DENVER art MUSEUM

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DENVERARTMUSEUM.ORG

Book + Art: Constructing A Handmade Artist Book

Ruby Red Workshop
Tuesdays, 5:30 – 7:30 pm
4-week session, February 16 – March 9, 2027
Educator: Jasmine Abena Colgan, jasmine.colgan@gmail.com

CLASS DESCRIPTION

Discover the art of handmade books by designing and constructing your own artist book from concept to completion. Students will explore the creative possibilities of bookmaking through folding, sequencing, binding, and sculptural construction. Along the way, participants will learn how artists use the book as a medium for storytelling, personal expression, and experimentation with image, text, and material.

Through demonstrations, guided studio practice, and individual instruction, students will develop one cohesive artist book over the 4-week course, allowing time to refine both craftsmanship and concept. The class will also include visits to the Denver Art Museum galleries and the Denver Public Library's Special Collections to examine historical and contemporary artists' books, manuscripts, and works on paper. Drawing inspiration from the museum's collections, students will consider how books function not only as containers of information, but as immersive works of art that invite interaction, reflection, and discovery.

Pricing:

Museum Friend: $150 / Member: $155 / Student: $155 / Non-Member: $180
**Students will purchase their own materials and should expect to spend $60-90. The DAM will supply bulk materials for an included $20 Studio Fee.*

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 TUESDAY 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 spend is $60-90. The DAM will supply bulk materials for an included $20 Studio Fee.

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 website before picking up prior to the first day of class. Please search the *Meininger Class Kit* section on their website.

Item	Quantity	Suggested Link
Bone Folder	1	Lineco Bone Paper Folders
Awl	1 set	Heavy Duty Awl
Blunt Tapestry Needles	1-5	Blunt Tapestry Needles, set of 12
Waxed Thread	1 spool	Books By Hand Waxed Linen Thread
Metal Ruler	1, 18-inch	Fairgate Aluminum Straightedge
Craft Knife	1	X-Acto #1 Knife

Adhesive Brush	1, size of your choosing	Lineco Glue Brush
Sewing Cradle	1	Sewing and Punching Cradle for Bookbinding
Colored Art Paper	1 pack of 10, or separate sheets of your choosing	Canson Mi-Teintes Art Paper Sheets
Colored Pencils	1 set of 12 or 24	Prismacolor Premier Colored Pencils
Book Cloth	1 roll, your choice of color	Books by Hand Book Cloth
Rubber Cement	1 jar, 4 oz	Elmer's Rubber Cement
PVA Glue	1 bottle, 4 oz	Books by Hand PVA Glue
Packaging Tape	1 roll	Scotch Super Strength Packaging Tape
Bees Wax	1	Lineco Bees Wax Cake
Eraser	1 or 2	Staedtler Mars Plastic Eraser
Drawing Pencils	1 set of 6	Blick Studio Drawing Pencils
Drawing Pens	1 set, your choice of size	Sakura Pigma Micron Pens

Note:
Please feel free to substitute or bring additional drawing and writing materials as you prefer.

What to Expect:

Students can expect a highly interactive, hands-on studio experience centered on designing and constructing one handmade artist book from concept to completion. Throughout the 4-week course, students will explore the relationship

between narrative, structure, materials, and binding while building technical skills through demonstrations, guided exercises, and individual studio work.

Each class will begin with a lecture and demonstration introducing new book arts techniques, followed by dedicated studio time where students apply those techniques directly to their own projects. Individual feedback, group discussions, and informal critiques will support students throughout the creative process.

As part of the course, the class will take a group visit to the Denver Public Library's Special Collections and Conservation Department to examine artists' books and handmade books firsthand. The class will also visit galleries within the Denver Art Museum to study works that complement the themes of the course, drawing inspiration from artists who explore narrative, materiality, and book forms across cultures and time periods.

No prior bookbinding or book arts experience is required. The course is designed for beginners as well as artists and makers looking to expand their practice. Students should come prepared to experiment, problem-solve, and engage with both traditional and contemporary approaches to artist books while developing a unique work that reflects their own creative vision.

Timeline:

Week 1 – Concept, Surface, & Structure
Theme: What does your book want to become?

- Lecture Topics
    - Introduction to artist books
    - Historical overview of handmade books
    - The codex and alternative structures
    - Narrative, pacing, and sequence
    - Surface, image, and text integration
- Material experimentation
    - Introduction to Structures
        - Accordion books
        - One-sheet books
        - Folded structures
        - Zine formats
- Demonstrations
    - Pressure, scoring, cutting, and folding
    - Sequencing imagery
    - Integrating text and image
- In-Class Activities

    - Students begin brainstorming concepts, sequencing imagery/text, experimenting with materials, building rough mockups ("dummy books")
- Homework
    - Develop concept statement, visual research, rough dummy book, initial material collection
- Deliverables
    - Concept proposal, thumbnail sequence, structural mockup

Week 2 – Repurposed Materials & Experimental Forms
Theme: Material communicates meaning

- Lecture Topics
    - Repurposed materials in book arts
    - Altered books
    - Sculptural structures
    - Nonlinear narrative
    - DIY publishing and zines
- Materials Explored
    - Cardboard maps
    - Envelopes
    - Fabric
    - Found paper
    - Packaging
    - Natural materials
- Demonstrations
    - Attaching pockets
    - Modular folds
    - Layering and collage
    - Structural experimentation
- In-Class Activities
    - Students refine scale, structure, page sequencing, material relationships
    - Students continue developing the final book
- Homework
    - Finalize page count, dimensions, material selection, structural format
- Deliverables
    - Refined dummy book, finalized structural plan, material samples

Week 3 – Binding & Construction
Theme: Pages become a book

- Lecture Topics

    - Signatures and text blocks
    - Sewing structures
    - Exposed spine aesthetics
    - Adhesive vs sewn bindings
    - Craftsmanship and tension
- Structures Introduced
    - Pamphlet stitch
    - Coptic stitch
    - Japanese stab binding
    - Multiple-signature structures
- Demonstrations
    - Punching sewing stations
    - Sewing cradle use
    - Sewing signatures
    - Attaching covers
    - Adhesive application
- In-Class Activities
    - Students sew signatures, construct covers, assemble text blocks, troubleshoot structure
- Homework
    - Complete primary construction of the final artist book
- Deliverables
    - Fully constructed artist book, functioning binding structure

Week 4 – Sculpture, Containers & Presentation
Theme: The book as an art object

- Lecture Topics
    - Sculptural book arts
    - Viewer interaction
    - Nonlinear reading enclosures and containers
    - Presentation strategies
    - Editioning and artist statements
- Demonstrations
    - Slipcases
    - Wrapped enclosures
    - Closure systems
    - Simple clamshell structures
- In-Class Activities
    - Students refine craftsmanship, build a custom enclosure, finalize details, photograph/document work, prepare artist statements
    - Final Critique

        - Students present completed artist book enclosure/container, conceptual framework, process development
- Final Deliverables
    - Completed artist book enclosure or container, artist statement, process documentation

Educator:

Jasmine Abena Colgan is an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and bookmaker based in Colorado whose work explores identity, memory, and storytelling through photography, artist books, printmaking, and alternative photographic processes. She received her Master of Fine Arts in Interdisciplinary Media Arts Practices from the University of Colorado Boulder and has taught photography, book arts, and visual culture at the university level, helping students develop both technical skills and conceptual approaches to making.

Colgan's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and is held in public and special collections, including the University of Colorado Boulder Libraries Special Collections. Her current long-term project, You Gotta Have Tough Skin, is a graphic memoir that combines photography, book arts, and printmaking to examine identity, visibility, and belonging through the lens of vitiligo. As an educator, she is passionate about making book arts accessible to artists of all experience levels, encouraging students to see the book as both a vessel for storytelling and a work of art in its own right.

www.photographsbyjazz.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.

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!