

WORKSHOP Your Presence is Enough (Reimagining the Self-Portrait)

with Alice Macdonald and Jessica Jane Charleston Guest
RWS

Price £115

Location RWS Gallery at Whitcomb Street

Date Sunday 18th of January 2026

Time 10.30am – 4.30pm

About the Workshop

In this workshop you will join artists Alice Macdonald and Jessica Jane Charleston in reimagining what the self-portrait can be. Using the self-portrait as a starting point, you will be guided to create new characters and scenes, drawing from life, the imagination, props and drapery.

You will start the day by exploring how other artists have re-imagined the self portrait, looking at artists like Paula Rego, Alice Neel, Edvard Munch, Chantal Joffe and many more. Alice and Jessica will lead various short exercises experimenting with materials and composition, and you will be guided to create a more considered watercolour painting in the afternoon.

Suitable for all levels, this day long session will be a playful and inventive experience.

Morning

- Introduction to Alice and Jessica's work and their recent joint exhibition Looking Glass (2024)
- Alice & Jessica will share artworks and influences with the group, e.g. Paula Rego, Celia Paul, Ken Kiff, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Alice Neel, Edvard Munch, Chantal Joffe and more.
- Alice & Jessica will lead a series of warm up drawing exercises to get the hand moving and the mind relaxed.

- You will start drawing from the self-portrait, whilst bringing in elements of the imagination, using pencils, charcoal and pastels.

Afternoon

- Break for lunch
- You will look back at drawings made in the morning and discuss what can be developed further during the afternoon session.
- You will move away from using drawing materials, to watercolours. Working from the drawings made in the morning, props and the mirror, you will be guided to reinvent new characters and scenes.
- Review: final round up and viewing of the work as a group, sharing and celebrating each other's achievements.

About the Tutors

Alice Macdonald

Alice Macdonald (b.1992, London) is an artist working in London. Her work is based primarily in drawing and painting but also includes printmaking, ceramics and set design. She received a full scholarship to study on the Drawing Year at the Royal Drawing School 2016-17 and completed an MA in Fine Art at City and Guilds Art School 2022-23. She is a recipient of the prestigious Elizabeth Greenshields grant (2022, 2025), The Royal Watercolour Society Young Artist Award (2022), the CGLAS X ASC Studio Prize (2023) and the Stephen Gooden Prize For Engraving (2023). She has exhibited widely in the UK and internationally, including in Korea, China and Belgium. She has also undertaken numerous residencies including Dumfries House, Scotland, Clovermill Residency in The Netherlands and most recently the La Brea Studio Residency in LA, California.

Jessica Jane Charleston

Jessica Jane Charleston is a British artist, working in London. She graduated from The Royal Drawing School in 2017, and was awarded the Young Artist Award from the Royal Watercolour Society in 2020. Charleston has exhibited her paintings extensively in the UK including with The Nunnery Gallery, Christies, London Art Fair, The Royal Academy and Hastings Contemporary. In 2025 she celebrated her first international solo exhibition in San Francisco, USA with CULT Aimee Friberg Gallery. She has been in residence at Dumfries House, Scotland, Moritz-Heyman in Pignano, Italy, and at Firstsite in Essex, England. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Dumfries House in Scotland, Moritz-Heyman in Italy, Stuart Hall Library, and HM King Charles in the UK.

Materials

- **Drawing materials:** pencils, charcoal, coloured pastels
- **Eraser**
- **Watercolour paper of your choice:** A3 size (at least 25 sheets)
- **Paints:** a watercolour set – pans or tubes
- **Brushes:** at least two (one small, one larger)
- **Water container**
- **Palette:** a palette for mixing or a large dinner plate
- **Handheld mirror or small mirror with a stand**
- **Optional:** Alice and Jessica will bring a selection of props and drapery for you to use, however you are welcome to bring your own e.g. hats, dressing up clothes, fabric, glasses etc.

Useful Links:

Alice Macdonald website: www.alicemacdonald.co.uk

Alice Macdonald Instagram: [@alice__mac](https://www.instagram.com/alice__mac)

Jessica Jane Charleston website: www.jessicajanecharleston.co.uk

Jessica Jane Charleston Instagram: [@jessicajanecharleston](https://www.instagram.com/jessicajanecharleston)

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.