

THE EYES HAVE IT, TOO

by Fred DiSanto

Fred DiSanto is one of Black Heart's favorite GK artists. He has impressed and inspired modelers for years with displays at conventions and articles for *Amazing Figure Modeler* and *Kitbuilders* magazines. His first article for Black Heart, *The Eyes Have It*, demonstrated his execution of the alien eyes on Black Heart's 1:1 scale *The Thing* from Another World wall-hanger. We asked Fred to write a sequel article, this time, documenting how to paint realistic eyes for Black Heart's *Curse of the Werewolf*.



With the many offerings of large scale and life-sized busts, modelers today have greater opportunities to make our models more life-like and realistic. Because the larger scale allows for more sculpted detail, it also allows for more painted detail to add life to the model. And because realistic eyes are critical to making a model look life-like, George Stephenson asked me to document painting the eyes for Black Heart's 1:1 scale *Curse of the Werewolf* wall-hanger.



Oliver Reed in *Curse of the Werewolf* (1961)

When describing how I paint 1:1 scale eyes, I always mention the techniques I learned from David Fisher. I would be remiss if I did not stress how important his teachings have been. I strongly recommend his article in *Amazing Figure Modeler* Issue # 39 describing his method. Watching his ModelMania DVDs (<http://modelmaniadvd.com>) is even more instructive. I like to SEE a method demonstrated. And, what could be better than being able to pause and rewind a video as often as I like and to see the demonstration as many times as I need? So, I am basically doing what David has shown on his video. I guess we all, then, add our own techniques to what we have been taught. I might be something as simple as using a particular paint brush or a preferred brand of paint that you are personally more comfortable with. We all have our own methods or secrets that we add to what we've been taught. So...here goes.



For the orb of the eye, I used a mixture of Liquitex colors- White, Raw Sienna, Paynes Gray, and a bit of Burnt Umber and Black. Add water and a few drops of Flow Aid to thin the paint for my airbrush. I always mix enough for

touch-ups later. If you streak a piece of white paper with this color, you'll be surprised by how gray it looks but when it goes on the kit, it is just right. Remember that "the whites of the eyes" is just an expression. So, avoid using straight white to paint the orb. I mix a pink flesh color for the inner corner of the eyes as well as the bottom edge (Burnt Orange or Red Oxide and then mix in a light flesh color made with White, Raw Sienna and Burnt Sienna). When complete and dry, I sealed it with Testors Dull Cote.

The next step is to draw the iris and the challenge, of course, is to make it look as round as possible, and to have the left and right evenly and naturally positioned. Look at your own eyes in the mirror, or have them photographed or find other sources of reference to study. Even though



part of the iris may be covered by the upper or lower lid (depending on the facial features or expression of the character), try to imagine the full circle shape of the iris behind the lids to help gauge the size. I wanted to render blue eyes. So, I base-coated the iris with a mix of Paynes Gray and Unbleached Titanium for a medium blue- gray color. I use a very thin mixture and it usually

takes several coats to fully cover. Since the mixture is thin, it's easier to wipe away, or cover with the "white" orb paint if (when!) I make a mistake.



I take the iris base color, lighten it and then start to draw the striations with my paint brush. I lightened the base color by progressively adding Unbleached Titanium and eventually adding a small bit of White. I usually paint the striations with squiggly irregular lines starting from the center and working my way to the edge of the circle.

I thin the paint so it flows nicely and I add a drop of Liquitex Airbrush Medium as I lighten the color. I really like the Winsor and Newton Series 7 brushes for this. I usually find myself using the number 1 and 0. It may help to practice drawing the circle shapes and squiggly iris lines on paper *before* you do so on the kit.



Then I use black paint and add the pupil. I position the pupils evenly in the center of the iris and make them as round as possible. Any "mistakes" can be covered up with some of the colors used when painting the striations in the iris. I again seal my work with Dull Cote. Now, I make sure my airbrush is squeaky clean and I have a brand new needle handy.



Next, I blur the edge of the iris. I have used pastel chalks for this, but I usually use my airbrush if I can get close enough and in a good position. It is critical to have your paint mixture very, very thin, and transparent. I use water and Liquitex Airbrush Medium (which dries clear) and add only a couple of drops to the base color I used for the iris. The mix is transparent and gives you a

chance to adjust your aim when you begin to spray. I usually spray at a very low PSI such as 10 to 15. I practice spray on paper and then go to the kit. As I do this, I have my airbrush protective needle cap removed. I am also keeping an eye on the needle and wiping away paint buildup with a soft brush dipped in alcohol. I usually build the color with a few passes, and if I get out of line too much, I sparingly spray the "white" orb color back on. Then I take Burnt Umber and try to create the same blurred effect in the pupil. I spray very carefully in the pupil letting a little of the color blend into the center of the eye for a slight color variation. You may also want to add a slight variation with Raw Sienna.



Now, it's time for some redness! For the veining in the eyes, I like to use a mix similar to the color of the inner corner with a bit more Burnt Orange. I do my best shaky and irregular line drawing and it usually comes from drinking plenty of coffee before I start. When I am satisfied with the veins, I take my base "white" color that I

used for the orb and add a bit of Unbleached Titanium to lighten it. I gently spray a very thin highlight spot to the "whites" of the eye. This can also be used to slightly tone down the bloodshot effect in case it's too red. Next I add upper and lower eyelashes with a dark brown color, and when dry, seal it again with a couple of coats of Dull Cote.



To finish the eyes, I gloss coat them with Testors Enamel Gloss Top Coat and Bingo! Life-like eyes.

Briefly, I'd like to discuss the colors used for the mouth. For the gums I used a fleshy pink (flesh mixed with Burnt Orange). I shade them with a darker color by adding Purple and Burnt Umber to the mix. Finally, I highlight by adding Unbleached Titanium and a touch of White to the original fleshy pink base coat. I base-coated the teeth with Burnt Umber. Then I painted the teeth with the same color used for the orb of the eyes, although I usually like to add more Raw Sienna. I darkened them with washes and airbrushing using a very thin Burnt Umber. After sealing with Dull Coat, I use Future Acrylic Gloss or Testors Enamel Top Coat.



I hope this documentation helps. These simple techniques will result in a most realistic and life-like finish on your 1:1 scale model kits. Have fun!