

Press release 20th December 2021

Oxfordshire Artweeks prepares a big splash for its 40th anniversary in May 2022



Oxfordshire Artweeks is the UK's oldest and biggest open studios event, the first event of this kind to be held in the UK back in 1983, when a small group of artists in Oxford opened their houses to Oxford, and now its flagship. Having imported the idea from the US, over four decades, the county's artists and makers have grown the event into a three-week festival involving two thousand artists across several hundred venues, from Banbury to Blewbury, Shrivensham to Shiplake.

Their 40th anniversary edition in May 2022 (7th-29th May) promises to be brighter and bolder than ever before. Artists, potters, photographers, sculptors, jewellers, textile artists, furniture-makers and more throw open their doors in towns and villages across the county to welcome visitors, for free, into nearly 500 pop-spaces, including artist studios, art schools, community spaces, gardens and galleries. Visitors can also explore pop-up exhibitions in amazing and intriguing spaces from bohemian terraces in the heart of Oxford city to Elizabethan manors surrounded by rolling country, in fifteenth century tithe barns, medieval churches, attic garrets and quirky warehouse spaces.

Plenty of new exhibitors, alongside popular favourites, will showcase their creative talent, explaining their concepts, presenting their materials and, often, demonstrating their methods. Throughout the festival, visitors will be able to see, touch and talk about hundreds of thousands of pieces of art and craft from the tiniest earrings to towering sculpture created from metal, wood, clay, glass and more unusual materials. Visitors can explore varied exhibitions and immersive installations; enjoy iconic Oxford views and sumptuous local landscapes through fresh eyes; travel to exotic destinations in art; wonder at surrealism, imaginative and abstract works; or talk to those using multidisciplinary art to explore history, alchemy, anthropology, and the constructs and challenges they encounter in the world day-to-day.

To mark their 40th anniversary, as part of the festival, Oxfordshire Artweeks is hosting a celebratory exhibition in Oxford's Jam Factory where selected members' 2D work will illustrate the breadth of art on show across the county. There will also be a selection of 3D work in John Lewis store in the Westgate.

Other exhibitions turn the focus onto the city itself – as well as illustrations and watercolours of the city and its skyline, there will be social commentary, with documentary photography showing the social history of East Oxford's Divinity Road, and a community show celebrating the Thames in the city and what it means to the people who live near it.



Another series of exhibitions highlights the wonders of the natural world around the globe: dozens of artists have painted and sculpted birds and beasts, blooms and buildings whilst visitors can also expect the unexpected: lamps felted from traditional wool of the Cotswolds, jugs inspired by the Madagascan chameleon, marquetry inspired by maths and even new 'Victorian' rocking-horses!

Oxfordshire Artweeks is a great way to explore both art and the county – take, for example, an artist trail along the High Street in the quaint town of Watlington or through the village where Downton Abbey was filmed, and whether an art aficionado or an everyday enthusiast, visitors will be enchanted and inspired and can choose a unique treasure to carry home with them.

Notes to editors

Oxfordshire Artweeks www.artweeks.org 7th-29th May 2022

The Artweeks festival is Oxfordshire's largest visual arts festival and the UK's oldest and biggest Open Studios event. It is a three-week not-for-profit celebration in May each year of the county's artistic and creative talent encompassing the visual arts in their broadest sense. As many as 2000 artists are involved, opening the doors to their homes and studios or taking part in pop-up exhibitions to welcome the public to see their creations and watch them work –over 100,000 people visit Artweeks exhibitions each year and a million pounds of art changes hands! Further press information, area-specific details within Oxfordshire, copy written to a word count, and/or high res images, contact **Esther Lafferty** 01367 242498 or 07715 640228 esther@artweeks.org