



# Painting Eyes 101

by: **Therron Thomas**

In regards to painting eyes on figures after you have painted over the factory paint job. Most painters first attempts at eyes are like an abstract painting that borders somewhere between Anime' and Gumby with a splash of Picasso just for flavor. This is mainly due to two factors. First and foremost the painter has no concept of how to paint eyes. Secondly, when painting a portrait most artists are taught to concentrate on the eyes because that is where most people will look longest to try to discover the mood of the individual captured in the artwork.

Hopefully with a few simple instructions and an illustration, I can help some fledgling customizers get their "eyes" pointed in the right direction.

First you need to get a mirror and study your own eyes for a while. A few things stand out immediately. One: Your eyes are sort of almond shaped even if you aren't oriental. (pre conception knocked from it's roost) and Two: The only time your eyes are pointed straight forward is right now when you are looking at yourself in the mirror.



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With this in mind follow these tips:

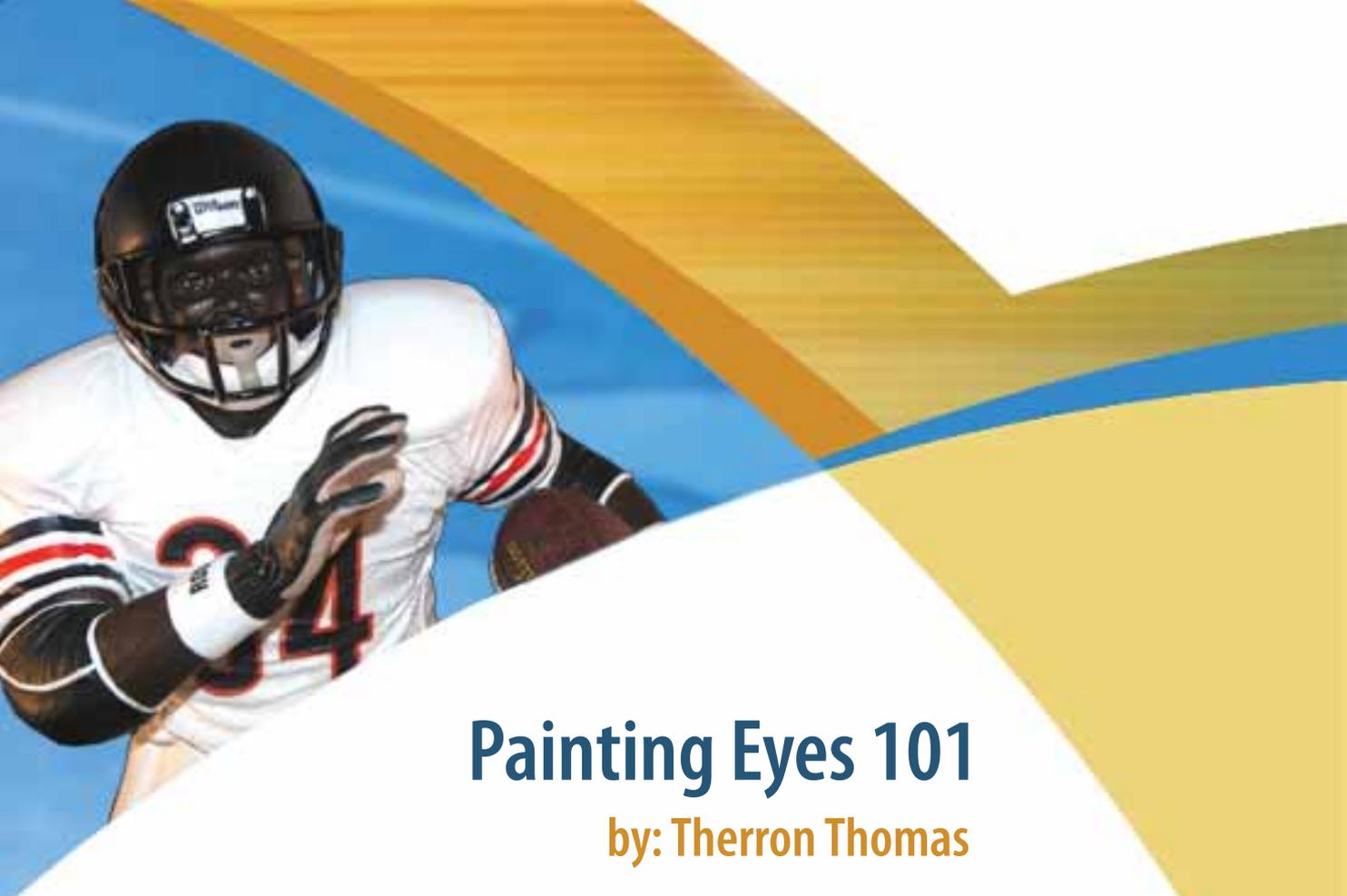
(In the illustration on page 3 you will see a progression of eyes being created)

- 1) Paint the eye-ball. Yes the whole ball. The big round globe that is tucked into the socket. This should probably be white but I like to use a very like cream color.
- 2) When that is dry, paint the iris. You should use whatever color your subjects eyes happen to be for this. I use a shade about twice as dark as I think it should be. Keep in mind at this point what your ENTIRE figure is doing. Don't point the iris straight forward if you are making a running back who is cutting a corner. More likely he would be peering to one side or the other. If you are making a down lineman, point them upward as he would be staring toward the other line but bent over he would have to look up across his own brow.
- 3) When the iris's are dry paint the pupil black. The pupil grows and shrinks due to the iris adjusting to let more or less light in. The size of the pupil should be smaller than the iris and it should be centered on each iris.
- 3a) You can also create artificial light by putting a VERY TINY little dot of pure white at a point that is identical on each pupil and even let it cover a part of the iris too. This is not a must but will get you closer to master status as you get better at it.
- 4) Now comes the hard part. Paint the upper eyelid and any remaining portion of white that is exposed above the eyelid. Keep in mind again what the player is doing. Do you want wide eyes? Squinted eyes? Once again this is where the mirror or photographs or for that matter a spouse or friend comes in handy. Don't just guess what the eyelid is doing, replicate the look you want. Also keep in mind that the eyelid is a crescent shape that starts in the corner of the eye and sways gently upward or downward depending on the lid and then meets the other lid usually straight across from the starting point.
- 5) Repeat step 4 for this step but paint the lower lid. Same idea, same techniques.

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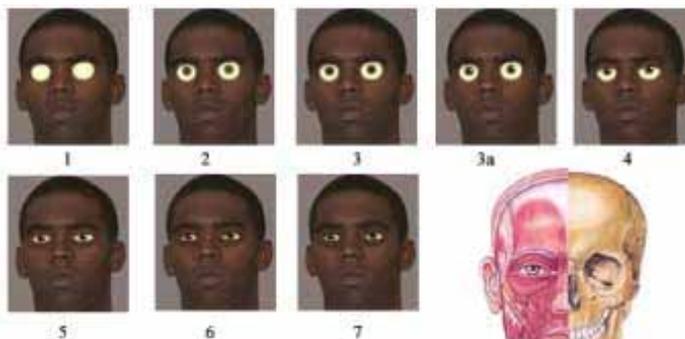


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- 6) This is where I like to paint the eyelashes. Be careful not to over do this part or you'll end up with an egyptian hyroglyph look. Try to keep away from black when doing the lashes. Use a darker shade of the color you would use for the players hair. The upper lash is much more important and promenant than the lower lash so concentrate on it.
- 7) The last few things are also what will push the look over the top. First off mix a little bit of your flesh tone with a tiny bit of purple or pink. You are looking to create the effect that all the little blood capilaries cause on your eye orbit area. Go back to your mirror and look at your upper and lower eyelids. See that slightly darker area above and below it? Most people have it but some don't. Try to create some shadow under the upper brow and under the lower orbit using this paint. Be very careful. When I say use a tiny bit of shade in your mixture I REALLY mean a tiny bit. You honeslty should not be able to tell much difference if any between this color and the actual skin tone. Lastly I also like to coat my eyes with a swiipe of paint-on gloss coat.

In the illustration you see a progression of eyes being created



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