OPEN STUDIOS WORKSHOP NOTES
Sharing our collective experience and wisdom

1. **Building Inventory**
    a. Experience supports having a range of wares and prices.
    b. Think about your price range and the audience you hope to attract, from $5 to hundreds
    c. It's fine to have items on display not for sale, to inspire commissions at Open Studios, but also have plenty on hand to sell.
    d. Doing a demo during OS, or having works in progress to show your process, is encouraged. These strategies engage visitors, keeping them longer in your studio, and often lead to increased sales.
    e. There is mixed opinion about bargaining with customers at OS. Many offer bulk purchase discounts, or have a friends and family rate. Others have bargain baskets.
    f. All emphasized the importance of pricing and labeling *everything*. Make buying easy for your customers.

2. **Creating Your Studio Environment**
    a. Your environment is part of your brand! Give it thought.
    b. Consider Parking, Entrance (garden), Ease of Access, Movement through the space, Departure. Think gracious and welcoming.
    c. Using your whole house or only part? Make sure to clearly label Private/Family areas.
    d. If the OS is off-site, or if you are sharing in a home, prioritize making the space sharing equitable.
    e. Signage (in addition to HA's): outside art, or signs on a sawhorse/sandwich board, arrows (this way to studio!)
    f. Music – if so, what's suitable for you and your space? What might entice people into your space?
    g. Plan your lighting and table coverings. Think about the details – from the visitor's POV.
    h. Maybe have a pair of "cheaters" or two by your displays, for folks who forgot their reading glasses.
    i. Plan seating for you and your guests. (Keep non-shoppers happy!)
    j. How will guests move through your space? Think about visitor flow (and crowds) as your set up your space.
    k. Greeting
        i. Consider what to say and not to say; how to help and be interesting without cramping your visitor's style
        ii. Have more than one script – for your sanity and to be responsive to different guests
    l. Plan ahead for bad weather. What will you do with wet jackets, for example?

m. Can people use your bathroom? How will you manage children? What if someone sits down and won't leave? (All real challenges!)
n. Think about all elements from the user's (guest's) point of view and make their experience as easy and enjoyable as possible.

3. Branding Your Studio and Work

a. OS artists are representing themselves, Hull Artists, and the Open Studios event. So, professionalism in all areas, and a spirit of generosity toward fellow artists, is encouraged.
b. All OS Studios will need to have a HA windsock, to ID the studio location. The windsocks is available for pickup at Gallery Nantasket. Additionally, Hull Artists has printed the OS artist listing/maps, posters, and provides lawn signs, street directional signage, and a studio number, corresponding to your number on the map.
c. Consider your Curb Appeal, including putting a lawn sign out in front of your studio a week early, or having actual art outside the studio to attract visitors. It's all part of your branding.
d. All artists should have business cards with contact info. Many also display a brief Artist's Bio with info that distills who we are as artists, through image or language, to help visitors understand our work and easily find us again.
e. In your displays, set up for "the hunt." Create visual interest, mix objects, create height changes in the display, use beautiful containers to allow visitors a sense of discovery or treasure seeking.
f. Some artists have give-aways at the point of sale to help people find you again.
g. Think in advance about the tone of your studio, and ways that you can be most hospitable to OS guests who have chosen to visit you.

4. Visitor Care and Feeding – Do It!

a. Nibbles and Drinks – near entrance (self-serve or will you serve?)
b. Give visitors plenty of space to explore and wander, if possible. Don't hover!
c. Discover visitor's interests; why did they come to your OS? Where else have they been? Where will you encourage them to go next?
d. Have OS brochures on hand – and help guide, based on their interests and on geography.
e. To do this well, make a point of knowing the work of your fellow OS artists! (HA website is a good starting point.)
f. Point out new artists and OS locations
g. Are they hungry? Send guests to OS sponsor restaurants!

5. **Labeling and Pricing**
    a. Price everything!
        i. On piece or by area ("everything on this wall is $_.")
    b. Have a range of work and prices so everyone can buy something.
    c. Decide if you are open to haggling or discounts; breaks on higher-priced items can be sensible.
    d. Decide what you want to do about sales tax – ignore, include in price, add on – it's up to you.
    e. Make Sales! Generate buzz about your work!

6. **Managing Payments**
    a. A quick checklist is available on the HA website.
    b. Make it easy to pay. Have a dedicated space that's clear and workable, with bags, wrapping, ribbon, packing materials all right on hand.
    c. Be able to process credit cards
        i. Square.com – links to your bank account
        ii. Need wifi or cellular reception to use
        iii. Send auto receipts to buyers and send vendor daily tallies
    d. Paypal and Venmo are other useful options. If using a QR code, make sure it works!
    e. For Checks, think of what info you want from your guests
    f. Have 2-part sales books on hand
    g. Have a cash box with small bills
    h. Pens
    i. Wrapping – for beauty and to protect art
    j. Bags, stickers
    k. Stay organized
    l. Script your sales process; be efficient; be a pro!

7. **Visitor Cultivation and Communication**
    a. HA provides posters, PR, street signs, windsocks, window signs, and the Guide/Map.
    b. HA also has a targeted marketing campaign to local and regional publications and an email campaign that will include promotion and thank yous to everyone on our mailing list.
    c. Carry OS maps with you everywhere to share.
    d. Contact your own networks – friends, work assoc, other "hobby" networks, and **share** HA's FB and Insta posts whenever you can.
        i. Facebook, email, instagram, twitter
        ii. Hullartists.com has downloadable links to the map and artist listing on the OS page.
    e. Our job is to help visitors find whatever they need – in our studio, other studios, and in Hull – art, craft, meals and snacks, entertainment, real estate! – to support our fellow OS artists and the event sponsors.

8. **Data Collection**
    a. Guests who give their data will be entered in a $100 Raffle each OS weekend.
    b. The $100 voucher is to be used with any OS Artist!
    c. We will share the dates for you to pick up your OS clipboard at Gallery Nantasket. It will have a RAFFLE label affixed and a data sheet that you may copy. (OS provides one clipboard. Please have more than one if you like.) The Raffle Form is available at Hullartists.com.
    d. Artists also are asked to complete a Data Sheet each OS weekend. This helps us better understand our audience, and improve our targeted marketing. The Data Sheet is available at Hullartists.com and will come to you via Constant Contact prior to each OS weekend, for ease of data collection. If you are in a multiple-artist location, please have each artist complete a data sheet.
    e. Invite every guest at your studio to sign in to get a chance to win the raffle. **PLEASE ENCOURAGE GISTS TO SIGN IN AT EVERY STUDIO THEY VISIT.** This increases their odds of winning (and helps us track visitor patterns).
    f. At the end of each OS weekend, copy all of your raffle names/data sheets for your records. Many will opt to take a picture of the sheets with their phones!
    g. No later than the **Tuesday evening** after each OS, drop your raffle sheets at Gallery Nantasket. A marked box will be outside the door after Gallery hours.

9. **Self-Care**
    a. OS runs 10 am – 4 pm, Saturday and Sunday. That's lots of time to be "on." Plan to take care of yourself so you have fun and can take good care of your guests.
        i. Do you have any support or backup? Invite friends/family to help!
        ii. Make a lunch or snack in advance and have on hand
        iii. Take small breaks if possible
        iv. Hydrate!!!
        v. Set up Sunday's studio Saturday night; you will thank yourself in the morning.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR OPEN STUDIOS!