



14th September 2015

Oxfordshire Artists prepare for autumn with legendary hobgoblins & gingerbread houses made from glass.

More than 100 artists and makers are preparing for new exhibitions and studio events in November as Oxfordshire Artweeks presents its 'runaway' Christmas Fairs Weekend, a seasonal venture for this open studios organisation, the longest-running and biggest of its kind in the UK. A selection of the county's painters and photographers, glass workers, metal sculptors, wood turners, stone carvers, jewellers, print makers and textile artists will be opening their homes and studios and presenting seasonally inspired art to the public for free, showcasing their talent at two day exhibitions across Oxfordshire on 14th and 15th November (11am-5pm), the perfect time to pick up original locally-crafted gifts before Christmas festivities begin.

In Headington Netta Jennison, who first exhibited her work to the public only this year, presents 'Space, Rhythm and Landscape from Norway' capturing the light of Northern clines with a fluid brushstroke and other media, whilst in Harwell, for example, Robert Strange's squashed wrapping paper foretells the picture that will be drawn on every living room floor this Christmas. Inspired by collections, Robert Strange a member of the UK Colour Pencil Society records an obsession with keeping colourful, discarded things in boxes, whether soft toys, cracker toys or confectionery wrappers, each of his pictures in this 'Squashed' series taking between 80-120 hours to draw.

Meet Graham Rice, for example, for whom stepping into his studio is like stepping into a fairytale, a gingerbread place hidden among the woods of North Leigh, reached from the whimsically named Cuckoo Lane. And here you'll find the rich colours of autumn encapsulated in enamel with the silhouettes of elusive deer amongst falling leaves, whilst crafted by his partner, foxes and hares scamper below as delicate silver jewellery all inspired by the local woods and the legends of Wychwood, a Royal forest in medieval times thought to be home to hobgoblins and jack o lanterns (also known as Willo the Wisp) who would on the disguise of a beautiful young girl or crock of gold to lead unsuspecting travellers floundering into the undergrowth.

Meanwhile in Holton Jackie Birchall's stained glass gingerbread house glows amongst handcrafted glass tree ornaments, rich in colour and shimmering with festive cheer and miniatures for a 'Christmas present pocket' by local artist Christine Bainbridge.

Find metal trees adorned with baubles in a loft gallery at Ascott-under-Wychwood and with a series of photographs telling tales of traditional craft techniques at Oxford's St Michael's at the North Gate celebrates the Art of Fair Trade at Christmas time, there'll be plenty to surprise and delight everybody this November.

Art aficionados and everyday enthusiasts alike are invited into dozens of houses and art spaces to delight in art and craft inspired by nature and local scenes, world travels and seasonal celebrations.

For more information and to plan your weekend, visit www.artweeks.org.

LOADS OF BEAUTIFUL IMAGES!

Notes to Editors

Oxfordshire Artweeks www.artweeks.org is Oxfordshire's largest visual arts festival, a three-week celebration in May each year of the county's artistic and creative talent., and the UK's oldest and biggest Open Studios event. Almost 1000 artists open the doors to their homes and studios and welcome the public to see their creations and watch them work. Each May approximately 100,000 people visit around 400 exhibitions and events across the county.

All exhibitions are free. **Further press information & photographs from Esther Lafferty**

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Esther Lafferty, and dozens of artists, are also available for interview.

