

## ARTS Obispo's Open Studios Art Tour Frequently Asked Questions

**What:** The San Luis Obispo County **Open Studios Art Tour**, a program of ARTS Obispo, takes place over two weekends in October each year. Free to the public, fine artists and crafters open their studios to showcase their art and share their process. Visitors create their own self-guided tour using the printed, downloadable or mobile-friendly catalog.

**Who:** Fine artists/crafters who live or work in San Luis Obispo County, or within 20 miles of the SLO County line, may apply for the 2017 **Open Studios Art Tour**. In order for artists from outside SLO County to participate, they must share a studio in SLO County, with a SLO County artist. All participants must be ARTS Obispo members at the Artist level or higher.

**When:** The 2017 **Open Studios Art Tour** will take place Saturday and Sunday, October 14/15 & Saturday and Sunday, October 21/22, 10am to 5pm. Artists have the choice of being open one or both weekends.

**Where:** Studios are open throughout San Luis Obispo County both weekends.

**Bonus:** Participating 2017 Open Studios Art Tour artists have the option to show in a spring bonus weekend May 5/6, **2018** (just before Mother's Day next year!) at *no additional cost*.

### ***How can I apply?***

[Click here](#) for the link to the online application or you can find the link in the Documents & Links box on the Open Studios Art Tour Participant Page.

### ***When is the deadline to apply for the 2017 Open Studios Art Tour?***

The deadline for applying at the Early Bird rate is April 21, 2017; final applications are due by May 15, 2017.

### ***Does my art qualify/will I be accepted?***

- The work of new applicant artists is screened for quality.
- Studios that are unknown to ARTS Obispo are screened for public safety.

#### ***Eligible artists must also:***

- Be members in good standing at the \$60 level ARTS Obispo membership or higher.
- Post your profile with images/videos on the ARTS Obispo Art Directory.
- Live in San Luis Obispo County or live within a 20 mile radius. For those artists that live outside the county, they must show their art at a SLO County artist studio.

### ***How much does it cost?***

- 1.) Applicants must be a current member of ARTS Obispo at the \$60 Artist level or higher. To become a member, [click here](#) or visit artsobispo.org and click on "Donate" in the top right corner of the website.
- 2.) Early Bird application, February 15 to April 21, 2017 is \$150; late application from April 22 to May 15, 2017 is \$200.

Note: Application fees are non-refundable. If an artist is not accepted, fees will be returned.

### ***Is the spring bonus weekend the same format as the regular Open Studios Art Tour?***

Yes, there will be a mobile-friendly Tour map and the fall catalogs will identify those artists participating next May. Visitors will be encouraged to save the catalogs for the spring show. Artists applying to the 2017 Tour will have the option to show during the spring bonus weekend, May 5/6, **2018**, at *no additional cost*. Artists must remain at the same location as the fall 2017 Open Studios Art Tour.

### ***Is the fee reduced if I participate with a group of artists or if I choose to participate only one weekend?***

No. Each artist receives equal publicity in the catalog and marketing materials and, therefore, must be a current ARTS Obispo member AND submit their own application and pay the participation fee. There is a space on the application form to note if you are participating with other artists.

### ***What do I need to do to complete the application form?***

Before you begin, make sure you have a high-quality digital image that is at least 1,500px on the shortest side to upload. If you are unsure what size file to provide, submit the largest file available (no larger than 10mb, however). For all of the requirements and recommendations for the catalog image, read the **Catalog Image Specs** document found in the Documents & Links box at: [artsobispo.org/open-studios-art-tour-participants](http://artsobispo.org/open-studios-art-tour-participants).

Also, have your State Seller's Permit number handy as you must provide it on the form. If you don't have a permit, visit [boe.ca.gov/info/reg.htm](http://boe.ca.gov/info/reg.htm) to register online. (It's free and easy.)

The online form ([click here](#)) is easy to complete and includes a section to browse your computer and upload your image. Be sure to complete any field with an asterisk (\*) as the form won't record if you have missed any. After completing the form, you may pay by credit/debit card or PayPal. If you would prefer to pay by check, you may mail it to: ARTS Obispo, 1123 Mill Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. However, we must receive your check within one week of your application. (If we don't, you will need to complete the application form again.)

### ***What do you mean by a high-quality image?***

The image you submit will be used in the catalog and other Open Studio's marketing materials and publicity efforts. It is your most visible marketing tool and the primary way visitors select which studios to visit. Consider having your art photographed by a professional photographer.

### ***I don't understand technology; can I apply in person or mail an application?***

The applications are online **only**. If you are having difficulties completing the form, try to find a friend or family member to help you. ARTS Obispo staff can also help over the phone or you may make an appointment to come into the office and complete the form with staff's help.

### ***Why do I need to have a profile on ARTS Obispo's Arts Directory?***

- It is a successful marketing tool for you to use to build your art business and reach customers.
- Many potential customers and business (including Art After Dark venues) review the Directory for purchasing art or having exhibitions.
- You may show up to 15 images/videos of your work in each of the mediums you work in giving Tour visitors a better sense of your art.
- A link to your website will be included in your profile.

Note: There is a [Quick Start Guide](#) online to help you produce your profile. ARTS Obispo staff can also assist you if you need help. Simply email [office@artsobispo.org](mailto:office@artsobispo.org) or call 805-544-9251.

### ***I am new to the Tour, do you provide training?***

ARTS Obispo staff is available to answer your questions anytime. Also, look for workshops for first-timers on studio preparation and marketing suggestions. (The workshops are also beneficial for veterans!)

### ***I would like to participate, but I don't have a space where the public can visit. Do you provide a location or can I show my work at a business?***

This is an Open **Studios** Art Tour. Many artists share their space and visitors like to go to locations where there are multiple artists. If you would like to find a studio where an artist is looking to share, visit ARTS Obispo's Want Ad page at [artsobispo.org/want-ads](http://artsobispo.org/want-ads). Artists that would like to share their space can post their classified on the Arts Calendar at [artsobispo.org/calendar](http://artsobispo.org/calendar).

Since the concept of the program is **studios**, artists are not allowed to show at a business.

### ***Do I have to demonstrate my artistic process?***

Participating artists are not required to demonstrate; however, it is a benefit to you to show the value of your work to Tour-goers. Actual demonstrations, storyboards, showing a work-in-progress you can discuss are all ways to show your process. If you choose to demonstrate, your listing will include a working studio symbol.

### ***What does ARTS Obispo provide for my application fee?***

- Advertisement listing for your studio in the 5,000 full-color, free print copies of the Open Studios Art Tour catalog which is distributed throughout San Luis Obispo County for visitors to pick up.
- Advertisement listing for your studio in the downloadable catalogs available on ARTS Obispo's website. For the last three years, the catalog had an average of 6,000 downloads each year.
- A location listing for your studio on the mobile-friendly map.
- Optional participation in the spring bonus weekend May 5/6, 2018
- Opportunity to post articles on the Meet the Open Studio Artist Blog
- Marketing workshops and access to ARTS Obispo staff to answer your questions.
- Open Studios Art Tour advertising and publicity in local and regional publications/media.
- Tour marketing materials including directional signs, nametag and postcards.
- Link to your website on your artist profile.
- Opportunity to show your work during Art After Dark and through the month of October at the Preview Show.
- Proceeds from your Tour sales are 100% yours—ARTS Obispo takes no commission.

### ***Do I need to be open all four days of the Tour?***

On the application, artists may choose to participate only one weekend of the Tour. You are **required** to be open from 10am to 5pm each of the days you state on your application and may not choose to close the second weekend if you have previously said you would be open both weekends. When you close, it annoys visitors who have made the trip to visit your studio.

### ***How does a visitor know which days I am open?***

To help visitors plan their route, the catalog contains color indicators that show if you are open the first, second or both weekends.

### ***Can I show reproductions of my work?***

Yes, copies of your original art may be included in your display along with your original work. These items may include giclées, prints, tiles, greeting cards, etc. You may not display art from another artist or any other items that weren't made by you.

### ***Are there any additional marketing opportunities with the Tour?***

Each artist may participate in the Open Studios Art Tour Preview Show hosted by ARTS Obispo and Art Central. Artists have the opportunity to submit one piece of original art, no larger than 12" x 12" x 12" (including frame), to sell. The exhibit opens during October's Art After Dark: SLO and stays in place for the entire month. Visitors find the exhibit a great way to preview the art they will see on the Tour and the artist's Tour studio number is referenced so visitors can find them on the map.

### ***How can I promote myself for the Open Studios Art Tour?***

In addition to your catalog advertisement listing, mobile-friendly map location and Preview Show, artists are encouraged to submit articles to the Meet the Open Studio Art Tour Artists Blog. Articles are also linked to ARTS Obispo's social media.

To assist artists, we conduct a workshop during the summer (you will be notified via email as to date and time) where we share ideas on how to tell your story, go over marketing tactics and discuss studio preparation. You will also receive a boiler-plate press release you can use to personalize and send to your local newspaper, neighborhood and social group newsletters, etc.

ARTS Obispo will also share the advertising plan for the program year so artists can plan any additional advertising they would like to do.

Partnership Works: Keep in mind that ARTS Obispo promotes the Tour as a whole and it is up to artists to market their studios individually. Artists are encouraged to help promote the Tour and their studios—the more buzz, the better the publicity.

### ***Why October? There seems to be a lot of events that coincide with the Tour?***

Open Studios Art Tour began in 1998 and visitors expect the mid-October event and even plan their vacations so they can attend. The Tour also coincides with National Arts & Humanities month. San Luis Obispo County is blessed with events throughout the year and it would be impossible to schedule the Tour on a weekend that didn't have conflicts.

## Reasons to Participate in the Open Studios Art Tour

- Exposure and building relationships with the public
- Sell your work
- Sell your services (i.e. workshops)
- Help educate the public as to the value of your artwork and what time, training, tools and equipment go in to producing quality original artwork
- Four days of commission-free sales opportunity, plus two extra if you choose to participate in the Open Studios Art Tour spring bonus weekend