

July Newsletter

Issue 1 - Wednesday 7 July 2021

Cheltenham's newest gallery is now open!

But is opening an Art Gallery during the worse pandemic in living memory a sensible thing to do?



After nearly two years and eight months of renovation work, Cheltenham now has a new space that amateur and professional artists can use to exhibit their work. But is opening a gallery really the right thing to do when across the world 'Art' is probably not the most important thing on everyone's mind?

The art world along with everything else in our lives changed during the first Covid lockdown with the closure of galleries, art fairs and the physical interaction with the audience suspended. For art lovers, seeing it there in front of them, understanding scale, interpreting colour, form, texture and seeing the work as the artist intended, was no longer possible.

To survive, some artists, galleries, art auctions, sale rooms and art fairs looked to digital platforms to help reconnect with their audiences, but for most artists, it became a unique opportunity to review, to re-establish and reassess themselves and their practice. They moved back to 'the kitchen table' or if they were lucky, an alternative space away from the city and from the outside world. For the most part, artists were a little constrained, but they are used to applying their craft in isolation.

Art itself adapts and changes to suit the world in which it exists. Throughout history artists have been there to monitor, record and help society make sense of events such as world wars, political change, and now global pandemics.

The signs are positive that art is not just surviving but thriving!

During the past two years of enforced isolation more people than ever have begun to explore the value of producing art from a physical and mental perspective and thanks to social media have had a platform of sorts.

However, without the personal engagement with the audience Art it is just a 'hobby' and no more than gratification for the producer. The artist needs feedback, reaction, they need a response, a physical connection, experiences difficult to reproduce through a screen or VR headset.

Artists need to be able to share their work and the demand for exhibition space to allow them to engage with their audience never greater.

So, is opening an art gallery during the worse pandemic in living memory a sensible thing to do?

Yes, it is exactly the right time to open a gallery.

- Andy Owen-Smith, Artist, Owner of Sixteen Gallery.

What Happened In June?



Despite the delays in lifting the Covid restrictions, Sixteen Gallery welcomed its very first exhibitor on the 18th June with a successful show by local artist John Gordon Duff.

Working mostly in pastels, John created a world of fantasy mixed with reality that transported the onlooker either far away to islands and sun-soaked landscapes or deep into his fantasy world of forests and woodland.

Following several sales and three commissions John has confirmed he is definitely going to book the gallery for another show next summer.

We interviewed John on our blog which you can read below.

[Read the blog post](#)

What's Happening This Month?

Planted Exhibition - from 30th June to 11th July

The gallery has now been transformed into a stylish and upmarket boutique to assist Local Company Cheltenham Upholstery in a rebrand and the launch of their stunning new range of sustainable furniture.

The sleek designs and fully sustainable materials make their sofas and arm chairs a unique product one that would enhance any living room.

We sat down with Daisy from Planted to discuss their latest collection which you can read below.

[Read the blog post](#)



Owner's Exhibition - Life on the Underground from 12th July to 26th July



Part of the reason for establishing the gallery was to provide the owner Andy Owen-Smith with the opportunity to exhibit his own work.

The theme of his latest show was born out of many years commuting on the London underground and he has attempted to recapture some of the pre-covid congestion that we took for granted and was part of our everyday lives. Set on different underground lines each picture captures a moment in time and centres around individual characters, each telling their own story.

Starting initially as a painter Andy trained in fine art during the late 70's but moved to sculpture a year into his three-year degree course.



After several years attempting to earn a living as an artist Andy made the decision to move into commerce and build a new career to support his family.

However, art remained a key part of his life but over the last ten years the need to express himself artistically began to become more important. Early retirement three years ago gave him the opportunity to return to doing what he loved most and rekindle his earlier passion for self-expression.

"The spark has always been present, but I just didn't have the time to nurture it. Now I have the time, the resources, and the maturity. Maybe too much maturity!"

"Setting up the gallery is an important step on my return journey, and I hope others will

"I had been painting from a young age but then I was suddenly presented with a whole new set of materials and the scope of what I could do suddenly became broader, more exciting, but I still kept painting. It has always been there as another way for me to express myself."

be able to use the space wherever they are on theirs"

Arthur Owen-Smith

from 27th July to 1st August

A one week pop-up designed around graphic design made with an illustrative eye. A brief snapshot of my current portfolio of graphic design work, typography, illustrations, interactive artworks, prints, posters and hand painted pieces. Blink is a showcase of, predominately, digital illustrations and graphic artwork depicting subjects and ideas that have sparked my imagination or piqued my interest.

The focus with this show has been on using bold colours, shapes and themes to create large scale prints with a big impact, that will become statement pieces displayed in homes, studios and workspaces. Hopefully bringing bright colours or a humorous twist to locations that will have, no doubt, become far too familiar and monotonous over the last year and a half of lockdowns and pandemics.



Community Art News



Here's some local art news that managed to catch the attention of the national press:

Two street artists have transformed an underpass in Benhall Park with colourful murals to celebrate the launch of an arts trail.

[Read the article](#)

Would You Like To Exhibit At Sixteen Gallery?

If you are interested in exhibiting at the gallery, please visit our website to see the renting options and more information.

[Sixteen Gallery website](#)

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