

In this three-part series, Jane Conner-ziser shows you how to digitally achieve realistic eye enhancement in portraiture.

JANE CONNER-ZISER

Making eyes

PHOTO-REALISTIC STYLE, PART 2

eyes

Photo-realistic enhancements to the eyes turn an ordinary look into a mesmerizing gaze. Find an image of your own comparable to this example, and follow along as we apply some Adobe Photoshop techniques.

1. Preparing for the edit. Open the file in Photoshop. Make two copies of the background layer by twice dragging the original background layer onto the Create a New Layer icon at the bottom of the layers palette. Keyboard shortcut: select the background layer and hit cmd/ctrl-J twice.

In the Layers palette, select the middle layer and change the Blending Mode (it's in a drop-down menu at the upper left of the palette) from Normal to Multiply. Add a black layer mask, which hides the image: Layer > Layer Mask > Hide All, or hold down the opt/alt key and click the Add Layer Mask icon (a gray square with a white circle in the middle) at the bottom of the Layers palette. Rename the middle layer Multiply (double-click on the name and type in the new name).

Select the top layer in the Layers palette, change the Blending Mode from Normal to Screen, and add a black layer mask. Rename the top layer Screen.

2. Layer masks. Now you have three layers; the original image, the bottom layer, is topped by a darker version and a lighter version, which are hidden by masks. We'll perform highly selective dodging and burning by painting in small portions on these layer masks. These enhancements will be nearly impossible to detect.

While there are many ways to set up Dodge and Burn layers, I find this method best lends itself to this delicate work. Screen and Multiply layers do not increase the contrast or result in as much discoloration when used extensively as some other methods do.



Figure 1: Original image

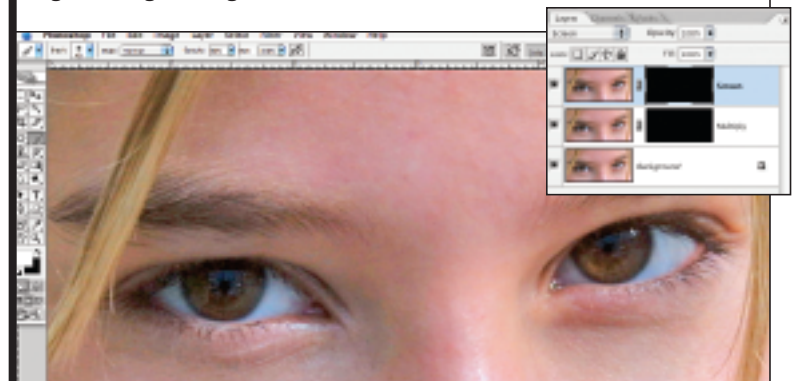


Figure 2: Creating two duplicates of the background layer. In the top layer, change Blend Mode to Screen. In the middle layer, change Blend Mode to Multiply. Add a black layer mask to each.

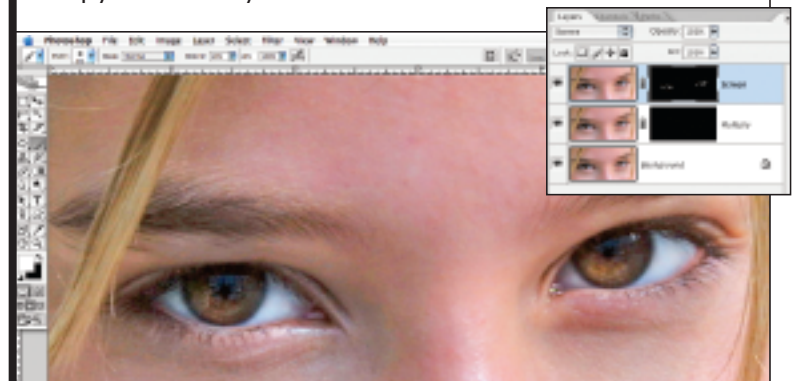


Figure 3: Paint on the Screen layer mask with white to enhance the whites of the eyes and other areas you'd like to be lighter.

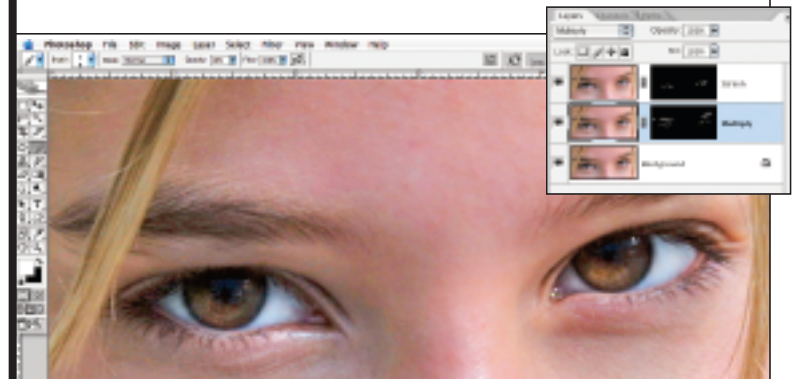


Figure 4: Paint on the Multiply layer mask with white to enhance areas you want to be darker.

Click on the mask on the layer you want to use. I'll start by enhancing the whites of the eyes and brightening some areas, so I click on the black square on the Screen (top) layer to select the layer mask.

Select the Brush tool. Set the options at the top of the screen: Mode=Normal; Opacity=10%; Flow=100%. Use white as the foreground color. (The overlapping squares near the bottom of the vertical tool bar designate the foreground and background colors; if they are not already black and white, hit the D key, to change. The X key swaps the foreground and background colors.) Choose a brush that fits nicely into the area you'll be working in and gently brighten the whites of the subject's eyes, the iris, and any highlights you'd like to brighten just a little.

If you make a mistake, change the foreground color to black (keyboard shortcut X, or click on the curly double-headed arrow next to the foreground color square in the tool bar), and paint over the mistake until it disappears. If you wish, again choose white as the foreground color and give it another try. You can show and hide as much of the Screen layer as you need to with this method.

Now click on the black layer mask on the Multiply (middle) layer. Again, select the Brush tool with the same settings, and use white as your foreground color. Paint over the areas of the eyes that you wish to make darker. I usually do the pupils, the outer rims of the iris, the

upper half of the iris, the upper lash line and the eyelashes. Choose different sizes of brushes as needed. The eyelashes require a much smaller brush than the other areas.

3. Fine-tuning. Zoom out so you can look at your work in the context of the entire face. To evaluate the extent of your work, turn the top two layers on and off (click the eye icon to the left of the layer). If a layer's effects are too much, reduce the layer's opacity with the Opacity slider (in the upper right area of the Layers palette), then slowly raise it again until you like the way it looks.

Now you have a beautiful eye enhancement that should be impossible to detect as a digital enhancement.

This process of selective dodging and burning with Screen and Multiply layers works well with other image enhancements, too. The Screen mask is good for adding highlights to skin, hair, jewelry and clothing. The Multiply mask is good for adding depth to facial lighting patterns and clothing, and for hand-painting vignettes. Try it on landscapes as well. This technique provides huge opportunities for getting the most out of your image files. ■

Jane Conner-ziser of Ormand Beach, Fla., is an internationally recognized portrait retouching artist, painter and instructor. With a background in fine arts, she's been creating professional portraiture for over 25 years. For more info, visit www.janesdigitalart.com.