

Animation Intensive Syllabus

Pre-College Summer 2026 - Pacific Northwest College of Art

Instructor: Adina Cohen

Program Assistant: Lydia Jovi Cruz

Introduction

Welcome to the Pre-College Animation Intensive at Pacific Northwest College of Art!

This course is designed for Pre-College students interested in exploring the creative possibilities of animation through the medium of stop motion and old school techniques (some of which were developed right here in Portland!).

My name is Adina Cohen, and I am a professional stop motion animator with credits including *Robot Chicken*, Netflix's *Buddy Thunderstruck*, the upcoming Laika feature *Wildwood*, and numerous other projects. I am also an independent artist, creating multiple stop motion films and illustrations that I sell at Portland's Saturday Market. I also work as an adjunct professor in the Animated Arts department here at PNCA.

I'm excited to help demystify the stop motion medium for all of you, and I hope this experience inspires you to continue experimenting with animation as you grow as artists. Throughout this Intensive, you will be introduced to the industry standard Dragonframe software and four unique approaches to stop motion animation:

- **Object Based Animation** – Bringing everyday objects to life through movement inspired by the work of artist PES.
- **Claymation** – An introduction to animation principles through clay animation techniques.
- **Pixelation** – Working in small teams to create playful animated motion using ourselves as the subjects.
- **StrataCut Animation** – Creating animated imagery through sculpted clay logs that are sliced frame by frame.

We'll study and test out each technique, experimenting with ways that inanimate objects, materials, and even the human body can be transformed into expressive moving art. Then, you'll apply what you learn to create your own short animated sequence.

I look forward to exploring the world of stop motion animation with all of you. Now let's go grab those frames!

Directory

Pre-College is held at PNCA's Main Campus (called The Arlene and Harold Schnitzer Center for Art and Design or the 511 Building), located at **511 NW Broadway, Portland OR 97209**. A detailed map of campus is available [here](#).

If you need to reach out to PNCA at any time during your Summer Intensive, please refer to the contact information below.

PNCA Community Education Office

pnca-community-education@willamette.edu

Community Programs Coordinator (available 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri): (724)-243-2711

PNCA Campus Safety *

campus-safety@willamette.edu

Lead Safety Officer/On Duty Officer (available 24/7): 503-621-2061

**** In an emergency, always call 911.** If you're away from campus and need help, you may call the Portland Police Non-Emergency Line: (503)-823-3333*

PNCA Admissions Office

pncaadmissions@willamette.edu

(503)-821-8972

PNCA Front Desk *(can direct you to any office)*

(503)-226-4391

Week 1 - Schedule At-A-Glance

Monday	9-9:15am: Check In & Welcome 9:15-10am: Parent Meet & Greet Student Icebreaker 10-11am: Campus Tour with PNCA Admissions 11am-12pm: Intro to Stop-Motion 12-1pm: Lunch 1-4:30pm: Experiments in Object Animation
Tuesday	9-9:30am: Check In 9:30am-12pm: Intro to Claymation - Animation Principles in Action 12-1pm: Lunch 1-4:30pm: Claymation Studio
Wednesday	9am-12pm: Intro to Stratacut Animation 12-1pm: Lunch 1-4:30pm: Stratacut Studio with Animation Stages
Thursday	9-9:30am: Check In 9:30-12pm: Pixelation Guest Lecture with Animator Dan Pasto 12-1pm: Lunch 1-4:30pm: Pixelation Studio with Downshooters/Tripods
Friday	9-9:30am: Check In 9:30-11:30am: Portfolio Websites with Megan McKissack 11:30am-12pm: Intro to Storyboarding 12-1pm: Lunch 1-4pm: Storyboarding Workshop 4-4:30pm: Storyboard Review & Exhibition Planning

Week 2 - Schedule At-A-Glance

Monday	9-9:30am: Check In 9:30am-12pm: Freeform Studio, time to work on final piece 12-1pm: Lunch 1-2pm: Post Production Workshop 2-4:30pm: Freeform Studio, time to work on final piece
Tuesday	9-9:30am: Check In 9:30am-12pm: Freeform Studio, time to work on final piece 12-1pm: Lunch 1-2pm: Artist Statement Workshop 2-4:30pm: Freeform Studio, time to work on final piece
Wednesday	9-9:30am: Check In 9:30am-12pm: Freeform Studio, time to work on final piece & workshop artist statements 1:1 12-1pm: Lunch 1-4:30pm: Freeform Studio, time to work on final piece
Thursday 3pm dismissal	9-9:45am: Freeform Studio, finishing touches 9:45-10:45am: Exporting 10:45am-12pm: Install exhibition 12-1pm: Lunch 1-3pm: Projection Mapping & Motion Design Demo with Megan McKissack 5-7pm: Friends and Family Reception
Friday	9am-9:30am: Check In & Reception Recap 9:30-10:45am: Risograph Trading Cards with Guest Artist Benita Blue 10:45am-12pm: Portfolio Reviews with Admissions Trading Card Studio 12-1pm: Closing Pizza Lunch 1-3pm: Final Critique & Deinstall 3-4pm: All-Session Wrap Up Party

Important Information

Required Forms

All required forms must be completed and signed by a student and their legal guardian before the deadline. Forms will have been sent to students and legal guardians via email (if you need new forms, please email pnca-community-education@willamette.edu). Completed and signed forms should be submitted via email, with the student's name in the subject line, to pnca-community-education@willamette.edu. Please read over your forms to ensure they're complete before submitting. **Students with unsubmitted or incomplete forms may be unable to participate in Pre-College activities and/or be dismissed from the program.**

Card Keys

PNCA buildings are always locked for student safety. At check-in, Pre-College students receive personal card keys that can be swiped for entry into PNCA buildings. Students must carry their card keys at all times. Card keys are only valid for the duration of the Pre-College program and must be returned on the last day of class so they can be rekeyed. **Damaged or lost card keys must be replaced at a student/legal guardian's expense. If a card key is lost, stolen or destroyed, students must report it to the Front Desk immediately.** In the event of a lost or malfunctioning card key, a Campus Safety Officer can let a student into the building. If you need to reach Campus Safety, call the 24-hour line at (503)-621-2061.

Parking

The parking lot at PNCA is for permit-holders only. If a student is driving to class, day passes for the PNCA parking lot can be purchased at the front desk each day for \$12. If friends and family are driving to the closing Thursday reception, an evening pass can be purchased for \$6. Paid street parking is also available nearby.

Trips and Activities

Pre-College Summer Intensives often include field trips (via public transportation or walking) to nearby businesses, galleries, and art organizations. In order to participate in field trips, students must have a completed Field Trip Form on file. Students are not permitted to drive themselves or other students to or from field trip locations, and staff may never drive students to or from field trip locations.

Classroom Expectations & Policies

During two-week Summer Intensives, students dive into technical artmaking, develop their portfolios, and bolster their creative and professional practice with guidance from PNCA professors and industry-leading guest lecturers. All Summer Intensives build towards an exhibition in one of PNCA's gallery spaces (including high-quality photo documentation). During the first week, Intensives emphasize exploration and skill-building, with focused workshops and lectures. In the second week, students are focused on applying these skills to make new work and collaboratively curating and installing their final exhibition. Across all programs– whether students are learning color theory, technical drawing, stop-motion techniques, or sound– we center four core learning areas:

- Personal Creative Practice
- Collaboration
- Design Thinking
- Professional Practice

Learning Outcomes

Summer Intensives are designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills to pursue a degree program in art or design. Pre-College students at PNCA will:

- Communicate ideas and creative concepts through experimentation with new-to-them mediums, techniques, and technologies.
- Strengthen their sense of personal creative identity, self-expression, and community engagement through collaboration.
- Explore art and design as a means of facilitating civic dialogue and social change.
- Develop their creative problem solving and meaning-making skills.
- Facilitate constructive dialogue, feedback, and critique with peers and instructors.
- Navigate ambiguity, risk-taking, and failure in the creative process.
- Recognize elements of creative entrepreneurship (e.g. a strong portfolio of work) and develop the foundational knowledge, tools, and practices necessary to pursue resilient, flexible, and contemporary creative careers.

Classroom Experience

Classes run from 9am - 4:30pm, Monday through Friday, with a one-hour lunch break each day at 12pm. Each day is divided into a Morning and Afternoon session. In these sessions, students participate in workshops, studio time, and group critiques, as well as guest

lectures, field trips, and artist talks. **Students are expected to be respectful of instructors and other students, as well as shared studio spaces, at all times.**

Supplies & Materials

PNCA provides each student with a tote, sketchbook, and an initial set of drawing basics, as well as all supplies required for workshops or in-class activities. Students do not need to bring anything to class, but they are welcome to bring a personal sketchbook if they have one they'd prefer to use. If students would like to purchase any additional supplies, especially for their final projects, there are two art supply stores near campus:

- Blick Art Materials (for new supplies)
 - 1115 NW Glisan St, Portland, OR 97209 (about 4 blocks from PNCA's Main Campus)
- SCRAP PDX (for secondhand and discounted supplies)
 - 619 SE 6th Ave, Portland, OR 97214 (just over the Burnside Bridge from PNCA's Main Campus)

Personal Devices

Students are permitted to bring smartphones, headphones, laptops, and other personal devices. Personal devices are never required for Pre-College programs, but we understand they can sometimes be very useful to students. Personal devices may be used by students during class at the discretion of each instructor. Instructors may revoke permission to use personal devices or ask that students store devices away at any time. If students are using personal devices in a way that is disruptive to their or others' learning, or using personal devices in any way that violates an instructor's classroom policy, disciplinary action may be taken.

Adobe Creative Suite

Many Pre-College programs include instruction in the Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, etc.). Pre-College students can access the Adobe Creative Suite on the shared computers at PNCA. Students should first [create a free Adobe ID](#) using an email address that they will have access to throughout the summer. If a student has an existing Adobe account, they are welcome to use their own Adobe ID. PNCA does not provide personal Adobe licenses to Pre-College students due to the short nature of the program.

Because computers are shared, students are strongly encouraged to save their files to a

personal Google Drive, flash drive, or other secure digital storage space after each work session. Any files left on computers at the end of a program will be deleted.

Life Models

Some Pre-College programs include figure drawing with live, clothed models. Models are always clothed for Pre-College programs, but Pre-College students are expected to follow the same etiquette as college students during life drawing sessions. Photography of models is never permitted. Students are expected to be respectful, non-distracting and attentive to their work during the model poses.

Artistic Content

PNCA values freedom of artistic expression. For Pre-College programs, we do have some content guidelines to ensure health, safety and well-being of students.

- Students may not produce images of themselves or other students in a state of full, partial, or suggestive nudity, or otherwise controversial state such as related to violence, drug, or alcohol-based, or otherwise self-destructive behavior.
- Students considering projects that include nudity, sexually explicit or implicit subject matter, or otherwise potentially controversial subject matter such as related to alcohol, drugs, violence, or otherwise destructive behavior that may pose a threat to the mental health, safety and well-being of the community, must review the project with their instructor before proceeding.

Documentation

PNCA's Documentation Studio will capture high-quality photos of student work immediately following installation and before the Friends and Family Reception. The photos will be shared via email within one month of the end of each Summer Intensive. We ask that students make sure to **download the photos of their work as soon as possible**, as PNCA is unable to store them indefinitely.

Portfolio Reviews

Each Intensive session closes with 1:1 Portfolio Reviews with PNCA Admissions Counselors. Students typically discuss their new, installed work, but they are encouraged to bring other pieces or photos of other pieces to share. Portfolio reviews are typically 10-15 minutes long.

Portfolio reviews are intended to be constructive and conversational. It is an opportunity to hear directly from the people who review applications, reflect on where your work is and where it's headed, and discuss what skills you may want to hone as you prepare for a creative career. Admissions will reach out via email with Portfolio Review feedback within one month of the end of each Summer Intensive. If you have any questions about your feedback or would like to schedule another review in the future, you can always reach out to pncaadmissions@willamette.edu or email your counselor directly. Admissions counselors are a great resource for any and all PNCA or portfolio questions!

Abandoned Work

Student work not picked up by the end of a program is considered abandoned. PNCA is not responsible for storing abandoned student work. If a later pick-up is required (e.g. a piece is too large to be taken home on public transit), students or families must make arrangements with the Community Education Office **before the end of the program**. PNCA staff will work to accommodate all reasonable requests, but cannot guarantee safe storage of the work, as PNCA does not have dedicated space for these pieces.

Evaluations

Instructors or program staff will provide students with an evaluation form at the end of each program. All evaluation responses are **completely anonymous**. While not required, student feedback is an important part of the development of each Pre-College Program and students are encouraged to complete evaluations honestly.

Credit

PNCA does not offer college credit for Pre-College programs at this time.

Letters of Recommendation

Pre-College students may request a letter of recommendation from their instructor, to be used for college admissions, internship and job applications. **Instructors provide these letters at their discretion; attending Pre-College is not a guarantee to receive a letter of recommendation.** Here are some guidelines for requesting a letter of recommendation:

- Reach out to let the instructor know that you would like to request a letter of recommendation.

- Include the purpose of the letter (e.g. the school and program you're applying to).
- Each college has its own process for letters of recommendation– most often, you provide the instructor's name and email address, and the college will contact the instructor directly. Colleges generally prefer recommendations to be confidential between the instructor and the college.
- Drafting a personalized letter takes time, so give your instructor at least 3 weeks before the deadline to write.
- Please note that PNCA will not share **personal** contact information for instructors at any point before, during or after the program.