

A group of young children are sitting on a light-colored wooden floor, looking towards the left. The children are dressed in casual clothing like t-shirts and shorts. Two large, diagonal purple graphic elements are overlaid on the image, one on the left and one on the right.

# School Programs

# About Us

A municipal gallery, the Varley creates meaningful conversations about Canadian art and society. We inspire local and regional audiences to engage with art through outstanding exhibitions and rich public and educational programs relevant to the communities we serve. We support artists from York region and seek to broaden access to the arts for diverse artists and cultural groups. We also share and celebrate the life and work of F. H. Varley, a founding member of the Group of Seven.

The Varley Art Gallery is situated on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe. We are committed to reconciliation, partnership and enhanced understanding.

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# School Programs

The Varley offers hands-on art activities and gallery tours designed to enhance visual literacy, encourage thoughtful discussion, and support critical thinking for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12.

**Bookings can be made on Mondays and Tuesdays only.**

## 1 Hour | Guided Tour | K to 12

In guided tours, participants discuss current exhibitions by closely observing artworks and sharing their opinions using appropriate art terminology. Students develop their observational and analytical skills.

## 2 Hours | Half-Day | K to 12

An exhibition tour followed by one hands-on studio session in which students create original artwork. Students explore, plan, experiment, produce, and reflect to demonstrate innovation and critical thinking .

## 4 Hours | Full-Day | K to 12

A one-hour gallery tour plus TWO one-hour hands-on studio sessions. A one-hour lunch break is included. Students apply elements such as line, shape, colour, and texture using a variety of media to make connections between art and other subjects like history, social studies, science, and language arts.

## 4 Hours | Portfolio Development | 9 to 12

Choose between linocut printmaking or life drawing to provide students with the tools to develop a well-rounded portfolio. These programs deliver excellent introductory experiences for relief printmaking and working with the human form. *Please note, Portfolio Development workshops have a maximum capacity of **30 students**.*

## How to Book

- Choose your preferred dates for your visit. We offer school programs on Mondays and Tuesdays, from 10 am to 2 pm.
- Fill out our Booking Request Form (linked at the bottom of this page) with your preferred dates and submit to [varley@markham.ca](mailto:varley@markham.ca).
- Check your inbox for a confirmation email from our education team. If your requested dates are unavailable, we'll suggest another
- Get excited! Your trip to the Varley is confirmed.

## [Booking Request Form](#)



## Fees and Booking Times

Program	Timeslot	Cost/Student
1 Hour Guided Tour	10 to 11 AM 11 AM to 12 PM 12 to 1 PM	\$7.00
2 Hours (Half- Day)	10 AM to 12 PM 12 to 2 PM	\$11.00
4 Hour (Full- Day)	10 AM to 2 PM*	\$16.00
4 Hours Portfolio Development	10 AM to 2 PM*	\$24.00

\*All four hour programs include a one hour lunch break from 12 to 1 PM



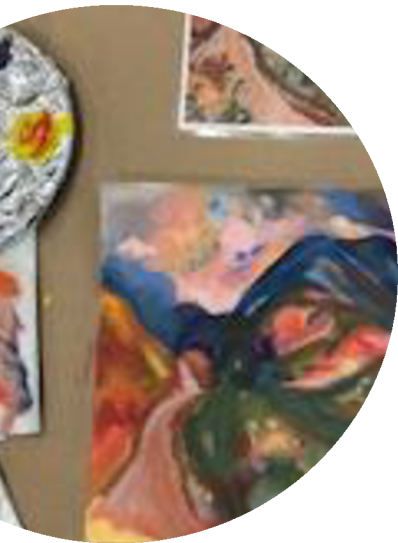
# One-Hour Studio Activities

## JK to 12



### Paint Like Varley | Acrylic Painting

Inspired by Fred Varley's expressive landscapes, students will learn about the art of plein-air painting. Through hands-on experimentation with brushwork, palette knives, and colour theory, they'll create dynamic compositions that capture the natural world.



### Animals and Ecosystems | Watercolours and Oil Pastels

Explore the beauty of Canadian wildlife through watercolour and pastel as you paint a native animal in its natural habitat using creative resist techniques. Wrap up the experience with a thoughtful group discussion on the ways human activity affects ecosystems across the country.



### Poster Printing | Printmaking with Ink and Scratch foam

Drawing inspiration from the Group of Seven's bold graphic designs, students will create striking posters based on a memorable personal experience. Using scratch foam relief printmaking, they'll explore text, shape, line, and contrast to express meaning through visual storytelling.



### Mini Self Portrait Busts | Air-Dry Clay or Plasticine

This sculptural activity teaches students to explore form, space, and shape by creating a three-dimensional self-portrait bust. Using air-dry clay (or plasticine for younger students), they'll build on an armature and experiment with a variety of sculpting tools and techniques to bring their likeness to life.



# One-Hour Studio Activities

## 9 to 12



### Lino-scapes | Printmaking with Lino

Students will examine how humans interact with the spaces around them by creating expressive linocut prints inspired by both historical and contemporary Canadian artists. Through hands-on exploration of carving techniques, shapes, lines, and chine collé, they'll gain a deeper understanding of composition and contrast.



### Life Drawing | Drawing with Graphite, Conte

Students will develop their observational skills through guided life-drawing exercises focused on the human form. Exploring techniques such as gesture and contour drawing, they'll produce a series of dynamic sketches and portfolio-ready figure studies.

## NEW! One-Hour Exhibition Activity

### JK to 12

#### **Inspired by the Gallery: Exhibition-Inspired Art**

Students will explore themes, techniques, and materials connected to the Varley Art Gallery's current exhibitions through a 1 hour hands-on studio activity led by our experienced educators. Each activity is designed to foster creativity, critical thinking, and artistic expression while connecting to the Ontario Curriculum.

*For more information, please contact the Culture Programs Assistant Ryan Taylor at [rtaylor@markham.ca](mailto:rtaylor@markham.ca)*

# Ontario Curriculum Links

All studio activities and gallery tours are designed to align with Ontario's Elementary and High School Curriculum. For full curriculum link breakdown by activity, grade, and subject, please contact us.

## ✓ Visual Arts

Students explore art-making, develop visual literacy, and build an understanding of art terminology and techniques. Through hands-on creation and critical reflection, students analyze the intent of artists and the role of visual media, both historically and in contemporary society. They consider how art shapes, and is shaped by, personal and cultural identity.

## ✓ Social Studies

By interpreting visual evidence in artwork, students investigate how different communities express their values, histories, and experiences. They explore how artists have represented Canada across time, and use inquiry and interpretation skills to examine the relationships, and tensions, between individuals, cultures, and broader social contexts.

## ✓ Language Arts, English and Media Literacy

Through rich discussion, students strengthen their communication skills, vocabulary, creative expression, and critical thinking. They learn to share ideas clearly, interpret meaning beyond the surface, and respond to visual prompts through storytelling, opinion-building, and dialogue.

## ✓ Science, Technology and Environmental Studies

Students deepen their environmental awareness by exploring how nature, technology, and the built world have inspired artistic practices across cultures and time periods. They examine how artists use materials and subject matter to reflect on human impact and our evolving relationship with the environment.



# Cancellations

The Varley Art Gallery of Markham reserves the right to cancel a program at any time to ensure the safety of participants and the site. Schools will not be charged if the gallery cancels a reservation due to inclement weather.

## Cancellation of a booking by a school or group:

Notice of cancellation must be submitted to the Varley Art Gallery no later than 10 business days prior to your visit date. Notice of cancellation received later than 10 business days will be invoiced at 25% of the original booking fee. Cancellation fees must be paid within 30 days from the program date.

## Invoicing and Number of Students:

Invoices are calculated at the time of booking, and are based on price per participant. ***Changes in participation numbers are allowed up to three business days prior to your visit.*** Refunds will not be granted for groups with fewer than 10 participants. Additional participants will be invoiced on the day of the visit. Please communicate any changes to [varley@markham.ca](mailto:varley@markham.ca) or by calling 905.477.7000 ext.3274 before your visit so that staff resources and revised pricing can be determined.

## Contact Us:

**Varley Art Gallery Education Programs**

**905-477-7000 ext. 3274 | [varley@markham.ca](mailto:varley@markham.ca)**

***Customized visits may be accommodated up on request.***

## **F.A.Q.**

### **How far in advance should I book a visit?**

A booking request form needs to be received at least 2 weeks prior to the date of request for standard programs.

### **Is there a minimum number of students required to book a program?**

A charge of twenty students minimum is applied to every program with a studio workshop. For gallery tours, we ask for a minimum of ten participants.

### **What is the ratio of adults to students?**

Kindergarten to Grade 6: 1 Adult for every 6 Students

Grades 7 to 12: 1 Adult for every 10 students

*Schools are responsible for ensuring ratio is met when visiting the Varley.*

### **Where can we eat lunch?**

Your one hour lunch break will take place in our studio. In the spring or summer, lunch can take place in the studio or outside (weather permitting).

\*Note: lunch and snacks are not provided by the Gallery. For high school students, there are options along Main Street Unionville to purchase lunch, such as cafes and restaurants, however wait times may vary.

### **Do we need a reservation for self-guided/teacher-led tours?**

No, admission to the Varley Art Gallery is free and teachers can bring their students for a self-guided tour any time during regular operating hours. For a guided tour with one of our educators, please complete a Booking Request Form.

# Scholarships and Bursaries

## Wallace Joyce Scholarship

The Wallace Joyce Scholarship is a \$1000 bursary that supports students from York Region pursuing post-secondary studies in an art-related field.

Mr. Wallace Joyce touched the lives of countless people in Markham. He was a champion of the arts and supported many organizations throughout his life. The Varley-McKay Art Foundation of Markham celebrates his contributions through the Wallace Joyce Scholarship. One award is offered annually, through a juried process, to a graduating high school student in York Region pursuing third level studies in an art related field.

### Eligibility:

- Graduating York Region high school student
- Pursuing art-related studies at a post-secondary level

Awarded by:



## William J. Withrow School Visits Bursary Program

William J. Withrow was a patron and founding board member of the Varley Art Gallery. The Varley-McKay Art Foundation of Markham established the William J. Withrow School Visits Bursary in his name. This program enables students to visit the Varley Art Gallery by subsidizing the cost of bus transportation. Subsidized students receive guided gallery tours and hands-on learning through the programs led by the Varley Art Gallery's experienced team of educators.

### Eligibility:

- Non-tuition school or organization
- Located in York Region
- Up to 60 participants
- Self-identifying as primarily minority students
- Confirmation of financial need

Funded by:







216 Main Street Unionville  
Markham, ON L3R 2H1

   VarleyArt Gallery  
[varleyartgallery.ca](http://varleyartgallery.ca)



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO  
an Ontario government agency  
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