

COURSE TITLE	CONTEMPORARY WATERCOLOUR: THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
COURSE CODE	OC2502049
TUTOR	LAURA RIBBONS
START DATE	19/01/2026
DAY & TIME	MONDAYS, 6 - 8PM
LEVEL	ALL LEVELS
LOCATION	ONLINE

DAILY BREAKDOWN

	Topics/ Skills covered	
	A few minutes before the first lesson - our moderator will be available to help with logging-in	What should I bring?
19 January 2026	Colour Mixing: Greens, browns and blues: This week, we will begin by exploring the essentials of colour theory and colour mixing. We will begin by focusing on how we can most effectively replicate colours seen in nature, we will then work on layering colours together - creating semi - transparent 'glazes' of colour, taking inspiration from the watercolours of Callum Innes. Finally we will experiment with some abstraction, whilst introducing plant materials - pressing leaves and sticks into our work and painting with and around them - creating a experimental works halfway between paintings and monoprints.	Some leaves of different shapes/textures (i.e. rosemary, mint, non-toxic plants etc) for pressing into the watercolour
26 January 2026	Botanical Painting with a Twist: This week we will start by looking at examples of traditional and contemporary botanical artists. We will then create our own botanical compositions from a live plant/cut flowers (chosen by each student), but combining this with ideas of colour theory and abstract composition from the previous week. The class will introduce ideas around composition and observational work.	A plant/cut flowers to work from
2 February 2026	Texture: This week students will be encouraged to explore different textures within their work, both with a paintbrush and with alternative tools - such as toothbrush, sticks, sponges, thread etc. Students will be shown examples of artists who explore texture in their work. Students will create a close-up/'zoomed in' painting of a textured plant of their choice - i.e. a cactus, a flower head, grasses etc. which will allow for an exploration of both texture and composition - exploring how we can create drama in our work, and what we can learn about a plant by 'zooming in'.	Any items that students can use to gain additional texture i.e. sticks, cut up credit card, thread, sponges, old toothbrush etc. and a plant or image to work from.
9 February 2026	Watercolour x Climate Crisis: This week we will consider how watercolour can be used as an effective means to discuss and explore pertinent social issues within our work (focusing on the climate crisis). Students will be introduced to examples of artists who use their work as a form of protest and/or a means to explore such issues. This week students will have the opportunity to create their own composition, combining figurative and abstract painting, collage and text into their work. Oral prompts will be given by the tutor. This week students will begin to think conceptually about their work and consider how they can use art to explore challenging topics in a mindful way.	collage material (i.e. old magazines or newspapers), scissors, glue
16 February 2026	Plants and the City: This week we will consider plants and the city - looking at urban plants and in particular how they contrast with/add to urban architecture and the significance (aesthetic and social) of bringing plants and green space into the urban landscape. In this class we will study how we can achieve greater depth in our compositions and introduce technique to gain a sense of perspective. We will consider why urban plants might be especially interesting and think about how we can explore the contrast between natural and human-made structures through our painting. This class will also introduce the use of masking tape as a tool to delineate the composition and enhance straight lines.	Reference images and plants if desired. Collage elements if desired.