



July 2026 ACR Update

New Presentation Mode

Adobe Camera Raw version 18.4.1 introduces a new presentation mode designed to showcase your images more immersively. This feature is accessible when using Camera Raw as a plugin, meaning when you open a RAW file directly or through Adobe Bridge.

To access this mode, you can use keyboard shortcuts:

- Press F to enter full-screen mode, which makes the Camera Raw interface take up the entire screen.
- Press Shift + F to enter presentation mode, where your image will fill the entire screen.

Once in presentation mode, you can navigate through your images using the left and right arrow keys or the spacebar. The arrow keys will push the current image off the screen to reveal the next one with a subtle animation. The spacebar, however, will provide a fading transition between images.

The surrounding color of the presentation screen can be customized by right-clicking within the image. You have options for white, light gray, medium gray, dark gray, and black. This allows you to match the background to your image content or desired viewing experience.

Additional options available via the right-click menu include "Fit to Screen" and "Show Info Overlay." The "Show Info Overlay" provides details like filename, date, and resolution. You can also control whether animations are used for transitions by toggling the "Use Animation" option.



While the presentation mode offers a great way to view images, the presenter noted a wish for true solid black backgrounds without a gray edge, an auto-playing slideshow option, and the ability to loop through images at the end of the sequence. Exiting presentation mode can be done by clicking the 'X' in the upper right corner or pressing the Esc key.

Vectorscope Enhancements

The vectorscope, introduced in a previous update, has received improvements in version 18.4.1. To access it, right-click on the histogram in Adobe Camera Raw and select "Show Vectorscope."

The vectorscope visually represents the colors present in your image. The proximity of the color information to the outer ring indicates saturation, while closeness to the center suggests a hint of that color.



Key improvements include:

- **Enhanced Color Representation:** When saturation is increased, the vectorscope now displays more distinct colors, making it easier to identify specific hues.
- **Improved Skin Tone Indicator:** The skin tone indicator, previously a line, is now a cone. This provides a broader range within which skin tones can appear natural, accommodating more saturated skin tones as well.

Bi-directional Gradient with New Controls

The bi-directional gradient feature, initially added to Adobe Camera Raw about a month prior, now offers more granular control over the transition effect. This feature is found within the masking tools.

When using the linear gradient tool, enabling the "bi-directional" option causes the gradient to fade out in both directions from its center line, rather than just one.

The new additions are two small triangles located on the gradient line. These triangles allow you to precisely define the transition zones for both the upper and lower fade-out areas. You can adjust these triangles to control how abrupt or gradual the fade is on each side of the gradient.

By adjusting these triangles, you can create a more defined "full strength" zone for your adjustment before it begins to fade out, offering greater flexibility in applying localized edits.

Displaying Autofocus Points

A new feature allows you to visualize the autofocus points used by your camera. This is currently supported for certain Canon, Nikon, and Sony cameras.

To enable this:

1. Ensure you are viewing an image taken with a supported camera.
2. Right-click within the main image preview area.
3. Select "Show Autofocus Points" from the context menu.

The autofocus points will then be displayed on the image, showing where the camera's focus was locked. The shape and size of these indicators may vary depending on the camera model. This feature is not persistent and will need to be re-enabled after closing and reopening Camera Raw or switching to a different image.

If you right-click on an image from an unsupported camera, such as an iPhone, the "Show Autofocus Points" option will not be present in the menu.

Generative Expand and Firefly Fill

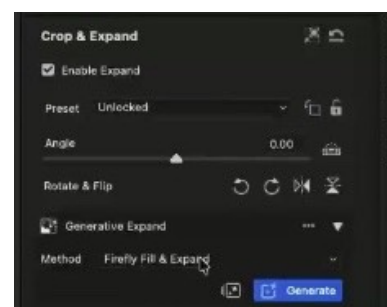
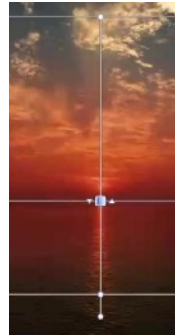
Adobe Camera Raw now includes "Generative Expand" powered by Firefly, which allows you to expand the canvas of your image and have AI generate content to fill the new space. This feature utilizes AI credits.

To use Generative Expand:

1. Select the Crop tool.
2. Enable the "Enable Expand" option.
3. Drag the crop handles beyond the original image boundaries to create new space.

Once the canvas is expanded, you have two fill options:

- **Content-Aware Fill:** This option attempts to intelligently copy and extend existing image content to fill the new area.
- **Firefly Fill and Expand:** This is the AI-powered option that generates entirely new content based on the surrounding image.



When using Firefly Fill and Expand, the tool generates three variations, allowing you to choose the best fit. You can switch between these variations using the provided arrows or by clicking on them directly.

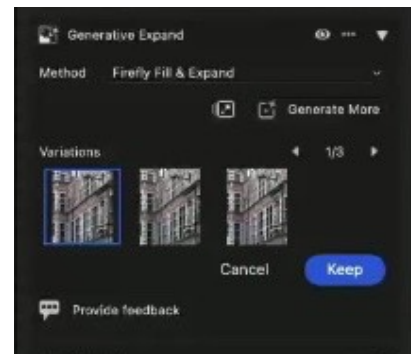
Handling Perspective Corrections and Canvas Expansion

When correcting perspective in an image, particularly architectural shots where vertical lines converge, Camera Raw's geometry tools can straighten them. However, this often results in empty areas at the edges of the image.

Previously, controlling how much the image could expand to fill these gaps was limited. With the introduction of Generative Expand, you can now add space and have it filled.

If you enable "Enable Expand" and pull the crop beyond the original bounds, you'll see a new icon. This icon, when clicked, will bring the crop back within the original image's bounds, preventing transparent areas.

When applying perspective corrections and then using Generative Expand, the generated image will maintain the same aspect ratio as the original image before the perspective correction was applied. This can sometimes be confusing, as the generated area might appear distorted if the geometry correction is still active.



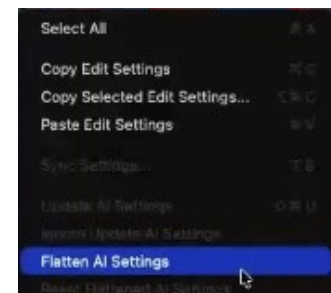
After generating the new content, you can select one of the three variations and hit "Keep" to finalize the expanded image.

Flattening AI Settings

A new concept introduced is "Flatten AI Settings." This feature is relevant when you perform edits using AI tools, such as retouching or generative expansion.

To flatten AI settings:

1. Right-click on the thumbnail of the image you've edited.
2. Select "Flatten AI Settings" from the context menu.



When AI settings are flattened, the edits are merged into the image, and the AI-specific indicators (like the dot next to the retouching tool) disappear. This means the edits become permanent and can no longer be individually adjusted or removed through the AI tools.

Flattening also occurs automatically when you use the "Enable Expand" feature and generate new content. This is Adobe's way of consolidating the edits.

There is also an option to "Reset Flattened AI Settings." This action reverts the image to its original state before any AI-related merges occurred, effectively undoing the flattening and generative edits.

When using adaptive color profiles or adaptive black and white profiles, and then expanding the canvas, the adaptive profile may not correctly recognize the expanded area, leading to visible artifacts or inconsistencies. Updating the adaptive profile might not always resolve this issue completely.

Limitations with High-Resolution Images

When using Generative Expand on high-resolution images, I've seen a noticeable drop in quality in the generated areas. The AI appears to generate content at a lower resolution and then scale it up, which becomes apparent when viewed closely.

For large, high-resolution images, the presenter recommends using the retouching tool, particularly the generative AI option, to fill in smaller areas of empty space (e.g., at the edges after perspective correction) rather than relying on Generative Expand for the entire expansion. This localized approach tends to yield better quality results.



Discrepancies Between Adobe Camera Raw and Lightroom Classic

A significant concern raised is the growing disparity between features available in Adobe Camera Raw and Lightroom Classic. With Adobe Camera Raw now on a monthly release schedule, new features are being added rapidly. However, Lightroom Classic is not being updated at the same pace.

Historically, Adobe Camera Raw and Lightroom Classic shared underlying code, ensuring that features added to ACR would eventually be supported in Lightroom. This allowed users to edit images in ACR with new features and then import them into Lightroom, where the results would be understood even if the interface controls were not yet present.

I'm frustrated that this synchronization has stopped. Many new features in Adobe Camera Raw, including generative fill capabilities and advanced masking options, are not yet available or fully supported in Lightroom Classic. This creates a workflow bottleneck for users who rely on both applications.