

Investing in Cornwall's creative future

Artonomy Fine Art has chosen Truro as a base from which to promote the careers of some of the UK's most gifted young artists.



Overview

Started as an art consultancy in early 2004, Artonomy Fine Art focuses on identifying promising young artists and supporting their careers by organising exhibitions both in the South West and beyond, providing expertly crafted promotion and negotiating commercial sponsorship.

Founder and senior partner Steve Kyffin trained as a graphic designer in Cornwall before setting up the strategic design agency Bluestone Design. Bluestone now has offices in both Plymouth and Bristol, and numbers several household names among its clients. Steve sees his in-depth knowledge of marketing and public relations as one of Artonomy's key strengths, but in the end he believes that success depends on the strength of the creative talent it represents.

"My passion is creativity," Steve says, "and Cornwall is an area that has that in abundance. What's really exciting now is that there's a real economic renaissance going on down here, which is making it easier for talented and ambitious people to make successful careers

in Cornwall itself. You can see this clearly in the design and media sectors, where we've now got a lot of brilliant companies working at national and international level. Artonomy aims to enable more artists to do the same - build high-profile careers while remaining rooted in Cornwall's uniquely creative environment."

Artonomy recently moved into a gallery space of its own - a beautiful nineteenth-century building in Truro that was originally a theological library. Finding the right place took a while, but the wait - and a lot of hard work refurbishing the building - have proved more than worthwhile. "We chose Truro partly because it's a thriving city with a lively arts scene," Steve explains, "but also because we just love it as a place. It's good to be able to demonstrate that you don't have to be in a major metropolis to run a successful and innovative fine-art business."

Workforce

As well as Steve Kyffin and two other partners, the Artonomy team comprises a manager and one other member of staff. Photographers, printmakers and other specialists are brought in to work on a project basis.

Technology

Steve Kyffin's design talents are very much in evidence on Artonomy's website, which provides a state-of-the-art virtual showcase for the artists represented by the firm, complete with images of their work and the studio environments in which it is produced, biographical details and news of recent and upcoming exhibitions.

Clients

Artonomy represents an impressive list of artists making engaging and often compelling work in a range of media, which it seeks to present in fresh contexts through collaborations with a variety of cultural and commercial partners. In 2004 it teamed up with Hunting

plc and Trebah Gardens near Falmouth to show a selection of work by finalists in the prestigious Hunting Art Prize. The gallery at Trebah, surrounded by a dramatic sub-tropical garden, made an intriguing setting in which to view the work of some of the UK's finest painters.

Other collaborations have included shows at the Russell Cotes Museum in Bournemouth and the Holburne Museum in Bath, and a major exhibition by the award-winning painter N. C. Williams at the Royal Cornwall Museum, supported by sponsors including Air Southwest. "My background means that I've got a good understanding of the benefits of sponsorship on a commercial level," Steve says. "It works well for all parties, helping the companies involved to enhance their brand identities and build deeper relationships with the communities where their customers live."

Support

"We approached Cornwall Pure Business when we decided to open a gallery in Truro," Steve says. "We weren't in the position of needing financial support, but they've been very helpful in an advisory way, giving us valuable contacts and supporting us with networking."