



## NEWSLETTER

June 2009  
Issue 36

### ARTWEEKS 2009

I hope that last month's Artweeks was successful and enjoyable for you. I gather from feedback so far that it was one of the best Artweeks yet for a lot of people, which is fantastic given all the macro-economic gloom – congratulations to all on this!

As I'm reaching the end of my 3-year stint as Chair of your Board, I'd like to say what a pleasure and privilege it's been to work with everyone connected with Artweeks: your hard-working and imaginative Board of volunteers, the Area Co-ordinators and everyone else who contributes to the success of the Festival – and of course Jo and Caryn, without whom everything would collapse. Many thanks to you all. As an Artweeks' groupie ever since the first one was being planned (sometimes in our kitchen) I was particularly proud to be part of the team helping plan the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and the further development of the Festival. An important part of all this has been canvassing your views about the direction of Artweeks (from the lively EGM we held to the current series of focus groups). I believe we've been able to: strengthen the administration (by bringing in someone to help Caryn) and the finances (with a prudent level of contingency reserve funds for a not-for-profit organization); improve the guide and website; and significantly increase our budget for and time spent on publicity as popularly requested - all while maintaining the entry fees at the same level for three years now.

There are obviously challenges ahead – not least financial ones, with sponsorship and grants more uncertain than ever: we'll probably need to review fees for next year, unsurprisingly given the above. Your Board is trying to make the focus of the organization less 'City-centric' (through recruiting new Board members, supporting North and South launch parties, promoting County-wide publicity, etc) , and to encourage more 'grassroots' participation and initiatives generally: your festival is after all what each of you make it. Perhaps we also need to try to create opportunities for more really surprising and unconventional events and exhibitions, possibly in collaboration with other arts organizations and other media. But when I talk to a jeweller who has been able to build a career through participating in Artweeks, or see an extraordinary exhibition like the Phoenix prison trust one last month, or enjoy the fun of the "Artwines" label competition, or experience the amazing range of creativity throughout the County, I think we can all be immensely proud of our wonderful annual celebration of the visual arts that is open to everybody, and allows the public to interact with artists and makers so directly. That sounds like a toast over a glass of wine at the AGM on 29 September: see you there!

*David Attwooll*  
Chair

Please come & join your Board for a glass of wine & an opportunity to air your views at the

### ARTWEEKS' AGM

29th September, Corpus Christi College, Oxford  
6.30-8.30pm

Find out about plans for the 2010 Festival, whilst catching up with old friends & meeting new fellow artists in this fabulous setting. Everyone welcome !

## ARTISTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you to everyone who has completed and returned this year's questionnaire. This information is vital when approaching potential sponsors or applying for grants, as it offers concrete evidence that Artweeks is a substantial event, attracting large volumes of visitors each year and contributing to the economic welfare of the county. If you haven't completed yours yet, please do so—your feedback is valuable to us.

You may be surprised to hear that based on the returns so far (from just under 20% of sites) :

- ◆ On average, each Artweeks' site this year had **262** visitors
- ◆ Although some of these visitors will have been counted more than once as they moved from site to site, it is worth noting that the Artweeks' Festival as a whole can claim more than **100,000** visitors in 2009. This represents a substantial increase on our 2007 statistic of 70,000.
- ◆ **34%** of sites sold more than £2,000 worth of work this year

Artists were also requested to submit ideas and comments about how Artweeks could progress in the future. The Board is always considering new ideas and looking for opportunities to improve. Some of your ideas will be discussed at the next Board meeting, but there were some questions that recurred (and do every year) so it may be helpful to respond to these now.

### ◆ **Costs and Finances**

Artists often complain about the cost of entering Artweeks. Our annual accounts will be presented at the AGM in September, but you may be interested to know that as in most years, we will just about break even again this year. This is because all of the organisation's income is ploughed back into the Festival. The artists' fees have not been increased for 3 years and were only increased in 2006 because there was a demand by artists for improved, professional PR and marketing. We now spend over 12% of our income (c.£9,278) on publicity which, if the statistics above are reliable, would seem to have been money well spent.

### **Different ways to enter**

There are a number of ways in which artists can participate in Artweeks if cost is an issue :

- as a non selling group (at a cost of £35 for group entry and membership)
- as part of a small or large group. A group of 20 artists, for example, can exhibit for as little as £12.50, (plus membership).
- new artists can apply for bursaries, details of which will appear in the September newsletter.

### **What you get for your money**

As a participating member of Artweeks, artists are offered a full colour advert in the Guide, 50,000 copies of which are circulated across the county and beyond. An advert in a publication of similar quality and circulation would cost c.£100 alone. In addition, artists benefit from specialist and professional PR and marketing (with exposure in most county newspapers and magazines, radio interviews and advertising, street and bus banners) promotional material, exposure through the year on the Artweeks' website, regular newsletters offering opportunities and perhaps most importantly, access to a network of local artists.

## Artists' Questionnaires.....continued

### ♦ **Organisation and Structure**

The feedback we receive relating to these issues is always diverse : some artists ask for more weeks to be added to the Festival, others want fewer; some want more late night openings, others less; some artists have suggested that the regions divide and exhibit at different times of the year whilst others are very happy with the way things are; some members have asked us to arrange more high profile special events whilst others have criticised the Board for spending too much time and money doing this instead of concentrating on the main business of promoting our Open Studios event.

We also have to consider that as only c20% of the questionnaires are returned, we don't know about the preferences of the remaining 80% of Artweeks' participants. The Board has to be careful not to over react to the feedback it does receive, as it is possible that the majority of our membership are perfectly happy with the current arrangements.

### Focus Groups

In order to investigate this more fully, the Board decided at the end of 2008 to set up a series of Focus Groups around the county to talk about the structure and organisation of Artweeks and how it might be improved. So far, groups have run in the North of Oxfordshire and Oxford city, with a session planned for the South at the end of June. There will be a report of findings in the September newsletter.

### ♦ **The Guide**

The Artweeks' Guide has always attracted a great deal of comment and in recent years, the vast majority of participants have told us that they are more than satisfied with its appearance and layout. Each year, more improvements are made and compared to other Open Studios events, the Oxfordshire Guide certainly stands out as one of the most professional. The returned questionnaires indicate that it is also the most effective marketing tool in attracting visitors to sites. The Board has therefore decided to keep the layout that we have, as it is the most cost efficient for the large number of sites that we promote.

### Front Cover

The front cover was especially well received this year. Designed by one of our artists (Christine O'Sullivan from Banbury) for the "Artwines" competition, it was eye catching and original. There will be another opportunity to participate in a similar competition to design a wine label in 2010, as discussions are now underway to secure continuing partnership with the Oxford Wine Company.

### ♦ **PR & Marketing**

We have engaged the services of a professional PR consultant for many years and in 2009, our new consultant, Tei Williams suggested all sorts of improvements to the way in which we market the event. Plans are already being considered for next year, but there are certain constraints that we have to work within :

#### Constraints to marketing our event

PR and marketing is costly, particularly if it is going to be done well so that the organisation can project a professional, attractive image to the public. The placing of adverts in publications, for example is very costly and so largely avoided by Artweeks. There are also many constraints on public displays of publicity material, especially banners, which is why there aren't as many around as we would like. The Board will soon be discussing the merits of trail maps which have become so popular with groups, particularly in rural areas, but are not looked on favourably by all our artists.

Thank you again for your feedback—we do value it and we will keep discussing it !.

*Caryn Paladina,  
Artweeks' Festival Director.*

## OPPORTUNITIES

### EXHIBITION SPACES AVAILABLE FOR ARTWEEKS 2010

#### **South Oxfordshire Barn**

The Barn at Haddon Acre Sires Hill OX 11 9BG

Lovely open space 4.5m x 6.9m. Natural light, tracked electric lighting, fitted kitchen & bathroom. Good decorative order. An acre of country garden for sculpture & wonderful views of Wittenham Clumps and the Chilterns. Plenty of off road parking. Can be used for workshops or talks & already covered for Public Liability insurance. Special Reduced rental rates for Artweeks 2010. Website [www.haddonacre.co.uk](http://www.haddonacre.co.uk). Contact Sue Hollebhone 01235 812052 [sue@hollebhone.com](mailto:sue@hollebhone.com)

#### **“First Floor Restaurant”, Oxford**

We are looking for artists to display their work in our “First Floor Restaurant”, a stylish, modern space offering a number of large and small walls. For more information about the restaurant, please visit [www.thefirstfloor-restaurant.com](http://www.thefirstfloor-restaurant.com), or contact Meera Byatt on 01865 200 203.

#### **Duke of Monmouth Pub, Oxford**

We have a separate room of about 50m<sup>2</sup> and a restaurant of about 100m<sup>2</sup> to offer as exhibition space. Please contact Thomas Furrer, Duke of Monmouth, 260 Abingdon Road, Oxford OX1 4TA. Tel. 01865 240 294. [www.dukeofmonmouth.co.uk](http://www.dukeofmonmouth.co.uk)

### BICESTER & FINMERE SHOW

Exciting opportunity to sell - artists and makers wanted to take part in The Bicester and Finmere Show on 1st and 2nd August. Very affordable at £35 for two days. Join talented, enthusiastic and cheery group coming from Bucks including: [www.jeremywhiteceramics.co.uk](http://www.jeremywhiteceramics.co.uk), [www.byhandbooks.co.uk](http://www.byhandbooks.co.uk), [www.glassdesigns.co.uk](http://www.glassdesigns.co.uk), [www.bijoux-bijoux.co.uk](http://www.bijoux-bijoux.co.uk) and [www.ascoggins.com](http://www.ascoggins.com) - total of 25 people taking part. The Show expects to attract an audience of 3000+ and is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Please contact Sally Evans on 01296 696747 or [sllyevan@aol.com](mailto:sllyevan@aol.com).

### **DATES FOR ARTWEEKS 2010 : 8-31 MAY**

**CITY WEEK : 8-16 MAY**  
**SOUTH WEEK : 15-23 MAY**  
**NORTH WEEK : 22-31 MAY**

#### **ARTWEEKS' OFFICE**

PO Box 559  
Abingdon, Oxon. OX14 9EF  
Tel/Fax : **01865 865596**  
E-mail : [oxfordartweeks@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:oxfordartweeks@yahoo.co.uk)

Office hours : Monday, Wednesday and Friday,  
9.30am—2.30pm

Festival Director : Caryn Paladina  
Office Administrator : Jo Golding

#### **OFFICE SUMMER BREAK**

The office will close for the summer break on  
**Monday 29th June at 2.30pm.**

The Artweeks' office will reopen on **Friday**  
**4th September at 9.30am**