

Painting the Colour Theatre

A Pre-recorded course

Colourful experiments in observation and abstraction

Tutor Nick Bodimeade

Course fee - £130

You can have access to the films for as long as you need.

A three-day playful and experimental workshop in which you will make a minimum of 10 optically dynamic abstract paintings in response to a pair of evolving, highly coloured still lifes constructed in modified and painted cardboard boxes.

The paintings will be visually informed by the Colour Theatre still lifes but not be slavish copies.

Seeking instead a painterly visual equivalence for the three dimensional richness of the Theatres.

The Paintings and the Theatres will be changed in response to each other.

The workshop aims to establish an evolutionary and experimental working process, where learning and development can be clearly seen. To this end we will work on at least eight of the ten paintings simultaneously, but only working on the least successful whilst holding onto the best until they have been superseded. This requires making simple comparative value judgements and enables clearly understood progress to be made. If your worst paintings overtake what were previously your best you have clearly made progress.

Working intuitively and being attentive to, and trusting of, your personal responses is central to the development of the work.

We will work with a limited range of marks and forms in both the constructions and the paintings, essentially stripes, blocks and blobs. Think of how Howard Hodgkin manages to create extraordinary evocations of space, place and human presence from similarly restricted means.

The colour we use will be shared between the paintings and the Colour Theatres to help with colour matching and to help the supportive relationship between painting and subject.

The dramatic qualities of the Theatres and the paintings will be enhanced by the use directional lighting from a desk lamp, allowing shadows to play their role in creating relationships, dramatizing space and modifying colour and mood.

Paint manipulation is a core element of the course. Transparency and opacity, working in layers, fluidity and stiffness and other qualities will be explored through a range of application techniques.

There will be three 1hr instructional videos, one to start each day. In these Nick will demonstrate by making a number of still lifes and a total of 12 paintings. He will take you through the whole process from constructing the Colour Theatres to evaluating the paintings at the end of the workshop.

Day 1

Constructing and painting the Box theatres

Painting coloured grounds

First stage painting on all boards

Day 2

Second Stage painting.

Works put into Critical Hierarchy.
Work on the least successful paintings.
Modify Theatres in response to the evolving paintings

Day 3

Continue process from day 2.
Changing paintings and subject dramatically.
Simplification and Editing
Establish how to make dramatic changes to work using opaque paint and underpainting.
Evaluation and reflection.

By the end of the course-

You will have established working in series as a developmental tool.
You will have established an open-ended experimental approach where process is prioritized over product.
You will have explored painting in 3 dimensions and considered paintings relationship to other art forms. See the extraordinary painted installations of Jessica Stockholder.
You will have explored the relationship that can exist between observation and abstraction.
You will have established a process of making comparative critical judgements based on your own sensibility, and gained confidence in trusting your own judgments.

You will need

Enough space to work on a number of paintings at the same time and for your subject matter. You will also need an area to lay out your developing work so that you can evaluate it, this could be a studio wall or sheets of white paper on the floor.
A minimum of 2 shoebox or slightly larger sized cardboard boxes
A variety of simple forms which can be painted on. Cardboard tubes, small boxes, blocks of wood, plastic bottles, balls etc.
A directional lamp
A range of acrylic paint sufficient in quantity to paint the constructions as well as the paintings. I recommend the use of mid range acrylic such as Winsor and Newton Galeria, or Lukas Studio Acrylic. Cheaper acrylics will tend not to have the necessary pigment load to make overpainting viable. The best acrylic such as Golden or Lascaux are expensive but the difference is noticeable.
White acrylic primer
Pots and palette for mixing
A range of cheap flat pastry type brushes from 10mm to 100mm
A minimum of 10 painting supports of approximately 30cm square. Ideally 6mm mdf or plywood [cut to size at a timber merchant] or cardboard, canvas board, heavy paper or canvases [the more paintings you make the more you will discover]
Some paper for experimentation
Rags or paper towel
Craft knife, scissors, tape, glue
Digital camera, phone or tablet for photography

Relevant Artists

Patrick Heron [mid career]
Howard Hodgkin
Peter Lanyon [constructions]

Joan Mitchell

Robert Rauschenberg's Combines

Jessica Stockholder

Cezanne, Picasso and Braque's approaches to still life as a laboratory for painting