

# Now I have registered for Artweeks, how do I get the most out of my exhibition?



## January

Sign up to the simple marketing workshop (February) – it's a chance to meet Esther (Festival Director), to hear about the Artweeks 'umbrella' marketing and to think through what else you can do to promote your own exhibition.

If you didn't order a venue flag or any other outdoor signage (bunting/banner) then you can place a late order via the Artweeks office during January.

If you are hiring a venue, check if a deposit has to be paid, by when, and make sure you remember to pay it!

## February

Think about what you will be showing during the festival so you can fill out your free artist gallery on the Artweeks website which is in 'My account' if you registered and paid for your Artweeks membership on-line.

You can add a brief artist's biography, an image of yourself at work and six additional images of your art. This gallery will be live from Feb/March-Dec, automatically linked to the listing for the exhibition(s) at which you are showing your work. It gives your work greater visibility by providing you with a continuous updateable presence throughout the year where you also add descriptions of additional forthcoming exhibitions, and contact details. If you are part of a large group these may be the only images of your work that the Artweeks office and the general public can see. Even if you have your own website, populating this artist gallery maximises your online visibility and is great for search engine optimisation. Website visitors may contact you any time to buy something they have seen on-line.

It may seem very early to do this - however, in February the ideas for most feature pieces are provisionally placed in the county's glossy magazines' May editions and so the information is vital to Artweeks staff for publicity purposes and then, later, to prospective visitors, enabling them to make an informed decision about which venues to visit during May.

Further/more specific information about your work and the Artweeks exhibition/venue, your inspiration and your life story where it is relevant should be sent to the Artweeks office with any other high resolution images ( $\geq 1\text{MB}$ ). You can also send this to magazines directly as a press release if you would like to, although going through Artweeks is usually more successful because it adds editorial credibility.

You may also be contacted by a local volunteer coordinator – go along and meet your neighbouring artists/exhibition organisers. It pays dividends later! In some areas, local artists group together to produce additional trail maps to facilitate local navigation and if the area coordinator is organising a map or a taster exhibition, consider being involved. Most artists feel they benefit from making this additional effort.

## March

Create some art!

If your art is 2-D and will need framing, start thinking about it now!

Although Artweeks provides a tried-and-tested vehicle to promote exhibitions broadly to the interested general population of Oxfordshire, we encourage all artists to do additional marketing for their own venue, using the logo to maintain the strength of the brand.

Think about putting together a leaflet of your own to use alongside the Artweeks promotional material. This need only be simple – printed at home with your name, address, opening dates, an example of your work, and the Artweeks logo, and if you are making it yourself, you can do this in early April. However you might choose to have a leaflet designed/printed professionally and if so, you should plan ahead. Your flier, whether home produced or professionally printed can then be stapled to the Artweeks flier to remind and assure visitors that your exhibition is part of something bigger, an event that is well-established and well-regarded. It is also a good idea to have something at the exhibition that visitors can carry away to remind themselves of

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where they were and what they liked – a flier will be fine for this or you might like to consider producing business cards/greetings cards.

Consider too whether you will hold a ‘private view’ the day/evening before you open, or as an opening event. This is a chance to invite all your friends, family, neighbours and colleagues to see your latest work. A private view encourages them to put a time into their diary and come along at the beginning rather than meaning to visit all week and then not quite making it! They are also likely to be particularly supportive at the beginning of the week and perhaps choose a piece for themselves from the widest selection you will have on offer. If you choose to have a private view/launch event, then set the time and start to tell people. You might like to include this on your flier, or even have a separate invite.

Artweeks will be working to promote the festival generally in the local papers and magazines with larger distributions. However, in March, you should send information yourself about your exhibition to your village/parish newsletter and other very local publications/websites for the What’s On? Sections of their May editions. Remember to include the words Oxfordshire Artweeks and, if you can, the strapline *Amazing art in wonderful places*.

If you are adept with social media, then start to promote your exhibition on line and link in to the Artweeks Facebook, twitter and Instagram accounts for re-tweeting etc. If you don’t have a website, consider setting up a simple Facebook page for your art.

Social media is also a great way to network with other artists across the county – search on Facebook for Oxfordshire Artweeks Artists, join the group and make yourself known!

## April

In early April, you should collect your Artweeks promotional materials from your local distribution point (volunteers to whom we are very grateful) when you are given details or where and when. These include the festival guide, posters, fliers and any pre-ordered flags/bunting/banners. If you need additional copies of printed literature, or feel that something you ordered is missing, then please get in touch with the office.

The festival guide is the main piece of promotional literature each year - we print fifty thousand copies during February and March and also produce leaflets and posters. Although these are distributed around Oxfordshire and beyond by the library services and a professional distributor (Direct Publicity) we ask that Artweeks members themselves also put them into smaller or more local places that professional channels don’t reach – the doctor’s surgery, the church, the hairdressers, the fish and chip shop, local pubs hotels and B&Bs, cafes and delis, schools, your place of work, and so on. Please spread these around liberally so as many people as possible see this promotional literature and are aware of the festival and so the whole community understands what Artweeks is all about and feels welcomed. The sooner people receive their festival guide, the better as this gives interested visitors a chance to browse through and see what is nearby and choose who to visit – please minimise the stock you have at your exhibition as by the time visitors reach your door, most will already have a copy.

Artweeks also produces headed posters that leave space for your own exhibition details – these are available both printed and as an electronic version (pdf).

If you are on a locally-produced trail map, please do distribute this too, both before the exhibition and to visitors during the exhibition who haven’t yet picked one up.

If you are a new venue, and particularly if you are a new venue in a village that hasn’t hosted an Artweeks venue before or recently, then this is very important. You might like to consider putting your flier with a festival guide and local trail map through the letterbox of the houses nearby about two weeks before your exhibition.

In early/mid April, send an email to all your contacts letting them know that your exhibition is taking place and encouraging them to put the dates in your diary. Please also send them the links to the Artweeks website and the whole festival guide as a pdf so they can choose where else to visit in addition to supporting you.

About a week before your exhibition opens, we recommend a follow-up email reminder!

Also, in April, consider how you are going to take payment – and organise a Paypal credit card machine, if appropriate – and check you have public liability insurance if you feel you need it: if not, arrange it!

Consider your pricing strategy, write prices tags and/or price list. If you’re planning to have a biography or information sheet available for visitors to take away with them, then prepare and print this.

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Get a visitors book to collect names, email addresses and comments – and we'd love to hear all this afterwards.

## **May**

Measure/consider your display space carefully and plan what you will put where and check you have all the exhibition stands/displays units you will require.

We suggest you prepare a box of useful things you may need so they are at hand at a moment's notice: this might include Red stickers for sold items, a receipt book, pens and paper, scissors, cellotape, blutack, screw driver, brown paper, bubble wrap, bags, string, float as you may need to give change.

Stock up on wine/teabags/cake, if necessary.

If you are exhibiting away from home/your studio, prepare your work in good time and pack it ready for transport.

If exhibiting from home, give yourself plenty of time to tidy the house, check and minimise trip hazards etc., hide away valuables and personal items, and remember to tidy the garden: first impressions count!

Give yourself plenty of time to set up.

## **Signage**

Work with your neighbouring venues to promote one another: before your exhibition opens, we recommend you contact the venues nearest to you, and if you have a chance pop by and see the art they will have on offer, swop fliers, and work out where they are geographically. We ask that neighbouring venues encourage their visitors to travel on to one another for maximum mutual benefit.

Using the Artweeks logo and clearly associating your exhibition with the Artweeks brand makes make visitors who might otherwise be shy of entering an art exhibition or artist's studio feel safe and welcome.

Signpost vigorously - in the day or two before your exhibition, putting directional posters on all routes into your venue (where you are legally able to) clearly pointing visitors to your venue. (You can add directional arrows to Artweeks blank posters or flags). Take particular care to direct drivers to your exhibition from wherever sat-nav might direct them and make your exhibition venues itself as obvious as possible to passers-by. If the exhibition space is within a larger place (such as a school, arts centre or leisure centre), you may need to have clear signage within the site.

## **Opening**

Put a sign on the door saying 'welcome – ring the bell/Just come in/Follow the garden path' as appropriate.

Offer a drink/cake to visitors if you wish, and some venues charge or ask for a charitable donation for this.

Make sure you are open at your advertised times (ask friends to pop by on a rota so you can take a break.) If you aren't able to open for any reason, add a note to your web entry and put an apologetic sign on the door for those who made the trip, perhaps giving directions to a nearby venue.

Packing up: If you're using a private venue, leave it nice and tidy as you or another artist may wish to use it again next year, consider booking it for next year if it has worked for you, and don't forget to remove any roadside signage etc.

## **June**

Please give us your feedback after Artweeks – both quantitative and qualitative. We really appreciate your numbers and your thoughts as these are invaluable for taking the festival forward into the future.

Keep using the website – your online artist gallery can be updated through the year, with new work and details of any additional exhibitions and keep using the logo, letting the office know if you have other exhibitions taking place later in the year.

And think about whether you'd like to a Christmas event in November/December. You'll need to let us know before the end of June!

## **September**

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Support Artweeks by coming to the AGM, networking and taking Christmas leaflets away.  
And don't forget to begin planning for next year: you must re-register by 31<sup>st</sup> December for the following festival.

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