

## **How To Get Plenty Of Visitors To Your SOS Event**

'Publicising your open studio and your art is hugely important! It doesn't matter how wonderful your artwork is, if people don't hear about it, they're unlikely to visit!' (Deborah Battaglia)

**Factors that can affect how many visitors you get to your event. How can you make the most of them and overcome any potential obstacles?**

- Geography/ Multi venue artists/ other artists nearby
- How many people recognise you. Where you are in your art journey.
- Marketing efforts. This is something we can all choose to work at with whatever time we can afford.
- The type of art/ artist – know yourself and your art. Our individual SOS events will be very different and will appeal to different people. Celebrate that, be authentic and use your point of difference to stand out and attract the right people to your event.

If you don't yet have a clear idea of your audience and how to connect with them, work on this.

- ❖ *What makes you and your art different?*
- ❖ *Why are you passionate about creating your art?*
- ❖ *Who will be interested in your work? Where and how can you talk to these people about your upcoming event?*
- ❖ *What do you want your open studios event to be like for the visitor? Why do they need to come to you? What will visiting you do for them? What objections/ reservations might they have? How do you want them to go away feeling?*
- ❖ *It's about people making a connection with you as an artist and the stories and journeys and passion behind creating your art.*

Assuming you've figured out what you're about and how to be authentic- You must now work out how to stand out and tell the right people about you and your event. Try to figure out where and how will work best for your audience and prioritise? Are they on facebook or Instagram? At craft fayres, art events, in art groups? Living close by? At your place of work? Visiting your website? etc

**Here's some ideas that have worked for other artists. (Pick what fits best for you but be prepared to push yourself out of your comfort zone a little if you want to make yourself known to a larger audience) .....**

### **Social media- FB/ Instagram.**

- Those artists who reported they did not get many visitors last year, did not generally have much social media presence.
- Regular quality is better than quantity - good engagement is crucial to being seen and making lasting connections. Avoid just making announcements - start conversations. Use meta to plan.
- Engage with relevant posts from the main Swindon Open Studios page. Share them onto your business & personal pages. Reply to all comments, ask questions- The more you engage, the more FB will show your post to others, so don't miss a trick!
- Tag SOS so that admins are notified and we can help your engagement with a like, comment, share.
- FB ad. Can be effective if you are super clear who your audience is, how to talk to them and what posts work best for you. Otherwise avoid wasting your money!

### **The Personal Touch**

- Use messenger, email etc to personally invite friends, family, previous customers/ visitors.
- Personal recommendations go a long way- ask friends & family to distribute brochures, invitations, share and tag on social media and recommend your event.
- Make your own invitations take to events. Include QR codes.
- Brochure distribution. Get yourself noticed attach a personal note/ invitation to local people.

### **Network and promote each other.**

- Set up a geographical or shared venue whatsapp group.
- Find another 'good fit' artist to champion each other's events and posts.

### **Write a spotlight blog post**

- Give people a bit more insight into the unique you and your passion. What will bring your people to your event? Give it an SOS spin and send it to us for our blog page.
- Repurpose the content to use across all channels: SOS website, your website, social media, email, press release.

### **Signage outside your house.**

- We had reports last year of visitors finding venues hard to find and giving up.
- SOS sign. Artwork in your windows. Bunting. Boards. Banners.

### **Press**

- Does your area have a local publication where you could submit a personal piece on you and your event.

### **Local Radio-**

- The committee have contacts if you want to do an interview.

### **Email list**

- Good success rate likely, as these are the people who have already shown they are genuinely interested in your work.
- If you don't have one, then use your event to start ready for next year. We can help with the legals.
- The committee use mailerlite.

### **FB groups**

- What groups are there locally within your niche?
- Join all your local groups. Be aware of rules, you can still infiltrate and advertised subtly! Eg, Introduce yourself and SOS as a free community event. Ask for ideas of where you can distribute brochures. Offer to deliver locally. Start conversations about art/ creativity.
- Ask admin if they'll include your SOS event.

### **Make Long Term Plans**

- Get the most out of SOS - How are you going to capture all these visitors to stay in touch? They obviously like your work enough to have visited you, they are your future customers/ fans.
- Business cards, leaflets.
- Be clear about your objective. Have conversations at your event with a clear long term call to action in mind- don't leave it to chance. eg, do keep in touch on my fb page, join my mailing list, come to this event, visit my website.

### **Use SOS Forum FB page**

Ask questions, ask for suggestions. Somebody will try to help.