

Oxfordshire Artweeks

Oxfordshire Artweeks is the UK's oldest and biggest open studios and pop-up exhibition event, and the 41st festival, which runs from 6-29 May and begins with a coronation, promises to be fit for a king. As the country's creatives open their doors to welcome visitors, for free, there's a wealth of art and intrigue to explore. In towns and villages around Carterton as many as 50 artists, ceramicists, sculptors, jewellers – many of whom are taking part in Artweeks for the first time this year – invite you to explore more than twenty locations during the second week of the festival (13-21 May).



You'll find artists, designers and makers showcasing extraordinary talent, explaining their materials and, often, demonstrating their methods. Touch and talk about thousands of pieces of art and craft and uncover the stories of their inspiration.



UP North

Look out for four artists in an old barn-cum-forge venue just off the A40 near Asthall.

This year regulars metal sculptor **Chris Townsend**, animal artist **Nic Vickery** and jeweller **Guen Palmer** are joined by ceramicist **Gilly Whittington** who throws most of her pots on the wheel, and hand-building larger vases. Most recently she has been working with porcelain, despite its reputation for being tricky because of the way the brilliant white background gives the glazes an extra éclat.

'I have always wanted my pots to have a feeling of spontaneity and movement, despite being static!' she chuckles. 'Inspired by Abstract Expressionist painters, I try to get that wonderful feeling of seemingly disorganised dynamism into each piece, and I love the exuberance of the random brushwork, and the unexpected results when the colours melt and produce a new and unexpected shade. As a contrast I also make contemporary designed mugs, bowls, and tableware in porcelain, with plain bright glazes.'

The Old Forge, Asthall Barrow Farm, Asthall OX18 4HJ
(Artweeks venues 278-280)
13-21 May (11am-5pm).



On the way to Witney

You'll find two artists/makers **Jessica Parker** and **Meg Harris-Smith** at Crawley Mill showing semi abstract landscape mixed media paintings using collage, ink and acrylic paint and freehand machine embroidery originals and stitched designs printed onto homeware and stationery in two adjacent studios
(Artweeks venues 295 and 296).
Crawley Mill Ind. Est., Dry Lane, Crawley OX29 9TJ
Open 13-21 May (10am-5pm; Meg's studio is closed on 13)



The Witney Artweeks trail

Artistic Licence

Visit The Corn Exchange for an exhibition of drawing and painting by the Witney art group 'Artistic Licence' which meets on Wednesdays in Witney's Corn Exchange, **tutored by Sarah Moncrieff (venue 297).**

The Corn Exchange, Market Square OX28 6AB
Open 13-21 May (11am-5pm)



A new face for Artweeks 2023: Steven Broughton

A witney-based potter making wheel-thrown ceramics opens his studios and invites you in **(Artweeks venue 298)**
S53 Corn Street OX28 6BT
Open 13-14 20-21 May (11am-5pm)



Derwent House represents a range of top British designer-makers handcrafting furniture, ceramics, textiles and homewares, and local artists too. **(Artweeks venue 299)**
3 Bridge Street OX28 1BY
Open 6-27 May (9.30am-5.30pm, closed Sun/Bank hols)



Debbie Howard WOA

Mixed media artist and potter producing vibrant and inspirational artworks as well as offering classes and retreats (**Artweeks venue 300**).

Also open 11th and 12th.

47 Woodgreen OX28 1DE

Open 11th-14th (11am-4pm)



Andrew and Kerry Forkner

This husband and wife artist duo open their home studios inviting visitors to see wildlife paintings and drawings; hand-dyed, quilted and embroidered textiles and jewellery

(**Artweeks venue 301**)

149 Manor Road OX28 3UF

Open 13-21 May (11am-6pm)



Bampton and Clanfield

At the heart of Bampton's Market Square stands West Ox Arts Gallery which is gathering together a new selection of artists for 2023 and art that stunning stained glass inspired by the moon and lunar incantations by Kay Gibbons, a fresh take on still life by Denny Webb, intriguing corvids by Sonja Coles and felted bags by Helen MacRitchie. Alongside popular regulars Pip Shuckburgh and Tuula Nicolson, you can also visit Mark Fitzgerald at Sun

Pottery and explore a first-time venue, The Old Forge, where Sue Side's striking graphite portraits and watercolours are shown alongside organic tactile stone sculpture by award-winning David Williams and talented young jeweller Tamzin Keown.

West Ox Arts Gallery Market Square
OX18 2JH (**Artweeks venue 287**)

Open 6th-28th May (11.30am-4.30pm)



Pip Shuckburgh

Fairwood, Cheapside OX18 2JL

(**Artweeks venue 288**)

Open 13-14th 18-21st May (11am-6pm)



Tamzin Keown, Sue Side

and David Williams,

The Old Forge, Church Street

OX18 2NA (**Artweeks venue 289-291**)

Open 13-14th 19-21st May (10am-5pm)



Tuula Nicolson

Wisteria, Church View OX18 2NE

(**Artweeks venue 292**)

Open 13-21 May (11am-5pm)



Mark Fitzgerald

Sun Pottery, 2a Bushey Row OX18 2JU
(Artweeks venue 293)

Open 13-21 May (10am-5pm)



Also, **Neville Crowson** shows plein air landscapes, garden scenes, seascapes, still life and church interiors

Blomfield House, Cote nr Bampton OX18 2EG

(Artweeks venue 294)

Open 13-21 May (11am-6pm)



In Clanfield, there are six further venues to explore, two of which are opening for their first Artweeks this year. Award-winning artist Petra Richards paints extraordinarily realistic paintings with an exceptional fine detail, vivid colours, dramatic compositions, and life-like capture. She focuses on the eyes, whether depicting humans or animals embracing the phrase that the “eyes are the window to the soul”. “There is no other part of the body that allows one to capture such a sense of feeling and emotion,” she comments.

Also passionate about faces, newcomer Tee Trueman welcomes you to Sol Studio in her beautiful garden at Setting Barn to see portraits of people using a variety of media; acrylic, ink,

charcoal and pastel in both a loose and detailed style.

Petra Richards WOA

Northcourt Farm, The Barn, Marsh Lane, Clanfield OX18 2RQ
(Artweeks venue 286)

Open 13-21 May 12pm-4pm (for additional time see Artweeks website)



Tee Trueman

Sol Studio, Setting Barn, High House Close, Clanfield OX18 2TD

(Artweeks venue 285)

Open 13-21 May (11am-6pm)



Ben and Sue Drew and The Drew School of Ceramics

High fired garden stoneware and domestic pottery and a selection of surprising and stunning student work.

The Calf Pens, Friars Court, Clanfield OX18 2SU

(Artweeks venues 281and282)

Open 13-18 20-21 May (12pm-5.30pm)



Silvi Schaumloeffel

Contemporary expressive oil painting studio. Exhibiting original artworks in a beautiful Cotswold farm setting.

Friars Court, Clanfield, OX18 2SU
(Artweeks venue 283)

Open 13-21 May (11am-5pm)



Charlotte Sweeney

Colourful, functional stoneware ceramics for the home. Wheel-thrown with some pit-fired vessels.

Elder Barn, Bushey Drive Clanfield OX18 2TS

(Artweeks venue 284)

Open 13-14 16-21 May (11am-5pm)



Elsewhere across the county, explore a five-acre sculpture park in the Cotswolds, take an art trail through the towns of Woodstock, Watlington and Wallingford or visit city studios in the heart of Oxford, including a printmaking workshop in the heart of the Bodleian library. Artweeks also promises a global journey through the eyes of Oxford artists who have been influenced by people and places around the world and the colours, fabrics, and styles of exotic destinations: tour America on a motorbike, go on safari in Tanzania, head to Svalbard or Cuba, and be enchanted by Rajasthan.

Where will you go first?

For more information on these and hundreds of other venues visit artweeks.org

Meet The Artists

Sonja Coles and Nic Vickery



Nic Vickery and coexhibitors at the old forge

Sonja Coles

Brize Norton's Sonja Coles is showing a series of paintings of birds, including magpies, ravens, and rooks, at the West Ox Art gallery in Bampton (Artweeks venue 287) as part of Artweeks for the first time this year. We asked what it was that compelled her to focus on these species for this exhibition.

"I have always had a real interest in wildlife and particularly the creatures that other folk don't always like. People are easily drawn to beautiful animals, but I find myself most intrigued by birds and animals that are considered pests or are maligned for some reason. I guess I have a soft spot for the underdog!" says Sonja.

"During lockdown we spent lots of time in the garden and it was always lovely to see the songbirds, but it was a family of jackdaws that really interested me. They come every year and nest in an old chimney pot, but it was the first time I had really taken the time to watch them. There was clearly a hierarchy, and I was fascinated to see the interactions between them all as they squabbled and jostled.

Jackdaws are part of the Corvid family, which includes amongst others, ravens, rooks, crows, and magpies and has long been the subject of multiple legends and folklore. Ravens were revered by the Vikings, in Icelandic and Norse culture, yet the Corvid species have often been portrayed negatively too. Magpies are thought to be thieving and sight of a single one is supposed to bring bad luck, for example. Crows have been considered to be the harbinger of doom, although in



actual fact they are known to be intelligent and capable of recognising human faces and even using tools.

Collectively, crows are known as a Murder of Crows and some people consider them pests, yet during dog walks locally, I would watch as huge flocks of crows appeared to race across the sky to get to their roosting sites at dusk and it was really exciting visually. It was interesting too that some birds seemed to take it upon themselves to fly back to round up the stragglers and you wondered what was going on in their heads.

I also wanted to paint ravens and so I recently visited the Tower of London, especially to see the famous ravens there. Sadly it turned out they'd had to be locked up to keep them safe due to the recent avian flu outbreak, so I could only see them through netting. At least they hadn't left though," she smiles, "as legend tells that if the ravens ever leave the Tower of London, the tower and the kingdom will fall and that would be pretty unfortunate in a coronation year! I have also been inspired by the pictures of a photographer @snapshotcrows in Vienna who is trying to raise the profile of Corvids in a positive way. She has adopted a raven called Rufus at Schönbrunn Zoo where he and his partner Munia are being studied because corvids are such intelligent birds.

The painting 'Two for Joy' is based on a pair of magpies that I photographed during a recent trip to Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital in Haddenham, which is best known for Hedgehog rescues but also helps all sorts of wild animals and because we have the jackdaws that come to the bird table in the garden, I have set up a wildlife camera that is triggered by a bird's movement to hopefully capture them in flight."

Avoiding harsh blacks, Sonja's birds are painted in a warm dark blue, dignified characters standing proud against a tranquil background of misty blues and soft whites which evoke clouds and twilight. Striking yet gentle, they're a little wistful and have a touch of intrigue and, although Sonja acknowledges that people approach her paintings with their own preconceptions of the birds, the series offers an approachable and even semi-romantic view of these stately species in which their playful and clever nature comes across.



Nic Vickery

Animal artist Nic Vickery is also inspired by the animals that roam Oxfordshire fields and Cotswold countryside, which she paints and draws, often with a light-hearted twist. One of her recent design stars Pepper Cow from Jeremy Clarkson's Diddy Squat Farm overlaid on a map of the Chadlington area.

For Oxfordshire Artweeks, she is setting up her vintage car and funky caravan combo by The Old Forge at Barrow Farm Asthall, just off the A40 between Witney and Burford where you can also visit blacksmith-sculptor Chris Townsend, potter Gilly Whittington and jeweller Guen Palmer (Artweeks venues 278-289)

"This year, for the first time, I have painted buildings starting with Roll Up! Roll Up! in which several brightly coloured birds circle the top of an art nouveau tower. The tower is based on a circus tower which is part of the Great Yarmouth Hippodrome Circus, billed as of the seven wonders of the British seaside and the only surviving circus building in the UK. It was built by the showman George Gilbert in 1903 and designed by architect Ralph Scott Cockrill, and has recently been restored to become a National Arts and Circus Centre. I've always loved interesting architecture, inspired by the natural world, particularly the art and craft movement, art nouveau and gothic architecture too. Everything William Morris did, for example, was inspired by nature and that's an ethos I feel at home with. Although I almost always paint animals, I was drawn to the tower because it was quirky, and I loved the motifs of hearts and peacocks in the stonework – the curvature of the shapes felt so natural that they were compelling!" says Nic.

"I chose to add European Rollers to the tower as, although they're not as extraordinary as peacocks, they're also very theatrical in colour with glorious teal feathers, a soft sunset peach-brown back and rich purple-blue beneath their wings which shows when they fly," she continues. "They aren't regular visitors to the UK but they are occasionally seen in the south of England, and I'd seen photos by Sue Cross, a Suffolk farmer and wildlife photographer. It's an event when they visit and so they seemed the perfect species to draw flocking to this tower, and I chose to call the finished picture Roll Up! Roll Up!"

I have also painted a fox sitting in an extraordinary Gothic doorway that's actually in the Georgia in Eastern European. The shape of the door frame and the lines of the pattern seemed to match the sinuous curves of a seated fox and his tail perfectly. For Artweeks I'm planning to show new a paintings of different animals alongside local buildings – such as Kelmscott or the Faringdon Folly. There are so many places to choose from!"



