



Open Call 2024

WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE? b-side festival 2024

BUDGET: up to £6k (plus additional £1k for travel and accommodation)

DEADLINE: March 10th 2024

An open call for creative responses to *Who Do We Think We Are? (WDWTWA?)*

b-side is offering commission opportunities to create new artworks in any media for the next festival, **b-side festival Sept 5th - 8th 2024**. Artworks should respond to the theme and can be responsive to Portland's heritage, culture, and geography.

Proposals can be for any amount up to £6,000 (there is an additional £1k budget for artists travel and accommodation, for both the Research & Development day(s) and for the Festival period) - we expect to commission across a range of contexts, concepts, and costs. Deadline for applications is March 10th 2024.

Please note: There is a separate access budget available.

How to apply

Applications must be made online via [CuratorSpace](#)

Please complete the online application form which will ask you the following information (if you are applying in another format we suggest the following timings for video/audio applications):

- Your contact details
- A description of your idea, stating how you would respond to the brief – including details of your method and where you imagine your creative response taking place (for example: online, in print, live... etc.) [700 words or max 5 minute video / audio recording maximum]
- Details of previous relevant experience (where you might have delivered similar work or worked in a similar way / method) [500 words or max 2 minute video / audio recording maximum]
- Confirmation that you are available to take part in b-side festival (5th - 8th September 2024)
- Images or weblinks illustrating your idea and / or previous work [10 images / weblinks maximum]

Applying in another format

As well as written applications, we can accept audio and video applications too. If you want to submit a proposal via video or audio, please record your video / audio response, save it on YouTube / Vimeo / Google Drive / Dropbox and then add the link to the video within the CuratorSpace form (where the text response would usually go).

If CuratorSpace isn't accessible to you, please contact Sally: sally@b-side.org.uk and we will work to provide a format that works for you.

Who is this opportunity for?

- We are inviting all artists: visual artists, poets, composers, storytellers, comedians, performers, musicians to dive into the provocation: **Who Do We Think We Are?**
- If you make work that is playful, maverick, challenging, inclusive, poetic, strange, magical, beautiful, or reflective.
- We welcome applications from artists at any stage in their career, with or without formal training and encourage applications from people under-represented in the arts including artists with lived experience of migration.
- Artists who might use engagement and participation in their work are welcome to apply (please note that there is approximately 16 weeks to make the work and therefore depth of social engagement may be limited).

The Brief

b-side festival commissions theme and site-responsive work for public spaces on Portland revealing aspects of the island's environment and communities and their relationship to elsewhere. The commissions form the core programme of the festival.

b-side's ongoing programme of work is '[Common Lands](#)'.

Who Do We Think We Are? is a development of Common Lands and of b-side's work on Portland, exploring our relationship to the place and people we work with: residents, artists and multi-disciplinary partners.

WDWTWA? begins with themes of identity, home, and migration. Through your responses we want to explore and widen this lens and extend the conversation, hearing from new voices adding richness and variety, challenge and conversation.

We believe that in making room and listening we are all enabled to broaden our understanding of how each of us interacts with place, with a goal to share places equitably.

About b-side festival

- The festival takes place over a four-day period with installations and events at several locations across the island. The commissions form the core programme of the festival with artists also contributing to talks and other events prior to or during the festival.
- Work can be for indoor or outdoor contexts, intimate or large scale, static, mobile, durational or event based.
- Proposals for artworks and interventions should respond to the theme and can be site-responsive and aim to intrigue and engage audiences.
- We welcome proposals that may involve working with Portland residents and visitors as individuals or groups or equally for more intimate, reflective artworks and encounters.
- Proposals should be for new work but may be part of a larger or on-going project.
- We expect artworks to have a presence throughout the festival or if event-based to include several performances or audience opportunities.
- Applications are invited from artists at any career stage and working in any media including visual art, digital, sound, film, text based work, live and performance art, social media and socially engaged practice.

- b-side values diversity and is working to make the application and commissioning process accessible to all. We welcome proposals from those currently under-represented in the arts. We will endeavour to work with artists to mitigate barriers to making their work for the festival. We welcome access documents from artists at any stage of the process. Please download and use our [Work with Me](#) document from our website, this document helps us better understand your needs and how we can work better together. More info on access documents <https://www.accessdocsforartists.com/>

Budget

- Up to £6000 to make work for the b-side 2024 festival. This covers the artist fee and all costs including transport of work, all materials for production, installation and de-installation of work.
- There is an additional £1k budget for artists travel and accommodation, for both the Research & Development day(s) and for the Festival period.
- We expect to commission across a range of budgets from £1000, with a maximum of 3 awards at the £6000 level.
- Artists may submit up to three ideas at varying costs within the £6000 commission budget maximum. Please submit a separate application for each idea.
- Applicants are welcome to bring additional funding from other sources to support their proposal if it is greater in ambition than our commission levels allow. In certain circumstances, we may be able to help source additional funding.

Selection Process

- All applications will be acknowledged on receipt.
- The festival Curatorial team read each application, discuss, and select a long list then a shortlist of artists for interview. Selection is guided by budget, spread of artform/duration/geography/type of visitor experience, and how all selected proposals work together across the festival to give visitors the very best experience.
- All unsuccessful applications will be notified at the earliest opportunity. We regret it is not possible to give feedback for unsuccessful applications at this stage of the selection due to the quantity of applications.
- All shortlisted artists will be notified and invited to an interview (via Zoom)

Key dates

March 10th	Open Call Closes
March 28th	Shortlisted artists invited for interview
April 2nd - 5th	Interviews
April 8th-12th	Selected artists notified
April 26/27th	Research + Development days
Aug 30th - Sept 3rd	Installation of artworks
Sept 4th	Festival preview and press day

- Artists will be selected on the basis of their outline proposal and will then have further opportunity to research and develop the final work.
- Each commission opportunity includes an introductory residential period on Portland April 26th + 27th allowing the selected artists to research and develop their final proposal. This initial residential period will provide opportunities to get to know the area with talks, walks and introductions to communities and individuals that artists might work with. Artists will have the opportunity for individual exploration of Portland as well as contributing to discussions between the curatorial team and selected artists.
- Successful applicants will be expected to be present for the duration of the 2024 Festival. Past festivals have shown us that audiences and artists get much more out of the experience if the artist is present with their work and able to engage with visitors during the festival.

If my proposal is selected how will I be supported?

The selected artists will have access to curatorial support, installation assistance, venue/site facilitation and help with finding accommodation. Artists will also have the opportunity of using our b-side shop front 'project space' - Outpost, in Fortuneswell, Portland for use as private or public facing research, meeting or workspace and engagement venue prior to the festival. Your work will be in the b-side festival programme which is marketed nationally and internationally in print and online and there is an opportunity for your work to exist online.

We can also help broker any connections you wish to make with members of the Portland community, if this is appropriate and useful to your work.

b-side equalities monitoring form

We'd like to ask a few questions which help us understand who we are reaching and how we can improve access to our opportunities. We are a grant funded organisation and it's important to both us and our funders to see who we are reaching and if there are any gaps we can address. Please click the link below which will take you a short survey. This part of the application is anonymous and will not be read alongside your main application.

We don't believe people fit easily into boxes so we have selected a non-categorising method below. You are welcome to write Prefer Not to Say for any answer.

[Click here for Equal Opportunities monitoring form](#)

Sites

- Work can be sited anywhere on the Island and artists are encouraged to research and suggest locations as part of their proposal but this is not essential, we will help selected artists find appropriate sites or venues. A number of locations used for previous festivals are listed below however we are completely open to considering any other suggestions.
- Sites should be reasonably accessible. We encourage visitors to explore Portland by foot using public rights of way and public transport where possible.
- b-side is committed to minimising our environmental impact. We encourage artists to consider the carbon footprint related to the production, materials, installation, and any activities as part of their project proposals, including to re-purpose or recycle all materials from installations and performances.

About Portland

Portland is a curious island with a very particular history and ecology and an increasingly diverse population offering huge scope for research and inspiration. Located just off the coast of Dorset and approached via a narrow causeway, this hulk of limestone, bounded by steep cliffs and treacherous seas is unlike anywhere else in Dorset.

Portland has been dramatically changed and influenced over the years by quarrying and military appropriation and secret experimentation. It is a small island just 1.7 miles across and 4 miles long, it's coastal edges subject to the forces of nature, eroded by the sea, landslips and rock falls, its interior removed by quarrying and mining.

More recently tourism is seen as the growth industry, as former quarries are re-wilded as nature reserves and Portland's unique ecological, historical and leisure attractions are increasingly recognized by climbers, divers, walkers, bird watchers, naturalists, geologists and historians. Portland, as a community and place, encapsulates in miniature the characteristics of what is happening in a wider world context.

Some useful research links

<https://www.portlandhistory.co.uk/introduction.html>

<http://www.geoffkirby.co.uk/Portland/>

<http://www.geoffkirby.co.uk/PortlandArchivePictures/index.html>

<https://portlandmuseum.co.uk/>

The Dorset Explorer website (link below) mapping system is useful for exploring many different layers of information on Portland

<https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/explorer/>

Location links

These are just a few examples of sites used for previous festivals. Additional sites will be developed and negotiated in discussion with artists in response to commission proposals.

Islanders Club

<https://www.facebook.com/islandersclub/about> or see photo here <https://flic.kr/p/2pgTMXG> and <https://flic.kr/p/2pgSD5S>

Chiswell Community Garden

<http://www.portlandhistory.co.uk/chiswell-walled-garden.html>

The Esplanade and Quiddles café, Chiswell

<http://www.portlandhistory.co.uk/chesil-cove.html><http://www.geoffkirby.co.uk/Portland/680730/#Esplanade>

Fancys Farm

<http://www.portlandhistory.co.uk/fancys-family-farm.html>www.fancysfarm.co.uk

The Engine Shed

<http://www.portlandhistory.co.uk/the-old-engine-shed.html>

The Stadium Bowl

<https://www.portlandhistory.co.uk/portland-stadium-bowl.html><http://www.geoffkirby.co.uk/Portland/695725/#Sports>

The Governors Community Garden (The Grove)

<http://www.portlandhistory.co.uk/governors-community-garden.html>

Easton Gardens

<http://www.geoffkirby.co.uk/Portland/690715/#Gardens><http://www.portlandhistory.co.uk/easton-gardens.html>

St Georges Church

<http://www.portlandhistory.co.uk/st-georges-church.html><http://www.geoffkirby.co.uk/Portland/685720/#StGeorgesChurch>

Portland Bird Observatory

<https://www.portlandbirdobs.com/>

Other potential sites/mobile resources

The following are sites/resources that b-side also has access to:

Phone Box

A series of decommissioned community owned red phone boxes <https://flic.kr/p/2p1L5m4>

Ad bike Trailers

b-side have 2 large ad-bike trailers that can be pulled by bicycles, see here for image <https://flic.kr/p/2p1HW5z>

Flag Poles

As part of our partnership work with [Boatfolk](#), b-side have access to 3 giant flagpoles (they used to be wind turbine masts) on a public walkway in Portland Marina