

V&A Academy

INTRODUCTION TO WATERCOLOURS



Introduction



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Throughout this course, tutor Leo Crane will introduce you to the lively personality of watercolour. Each week, throughout a series of exercises, you will explore a different way to use this versatile medium, from luminous manuscript painting to precision illustration and spontaneous mark-making. By the end of the course, you will have tried out a variety of techniques, creating a mini portfolio of sample pieces and a final project.

The course is led by Leo Crane, author of *Contemporary Figures in Watercolour* (Pavilion, 2021) and lead artist of the award-winning watercolour animation *Nude Triumphant* (Animate Projects 2020).

Information

Mondays, 15 September – 20 October 2025

Afternoon Session 14:00 – 16:00

Evening Session 18:00 – 20:00 GMT

This course will be delivered online via Microsoft Teams. You will be issued with a V&A Academy Teams account and log in information prior to the start of the course.

Materials are not provided, please see a list of materials below.

There will be a maximum of 24 participants in the session.

Recordings of the sessions will be available for 6 weeks after the end of the course.

Suitable for complete beginners or those with some experience of watercolours.
Suitable for participants aged 18 and over.

MATERIALS & TOOLS

Materials for watercolours vary hugely. For this course, basic (cheaper) materials will do just fine. As you develop your individual practice, you will come to understand where it may be worth investing a little more. Please come along with the following:

Watercolour paints: A good selection of colours (doesn't matter if they are pans or tubes), e.g. lemon yellow, cadmium yellow, cadmium red, alizarin crimson, ultramarine, cobalt blue, viridian green, yellow ochre, raw umber, Chinese white (these are example colours only).

Brushes: One large flat brush, one medium round and one small round (synthetic bristles are fine)

Paper: 200gsm (at least), cold pressed (this has a slight texture to the surface)

White dish for mixing paint (flat, preferably ceramic)

Two containers (e.g. jam jars) for water

Kitchen roll

Rock salt

Clingfilm

Masking tape

Week One: Monday 15 September

Materials and Techniques

Online

Leo Crane

Introduction to brushes, paper, paints and how to apply them

Friday 19 September: Spotlight Session

Online

12:00 – 13:00

Leo Crane

Virtual Prints and Drawings study visit with Leo Crane

Week Two: Monday 22 September

From Opaque to Luminous

Online

Leo Crane

Overview of early manuscript painting; exploring opaque and transparent paints

Friday 26 September: Spotlight Session

Online

12:00 – 13:00

Varunika Saraf

Mughal Painting and its Influence with Varunika Saraf, Artist and Art Historian

Week Three: Monday 29 September

Illustration and Enchantment

Online

Leo Crane

Washes and line inspired by Dulac, Rackham and British watercolour illustration

Friday 03 October: Spotlight Session

Online

12:00 – 13:00

Joanna Layla

Virtual Studio visit with Joanna Layla, Fashion Illustrator

Week Four: Monday 06 October

Expressive Figures

Online

Leo Crane

Painting from life, quick poses, gestural marks

Friday 10 October: Spotlight Session

Online

12:00 – 13:00

Koshu Japanese Art

Sumi-e Painting with Koshu Japanese Art

Week Five: Monday 13 October

Live Session Rescheduled for 20 October

Friday 17 October: Spotlight Session

Online

12:00 – 13:00

Lucy Mayes

Pigments with Lucy Mayes, London Pigment

Week Six: Monday 20 October

Inner Energy

Online

Leo Crane

Overview of East Asian ink wash painting; tree study in sumi-e style

Friday 24 October: Spotlight Session

Online

12:00 – 13:00

Lottie Cole

Virtual Studio visit with Lottie Cole, Artist

Week Seven: Monday 27 October

Final project and individual feedback

Online

Leo Crane

Project brief and one-on-one tutorial time with a final group critique