



RWS

Royal Watercolour Society

WORKSHOP Everyday Characters: Observational Drawing Inspired by Sir Quentin Blake with Julia Midgley RWS

Price £115

Location RWS Gallery at Whitcomb Street

Date Friday 15th May 2026

Time 10.30am – 4.30pm

About the Workshop

Explore the joy of capturing people and everyday moments with lively, expressive line in this observational drawing workshop. Inspired by Sir Quentin Blake's playful, character-filled sketches, you will practise capturing the gestures, posture, and personalities of people at large whilst translating them quickly onto the page. Through rapid, responsive drawing on location, you'll develop skills in observation, proportion, and expressive mark-making, developing your own illustrative language.

This course will begin with direct observational drawings in the morning out on location in Trafalgar Square and St James Park. In the afternoon, you will produce a finished drawing in the gallery, based on the work produced earlier in the day. Throughout this workshop there will be plenty of handy hints and techniques explained, all designed to break down any inhibitions or concerns that drawing movement or people at large is in any way daunting.

This workshop is designed for all abilities and celebrates honesty, movement, and humour in everyday life, offering a relaxed, supportive space to draw the people and moments around you with energy and expression. Whilst quite high levels of concentration are required, it will be fun, eye opening, and confidence building.

Morning

- Initial introductions
Introduction to Sir Quentin Blake's work and drawing style
- Julia will give an artist's demonstration accompanied by examples of her work
- The morning will then be spent on location making tiny sketches at speed on Post it Pads of the many varied visitors to Trafalgar Square and St James Park
- Return to the studio, attaching all the Post it Pad drawings to the studio wall to produce a reference library of sketches
- The group will discuss the work and outline how this library will be used in the afternoon session

Afternoon

- Break for lunch
- The afternoon will be gallery based
- Julia will talk to the group about how to approach the development of a finished drawing
- The wall display of sketches will provide a resource for the group to use as they begin to work on a larger piece (A3 - A2) based on the observations made out on location
- Any approach to drawing may be used
- After a couple of hours, the completed works will be displayed and a light-hearted, yet constructive review of the day's work will take place

About the Tutor

Julia is a reportage artist and was Reader in Documentary Drawing at Liverpool School of Art & Design, LJMU, for over 25 years. Direct observational drawing is the bedrock of her practice, whilst drawing also informs her printmaking and studio portfolios

Julia's reportage/documentary commissions reflect an interest in war art, and medicine. War Art & Surgery, a WW1 Centenary drawing project, in collaboration with The Royal College of Surgeons of England, documented military medical training and the rehabilitation of wounded soldiers.

Julia is member of both the Royal Watercolour Society and the Royal Society of Painter Printmakers and a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy of Art's Summer Exhibition. Examples of her work can be found in the holdings of National Museums and corporate bodies, internationally and in the UK.

Materials

- **A Post it Pad:** (any colour / size up to 13 x 8 cm)
- **Small personal sketchbook:** up to A4
- **Watercolour paper for final piece** (size A3 or A2 depending on preference) – this is not obligatory and any favourite paper would do, see below:
- **A selection of random papers:** this could be normal cartridge 90 gsm minimum; brown wrapping paper; newsprint; tinted paper; old documents; or whatever you like to work on.
- **Black & white drawing implements:** to include favourite pens, pencils, markers, charcoal, compressed charcoal (basically, a broad selection of mark making media which is down to your personal preference)
- **Coloured pencils** (recommended not obligatory)
- **Coloured pens** (recommended not obligatory)
- **Eraser**
- **Tippex**
- **Masking tape**
- **Watercolours or acrylic paints** (optional): if you wish to use watercolour or acrylic paint please bring a small water container, brushes, palette and sponge / cloth for wiping brushes.

Useful Links

<https://quentinblake.com/gallery>

<https://www.instagram.com/quentinblakehq>

Julia's own website: www.juliamidgley.co.uk

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.