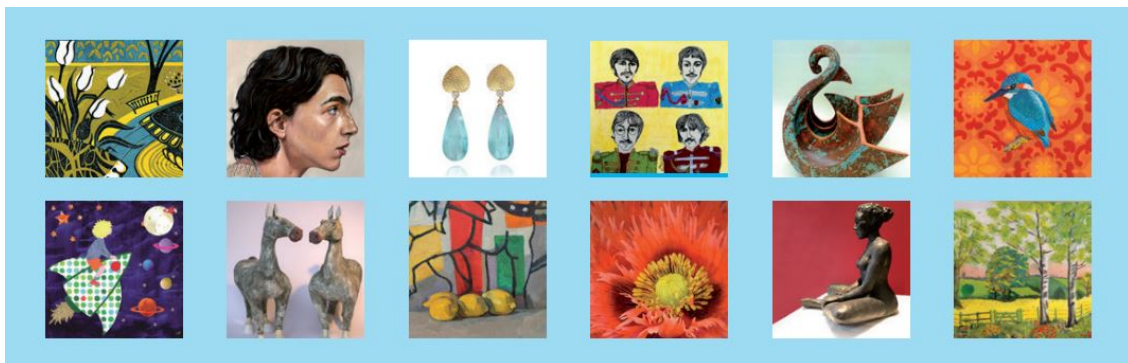




*April 2019*

## Just a month to go!

We're now only weeks away from Oxfordshire Artweeks which runs from 4th-27th May. During the first week of the festival (4th-12th May) nearly 200 art spaces across the city of Oxford welcome you in. The second week (11th-19th May) takes place in South Oxfordshire with venues along the Thames from Faringdon to Henley and the Ridgeway from Wantage to Thame, and during the third (18th-27th May) visit beautiful North and West Oxfordshire where venues can be found nestled from Burford and Chipping Norton in the Cotswolds across to the historic market towns of Bicester and Banbury.



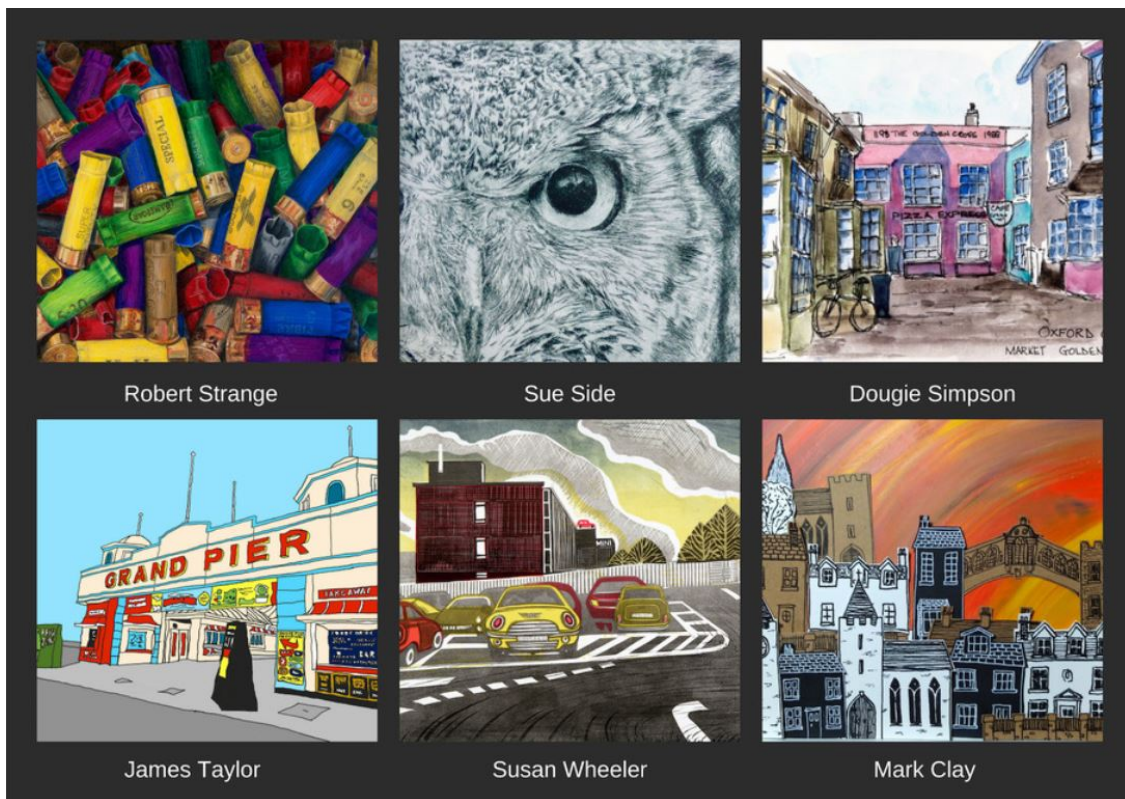
Susan Wheeler; Mark Draisey; Guen Palmer; Harriet Riddell; Andrea Brewer; Yvette Phillips  
Celine Beaugrand; Aline Stanway; David Bliss; Julia Loken; Jane Moser; Anthony Belcher

The festival guide can now be picked up in libraries, in Oxford's Blackwell Art Shop on Broad Street, in The Jam Factory which is a stone's throw from Oxford railway station or at local information points across the county. Alternatively, you can download the .pdf [here](#), browse hundreds of pictures in the Artweeks' artist on-line galleries [here](#) or print off local area trail maps [here](#) to make you choice. On social media, find us using the #oxfordshireartweeks hashtag.

- Jericho Artweeks with support from Oxford Art Society, are presenting a talk on The Mystique of the Studio and the World Within by Festival Director Esther Lafferty (7.30pm, Tuesday 7th May, St Barnabas Church, Cardigan Street, Oxford OX2 6BG. The event is free (donations welcome) but please arrive early as places can't be pre-booked.

## Where to see Artweeks artists this month: in Bampton, Oxford and Radley

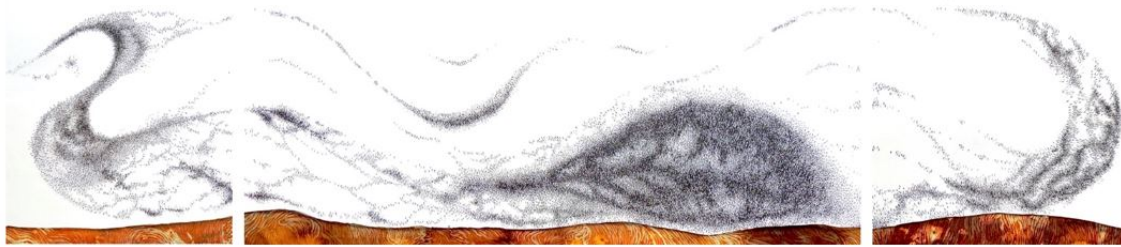
While the excitement builds, we have three suggestions of places to visit to keep your impatience at bay! Begin in Bampton, where West Ox Arts Gallery has a crisp fresh exhibition Graphical Illustration (from 6th April – 4th May) showcasing the work of six talented contemporary Oxfordshire artists.



Printmaker [Susan Wheeler](#) takes her starting point from a landscape, buildings, plants, or people, noticing and drawing attention to their particular shapes, colours and underlying patterns in pleasing linocut compositions with bold lines and flat areas of colour.

In contrast [Sue Side](#) wields a pencil with incredible skill to draw the stories hidden in our local environment of tree, copse, land and sky: stories both complex yet insubstantial and fleeting, played out against the vast stage of

depth, pattern and fluidity. From a distance these works seem to be of abstract, random forms. It is only close up you see they focus on the pattern, purpose and togetherness of the flocks. Sue is also drawn to the many subtle details that characterise people and animals, raising the ordinary to a thing to ponder.



Sue Side: A Starling Song in Three Parts

It is the ordinary, the everyday and the discarded that catches artist [Robert Strange](#)'s eye too – his original colour pencil drawings from his 'Rusty' series of old tools are almost photographic in their extraordinary detail, and hang alongside paintings of old toy cars and colourful 'Squashed' collections.

Also on the walls, you'll find landscapes from the real world and the imagination - [Dougje Simpson](#)'s pieces in a contemporary pen & wash style reflect Oxford and Blenheim Palace, Sidmouth and Venice; James Taylor adds crisp design flair to recognisable views whilst [Mark Clay](#)'s work is inspired by landscapes, both human and natural. He uses both graphical and illustrative techniques to investigate a world that can be both beautiful and ridiculous. His responses to the Anglesey coastline are analytical and pared down to simple interacting lines, while the city of Oxford inspires him to richer flights of fancy. Expect a touch of cartoon humour too.



Paintings by Alan Kestner; Debrah Martin and Rosie Phipps

Meanwhile in Oxford, in the Arts at the Old Fire Station Gallery (until 11th May;

mediums. Their art, influenced by people and landscapes both near and far, draws on contrasting backgrounds, cultures and experiences.

*"Draw a story in lines, plot its progress in oils, and bring the conflict to a head with brush strokes,"* says LiterArties artist [Kamal Lathar](#), and each of the group tells their tales in different styles.

[Alan Kestner](#)'s detailed works, for example, are like individual theatre productions pinned in a moment of time, his imaginative scenes laid out across the paper, rich with narrative and humour. In contrast, [Debrah Martin](#)'s paintings reflect the richness, luminosity and drama in the natural world which we all too often take for granted, from the humblest tree to the stormiest sky above whilst [Rosie Phipps](#)' paintings are flowers in vases - generally deeply patterned in joyful vibrant colours - are a celebration of life, its abundance and beauty.



Willow Winston's Hexagons in Arpeggio at the RA 2018

There's a chance to get involved this month in an exhibition of interactive and kinetic sculpture 'Mathematics and Imagination' at Radley College's Sewell Gallery ([Artweeks venue 220](#)). Here Willow Winston experiments with materials empirically to explore structures rooted in mathematical form, and pathways to deep levels of connection with the nature of the Cosmos. She is inspired by the book 'Mathematics and the Imagination' (1940) which she read as a child, its starting premise is that Mathematics leads the creative faculties beyond even imagination and intuition, her intention is to open doors to the beauty of Mathematics and at the same time extend the range of the viewers' imagination. She is also inspired by the Periodic Table which celebrates its 150th anniversary this year.



Abingdon Road in South Oxford, and that's where I held my first open studio event, inviting people to come and see the pieces I was making. They loved to have a look at the projects I was working on at the time. "After a couple of years I upgraded to a studio in the garden. It wasn't much more than a garden shed really with my glass pieces hanging around the sides. I'd made windows for the kitchen and bathroom in the house as well as glass for the front door and I would show visitors those too. In fact, when we sold that house the person who bought it particularly wanted it because of the stained glass, and after I left I was invited back several times to create new windows for an extension that was being added."

Vital meanwhile had moved to his house, 538 Banbury Road, where he now opens his studio each year. "The house had a garage which I took over as my workspace and extended it to become a studio and gallery." The large bright windows overlook a garden where Vital's stone, terracotta and glass sculptures are on show.

Although primarily known for his fused glass art, Vital shows his talents across a range of art forms. "I grew up with the smell of oil paintings and wood resin as my grandfather was busy painting and sculpting around the house," he explains, "and so it was natural for me to pick up brushes and carving tools from a young age and to switch back and forth between different media. I will constantly enjoy changing experiences by playing with different viewpoints, materials and methods."

"It's funny though," he says, "I grew up in the Flanders in Belgium, which has one of the richest traditions of glass in the world. You can find Flemish glass in the oldest English churches, and in Oxford's colleges, but I didn't start working with glass

flamboyant colours and narratives. He also adored the fairy-tales as a boy. "I pick up ideas from many sources, including the rich storytelling traditions of the places where I have lived and travelled. My favourite characters when I was a child were the witch, the princess and the dragon – or any fabulous beast. Talking of which, one of my current models is Dexter, our English pointer. He is my model for drawings and clay and bronze sculptures."

"Having been to China which I found fascinating, over the last few years I have taken the animal of the Chinese New Year as a theme. The dragon, the monkey, the dog and the rooster each have their tales, characteristics and associated symbolism. They appear in many of my works on show. This year though we've welcomed in the Year of the Pig and I thought that this traditionally considered lucky creature might rather leave me scratching my head. Beaught used the pig to symbolise gluttony but also as a jovial fellow – we use the phrase 'so happy as a pig in mud'. Also, I love the idea of a flying pig."

"Having been to China which I found fascinating, over the last few years I have taken the animal of the Chinese New Year as a theme. The dragon, the monkey, the dog and the rooster each have their tales, characteristics and associated symbolism."

Although Vital enjoys creating characterful pieces, it is the windows, doors and glass panels he creates for buildings large and small for which he is best recognised. His designs can be seen in the UK and internationally. Locally they can be found in, amongst others, Linacre College, Sobell House Chapel and Stoke Mandeville Hospital. They can also be seen in the swimming windows in the town halls of Oxford, London, Bonn and Grenoble, and in many private houses.

Although his earlier commissions were stained and leaded glass, today he makes large fused glass panels boasting colour, rhythm, abstract circles and sweeping curves. Each glass window is rich with texture as it ▶

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And last but not least, Artweeks may not be 150 years old, but this is our 37<sup>th</sup> year, and North Oxford's contemporary glass artist **Vital Peeters** has opened his studio ([Artweeks venue 17](#)) for the last 30 of them! You can read all about him – before going to visit – [here](#), as published this month in the glossy magazine OX Sylva.



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