

Quick Start Guide

Layer live, non-destructive print & apparel effects onto your finished artwork — color, texture, grunge, and vintage looks, stacked like Photoshop layers, right in your browser.

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1 Open Effects Studio

Three ways to get there:

- Sign in at tonesmith.makerfoundryco.com and click **Effects Studio** in any page's top navigation.
- From inside the **Halftone Editor**, click **Export** and choose **Open in Effects Studio** — your artwork loads ready to style.
- Try the public demo at [/effects-studio-demo](#) — no sign-up required. Exports carry a watermark until you sign up.

This is not the Halftone Editor. Effects Studio styles your *already-finished* artwork — it does not separate or halftone. When you're ready to halftone for screen print or DTF, send your result to the Halftone Editor (Step 13).

2 Load Your Artwork

Drop a **PNG, JPG, or WEBP** onto the upload zone, or click to browse. PNG with transparency works best — every effect lands only on the visible (non-transparent) pixels, so your transparency is always preserved.

- **Reopen a saved project** — drop a `.overtone` file to restore your exact layer stack (see Step 13).
- **Recent projects** — saved `.overtone` projects appear as thumbnails on the upload screen. Click one to pick up where you left off.

3 Prep the Base (optional)

Open the **Image** tab in the Library to clean up your source pixels before styling. These tools act on the base artwork, not as effect layers:

- **Crop & Set print size** — frame the design and lock your output dimensions at 300 DPI.
- **Upscale** — enlarge low-resolution artwork.
- **Remove Background (AI)** — knock out a solid or busy background so effects only hit the subject.

4 How the Effect Stack Works

Effects Studio has three zones, like a simplified Photoshop:

- **Library (left)** — tabbed effect categories. Click a thumbnail to add it as a layer.
- **Canvas (center)** — your live result, updating as you adjust.
- **Effect Stack (right)** — the layers you've added, plus the settings for whichever layer is selected.

The stack renders **bottom to top** and is fully **non-destructive**. For any layer you can:

- **Reorder** by dragging — order changes the look.
- **Toggle visibility** with the eye icon.
- **Set opacity** to blend the effect with what's below.
- **Remove** it anytime. Nothing is baked in until you export.

Add as many as you like. Stack a color recolor under a texture under a grunge brush — the combinations are where the looks come from.

5 Color — Chromatone

*The **Color** tab. Recolor your art with a gradient map.*

Chromatone remaps the brightness of your artwork onto a color gradient — shadows take one end, highlights the other. Great for duotones, neon pops, and unified palettes.

- Pick from **40+ gradient presets**, or build a **custom gradient**.
- Dial the **intensity** to blend the recolor against the original.

6 Texture — Screentone

The **Texture** tab. Procedural halftone-pattern overlays.

Screentone lays a clean, resolution-independent pattern over your solids — the retro print-dot and line looks. Ten styles: **Orbit, Bloom, Tide, Weft, Hatch, Trellis, Mirage, Sonar, Speckle, and Reed.**

- Set **frequency** (how fine the pattern is) and **angle**.
- Pick the two-tone **colors**, or let it pull from a Chromatone gradient.

7 Patina — Grunge Textures

The **Patina** tab. Real distressed-texture overlays.

Patina blends a library of photographic grunge textures over your design for a worn, vintage, hand-printed feel.

- Choose a texture from the thumbnail grid.
- Set the **blend mode** (Multiply, Screen, Overlay, Soft-Light), plus **scale** and **opacity**.
- The texture is automatically clipped to your artwork, so transparent areas stay clean.

8 Throwback — Vintage Looks

The **Throwback** tab. One-click retro color grades.

Throwback applies tonal looks that fade, tint, and age your artwork — the airbrush/vintage feel without the manual work. Pick a look card (e.g. **Washout, Sunfade, Goldenrod, Tobacco, Newsstand, Faded Rose**) and fine-tune fade, saturation, and tint.

9 Grit — Grunge Brushes

The **Grit** tab. Paint distress by hand.

Grit lets you paint grunge directly onto a layer mask with real brush tips — for targeted wear, holes, and rough edges. Pick a brush tip from the grid, then paint on the canvas.

- **Erase mode** — knocks holes in the design (distressed, worn-through look). Always a clean, binary knockout — no faint haze.
- **Add mode** — paints grunge ink on. Choose the color source: **Distress** (darkened artwork, like worn ink), **Black, White**, or **Custom** (with an eyedropper to pick a color straight from the canvas).
- Adjust **brush size**; **Clear** the mask to start over.

10 Crisp — Clean Edges for DTF

The **Crisp** tab. Remove semi-transparent pixels.

Soft, partially-transparent edge pixels cause the dreaded white haze around DTF prints. Crisp is a finishing layer that hardens your alpha to a clean on/off edge — every pixel is either fully there or fully gone.

- Add a **Crisp** layer (usually on top), then drag the **Threshold** slider.
- **Right** = erase faint edge pixels (contract). **Left** = fill faint pixels to solid (expand).

DTF tip: a Crisp layer at the top of your stack is the cleanest way to kill edge haze before you send a design to print.

11 Target an Effect to One Layer or Area

By default an effect applies to the whole image. Two ways to scope it:

- **Clip to layer below** — toggle this on a layer's settings and it only affects the pixels the layer directly beneath it changed. Example: clip a Chromatone to a Screentone to recolor *just* the pattern, not the whole design.
- **Apply to area** (paint a mask) — click **Paint mask** and brush over the canvas to limit the effect to that region. **Invert** flips it; **Clear** removes it.

12 Compare, Zoom & Preview on a Shirt

Use the canvas controls to check your work:

- **Original / Result / Split** tabs — compare before and after. Split gives you a draggable divider to wipe between the two.
- **Zoom, pan, and fit** — inspect detail, then snap back to fit.
- **Shirt Preview** (top-right of the canvas) — drop a garment color behind your art (Black / White presets or a custom picker) to see how it'll sit on the shirt. This is preview only — it's never exported.

13 Export & Save Your Project

Click **Export** in the footer. You get five options:

- **Download PNG** — the flattened result, full-resolution, ready to use.
- **Save Project (.overtone)** — saves your editable layer stack so you can reopen and keep editing later.
- **Open in Halftone Editor** — hand the result off to separate & halftone for print.
- **Send to Gang Sheet** — place it on a DTF transfer sheet.
- **Open in Mockup Studio** — preview it on a garment.

What's a .overtone file? A project file that bundles your source artwork plus every effect layer, mask, and setting. Save it as a download *and* it appears in **Recent projects** on the upload screen. Reopen it anytime to keep editing your exact stack — it's the "resume later" file, not the handoff. The three handoffs above always pass the flattened PNG, never the project file.

Recent projects are browser-local. They live in this browser on this machine. Keep the downloaded `.overtone` file as your portable, shareable copy.

The Round Trip with the Halftone Editor

Effects Studio and the Halftone Editor hand off to each other both ways:

1. In the **Halftone Editor**, click **Export → Open in Effects Studio** to style a finished design.
2. Stack your color, texture, and grunge effects here.
3. When you're done, **Export → Open in Halftone Editor** to separate and halftone the styled result for print.

Works in demo mode too — the demo editors route to each other automatically.

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Now go make something.

Finished art in. Signature looks out.

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