



DUNDAS VALLEY
SCHOOL OF ART

2026 Vol. 1

Newsletter



21 Ogilvie: A Grand Old Dame of Dundas

WITH OVER 8,500 ANNUAL COURSE REGISTRATIONS, DVSA is a vital hub in the Dundas community and greater Hamilton region, a space for artists to learn, create and come together for classes and events. The building itself at 21 Ogilvie Street, with its original wood flooring, support beams and brickwork in places, exudes a fascinating and colourful past, adding to the experience of making art in such a historically rich venue.

Built in 1836, the building's original purpose is unclear – no official documents remain to provide clues. The trail picks up however in 1858 when the building became home to the Wesleyan Ladies' College, a boarding school for as many as forty women. Once the college closed in 1866, the building was transformed for industrial use, housing The Canada Screw Works until it closed in 1887 and moved the business into Hamilton. The Screw Works later became a division of The Steel Works of Canada (Stelco).

Pratt and Whitney Small Tools (who had merged with Bertram and Sons), then moved into 21 Ogilvie. During WWII, one part was used as a

munitions factory. By the time DVSA founders Marion Farnan and Emily Dutton took over the site in 1971, it was "in a sad state of neglect." Government funding, private donations and fundraising events were required to add a fire escape, update the structural work and make the building fit to host art classes.

By 2010, the building was feeling its age and major renovations were again required. Funds were raised to install proper HVAC and an elevator while enhancing the art studios to offer a greater diversity of programs and activities.

This venerable building has seen many iterations in its almost 200 years. The DVSA staff and Board of Governors are proud custodians of its past and committed to ensuring this grand old dame has a prosperous future.

"The community feels so passionate and connected to this building," says Kathron Hann, DVSA's Executive Director. "It's our job to ensure it keeps evolving – inside and out – so that creative passion and connection endure."

OVER THE YEARS



1858–1866

Wesleyan Ladies' College



1866–1887

The Canada Screw Works



1971

Dundas Valley School of Art moves to 21 Ogilvie St.



2010

DVSA undergoes major renovations to HVAC, elevator and studios.



Top Left
Participants collaborate on an installation depicting the local watershed.

Top Centre
Kahnyen'kehàka Santee Smith Tekaronhiàhkwa presents an artist talk.

Top Right
Gallery visitors contribute their ideas for "What makes a better future for all?"



Bottom Left
Collaborative wall collages in the *Building Better Homes* show.

Bottom Right
Jackson Hudecki and Mita Giacomini share insights during a panel discussion.

Special Programming Sparks Collaboration and Conversation

WITH INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN MIND, DVSA offers free special courses and programs that build community, foster creativity and initiate important conversations. Most recently, our Art and Climate Change series welcomed 16 students exploring intersections of art and the environment. Their work culminated in a thought-provoking group exhibition in the DVSA Gallery called *Building Better Homes*.

Generously funded by the incite Foundation for the Arts, the program also invited members of the public to five free panel talks, featuring artists, scientists and climate experts. Among them was multi-disciplinary artist Kahnyen'kehàka Santee Smith Tekaronhiàhkwa, who reflected on art as a way of knowing, a vessel of survival and a pathway to renewal.

"It is just so important to recognize how much knowledge is held in Indigenous communities around exactly the things we need to know about how to address

climate change," says Sally McKay, DVSA's Visual Arts Director.

Outreach Facilitator Lisa Jefferies says the school's location near Cootes Paradise and Spencer Creek make the program especially meaningful, urging the community to be better land stewards.

This program is just one example of DVSA's unique offerings that encourage collaboration. Others include the recent mural project Piece x Piece, free pottery workshops for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, a workshop with Indigenous artist Quinn Smallboy, and art making with teens at the Roots Youth Centre. In these settings, participants can understand and learn about subjects which hold significant emotional weight – in the process, fostering a more resilient, empathic and kinder community.

Adds Sally, "We're very focused on the good that art does."

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Sian McGregor: From DVSA Volunteer to Featured Artist

YEARS BEFORE Sian McGregor's *Tiger Lily* became a highlight work in DVSA's live auction last April, she was an event volunteer who dreamed of one day having her work displayed for bidders. Her DVSA journey began almost 20 years ago when her children attended summer and March Break camps, enjoying the creative outlet the school offered.

"We believed in the importance of nurturing their creativity from a young age," says Sian, who started taking her own artistic practice seriously in her 40s. Enrolling in various DVSA classes, she eventually fell in love with oil painting, which allows her to explore classical realism.

Ten years ago, Sian began volunteering at DVSA's Annual Art Auction, spending hours looking at pieces and feeling inspired. "It motivated me to set a goal of submitting my own piece. So that's what I did!"

Sian says being featured at the auction helped her believe in herself as an artist. "Family and friends will be



Sian McGregor with *Tiger Lily*, featured in the live auction night at DVSA's 54th Annual Art Auction.

kind to you as you develop your skills, but when you get public recognition, it can help to ease those doubts and propel you forward."

She encourages up-and-coming artists to attend the event and get inspired. "The auction sets a stage for both established and new artists to sell their work, to support each other and to support the school and the art community."

DVSA's 55th Annual Art Auction will take place April 6-12, 2026.



Three Questions for DVSA Instructor VITALY MEDVEDOVSKY

Born in Kharkiv, Ukraine, Vitaly Medvedovsky moved to Canada in 1998, completing the MFA Painting program at Concordia University after receiving a BFA from OCAD. A new instructor at DVSA, he teaches classes in portrait drawing and painting as well as surreal still life. But it is only through sheer luck that Vitaly Medvedovsky is teaching visual art. If not for a music teacher's strong discouragement when he was 7, he might have ended up a singer.

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

I feel honestly the answer is more books or movies rather than visual art – sci-fi stuff like Ray Bradbury or Ursula K. Le Guin. They created worlds different from ours but told stories that were really about us. I found that very attractive.

2 When was your first eureka moment?

I don't think I had one moment. I feel it was a gradual process of understanding that, [like those books and movies,] I don't need to copy this world around me. In my art, I can take things from the environment and combine or reinterpret them into things that interest me.



3 What was the first medium you were drawn to?

My first and ever last love is oil. As a medium, it is just endless in terms of possibilities. It can be endlessly fun and endlessly frustrating. It's a bit like gambling. You feel the next brush stroke is going to fix it. You're always chasing that final brush stroke, but you never get it. It's completely illusory.

Fundraising at DVSA



Poster by G. Zeldin

OVER OUR 60+ YEAR HISTORY, DVSA has had many creative and memorable fundraisers – from house tours and cookbook sales to a beef BBQ that saw gatecrashers enticed by the tantalizing aromas drifting through the Dundas downtown core. One legendary event was DVSA's *First Tango in Dundas* evening in 1973. Having all the elements of a fantastic soiree – tango lessons, cocktails, a silent auction and guest produced artworks – it was one unplanned arrival that made the evening exceptionally memorable – a “mystery masked stalker.”

Wearing nothing but a World War I flying helmet, goggles and work boots – some say there was a trench coat, but that's up for debate – this sassy individual, whose identity remains a mystery, is now forever entrenched in DVSA lore and event protocol.

Although tame in comparison, DVSA's fundraising events continue to play a

critical role. As the school has grown and funding avenues change, we've expanded fundraising to also include the **Creative Vision Fund** with a goal of meeting the logistical realities of a growing school and aging infrastructure.

- DVSA's Auctions (Annual Art Auction, Collectors' & Holiday Editions) direct up to 50% of the funds raised back to the participating artists, thus ensuring stability for our visual arts community.

- For donations to the **Creative Vision Fund**, 100% of every dollar is directed exclusively to meet DVSA's operational costs.

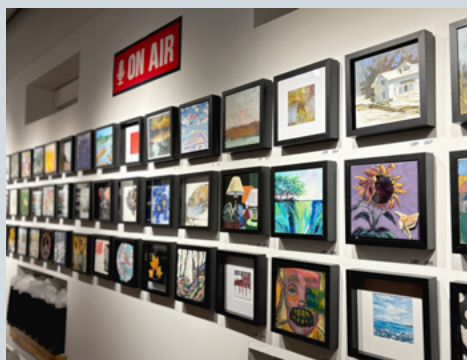
Funds raised through events or activities are critical to ensure the financial stability of DVSA as course and workshop fees only meet 60% of our operating costs. Whatever time of year it is, please consider supporting DVSA and ensure the next generation of artists can discover the artist in them. You can do so at dvsa.ca/donate.

Happenings & Highlights



A Revitalized Artists' Connection

After a year hiatus, version 2.0 of our DVSA Artists' Connection Program returned in September with refreshed guidebooks and expanded art collections featuring new artistic voices from the Hamilton region. The first two updated programs – *Sense of Self* and *Sense of Place* – are now available for classroom bookings across the Hamilton-Wentworth School Boards. The Artists' Connection Program loans curated art collections to classrooms and features 10+ original works of art along with a guidebook filled with ideas for activities.



Little Black Frame LIVE

Now, that was some night! Our annual November art party and fundraiser levelled things up to become Little Black Frame LIVE, adding live artmaking and live performances to the art selection fun. Proceeds from the evening help support our hands-on art programs, providing courses and workshops to participants of all ages and backgrounds. Our deepest gratitude to the 164 artists who provided the spectacular artwork for the night and to our generous event sponsors.



A Bursary Bonanza

With a benevolent anonymous donor matching all donations to the DVSA Bursary Fund, our community stepped up over the summer to raise a total of \$4,065.80 – when doubled this becomes over \$8,000! The Bursary Fund supports young and adult artists who, due to financial reasons, are unable able to attend DVSA classes. A very big thank you to all our contributors. We look forward to expanding our offerings of art experiences throughout the year.