

Textiles: Cherokee Basket Weaving

Ruby Red Workshop
Saturdays, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
September 13 & 20, 2025
Educator: Salix Dezrea Renan, dezrea.renan@gmail.com

CLASS DESCRIPTION

Students will learn the history of Cherokee basket making materials from pre-European contact through to contemporary Oklahoma Cherokee weaving. Following Sarah H. Hill in her book, Weaving New Worlds: Southeastern Cherokee Women and Their Basketry, we will meet some notable weavers and touch on different material traditions. The DAM Indigenous Arts of North America has a small selection of basketry from the Original Peoples of the Southeastern US and their descendants, and this class will both expose students to more examples of these traditions and give them an opportunity to weave their own round reed Oklahoma style Cherokee basket.

Pricing:

Museum Friend: \$160/ Member: \$165 / Student: \$165 / Non-Member: \$190

**Price includes a \$30 Studio Fee for all materials provided.*

Refund and Class Cancellation Policy:

The Denver Art Museum adheres to a no-refund, no-exchange policy. If you are unable to attend, please consider your payment a tax-deductible donation.

If a class or workshop is cancelled by the Denver Art Museum due to inclement weather or teacher illness, a make-up day will be scheduled on a FRIDAY or SATURDAY as the educator's schedule allows.

Accessibility Statement:

To request large print materials, a sign language interpreter, CART or any other accessibility service, please email Access@DenverArtMuseum.org at least ten (10) business days in advance of the program. We will make every effort to provide accommodation for requests made outside of that window of time.

Please see further information about accessibility, parking, and directions to the DAM here: <https://www.denverartmuseum.org/en/accessibility>

Materials:

All materials will be provided for this workshop and are included in the Studio Fee of \$30.

What to Expect:

Week 1

The instructor will spend the first 60 – 90 minutes presenting a close look at Cherokee basket weaving traditions and weavers, students are welcome to move around as needed during lecture and discussion. The instructor will spend 20 – 30 minutes demonstrating starting, shaping/forming, and finishing a basket. For the remainder of the class, the instructor will provide step-by-step instruction to the group, followed by one-on-one support. After the demonstrations, students are free to take breaks, including lunch, as needed. Every student will be able to finish at least one basket, possibly more.

Week 2

Class will begin with a shorter presentation on significant Cherokee weavers, during which students can feel free to work on baskets. The instructor will spend 20 – 30 minutes providing a demonstration of double walled basket weaving, followed by one-on-one support. Students are welcome to take breaks as needed.

Timeline:

Week 1: Single-Walled Basketry

Learn the History of Cherokee Basket Making Materials

- Students will explore the evolution of Cherokee basketry materials, starting from pre-European contact through the pre-removal period in their ancestral homelands, and into contemporary Oklahoma Cherokee weaving traditions. Along the way, students will learn about notable weavers and the diversity of material traditions they used.

Engage with Historical and Contemporary Examples

- Students will gain insights into the cultural significance of Cherokee basketry through a discussion of pieces housed in the Denver Art Museum's Indigenous Arts of North America collection.

Weave a Single-Walled Basket

- Participants will apply their knowledge by creating their own round reed, Oklahoma-style Cherokee basket. This hands-on activity introduces the basic techniques of Cherokee basket weaving, building a relationship with

the land by working with natural materials, and reflecting on their context.

Week 2: Double-Walled Basketry

Learn About Important Cherokee Basket Weavers

- Building on the foundational skills learned in Week 1, the day will include further exploration of the lives and contributions of significant Cherokee basket weavers, highlighting their artistry and impact on preserving this cultural tradition.

Advance Weaving Techniques

- Under guided instruction, participants will continue their work to create a more complex double-walled basket. This is another building block of Cherokee basketry that will allow students to create more intricate pieces. By the end of the workshop, students will have a greater appreciation for Cherokee basketry traditions, as well as at least two completed baskets to take home.

Educator:

Salix is a 35-year-old two-spirit, multiracial creator and educator of Muscogee/Cherokee descent. Salix has had baskets on display at the Evergreen Center for the Arts, and they teach basket weaving for Colorado Native Org's Native cultural night. You can also find them at events such as the Harvest of All First Nations Corn Festival, and ayA Con Denver.

<https://www.instagram.com/salix.weaves/>

WORKSHOP SPACE POLICIES

About:

The Ruby Red Workshop is a dedicated space for Creative Classes and adult programs located on the first floor of the DAM's Martin Building. You can expect a traditional style art workshop with tables and four-legged chairs with backrests. There are a variety of other seating options available. Sinks, soaps, paper towels, and waste receptacles are accessible in the workshop. Restrooms are located in the elevator bay just outside the workshop entrance. Food and beverages are allowed inside the workshop space, please ensure that you do not enter any galleries with these items.

Each class is different and does not follow a strict or set structure, but will generally include instructor presentations and demonstrations, class gallery

visits to view artworks in the DAM collections, individual work time supported by class instructor and assistant, and discussion or share-out time of finished works and works-in-progress.

Cleanup:

Please remove all artworks from the classroom at the end of each class. If wet paintings or in-progress artworks need to be stored in the classroom, there is limited storage on drying racks and in the equipment closet. Students must take home their own materials after each class. Please ensure that art supplies and equipment belonging to the DAM are put back in the appropriate locations. Sponges, paper towels, and cleaning solution are provided in the classroom for cleanup.

Classroom Access:

Students will have access to the classroom only during scheduled class hours. Please contact Mia DeBakker, Creative & Public Engagement Coordinator, if you need to arrange entrance to the Workshop outside of those hours – MDeBakker@DenverArtMuseum.org

Thank you for being part of Creative Classes at the DAM! For any questions concerning your registration, please reach out to our Sales & Service Team at SalesTeam@DenverArtMuseum.org or (720) 913-0130.