



Room 212 Success Leads to Online Shop



Four years ago, **Room 212** was a tiny one-room pop-up

gallery showing work by a handful of local artists, on a quieter part of Gloucester Road. Since then it has grown into a much-loved, well-known Bristol gallery, a treasure trove of art and creativity and the hub of **Gloucester Road Central**. Out on the wide pavement planters overflowing with flowers jostle for space with browsers full of prints. Up on the front of the building Cary Grant, who went to school around the corner, waves cheerfully to passers-by, drawn to the ever-changing colourful window displays reflecting the seasons or Bristol events. Inside there is a huge variety of original artwork and cards to suit every taste and occasion.

The success of **Room 212** stems from many factors: the immense drive and enthusiasm of owner Sarah Thorp, the amazing array of artwork on offer and the appreciative customers who enjoy spending time in this treasure trove. Sarah is a member of the North Bristol Artists, who show work in their homes during the last weekend of November. She conceived Room 212 as a place for fellow artists to show their work on a more

permanent basis. By visiting other Art Trails and Open Studios Sarah invites a wide variety

Carla James

of artists and creatives to show their work at Room 212. Artists take it in turns to run the shop and the different themes encourage creativity and a constant supply of new work. This positive combination puts Room 212 at the centre of **the arty section of Gloucester Road**, now known as **Glos Rd Central**. Other businesses in the area are flourishing and

people are happy to walk up Pigsty Hill, from the traditionally more popular part of Gloucester Road, knowing that they can spend hours looking at art and relaxing at some fantastic cafes and restaurants. Recently



canvases of local artwork in the new Bishopston Library. The gallery is currently working with the Send a Welcome local community project to create a lovely Welcome mosaic on the pavement in front of Room 212.

Room 212 Online Shop This year, Room 212 has gained an array of awards and prizes, most recently at the Small Business Awards, hosted in London by celebrity Sue Perkins. This national success has prompted the launch of a **Room 212 online shop**. Sarah's partner Mark

Hayward is a photographer based in Stanton Drew and he has offered to take on the job of overseeing online sales. Existing Room 212 customers can now benefit from being able to make choices at home and might find artwork on the site that can't be found in the gallery. The online shop means if you see something you like in Room 212 and can't make up your mind, would like it in a different size, or sent to a friend or relative elsewhere, you can. Also, if you can't see what you're looking for then you can make specific requests or even commission an original piece of work. There are plans for a **Wish List** so that customers can give hints to their friends and families – this will be especially helpful for birthdays, weddings and Christmas. There's so much potential and Room 212 values

your feedback as the online shop develops. When *Vogue* got in touch and said they'd

like to feature Room 212 in their Bristol focus, out this month, the online shop seemed a perfect way to spread the word about Room 212 artists nationwide!

Autumn plans Room 212 is renowned for its creative window displays and fun happenings. This September starts off with the Bristol Art Trail, a city wide trail with an app to follow, rather than a map, over the weekend of 2-3 September. Room 212 has signed up to the trail and will be focusing on 4 artists, **Jenny Urquhart, Carla James, Made By Ilze and owner Sarah Thorp**. All these artists will join forces to create a vibrant, Bristol-centric display. As we move into autumn the windows will take on a fruit & veg theme. There'll be another of Toni Burrows popular fox mosaics – to celebrate the sale of her book *The Last Apple On The Tree*. Toni's amazing mosaics are normally only on display all



Gloucester Road – a rare treat. The originals aren't for sale but prints and cards are available. Local celebrity gardener **Lia Leendertz** will be joining in with the launch of her new gardening Almanac, illustrated by Bristol artist Emma Dibben, and a range of other Room 212 artists will be contributing their artwork. Half term will bring another fantastic Day of the Dead display with more takes on the iconic Mexican artist Frida Kahlo by local artist **Laura Robertson**. November brings the North Bristol Art Trail (25-26 Nov.) when Room 212 focuses on artists from the trail. In the build-up to the trail Room 212 will be promoting all the artists involved in the Gloucester Road Art Banner project. Lots to look forward to...

212 Productions Two years ago Sarah partnered up with artist and professional printer Neil Roberts to launch a high-quality printing company, **212 Productions**. Neil has been in the printing industry for over 12 years, specialising in c-type, giclée and dye-sublimation. Artists and

photographers are always looking for good quality, reasonably priced prints, so Sarah and Neil decided

to invest in a printer to help them out. They have recently taken on a printing studio in St Werburghs while maintaining a printer in Bishopston. **Room 212** artists get special discounts but the printing services are open to everyone and 212 Productions creates prints for a diverse range of artists and photographers from locals to well-known Bristol artists. www.212productions.co.uk

212 Eco House Last year saw the completion



of the beautiful 212 Eco House round the back of **Room 212**. This house is made from sustainable and recycled

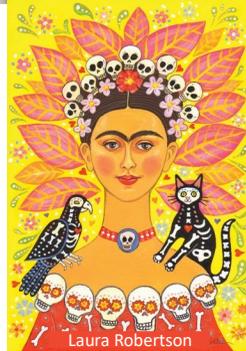


and straw walls, set in a lovely sunny garden. The house (and Gloucester Road) was given a glowing review in the *Guardian* (see online article British Boltholes Nov 2016) You are invited to look around the house and chat to the builders during **Bristol Doors Open Day** on Sunday 10 September. Lovely art will be on sale with tea and cake on offer in the garden. In November the Eco House will be open during the **North Bristol Art Trail (25-26 Nov)**. Sarah Thorp will be using the Eco House as her venue on the

trail and will be showing her upcycled decoupage

furniture and homeware. Popular jewellery maker Katie Johnston will join her while Toni Burrows will bring along some of her amazing mosaics. **Room 212** will be open during both these events.

Room 212 remains as fresh, vibrant and welcoming as the day the door first opened, and now there's a virtual door into this wonderful world of art as well! www.room212.co.uk



During September **Bishopston Matters** Readers are offered a

10% discount on their first online purchase with Room 212,



Room 212 put up
some lovely bright

over her house during the North Bristol Art Trail, but
Room 212 has persuaded her to bring them out
onto

materials, with
a living roof

using **code BMsummer17**

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