



HERTS OPEN STUDIOS

MARKETING

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Welcome to Open Studios

We want to support you in making your Open Studios as successful as possible. Whether you are opening your home studio, sharing a space as a member of a group, or taking on a venue yourself, there is a lot to do in order to get visitors through the door.

This pack will give you advice and suggestions of how, when, and where to market your event and what you can do to make the experience a positive one. We have received input from previous participants in compiling this guide and we hope it gives you confidence with marketing your Open Studios.



What is success?

Everyone has different ways of measuring success. Open Studios was set up over 35 years ago for artists to open up their working studios and allow audiences in to see where the magic happens; it was not necessarily considered a commercial venture. It is worth bearing this in mind to help you frame your own success, and to manage your expectations from Open Studios.

- ♥ **Value connection over sales.** Relationship building is so important with art sales. Remember that Open Studios is very much a chance for people to meet the artist - be present to engage with potential customers. Your story, your influences and your enthusiasm are all contributory factors in selling your art.
- ♥ **Think of Open Studios as a seasonal ritual.** Use it as an opportunity to get your studio in order, as a deadline for new work, as a point at which you can think about the past year and the year ahead - this can be really useful for planning your work for the year.
- ♥ **Be realistic about your budget.** Think about what you are willing to spend on your event. Consider costs such as venue hire, marketing, refreshments, framing. These can all add up. Perhaps you might try to think of the outlay as a long term investment in your practice. Marketing materials and signage can be used again in the future if they are generic.
- ♥ **Remember that HVA can only do so much.** The Herts Visual Arts team are here to support and promote you and your Open Studio; however, we know from 35 years of experience that the most successful openings are those where the artist(s) have worked hard with their own promotion. This guide will provide you with lots of advice on how best to market and manage your event.

Set goals beyond sales figures

Sadly, we cannot guarantee sales. There are so many factors at play when it comes to people buying your work. Low sales are not reflective of your success as an artist. You might want to focus on some of these other benefits instead.

Increase your social media following

Visitors will follow you if they enjoy your work, they may even share images on their socials - free marketing!

Grow your mailing list

Always have a mechanism for people to leave their email address to be informed of future exhibitions and news.

Learn what does and doesn't work

Conversations with visitors might help you understand which pieces are more successful than others, and why.

Making someone smile

Brightening someone's day with your art is always priceless .

Building your audience

Sometimes purchasing an artwork takes time; a visitor might not buy on the day but their memory of your studio will last. Work might sell later down the line following their visit.

SETTING UP YOUR SPACE

- ♥ Tidy up a bit but remember that people love to see processes and the things that inspire you. Keep your sketchbooks out, maybe curate a bookcase of your favourite art books and other inspirations.
- ♥ Have a work in progress on the go, something for visitors to see but also something to keep you occupied during the quieter times.
- ♥ Have a clearly visible sign with your payment options - whether that be your bank details for a bank transfer or the fact that you are able to take payment by card, it makes it easier for people to consider buying if they know how to pay.
- ♥ Consider writing an artist biography and displaying it in your studios. This is a great conversation starter, it gives people a way into your background and work and allows you to offer information that might not necessarily come up in conversation.
- ♥ Create a visitors book for people to leave their comments and email address if they wish to be added to your mailing list.
- ♥ Use the Risk Assessment to run through any potential issues that you might not have considered



"Open Studios allowed me to make a more personal connection with my visitors which has not only led to repeat sales but broader opportunities to showcase my work and further engagement on social media, and all from the comfort of my own home."

HOW TO USE OUR BRANDING

The yellow Herts Open Studios branding is bright and bold and difficult to miss. Whilst we thoroughly encourage you to create your own style, we would ask that you use our brand guidelines when creating your own marketing materials. Please use the Herts Open Studios logo and include yellow elements to maintain the distinctive brand.

- ♥ **Herts Open Studios Yellow**
C4, M0, Y93, K0
R255, G235, B0
Hex # FFEB00
- ♥ **Herts Open Studios font**
We use Bebas Neue for the Herts Open Studios logo.
This can be downloaded for free from Google Fonts.
- ♥ **Herts Open Studios logo**
This can be downloaded from the HVA website:
<https://www.hvaf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/HERTS-OPEN-STUDIOS.png>
- ♥ **Social Media Assets**
Each year we produce social media assets for you to use which complement the brochure design. These can be downloaded here:
<https://www.hvaf.org.uk/herts-open-studios-artists/resources/>



PREVIOUSLY
PRODUCED
ARTIST FLYERS

MARKETING YOUR EVENT

Letting people know where your Open Studios is taking place is one of the greatest challenges. Herts Visual Arts provide lots of bright yellow marketing materials to help make sure that you get noticed. Adorn your door, fill your windows, and decorate the nearby hedges and fences - make sure that everybody who walks past knows what is happening. It is also really helpful for people who are coming to visit you, they might have your address but a bright string of bunting will really help them find you.



Bunting

Our distinctive bunting is one of the sure fire ways to bring visitors to your door. First time participants will receive one length (3m) as part of their Open Studios entry. Additional lengths can be purchased through the website.

<https://www.hvaf.org.uk/product/open-studios-bunting/>



Posters

These all weather posters can be affixed to most surfaces and provide really bright and clear signage to your venue. Available to purchase on the website - or you could create your own!

<https://www.hvaf.org.uk/product/os-poster/>



Local Trail Maps

If there are a few of you taking part in Open Studios locally, why not get together and create a local art trail map? In the past artists have found this a very effective way of helping visitors navigate their way around local studios.

Arrows

Lead your visitors to your venue with a trail of bright yellow arrows. To save money on printing costs, buy some yellow paper and print the arrows on top. Laminate if possible for future use. Fix these with cable ties to lampposts and fences leading from main roads to your doorway. You can download pre-prepared arrows from the website.

<https://www.hvaf.org.uk/herts-open-studios-artists/>



Banners

These large banners are available to purchase through the website. They bring great visibility to the local area, bold and bright and easily attached to railings. Speak to your local council to find where they allow you to hang them.

<https://www.hvaf.org.uk/product/os-banner/>

Leaflets

If you are taking part as a group, consider creating leaflets for your venue. Some local areas collaborate to produce a leaflet to distribute to local homes and businesses.

Invitations

A personal invitation goes a long way. If you are planning on holding an opening event or any other special occasion, it might be worth considering hand making some invitations. Someone who has been made to feel special is far more likely to attend your event.

BROCHURES

Our beautiful professionally designed brochures are integral to the marketing, value and experience of Open Studios. Having been produced for many years they are a recognisable and valued asset which visitors seek out each year and treasure. The brochure lists all venues and artists, with easy to use indexes and maps to help with the planning of visits. Not only do they promote the event but they also act as a lasting reference point and index of local artists.

Distribution

Herts Visual Arts uses a distribution company to send brochures out across the supermarket network in Hertfordshire. Participants are provided with up to 30 copies each which can be distributed as they see fit. We recommend that you combine forces with other artists in your area to plan which venues would be the most beneficial, and agree as a group who will provide brochures to each location. Think of the venues where your prospective buyers might shop, eat or visit.

Brochures will be distributed to artists via their Area Coordinator at the end of August.



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Instagram and Facebook

Regular posting on social media in the lead up to Open Studios is a great way to spread the word. Consider using the following types of posts to maximise viewer numbers:

- ♥ **Countdown posts in the weeks before Open Studios.**
Choose a selection of artwork, images of your process, and installation shots to create a carousel of what people can expect to see at your Open Studio. Having multiple images in a carousel means that more people will see your post. Use the Open Studios social media assets on the website to help you.
- ♥ **Installation Reels.** Create short videos showing you preparing your space, finishing work, hanging your bunting - all of these help tantalise prospective visitors with a glimpse of what they can expect to see.
- ♥ **How to Find Me Reel.** Film the approach to your studio from the main road, this could be sped up if necessary, it helps give visitors a visual sense of how they will find you.
- ♥ **Introductory Hello.** Film a welcome message in your space; not only does having your face in shot work well with the algorithms, but a lovely warm message will encourage people to come and say hello.

And remember, always tag **@HertsVisualArts**. We will repost your Open Studios posts to our story and spread the word.

Local Facebook Groups

Herts Visual Arts is a member of many Facebook groups through which we promote our activities. However, there are probably hundreds of groups across Hertfordshire that you could tap into as an artist. Many groups require you to be a local resident or business owner, so you are in a better position than HVA to join these groups and post your events. Do your research well in advance and join your local groups beforehand so that when the time comes you are ready to post about your Open Studio.

Facebook Events

Adding an event to Facebook is really easy and effective. Go to your Facebook profile page and under the More menu you will see Events. Click on this to Add a new event. You can send invites to all your friends, or just a select few. It's a great way of getting people to engage with your Open Studio by adding the date to their calendar. Once you have created your event, make sure to invite your friends and share with any groups you belong to.

WhatsApp

Love it or loathe it most of us are on at least a handful of WhatsApp groups. Maybe it's your street group, your child's school group or your local dog walkers group. Post your event; let them know that Open Studios is happening and that you are taking part - many have probably never heard of Open Studios so this is a great way of spreading the word locally.

#hertsopenstudios

ONLINE EVENT LISTINGS

There are many event listings websites across Hertfordshire on which you can create free adverts for your events. This is not a definitive list, there may be others you know of, but this directory will give you an idea of local advertising opportunities.

Countywide

Creative Hertfordshire www.creativehertfordshire.com/

Herts Advertiser www.hertsad.co.uk/local-events/

Central

Borehamwood & Elstree Times www.borehamwoodtimes.co.uk/local-events/

Wonderful WGC www.wonderfulwgc.co.uk/

Welwyn & Hatfield Times www.whtimes.co.uk/local-events/

Dacorum

Enjoy Dacorum www.enjoydacorum.co.uk/events/

Dacorum Events webapps.dacorum.gov.uk/dbcef2016/community_events/AddEvent.aspx

What's on in Hemel www.whatsoninhemelhempstead.com/submit-your-event/

Tring Together www.tringtogether.org.uk/whats-on

East Herts

Discover Stortford discoverstortford.co.uk/events/

Go Hertford gohertford.co.uk/events/

The Best of Hertford and Ware www.thebestof.co.uk/local/hertford-and-ware/members/events/add/

Harpenden

We Are Harpenden harpenden.thewearecommunity.co.uk/events

Harpendia www.harpendia.com

North Herts

Love Letchworth loveleetchworth.com/submit-your-event/

Visit Hitchin visithitchin.com/whats-on/

Royston Listings thelistingmagazine.co.uk/whatson/

Hitchin Nub <https://hitchin.nub.news>

South East Herts

Love Hoddesdon www.lovehoddesdon.co.uk/events.php

All Events Hoddesdon allevents.in/hoddesdon/all#

South West Herts

Watford Actually www.watfordactually.com/upcoming-events

Watford Town Centre watfordtowncentre.com/events/

St Albans

Enjoy St Albans www.enjoystalbans.com/register/

We Are St Albans stalbans.thewearecommunity.co.uk/events

PRINTED PUBLICATIONS

There are still some remaining print publications across the county.
Here is a listing of those that we know about.

Countywide

Life Magazines www.thelifemagazines.com/magazines/hertfordshire/

Hashtag Hertfordshire www.hastagdigitalmedia.co.uk

Parish Magazines The majority of parishes pulish comunity newsletters

Central

Welwyn Hatfield ONE published Spring and Winter one.welhat.gov.uk/borough/one-magazine-1

Borehamwood Times www.borehamwoodtimes.co.uk/send-us-your-news/

Welwyn Hatfield Times www.whtimes.co.uk/

Dacorum

The Guide Berkhamsted issuu.com/theguideberkhamsted

East Herts

Bishops Stortford Independent www.bishopsstortfordindependent.co.uk/contact-us/

Harpenden

Harpenden Now thenowmagazines.com/rates-book-now/

North Herts

Outlook Magazine published quarterly www.north-herts.gov.uk/outlook-magazine

South East Herts

South West Herts

Watford Observer www.watfordobserver.co.uk/

St Albans

Herts Advertiser www.hertsad.co.uk/send-us-your-news/

St Albans Now thenowmagazines.com/rates-book-now/

JANUARY

- ❑ Start thinking about venues - could you use your home studio or will you be looking at an alternative option? Use our Venue Finder on the website to find available venues or to post a Venue Wanted message.
- ❑ Put your upcoming area meetings in the diary - these are a great place to find out more about local venues and group opportunities and also to get advice from other members about Open Studios.

FEBRUARY

- ❑ You will need two descriptions of you and your practice, one for the brochure (150 characters) and a longer text for the Open Studios website (1500 characters). Consider how this will attract visitors.
- ❑ Identify a strong, high resolution image that will be used to promote you in the brochure and on social media. Make sure that the work is eye-catching, is clear and is the best reflection of what you do.
- ❑ Put your upcoming area meetings in the diary - these are a great place to find out more about local venues and group opportunities and also to get advice from other members about Open Studios.

MARCH

- ❑ Registration Opens - you need to have your venue ready to complete your registration.

APRIL

- ❑ Registration Closes

JULY

- ❑ Ensure you've got the necessary signage and bunting, if not order through HVA website <https://www.hvaf.org.uk/herts-open-studios-artists/resources/>
- ❑ Check that your insurance is up to date. All Open Studios participants must have Public Liability insurance in place.
- ❑ Carry out your Risk Assessment.
- ❑ Collect your brochure allocation from your local Area Coordinator. Distribute locally, ideally as part of an organised effort with other local participants.

6 WEEKS TO GO

- ❑ Create your Facebook event and share with your friends and local FB groups

5 WEEKS TO GO

- ❑ Make sure that you have plenty of business cards, greetings cards or postcards for people to buy / take away. If not send them off to the printer now.
- ❑ Ensure that you have adequate packaging materials suitable for your work for any sales.

4 WEEKS TO GO

- ❑ Create your event listings on local websites
- ❑ Send out personal invitations for any preview events or celebrations you might be holding during Open Studios
- ❑ Start your Social Media countdown posts

3 WEEKS TO GO

- ❑ Write your Artist Statement / Biography and place it in a frame, or something similar so that it is easily readable for visitors.

2 WEEKS TO GO

- ❑ Label and price all work that is for sale. Either through individual labels or a clear price list with titles and prices.
- ❑ Prepare a visitors book if you would like to record email addresses and comments
- ❑ If you are holding a private view event, check your glassware (hire if necessary and purchase drinks

1 WEEK TO GO

- ❑ Tidy up your entrance, ensure a clear walkway for visitors with no trip hazards. If any hazards are unavoidable, consider ways to minimise risk.
- ❑ Print out arrows from the website onto yellow paper and laminate them to lead visitors to your doorstep.
- ❑ Charge your card payment devices and (if possible) test that your payment system works in your venue.

1 DAY TO GO

- ❑ Hang up your bunting, put out your posters and get ready to welcome your visitors!

GOOD LUCK!

We hope that this guide has provided with your the confidence to set up and market your Open Studios event.

Remember, success is measured in many ways, but most of all Open Studios should be an enjoyable and positive experience.

If you have any questions about the Open Studios process, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the team on **openstudios@hvaf.org.uk**.

For marketing queries please contact **marketing@hvaf.org.uk**.