

17th February 2015

Art for everyone across North Oxfordshire this spring



Around 1000 artists and designer-makers, including 150 who are first-timers for 2015, are preparing for more than 400 exhibitions and events across the county for Oxfordshire Artweeks from 2nd-25th May, including more than two dozen in and around Banbury itself, for the longest-running and biggest open studios event in the UK.

Painters and designers, potters and sculptors, wood-turners, photographers, jewellers and textile artists will all be opening their homes and studios across the county to the public for free to showcase their talent through exhibitions and demonstrations. From fashion to furniture, in collage, ceramics, mosaic, on fabric, on film and on canvas, artists are telling tales of wonderful places and journeys travelled, their inspiration and ideas, from Warrington to Deddington, in Great Bourton, Balscote and Bloxham.

Banbury will be bursting with art as nine venues throw open their doors in the centre of town and invite you in. In Market Place, two complementary exhibitions will each run for three weeks, as Banbury artist Gena Johns presents Banbury in 3D handcut photographic collages & digital collages transferred onto wood and painter Stuart Roper explores Oxfordshire's secret places on a large scale at Hamptons International. Over at The Mill discover colourful nature canvases in a new airy attic studio space overlooking the canal or be surprised by the range of art inspired by water in the ground floor gallery. Just a stone's throw away, enjoy striking art photography in both bold colours and black and white by Steve Gold on Queen's Road; find watercolours and acrylics by local art groups at The Artery, and consider art and poetry intertwined as the talented members and volunteers of Restore on Calthorpe Street express their experiences and feelings about mental health.

On Tramway, where an industrial tram line once ran between canal-side factories and railway sidings for freight trains, you can find art inspired by dance. here too, ground-breaking Oxfordshire artist Claire Reika Wright, once described by a former Tate Modern curator as 'working at the coal face of digital art', also belies the industrial heritage of this site with engaging interactive art inspired by trees in the Cotswolds, romantic and celestial in nature each including the sun or moon and the silhouettes they create.

In the countryside around, the studios and halls are bursting with animals from quirky animals in a Swalciffe pub alongside traditional acrylics and watercolours propped on rustic agricultural machinery in the neighbouring medieval barn. In Bloxham discover big bold abstracts and pots of pleasure and purpose, or find Cloudcuckooland in Deddington courtesy of designer-maker Tony Davis from the art collective Art More Lovely.

Explore the natural world, from the poles to the equator, take a journey in a gondola through the Venetian archipelago, or travel back in time and share memories of childhood. Come nose to nose with a highland cow in a Cotswold pub, or follow the fine lines of a bird at flight in a bookshop. Find nature encapsulated in glass or reproduced as fine silver jewellery, or enjoy art good enough to eat, or eat off!

Visitors are invited into hundreds of interesting spaces, many of which are usually closed to the public, including Oxford Colleges, two of the finest medieval barns in England, a West Oxfordshire wind farm, and a classic 1930s barge on the river Thames. Art aficionados and everyday enthusiasts, adults and children alike will be able to follow art trails through Oxford streets, Cotswold villages, along the Thames or through the county's market towns.

And with art talks, events, and workshops at The OU Museum of Natural History, The Ashmolean and art centres across the county, there's something to inspire all ages and aspirations. Visitors will have the chance to see the art produced in their own communities, to ask local artists about their influences, techniques and materials, and even have a go themselves.

The listings are now available on-line at www.artweeks.org and the printed festival guide will be available from April.





Claire Reika Wright

Jacqueline Taylor

Gena Johns

Martin Damen

Graham Mant

Notes to editors

Artweeks is celebrated across Oxfordshire in partnership with local arts centres, museums, and other Oxfordshire organisations, with support from The Oxford Times and Hamptons International.

Notes to Editors: Oxfordshire Artweeks www.artweeks.org 2nd- 25th May 2015

Artweeks is Oxfordshire's largest visual arts festival and the UK's oldest and biggest Open Studios event, a three-week celebration in May each year of the county's artistic and creative talent encompassing the visual arts in their broadest sense. Almost 1000 artists open the doors to their homes and studios and welcome the public to see their creations and watch them work – in 2014 over 100,000 people visited more than 400 exhibitions and a million pounds of art changed hands!

Further press information & lots of lovely colourful IMAGES contact **Esther Lafferty** 01367 242498 or 07776 196967 esther@artweeks.org



and **The Oxford Times.**

