

Taking part in Oxfordshire Artweeks: what do I need to do to sign up?



What is Oxfordshire Artweeks?

Oxfordshire Artweeks is an artists' organisation which presents an annual festival each May and a smaller season of events in November and December. The brand is well-known and has a reputation for diverse and inspiring art. The flagship May event, the Oxfordshire Artweeks Festival has been running for more than 30 years. It is the county's best-known and longest-running annual visual arts event and the largest artists' and makers' open-studio and pop-up exhibition festival in the UK. During the festival, more than 100,000 visits are made to more than 400 very different Artweeks venues which host around 1000 artists, and art worth as much as £1 million is sold during the 24 day period.

The event is publicised with fliers and posters throughout the spring, and in April 50,000 copies of the festival guide are distributed in Oxfordshire and beyond. The guide is also available on-line, along with a supporting website onto which Artweeks artists can add additional images and information about themselves. There is also considerable coverage of the festival in the local press and media in throughout May.

Am I eligible to take part?

The Artweeks festival is non-selective and open to all artists and makers living or working in Oxfordshire or those that have a studio in Oxfordshire. Artweeks is also open to artists and makers that live outside the county but are members of an established Oxfordshire-based art group, society or guild. Please note that all work exhibited must be original, designed and made by the exhibitor (unless you are registering a gallery or a business exhibition.)

When do I enter?

The application period for exhibition entries for the following year runs from September to December. The closing dates for postal entries is 30th November and for on-line entries [requiring payment on-line], 31st December. As the Artweeks office closes for Christmas in mid- December, register early in case unexpected difficulties arise.

You may enter Artweeks as a solo artist, a pair of artists, three artists, a large group of four or more artists, a non-selling group or as a business/gallery, and there can be several exhibitions/types of exhibition at the same address.

As an individual artist you have the maximum exposure with your own picture, text and index listing in the festival guide. As a pair/trio or group of artists, you share the picture and text listing. However all Artweeks members are listed in the artist index and, if they registered for membership on-line, have an on-line gallery facility.

What do I need to pay to take part?

There are two components to taking part:

1) Annual Artweeks Membership for the year in which you plan to exhibit: £ 20 per exhibiting (selling) artist/maker. Non selling groups, and businesses and galleries are covered by one organisational membership in their name. (Large amateur art groups may also take out an organisational membership for a large group exhibition if their participants are exhibiting no more than three pieces each, provided you have confirmed this with the Artweeks office.) For all other cases, membership should be taken out (on-line if possible) by each exhibiting artist.

2) The registration fee for your exhibition entry into the festival guide.

This will vary depending upon the format of your exhibition. For 2018 this is

Individual exhibition entry fee: £115

Pair of artists : £160

Three artists: £240

Large group exhibition entry fee: £285

Business/Gallery exhibition entry fee: £315

Where more than one artist is involved in an exhibition, a nominated artist from the group should complete the exhibition registration once all the members who are taking part are registered.

Choosing your venue

In order to register an exhibition, you will need to find your own venue or join a group show. Artists organise their own exhibitions including any costs or public liability cover that exhibition requires. An exhibition could be in a home, studio or alternatively any public/private space where they are happy for you to show your work and invite visitors in.

Do consider the pros and cons of different venue types:

- Some artists are keen to open their studios and welcome visitors to the space in which they create their art. Others prefer to host an exhibition or show their creations elsewhere. From visitor feedback, it is clear that while some of our visitors have a preference for venues that are not private homes, others much prefer to visit an artist in their own environment.
- Rural venues do tend to be quieter than those in town centres. The visitors who do make their way to see you are therefore more discerning as they have specifically chosen to come and see your work rather than visiting because you were with another artist whose work they were interested in, or they were following a local trail. Your own promotional activities will be more important.
- Please bear in mind that we have found that groups of artists often attract greater footfall than solo artists and artists offer one another encouragement and support. However, working with other artists to present a group exhibition can present more of a challenge than managing your own exhibition in your own way.
- It can be useful to hold an exhibition in a venue that has good footfall for other purposes e.g. a theatre or leisure centre. However, multi-purpose venues, or venues for whom art is not their primary purpose may need more encouragement with their signage and exhibition promotion.
- Cafes often provide good wall space and long opening hours while the artist needn't be in situ. However, sometimes exhibition visitors find it hard to enjoy artwork over the heads of diners.

Choose your dates

The Artweeks festival is subdivided into three distinct geographical areas, each of which runs for nine days (from a Saturday one weekend to the following Sunday, or for the third week, the following Bank Holiday Monday.) The order of the weeks rotates between North & West Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire and Oxford city so check the website for details.

What do I need to register?

Once you have chosen a place to show your work, **you will need to have the address, the dates and the times your exhibition will be open to hand in order to register.** If you can, keep your opening hours simple as visitors often don't take note of irregular times/days. Our recommended opening hours are every day 11-6pm (11-8pm on Thurs).

You will also need your venue details, an image and a ten or twelve carefully-chosen words describing your exhibition.

Many visitors make their choice of whom to visit based on your festival guide entry alone so we recommend you choose a picture that is representative of your work(s), and as eye-catching as possible – test this by printing it out at the size of a stamp. Square images work best within the page layout, and the technical specifications for upload to the website are as follows: min 800 x 800 pixels; from 1MB to 4 MB as a png gif jpg or jpeg. Look at the festival guide from the previous year (available on the website) to give you ideas – and you'll see that if you are exhibiting as an individual, or within a pair or trio of artists, your exhibition will be listed underneath your names so there's no need to repeat them.

When entering your exhibition, you will have to choose a region (North and West Oxfordshire; Oxford city; or South Oxfordshire and Vale where your venue is located) and a local area for mapping purposes, so please choose the area closest to your venue. Your name will then be passed to the local area coordinator [if we have one in your area] and also any promotion material that requires collection will be sent to your chosen areas collection point.

Registering for membership and registering an exhibition should be done on-line at www.artweeks.org (or if you have no computer access, with a paper entry form available from Oxfordshire Artweeks, PO Box 244, Wantage, Oxon OX12 2EJ or by calling 01235 869059.)

First become a member of Artweeks for the year you are exhibiting. You must then complete and pay for an exhibition entry [including submitting an image] before the 31st December unless you are part of a group where another person is the exhibition coordinator and has undertaken to register the exhibition.

In addition to the festival guide, what promotion material will I get to use?

Artweeks produces a simple flier, A4 and A3 posters promoting the whole festival, and generic A4 and A3 headed posters which you can use for your own purposes – adding your venue number, directional arrows or other information as you choose.

You can also pre-order additional items before the 31st December.

FLAGS - Reusable vinyl venue flags £ 560mm x 495mm with Artweeks logo: 18.00 each. *Recommended*

BUNTING 10m strips of blue/orange/white vinyl pennants £ 18.00 each

BANNERS 8ft by 3ft, design varies each year £75.00.

CAR STICKERS with Artweeks logo 125mm x 125mm : £ 1.50

Apart from the car stickers which are posted immediately, promotional items will be available for collection from your local distribution point in the April preceding the festival.

Once I am registered, then what happens?

As a member of Artweeks, from the January of the year for which you have registered, you will receive the Artweeks newsletter which includes information, advice and opportunities.

You will also be encouraged to provide additional information both on-line and to the Artweeks office for marketing purposes and you will also have the opportunity to sign up for a simple marketing workshop.

You may hear from a local area coordinator, a volunteer who has offered to coordinate Artweeks artists in your town or village with a networking event, a local trail map or extra local promotional activity.

The updated website for the May festival year goes live by March.

In April you will be able to collect promotion material from a collection point local to your venue and distribute this prior to your exhibition. The more local activity you generate, the better your visitors numbers will be!

Following your May exhibition you will be asked to complete a questionnaire and return it to the Artweeks office.

In early June, you will be given the opportunity to register a Christmas exhibition in the Christmas season.

Artist galleries remain on-line throughout the calendar year and you may use the Artweeks logo until the year ends.

The Artweeks organisation became a not-for-profit members company, limited by guarantee, in 1999 with all participating artists becoming members of the company. All participating artists must be a current member of Oxfordshire Artweeks, for the year they are exhibiting. Only members of the company are entitled to take part in the annual Oxfordshire Artweeks' festival.

ALL members must agree to the following statement: "I hereby apply to become a member of the Oxford Visual Arts Festival Limited, a company limited by guarantee, as specified in the Memorandum and Articles of Association, as an individual or on behalf of a group, subject to the rules specified by the Directors. I understand that I have a maximum liability of £1 (one pound) in the event that the Company should be wound up and there remains a shortfall of liabilities over assets at that time."

A year's membership runs from 1st Jan-31st Dec.

Membership Forms and fees may be submitted from September to December for the following year.