



SEOS
ARTISTS
MAKERS

SOUTH EAST OPEN STUDIOS

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

PREPARED BY
THE SEOS COMMITTEE

WWW.SEOS-ART.ORG



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Thank you to all our Artists and Makers for taking part in SEOS 2023



Photo cr; Frances Wells

WELCOME

At the end of every South East Open Studios year, we take the opportunity to review the event, reflect on member feedback and look forward to how we can optimise and improve SEOS for the future.

This Annual Report allows us to present our operations, and at the AGM, we will be actively asking to receive input from the attending members so we can move the organisation forward.

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1 - CHAIR'S REPORT

Each year as Committee Members, we put together this report to let you know how the year's South East Open Studios has gone. As in past years, the picture is mixed and over the next few pages you'll be able to read about this in more detail. It's too easy to attribute the negatives to the current state of the economy as we continue to feel the impact of the cost of living crisis, high inflation, energy costs and increased mortgage repayments. We will explore this later, but now is not the time to dwell on these issues. Instead, what we should be doing is celebrating our collective participation in an amazing event that brings art and creativity to everyone in this wonderful part of the country. Certainly for some, SEOS has worked better than for others, but everyone involved should delight in the fact that that visitors came out in numbers to celebrate creativity, engage, visit studios and galleries and admire and buy wonderful art and crafts. Collectively, we should also be thinking about how we can take the lessons of SEOS 2023 and use these learnings to build into next year's event.

This was my first year as Chair of SEOS. As a previous visitor, I was all too aware of the talent that comes together for the event; what I have discovered is the effort and dedication of all involved in making SEOS happen. From the Committee members who, amongst other things, organise and manage registration, design, production and distribution of the Guide and the website, including artist's listings, commercial opportunities, media relations, social media and liaison with the Area Coordinators, as well as the work of the Area Coordinators themselves and countless participating artists. Among many highlights this year are that we also had support from two local councils (thank you Dartford Borough Council and Sevenoaks Town Council) that recognises the value that art brings to the local area, we were featured in local media, including at least three times on BBC Radio Kent, our social media profile and activity, including that by our members, grew substantially, we held a 'launch event' at the Mick Jagger Centre that was attended by local dignitaries and gave artists the chance to exhibit their work and participate in a competition. We have had interest already from prospective new members as well as in commercial collaborations for next year.

One of the key things that makes SEOS so effective is the way in which all of you, the members, engage with the scheme and join together to make SEOS a success, whether it's for individuals, for groups and for everybody participating. The synergies that result from us all working together and promoting work individually as well as collectively, are real, significant and vital. We all look forward to continuing to work together to showcase your exceptional talent and creativity, and to welcoming you very soon as participants in SEOS 2024!

Philip Johnson - Chair



2. TREASURER'S REPORT

Unaudited Financial Statement for the year ended 30 June 2023

South East Open Studios

Chairman	Philip Johnson (appointed Sept 2022)
Treasurer	Peter Relf (appointed Sept 2022)
Web Editor	Mark Welland
Guide Designer	Mark Welland
Guide Distribution Officer	Polly Hosp
Data Management Officer	Jessica de Mattos
Social Media Officers	Jessica de Mattos Polly Bennett
ACO Officer	Polly Hosp
Guide Advertising	Sarah Bourne
Marketing Officer	Bethany Arnold (appointed Nov 2022)

Report to the Members

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 18 June 2023, I have reviewed, without audit, the attached financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2023, as set out on pages 2 to 5, from information supplied and certified as correct by the Honorary Treasurer of the SEOS.

----- Peter Gingell FCMA

----- Dated



Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 30 June 2023

		2023	2022
	Notes	£	£
Income			
Members' Entry Fees & Entry Amendments		40,715	38,282
Grants		750	500
Amendments to Entries		0	90
Advertising space in guide		600	3,510
Bank Interest received		142	1
Sundry Income	5	250	-
		-----	-----
Total Income		42,457	42,383
Expenses			
Guide Printing and Signage	6	19,643	30,236
Guide Production		3,500	3,500
Guide Distribution		500	800
Committee Honorariums	2	11	9
Committee Fees including Mileage	7	8,517	10,825
Advertising		2,366	3,509
Printing, Photocopying, & Postage		62	308
Website Costs	8	1,934	1,884
Image Preparation		286	696
Insurance		347	250
Accountancy		300	600
Other Costs	9	753	35
ACO promotion all costs		1,354	787
		-----	-----
Total Expenses		39,573	53,439
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year		2,884	(11,056)
		-----	-----



Balance Sheet
as at 30 June 2023

		2023	2022
	Notes	£	£
Current Assets			
Cash at Bank (Savings)		9,561	4,510
Cash at Bank (current account)		4	1,771
Debtors	3	-	-
		-----	-----
		9,565	6,281
Current Liabilities			
Sundry Creditors	4	400	-
		-----	-----
		400	-
Net Assets			
		9,165	6,281
		=====	=====
Represented by			
Bought forward balance		6,281	17,337
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year		2,884	(11,056)
		-----	-----
		9,165	6,281
		=====	=====

The Financial Statement were approved by the committee and signed on their behalf by

----- Philip Johnson – Chairman

----- Dated



Notes to the Accounts
For the year ending 30 June 2023

1. Accounting convention

The financial statements are prepared under the historic cost convention.

2. Committee members

Each committee responsibility receives an honorarium of £1, some committee members are responsible for two jobs, the total paid this year was £11 (2022 - £9). In addition, committee members invoice for their services rendered to SEOS. The expenses include mileage allowance at approved rates.

3. Debtors

	2023	2022
	-	-

4. Creditors

	2023	2022
Accountancy	300	-
Cost to hire AGM venue	100	-
	-----	-----
	400	-
	===	===

5. Sundry Income

	2023	2022
Compensation from Bank for poor service	250	-
	===	===

6. Guide Printing & Signage

	2023	2022
Guide Printing and Delivery	19,110	23,145
Bunting	-	1,997
Cable Ties	-	96
Dump Bins	-	329
Banners (Reusable)	-	2,318
Signage (Reusable)	-	3,225
Arrows (Reusable)	-	1,733
Posters & Leaflets (Not Reusable)	533	108
Dump Bin Signage (Reusable)	-	48
Grant used from 2020-21	-	(2,763)
	-----	-----
	19,643	30,236
	=====	=====



Notes to the Accounts (continued)
For the year ending 30 June 2023

7. Committee Fees (including Mileage)

The expenditure shown for this year of £8,517 includes costs of £800, which relate to time spent on the 2022 rebranding project, these costs were received after last year's accounts were completed.

8. <u>Website Costs</u>	2023	2022
Artist Archive	941	936
Dropbox and Hosting	746	499
Flipbook	-	110
Font	-	167
JotForm	247	172
	-----	-----
	1,934	1,884
	=====	=====
9. <u>Other Costs</u>	2022	2023
Credit Card Fees	61	35
Stripe Fees	613	-
Google Meet Yearly Fee	79	-
	-----	-----
	753	35
	=====	=====

Summary

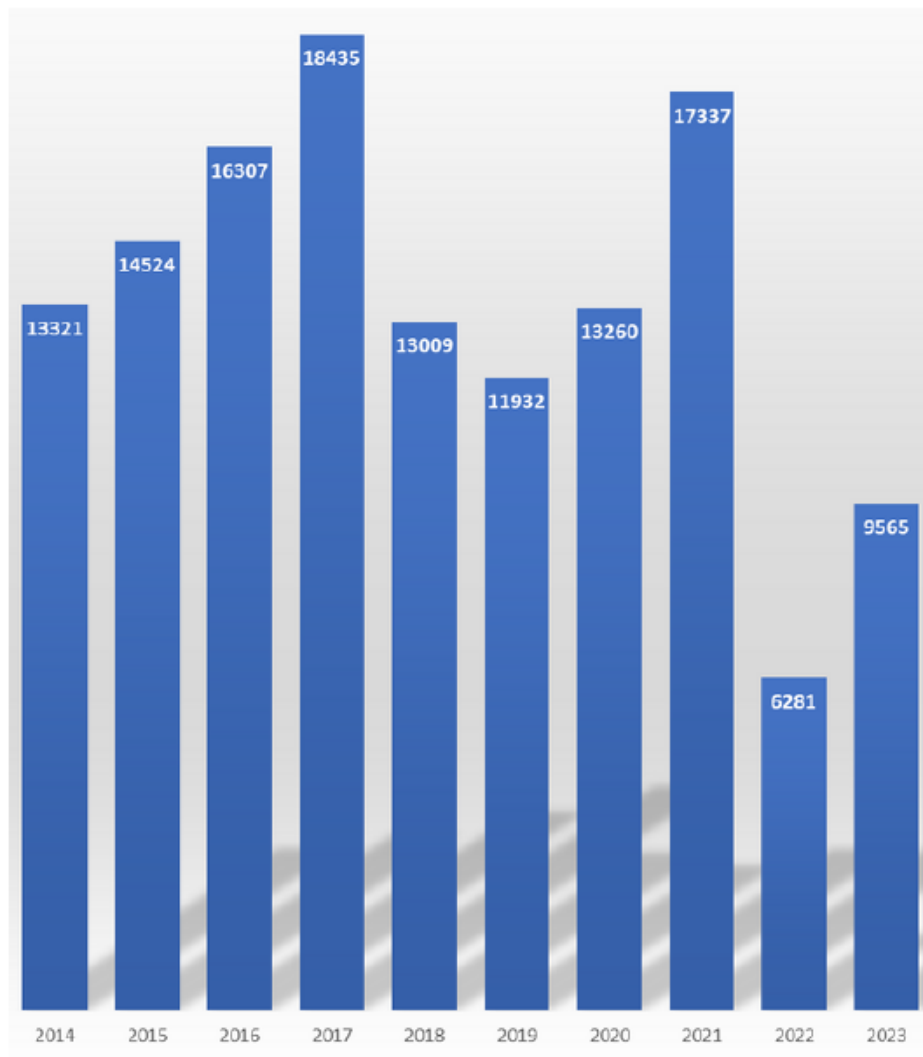
These are the accounts for the year ending 30 June 2023, and we are showing a surplus for the year of £2,884. The comment in last year's accounts from the Accountant regarding the viability of SEOS was taken onboard by the committee, with both income and expenditure being critically reviewed at each of this year's committee meetings.

We did increase the fees this year and didn't offer an early bird discount. Member numbers were slightly down on last year but overall, membership income increased by £2,433. We were also able to obtain grants from Sevenoaks and Dartford Councils which we used to promote the artists in those areas, and obtained £600 from the Wealden Literary Festival for an advertisement on the back cover of the Guide.

With the cost of almost everything increasing, especially our largest item of expenditure, namely the printing, production and distribution of the Guide, we had to reduce the number of copies of the Guide this year to 28,000. All other costs were controlled within tight budgets which can be seen with the comparisons to last year, with many expense groups showing savings or little increase over 2022.

I have reproduced the graph of monies held in the bank and have added this year's closing figure. Although moving in a positive direction this year, the closing balance is still well below an average balance from the pre-2022 levels. The committee needs to hold a reasonable bank balance that can give it flexibility to make immediate decisions and cover unexpected expenditure or unforeseen events, such as the pandemic.

This is my first year as Treasurer of the South East Open Studios and I would like to thank my predecessor Charlotte Landman for her ten years of service as Treasurer.



South East Open Studios Bank Balances as at 30 June

Peter Relf - Treasurer

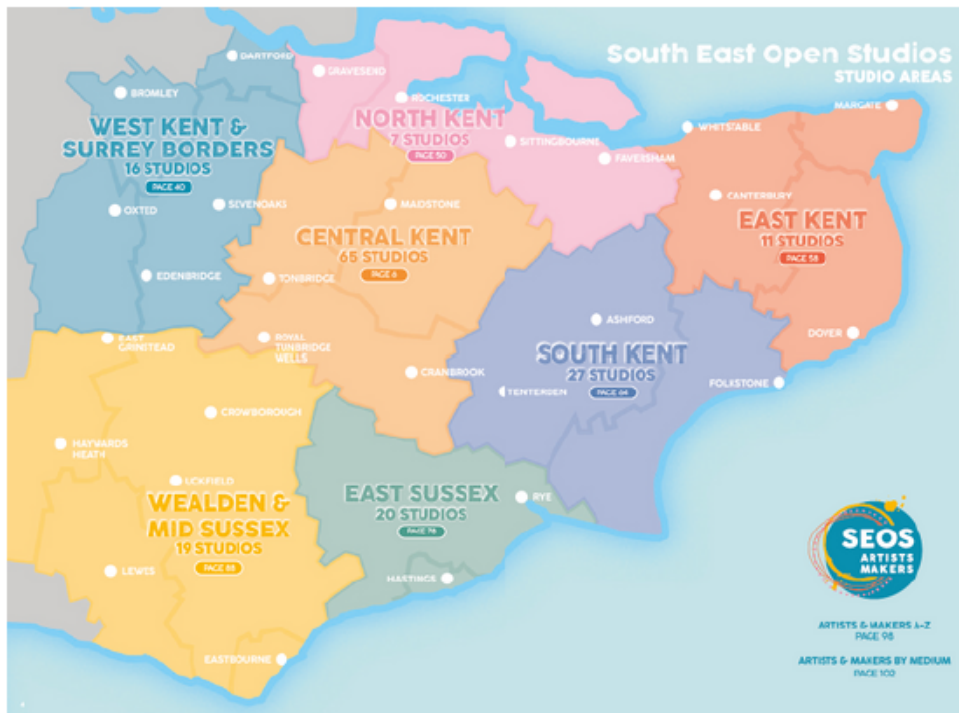
3. AREA COORDINATOR OFFICER'S REPORT & GUIDE DISTRIBUTION REPORT

Nine Area Co-ordinators (ACOs) supported SEOS in 2023, working across 19 council areas. This year we welcomed six brand new ACOs to the role, welcomed back two ACOs and as the ACO Officer, I stood in to cover for the areas that had no representation. This made it a challenging start trying to fill those experienced shoes.

Our thanks go out to ALL of them for the sterling work they have done within their local artist and maker communities - we literally couldn't run this event without them.

The ACO role is a challenging one – there is a lot to do – but it is also hugely rewarding, with all our ACOs reporting how much they enjoyed connecting with the artist and maker community in their area. Many are committed to keeping their meetings going throughout the year – a wonderful idea, we look forward to hearing how it goes!

The redesign of the Guide involved redefining the areas using the district council boundaries. This is a contentious issue as boundaries have been nipped and tucked over the years to ensure artists and makers are 'where they would like to be', providing little logic that could be followed through onto new maps. Although necessary, it also made recruitment extremely difficult as we had to re-learn which areas people were in, and in some cases move people around. Especially challenging for our new ACOs. Grouping these areas for the Guide chapters was also an issue, with some members suggesting that the naming needs to be revised for next year – especially 'Wealden & Mid Sussex' and 'West Kent / North Kent'.





Breakdown of members per district council:

Ashford:	27	Medway:	10
Bromley:	02	Mid Sussex:	01
Canterbury:	03	Rother:	22
Dartford:	02	Sevenoaks:	23
Dover:	07	Swale:	02
Folkestone & Hythe:	18	Thanet:	02
Gravesham:	07	Tonbridge & Malling:	36
Hastings:	03	Tunbridge Wells:	70
Lewes:	01	Wealden:	25
Maidstone:	21		

We introduced a new 'Space Share' tool on the website, where people could buddy up and find space for the event, or offer space to artists or makers. Quite a few members used this successfully, the feedback was positive, and we aim to do it again next year.

Once again, feedback suggests that individuals in more remote areas struggle with visitor numbers, where groups can attract a larger footfall. The cries from each side are equally strong – individuals are wanting more support and a return to the 'ethos' of the event, and the groups are wanting discounted registration fees. This subject is discussed every year, it is the view of the Committee that it MUST be a level playing field for everyone taking part, and there must be flexibility so people can take part however they wish. The key is for everyone to support each other throughout the event – passing visitors on.

We implemented a new system this year for getting Guides from the printer to the ACOs utilising a local distribution company – this proved to be both labour saving and cost effective. Thank you again to the ACOs (and their extended families) for helping this run so smoothly.

Last year we highlighted the need to better manage Guide distribution, which was also greatly impacted by vastly higher print costs this year. We agreed to limit each members' Guide allocation to 80 Guides, plus a small allocation for 2 dump bins per area, where in previous years the areas could request as many Guides as they needed. Generally, everyone felt they had the right number – though it surprised the ACOs to find that some people only collected half their allocation, and some people didn't collect their Guides at all – this gives the ACOs a tough challenge to get those Guides out at a time when they are already very busy, and we wonder how those individuals are connecting with potential visitors without any Guides? We know from many years' experience that, getting Guides into the hands of interested people is critical to the success of individual events.



Visitor numbers seemed to be down a bit this year, with some artists saying it was 'painfully quiet' while others reported higher sales 'even though footfall was down'. Some said it was their best year ever! There is an acceptance that we are struggling within a difficult financial climate, we also wonder if the heat, or the multitude of other events we are competing against, kept people away.

Again, we have reached out to Art in June and asked to meet. At the time of writing there has been no uptake. We would like to find a way to embrace and support each other when we are all trying to do the same thing. We still believe having two events on at the same time puts strain on artists and makers (with some opting to do both events) and confuses visitors. We also see it is such a huge duplication of effort – we know only too well what goes into these events!

As with previous years, we really struggled with managing member expectations. SEOS is, and always has been, about connecting with the community, talking about your work, developing relationships and building links with art lovers. This year we noticed people evaluating the registration fee against the number of 'unknown' visitors they received, or against their sales – which is rather missing the point. It also demonstrates a lack of understanding about all the places where we DO spend their money – Guide, social, web, publicity, advertising etc.

What is clear is that those members who are most organised do best. They have mailing lists, a commitment to market their own events (and those of their neighbours) and a strong display of their work. SEOS should be a time where members continue to work, not sit waiting like expectant shop keepers.

Sadly, this year, we are losing two ACOs – Jane Cordery and Georgina Bays – thank you both for your wonderful help and input. We are looking for people to join us in Rother, Folkestone & Hythe, Hastings and East Kent. If you would like to connect with your local creative community, do please let us know.

I am also stepping down from the Committee after 4 years fulfilling various roles (Social Media Officer, Marketing Officer, ACO Officer and ACO for Sevenoaks & Bromley). It has been a wonderful experience, and I have made lots of new friends, we have such an enthusiastic committee I am looking forward to seeing where SEOS goes next. I highly recommend it if anyone is thinking of giving it a go.

Polly Hosp - ACO Officer



4. WEBSITE OFFICER'S REPORT

As part of the SEOS offering, the website continues to be a versatile tool with a number of roles which help support our different users. The site acts primarily as a site for finding out information about both the event and artists. Members continue to have their own page and login for accessing essential SEOS graphics.

Although only from a small percentage of the membership, we did have some concerns from the membership survey this year. For some the website seemed hard to navigate and needs further functionality to make it a useful tool with perhaps better links between the artists pages and the online guide. It is mentioned every year that there should be location details and opening times on the member pages. This is very difficult for some as they are not at the open studio location for the rest of the year. We would also really like to have both artists pages and a good interactive map for studio locations and perhaps studio trails, which is something we are keen to explore. We are of course open to suggestions of ways to improve the website within the tight budget we have for it and find ways of engaging with a younger audience.

SPACE SHARE NOTICE BOARD

This year we introduced a Space Share Notice Board which had 35 requests either offering or requiring space to share. There may have been others but we were notified that 7 were successfully filled or found.

NEWS AND EVENTS

As the Open Studio event approached, a News and Events page was set up to allow a fresh channel for those items.

ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Following from last year we deployed our artist pages via the Artwork Archive platform. This has proved an invaluable resource especially for those artists with no other website or social media presence. This area of the site gained around 3,400 sessions (a period of time during which a user interacts with the website) during the period.

FLIPBOOK

Continues to be a popular feature allowing viewers online access to the guide. This area of the site gained around 5,200 sessions from our snapshot.

NEWSLETTER - EMAILOCTOPUS

To keep overheads down we were encouraged to find a new free newsletter service. All newsletters and group member notifications are now managed through EmailOctopus.

GOOGLE ANALYTICS

We use Google Analytics within the website to give us a gauge on the website usage and how users find or engage with the website.

As a snapshot the following gives an indication of the search traffic over the 90 days from around mid-April.

ALL SEARCHES =

8,700 unique users - 8,500 new users. This gives an indication of how the website is used during the run up to and during the event.

SEARCH CHANNELS

Links from the following...

Organic Search (Using search engine) = 3,500 Users

Social Media Channels = 2,500 Users

Direct = 2,500 Users

Referral (From other websites) = 296 Users

INTERACTIONS

Page Views = 37,500

PAGES

Home = 11,000 views - Up 1,000 from 2022

Online Studio Guide = 6,300 views - Up 300 from 2022

Artists /all-artists (Artwork Archive) = 4,600 views - Up 230 from 2022

Trail Maps = 1,700 views - Down 300 from 2022

Member Area = 1,400 unique views - Up 745 from 2022

Other Pages = The rest

LOCATIONS

UK = 7,829 Users

USA = 477 Users

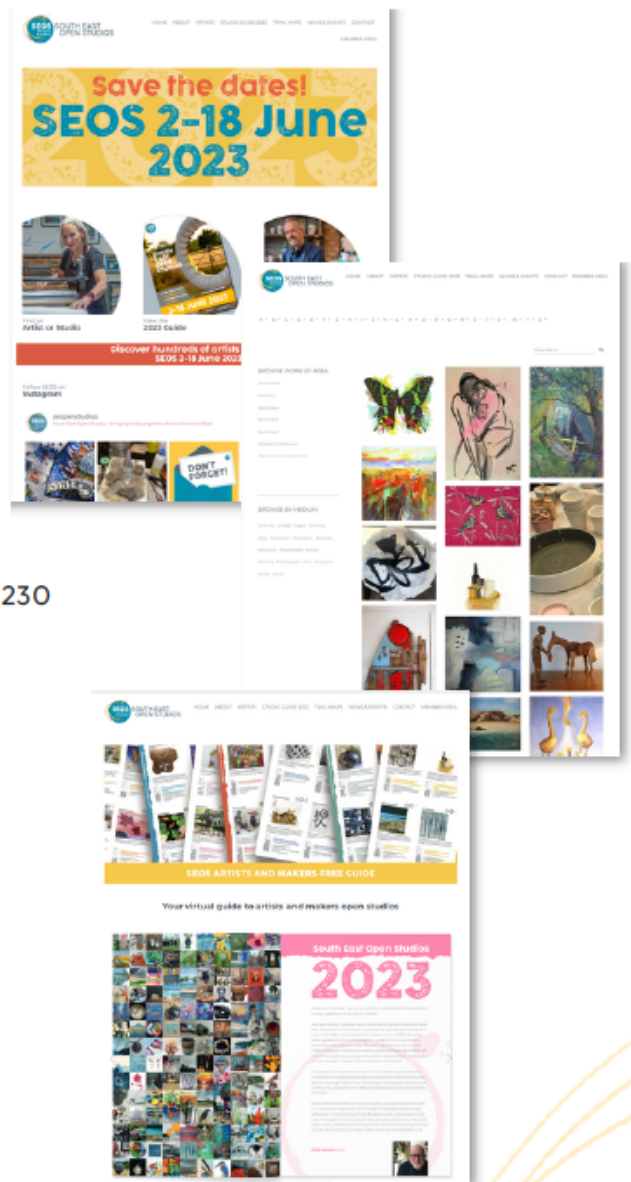
DEVICES

About the same as 2022

Mobile = 63%

Desktop = 30%

Tablet = 7%



It's interesting to see that by far, the amount of users on the website use a mobile device. This helps us focus on the usability and access for that group.

Mark Welland - Website Officer

5. GUIDE DESIGN REPORT

Taking over from Terry after many years of service was going to be a challenge but we used the opportunity to build on some of the new design implementation of the previous year to bring a fresh look to the Guide. Although minimal, we upped the size to a full A5 which allowed us to have larger pictures for each artist and consider the artist description, studio location and contact.

The Guide acts primarily as a resource for visitors but one of the main things it has to do for the organisation and artists members is to act as efficiently as it can to represent and coordinate the artists and groups within it. With this in mind, the areas were for the first time aligned with council areas across the south east which makes the implementation of the sections more manageable.

We also introduced a new data pipeline (getting the information that members submit) and digital proofs. This enabled a substantial reduction in the potential for errors when duplicating artists' information for the many platforms it is used on, as well as making a significant cost saving. Artists now have a studio number instead of an individual number meaning it's easier to see if an artist belongs to a studio with more than one artist.

As with any new design, we have experienced a couple of teething problems which can thankfully be easily resolved for the next edition. Some respondents to the member survey mentioned that some visitors found the grey text and date block difficult to read and interpret. During the proofing stage we did discuss our concerns for the clarity of the text with the printers, and we were assured it would work on the final printed guide. Some visitors found it difficult to read the yellow text in the Wealden Mid-Sussex section which has been noted and we are aware that there may be preferable names to call some the sections in the guide.

With inflation and other factors, the cost of printing has proved to be the most expensive it has ever been. To help, we were forced to remove any advertising apart from a premium back page sponsor, as the cost of advertising would not cover the cost of print and distribution of the space each advert takes. This kept the cost to around 70p per guide and we printed 28,000.

We are aware that the Guide has to work hard to properly represent the diverse range of art that members produce and consider the new design helps both the artists and visitors feel as if they have a tangible, year long presence of the artwork that is produced. We are listening to the great feedback we are getting to help make the guide as inclusive and strong as it can be.

Mark Welland - Guide Designer



6. SPONSORSHIP OFFICER'S REPORT

In the Autumn of 2022, the committee unanimously agreed that selling advertising space inside the Guide was not making a profit for the organisation, as the cost of printing the pages for the advertisements was equal to the advertising sales revenue per year. Due to rising printing costs, it was decided that it would make more sense to sell the back cover to an event partner or sponsor as premium advertising space.

In January 2023, the role was changed to Guide Sponsorship Officer, and a few leads that had been established before Christmas were followed up. By February 2023, after a meeting with one of the directors at a major Kent-based estate agent, a deal was closed for the back cover, and we proceeded to draw up a contract.

Unfortunately, despite their assurances, this estate agent pulled out of the arrangement, and so the search for a premium advertiser started all over again! A further fourteen major local companies were approached, several were interested but had already spent their 2023 printed marketing budget. However, most have asked to be contacted in the Autumn for the 2024 guide. Only one company said it didn't use printed marketing, whilst others felt it wasn't the right time but appreciated the quality of the guide and the look of the mock-up they were sent.

We had 12 incoming enquiries for advertising space in the guide, which were all replied to with an explanation regarding the decision to look for an event partner. We had a few disappointed replies and one slightly outraged reply, from a local listings magazine telling us we were 'having a laugh', lol :-D)

Eventually, the Wealden Literary Festival came through and took space on the back cover and after negotiations with their Director, Laura Willan we reached an agreement. We all agreed that WLF is a good fit as it culturally reflects our own.

As well as exploring extending our relationship with the Wealden Literary Festival, for next year's Guide we will start to approach companies this year, in late summer, early autumn, in order to catch them before they spend all their yearly publicity budget. We will also have copies of 2023's Guide to send out to them, so they can get a feel for our organisation, and the quality of the publication on offer.



Sarah Bourne - Sponsorship Officer

7. SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

It has been another successful year for South East Open Studios on social media, despite the ever-present challenge of keeping up with changing algorithms. This year we welcomed Polly Bennett as our new Social Media Engagement Officer and she has risen admirably to the challenge of keeping up with the intensive task of SEOS social media management!

2023 SEOS social media has grown by 906 followers since last year, with a total of 11,348 followers across Facebook (2959), Instagram (4769) and Twitter (3620) – an overall increase of 9% since July 2022, and continually rising as our reach keeps on growing.

Facebook and Instagram have increased by 276 and 718 respectively, compared to last year and between July 2022 and July 2023, our Facebook and Instagram content reached an estimated 145,116 different people; an overall 34% increase on the reach between 2021 to 2022. The slight decrease in Twitter followers may be due to the fact that Twitter is less suited to the nature of SEOS social media, and very few of our members have a Twitter presence.

We are continuing to reach more intermediaries such as local magazines, gardens, organisations, etc. who help spread the word and provide publicity opportunities during the event. We are also reaching a lot more artists, which is fantastic, but in the future we need to focus on increasing followers who aren't artists - as in, the people who would visit the studios.

This year, 222 out of our 282 members (79%) are active on one or more social media platforms. Although this is a slight decrease on last year's percentage of members with social media (86%), those who do have social media are actively engaged with their online creative communities and have been keen to engage with the SEOS social media pages.

For the third year running, we prepared a selection of SEOS branded 'overlay' images for members to download and use to promote themselves and their SEOS venues on their own social media pages. The overlay images were made available to download in the Member Area of the SEOS website and were very well received; offering multiple colour options allowed for a colourful and personal aesthetic, and overall members found it easy to use the overlay with the instructions supplied. The overlays really help promote who we are and show the public just how many artists are involved in SEOS. We did our best to share every single overlay image we were tagged in, or that we were able to find on our feed.



PAID CAMPAIGNS

For SEOS 2023 we ran two paid campaigns across Facebook and Instagram. We ran an intensive recruitment campaign in January, and a second full campaign aimed at visitors for the 17-day event period in June.

We chose to run the recruitment campaign during both the first and last weeks of January to ensure that our targeted audiences were reached at both the start and end of the sign up period, to maximise the advert reach potential. The campaign comprised 28 highly-targeted area adverts, designed to be consistent with our branding and featured high quality, attractive photographs featuring many different creative mediums.



Recruitment Campaign samples

Last year we promoted to targeted audiences by area instead of generalised adverts across the whole of the south east, and found that they reached our targeted audiences much more successfully.

Our paid recruitment adverts had a budget of £400 (actual spend: £392) and had a total reach of approximately 96,000 unique viewers – a huge increase on last year's recruitment adverts, which had a reach of around 55,000 viewers. The total number of 'click-throughs' to the SEOS website was 2,833.

The second paid campaign took place during the event and was aimed at studio visitors across different parts of Kent and East Sussex. We created nine unique videos, each personalised with a selection of artwork by members taking part in the area being targeted in the video. This campaign was promoted across both Facebook and Instagram and ran for the entire event period with a total spend of £306.

This paid event campaign reached approximately 40,000 unique viewers with a fantastic 21,446 engagements across the whole campaign (including likes, shares, comments, link clicks, onward page engagement etc.). The total number of 'click-throughs' to the SEOS website was 1,170.



Overall, the paid campaigns were highly successful with a greatly improved reach on last year and a reasonable click through rate. It was surprising to see some feedback about a perceived lack of paid social media advertising, especially given the amount of coverage achieved, but this may highlight a missed opportunity for advertising in a specific geographic area. Increased participation of members in social media campaigns is something we will be looking to encourage next year as it is clear that this medium is an increasingly important part of our promotional activity.

During our May feature campaign, our feature posts reached almost 30,000 unique accounts. The highest reaching feature post reached 433 accounts, generating 28 likes and 5 profile visits. During the June event, the highest reaching shared post reached 1,124 accounts, and generated 78 likes and 20 profile visits. This shows us engagement increases during the event, which can only benefit our members! During June, we reached 36,590 accounts on Instagram and Facebook. Instagram engagement was up 45.7% with 835 people engaging compared to the previous month. Facebook engagement was 3,807 which was 19% lower than the previous month.

Most of the engagement is by the artists taking part in the event. This could be due to the algorithm, or that the majority of visitors are of an age where they don't regularly use social media. One member did comment that they didn't find the Instagram posts particularly interesting. To boost engagement, the idea of 'artist medium themed' days would work well, as it creates more of a narrative to follow. Additionally, more interaction with the artists would be beneficial, like the interviews that were sent out in the newsletter. The algorithm could be altered if we post less each day.

It is always a challenge to squeeze in the individual member features between the launch of the individual artist pages on the SEOS website and the start of the event. This year, in an attempt to manage the frequency of posts in the event lead-up period, we opted to make feature posts for each studio, with the individual member features as 'carousel' posts. We endeavour to feature every member in the fairest way possible, though we appreciate that it can be a somewhat intensive and repetitive experience for those watching our social media pages in the lead up to the event.

Whilst it is possible to start the member features much earlier, it would give those who are featured at the beginning of the year an unfair disadvantage against those who would be featured much closer to the start of the event. We have taken on board the constructive feedback comments regarding our member features and will be sure to consider alternative options for the lead-up to next year's event, to make the features a little less intense and more varied for those following the SEOS social media pages.

As always, we want to extend a huge thank you to all the members who have engaged with us consistently and worked hard to promote the event and 'spread the word' through their own social media presences as well as through our SEOS pages. We can't do it without you and the louder our members shout about SEOS on social media, the better our reach and therefore the higher the impact social media has on event success.

Polly Bennett & Jess de Mattos - Social Media Officers

8. MARKETING OFFICER'S REPORT

Beth Arnold joined us as Marketing Officer in November and has been driving this year's marketing efforts which have included paid advertising in local publications, press and radio coverage, and various targeted social media campaigns.

On the internal comms side, you might have seen newsletters, distributed monthly, aimed at keeping everyone up-to-date with the latest SEOS news, as well as providing helpful guidance on how to market your studios. Press releases were produced to highlight newsworthy events and a revised media listing compiled of journalists and publications. We also ensured that all members received the launch press release, and encouraged members to promote themselves where possible through local media, with the support of their Area Coordinators.

It is never an easy process to get recognition in the media, especially given the crowded news agenda. This year, however, we were able to spread the word about South East Open Studios through a number of radio interviews on BBC Radio Kent featuring our Chair and some of our artists. We believe our radio coverage has really helped to raise awareness of the wealth of talented artists and makers in the region - and hopefully encouraged more visitors to come and see what South East Open Studios has to offer. We have built relationships with journalists at local radio stations - including BBC Radio Kent - which we hope to continue going forward next year.

Through the funding secured this year from Dartford Borough Council, we were able to host our first-ever South East Open Studios launch event at the Mick Jagger Centre in Dartford. The live art competition gave us the opportunity to reach out to the media and was great for creating a buzz on social media and getting everyone eager and ready in the run-up to SEOS this year.

The marketing and publicity efforts of SEOS continue to raise the profile of visual arts across the south east region and we are grateful to all of our members who have supported our campaign and helped to spread the message. We will continue to evolve and optimise our marketing and social media strategy and keep our engagement levels high - we look forward to coming back with a bang in 2024!

Beth Arnold - Marketing Officer



STUDIOS 2023 PUBLICITY &

Sussex Local - April

Free editorial

Circulation: 31,500

Click the link [here](#) for the full article.

The screenshot shows the Sussex Local website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Magazine, About Us, Podcasts, Join Our Mailing List, and Contact Us. Below the navigation bar, there is a header with the Sussex Local logo and a search bar. The main content area features an article titled "South East Open Studios artists and makers work showcase". The article includes a photo of a woman holding a large ceramic pot. To the right of the article, there is an advertisement for local libraries and a section for contacting MPs or Councillors. The article text describes the South East Open Studios event, which is a 17-day event celebrating creative talent in the South East region. It mentions that the event is held in various locations, including countryside, coastline, villages, and towns. The article also highlights the opportunity for artists to showcase their work and for the public to engage with the local visual arts community. The article is dated April 16, 2023, and is written by Kathy Bailles.

Isle of Thanet News - April

Cost: free coverage

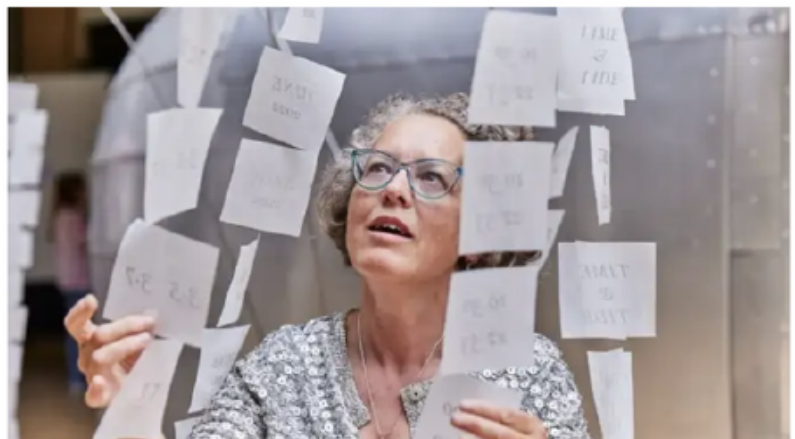
Read the full coverage

[here](#).

South East Open Studios gets set for 17-day event inviting public into workspaces

April 16, 2023 Kathy Bailles Events 5

The advertisement for Lovetts of Ramsgate features the company logo in red and white. To the right of the logo, there is a blue box with white text that reads: "We need your property to sell or let. Email: Ramsgate@lovetts.co.uk. Call: 01843 570305. FREE VALUATIONS. EXPERT SERVICE".



Artist Ruth Hall Garten (Image SEOS)

Dartford Living, May

Cost: £70



Readership (print
and online): 50,000

CALLING ALL ART LOVERS!

South East Open Studios
2023 is launching with a
LIVE art competition

Meet local artists and makers
and watch them work

RSVP to info@seos-art.org
to secure your place in the
audience

 **30 MAY, 5 - 7PM**
 **THE MICK JAGGER
CENTRE, DARTFORD**

SOUTH
EAST
OPEN
STUDIOS



@SEOPENSTUDIOS

ARTWORK BY SARAH YOUSEMAN

**Wealden Times - May
notebook edition**
Cost: free coverage
Circulation: 18,000

Notebook

What to do and see near you



THOMAS COOKIE



CAMPER CATERING



BELLE & MACK



ENLOE MAY



ANYA SUSKO



...AND LOTS OF DOGGOS



On Track

The big weekend of King Charles III's Coronation will see Brooklands celebrate the Best of British - from British manufacturing down to one of our best-loved characters, Paddington Bear joining in the action. There will be a host of British vehicles on display including a celebration of 100 years of MG and 75 years of Land Rover. All British car and motorcycle marques are welcome to join! Paddington will be making special guest appearances and there will be a variety of family entertainment, Test Hill ascents, trade stands, live music and traditional British fayre. You can find out how to get involved and book via brooklandsmuseum.com

Summer's Day Vibes

Do you love visiting beautiful gardens? Fancy shopping the most amazing handpicked selection of pop up shops - the ultimate selection of homeware, fashion, beauty, craft, garden, gifts and more! All amid said gorgeous garden, with wonderful views, absolutely delicious food, tempting drinks and in the full knowledge you're doing your bit to support local businesses - giving makers and sellers a super-happy spring in their step. Welcome to the Wealden Times Midsummer Fair - we can't wait to see you on **8th, 9th, 10th June**. Your ticket price includes entrance to Hole Park Gardens with its acres of parkland (usually £10) and you can stay all day - giving you plenty of time to drink in the summer's day atmosphere complete with Pimm's, bunting and music from school choirs and the fabulous Cranbrook Town Band. Book your tickets and see our exhibitor list at wealdentimes-fair.co.uk

© Wealden Times Magazine

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Studio Safari

For an inspiring seventeen days, from 2nd to 18th June, artists and makers across the South East will open up their studios, welcoming members of the public and showing their work. South East Open Studios - SEOS - celebrates creative talent across Kent, as well as parts of East Sussex and south London, raising the profile of the visual arts. Take a look at their website to discover the amazing array of artists you can visit in their own habitats! seos-art.org

pricelismagazines.com

Kent Life - May
 Four Page Spread, Editorial
 Cost: Free coverage
 Monthly circulation 14,186

KENT IS WHERE THE ART IS

Come June, artists and makers across the county will be displaying their works in an annual celebration of creativity

WORDS: ANNA LAMBERT



Roll up, roll up for the southeast's biggest, best, multi-venue art show that sees a plethora of creatives show open studio to visitors. Throughout Kent (and beyond), almost 300 of them will be demonstrating their skills in everything from portraiture to pottery, jewellery making to textiles as part of Kent's fourth Kent Open Studios (KOS) event, with the chance for visitors to talk to the artists, discover how their work is produced and perhaps to bag themselves a beautiful, one-off bargain. It's an exciting time for KOS, now in its 38th year and with a new chair

at its helm. He's Philip Johnson and, as a Bexley-based design professional used to working in the arts, he's got the ideal CV for the role.

"I've worked that way in life – so many of us do in our mid 30s – when I had more time on my hands," he explains. "Last year, my former colleague Polly Hoag, with whom I worked at the Design Council and who's now on the KOS committee, asked me if I was interested in joining the team. I couldn't really resist – my partner and I have visited local Open Studios in previous years, so I knew just what a great opportunity the event offers both to artists and visitors."

Philip says that his role is, "primarily to bring everyone together," with the team offering a new range of resources this year. "For the first time, we'll be having a launch

with the chance for southeast-based artists to show their own work and a competition featuring local schools and artists, which KOS is hoping will be judged by a leading artist. This, though, will be a one-off competition – there's nothing competitive about taking part in KOS as a whole. "There's no selection process for those taking part in KOS," confirms Philip.

"The event is open to every sort of artist – and we have both well-known professionals and keen amateurs opening their doors. We wouldn't turn anyone away because the event is all about encouraging people to get involved. It's that breadth of talent that makes KOS so interesting, I think – and I'm always blown away by just how much of it there is on any day."

Key to the event's success is its ability to

Right: Another part of the KOS mix – these are the 'open studios', opening their doors to everyone

"We have 150 new artists exhibiting this year, and social media's certainly helped with this," says Philip. "And I think, too, word is spreading about the 'no-pressure' environment KOS facilitates. "Visiting a gallery can be intimidating, while a trip to an KOS studio is simply a chance to look at art and find out more about it. Even if you want to buy a card or tea, wonderful if you want to buy an original artwork, but equally, absolutely fine if visitors leave simply with their appreciation of creatives and the work they produce enhanced – that really is what it's all about."

top right: Pretty about pots? You'll find plenty to admire at KOS this year – these ceramic glass bottles are by Tim Haines, who is exhibiting in West Malling
bottom left: Margrid Plunkett's The Sole Douch
 Andrew: You'll also find 'jewellery' work at KOS – this hand-forged necklace is by Carolee West, exhibiting in Hildenborough



Martin Barraud's 'Heartland' – he's opening his doors in a shared studio in Penhurst

MEET SOME OF THE ARTISTS

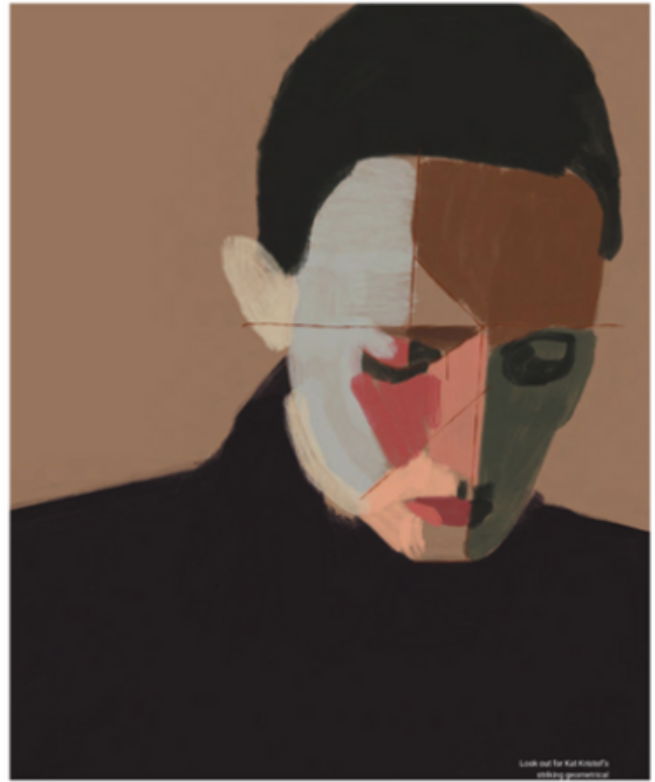
Margrid Plunkett is a painter-performer whose work mostly depicts figures in everyday life, specialising in enclaves, she has an MA in performing from Camberwell School of Art, runs workshops from her Maidstone studio and works one day a week at Artichoke Print Works in Brixton. She says: "Having graduated in 2020, I finally feel ready to open my doors. For me, KOS is about connections – I know there's a wealth of local artists around this part of Kent but you can feel a bit isolated away here. This is my chance to get to know other artists – hopefully for us to form some sort of creative hub – and of course to show visitors what we're up to. I'll have plenty of my prints on display, but I've also been saving lots of old Tetrapak cartons and the plan is to let visitors cut them up, scratch designs into them and then have the experience of taking a plate for themselves. That first time you use

pretty magical, so I'm really looking forward to sharing that excitement."

Jude Ashley Brown is an oil painter with a background in textile design. Inspired by domestic life and female figures, she has a studio based at Godstone House. "This will be my fourth year exhibiting with KOS. I love the way the organisation offers support to artists established and new – in the run-up to the event we'll meet for coffee and share what we've learned with those who may be exhibiting for the first time. KOS is such a great way to dip a toe into the water – a safe place in which to show your work in your own home, in a studio or with a group. And I have meeting visitors. If my work is sold through a third-party gallery, I'll often wonder who actually bought it – with KOS visitors, if they do feel they want to buy something – even if it's just a card – I'm there in person, so I've

just pop in for a look though having seen the KOS banner on the road, equally that's fine. Hearing them say, "We never knew you were here!" is great, because now they do."

Martin Barraud of micro-agency We Make You Think is best known as the installation artist who created the iconic There But Not There project. "I'm taking part for the first time this year from a shared studio in Penhurst. Martin says: "When my neighbour artist Lucy Hemmer Jones previously asked me to join her for this year's event in her studio, I didn't hesitate in saying yes. I'm producing a series of limited-edition conceptual photographs for the KOS event and this is my chance to see in person people's reactions to them, just as I had the chance to see how people reacted to the project's silhouettes of fallen soldiers for There But Not There when they were on display for the Remembrance period in Pembroke Church a few years ago. There's so much fantastic



Look out for Kit Kitchin's striking portraiture



Open Goddess experience, where people have the chance to meet these responsible for what they're seeing, to ask questions and to learn more.

"It's about connecting enthusiastically with the local community, inspiring into that sense of enthusiasm, whether as artist or visitor."

And the visitor's perspective?
 Arts writer **Jane Mahby** has lived in Kent since 2005 and is a regular KOS visitor. "I like that you're walking into a space – whether their home, gallery or shared studio – that's been created by the artist themselves," she says. "I really enjoy learning about the creative process, being able to chat to those behind it and being inspired by lovely things. Plus it's all for free – what more could you ask for?"

KOS runs June 2-18 – look out for guides in local cafes, theatres and cinemas featuring all the artists and details of where they're exhibiting.



Local artist Martin Barraud



Arts writer Jane Mahby



Jude Ashley Brown says KOS offers the chance



Margrid Plunkett is excited to be opening her studio doors to KOS visitors for the first time

Kent Life - May
 Quarter-page ad
 Cost: £183.60

Join us this summer as we celebrate the creative talent across Kent and East Sussex.

Visit our artists & makers, chat about their work, get inspired!

ARTWORK BY KATE PENOYRE

SEOS ARTISTS MAKERS

VISIT: SEOS-ART.ORG

@SEOPENSTUDIOS

Kent Life - June
 Quarter-page ad
 Cost: £183.60

Join us this summer as we celebrate the creative talent across Kent and East Sussex.

Visit our artists & makers, chat about their work, get inspired!

ARTWORK BY ELIZABETH SHEDDIN

SEOS ARTISTS MAKERS

VISIT: SEOS-ART.ORG

@SEOPENSTUDIOS

Kent Life

Ingenu
 Double page spread, Spring issue
 Readership: 15,000+
 Cost: £225

Join us this summer as we celebrate the creative talent across Kent and East Sussex.

Visit our artists and makers, chat about their work, get inspired!

ARTWORK BY KATE PENOYRE

SEOS ARTISTS MAKERS

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

@SEOPENSTUDIOS

spotlight on... art trails & open studios

With the support of the public and thousands of artists, the South East Open Studios 2023 has grown to be one of the biggest open studios events in the UK. Art lovers are encouraged to take part this summer by visiting studios and supporting or exhibiting their work. The event offers a wonderful opportunity to see the work of local artists and makers in their own homes and studios.

South East Open Studios 2023 runs from June 2 to 18, 2023. This exciting event offers a wonderful opportunity to see the work of local artists and makers in their own homes and studios. The event offers a wonderful opportunity to see the work of local artists and makers in their own homes and studios.

SEOS ARTISTS MAKERS

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

@SEOPENSTUDIOS

Sussex Life, June
 Half-page ad
 Readership: 14,972
 Cost: £363.60



SOUTH EAST OPEN STUDIOS

Join us this summer as we celebrate the creative talent across Kent and East Sussex. Visit our artists and makers, chat about their work, get inspired!

JUNE 2 - 18 2023

SEOS ARTISTS MAKERS

DENHAMS AUCTIONEERS & VALUERS

We offer **free** antique valuations at your home, on our premises or by email

An antique clock made in the 18th century. Made for a lady.	An 18th century pocket watch made in London. Made for a lady.	A large antique pocket watch made in London. Made for a lady.	An antique pocket watch made in London. Made for a lady.	An antique pocket watch made in London. Made for a lady.

NEXT AUCTION WEDNESDAY 14th JUNE AT 10:00AM

Call 01403 205699 for an appointment or email your photos to valuations@denhams.com

Sevenoaks Signal, June
 Cost: free coverage

The Sevenoaks
Signal

Issue 14

SEOS ARTISTS MAKERS

Pamela Milne visited Vietnam in January – one of the most colourful places in the world – her paintings are very much inspired by this trip. Pamela loves painting in vibrant colours and identifying patterns in what she sees. Her paintings are built up gradually by looking at shapes and textures, here the arc of the umbrellas has been reflected in the curve of the trees.

Instagram: [milnepamela](#) fb: [pamelamilne](#)

Sue Houghton works in oils and acrylics from her studio in Toys Hill in the Kent countryside. She has always enjoyed sketching and photography to capture the moment. Drawing from an eclectic mix of subjects inspired both locally and from travels at home and abroad, her work reflects enthusiasm and passion for art and her enjoyment of colour and experimentation. Recent subjects have included contemporary scenes from the Kent coast, walking in Italy and some colourful art inspired by Mexico.

[@suehoughton101](http://www.beechwoodgallery.co.uk)

Victoria Lucas Roberts is a glass artist, she produces abstract art forms using both Effetre and Bullseye glass. Her piece here – Zarfenco 01 – is part of a series made with Effetre glass. The Zarfenco and Filigrana rods are hand made in what is called a Hot Shop, they vary in width and are approximately 1 metre long.

www.sorreltglass.com

SEOS ARTISTS MAKERS

SOUTH EAST OPEN STUDIOS

South East Open Studios is taking place from 2 to 18 June 2023, all our artists and makers are looking forward to welcoming visitors to their studios. Look out for the free Guide, see our website for more details www.seos-art.org and watch out for announcements on social media @seopenstudios

Please mention us when responding to adverts

The Sevenoaks Signal **7**

InsideKent, June

Quarter-page ad and half page article

Cost: £106.80

Readership: Readership approx 95,000
in print and 35,000 online



Radio coverage:

We're pleased to say we've had a few radio appearances this month on BBC Radio Kent and Made in Kent, featuring some of our incredibly talented artists!

We've had two BBC Radio Kent interviews since the beginning of June, as well as getting a slot on Sunday's show hosted by Vinca of Loomiere Weaves.

Some links to our coverage are below:

BBC Radio Kent with Leo Ulph, featuring Giles Whitehead's art studio and the white studios in West Malling: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcT6hhChIxw>
Charlotte ([Kara Jewellery by Charlotte](#)) and Suzy ([Suzy Phillips](#)) delivering a fantastic interview with Made in Kent: <https://vimeo.com/834104706?share=copy>