



ARTISTS OPEN STUDIOS 2010 SHEFFIELD & SOUTH YORKSHIRE



Courtesy of Fiona Oliver

EVALUATION REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

2010 has been a very successful year for Sheffield Artists' Open Studios, with 110 artists participating in 72 studios and non-traditional spaces across Sheffield and South Yorkshire, increasing from 102 artists participating in 2009.

This is the first year I have project-managed Artists Open Studios on behalf of Open Up Sheffield, and I worked tirelessly to stimulate discussion with strategic players regarding increasing the reach, depth and accessibility of the event, despite our lack of public funding, which of course, severely affected our capacity.

In order to consolidate the organisation's achievements, I first worked on informing our organisational review in late 2009, which resulted in a new Business Plan written by our dedicated Board, revised procedures and processes, and new quality control procedures developed in consultation with Arts Council England (who I worked for in the past). I also ensured that appropriate administration structures were ready to use in order to completely re-develop our website and upgrade our email facilities.

In developing the programme for this year, I aimed to broaden the range of visual arts genres and communities represented, providing year-round exposure for artists under the Open Up Sheffield umbrella, whilst increasing artist, participant and audience numbers. For example, this year we have included spray-can art (urban art) for the first time, and after consultation with our Board/Steering Group and the Open studios network, I hope to be able to include other genres, such as calligraphy, henna painters, tattooists and digital artists in due course – watch this space.

There was a broad programme of successful activities this year, including a launch event, 2 production meetings, exhibitions in shop windows, a brand new website, a new Facebook group, new, and a pilot of new, improved e-newsletters,. Most importantly, the event has continued to be about showcasing grassroots artists' working practices, and work produced in non-traditional spaces to the general public. The foundations have now been laid for participating artists to benefit in future from



access to more networking events, increased free publicity for private viewings and workshops, discounted artists' materials from additional suppliers, further advice on how to open your studio to best effect, the use of Facebook to promote your work, and training for volunteers.

To bring this event closer to the public's eye amidst busy lifestyles (and lack of funds!), we are completely dependent on you volunteering your time to help out wherever possible, including coordinating activities, helping to service our growing Facebook group, distributing brochures around the city, and telling everyone you know about this event; please continue to do so!

I would like to offer special thanks to Fiona Oliver, who volunteered to act as this year's official photographer, and provided a large portfolio of excellent images from studios she visited; some of these are available on our website. Special thanks are also given to Jean Luce and Casper Carr, who helped distribute our publicity material.

In addition, our Board members and Steering Group have spent a huge amount of their own time working to provide you with a very successful event in 2010, and support from sponsors such as the Academy of Makers and Freeman College helped to preserve Sheffield's cultural and creative heritage to good effect.

Most of all, however, those committed to supporting grassroots visual arts by supporting us this year have been amazing – thank you to you all.

Best wishes

Maxwell Singh

Volunteer Project Manager



BACKGROUND

Open Up Sheffield was established in 1998 as a volunteer-led, not-for-profit visual arts organisation, delivering an annual Artists Open Studios event across the city and South Yorkshire. Since then, we have attained a clear record of success in delivering quality annual events, which have expanded to include an additional 8 artists over and above last year's total, without compromising on quality. Open Up Sheffield continues to inspire and increase live and increasingly, online audiences across the region and beyond, and remains the largest city-based open studios event in the U.K. outside of London. In 2010, the event took place on the weekends of 12th/13th June, and 19th/20th June.

Vision

As a voluntary organisation, Open Up Sheffield aims to:

1. promote visual arts to the general public;
2. encourage public participation in visual arts practice or activities;
3. provide a year- round wide-ranging service to visual artists.

Our success in 2010 is a result of positive and constructive working relationships between the 8 Directors, 5 Steering Group members (who act in an advisory capacity), a new Project Manager in 2010, and productive relationships with artists, exciting new partners and enthusiastic volunteers.

Evaluation Framework

The purpose of this evaluation is to measure quantitatively and explore qualitatively the delivery of Artists Open Studios 2010 and the impact it has had on its artists, participants, audiences and partners, as well as the general visual arts environment in the city and beyond. The overall programme for this year was underpinned by draft indicators of success, which were based on indicators grouped under the headings below.



Consultation Methodology

Several methods were used to collect primary data as outlined below. 110 artists participated in total, opening their studios, demonstrating or exhibiting in 72 venues in Sheffield, Barnsley and Doncaster. One of the 110 artists was not able to open this year due to personal circumstances beyond their control.

ARTIST DATA

Each artist was asked to complete and return a short form with targeted data, including a record of their visitor numbers, income earned from the event and other measurables, as well as qualitative responses to inform future planning. The range of questions asked in previous years was revised to extract more streamlined and relevant information overall.

78 artist evaluation forms were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 77%, which is our best ever response rate. In 2009, the response rate was 61%.

Key finding: Rates of return for monitoring forms increase when we explain exactly why we need them

Recommendations: More work is still needed to encourage all artists to return their forms, so that findings can be increasingly accurate and recommendations more relevant.

Artists were asked how many visitors they had:

2010 6674 different individuals from 78% of artists. Scaled up to 100%, this would represent 8142.*

2009 6842 different individuals from 61% of artists. Scaled up to 100%, this would represent 9510.*

**scaled-up figures are commonly used to provide a very general projection where data is incomplete, and it is understood that they are limited in accuracy.*



Key finding:

- a. *Visitor numbers fell this year by approximately 11% for a number of reasons, including change of regular dates, many other festivals and events taking place at the same time, lack of Decaux advertising posters (causing loss of visibility), problems with distribution of marketing material, less advertising, etc, mostly due to a lack of funding.*
- b. ***Online visitors, however, increased very significantly, adding value for artists (see below)***

Recommendation: Promotion needs to take place over a longer timescale and prioritised in terms of resources.

Artists were asked to provide information regarding the value of sales, commissions or related enquiries:

2010 Declared total income of £57,850 from 78 artists

2009 Declared total income of £57,124 from 61 artists

Key finding: Scaled up total spend fell by 11%, in line with lower visitor numbers

Recommendation: Find new ways to help artists sell work – information sheets on how to sell work if requested, and more information sent directly to buyers such as interior designers.

Artists were asked if they had participated in Artists Open Studios before:

No 28.2% Yes 71.8% (comparative figures unavailable)

Key finding: A large proportion of new participants

Recommendation: Ensure that new participants are identified and engaged, whilst maintaining the participation of existing/repeat participants.



Artists were asked what motivated them to take part this year (most popular responses first)*:

1. Selling work
2. Make new clients
3. To build new contacts
4. Keeping in touch with clients
5. Publicity
6. Sharing enthusiasm for art
7. Understanding your audience
8. To obtain critique of your work
9. Motivation to make new work
10. A chance to de-clutter your studio

Artists were asked which date they would prefer for next year's event:

May Day Bank Holiday weekend 87.2% Mid-June 12.8%

Recommendation: The event should return to the May Day Bank Holiday

Artists were asked if they plan to participate again:

2010	Yes	97.4%	No	2.6%
2009	Yes	93.2%	No	6.8%

Key findings: Repeat participation rates have increased, suggesting higher satisfaction with the event this year.

Artists were asked if they would be recommending participation to other artists:

Yes	97.4%	No	2.6%
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Artists were asked which additional activities they believe would be useful and relevant (most popular responses first)*:

1. Open Art exhibition outside of the main annual event
2. Visual arts auction
3. Promotion of your existing workshops, classes, etc
4. Commissions of new work
5. Winter Open Studios
6. Monthly e-newsletters
7. Networking/peer support events
8. A full consultation event for Artists Open Studios 2010
9. New programme of master classes delivered by participating artists

Recommendation: Additional activities should be undertaken when and if resources permit. Cost-effective communication via channels such as e-newsletters should continue, monthly if possible.

Artists were asked how the event could have been improved (most popular responses first, includes “any other comments”):*

1. Better general publicity
2. Earlier publicity campaign
3. Greater visibility around Sheffield
4. Provision of banners, stickers and more posters
5. Better time of year
6. Earlier registration
7. A selection of studio trails and/or maps outlined in brochure
8. Opportunity to proof-read brochure
9. More communication with artists
10. More public funding (Sheffield City Council, Arts Council specifically named)
11. More opportunities to meet fellow artists
12. Better website



Key findings and recommendations: Many of the above comments fall into one or both categories and will actively be taken into consideration in discussing the development for Artists Open Studios 2011.

Artists were asked if they were interested in joining our steering group to advise on future activities*:

Yes 18 people No 60 people

**No further details about the role were available at the time*

Recommendation: Artists should receive an application pack at the same time as the monitoring form to maximise effectiveness.

Artists were asked their gender*:

2010 Male 38.2% Female 61.8%

2009 Male 36% Female 64%

** scaled-up to include non-respondents*

Artists were asked to indicate their age:

2010 Under 25 8.1% 26-65 years 82.8% 65+ 9.1%

2009 Under 25 1.7% 26-65 years 90.1% 65+ 8.2%

Key finding: the proportion of young participants as well as those over 65 has increased.

Recommendation: Continue efforts to increase the number of young participants

Artists were asked their ethnic origin:

2010 White British 91.8% Other* 8.2%

**includes African-Caribbean (1), Indian (2), Irish (2), Mixed race (3), Roma (1)*

2009 White British 95% Other** 5.0%

***breakdown unknown*

Key finding: the proportion of ethnic minority artists has increased this year

Recommendation: Continue efforts to include communities of Sheffield not currently fully represented in our core offer. This needs to be balanced with further investigation of the demographics of the visual arts community, and what we define it as – include new genres such as henna painting, Islamic and Chinese calligraphy?

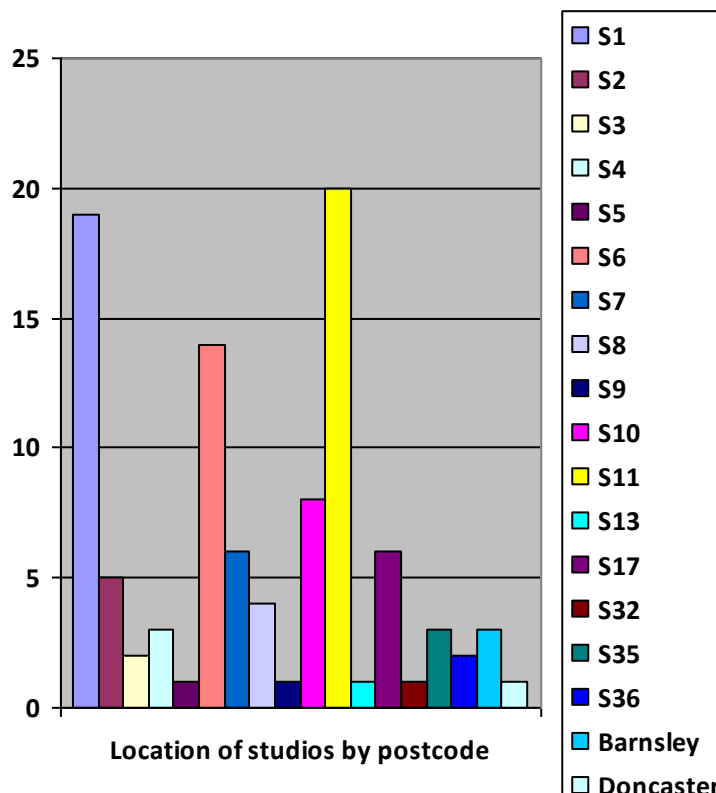
Artists were asked whether they had a long-term illness/disability:

2010	Yes	4.5%	No	95.5%
2009	Yes	11.5%	No	88.5%

Key finding: the proportion of disabled artists participating has decreased this year

Recommendation: Discuss whether we are reaching disabled artists in the most effective way, compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Location of Open Studios/Venues





Key finding:

- a. *There was a large amount of activity in S1 (the city centre) because we assisted artists with studios unsuitable for public access to find venues in the city centre to open up their work.*
- b. *Due to its high concentration of artists, S11 remains an area of high activity*

Recommendation: We should continue to work towards increasing the number of open venues in other areas of the city and its catchment area.

VISITOR DATA

Accepting that the data on returned forms is not necessarily representative of our audiences; it does, however, provide a starting-point and is at least one measure of our success.

689 visitor monitoring forms were completed and returned by artists, most of whom made a point of saying that it was impractical to ask every visitor to complete one. This is 8.5% of the scaled up number of visitors. Approximately half of these have asked to join our database.

Artists were also asked to collate visitor forms, and the reasons for collecting data were explained as:

- a. *we need to understand who is attending our activities, who is not, and why, so that we can identify ways to increase audiences, appreciation of grassroots artists, sales and feedback;*
- b. *potential public funders need to know who is benefitting from their investment, (and who is not) and often request that visitor data is monitored.*

Key findings:

- a. *Artists are willing to ask their visitors to complete forms, but have made it clear that the setting was not always appropriate. When it was clearly explained why they were needed, artists were happy to try and collate them.*
- b. *Visitors were confused by some of the questions, especially when asked to rate the event*

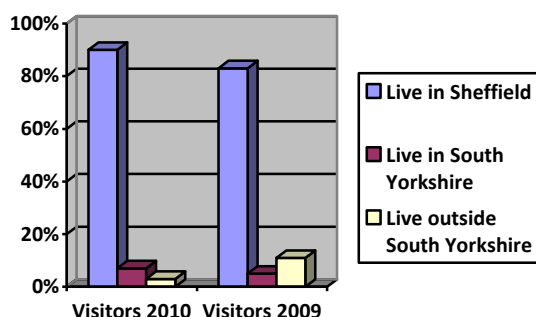
Recommendations:

- a. *We should continue to expand our database of visitors who agree that we can store their details, looking to form a Friends of Open Up Sheffield in the medium-term.*
- b. *The visitor form needs to be revisited to make questions clearer and more focussed on relevant measures, such as where visitors picked up leaflets, and which other types of visual arts activities they would enjoy visiting. This will help us establish if the market exists to make any new, future activities successful.*

Visitors were asked how they heard about Open Up Sheffield (most popular responses first):

1. Word of mouth/participating artist
2. Open Up brochure
3. Open Up leaflet
4. Website
5. Newspaper article
6. Poster
7. Radio

Visitors were asked where they live:

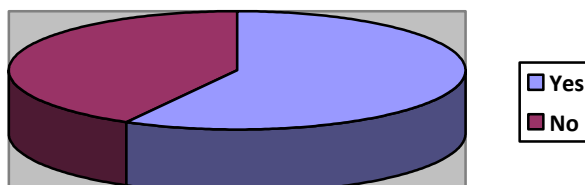


Key finding: A larger proportion of visitors were from Sheffield this year.

Recommendation: Continue efforts to reach and target visitors to the city

Visitors were asked if they had attended in previous years:

Yes 58% No 42%



Other methods of data collection

- 2 face-to-face production meetings at Sheffield Cathedral
- Telephone conversations
- Emails
- 50+ one-to-one meetings
- Attendance at, and observation of events by the Project Manager and Steering Group
- Analysis of marketing material distribution, website content and available press cuttings
- Desk research of secondary sources, e.g. partner venues and enquiries

Overall, nearly 850 people, including artists and visitors, contributed information and views to this evaluation, adding value to its findings.

TAKING PART

Registration Process

After some initial difficulties due to IT issues, the registration process was completely overhauled for 2010. New artist registration forms and guidelines were produced for ease of administration, which will be developed further for 2011.



Key finding: Artists generally found the new forms to be clear, easy-to-use and fit-for-purpose. The new forms also helped to make administration more efficient.

Cost of Participation

Due to budget constraints, prices were increased to £80 for 2010 from a price of £65 the previous year. This was due to the lack of grants, major sponsorship or other sources of funding; we consulted the Open Studios Network before the increase to listen to their suggestions. Nevertheless, 110 artists participated this year, increasing from 102 in 2009. Where groups of artists were opening together, the full individual rate was still applicable; we were not in a position to offer discounts for groups.

Key finding:

- a. The price rise has not adversely affected participation numbers. This is because we engaged artists in an open discussion about the matter and offered an explanation for the increase.*
- b. Craftspeople were concerned that with rising costs, it may become uneconomic for them to participate due to the lower revenues they secure per object.*

Recommendation:

- a. Whilst difficult in the current climate, the participation price for 2011 should be calculated using full cost recovery principles moving forward, which could mean price increases.***
- b. If possible, a reduction for craftspeople could be considered, or perhaps a reduced rate for their advertisements.***

Bursaries

In the light of the price increase and its effect on those unable to pay, the Board decided to offer a limited number of free places to talented applicants on benefits who were prepared to request and demonstrate their need in writing. 4 bursaries were applied for and granted.



Recommendation: We should continue the bursary scheme and maximise its impact so that young people in less prosperous areas can have the opportunity to take part and build on their artistic strengths.

Associate Membership

Associate membership was also introduced for the first time, which allowed artists unable to open up on either weekend to be included in the brochure, though without an image.

Key finding: Just 2 artists opted to become associates.

Recommendation: Associate membership is not popular or cost-effective and should be discontinued.

Quality Control

After its organisational review last year, Open Up Sheffield has implemented a rigorous Quality Assurance Framework, which acts as a benchmark for quality control measures and standards used in the delivery of Artists Open Studios.

This year, whilst artists were self-nominating, the Board of Directors overviewed and authorised all applications based on the principle of the artists demonstrating their commitment to visual arts in their application form. In this way, subjective decisions and artistic judgements were avoided. Using the Quality Assurance Framework as a point of reference, 2 applicants were invited to re-apply next year, and are happy with the feedback provided.

Key finding: The Quality Assurance Framework has been a useful tool to gauge and improve the quality of visual arts at Artists Open Studios, whilst continuing to engage artists.

Recommendation: Numbers of artists participating could be capped so that the project remains manageable and artists benefit from increased quality by all participants.



Online Payment

Online payment via PayPal was introduced for the first time, which proved very popular, with half of paying artists choosing to use the facility. Whilst a small commission is paid to PayPal, the process is quick, simple and saves significant amounts of time and money in administration.

Key finding: Paying online is increasingly popular

Recommendation: Paying online should be encouraged and an administration charge considered for paper-only applications.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY

Suggestions and comments from artists have overwhelmingly confirmed that whilst the more modern branding, style and objectives of the brochure has been very well received, improvements are needed to publicity distribution and the types of printed material available.

General comments about the publicity and brochure (most popular responses first):

1. Excellent brochure
2. Brochure looks a lot less cluttered now bus information has been removed
3. Publicity material needed much earlier
4. Opening times need to be displayed clearly in the brochure
5. Many visitors came due to own promotion/networks
6. More press coverage needed
7. Introduce pedestrian routes/trails to brochure
8. More visibility across the city would have helped
9. I would have liked the chance to proof-read my brochure entry
10. Where are the Decaux posters?
11. Need banners, stickers, A6 postcard sets, bookmarks, laminated arrows and balloons
12. More brochures are needed in the libraries



13. Need more frequent newsletters
14. Need more details about the venues in the brochure and online – images?
15. Need to reach a broader public
16. The brochure is too focussed on art at the expense of craft

Key findings and recommendations: Many of the above comments fall into both categories and will actively be taken into consideration in discussing the development for Artists Open Studios 2011.

Distribution of Marketing Material

- This year, artists were asked to pick up their requested marketing material from the Workstation, and many bags remained there until the eleventh hour.
- 2 paid helpers and several volunteers assisted in distributing marketing material across Sheffield.
- Generally, rates of uptake of brochures and leaflets differ enormously in venues across Sheffield, shown by marketing material remaining unused in some areas and out-of-stock in others.
- The absence of marketing material in libraries across Sheffield was an issue, despite several hundred being delivered to Central Library. This occurred due to confusion at Central Library as to what they should do with the brochures.

Key finding: More time and cash resources need to be allocated to the distribution of marketing material, several weeks before the event.

Recommendations:

- a. A positive strategic relationship with Sheffield City Council needs to be nurtured to secure help distributing marketing material next year***
- b. Scheduling needs to reflect increased time for marketing distribution.***
- c. A comprehensive database of potential distribution points needs to be compiled and updated; more frequent drop-offs and checks would ensure better distribution.***



Brochure Advertisements

Advertisements of different sizes, types and prices were available for purchase and served a secondary purpose in terms of providing visibility for our key messages, strategic relationships we are developing, and who our supporters are.

Recommendation: A robust portfolio of appropriate potential advertisers needs to be developed, solicited and stewarded on an ongoing basis.

Press Releases

This year direct coverage for the event was seen in 6 printed publications and several 3rd-party online publications.

Key finding: press coverage was not comprehensive, and needs to be improved.

Recommendation: Earlier press releases needed, dependent on completion and availability of brochure.

ONLINE SERVICES

We registered with a new email provider early in the year for general emails, and used the pay-per-month Constant Contact service to distribute our e-newsletters to a database of several thousand people for practical purposes. Newsletters were also distributed by partners such as CIQ, Arts Council England, and others. After creating our own new website for 2010, there has been a very positive response to it, with just 1 artist saying they felt it was poor. All artists were supportive of developing further online services and presence. Just 3 of the artists participating this year do not have access to the internet.

Key findings:

- a. *Sending out newsletters via Constant Contact has significantly reduced e-communications being returned as spam.*



- b. *The website allows easy access for a range of stakeholders, and has been crucial to the success of Artists Open Studios 2010.*
- c. *Artists are keen to be part of an Open Up Sheffield online community, even if they have their own website already.*
- d. *Artists without online access are now the exception rather than the rule.*

Recommendations:

- a. ***We should continue to use Constant Contact where newsletters and circulars need to be sent out to several hundred people.***
- b. ***We continue to add general information about open studios to the website as part of an audience development initiative***
- c. ***We create a visitor home page giving a clear picture of what visitors can expect on their visit, with links to preview evenings, taster exhibitions, additional activities, and an improved search facility, including search by media, days open and key words tagged in the artist's description.***

Website - Comments:

1. Attractive and easy to read
2. Love the rolling "featured artist" facility
3. Needs bigger galleries for each artist
4. Some visitors had difficulty with it
5. How many hits does the website get throughout the year?
6. Could we post details of our viewings and events on your website?
7. The website seemed to crash frequently
8. Much, much better than the old website
9. Could I post images of my studio on my profile?
10. Needs work on the layout

Key findings and recommendations: Many of the above comments fall into both categories and will actively be taken into consideration in discussing the development for Artists Open Studios 2011.



Online Registration

Online registration would take away a major administrative burden, and allow artists to register quickly, with ease, and in their own time. Electronic registration started this year, with excellent results.

Key finding: Half of artists used the electronic registration method this year and were very pleased with the facility.

Recommendation: Online registration should be developed in due course, so that artists can submit their text and images directly on to the website.

Online Editing and Proofing

This year, administering the website took much longer than anticipated, and took longer to complete than the brochure.

Key finding: artists requested that images were changed and adjustments made to their website profiles, etc.

Recommendation:

- a. It is reasonable that artists should be allowed to change their website profiles within reason. To facilitate this, we should aim to have an online editing process in due course.***
- b. Proofing of text could also take place online, saving postage costs and time, and enabling artists to check that their amendments have been made satisfactorily.***

Visitors to the Website

At this time, we currently have a daily average of just over 200 visits from 100 unique visitors to the website. This peaked at a daily average of 500 visits from 300 unique users during this year's event.

Key finding: This is an encouraging figure, which shows that our website continues to be a portal for online audiences throughout the year.



Recommendation: We should continue to grow our online audience by developing the website and its facilities further.

Social Networking

A Facebook group was established in May which has proved far more popular than expected, with over 200 artists and art-lovers joining within 3 months. This started as a general communication tool is currently acting as a portal for conversations and postings amongst artists and art-lovers. It is clear that there is a need for a well-publicised, bespoke portal for artists taking part to communicate with each other throughout the year.

Key Finding: Many artists participating this year are now on Facebook, and have already engaged in using it to promote their work and workshops.

Recommendation: More time and resources are allocated to developing and servicing our Facebook group, which is already more effective and useful instead of a blog on our own website; care needs to be applied with regard to copyright issues for images.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Launch Event



In partnership with the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Cathedral, our launch event this year took place at the Cathedral as part of Sheffield's new Summer Music & Arts Festival, with top jazz entertainment and an exclusive preview of a new exhibition by Paul Floyd Blake, winner of the 2009 National Portrait Gallery Taylor Wessing Award, who was the official Open Up Sheffield photographer in 2003.

Brian Holland, Chair of Open Up Sheffield opened the event, and noted that this year's event truly offered "...great art by our greatest local artists"

Many met Maxwell Singh, the new Project Manager in person for the first time, having already spoken many times by phone, and all agreed that it was an exciting and inspiring occasion.

With refreshments kindly provided by Sheffield Cathedral, there was a lively and welcoming atmosphere throughout. Nearly 70 people attended, with representatives from arts organisations, art galleries, the local authority, community leaders, arts enthusiasts and, of course, visual artists.

Fiona Oliver, this year's photographer, kindly offered her services for the evening, providing some excellent visual reminders of the event.



Everyone was astounded by Brian Smith, one of this year's participating landscape artists, who brought along his easel and paints to paint the urban landscape in Cathedral Square in the warm summer evening breeze, which he completed inside the Cathedral after dark. **Overall, a resounding success!**

Production Meetings

2 production meetings were arranged this year and attended by 80 artists overall. These enabled artists to meet each other before the event, offer suggestions, ask questions, pick up their marketing material and information sheets regarding how to deliver their open studios to maximum effect, based on their priorities.

Key Finding: Most artists enjoyed the experience, felt it was very useful, enjoyed networking with their peers, and interestingly, enjoyed exchanging advice, information and initiating discussion of issues with each other.

Recommendation: We should aim to increase the number of such events in future, via one-off events connected to delivery open studios, or by regular drop-in meetings, where people who are not on the Board, or who are unable to commit to attending regularly, are welcome to attend and advise on important matters whenever possible.



PARTNERS

This year we have developed new strategic relationships with key stakeholders, and consolidated old ones, all of whom have been very supportive. This work will continue as part of a rolling process to improve our dialogue, leverage and influence with key decision-makers in the sector. These include:

- **Broomhill Festival**
- **Great Sheffield Art Show**
- **The Academy of Makers** (www.academyofmakers.co.uk)
- **Freeman College** (www.glasshouse.ruskin-mill.org.uk/Freeman%20College.html)
- **Sheffield Cathedral** (www.sheffield-cathedral.co.uk)
- **Open College of the Arts, Barnsley** (www.oa-uk.com)
- **Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Achievement Service** (www.grtleeds.co.uk)
- **Education Leeds (!)** (www.educationleeds.co.uk)
- **Sheffield City Hall** (www.sheffieldcityhall.co.uk)
- **Engaging Youth in Yorkshire** (www.culturalolympiadinyorkshire.com)
- **Open Studios Network** (www.openstudiosnetwork.co.uk)
- **Quaker Meeting House** (www.sheffieldquakers.org.uk)
- **The Source at Meadowhall** (www.thesource.meadowhall.co.uk)
- **University of Sheffield** (www.sheffield.ac.uk)
- **Artscene** (www.artsupplies-uk.co.uk)
- **The Workstation** (www.showroomworkstation.org.uk)
- **S1 Webmedia** (www.s1webmedia.co.uk)

CONCLUSION

Artists Open Studios was originally conceived as an exploratory and showcasing programme for grassroots artists, participants and audiences, and its achievements and objectives reflected this. They were, however, mostly aspirational and were therefore difficult to measure.



In a change of direction, Artists Open Studios 2010 has been developed not only as an exploratory and showcasing programme, but as a catalyst for change and, more particularly, as a vigorous new agent of change within the artistic environment of Sheffield itself.

Sheffield has a thriving cultural and creative industries sector, accounting for 7.2% of Sheffield's working population – almost double the national average. The city also has a very complex visual arts structure, with key galleries, studio complexes, funders and other stakeholders currently working apace towards developing Sheffield's creative activity moving forward.

In this environment, Open Up Sheffield, as a small, under-resourced organisation run by volunteers has achieved an enormous amount, justifying its enduring place in the sector. As such, we are confident that decision-makers and funders in the city and beyond will recognise our huge potential for development in due course, our growing achievements for grassroots artists and the city's creative sector, and it is important that we continue to work towards this goal in a considered, coordinated and strategic way.

In the light of the current economic climate, it is encouraging that 110 artists took part this year. From the quantitative data received this evaluation is one of the most accurate to date, due to such a high percentage of data returned by our artists.

In the coming year, we plan to build on our achievements, aiming to:

- maximise consultation with new and existing partners;
- maximise the benefits of this evaluation to inform our future activities;
- continue to engage artists and volunteers in the coming months;
- streamline and develop the skills of the Board;
- and engage the ideas, support and assistance of key stakeholders.



Overall, Artists Open Studios 2010 was very successful, and lessons have been learned to inform our way forward. The event continues to be special because it advocates the grassroots talent within the city, attracting international prize-winners to work alongside committed artists – it has a real impact on how the world views art, views Sheffield, and views our artists; hence “...great art by our greatest local artists”.