



Jamaica Street Artists is about to allow access to all areas for its Open Studios weekend. We spoke to some of the artists about their work, what they'll be preparing, and what they most enjoy about this special annual event.



ANOUK MERCIER
Anouk is a fine artist who has been at the studios for almost three years

"I draw, mainly, but I also do some mixed-media pieces. I use a printing technique using acetone, I airbrush inks and then draw some detail into the landscape. I also do some graphite drawings and etchings.

"Open Studios isn't just an exhibition, it's also about people getting to see into your workplace, which for me is not a pristine, organised area.

"I feel that when I go to other artists' studios it's an opportunity to gain an insight into the process of making, not just seeing the finished pieces, so I always try to have a few pieces in the studio that are unfinished. The best bit is that it's an informal event in which you get to talk to people about your work outside of the context of a gallery, which can be very formal."



Anouk Mercier



ANDREW HOOD
Andrew has been a part of the studios for 15 years; he paints landscapes

"My work is in between abstract and figurative. I tend to travel a lot, and I work on location. I take a sketchbook with me and make drawings and then paint from them.

"I paint Bristol quite a bit, so I will put up some of those paintings for Open Studios. One of the things I like about the weekend is that it focuses everyone, the building gets tidied up and people have to decide what they're going to exhibit. The other good thing is the atmosphere; it's a good buzz for us."

Meet the ARTISTS

Jamaica Street Artists is one of the largest creative-led studios outside of London, and for one weekend in June, we get the chance to view the artists in their natural habitats, says SUMMER BROOKS. Photos Suzie Davidson-Kelly



JESSA FAIRBROTHER
This is photographer Jessa's second Open Studios

"My work is about loss and nostalgia. The works are either long exposures with lots of movement, or they are embellished prints; they might be painted or have dried flowers on top, or they've been destroyed or burnt in some way.

"It's really interesting to see people

come in and respond to your work in that environment. It's not like a gallery, so people get a lot closer and you can see their reactions. I was intrigued last year - I saw some people having really long conversations in front of my work, and you don't get that in a more formal, gallery environment.

"We put up boards so it looks nice but there is some chaos going on behind those boards! It's nice to have that clear out."

Elaine Jones



ELAINE JONES
Elaine's work is influenced by her expeditions. She has been at the studios for 15 years

"My work is influenced by places I've been to; I went to the Arctic a few years ago, and that's an influence that comes back quite a lot. I create serene landscapes that are quite lonely. I do a lot of observational drawings and studies, and then in the studio the paintings develop on their own. I pour the paint on - so some of it is accidental, and some is quite controlled.

"Open Studios is the only time we open the building to the public and every year it gets busier. We get the same people coming in who collect the pieces, and it's really nice having these people who support us and who are interested. It's a good opportunity to have a clear-out and show people what you're doing."



Clockwise from top left: Andrew Hood's studio; Anthony Garratt's garret (bet he's never heard that one before); don't expect pristine gallery conditions; Abigail McDougall; Jessa Fairbrother

The arts



ANTHONY GARRATT

Anthony is an expressionist landscape painter who focuses on British landscapes. He has been at the studios for five years

“My work is focused on the British weather at the moment. I will show a few pieces from gallery shows and some pieces from my storm series.

“I leave the floor just how it is for Open Studios – it’s a real mess, and I think it’s nice for people to see what that’s like. It gives it more of an authentic studio feel; I just paint the walls and make it a bit tidier.

“The best part about Open Studios is enabling people to see in; I think artists’ studios have a reputation for being a bit elusive and mysterious, so it’s quite exciting for people to have a look around.”



Philip Munoz



ABI MCDUGALL

Abi is a landscape painter who has been at JSA for five years

“I concentrate on light and colour in my work. I started doing some work on Bristol, and then I moved on and started painting places in the countryside and further afield – I’m doing a lot of London-based work at the moment.

“Open Studio is such a great group endeavour; everyone pulls together and you get to reconnect with everyone and see what they’ve been doing.”



Andrew Hood



Serena Curmi



SERENA CURMI

Serena is an illustrator-turned-painter who has been with the studios since 2008

“I paint in oils. My work is mostly female-based and it’s quite ethereal and dreamlike, with a bit of narrative. I often include an animal, and there will be some interaction between the human and the animal.

“My work is going towards the theme of madness in women. I’m starting to research case studies of women in history; it intrigues me.

“Open Studios can be stressful, because everyone’s trying to get everything finished on time, but then the weekend arrives and everyone gets to relax and have a drink. It’s just a really nice, fun weekend.”



PHIL MUNOZ

Phil’s paintings focus on glamour and social identity; he has been at the studios for eight years

“I think people like to see work in progress and see how it’s done. We’ll make it more of a gallery space and have everything quite minimal. It’s good exposure; you get lots of people seeing your work, whereas in a gallery maybe a dozen people will see something before it’s sold. It’s a lot of work. I paint people, so it’s good in the sense that sometimes I might find a new model!” **CL**

The Open Studios starts with a private view on 13 June and will be open all weekend with the auction taking place on the Sunday
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