

**OPEN  
STUDIOS**  
SUNSHINE COAST

**→ ARTIST  
CHECKLIST**

18-27 MARCH 2022

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# → INTRODUCTION

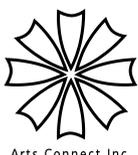
Open Studios Sunshine Coast brings the artist and the public together. It is an opportunity to expose a broad portion of the community to what it is that you do and make. You will have a chance to interact and educate the public as to why you do what you do. Their visits to your studio will also open the door to new markets, sharing of techniques and processes. It will be an invaluable opportunity to see your work firsthand and in return give confidence to you as an artist as they explore and admire your work.

The following checklist will help and guide you through the process of participating in the Open Studios Sunshine Coast. Some of you who have already participated in previous years will already know some of the processes but those who are joining us this year will hopefully find the checklist helpful. These guidelines can be tailored to your specific needs and situation.

# → BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION IN OPEN STUDIOS SUNSHINE COAST

- ✓ Generation of revenue
- ✓ Exposure to a new audience
- ✓ Keep established clients abreast of current work
- ✓ Educate a broad audience about your media, showing techniques to interested people
- ✓ Break down barriers by allowing the artist and the public direct immediate interaction and communication
- ✓ As an information gathering tool
- ✓ Networking: - Connecting with other artists and professionals, in and outside your field of art work
- ✓ Introduce your work to possible collectors, galleries or curators.

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# → PLANNING FOR OPEN STUDIOS

## **A Goals: What do you want from the Open Studios Sunshine Coast experience:**

- Sales
- Exposure for your work
- Meeting new people and gaining referrals
- Networking with other Artists
- Introducing your work to possible collectors, galleries or curators
- Keeping collectors abreast of recent work
- Feedback from the public

## **B Prepare early: A few months before your scheduled Open Studio:**

- Produce new work to enhance your older work
- Organise any promotional material – Biography's etc
- Secure any help (1 or 2 people) as you, the artist, can relax and interact without stressing about other things, designate helpful tasks
- Organise any display materials required, easels etc
- COVID-19 preparations – QR code clearly placed on entry, hand sanitiser, sign in sheet
- If you are represented by a gallery, make sure you let them know you are participating in Open Studios Sunshine Coast. Keep pricing consistent with your gallery

## **C Publicity: Provided by Open Studios Sunshine Coast team**

Open Studios extensively market and promote the event to encourage people to your studio. You can help with its success by promoting yourself with the following:

- Consider your own mailing list
- Setup Facebook and Instagram pages, a YouTube channel, blogs, or website to build interest in your art
- Create a Facebook event page and invite everyone you know
- Have a supply of Open Studio trail guides to hand out to promote other artists and the event

## **D Plan for Parking:**

- Be considerate of your neighbours and inform them in advance
- Arrange for (if you can) extra parking spaces
- Mark alternate parking areas well
- Invite neighbours as this may alleviate their anxiety about extra traffic – Remember they are potential customers too
- Help distribute Open Studios Marketing material/Postcards/Posters in and around your local area

## **E Directions to your studio – Signage**

Arts Connect will provide limited signage (Open Studios Flag & Spike for out the front of your studio and wayfinding signage for street corners).

If you wish to place signs on private property, get permission. Do not attach signs to existing signs in the community.

Ensure signage is clear and easy to follow, do a drive around.

# → PREPARING YOUR SPACE

## A Arranging your space

- You may need to remove furniture from your living or workspace to make a more gallery-like setting for displaying finished work. This will create a good traffic flow for the public. Walk through your space as a potential visitor from front gate and back again, does it work?
- You may need to add additional display areas, such as secure cases, easels or pedestals
- If you have pets, consider someone to look after them during the opening times
- Do a 'spring clean' so your studio space is neat and tidy
- Access to a clean bathroom for an emergency
- Provide a Guest Book with a section for 'Please leave a comment' and email contacts

## B Safety and Security

- Always have at least another person with you
- Ensure you have a safe entry and exit point and limit visitors to small manageable groups if possible
- Clearly mark areas that are off limits to visitors with ropes or obvious signs
- Clearly designate handicapped access
- Be aware of COVID-19 restrictions - distancing and capacity
- If your studio is in or near your home, make sure someone is always in your house for security reasons. Alternatively secure your valuables, lock rooms and exits to areas off limits
- One person should be responsible for money/retail sales, refer to Retail Sales on page XX
- Have a plan for medical emergency or security problems
- Safeguard valuable materials, tools and small artworks
- If you scheduled time is open all day, schedule in meal breaks and stay hydrated

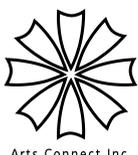
## C Safety of guests

- Unplug power tools
- Remove toxic materials, dangerous chemicals and sharp objects
- Put up signs or rope off unsafe areas
- Mark steps and uneven pavement

## D Photo documentation and social media

- Have someone photograph your opening days, these can be used to refresh your website and socials
- Make some Instagram reels content on each day and post if you have time
- Take photos of your set-up, display and work area for future reference

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# → PREPARING YOUR SPACE

## **Music**

While music is optional you should consider that music may distract some people who are already stimulated by the visual feast of your studio. At most, it should be used in the background to enhance the Open Studio experience, never to compete with it.

## **Refreshments**

While refreshments are optional and may add a nice touch to your studio experience keep in mind the following:  
No food, but you could offer a cold-water jug and disposable cups.

## **Insurance**

Check your contents/liability insurance make sure it will cover you for this event.

# → PRESENTATION OF YOUR WORK

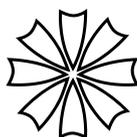
## **A The presentation of your work is important to give a professional approach to your body of work. Consider the following:**

- Provide appropriate displays of your work – pedestals, framing etc
- See the event as a marketing opportunity getting around to all your guests and interact with them responding to any questions. Give feedback about some of the work, your inspiration, themes, techniques and materials
- Wear some of your work, if appropriate or serve refreshments in your pieces
- The more work you have the more the visitors are engaged with the variety of works on offer.

## **B Design your display for the Open Studio:**

- Where possible display your most recent work. Older work can be displayed to complement your recent work
- Discounted items displayed separately

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# → PRESENTATION OF YOUR WORK

## **C Present your work in the best manner possible:**

- Display work thoughtfully and respectfully. Leave ample room between pieces so that a cluttered appearance is avoided
- Allow as much work to be seen as possible from various vantage points
- Prepare professional looking labels for the work on display (both recent and older).  
Label information may include: Title, Date, Materials, Price
- You may wish to include information cards, such as a brief, well written artists statement of information specific to a particular piece
- Avoid making it easy for work to be picked up or removed without help from the artists or helper
- Keep displays tidy and glass cases fingerprint free
- Display work in progress on a workbench or a step-by-step guide to various stages in the creation of a piece

## **D Demonstration of techniques, processes and materials.**

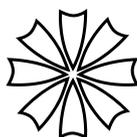
This is meant to engage and educate the public about your work and what it is you do. You want visitors to your Open Studio to gain an enhanced appreciation of your skill and the time you invest in your work. Options:

- Poster with step-by-step example of your process and technique
- 'Live' demonstration, presenting a short demonstration of a process
- Offer workshops during your Open Studio allocated time
- Run a digital projector with short videos of process. Arrange a space for this to happen if possible

## **E Artists profile:**

- Display materials from previous exhibitions, catalogues etc
- Display magazine articles
- Display books, sketchbooks and visual diaries that include your work. Have these in a designated area where visitors can sit and read or on a small table
- Set out a portfolio of your work. This may include biography, colour prints of finished work, works in progress or articles about your work
- Give away colour postcards, business cards or small samples
- Prepare a few resumes in case someone asks and a list of all your social handles
- Have a guest book ready for people to leave their names and email contact. Leave this in an obvious location and encourage people to sign it
- Put out announcements for upcoming exhibitions or workshops
- Display a list of galleries where you are featured so people will be able to access your work after the Open Studio
- Wear a nametag and make nametags for your helpers as well

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# → ARTIST RESPONSIBILITY

## **A Stay focused:**

- Keep track of who is where and monitor public

## **B During the Open Studio remember this event is showcasing your work and the general public will be interested in talking to the Artists, so be present each day of the event.**

- Be friendly to everyone
- Remember your goals.

## **C Prepare for the difficult questions that may make you feel uncomfortable. Prepare answers in advance for questions about:**

- Studio discounts
- "How long does it take you to make a piece?"
- Why does your work cost so much? The general public may not be aware of the time and effort it took to develop a certain piece

## **D Allow photography and welcome people to share and tag their experience.**

- Get some photos and video content with your guests and permission to share them later.
- Put away anything that you do not want photographed or touched. Expect people to touch things.

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# → RETAIL SALES

## **A Advance considerations before the Open Studio**

- Post prices with each piece or prepare a price list that is easily referenced
- Have small inexpensive works or products for sale (\$10-\$15 range). Some artists prepare smaller or lower priced items for Open Studios. This is a business decision dependent on your objectives for the Open Studio
- Decide on a return policy. Prepare a sign with your Return Policy
- This sign must be prominently posted before the point of purchase to be legally enforceable. Prominent posting may be at the entrance, at the sales area, or attached to each item
- Always sell work at retail prices
- Develop and include care and maintenance instructions, as appropriate

## **B Discounts. These can be offered if you are not represented by a gallery:**

- Decide whether you will offer discounts for cash. You will be asked!
- Older pieces represent your body of work. They are not leftovers to be discounted and sold at lower prices.
- While pricing of older work may be lower than current pieces, it should not be drastically so. There should never be a “bargain basement” feel to any part of the display
- It may, nevertheless, be a business decision to sell discontinued lines. Do this only if the line of work is no longer sold at galleries or stores that carry your work
- “Seconds” should be clearly marked

## **C Invoicing**

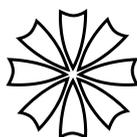
Prepare an Invoice form for the Open Studios in advance if you have not already done so. Customer information filled out on an invoice can be used for future marketing.

- Keep addresses of buyer for future mailing lists and to keep a record of your work sold
- Shipping charges, if appropriate. If the work is shipped out of state, you will not need to charge sales tax.??
- The Return Policy should be printed on all sales receipts, invoices and/or credit card receipts

## **D Cash transactions**

- Make sure that you have change available and this is secure for cash sales

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# → HANDLING SALES

## **A During the Open studio some of the following should be considered:**

- Have another person responsible for sales transactions. This frees you up to discuss your work with the public without distractions
- If sales are going well, especially cash, take precautions and any excess revenue to be put in a safe and secure place
- Document each day, keep a record of sales, transactions, emails, conversations etc

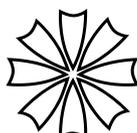
## **B Method of payment:**

- Cash. Have plenty of small change, a cash float around \$150 in small notes
- EFTPOS facilities. If possible, purchase a Square card reader (Officeworks) and have it set up and fully charged. The app goes on your phone. Practice using it before you need to
- Direct Bank Transfer – BSB, Account details and Account Name
- Make sure you get the contact details of buyer- email and phone number, so receipts can be issued
- Keep contact details to develop a mailing list
- Artists should retain any work purchased “on time” or instalment with a written contract until the work is paid in full

## **C Commissions and special orders:**

- If you wish to accept commissions or special orders, post this information somewhere in your display or on your cards and invoices
- Exchange email and contact details for negotiations on commissions

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# → FOLLOW UP POST OPEN STUDIOS

**Make notes to yourself about what was successful or unsuccessful for the next Open Studios Sunshine Coast, for example:**

- How was your work received?
- What was popular and, perhaps, why?
- How was your presentation received?
- What worked well and what didn't?
- Were all pieces visible and accessible?
- Was your work secure?
- Was there a comfortable traffic flow?
- Follow up thank you emails to customers
- Return Open Studios Sunshine Coast signage
- Develop your mailing list for next time using your guest book and invoices
- Follow up commissions or special orders promptly
- Feedback to be given to the Open Studios Sunshine Coast team

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