

# **Paint Fit – Autumn Studio Retreat 2026**

**Get into your studio and feel confident to work freely and with focus.**

**10 day challenge** (*live online with Emily in her studio each day*).

**Tutor - Emily Ball**

**Dates October 26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>st</sup> & November 2<sup>nd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> 2026**

**(Monday – Friday each week). 10am - 11.15 am each day**

**Course fee - £250**

This annual course has been very successful and popular with artists. They have found it incredibly helpful and informative for their practise; enabling them to break out of feeling stuck and then onto producing personal and exciting work with confidence and renewed curiosity and energy. It is all about motivating artists to get working in their studio every day, for 10 days. With daily input from Emily as your Paint Fit Trainer, the course will encourage you to make a positive commitment to your practice and instil a daily work ethic that will become an essential part of your painting routine that continues after the course ends.

Live from her studio via Zoom, Emily will provide an hour-long workshop each morning, for two weeks (Monday to Friday). These sessions will set you up for the day, providing motivation and demonstrating different techniques. A daily warm up exercise will help focus the attention on being clear and playful; maximising the potential of the materials for your mark making language. The exercises will help you be more fluent with improvisation, phrasing, repetition and creating an exciting visual language that is personal and relevant to the subject; helping you to be 'Paint Fit' and ready for the rest of the day.

This year there will be bonus preparation videos that you can receive two months before the live online course that explore what it means to make studies to support and inspire your paintings. These will include drawing exercises and suggested research approaches. She will share how she prepares her ideas and work before she starts a collection of paintings. Preparing thoroughly and feeling immersed and connected to what ever your subject is makes the process of making the paintings much more rewarding and gives a flow to the work. By preparing in this way you will have a lot of rich material that will feed all future work and help you find what your focus is during the Paint Fit course.

In the live painting sessions Emily will give you the tools and courage to find a way forward to make your paintings; developing the expressive qualities that are essential to make the work have the feeling that you want. It can be tough to keep going on your own and it is easy to sometimes feel despondent, so working as a group can help us keep our courage up. There is no individual feedback given by Emily during these sessions but there will be break out rooms for discussion on 4 afternoons during the 2 week course to give the opportunity to meet the other students and also share thoughts and inspiration. There will also be a private

Facebook group that you can join to share and discuss your work each day. Emily is part of this group and will also offer comment and suggestions if you are stuck. By the end of the 2 weeks you will have made a lot of work, got into a routine of being in your space and also be armed with some processes and strategies for continuing forward. Emily does not provide the subject matter: you will have this already. So, to get the most out of this course, it is essential that you have lots of studies and perhaps paintings that are already in progress to build and improvise from.

*Emily is also happy to give you a tutorial online a few weeks before the course to help you prepare enough studies and feel engaged with your subject. Some students also find it helpful to have a tutorial after the Paint Fit course to review progress and plan the next steps forward. A one hour tutorial costs £70 and half an hour is just £35. Email emily to arrange dates and times [emily@emilyball.net](mailto:emily@emilyball.net)*

## **Course details**

### **Nurture a community**

Being part of this experience also connects like-minded artists together. A shared experience is very powerful and liberating. There will be some time set aside for discussions in Zoom break out rooms each week. We will have a private Facebook group where ideas and work can be shared daily. You can continue to use the group after the course has finished to help sustain that sense of camaraderie and supporting that you will have enjoyed during the course. If you use Instagram, this can be used as another platform to share your work and progress.

### **What does it do?**

PAINT FIT motivates artists to get working in their studio every day, for 10 days. It will help artists make a positive commitment to their practice. To recognise that turning up daily in their studio is an essential part of being an artist ; it's what they do, who they are. Emily is leading you each day as your motivator and Paint Fit trainer!! The exercises are designed to help you feel focused and limber up to be ready to paint for the rest of the day.

### **Who is it for?**

This is for artists who need more courage and are feeling stuck, or tired; lacking the energy to motivate themselves and push to keep working regularly. It is for artists who wants their work to be more expressive and yet their courage falters when they are on their own in their studio. If the artist wants to dive into their project and paint from day 1 of the course then they need to have a subject already. They will need lots of studies and perhaps paintings that are already in progress for us to build and improvise from. Or, alternatively, they can use these 2 weeks to start a brand new project and apply the exercises and motivation to make studies ready to work from.

This fee includes:

- Pre-course videos two months before the course. These have suggestions for how to make drawings, studies and do research about your chosen subject. This preparation will provide you with essential material to work from, bring you closer to your subject, give you confidence and clarity in your decision making when you are painting.
- A list of all the materials you need for each of the 10 live sessions will be emailed to you one week before the course.
- A one and a quarter hours live Zoom workshop each day, for 10 days. 10am – 11.15am each day. The Zoom link will be emailed to you two days before the course. The live sessions are run and filmed by Luke Stuart. He makes sure that, as the viewer, you get close ups of all the exercises, materials and processes.
- Each morning Zoom meeting will be recorded by Emily. At the end of the first session you will be emailed a link to access all the recordings. You only need this one link to view all of the 10 days recordings. You have access to view these for 30 days after the last day of the course.
- Four afternoon Zoom meetings (two each week) where there will be the opportunity for question and answers in break out rooms but also out loud to the whole group. You meet the other artists and discuss what you are finding helpful and where there needs more explanation and development.
- If a student lives in a different time zone and cannot join the live class then we are can give them a link to the recording.
- There is a Facebook group page created for students on this course. You can add photos of your work here and give each other feedback. Please add a friends request to **Paint Fit – Studio Retreat**.

We will be using **Zoom** for our Video Communication. It is really easy to use. You will be emailed a password and login to enable you to join the meeting at the specified time. Emily will be online half an hour before the workshop starts (9.30 am) so you can check in earlier so that you can be ready and waiting.

**After the course if you would like one to one feedback with Emily using Zoom she would be very happy to book you an appointment. Please arrange this with Emily and contact her via [emily@emilyball.net](mailto:emily@emilyball.net) The cost of this tutorial is £70 for a one hour and £35 for a half hour meeting.**

**If you need to stock up with materials then Seawhite can deliver an order to you. If you use the code EB10 you will receive a 10% discount when you purchase materials through Artesaver <https://www.artesaver.co.uk/>**

## **Gathering inspiration and resources**

The pre-course films will help you prepare. You need to have a theme or subject that will be your focus for the paintings. Something that really excites you and feels important; an extension of yourself and your values. I would strongly recommend that you have lots and lots of studies where you have investigated your subject. These are not plans for how the final paintings will look they are to help you engage, look, unpack and start finding out what is important to you about your subject. This process of searching and finding out will continue in the paintings too but you will need a reservoir of experience and information to play with to give you lots of options. Be inquisitive and playful. Don't settle for ordinary or studies that tell you what you already know. New marks, shapes, colours, connections can be there to dip into as you work.

Even if you are continuing an existing project making new studies will be helpful. If you wish to use the course as a way of starting a new project then this a perfect way to get started and progress in a confident way.

Artists can book a tutorial before Paint Fit starts to help them clarify what they want to do and how to go about it. Some also find it invaluable to have a tutorial at the end of Paint Fit to review progress and create a personal plan for the next stage of the work. This helps keep the momentum going. I would strongly recommend that when you put the course in your diary, as committed time to work, that you also book out the following week after the course has ended. You will be on a roll and need to keep working and also digest and review what you have done.

## **How students need to prepare their studio and stock up**

### **You will need to organise your work space.**

Make sure that you have enough room to work, and as much wall space as possible to put up studies and paintings as you go through the two weeks.

Will you be working at an easel, flat on a table, on the floor or straight onto the wall? Or perhaps a mixture of all of these, space permitting. Consider how you would like to use your space in a way that feels inspiring and allows room for plenty of experimentation. You could set up different work stations and get materials ready for each one to allow you to smoothly transition from each process to the next. Be organised. It will really help the flow of your work and keep your head clear too.

### **Gather and prepare your materials (a specific list of what to prepare for each session will be sent the week before)**

#### **Paper**

- Every day you will need to be able to put your hands on some paper to make studies and do the exercises.

- If you can purchase a pack of Cartridge A1 220gm from Seawhite this would be perfect for general use
- A pack (ream) of A3 photocopy paper will be helpful for one of the days as our starting point.
- Smaller sheets A3 or A2 will also be helpful to make smaller quick studies but also to use for collaging.
- If you are working with oils then there may be occasions when I recommend working on Arches Oil paper (you can purchase this from Jacksons Art online) or perhaps Fabriano Artistico HP 300gm (Seawhite sell this) so that you have a tougher surfaces to work on that could be turned into paintings out of the exercises.

### **Other surfaces to paint on**

You may like to continue doing all of your work on paper. This would be fine. You may like to work on stretched canvas or loose canvas stapled to a board or the wall. Primed boards are another option. Any of these are good. If you know what shape and size you want to paint on, then stock up so that perhaps you have 6 all the same.

### **Paints**

Stock up with whatever you like to use. Have generous quantities of all of your colours and work with the best that you can afford. I will most likely be working in oils with a medium that is a 50/50 mix of solvent and linseed stand oil. This both makes the paint flow more freely and speeds up the drying time significantly. You will need lots of rags too!

### **Mediums for acrylics**

Ideally acrylics should be diluted with acrylic mediums NOT water. So please have some acrylic mediums that say they will increase the flow and transparency of the paint. Some offer the option of increasing the gloss as well. That is up to you. I quite like glossy but some artists prefer matt. I use Golden gloss medium. This makes the paint flow but also adds a glossy sheen to the colour. I also like to use Liquitex gloss medium and varnish.

<https://www.greatart.co.uk/liquitex-gloss-medium-varnish-oxid.html>

### **Brushes**

It is still important to have lots of brushes and ones that hold a good amount of paint to aid the flow and distribution over the surface of the paper. For bigger brushes I frequently go to hardware and decorating shops. Good makes of artists quality large brushes I buy are Princeton and Omega. You can order these from Broodie and Middleton.

<https://www.brodies.net/index.php/catalogsearch/result/?cat=0&q=Omega+brushes>

I recommend having a few palette knives too, of differing shapes and sizes.

### **Palette**

I have a very large perspex palette to mix my oil colours on. You also might like to mix small or large pots of colours so that you can keep them sealed to use again. For acrylics you can create a 'stay wet palette' as well. I do this by covering a large piece of perspex with 3 or 4 layers of kitchen roll. I then wet this generously and finally cover with sheets of white

greaseproof paper. This creates a cool, damp environment and prevents the paint from drying up too quickly. I also add a little 'Retarder' to the paint. This medium when mixed into the paint slows down the drying time, giving you several hours of working time without wasting the paint.

**Other materials –**

Oil bars (particularly black and white but I have lots of colours), Black Indian ink, Coloured Sennelier inks, felt tip pens, charcoal sticks, masking tape, a glue stick and scissors will also be useful.

***Any queries regarding the things on this list please email me with questions.  
emily@emilyball.net***