

BROWNE SCHOOL OF ART.



Portrait. Zarahn Southon 2024

FOUNDATION PORTRAIT PROGRAMME - I -

Monday Evenings 2026
Zarahn Southon

YEAR LONG FOUNDATION PORTRAIT PROGRAMME – I – 2026

Mondays 5.30 – 9.30pm

Course Structure & Key Dates

- **Term 1:** 2 February – 30 March (9 weeks)
- **Term 2:** 20 April – 29 June (9 weeks)
 - No class: ANZAC Day Mon 27 Apr, Kings Birthday Mon 1 Jun
- **Term 3:** 20 July – 21 September (10 weeks)
- **Term 4:** 12 October – 7 December (8 weeks)
 - No class: Labour Day Mon 26 Oct

Exhibition: 15 – 19 December 2026

Course Outline

This programme provides a comprehensive introduction to portrait drawing and oil painting. It is designed for those wishing to strengthen their technical skills and methodological practice in artmaking and realism.

The structure of the year-long course supports participants in developing a cohesive body of work that deepens their understanding of the human form as it applies to portraiture. Working directly from the live model, students will gain knowledge within a Kaupapa Māori framework that emphasises **manaakitanga** (support and respect).

- **First Half of the Year:** Focus on drawing, proportion, anatomy, and poster studies of the head, body, drapery, and hands. Quick to medium-length poses, anatomy studies, and demonstrations will strengthen technical foundations.
- **Second Half of the Year:** Long-pose oil painting integrates earlier learning, developing skills in light, colour, tone, and composition. Students move from technical exercises towards narrative-based portraiture.

Supplementary lectures in art history and colour perception will place portraiture in a contemporary context.

By the end of the course, students will have the ability to draw and paint from the live model with greater confidence, understanding both contemporary and traditional approaches.

Term Breakdown

Term 1

- Fundamentals of proportion: Bargue plates & old master copies
- Live nude model studies (gesture, block-in drawing)
- Introduction to clothed portrait model
- Final project: Two head drawings demonstrating proportion and block-in
- Supplementary exercises: anatomy & head structure

Term 2

- Anatomy of the head & skull (Ted Seth Jacobs: *Dictionary of the Human Form*)
- Study of hands and drapery
- Feature studies (eye, ear, nose, mouth)
- Light, colour, and tonal key through poster studies
- Introduction to Caravaggio palette and expanded colour palette
- Rounding studies for volume and form

Term 3

- Two extended long-pose projects: block-in, grisaille, colour layering
- Old master copy exercise
- Focus on pathways, inner curves, sfumato, and painting hair
- Narrative portraiture discussions: symbolism, style, cultural differences (European & Māori perspectives)

Term 4

- Final long-pose project (20–30 hours)
- Application of *Restructured Realism* principles
- Professional standards in portrait commissions
- Cultural awareness in portraiture and representation

Outcomes

By year's end, students will:

- Gain confidence in portrait drawing and painting from life
 - Understand the portrait in both European and Māori contexts
 - Advance technical, compositional, and narrative approaches
 - Develop work suitable for exhibition and professional practice
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Teaching Strategies

You can expect weekly feedback from tutors, both individually and in group critique. Tutors will:

- Provide a supportive and constructive environment
 - Offer clear advice and strategies for technical progress
 - Encourage discussion, debate, and critical reflection
 - Deliver demonstrations and contextual lectures
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Expectations of Students

Students are expected to:

- Arrive prepared and on time
 - Commit to exercises, homework, and independent study (gallery visits, sketching, visual diary)
 - Respect tutors and peers, contributing generously in critiques
 - Maintain professional studio etiquette (phones on silent, tidy workspace)
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End of Year Exhibition

A curated exhibition of student work from the second half of the year (15–19 December 2026) will celebrate course achievements and provide valuable experience in professional presentation.

Workbook

Your workbook is a personal record of ideas, references, exercises, and reflections. It serves as:

- A storehouse of visual research
 - A tool for implanting technical and conceptual learning
 - A means for tutors to understand your direction and support your progress
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Materials List

A basic kit of materials to get you up and going is listed here. Specialist art shops are the best option and will provide student discounts if you mention that you are attending the school.

Recommended stores are:

- Studio Art Supplies – Crummer Road, Grey Lynn.
- The French Art Shop – Taylors Road, Morningside
- Gordon Harris – Gillies Avenue, Newmarket and Symonds Street, Auckland Central
- Warehouse Stationery – has Winton oil paint

Materials required

- Pencils HB, B, 2B
- 3 x sticks of medium to hard willow charcoal
- 1 x piece of sandpaper used for sharpening the charcoal

- 1 x kneadable eraser
- 1 x large flat palette (no plates please)
- 1 x odourless turpentine
- 2 x screw cap jars
- 1 x Mahl stick (*optional)
- 1 x masking tape
- 1 x roll handee towels
- 1 x plastic bag for tissues and rubbish
- 1 x palette knife
- 1 x plumb line or knitting needle for measuring (*optional)
- 1 x oil medium: I use a medium of Schminke stand oil, dammar varnish, and turpentine. If you prefer, mix up your own before class or purchase pre-mixed medium

Brushes I usually use a minimum of 2 or 3 particular sized brushes at one sitting. I designate one for darks, one for lights, or varying hues, and occasionally one clean brush used to merge brush strokes

- Round Junior Synthetic Series 303 Da Vinci range (cheap good brushes) sizes no. 3-10 is fine for small portraits
- 2 x large Filberts either bristle or synthetic for the background (optional)
- Da Vinci 1875 NOVA Brushes - Filbert
- 2 x size 10
- 2 x size 4

Oil paint

You will be using a limited palette based upon the colour theory of Anders Zorn and will have the option of adding more colors if required. I use a mixture of Old Holland, Schminke, Rembrandt, and Williamsburg oil paint.

Zorn palette (essential)

- Titanium white
- Yellow ochre
- Cadmium red
- Ivory black

Medium - large colour palette (*optional)

- Titanium white or zinc white
- Brilliant yellow-red
- Vermillion
- Cadmium red light
- Cadmium orange
- Brilliant pink
- Alizarin violet light
- Dioxazine violet
- Cerulean blue
- Kings blue light
- Kings blue violet grey
- Ultramarine blue
- Sap green
- Cadmium green light
- Burnt sienna
- Burnt umber
- Raw umber
- Ivory black

At Browne School of Art, we also have a selection of basic materials available for purchase: Paper in A1 - A2 sheets, newsprint, cartridge, sugar grey, wet strength, bulldog clips, pencils charcoal, erasers, white chalk, black ink.

This list is a general guide only. The majority (though not necessarily all) of these materials may be used as students' progress. Canvases, panels and boards can be prepared fairly easily and these need to be to your own preferred formats and sizes. If you are using oil paints please come prepared for this with odourless turpentine and plenty of rags for cleaning up.

Bibliography

The Dictionary of the Human Form. Ted Seth Jacobs

The Complete Guide to Figure Drawing . Anthony Ryder

Light for the Artist. Ted Seth Jacobs

Drawing with an Open Mind. Ted Seth Jacobs

The Practice and Science of Drawing. Harold Speed

Heads, Features and Faces. George B. Bridgeman

Drawing the Draped Figure. George B. Bridgeman

Drawing the Head and Hands. Andrew Loomis

Goldie. Roger Blackley

The New Zealand Wars. James Belich

He Kupu Tuku Iho. Tīmoti Kāretu and Wharehuia Milroy

New Zealand Portraits. Richard Wolfe

Figure work : the nude and life modelling in New Zealand art. Sandra Chesterman