Cotswold Sculptors Association

INSTAGRAM - A GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS

DECEMBER 2022



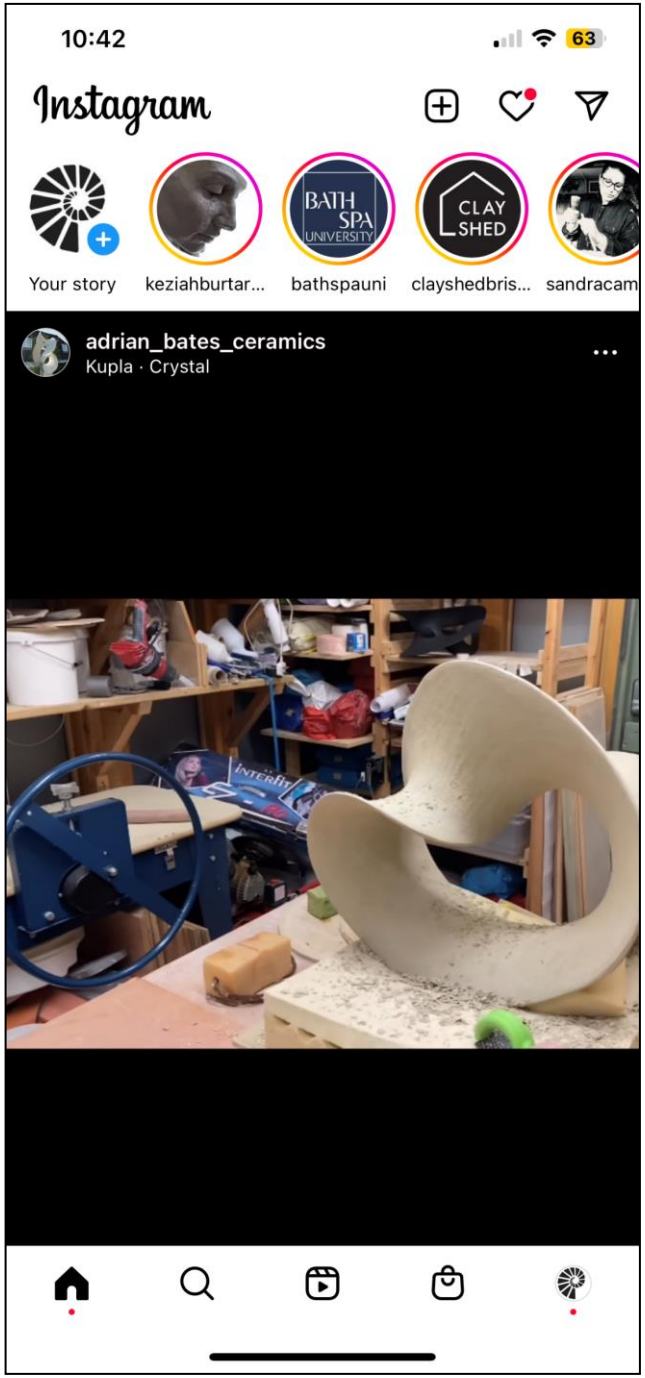
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1. Why use Instagram?

- Instagram is a social networking app made for sharing photos and videos from a smartphone. Users have a profile about themselves and a news feed that constantly updates with the posts of others they follow. It offers an easy and free way to showcase your work, build your brand and potentially turn followers into customers!
- Many of our sculptors already use Instagram to promote their work, and have established a strong presence and following
- Our experience shows artists / sculptors can:
    - **Access a wider audience** than just those who know them or their work already and followers can come from anywhere in the world
    - **Communicate with people** who are already 'fans' of their work
    - **Develop greater understanding and appreciation for their work** and all it takes to create it by holding dialogue with people about what they do and why
    - **Gain feedback** from those commenting on a post that can guide future work
    - **Stimulate buying interest** in their work
    - **Directly sell work** through social media
    - **Enjoy the interaction!**
- Instagram is a favourite as all posts are generated around a picture / photo or video so it is very visual, easy to use, simple to follow other like minded people, and develop a fan base, and it creates a 'gallery' type view of your posts in your profile



2. How do I set up an Instagram account?

A standard Instagram account

- Download the Instagram app for iOS, Android, or Windows.
- Open the app and tap **Sign Up**.
- Enter your email address and tap **Next**.
- Choose your username and password – consider your name carefully as you need people to find you easily if they search for your name
- Fill in your profile information. This explains what your business is and what you do in just a couple of sentences (150 characters). Tips:
    - Convey your personality – this is about you!
    - Go casual, or professional, or a little bit cheeky - whatever makes the sense for you
    - Use spacing and line breaks: Line breaks make your bio easier to read online.
- Add a profile picture - a photo of you or your logo (same one used on other social media so instantly recognisable). It will be cropped into a circle so make sure it looks OK
- Tap **Done**

Converting to Instagram business

Instagram business accounts offer additional features:

- **Instagram Insights -** gives you data on engagement, impressions, audience etc
- **Instagram Ads -** create ads that appear in follower's feed
- **Post on Instagram From a Desktop -** publish photos from a desktop, through third party platforms e.g Meta Business Suite
- **Beefed Up Instagram Profile –** e.g. contact buttons so people can easily get in touch

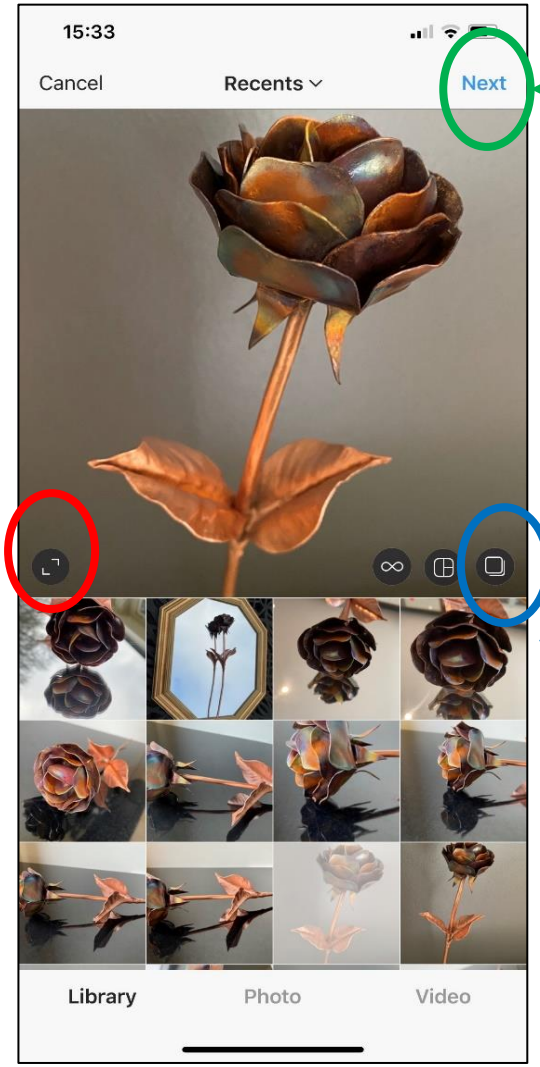
To convert a personal account to a business account:

- Tap the **profile icon** to go to your profile.
- Tap the **three lines icon** at the top right, then tap **Settings,** then **Account**.
- Tap **Switch to professional account**, then **Continue**.
- Choose a category for your profile e.g. artist
- Update your profile information - name and username (these are searchable)
- Include your website: This becomes a clickable link
- Follow prompts to connect your Instagram to your Facebook business page
- Add contact information: include email address, phone number, physical address and tap **Done**.

3. How do I make a post?

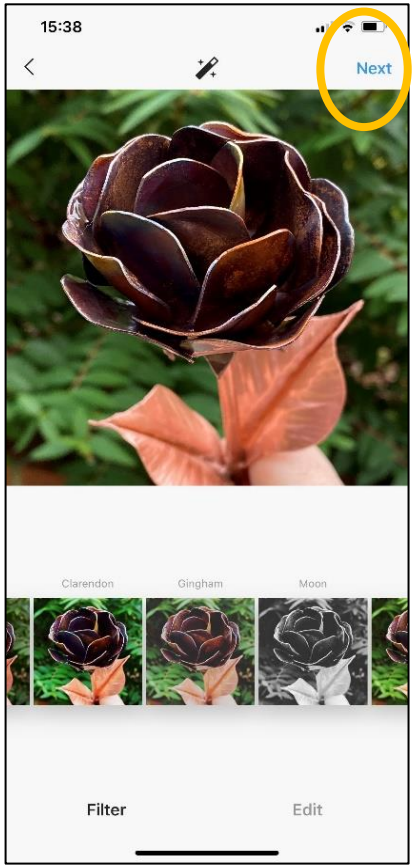


- Select the + button at the upper right edge of the home page to start a post



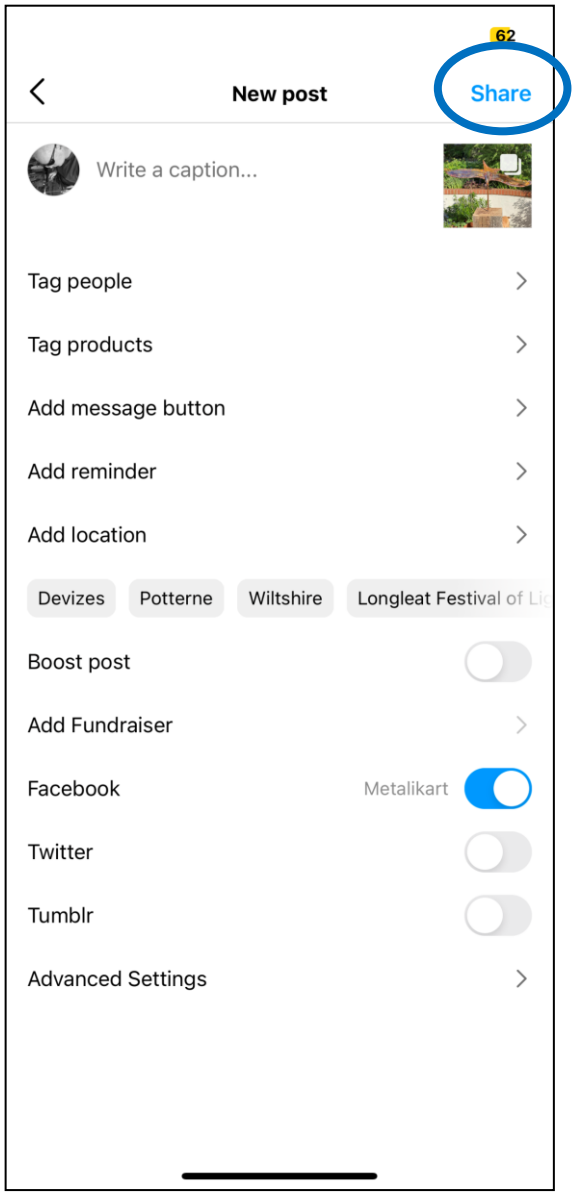
- Select a photo(s) to post by clicking the photo from your library
- Select this button to ensure fit
- Manoeuvre the photo within the space to ensure it is centred, or shows the aspects you want to highlight by holding your finger on the photo and moving it
- To post multiple photos click here tap each photo you want to post

- Click 'Next'
- Choose a filter to enhance your photo if you wish – then click 'next'

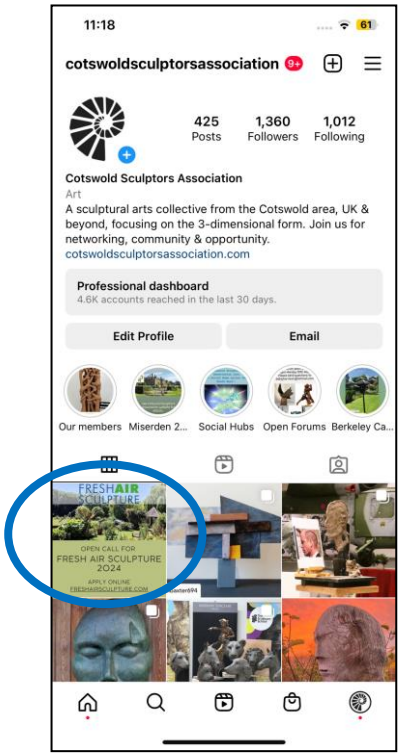


3. How do I make a post?

- You are then taken to this screen where you write the caption for your photo (tips on what to say are offered later in this presentation)
- You would also add hashtags here (tips later)
- You can declare your location if that's important to your post e.g. if you are at an exhibition you want people to visit
- You can also automatically publish your post to Facebook – there is an option to link your account to a Facebook account from your profile



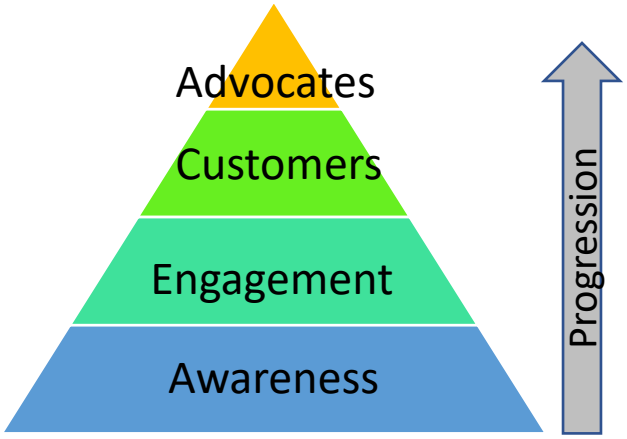
- Once you are done click 'Share' and your content will be published to the news feed, to Facebook if linked, and will appear on your profile page in chronological order – most recent post is top left of your tiles
- Next you will start to see engagement with your post!



4. How do I make Instagram work effectively?

4.1. Create posts that appeal to your customer

- Determine who already likes your work and buys from you and think about what your audience wants to see from you
- Do some research – look at what other sculptors do to promote their work on social media. Try a few of the CSA members on Instagram such as Kezia Burt, Stacey Beaumont, Martin Elphick, Roy Evans, Anna Gillespie, Debs Harrison
- Your aim will be to build the following



Advocates: people who promote or recommend your work, suggest sales avenues or provide gallery space to show your work

Customers: people who buy / commission your work

Engagement: inspire people to comment on your work and ask questions or share it with others and to follow you

Awareness: grow the audience who are aware of your work

4.2. Post regularly

- Once you start building a following on Instagram, your fans will expect to see posts from you on a regular basis. Don't overwhelm them so they get bored, but share interesting and engaging material they enjoy and interact with.
- Try not to 'go dark' for too long, but consider this a conversation with your fanbase, and keep in touch with them .

4.3. Share great content

Instagram is all about the visuals. Some ideas for photographic content:

- **Show your work**. Photos of your pieces in the workshop or in situ in a home or garden
- **Show your craft / process**. Show work in progress, demonstrating how the finished article comes together (fans find this fascinating)
- **Show you**. Photos of you at work, demonstrate how you work, where you work, share stories of what happened at work today, who came to visit, accidents that happened, triumphs, surprises and things that made you laugh *(NB posts showing the 'artist' gain c50% more engagement than those only showing art)*
- **Show your inspiration**. Photos of what inspires you, motivates you, gives you energy, starts your day
- **Show your plans**. Highlight where your work can be seen, forthcoming shows (flyers), exhibitions, galleries, shops
- **Show customers**. Get permission to share photos of delighted customers beside their piece of art

4.4. Take amazing photos

Your mobile phone is your best friend, since you can post straight from your device. Tips:

Use natural light	Avoid harsh light	Use the rule of thirds	Try different angles	Don't forget video / reels!
It makes shadows softer, colours richer, and photos nicer	Late afternoon is a great time to take photos. For mid-day shooting choose cloudy days	Your phone camera has a grid built in to help you follow this rule. Place your subject where grid lines meet to create an interesting photo	Crouch down, stand on a chair–do whatever it takes to get the most interesting version of your shot	These are striking as they stand out in and are more engaging - in fact they now have priority in Instagram's algorithm

4.5. Write compelling captions and text

- The caption and text you use tell a story that makes the photo meaningful
- The first few words need to be powerful, intriguing and want the reader to learn more
- Get it right and you can make followers think, laugh, and feel a connection to you and your work
- Always write in your own personal style. Don't just describe what the picture is, but talk more about how it came about, why you did it, what it means to you, who its for etc.

Examples of captions from artists:

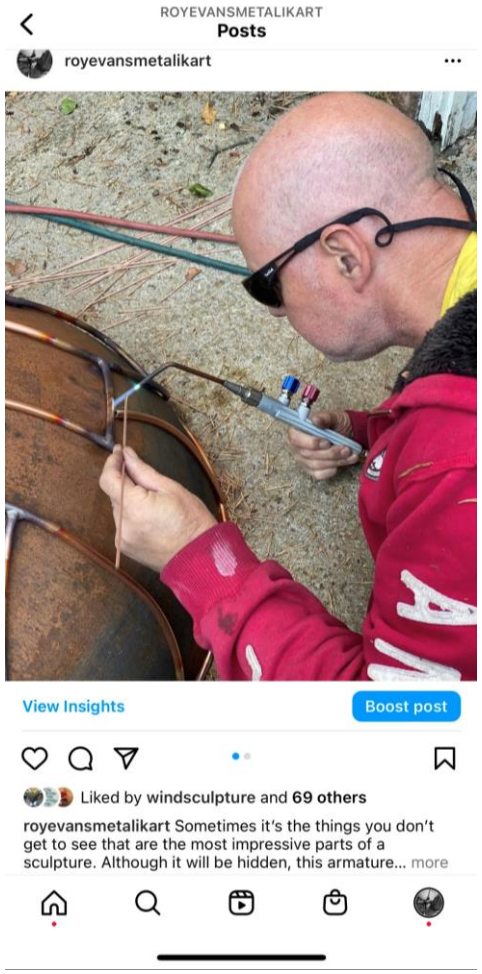
"I'm not a morning person but today – WOW it all came together at 5.00am…."

"Textured weathered looking surfaces have always fascinated me…."

"Michelangelo once said 'every block of stone has a statue inside it and it's the task of the sculptor to find it… "

"Never again I said, but here I am…"

"I'm having a play!"



4.6. Use hashtags at the end of your post

- Hashtags are a way of 'labelling' or categorising your subject so it is easier to find, as they are searchable
- Search for a hashtag, and you will see all the associated content i.e. any posts that others have also used that hashtag in. It's gets your content in front of people who don't already follow you personally
- Typically, add 5-10 to each post, but mix them up. Look at what your audience, competitors, and industry leaders are already using. Or google 'best hashtags to use for sculptors'!
- As you start writing a hashtag for your post a number of suggestions will come up showing you how many people have posted with that hashtag which might help you choose the popular ones
- **Always add #cotswoldsculptorsassociation as that means CSA can find your posts and repost them to our account, putting your work in front of our 1400 followers**
- The narrower the scope of the hashtag, the more engaged the users tend to be. Don't be afraid to find a niche interest or topic that you'd like to build an community around. And try something quirky that makes people laugh e.g. #willmissthisone #chuffedtobits #mothernaturerocks #turnedoutniceagain
- Types of community hashtags that connect like-minded users :

Hashtags indicating your product or service - #sculpture or #stone

Hashtags indicating your niche in your industry - #gardenart or #rakuceramics

Hashtags for Instagram communities in your industry - #sculptorsofinstagram or #artistsofinstagram

Hashtags for special events or seasons - #miserden or #nationalgardeningweek

Hashtags using location - #wiltshireuk, #cotswolds, #stroudlife, #gloucestershire

Daily hashtags - #mondaymotivation, #tuesdaytip, or #thrillingthursday

Hashtags with phrases relevant to what you do - #becreative, #scupturelove, #shapeandform

Hashtags with acronyms - #qotd (quote of the day) or #iwoot (I want one of those)

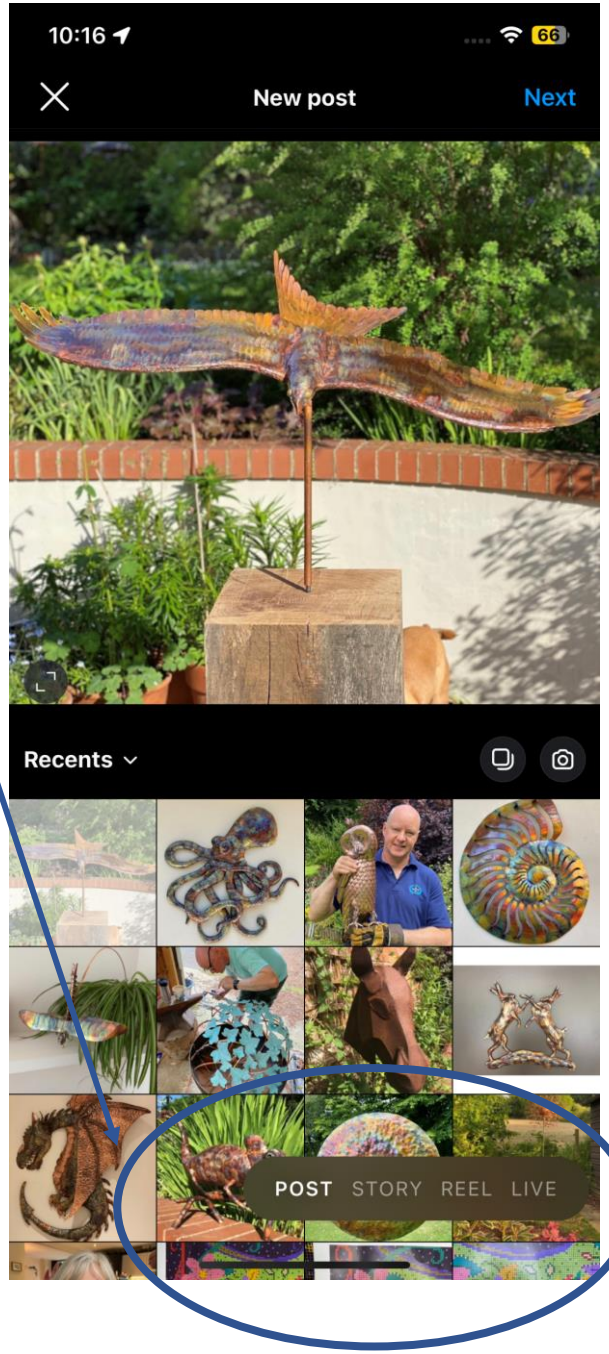
Hashtags with emojis, like # or #



4.7. Use reels, stories or ‘go live’

- These are simply different ways to publish your content
- They can be given greater priority in the Instagram logarithm i.e. are put in front of more people quicker than standard posts
- They often get higher engagement from your audience too
- To choose these alternatives select them from the options at the bottom of the screen when you hit the + button to create a post

- **Reels** – simply videos. Created from a selection of your photos that are animated in the app, or from a video generated on your phone.
- **Stories** – are posts that contain photos and videos that disappear after 24 hours. They appear at the top of the Instagram app, rather than in the news feed. They incorporate interactive tools like stickers, polls, and Instagram Story filters to make your content really pop.
- **‘Go Live’** – like having a video call with your followers. You select this option as you choose how to make a post, and immediately you are videoing yourself or your view and streaming it to your audience.

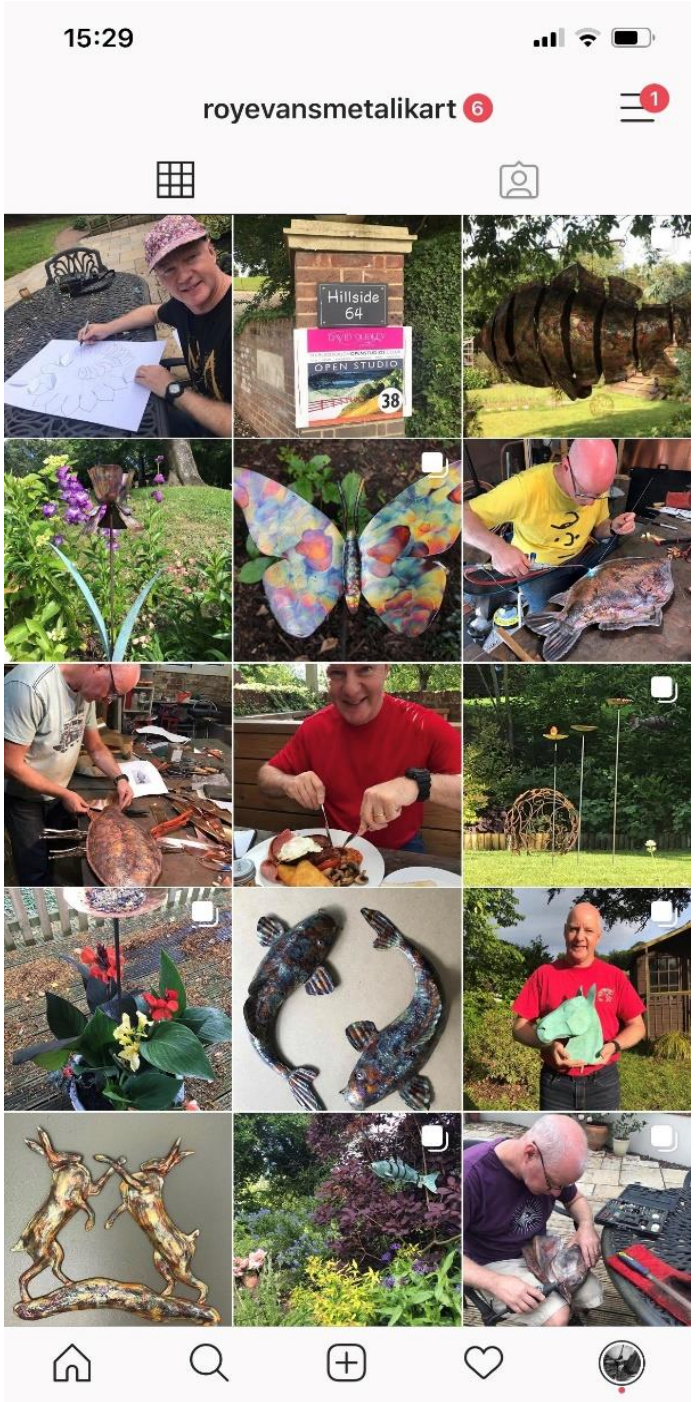


4.8. Consider the big picture

As you start to build up your posts look at your profile page and aim to make this collage as visually appealing in itself as possible to encourage people to scan throughout your posts i.e.

- not two pictures together that are similar either to the left, right, above or below each post
- Variation of sculpture based posts and pictures of you doing your work

This is your ‘shop window’ – it gives viewers a quick overview of what you are all about and a sense of your practice and personality



4.9. Grow and engage your audience

Follow and engage with relevant communities on Instagram

- A community relevant to your brand already exists on Instagram, you just have to find them. You could start with following all the CSA sculptors. Then look at who they follow, and follow those of interest too.
- You can also follow hashtags. This is like following a subject rather than a person, and all sorts of posts will come into your feed relevant to that subject, which gives you the chance to follow other like-minded individuals
- Go further - engage with others, and comment on social media posts you like. Follow the people who participate in these discussions. Make your presence known to people who are likely to be interested in your content. Message people directly if you wish to 'speak' privately

Respond to comments and mentions

- Respond to comments and mentions of your brand on Instagram, so users feel motivated to keep engaging with your brand. Always respond to comments offered on your own posts so fans know you are listening and appreciate their engagement

Promote your Instagram account

- Tell people you have an Instagram account. Put the account details on your email footer, on your business card, publicity material etc.. When speaking to people ask them to follow you on Instagram

Don't be afraid!

- Just try it, play with it, watch what others do, practice makes perfect and the rewards can be amazing



5. How do I work safely online?

- Pick a strong password - use numbers, letters and special characters (such as !$@%)
- Change your password regularly – it helps to keep your account secure and prevents you from being hacked
- Never give your password to someone you don't know and trust
- Make sure that your email account is secure. Anyone who can read your email can probably also access your Instagram account. Change the passwords for all of your email accounts and make sure that no two are the same
- Log out of Instagram when you use a computer or phone that you share with other people. Don't tick the "Remember me" box when logging in from a public computer, as this will keep you logged in even after you've closed the browser window
- Be careful about the background of your photos shared – don't give away personal information on letters or bank cards visible by zooming into the image
- If you have done this inadvertently delete the post or edit them as follows:
    - Go to your profile page and find the post you want to delete
    - Open the post
    - At the top right corner there are three dots – click on this
    - A menu comes up including a 'delete' option – click on this and your post is removed completely
    - There is also a 'edit' option. If you click on this the content of the text you posted comes up
    - You can then go into the text, change it, then click 'done' in the top right corner and the post will be published with the amendments made
- Don't respond to messages from people you don't feel are genuine, or click on links sent to you
- Set up two factor authentication for your account. Navigate to your profile and tap the 3 lines icon in the top right, select the Settings menu and tap **Security > Two-Factor Authentication > Get Started**.
- If someone is harassing you or posting inappropriate content, report them to Instagram. Just tap the three-dot icon on the top right of an Instagram post or bottom right of a story.

And finally…



Instagram is:

- Easy and fun to use
- A great way to promote your work
- A source of feedback, engagement and potential sales

So give it a try!

If you have any problems, get in touch with me directly
janeboiston@msn.com