

# Press release 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## Oxfordshire Artweeks plans a virtual festival for May 2020



Oxfordshire Artweeks is the UK's oldest and biggest open studios and pop-up exhibition event: in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, the 38th festival — taking place from 2<sup>nd</sup>-25th May — is moving on-line.

“Given the government’s advice this week, that it is time for everyone to stop all non-essential contact with others to slow the spread of COVID19, and because these guidelines are likely to be in place for several months, it is clearly inadvisable to go ahead with physical exhibitions which could put the health of our artists and visitors at risk. While we are sorry that this is the case, we have made the decision to become a virtual festival this year,” explains Festival Director Esther Lafferty.

“There will be thousands of pictures of the pieces created by painters, potters, silversmiths, textile and glass artists, furniture-makers and more, and visitors will also be able to enjoy video footage of artists at work, to explore ‘walk-through’ exhibitions on-line and delve deeper with through-the keyhole-interviews with a number of artists in different media. With hundreds of creatives taking part in a social media celebration too, using the hashtag #oxfordshireartweeks, we hope to brighten up what, for many local people, will be long days in self-isolation or practicing social distancing.”

From the real to the surreal, there’s fun of the fair and a feast for the eyes in flora, fauna, folklore and fable so whether an art aficionado or interested internet-surfer, be enchanted, inspired and even choose something unique from your own home this May.

*A small number of exhibitions currently plan to remain open to visitors including Sculpture at Kingham Lodge which is set in five acres of landscaped gardens with a breath-taking Alhambra-inspired pavilion and blooming rhododendrons & azaleas (Artweeks venue 276).*

*Other venues will also publish any new dates for the autumn in coming weeks, and Artweeks in Watlington (venues 71-120) will run, provisionally, from 29<sup>th</sup> August.*



Cover image by Ian Bailey

## Notes to editors

Oxfordshire Artweeks [www.artweeks.org](http://www.artweeks.org) 2nd-25th May 2020

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. Around 1500 artists open the doors to their homes and studios or take part in pop-up exhibitions and 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](mailto:esther@artweeks.org)

Oxfordshire Artweeks is supported by Designers Guild.



Exhibition of art by Artweeks artists Emma Davis Instagram [studio.emmadavis](https://www.instagram.com/studio.emmadavis)



Above: Sculpture at Kingham Lodge