



@nathanmccarron

Portraiture Tips with Nathan McCarron

Get ready to
#COLOUR4LIFE

Hi there! I'm Nathan, and some of you might have seen my pencil sketches on TikTok or Instagram where I draw your favourite celebrities and animals. My videos are short and fun, but don't usually reveal the work that goes into creating portraits.

In a few short steps, I'll share my secrets on how I perfect eyes, skin tones and curly hair! Art has no rules, and everyone has a different process, but this is mine.

As a Faber-Castell ambassador, I invite you to get inspired and learn useful skills for you to participate in Faber-Castell's #Colour4Life competition. Ready to learn with me?



Nathan McCarron's tips for *drawing eyes*

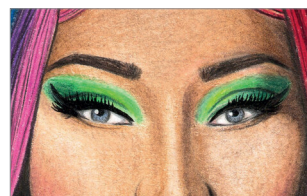
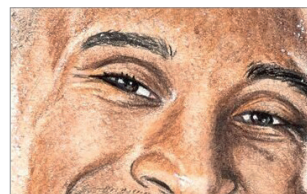
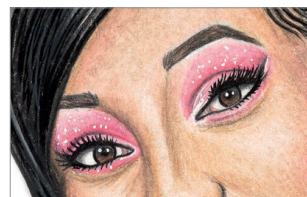
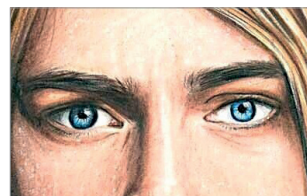
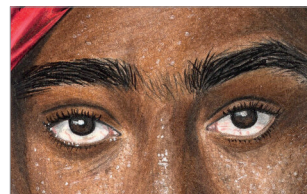
The first step for a great eye is having a good, clear photo that allows you to see every detail.

Every eye is unique, so it's important to get the right angle and shape down before you start blocking colours. Don't be tempted to add details at this stage.

1. **Using a 2H graphite pencil, sketch the right eye shape and angle** before blocking colours.
2. **Use a ruler against the reference photo** to make sure the size and spacing of the eye is correct.
3. **Next, using a kneadable eraser, remove enough graphite** to leave a very faint sketch behind so it won't affect the shading.
4. **Use Polychromos Beige Red (or similar) to shade around the eye**—even on dark skin tones.
5. **Use some of the Polychromos Cold Grey range at the top of the white part of the eye** to add some shadow from the eyelashes.
6. **Use a pale beige-pink Polychromos** that best matches the reference image to **finish off the white part of the eye** by creating the inner corner of the eye nearest the nose.
7. **Next, examine the iris colour closely**—even the most basic blue eye can have 5 different shades of blue.
8. **When working on the iris, always start with the lighter colours first.** Keep pencils very sharp for this part and press very lightly, building up with darker colours where you see them. You can repeat with light colours—but always finish with dark colours.
9. **Use a black Ecco Pigment fineliner pen for the pupil** for a bold, punchy finish.
10. **Lastly, dot the iris using a white Pitt Artist Pen** or a white fineliner to make the eyes pop.

Once the eye itself is finished, feel free to decorate the surroundings of the eye with eyelashes, eyeshadow or darker shadows on the eyelid—and even wrinkles.

You want to be true to the subject you're drawing—but at the same time, if they look better with blue eye shadow, do it! ;)



Nathan McCarron's tips for

drawing curly hair

Like every aspect of drawing, it's important to see how the hair sits and where light is coming from. By darkening the hair in areas light doesn't hit and making sure the hair flows like your reference photo, it'll help your drawing pop and look real.

Curls come in all shapes and sizes, but this basic technique will form foundations you can adapt for any head of hair with locks of cascading curls.

1. **It's all about the letter 'S'. Start off by softly marking a squiggly 'S' in the direction of where you want the curls to go.** This simple 'S' shape can be big for larger curls or tight for short ringlets.
2. **Once you have drawn the first 'S', draw a second one in the exact same way but a little higher.** This takes lots of practice to get right and understand. Don't worry if you get it wrong—for every curly head I've drawn, I've always had to start over in some sections because the curls didn't flow and make sense.
3. **Look at the picture to help you for this next part. Add a small line connecting the two curvy 'bumps' of each 'S'.** You should be making little triangles. Be sure to look carefully, because if you don't join the right lines here, it won't make sense when it's time to colour.
4. **Next, use lighter Polychromos colours to mark hair strokes in the direction of where the hair is flowing.** Every second section should go in the opposite direction from the last, always going downwards. If the first section involved pencil strokes moving top right down to the left, then the next section should be top left down to the right.
5. **Try to make every second section a little darker to add depth and value to the locks.** I also like to go over the original outline again in a darker colour to make it pop and look real.

When you get really good at this, you can start to play around with shapes. Look at my drawing of singer Shakira! Some of the S shapes don't even join, and some of them do.

In every section of hair, if you look closely, you can see some are darker than others. If you make a mistake on the flowing of the curl, you can just darken that curl and leave the good curls you've made lighter to show them off. **That's the beauty of art—no rules, and no such thing as mistakes.**



Nathan McCarron's tips for

creating skin tones

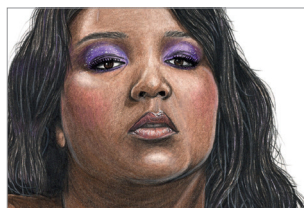
Creating skin that looks real is easier than you think.

No matter what skin tone or colour, the process is always the same. It's the attention to details that will win the audience over. The more people you draw from everywhere around the world, the better you will become at creating tones that match the person you are drawing.

1. **Using a 2H graphite pencil, create a fine sketch of the face outline.** Like the eye sketching process, remove excess graphite with a kneadable eraser so it doesn't impact the shading later.
2. **Start blocking colours for the forehead by lightly colouring in a circular motion, starting with 1-2 layers on top of each other.** For fair skin tones, use Beige Red & Cinnamon Polychromos. For dark skin tones, use Burnt Siena & Burnt Ochre Polychromos.
3. **Next is where the magic happens—use a cotton bud Q-tip and rub on top of the layers you have just done.** This can take a few minutes but it will eventually smooth out all of the pencil lines.
4. **If you see shadows in certain areas, start your next layer with darker colours.** Again layer very lightly, and follow with a cotton bud to smooth. For fair skin tones, use Burnt Siena or Burnt Ochre Polychromos. For dark skin tones, use Walnut Brown & Black Polychromos.
5. **Repeat until you are happy with the colour and how it matches the reference.** However, be careful to layer slowly, as too many layers can make it difficult for a kneadable eraser to remove.
6. **Once the forehead is done, follow the same process** on the left cheek, the chin and then the right cheek to finish.

Nathan has made a really quick and effective skin tutorial on his TikTok showing you the step by step process, so check it out!

Extra Tip: Use Light Purple Pink Polychromos on the last layer of the cheeks to add a rosy blush finish. A white fineliner or gel pen can also be used to add tiny speckles over the skin to give the impression of skin pores for added detail and authenticity.



ABOUT #COLOUR4LIFE

Colour can mean inherently different things to different people—from an eruption of bright vibrant shades to deeper tones that emote a darkness or mood. Faber-Castell have long been purveyors of artistic expression—with 261 years of experience to call on, we're focused on inspiring Australian artists, both amateurs and professionals alike, to showcase the colours of the world around you.

#Colour4life is about harnessing the power of colour for self-expression and aims to become a forum where participating artists can get inspired by each other and by our ambassador artists. With five major prizes up for grabs, as well as exposure on Faber-Castell's social media platforms and website, the competition is a chance to showcase what colour means for you and win the best tools of the trade available to continue your artistic journey.



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