



October 2018

An abundance of art!



Oxford Art Society's 2018 Open Exhibition includes many Artweeks artists

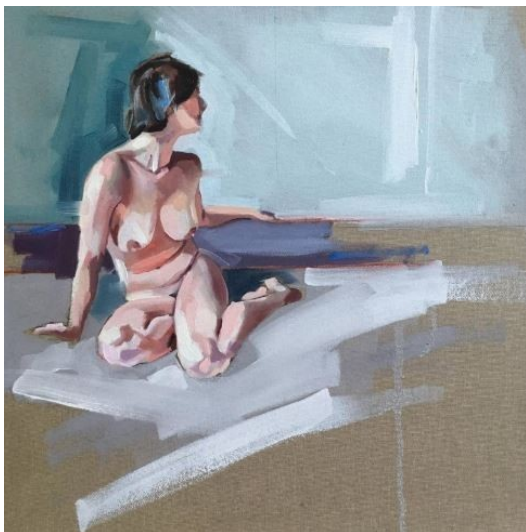
As the nights draw in, inclement weather makes the great outdoors less inviting. Fortunately, there is an absolute abundance of great art to discover in cool and quirky art spaces across Oxfordshire this month.

In the city of Oxford, the Oxford Art Society's large September exhibition runs until 14th October in the magnificent cloisters of St John the Evangelist Church on the Iffley Road whilst in Bampton's equally historic town hall, West Ox Arts Gallery presents Curvilinear (until 13th), a curveball of an exhibition that combines by ceramics by Sally Dorrity and photography by Tracy Florance, the two very different bodies of work complementing one another with surprising effect.

either crank, white or black clays to create small, medium and large pieces, both functional and sculptural. Constantly experimenting with shapes and glazes, getting inspiration from classical forms as well as the tones and textures of nature, Sally's pieces range from small vases and dishes to large ali baba pots and sculptures. Tracy specialises in original photographic images from around the world and her current interest lies in contemporary architecture where she emphasises patterns and shapes which others might miss.

Curvilinear is followed by an exhibition by Artweeks artist Andrew Forkner whose illustrations of birds and animals, from local wildlife to big cats, that hang upon the walls are reproduced in natural history books for the coffee table.

In another town hall gallery space, this time above the arches in Deddington,, Wychwood Art's new Autumn Exhibition includes pieces by popular printmaker Kate Boxer whose work has a vitality and immediacy: you feel that if you look away and look back her people and animals will have altered their pose. There are also new pieces by Sabina Pieper whose pictures of women hold your eye steady and draw you in. There are more powerful poses in Summertown, in 'Flux' at the Sarah Wiseman Gallery from the 13th October, where figurative painter Clare Bonnet's explores her relationship with femininity. Her semi-abstract female forms have mostly broad, simplified brushstrokes, and she places the figure in ambiguous, sparse interiors, juxtaposing fine details with strong, clearly defined lines and large areas of solid, vibrant colour.



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Also on Oxford's South Parade, the Turrill Sculpture Garden presents 'I See' Sculpture by Rolf Hook (from 6th Oct) whouses wood from trees that have naturally fallen. He explores the aesthetics of shape, form, texture and colour in hard woods such as ancient oak, yew and sweet chestnut to produce tranquil stylised heads and portraits that appear to belong in the landscape and will endure the elements. These are shown alongside sculptures with rustic, featherlike carving to evoke wings that collect rainwater and become natural birdbaths.

Head over the road to The North Wall where wood is a key element for The Society of Wood Engravers who are opening their national touring exhibition here in Oxford with an selection over one hundred wood engravings, woodcuts and linocuts made by artists as near as Summertown to as far away as Russia and America. It's an amazingly diverse range of talent, styles and interpretations.

There's also a very exciting mixed artist exhibition in OVADA's cavernous warehouse space, with an accompanying film, music and performance: 'The Great Divide' is Oxford's first celebration of international street art and it includes work by urban artists from around the world. Curator and Artweeks member Tommy Watkins notes that in a city famous for educating the elite political classes better known for making, rather than breaking the law, the ever-evolving, current nature of street art directly challenges the status quo and the exhibition addresses current political issues that are dividing people globally and creates a narrative around how we can come back together in the face of division.



From above left, figurative painting by Clare Bonnet; photography & ceramics at West Ox Arts; example from The Great Divide; and Anna Dillon's Chalk Hill.

To remember the past and the way the divisions of war changed the world around us, from 16th October landscape painter Anna Dillon from Aston Tirrold is presenting an uplifting yet moving exhibition in Didcot's Cornerstone Arts Centre. For the last four years, she has been researching the story of the men of this landscape, the part they played in the very similar and yet different landscapes of the first world war and the legacy left behind in art, literature and on the land itself. Her contemporary colourful oil paintings, each look at the panorama today, both here and on the battlefields of France and Belgium, yet taking the viewer on a journey back and forth in time. One of Anna's powerful pictures, for example, shows the wide views from nearby Churn on the Oxfordshire-Berkshire border - the classic rolling hills of the chalklands of the Downs, now exuberant with the sunshine yellow of rapeseed. During the First World War the view was very different - this was the site of Churn camp where hundreds of local men trained for the Berks, Bucks and Oxfordshire Yeomanry and the old Newbury to Southampton railway line ran through the valley bringing horses and tents, supplies and provisions to the men. It is from here many local men headed to the Western front never to return. The exhibition runs until 25th November 2018, and includes paintings, some 2m wide; a selection of photos, both drawn from historical archives and Anna's own; sketchpads and other 'project memorabilia'.

And last but not least, for those who enjoy the intimate experience of meeting and discovering the methods, materials and mindset of an artist, art the Thame Art Crawl offers a mini art trail in the style of Artweeks from the 18th-20th and includes wonderful contemporary graphics by James Taylor, and windswept landscapes by Janine Philips, striking ceramics by Fleur Ensur. And there will be more open studios and pop-up art spaces across the whole county next month as Oxfordshire Artweeks artists present their Christmas Season. You can see more about these events and the art of other Artweeks artists at www.artweeks.org