



Boulder Open Studios Tour Tips for Open Studios Participants

Before Opening your Studio to the public:

1. Think about your studio's accessibility, do a risk assessment and take reasonable precautions to avoid accidents e.g. Notices saying 'Step Down'
2. Make sure that you have good lighting; can you offer toilet facilities, if so make sure they are well posted.
3. Make sure that your neighbors are aware of what you are doing, think about how the parking will work and warn them about your opening dates. Then invite them to come enjoy your art!!
4. Always check which studios in your area are open and encourage visitors to visit them too - hopefully they will be doing the same for you. If there are enough of you then you could get together and promote each other by creating a postcard together, social media, or other means.
5. Take the time to make your studio and display look as good as possible, but still look like a working studio; visitors appreciate a professional approach if they have made the effort to come and see you, but they are also excited about experiencing a working art studio. Have a mixture of old and new work and some work in progress.
6. Prepare labels explaining your work, and your processes, have your sketchbooks available for people to look at.
7. Have business cards available with your name and contact details.
8. Price your work carefully, (do not devalue it.) Keep a photographic record of everything for sale.
9. Have a receipt book and a list of all artwork for sale with prices OR complete your Inventory in Square / Paypal. These systems will automatically send receipts to your patrons, as well as track items, prices, sales, taxes etc.
10. Get your payment collection system in place. If you accept credit cards, make sure your swiper is working correctly and you can log in easily to the system. Keep a calculator handy. Get some change to have for cash purchases. Create a table of prices with corresponding sales tax, so you don't have to do the math every time someone wants to buy something.
11. Collect suitable packaging materials and make sure that all artwork has your name and contact details attached. Maybe print a short bio to go in the bag!
12. Create a plan for where your yellow signs will go ahead of time. Think about visitors coming from all directions and how to best guide them to your studio door. Make the entrance to your studio as visible as possible. The map will get visitors to your general location, it is up to the yellow signs to get them to your studio door. [Please note that the yellow signs MUST be removed each evening after that day's Tour is over. This is covered in #9 in the next section of these tips.]
13. Post your official OST poster at the entrance to your studio, so people know they are at the right place. You will receive this poster when you drop your art off at the Museum of Boulder. Remember that a specific art drop-off time is scheduled for each artist this year. Be kind to staff and volunteers and adhere to the schedule.
14. Send personalized postcards inviting friends and collectors to the Preview Exhibit as well as to your studio. Remind them that the Preview Exhibit will be held at the Museum of Boulder.
15. Give out catalogs at the event but if possible to friends, etc. beforehand. Most visitors like to plan a route or day out so a catalog is useful.

During the Open Studios Tour:

1. If you say you are open then you must be there –nothing is more annoying than arriving at a studio to find they are closed. It's a good idea to have another person with you so that you can have lunch/go to the restroom.
2. Always keep yourself and your studio safe – place all keys, handbags, cash box etc. out of site & if you are doing a solo studio ask a friend or family members to be on hand in case of emergencies (or requests to use your toilet while you are otherwise occupied). Most visitors are honest but it only takes one opportunist....
3. Count people who enter your studio during the tour and report your numbers to Open Studios. These numbers help us to get grants that help fund the tour, keeping the cost as low as possible for participating artists.
4. Use a visitor's book and ask them to sign and put their email address. This helps with counting your numbers, but more importantly gives you a future mailing list – explain why you want their details & that it won't be passed on to third parties. Then you can email them an invitation to your next years' open studio.
5. If you wish, have some light refreshments on hand. Think ice water and snack mix - keep it simple! Remember, this is a public event, so if you want to serve alcohol, you must secure a liquor license to serve it.
6. If you would like to include quiet background music it can be less intimidating for visitors.
7. It is good to have work in progress for visitors to see, or sketchbooks as most like to see how you arrive at a finished piece of work. Create an area of your studio that shows your process and/or a demonstration area.
8. Postcards or greetings cards of your work are a good way of getting small sales if visitors cannot afford to buy bigger items, make sure these have your name and contact details.
9. Do not leave signs, balloons etc. posted unless you are open. It is illegal in Boulder to leave signs out overnight. These may be removed by local authorities and are misleading to the public as they will assume you are open if displaying them. A notice on your entrance with your opening days is a useful addition.
10. Do not be disheartened if your first Open Studios event is quieter than you expected. You will build up your visitor base over a period of years and once people know what you do, they will return. Keep working on something during the quiet times.
11. Don't expect to sell everything – this is a networking exercise as well; visitors will get to know you and your work, and if you build a good relationship they will probably come back after the event.
12. Enjoy yourself, and your visitors will enjoy the experience too.