Peacock Arts Trail - Guide To Using Hashtags

What is a hashtag?
A hashtag is a key word or phrase preceded by a # symbol to create a thread or conversation.

Why use a hashtag?
You would use a hashtag within your post to categorize topics, bring conversations together and encourage exchanges & interaction with other social media users.
A hashtag is not monitored by the Algorithms that control how far a post is seen so using hashtags effectively can give your post the potential to be seen by more users.
It's most effective on instagram & Twitter, less so on Facebook.

Only you can add a hashtag:
No one else can tag your post to a hashtag, only you can.
If I write in your comments – 'ohh this is a great post, you should use #peacock-studios so others can see it' your post still won't show under the 'peacock-studios' hashtag if I search for it. But if you add the # into the main body of your text (by editing it) or simply add it as a later comment, then it will show up.

Creating a hashtag:
By putting the # symbol before a word or phrase you create a hashtag e.g. #handmade
You can use a phrase by running words together e.g. #madebyhand , or you can split words by using an underscore e.g. #cherishandrelish_august
An underscore is the only other character that you can use without breaking the link, inserting dashes, hyphens and spaces won't work.

You can use numbers, but not on their own (#123) or at the start (#2017peacock)   but in the middle or at the end works e.g. #peacockartstrail2017 is fine.

Where to use:
You can use a hashtag in the middle of your post or tweet, but avoid over use as it spoils the flow and makes it harder to read. If you want to add more, do so at the end. Remember that on Twitter you are restricted to 140 characters, so use your # wisely.
Here are some examples of great tweets from our Rachael Holtom:
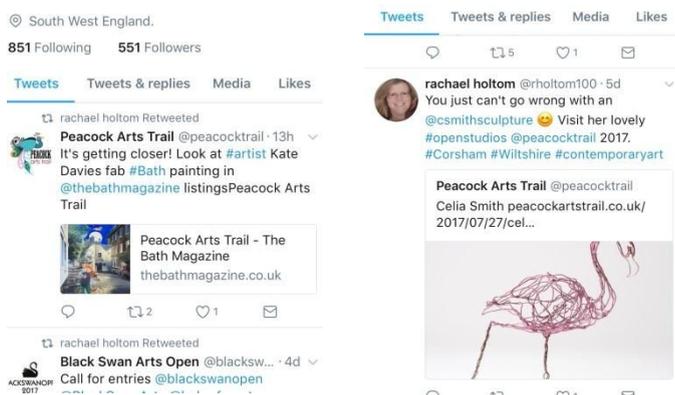
On Instagram you can use up to 30 hashtags, beyond that they won't get converted to a link. 30 is a lot, between 6-12 is good number. That's still a lot to include in the main body of your text (caption). You can include them at the end of your caption, but if you're using quite a few it's a lot for people to

scroll through. Instead you can add your hashtags into the comments below, that way, once you get a few comments, the hashtag one will not be visible but will still be doing its work.

Here's an example of how that looks:
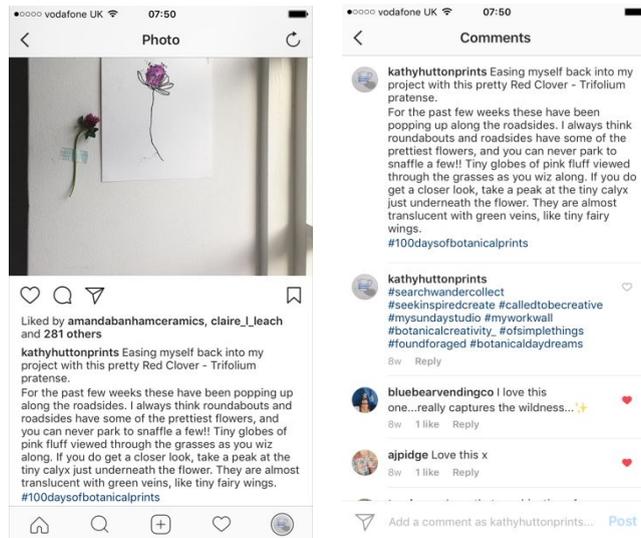
There are lots of free resources on the internet for using Hashtags, especially for Instagram. Meighan O'Toole gives a clear insight into why and how to use them.
http://www.meighanotoole.com/using-hashtags

Types of Hashtags: Specific and theme and mood.

Here's a good explanation by Meighan O'Toole:

There are over 40 billion photos on Instagram as of today. Some hashtag pools have hundreds of thousands of images, leaving the images that get tagged to be swallowed up almost immediately. While it's important to use popular hashtags, as there's no way around it, it's also important to use niche hashtags.

Example: A macramé artist should use the #macrame hashtag for obvious reasons, but the #macrame hashtag has 254k images in it. So while it's important she use that hashtag, she may also want to use the hashtag #modernmacrame which has just over 10k images. This allows her image to get into a popular pool, but also adds her image to a pool that isn't as highly trafficked with images and where more people within her industry are looking.

The best way to find new hashtags that are beyond the specific is to research: look at people you follow who are working in the same medium or discipline as you, if their posts are receiving lots of likes & comments, look at the hashtags they are using.

Creating lists:
You can create lists of hashtgs and organise them by topic & store then in Notes on your phone were you can simply copy & paste them into your posts as needed.

Mix it up:
Try to avoid using the same hashtags every time you post, have a few that you can select from. After all your posts will differ each time, so should your hashtags to keep them relevant.
If you constantly use the same group of hashtags, the Instagram algorithm may spot this and presume you are a Robot (media bot) and will restrict the way it pushes your post out (some people / big

companies use 'bots' to create content & post). So although the algorithm cant effect the way a hashtag appears when the #thread is searched, it can affect how many of your followers see your post.

When you search a Hashtag in Instagram you will see all the related tagged posts displayed in the grid. The top 9 performing posts within that # appear first, below that they appear by most recent. The ones that appear in the top 9 are not necessarily the posts with the most likes. The speed with which the likes were received and the number of comments factor in the calculation, comments carrying more weight than likes alone. To get your post featured in the top 9 grid means that anyone searching that # will see your post first, this is how you can gain more followers, through genuine interaction from likeminded people. By researching for young and relevant hashtags, you can give your post the best chance of being seen by a wider audience.

Another way hashtags can be used is for mini project which create little communities, motivation and inspiration. Hashtags such as #100dayproject #sketchbookproject #meetthemaker #21daysinmyartworld etc.

Here's a few Hashtags on Instagram that might give you some ideas and may be useful for some of you on the run up to the arts trail:

#myworkwall created by illustrator Helen Stephens @helenstephenslion currently has 2.5k posts so it's still small enough to be 'noticed in' It's exactly what it says on the tin - a picture of your current inspiration or a few pieces that you may have pinned up on your studio wall.

#artistsbooks 9k, #markmaking 140k, 22k, artistsathome .5k, #allthingsbotanical 44k, #contemporarystainedglass .5k, #studioscenes 112k, #heritagecraft 1.5k, #modernmaker 88k, #abstractlandscape 22k

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