

# *Abstract Figuration*

*Drawing & Painting in the Contemporary Academy*

**DATES** 16–20 September 2026    **DURATION** 5 days    **INSTRUCTOR** Pau Marinello    **LEVEL** All levels

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This five-day intensive workshop explores **abstract and expressive** figuration as a living pictorial language, one that bridges the traditions of the academy with the expressive freedoms of contemporary painting and drawing. Working from the live model, participants will develop personal compositions that move fluidly between the figurative and the abstract, learning to construct, deconstruct, and rebuild the image with intention.

The workshop is structured as a progressive journey: from rapid study and compositional exploration on the first day, through the sustained development of a major work, to its final resolution on the fifth. Each day builds on the last, with guided demonstrations, group critiques, and individual mentoring throughout.

*Students may work in charcoal or oil. For painting, a reduced palette is recommended: Alizarin Crimson, Ultramarine Blue, and Titanium White, or a monochrome grisaille underpainting.*

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## **PROGRAMME**

### *Day by Day*

#### **DAY 0 · OPTIONAL PREVIEW**

#### Live Demo — Introduction to Abstract Figuration

Pau Marinello demonstrates the full visual language of the workshop in a single live session, working from a posed model in charcoal or oil, pushing the dynamism of the figure in dialogue with abstract compositional elements. Open to the public and to all incoming workshop participants.

**DAY 1 · WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER**

## Context, Materials & First Compositions

**10:00 Introduction & context**

The academy in the 21st century: its history, its evolution, and its continued relevance. Pau presents his personal practice and introduces abstract figuration as a contemporary pictorial language, illustrated with key examples.

**11:00 Materials & pose setup**

Presentation of materials and working methods. The model is introduced; the role of photographic reference is discussed. Students prepare their surfaces and consider their compositional approach.

**12:00 Charcoal study: values & balance**

A first rapid composition in charcoal, exploring tonal values, gesture, and the balance between the figure and abstract elements. Speed and commitment are encouraged over refinement.

**13:00 Lunch**

**14:30 Afternoon session — multiple compositions**

Painting students begin working in their chosen medium (reduced palette or grisaille). Charcoal students continue or restart. The goal is to complete at least two full compositions before the end of the day, the foundation for the major work that begins tomorrow.

**DAY 2 · THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER**

## The Major Work Begins — Block-in & Structure

**10:00 Presentation & step-by-step demo**

Pau presents a full demonstration of the block-in process for both drawing and painting. Proportion, compositional balance, gesture, and rhythm are addressed in sequence.

**11:00 Block-in: morning session**

Students begin their main work (recommended format: 60 × 80 cm or similar). Focus on establishing proportions, gesture, and the overall rhythm of the composition. Painting students complete the underpainting with a single transparent colour suited to their palette.

**13:00 Lunch**

**14:30 Block-in: afternoon session**

Continued development of the composition. Students who have established a solid foundation may begin simplifying edge quality using a single preparatory value, the first step toward integrating figure and ground.

**DAY 3 · FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER**

## Values, Colour & Mass Painting

**10:00 Explanation of the day's approach**

Pau addresses the relationship between value and colour, and how the decisions made today will shape the final integration of figure and background.

**11:00 Morning working session**

Charcoal students introduce values into their compositions. Painting students premix their colour masses and begin mass painting, covering the surface with broad areas of resolved colour.

**13:00 Lunch**

**14:30 Afternoon & group talk**

Continued refinement of values and colour. At the end of the session, all works are brought together for a group discussion. Pau presents selected process examples to help participants contextualise their progress and identify what to develop the following day.

**DAY 4 · SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER**

## Edges, Integration & Controlled Destruction

**10:00 Presentation: compositional examples**

Pau presents works demonstrating how figure and background can be unified through edge work, texture, and intentional disruption of the surface.

**11:00 Morning session — edge refinement**

All students focus on the relationship between large masses, paying particular attention to edge quality as a means of expressing form and integrating figure with ground. The balance between the abstract and the figurative is continuously interrogated.

**13:00 Lunch**

**14:30 Integration — destroy to rebuild**

The afternoon is dedicated to the act of sacrifice: working into the painting or drawing to achieve deeper integration. Textures are introduced, passages are destroyed and reconstructed. Works may be placed on the floor or turned upside down. Students are guided to make the critical decision of what to give up in order to strengthen the whole. References: Gerhard Richter, Golucho, Nicola Samorì.

**18:00 Group critique**

All works are gathered and reviewed collectively. An open conversation about what happened in the process, what was gained, what was lost, and what remains to be resolved.

**DAY 5 · SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER**

## Resolution — Focal Points & the Final Image

**10:00 Presentation: modelling, focal points & the gaze**

Pau addresses how to guide the viewer's eye through a composition, the role of primary and secondary focal points, the use of silence and density, and how the final decisions either resolve or open the image.

**11:00 Morning session — reading your work**

Students spend time in contemplation of their work: assessing the current state of the composition, the effects of the previous day's interventions, and what now needs to be built, refined, or left as it is.

**13:00 Lunch**

**14:30 Final session — resolution**

Students bring their primary and secondary focal points to the highest level of finish consistent with their overall composition. The final hours are dedicated to resolving the tension between the painted and the unpainted, the defined and the suggested.

**18:00 Final critique & closing**

All works from the week are presented together. A final group conversation about the process, the decisions made, and the image each participant has arrived at.

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## *Painting materials*

The workshop fees include only the **canvas and paper**. The remaining materials are to be brought by the students.

### **OIL PAINT (Bring your own Paint)**

- Titanium White (Important)
- Yellow Ochre by Gamblin/ Williamsburg
- Cadmium Red or Cadmium Red Medium
- Alizarin Crimson
- Transparent Red Oxide
- Ultramarine Blue
- Ivory Black

\*You are welcome to add any additional colours to your palette at your own discretion.

## MEDIUM - SOLVENT & OIL

- Odorless Mineral Spirit such as Gamsol or Marie's Odourless Mineral Spirit
- Refined Linseed Oil



**Note: Do not Bring Turpentine as it is harmful to health and not allowed in the academy.**

## PALETTE (not provided)

Any Palette (Must be Grey) or buy a 2-3 mm Transparent or Grey Acrylic Sheet 12" x 12" from Amazon.



## BRUSHES (not provided)

- White Bristle Filbert Brushes (6 Different Sizes: Even Number or Odd number)
  - Brusto (Series 1008) or Art Essentials or Daler Rowney (Georgian) or Pan Art
- Fan Brush (Medium to Large Size)



## OTHERS (not provided)

- Palette Knife Tear Drop Shape. Should be flexible.
- Kitchen Roll or Rag
- Medium Cups with lid



## DRAWING MATERIAL (not provided)

- Graphite pencils 4B, 2B, HB, H, 2H (for graphite drawing)
- Willow/Vine Charcoal (soft charcoal)
- Nitram Charcoal (Soft, Medium, Hard)
- Erasers Brand: Milan, Koh-I-Noor, Staedtler (Hard Eraser & Kneaded)
- Box Cutter & Sandpaper Block
- Masking Tape

## *Fine Art Stores*

### ART LOUNGE | MUMBAI

[www.artlounge.in](http://www.artlounge.in)

3A Karim Chambers, | Kala Ghoda  
Phone: 75990 55055

### SITARAM STATIONERS | DELHI

[www.sitaramstationers.com](http://www.sitaramstationers.com)

J-5 Central Market, Lajpat Nagar  
Phone: 98109 39394 | 96503 38339

### Brusto | KOLKATA

[www.brusto.in](http://www.brusto.in)

B 303 Axis Mall, Newtown | 700156  
Phone: [9674044111](tel:9674044111) |  
[mail@creativehands.in](mailto:mail@creativehands.in)

### HIMALAYA FINE ART | MUMBAI

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### HINDUSTAN TRADING | CHENNAI

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600014 Chennai  
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[www.hakimistationer.in](http://www.hakimistationer.in)

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400003 Mumbai  
Phone: 93248 75250