

# 2D Mixed Media: From Patterns to Compositions

Ruby Red Workshop  
Thursdays, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm  
4-week session, August 20 – September 10, 2026  
Educator: Alina Orav, [alinaorav@gmail.com](mailto:alinaorav@gmail.com)

## CLASS DESCRIPTION

In this 4-week class, students will explore how patterns function within two-dimensional artworks and how they can be combined to form cohesive compositions. The class is grounded in direct observation and study of pattern-rich and compositionally compelling works from the Denver Art Museum's collections and exhibitions.

Students will learn analytical methods for examining repetitions, structural organization, compositional movement, combination of patterns, and deliberate color relationships. Through focused gallery-based sketch studies using colored pencils and notebooks, students will practice schematizing and simplifying complex artworks into clear visual systems. Through this process, they will develop a technical approach to seeing, enabling students to abstract compositions, identify dominant shapes and rhythmic structures, and better understand visual decision-making of the artist.

Studio work extends this analytical inquiry into practice. Students will create painted pattern papers that are cut, reorganized, and assembled into new compositions. This class emphasizes composition as both a perceptual and generative tool, fostering visual literacy, structural clarity, and experimental exploration through painting, drawing, and pattern-making techniques.

### Pricing:

Museum Friend: \$130 / Member: \$135 / Student: \$135 / Non-Member: \$160

*\*Students will purchase their own materials and should expect to spend \$60-75.*

## 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 later THURSDAY 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](mailto: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:

Students must purchase their own materials and bring them to each class session. The anticipated materials cost is \$60-75. Additional materials will be supplied.

The DAM partners with Denver-based [Meininger Art Material](#) to create class materials kits that can be ordered online and picked up or shipped locally. Students must pre-buy the kits online via the [Meininger's website](#) before picking up prior to the first day of class.

Item	Quantity	Suggested Link
Acrylic paint brushes	6 or more brushes; different sizes	<a href="#">Professional Paint Brushes-Set of 24</a>
Detailing paint brushes	2 brushes; different sizes	<a href="#">Round Pointed Tip Detail Paintbrushes</a>
Wide acrylic paint brush, approximately 3-inch	1	<a href="#">3-inch Chip Paint Brush</a>
Sketchbook	1, 8.5"x11" or larger	Up to you!
Colored pencils	1 set of 12	<a href="#">Crayola Colored Pencils-Set of 12</a>

Graphite pencil, 3B	1-2	<a href="#">Tombow Mono-100 Pencil, 3B Hardness</a>
Kneadable eraser	1	<a href="#">Faber-Castell Kneadable Eraser</a>
Acrylic paints	1 set of 12 colors, 60 mL tubes or larger	<a href="#">Arteza Acrylic Paint-Set of 12 Colors</a>
White acrylic paint	1, 8 oz or larger	<a href="#">Apple Barrel Acrylic Paint, White-8 oz</a>
Old rags or towels for cleaning brushes	Assortment	Up to you!
Plastic card for scraping paint and texturing (e.g. expired bank card)	1	Up to you!

**Note**

Aprons are available in the workshop, but old clothing is recommended as acrylic paint may permanently stain clothing. Alternatively, students may bring a lab coat or protective gown to wear during painting sessions.

**What to Expect:**

This class will combine guided work in the DAM galleries with studio-based practice. Students will engage in close observation of selected artworks and translate their insights into hands-on creative work.

Throughout the class, participants will move from recognizing visual patterns to developing their own compositions. Class time will involve active making, including sketching, painting, drawing, cutting, rearranging, and assembling. Students will produce multiple exploratory studies rather than a single large, finished piece, with emphasis placed on experimentation and creative development.

No prior technical experience is required. Instruction is adaptable to different skill levels, and exercises may be approached with varying degrees of complexity - from minimalistic abstract compositions to figurative ones. The learning environment will support focused work, independent thinking, and constructive exchange.

## Timeline:

### **Week 1 – Museum Session: Pattern Analysis**

Students will be introduced to the course objectives and materials. In the DAM galleries, the instructor will lead guided observation and demonstrate drawing focused on identifying repetition, pattern relationships, and structural placement in selected artworks. Students will complete studies that simplify and analyze patterns and their combinations in the artworks. Participants will be provided with individual help in the process. Group feedback and discussion will conclude the session. Optional homework will be assigned.

### **Week 2 – Studio Session: Pattern Development**

Following a studio demonstration on painting and pattern-making techniques, students will create original painted and drawn patterns. Emphasis will be placed on experimentation and surface exploration. Individual feedback will be provided throughout. The session will conclude with group review. Optional homework will be assigned.

### **Week 3 – Museum Session: Composition Analysis**

The instructor will lead guided observation and drawing demonstrations in the galleries to show how to break down an artwork into compositional structures. Students will examine image construction in selected two-dimensional pieces with pencils on paper. Through observational sketching, participants will analyze structure, balance, movement, and spatial relationships. Individual feedback will be provided throughout. The session will end with group review and discussion. Optional homework will be assigned.

### **Week 4 – Studio Session: Composition Development**

Students will transform their previously created pattern papers into original composition(s) through cutting, rearranging, and assembling, with the option to further develop the work through painting and drawing. Individual guidance will be provided throughout. The class will conclude with a group review of completed works.

## Educator:

Alina Orav is an internationally active Estonian artist based in Colorado with over 30 years of experience in painting and drawing. Working across painting, installation, sculpture, and drawing, she holds a bachelor's and master's degree in painting from the Estonian Academy of Arts, with additional studies in Florence (IT) and Vancouver (CA) and internships in London (UK), Amsterdam (NL), and Volda (NO). Orav has held over 15 solo exhibitions in Estonia and additional solo shows in the United States, Canada, Finland, and Iceland, and her work has been exhibited internationally across Europe, North America, and

Japan. She has curated international exhibitions, taught painting and color studies at the Estonian Academy of Arts and received the State Real Estate Ltd. Science and Development Grant (2017) for her invention, the polyview image, which she presented internationally.

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

## 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. Students 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](mailto:mdebakker@denverartmuseum.org).

## QUESTIONS

Questions about class content, curriculum, materials, etc. can be directed to Mia DeBakker at [mdebakker@denverartmuseum.org](mailto:mdebakker@denverartmuseum.org) or Sarah Rockett at [srockett@denverartmuseum.org](mailto:srockett@denverartmuseum.org).

For any questions concerning your registration, please reach out to our Sales & Service Team at [info@denverartmuseum.org](mailto:info@denverartmuseum.org) or (720) 913-0130.

Thank you for being part of Creative Classes at the DAM!