

Painting: Acrylic Color Theory 1

Ruby Red Workshop
Thursdays, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm
4-week session, September 24 – October 15, 2026
Educator: Sarah Shay, sarahrshay@gmail.com

CLASS DESCRIPTION

This 4-week class will introduce students to the fundamentals of color theory through acrylic painting techniques. Over the course of the four sessions, students will explore how to build compelling color relationships such as complementary and analogous colors and gain hands-on experience mixing paints to create dynamic compositions.

Ideal for beginners and intermediate artists, this class provides both technical knowledge and creative freedom to experiment with color in a supportive environment.

Pricing:

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

**Students will purchase their own materials and should expect to spend \$50-70.*

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 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 \$50-70. 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
Acrylics basic paint set (red, blue, yellow, white, black)	1 set	Liquitex Basics Acrylic Fluid Paint Set
Paint brushes	1 set	Blick Scholastic Golden Taklon Brushes and Sets
Heavy weighted paper OR canvas paper (136 lbs)	1 pad	Canson Foundation Canva-Paper Pads
Palette Paper	1 pad	Richeson Gray Palette Paper Pad

What to Expect:

In this 4-week class, students can expect to dive into the world of color theory through a hands-on approach using acrylic painting techniques. The session will begin with gallery visits in the DAM's collections to explore various artworks and develop inspiration for unique color palettes. Through these visits, students will learn how to identify and extract color combinations that resonate with them. Back in the studio, students will practice color mixing and matching to build confidence in creating the perfect hues for their paintings. The class will also encourage personal exploration, helping each student identify their own color preferences and how to incorporate them into their artwork. By the end of the 4-week session, students will have a deeper understanding of color relationships, enhanced acrylic painting skills, and the ability to express their creative vision through thoughtful use of color.

Timeline:

Week 1 – Introduction to Color Theory & Inspiration Gathering

- Overview of color theory fundamentals: primary, secondary, and tertiary colors, color wheel.
- Discussion of color relationships: monochromatic, complementary, analogous, and triadic colors.
- Reflect and sketch: Start a color journal to collect color ideas and notes.

Week 2 – Value: Tints & Shades

- Discussion: Between Black and White, Value, tints and shades
- Guided studio time: Color Mixing, Value and Monochromatic Color Relationships
- Building on color journal

Week 3 – Beyond Monochromatic Color

- Overview of complementary, analogous, and triadic colors.
- Guided work: Mixing complex color relationships
- Group critique: Share and discuss color development as a class.
- Exploring color as tool for composing visual ideas

Week 4 – Applying Color Theory in Acrylics

- Review of key color theory concepts and acrylic painting techniques.
- Guided work time on final composition
- Group critique: Discuss how color choices shaped each student's work.
- Class wrap-up: Tips for continuing color exploration and acrylic painting

Educator:

Sarah Shay is a Denver-based artist. For Sarah, painting is a means of slowing down and nourishing a connection within ourselves and with each other. Sarah studied Photography and Anthropology at the University of Iowa, and Arts and Education at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Teaching and learning are at the core of Sarah's painting practice, and Sarah has taught in K-12, Higher Education, and community-based programming in Colorado.

<https://www.instagram.com/sarahshaystudio/>

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.

QUESTIONS

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

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

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