

# Swedish artist Anni Thorn returns to Newark for Gallery 6 exhibition

Swedish artist and singer-songwriter and former Winthorpe publican Anni Thorn returned to her English home town of Newark for an exhibition of her paintings at Gallery 6.

The exhibition of abstracts opened on Tuesday at the Stodman Street gallery and runs until Saturday, August 31, along with works by other artists.

As Annika Cawthorn, Anni and her then-husband, Paul, ran the Lord Nelson pub for seven years, until they fell in love with a house in the Swedish ski resort of Åre 20 years ago, but she still makes frequent return visits to Newark.



Anni Thorn. (15495006)

"I have so many close friends here that I consider them as my family. I often come back four times a year and I would love to buy a cottage here as a second home, but it's just too expensive," she said.

Anni also has an exhibition on in Stockholm featuring large canvasses of racehorses, to coincide with the Stockholm Horse Show, and has been approached by a New York gallery keen to display her work, but she found the Newark exhibition particularly challenging.

"It's a small space, so creating small paintings has been a big challenge for me, but it's been good for me to think small. Sometimes it's good to be pushed to do something else," she said.

Small abstracts inspired by the sea and by the mountains

where she lives are on display alongside smaller works in acrylics plus two larger, darker works called *Twist Of Fate* and *Worry Is Suffering Twice*, which have attracted interest from the US.

The paintings are all produced without brushes. Mother-of-two Anni uses sponges, cloths and spatulas to create varied textures.

Anni has also just released a first album, *Crazy Duchess*.

"It's a combination of Swedish blues and English jazz. I recorded the album at Peter Gabriel's Real World studio in Bath. I've had a year off after 17 years of teaching to see if I could survive on my music and art," said Anni, who taught business and economics at the Mid-Sweden University.

"It's very hard to make a living from music but that was fulfilling my dream, and the music inspired me to start painting again. I wanted to get back into painting and do it seriously, to see where it could take me — and now it's taking me to New York."

Anni's development as an artist was hard won. While still working as a publican she took a one-year foundation course in art and design at Newark College.

She said: "They said I was too good not to do something with my talent, so they pushed me to apply to university." Three years later she emerged with a BA honours in

design studies at Nottingham Trent University, studying full-time by day and running the pub-restaurant full-time by night.

But with interest from America as well as the UK, her artistic career appears to be taking off.

“The New York Gallery in Manhattan found me on Instagram and asked me to send them four examples of my work.

“They loved it, and are going to sell my work on their website. If that goes well they will invite me to do an exhibition and they may even offer me a studio there. So that’s my aim now – it would be a dream.”

Meanwhile, Anni is just delighted to be exhibiting in Newark. “It is so nice to come back to my English home town in a different role and show my creative side that I never had the time to explore properly during my time at The Lord Nelson,” she said.