
COS ARTIST NEWS

A CLOSE UP ON OUR ARTISTS, BY [ROB WILKINSON](#).



Soozie doesn't do standard!

There's nothing standard about Innellan-based jewellery maker Susan M Turmeau!

As one of over 50 Cowal Open Studios artists and makers from across the Cowal peninsula due to open their studios to the public in September, Soozie has forged her own unique path for the last 30 years, facing a number of challenges along the way.

Originally from Busby on the south side of Glasgow, Soozie was the youngest of four and grew up partially deaf.

Soozie explained "It was very difficult for me to communicate with people but, since getting a cochlear implant 12 years ago, my world has suddenly got a lot larger and this has helped to inform the work I do. It has transformed my life for the better.

“I now pay attention to the "big stuff" whereas before I used to focus on the smaller things. The landscapes all around me have inspired me to expand the scope of my work with sculptures and artworks becoming an increasing part of what I do.

“I’m even branching out into illustration with a commission to create the cover and illustrations for a forthcoming novel by local author and historian Margaret Hubbard who just happens to be my neighbour!

I mainly work with sterling silver, 18 carat gold and gemstones when it comes to jewellery although I cast my net a lot further when it comes to the materials I use for my artworks,” added Soozie who has displayed her creations within a number of galleries and took part in a group exhibition in 2018 as one of 4 artists chosen to get a week’s residency at Cove Park, thanks to DBHT and Creative Scotland, where she explored her Tinnitus and curated a show that reflected the condition.

Soozie, 51, spent two years at college in Glasgow before studying Jewellery and Photography at Edinburgh College of Art. She moved to Innellan 25 years ago and lives with husband John and a wee dug Max.

In 2012 she was the part of a crowd-sourced Creative Scotland film “We are Northern Lights” and, at the time, combined her jewellery making with the job of a cleaner.

“I started out as a cleaner at various venues, including the Burgh Hall in Dunoon and I’m still proud to consider myself as such. Where would the world be without cleaners although these days most of my time is consumed creating jewellery within my small and busy studio combined with a spot of gardening.



“I’m never 100% happy with what I create but maybe that is a common trait with artists. Everything I make is bespoke and uniquely tailored to the needs of each commission I get. I don’t do ‘standard’ and baulk against the idea of being a brand.

“I always look forward to the open studios weekend and generally have around a hundred folk visiting over the four days with my ‘sitooterie’ outdoor space being transformed into a mini gallery.

“Once again, this year I’ll be hosting visitors alongside painter Morvern Lusk. She is one of many Cowal Open Studios artists that I’ve worked with over the years including sculptor Guy Elder and potter Moira Ferguson to name but two.

“It’s a fantastic network that provides advice and support as well as friendship. It’s symbolic of how my world has grown in recent times!” she concluded.

Soozie truly is a one off and a joy to spend time with. Visitors can see her in action making the stunning rings, brooches, necklaces and other jewellery pieces as part of the Cowal Open Studios open weekend (September 22nd to 25th) on the ‘south route’.

Visit cowalopenstudios.co.uk and turmeaujewellery.co.uk for more details.

