



Hints and tips for making the trail work for you ... and your visitors!

Here, we share some of your thoughts that you kindly gave us when you registered. Then, there are some of the Peacock Chicks' thoughts. However, there are right or wrong ways; the great thing about the trail is that everyone of you is unique!



Elizabeth Barnikel

Make sure that the signage is really good to the studio. Have lots of cards to sell.



Kate Davies

In order to make a success of an event, you have to shamelessly and tirelessly advertise and promote it to everyone you know using social media, word of mouth etc.

Working on the premise - if you don't tell the world, how will it know such a fantastic event is on?!



Humphry Barnikel

Make sure it is easy to find your studio (lots of signage at oad junctions etc). Put up notices and balloons to make it visible. Have a preview evening for friends (with wine, eats etc).



Annie Mulholland

Enjoy putting your exhibition together. make it yours and show people all the love and care you have put into it.



Kathy Hutton

Make your venue as welcoming as possible.

Consider having sketchbooks accessible - people like to see your thought process and experiments, its interesting for them to be able to 'discover' little bits of information for themselves.

If possible allow them to 'have a go' its all part of the experience for them.



Mary Quarmby

Just enjoy the experience and remember that some people are nervous about entering your space.



Claire Baker

Stay open when you say you will be open, don't rely on others to do your marketing, make your venue obvious, be happy, smile & engage with everybody, enjoy it.



Hermione Skrine

Leave people in peace to look. Sometimes the quiet ones come back to buy. Have some cards for people to buy if they can't run to a painting.



Jan Nesbitt

Be professional but open to people. Share the enjoyment, encourage and inspire other and potential artists.



Philippa Macarthur

Enjoy! However lacking in confidence you feel, most people are so interested and positive about what you do!



Chris Dunn

Make sure artwork is well presented and you have a clear idea of what to say about each individual piece. Use social media to promote your venue as much as you can.



David Norfolk

Get feedback from friends, make sure that you attend to details of presentation etc.



Emelie Hryhoruk

Work hard, advertise, reach out of your comfort zone and have faith. This is my first time exhibiting in the Trail, and it has been such a wonderful journey already.



Cheryl Cork

I would suggest that being part of a group exhibition can be more advantageous in many ways compared to exhibiting alone. I have already met some very encouraging and helpful members of the group in my enquiries.



Chris Draper

Enjoy showcasing your work. Be ready to chat to lots of people and also answer similar questions several times. Try and get out to see some other artists work, so maybe get someone to look after your studio work for a bit.



Anya Beaumont

If you decide to run a workshop make sure it accessible and easy to drop into. Running something that has to be timed and needs booking in advance makes it much more complicated and stressful to manage.



Lisa Metcalfe, Huntingdon Gallery

Spread the word, get the flyers and brochures out and make sure you put up your own flyers in local shops & cafes. Email invites and keep pushing Facebook



Sow's Ear

Do it! At worst you get to be in your studio for a week. How can that be bad?



Susie Brooks

Everyone matters equally. There is no hierarchy of artist or visitor. Every visitor or contact brings a new tree of opportunities.

**Rachael Holtom,
Peacock Publicity Person**

I'm not an artist (at all!) but love art and have visited most of the local art trails, sometimes as a normal punter but some times in my role as a 'secret shopper' for Lacock Abbey where I organised their outdoor art trails which, I know, really helped some artists with their careers.

I've never had a negative arts trail visit. Some are better and some are ... a bit strange, but they all make up the rich tapestry of a day on an arts trail!

My first top tip is to make your venue stand out. Jane Scott in Holt is a great example. Her exuberant display of bunting, flags and banners matches her personality completely and extends a welcome to anyone who drives by. Even if you can't stop then, you know that something arty is going on! At Lacock, when we evaluated an event like outdoor theatre, it was the roadside banners that produced the most ticket sales!

Having said that, social media is not all 'about what someone had for breakfast' but a really effective (and free!!) method of advertising. Set up an account a month in advance, follow other artists on the trail and elsewhere, follow the Peacock Trail and like or retweet their posts. Use # to flag up your work to people across the globe. See our Artist Resources page for tips - <https://peacockartstrail.co.uk/artist-resources/>

Having a friendly physical welcome display outside your venue makes it easier for people to step confidently up to your door. Not being sure of who is on the other side of the door works both ways!

Once in, make sure your venue is fairly tidy and I hate to say it, smells nice. Two venues I visited recently did not and that was an impression that sticks. Brew some coffee, open windows, maybe have an air freshener of whatever sort you like.

It's up to you how much 'chat' you give to your guests. Play it by ear, look at their body language. Some love a good chat, others (as Hermione says above) prefer to be left to their own thoughts.

Please do at least say hello! My husband and I visited one venue where we wandered around the studio knowing full well that the artist was eating lunch watching TV but never came to say hello - a strange feeling! At another one, an artist continued chatting to a friend about a mutual friend's cancer treatment, although sympathetic, we felt as if we were trespassing!

Have a little mental list of conversation starters. It can get a bit wearing to be asked the same questions all the time - although I know they are hard to think of.

Be prepared for someone to pop up by mistake at a time outside your venue opening hours and think how you would deal with this. I am guilty of doing this with one lovely lady in Chippenham. She graciously let me in to browse. I later asked one of the exhibitors to display at Lacock.

You never know who is going to walk through that door. If they do not buy there and then, they might buy or commission from you later or they might (like me) work in the arts and heritage sector and add the precious brochure to their files for future reference. I was also seeing who I knew I could imagine working with.

To cake or not to cake... that is totally up to you. It's nice to be offered, but not crucial. There is also so much cake one can eat (even me!).

Another good idea, but has to feel natural to you, is to have a hands-on activity. My husband and I had some lovely 'us' time on a school day making jelly prints with a Peacock Artist who let us play in her studio with no feeling of being hurried out. I did not buy anything, but the goodwill I felt means that I remember she runs workshops (which I know from that small experience will be great) and retweet her posts and recommend her to others.

Above all, be yourself! Relax and enjoy sharing your art. You never know what will happen next ...