

ARTIST GUIDE: E-NEWSLETTERS



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INTRODUCTION

Newsletters are a good way to keep in touch with people on a regular basis to help build a relationship with your audience. You don't necessarily have to communicate with people frequently, but information about your latest work, exhibitions you're taking part in and a peek behind the scenes are useful ways to keep your audience engaged.

Some people take a long time to make a purchase, so it's helpful to keep in touch with your audience to remind them who you are and what you're making. Others may come back several times to buy your work, and some may not make a purchase but might talk enthusiastically about you and encourage others to buy.

There are many platforms to help you design and distribute e-newsletters, including [Mailchimp](#) which we use as our example in this Guide. Others include [iContact](#), [MailJet](#) and [sendinblue](#). Many platforms have a free version with options to pay for extra features. Using these platforms, you can design your newsletter with a template and send it directly to each person on your mailing list. Some platforms allow you to integrate with an online store. Most of the platforms are set up to make GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) straightforward, and include an option for people to remove themselves from your list.

YOUR AUDIENCE

It's important to think about your audience before you start creating your newsletter, so that you can have them in mind when you're putting it together.

Think about the sorts of things that might interest them and what might grab their attention so they want to read more.

Make sure that your e-newsletter is accessible for everyone. Mailchimp have a good [guide to accessibility for e-newsletters](#).

You can add a newsletter sign-up section to your website and share on social media. Mailchimp and other platforms allow you to create a simple webpage which is set up to gather the data you need. You can link to this from your social media and other web pages. You can also collect email addresses at events by asking people to complete a slip of paper. This is often more appealing than asking people to sign a book where everyone can see other visitors' contact information.

When you invite people to sign up, it's helpful to tell them how long it will take eg '30-second newsletter sign-up'. You should also give people an idea of what will be included in your newsletter. For example 'Receive news about my latest artwork, exhibitions and events, 'See behind-the-scenes videos and find out what inspired me' or 'Sign up to receive exclusive invitations to my private views and special discounts on my work'. Another useful piece of information is how often you're going to be contacting them, such as 'sign up for my monthly e-newsletter' or 'receive my occasional newsletter'.

With Mailchimp and other platforms, you can set up an auto reply when people sign up. They will receive an automatic message from you, but just because it's automatic, it doesn't mean you can't make it friendly and personal.

[View this email in your browser](#)

September News from Sam Brown



I'm looking forward to welcoming some of you to my studio at the end of the month during Somerset Open Studios. When the weather's fine, I'll be sitting in my garden painting the view of the beautiful Somerset landscape, so do drop by and say hello.



I've been creating some new landscape paintings which you'll be able to see during my Open Studios event. I'm offering newsletter readers a free pack of printed greetings cards with each purchase. Just quote **READER21** to receive the offer.

During my residency in Italy last year, I began experimenting with some different styles of painting and I'm looking forward to sharing some of my new work.



[Read more about my trip on my website](#)



Line & Bristle have started producing artist brushes which

YOUR NEWSLETTER

Tone

A newsletter is a good way to engage your audience, and a personal, friendly, informal tone is what most people want; they want to see something of the artist and feel that they're getting to know them. It's also good to share your enthusiasm for the latest work you're creating, your latest inspiration or highlight work by other artists.

Informal language is fine, but you still need to be professional, so remember to check your newsletter for grammar and spelling.

Content

You don't need to write a long essay about each topic in your newsletter; sometimes, a photo and caption is enough. Other times, you might want to include a few paragraphs, and if you have more to say, you could include a short summary in your newsletter with a link to a webpage for a longer article.

Remember that if it's a newsletter, you should focus on news. That doesn't mean you can't share reflections and thoughts, or look back at what you were doing a year ago, but try to make it topical. Help your audience feel that they're the first to hear what's new.

Photos

Images are a must for newsletters, and artists should be able to take interesting images of their work. If you'd like to know more about how to do this, read our [Guide to Creating Images to Publicise Your Work](#).

New artwork

Your audience will love to hear about your latest work and what inspired you to create it. If it's going to be exhibited somewhere, you can include information about that, and if it's a commission, that's an ideal opportunity to give some more information about how people can commission you. Make sure that readers know they're the first to see the work.

Work in progress

Sharing work in progress is an ideal opportunity to show more about how you make your work. You don't have to give away all your secrets, but people love to see behind the scenes and learn a little more about how art is created. You can include photos and videos of you working and talking about the process. Photos of sketchbooks, materials and your work space all help to draw people into the creative process.

If your work takes a long time to complete, this is an ideal opportunity to take your reader along with you on the journey, sharing the latest update in each newsletter until the work is finished.

Events, exhibitions and sales

If you're taking part in an exhibition or event, it's good to share the news early so that your readers are the first to hear about it. We all need reminding about things, so make sure that you include the information in your newsletters a number of times so that people don't forget.

Take photos when you're installing an exhibition or getting ready for an open studios event – these are good to include in a newsletter that goes out as a last minute reminder.

If you've sold some work, the buyer might be happy to send an image of it hanging on their wall or sitting on a shelf. You could ask to take a photo of someone when they make their

purchase. Showing that people are buying your work helps to encourage others to buy. If the buyer wishes to remain anonymous, you could share a photo of the work and say something like “this new landscape painting has just been bought and is off to its new home in Gloucestershire”.

Special offers

If you offer discounts to encourage sales, your newsletter is a good place to share them. Some artists feel that discounts encourage buyers to undervalue their work but might offer an added extra such as free postage and packing, access to a special event or an individual tour of the artist’s studio. You could announce special commission opportunities or give the buyer your sketch of the work.

PUTTING YOUR NEWSLETTER TOGETHER

Design

Mailchimp and other platforms offer templates to help you design your e-newsletter. Within the templates, you can change background colours, add your logo, include images and text.

Branding

Try to create a standard design and stick to it so that your readers know it's from you as soon as they see it. Make sure that the design links visually to your website and social media profile images and banners.

Images

Try to have at least one image for each story. Where possible, these should be photos from your studio, images showing your sketches or the things that have inspired you. If you really can't find or create the image you need, you could use an image library such as [Unsplash](#), [freeimages](#), or [pixabay](#).

Header and subject

The subject is the first thing that readers see when the email pops into their inbox. Make sure people know straightaway what the email is. Mailchimp also allows you to add preview text – up to 150 characters that readers see before they open the email. This is an opportunity to give a taste of the content of your newsletter. For example, “Open Studios announcement and news of my latest work”.

When readers open your newsletter, they will see the header at the top, where you can include your logo and/or a striking

image with a short headline. You could have a creative headline, or simply call it 'September News from artist Sam Brown'.

September News from Sam Brown



I'm looking forward to welcoming some of you to my studio at the end of the month during Somerset Open Studios. When the weather's fine, I'll be sitting in my garden painting the view of the beautiful Somerset landscape, the stone barn and cowbells.

Introduction

To help keep your readers engaged, it's a good idea to write a personal introduction. Mailchimp allows you to personalise your newsletter, so you could write something like:

Dear Jamie,

I'm writing with news about my Somerset Open Studios event. I do hope you'll be able to visit and see my latest work. You can read more about the decorated ceramic tiles I've been making in this newsletter.

Do you have a favourite bird you'd like to see illustrated on one of the tiles? Do reply to this email to let me know, or share your suggestions on social media.

I hope to see you at my studio next month.

Best wishes,

Sam

Main content

Think about how many stories you want to include. If there are too many, readers may switch off.

Keep the newsletter content short. If you want to include longer content, add a short summary and a link to a longer article on your website, for example. Your newsletter is a good opportunity to encourage traffic to your website so that readers can find out more.

Don't forget to include photos and/or videos to make the newsletter look attractive and draw people in.

Do you have a call to action? Is there something you want people to do when they've read your newsletter? Attend an exhibition, or buy your work, for example. Make sure you include information and an encouraging message about how to do that.

Contact information

Always include links to your website, contact information and social media links. Mailchimp has icons set up to help you do this.

Other info

You might want to include some information such as a short biography to remind people who you are, or a map to show the location of your studio.

FREQUENCY

It's often recommended that you send a newsletter on a set day at strictly regular intervals, but with so much flooding into inboxes, readers are unlikely to notice whether you've released your news on the correct day. Make sure that you set a frequency you can accommodate, and that you have something new to say each time you send a newsletter. You might want to time your newsletters to coincide with the best time to remind people of an upcoming event. Time your newsletter so that it feels like a welcome addition to your readers' inboxes.

You can use Mailchimp's analytics to see what proportion of your mailing list are reading your newsletter. These stats aren't 100% accurate but they do give a very good guide. Don't be disappointed if your open-rates seem low. You can read about the average open-rates in [Mailchimp's article Email Marketing Benchmarks and Statistics](#).

GETTING STARTED

Mailchimp has a good [guide to getting started](#). It's a good idea to look at other people's newsletters for inspiration, to decide what you like, what you don't like, and what you think will appeal to your audience.