

Introduction

If you have purchased this course you are more than likely wanting to improve your drawing and painting skills so that you can confidently paint or draw animals. Students often fall within two categories. Those who want to have a bit of fun, they like animals, they enjoy painting wildlife and they perhaps like to dabble and paint their own pets or their friends or family pets and give their artwork away - but have no intention of selling or exhibiting. The other category of students usually wants to improve so they can set up their own business and wish to take commissions from the general public or start to exhibit or sell in galleries.

Drawing and painting for fun - the first category.

If you fall into the first category, you will want to learn new skills to please yourself and your close friends and relatives. You will probably be taking a lighter approach to the course, having fun along the way, experimenting with different materials and perhaps combining this course with your local art groups, or other courses you are doing possibly with other subjects too. You find it recreational, relaxing and fun with very little pressure.

Drawing and painting for Commission

If you are looking to set up your business in Pet Portraits I can help you to look objectively at your work, to look at the commission process from the point of view of the customer, I will talk about the importance of customer service and your reputation.

If you have any questions or queries about the course, or if there is anything you don't understand, please don't hesitate to ask when you send me your artwork.

Mediums

The course introduces you to many different mediums, including Graphite Pencil, Coloured Pencil, Pastel, Acrylic and Oils. What about watercolour I hear you cry? In my personal opinion it takes years of practice to become a proficient water-colourist. There is no getting away from the fact that watercolour is a hard medium to learn and you really need to be adept in drawing animals before even considering this task. It is one thing to be able to paint an atmospheric watercolour landscape, but quite another to realistically portray a detailed head study of a dog. It is even more difficult to use the kind of loose wet in wet techniques from landscape painting and successfully in a pet portrait. It's possible but you would need rock solid under drawing to pull this off. For this reason I have not included watercolour in the course.

Animals in Detail

In this section we deal with animals in detail looking closely at how to draw and paint fur and eyes. I'd like you to carefully read both sections and then move to the exercises page as it will give you some practice exercises to complete followed by exercises for assessment.

Studying Fur

There are many types of fur, depending on the subject, and breed of animal. They all have some fundamental rules, which should be observed at all times. Find some clear photos of various breeds of dogs and take a section of the fur to copy as a small detailed study. Experiment with different textures and lengths of fur. The samples below have been drawn with coloured pencil.

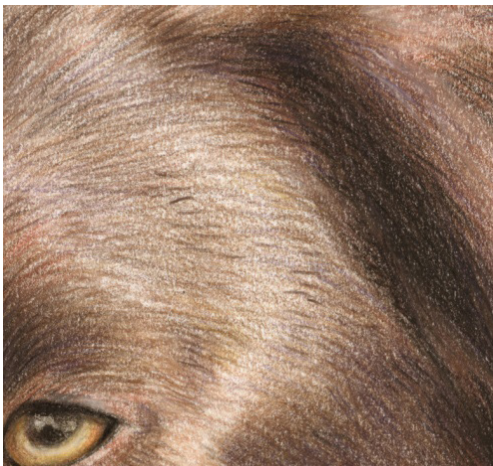


Direction of fur.

This is very important. If you do not draw your fur in the correct direction the subject will look flat or wrong. To make a realistic three-dimensional form you must study the contours of the animal.

Depth in colour.

Try not to use one colour to create fur; if you look at the subject even if it is black, there will be many colours within the fur itself. This will help with the solidity of the subject as well as adding interest in the coat.



Shiny coat.

All animals have shiny coats, there will be highlights and you must convey this convincingly without leaving white gaps in the fur.

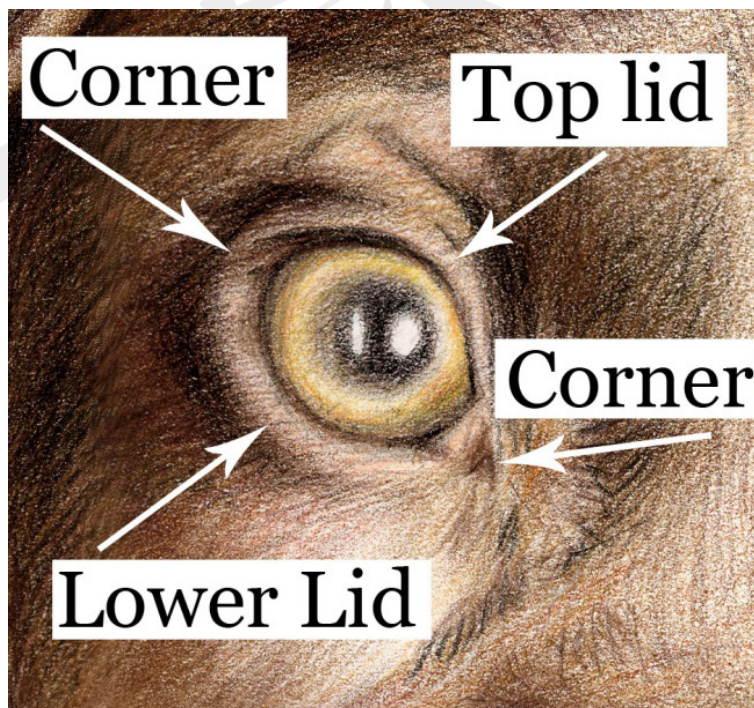
STUDYING EYES

The most important aspect of any eye whether human or animal is the white highlight. This highlight creates life and sparkle, without it the portrait can seem lifeless, dull and unengaging.

The highlight in an eye is a reflection of the strongest light source in the surroundings. In the example below it appears that the shot was taken indoors and there were two windows. Sometimes you can actually see the photographer and surroundings reflected in the eye itself. In cases such as these its best to simplify. You will find instances when working from photos where there is no highlight present at all. A good rule of thumb when placing the highlight is to aim for around the 11 o'clock or 1 o'clock region of each pupil. Find a clear photo of an animal and study the eyes. Copy them as a small detailed study. Experiment using photos of a variety of breeds of dogs, cats, horses and other animals.

When drawing and painting eyes it is best to draw them out very lightly using graphite pencil. Make sure that you have the eyes exactly right to start with, as once you begin to place the colour on, it will be much more difficult for you to amend.

Remember when drawing eyes, they are pretty much constructed the same. They have a top lid, a lower lid and they all have two corners. The diagram below illustrates this. If you are trying to copy from a photo where you cannot see this amount of detail, either choose another reference photo or get some more reference so that you can fully understand what you are drawing. Colours of eyes are very important. You must retain the luminosity of the eye and try not to make it muddy.



Now we are going to look at some examples of dogs, cats, horses and other animal's eyes with explanations of how I created them in pencil, coloured pencil, pastel, oils and acrylic.



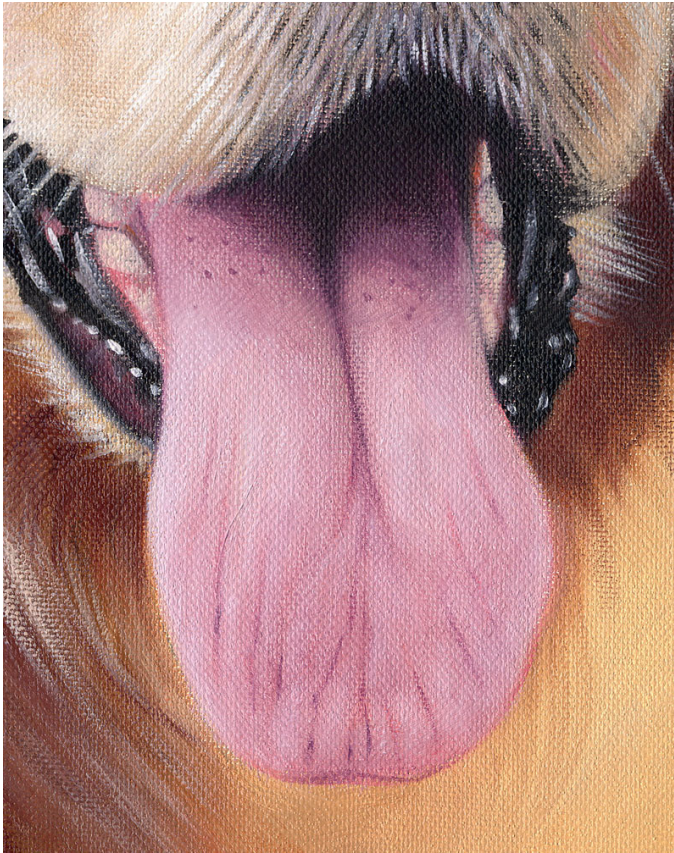
The next stage is to begin to add the detail in the eyes and nose. Add the first tones very lightly to make sure they are correct, stand back and compare your drawing with the photo to see if any changes need to be made before the darker tones are added. By shading the darkest areas at this stage (in this case black for the eyes and nose) we can gauge how dark the rest of the fur needs to be.

When you begin to add the top layer of fur you must be aware of the direction of fur. This will ultimately create the three-dimensional form and the solidity of the dog. Use a variety of colours, interweave them with each other and make sure your coloured pencils are sharp. As you can see I have also complete the final layers on the eyes.



Continue working your way across the dog's fur still making note of the direction of fur and referring to the photographic reference at all times.

TONGUES



Many dogs are depicted with their tongues out and this can be a good thing as it makes them look healthy, alert and happy.

However this does mean that you have to paint the tongue the correct colour, with the appropriate wrinkles and creases. You need to know how to create the texture of a tongue.

Ensure that the tongue does appear to continue through to the back of the mouth. As the tongue disappears it must appear in shadow, as it recedes into the mouth.

Tongues are all different colours however in the example left I have used Alizarin Crimson, French Ultra Marine, Indian Red, and Naples Yellow and White. If you play around with these

colours in varying degrees you should get a colour similar to mine here. Colour mixing is not an exact science, there's no real trick involved, you just have to keep mixing and experimenting until you can mix the required colour with ease. It will take time and practice so don't give up and just try to paint what you see.

Tongues can crop up even if you aren't expecting them. Nick has recently painted a cat with his tongue out. I have seen quite a few examples of this on the internet and it's quite common.

See if you can collect a variety of photos of different animals with their tongues out to practice on. The techniques will be similar for each; the base colours will be similar too. Just make sure you take note of the light and shade and the highlights!

