

## Press Release

May 2023

### **B-SIDE FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES TURNER NOMINATED RORY PILGRIM FILM SHOWINGS**

Turner-nominated filmmaker Rory Pilgrim will be attending b-side festival this year and finishing his trilogy based on the Isle of Portland.

The internationally recognised arts festival taking place from 7th-10th September 2023 will hold showings of his two films, RAFTS and The Undercurrent, highlighting b-side's love of local with the Southwest filmmaker.

Centred on emancipatory concerns, Pilgrim aims to challenge the nature of how we come together, speak, listen and strive for social change through sharing and voicing personal experience. Strongly influenced by the origins of activism, feminist and socially engaged art, Pilgrim works with others through different methods of dialogue, collaboration and workshops. In an age of increasing technological interaction, Rory is highlighting connections between activism, spirituality, music and how we form community locally and globally at b-side as a buzzing hub of local talent.

The first instalment in Pilgrim's deep dive into how the climate crisis relates to support structures in our everyday lives is The Undercurrent. This follows activists exploring how climate change interconnects with other aspects of their lives including family, difficulties with religion, friendship, fighting for gender equality and the essential need of a home. In these uncertain times globally, The Undercurrent questions what makes us feel like we belong somewhere - it is a home, a country or each other? Following this is RAFTS the second chapter of Pilgrim's work featuring a concert broadcast that interweaves stories, poetry and reflections around a seven-song oratorio. Using tools of prophecy, reflection and creativity, the concert takes us on a journey that contemplates which 'rafts' could be needed to navigate the future in times of change and uncertainty. The third chapter will be unveiled at b-side.

Taking place on the extraordinary Isle of Portland, b-side welcomes curious wanderers and arts-obsessed regulars to its 11th year. The festival will take place on Dorset's best kept secret from Thursday 7th - Sunday 10th September. Find more information [here](#).

Driven by an abundant community of creative locals, the festival provides a platform for global artists today and seeks out the art scene's most exciting newcomers. The interactive

tour around this distinctive part of the UK explores its heritage through each artist, year after year.

Rocca Holly Nambi, Director of b-side states: "We are delighted to share the culmination of our two-year programme, This Land, at b-side's 2023 festival. Residents of Portland have been working with national and international artists to excavate knowledge and acquire new skills to protect, preserve and propose new futures for natural and built heritage sites on our unique isle. Together we are celebrating what community building and contemporary art can do for the places we live, visit, and love."

The theme for this year culminates in four newly commissioned artworks which focus on the intriguing history and heritage of Portland. With land protection at the forefront, This Land focuses on two fragile and unique natural and built heritage sites identified as at risk: the last remaining area of original Portland landscape at Portland Bill and the ruins of a Tudor cottage, Brandy Row on the seafront at Chiswell. Funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, community-led research has inspired artists to create work that highlights the potential future of these sites as well as their story's connection to wider global challenges. The Heritage Fund proudly supports thousands of heritage projects across the UK thanks to money raised by National Lottery players.

Stuart McLeod, Director England - London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "We are delighted to support the b-side festival project, which thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, will mean that more people can learn about the exciting heritage right on their doorstep at Portland Bill and Brandy Row. Heritage has a huge role to play in instilling pride in communities and boosting local economies, and this project is a fantastic example of achieving those aims."

Each artist commissioned by b-side interprets the story of Portland; the unique landscapes intertwined with perspectives of newcomers and generations of Portlanders. Taking on the theme, and their very first time at b-side, are prolific digital artists Heinrich & Palmer. Their multi-media installations and striking interventions respond to architectural sites. Each piece blurs the boundaries between real and virtual space utilising light, material and audio. Their commission for b-side 2023 explores a building's permanence versus impermanence through the medium of film, sound and digital imagery. Having also immersed themselves in Brandy Row for over a year, Anna Heinrich and Leon Palmer plan to use cutting edge technology to analyse cottages once inhabited by fishermen and quarrymen. Currently used as stores, the future of the site is uncertain as it fights against deterioration and rising environmental concerns.

London-based artist Emily Tracy will be showcasing a new artwork created by many hands at the Portland Bird Observatory. Emily collaborates with life through collage, objects and research. This year, her piece explores the 60 years of close observation of Portland skies undertaken by The Portland Bird Observatory and its dedicated voluntary birdwatchers. This new artwork aims to spark conversation and understanding of the rich, entangled ecology that exists in 'The Last Landscape'.

Set to become the go-to hive of radical, forward-thinking activity, b-side festival welcomes art-lovers from across the country to honour Portland's cherished land.

The full programme and artist line-up for b-side 2023 Festival will be confirmed later this year.

For more information, please visit the b-side website <https://b-side.org.uk/> and Follow b-side festival on Instagram [@bsidefestival](https://www.instagram.com/bsidefestival/), Twitter [@bsidefest](https://twitter.com/bsidefest) and Facebook [@bsidefest](https://www.facebook.com/bsidefest/).

## **ENDS**

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### **Editors' Notes**

b-side is a leading contemporary arts festival which takes place on the Isle of Portland, Dorset. The festival showcases the works of multiple artists who place Portland at the heart of their creations. Inspired by the island's awe-inspiring landscape, artists use Portland as a microcosm to make statements with impact, including drawing global attention to nature conservation and Portland's cultural prominence. Since 2012, the festival has been funded by Arts Council England, making it a National Portfolio Organisation - a leading arts organisation with the primary responsibility to develop national arts and cultural ecology.

We are proud to be supported by the Heritage Fund. Find more information here:

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/contact-us/press-office>