

Program of Studies 2025-2026
CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Half-Day Program

Visual Arts

The Visual Arts department faculty teaches the fundamentals of art in a variety of disciplines including drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, analog and digital photography, art history and digital illustration, filmmaking, and marketing design. Students engage in the curriculum prescribed by the Visual Arts Department Head based on work presented in an audition for evaluation, in addition to student interests. Additionally, course selections are based on grade level and technical proficiency.

- We teach the importance of visual thinking and creative problem solving.
- We emphasize observational drawing techniques for college portfolio preparation.
- We encourage collaborative work both within the Visual Arts Department, throughout CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Half-day Program and the Greater Hartford community.
- We encourage and support students' risk-taking as they progress through the rigorous curriculum.
- Art history courses, gallery and museum tours, guest artist lectures and hands-on workshops provide a context for students' work of artists past and present.
- We exhibit student artwork in the school throughout the community, nationally and internationally.
- Students are encouraged to participate in local, national and international visual art competitions.

Supplies – Students are encouraged to bring supplies they prefer to create with, however all supplies for in-class studio work will be provided.

Year 1: Foundation Drawing and Painting in addition to 2-3 of the following courses: Foundation Sculpture, Art History, Ceramics, or Digital Media

Year 2: Drawing and Painting Level 1 in addition to 2-3 of the following courses: Sculpture, Art History, Ceramics, Mixed Media, Printmaking, Digital Media or Photography

Year 3: Drawing and Painting Level 2 in addition to 2-3 of the following courses: Sculpture, Art History, Ceramics, Mixed Media, Printmaking, Digital Media, Photography or AP 2D Drawing

Year 4: Senior Seminar in addition to any of the following courses: Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Art History, Ceramics, Printmaking, Digital Media, Photography or AP 2D Drawing. If the student has excelled through the curriculum from the previous year they would have the opportunity to develop an Independent Study in technique(s) and medium(a) of choice.

VISUAL ARTS COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

VISUAL ARTS REQUIRED COURSES

Art History

Stones Ages to Renaissance, Postmodern to present, 3D Anthropology, Expressive Arts & Cultures and Film Composition: Each of these courses provides an introduction to the creative history visual arts has enhanced and influenced societies around the world. These courses will focus on how art is used to communicate ideas, translate traditions through research, and discover how to analyze and interpret techniques practiced in art making.

Foundations Drawing

This course encourages students to develop basic drawing skills, including the ability to perceive and express visual relationships by understanding and implementing the Elements & Principles of Design. Courses will focus specifically on observational drawing, architectural landscape and abstraction.

Drawing 1, 2, and Figure (2nd, 3rd, 4th year)

These courses encourage students to draw from observation to create compositions beyond representation. An exploration of conceptual and pictorial issues, visual problem solving and researching contemporary artists styles and themes are also part of the curriculum for this course. Additionally, human anatomy will be explored by studying skeletal structures along with posed figure model studies and live models to observe and create compositions from.

Methods and Materials of Visual Art Making

This course encourages students to develop basic color theory through watercolor, ink and acrylic painting techniques, in addition to practicing drawing techniques in a multitude of dry media. The ability to practice critical thinking by implementing the Elements & Principles of Design is the foundation in the curriculum for this course.

Watercolor Fundamentals

This course explores the medium of watercolor through several different techniques and materials. The class will focus on using a variety of watercolor types and techniques. Students will also use a variety of other materials to interact and enhance their watercolor paintings.

Painting (2nd, 3rd, 4th year)

Further exploration of color theory, knowledge and application with the wet media such as watercolor, ink, acrylic and an introduction to water soluble oil paint. The significance of color will be explored as an Art Element and relationships between color through the Elements and Principles of Design will be examined.

3D Design: Clay Fundamentals

This course provides an introductory exposure to the history of ceramics and a beginning level experience in the use of clay as a fine art medium. Forming techniques, surface development and glazing, and kiln firing practices will be introduced. Both the functional and sculptural ceramic traditions will be explored.

3D Design: Sculpture

This course introduces conceptualizing three-dimensional structures from two-dimensional design drawings. Traditional and non-traditional materials for sculpture building will be explored in addition to a variety of surface engineering techniques practiced to create functional and aesthetic compositions.

Senior Seminar Portfolio

This course will further explore more unique, personal and conceptual approaches. Students will have the opportunity to experiment within each project. A responsible student will become familiar with traditional and digital media, the means of creating and delivering art, promoting and networking as an aspiring artist, and the expectations of working as an artist in the field.

VISUAL ARTS ADVANCED COURSES

AP 2D Drawing (3rd, 4th year)

This course provides opportunities for students to practice and develop skills in inquiry and investigation through portfolio development. Students will practice and develop in experimentation and revision within their portfolio while gaining skills in communication and response to works of art created. Understanding integrity in art making, what constitutes plagiarism, and how to develop beyond duplication from referenced images and ideas will be integral to student progression in this course.

3D Design: Advanced Clay Design and Introduction to Wheel Throwing

This course is designed to allow advanced ceramic students to work on developing a personal expression in clay. Each student has the option to direct their own projects with guidance by the instructor, if needed an assignment can be designated by the instructor with focus on hand-building, throwing on the wheel or experimental glazing techniques.

3D Design: Advanced Sculpture

This course will continue to enhance student development of three-dimensional structures from two-dimensional design drawings. Advanced traditional and non-traditional materials for sculpture building will be explored including stone, wood and metals. Projects created during this studio will be longer in length and more extensive in process.

Advanced Digital Photography

This course will provide opportunities for students to work independently and collaboratively with focus on specific Arts Academy community projects, product and staged photography. Students will continue to develop an understanding of how to manipulate imagery through the Adobe Creative Suite.

Advanced Digital Illustration

This course will allow students to continue development in Adobe Illustrator along with the Adobe suite of illustration tools. Students will create more in-depth thematic work by using drafting tablets for creation, manipulation, effects, and typographic techniques.

Animation

Introduction to Digital Animation teaches students the fundamental principles of working in 2D digital software with an emphasis on animation, story, sound, timing and execution. Students will learn how to transition from traditional hand-drawn animation techniques and creative processes into the digital realm.

Visual Arts Independent Studio (3rd, 4th year)

Participating students will have the opportunity to further explore techniques and media of personal interest in which they have technical proficiency in. By creating a proposal which outlines expectations for artistic exploration, a thematic series of work will be developed by each student who successfully submit a specific project proposal.

VISUAL ARTS ELECTIVE COURSES

Analog Darkroom Photography

This course covers an extensive foundation of darkroom photography practices, techniques and history. Operating a pinhole & SLR camera, processing 35mm and 120mm film in addition to developing prints in the darkroom studio will be included in the base fundamentals for this course.

Character Development Illustration

This course introduces students to the conceptual process of developing a character that could be used in a storyboard, comic panel or graphic novel. Focus on the history of Manga and Anime, figure drawing, environmental landscapes, creating origin stories and developing an understanding for color theory will be objectives covered in this course.

Conceptualism in Street Art

This course identifies the importance, style, and imagery used in Street Art. Students will research and create a series of art using traditional and non-traditional media reminiscent of street art graffiti. For decades, street art has been used as an outlet to illustrate uplifting, political, humorous, and informative illustrations in a public forum.

Digital Illustration

This course introduces students to Computer Graphics, and explores Adobe Illustrator by using a drafting tablet for creation and manipulation, effects, graphic illustration techniques, and typographic functions in applying the computer graphics medium to problem solving in graphic design.

Digital Photography

This course introduces fundamentals of digital photography and the technical aspects involved with using a digital camera. Students will learn how to upload images, proper use of storage and manipulation of imagery through Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom.

Mixed Media

This course will introduce students to a variety of traditional and non-traditional multi-media techniques in response to visual art making challenges. Media explored will include watercolor, ink, gouache, collage, acrylic, mono-printing practices and Xerox transfer.

Motion Graphics

This course students learn to animate text, images, and design elements to create visually engaging stories and sequences. Emphasis on digital design, animation principles, and professional software skills, preparing students for creative work in media, film, and design will be an integral part of this course work..

Printmaking

This course will encourage students to develop technical skills in a variety of studio print media such as monotype, linoleum block printing, dry point etching and relief plate rubbings. Repetitious drawing practices and an understanding of color theory are significant components to this course.

Expressive Arts & Cultures

This course students will have the opportunity to explore creatives from around the world. Resources for engaging in cultural exploration through the arts will include guest artists, hands-on workshops and arts competitions with a purpose of awareness, advocacy and inclusion.