

ART | OPEN STUDIOS

# Where the art is

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YOU can tell a lot about a person by the state of their desk. A cluttered mess usually suggests a more laid-back personality, while neat stacks of files and folders are more likely to indicate an efficient, if slightly anal, mind.

But what if your work area is slightly bigger than a desk? What if you're an artist who spends their days holed up in a large studio?

We are used to trying to read the thoughts of an artist through the paintings they have displayed on the walls of a gallery but, as anyone who has ever been inside an artist's studio will tell you, gaining a peak into their working practices offers a real insight into their final product.

Arts Unwrapped, an "open studio" project which runs over the next three weekends, takes this logic and runs with it. Unlocking the doors of 40

artist studio complexes all over London from Hackney to Peckham, Deptford to Clerkenwell, Ladbroke Grove to Kilburn, the project allows members of the public access to a usually clandestine world.

Artists taking part include David Austen, Keith Wilson and Ian Davenport, Turner Prize nominee Mark Titchner, and fashion designer Julie Verhoeven, as well as jewellers and artists who work with textiles and ceramic. Most of the

**“The public can engage with the artist. You'd never get that in a gallery”**

PAINTER CLEM CROSBY



**WALK THIS WAY** | Clem Crosby will be baring his studio, above, as well as his work, left



what to paint?' are often the hardest to answer."

Despite this, he welcomes the interchange between the public and artist.

"It gives the public the chance to engage with the artist, break that terrible kind of White Cube stigma. You'd never get it in a gallery," says Crosby, who shares Tannery Arts with installation artists, a film-maker and sculptor Alison Wilding.

For other studios, Arts Unwrapped offers its residents a chance to promote their wares.

Melanie Potro, who makes bespoke wedding dresses in her studio at Clerkenwell Green Association, expects to pick up a few new customers when she lets members of the public into her studio.

"It's great because there's a different audience coming and so a good potential to get new clients," says Potro, who shares her studio space with many other craftspeople and designers.

"They see the sewing machine in the corner and they know it's not made in China."

**Arts Unwrapped, various London studios, 18-20 May, 1-3 and 8-10 June, [www.artsunwrapped.com](http://www.artsunwrapped.com)**

artists involved will be present at their studios, no doubt only too happy to field questions.

Clem Crosby, a painter whose studio forms part of Tannery Arts (Laburnum Street) in east London and who has taken part in previous open studio events, says it can be a strange experience.

"It's like being in a boxing ring with an unorthodox boxer," says Crosby, whose abstract oil paintings can be seen on the exterior of the Young Vic theatre.

"Artists don't talk to each other about why they work. So the simpler questions like 'How do you start your paintings?' and 'How do you know

**FIVE TO SEE**

**Tannery Arts, 237 Hackney Road, E2**  
Not to be confused with Tannery Arts in nearby Laburnum Street. Artists here include Charles Avery, who will represent Scotland at the Venice Biennale

**Studio Voltaire, 1a Nelson's Row, SW4**  
A former metalworkers' factory now used by painters, sculptors and mixed-media artists

**Acava 1-15 Cremer Street, E2**  
A hub of the East End art scene with 56 studios

**Kingsgate Workshops Trust, 110-116 Kingsgate Road, NW6**  
An array of artists from printmakers to silversmiths work here

**Clerkenwell Green Association, 33-35 St John's Square, EC1**  
The base for more than 70 craftspeople and designers. Madeleine Boulesteix's cutlery chandeliers have to be seen to be believed



**STEP INSIDE** | David Austen's studio, above, and a distinctive work by Ian Davenport, right

