

# Gyotaku- The Art of the Fishprint

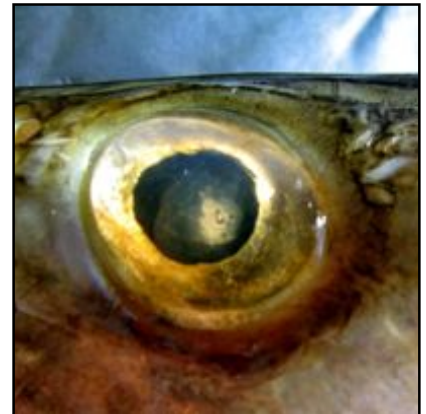
## The Eye of the Fish

You have just taken a print from your fish, and did not ink the soft membrane of the eye. As a result there is an empty orbit in the head of your gyotaku. These instructions will lead you step by step to recreate the eye with both a water and a drawing medium. Although painting the eye with diluted printing ink is a common choice, there is no rigid medium for this final touch. Similar effects can be had with acrylics, watercolors, colored pencils, pastels, sumi-e inks, colored markers or pastels. It is left to your creativity, available supplies, and comfort level with the chosen medium

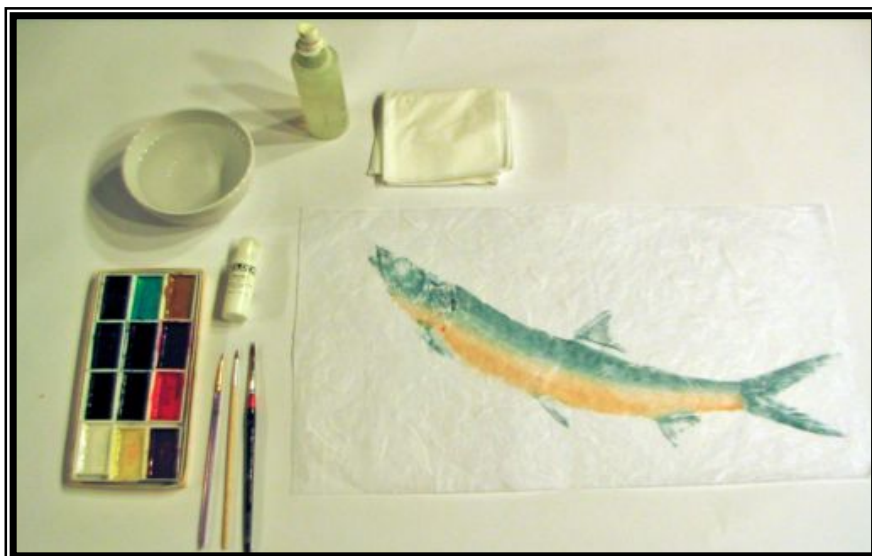
You recall that before you started printing you studied the eye to note the color, shape, pupil size and shape, membrane type and orientation. If you did not do this, then perhaps a photograph or an illustration will serve as a reference to create a realistic eye.

### Materials and supplies

- Watercolors, either tube or pan, in a variety of colors or watercolor pencils or
- Acrylic paints, sumi-e ink, diluted printing ink, colored pencils, colored ink pens or pastels
- Brushes for applying the colors
- Tissue for blotting
- A sample piece of the same paper on which the fish is printed
- Container of water for rinsing brushes
- Fine spritzer for diluting water medium

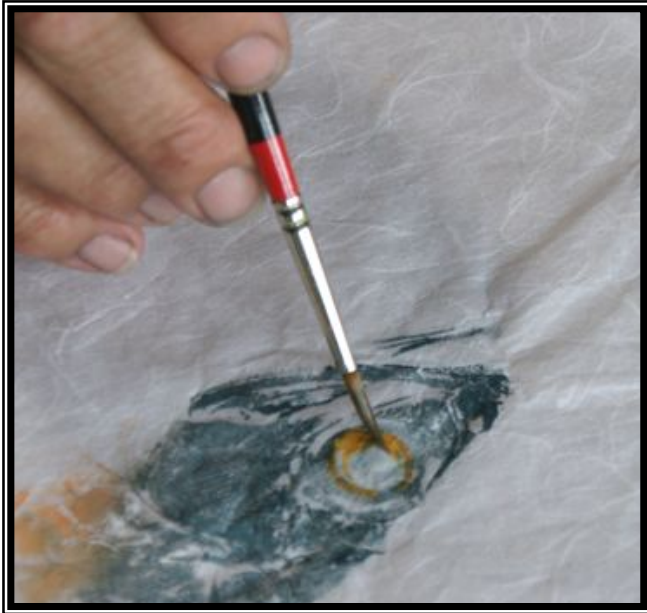


*Some printers take photographs of the fish's eye as it comes out of the water.*

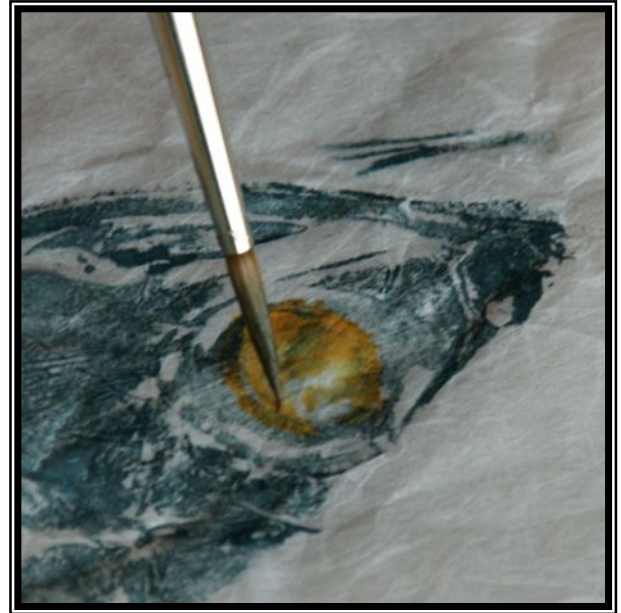


*Prepare materials before starting to paint the eye. Test on a sample of the paper to check for wicking characteristics of the rice paper. If using a wet medium, keep blotters close at hand.*

**These photographs illustrate the basic steps in creating the eye with a watercolor medium**



1). *Define the Iris with diluted color*



2). *Fill in the base color of the iris, leaving one part lighter as the white spot*



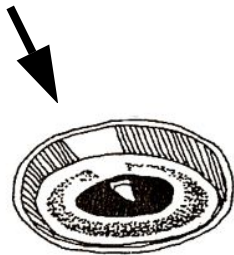
3). *After waiting for the paper to dry thoroughly, paint in the black pupil, leaving an opening that represents the "white spot"*



4). *Final touches include application of a complementary color, and highlighting the "white spot". Note that the color is darker on the base of the iris.*

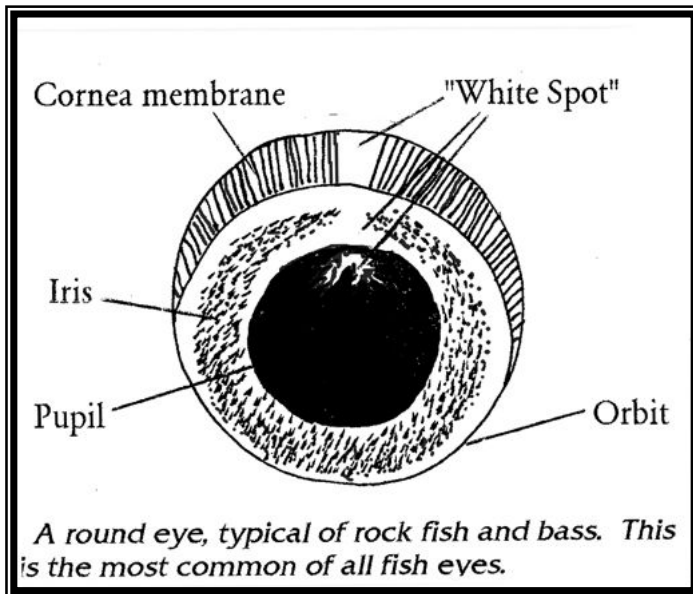
## The Eye of the Fish- Study the eye

Just as the fin position adds action, and color adds drama, the eye adds life and soul to your printed fish. One of the most important characteristics of a lifelike eye is the "light spot" or "white spot", where light reflects off the smooth surface of the eye. Before you start to paint, decide on the angle that the eye reflects in the print. If it is coming in from the top, as if from the sun high in the sky, then the "light spot" will reflect in that way, and reflect in that direction for all fishes in a school. Careful planning at this point is vital.



*Note how the light spot is continued through all parts of the eye.*

There are common features to all fish eyes. However, the variations are many, and not all eyes are symmetrical. The eyes of flatfish, including flounder and sole, have migrated and are notably different, and both are on the topside of the fish. The pupil of most fish is usually black or a dark iridescent color, and the iris can be a combination of many hues.



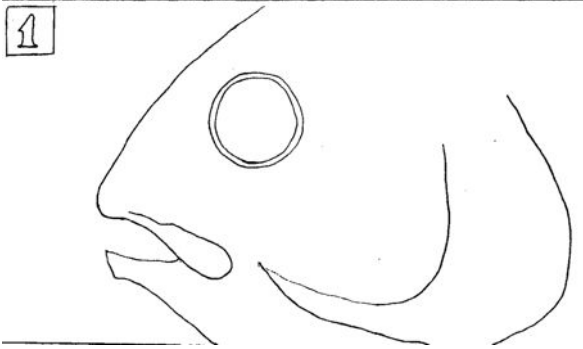
*Important features of the fish eye.*



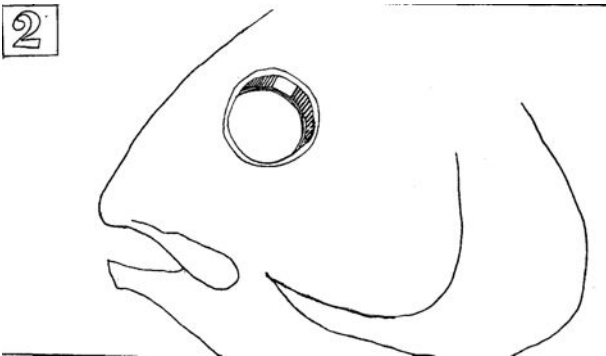
*Examples of some of the different type and shapes of fish eyes.*



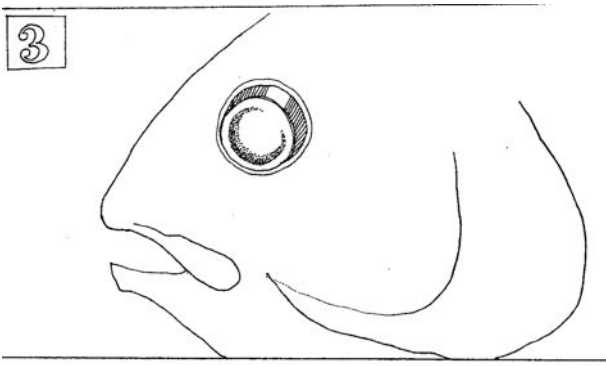
## Step by step illustrations for drawing a fish eye



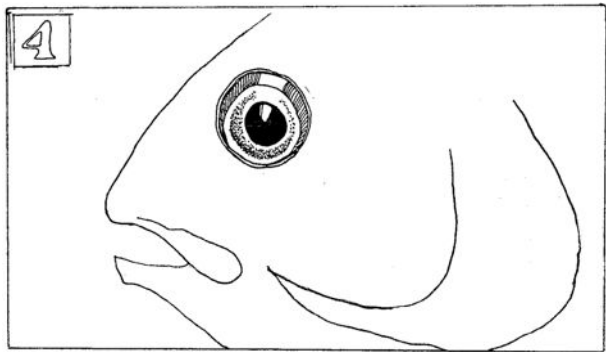
1. Define the margin of the orbit if needed by a light outline with brush or pencil. **This step is not critical as usually there is definition left by the printing process.**



2. Some fish have a corneal membrane that is very well defined. For these fish, paint in a crescent arc to represent the membrane, leaving it open for the "white spot". The use of natural colors will enhance the realism of the eye.



3. Create the iris by painting in a partial circle in the middle of the orbit. Leave a narrow unpainted border at the outside of the circle. This defines and highlights the iris. Add complementary or contrasting color to the iris for interest and definition.



4. Paint in a black or dark-hued smaller circle in the middle of the iris circle to represent the pupil. Leave an unpainted space to represent the "white spot". As you progress with eyes you may want to offset the position of the pupil in the iris to give the fish "personality".

**Important:** Match the value (intensity of pigment) of the eye to the value of the print.