

Simply Still Life

April 1st - 4th 2025 (Tuesday – Friday)

Tutor Katie Sollohub

Course Fee £400

Suitable for all levels, including beginners.

Inspired by the 'Matisse in his Studio' exhibition, we will be creating simple still life set ups in the studio, bringing a sense of domestic space, through props, objects, fabrics and furniture. The way objects inhabit a space can be so evocative, suggesting something that has, or is about to happen, a half drunk cup, an open book. Still life has also been used by artists as a simple, manageable subject with which to play with much more universal themes, the play of light on forms, the effect of colour and pattern in a composition.

You will make a series of colour studies and paintings from group still life set-ups, paying special attention to fabrics and objects with sumptuous colour, pattern, texture. These different approaches will help you get to know the subject, and can then be applied to start a painting, giving you several ways in. You will start 2 or 3 paintings, and have time to work on them to some kind of resolution. Other artists that will provide inspiration are Morandi, Soutine, Braque, Winifred Nicholson, Gwen John, Bonnard and Tricia Gillman.

Course details

Day one: Tuesday 1st April

am introduction, discussing what objects mean to us, simple drawing exercises

pm intro to painting, demo mark making, start first 1 or 2 paintings with guided exercises

Day two: Wednesday 2nd April

am. warm up exercise in paint and/or drawing
start 2nd/3rd painting

pm. work on both/all 3 paintings

Day three: Thursday 3rd April

am. warm up quick small studies, using collage - to encourage play and improvisation

pm. continue on all 3 paintings, changing them in response to small studies. Move around the room, different viewpoints, to encourage change and editing

Day four: Friday 4th April

am warm up exercise as needed, one to one tuition, resolving one or more paintings

pm. finishing off, reflecting, review the work, peer discussion.

BEFORE THE COURSE:

Consider bringing 2 or 3 objects that you love from your home. These will be incorporated into group still lives. You do not need to do any visual preparation, but it would be useful if you do take some time to consider your relationship to the everyday spaces of your own home. A corner of the room, table, chair and lamp, a pile of magazines, kitchen utensils on work surfaces, a windowsill. These spaces are often ignored, or filled up with clutter, yet they are vital for our lives, moments of rest and contemplation, objects of necessity, places of activity. You might make some drawings, take photos, make notes, as well as think about artists whose work reflects on the intimacy of still lives in domestic spaces (eg. Bonnard, Patrick Cauldfield, Gwen John, Winifred Nicholson, Matisse, Morandi)

COURSE MATERIALS

What you need to bring:

For drawing - charcoal, rags, rubber, pencil, pens and masking tape (fixative if you need, to be used outside only), coloured pastels or pens if you have them. The studio has stocks of drawing paper that you can purchase by the sheet.

For painting

- a range of colours, in oils or acrylics - starting with the basic - 2 reds (Alizirin, Cadmium); 2 yellows (lemon and cadmium); 2 blues (Cerulean or cobalt and Ultramarine). Plus white. From these you can mix a wide range of other colours, but if you have some additional favourites (eg magenta, turquoise, a yummy green, black or paynes grey) then do bring them.

- mixing mediums - gloss/matt, runny/thick, your choice, for oils or acrylics, to mix and help the paints flow, give body, do glazes, layer etc
- for acrylics, seawhite sell Vallejo gel medium and pouring medium
- for oils, NO TURPS OR WHITE SPIRIT - Zest it or Shell Sol T are good alternatives, for mixing, diluting colours, and cleaning brushes
- linseed oil is good for mixing with paints, though it extends drying time. Liquin and other mediums will help dry more quickly
- a range of brushes from small (rigger) to very large (including household brushes if you have them)
- pots with lids for oil mediums, any pots for acrylic
- a large palette (There are pots and palettes at the studio to borrow)
- kitchen towel and greaseproof paper to cover your palette
- rags, baby wipes
- 3 painting supports of your choice (canvas, board, paper) of the same shape and size, to work on all 3 during the course.
- a camera/phone camera to record your work in progress
- a sketchbook for notes and info, if you have one and like to use one