

CHELTENHAM OPEN STUDIOS

PRESS RELEASE

May 20, 2010

A SUMMER OF VISUAL ART

Woodcarving, mosaic, paper and stitched textiles, enamelled work, jewellery, printmaking, and photography; add in some sculpture, ceramics, collagraphs and, of course, painting and you get a sense of the diversity of talent on show, in several locations around town, this summer. Every piece of the work on show has been created in homes and studios set in and around Cheltenham.

The exhibitions — at the **Summerfield Gallery** (July 3 – July 7), the **Everyman Theatre** (June 28 – August 9) and the **Star Gallery** in Cheltenham General Hospital (July – October) — are being curated by Cheltenham Open Studios (COS). Many art lovers in Cheltenham will be aware of the artist-run association's biennial festival event, where the public are offered the unique opportunity to view art in the space where it's made. Some may not know that, since February, COS has also become a members' community network in order to better raise the profile of visual arts in the area. The association's new website — www.cheltenhamopenstudios.org.uk — is set to become the definitive directory for artists working in the area and the place to head if you want to know what's on.

Encouraging people to 'pop down and take a look', Sean O' Sullivan, COS Chair, said:

"Cheltenham has a long history as a home to a creative artistic community. While that community still exists today, it finds itself constantly challenged by the conflict between the need to create and the need to survive financially. That's why COS was set up, to become an advocate for artists in this area."

“We are looking at ways of raising public awareness of the variety and quality of the creativity that is happening locally, and hope that in doing so we can achieve support and involvement from our local community. The gallery window exhibit is just one of a number of exhibitions we are curating around the town, throughout the summer.”

Throughout June, the **Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum** window will also become a showcase for COS members' work. And for those of you with an eye for a bargain, all of the specially commissioned 5 x 5s, featured in the gallery window, will be available to buy for £5 at the end of the Summerfield Gallery exhibition.

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ABOUT CHELTENHAM OPEN STUDIOS

With a membership approaching 70 artists, Cheltenham Open Studios is an artist-run, not-for-profit association. By networking artists together, it aims to raise the profile of visual arts in Cheltenham and its surrounds, make people aware of the diversity of talent in the area and inspire and encourage local artists. Since 2000, the association has organised a major biennial event where up to 200 artists open their homes and studios to the public, engaging people directly with the art being created on their doorsteps. The next such event is pencilled in for Saturday 4 to Sunday 12 June 2011.

For more information, contact **Niki Whitfield** on 01242 702809 or visit the Cheltenham Open Studios website: www.cheltenhamopenstudios.org.uk