



BUGSLABBER 1.1 HELP

Bugslabber is a utility that writes XML batch scripts which generate "slabs" (substacks) within Zerene Stacker, a focus-stacking application by Zerene Systems.

- Stacking slabs can often create better results than stacking hundreds of images in a single pass. A popular approach is to create PMax slabs and combine them using DMap.
- Once slabs are created, rendering a complete stack is much faster, which can encourage experimentation with DMap settings.
- Retouching within Zerene Stacker using slabs (with their greater depth of field) is far easier than retouching from individual source images.
- To read more about slabbing, see "MORE ABOUT SLABBING" below.

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USING BUGSLABBER

In Zerene Stacker:

- 1) • Load the images for your stack
 - Choose Stack > Align All Frames (or Align & Stack All)
 - Save the ZS Project

In Bugslabber:

- 2) • Choose the ZS Project folder
 - Set up your slabbing
 - Save a batch script (which is an .xml file)

In Zerene Stacker:

- 3) • Choose Batch > Load Batch Script... to load your script.
[By default, output files will be saved inside the ZS Project folder in a folder named SavedImages. You can change this in ZS's Batch Dialogue window if you like.]
 - Click "Run all batches".
 - Close the Batch Dialogue window.
- 4) Select the slabs that show up as Output Images in ZS, then choose File > Remove from List... > Output Image(s). [These internal files are unneeded and take up valuable disk space.]
- 5) Find your slabs in the SavedImages folder and add them to the ZS Project as Input Files.
[Be sure that the ZS preference "Add files to existing project as already aligned" is checked.]
- 6) Select the slabs in the Input Files window and choose Stack > Stack Selected (PMax) or Stack > Stack Selected (DMap).

MAIN SCREEN

- **Choose...:** choose a saved ZS Project (which is a folder containing a .zsj file).
- **Reload:** if you add or delete Input Files in the ZS Project, save it, then reload it in Bugslabber.
- **Image range START and END:** ordinal numbers of the first and last images to include in slabs [Filename displays below the number fields are popup menus which can be used for selection.]
- **IMAGES:** the number of images contained in the image range.
- **SLAB SIZE:** the number of images in each slab, typically 10 to 30.
- **OVERLAP:** the number of images to reuse from the preceding slab. An overlap of about 25% of Slab Size is typical.
- **Stack every N'th frame:** when checked, slabs will contain only N'th frames, e.g., a slab size of 20 with "Stack every 2nd frame" will result in slabs of 10 frames each.
- **Single-pass:** for creating single-pass stacks with varying settings which can be run as multiple batches. See "RUNNING MULTIPLE BATCHES IN ZERENE STACKER" below.
- **STACKING METHOD:** PMax or DMap

If using the DMap method, check the "Preset contrast threshold" box unless you wish ZS to pause between each slab to let you adjust the Contrast Threshold Percentile.

To run a test slab to find an appropriate Contrast Threshold Percentile value, uncheck the "Use Fixed Contrast Threshold Percentile" preference in ZS, then select a representative slab and choose "Align and Stack Selected (DMap)".

ZS PREFERENCES SCREEN

Click the "Set ZS Preferences" button to set the following ZS preferences:

PMax settings (Grit suppression, Retain UDR)

DMap settings (Estimation radius, Smoothing radius)

File saving settings (JPG and Quality or TIFF and Color Depth)

Retain full dynamic range

Filename settings

All other ZS preferences (from the saved ZS Project or an imported batch script)

Please refer to the Zerene Stacker documentation for information about ZS preferences.

RUNNING MULTIPLE BATCHES IN ZERENE STACKER

- Choose Batch > Load Batch Script... to load the first batch. Click Close Dialog.
- Choose Batch > Append Batch Script... to load the next batch. Click Close Dialog again.
- Repeat as needed. When the final batch is loaded, click Run All Batches.

MORE ABOUT SLABBING

Zerene Slabbing: <http://extreme-macro.co.uk/zerene-slabbing/>

Sub-stacks: <http://www.photomacrography.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=15075>

Automating Partial stacks in Zerene Stacker:

<http://www.photomacrography.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=14680>

Search <http://www.photomacrography.net/forum/> for “slab” or “sub-stack” (or any topic related to macro photography)