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Ballicol College by Cathy Read



Blossom trees painted by Barbara Emery



Turl Street, Oxford, by Cathy Read



Artist Victoria Stanway

Artists open their studios for a festival of creativity

Esther Lafferty

Oxfordshire Artweeks

AS Oxfordshire Artweeks continues and Bicester bursts into life with pop-up venues in and around the town, more than 60 artists, makers and designer makers welcome you to enjoy their art shows and open studios.

In the town itself venues include the old St Edburg's School where you'll find OYAP, members of Bicester Sculpture Group and more and, on Sheep Street, Bicester Arts Network which presents vibrant art, craft and design by 24 artists with very different styles.

These include joyful lush garden scenes by Barbara Emery, and an architectural series of Indian ink buildings by Thomas Shepherd who, inspired by stories, the places where stories can be found and the ways between them is illustrating his way around the UK via independent bookshops, and the landmarks and landscapes he discovers en route.

Exhibiting recent pictures of Oxford, London and Manchester alongside, Cathy Read is also inspired by architecture and vibrant metropolitan scenes. Cathy draws with masking fluid, outlining pencil-drawn buildings and architecture in a white liquid which protects paper from paint, before adding free-ranging watercolours and acrylic



Bath time by Victoria Stanway



Piece by Victoria Stanway

It is the industrial north that influences many of the paintings by fellow artist Victoria Stanway which provoke an uncomfortable emotional reaction in the viewer.

There are equally rich displays of work in villages and towns across north and west Oxfordshire until Sunday - all worthy of a weekend visit.

● Oxfordshire Artweeks sees hundreds of artists open their studios to the public or host pop-up exhibitions in interesting spaces across Oxfordshire. The festival continues until May 29, with Bicester and north Oxfordshire venues open until this Sunday.

For more on venues in and around Bicester and further afield visit artweeks.org

ink applied with a pipette. The precision of her lines combined with a relaxed fluid approach to colour gives her a distinctive style in which she showcases the beauty of buildings in a modern world. "Cities never stand still and as one part dies back a new structure is built over the remains so I'm inspired by both modern lines and

gothic intrigue. "The university dominates Oxford and although I have painted more modern buildings in the city too, I find myself returning to the iconic views.

"One thing I find fascinating about the urban landscape," she says, "whether in a classical city or the industrial north, is the way it varies as you walk around."