

CONSTRUCTING A LANDSCAPE PAINTING

Tutor - Joe Packer

Dates – May 6th - 8th 2026

Cost - £300

A 3 day course during which you will 'construct' up to three large (A1+) paintings Heavy duty paper, using quick drawings and paintings made from nature through a variety of approaches, as a your visual resource. We will work in an outside space, weather permitting, a nearby wood on the first day. You will gather visual material, working first in black and white, and then progressing to colour. Making a series of quick drawings and paintings on paper, recording interesting forms, light and shadows, perhaps getting in quite close and intimate with the woodland undergrowth rather than recording the overall vista. This accumulated visual information will then be used as the starting materials and basis with which to embark on the larger paintings back at the studio on days 2 and 3. You will use these as both a resource to work from and as materials that may be directly employed as part of your larger paintings in a collage capacity. You will be experimenting with a whole variety of painting processes, including- collage, experimental mark making, glazing, and paint transfer methods.

The intention of the course will be to look at ways in which painting/collage methods can be used to make something that constructs a space or spaces within a painting, capturing an essence of a place rather than creating an illusionistic 'view, of it. We will explore the idea of a painting being something that can both evoke the feel, or atmosphere of a place without trying to depict it in a literal way, whilst also trying to make something that functions as a self-contained thing in its own right. The idea of its existence justified by its own internal 'visual poetry'. You will be encouraged to think about painting in these terms during the course. The 2 or 3 large paintings will be worked on simultaneously in order to avoid the idea of 'a final finished piece' to ensure experimentation is not hindered by preciousness in the later stages. The purpose of the course, is to explore paintings potential through these processes, and the exciting possibilities they offer.

Day 1- For the preliminary works, we will travel to the woods. We will begin working only in black and white, drawing from what we see and exploring a range of different ways of recording visual information. Working quickly, and not dwelling on one drawing for too long, you will be experimenting with a variety of approaches and mark-making techniques using charcoal, brushes and other implements. You will also experiment with using different consistencies of black paint, combining thin washes with thicker applications. You will be encouraged to keep the painting loose, rather than getting bogged down in too much detail, responding to the interesting forms, interplays of light and shadows, and other visual stimuli around you. In the afternoon we will continue this approach but then you will also be using colour to respond to your surroundings. These quick paintings will provide the resource materials and base components with which to commence the larger paintings on Day 2.

Day 2- will be a day of exploring through visual play, using the day one quick drawings and paintings to work from, and/or cutting up and re assembling some them to use as collage components directly, as you begin work on your larger pieces. You will be playing around with the possibilities of different spatial arrangements and continuing with experimental mark making and using some of the paintings for paint transfer techniques. You will see how, through this approach, space in a painting can be constructed.

Day 3 -Will be a continuation of working on the 2-3 large paintings. You will now also start employing glazing processes in your investigations, building the paintings up in layers, using thin paint, so that evidence of the paintings 'history', becomes an inherent part of the work. How, as the pieces start taking on their own identity, the decision making starts to become something dictated by the pieces themselves as much as from your preliminary resource work. Creating paintings which are unexpected and couldn't have been pre-planned. You will gain an understanding of how a painting can have its own internal visual logic.

By the end of the course we will have seen how a Landscape painting doesn't have to be arrived at just through direct 'from life' observation, but can evolve through a range of processes, representing our experience of the landscape in a different way.

There will be practical demonstrations at appropriate points each day.

Day 1- Experimenting with mark making, making the quick drawings and paintings out in our environment, prepping the large paper sheets ready for day 2.

Day 2- Commence working on the large paintings, cutting and pasting some of the resource work from day one, experimenting with mark making, paint transfer, and collage processes.

Day 3- Continue working on the large paintings, experimenting with glazing techniques, changing and reworking the paintings, and responding intuitively, and not being afraid to make big changes where it is felt needed, to bring the paintings to a visual resolution.

By the end of the course

You will have explored the idea of 'building a painting' using an experimental intuitive approach, and how to think about a painting as a self-contained thing in its own right with its own intrinsic space and internal visual logic.

You will have established how visual decision making that, evolves, changes, and remains fluid during the making process, and your own critical judgments during this process, can lead to a much more interesting painting than trying execute a more pre-planned idea.

You will have explored a wide range of ways of using paint and other materials, and how to exploit their physical properties to your advantage.

You will have considered the complexities of the picture plane, with regards to space, spatial arrangements upon it, and its potential as complex arena, and the myriad of possibilities it has to offer.

You will need-

3 large sheets of heavy gauge paper (at least A1 size) 300gsm +

A good supply of regular cartridge paper (min 2xA4 pads)

A good supply of newsprint paper

At least 1 pack of assorted colour card or paper (min 25 sheets)

Any other paper materials you may have lying around

Black and white, and a good range of colour, acrylic paints, sufficient in quantity to make both the multitude of quick paintings, and for the three large paintings.

Charcoal, soft thick pencils (4B+)

chalks, colour pencils etc if you have them, not essential, but the more mark making possibilities the better.

A good range of brushes, artists brushes- round and flat hog hair and softer synthetic bristle in a variety of sizes, plus household DIY brushes 1-4''

Palette knife, paint rags.

A water pot with a lid or a water bottle, and smaller pots/tins for mixing (tuna tins or similar are good)

PVA glue (min 1000ml)

Masking tape

Acrylic varnish- clear, satin or gloss, (min 1000ml) this can be bought from a DIY or hardware store, (ensure it says 'wash brushes in water' on the tin)

Scissors, Stanley knife.

A hair dryer, to speed up drying times.

An Art box or some sort of container or bag for carrying materials needed for the woods trip on day one.

Folding stool or chair if you have one, light enough to bring on woods trip.