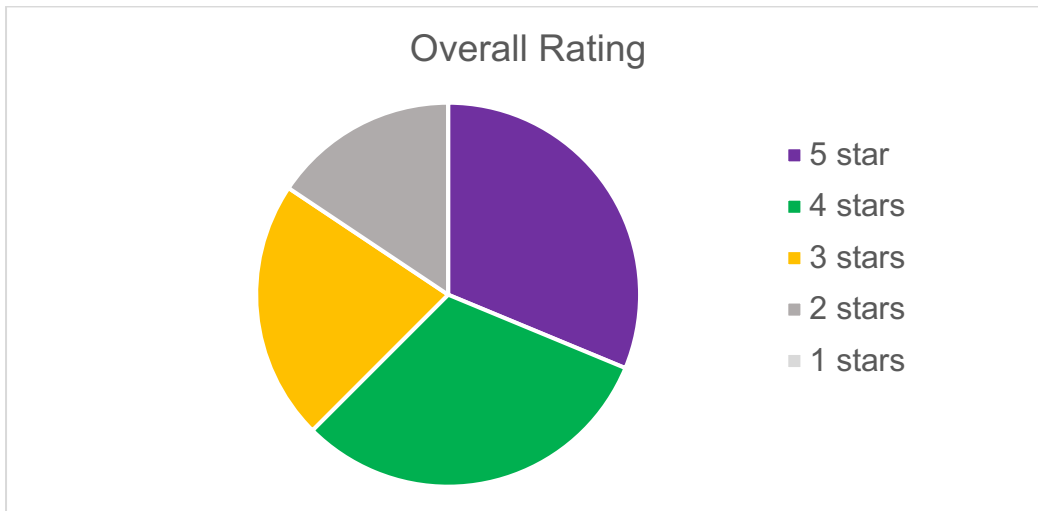


Open Studios 2024 feedback survey

58 studios and invited to take part in the survey. 32 artists and venues responded to the survey. This is a lower response rate than previous years

Star ratings “How was the open studios for you?” – 32 responses, with 63% rating the event as 4 or 5 stars – a better figure than 2023. No one rated the event one star and 15% rated it as two stars.



Organisation and promotion

	Poor	So so	Very good	Excellent
Communications before and during the event	1	2	24	5
The web site	0	7	19	6
Printed guide	0	6	17	9
Poster	2	9	13	8
Coverage in the media	4	13	10	2
Coverage on social media	1	3	18	8

Overall feedback on the organisation, communication and promotion of the event was very strong and had better ratings compared to 2023. Cells in the table above highlighted green show the improvement compared to 2023 (a reduction in poor scores and increased positive scores).

With the new arrangements for social media support we were able to run the Instagram weekly takeovers by member artists in the lead up to the event. Activity during the open studios was not as intensive as previous years.

The overall print run for printed guides was increased this year and the proportion allocated for local distribution was higher than previous years. The number of studios reporting having too few guides was significantly lower than last year and more studios reported having too many guides. There were some issues with distribution of the printed guides to studios in the Oban area.

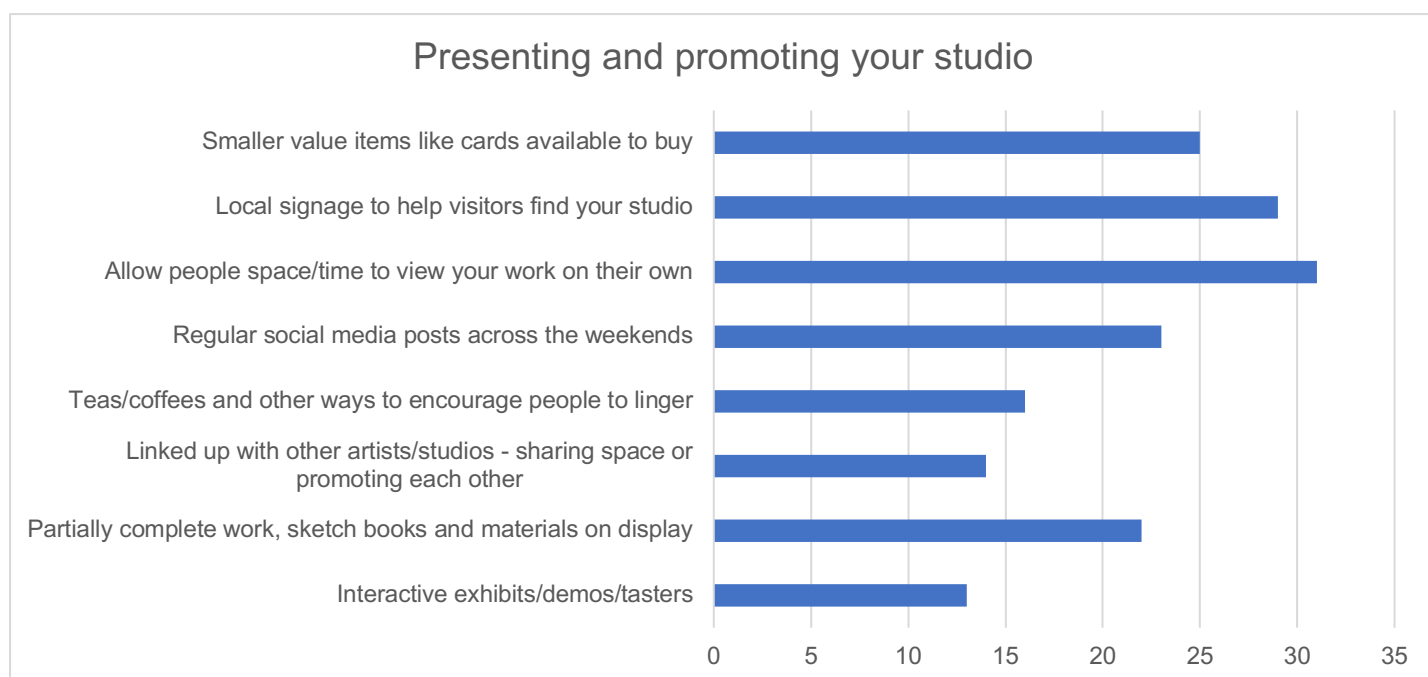
Information was also shared on the locations covered by Direct Distribution to help studios identify additional outlets for the printed guides.

	I had too few	I had the right amount	I had too many
Printed guide	4	19	9
Posters	1	14	16

There is strong support for the folded map format of the printed guide. The graphic on the front cover was well received this year with 85% liking this compared to 63% last year. The information about when each studio was open still needs to be improved. Feedback from visitors was also generally positive and the new section on accessibility was liked by more than half the respondents.

Marketing of the prize draw needs to be clearer in future.

Feedback on the social media support was very positive and stronger than last year. There were some comments that picked out particular points to consider for how we develop this activity in future.



Graph shows detail from the 32 artists that responded to this question. Other specific feedback from studios on presenting and promoting the studio/venue included:

“I had a music event at my studio to give people more reason to come”

“We did an opening night which I think helped spread the word. Would def do workshops next year!”

“Created a local leaflet highlighting venues within a small distance.”

“Own signage - not using studio number or ArtMap name as these are only meaningful to the minority who are already in the know. Open Studio or Art Show etc more meaningful.”

“Personal invitations to a private view.”

“Local signage and leaflets were mentioned much more than social media when I asked visitors how they knew about artmap.”

Visitor numbers and sales

Visitors – 30 studios reported detail of visitor numbers. Total visits ~3,722 with an average number of visitors of 124, which is lower than 2023 and slightly below the 2022 average. The weather was particularly poor during the week and this is likely to have depressed visitors numbers.

Sales of £61,368 for the 25 studios that reported sales. Average sales for those who reported figures was ~ £2,455, which is the highest figure we’ve ever recorded in the eight years we have collected data from artists after the event.

The high average sales per studio is very encouraging and indicates a strong continued interest in the open studios event from members of the public. The record number of studios this year also shows that the event is valued by the artists taking part.

Using the open studios as a springboard

In previous years we have picked up anecdotal feedback about artists taking on commissions from visitors to their studio. This year we asked, *“Did you make any useful connections, take commissions for work or receive invitations to attend other events?”*

25 artists responded to this question. Of those, 12 received commissions for work, 4 were asked to run workshops and 13 made useful networking connections with other artists, including a couple who may have opportunities for collaborations with other artists.

What did you learn?

We included a question again to encourage reflection on the event to help artists think about improvements for future events and to share experience with others. These are a selection of the comments.

“The signage was key being so isolated on Luing. I put 11 A2/A3 between the A816 and my studio. Some visitors had faithfully followed them all the way without having

any idea about ArtMap. I didn't get enough printed matter into holiday accommodation."

"I sold during the week between the weekends . So I think I will say by appointment during that time next year"

"It's worth the initial stress and worry, you get alot more out of it than just sales"

"Alot of visitors hadn't seen or read the brochure, or if they had, hadn't digested the detail: so simplification is key. I will just have a big open/ closed sign next year, and not do "by appointment", just do open 2-5pm in th interim week"

"Can never tell if a) there will be any visitors or b) any sales from one year to next."

"We will have to make directions to our studio clearer — perhaps with a map of Kilmartin to our 'hidden lane'."

"Getting things sorted earlier, encourage them to use the space more as a studio, have more events."

"The site of the venue is very important and signage is crucial. We need more banners explaining the red dots."

"Signage, signage, signage!"

"Parking got quite congested from time to time, so I'll be giving that a bit more thought next year."

"More street signage, more work"

"I would make smaller affordable mounted and packaged work"

"visitors remarked (unprompted) that signage wasn't clear in Lochgilphead - good in other places."

"i would ask for more help with road signage and leaflet distribution (I found this exhausting and way out of my energy range to do alone and with health issues) , not worry about buying in cakes etc to offer as most people want to eat at Tarbert, get the pricing out on small items right at the beginning (ie try and be more prepared in advance!), accept all offers of help! talk with other artists at every opportunity"

"Blg paintings (over £250) didn't sell - cards sold well - small items of interest will sell well."

"The bank holiday monday was a very quiet day despite improved weather. A number of ArtMap participants had posted on social media that Sunday was the last day which didn't help those who were open on Monday. The friday before Artmap started (16th) was busier without the additional Artmap signage. having the long weekend run Friday to Sunday would be better than Saturday to Monday. Many holidaymakers are arriving and leaving on Saturdays so Friday catches the ones about to leave and Sunday gets the ones who have just arrived the day before, but

on Bank Holiday Mondays a lot of people are leaving. As Artspace Oban is open every day we just need to put out our additional signage a day or two earlier. To make opening times clearer we will create an Artmap related webpage on our website and a QR code linking to it will be on our publicity materials next year. We intend to create a physically signposted walking route between Artspace Oban and Rockfield next year. We will consider promoting taster activities.”

“I may have rushed people into looking at the studio set up and process bit without letting them have a good look at the work itself.”

“Visitor numbers and sales are highly dependent on the weather. Bad weather this year.”

“Hours are too long. I have said it before. 11 till 4pm would be better”

“Exterior signage is absolutely key. People stayed much longer than I expected and were very engaged. The short film attracted a lot of attention. It was good to share with another artist”

“I loved it, it was an incredible first experience and am really glad to have taken part. The support from Brian and other artists was invaluable and greatly appreciated. I would encourage all artists who have to do it alone to get in touch with others and utilise as many offers of help as possible :)”

Visitor feedback

The prize draw included some questions to get feedback from visitors to the studios. Only 32 visitors entered the prize draw, lower than we expected. Of the 32, just over half had visited the opens studios in previous years, 60% were from Argyll and Bute and a quarter were from outside Scotland. Comments were overwhelmingly positive with the main suggestion for changes relating to clarity of opening times.

And finally...

There was quite a lot of detail in the responses to the final question – a good sign that Artmap Argyll is valued by the artists taking part. Themes from the comments focused on raising the profile of Artmap, the timing of the event, encouraging people to travel between studios and the value of the WhatsApp chat.

There were also thanks for the voluntary input from Artmap members and the management committee to organise the event and Gillian for the social media support.

Thank you to everyone who provided feedback. The detail helps us to plan the event for next year.