

THINGS TO DO > ENTERTAINMENT

Boulder artist launches StudioDoorz, a platform connecting art lovers with creatives

Bill Snider created the site as a way for patrons to visit artists' studios year-round



Metal sculptor Mitch Levin works in his Boulder studio. Levin is one of 60 artists who has a listing on StudioDoorz, a site created by Boulder-based artist Bill Snider as a way to connect art lovers with artists through year-round studio tours. The platform features artists outside of Colorado and will eventually include international talent. (Mitch Levin/ Courtesy photo)



Pre-COVID, when looking to find unique pieces to fill one's interior, folks would often visit art districts, attend art walks or stroll open-air markets. With multiple large-scale art shows being canceled due to the pandemic and galleries operating at limited capacity, more people are searching the web for everything from handcrafted pottery to stained glass.



Boulder-based artist Bill Snider stands by one of his paintings in 2019. Snider has created StudioDoorz, a site dedicated to connecting potential patrons to artists through scheduled studio tours year-round. (Bill Snider/ Courtesy photo)



Boulder-based artist [Bill Snider](#) has bridged the gap between creator and potential patron with the launch of [StudioDoorz](#) — an online site that connects art seekers with makers through scheduled studio tours year-round.

While the concept for the site was hatched prior to the pandemic, it has served as a great outlet for makers looking to drum up business during so many shutdowns and has allowed buyers to get an intimate shopping experience beyond the glow of a screen.

Currently around 60 artists — mostly within the Front Range — are participants on the site that allows users to search by location, name, medium or just leisurely browse.

StudioDoorz has branched out with artists in Denver and Snowmass creating listings, in addition to Tucson, Arizona, Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

With contacts in New Zealand, Mexico and the Netherlands, Snider is hoping to expand the platform internationally.

We caught up with the creative — a University of Colorado alum, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in fine arts — to find out about the latest project, what feedback has been and what visitors to his own studio can expect.





Painter Susan Albers works in her central Boulder studio. Albers is one of the artists on StudioDoorz, an online platform that connects potential patrons with creators through scheduled studio visits. (John Waugh/ Courtesy photo)

Daily Camera: What inspired you to come up with the concept for StudioDoorz?



Bill Snider: I've been a participant in the Boulder Open Studios Tour for the last 10 years or so and have enjoyed having visitors to my studio. I have found that these visits are not only fun, but good for business. Like most artists that are interested in selling their work, I've tried a lot of different approaches. I'm in a few galleries, worked with art consultants and dabbled in the world of online art sales. As it turns out, the majority of what I sell each year comes from direct contacts with collectors, and studio visits make up the larger component of those sales. So hatching the StudioDoorz idea wasn't much of a leap. Finding a way to get visitors to come to artists' studios seemed like a good idea. The other part that made this seem like a good idea is that I think people really like buying something from its "maker." A lot of the artwork that my wife and I have collected has come from buying it from the artist. It comes with a story — you know who they are and what their work is all about. That's very different from acquiring something off the shelf or online. I guess you could compare it to the farm-to-table movement and I think it's why the open studios model has been so successful all over the world. So, we've taken the proven model of studio tours and expanded it into a year-round marketing tool for artists. Mind you, StudioDoorz isn't claiming to be the one and only form of marketing an artist should do. It's just one part of the puzzle.





Ceramic artist Liz Quan works in her North Boulder studio. Quan is one of the artists on StudioDoorz, an online platform that connects potential patrons with creators through scheduled studio visits. (Matthew Staver/ Courtesy photo)

DC: Since launching the site in October, what has the feedback been from both participating artists and potential patrons?

BS: Even before we launched I spoke with a lot of my artist friends about the idea and the reaction was good. No one said it sounded like a really bad idea. In fact there have been some artists who have been wild about the idea even though they realize that it will take time before someone arranges a visit. And on the visitor side, the reaction has been good as well. During the Open Studios tour I started asking people if they would like to visit artists' studios when they travel and pretty much everyone said yes. In the long haul, we want to spread StudioDoorz as far and wide as we can so that when someone is visiting another city or country, they think about, "I wonder if there are any StudioDoorz artists around here that I could visit?"



DC: In this time of COVID, when so many art shows have been canceled, this seems like a great vehicle to connect interested buyers with artists. What would you say has been the most rewarding aspect of launching this project?

BS: I was in the very early stages of getting StudioDoorz going when the COVID arrived and I wasn't sure if it would help or hurt. Some artists have been OK with having visitors and some not. What we're really looking at is getting ready for a post-COVID world when artists with StudioDoorz listings will all welcome visitors. When I did this year's Open Studios Tour, visits were all prearranged. The numbers were much lower than normal years, but the sales were actually quite good. So, I think that visitors have already started to embrace the idea, even in a difficult time.

DC: Love that your yearly cost for artists is so reasonable. Why was it important to keep this fee so low?





Artist Samuel Austin holds up one of his paintings in his downtown Boulder studio. Austin is one of the artists on StudioDoorz, an online platform that connects potential patrons with creators through scheduled studio visits. (Samuel Austin/ Courtesy photo)



BS: StudioDoorz is a startup so keeping the price low was a necessity, but we hope to keep them low so that we can grow our community. Currently, the price for a listing is \$25 per year. We have had some artists tell us that it's too low and people will assume it has no value. As we move forward, the price will go up, but only when we can prove there is value. Those fees will be turned around to help promote the site and encourage visitors to make contact and visit artists. Building a large global community of artists is where we want to go — think [OpenTable](#) for artists. Some of the online sites that sell artwork represent thousands of artists. For me as an artist, that is a problem because it seems that the likelihood of someone finding my artwork is low. StudioDoorz — on the other hand — filters artists into smaller groups. They are filtered by location. Someone wanting to visit artists' studios won't search for artists in New York when they're going to be in San Francisco. Artists will have a better chance of being found in that scenario, and for most artists being found is the real trick.



"Circles," a recent painting by Bill Snider, creator of StudioDoorz. (Bill Snider/ Courtesy photo)



DC: Lastly, I find your artwork very intriguing. What can folks expect from a visit to your studio space?

BS: A lot of paint splattered on the floor and walls — works in progress. People are interested in my process so I have samples of the steps I go through to get to the final product. I'm also very happy to share information with other artists and, of course, I have works for sale — in all sizes and prices — sometimes for free.

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