

## **SOUTH EAST OPEN STUDIOS 2008**

6 – 22 June 2008

### **PRESS PACKAGE**

**For further information on these or any other subjects, or for photos of artists participating in this year's event contact:**

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#### **CALL FOR ARTISTS – South East Open Studios – 6-22 June 2008**

June 2008 might seem a long way off, but now is the time that South East Open Studios invites visual artists working in all artistic media to join them next year in opening their studios and inviting the public to step inside.

South East Open Studios is an annual artist-led event running for 2 weeks in June, and is open to all artists working in Kent and East Sussex. Each year, the number of participating artists increases, last year totalling more than 250. A full colour printed guide and website advertises the artists' details for a whole year. Membership details and online application are available from the website, [www.seos-art.org](http://www.seos-art.org). Postal application forms are also available or send A4 s.a.e. to SEOS, 1a Marion Cottages, Maidstone Road, Wrotham Heath, TN15 7SN. Deadline for applications: 31st January 2007.

#### **SOUTH EAST OPEN STUDIOS 2008**

Each year, for two weeks in June, artists who live and work in Kent and East Sussex extend an open invitation to visitors to come in and watch them work, ask questions and generally talk about the curious and sometimes mysterious processes of making art.

The event aims to bring all aspects of visual art and crafts to a wider audience by providing an opportunity to meet the artists 'at work', while at the same time providing an informal network for artists, many of whom work in rural areas.

A free full-colour guide is printed each year, and this serves as a year-round brochure as many artists open their doors again in the autumn, or welcome visitors by appointment after the open studio fortnight.

### *Artists in your area*

As yet we do not have a full list of artists taking part as entries don't have to be in until the end of January. Any journalist wishing to contact any participating artists should contact Liz Garnett for names and contact details.

## **ABOUT SOUTH EAST OPEN STUDIOS**

Open studio events, where artists invite the public to visit their workshops and studios to see art in the making, have been mushrooming at home and abroad in recent years. Amongst the oldest and largest is South East Open Studios (SEOS), which encompasses the whole of Kent and the East Sussex borders.

SEOS began back in 1996, when professional painters Bryan Senior and Georgia Hayes laid the groundwork with Arts Development Officers Beverley Whittrick of Tunbridge Wells and Allison Wright at Sevenoaks. Today, we take online communication for granted, but back then there were precious few databases to be tapped into. After much hard networking and forging of links, 46 artists working in the two areas were brought together, and in 1997 **West Kent Open Studios** ran for two weeks.

Following on the success of this first event, neighbouring borough councils and KCC added their support. A volunteer committee was elected, and to reflect the increased scope of the event, it was renamed **South East Open Studios**. Entries for 1998 jumped to 130, and year on year numbers continued to rise. This year, there are just under 250 entries in the 56-page full-colour illustrated free guidebook.

In those fledgling years, the overwhelming majority of artists taking part were painters, and they maintain their prominent position today, joined by a variety of artists working in other disciplines: furniture-making, jewellery, ceramics, textiles, photography, sculpture, stained glass and mosaics to name a few. With new artists joining each year, it is a testament to the success of the event that many artists participate year after year – many of the studios which took part in 2007 were amongst the original 46 pioneers who opened their doors to the public back in 1997.