

# AMERICA 250

## 2026 SUMMER PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Jenny Santa Maria  
Teaching Artist & Special Educator





*Hi,  
I'm Jenny!*

Perhaps my greatest gift is bringing out the gifts in others. Since earning my Masters in Art Education and Special Education in 2013, I've worked with adults, mature adults, and underprivileged teens; populations often challenged by anxiety, self-doubt, and perfectionism. After more than a decade in special education, I shifted my focus to what I believe is the most underserved population in the arts — the general public. Across 9 counties in New Jersey, these workshops are celebrated for their welcoming atmosphere and gentle, coaching-style instruction, nurturing both creativity and social-emotional wellbeing.

Every workshop I facilitate is a creative empowerment workshop designed to meet people where they are. I've seen that while art classes are plentiful, spaces intentionally designed for those who feel uncertain or "not artistic" are rare. I care as deeply about nurturing the artist as I do about the art itself, creating spaces where sharing stories and building community are naturally part of the experience. By arranging the tables in a U-shape, I create space for conversation and connection. Those familiar with my teaching style know that they'll not only learn a skill, but often make a friend in the process.

It's a privilege to witness participants move past their limiting beliefs and discover that there's no such thing as a "non-artist"—only artists with something in their way. In a culture that feels rushed and disconnected, the arts restore what matters most: community, healthy self-expression, and a renewed appreciation for the handmade.



# Programs for Adults & Mature Adults

Activity	Fee (all materials are provided)
<p><b>LECTURE &amp; ART-MAKING: “Revolutionary Art”</b></p> <p>This program explores how artists throughout history have used imagery to confront injustice and ignite social change. From Picasso’s iconic Guernica to Keith Haring’s instantly recognizable public works, we look at how art has functioned not just as decoration, but as a rallying cry. After the lecture, participants take part in a guided draw-along to illustrate their own “Seeds of Change,” creating bold, colorful imagery as a visual declaration of what they believe is worth protecting or nurturing in the world — continuing the legacy of art as a spark that fans an entire revolution.</p> <p>*This program requires a projector, screen, and HDMI hook-up for Mac compatibility.</p>	<p>\$400 for up to 20 registrants</p>
<p><b>LECTURE &amp; ART-MAKING: “Freedom to Create: The Artists Who Shaped America”</b></p> <p>Celebrate the diversity and creativity that have shaped the American art story. We’ll explore how each artist’s experiences and challenges informed their creative voice—from Georgia O’Keeffe’s meditative connection to the natural world, to Faith Ringgold’s storytelling quilts that wove art and activism together, to Keith Haring’s bold visual language created in service of social change. Together, their work honors the freedom to create and the many voices that form our shared story. Through an engaging lecture and hands-on art-making session, participants will explore the power of self-expression and create original works inspired by the techniques and stories of these groundbreaking artists—celebrating what it means to make art in the spirit of freedom.</p> <p>*This program requires a projector, screen, and HDMI hook-up for Mac compatibility.</p>	<p>\$400 for up to 20 registrants</p>
<p><b>Art for the “Non-Artist”</b></p> <p>Designed specifically for those who don’t consider themselves artists, this class will equip you with foundational observational drawing skills and leave you with a stunning, realistic feather drawing you’ll be proud to showcase. Using Prismacolor pencils, you’ll learn techniques to bring depth and detail to your work in a supportive and encouraging environment. With art coach, Jenny Santa Maria, guiding you every step of the way, you’ll discover that creativity is within reach—even if you’ve never taken an art class before. If you’ve ever hesitated to try your hand at drawing, this is the perfect class to begin your artistic journey!</p>	<p>\$300 for up to 20 registrants</p>
<p><b>Draw and Discover: Charcoal for Non-Artists</b></p> <p>Inspired by the American landscape in all its forms — from coastlines to deserts, mountains to fields, this expressive drawing workshop is designed especially for those with no artistic experience. Using charcoal, kneaded erasers, and touch, participants will discover how to draw by revealing rather than outlining. As textures shift and forms appear, each person will see a landscape, real or imagined, begin to emerge from the page, uncovering a story waiting to be seen. Expect to get your hands a little messy as we explore creative charcoal techniques. Wear an old shirt and join us for an unforgettable, hands-on art experience.</p>	<p>\$300 for up to 20 registrants</p>

# Programs for Children & Teens

Activity	Fee (all materials are provided)
<p><b>"Many Kinds of Beautiful": Butterfly Art for Kids (K-3)</b></p> <p>This fun, hands-on art workshop celebrates the beauty of difference through the colorful world of butterflies. We'll begin by observing a dazzling butterfly collection on loan from Insectropolis in Toms River, noticing the incredible variety of colors, shapes, and patterns that make each one unique. Inspired by what we see, children will create their own one-of-a-kind paper butterflies using colored pencils and markers. Every design will flutter with creativity and imagination — a joyful reminder that our differences make the world brighter.</p>	<p>\$400 up to 16 children *must be accompanied by an adult</p>
<p><b>Stitched Stories: Embroidery 101</b> (Perfect for Young Adults and Adult Learners)</p> <p>Every stitch tells a story. In this beginner-friendly embroidery workshop, we'll cover the split stitch, French knot, easy needle-threading techniques, and more. A variety of templates and visual references will be available for inspiration, so participants can follow a pattern or design their own. You'll leave with the skills to make embroidery a joyful, portable part of your creative life.</p>	<p>\$350 up to 18 registrants</p>
<p><b>Molly Pitcher's Pitchers: A Model Magic Experience (K-3)</b></p> <p>Join us for a fun and engaging sensory experience inspired by Molly Pitcher, the Revolutionary War heroine remembered for her courage and compassion. Molly was an ordinary person who did something extraordinary, stepping forward with courage and care to help others in need on the battlefield. After hearing her story, we'll learn hand building techniques to make our own colorful pinch-pot "pitcher" using Model Magic and markers. Molly's story reminds us that even small acts of care can make a big difference- and anyone can be a hero.</p>	<p>\$400 up to 12 children *must be accompanied by an adult</p>

# Virtual Programs

Over the years, I've offered a variety of virtual programs through libraries and senior communities, consistently drawing strong attendance. These sessions remain among my most accessible and far-reaching offerings. Each one combines a dynamic slideshow with a live, step-by-step draw-along using an overhead camera. These sessions aim to spotlight the strength and perseverance of artists, and inspire personal expression. I love being able to share the arts in a way that meets people where they are—right at home.

**Fee for 1.5 hour program: Virtual Lecture with "draw along": \$200**

## ART MOVEMENTS:

- Ancient Greece and Rome – Participants draw Greek pottery in the three styles discussed.
- Ancient Egyptian Art – Concludes with drawing a scarab
- The Renaissance – Focuses on cross-hatching techniques, drawing like Michelangelo
- Impressionism – A favorite among mature adults, featuring a draw-along to reimagine Monet's bridge.
- New York's Finest: Warhol, Haring & Basquiat in the 1980s- Design a pop art-inspired shoe.

## ARTISTS:

- The Life and Legacy of Alma Thomas – Reimagining one of her vibrant works.  
(It's always a joy to share the work of Alma Thomas—both during Black History Month and throughout the year—while also acknowledging the challenges she faced as a Black woman artist in the segregated American South.)
- Salvador Dalí – concluding with a whimsical clock drawing inspired by "The Persistence of Memory"
- The Life and Legacy of Michelangelo – concluding with cross-hatched bird drawing
- Keith Haring – concluding with a reimagining of "Two Figures with Red Heart"
- Pablo Picasso – A survey of his many artistic periods, ending with a recreation of "Girl Before a Mirror"
- Frida Kahlo – concluding with a step-by-step draw along of a sugar skull

*I believe art has the power to build a healthier and more compassionate society, and it would be an privilege to help fulfill that vision at your branch. I work with libraries across the region to offer adaptable, thoughtfully designed creative programming that align with grant goals and community needs. Each program can be tailored to support creative aging, youth engagement, or inclusive programming, and is easily adapted for individuals with special needs. I'd welcome the opportunity to discuss possibilities for collaboration.*



Art for the “non-artist”, Princeton Public Library



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