

Course Title	Contemporary Painting: Exploring techniques, materials and surfaces
Tutor	Alison Hand
Studio session Dates	Wednesdays; 14 January - 25 March 2026 <i>Reading Week: 16 February - 20 February 2026</i>
Session Times	10:30am - 4:30pm
Course Code	E2502P35
Materials Cost	£10.00 (See below)
Location	Mermaid Court Studio 1 & Bankside
Course Fees	£675.00

Course overview

This exciting and experimental course explores contemporary painting processes and surfaces, testing and discovering new material languages in paint. You will expand and develop your understanding of what paint can do, and the specific material qualities of paints, contextualised with contemporary artists and movements, and your own individual subjects and themes. You will investigate how various paints (including spray paints, encaustic wax, gloss paints, acrylics) feel and handle and how to use them. You will also explore the interaction of paint with other surfaces such as found objects and photo transfer.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

Analyse the work of others and apply findings to their own work
Create experimental paintings using different media and surfaces.
Research, plan and realise 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. You should be open to experimentation and questioning.

About your tutor

Alison Hand is the BA Fine Art Programme Leader at Art Academy London. She has an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art, and is currently the Artist in Residence with Kings College London Philosophy department exploring new research into dreams and wakeful consciousness. She is a published writer on art and architecture, the latest project being a 6,000 word article on contemporary drawing for Bloomsbury publishers. Hand's paintings and drawings have won many awards including the Basil H Alkazzi Scholarship; the Gordon Luton Award for Fine Art; and the Stephenson Harwood Award.

@alisonhandartist

<https://www.alisonhand.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(s)	What to bring
1	14/01/26	Transparency and painting as collage In this first week we will be using acetate as a painting surface, exploring the transparency and plastic sheen. Starting with a presentation and group discussion, we will explore how to break habitual approaches to composition through the use of collage and source material in painting. We will then work on sheets of clear acetate, utilising the transparency to create layered, double sided works, which employ the quick drying nature and stretch of acrylic paint; the 'utopian' colours and soft edges of spray paint; and the glossiness and dense coverage of household paints. Brushwork and flatness is very apparent on clear plastic surfaces, and these gestural and non-gestural techniques can be considered and utilised.	Alison Hand Mermaid court Studio 1	There will be a cost of £10 per student to cover acetates, spray paints, and some household paints. Also please bring acrylic paints with you and decent brushes, of all sizes
2	21/01/26	Spray paints and stencils This week we will start with a presentation of artists who use spray paint in painting. Then we will make our own stencils and work with spray paints in this way combined with freehand techniques.	Alison Hand Mermaid court Studio 1	Surfaces to paint on, ie MDF boards, canvases, etc - if possible not canvas boards. Also bring acrylic paints, mediums, and brushes.
3	28/01/26	Photo transfer and paint This week we will use the photo-transfer technique to transfer images to surfaces, and then work into and on them with paint.	Alison Hand Mermaid court Studio 1	As above plus photocopies for photo-transfer
4	04/02/26	Encaustic wax painting This week we will be using heated encaustic wax as a medium for painting, mixing paint with it and creating semi transparent layers. This is a lovely medium which can be gestural and delicate at the same time.	Alison Hand Mermaid court Studio 1	Surfaces to paint on, ie MDF boards, canvases, etc - if possible not canvas boards. Oil paints and/or dry pigments, and brushes - of all sizes including big brushes.
5	11/02/26	Exploring acrylics - layers and subtlety Acrylic paints have wonderful properties. You will explore these by working in two different ways with them. This first week we will build up a series of very thin layers of acrylic washes to create density, subtlety, colour, and depth, with painting 'incidents' (images or abstract forms) located on different layers, thereby creating a sense of space, ambiguity, and intrigue within a very flat surface.	Alison Hand Mermaid court Studio 1	Surfaces to paint on, ie MDF boards, canvases, etc. Acrylic paints, mediums, and brushes - of all sizes including big brushes.

Reading Week 16/02/26 - 20/02/26

6	25/02/26	Exploring acrylics and oils - masking techniques, flatness and plasticity, juxtaposed with the language of oil paint This week we will continue with our exploration of acrylic paint, this time employing its flat plasticity and the disappearance of brushwork and gesture, using tape to mask edges and areas. We will layer flat areas of forms and colour to discover how to create a sense of space and hard edged vibrancy. We will also combine this with the luscious effects of oil paint sitting on top of the acrylic, trying out techniques such as blurring.	Alison Hand Bankside	Surfaces to paint on, ie MDF boards, canvases, etc. Acrylic and oil paints, mediums, and brushes - of all sizes including big brushes.
7	04/03/26	Responding to found surfaces This week we are exploring and playing with the actual surface, so our painting surface / support becomes as much a part of the artwork as the paint. In using the surface as a medium, we need to consider the material properties, language, and associations of the surfaces we use. In preparation, you will find suitable and exciting surfaces to use, which may be irregular, found objects, or fragments - and will work with them to draw out their material qualities, adding to or subverting them via their painted interventions.	Alison Hand Bankside	A range of surfaces as described left. We will discuss this the preceding week. Acrylic and oil paints, mediums, and brushes - of all sizes including big brushes
8	11/03/26	Painting as process The day will begin with a group discussion of painters who use process as the primary element in their work, considering how they utilise the material language of paint, as affected by time, movement, repetition, and chance, to create paintings. We will then make our own paintings which explore the idea of process as form, investigating the properties of traditional oil paint and 'household' paints - pouring, dripping, scraping, erasing, and the potential temporal qualities of paint, creating something which is unfixed and changes over time. We will make our own painting devices to extend our range outside the paintbrush.	Alison Hand Bankside	Surfaces to paint on, ie MDF boards, canvases, etc. Acrylic and oil paints, mediums, and brushes, of all sizes including big brushes.
9	18/03/26	Personal project These last two weeks students can develop their own personal project drawing on themes explored in the course.	Alison Hand Bankside	Surfaces to paint on, ie MDF boards, canvases, etc. Acrylic and oil paints, mediums, and brushes, of all sizes including big brushes.
10	25/03/26	Personal project These last two weeks students can develop their own personal project drawing on themes explored in the course.	Alison Hand Bankside	Surfaces to paint on, ie MDF boards, canvases, etc. Acrylic and oil paints, mediums, and brushes, of all sizes including big brushes.

Preparation Requirements & Additional Costs

YOU MUST PROVIDE YOUR OWN MATERIALS.

The Academy is a white spirit and turpentine free environment and only odourless spirits, such as Zest-it or Sansodor, are permitted on the premises. Students must provide their own spirits, which can be recycled for longevity.

We request that you bring 2 small jars (one with a lid, one without) to hold your spirit, and a few cloths rags for brush cleaning (such as an old cotton t-shirt).

Additional Costs

There will be a cost of £10 per student to cover acetates, spray paints, and some household paints, that the Academy will provide. This is payable at the start of the course.

Materials and equipment students need to provide

A good range of brushes - small to large.

Acrylic paints and Oil paints.

Any paints/paint products that the students have and may wish to experiment with; household paints, watercolour, thickening mediums etc.

Initial introduction materials and tools will be provided by the academy, subsequent materials will be sourced and/or paid for by students.

You will need to bring your own painting materials to the class. If you do not have your own materials, we recommend you order an **Oil Painting Pack** or **Acrylic 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 paint tubes in: Titanium White, Lemon Yellow, Cadmium Yellow, Burnt Umber, Cadmium Red, Alizarin Crimson, French Ultramarine Blue, Coeruleum Blue.

An **Acrylic Painting Pack** (£60.00) 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 10"x 12" canvas board

One 10"x 14" canvas board

Two 12"x 16" canvas boards

8 Daler Rowney (*System 3*) acrylic tubes: Titanium White, Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium Red Hue, Ultramarine, Sap Green, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Umber, Mars Black.

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 have this in stock.

Resources & Further Reading

Please note reading lists are suggested, not required.

Author	Year	Title	Publisher	Location
Price, M.	2012	<i>Vitamin P2: New Perspectives in Painting</i>	Phaidon	London
Schwabsky, B.	2007	<i>Vitamin P: New Perspectives in Painting</i>	Phaidon	London
Staff, C.	2013	<i>After Modernist Painting: The History of a Contemporary Practice</i>	I. B.Tauris	London

Wood, P. Harrison, C.	1993	<i>Modernism in Dispute, Art since the forties</i>	Yale University Press	Connecticut, New Haven
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Other useful resources (websites, galleries etc)

Artists of interest: Robert Rauschenberg, Sigmar Polke, Barbara Howey, Ian Davenport, Louise Nevelson, Angela de la Cruz, Gunter Uecker, Tomma Abts, Luc Tuymans, Mamma Andersson, Wilhelm Sasnal, Shirley Kaneda, Fiona Rae, Agnes Martin, Lee Ufan, Marwan Rechmaoui, Shozo Shimamoto

<http://www.contemporarybritishpainting.com/index.php>

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.

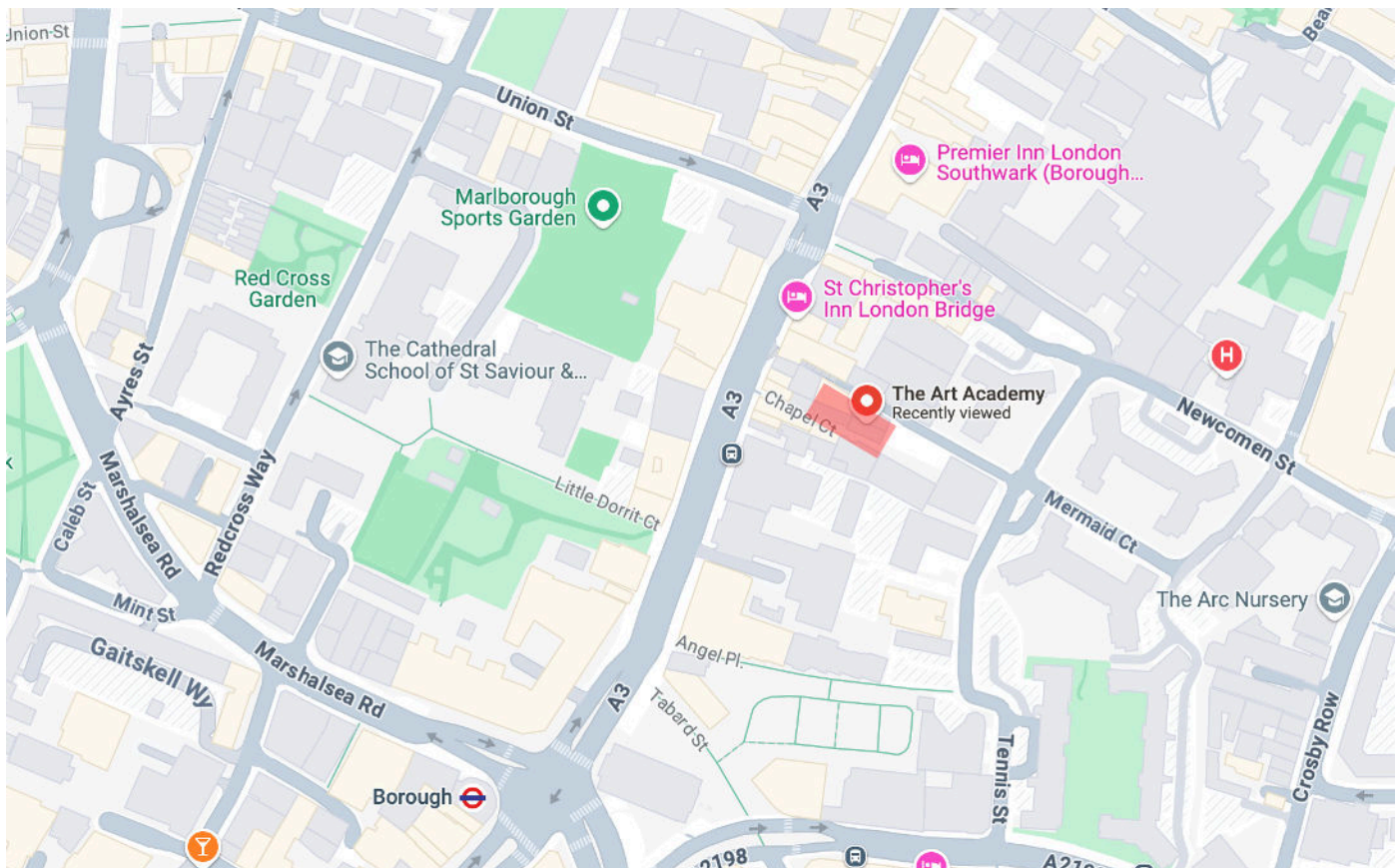
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7407 6969 or email at academiccourses@artacademy.ac.uk

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

1) The Art Academy – Mermaid Court Campus

165A Borough High Street

London SE1 1HR

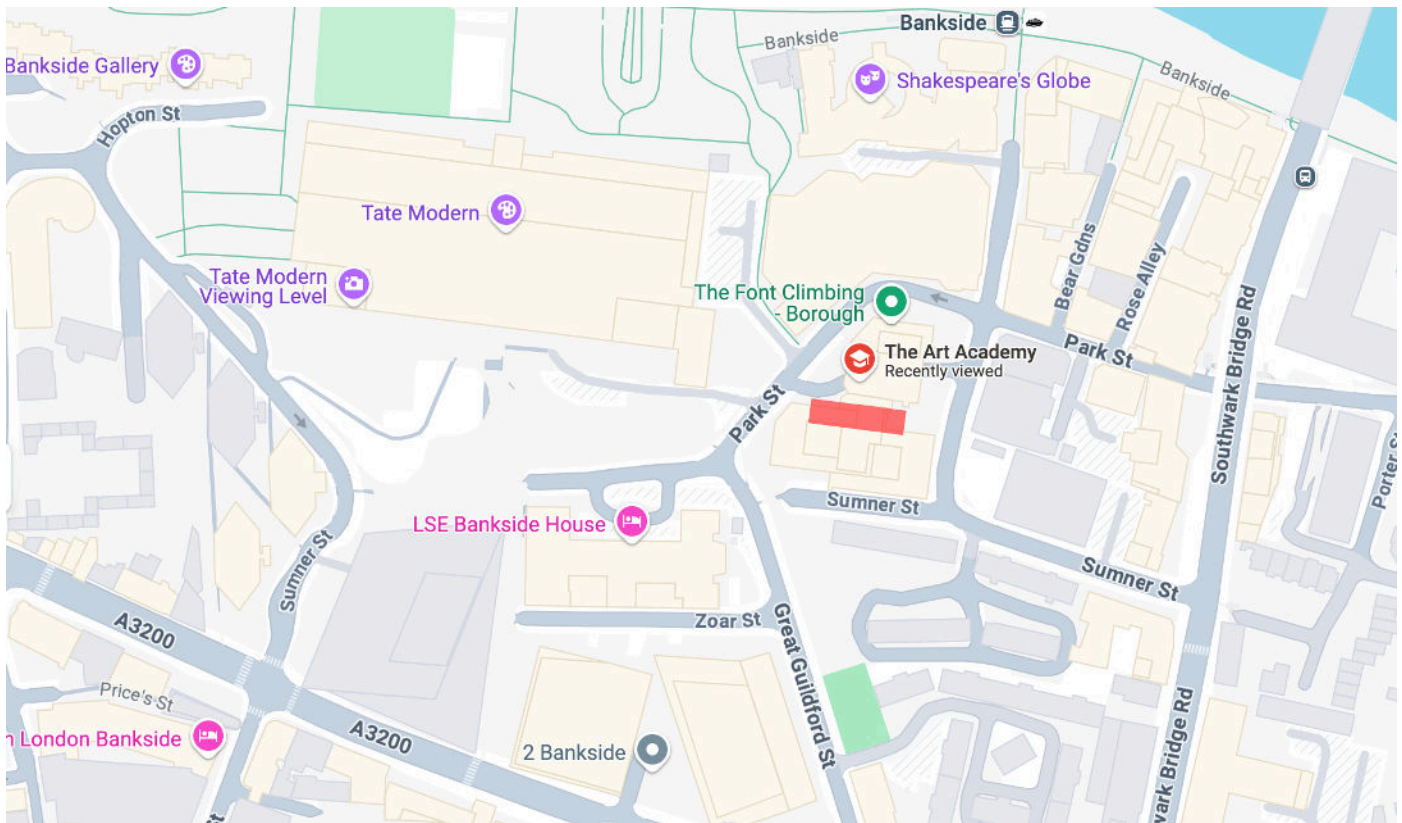


2) Art Academy – Bankside Campus

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.