

Pysanky

The Ancient Art of Ukrainian Egg Decorating



Program Proposal

Jenny Santa Maria

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Pysanky, a revered art form dating back to the Neolithic, involves creating intricate designs on eggs using beeswax and dyes in a layered batik method. In both workshops and demonstrations, participants will learn a range of techniques, explore traditional motifs, and gain a deeper understanding of pysanky's historical and cultural roots. We dive deep into the meaning of this art, as one that is meant to be given away, in celebration of life and love. Each participant will leave with their own beautifully decorated egg and the skills to continue the tradition at home. All materials are provided.

Experience

I've been teaching pysanky for over a decade in a wide range of esteemed settings across New England. My workshops and demonstrations have been hosted by art centers, museums, libraries, and botanical venues, including the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (VT), Grounds for Sculpture (NJ), Newport Art Museum (RI), Chapel of Sacred Mirrors (NY), the Center for Contemporary Art in Hudson Valley (NY), Omega Institute (NY), Shelburne Craft School (VT), and White River Craft Center (VT). I've also brought this tradition to higher education and retreat environments, including Monmouth University and Honey Hollow Farm in New Hope, PA. My work has been featured in numerous periodicals, including the Wall Street Journal ('22).

Pysanky Programs: Demonstrations & Workshops



Both demonstrations and workshops include a thorough review of the cultural and historical roots of pysanky, highlighting its ancient origins, traditions around the sharing and creation of the eggs, symbolic language, and we discover why the egg has always been a symbol of hope and peace. Participants in both formats will see a live demonstration of the batik wax-resist method, learn about the tools and materials used, and are invited to share their own stories, traditions, or connections.

Demonstrations

- Perfect for those who are curious or intimidated by the process, demonstrations are an accessible and engaging way to experience this revered art form without the pressure of creating.
- All ages welcome – family-friendly and inclusive
- No participant limit – ideal for large audiences
- Includes two egg giveaways made during the demo- an added surprise that brings joy and connection to the experience.
- I am fully equipped to do a virtual demonstration from my home. A popular option with libraries.
- Fee: \$250 for a 1.5 hour program, \$150 for a virtual demonstration

Workshops

- A fully immersive, hands-on experience where each participant creates their own pysanka with guidance and support, along with the skills to continue the tradition at home.
- Includes everything in the demonstration, plus hands-on instruction
- Step-by-step practice of wax-resist techniques and dye layering
- I provide all materials. The space provides tables and chairs. I prefer a U-shape orientation so we are all together, creating a familial atmosphere, with an additional table for the “dye station” and another table for handouts and references.
- I can safely supervise up to 18 participants, ages 18+. Participants share small taper candles in pairs, which helps minimize safety hazards and naturally encourages dialogue, collaboration, and a sense of shared experience.
- Waitlists are encouraged to accommodate potential cancellations and help gauge community interest.
- Sometimes parents want to bring their child, and as long as the space is open to it, I can work with ages 12+ and a special waiver would need to be signed by the parent.
- Fee: \$45 per participant for a 2.5-hour workshop, plus a \$10 materials fee to cover the cost of eggs, dyes, wax, and all supplies provided. I understand that some organizations may face financial limitations—please don't hesitate to reach out. I'm happy to discuss options and may be able to offer a sliding scale in certain cases.





We conclude our time together by arranging a beautiful display of everyone's creations—a joyful moment perfect for photos and celebration. Every work you see here was made by a beginner.





"If you can
write your name,
you can do this."

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