

Lyme Regis ArtsFest

Started in 2003 by gallery-owner Chris Wicking, Mayor Sally Holman and Hugh Dunford-Wood, with the support of Jude Law and the Arts Council(sadly no longer providing funding!), Lyme Regis ArtsFest has grown to be one of the jewels in Lyme's crown. For nine days in September (17th to 25th this year), the town buzzes with creative energy. More than a hundred shops and businesses get involved by displaying local artists' work and acting as pop-up galleries, a dozen or so artists throw open their studio doors to the public and the Baptist Church Hall and the Malthouse (in the Town Mill complex) host group exhibitions. The latter will be an intriguing affair, with every ArtsFest artist contributing one work 12 inches square on the topical maritime theme (in this year of Maritime Lyme), each priced at £100 or less.

Sally Holman's vision for the event from the outset was that it should be much more than a big art show. She and the organisers of the past five years, Karol Kulik and Christina Allison, have always put considerable emphasis on participation and interaction and on making a contribution to the local economy and the town's tourist offering, as well as covering the Arts in the widest possible sense. The event has the support of West Dorset District and Lyme Regis Town Councils and, this year, sponsorship for a series of poetry workshops and a competition for under 18s from the Rotary Club of Lyme Regis, but it is largely funded by the artists who make it happen.

Most activities are free or very low cost because **ArtsFest is about having a go....**whether it be discovering how to make stained glass or learning to hand felt and peg loom or to get up close to the magnificent new organ in St Michael's Church or do your first piece of illuminated calligraphy...there is a full programme events and workshops to give visitors the chance to get stuck in and experience something new! A number of artists will be working in and around the glorious new Marine Parade Shelters and inviting and encouraging participation. Anyone from the age of three can join in the Mass Drawing Extravaganza on Saturday 17th September and enjoy lots of child-friendly activities up at the Woodmead Halls at Axminster Artisans' Art and Craft Fair. Early risers can paint the dawn with Christine Allison before tucking into a scrummy breakfast at 'By the Bay' on Sept 24th. This event was a huge success last year, so do book!

Lyme's literary heritage also features strongly, with a series of walks, talks and films on Jane Austen and John Fowles with Lyme's resident expert, Nathalie Manifold. British Council and Black Dog Creative writing group tutor will help you write your life story in a workshop on 22nd, whilst local poet Anthea Simmons encourages you to get your creative juices flowing on 20th. Linzi West will be in Serendip Bookshop in the afternoon on 18th talking about children's book illustration and the Rev David Knight will be sharing his passion for the world of typography in the Malthouse on 22nd.

Music is featuring more and more. SaxSATION (18th September, 4.00pm), a group of glamorous lady saxophonists, will be getting everyone toe-tapping on Marine Parade and the final of Lyme TV's Song Contest is a must in the Woodmead Halls at 9.30pm on the following day. You can join in a massive jam session in the Malthouse on Wednesday 21st...just make sure you know the words or the chords for Dylan's 'Blowin' in the Wind'! Wannabe rock stars can get expert help in a workshop running from 3pm to 6.30pm on 24th. Lyme's famous young B Sharp Buskers will be performing all day, too, down on the seafront.

ArtsFest is also about meeting the artist. There is something extra special about owning a piece of art whose creator you have met and spoken with, gaining insights into their inspiration and techniques. Some of the open studio artists are a little off the beaten track but you will find that extra little walk really worthwhile. It's really fascinating to see silversmith, Lucy Campbell, at work in her studio in Woodmead Road at the top of Lyme or to be able to get up close to Greta Berlin's fantastic sculptures outside Christine Allison's studio (see Christine's stunning birds of prey at the same time!) or outside photographer Peter Wiles's house, 1 Mill Green. Peter's studio will be open as will fellow photographer Maisie Hill's ,further up, on Hill Road. Then there's international artist, Gail Sagman. Her large scale work in the vast Jam Factory space is not to be missed.

There IS a lot to see and do...but you do have nine days in which to do it! Keep an eye on the website for the latest news and make sure you get hold of a brochure! The artists look forward to seeing you!

www.lymeregisartsfest.com

ArtsFest Grand Opening Ceremony 17th September, Noon: Official opening by the Mayor of Lyme Regis and the Town Crier, featuring the Woodroffe School Saxophone Choir. All are welcome to join the civic procession from the Shelters to the Town Mill.

Collino Printing, Marine Parade Shelters, 17th Sept 10.30 -4pm.

Hugh Dunford-Wood invites you to create a unique image created from a collage of lino prints. hugh@dunfordwood.com

Literary Evening at By the Bay, 20th 7.30pm

A three course dinner for £19.75 is the backdrop to a fascinating evening of insights from three local writers at the top of their game: BAFTA- winner Nick Fisher, acclaimed novelist, David Huggins; and established animator and children's author and illustrator Keith Robinson. Booking essential.

WordFest at the Marine Theatre, 23rd, 7pm.

An evening of sea shanties from Lyme Regis Gig Club, stand-up comedy from 14 year old Rex Fisher and poetry from Lyme Regis and Charmouth school children and local poet, Anthea Simmons. Prize-giving ceremony for the Rotary-sponsored young people's poetry competition. Be there!

Photo Portrait Day for Under 25s.

Have a quick picture taken for a social network site or spend the day learning more about portrait photography with Maisie Hill. Langmoor Room, Marine Parade Shelters, 10 – 4pm, 25th September

Drumming Workshop with Magic Drum, 24th 12-1.30pm. Drumming is the most accessible form of group music-making, and this workshop is open to all ages and abilities. Great fun!