

OPTICS

User Guide

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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OPTICS 2026.0.2 - 3/10/26

Bug Fixes

File > Open With Resize With PNG Image Crashed Optics

Using File > Open with Resize to open a PNG image produced an immediate crash.

Filter Selected After Image Load

When an image was loaded while a filter was selected, loading a new image kept the filter selected but did not display its parameters. The parameters only appeared after switching to another filter and then switching back. Now, the filter selection is cleared whenever a new image is loaded.

Looks Were Not Alphabetized In Optics UI

Looks were alphabetized in the Photoshop Panel, but not in the Optics UI.

My Collection Missing From Filters Tab/Window

My Collection was missing from both the Filters tab and the Filters window.

Photoshop Panel

My Collection Missing From Optics Panel In Photoshop

My Collection was accidentally omitted from the Photoshop panel.

Update Custom Presets and Looks in Photoshop Panel After Refresh

New custom presets or Looks created in Optics did not appear in the Photoshop panel unless Photoshop was restarted. They should have appeared after returning to the panel and clicking Refresh.

S_LensFlare

The default vertical orientation of the lens flares was flipped.

Splash Screen Only Appeared On Primary Monitor

The splash screen only appeared on the primary monitor when multiple monitors were connected. The Optics UI would appear on non-primary monitors, but the splash screen did not display there during loading.

OPTICS 2026.0.1 - 12/11/25

Bug Fixes

Favorite / Custom Preset Issues

In the Classic workspace, the Filters window's Favorite and Custom groups did not display favorite or custom presets after restarting. In the Default workspace, custom presets created across different collections did appear, but they were sorted incorrectly.

Looks Deletion Crash

Optics crashed when right-clicking over a Look thumbnail in the Filters window.

Open With and Drag-and-Drop to Application Icon Did Not Load Images

Resolved an issue where opening an image via Open With or by dragging and dropping an image onto the Optics 2026 application icon would launch Optics but failed to load the selected image. Both methods now function as expected.

Particle Illusion

Crashed With Large Images

Applying Particle Illusion to a 13,861 × 9,901 pixel image at full resolution caused Optics to crash.

Particle Illusion > UI Image Resolution Preference

Added a Particle Illusion > UI Image Resolution preference that defines the maximum image size transmitted to the Particle Illusion interface.

Changes

Preferences

Particle Illusion

Created a new Particle Illusion preference group.

Plug-ins

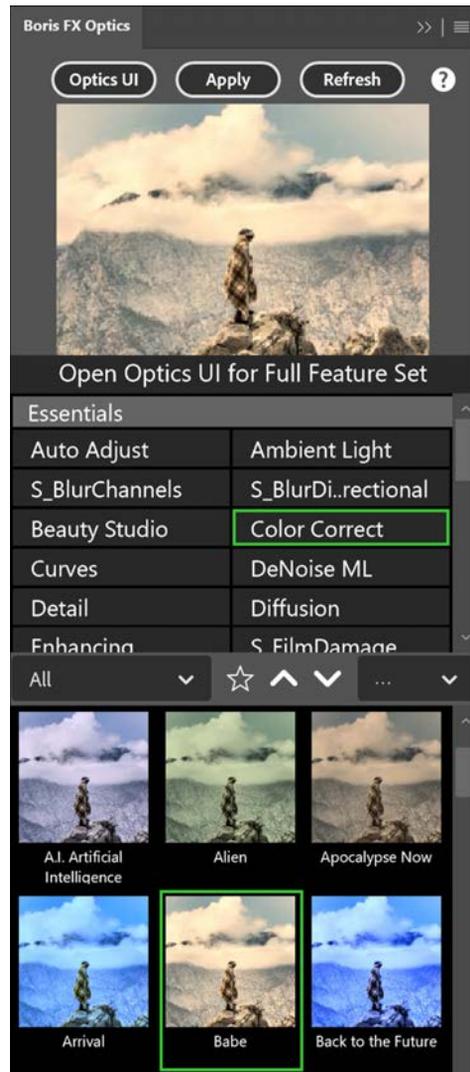
Moved Effect Duration and Preview Resolution Warning preferences to the Particle Illusion group.

OPTICS 2026 - 12/1/25

Features

Photoshop Plugins Panel

The Optics Plugins Panel in Photoshop is a dedicated workspace where you can select and apply Optics filters directly within the Photoshop interface. It streamlines the experience of using Optics by integrating it into a unified, dockable panel—similar to how you'd use Layers, Properties, or Brushes.



New Filters

DeNoise ML

The Denoise ML filters employs sophisticated deep learning techniques to eliminate unwanted noise from images while preserving critical features. To train the denoising model, numerous images were utilized, resulting in a highly effective system.

S_PixelSort

Sorts pixels exceeding a threshold along lines arranged in various patterns, including parallel lines, lines radiating from a central point, and circular lines.

S_VHSDamage

Simulates artifacts that may be introduced during analog tape recording and playback, including interlaced combing, chroma/luma degradation, and various types of tape noise.

UpRes ML

The UpRes ML filter employs machine learning to increase the resolution of images while preserving critical features. To train the UpRes model, thousands of images were utilized, resulting in high quality results.

Masks

New Mask Types

Depth Map ML

Depth Map ML analyzes an image and determines how far away each part of the scene is. Use the depth map to control blur or color correction based on depth in the Depth of Field and Color Correct nodes, and create masks according to a particular depth level.

Face ML

Segments facial regions--such as the eyes, lips, and mouth--into individual matte layers, enabling precise effects or compositing for each feature. Ideal for beauty retouching, offering detailed control without the need for manual masking.

Use Masks As Input Sources And Drivers Of Filters

Masks can be assigned as inputs to a filter's optional image or mask input, allowing the effect to respond more naturally than traditional post-effect masking. Filters such as S_EmbossDistort, S_EmbossGlass, S_EmbossShiny, and Depth of Field support optional inputs, while most Sapphire filters accept mask inputs. To assign a mask, right-click on it, choose **Use as Input**, and select the desired input. Once assigned, an arrow icon appears in the mask's lower-right corner to indicate its input status.

Particle Illusion - Update To 2026

Particle Illusion has been upgraded from v2025 to v2026, delivering significant improvements in animation, camera control, and overall usability. Plus, the 2025.5 and 2026 Emitter Libraries provide a wave of inspiring new presets.

Sapphire - Update To 2025.5

Sapphire has been updated from v2023.5 to v2025.5 adding S_PixelSort, S_VHSDamage and a wide array of presets.

New Presets And Looks

Four new looks are included and numerous presets were added to the following filters: S_Aurora, S_Clouds, S_ChannelSwitcher, Color Correct, Cross Processing, Dual Gradient, S_FilmDamage, Harris Shutter, S_InfiniteZoom, S_LensFlare, Light, Looks, Particle Illusion, S_QuadTone, S_RomanTiles, S_UltraZap, S_Vintage2ColorStrip, S_Vintage3ColorStrip.

Preferences Reset

Holding **Ctrl/Cmd+Alt** during startup now resets preferences.

Save Setup shortcut

Assigned **Ctrl/Cmd+Alt+S** as the keyboard shortcut for saving setups.

User Interface

Collections/Filters Windows

Filters are now accessible through the Collections/Filters window. The Filters tab organizes all available filters by function, while the Collections tab presents curated subsets grouped by intended purpose. To add a favorite filter to the My Collection group, use the right-click context menu.

Note: Selecting Window > Filters opens the legacy Filters menu from Optics 2025 and earlier, featuring thumbnail previews beneath the Viewer. Users who prefer the previous default layout can also access the visual Filters window via the Classic workspace.

Keyboard Shortcuts

Ctrl/Cmd+[or] - Paint Brush Softness

In the Paint filter or mask, **Ctrl/Cmd+[or]** decreases/increases the brush opacity.

Ctrl/Cmd+I - Invert Mask

Ctrl/Cmd+I inverts the mask.

X - Paint Brush Opacity

In the Paint filter or mask, **X** changes the brush opacity from 100 to 0 or 0 to 100. If the Opacity is set to some other value, the Opacity switches to 0 or 100 when **X** is selected.

Bug Fixes

Crash When Click+Dragging Look Thumbnails

Dragging a look thumbnail within the Filters window caused Optics to crash.

Curve Adjustments Were Locked After First Use

After initial adjustment, curve settings could not be modified. This affected Cross Processing, Curves, and Film Stocks.

Excess Saturation in Luminosity Blend Mode

The Luminosity blend mode was rendering approximately 20% more saturation than intended.

Hidden Filters Not Restored After Restart

Filters hidden prior to restart were not reappearing when “Show Hidden Filters” was selected.

Layer Blend Mode And Opacity Settings Ignored When Painting Masks

When painting a mask, the Viewer temporarily displayed the layer using Normal blend mode at 100% opacity, overriding any custom blend mode or opacity settings applied to the layer.

Layer Name Changes Not Persisting In Saved Looks

Renamed layers in Optics reverted to default names when a Look was saved, preventing custom naming from persisting.

Light > Color Not Retained in Look

Looks created with custom Light > Color settings were not preserving the selected color. Upon reloading, the value defaulted to white.

Low-Resolution Extended Tooltip Videos

Extended Tooltip videos for Paint and Spot previously displayed at reduced resolution.

Missing Custom Color Correct Presets After Restart

Custom Color Correct presets were not appearing in the UI after restarting Optics.

Numeric Field Controls Misbehaved on Mac

On macOS, trying to adjust numeric values with **Alt** or **Alt+Cmd** caused the window to scroll instead of changing the value.

Overlay Mask Displayed Red Lines Without Active Mask

When no mask was present, Overlay Mask incorrectly displayed red vertical lines.

Tooltips May Stay On Screen

In some cases, tooltips could linger after switching to another app.

Changes

Shift+Left-Mouse+Drag Shortcut Key Re-Assignment

Shift+left-mouse+drag was re-assigned to Face ML to drag select masks. Previously, it was used to zoom the image in and out.

User Interface

Workspace Changes

- Default workspace now has Collections/Filters and Presets are on the left, Viewer in the center, and Parameters and Layers are on the right.
- The Edit workspace has been replaced with the Classic workspace, which was the default layout in Optics 2025 and earlier. In this configuration, Layers and Presets are positioned on the left, the Viewer and Filters are in the center, and Parameters are located on the right. This retains a familiar workflow for users who preferred the previous default setup.

Known Issues

Particle Illusion - Single Particle Types & Multiple Strokes

When using multiple brush strokes, some brush presets, for instance "Hot Flare Warped Trail Thin Smoke", the glows and rings only show on the last pat.h

Photoshop Smart Objects and Alpha

When alpha is exported from Optics to a Smart Object containing an embedded layer mask, it is exported as transparency. You can access the Smart Object's alpha after applying Optics by dragging the Smart Object's layer thumbnail and releasing on top of the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the layers window.