

WORKSHOP Abstracting the Garden in Gouache: Inspired by Patrick Heron & Albert Irvin with Tessa Pearson ARWS

Price £115

Location RWS Gallery at Whitcomb Street

Date Wednesday 20th May 2026

Time 10.30am – 4.30pm

About the Workshop

Explore the energy and colour of plants and gardens through abstract gouache painting, inspired by the bold, vibrant work of Patrick Heron and Albert Irvin. In this workshop, you'll experiment with mark-making, layering, composition, and colour to create lively, expressive interpretations of botanical forms.

Suitable for all levels, the session encourages playful exploration, creativity, and a confident, hands-on approach to abstract painting.

Morning

- Initial introductions. Tessa will introduce the group to gouache and watercolour, and their differing properties.
- Tessa will introduce the group to the works of Patrick Heron and Albert Irvin, examining their technique.
- Tessa will lead a demonstration of techniques, including experimenting with aspects of transparency and opaqueness, wet in wet, layering, flat and textured.
- Students will be encouraged to experiment and paint their own samples. At this point you will not be concerned with subject matter, and the group will share ideas on possibilities.

Afternoon

- Break for lunch
- In the afternoon you will work on larger more finished paintings, sourcing abstract compositional ideas from your sketchbook material or photographs. Tessa will discuss her own process and working methods to create abstract ideas.
- She will work with you individually to discuss possible ways gouache would work with your own painting methods.
- Review: there will be a chance to view each other's work and an opportunity to ask questions.

About the Tutor

Tessa Pearson is a painter and printmaker living in the Surrey Hills, south of London. She graduated from the Royal College of Art in Printed Textile design, winning the Courtauld prize, and had a successful career selling hand painted fabrics all over the world from her London studio and gallery.

Transferring her skills, Tessa now uses painting as her preferred medium, working exclusively on paper with watercolour and silkscreen monotypes. Her influences have been many, from Matisse to Hodgkin and the bold colourists of mid twenty-first century painters Patrick Heron and Albert Irvin. Known for her exceptional use of colour, Tessa's recent work focusses on patterns and colour experienced in inspirational gardens both her own, and from her travels in Morocco, which she interprets in her very recognisable style.

Tessa has taught painting at every ability level for over 30 years and continues to enjoy inspiring and guiding painters in experimental techniques.

Materials

- **A selection of watercolours:** tubes of artist quality are best and should include a good range of reds/blues and yellows. Recommended colours are green gold, opera rose, lemon yellow, indigo, cerulean, perylene green, violet, neutral tint, ultramarine blue. Also, a tube of permanent white gouache is very useful.
- **Paper:** loose paper is best. A2 or A3 size, approximately 6-10 sheets, depending on how large/fast you work. Tessa recommends Saunders Waterford 300g NOT paper, but Bockingford A3 300g/140lb NOT paper is good value for experimenting.
- **Sketchbook or notebook:** a small sketchbook or notebook would be handy for notes.
- **Large watercolour palette**

- **Water pots:** two large water pots and some small plastic pots for larger amounts of wash.
- **Brushes:** bring what you have including a few older rough brushes. If you have to buy any, invest in a no.1 Isabey squirrel mop brush.
- **Oil pastels:** 'inscribe' student pastels work well or children's wax crayons.
- **Water soluble crayons:** 'Inktense' crayons (by Derwent) and Stabilo 'Woodies' both recommended.
- **Inks:** small bottle of black Indian ink and a few bottles of coloured inks, if you have them.
- **A stub of white candle**
- **Glue stick**
- **Scissors**
- **Kitchen roll**
- **Reference material:** please bring, if you can, a few flowers and a small vase container. You could also bring a sketchbook if you have relevant drawings.

Useful Links:

Patrick Heron: www.tate.org.uk/collection?aid=1278

Albert Irvin: artuk.org/discover/artworks/search/actor:irvin-albert-19222015/page/2

Tessa Pearson: www.tessapearson.com/watercolour

Location



RWS Gallery
3-5 Whitcomb Street
London
WC2H 7HA

Just off Trafalgar Square
Nearest tubes: Leicester Square and
Charing Cross

Nearby parking is very limited. There is a Q-Park multi-storey car park at the top of Whitcomb Street that charges around £9/hour. If you wish to travel by car we recommend checking nearby parking on parkopedia.com

Lunch & Refreshments

Lunch is not provided and it is recommended that you bring your own food and drink for the day, which can be consumed in the gallery. Students are welcome to use the gallery fridges to store their food and drink. There are also many cafes nearby including a Pret-a-Manger next door to the gallery.