
CONTEMPORARY

ART

ACADEMY

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Artist: Robert Fitzmaurice

Prepared by: Zavier Ellis & Mathew Gibson

Date: February 2026

INTRODUCTION

This development plan has been prepared following an initial consultation between Robert Fitzmaurice, Zavier Ellis, and Mathew Gibson. It reflects Robert's current practice, ambitions, and the specific challenges he has identified in developing his career beyond his existing networks. The purpose of this plan is to clarify priorities within Robert's practice and outline how targeted professional development and mentorship could support him in strengthening his profile, gaining appropriate exposure, and navigating both public and commercial art contexts with greater confidence.

CONTEXT

Robert is an artist working across painting and ceramics, with a recent and significant shift in his painting practice toward egg tempera. Alongside this, he is exploring ceramics as an expanding strand of his work, with a desire to develop this into a more resolved and professional body of work.

He is actively engaged in developing his career, regularly visiting exhibitions, applying to opportunities, and seeking feedback, but feels he currently lacks consistent, high-level critical input on his work. While he has participated in exhibitions and open calls, these efforts have produced mixed results, contributing to uncertainty around effective routes forward.

Robert is motivated by increasing the visibility and profile of his work, gaining stronger exhibition opportunities, and ultimately securing gallery representation. He is open to professional guidance, mentoring, and critique, and is particularly interested in advice around pricing, positioning, and understanding how his strongest work is perceived externally.

AMBITION

Short-Term

- Develop a focused portfolio of egg tempera paintings alongside continued experimentation with ceramics.
- Submit an Arts Council England research and development application.
- Visit galleries in London to better understand curatorial contexts and presentation standards.
- Seek structured feedback on current work through studio visits or selected critiques.

Medium-Term

- Secure a solo or group exhibition in 2027.
- Progress discussions with Bridport Arts Centre regarding a proposed exhibition.
- Develop and submit a group show proposal focused on geometry and abstraction.
- Strengthen professional relationships with curators, writers, and artists aligned with his practice.

Long-Term

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- Secure representation with a gallery that aligns with his work and ambitions.
 - Have work acquired by public or institutional collections.
 - Establish a sustainable, confident professional practice with clarity around positioning, pricing, and career strategy.

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

For Robert, success means increased visibility and recognition of his work within appropriate professional contexts. This includes participation in strong exhibitions, receiving informed critical feedback, developing confidence in pricing and presentation, and building relationships that lead to longer-term opportunities such as gallery representation and institutional acquisition.

CHALLENGES

- Limited access to consistent, high-quality critical feedback on his work.
- Difficulty navigating rejection and maintaining momentum after unsuccessful applications.
- Uncertainty around the effectiveness of open calls and how to assess the value of opportunities.
- Challenges with regular and effective social media engagement.
- Limited confidence in pricing work and articulating its value.
- Administrative burden of applications and professional activity detracting from studio focus.

NEEDS

- Structured mentoring that combines critical feedback with career strategy.
- Guidance on identifying reputable opportunities, galleries, and open calls.
- Support with pricing, presentation, and professional communication.
- Insight from both public-sector and commercial art perspectives.
- Help developing confidence and resilience when navigating the wider art world.

CAPACITY

Robert has the capacity to commit time to professional development alongside his studio practice. He is open to a 6–8 month mentoring period and has identified a budget of approximately £90–£100 per month for mentoring or critique sessions. He is motivated, proactive, and willing to engage with tasks between sessions where value is clear.

WHAT WOULD MAKE THIS EXPERIENCE VALUABLE

This experience would be most valuable if it provides Robert with clearer insight into his strongest work, how it is perceived externally, and how best to position it professionally. Increased confidence around pricing, applications, and networking—alongside meaningful critical dialogue—would significantly support his progression. Practical, honest guidance that demystifies the art world and supports long-term decision-making would be particularly impactful.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

MONTH 1 (MAR)

Joanna Whittle (Artist)

- Artist crit
- Together decide on tasks/research/discussion topics for the follow-up session

MONTH 2 (APR)

Jade Mitchell (Mindset & Strategy Coach)

- Mentee to present prior experience, current interests and aspirations, highlighting areas needing support, development, or specific attention
 - Mentor presents summary of experience
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- Analyse mindset & professional strategy
 - Together decide on tasks/research/discussion topics for current & following session

MONTH 3 (MAY)

Rebecca Pelly-Fry (Curator)

- Mentee to present prior experience, current interests and aspirations, highlighting areas needing support, development, or specific attention
- Mentor presents summary of experience
- Explore exhibition ecosystem & opportunity
- Together decide on tasks/research/discussion topics for the follow-up session

MONTH 4 (JUN)

Joanna Whittle (Artist)

- Follow-up artist crit
- Together decide on ongoing tasks/research

MONTH 5 (JUL)

Jade Mitchell (Mindset & Strategy Coach)

- Follow-up session to Month 2
- Together decide on ongoing tasks/research

MONTH 6 (AUG)

Rebecca Pelly-Fry (Curator)

- Follow-up session to Month 3
- Together decide on ongoing tasks/research

MONTH 7 (SEP)

Zavier Ellis (Co-founder)

- Review

CONCLUSION

Robert has a strong and evolving practice, with recent developments in egg tempera and ceramics indicating a focused and productive period of growth. While he is proactive in seeking opportunities, structured professional support would help him translate this activity into more consistent outcomes by strengthening critical understanding, professional positioning, and confidence. Targeted mentoring would support Robert in clarifying his strongest work, navigating exhibitions and applications more strategically, and building sustainable relationships within appropriate public and commercial art contexts.

Investment Summary:

- 1-hour 1-2-1 mentoring sessions - £95 each (fees are paid in monthly instalments starting two months ahead of the planned start date, or immediately if the programme begins sooner)
- Start Date: March 2026
- Session Frequency: Monthly
- Optional supplementary 1-2-1 mentoring sessions - £95 each
- Optional course add-ons - £95–£295