

The Return of The Ever-Growing Gallery



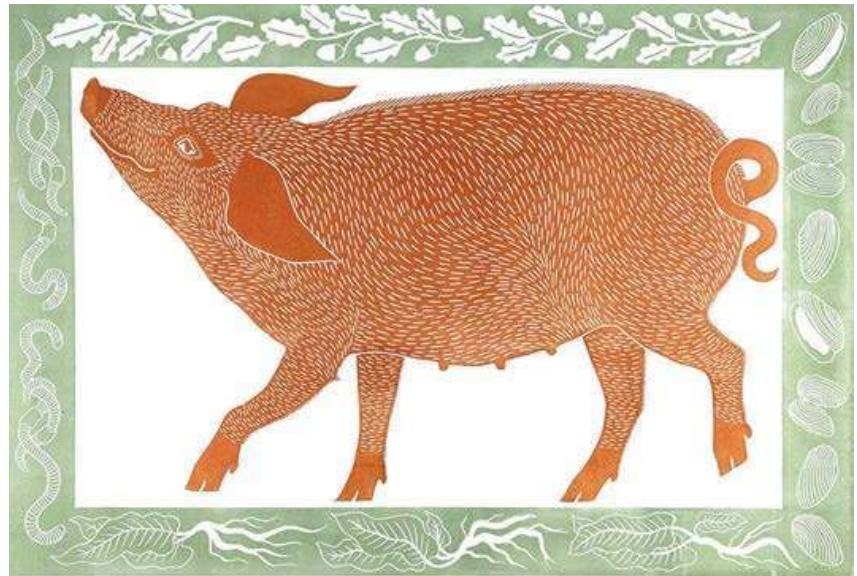
This month and next, more than 100 artists in and around Abingdon are preparing for Oxfordshire Artweeks later this spring. Artweeks – the UK’s oldest and biggest open studios and pop-up exhibition event - always seems to be the event that signals the arrival of summer sunshine, and as the festival begins colour suddenly runs riot across the county, so we were keen to find out what we’ve got to look forward to locally.

Artweeks runs this year from 4-27 May, and each of the three weeks is different. In week one (4-12), you can head to North and West Oxfordshire and in week two the focus is venues in Oxford. It's the third week of the festival (18-27), including the late May bank holiday weekend, when things really hot up here in Abingdon: there'll be venues open in the town centre Peachcroft, and the surrounding villages of Lower Radley, Kennington, Sunningwell, Sutton Courtenay and more. And remember, some artists team up to host group shows while others open their studios: all welcome you both to enjoy the art on show and to chat about their materials, methods, and inspiration. You just drop in, no appointment necessary. *Now, let's get exploring...*

Venues in Abingdon

In the centre of town, there are a number of exhibitions to visit along the Artweeks trail, including 35 Ock Street where you'll find the Oxfordshire Chinese Brush Painting Group, the Abbey cinema, The Charter Studios, and ceramicist Fi Cooper on Cameron Avenue. Here's a selection of other venues to get you started.

Head to **St Nicolas Church** to find the friendly Abbey Group which



includes four artists and a glass worker. Amongst them, find bright and bubbly Emma Williams who has been making art inspired by turf labyrinths and mazes. "Some of these are very old, dating back many hundreds of years," she explains. "A trip to the Ashmolean Museum's labyrinth exhibition last year sent me searching for labyrinths closer to home. According to one source there was a turf labyrinth in Cowley, used by the Templar Knights, no longer in existence... and to see a modern-day turf labyrinth, head to Grey's Court near Henley! The turf labyrinth at its

simplest is a pattern cut into the turf, you follow the one path from start to the end. Their purpose is not quite clear, but many think that you walked the labyrinth as an act of penance. At first, they look intimidating to draw, but with a few tips and practice runs they are very satisfying and meditative to paint."

Look out here too for Margaret Horton's fun collages of Oxford with a difference: each of which is created using paper on a theme including 'Oxford in books', 'Medieval Oxford' and 'Musical Oxford'. Look out too for ►



a William Morris-themed Oxford, the dome of the Radcliffe patterned with The Strawberry Thief and same dome topped with a woolly-hat in 'Oxford wrapped up'.

Over in St Ethelwold's House on East St Helen's Street, Sandra Hoefst is interested in line, shape, and colour in the landscape and, using mixed media, explores how these interact with each other and Caroline Harben is an Abingdon artist whose primary interest is in the landscape: she seeks to capture not only its beauty, but also its essence. This year she has branched out into more abstracted interpretation of local landscapes and the exhibition will include different interpretations of the same scene.

For something else a bit different, head to Bury Street to discover a new group of five artists, 'The Abingdon Artist Collaboration' who are weaving the threads of their creativity together on a single collective theme: 'the mycelium network'.

"And what on earth is that?" we hear you ask. Mycelium are tiny "threads", the underground part of a fungus, that wraps around tree roots and connects individual plants enabling the symbiotic relationship between trees and fungi - sometimes called the "woodwide web". And scientists believe that trees can communicate through this hidden underground network! Inspired by this idea, the artists are creating their own interpretations mycelium using various materials, from found items to UV light. And at their exhibition above Willow's Shake Shop there'll be an activity table of crafting where visitors of all ages can create their own mycelium threads - perhaps by French knitting- to either be add to the show to take home.

Heading out of town on the Artweeks trail, don't miss the three artists at '13 The Chestnuts' where Iain Shield studio pottery throws bespoke

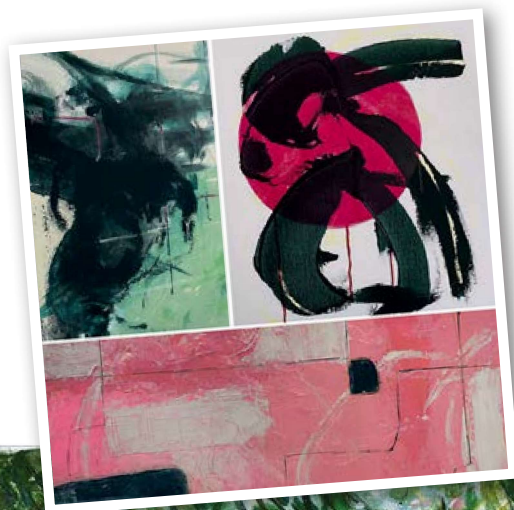
functional stoneware, using ash-based glazes the colour of which is heavily influenced by the clay itself and his firing techniques. Expect pastel tones with a satin/matte finish, earth tones and texture! The second exhibitor, Nikki Shield, loves to play with bold joyful colours and expressive mark-making and paints intuitively. With a background in graphic design, she is particularly inspired by the beauty of small things and loves to create letterpress designs and experiment with linocut prints. "I love the smell of the ink, the feel of the paper and playing with design ideas and colours," she smiles.

Alongside, Judith Godsland also confesses to a love of paper. "A single sheet has such potential," she explains. "Left to itself it reflects light. Creased, it becomes a mountainous landscape. It can be encouraged to stand up, to fly, to jump, to float, and even to slink downstairs. It can be dyed, printed, painted, drawn on, glued, torn, sliced, punched, folded, or screwed up and re-opened until it feels like cloth."

Judith began bookbinding in the 1990s and had become interested in making book structures specially for creative people. "Though it's always satisfying to complete a traditional structure (a precise, traditional binding can be relied on to 'work' and to wear well), modern bookbinding is a different sort of fun. Modern designs are more sculptural, especially those which incorporate complex folds."

Bookbinding projects result in off-cuts of paper and so, as a wonderful side hustle, Judith also make tiny pop-up cards and funky paper animal bookmarks which are so enchanting you'll want a whole menagerie!

Also in Abingdon, the Peach Croft Barn Artists and jewellers' show is perennially popular! In a gorgeous barn setting - which is worth a visit for the building itself - you'll find art by a wonderful variety of artists and creations ranging from Caroline Ritson's latest paintings in lush greens, inspired by Albert Park and tactile flecked stoneware pottery by Suzanne Bladon, to an extraordinary necklace



Caroline Ritson



by Janet Richardson, currently in contention a for Goldsmiths' Craft and Design Council Award, an 'Oscar' of the jewellery and silversmithing world.

"I love carving," she says, "and The Worshipful Company of Horners provided me with some cow's horn to carve. Cows horn is ethical and sustainable, and it looks very like tortoiseshell in a finished piece! I made a necklace which also includes pink tourmaline and citrine, set in Argentium silver."

Alongside jeweller Machi de Waard, will be showing a selection of modernist jewellery in gold and silver. Her work was a top pick of the Royal College of Art last year and pieces from this new collection will be on show. Machi's aesthetic is informed by the visual language of twentieth century modern art: Distilling the abstract forms and clean lines of modern art she focuses on visually strong shapes such as lines and circles, engaging her creativity through restraint, and making iterations of her chosen shapes by varying the details.

The surrounding villages

Nestled in Dry Sandford, Sunningwell, Cumnor and Culham, you'll find other interesting Artweeks venues to explore. In Lower Radley, for example,

in a tucked away garden close to the Thames path printmaker Lizzie Wheeler is showing her new series of pictures on the theme of rewilding inspired by a trailblazing rewilding project at the Knepp Estate in Sussex.

"The Knepp rewilding project is a hopeful and verdant oasis amid our largely crumbling ecosystem in the UK," explains Lizzie. "Making art to celebrate the revival of nature and tell a story of hope, is a powerful thing. I believe it can help us to reconnect with the natural world in ways that perhaps we didn't realise we sorely missed."

Pieces on show will include 'Hope for a Wilder World' – a linocut featuring the 'Knepp Oak tree' and large grazing animals reintroduced there, 'A Wild Spring Day' - a linocut of a Moorhen, a woodcut

'What Are We Without the Beasts?' whose title references the speech by Chief Seattle, and nods to the cave paintings at Lascaux and 'The Marmalade Tamworth' – a linocut of a Tamworth pig, reintroduced as an important soil disturber at the Knepp estate – the happiest pigs you will ever see apparently!

And there's a newcomer to Artweeks over in Sutton Courtenay, Emma Cavell whose 'Peace by Piece' mixed media mosaics re-create beauty

through brokenness. Take a moment, perhaps to linger by her sculptural vessel 'Open', an abundance of floral joy, forest fungi and butterfly beauty and you'll see the many materials used in this vibrant mix: vintage china, porcelain flowers, ceramic beads, paua shell, amethyst and carnelian crystals, shells, recycled glass, ceramic beads and a variety of mixed media. The rim of the vessel is encrusted with vintage china teapot lid-knobs – depicting an enchanted circle of forest fungi, crystals, tiny antique glass beads, porcelain violets, green/gold porcelain leaves, and tiny hand rolled nodules of antique gold metalized braid, suggesting little beads of dew nestled within the flowers and fungi.

If you're keen to get started in the weeks before the Abingdon venues are open, then head to Oxford for the day (11-19 May): there are dozens of venues to choose from within Oxford city centre, including three Oxford colleges and Rhodes House; a great selection of photography by Oxford Photographers in the Mathematical Institute in the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, and a working letterpress studio at the heart of the historic Bodleian Library (Artweeks venue 245). You'll also find surprises, like Japanese flower arranging with Oxford Ikebana Study Group (Artweeks venue 223), exquisite papercuts in Jericho's Southmoor Road (Artweeks venue 227).

Elsewhere across the county, from the traditional to the contemporary and multidisciplinary, there's something to delight, intrigue and inspire everyone. Look out for fashion and furniture and other art to surprise you, including exquisite 3D paper sculpture, five-minute portraits, locally-created pigments and sport art ahead of Paris 2024 with an Olympian Artist. Expect the unexpected as traditional boats, Victorian rocking-horses and contemporary concrete creations make an appearance or discover installations that challenge the perception of Oxford as a bastion of privilege and generative art created through computer coding and a cool robot called Stephen. Where will you go first?

Artweeks

LOCAL VENUES

IN ABINGDON

Abbey Group (Artweeks venue 464)

Exciting and innovative mixed media, painting, and glass in historic surroundings.

St Nicolas Church
6 Market Place OX14 3HG
10am-5pm, 20-27 May



Oxon Artmakers (Artweeks venue 465)

Painting: a group of artists expressing their feelings on paper and canvas to make inspiring art.

The Abbey Cinema
Abbey Close OX14 3LD
11am-9pm, 18-27 May



The Abingdon Artist Collaboration (Artweeks venue 468)

Five artists and their creative threads in the very heart of Abingdon shopping centre – with milkshake and cake! Could you ask for more?

The Digby Room
@ Willow's Shake Shop
18 Bury Street OX14 3QT
10.30am-5pm, 18-24 May



Makespace Oxford (Artweeks venue 469)

Explore the studios and enjoy a variety of artwork from The Charter Studios artists and South Abingdon community groups.

The Charter Studios
Broad Street OX14 3LZ
11am-4pm, 18-24 May



Caroline Harben and Sandra Hoefl (Artweeks venues 466 and 467)

A landscape artist seeking to capture 'Spirit of Place' and a mixed media artist exploring line, shape, and colour in the landscape.

St Ethelwold's House
30 East St Helen's Street OX14 5EB
Fri/Mon 11am-4pm; Sat/Sun 11am-5pm, 24-27 May



Oxfordshire Chinese Brush Painting Group (Artweeks venue 470)

An incredible selection of Chinese brush painting in its many styles, on paper and on silk.

35 Ock Street OX14 5AG
10.30am-2pm (Sat 10.30am-12.30pm),
18 20-25 May



Fi Cooper (Artweeks venue 471)

Ceramics inspired by landscape and natural forms.

5 Cameron Avenue
OX14 3SR
Wed-Thu 2pm-6pm; Fri-Sat 11am-6pm, Mon 11am-5pm, 22-27 May



'13 The Chestnuts' (Artweeks venues 472, 473 and 522)

Visit Iain Shield to see stoneware ceramics from the heart: ancient glazes, reduction fired, slip textures; Nikki Shield's abstract landscape paintings and letterpress and linocut designs; and Judith Godsland sketchbooks and other book structures, handmade cards, bookmarks and more.

13 The Chestnuts OX14 3YN
10am-6pm (Wed-Fri 4pm-7pm)
18-19 22-26 May



Peach Croft Barn Artists (Artweeks venues 474-476)

Lively new art from sixteen artists and makers, both regular exhibitors including Paul Minter and the 'Six Great Jewellers', and new faces. Paintings including those of landscapes, gardens and historic houses, ceramics, sculpture and jewellery in a beautiful old barn. Daily demos at 2pm.

Peach Croft Farm, Twelve Acre Drive OX14 2HP
10am-5pm, 18-27 May



For more details on these and other venues or to browse an online art showcase visit artweeks.org

IN RADLEY AND KENNINGTON

Zelga Miller (Artweeks venue 477)

'Drawing Thoughts' explores the consequences of mental health challenges to the body and the journey to recovery.
*Sewell Centre Gallery
 Radley College OX14 2HR
 1pm-5pm on Tues-Thurs, runs 19 April-17 May.*



Lizzie and Susan Wheeler (Artweeks venues 478 and 479)

A colourful exhibition of linocuts, monoprints, collagraphs and cards by printmakers Lizzie and Sue Wheeler in their studio near the Thames footpath.
*115 Lower Radley OX14 3BA
 11am-6pm 18-27 May*



Ros Murphy (Artweeks venue 480)

Vibrant oil paintings, pretty garden setting, and indoor studio/ refreshments.
*3 Park End Barns, Kennington Road
 Radley OX14 2JW
 11am-6pm, 18-27 May*



Mags Cuttle (Artweeks venue 481)

Beautiful, functional and decorative pottery. Mugs, jugs, plates, bowls, vases and bottles.
*141 Upper Road
 Kennington OX1 5LR
 11am-6pm (Thu/Fri 1pm-8pm, Sun 10am-4pm), 18-19 22-27 May*



OTHER VILLAGES AROUND ABINGDON

Sunningwell School of Art (Artweeks venue 482)

Adventures in painting, pottery, drawing and sculpture from over 400 students!
*The Old School, Sunningwell Road
 Sunningwell OX13 6RD
 12pm-6pm, 25-27 May*



Dry Sandford: Elaine Newson (Artweeks venue 483)

Vibrant textiles, glass, jewellery, paintings, printmaking, mixed media, cards and more. Wonderful colourful variety and a warm welcome. Parking and teas.
*Sanctuary, 32 The Field
 Dry Sandford OX13 6ED
 11am-6pm, 18-27 May*



Cumnor: Hannah Vickery (Artweeks venue 484)

Abstract mixed media paintings inspired by the landscape and literature.
*2B Hurst Lane
 Cumnor OX2 9PR
 11am-5pm (Thu 5pm-8pm), 18-19 22 25 May*



Appleton Artweeks (Artweeks venue 485)

A large group of artists and makers showing quality paintings, ceramics, jewellery and other media in a bright airy village hall with refreshments.
*Appleton Village Hall, Oaksmere
 Appleton OX13 5JS
 10.30am-5pm, 18-19 May*



Frilford: Abingdon Preparatory School (Artweeks venue 486)

Art and design work celebrating creativity, made by students from reception to year 8.
*Josca's House, Kingston Road, Frilford OX13 5NX
 4pm-6pm, 21 May*



Charlotte Storrs (Artweeks venue 463)

Functional stoneware ceramics, all wheel-thrown. Pottery in a beautiful secret garden close to the Thames.
*8 The Green, Culham
 OX14 4LZ
 12pm-5pm, 18-27 May*



Emma Cavell (Artweeks venue 462)

Innovative mixed media mosaics 'Peace by Piece' re-creating beauty through brokenness.
*110 High Street
 Sutton Courtenay OX14 4AX
 1pm-6pm, 18-19 22 25-27 May*

