Strathmore 2019 ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES

INTRO TO PAINTING WITH GOUACHE

with **Myriam Tillson**

Lesson 4 : Eye Painting Demo

OUTLINE

In this 4th video, we will be using gouache to create a more in-depth painting of an eye, that will require more layering and more blending than our landscape, as well as more extensive color mixing.

SUPPLY LIST

- Paper: **Strathmore** [400 Series Mixed Media Paper](), **White**
  7x7” sheet, 300gsm (140lb), taped to a board

- Brushes :
  Princeton Velvetouch **Angle Shader** size 1/4”
  [*Used for most of the piece.]*
  Princeton Velvetouch **Round** size 2
  [*Used for tiny details like lashes and eyebrow hairs.*]

- Paint : **Daler Rowney Aquafine Gouache**
  Ivory Black, Raw Umber, Raw Sienna, Burnt Umber, Ultramarine Blue Dark, Phthalo Blue, Titanium White, Payne's Grey, Cadmium Yellow Hue, Lemon Yellow, Alizarin Crimson Hue, Cadmium Red Hue.
  [*All colors are from the basic kit we put together in video one.*]

- **Mixing palette**
  [*Can be plastic or ceramic, a plate, a paper palette, a glass sheet...*]

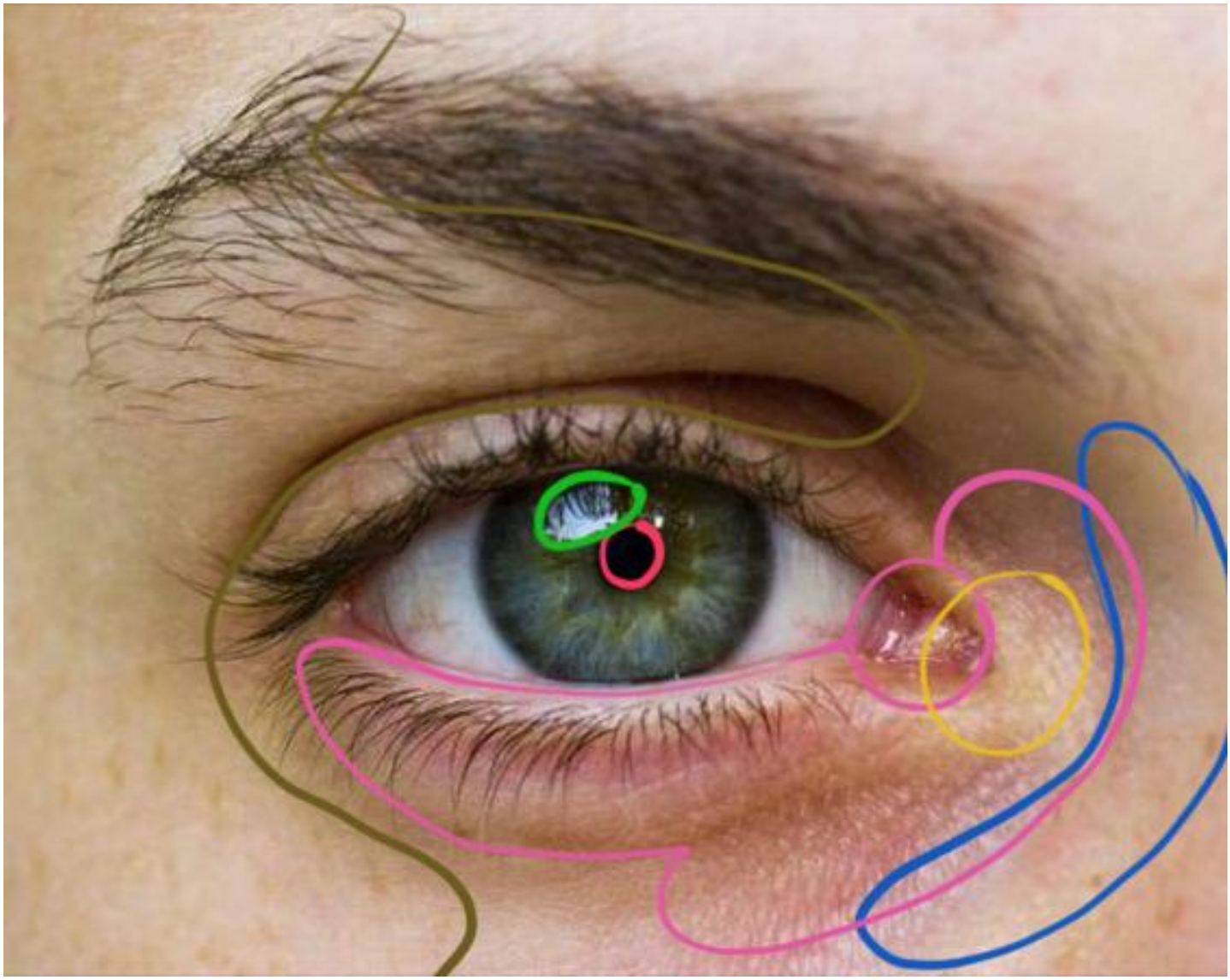
- **Tape**
  [*Any low-tack works. This is to prevent the paper from buckling, and also creates a clean white border around the piece once finished.*]

- **2 jars of water**
  [*One jar to wash our brushes, and one jar for clean mixing water.*]

- **Paper towel**

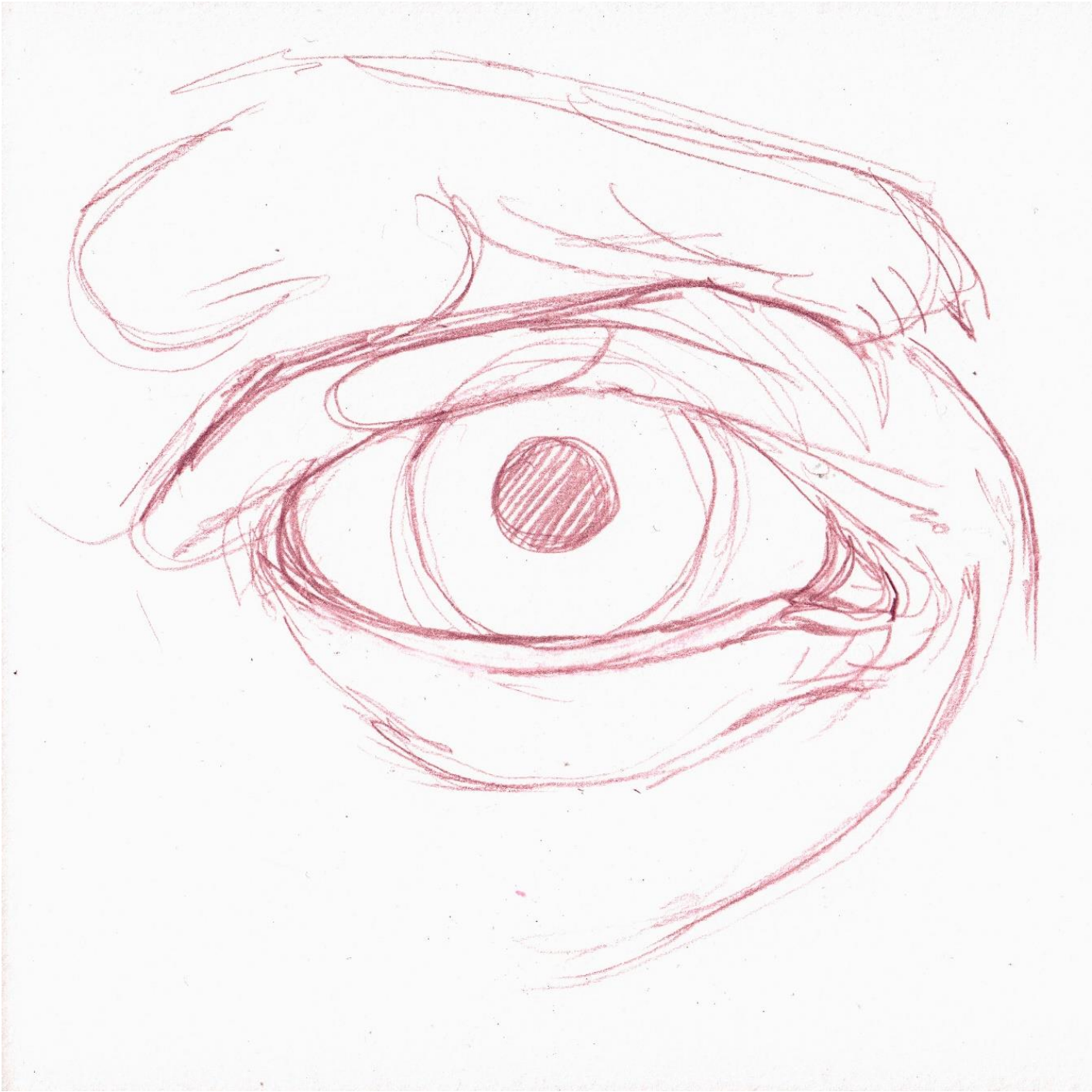
PALETTE SET-UP

REFERENCE ANALYSIS



Red : Darkest spot (the pupil)
Green : Brightest highlight
Pink : Areas with pink tones
Blue : Area with blue undertones
Brown : Skin with more ochres and browns

THE SKETCH



THE PAINTING PROCESS

NOTE 1 : *We will be working almost entirely with opaque gouache in this painting, and will rarely be diluting it further than the ideal gouache consistency we talked about in video 2.*

NOTE 2 : *When I paint, I tend to jump back and forth between various parts of a painting, to make sure I am keeping a consistent look going throughout. I don't work on one element all the way to its completion and then move onto the next, as I run the risk of forgetting how that element relates to all the others in the image. However, that would make these instructions somewhat confusing and scattered if I followed that format here, so, for the sake of simplicity, I will be describing my process for each elements in sections in this document.*

- THE BASE SKIN TONE

We are going to start by mixing up a base skin tone color using **Titanium white**, and tinting it with some **Raw Sienna**, and the tiniest hint of **Cadmium Red Hue**.

This color is going to be our base for most of our skin mixes as we go along, so make sure to mix quite a bit of it if you are not confident you will be able to recreate it.

I tend to mix my colors together on my palette a lot, but if you find that confusing, you can isolate a few portions of your base skin tone and use those to later mix up your shadow and highlight color variations.

A note about using red in skin tones : Skin has a lot of red in it, and whenever you mix a skin tone color, especially Caucasian, it will usually require the addition of a little red paint. When adding red to create a skin tone, use a warm red (with orange undertones) rather than a cool red (with purple undertones). Warm reds will keep your skin tones more orange and less pink, which is more natural looking. Cool reds are good for creating a flush in the skin, or adding make-up accents.

If you feel like you added too much red to your mix, balance it with a little more **Raw Sienna**, and vice-versa. Make sure you don't make your mix too dark however, and add **white** whenever you think it is needed.

A note about mixing colors with white : If you feel like your mix is getting *very* dark, and you are having to add *a lot* of white to lighten it, use a little of your color and add it into a new batch of white instead of adding the white to your batch of color. It is a lot easier to darken white than to lighten a dark mix.

Apply your basic skin tone all around the eye, adding more white if you want your color to be lighter, and more Raw Sienna if you want to darken it a little.

You can add a little white or brown to your unwashed brush, and blend that directly onto the fresh paint on your paper, instead of mixing a new color on your palette, if you feel comfortable doing that.

Don't worry too much about all your paint being perfectly blended, and the same color everywhere. No skin is ever perfectly smooth and even, and the slight shifts in color that can occur from your paint being slightly unevenly mixed, or your tones being slightly different from one application to the next, will only add to the depth and realism of your final painting.

We are going in fairly thick and opaque here, as we want to be able to mix and blend our colors together as we apply them to the paper (refer to Blending Technique 3 in our 2nd video). Most of the skin will stay as it is being painted now, with only minor changes, so you can apply it heavily without having to worry too much about needing to layer more colors on top later on. The only areas you need to be careful not to go in too thick, are the under-brow and the under-eye area, as these are both areas that we will need to apply more layers to as the painting goes on.

Do apply some paint on the eyebrow, as we want the skin color to come through the hairs once we get to painting the full eyebrow. We will need to layer more paint on top of that area later on, but because we will be painting the eyebrow hairs in short, quick, opaque strokes, we won't be needing to overwork the area, and we should be fine with a slightly thicker under-layer.

Once you have covered most of your areas, wait for your painting to dry before adding more paint. This will allow you to see how your colors look once dry, as, like with most paints, gouache changes color a little in the drying process (dark colors tend to lighten up, and lighter colors tend to darken).

Apply some lightly tinted white to any areas that have darkened a little too much (the right side of the brow is very bright in the reference, for example). Do not use pure white, as your colors have now dried, and will not mix as easily into your white as they did in our previous step, and we want to keep our pure white for our highlights at the end. You only need to tint your white ever so slightly to bring its brightness down a notch.

Wet vs dried tones

- SHADOWS

Now, let's start working on our shadows.

To create your shadow tone, which will be a **medium, warm, brown**, use you **base skin tone** mix we made earlier, and add a little **Raw Umber** and a hint of **Alizarin Crimson** to warm it up (We are using Alizarin Crimson this time, because shadows are often a little purple, so a red with orange undertones, like our Cadmium, would make our shadows looks more burnt, and not as cool as they need to be).

To darken the mix, use a little **Payne's Grey** when needed.

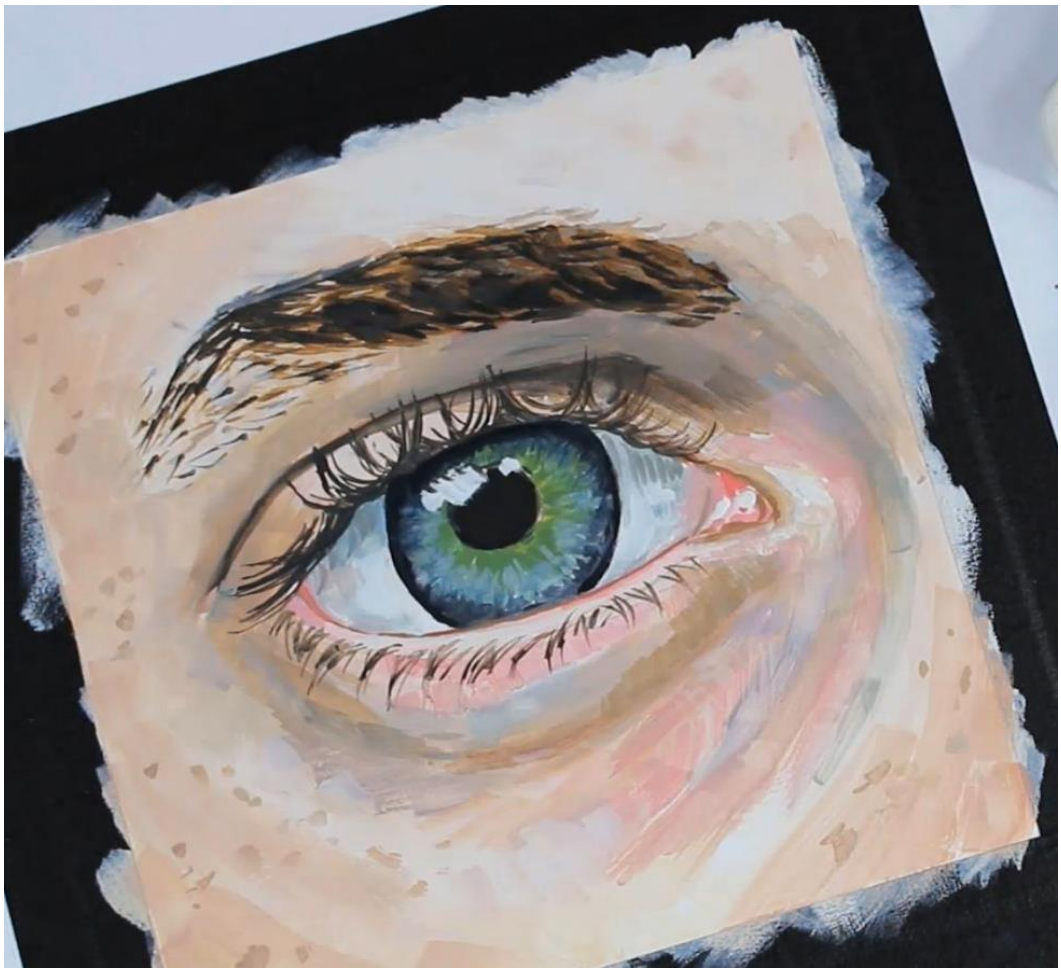
Be careful with your strokes, as the more you work your paint into your surface, the more likely you are to reactivate your under-layers.

Start with a sort of caramel color, and add it to all the areas that are slightly shadowed on your reference ; the brow, the sides of the top lid and inner corner of the eye, and the under-eye. Make sure to avoid the areas that are more highlighted, such as the middle of the top lid, and the rounder part in the middle of the under-eye.

We will be softening the shadows are we go along, but if you are worried about them looking too harsh, soften them by adding a little bit of a lighter skin tones mix to them. Try not to use water to soften them, as that will just reactivate everything and muddy it all.

Your shadows will need to be gradually layered on, opaquely, and we will need to wait for each layer to dry before applying a new one. Judging the intensity of your shadows is something that is up to you however. I can only guide you when it comes to mixing the tone, and where to apply it.

The shadows under the lower lid and under the brow are greyer and bluer, so adding a little light purple (**Blue** and **Alizarin** mixed with your base **skin tone** color) can add depth there.



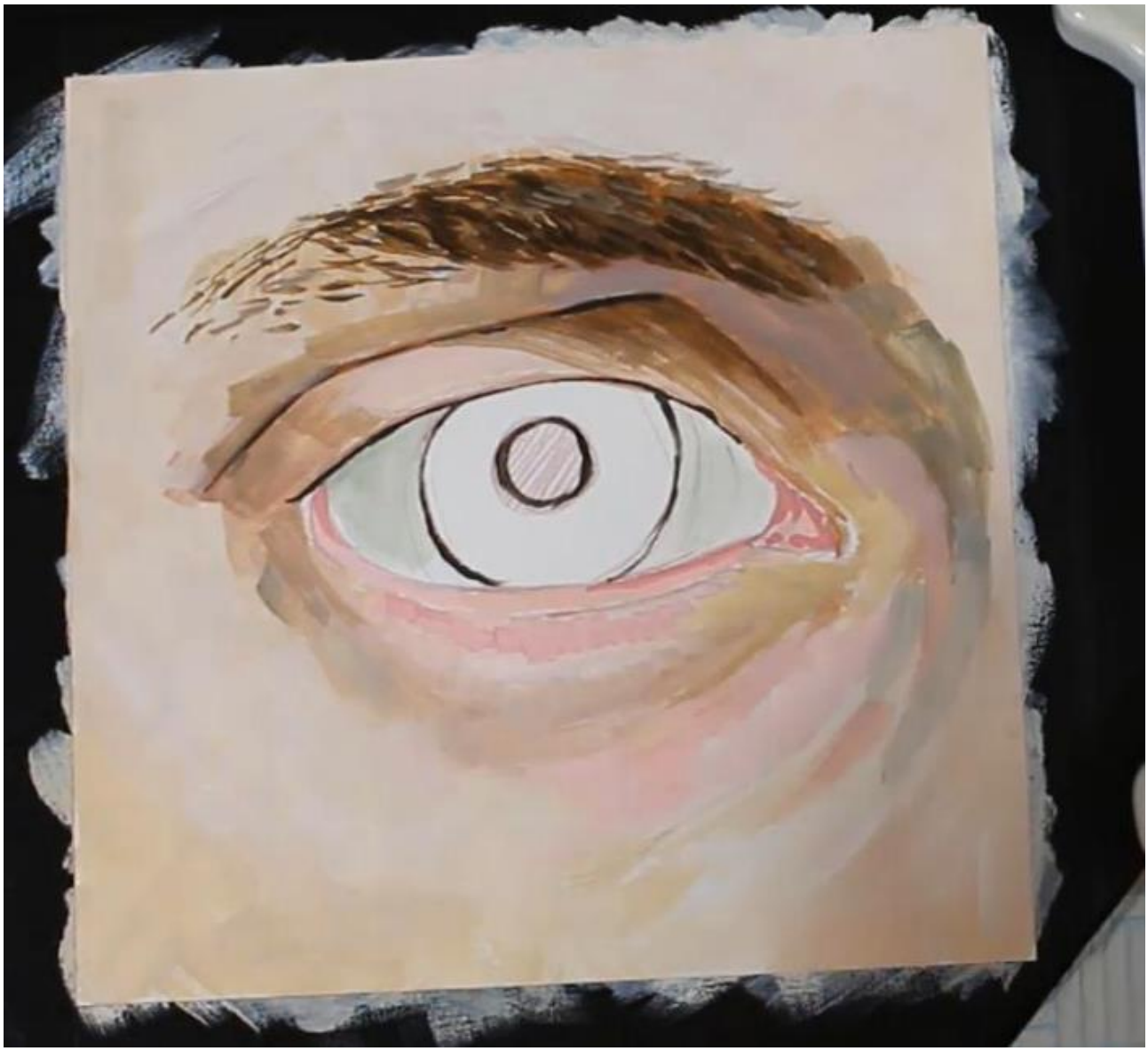
- THE PINK

Time to add a little of that pink tone around the eye. Mix in a little of **your light skin tone base** (from step 1) into some **white**, to tune the white down, and add a little **Cadmium Red** to create a light pastel pink.

There is no need to very thoroughly mix your pink. Just make sure that any red has been dissolved into the white, but if there are accents of darker pink here and there, it will only help add a more natural looking flush to the skin when painting.

Add your pink to the under-eye, concentrating it more just under the lower water line, in the water line itself, and in the water duct.

Later on, I will go back with some more intense pink to add some fleshiness to the tear-duct, but you can do that now too.



- THE EYEBROW

Wait for your painting to dry completely, and mix up a dark brown mix (a sort of dark coffee color) using **Raw Umber** and **Burnt Sienna**.

Use this intense brown to draw the upper lid crease, and block in the brow.

For the eyebrow hair, use brief, quick strokes, and alternate between using your dark brown and a lighter, caramel brown (that you can obtain by mixing some raw sienna and white into your dark brown). Varying your browns will add depth and volume to your eyebrow hairs, and will avoid them looking like one big block.

Make sure you paint some stray hairs here and there, especially at the start, and at the tail end of the eyebrow.

You can also add a few very light hairs at the top of the brow.
Use a darker brown for the hairs closer to the eye, to mimic the geometry of the brow and how the shadows gets more intense there.

- THE BLUE

We can now start working on adding a little of that blue tone to the inner eye.

Although we think of it as blue, it is more of a very light blue grey, which we can get by mixing the tiniest amount of our **Phthalo Blue** to our **light brown shadow mix**.

(Blue is VERY intense, so go in very carefully with it! You can always add more, but you can't take any away!)

To add our blue accents to the inner corner of the eye, dilute your blue tone a little more than usual, and count on the existing layers of paint to reactivate a little when you brush your blue over them. This adds a feeling of translucency and makes the skin look thinner and more transparent in those areas.

The inner corner of the eye also has a little yellow, which we can add by mixing some of our **Cadmium Yellow** to a little **skin tone color** and quickly dabbing it on.

- THE EYE

We are now going to start working on the eye itself.

First, use your dark brown mix to contour the upper lid and the iris of the eye. Add a little **Payne's Grey** to make it even darker, but not quite as intense as pure black.

Then, we want to tone down the white of the eye so it doesn't look as flat, and looks more like a round volume. The white of the eye isn't actually all that white, and has a lot of blue-grey shifts of color. It also has a constant cast shadow from the eyelashes and upper lid, so the top of the eyeball is usually darker.

Use a mix of **white**, and your **browned blue**. You can dilute your colors for this part, as we only need a light wash of color here.

After painting the white of the eye, paint the pupil with pure, solid **black**.

Then, we can start working on the iris, the colored part of the eye. The outer lining of the iris is quite dark, so go in with a line of **Payne's Grey** to emphasize that. Then, we will mix a dark-grey blue, and use it very diluted to add a light blue under-layer.

The iris is made up of thin strands of color, going around the pupil in a sort of star pattern, so use your brush to add your strokes in a wheel pattern around the middle of the eye.

The eye in our reference is a mix of blues, greys and greens, so we need to mix a basic **green**, using **Cadmium Yellow** and **Ultramarine Blue**.

[You can refer to our landscape painting video for some tips on mixing greens.]

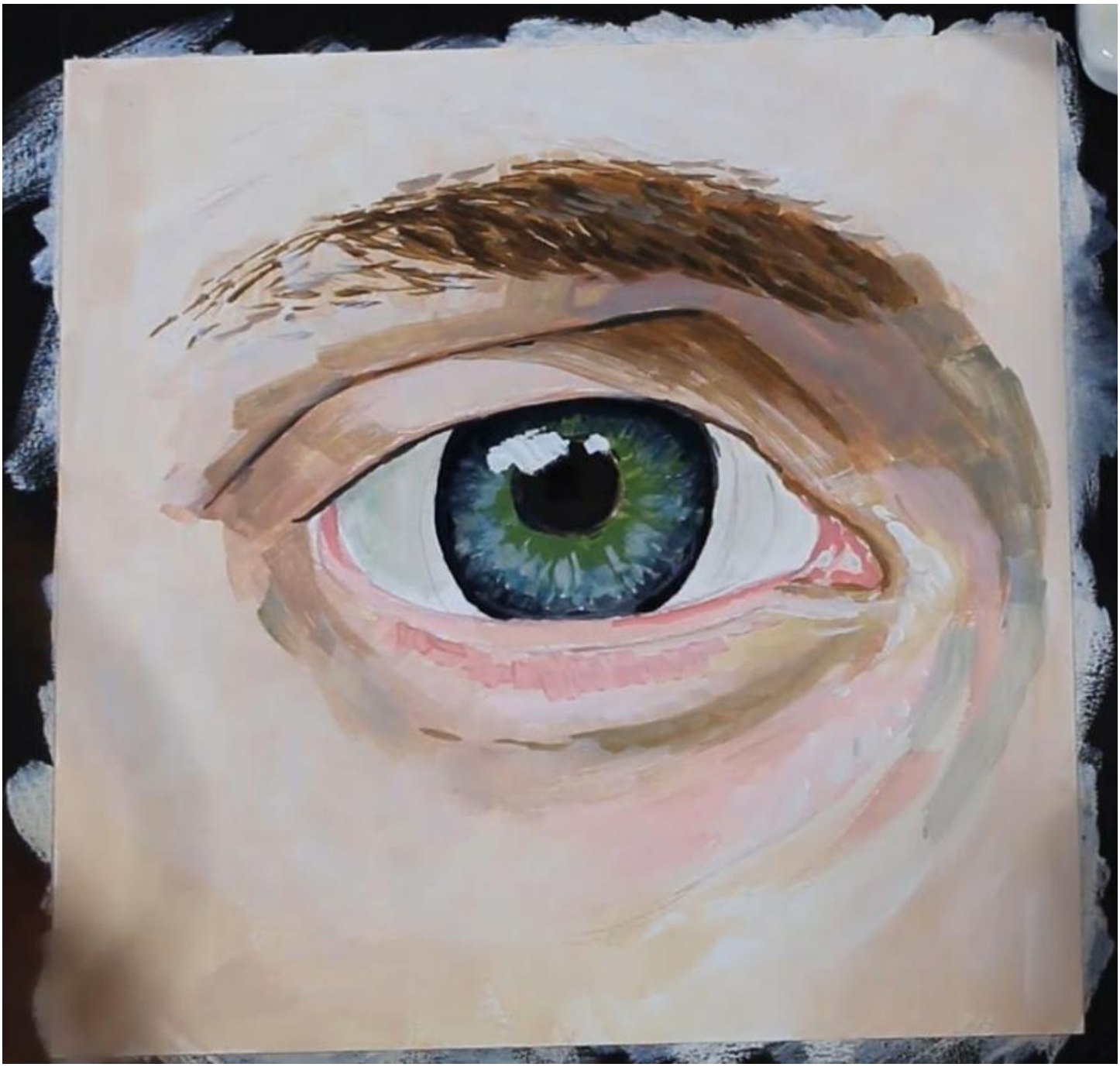
Layer your green on top of your blue strokes. There is no need to worry too much about your colors mixing together, so there is no need to wait for each layer to dry to apply a new one, but you don't want your mixes to

be very diluted either, so make sure your paint is reasonably opaque.

Do wait until your colors are dry before applying lighter spots of color however, as you want those to stand out a little more, to add depth and contrast to your eye color. Go in with a lighter blue-grey and dot it here and there, avoiding the top of the iris, that would be in shadow from the top lid.

Do the same with a light green (mix some white into your green mix), once your eye color has dried.

Finally, after all your paint has dried completely, go in with a clean brush and some fresh water to add your pure white highlight.



Once you have added your brightest highlight, you can then assess whether it stands out enough, or whether you need to tone down your other light areas.

If the white of your eye is a little too white, and undermines your highlight, go in with a diluted Payne's Grey layer, or a whitened blue-grey mix, and darken it further, especially under the top lid, where the shadow would be, as well as each corner of the eye.

The corners of the eyeball also have a slight pink tint from the blood vessels there, which you can easily add with a very light touch of pink.

Then, using a dark red-brown mix (**Burnt Sienna** and a hint of **red**), draw on the lower waterline. Don't use a straight, consistent line, vary your line thickness to make it more natural. You don't want that line to be dark blue, like our top waterline, because it isn't as harsh a shadow as the one projected by the lashes and top lid. It is merely a light delimitation between the eyeball and the lower waterline.

Our last detail for the eye will be the eyelashes.

Using either your thin pointed brush, or the tip of your angle brush, use decisive, quick strokes to draw on your lashes. Use a dark mix of **Payne's Grey** and **Raw Umber**, the same dark color you used for the dark hairs of the brow, and make sure you taper the end of your brushstroke.

You can rotate your canvas to whatever position is the most comfortable to create smooth, fluid lines.

The upper eyelashes slightly overlap the eye itself, whereas the lower lashes are a little further away from it, leaving some space for the lower waterline to be visible. Lashes also grow in triangular clumps, and are not evenly spaced.

- SURROUNDING SKIN LAST TOUCHES

The skin around the eye is very light and doesn't have much texture, so it can look a little bland if left as is. To remedy to that, you can add some circular strokes of slightly darker skin tone (very slightly darker, it doesn't need much to stand out). This can help frame the eye and focus the viewer's attention on it.

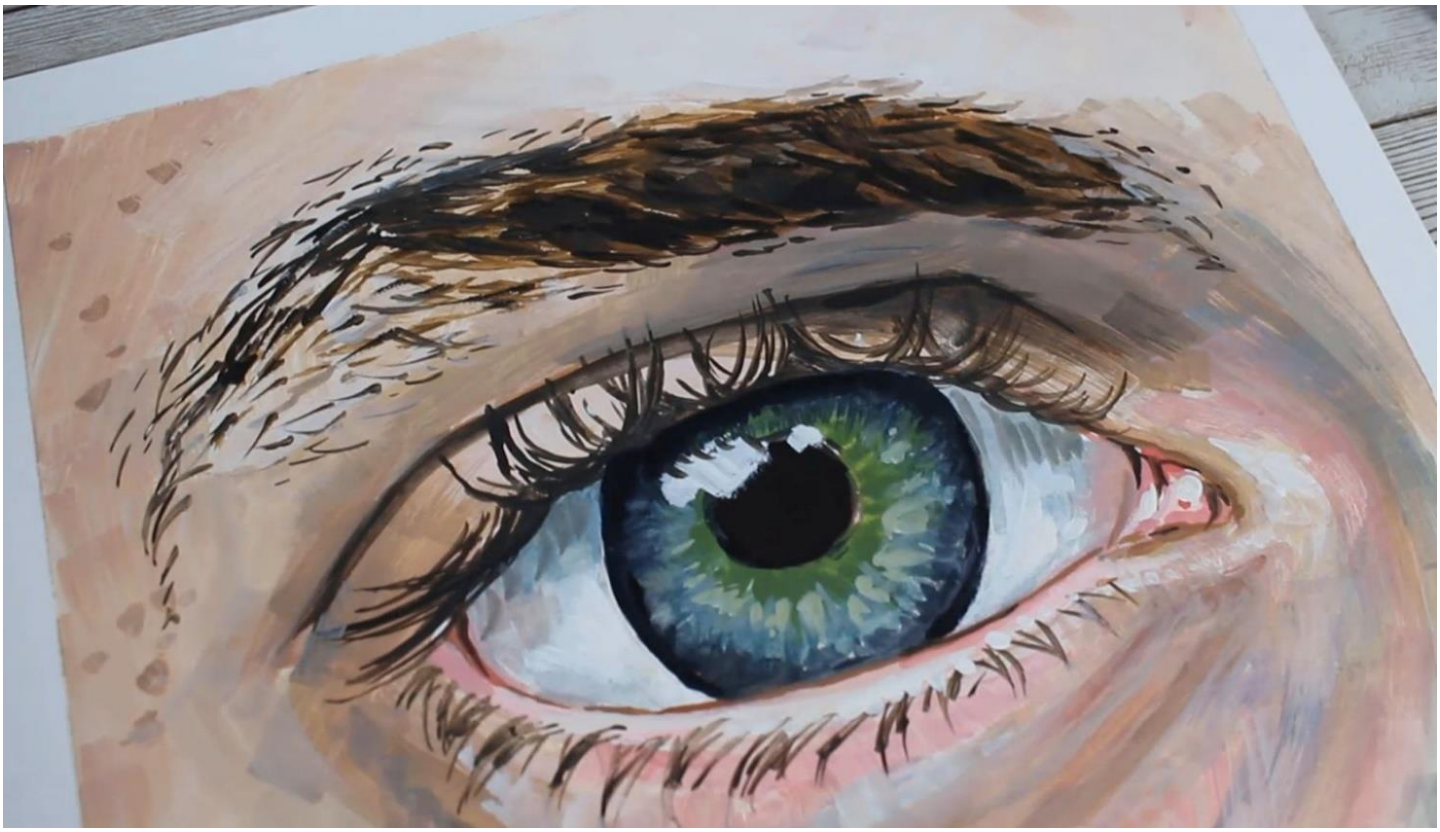
You can also add some very light freckles with a similar darker skin tone. If you do, make sure you lighten that darker skin tone mix a lot if you want to apply freckles to the lighter areas of skin, like the top of the brow on the right.

- FINAL DETAILS

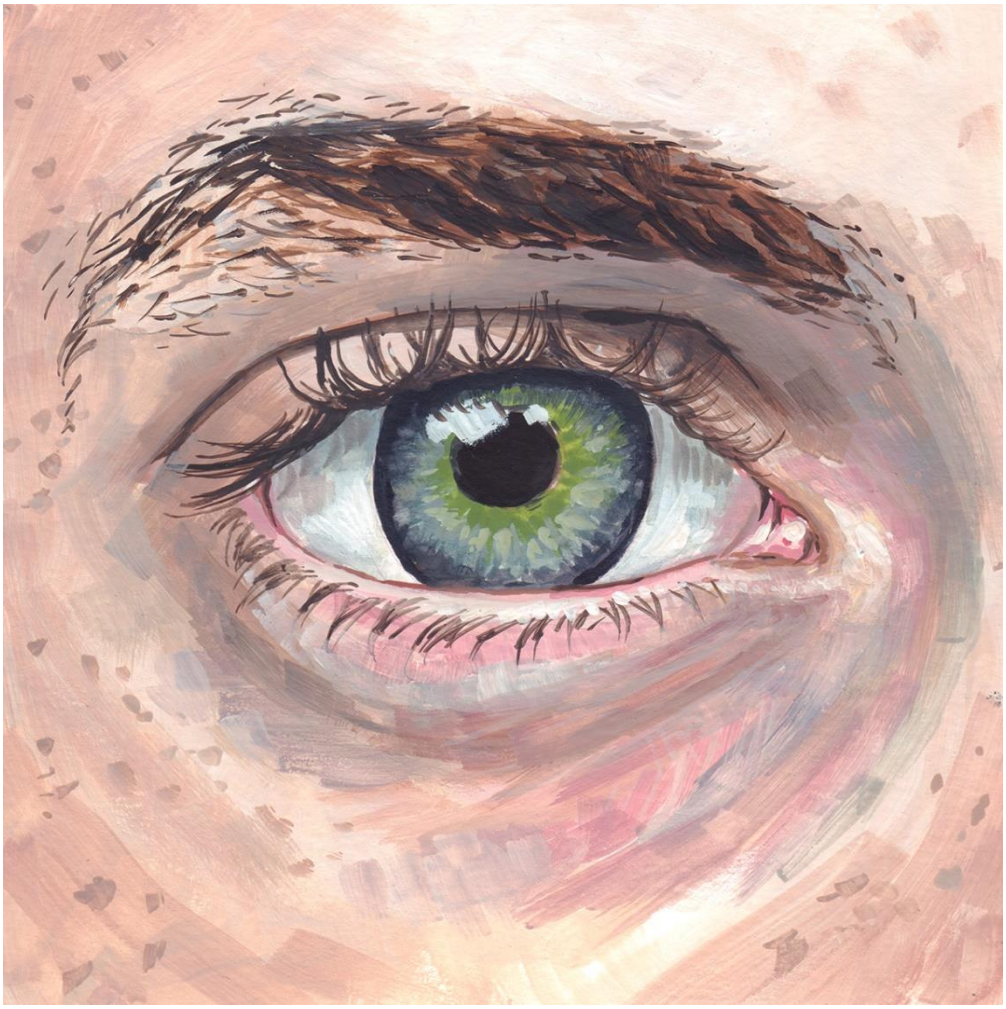
When you feel like you are nearing the end of your painting, and it is starting to be a little difficult to layer more color on without reactivating the paint, it is time for your final details.

That is the point where you can add the last highlights wherever is needed. Make sure the corner of your eye is bright, that the water duct looks wet, and that the centre of your lower lash line is brighter than the corners of it.

You can also add a few light grey strokes to the top of the eyeball to mimic the shadow projected by the lashes.



And there you go!

I hope you enjoyed this painting experience, and that you feel like it was beneficial to your learning experience!

Gouache can be a tricky medium, but it is really wonderful too, and I hope you will find joy in using it, as I do!