

Colchester Art Society

President: Simon Carter

Chairman: Bryan Whiteley

Ipswich Art Society

President: Jude Lockie

Chairman: Stephen Cassidy

“Borders”, a joint project between Colchester & Ipswich Art Societies

Dear Art Society Member,

Thank you to all of you who were able to come to the meeting on Saturday 29th February at Firstsite.

As you know the response to the project has been much greater than we dared hope and it was clear that there were several key decisions to be made, especially regarding selection. It was important to us that we were able to listen to your views and achieve a consensus on the next steps.

The meeting opened with a welcome to all and an introduction of the organisers, followed by a showing of the trailer for “*Stour Surrounding*”. This excellent film by Jevan Watkins Jones has been shown in Colchester, Ipswich and Felixstowe but it is hoped that there will be further showings for those who missed it first time around.

Kirsty White, from Firstsite, touched briefly on the background to the project and the desire on the part of Firstsite to support artistic life in East Anglia and to build upon the relationship with Colchester Art Society. The proposed exhibition fits neatly into the Firstsite programme for 2020/21 of *Landscape and Wellbeing*.

Simon Carter outlined the *Brief* and responded to the many questions raised by the audience, especially regarding how we ensure that we are able to exhibit all the submitted works. The plan currently being worked on is to mount more than one exhibition, each comprising a broad selection from the works submitted and ensuring that between these shows, all works would be exhibited at least once. Each exhibition would be designed as a coherent whole and selection will be made on this artistic aim, rather than on some measure of merit. An alternative suggestion was that perhaps Firstsite could accommodate two shorter exhibitions rather than one long show. Stephen reminded the meeting, that although being shown at Firstsite was important for some members, it was the coming together of the two societies which gave rise to the project in the first instance and that it remains an essential element. It is important, in the spirit of the show, that there are exhibitions in both Essex and Suffolk. Therefore, to remain true to the original concept we are convinced that the aims will be better served by having 2 exhibitions of equal stature, one at Firstsite starting on the 18th July and one in Ipswich possibly starting towards the end of July 2020.

Artists are reminded that Firstsite charges 50% on all sales and this should be reflected in the price of your work.

In bringing the members together it was proposed that we hold a *Big Draw* at Flatford on Saturday 16th May, between 10.30 and 4pm. The idea is for as many artists as possible to gather by the banks of the Stour, near the NT property, to draw and record their response to the landscape in whatever medium they choose. Artists will need to bring their materials, food, drink and a chair. At approximately 1.30 the artists will retire to a field, set aside for the occasion, where they can eat their picnic, look at one another's work and socialise. It is possible that framed studies and drawings from the session could be included in a separate exhibition, possibly in the *Boathouse Gallery*, Flatford in November, courtesy of Sarah Milne. The car park at Flatford can accommodate 300 cars or so but you can cut down on parking fees and carbon emissions by sharing transport. The car park is free to NT members. There are also toilet facilities and a café on the site.

A film is being made by Noah Carter of the whole project, starting with the meeting at Firstsite and including the *Big Draw* and the exhibition itself. It is hoped that a booklet can be produced to mark the occasion as well. It will not be possible to include a reproduction of every work but each artist involved in the project will be named. If any artist has any text about the Stour or borders generally, a poem or recipe please send to bryanwhiteley@hotmail.co.uk for consideration for inclusion.

Good quality images of your work are required for publicity purposes and should be sent to meet the end of May deadline. This is to allow for preparation of the artwork for the booklet. We expect to print around 250 copies and sell at £10 each in order to cover the production costs.

For guidelines on how to photograph your art work please go to the RA website or contact John Milne at Ardleigh Studios. Examples of his work can be found on www.johnmilne.photography. John charges £25 per half hour session for as many pictures as he can fit in the time. If you are interested you can contact him at admin@johnmilne.photography.com or text 07973 839682.

A short description about your work will be needed at the time of submission. A simple form will be sent out with the details required nearer the time. You will need to supply the title, medium, size and price and where appropriate, an approximate location of the work; where on the Stour it is based or the place it was made.

A number of smaller galleries are interested in showing work from the project. It is quite likely that they will select work from the Firstsite exhibition and charge commission on all sales.

The important dates for your diary are:

Saturday 16th May for the Big Draw at Flatford between 10.30 and 4pm.

Sunday 31st May is the absolute deadline for completing your work and submitting your form and image.

We hope that all of these arrangements will go ahead as planned but the spread of the coronavirus means that they may well be subject to change or even cancellation. We will keep everybody informed of any changes but if you are forced to self-isolate, at least you have something to work towards!

Thank you to everybody who has responded so positively and for the many appreciative comments that we have received.

Best wishes,

Simon, Jude, Bryan & Stephen

March 2020