

Oxfordshire Artweeks: area highlights.

Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Faringdon, Henley,

The Cotswolds, Wallingford, Wantage, & Witney.



As around 1000 artists and designer-makers gear up for more than 400 exhibitions and events across the county this spring for Oxfordshire Artweeks, the longest-running and biggest 'open studios' event in the UK, painters and photographers, potters and sculptors, silversmiths and textile artists....

In Abingdon

....in twenty venues in and around Abingdon will be showcasing their creative talent from 3rd-11th May. And with ethical fashion design in the centre of town, an exhibition of Russian culture from icons to i-cats in a beautiful barn at Stonehill House, and delicate jewellery inspired by Faberge eggs in Dorchester-on-Thames, there's plenty to delight, amaze and inspire you this summer.

Just off the Thames path in Radley, print maker Susan Wheeler will be showing original linocuts of local places and people in her Radley workshop, while at Peachcroft farm, The Jewellery And Silver Society Oxford (JASSO) are hosting an open workshop with classes & demonstrations of silversmithing & jewellery making. You'll also find a new collection of contemporary clothing by ethical fashion designer Feng Ho who pursues a zero-waste policy, sourcing chemical-free jersey fabrics made from bamboo and eucalyptus.

In Banbury

...in thirty venues in and around Banbury will be showcasing their creative talent from 10th-18th. And with colourful stained glass art for the garden in Deddington and Burdrop; animal sculptures crafted from sheet metal in Bodicote, and heaven and hell in the world of ballet through the eyes of painter Gilbert Csecs, there's plenty to delight, amaze and inspire you this summer.

You'll be able to wander through the streets of Banbury old town and follow an art trail to find local art at every turn while The Mill Arts Centre presents 'Banburyscapes'. In Hamptons International in the Market Place you'll find work by talented students from Chenderit School, or drive to Middleton Cheney for colourful fine art recipe prints. In Culworth enjoy print-making inspired by the circus, find stoneware pots of 'Pleasure & Purpose' in Bloxham or discover bespoke ironwork and restored vintage furniture by designer-maker Alex Moss at his Deddington forge.

Over in Swalcliffe, in the beautiful medieval tithing barn renowned for its roof structure and which opens only infrequently, Artweeks comes alive with a week-long exhibition of acrylic and watercolour paintings, 'From Africa to Oxfordshire' scattered amongst a fascinating array of traditional agricultural vehicles and rustic carts.

In Bicester

... in and around Bicester, will be showcasing their creative talent from 10th-18th. And with indoor and outdoor sculptures in diverse materials and styles from the dynamic Bicester Sculpture Group who'll take over The Old Vicarage by St Edburg's, the OYAP Trust exhibiting their youth art on the escalators in Sainsbury's, and quirky illustrations of farm animals and wildlife by local artist Pauline Gibbs at Bicester Village, there'll be plenty to delight, amaze and inspire you this spring.

You'll also find jewellery and pottery in a newly converted studio in Lower Heyford, whilst Heyford House will host Art More Lovely which would be worth visiting just for the imaginative road signs but also houses a wide variety of work by a group of eight talented

designer-makers. Or head up to Deddington for portraits and landscapes in the Old Town Hall and discover bespoke ironwork and restored vintage furniture by Alex Moss at his forge around the corner.

In Didcot

...in twenty venues in and around Didcot will be showcasing their creative talent from 3rd-11th May. With a striking photographic installation documenting the work and environment of a local farrier at The Cornerstone Arts centre; an adrenaline-rich exhibition of mixed martial arts and cage fighting in South Moreton, and a giant sculpture garden taking over the village of Ardington to the west, there's plenty to delight, amaze and inspire you this spring.

In Faringdon

...in more than a dozen venues in and around Faringdon will be showcasing their creative talent from 3rd-11th May. With panoramic photographs of local landscapes meticulously reconstructed from hundreds of original alongside vibrant pastels in Faringdon's Old Town Hall, once the venue for Hanging Judge Jeffreys' infamous sentencing; two Longcot stone carvers a stone's throw apart and woodcuts and screenprints inspired by Downton Abbey in Bampton, there's plenty to delight, amaze and inspire you this summer.

New local arts group - The Vale Artists - are planning their first exhibition in The Rookery on Marlborough Street while five art spaces in neighbouring Great Coxwell will host semi-abstract photography in a beautiful garden studio in Watchfield; enjoy dotty dog art in Shrevenham or, in Uffington's Tom Brown's School museum, find funky and functional pottery nestling against Trudi James' quirky bespoke lampshades inspired by nature.

In Henley

...more than twenty painters and photographers, potters and sculptors, silversmiths, and textile artists in venues in and around Henley will be showcasing their creative talent from 3rd-11th.

With Gallery Singular, The World's Smallest Art Gallery nestled along Friday Street showing flowing figurative sculptures by art therapist Trisha Crocker beneath townscapes and period buildings; bespoke contemporary furniture by Philip Koomen, described by BBC Homes and Antiques magazine as 'one of the finest craftsmen in wood in Britain today'; and wooden fish and birds exhibited in the shadow of Ewelme's fifteenth century church, there's plenty to delight, amaze and inspire you this summer.

In Goring, a garden studio will come alive with butterflies, just around the corner from quirky pottery and an exhibition of still life, landscape and 'odd ideas' or enjoy landscape photography of The Chilterns capturing the changing seasons.

In The Cotswolds

...artists in seventy venues across the Cotswolds will be showcasing their creative talent from 10th-18th. With five acres of landscaped gardens bursting with 300 sculptures in Kingham; artist trails through Cotswold villages including Chadlington and Charlbury; glass, mosaics and furniture, there's plenty to delight, amaze and inspire you this summer.

Visit professional artist studios on the Great Tew Estate, discover steel sculptures of birds and beasts from lizards to life-sized horses in the Wychwoods, and intricate paper collages of Venice in Great Rollright. Head over to Chipping Norton Theatre for rich and evocative abstract inspired by nature or find Chipping Norton Town Hall overflowing with surprising diversity and creations of talented local designer-makers from the Oxfordshire Craft Guild, including for example decorative pictures made from wood inlaid with colourful veneers.

In Wallingford

... in forty venues in and around Wallingford will be showcasing their creative talent from 3rd-11th May. And with a community art garden of mystery and suspense, bespoke contemporary furniture by Philip Koomen, described by BBC Homes and Antiques magazine

as 'one of the finest craftsmen in wood in Britain today' contrasting with reclaimed wood & driftwood items in Checkendon and Ipsden; and delicate jewellery inspired by Faberge eggs in Dorchester-on-Thames, there'll be plenty to delight, amaze and inspire you this summer.

In Goring, a garden studio will come alive with butterflies, just around the corner from quirky pottery and an exhibition of still life, landscape and 'odd ideas'; Chalgrove's 13th century church will be cluttered with new paintings; discover seven artists exhibiting together in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell's village hall or head to Ewelme Pottery for a vibrant display of different art forms including fish and birds carved from oak and boxwood with silver detail.

In Wantage

...in more than a dozen venues in and around Wantage will be showcasing their creative talent from 3rd-11th. And with a photographic exhibition promoting the past, present and future of people, places and stories of Wantage; two talented sculptors working working in cast iron, steel, bronze, glass, and wood in South Fawley and the village of Ardington overrun with art, there's plenty to delight, amaze and inspire you this summer.

In the town centre, you'll find intricate textile pictures and glass art, atmospheric art in the Dolphin Art Gallery, and the hidden places and spaces of South Oxfordshire captured on canvas for the Vale and Downland. Head west for bespoke furniture in Challow and over in Uffington's Tom Brown's School museum, find funky and functional pottery nestling against Trudi James' quirky bespoke lamps inspired by nature.

In Witney

...more than thirty venues in and around Witney will be showcasing their creative talent from 10th-18th. With village trails in Bampton and Eynsham, silversmiths showing their wares in the Long Hanborough 'jewellery quarter', full length flower paintings standing like dancers in the Methodist church on the High Street and still-life painting by a partially sighted artist in the Market Square, there's plenty to delight, amaze and inspire you this spring.

In the SOTA Gallery, you'll find the same view depicted by five local artists in their own very different styles, in paint and photography, sculpture in Cotswold stone from Burford Quarry and local wood, turned in local wood, and stone-carving demonstrations – Five artists, One View, Five pieces of Art - or head to Burford for a pop-up exhibition of oil paintings of the local landscape in Tolsey Museum each Friday throughout the summer.

Without leaving the county, festival visitors all be able to travel America's iconic Route 66 through the eyes of an Oxford photographer, navigate the waterlilies of the Botswanan delta through a series of etchings, and explore arctic waters with Burcot's Frances Brann who travels and paints half of the year aboard a 49 foot sailboat. Explore the world through New York cityscapes and oil paintings of rural India, see the alps through French eyes, or experience Japanese Ikebana.

From steam punk sculpture to a day in the life of a local farrier told in photographs, visitors will have the chance not only to see the art produced in their own communities but to ask local artists about their influences, techniques and materials, and even have a go themselves.

It's also chance to step inside hundreds of interesting spaces, many of which are usually closed to the public, including one of the finest medieval barns in England housing an exhibition of African animals amongst rustic carts; a classic 1930s barge on the river Thames and a Ridgeway estate overrun with sculpture.

For more information and images call Esther Lafferty, Festival Director on 01865 821090 or email esther@artweeks.org