

## Floribunda 2 (Online) – Colour and Gesture

### Course notes

Tutor - Emily Ball (filmed at the Seawhite Studio in Partridge Green, W.Sussex)

Cost - £130

#### **Day 1**

**The Colours** – Starting paintings straight away. Identifying the colours of the flowers, leaves, buds, stems, shadows and mixing them. Exploring how to get the luminosity, the silky, the rough, transparent and chunky matt qualities of the plants. Using these mixed colours to paint areas of shape and surface onto good quality surfaces – such as arches oil paper for oil paint, fabiano artistico for acrylics, canvas or boards for either. Making experimental beginnings arranging colours on top of each other to create the depth, shimmer and dance of light. I would recommend not working too large and to have between 6 – 9 prepared surfaces for paintings.

#### **Day 2**

**The Gestures** – Starting new paintings and continuing the previous days work. Thinking about what tools to use: fat or thin brushes, rags, feathers fingers, pouring, scraping, scribbling, dabbing. What is the gesture needed: the speed, the direction, tilt, bend, flow, journey, the tangle, the silky shelf, the velvet crumpled petals? How do you navigate and describe the chaos and jungle of complexity? How do you attempt to capture the elegance, fragility and dance of individual stems and flowers? This is what we will explore. With exercises that are releasing and eye opening we will explore the language and content that marks can offer.

#### **Day 3**

**The Images and Motifs** - Continuing the paintings started. Taking away the flower still life set up and working only with the studies and the paintings that have been started on Days 1 & 2. We will develop the paintings through selecting, editing, emphasising and inventing. Composing in this way relies on our responses to the language, listening and looking to see what feels right and pertinent. Working in series is very helpful in this process. We are finding out what our experience might look like using the colour and gestures that we have noticed and created.

**If you need to stock up with materials then Seawhite are delivering orders.**

**<https://www.artesaver.co.uk/>**

**When you get to the check out enter the code EB10 to get 10% discount. This offer is for orders through the website only NOT in their showroom.**

### **How you need to prepare**

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

Make sure that you have enough room to work, and some wall space to put up studies and paintings as you go through the week. Allow space for your Floribunda set up, considering the light quality and backdrop that you prefer.

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.

### **Set up your collection of plants and flowers.**

Think of this as gathering resources rather than as a set arrangement that you will then try to copy. There could be pots of flowers from your garden. You may have beautiful vases (hierlooms, charity shop buys, a gift from a loved one) that you fill with gathered cut flowers from your garden. Even the weeds in my garden seem rather beautiful at the moment (Forget me nots and Dandelions seem to glow in a little drinking glass I have on my window sill). Maybe you go for a daily walk and come back with a handful of picked wild flowers to enjoy through the day. A mixture of all of these is fine. Enjoy the process of arranging them and the extraordinary variety and contrast of different plants side by side or jumbled together.

### **Gather and prepare your materials.**

#### **Paper for finished paintings**

- With acrylics make sure the paper is no less than 300gms in weight. To make finished paintings you will need between 6 – 9 cut to size (I am working on cut A3 size paper in the films). If you work quickly then go for 9.
- With oils the paper does not necessarily need to be sized or primed. Again the heavier and better quality paper is preferable. It is actually rather lovely working straight onto unsealed paper in oils. It stains and dries very quickly. The only thing you must be aware of is that with thick areas of paint, in time, there will be an oily halo appear around the paint, as the oil leaches into the surrounding bare paper. This is not something I dislike, but just so you know. You may prefer to prime your paper. A couple of thin coats of acrylic primer, gesso or household white emulsion would be good.
- My preferred paper is Arches Oil paper. This is pre-sized and a beautiful surface to work on.

### **If you prefer to paint on Canvas or Board**

#### **Canvas**

Stretched canvas on a frame, or loose primed canvas off a roll (this could be wrapped around a board to give a firm surface to work on or stapled to the wall). Again 6 - 9 of the same shape and size required, as you will be working series.

#### **Boards to paint on**

Prepared artists boards. Seawhite sell unprimed wooden cradles which are lovely to work on. Priming might be a good idea but some artists rather like the unprimed surface too. Smooth cardboard or mountboard are options too. (6 - 9 of the same shape and size).

### **Paints and other materials**

#### **A guide to what colours to use in both acrylics and oils**

The following list of colours enable you mix a fantastic range of colours. (No need to buy earth colours or greens).

Titanium White, Azo yellow (acrylics only), Lemon Yellow, Cadmium Yellow, Indian Yellow, Cadmium Red or Vermillion, Alizarin Crimson, Magenta, Cobalt Blue, Cerulean Blue, Ultramarine Blue and Phthalo Blue. I also treated myself to Quinacridone Rose which is a fabulous colour to use for pink and red flowers, but more expensive.

I also frequently use **Oil Sticks** as well as the paint. My preferred make is Markal but I also R & F Oil Sticks. I treat myself to colours that I would never think to mix. A white oil stick is incredibly useful.

### **Mediums and equipment for oils and acrylics**

**Oils** - In my own studio I never use White spirit or Turpentine. It is highly toxic and smelly. I recommend Shellsol T which you can buy from Jacksons Art supplies, or A P Fitzpatrick (this is a solvent which is an alternative to white spirit to clean your brushes with and thin the oil paint). I recommend that you use a 'Drying medium' (to speed up the drying time). I use a 50/50 mix of Linseed Stand oil and Shellsol T. I find this mix odourless and very effective. If you cannot get hold of either of these open all your doors and windows to get lots of ventilation and use the mediums you already have.

**Lots of Rags** - I use rags to paint with a lot. So a good supply of cotton rags are essential.

**Acrylics** - Ideally when you want to dilute acrylics this should be done 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. Liquitex and Golden sell a good range of mediums. If you want to slow down the drying time of the paint then also buy some Retarder.

### **Brushes for Oils and Acrylics**

It is important to have lots of brushes in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Avoid having too many flat brushes instead buy Filberts, Rounds, Liners/Riggers. For bigger brushes I frequently go to hardware and decorating shops. Good makes are Princeton and Omega for large brushes. You will definitely need a couple of rigger brushes. These are traditionally used for water colour and have very long fine bristles, fantastic for delicate continuous lines. I recommend a few palette knives too, of differing shapes and sizes. Here are a suggestion of 3 types that you could get to add to your collection.

<https://www.russellandchapple.co.uk/index.php/omega-series-79.html>

<https://www.russellandchapple.co.uk/index.php/omega-series-59-6371.html>

<https://www.russellandchapple.co.uk/index.php/da-vinci-riggers-series-1285.html>

**Any queries about materials or course content please email [emily@emilyball.net](mailto:emily@emilyball.net)**