

KOESTLER ARTS - ART AID

Koestler Arts produce monthly Art Aid sheets featuring creative tasks that can be done in cell and with just paper and a pencil. New Art Aid sheets are available from the first Monday of every month. Although the 2024 Koestler Awards deadline passed on 12 April, we hope these sheets will inspire you to remain creative and perhaps try something new.

DECEMBER 2024

For each Art Aid sheet, we commission an artist or writer who has engaged with Koestler Arts to set a creative task and share their experience with creativity. This month we asked Koestler Award winner and mentee Paul, who currently has a portrait on display in our 2024 national exhibition *No Comment*.



Portraits on display at No Comment exhibition, including Paul's portrait of curator Aindrea Emelife

My Story

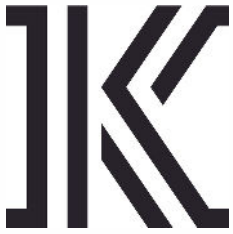
When I first came to prison, I felt lost. Art became a way for me to occupy my time, relax, and process everything I was going through. Over time, it turned into a lifeline and an essential part of my daily routine.

When I began, I didn't think I was any good - at least not by my own standards - but I was determined to improve and draw like the artists I admired in books. Slowly but steadily, I made progress.

Now, after my release, art has become my career. It was what kept me grounded and sane during my time in prison.

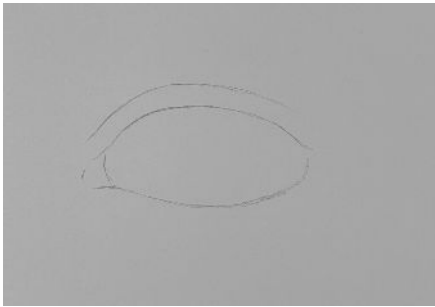


Hand Drawn - a Life Study, HM Prison Warren Hill, Silver Award for Drawing, 2017

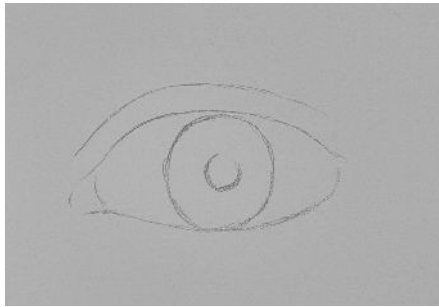


My Task: How to draw an eye

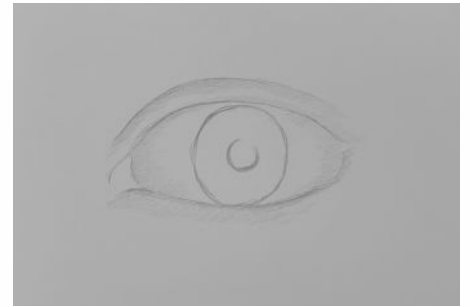
Learning to draw eyes is a good starting point for creating lifelike portraits. Below is a step-by-step guide - you'll need a photo, mirror or friend's eye to draw from, and either a pencil or a ballpoint pen.



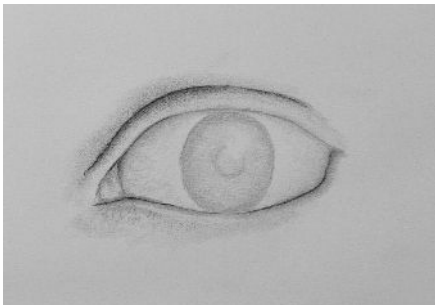
Lightly sketch two curved lines to create the eye shape, and another curved line above for the crease of the eyelid



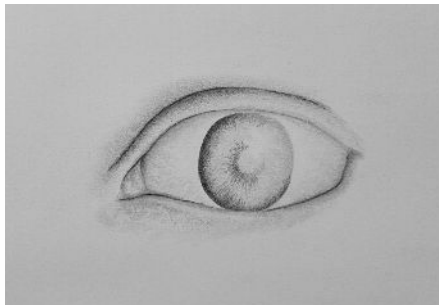
In the centre, draw a circle for the iris and a smaller circle inside for the pupil



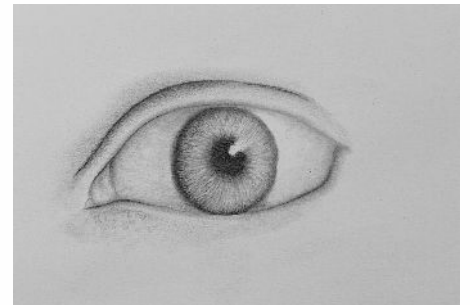
Shade gently to define the structure and add shape to your lines. Use the side of the pencil for softer, even shading



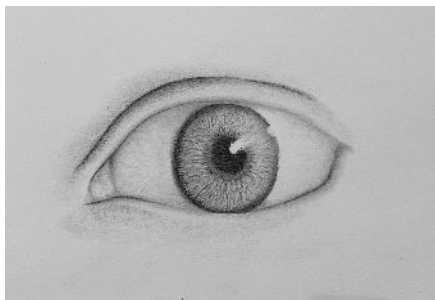
Smudge or blend the shading using your finger or a tissue to soften the effect. Continue adding layers of shading, blending between each layer until you are happy with the depth



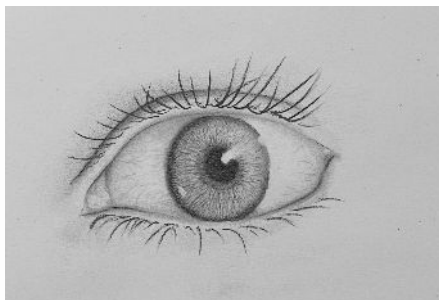
Focus on the iris, working from the outer edge inward. Add lines radiating from the pupil to create texture. Pay attention to the natural patterns and details of the eye for realism



Use your darkest pencil to fill in the pupil, leaving a small highlight area untouched for a reflective effect



With a light pencil, lightly sketch veins in the white of the eye. Keep these lines faint and subtle



Draw eyelashes. Pay attention to their angles and natural curve. Don't make them too uniform; lashes vary in direction and length

Final Touches:

- Use an eraser to lift out highlights in the iris, pupil, or white of the eye
- Continue building layers of shading and detail to refine the depth and texture
- Adjust the tones and contrasts until the drawing feels complete

You don't need to send your responses to these tasks to us at Koestler, we just hope you'll enjoy giving them a go. If you do we'll be very happy to see them but please note they won't be entered into this year's Koestler Awards and we won't be able to return them to you.