



## Banbury celebrates thirty years of outstanding art

Circus-themed paintings in Culworth, vintage wedding couture in Cropredy, conceptual sculptures in a 200yr old boatyard, and 'Work in progress' by students at Oxford & Cherwell Valley College, are just some of the things you'll be able to see in and around Banbury during Oxfordshire Artweeks in early May.

Around 1000 artists, including 180 new for 2012, are preparing to open almost 500 venues across the county this spring as Artweeks celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, making it the longest-running and biggest open studios in the UK. With forty venues in Banbury and the surrounding villages inviting you in; a wide variety of work on show, from ceramics and jewellery to furniture and digital media, prints, cards and pots; and a dozen new Banbury artists and makers joining in for the first time this year, there'll be something to capture everyone's interest, whether art aficionados and everyday enthusiasts, and all for free.

To mark this birthday year, a celebratory exhibition by photographer Simon Murison-Bowie will come to The Mill Arts Centre in Banbury (1<sup>st</sup> May-2<sup>nd</sup> June ) direct from Modern Art Oxford, capturing, in black and white, thirty Oxfordshire artists at work in their private studios.

*'This is a project rooted in an age-old fascination in the place of an artist's making ... Simon's acute and insightful depictions support the riposte to 'everyone is an artist' with the more telling assertion that 'all artists are people'. Michael Stanley, Director, Modern Art Oxford*

In addition, a teenager commended by the 'Wildlife photographer of the year' competition; an award-winning ceramicist who wears goggles and gauntlets to brave the flames in which she fires her pots; life-size sculptures celebrating Olympic values standing tall in The Ashmolean; and a celebration of arts & crafts by older people using the Banbury Health and Wellbeing Centre are all in the planning.

With new local area trails, as well as the definitive festival guide and website, visitors will have the chance to see the art produced in their own communities, to ask local artists about their inspirations, techniques and materials, and even have a go themselves.

Artweeks is celebrated across Oxfordshire in partnership with local arts centres, museums, and other Oxfordshire organisations, with support from Hamptons International whose Banbury & Deddington offices will house taster art throughout May.

You can pick up an Artweeks guide from libraries, Hamptons branches and local information points from April or visit [www.artweeks.org](http://www.artweeks.org).

## **Notes to Editors**

### **Oxfordshire Artweeks [www.artweeks.org](http://www.artweeks.org)**

Artweeks 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. In 2010 over 107,000 people visited nearly 500 venues across the county.

#### **All exhibitions are free**

*Oxfordshire Artweeks* 2012 will run from Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> May 2012 and is organised into three geographical areas

*North Oxfordshire Exhibitions:* Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May

*City Exhibitions:* Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May

*South Oxfordshire Exhibitions:* Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> May

The *Oxfordshire Visual Arts Festival (Artweeks)* is a non profit-making company, limited by guarantee and owned by its members. Everyone is welcome to take part and there is no selection process for artists wishing to participate.

**Further press information & photographs from Esther Browning 01865 821090 or 07776 196967 [esther@artweeks.org](mailto:esther@artweeks.org)**

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