

Course Title	Contemporary Life Drawing
Tutor	Zoe Toolan
Studio Session Dates	Wednesdays; 14 January - 25 March 2026 Reading Week: 16 February - 20 February 2026
Session Times	10:30AM - 4:30PM
Course Code	E2502DR002
Location	Bankside
Course Fees	£675.00

Course overview

Traditional, skill based life drawing is complemented with contemporary drawing approaches in this exciting and multifaceted drawing course.

Working with life models throughout, students will begin the course by learning fundamental observational drawing skills in relation to the human form. This grounding will instill practical knowledge and confidence, which will then be used as a springboard for contemporary ways of thinking and working. As well as creating finished pieces, the drawing process will be firmly acknowledged as an art form in itself. Through innovative practical exercises, formal experimentation and group discussion, you will receive a holistic approach to drawing.

Your tutor will support you fully throughout the course in both group sessions and one-to-one support, providing very regular feedback, critique and constructive advice.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Experiment with different approaches to drawing the body.
- Understand and apply measurement techniques.
- Create rapid, intuitive drawing from short poses using a variety of media.
- Create drawings from long poses using a variety of media.
- Use drawing techniques convey the feeling of mass, volume, form and texture.
- Capture the body in motion and draw moving forms using experimental techniques.
- Explore different ways of creating space within drawings through composition.
- Research, plan and complete a self initiated project.
- Apply safe-working practices at all times.

What Level is the course and do I need any particular skills?

This course is suitable for all levels.

About your tutor

Zoe Toolan is a working class artist educator from Yorkshire now based in Brighton. Her art is live and social with drawing at its core and learning integrated into her practice instead of a separate activity; she often challenges what drawing is with the aim of opening discussion and debate around wider issues. Zoe is passionate about art being an essential part of everyone's everyday life and has shown work in spaces ranging from traditional galleries to music

festivals. She has completed projects for bodies including L.A.D.A. and Axis, and is a contributing author to DK's The Artist's Manual.

<http://www.zklt.co.uk>

Weekly breakdown

Below is a weekly breakdown of what will be covered. Please bear in mind that these sessions will move with the pace of the group, so a degree of flexibility of what will be covered on which day will be employed.

Wk	Date	Topic/Activity	Location, Tutor & Model	What to bring
1	14/01/26	Health & Safety briefing Course Intro Gesture & Construction Rapid gesture drawings from different viewpoints to identify the internal flow and structure of the body. Starting to construct the body out of a series of interrelated basic shapes and key lines. Long and short poses.	Studio 6 Zoe Toolan Model x 1	All drawing materials. Necessary mediums: Willow charcoal Compressed charcoal Range of pencils Eraser Putty rubber
2	21/01/26	Measurement & Anatomy Introducing sighting and comparative measurement along with basic anatomy to achieve accurate proportional relationships.	Studio 6 Zoe Toolan Model x 1	All drawing materials
3	28/01/26	Tone & Mark Making: Still Life Into Life Drawing Exploring how different drawing techniques convey the feeling of mass, volume, form and texture. Exploratory still life drawings as well as life drawing to consolidate understanding.	Studio 6 Zoe Toolan Model x 1	All drawing materials
4	04/02/26	Planar Analysis: Making and Drawing From 3D Reference This week we will introduce the idea of body planes by creating a series of small 3D reference models from life to then draw from. This is not sculpture as such, but a 3D creative drawing act to aid our visualisation of the body's interlocking planes. By translating 3D into 3D before drawing on a 2D surface, you will actually feel how planes and shapes change around the figure. This will greatly aid your ability to identify areas of tonal shift.	Studio 6 Zoe Toolan Model x 1	All drawing materials

5	11/02/26	Space: Perspective, Colour and You We now start to look at situating the body in space/place and begin to relate the act of drawing to our own bodies. As well as drawing from life, graphical exercises in perspective and colour theory will help you understand your own field of vision. This heightened awareness of your own body's perception of space will directly affect the creation of your drawings. Includes both traditional and contemporary artist references (drawing, painting, live art, performance) to challenge linear notions of topics explored.	Studio 6 Zoe Toolan Model x 1	All drawing materials Communal coloured mediums supplied, but please bring your own if you have them.
Reading Week 16/02/26 - 20/02/26				
6	25/02/26	Movement In Three Parts Studying the figure in motion and tackling the various issues (both practically and conceptually) that arise from non-static poses. Part One: Movement Within Understanding what happens to the surface forms when the body bends, flexes and rotates. Through shorter poses you will learn to make decisions about the most important aspects of the figure to draw to convey internal movement. Classical works and specific poses from art history will be referenced throughout. You will also move and stretch your own body to gain further insights into the strains and stresses of a life model's work and the poses they undertake to inform and inspire you and your work.	Studio 6 Zoe Toolan Model x 1	All drawing materials
7	04/03/26	Movement In Three Parts Following on from last week, we will now introduce other factors and sources of movement. We are deliberately moving away from a predetermined outcome, giving permission for the process to lead, for play and experimentation. Part Two: Approach How the movement of a figure around a space affects the artist's approach. Exploring how working from a moving model often challenges understanding of what life drawing should look like and can mean representation teeters - or fully pushes into - abstraction. Discussion and artist references throughout. Part Three: Experimentation	Studio 6 Zoe Toolan Model x 1	All drawing materials

		Using unpredictable mediums, interesting surfaces and unusual ways of creation, you will start to add inherent movement to your drawings. This will further challenge your encounter with the moving model and yourself by breeding freedom and experimentation. We will discuss the relevance of live art, performances and artist references throughout.		
8	11/03/26	Out & About This week will be split into two halves. Working both within the studio from a clothed figure and on location (TBC), you will explore issues that arise when working in an uncontrollable non-studio setting. You will also be introduced to various artists who explore their own bodies in relation to movement within a city.	Studio 6 Zoe Toolan Model x 1	Easily carried drawing materials (will discuss in previous lesson) Sketchbooks Fully charged phone to take pictures
9	18/03/26	Self Led Project Taking inspiration from the course's previous sessions, you will have two weeks to work on a self-initiated project of your choosing. This could be a fully realised piece, a series of experimental drawings or anything else you'd like to explore; your tutor will help you decide and be there to guide you. Note: We will be working with the same model for this session and the next.	Studio 6 Zoe Toolan Model x 1	All drawing materials
10	25/03/26	Self Led Project Continue working on self led projects. Finish projects by afternoon break, then hang/display work. Group Crit from 3pm. Note: we will be working with the same model as the previous session.	Studio 6 Zoe Toolan Model x 1	All drawing materials

Preparation Requirements & Additional Costs

YOU MUST BRING YOUR OWN MATERIALS

You will need to have a good range of drawing materials - including but not limited to - willow and compressed charcoal, range of pencils, eraser and putty rubber, fine line pens.

See above for other preparation requirements each week.

If you do not have your own materials, we recommend you order a **Drawing Pack** at the time of booking which will be available when you arrive for your first class.

A **Drawing Pack** (£25.00) contains:
 One set of lead pencils (2B, 4B, 6B)
 One box of willow charcoal sticks
 One box of compressed charcoal sticks

One set of conté crayons
Putty Rubber
Eraser

Resources & Further Reading

Please note reading lists are suggested, not required.

Author	Year	Title	Publisher	Location
Loomis, A.	2011	<i>Figure Drawing For All Its Worth</i>	Titan Books Ltd	London
Joseph, C,	2013	<i>Anatomy: A Complete Guide to the Human Body, for Artists & Students</i>	Ivy Press	Brighton
Malbert, R.	2015	<i>Drawing People: The Human Figure In Contemporary Art</i>	Thames and Hudson	London
O'Reilly, S.	2009	<i>The Body In Contemporary Art</i>	Thames and Hudson	London

Other useful resources (websites, galleries etc)
https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/from-life-history-of-life-drawing-annette-wickham

Who can I contact for further information?

General information and advice on courses at Art Academy is available from the main office, open Monday to Friday 09:00 – 17:00 during term time.

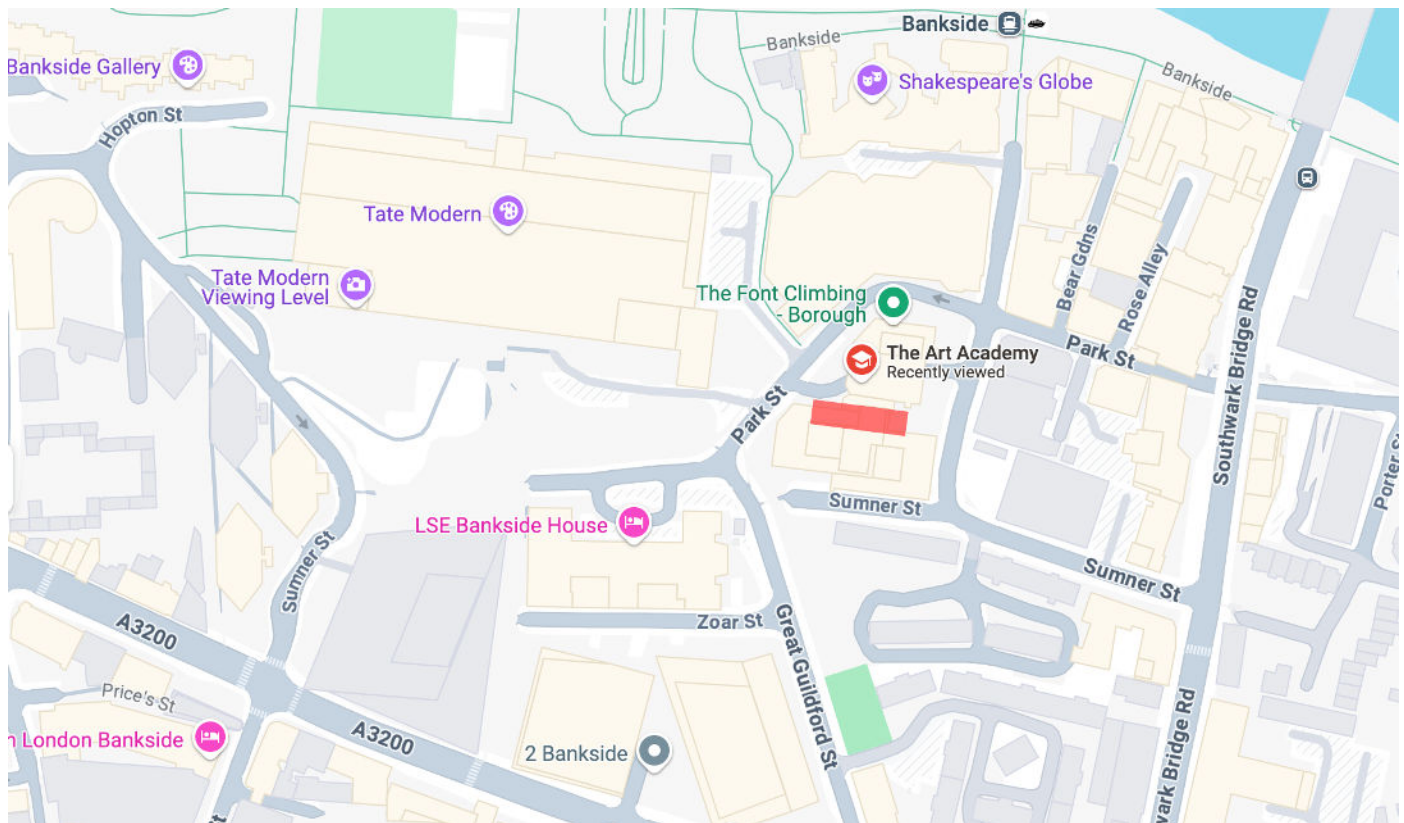
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7407 6969 or email at academiccourses@artacademy.ac.uk

Locations - (Please check course location at the top of this document)

Art Academy – Bankside Campus

185 Park Street
London SE1 9BL

The Art Academy is conveniently located minutes away from London Bridge (Northern and Jubilee lines, National Rail services), Southwark (Jubilee Lines) and Borough (Northern line) underground stations. Please [click here](#) for a map, what three words input.



Just moments walk from the Thames, Art Academy is also ideally located for access to:

- White Cube
- Tate Modern
- The Globe
- Bankside Gallery

If you would like to make the most of the area a member of the team will be happy to advise you on areas of interest locally.

Refreshments & Facilities

All students have access to the common area located in the basement level of the building, here you will have use of a fridge, kettle, microwave and eating area.

There is a wealth of supermarkets, shops and cafes in the area as well as the world-famous Borough Food Market, fifteen minutes walk away.

For health and safety reasons, all students, staff, and tutors must use a sealable keep-cup or container for hot drinks. Mugs and open cups are not permitted in our teaching spaces. As we do not provide keep-cups, please bring your own if you wish to use the coffee and tea facilities in our Hub area.

Disabled Access

The campus has an elevator and has no threshold from the street level providing full step free access. We make every effort to accommodate students' access requirements, if you have mobility issues please speak to a member of the Academy team before your course starts.

Further Details

- You will need to have paid in full for your class before the first session of your class, your place is not guaranteed until we have received payment.
- If you purchased a materials pack online this will be given to you on the first session of your course upon your arrival.
- Ensure that you wear appropriate clothing, as you may get messy!
- All artwork at the Academy MUST be taken home at the end of the course.
- Please ensure that your mobile phone is switched off, or is on silent, during the class.
- Please read the Health and Safety Guidelines carefully, provided at the beginning of your course.
- If you wish to join any class for the next term please contact the office to re-book. Classes are becoming increasingly popular, so please book early in order to guarantee your place.
- If you have any further queries let us know and we will do our best to resolve them. Thank you for your cooperation and we look forward to seeing you.