visual and performing arts!
AT COLORADO ACADEMY
At Colorado Academy, we believe that the Visual and Performing Arts are an integral part of a liberal arts education in all divisions and must be approached with a commitment to excellence. Beyond technique and the skill set crucial for all artistic study, we teach students to develop a vocabulary for discussing their experience in the arts and to think and work conceptually. Daniel Birnbaum, curator for the 53rd Venice Biennale says — *A work of art is more than an object, more than a commodity. It represents a vision of the world, and, if taken seriously, it can be seen as a way of world-making.*

CA offers courses of artistic study for all students, allowing exposure and experience to the new learner, as well as advanced programs of study for those seeking a professional path in college and beyond. As a community, we engage in the performing and visual arts to be human, to find compassion, and to know what it means to thrive in a civilized society.
Visual Arts

The Visual Arts Program combines a choice-based exploration with a discipline-based study of art. In Pre-K through Middle School, instructors facilitate the TAB-Choice approach, which teaches artistic behaviors, empowers the artists to direct their own learning, and guides young artists to make work that is meaningful to them. As students progress to Upper School, they begin to dive deeper into discipline-based art, where they learn and practice technical skills and approaches that lead to sophisticated work. Portfolio-level Senior artists create a body of work that culminates in a juried group show in the Ponzio Arts Center. Student work is on display in all three divisions throughout the year and in CA’s annual All-School Arts Festival every spring. Our visual arts teachers are experienced educators and artists who provide a continuity of instruction for students from Pre-Kindergarten through Upper School.

Theater

Theater study at CA offers a focused and progressive program in Acting and Directing centered in the Sanford Meisner method of scene study, teaching students to work moment to moment and to live truthfully on stage. There is also a fully developed Technical Theater program through which students study stage management, lighting, sound and set design, and also acquire hands-on experience in stage crew assignments. The Conservatory of Theater is the production ensemble in the Upper School by application and audition. Students may enter conservatory in either a performance or technical concentration. Upper School produces four major productions per year, in addition to the 24-Hour Play Project, which brings together student writers, directors, and performers for one intense day of rehearsal, culminating in a performance. Middle School’s performances include both a musical and non-musical main-stage production, and Lower School performs three grade level presentations through the music program.

Music

CA’s music program trains students in vocal and instrumental music with numerous performance opportunities throughout the year. Lower School students begin with an active collaborative music program, progressing in Middle and Upper School to participation in Choir, Orchestra, and Jazz and Rock Combos. In addition to the music course offerings, there is an instrumental music program providing private music lessons during the school day in piano, strings, guitar, and wind instruments. Students may also participate in specialized programs, including specialty choirs, chamber ensembles, and the music composition program.

Dance

The dance program provides an opportunity for all students to try a number of dance styles on all levels of expertise. Elective classes are offered in classic and contemporary styles, including Tap for Grades 7-12. The Conservatory of Dance in Upper School is an audition-based contemporary company with a technical emphasis open to students in Grades 9-12, and it is the performing ensemble of the school. All electives in Dance may fulfill any number of Arts requirements or one outside Athletic credit. Conservatory dancers commit to a two-trimester study ending in the annual In Concert performance, and they may elect to apply both trimesters to either Athletic or Arts credit, or they may choose to do one of each.

Sanford Meisner of New York’s Neighborhood Playhouse was one of the most beloved and respected acting teachers in this country. His method of scene study is based upon the imagination, teaching students to work moment to moment so they learn to put their attention on the other person and see acting as the “reality of doing”—not emoting—as well as behaving “truthfully in an imaginary situation.” Students learn to listen truthfully and to depend upon the other person for their organic response.
The Lower School Music program is grounded in both the Orff-Schulwerk approach and traditional choral singing. We strive to teach students musicianship and innovative expression skills so that music becomes a way of life for them, starting in these early years.

Lower School

The Lower School Arts program engages students in music, theater, dance, and storytelling through a collaborative experience. Students learn choral singing and to play on Orff instruments, as an inventive ensemble, leading up to grade-level performances each spring. The Visual Arts program engages the imagination and enthusiasm of our young artists. A variety of materials serve as a springboard for self-expression as students challenge themselves to persist through the artistic process as they learn to develop craftsmanship. Throughout the year, students reflect on their work and the work of contemporary and historical artists to deepen their understanding of the larger art community. Students have the opportunity to show their work throughout the year, including the fall K-8 show and the All-School Arts Festival each spring.
Middle School

Students begin the exploration of the arts in Grade 6 through an arts rotation that includes exposure to the following disciplines: vocal music, theater, visual arts, and coding/design. In Grades 7-8, students are allowed to express preferences for electives; however, they are directed to investigate a wide range of classes that will help them to discover the genres in which they may want to specialize as they move on to high school. Options include vocal music, theater performance, technical theater, visual art (2D and 3D), film and digital media, dance (contemporary and traditional styles, including Tap), wood shop, and band (Jazz or Rock). Students also have the opportunity to study strings, woodwinds, flute, brass, piano, and percussion through our private music program. Artistic observation and critical thinking are emphasized across disciplines as students begin to develop an aesthetic vocabulary for discussing the arts.

Recent & Upcoming Productions

- The Pirates of Penzance
- Babes in the Wood
- Dirk Smirk Secret Agent
- Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
- Thoroughly Modern Millie
- The Silver Whistle (outreach production)
- Xanadu
- Jazz/Rock Combo Concerts
- Choir and Chamber Ensemble Concerts
- Piano/String/Flute Recitals
In Upper School, students have the opportunity to specialize in an artistic area of their choice, but it is not unusual for a student to concentrate in more than one art form. The approach to study is twofold: elective classes open to all students, and an advanced Conservatory/Portfolio program by audition and application for students who wish to pursue the arts on a professional level or who would like to study their art on a highly focused level while in high school. A wide range of electives is offered in both performing and visual arts. Advanced programs include Specialty Vocal Groups, the Conservatories of Theater and Dance, Advanced Musical Theater Production, and Portfolio Study. All arts classes at CA receive academic credit, and grades are part of the student’s cumulative average.
What Our Students Say

“At Colorado Academy, theater productions offer an environment where I can grow and develop as a performer, a leader, and a human being. Theater has taught me that, with a group of focused and genuine people, extraordinary things can be accomplished.”
Rachel Harris ’19

“I’ve had a positive experience studying in Colorado Academy’s Audio Engineering course, taking private lessons for seven years, and performing with multiple combo groups. Being a part of the Colorado Academy music program has expanded my knowledge about music and my passion for it.”
Caleb Aguirre
Class of 2020

Upper School Course Selections

Visual Arts
- Studio Art
- Digital Photography
- Digital Video
- Ceramics
- Graphic Design and Publication
- Introduction to Architectural Drawing
- Advanced Portfolio Study in Studio Art, Digital Photo, and Video (by application and review)

Theater
Special production opportunities open to Upper School students include The 24-Hour Play Project. Courses marked with an (*) are by audition.
- Acting/Scene Study
- Directing
- Technical Theater
- Musical Theater
- Advanced Musical Theater Production*
- Performance Innovations
- Acting for Film
- Conservatory of Theater (Performance* & Technical Theater Concentrations)

Music
- Chamber Choir
- Multiple Specialty Choirs*
- Orchestra
- Rock Combo
- Jazz Combo
- Audio Engineering

Dance (*) by audition
- Contemporary/Hip-Hop
- Tap
- Broadway Dance
- Conservatory of Dance*
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AT COLORADO ACADEMY | 2019-2020