

# Newsletter

## DVSA's Lavender Inspirations Program Offers a Space of Empowerment for 2SLGBTQIA Youth

Lavender Inspirations instructor Birdie Gerhl is keen on breaking down barriers.

Not only does generous sponsorship from TD Bank Group mean DVSA's hands-on art program for 2SLGBTQIA youth is available for free, but Birdie and collaborators Mikah and Fern – both art therapy students – employ a drop-in format rather than a more formal course. “Being a teen is tough,” Birdie says. “You’re not being graded. It’s not that kind of course.”

The new program takes a holistic approach to creativity. For the course facilitators, this means “meeting people where they’re at.” Program participants come to DVSA to gather with their peers and make art if they want. Mikah explains, “Agency is important in what we do.”

Building community is also important. It’s not uncommon for 2SLGBTQIA youth to feel alone. “Creating community and using community as a way to care for one another is one of the program goals,” says Mikah. For Birdie, the concept of community goes even further: “One of my hopes... is to offer a queer lineage, because queer folks are often isolated from our elders. A big dream of mine is, after coming to this space, at least one person would learn they come from something and that doesn’t necessarily have to be a blood relation.”

Birdie encourages interested youth to join them this Fall. “It’s okay if you don’t make the first couple of classes. You’ll always be welcome.”



Artwork: Birdie Gerhl



tati Toronto Art Therapy Institute

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*“Art crosses the imaginary borders that structure our lives.” – Mikah*

# DVSA's Diploma Program Offers Unique Opportunities for Mentorship and Intergenerational Learning

DVSA's full-time three-year diploma program — Studio Fine Art Practice & Theory — provides individual and small group instruction designed for students to thrive outside a traditional post-secondary setting.

The program, which began in September and is preparing for its second year, provides a maximum of 10 students in each cohort with the opportunity to develop their visual art studio practice to a high level while focusing on their own interest and goals.

“Some people are just better suited to the smaller environment and personal touch that our program offers,” says DVSA's Visual Arts Director, Sally McKay. “There's a real spectrum of folks at different points in their life coming into the program,” she adds, emphasizing the opportunities for intergenerational exchange that provide students with new perspectives and outcomes.

Led by a high-calibre faculty of practicing artists, Studio Fine Art Practice & Theory equips successful graduates with the tools they need to become professional artists.

“You make the art your goal and then, through that, you discover all kinds of things about yourself — your strengths, weaknesses, interests, and potential pathways you wouldn't find otherwise,” says Sally.

Sally feels the program is especially unique because it's located at DVSA, a focused environment where students can prepare and present their work in a professional setting. Students benefit from the school's visiting artists, workshops and part-time studies. They also flourish due to close relationships with their peers.

“There are often vulnerabilities because art can be quite emotional or personal,” she says, adding that one of many transferable skills that come out of an effective art education is empathetic communication.

Learn more at [dvsa.ca/full-time](https://dvsa.ca/full-time)



*“You make the art your goal and then, through that, you discover all kinds of things about yourself — your strengths, weaknesses, interests, and potential pathways you wouldn't find otherwise.”*



# Little Black Frame Artist, Lorraine Roy Sparks Curiosity About Nature

Sewing fabric by the age of six, it wasn't until she was in her teens and picked up embroidery that Dundas artist Lorraine Roy had her 'aha!' moment.

She later became a member of the Canadian Embroidery Guild and saw it was possible to make a career out of textile art.

While Lorraine was expanding her embroidery knowledge, she was also at university studying horticulture. Putting the two together was magical.

"I got this idea of doing an exhibition based on the University of Guelph's Arboretum project where they were saving seventeen rare and endangered trees. I thought, wouldn't it be great

to do that in textiles?"

Since then, her artwork has married science and art. "A lot of my textile work is bringing the scientific aspect of the botanical into people's consciousness.... I like to [express] the connection between humans and nature because we are part of nature, but we have separated from it. Science is an important part of better understanding and loving nature."

Lorraine has participated in DVSA's Little Black Frame fundraiser for the past eight

years and she'll be back again this year for the 10th edition. She enjoys the challenge of the smaller format, allowing her to indulge in the small details of the stitching. Why does supporting DVSA matter to her? "The school make[s] our community so much more vibrant a place," she says. "It gives Dundas a living, breathing heart."

*Our 10th edition of Little Black Frame Mystery Art Night is scheduled for November 9, 2024.*



Above:  
Little Black  
Frame Artwork  
by Lorraine Roy

Left:  
Lorraine Roy

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*"DVSA makes our community a vibrant place."*

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## Three Questions For Faculty Member, Holly Sneath

Holly Sneath has been gracing the DVSA studios since her late teens – first as a student, then as our print shop tech and after her graduate studies at Cornell, as an esteemed instructor for drawing and painting classes. Her own art practice has resulted in a range of works prominently featured in regional exhibitions and DVSA's Art Auction. We took a moment to ask her about some key artistic moments in her life:

**What is the first artwork you remember that made a significant impact on your artistic path?**

When I was about five or six, I saw a Rembrandt show – I think it was at the Art Gallery of Ontario – and I remember being blown away by the self-portraits and *The Night Watch*. I thought, "This is what I want to do. I want to make pictures like that." My father bought me all the postcards I wanted from the gift shop and I put them all in my school "Pioneers" project (no one told me Rembrandt wasn't an Upper Canada pioneer). I drew a log cabin on my cover and I remember being so disappointed that my picture really didn't look at all like a log cabin.

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

Oil. Maybe I should blame that on Rembrandt, but Picasso

and Miro and Paul Klee and all the other artists I saw while growing up used oil paint, so I did too. Unfortunately, oil doesn't like me anymore, so I've had to transition to other mediums. I find it fun to try new things.

**Could you tell us about a 'eureka' creative moment?**

I was young and I was doing collagraphs at the art school. I remember cutting up these big cardboard figures and printing them. The first print was a fish – about two-and-a-half feet tall – and I felt a real rush when hanging it up. The process involved the addition of low relief, as well as the opportunity to include multiple colours. I was having such fun preparing the plates cut in the shapes of fish, birds and turtles and using feathers and cheesecloth as collage elements. They were beautiful and it just blew my mind because I was new to all of it.



*"I remember being blown-away by the self-portraits."*

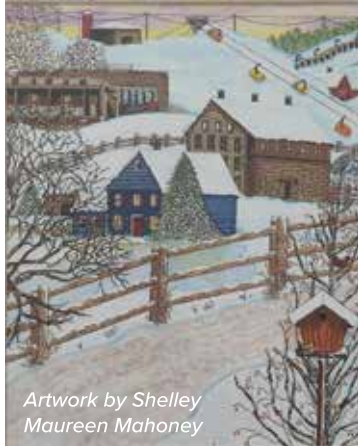
# DVSA BROUGHT MY MOM'S FIRE BACK

## Growing up, Shelley Maureen Mahoney dreamed of one thing — working as an artist.

However, at her parents' insistence, she became a schoolteacher, first in Windsor and later in Stoney Creek.

"Art was her true love," says Shelley's daughter Monica Mahoney, who now makes a monthly donation to DVSA in her mother's memory. "When she was first diagnosed with cancer, I'm pretty sure art is what saved her."

In the early 2000s, Shelley enrolled in classes at DVSA and befriended fellow artists. "She absolutely loved the school," says Monica.



Artwork by Shelley Maureen Mahoney

Not long after her artist journey had begun, Shelley was diagnosed with terminal cervical cancer. "She did her chemo and her radiation... and she did her art, because that's what she loved to do," says Monica. "She beat the cancer and was in remission for 15 years."



Monica and her mom, Shelley



The cancer returned in 2016 and a few years later, Shelley passed away, leaving her art with Monica and her sister, Jenn.

"I wanted to do something in her honour," says Monica, who adds the recurring donations to DVSA would mean a lot to her mom. "[The school] helped her so much. It brought her fire back. I donate so it can bring joy to somebody else."

*"When she was diagnosed with cancer, I'm pretty sure art is what saved her."*



## Gettin' our Groove On!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our 60th Anniversary Art Party.

Special thanks to our staff, faculty artists, our performers, our food and drink sponsors and incite Foundation for the Arts — because of you our Groovy Bash was a huge success.

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## Buzzing With Summer Camp Energy

Our young artists are excited to create art in our 2024 Summer Art Camps that include Bursts of Colour, Pottery-Palooza, Cartoon Magic, Stained Glass for Teens and more.

With community support, we are thrilled to provide bursaries that give access to the arts for children and families experiencing financial barriers.



## A Radiant DVSA Gallery

In June, our Gallery came alive with artwork created by HWDSB and HWCDSB students who participated in our Artists' Connection outreach program. A series of five travelling art exhibitions, the Artists' Connection program provides an opportunity for young people to engage with the exhibition artworks and create their own art in artist-led workshops.

Thank you to our contributing writers, Jessica Veter and Jessica Rose.