



Oxfordshire Artweeks

Oxford Clarion

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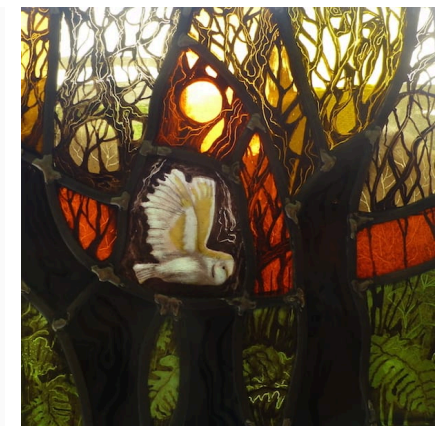
Amy Letts, Venue 451 Headington

As [Oxfordshire Artweeks](#) bursts into life next week with a three-week festival of artists' open studios and pop-up exhibitions at 350 venues across the whole county - all of which are free to enter - we ask, 'what's it all about and why has it been so successful?' This piece was written in collaboration with [Oxfordshire Artweeks](#), and we are delighted to share works from some of the artists on display this year, and where you can find them.



Anita Joice, Venue 328, Woodstock, Tess Blenkinsop, Venue 399, Summertown

The idea for an open studios event was brought from the US in the mid 1980s and the first Artweek was held in Oxford, a small local event. Since then, millions of visitors have enjoyed the friendly welcome of thousands of local artists and makers. Now the festival encompasses the whole of Oxfordshire, and is a model that has been copied across the UK.



Valerie Petts, Venue 377, Jericho, Anuk Nauman, Venue 259 Great Rollright

Artweeks is a pleasure because it is about so much more than simply the art, craft and design on show. It is also about the people who have created it and the stories they have to share, their inspiration, methods, and materials – from paint and clay to wood, precious metals, textiles and glass. It's a chance to explore, to be wowed, to chat over a cup of tea and a slice of cake (if you'd like. It's no problem if you're quietly reflective instead). And through these conversations, the festival fosters creativity in thought and artistic practice in both the creative community and the many visitors who need only a touch of curiosity to get involved.



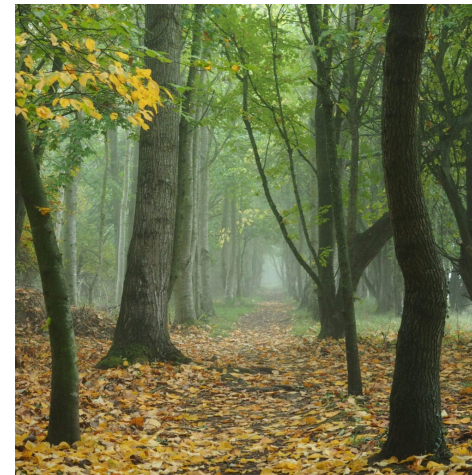
Ronald Turner, Venue 230, Aynho, Paul Tomlinson, Venue 191, Eynsham

Pop-up exhibitions are often an easy way to discover the hidden talent of a collection of artists in a single space, whilst a visit to an artist's studio can offer a more in-depth insight into an artist's practice and is a more intimate experience. If a picture tells a thousand words, then a studio is an epic adventure!



Rachel Ducker, venue 383, Jericho, Wendy Skinner Smith, Venue 348, Oxford West

Entering a studio is like opening a window into an artist's world to see the way they work, their materials, their tools, their processes, sketchbooks and their work in progress. In this almost mythical space the real and the imagined, great ideas and quiet reflections are drawn together with an artist's chosen craft and incredible skill. You can see incredible creations emerging from many different materials – on canvas, through a lens, and from the traditional to the contemporary. You will find beauty, both aesthetically and in the way that art can makes us feel or help us communicate.

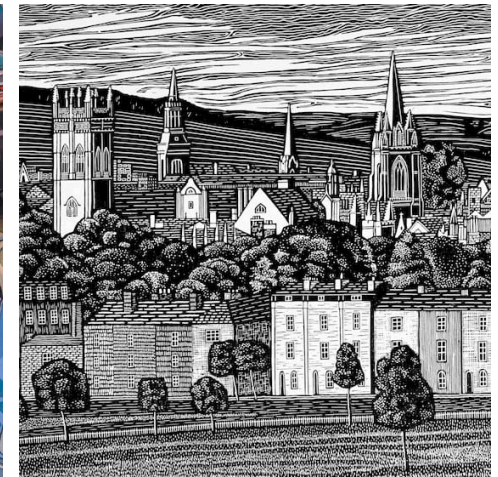
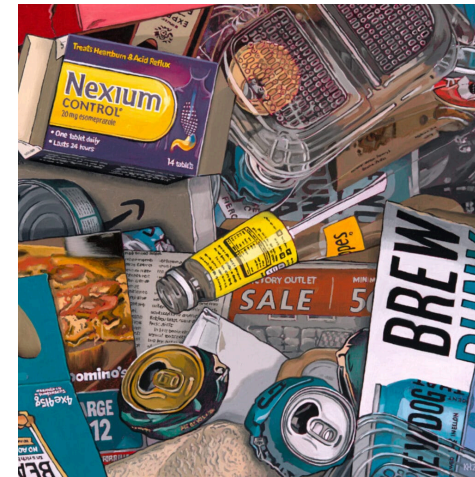


Merrill Jacobs, Venue 28, Abingdon, Deb Sutcliffe, Venue 59, Aston Tirrold



Bruce Bignold, Venue 10, Appleton, Tim Kapp, venue 356, Oxford Centre

There's no obligation to buy anything during Artweeks – and some of the exhibitions don't have work for sale. However, if you value individuality and creativity, carrying a treasure home with you makes a contribution to the local economy. And there is something special about an original piece of art, jewellery, pottery or wood which is truly one of a kind, hand-crafted with a rare imagination and skill, and yet choosing an original needn't be expensive. Furthermore, as well as carrying away a picture – or some other kind of piece – that's captivated you, by buying directly from an artist you also carry away a trilogy of tales to tell around the dinner table: the story of its inspiration, the story of creation, and the story of how and where you found it on a sunny May day, perhaps in a [remarkable jeweller's workshop](#) in the woods on the Cornbury estate, or in a [charming orchard studio](#) with a view of the Wittenham Clumps.



Kevin Hinton, venue 197, Cassington, Jenny Dingwall, Venue 368, Jericho

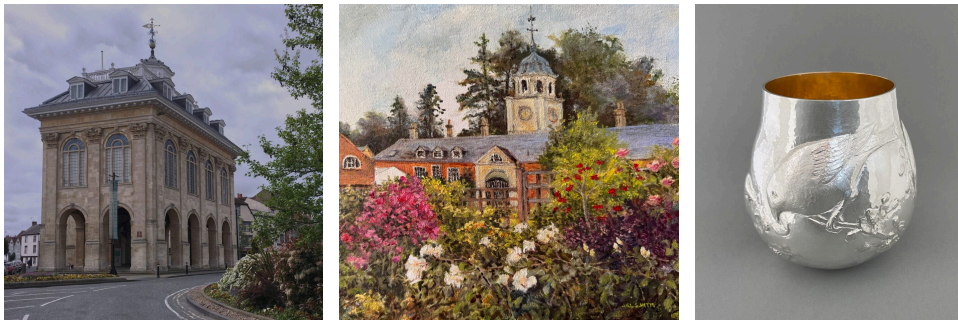
Often scattered along village or neighbourhood walking trails, the venues themselves are a fascinating collection of places, ranging from ancient abbeys and manor houses to medieval barns and secret garden galleries with hidden histories themselves. Did you know, for example, that the beautiful west Oxfordshire village of [Coleshill](#), where the National Trust Heritage and Rural Skills Centre is hosting six artists, was the top-secret training headquarters for the secret British Resistance during WW2? Or that [Braziers Park](#), a seventeenth century Strawberry Gothic style country house near Wallingford where – for Artweeks – you'll find very bright paintings and pottery with hint of the volcanic, was used and lived in by colourful characters from Ian Fleming to the late Marianne Faithful and Mick Jagger?



Joanne Sonnier, Venue 23, Abingdon, Kate Hipkiss, Venue 500, East Oxford

Each week of the festival is different. During the first week of the festival, from 2 – 10 May, art spaces across South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse, along the Ridgeway and the Thames, will throw open their doors to you: just look out for the yellow and blue flags and bunting. Then from 9-16 May the Oxfordshire Cotswolds and an ABC of North Oxfordshire market towns and villages, from Adderbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton, promise a warm welcome. This year's final week (16 – 25 May) focuses on 200 studios and collectives in Oxford itself, with venues ranging from [attic garrets](#) to [Oxford colleges](#) and even a [Wolvercote canal boat](#).

For more information on the artists to visit, their venues and opening dates and times visit www.artweeks.org.



The Abingdon Camera Club, venue 22, Abingdon, Jill Smith, Venue 40, Wantage, Stella Campion, Venue 511, Oxford East,

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