Key points to bear in mind when having a studio visit

Be prepared

- **Research the curator** – Look into what they have done before, the institution they work for, and the mission and aims of that institution.

- **Check their bio** – If they are early in their career, they may not have extensive experience. Set your expectations accordingly.

- **Identify their interests** – Most curators focus (even in broad terms) on particular themes or ideas. Understanding these can help you frame your presentation and highlight connections between your work and their interests.

- **Understand the institution** – If they work for an organisation, look at its programme. Is there a theme, standpoint, or focus (e.g., communities, research)? This will help you understand their interests and the purpose of their visit.

- **Plan your hour wisely** – Studio visits are short (sometimes less than an hour). Start by giving a brief overview of your main themes (think of the ‘elevator pitch’ or your artist statement). Carefully “curate” the projects you show them, focusing on those that best demonstrate your research, technique, and themes.

  I would focus on works that both distinguish your practice and connect with broader discourses. The visitor may also ask about specific works they have researched beforehand.

- **Your studio tells a story** – Consider what you have around you. Studio spaces are often exciting for curators; they offer insight into how an artist works, what inspires them—books, images, mood boards, colours, music, etc.

- **If the visit is online**, you can still share studio materials via camera. You may also prepare a presentation showing work and references, or mention what you are reading, watching, or listening to, so the curator can understand the context of your practice.

What should I expect from the studio visit?

Be realistic. A studio visit rarely results in an exhibition offer on the spot, nor is it a guarantee that it will lead to one—though it *might*. Keeping this in mind helps manage expectations and structure the visit effectively. Think of it as one step toward your larger goals.

It helps to be clear about the reason for the visit:

- Is it part of a programme organised by an institution to bring artists and curators together?

- Did *you* request the visit? If so, be clear with yourself—and with the curator—about your intentions.

- Is the curator visiting as part of their research?

- Are they working on a specific independent or institutional project?

How do I make the most of the curatorial visit?

Once you are prepared and have realistic expectations, the next step is managing the meeting.

- **Your studio is your space.** You can set the tone of the conversation.

- **Break the ice.** Ask the curator a few questions to make them comfortable. Invite them to talk about themselves, their role, and what they are currently working on.

- **Ask how they'd prefer to start.** For example: ask if they would like a brief overview of your practice (an elevator pitch/artist statement), or if you should jump straight into discussing specific works?

- **Focus on key works.** Aim to spend 5–10 minutes on each. For videos, show a key extract. If something is in progress, say so— you may want to invites dialogue and feedback on it. Share references or inspirations; this often encourages curators to share associations or comparisons.

- **Be curious about their responses.** Their perspective can help you understand how your work is read. Their suggestions may be useful—even if you do not agree with them.

- **Watch the time.** Ask if they want to see more, if they have extra time, or if there's anything specific they'd like to explore further. Check if they'd like to hear about your current or upcoming work.

- **Leave things open.** If you enjoyed the visit, say so. Ask if they think you should show your work to someone else or if they have recommendations—things to read, see, or listen to.

My studio visit was a disaster!

What if the curator *should* have been a good match—but it just didn't work? Maybe you didn't "gel," maybe your work and their interests are worlds apart. This happens and it's ok, you don't have to like everybody and not every curator has to be interested in your work.

This is just *one* studio visit, not your last. The reality is that both artists and curators get better at studio visits through practice. Don’t catastrophise—chances are it wasn’t as bad as it felt. And if it really was, learn from it and adjust for next time.

Ideal situation: open conversation, mutual learning, shared ideas, new references, possibilities, and follow-ups.

Less ideal: it felt like an interrogation; the conversation was one-sided; you couldn’t read the curator; they didn’t engage with the work (curators, too, may struggle with how to talk to artists).

If it didn’t go well, **move on**. It's upsetting, but it happens.

If you are frustrated with the outcome and feel you didn't present your practice well, you *can* **follow up**. For example:

"I was a bit nervous during the visit and feel I may not have presented my practice as clearly as I hoped. I'm attaching a small selected portfolio with the works we discussed, along with a few others for context. Please let me know if you'd like any more information."

This doesn't blame the curator; it simply expresses your feelings and reclaims the situation with honesty and professionalism.

What if I live somewhere remote?

How do I share my work or organise studio visits?

- **Build local networks** – Connect with local like-minded people, organisations, collectives, book clubs, and other groups. These can be excellent starting points for showing your work.

- **Participate in online presentations and forums** – As you are doing now.

- **Use social media wisely** – It connects you to a wider world.

- **Visit galleries when you can** – Stay in touch with the scene you care about.

People talk to people. The more others know about your work, the easier it is to build connections. Reaching your goals requires strategy, commitment, and determination. After that, it’s about taking one step at a time—begin within your immediate surroundings, then expand outward.