

Topaz Texture Effects

I don't know about you, but when the digital capture of the scene I just photographed looks too much like what I saw with my eyes, it bores me and I want to do something dramatic to it! One of the best ways to alter the mood and feel of your image is with textures and related effects.

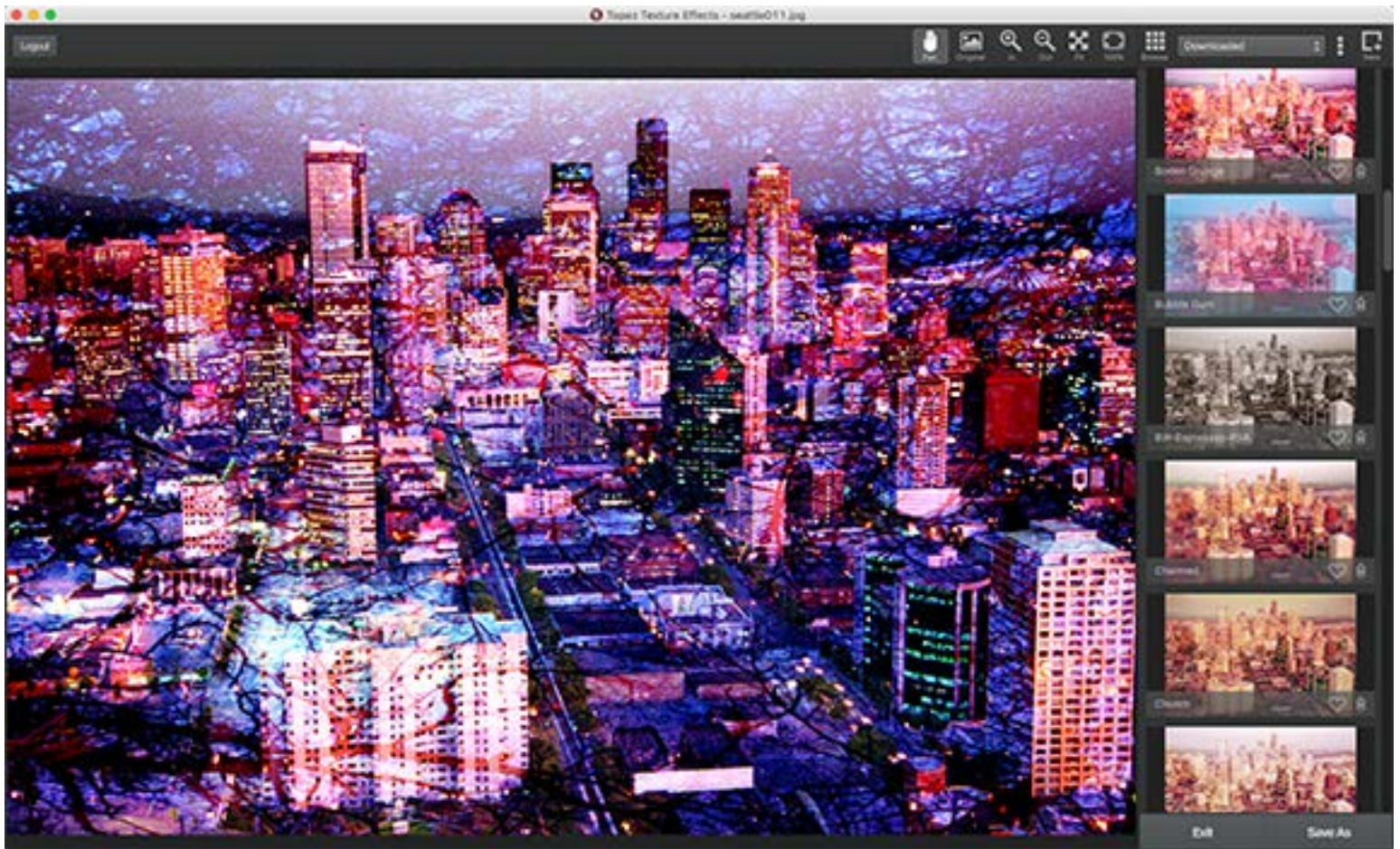
Normally, you would download a texture or shoot some yourself and use blending modes in your image editor to overlay them and merge them into your original. If you want to try many different textures, that's a lot of layers and a lot of work! A better way to approach this is with an app/plug-in such as Topaz Texture Effects that does the heavy lifting for you, since it's all about saving time and effort.

Texture Effects offers a 1-click preset method to make this process really easy, as we will see.

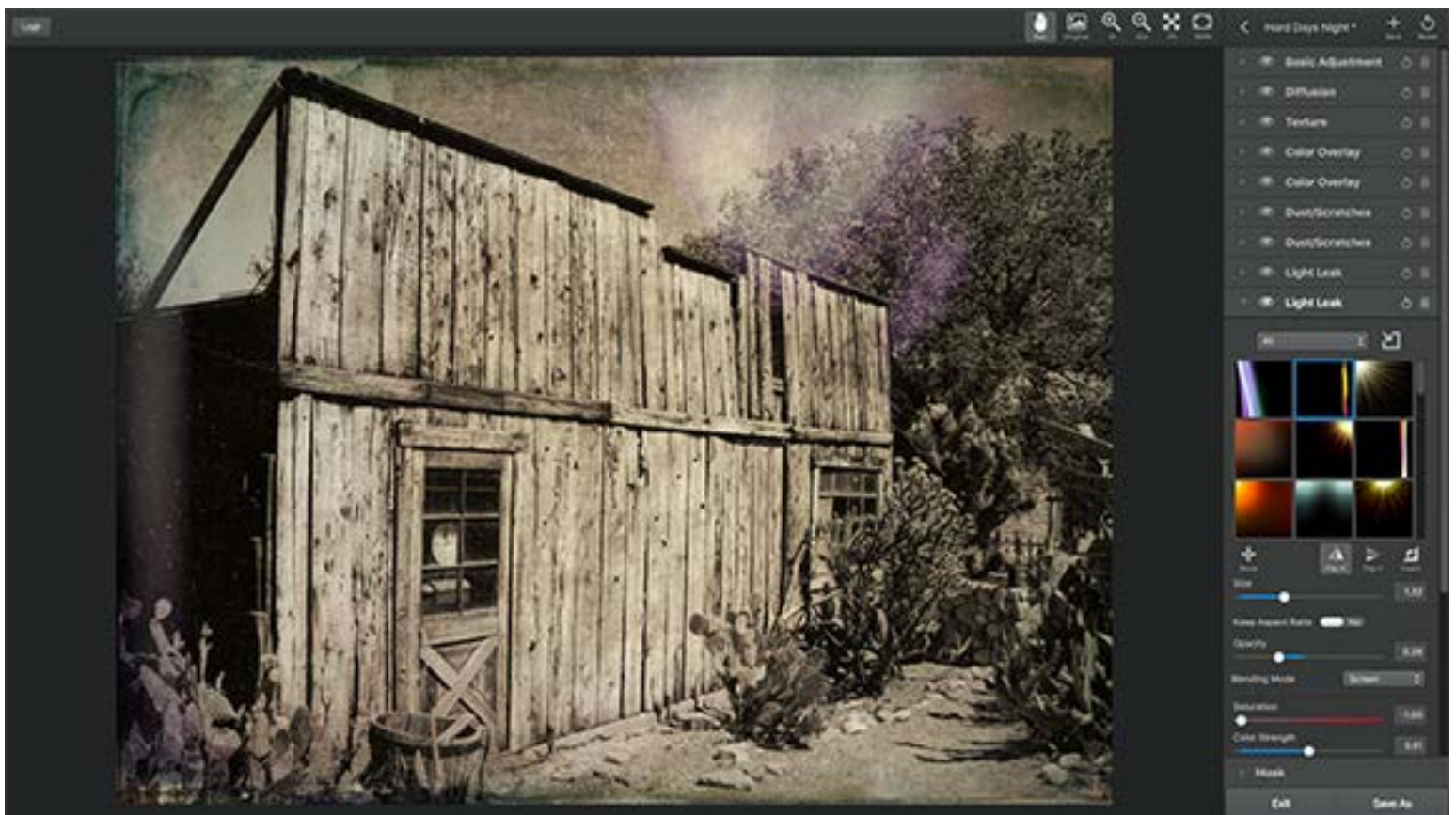


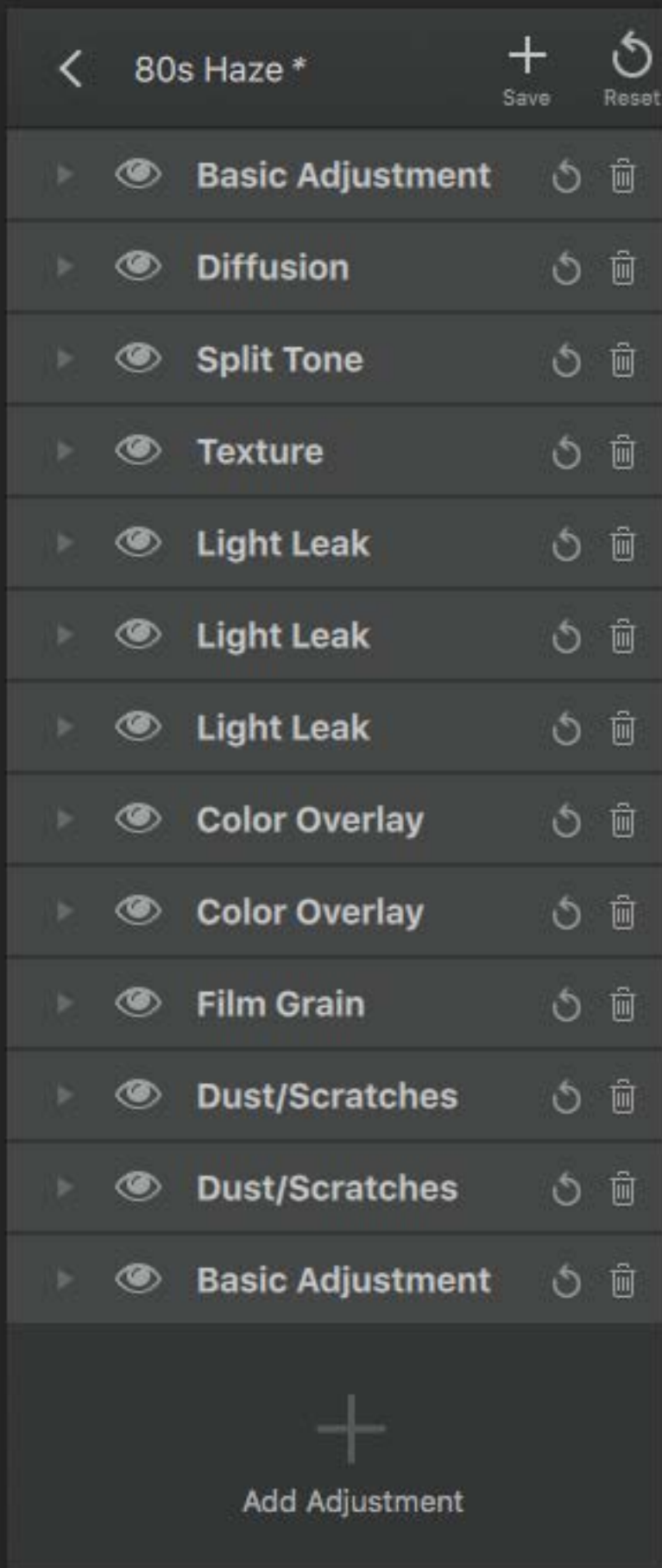
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When you open Texture Effects, load an image and click on any preset at the right, this is what you'll see. Click the presets until you find one that suits your image and Save. That's most of it, really!



If you want to work a little harder and customize the results, click on the Adjustment icon in the center of any selected preset and you will see this on the right of the screen: Full control over everything.

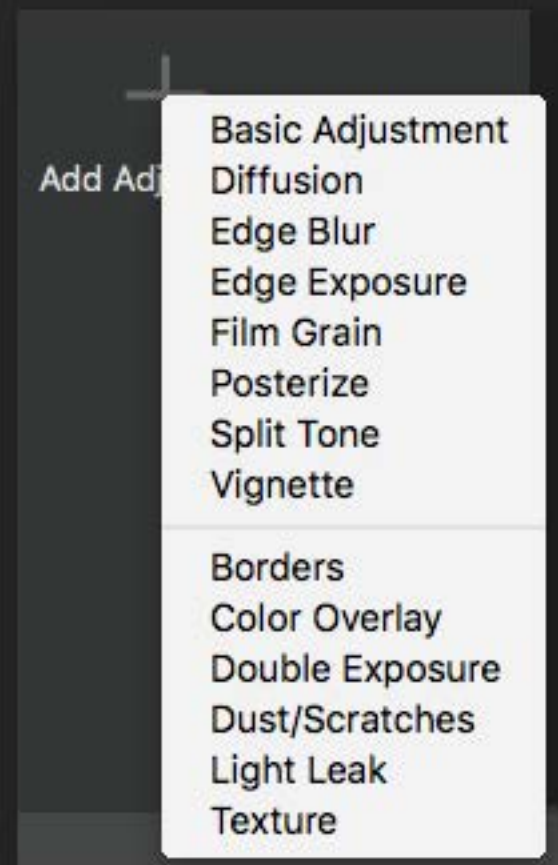




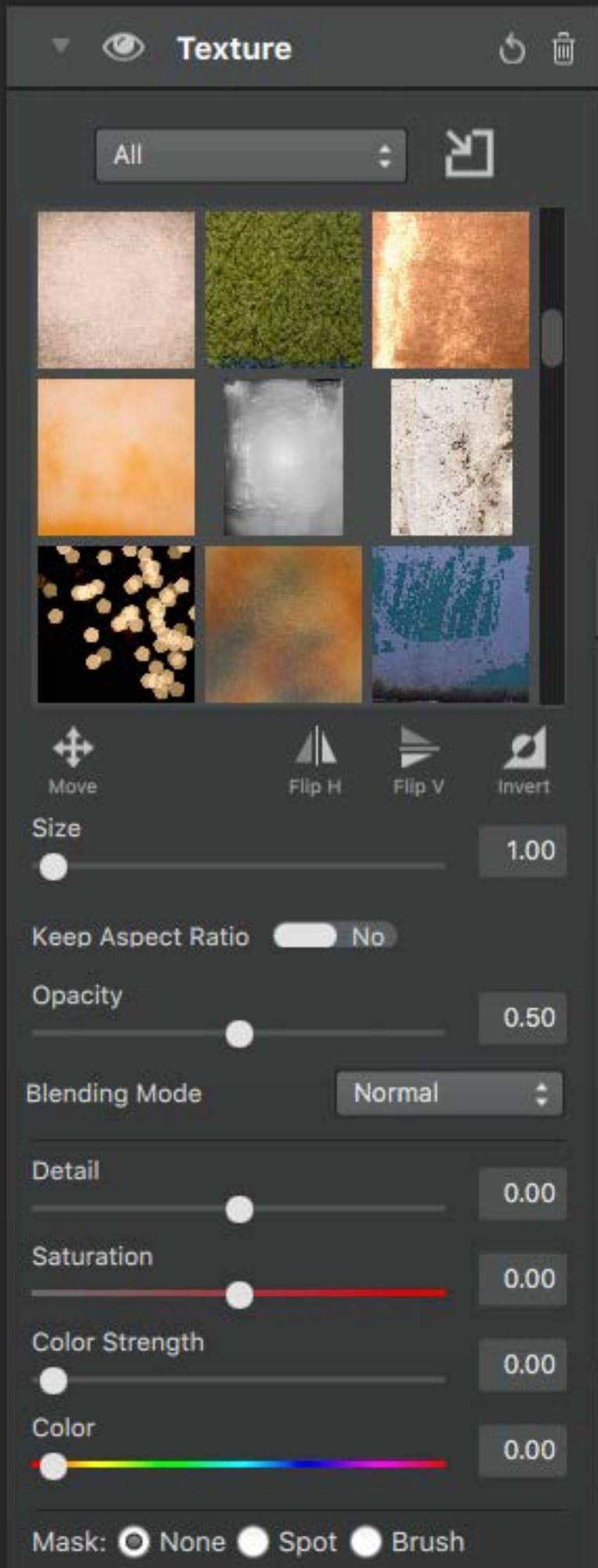
You want control, you've got control! At left is an example of the various sub-effects that add up to create a single preset (in this case, "80s Haze"). Obviously somebody else went through a lot of effort to create this effect, saving you the time and trouble.

Note that in some cases, multiple instances of the same sub-effect can be used in a preset, with slightly different settings applied to each instance.

If you want to examine these settings, click the expander arrow at left to view the inner workings (see screenshots on the next page). If you want to see the preset without certain sub-effects, click the visibility "eyes" to hide them. If you make a mess while poking around, click the circular "reset" arrow. To remove any sub-effect, click the trashcan icon.

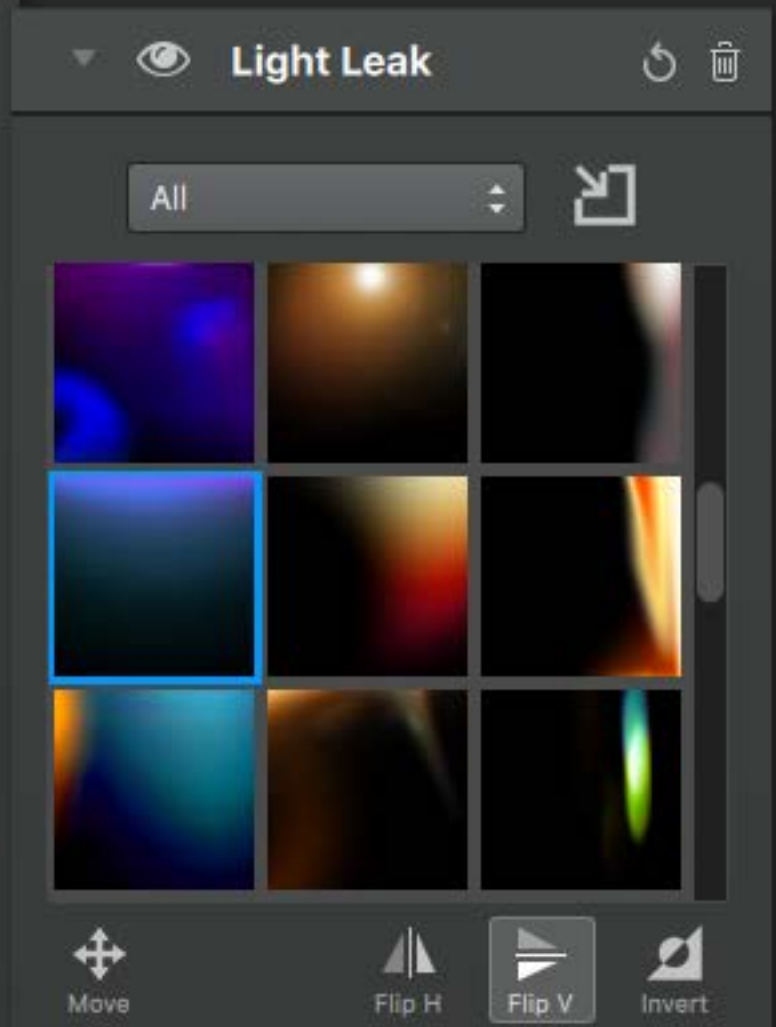


To add a sub-effect to the preset, click the Add Adjustment plus-sign (+) and pick from among the many choices offered (right).

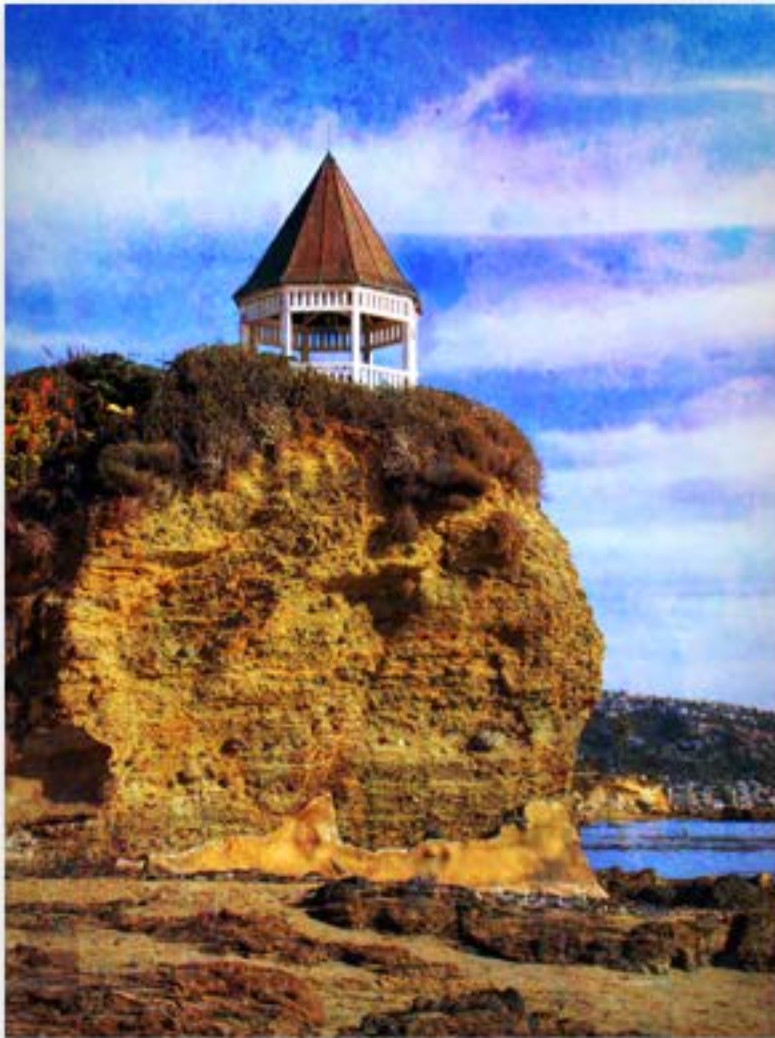
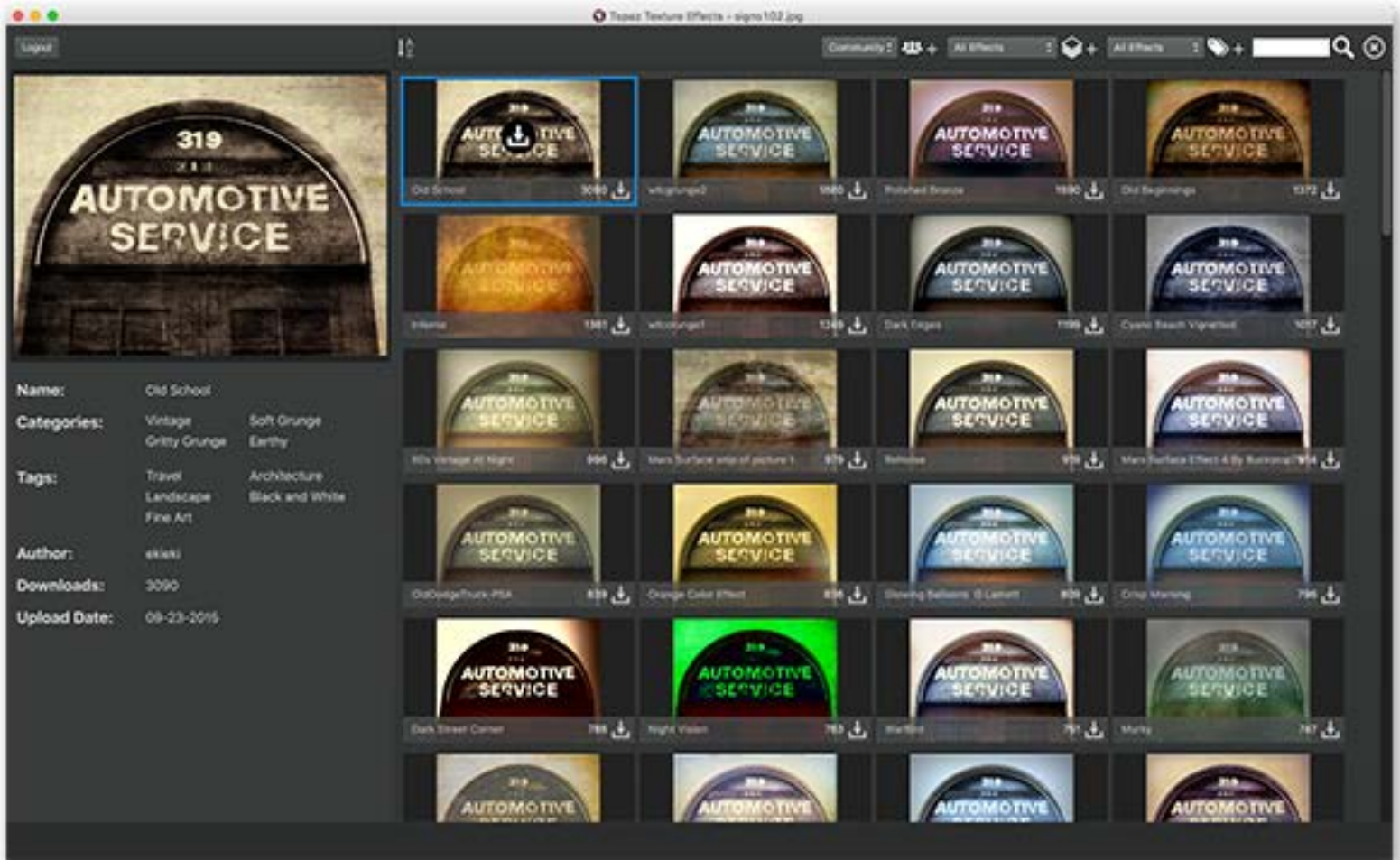


Here are two examples of the expanded view and controls offered for each sub-effect. While the name "Texture Effects" implies you are simply adding texture overlays to your image with this plug-in/app, so much more is actually going on.

You can control Light Leak (example below), diffusion, tone, color overlays, film grain, dust/scratches and more. Every one of these granular effects offers further sub-settings – or you can treat them as basic presets and apply them exactly as they are presented, whichever you prefer.



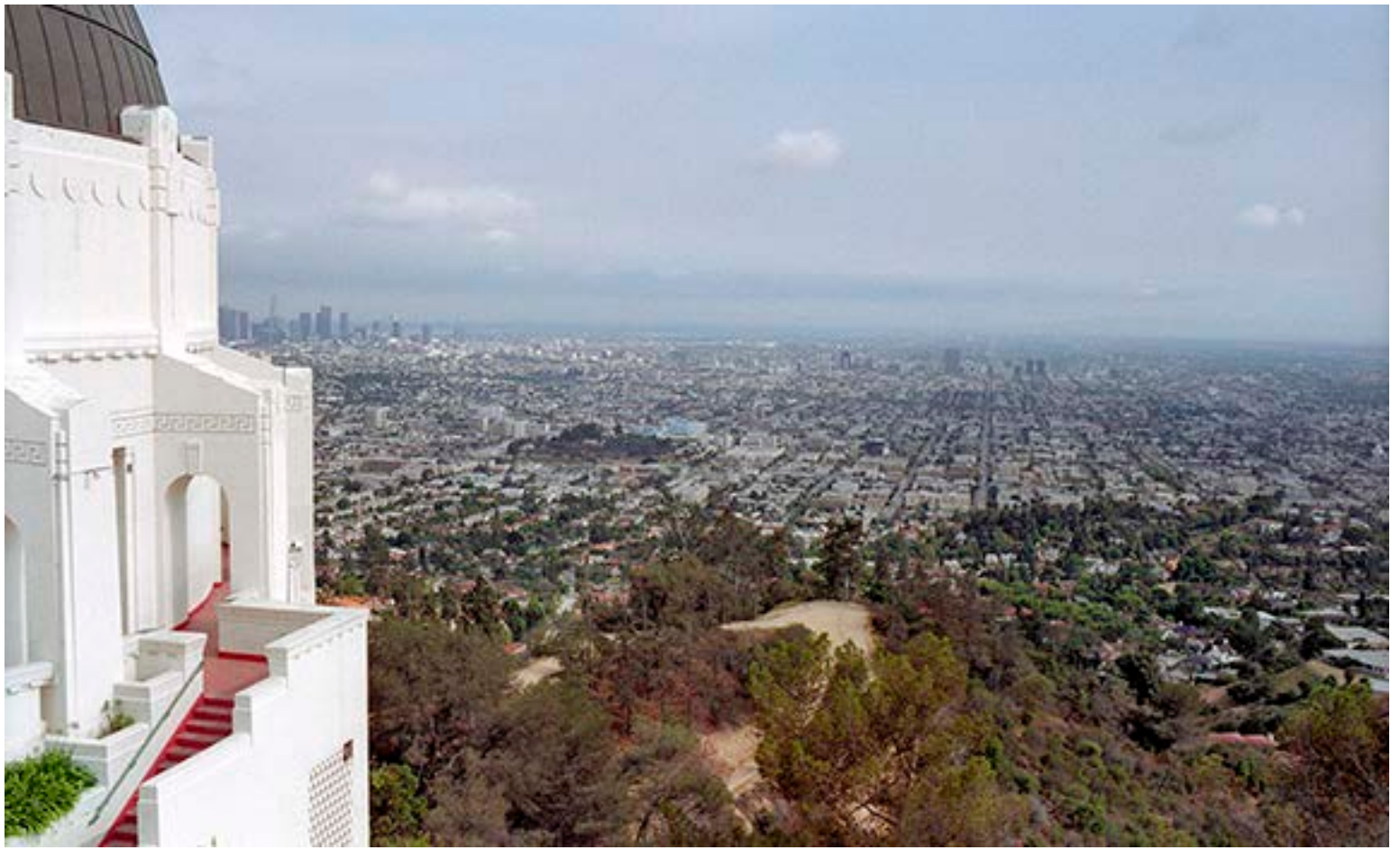
So you're beginning to see how addictive this can be! It's bad enough to have built in presets and be able to edit and save your own, but there's even more: Topaz has a Community of users who share presets!



If you click on the little Browse grid at the top of the interface, you can quickly see how the scores of available effects will look when applied to your image. View options include Local (for built-in and self-saved effects), Community (to see what others have posted, and they are posting new ones every day!), or Both at once.

The screenshot above shows just a portion of the currently available Community effects. All you have to do is click on various ones until you have something you like. And of course you can edit and customize Community effects as well (at left is the result of a color enhancement preset I modified slightly to my liking by backing off the vignette a bit and adding a Light Leak).

Now let's look at some before-and after examples and see how effective Topaz Texture Effects can be. Once you start using it you'll keep using it.



Here's a shot of the Griffith Observatory overlooking LA, which I shot on 35mm film 20-some years ago. That's old, but not as old as I made it look with a little Texture Effects treatment. The uninformed observer might be led to believe this was taken in the 1930s, when the Observatory first opened.





BEFORE



AFTER





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