ACO ASE Converter v2.2

User Guide

ACO ASE Converter v2.2 is an offline palette converter with an image preview. It creates luminance-mapped gradients from swatches; it does not reproduce an Adobe swatch library as a photographic look without that mapping.

Toolbar and keyboard

Control	Behaviour
Background squares	Apply black, middle grey or white to the preview surround only.
LOAD [L]	Route ACO/ASE to the stack and one supported image to the preview.
ZEBRA	Mark channels above 252 in magenta and pixels below 3 in all channels in lime green.
SOURCE [S]	Toggle the ungraded image without changing the active preset or saved transform.
UNDO [U] / REDO [Y]	Restore scalar settings and stable preset selection; maximum 20 states.
RESET ALL	Deselect the preset; reset tone, blend, strength, SOURCE and ZEBRA once.
START OVER	Confirm removal of all presets; cancel pending loads/saves; reset prefix and settings; restore TEST CARD.
LEDGER	Request a provenance-stamped CSV of timestamped full JSON states.
SAVE [E]	Save the active preset using SAVE FORMAT.

Shortcuts work outside text fields and selectors. Space or Enter selects a focused preset row. Delete on a row requests its removal. The background squares and delete crosses are keyboard buttons. The folder warning retains Tab focus and closes with OK or Escape.

Load an image or palette

LOAD IMAGE replaces the judging image; TEST CARD restores the embedded approved PNG without clearing presets. Every new source image clears undo history. Supported image types are .jpg, .jpeg, .png and .webp, up to 25 MB and 24 megapixels. File signatures and browser decoding must agree with the accepted type. The longest preview side is at most 1,200 pixels.

LOAD INTO STACK adds .aco and .ase files. Both the list and the whole window accept drops. Folder drops are walked recursively where the browser supports them. If a folder cannot be read or exceeds a traversal limit, loading stops and the modal directs you to choose files directly. Folder picking is not added to the standard LOAD picker.

Limit	Value
Files per load	100
ACO/ASE asset size	10 MB per file; 30 MB per asset batch
Loaded presets	1,000
Folder walking	1,000 entries; 20 levels; 100 files; 55 MB total
ZIP save	100 LUT files plus provenance manifest

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Choose the ACO encoding explicitly

STANDARD 16-BIT follows Adobe RGB channel encoding and is correct for the supplied Skin Tone file. If another exporter deliberately stores 8-bit values in the 16-bit slots, choose NON-STANDARD 8-BIT COMPATIBILITY before loading that file. The choice affects future loads only. Remove the earlier load before loading it again. Compatibility mode rejects RGB channels above 255.

Understand grouping and colour conversion

Native ASE group nesting takes precedence. ACO names and ungrouped ASE names can derive paths from slash-separated names or a spaced em dash. Subgroups are separate presets; a parent with subgroups does not combine its direct colours with them. Root colours alongside named groups are ignored with a named notice. These layout decisions are reported, not hidden.

One-colour groups gain black and white anchors. Groups with 2-5 colours retain their luminance-ordered gradient stops; 6-10 colours are resampled to five. Larger named groups are rejected. Flat root libraries above ten colours are accepted only when divisible by five, then split into sequential five-colour presets with a notice. Source-order saves retain the converted RGB order within each accepted palette, not ignored groups or a complete reconstruction of the library.

WARNING — Lab and CMYK conversion is an APPROXIMATION because swatch files carry no usable source colour profile. Lab assumes D50 and adapts to sRGB D65; values outside sRGB are limited. ACO grayscale is a black-ink amount; ASE Gray is brightness.

Manage the preset stack

The title displays a live item count. STACK NAME sets the save prefix independently of preset labels. A row or its checkbox selects one preset; deselecting it shows the plain preview. Red X requests confirmed deletion. CLEAR STACK confirms bulk removal, cancels pending palette/folder reads and saves, and keeps the image. An empty clear still cancels pending palette work without a dialogue.

The RENAME field is prefilled with the selected name. Type a replacement and click RENAME or press Enter. Renaming changes only the label, not colours or position, and does not overwrite STACK NAME. Names are treated as text. The active strip contains the full generated gradient; row chips show up to ten source swatches.

Judge and adjust the preview

QUINTONES samples five equally spaced gradient points, TRI-TONES samples three and DUOTONES samples the endpoints. Source Rec.601 luminance chooses a position between those points. BLEND MODE selects NORMAL, MULTIPLY, SCREEN, OVERLAY or SOFT LIGHT. STRENGTH mixes the result with the source over 0-100%; at 0% the colour transform is identity.

The histogram uses 256 Rec.601 luminance buckets from the displayed colour result before zebra markers. SOURCE LUMA MEAN is the ungraded source average, not the adjusted image average. SOURCE and ZEBRA never change save output. Hover once for a plain tooltip and return for the technical tooltip; keyboard focus also shows tooltips.

Save palettes and LUTs

SAVE FORMAT selects the paired SAVE ACTIVE and SAVE ALL controls. GRADIENT CSV gives 2/3/5 sampled stops and excludes blend. ORIGINAL SOURCE-ORDER CSV keeps accepted palette colours in import order, converted to RGB hex. A data row contains only hex colours; readable names and provenance are comment lines. Receiving tools that scan hex text must ignore those comments.

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INDIVIDUAL LUT creates a 33-point .cube. LUT ZIP creates a single uncompressed archive with LUTs and PROVENANCE.txt. A LUT save captures the entire requested stack, colours and settings before starting. Later edits cannot change that batch. Overlapping saves are blocked. CANCEL SAVE discards an unfinished ZIP or stops further individual requests; files already requested remain.

Save choice	Filename pattern	Contents
Active gradient CSV	<preset>_<stack>_<mode>.csv	One 2, 3 or 5-stop gradient; blend excluded.
All gradient CSV	<stack>_AllPresets_<mode>.csv	One gradient per data row; blend excluded.
Active source CSV	<preset>_<stack>_source.csv	Imported palette order as converted RGB hex.
All source CSV	<stack>_AllPresets_source.csv	Imported order within each loaded palette.
Active LUT	<preset>_33.cube	33 x 33 x 33 colour transform with blend.
All individual LUTs	<stack>-<preset>-<number>_33.cube	Separate files from one captured stack and settings.
Active or all ZIP	<preset>_33.zip or <stack>_AllLUTs_33.zip	LUT files plus PROVENANCE.txt; maximum 100 LUTs.
Ledger	aco_ase_converter_ledger.csv	Timestamp and full JSON state; maximum 1,000 records.

WARNING — A green header means a download was requested, not that a disk save was verified. Browser settings control destination and whether multiple downloads are permitted. Check Downloads, or choose ZIP for one batch download. A 33-point LUT is an APPROXIMATION between lattice nodes, not an exact off-lattice preview match.

Session records and privacy

The ledger keeps at most 1,000 entries. Each contains an ISO timestamp and the full scalar state, including an event. UNDO and REDO persist their resulting state and append an event. The browser keeps scalar settings and the ledger where storage is permitted; images and preset data are not restored after closing. An invalid or old session is discarded. Storage denial falls back to memory and gives a warning, so the app remains usable.

Images, presets and settings never leave the device. There are no runtime network calls, external fonts or external scripts. Download LEDGER before closing if you need a durable record. Browser storage can be cleared by browser policy or by you.

Read failures and recovery

A malformed file is rejected by name and reason without loading any of that file. Valid files in the same batch may load, followed by a loaded/rejected summary. Notices and failures remain visible for 2.5 seconds each. Recheck the source file rather than renaming another file type to .aco or .ase. If a new load is cleared or restarted while reading, its stale result is discarded.

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