

COSA Project Information 2017

Project Background

Cheshire Open Studios is an exciting and successful regional arts event that has taken place annually since 1997. Over the years the event includes between 40 - 80 Cheshire based artists and craft makers opening their studios as individuals or in-groups, over a series of weekends or weekdays and coming together for yearly group exhibition. In 2017 Cheshire Open Studios celebrates 20 years of open studios in September & October 2017 and is one of the major art events in the region's art calendar.

This initiative is designed to support professional & semi-professional artists, craft makers, creatives and artisans who often work in isolation; enabling networking and mutual support and an opportunity to engage with their audiences whilst also raising awareness of the artists and the artistic community in Cheshire. The event attracts visitors both locally, regionally, nationally & internationally and is visited by between 2000 - 5000 people of all ages.

The project attempts to address the lack of contemporary galleries and local exhibition spaces for local artists within Cheshire by helping to promote local artists in their own or public spaces whilst encouraging new opportunities for residencies, commissions, selling, exhibiting and teaching. Participants benefit from a boost to their profile through high quality publicity, including a full colour A5 brochure, posters, news publications, banners, radio broadcasts, press releases, website and social media networking.

We would also like to encourage more participation by performance, experimental, conceptual or emerging artists and recent graduates whom benefit from a discount on membership. There is no formal selection process for participants of Cheshire Open Studios however you must be a professional or semi-professional artist, craftsperson, creative or artisan living and working in Cheshire.

Cheshire Open Studios is a self-funding, not-for-profit, voluntary artist led project, run by a voluntary steering group and project coordinator.

PLEASE ENSURE YOU READ ALL PROJECT & APPLICATION DOCUMENTS BEFORE APPLYING.

If you require a large print version of these documents please contact Midge on *07808944550* Mon-Fri 10 am to 4pm or email [**info@cheshireopenstudios.org.uk**](mailto:info@cheshireopenstudios.org.uk)

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SPECIAL THANKS ...

Many thanks for all the hard work of the artists who volunteer each year to be on the steering group, assist with running the event and the promotional work carried out by all of the artists who participate each year. Your continued support is greatly valued.

Thanks also to go to Cheshire East, West and Chester councils for the assistance & marketing support provided by them. Special thanks also go to our sponsors and supporters.

Main Points for 2017

Here are some of the main changes for this year. More information about each is provided in additional documentation sent with the application pack or downloadable from the website at www.cheshireopenstudios.org.uk (see section under **Take Part**).

1. **Open Studios Dates** – A choice of 4 weekends between 23rd September and 15th October to open your studios. Optional to open during weekdays or extra days can be accommodated.

2. **Annual Open Exhibition – 19th September – 2 November 2017**

Exhibition Venue: Gallery 1 @ Castle Park Arts Centre

Exhibition Prizes and Awards on offer this year range from £40 to £200 and include:

- a) **Gallery Choice Award**
- b) **Mayors Choice Award**
- c) **Steering Group Choice Award**
- d) **Visitor's Choice Award**
- e) **Best Newcomer Award (for new & emerging artists only).**

3. Open Studio membership levels are provided to cater for two main levels i.e. "**Open Studio Artist**" or "**Exhibition only**". **Entry is open to all Cheshire based artists.** Artists can choose between being an **Open Studio Artist** or an **Exhibition Only** entrant.

Open Studios Artists open their studios to the public and must enter work to the exhibition and complete ALL application forms.

Exhibition Only Artists only participate in the Exhibition and will need to provide a completed Exhibition Entry Form with an Artist Statement Form. "Exhibition only" Artists may be subject to acceptance and selection by the gallery or steering group however every effort is made to ensure all artists entering are represented in the exhibition by at least one piece of work.

Artist Group Entries continue to be supported with standard & group open studio memberships. Open Studio Artist entry is also open to any artist whom can open or share a studio in Cheshire e.g. guest artists from outside the region are welcome to participate provided the studio space they will be using during the event is based in Cheshire (please see **Essential Entry Requirements** section for permitted locations).

4. Please note **new address** for postal applications should now go to **Cheshire Open Studios, c/o 8 Bakers Court, Winsford, CW7 2BQ.**

5. **Not got a studio?** Let us know you need to share on the application form and we will do our best to pair you with someone with space on offer. Or why not find an empty shop or other space in your local town for a pop up studio event?

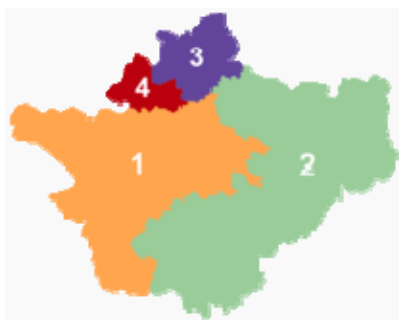
6. **Submission and Entry Deadline: Midnight Tuesday 1st August 2017 by email/online, Friday 4th August for postal entries.**

ESSENTIAL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

If you would like to participate as an Open Studio Artist the criteria is as follows.

YOU MUST:

- be a practising **professional** or **semi-professional contemporary artist** or **craft maker / artisan** making **original works**, not solely a commercial outlet (i.e. not a gift shop, commercial gallery or an amateur artist). From 2015 applications are also open to local community galleries (supporting local artists) or art groups with studio spaces or within commercial outlets.
- Your studio that will be open to the public must be within the ceremonial county of Cheshire i.e. Cheshire East, West & Chester, Halton (Runcorn) or Warrington. See map below or for further clarification of boundaries please see this link: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheshire>.



1. [Cheshire West and Chester](#) (Unitary)
2. [Cheshire East](#) (Unitary)
3. [Warrington](#) (Unitary)
4. [Halton](#) (Unitary)

- attend meetings (roughly one or two main meetings will be held during the project) and **play an active role in making sure that the entire event is publicised in your local area**. (Leafleting houses, shops, businesses etc using leaflets, posters, brochures that will be distributed to artists prior to the main event).
- **have public liability insurance during the period your studio is open to the public** (explained in the additional notes section).
- **Submit a minimum of one or more (i.e. as requested in the exhibition entry form) pieces of work to the exhibition / event**
- **be present at your workspace and available in person to the public on your advertised open days between the stated opening hours: 10am – 5pm**
- be prepared to welcome and interact with members of the public who visit your studio, talk about your work and answer questions.

- have examples of work in your studio for visitors to view. Your open days can be a great marketing and selling opportunity (but you are under no obligation to sell).
- have the tools of your trade available to view in your studio, e.g. clay, printing press, sketchbook, test pieces, work in progress etc.
- be based in an accessible studio/workspace suitable for public visits.
- Review your information in publications i.e. brochure and website before public release
- have (or be willing to share) a studio/workspace within the districts of Cheshire.
- pay a participation fee as explained above to take part in the project (fee explained in additional notes section). This must be paid along with your application entry. **Open Studio Artists** that are recent graduates (i.e. since 2012) are exempt from the **open studio entry fee but not the exhibition entry fee.**
- complete and return risk assessment when requested for your studio before your open weekends and take necessary action as indicated on the assessment. A Checklist will be issued at a later date prior to your opening dates.
- complete and return the provided **artists' & visitor feedback questionnaires** at the end of the event **within one month** for evaluation purposes. Information about feedback forms will be provided at a later date.

PROJECT DATES

Cheshire Open Studios event will take place between **19th September and 2nd November 2017**. It is requested that **all studios are open** to the public (as much as possible) between these dates.

Open Studio Artists studios will be grouped geographically when listed in the leaflet/brochure and **must open for at least one of the available weekends** and on any dates you specify on your application form.

Optional Xmas Opening proposed 25th & 26th November. If you would like to open your studio in the run up to Christmas please indicate this on the application form.

Artists can specify opening their studios **by appointment at other times of the year**. This opportunity is detailed in the application guidelines and an appropriate option for selection is provided on the entry form.

All dates will be publicly advertised, so you MUST BE OPEN if you have agreed to be. In the event of exceptional circumstances where you are unable to open on selected/allocated dates please contact the Project Coordinator as soon as possible.

PROJECT EVENT SCHEDULE

EVENT	DATES
Submission Deadline	All entries to be received by Midnight Tuesday 1st August 2017 by email/online, Friday 4th August for postal entries
Brochure schedule	<p>First draft for review by artists – mid-August 2017 (TBC)</p> <p>Final proof signed off by 29th August 2017 (TBC)</p> <p>Delivery to Cheshire Open Studios – early Sept 2017 (TBC)</p> <p>Big Meeting & Distribution to artists to commence on or after delivery of brochures in August (TBC)</p> <p>TBC – further notifications for exact dates will be sent out later</p>
Exhibition / Event(s)	<p>Handing in Days Mon 18th 10 am - 4pm & Tues 19th 10 am - 12 pm September.</p> <p>Arrangements possible to drop off work prior to these dates can be arranged. All work for exhibition must be received by Tues 19th Sept 12 noon.</p> <p>Hanging: Tues 19th September 12 am - 4pm</p> <p>Collection of unselected work (applicable to Exhibition Only entrants): Wed 20th or Thurs 21st September, 10 am to 4 pm or by arrangement. Notification of unselected work will be sent out on the evening of either Tuesday 19th or early morning Wednesday 20th.</p> <p>Preview: Friday 22nd September 2017, 7-9pm</p> <p>Open to public: Sat 23rd September to Wed 1st November 10am to 4pm</p> <p>Collection & Take Down: Thurs 2nd November 10-4pm. Would appreciate it if artists can collect work before 2pm. Arrangements to collect at later date/times can be arranged if necessary.</p> <p>Exhibition Venue: Gallery 1 @ Castle Park Arts Centre, Frodsham</p> <p>Arrangements can be made for those that are unable to make handing in/collection dates if agreed with the organisers beforehand. Please state this on the exhibition form. The Exhibition will be staffed by artists/volunteers under the direction of the Exhibition Curator & Project Coordinator. The venue also invites applications for demos/workshops during the exhibition. Please indicate if you are able or would like to provide any of these on the form.</p> <p><i>Notification of Visitor's Choice Award will be announced on Thursday 1st November.</i></p>

<p>The Open Studios event will be run over 4 weeks with all studios opening between 21st September and 15th October.</p> <p>As a minimum artist must open for at least 1 of the 4 weekends.</p>	<p>Open studios weekends & additional dates: Open Studio Days between Saturday 23rd Sept to Sunday 15th October. Please clearly indicate weekends or days you will be open on the form.</p> <p>Open Extra days: Additional dates for artists to open their studios for Christmas is permitted. Xmas Opening 25th & 26th November</p> <p>Open by Appointment: Artists can also indicate open by appointment at other times of the year.</p> <p>Please clearly indicate these clearly on the application entry form</p>
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Artists participating in the open studios **MUST** submit at least one piece of work for the exhibition to ensure representation with the group as a whole. Work submitted for the exhibition will have to remain at the venue during the whole exhibition i.e. cannot be removed until the exhibition ends.

If you are away during the exhibition handing in/collection dates arrangements should/could be made with other artists in your area or with the Project Coordinator or Exhibition Curator to deliver/collect your work to/from the exhibition. Such arrangements can and should be indicated clearly on the application form or ideally be pre-arranged before applying.

Additional Promotions for 2017 - Marketing Materials & Events

For this year we will continue with additional promotional events and looking at building resources for better marketing & advertising in the future along with fun events in the various local areas to promote the event and improve accessibility to the studios.

Hence for this year we would encourage some of the following:

- a) Organise a car share scheme.
- b) Artists sharing/using spaces or holding open studio days in local community galleries, pop up or other gallery / art spaces or festivals
- c) We have two large banners to display in public areas. We welcome recommendations for locations for these to be displayed and request volunteers to put them up & take them down during the event.

Please indicate if you would like to consider any of these options or need to share a studio space on your application form.

If you decide to assist with any of these we will contact you after we have collated all the applications to discuss details and make the necessary arrangements.

Please ensure you read all the relevant application documentation before submitting your application.

In addition to this document please also see:

- a) **Application Guidance 2016** which includes useful information on **How to Enter**
- b) **Artists Checklist** & helpful guidance notes for completing the **Application & Exhibition Forms**

To enter please complete the following as appropriate and submit along with requested information and relevant fee (please see **Application Guidance** for more information):

- 1. Open Studios Application Form**
- 2. Exhibition Entry Form**
- 3. Artist Statement Form - one for each artist is required**

Please note: If you have participated in Cheshire Open Studios since 2012 and already have a profile on our website, please review & revise it, then send us any amendments to your artist statement or indicate this on your Application Form i.e. in this case it is not necessary to send us a fully completed Artist Statement Form. However please ensure the information we have is up to date and accurate. We will however require 3 new images of recent work.

Quotes from past participants

- 'The interest in the process of etching and how it came about was great and the sales were good!'
- 'It [COS] has given me new confidence in my work, and it was lovely to receive compliments!'
- 'despite not making direct sales it is still worth participating as it reminds people of my existence. Raising awareness leads to future commissions'
- 'brochure well designed, people keep them, was approached last week by a gallery person using last years brochure, I've been approached by galleries and individuals who have found me via the website'
- 'I do think viewing work in a domestic environment reinforces the notion that art isn't just for museums or galleries but part of every day life. We had loads of people attending.....many of whom commented that they didn't go to contemporary art venues, because 'they're not for us'.
- 'Open Studios was a super experience and I met some fab people, students, children and feel they got a lot out of their visit. I know I did.'
- 'It was interesting to meet people and to hear their views and watch their reactions, very valuable feedback indeed.'
- '...my first year was very successful, mainly because I shared a venue..'
- 'I thought it was great this year. It reminded me of why I do what I do!'
- 'great catching up with people.'
- 'This was my first event and whilst I was wound up like a coiled spring beforehand I really enjoyed it.'
- 'it was a really satisfying event'