

ARTIST GUIDE: SOCIAL MEDIA



WITH KIND PERMISSION OF

SOW
somerset
art works

INTRODUCTION

Social media is a good way to showcase work to your audience and potential buyers. You can share your thoughts and inspirations informally. There are good platforms to show images and videos such as: behind the scenes, work in progress and finished artworks. You can interact with your audience so they can get to know you a little.

A social media presence helps to raise your profile. If people searching for you online find your website and your social media profiles, that adds to their impression of you as a busy artist.

Artists are increasingly selling work through social media, and recent campaigns such as Matthew Burrows' #ArtistSupportPledge have been very successful for many artists.

Social media is also a good way to meet other artists, to exchange ideas, thoughts and experience.

It's not essential to be on all platforms; it's best to choose one or two that suit your needs, and aim to post regularly.



POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Social media platforms have good user guides, which you can access from the links below. This guide for artists aims to provide some hints and tips to get you started and improve your social media presence.

Facebook

Facebook is currently the social media platform with the most active users. A wide range of people use Facebook, where you can post text, images, video, live video and links to websites. There are three main ways to engage on Facebook:

- **Personal Profile** – you need one of these to get started on Facebook. It's where you share posts with Facebook Friends.
- **Facebook Page** – you can choose to set up a Facebook Page for your business or artistic practice. This is where you can share posts with people who are following you.
- **Facebook Groups** – these are interest groups or communities covering a wide range of topics, where you can exchange ideas and information. This is a good way to communicate with other artists.

[Facebook user guide](#)



Twitter

Twitter is a good place to share text, images and video. It's used by a wide range of people. Lots of arts organisations and key people within those organisations use Twitter, and it's popular with academics and journalists. Twitter users engage frequently; it's a good place for sharing news. It's easy to retweet (share other people's tweets) so a popular topic could spread quickly.

[Twitter user guide](#)

Instagram

Instagram has a focus on visuals and is popular with artists and people who are interested in art. It's a great place to show off your work, and its use is increasing. You can share photos, video and live video from your phone only. Although Instagram is visible on computers, you can't post from there.

[Instagram user guide](#)



YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing platform. Although it has a different feel to other platforms, it is considered to be social media. It's also the second largest search engine after Google; lots of people are looking there for information, interest and entertainment. By having videos on YouTube, people are more likely to find you online. It's a good place to share videos of any length, which could be 'how to' videos, behind-the-scenes videos or videos talking about new work.

[YouTube user guide](#)

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a platform for professionals where you can share your CV, posts, articles, images, video and links. It's a good place to showcase your knowledge and expertise.

[LinkedIn user guide](#)

There are lots of other platforms which you might want to consider, including Vimeo for video sharing, WhatsApp to communicate with customers, Snapchat for young audiences, TikTok which is focussed on music social videos but also includes a wide range of content, and Clubhouse which is an audio only platform.

CONTENT

You can use social media to share:

- Photos (see our Guide to Creating Images)
- Video (see our Guide to Creating Short Films)
- Live video (see our Livestreaming Guide)
- Text
- Events
- Links

The basic way to share information on most social media platforms is via a Post. There's also a range of other ways to share content such as [Facebook Stories](#) and [Instagram Reels](#). Platforms often try new ideas, and it pays to experiment with these because your content is more likely to appear if you're using all the latest features.

Your main aim might be to sell more work, but consider the point of view of your audience. What do your followers want to see? Remember that social media is about engaging with your audience, telling them and showing them more about you and your work. It should be a conversation rather than a one-way broadcast. It's fine to add information about how people can make a purchase, but do balance this with other interesting information.

Social media and algorithms

On most social media platforms, you view a Newsfeed where you can see content posted by other people. The social media platforms are designed to give you the best experience to encourage you to stay there for longer, so rather than just showing you everything that is produced by all the people you follow, they use an algorithm to select the most appropriate items. What you see depends on how you

interact with other users – what you comment on and ‘like’ as well as what your friends and followers like.

If people interact with your posts by commenting, sharing and liking, then those posts are more likely to appear in the newsfeeds of your friends and followers.

Organic reach and paid advertising

Organic content refers to the posts, stories etc that you add to social media with no cost attached. You can reach a much bigger audience by paying for **advertising**. There are good guides to help you to do this – it’s in the interests of the platforms to make it easy for you! Most social media platforms enable you to target your audience by geographical area, age, interests etc. For relatively small budgets, your ad can appear in the newsfeeds of those most likely to be interested in your work.

Hashtags

Hashtags help users to find things that interest them. If people are interested in art in Somerset they might search Facebook or another platform for #art and #Somerset. If they’re looking for something in particular, they might search #watercolour #landscapes #Somerset, for example.

The number of hashtags recommended depends on which platform you’re using. For Facebook, use one or two relevant hashtags, perhaps linking to something that is popular. The recommendation for Twitter is also one or two to increase engagement. For Instagram, you can use many more; the maximum is 30, and it’s recommended to use lots.

Use of hashtags is more recent for LinkedIn, where two or three are recommended on a post to help people find your content.

GETTING STARTED

Social media platforms are updating and changing all the time. There are so many opportunities, it can be hard to get started and equally hard to know whether you're being effective. Here are some tips to help you focus your efforts:

- Decide what you want to achieve through your social media. This will help you to select your platform(s) and keep focussed.
- Choose one or two platforms which you think are the most appropriate for you.
- Decide how often you think you can post and make a plan to help you add content. It's good to post regularly, even if you can't post frequently.
- Check character counts, image proportions and video lengths for the social media you're using. These are included in the guides which are linked to above.
- Post different kinds of content – text, images, video and links.
- Most people don't scroll through lots of text on social media, so keep it short. If you want people to read more, you can always include a link.
- Use one image or just a few. This will often have more impact than adding lots.
- Create some simple videos to share. For more help with this, see our [Guide to Creating Short Films](#).
- Don't just post; engage in conversation with other people. If you comment on other people's posts, they're more likely to comment on yours. This helps your posts to appear in more people's newsfeeds.

- Use emojis ... but in moderation. Emojis convey emotions and humour and make content more shareable. It's good to add a few to your posts, but remember that if someone's using a screen reader, it could make the message more complicated.
- See our Welcome Guide to find out more about social media and accessibility.
- Experiment with the latest features such as Facebook Stories and Instagram Reels.
- Use hashtags.
- Try livestreaming with social media. Read our Guide to Livestreaming for more information.



Simple emojis such as the pointing finger make your content more shareable