

LESSON 29

THE HUMAN EYE OF INSPIRATION

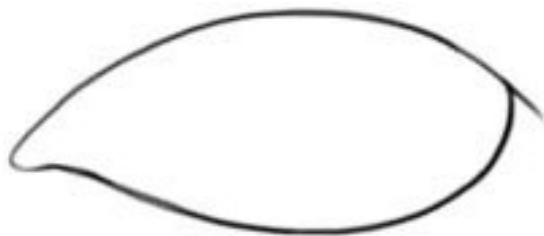


The eye. Without a doubt, it's my favorite thing to draw on humans, creatures, animals, aliens, robots, and, yes, even marshmallows, as I've done on my national public television series. The human eye is most definitely the window into a person's soul. But how to capture it?

To draw the eye in 3-D, I first want you to grab a small mirror. I want you to prop this mirror up next to you while you are drawing at the table. I want you to be able to look closely at your own eye as we draw this lesson. This is a technique I picked up from my visit with some of my alumni students at Dream Works PDI a number of years ago. The animators were working on *Shrek*, and at their drawing animation stations they had several computers, monitors, multiple drawing surfaces, and, interestingly, two mirrors on either side of their drawing tables. As the animators worked on drawing different parts of Shrek, I could see them scowling at their mirrors while drawing Shrek's scowling face. I saw them holding their hands up in different positions while drawing Shrek's hands. It was so exciting to watch these world-class artists bring Shrek to life. Now, let's add life to your own sketchbook—let's draw the eye.

1. While sitting at your table, look into your mirror. Now, look a few moments longer. . . . What a gorgeous miracle you are. Just look at that image! Those eyes! Those lips, nose, ears, hair, what a perfect model to draw from. You traced da Vinci in Lesson 28; now you will drawing from the most perfect eye model on the planet—

yourself! Very lightly shape the eye. For this lesson, we will draw an eye that resembles the shape of a lemon, with the bulb of the lemon facing the nose, shaping the tear duct. As you draw more eyes (and you will no doubt draw hundreds more, they are so cool to draw), you will notice there are as many variations for eye shapes as there are people on the planet. For this lesson we will use a simple lemon shape.



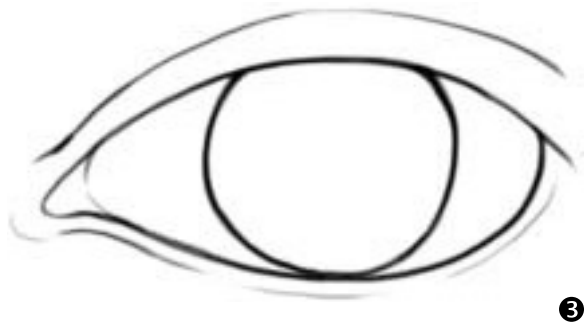
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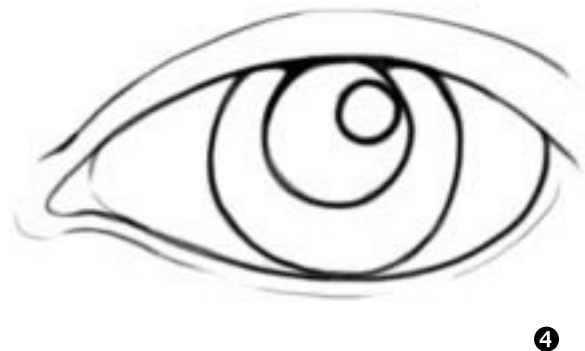
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2. Look in your mirror, and take a close look at your left upper eyelid. Notice how the creases follow the contour shape of the eye. Draw the upper eyelid starting at the tear duct.

3. Draw the perfectly round circle of the iris tucked under the upper eyelid just a bit. We are applying the drawing law of overlapping. Remember that the iris is a perfect round circle, not an oval. Look into your mirror. Look closely at the thickness edge running along the top of the lower eyelid. Interesting, tiny details like this one are what you want to look for and draw. These are the details that will really give your eye drawing the "wow" factor. Without them, your drawing will not look realistic.



4. Look into your mirror. Look closely at the pupil in the center of your iris. Notice the perfect roundness of the circle. Notice the tiny spots of reflection inside the black circle. Draw the perfect round circle pupil in the middle of your iris. Lightly block out a small circle shape to reserve for the light-reflection effect.



5. Look into your mirror. Look closely at your pupil again. Look at the deep black of the pupil and the brightness of the reflection. Draw this deep black pupil with the light reflection.



6. Look into your mirror. Look closely at the iris area around your pupil. Look again. Now, look again. Just an awesome play of light, color, moisture, shape, such detail! When you are drawing the iris, use pencil strokes radiating out from the dark pupil, and use a variety of line lengths, some short, some long. When you start experimenting with colored pencils, this is the lesson I would recommend you start with. (Using colored pencils to draw the iris is . . . how would I describe it? A transcendental experience!)



7. Draw your gorgeous eyebrow. Draw individual hair starting at the bridge of the nose and moving across the brow. Draw with flowing single lines, angling the hairs more horizontally as you move away from the nose. Begin shading the eye along the inside of the eyelids.



8. Look into your mirror. Look closely at your eyelashes. Notice how your eyelashes are clustered in small groups of two or three, not just single hairs. Notice how the eyelash groups start on the very near thickness edge of the upper lids. Notice how your eyelashes curve away from your lid, following the contour of your eye. Draw a few groups of three eyelashes. Pay attention to your placement. Be sure to draw them at the very near edge of the lid. Pay attention to the direction of the curve of the lashes. Be careful not to draw too many eyelashes, and avoid drawing them too vertically (or else you risk creating what I call the "spider effect").

The next step is shading. This is the lesson step that really pops your eyeball right off the page! There are five specific areas to shade. The first of the five shading areas is directly under the top eyelid, the full length of the eyeball. The second spot is along the bottom lid, above the thickness line, directly on the eyeball. Keep this very light shading at first; you can build up more dark contrast later. (If you start too dark, it will look like some very heavy Goth black eye makeup, unless of course this is the look that you are going for.) The third area is the little crease at the top of your eyelid, the line that separates your eyelid from your eye socket. The fourth shading area is the bottom of the eye socket, darker in the center corner near the nose and tear duct. This shadow is blended and falls into the cheek.

As Leonardo da Vinci used blended shading to define Mona Lisa's eyes without any hard edge dark lines, you too can use blended shading to soften and define your 3-D eye. Be sure to darken and blend the fifth area of shading in all the tiny nook and crannies in the corner of the eye socket and eyelid.



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