



40 Years of Oxfordshire Artweeks

The idea for an open studios event was brought from the US four decades ago and the first Artweek in the UK was held in Oxford, simply as a small local event. Since then, millions of visitors have enjoyed the friendly welcome of local artists:

now the festival encompasses the whole of Oxfordshire and it is a model which has been copied across the country. The ethos, however, remains the same: artists and makers open their doors and welcome, for free, anyone who would like to see their art, their studios and chat about their work and inspiration. All that visitors need is a touch of curiosity. Pop-up exhibitions are often an easy

way to discover the hidden talent of a collection of artists in a single space, and a visit to an artist's studio can offer a more in-depth insight into an artist's practice. It is a more intimate experience: if a picture tells a thousand words, then a studio is an epic adventure.

Entering a studio is like opening a window into an artist's world to see the way they work, their materials, their tools, their processes, sketchbooks and their work in progress. In this almost mythical space the real and the imagined, great ideas and quiet reflection are drawn together with an artist's chosen craft and skill. You can see incredible creations in all kinds of materials; on canvas, through a lens, from the traditional to the contemporary and multidisciplinary. You will find beauty; both aesthetically and in the way that art can make us feel or think.

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To mark this impressive milestone anniversary, Artweeks are presenting two exhibitions which showcase the quality and variety of the art you can see this month. In The Jam Factory, kindly sponsored by Wise Investment, you can browse a joyful and colourful exhibition by 100 artists, all of whom are exhibiting more fully elsewhere during the festival. The second is a select showcase in John Lewis at the Westgate Centre in Oxford. The focus is on 3D work; sculpture and hand-crafted furniture, elegant glass, and an array of ceramics.

Artweeks is about so much more than simply the art, craft and design on show. It is also about the people who have created it and the stories



they have to share. We hope that together, Artweeks will continue to foster creativity in thought and artistic practice, in both the artist community and among its visitors for many years to come.

For more information on the artists to visit and their venues, visit artweeks.org