

Art Academy

Elective Skills Workshop Course

Course Title	Watercolour and Ink
Tutor	Laura Ribbons
Studio session Dates	Wednesdays; 14 January 2026 - 25 March 2026 <i>Reading Week: 16 February - 20 February 2026</i>
Session Times	10:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Course Code	E2502P36
Material Cost	£15.00
Location	Bankside
Course Fees	£675.00

Course overview

This course aims to introduce students to the water-based mediums of watercolour and ink. Both indoors and outdoors you will work responsively, exploring the particular qualities of these mediums. You will gain an understanding of how these mediums bridge the gap between drawing and painting, you will collect and record your findings and experiments in a sketchbook and develop your learning into finished artworks in the studio. You will be learning both more traditional and exploratory techniques, and will be introduced to a range of artists each week, supporting you to find your own style.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

Analyse the work of others, applying findings to their own work.
Create drawings and paintings in colour and monochrome, both indoors and out, utilising wet mediums.
Create paintings that utilise the paper as the lightest tone/ colour.
Create drawings and paintings that utilise dry paper/brush and wet-on-wet techniques.
Create a series of experimental artworks utilising the different properties of watercolour and ink
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

Laura Ribbons is an artist, facilitator and curator based in Hastings. Laura has been working in watercolours for over 15 years and is a passionate advocate for the medium. She is a graduate of Wimbledon College of Art with a degree in Fine Art (Painting). She was the winner of the 2012 Orbis Art Prize and was nominated for the Clyde & Co Art Awards the same year. In 2016 Laura gained a Masters degree in Environmental Anthropology from the University of Kent, allowing her to further develop her interests in plant-human relations and the climate crisis, both topics which conceptually inform her practice. Laura has exhibited widely and her works feature in a number of private collections across the UK, she has also exhibited in Spain where she lived from 2018 - 2019. In 2022 Laura was invited to take part in the Towner Gallery's Open Plan Residency programme. As a socially-engaged arts practitioner Laura has worked on projects with a number of high profile galleries including Towner Eastbourne, Watts Gallery - Artist Village, Pallant House Gallery and Hastings Contemporary. Laura currently has a solo exhibition at Hastings Museum & Art Gallery entitled Plants Make Places, which opened on 23rd August 2025 and runs until 1st February 2026. The exhibition which received Arts Council funding is part of a wider community project exploring how plants shape the places we live and our identities, and includes work produced in collaboration with project partners.

<https://lauraribbons.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.

Preparation Requirements & Additional Costs

Wk	Date	Topic/Activity	Location & Tutor	What to bring	Model
1	14/01/26	We will explore the qualities of watercolour and associated techniques (including wet-on-wet vs. dry brush techniques, layering) through a range of colour studies, culminating in the creation of a larger abstract colour study on paper. Students will also be taught how to stretch their own paper.	Laura Ribbons	<i>Note: Although materials are specified per session, please ensure you have the complete list to hand.</i> A3 Watercolour paper (pad or loose sheets), sketchbook (size of your preference), brushes, 1 x larger brush (for washes), watercolours, palette.	No
2	21/01/26	You will be introduced to Indian ink; we will look at the qualities, properties and examples of use of ink and different items that can be used to draw with inks (dip pen, brush, stick) and make a series of quick studies. Working from still life in the studio, we will spend half our time making a study in ink and half our time creating a watercolour study (thinking back to colour studies of previous week) and produce two observational works by the end of the session (one monochrome, one colour study).	Laura Ribbons	A3 watercolour paper, cartridge paper, watercolour paint, brushes, palette.	No

3	28/01/26	Trip: We will spend the whole day working at the British Museum. We will create works from life in watercolour using a limited colour palette. We will pay particular attention to the relationship between architecture, people and objects.	Laura Ribbons	Watercolour paints, brushes, watercolour pencils (if desired), small sketchbook(s), tissue/ kitchen roll, pot for water, OR a 'water brush' - see materials list, may be helpful.	No
4	04/02/26	This week, you will have the opportunity to explore working at scale/ across different surfaces and creating your own composition - you may want to use sketches you created last week on the trip as inspiration. You will be provided with a large roll of paper and/ or material and will decide how you want to support your surface, constructing it in the space (i.e. whether pinned to walls, flat on floor/table, draped over chairs or a combination of all of the above). We will utilise studies made at the British Museum in combination with plants/objects in the studio to create a large scale painting/drawing.	Laura Ribbons	Sketchbooks, brushes, masking tape, watercolours, palette.	No
5	11/02/26	PM: We will explore working from figures using both inks and watercolour and students will be introduced to the idea of using a limited colour palette and shown examples of artists who do this. AM: In the morning we will make a series of studies using inks, we will also look at how we	Laura Ribbons	Small sketchbook (s), watercolours, palette, A3 paper - loose sheets, a stick.	Yes - all day

		could use a limited colour palette and different ways of 'drawing' with lines and alternately using forms/washes. PM: In the afternoon students will be introduced to some examples of artists who use watercolour or inks for portraits/models and will do one or two longer studies in watercolour.			
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Reading Week 16/02/26 - 20/02/26

6	25/02/26	AM: Visit to Red Cross Garden (weather permitting!) (for morning sketching), we will focus on different textures found in the gardens (additionally, we may collect any materials found in the garden/en route that can be used later for application of texture). PM: Returning to the studio, you will use source material gathered in your sketchbooks to create work focused on texture. You will have the opportunity to utilise 'alternative' materials to enhance the texture of your work (e.g. sticks, seeds, sponges, wax crayons and anything brought from home).	Laura Ribbons	* Bring layers appropriate for working outside!* Watercolours, palette brushes, pencils, sketchbooks, paper, kitchen roll/tissue, a handful of additional materials brought from home that might add texture (to be used in the afternoon) -think your old toothbrush, sponge, dried grass, seeds, leaves, sticks, citrus fruit string bags, old credit cards. Etc, 1 x A3 sheet for afternoon working.	No
7	04/03/26	Students will be asked to incorporate one non-traditional 'paint' into their work today (i.e. coffee, beetroot etc). Students will be introduced to artists who use alternative 'paints' and/ or who have	Laura Ribbons	Watercolours, brushes, at least one alternative 'paint', sketchbooks, any additional materials/objects that might be useful for your piece* *If desired this may feed into personal projects.	No

		expanded the language of what can be considered a 'watercolour'. With this in mind students will create or design a work in response to this idea of an expanded definition, as well as being introduced to different approaches to working i.e. using collage as a starting point, working on alternative shapes and surfaces etc.			
8	11/03/26	Begin your self-directed project utilising still-life/gathered source material/imagery/ to create a composition /series of compositions using watercolour and/or inks (as desired).	Laura Ribbons	Watercolours, brushes, pencils, sketchbooks, A3 paper, tissue, palette. (any other materials desired by student to be used in personal project),	No
9	18/03/26	Continue working on and complete your self-directed project utilising desired materials.	Laura Ribbons	Watercolours, brushes, pencils, sketchbooks, A3 paper, tissue, palette. (any other materials desired by student to be used in personal project),	No
10	25/03/26	Continue working on and complete your self-directed project utilising desired materials. PM: Critique to finish.	Laura Ribbons	Watercolours, brushes, pencils, sketchbooks, A3 paper, tissue, palette. (any other materials desired by student to be used in personal project),	No

YOU MUST BRING YOUR OWN MATERIALS

There is a materials cost of £15 which includes some materials for the course. You will need to gather a collection of watercolour brushes and implements - small and large up to 2-3cm in flats, filberts, rounds, chinese, dipping pen and anything else which makes marks you enjoy.

Make sure you have a range of watercolour paper and watercolour sketchbooks, as you'll often need to work across multiple surfaces - a smaller watercolour sketchbook (A5 - A6 may be beneficial when working outside).

A good quality cartridge paper sketchbook is also useful.

We will use full sheets of paper so it may be better to buy paper in larger formats which you can cut down. The Academy stocks a small selection of A1 watercolour papers but other than this all materials will need to be sourced elsewhere.

Below is a list of these materials you are required to provide for the course. Please also check the 'what to bring*' sections above. Your tutor will advise if further materials or equipment are required as the course progresses.

Essentials:

- Simple watercolour starter brush selection, such as:
<https://www.jacksonsart.com/en-us/pro-arte-polar-brush-wallet-set-of-5-2-4-6-8-round-3-8-flat> or <https://www.cassart.co.uk/cass-art-synthetic-brush-set-of-6--c/>
- At least one large flat-headed brush (to students preference) for washes (students on a budget: consider a soft decorator's brush from a hardware store - these will be considerably cheaper):
<https://www.jacksonsart.com/en-us/silver-brush-atelier-hake-short-handle-flat-size-4in-100mm-wide>
- Small set of watercolour pans (for use out and about):
<https://www.cassart.co.uk/winsor-newton-cotman-including-1-artists-quality-watercolour-sketchers-pocket-box-of-12-half-pan---cass-exclusive--c/>
- **Or** if you prefer: watercolour tubes, in colours: viridian, alizarin crimson, cadmium yellow, cadmium red, ultramarine blue (these will mostly be present in sets of pans):
https://www.jacksonsart.com/en-us/jacksons-artists-watercolour*
- Watercolour palette (whatever students have available, could be simple plastic palette, ice-cream tub, old plate, small glass panel etc. or something like this: <https://www.cassart.co.uk/loxley-plastic-daisy-palette--c/>
* please note most sets of watercolour pans also comprise a small palette.
- Small watercolour sketchbook(s) for working out and about, A4, A5 or A6 - Seawhites are a good quality less-expensive brand:
<https://www.cassart.co.uk/search.php?nav-menu-quick-search=watercolour%20sketchbook&page=1&limits=36>
- A water holding paint brush (students have used these on previous courses to good effect when working outside and it will be safer when we are working in museums).
https://www.hobbycraft.co.uk/shore-marsh-water-brush-set-6-pack/6685491000.html?glCountry=GB&store=68&gclid=aw.ds&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20483624076&gbraid=0AAAAADnvm3J-XpylL7LLRWKXCA2UMI4dv&gclid=Cj0KCQjw5jHBhDHARIsAB0YqzBGlgervoXwwZqo90SSZknXo6JB_9Jle4l8YV1m2qD-e7UoxMpT1saAo9REALw_wcB
- Watercolour pad of A3 paper (gummed pads stop the paper buckling) such as:
<https://www.jacksonsart.com/en-us/bockingford-watercolour-papers-pads-white>
- Some additional watercolour sheets/tear out pad (A3 ideal).
- A few sheets of cartridge paper suitable for ink (A3 size)
- Transportable water pot with lid (jam jars are ideal)
- A suitable bag to carry your equipment out and about

***Students may use pans or tubes or a combination - we will spend at least 1 session working at a larger scale, so tubes may be easier for this, please ensure whatever you use colours include the 3 primaries, alizarin crimson and viridian.**

Additional (not essential, but if desired):

- Mop Brush (size 2 or above): <https://www.jacksonsart.com/en-us/roman-szmal-synthetic-squirrel-brushes>
- Fan brush: <https://www.jacksonsart.com/en-us/pro-arte-prolene-synthetic-watercolour-brushes-79011>
- Sponges: <https://www.jacksonsart.com/en-us/handover-natural-sea-sponges>
- Dip pen and nibs: <https://www.cassart.co.uk/manuscript-student-artist-calligraphy-dip-pen-set--c/>
- Black Indian ink will be made available, but if you would like any other colours, these can be purchased as individual pots or as a set:
<https://www.cassart.co.uk/winsor-newton-henry-collection-ink-pack-of-8-14ml--c/>
- Masking fluid (if student has used this before and finds it helpful, please do not worry about purchasing this as it is absolutely **not** essential)

NB **DO NOT USE** detergent of any kind when washing brushes, water bottles or pots!

Resources & Further Reading

Please note reading lists are suggested, not required.

Author	Year	Title	Publisher	Location
Smith, A. (editor)	2011	<i>Watercolour</i>	Tate Publishing	London
Callum, I. & Colm, T.	2011	<i>Water, Colour</i>	Sean Kelly Inc	New York
Friedman, S.	2023	<i>Georgia O'Keefe: To See Takes Time</i>	MOMA	New York
Hessel, K.	2022	<i>The Story of Art Without Men</i>	Cornerstone	London

Other useful resources (websites, galleries etc)

- Callum Innes, Tate Shots: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2aunPHTe_I
- Chris Offili: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/ofili-untitled-t07503>
- Emma Larson: <https://www.instagram.com/zebrakadebra/?hl=en>
- Lauren Tamaki (look especially at 'Portraits', 'Food' and 'People Doing Things': <http://laurentamaki.com/>
- Arjuna Gunarathne (nice examples of coloured inks): <https://www.arjunagunarathne.com/>
- Julija Skudutyte (examples of trad style used in contemporary way): <https://julijaskudutyte.com/>
- Luiz Zerbini (look at for dynamic compositions): <https://www.stephenfriedman.com/artists/57-luiz-zerbini/>
- Jaakko Mattila (incredible colour/light studies): <https://www.jaakkomattila.fi/>
- Luci Eyers: <https://www.lucieyers.org.uk/luci/home.html>
- Jose Saboritt (look specifically at his plant paintings): <https://www.instagram.com/josesaborit/?hl=en>

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

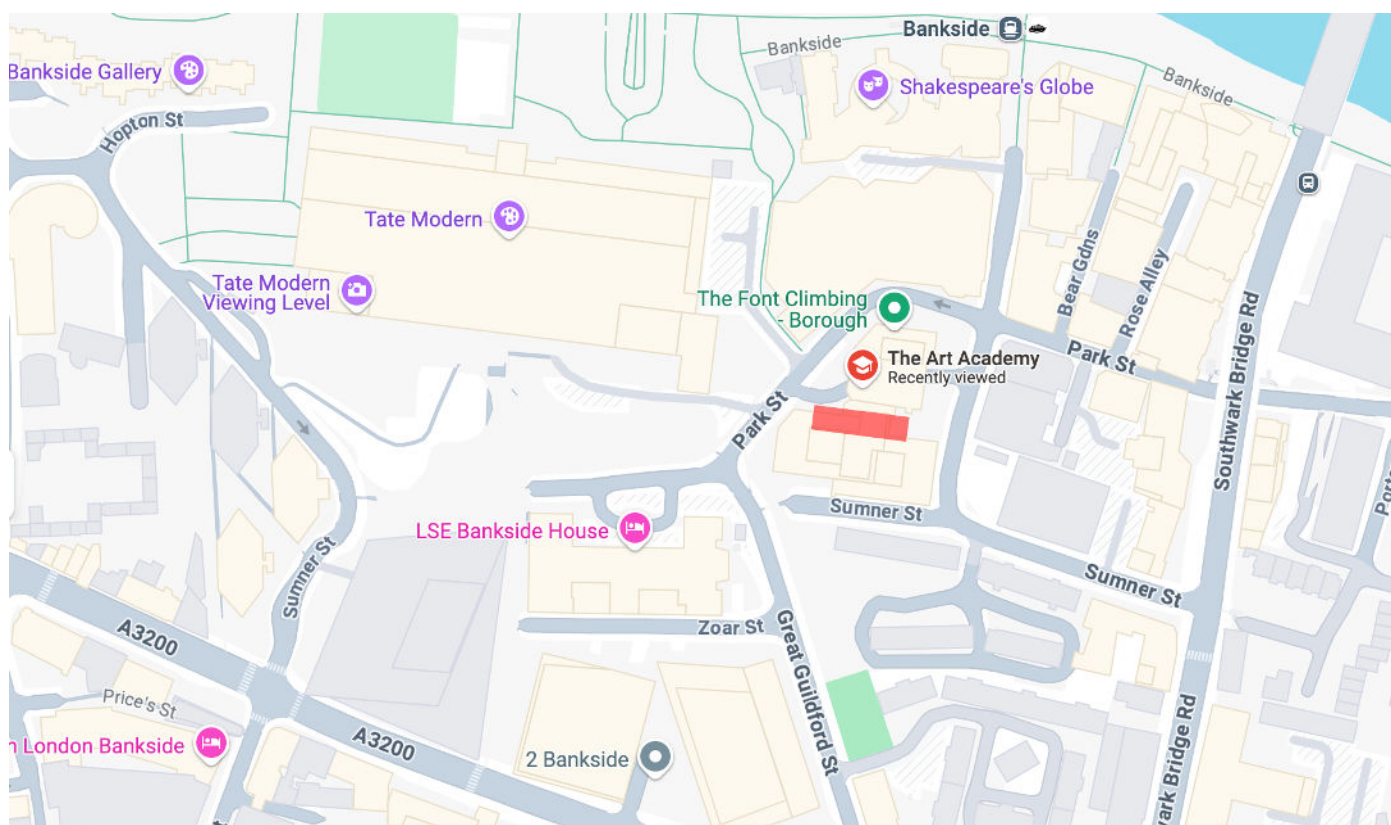
Locations - (Please check course location at the top of this document)

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.