

WORKSHOP: Still Rooms, Living Stories: Painting Interiors Inspired by Vanessa Bell with Lottie Cole RWS

Price £115

Location RWS Gallery at Whitcomb Street

Date Wednesday 6th May 2026

Time 10.30am – 4.30pm

About the Workshop

In this workshop, you will explore how quiet spaces and personal objects can hold powerful stories, inspired by the intimate domestic paintings of Vanessa Bell. Focusing on light, colour, pattern, and composition, you will learn how to create mood and suggest memory or narrative, without relying on figures or text.

Through guided exercises and supportive discussion, you will experiment with harmonious palettes, simplified forms, and thoughtful arrangements to develop paintings that feel personal, atmospheric, and quietly expressive. This workshop invites you to slow down, look closely, and discover how still rooms can become living stories.

Suitable for all levels, but it would be beneficial to have a small amount of experience in watercolour.

Morning

- Initial introductions. Lottie will show work from her own archive, talking about her personal process and sharing visual references from the work of Vanessa Bell to help inspire participants. Whilst viewing these references, the group will discuss how objects and spaces can suggest personal stories.
- Warm up exercises: working from personal images, the group will experiment with the use of watercolour crayons, colour pencils & watercolours/gouache paints to make quick sketches focusing on composition and simplifying forms.
- The group will then begin to make more considered drawings/paintings. You will explore how composition, colour and light can create mood, finding a personal colour palette.
- View everyone's work as a group and talk about composition and how people have used their materials.

Afternoon

- Break for lunch
- The group will develop one of the images made in the morning using any combination of materials according to your preference. You may wish to use a collage approach and combine interior spaces with selected personal objects.
- Focus on atmosphere, arrangement, and narrative in your painting
- Lottie will offer one-to-one advice, direction and suggestions throughout.
- Review: final round up and viewing of the work as a group and a chance to discuss and consider how to take your work forward independently

About the Tutor

Lottie Cole began a Foundation at Wimbledon Art School and went on to study Art History at St Andrews University. She enjoys reading a picture, and as such likes her work to operate on different levels - the first simply an interior - the second the decoding of allusions and objects.

Lottie's paintings reflect her interest in Art History; provenance and the role women have played in both. She regularly looks to women artists & collectors of the past for affirmation, guidance and inspiration. She paints homes, not least because they are a realm of women, an area unlike most others where they are authored by women. Though people are rarely seen in her paintings, she believes the domestic interior contains considerable biography & human emotion from grief to celebration seen through the objects on the mantelpiece or the paintings on the wall.

Materials

- **Sketchbook**
- **Good quality cartridge paper:** at least 5 sheets
- **Watercolour paper:** about 5 sheets (A3 max)
- Box of **Watercolours/tubes** (or whatever you usually use)
- **Brushes**
- **Watercolour pencils** x3 contrasting colours (not black)
- **Watercolour crayons** x3 contrasting colours (not black)
- **Pencil & eraser**
- **Water pot**
- **Palette:** with enough room for mixing puddles of ink and paint
- **Masking tape**
- **Kitchen roll**
- **Interior references** (these could be personal spaces or spaces that you are drawn to. Please also bring images of personal objects or objects that have a strong narrative that you'd like to include in your painting)

Useful Links:

Vanessa Bell:

<https://artuk.org/discover/artists/bell-vanessa-18791961>

Lottie Cole:

www.instagram.com/lottiecole1

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.