

# Newsletter



## Knocking Down Barriers Through Art

Each month, Hamilton artist and art instructor April Mansilla runs a workshop at the Ellen Osler Memorial Home. The workshop is part of DVSA's Community Art Experience Program, which, along with bursaries and other initiatives, aims to remove barriers for people who would not otherwise have access to art education.

Removing obstacles is key for April, a vocal advocate for mental health and well-being. For April, when it comes to art it "doesn't matter what you went through or who you are or where you come from." There are no rules in her workshops. "These women have lived with rules for a long time, and I don't want to say you have to do [this] when their self-expression wants to do something else."

The living room at Ellen Osler House is decorated with the artwork created in the workshops. Some residents have even left their artwork in the bedroom they stayed in for the next woman, so the sense of connection passes from woman to woman, even if they never meet in person.

"There's no us versus them," says April. "We're just all there with a paintbrush in our hand."

Megan Hardyman, Ellen Osler House Program Coordinator, believes the hands-on art programs contribute positively to the health and wellness of the residents. "A lot of the women are coming out with amazing artistic talent that hasn't really been exposed. Our partnership with DVSA has allowed us to tap into that."





## Happy 60th Birthday DVSA!

Look how far we've come! From a couple of converted offices above Jack Pinder's Sporting Goods on King Street in 1964 to the current year of 2024 with 8 bustling art studios, a pottery department, a full-time program, over 75 faculty members and almost 8,000 annual student registrations.

Our founders, Marion Farnan and Emily Dutton had little inkling back in those early days where their efforts to bring quality painting and sculpture instruction to the region would lead. But no doubt they'd be immensely proud to see their baby art school all grown up – a recognized leader in visual arts education and a pillar of the Hamilton community.

Here's the 60 years! We've planned some special events and festivities over the next 12 months – stay tuned to hear more.



*From the Walton family collection.*

## Family Legacy Sees 5 Generations of Artists

The art in Margaret Walton's home is a family legacy—most of the art was done by family—but it's also the legacy of the town of Dundas and Dundas Valley School of Art. Margaret Walton's grandmother was Marion Farnan, who, with her good friend Emily Dutton, started DVSA and forever changed the town of Dundas.

"Marion created the whole art community in Dundas," says Margaret. "It's an extraordinary testament to her and to Emily. Dundas would be a very different place if not for DVSA."

The school has always been

a part of Margaret's family's life. Her father, John Farnan, was on the board for twenty years. Both she and her sister took classes and volunteered when they were teenagers. Her son, Jason, is a creative potter who found his start at DVSA. And, granddaughter Lily, twelve, has been taking classes at DVSA since she was four. That's five generations of artists with deep ties to the school.

Margaret gives her grandmother full credit for her family's creative interests. "Marion kind of went full bore and gave us all the opportunity to take classes,"

she says. Judging by the art in Margaret's home and garden, Marion's children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren have made fine use of the start she provided for them.





# Landscape Through A Unique Lens

Artist Eric Ranveau's paintings are more than abstract landscapes – they're a way of giving back.



Originally from France, Eric has been using his artwork to show his appreciation for the world around him since he first arrived in Canada in 2006 and was introduced to '70s art collective The Tiger Group by one of its members, artist Bill Powell.

"It was the same spirit as The Group of Seven. Bill introduced me and proposed I be a part of it," recalls Eric. "I did landscapes in Canada because they're beautiful first of all, and I just thought, okay,

The Group of Seven did so many things about scenery in Canada, why should I not show people how a European artist imagines and creates the Canadian landscape?"

Local landscapes come alive though Ranveau's abstract perspective, offering a unique lens through which to view sights otherwise easy to take for granted. His work will be up for bids at DVSA's next Art Auction April 1-7 and for Eric, this is an opportunity to offer thanks.



*"Walking Along The Georgian Bay" from the DVSA 2023 Art Auction*

"I want to give something back to the art school because the reason why I'm here today is because of art school," he says. "DVSA is unique – there is nothing else the same, except maybe in Toronto."

In turn, the Hamilton region will have a chance at the auction to support DVSA and maybe own a Ranveau original. For Eric, there's something for veteran art lovers and novices alike at an event like this.

"To understand art you don't need to speak Chinese, English or French," he says. "It's a common language. The DVSA Art Auction brings people together. It brings the community together."



## Three Questions For Faculty Member, Ward Shipman

Throughout his forty-year teaching career, Ward Shipman has worn many hats – from Art Department Head at Westdale Secondary School to teaching 3D animation at Mohawk College and teaching drawing/painting classes here at DVSA. But the common thread that stitches the fabric of his life together is a lifelong love of art.

**Who was the first person you remember that made a significant impact on your artistic path?**

**Ward:** "My first real art teacher was Allen J Scott. There were art lessons at The Royal Conservatory of Music on Saturday morning and off I went. At 5:00 p.m., my parents were wondering, 'What's happened to Ward?' They drove down and Allen tells them, 'Well, you can't learn how to draw in two hours, so we stayed all day.' Allen was 72 and had hung out with Norman Rockwell and James Montgomery Flagg, so I learned about the golden age of illustration through him. I was one of those kids who'd done step-by-step Disney comics and then at 12 years old suddenly we're doing French Academy methods: copy the plaster casts and then do the still-life and then do the portrait and stuff like that."

**What was the first medium you were drawn to?**

**Ward:** "Drawing, definitely, and then watercolour, and then

oil paint. I really enjoy drawing from the figure – the fact that things are timed, that if it doesn't work you just flip the page, you keep on going. Not everything you're going to do is going to work out; you've got to be on and it's a real challenge."

**What was your first eureka moment?**

**Ward:** "When I was a little kid in school, we were supposed to be doing a drawing of something – a house, mom, dad, whatever—and mine didn't work out. In frustration, I put a red X through the whole thing, added more colour to it and made it into the Union Jack flag. The teacher thought it was cool and said, 'Go and show the other teachers.' I felt embarrassed and proud at the same time. There was an artist who said that you have ten thousand bad drawings in you and then you get to the good stuff."



# Creative Giving

For DVSA student Mary Fawcett, the best way to say thank you is by giving back.



"This school got me through the pandemic," says Mary, a Dundas local in her eighties.

Her first introduction to DVSA was a Beginner's Watercolour class and from there she was hooked, adding online drawing classes to her schedule during the pandemic while continuing her painting pursuits. But, when in-person classes returned, Mary found there was so much more to being a part of DVSA than art alone.

"I love the old building and there's a big social factor. I love seeing other people's paintings and the camaraderie," she says. As much as she admired her classmates' work, Mary's own creativity drew admirers for a very different reason.

"I saw people had fabric roll up holders to put their paintbrushes in and I couldn't find anything," says Mary. "So as a quilter before I started painting, I designed and made myself a holder for my paintbrushes."

These colourful paintbrush holders quickly drew interest from the rest of the class. Mary happily quilted more and sold them for twenty dollars each, donating every penny to DVSA to show her appreciation for everything the school has provided for her.

"DVSA is a huge asset to the Dundas community," she says. "I'm just amazed at the variety of classes [and] I think what they offer for children and their artistic development is so very important."

## Little Black Frame Mystery Art Night



### Oh, what a night!

The excitement was palpable and artworks flew off the wall during November's Little Black Frame Mystery Art Night in support of our hands-on art programs.

Our deepest gratitude to the 157 artists who provided the 170 spectacular artworks for this school fundraiser and also to our generous Event Sponsors.

## Holiday Hoopla Free Family Art Day



Our **Holiday Hoopla Family Art Day** in December was a huge success with over 250 attendees.

Children and adults alike had a great time creating winter-themed art in a total of 6 different studios, led by our fabulous faculty.

We look forward to hosting our next Famajam Family Art Day this February.

## ARTIST TALK with KAREEM-ANTHONY FERREIRA



We were delighted to host a January **Artist Talk** with Hamilton creator, **Kareem-Anthony Ferreira**.

Kareem shared his painting process, background, educational journey and his emergence into the local and international art world with us.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and, most of all, to Kareem, for sharing your time and your art.

Look for the talk video on YouTube.