

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Brighton and Hove News
Doors open once more for a 'covid-safe' Artists Open House Winter Festival
Louise Acford
19 November 2020



Doors open once more for a 'covid-safe' Artists Open House Winter Festival

City artists and crafts people are once again exhibiting work as part of the Artists Open Houses Winter Festival.

Despite this year's lockdown restrictions, the event is going ahead in a format adapted for our current circumstances.

Artists from across the city will exhibit online from November 21 but, government guidance permitting, homes will open to shoppers from December 5 until December 13 by appointment only.

The event, which normally runs for three weeks prior to Christmas, has been extended to incorporate the Open House Festival, which takes place every May, but this year was postponed because of the Spring lockdown.



Image: Artist Alej ez's Brighton and Hove Illustrated Alphabet is among the work featured as part of the festival.

Festival director, Judy Stevens, said they had received government funding to help move the festival online and ensure in-person viewings were covid-safe.

"We have followed all the government guidelines. There is an online booking system and at every house there will be the necessary PPE, face masks and hand sanitiser.

"They will be managing visitor flow with necessary social distancing."

The booking system will offer a quiet alternative to the city's retail centres, which are expected to be packed with shoppers once the current lockdown has ended.

Artists will be holding virtual tours and work can be purchased online via the Artists Open House website (aoh.org.uk).



Image: Miladys Parejo is exhibiting lockdown-inspired work as part of the Winter Festival.

The festival will feature art created in response to the pandemic, including Miladys Parejo's 'Aftermath of the Spring Lockdown'.

In addition to the fine art, which is normally the main feature of the May festival, crafts people from around the city will be selling festive goodies and handmade gifts including, in a sign of the times, an array of face masks.

Ms Stevens said she hoped Brighton and Hove shoppers would get behind the city's artists at, what has been, a difficult time.

She said: "The open houses are a major platform for selling their works. Although everyone has had a hard time this year and the creative artists were really affected.

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"It would be great if the city can support artists who have suffered in the last few months."

In a festival first, internationally-acclaimed artist David Shrigley has mentored four University of Brighton Fine Art degree students as they created work specially for the event.

The exhibition, featuring work by Ainoa Burgos Gonzalez, Bradley Smith, Jack Digby and Liberty Cheverall, will be displayed at 15 Brighton Lane throughout the festival.



Image: Artist David Shrigley (top middle) mentors students for the festival via Zoom.

The mentoring was another aspect of life impacted by the pandemic, all the artist's tutorials with the students had to take place via Zoom calls.

Mr Shrigley said: "In spite of the remote interaction, the conversations we had were really enjoyable and the participants were all very generous and thoughtful in the presentation of their work."

"I have my mask ready and am looking forward to seeing the work at the actual exhibition. Making art is so valuable for many people's health and wellbeing and the Artists Open Houses project provides a priceless opportunity for artists to share their work."