

Ridgewood's "Soho"

BRINGS THE
VISUAL ARTS
CLOSER

Just over fifty years ago, a nondescript New York City area located south of Houston Street was home to warehouses, printing plants, mechanical repair shops and small factories. For a variety of reasons, that industrial look and feel attracted artists who transformed the neighborhood into a working and living center of creativity and artistic activity in the 1970s. Something similar is afoot in Ridgewood where performance spaces, studios and even luxury apartments are finding their way into a stretch of railway tracks, auto shops, and commercial parking zones.

One of those ventures is Master Art Studio at 215 Chestnut Street which prides itself on offering professional education and instruction in fine arts, animation, sewing and fashion design that rivals its NYC competitors. "Our small class sizes, which allow for individualized attention, are taught by instructors who are working artists, actively exhibiting in art shows and



Master Art Studio founder, owner and teacher Sasha Robinson, left, with teachers Tea Toodze, Katrina Fletcher and Victoria Charukhchyan.



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The beauty of a fine art class comes to life.

galleries," says Sasha Robinson, Founder and Director of the school. "Our mission is to foster creativity and skill development ranging from traditional art techniques to advanced digital skills. We also work on portfolio development with aspiring students and designers who wish to apply to competitive art schools, high schools, and colleges." Master Art Studio alums have graduated from some of the most prestigious art colleges including Pratt Institute, Fashion Institute of Technology, the School of Visual Arts, Parsons School of Design, the Art Institute of Chicago, and top university art programs.

Sasha holds a dual Master's in Fine Art and Fashion Design from Tbilisi State Academy of Art. She came to the U.S. from Tbilisi, Georgia, to begin her career in fashion design, working for Tarquin Ebker and Bob Mackie. She later transitioned into advertising as an art director and supervisor. Always mentoring others, she started to teach art in 2007 and then founded Master Art Studio in Wyckoff before relocating to Ridgewood in 2015.

In 2024, the school expanded its commitment to the arts by opening a professional contemporary art gallery, OQO Gallery, pronounced "oko," the Old Slavic word for "eye," a fitting symbol for a visual arts gallery. The gallery showcases curated established and emerging American and international artists, and has featured, among others,

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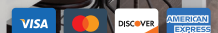
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Guests enjoy a recent OQO Gallery exhibition.

"Creativity is contagious," says Sasha, quoting Albert Einstein. "Pass it on!"

Tea Toidze, who teaches at the studio, painter Riham ElSadani, and Davlat Toshev, a miniaturist who creates in the Persian tradition. "I am passionate about bringing high-quality art to the community and helping Ridgewood's art environment flourish," adds Sasha. An upcoming exhibit will showcase an international artist whose compositions blend elements of Cubism and Futurism with organic architectural influences.

The school strives to be a space where creativity and community intersect. It plays an active role in Ridgewood's cultural scene, maintaining a close-knit collaboration and networking relationship with the Ridgewood Arts Foundation, hosting a show of local artists last year. Sasha is a former board member of RAF and the Ridgewood Arts Council and a long-standing member of the Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce and Ridgewood Guild. You can reach her at sasha@masterartstudio.com or 201-887-2187 and find out more at masterartstudio.com, on Instagram @masterartstudionj and @oqogallery, or on Facebook @masterartstudio.



Adult students at a basic sewing class.