
CONTEMPORARY

ART

ACADEMY

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Artist: Penny Jones

Prepared by: Zavier Ellis & Mathew Gibson

Date: March 2026

INTRODUCTION

This development plan has been designed to support Penny in strengthening and sustaining her painting practice through structured dialogue, critical feedback, and contextual engagement. The programme aims to recreate aspects of the rigorous critical environment experienced during postgraduate study, while remaining flexible and responsive to Penny's interests, pace of work, and location.

Living and working in Crete, Penny currently operates with a high degree of independence and limited access to peer critique or professional discourse. This plan therefore prioritises meaningful critical exchange, studio reflection, and contextual exploration to help deepen and challenge her practice.

Through a series of mentoring sessions, Penny will have the opportunity to test ideas, reflect on her methods, and situate her work within wider artistic conversations. The intention is not to impose external goals but to enrich an already established practice with thoughtful dialogue, sustained feedback, and intellectual stimulus.

CONTEXT

Penny is a painter based in Crete who returned to painting in 2020 after a long period working outside the studio. She previously studied art in Bristol and has significant experience within the arts sector, including managing artist studios and running a gallery supporting emerging artists.

Her practice explores the tension between disgust and fascination, often using food-related imagery and references to the body. The work is concerned with the psychological space between attraction and repulsion, investigating themes of taboo, risk, and the boundaries between the pleasant and the unsettling.

Penny typically works from photographic source material, including her own images and found cuttings. Her compositions frequently adopt a cinematic, letterbox-like format (approximately 70 x 140 cm), creating a voyeuristic framing that encourages close and sometimes uncomfortable viewing. Although she once worked on much larger canvases, her current format reflects a more intimate and focused approach to image-making.

While Penny has exhibited informally in Crete, opportunities to show work locally are limited. At present, she is not actively pursuing exhibitions and instead finds satisfaction in the act of making. However, she values the possibility that her work might circulate beyond her immediate context and reach audiences

capable of engaging with it critically.

A key aspect currently missing from Penny's practice is sustained critical dialogue. During her BA and MA studies she benefited from rigorous critiques and peer discussion, and she now feels the absence of that environment. While she has experimented with digital tools such as AI for feedback, she recognises that these cannot replace informed human critique.

AMBITION

Short-Term

- Penny's primary short-term goal is to refine and accelerate her painting process. She has identified a tendency to become overly absorbed in detail, which can slow production and limit experimentation.
- Through discussion and critique, mentoring sessions will support her in identifying strategies for maintaining energy and spontaneity within the work. This may involve exploring alternative approaches to composition, mark-making, or image selection that allow her to sustain momentum in the studio.
- Developing a more fluid relationship with the painting process will help Penny produce work with greater regularity while retaining the conceptual tension that defines her practice.

Medium-Term

- Over the medium term, Penny aims to continue strengthening her studio practice while deepening the conceptual and contextual grounding of her work.
- Mentoring sessions will introduce critical and historical references relevant to her interests in the grotesque, bodily imagery, food culture, and the aesthetics of disgust and fascination. These discussions will help situate her practice within broader artistic and theoretical frameworks.
- The aim is not to redirect the work but to enrich its intellectual foundation, providing new points of reference and potential directions for exploration.

Long-Term

- While Penny does not frame her practice around conventional career ambitions, she expresses a desire for the work to "leak into the universe" – to exist beyond the studio and be considered worthy of exhibition or acquisition.
- Long-term success therefore lies less in specific milestones and more in sustaining an engaged and evolving practice that continues to generate compelling work. Should opportunities for exhibition or wider circulation arise, Penny would like the confidence that the work is strong enough to meet those contexts.

SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Success for Penny would mean:

- Producing paintings with greater fluidity and confidence in the studio
 - Engaging regularly in thoughtful critical dialogue about her work
 - Recreating aspects of the intellectually stimulating critique environment experienced during postgraduate study
 - Feeling that the work is being challenged, tested, and pushed forward
 - Having the sense that the work could circulate beyond her immediate environment and be
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received as serious contemporary painting

CHALLENGES

- The primary challenge currently affecting Penny's practice is the absence of a rigorous feedback environment. Living in relative isolation from other artists means she has limited opportunities to discuss work critically or receive informed responses to new paintings. As a result, ideas are largely tested internally rather than through dialogue. Although Penny expresses confidence in her independence and studio autonomy, she recognises that meaningful critique and conversation can significantly deepen a practice.
- Another challenge relates to her working process. Penny has identified that she can become overly focused on fine detail, which slows production and can reduce the energy of the work.
- Finally, after a long break from painting prior to 2020, she is still rebuilding aspects of her working rhythm and professional confidence within the studio.

NEEDS

Penny expressed a clear interest in balancing two key areas of development:

- **Studio Practice**
Regular critiques of new work will allow Penny to test ideas, reflect on compositional decisions, and identify strategies for maintaining momentum in the painting process.
- **Critical and Historical Context**
Alongside studio critiques, discussions around relevant artists, movements, and theoretical frameworks will help expand the conceptual terrain of her practice.

Alternating between these two strands will allow Penny to both strengthen the work itself and deepen its contextual grounding. She also expressed interest in engaging with strong critical voices and mentors capable of offering rigorous, intellectually engaged feedback.

CAPACITY

Penny is not currently working towards specific exhibitions, deadlines, or external opportunities. This provides a useful degree of flexibility, allowing mentoring sessions to focus primarily on the development of the work itself rather than external pressures.

She is able to commit to regular monthly sessions and would prefer meetings on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Friday afternoons (UK time), which align with her schedule in Crete.

The absence of immediate deadlines means the programme can prioritise reflection, experimentation, and sustained critical engagement.

WHAT WOULD MAKE THIS EXPERIENCE VALUABLE

For Penny, the most valuable outcome of this experience would be reconnecting with the intellectually rigorous environment she experienced during postgraduate study.

This includes:

- Honest and challenging critique of her work
 - Exposure to new critical perspectives
 - Conversations that push the work conceptually
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- Feeling part of an ongoing dialogue about painting and contemporary art

Ultimately, the programme should function as a space where ideas can be tested openly, where the work can be examined seriously, and where Penny can continue developing her practice with renewed focus and stimulation.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE

MONTH 1 (APR)

WEEK 2 – Sam Jackson (Artist)

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

MONTH 2 (MAY)

WEEK 2 – Sarah Kent (Art Critic, Curator, Artist)

- Analyse critical context of mentee's practice
- Mentor to advise on research & furtherment of contextual awareness
- Together decide on tasks/research/discussion topics for the follow-up session

MONTH 3 (JUN)

WEEK 2 – Sam Jackson (Artist)

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

MONTH 4 (JUL)

WEEK 2 – Sarah Kent (Art Critic, Curator, Artist)

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

MONTH 5 (AUG)

WEEK 2 – Liane Lang (Artist)

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

MONTH 6 (SEP)

WEEK 2 – Emily Steer (Art Writer)

- Analyse critical context of mentee's practice
- Mentor to advise on research & furtherment of contextual awareness
- Together decide on tasks/research/discussion topics for the follow-up session

MONTH 7 (OCT)

WEEK 2 – Liane Lang (Artist)

- Follow-up artist crit
 - Together decide on ongoing tasks/research
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MONTH 8 (NOV)

WEEK 2 – Emily Steer (Art Writer)

- Follow-up session to Month 6 Week 2
- Together decide on ongoing tasks/research

MONTH 9 (DEC)

WEEK 1 – Zavier Ellis (Co-founder)

- Review

CONCLUSION

Penny already possesses a distinctive and conceptually intriguing painting practice rooted in the tension between attraction and repulsion. Her work demonstrates a clear visual language and thematic focus, developed through years of artistic engagement and life experience.

The principal opportunity now lies in reintroducing sustained critical dialogue and contextual engagement into her practice.

Through regular mentoring sessions combining studio critique and critical discussion, this programme aims to support Penny in refining her working process, deepening the intellectual grounding of her work, and sustaining a vibrant and evolving studio practice.

The intention is not to impose external expectations but to create a stimulating framework in which Penny's work can continue to grow, challenge itself, and find its place within broader artistic conversations.

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: April 2026
- Session Frequency: Monthly
- Optional supplementary 1-2-1 mentoring sessions - £95 each
- Optional course add-ons - £95-£295

office@contemporaryartacademy.com
contemporaryartacademy.com
@contemporaryartacademy
