

Course Title	Contemporary Still Life
Tutor	Nicholas Mcleod
Studio session Dates	Fridays; 16 January 2026 - 27 March 2026 Reading Week: 16 February - 20 February 2026
Session Times	10:30am - 4:30pm
Course Code	E2502P017
Materials Cost	£7 (See below)
Location	Bankside
Course Fees	£675.00

Course overview

Develop your approach, understanding and engagement with painting through the genre of Still Life. You'll look in-depth at the work of both contemporary and historical artists for whom still life is a major focus and discuss why the genre is still relevant today. You'll consider the use of objects for their symbolic value as well as their aesthetic properties. Throughout the course students will examine the abstract forms, shape, colour and tone of the objects and explore how to use all of this information to create interesting and contemporary paintings. Working in oil, you'll be encouraged to approach the act of painting with a balance of instinct and analysis, growing your technical understanding of a variety of mediums and materials, whilst also developing observational, critical and creative skills.

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Analyse the work of others, applying findings to their own work.
- Apply observational drawing and painting skills.
- Create still life paintings using a variety of approaches to motifs and subject matter.
- Apply colour mixing techniques.
- Apply a range of paint application techniques.
- 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

Nicholas McLeod graduated with an MA in painting from the Slade School of Fine Art in 2016. He has won the Threadneedle Prize Visitors Choice award and his work has been selected for numerous exhibitions across London. Nicholas has also had his work included in various publications including, *A Brush With The Real: Contemporary Figurative Painting* (Laurence King Publishing) and *Imagine Architecture* (Gestalten, Berlin)

<https://www.nicholasmcleod.com>

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	What to bring
1	16/01/26	Overview of the genre of Still Life and the formal qualities of painting: Tone, Light & Composition: This session will start with a presentation and group discussion about still life as a genre, considering its origins together with the changing ways it has been used throughout art history and in contemporary painting. We will then make a painting using simple white objects. Carefully observing how light and shadow can be used to generate a sense of depth and volume	Nicholas Mcleod Bankside Studio	Painting equipment. Surface(s) to paint on 10 x12" Canvas Board x 2 10 x 14" Canvas Board x 2 Acrylic/Oil Sketch Zest-it pad Tear off palette Burnt Umber, French Ultramarine, White
2	23/01/26	Colour: This week we will focus on colour, looking at how it has been used by contemporary artists to articulate their ideas. We will be using 3 different coloured grounds to see the effects they have as well as developing an understanding of colour mixing and application.	Nicholas Mcleod Bankside Studio	Painting equipment: Canvas Board x3, Oil painting paper or stretched canvas. French Ultramarine, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow, White, Burnt Umber, Coeruleum Blue. Zest-it, Tear off Palette
3	30/01/26	Texture and Form: We will start with a short presentation by your tutor on a variety of mediums that can be mixed into paint to change the qualities and behaviour of it. You will then make paintings of your own using the mediums in order to develop an understanding of how paint can be used to articulate certain sensations. We will consider technical approaches to painting different surfaces and textures as you make this work.	Nicholas Mcleod Bankside Studio	Painting equipment: Canvas Board, Oil painting paper or stretched canvas. French Ultramarine, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow, White, Burnt Umber, Coeruleum Blue. Zest-it, Tear off Palette
4	06/02/26	Pop Art and Consumerism: The still life object was a shared interest amongst pop artists, some of whom expanded it beyond painting into multi dimensional sculptural forms. It was used as a means of commenting on contemporary life and on post war consumerism in particular. We will consider the work of a range of artists addressing issues of consumerism, including Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Jeff Koons, Lucy Sparrow, James	Nicholas Mcleod Bankside Studio	Source material for collage - tutor to advise. Glue, scissors. Selection of Acrylic and/or Oil paints

		Rosenquist and Wayne Thiebaud before you make your own paintings on the subject.		
5	13/02/26	Transcription: In this two week project students will be asked to select a piece of work, or works, by another artist. They will begin by making drawings and oil sketches which will then be developed into one completed work. There is also the option to choose an exhibition you have recently visited and make work in response to the show as a whole.	Nicholas Mcleod Bankside Studio	Painting equipment: Canvas Board, Oil painting paper or stretched canvas. French Ultramarine, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow, White, Burnt Umber, Coeruleum Blue. Zest-it, Tear off Palette
<u>Reading Week 16/02/26 - 20/02/26</u>				
6	27/02/26	Transcription cont: Continuing with the project from the previous week.	Nicholas Mcleod Bankside Studio	Painting equipment: Canvas Board, Oil painting paper or stretched canvas. French Ultramarine, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow, White, Burnt Umber, Coeruleum Blue. Zest-it, Tear off Palette
7	06/03/26	From Figuration to Abstraction: This class will be used to explore the boundaries between figuration and abstraction. You will be encouraged to think about figuration, not as a static mode of making, but rather as something that can be challenged, pushed and played around with. We will begin the class with a series of quick exercises which will then be developed throughout the day. We will look at artists such as Richard Diebenkorn, Clare Woods and Gillian Carnegie	Nicholas Mcleod Bankside Studio	Please ensure you bring a sketchbook, drawing materials and some form of camera. Painting equipment: Canvas Board, Oil painting paper or stretched canvas. French Ultramarine, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow, White, Burnt Umber, Coeruleum Blue. Zest-it, Tear off Palette
8	13/03/26	Gallery Visit: You will visit one or more galleries with your tutor to critically consider examples of Still Life paintings.	Nicholas Mcleod Bankside Studio	Painting equipment: Canvas Board, Oil painting paper or stretched canvas. French Ultramarine, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow, White, Burnt Umber, Coeruleum Blue. Zest-it, Tear off Palette

9	20/03/26	Personal Project: You will choose from the approaches taught over the course and create your own still life from which to paint.	Nicholas Mcleod Bankside Studio	Painting equipment: Canvas Board, Oil painting paper or stretched canvas. French Ultramarine, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow, White, Burnt Umber, Coeruleum Blue. Zest-it, Tear off Palette
10		Personal Project cont: Each student will give a brief presentation of their work including any artists, exhibitions, books, films, etc. that have inspired them. This is an opportunity to contextualise your own work in relation to broader contemporary concerns and gain feedback from your peers. In the afternoon we will continue with your Personal Projects.	Nicholas Mcleod Bankside Studio	Painting equipment: Canvas Board, Oil painting paper or stretched canvas. French Ultramarine, Cadmium Red, Cadmium Yellow, White, Burnt Umber, Coeruleum Blue. Zest-it, Tear off Palette

Preparation Requirements & Additional Costs

YOU MUST BRING YOUR OWN MATERIALS:

- Drawing equipment (inc. 2B & 4B pencils), rubber, charcoal, putty rubber
- Burnt Umber and Titanium white acrylic paint
- A3 or A4 pad oil painting paper
- Brushes – Hogs hair brushes (Filbert no. 7 & 10, round no. 4, flats), acrylic brush round §(no. 2)
- Only odorless spirits, Sansodor or Zest-it (the Academy is a white spirit free environment)
- Liquin Original
- Jam jar x 2
- Tear-off paper palette
- Oil colours: Cadmium Red, Alizarin Crimson, French Ultramarine Blue, Cerulean Blue*, Paynes Grey*, Cadmium Yellow, Burnt Umber, Titanium White, Yellow Ochre*

** If you buy the Art Academy Oil Painting Pack, please be aware these colours are required in addition to the pack.*

- Apron or old shirt
- Old rags
- Baby wipes
- Surfaces (specified each week)

There will be a materials cost of £7 for the following mediums used throughout this course:

- Lukas painting medium No.5
- Sand
- Marble Dust
- Wax (Beesw)
- Liquin
- Linseed oil
- Glaze Medium

If you do not have your own painting materials, there is an option to order an **Oil Painting Pack** at the time of booking which will be available when you arrive for your first class.

An **Oil Painting Pack** (£75.00) contains:

A set of bristle brushes, both flat and round, suitable for either oils or acrylics
 One tear off palette (9"x12")

One palette knife
 One bottle Zest-it (250ml)
 One 10"x 12" canvas board
 One 10"x 14" canvas board
 Two 12"x 16" canvas boards
 6 Daler Rowney (*Georgian*) oil tubes: Titanium White, Cadmium Yellow, Alizarin Crimson, Cadmium Red, French Ultramarine and Burnt Umber

Certain materials can also be purchased from the Academy shop during shop hours. Please check in advance of your class if the item you require is available, as the Academy may not stock all items listed above.

Resources & Further Reading

Please note reading lists are suggested, not required.

Author	Year	Title	Publisher	Location
Erika Langmuir	2010	<i>A Closer Look, Still Life</i>	National Gallery	London
Michael Petry	2013	<i>Nature Morte</i>	Thames & Hudson	London
Stephen Johnstone (ed_	2008	<i>Contemporary Art: The Everyday (Documents in Contemporary Art)</i>	Whitechapel Gallery	London

Other useful resources (websites, galleries etc)
Looking at the Overlooked; Four Essays on Still Life Painting Norman Bryson, Reaktion Books Wayne Thiebaud, American Still Life. Courtauld Gallery 10th October 2025 - 18th January 2026 (Booking Essential) Large Issues From Small, Meditations on Still Life https://www.frieze.com/article/large-issues-small <i>Do Real Artists Still Paint Flowers?</i> By Patrick Cullen (Essay) http://www.thejackdaw.co.uk/?p=1500

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.

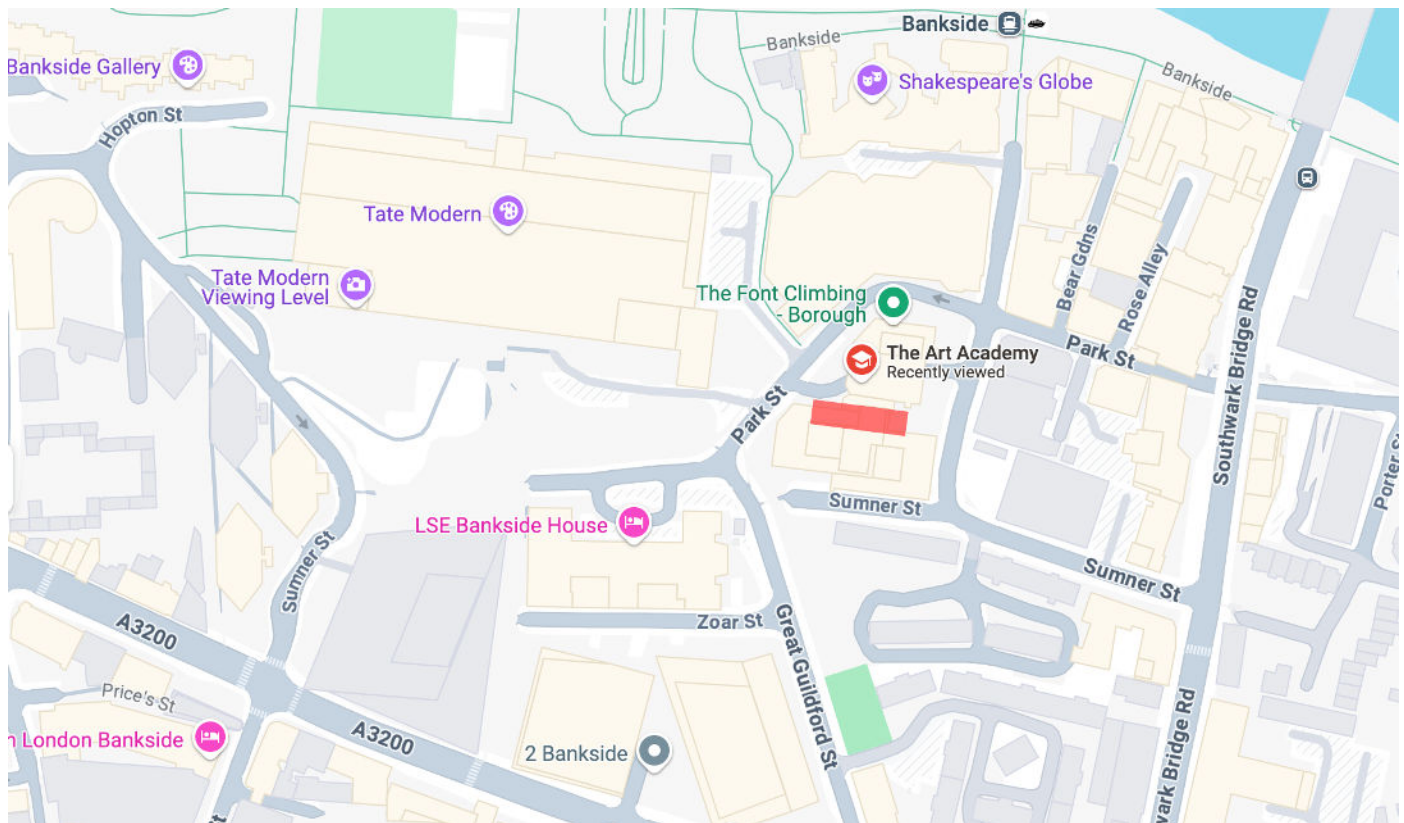
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7407 6969 or email at academiccourses@artacademy.ac.uk

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.