



How to prepare for and what to expect from your participation in Open Studios 2009

Think about why you are participating in Open Studios. Are you here for social reasons, so your friends can see your artwork and studio? Are you here to make sales? Are you participating because you are interested in being a more active part of the Boulder art community and in promoting this community? Are you opening your studio to get direct feedback on how people respond to your work? Knowing your goals will help you get the most out of this wonderful event.

GETTING READY

Marketing the Event

- Talk it up! Tell everyone you know about your participation in Open Studios.
- Develop a mailing list of friends, collectors, galleries, media, and business associates and send them announcements.
- Distribute flyers or postcards advertising the event to your neighbors and friends. We recommend www.vistaprint.com and www.overnightprints.com for producing high-quality postcards.

Editing your Work

- Show what you feel proud of, whether it is old or new.
- Have work in a variety of prices if possible, so there is something in everyone's budget.
- This may be a good time to show studies and more experimental work.

Pricing your Work

- Decide on prices beforehand.
- Make the prices clearly visible, on a card or sheet, with title, medium and price. Most people are afraid to ask about prices, so make it easy for potential customers.

Thinking about Discounting

- Decide beforehand which pieces have firm prices and which, if any, could be discounted.
- Decide the lowest amount you will accept so you will be prepared to negotiate.
- Don't be afraid to stick to your prices...but be prepared to justify why it is a fair price.

Exhibiting the Artwork to show your work to its best advantage

As stated in our application, "Participating artists must have a minimum of 12 pieces to be exhibited during Open Studios, (6 for labor intensive media)."

If you sell pieces the first weekend, ask the buyer if you can keep it through the second weekend. Put a red dot on the piece to indicate that it is sold. This will show your customers that your art is selling, but will give them an opportunity to see more of your work. You need to be carefully that attendees are able to see enough of your work on the second weekend.

2-dimensional work

- Mat, frame or mount on boards
- Display it on walls or easels
- Display in racks or bins
- Protect all paper work from the many hands that will want to touch it by using clear plastic protectors, shrink wrap or by offering your visitors cotton gloves (available at photography stores)
- Keep framing clean, simple and professional
- Display a portfolio of other work.

3-dimensional work

- Display on table or pedestals
- Leave enough room for people to pass without touching work
- Display a portfolio of other work.

Creating Handouts... these can include:

Resumes	Copies of publicity you may have received	An artist statement	have photos or color copies of selected pieces
Gallery cards if you work with a gallery	Include as many photos as possible in handouts	Your business cards	Cards of friends/artists

Prepare your educational component for your visitors

As stated in our application, "Participating artists must agree to provide an educational component for visitors by demonstrating their creative process and materials, or displaying the basic steps in completing their work. This educational component is in addition to discussion of artist's work with visitors."

Offering Payment Options

- Consider offering payment options such as a layaway agreement
- Get access to a credit card machine through a friend or gallery
- Have signage indicating payment options (i.e., Credit Cards, Layaway)

Resources for obtaining merchant credit card service

Open Studios does not endorse any particular company, but artists have recommended these:

Wells Fargo (Boulder)

Kathleen Cogan, 303-441-0272. Several artists used Wells Fargo at the Juried Art Fair this year.

Paymentech

Steve Bashkin, Territory Manager, Tempe Proactive Sales Chase 800-619-1982 ext. 7416

steven.bashkin@chasepaymentech.com

You may also want to contact your own bank, as many will give existing customers good deals.

Collecting Sales Tax

Know the tax rules and how they apply. You are required to collect sales tax.

If you are licensed, questions may be directed to the City of Boulder Sales Tax Office, (303) 441-3050.

- Tax within Boulder City/County is 8.16%
- Tax within Boulder County but not within the city limits is 4.75%
- Services are not taxed (i.e., delivery fees, gift wrap)
- Use sales receipts
- Provide a copy of this to the buyer for their records
- Record addresses of all buyers

For more details and links to sales tax forms, see the Artist Resources page our website.

Having Supplies on Hand

- Receipt book
- Red dot stickers (to indicate SOLD pieces which are still on display)

- Change for cash purchases
- Guest book...encourage visitors to sign!
- Bags, bubble wrap, newspaper, boxes, etc. to carry work away
- Artist Name Tag (provided by Open Studios at the art drop off)

Preparing your Space

Be aware that whatever visitors see, they will feel invited to explore. Keep this in mind as you adjust your studio.

Outside

- Use the yellow Open Studios yard signs to identify your studio. Write your studio number with a NON-permanent maker (Marks-A-Lot) and draw directional arrows on these signs.
- Take your signs down each evening and between the two weekends (required by law)
- Consider having balloons to draw attention to your studio
- Consider parking availability
- Be sure walkway to studio is well marked and clear of clutter
- Talk to your neighbors ahead of time about this event, and tell them to expect traffic... especially if small children play near or in your driveway

Inside

- Clean your studio
- Clearly label any areas which are off limits
- Provide good lighting
- Leave enough room for twenty people to circulate freely
- Plan what, if any, *non-alcoholic* refreshments will be served
- Consider having soft music
- If applicable, set up an inviting space for your children's art activity
- Remove all toxic materials and other potential dangers, especially anything posing danger to the young children visiting you

Finding Helpers!

- For set-up and clean-up help
- To give you a bathroom or lunch break
- To help visitors while you do your demonstration
- To help write up sales or pack sold artwork while you interact with visitors

OPENING YOUR STUDIO

Just a reminder, you must be in your studio ready to receive visitors during the Open Studio hours!

Creating a good first impression

- Create a friendly atmosphere inside and out.
- Place the work in a way that is easy to view
- Provide simple beverages and snacks
- Greet each visitor.
- Be warm and friendly
- If you are busy, at least acknowledge each visitor with a nod or smile
- Help people know who the artist is.
- Introduce yourself and welcome people to your studio
- Wear a name tag indicating you are the artist
- Assistants should also wear name tags that say "Artist Assistant" (provided by Open Studios)

Interacting with Visitors

- Relax, be natural, smile
- Explain where to find things
- Ask icebreaking questions
- Take the initiative
- Focus. Who will you spend time with?

Talking about your Art

- How it is produced
- What inspires you
- Don't assume visitors know what you know about art.

Demonstrating your Technique

- Have your tools visible and let people try it! Have supplies that they can handle.
- Indicate on mailers if you are doing a demo and if it begins at a certain time.

Dealing with Difficult People

- Be politely assertive.
- Develop ways to excuse yourself and breakaway from an overbearing visitor.
- Discuss a plan with a helper.
- Direct the person's focus back to the art and away from you.
- Explain that you are offering a demonstration, not teaching a class.

Listening to the Visitor

- Has the visitor ever purchased art before? What kind?
- Have they ever seen your work before?
- Why did they decide to come on this tour?
- Are they spending time with a certain piece?

Selling your Work

- Presume that a person will buy.
- Leave the details (framing options, delivery) until after the commitment has been made.
- Focus on what is available; don't make them interested in unavailable work.

Closing the Sale

- Keep the piece until it is paid in full.
- Don't push, but try to close the sale before they leave the studio.
- Suggest taking a piece "on approval" if they seem hesitant. Purchase price could be refunded if piece doesn't work.

Following up

- Send a "thank you" note.
- Add visitors to your mailing list

HAVE A GREAT OPEN STUDIOS EXPERIENCE!