

WHO DO  
WE THINK  
WE ARE?

**HEADLINE FESTIVAL REPORT 2024**

## B-SIDE'S INTENDED OUTCOMES



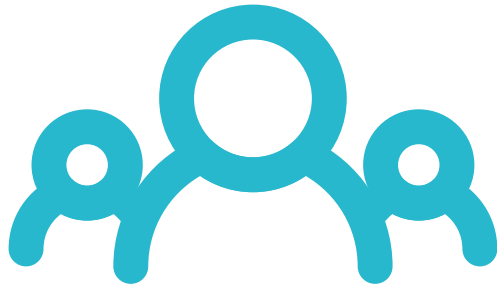
b-side's ambitious programme of creative collaboration, between the community on Portland and local, national and international artists, is strengthening local recognition of the importance of culture and creativity in their own right, and their role in all of our health and wellbeing.



b-side is enabling more people living and/or working on Portland to participate in arts and heritage activities, to work with each other, to acquire new interests and skills and to contribute to the decisions that promote and protect the island's culture, environment and heritage.



b-side is a socially, environmentally and financially sustainable organisation serving the Isle of Portland and benefiting a wider population of artists and audiences. By highlighting Portland as a microcosm of global issues, b-side is attracting supporters, collaborators and commentators from well beyond its physical borders.



# 5075

Visits to festival sites (inc estimates for non invigilated work)



# 1319

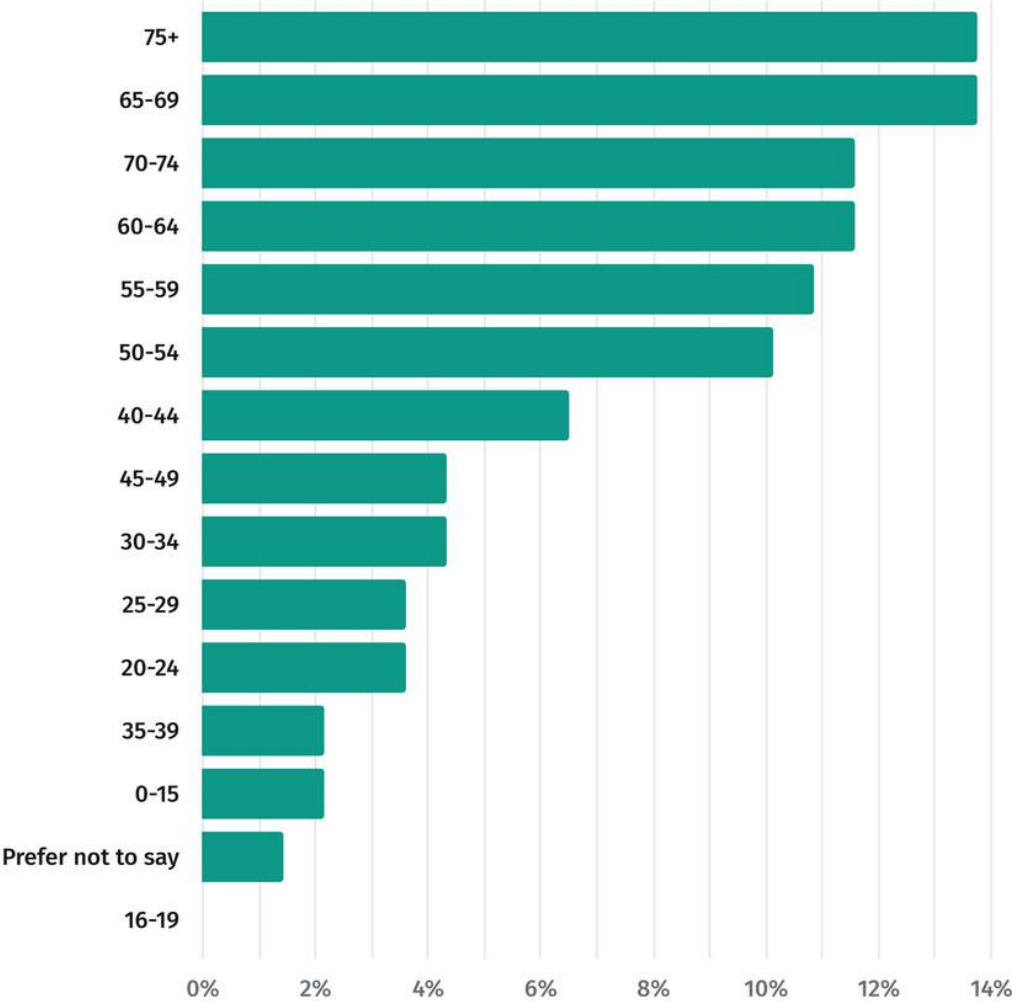
Visits to the FRINGE festival (inc estimates for non invigilated work)



# 41

Volunteers helped us deliver the festival in 2024

**What is your age?**

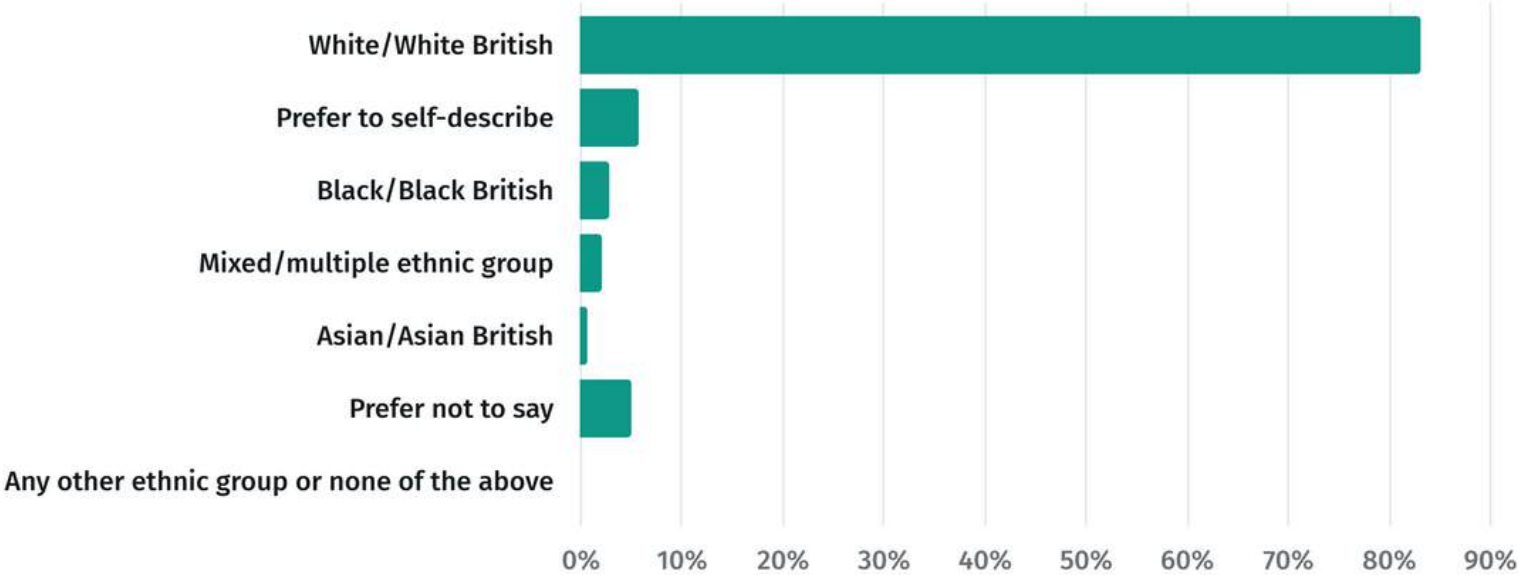


Responses: 138

**WHO CAME?**

Age range of survey respondents

**With which ethnicity do you identify?**



Responses: 137

**WHO CAME?**

Ethnicity of survey respondents

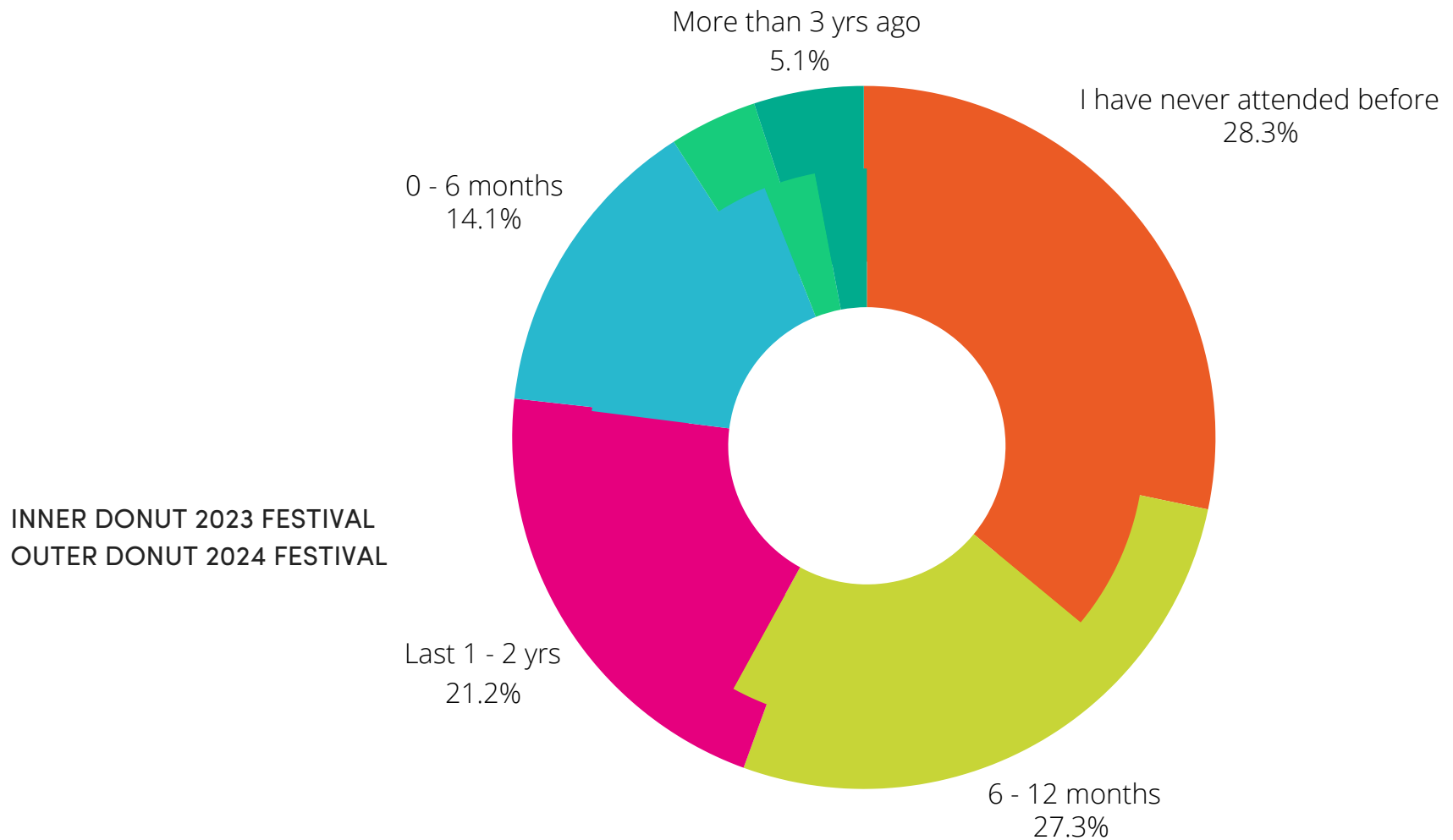
**“Such a special project, encapsulating people’s most precious moments – a lot of dedication in putting this together. Wonderful!”**

**Festival visitor**



Image: The Portland SIM Project by Liz Hingley





## ATTENDANCE 2024

When did you last attend an event by this organisation?

The chart could indicate that the first time attenders from 2023 have returned to the 2024 festival.

New audience percentage for 2024 is still quite high indicating that the festival continues to reach new audiences.

"An amazing project which has resulted in this beautiful Red Dress. An honour to see it on Portland" Festival visitor



Image: The Red Dress by Kirstie Macleod

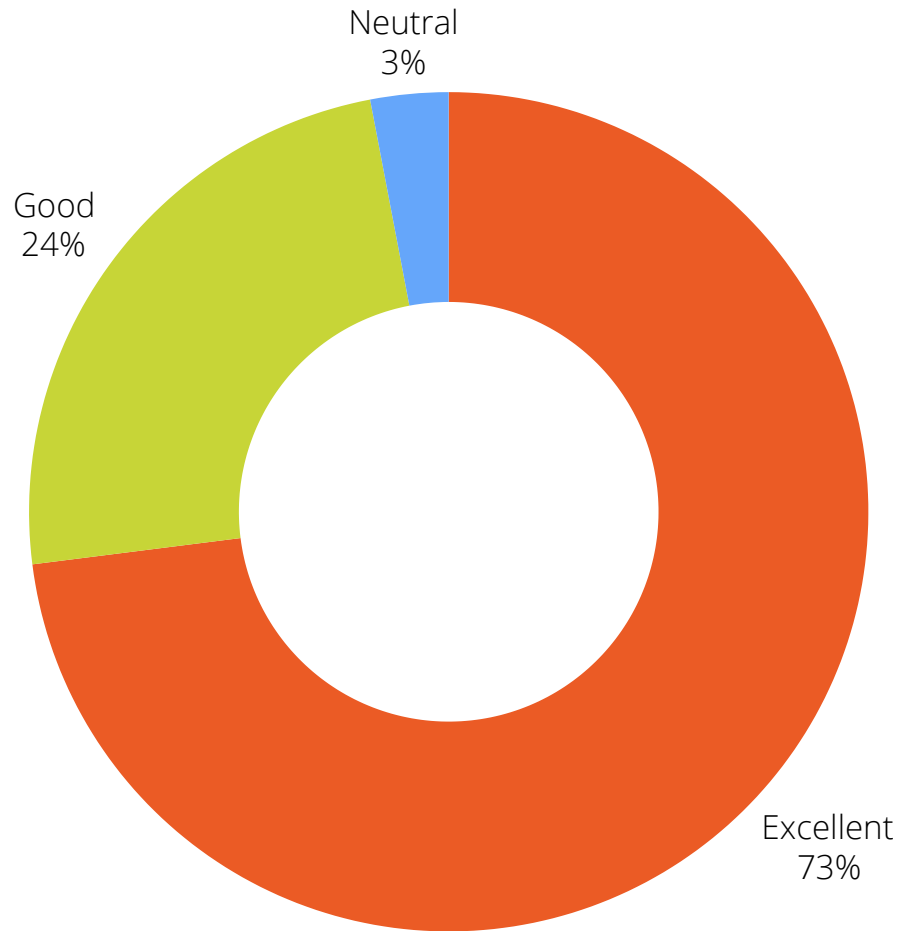




“This extended piece blew my mind. The archaic process of the peeled away flake panel revealing millenia-spanning Persian mark-making styles.

I’ve never seen 3D printing used to such beautiful effect as the statue. Both on my doorstep too.”

Festival visitor



## **ABOUT YOUR VISIT 2024**

How would you rate your experience overall?





“b-side for me was inspiring, educational, quiet unexpected, moving and a huge amount of fun.

I really enjoyed interacting with the visitors and getting swept up in their enthusiasms and reactions to the various projects.”

Festival Volunteer





“A very interesting experience and such a talent! I really enjoyed sitting and discussing the Island and the art, and now have a fantastic momento of this year’s festival”

Festival Visitor

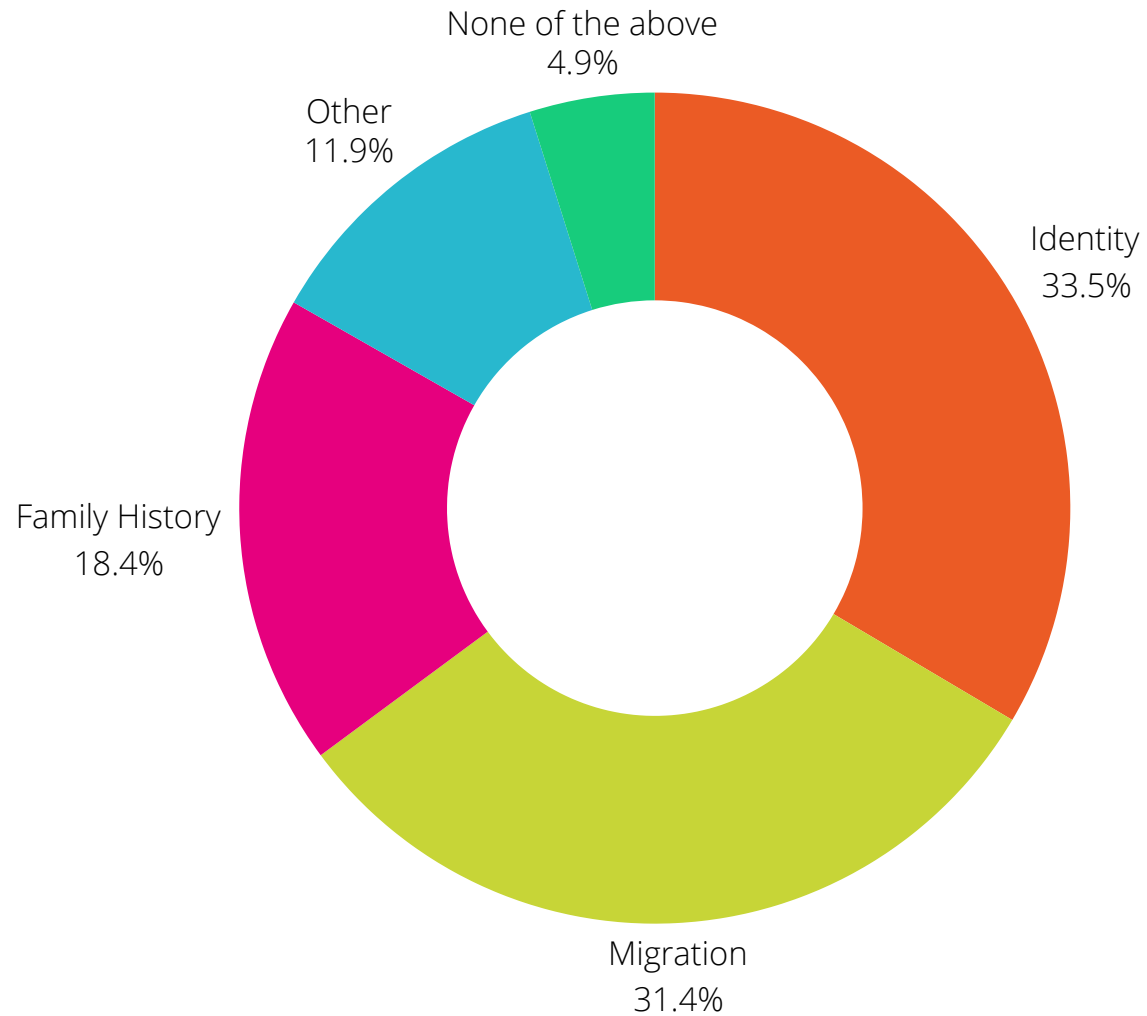
Image: ‘Face Value’ by Harald Smykla

“Loved the match strike film, fascinating the differences in the human face, all so interesting what a wonderful unique idea”

Festival Visitor



Image: Still from 'This is Us' a film by Hugh Dunford Wood in collaboration with Stephen Clarke of biggerhouse film



## THEME 2024

Have the artworks you have seen at the festival inspired you to think about any of the following?



## Word cloud showing the most used words to describe b-side festival



Source: 145 festival visitor surveys



Images: Dan Babel 'Batman and the Na- Nas'





Images: Miss High Leg Kick 'Eau de Portland'



# ARTISTS





# 19

International, national and regional artists made work and delivered events for Festival 2024

# 6

New artworks commissioned

Image: 'New Union Flag Rules the Waves' by Gil Mualem-Doron



“In my experience, b-side is probably the friendliest art festival in the UK (or anywhere?). Communication with b-side staff has been positive and thorough throughout, and I received excellent support. The accommodation b-side had booked was very good, well equipped and in a brilliant location.

The volunteers stewarding my project did a fantastic job in managing schedules of participation.”

Image: Artist Harald Smykla 'Face Value'





“The curation was great both in the general theme and how the various projects were connected to it.

The volunteers were absolutely amazing - I have been working in various festivals in the past and at beside their presence and dedication were fantastic.”

Artist Gil Mualem-Doron



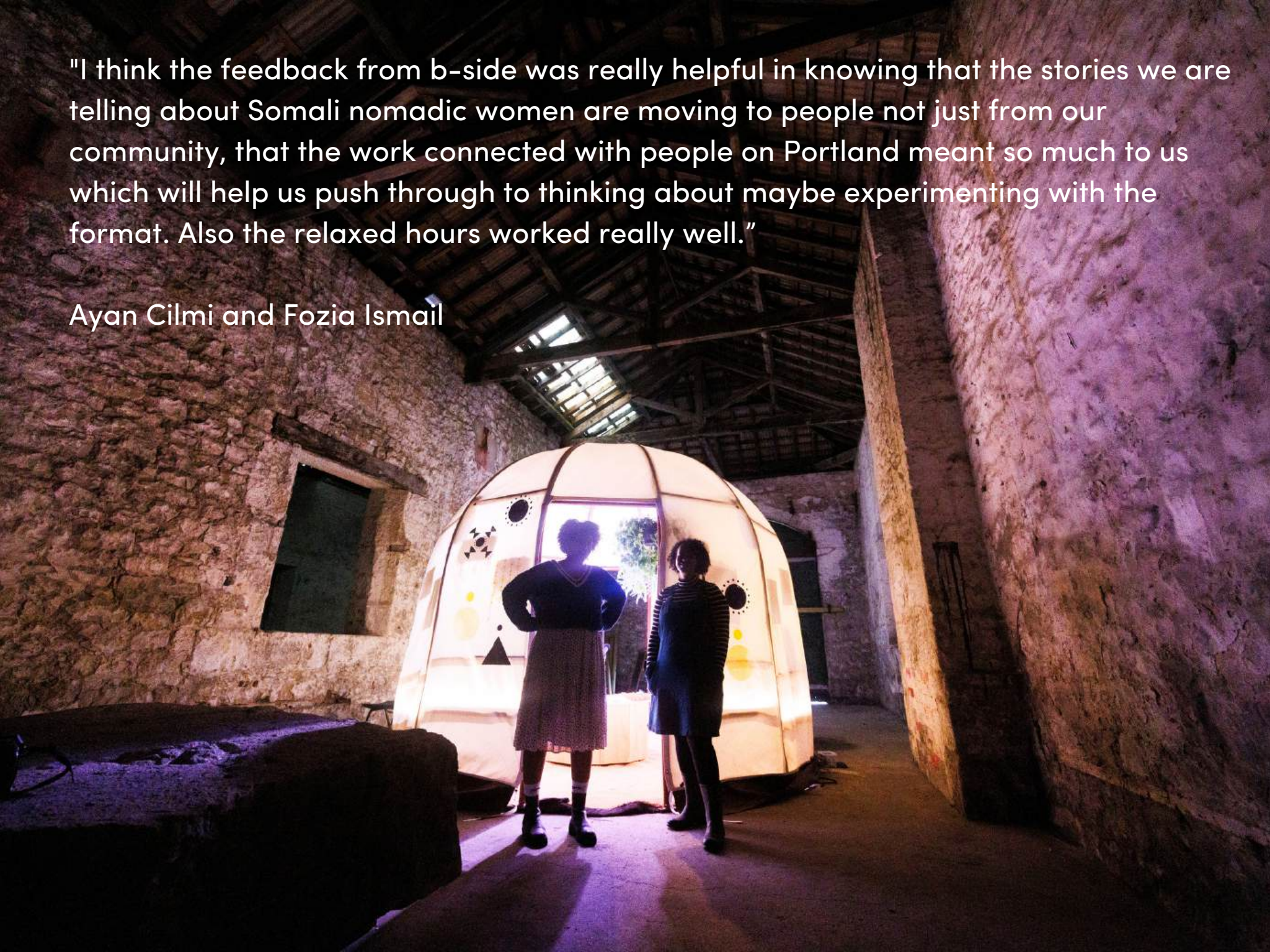
“I felt well supported throughout the whole experience with b-side festival and truly lucky to be showing alongside the other artists and collectives. It is rare to have a budget that respects the amount of labour it takes to make significant creative work and I appreciated that the expense budget was separate, it helped structure costs. The festival team and volunteers were incredibly warm and welcoming with an impressive professionalism. It was great that all activities and installation were so well documented by a professional film and photography team.”

Liz Hingley



"I think the feedback from b-side was really helpful in knowing that the stories we are telling about Somali nomadic women are moving to people not just from our community, that the work connected with people on Portland meant so much to us which will help us push through to thinking about maybe experimenting with the format. Also the relaxed hours worked really well."

Ayan Cilmi and Fozia Ismail







"This is a very special and unique festival. From the onset we felt supported as artists - from all the b-side team. The development weekend is particularly unique - such a great opportunity to meet other artists/learn about other work

Miss High Leg Kick



“I felt extremely supported by b-side who provided a caring friendly and nurturing environment. Great to meet and work alongside a great team of artists, curators , volunteers etc... organisation was extremely and gently efficient”

Deborah Bowness



“The ethos of b-side truly fosters a caring, nurturing, and supportive environment for artists, collaborators, and the community. Throughout my experience of working with b-side, I have felt fully heard and listened to.”

“The Seaweed Explorations project with b-side has significantly influenced how I collaborate with audiences in my creative work. This project has been supported by invested research, with the mentoring and guidance necessary to produce a well-informed and in-depth creative study.”

Maddison Collymore  
Platform Bursary Artist 2024



# COMMUNITY

A vibrant night-time parade scene. In the foreground, a man in a red hat, orange feathered collar, green t-shirt, and pink shorts holds a large rainbow flag. To his left, a woman in a white top and red plaid skirt also holds a rainbow flag. The background is filled with other parade participants, including a woman in a green costume and a man in a cardboard box hat. Large, illuminated floats are visible, including one with a large eye and another with a globe. The scene is set on a street with stone buildings under a dark sky.

Image: Islands of Imagination Parade





79

Artists took part in the b-side Fringe 2024 between Aug 31 and Sept 8 at 25 venues.

Once again, the Fringe was open to anyone who wanted to join in. It was varied and diverse ranging from synchronised swimming, crochet groups, window displays of family history to artists exhibitions, open studios and workshops.

Photo: Fringe artists Lynn Kirkland and Olivia Nurrish





Photo: Penny and Spike Piddock photography





Images: Yollande Posthumus and Gill Locke





Photo: Simply Synchro





Photos: Test Space and Antje Rook







This years Parade 'Islands of Imagination' was a partnership production between b-side and Portland artist Sophie Fretwell including puppets by Emerald Ant CIC





Images: Islands of Imagination Parade 2024







Images: Islands of Imagination Parade 2024







Image: Islands of Imagination Parade 2024





## CHATGPT analysis of 3 words to describe b-side festival

### Social and Community

- community
- welcoming
- friendly
- sociable
- connection
- co-operation
- inclusion
- diverse
- friendliness
- social

These words emphasize themes of togetherness, inclusion, and a sense of community and social interaction.

Source: 145 festival visitor surveys



# PARTICIPATION

A group of people are gathered around a table, engaged in a hands-on activity. The table is covered with various art supplies, including brushes, pens, and containers. Some individuals are looking at papers or documents on the table, while others are actively working with the materials. The background shows a bright, open space with blue structural elements, suggesting an indoor workshop or community center setting. The overall atmosphere is one of collaborative learning and creative participation.

Image: Seaweed Explorations by Maddison Collymore



“Participatory workshops are the soul of The SIM Project and what drive it forward. It was fantastic to bring residents of the Bibby Stockholm barge and the islanders together to create their own artworks to keep, and to add to the site-specific installation in Portland, which then also travelled onto the Victoria & Albert Museum.

I am still absorbing the experience, which was significant in many ways for me and the team.”

Liz Hingley





“I hope you spent enjoyable times with us, because we spent very wonderful and never-to-be-forgotten times with you, especially with our participation in The SIM Project workshop.

Thank you very much for the wonderful opportunity you have given us to be a small part of this great project”

Portland SIM project workshop participant, Ibrahim

Image: SIM jewelery created at SIM workshop



“The collaboration with Portland residents was paramount to the project. The project wouldn't have worked without such wonderful positive input from everyone we interviewed. We only had positive responses from people we stopped in the street - it was testament to the overwhelming support for b-side from locals.”

Miss High Leg Kick



Image: Eau de Portland



“Hearing that others experience similar feelings and barriers trying to work in the creative sector was liberating. Hopefully from this I can work with others to create opportunities to overcome such issues.”

Participant from ‘How Can I Stay’ a one day workshop curated by Erika Cann and Alix Emery, supported by Visual Arts South West, held at Sweet Hill Farm, Portland.







**143**

children took part in  
Under One Sky  
workshop



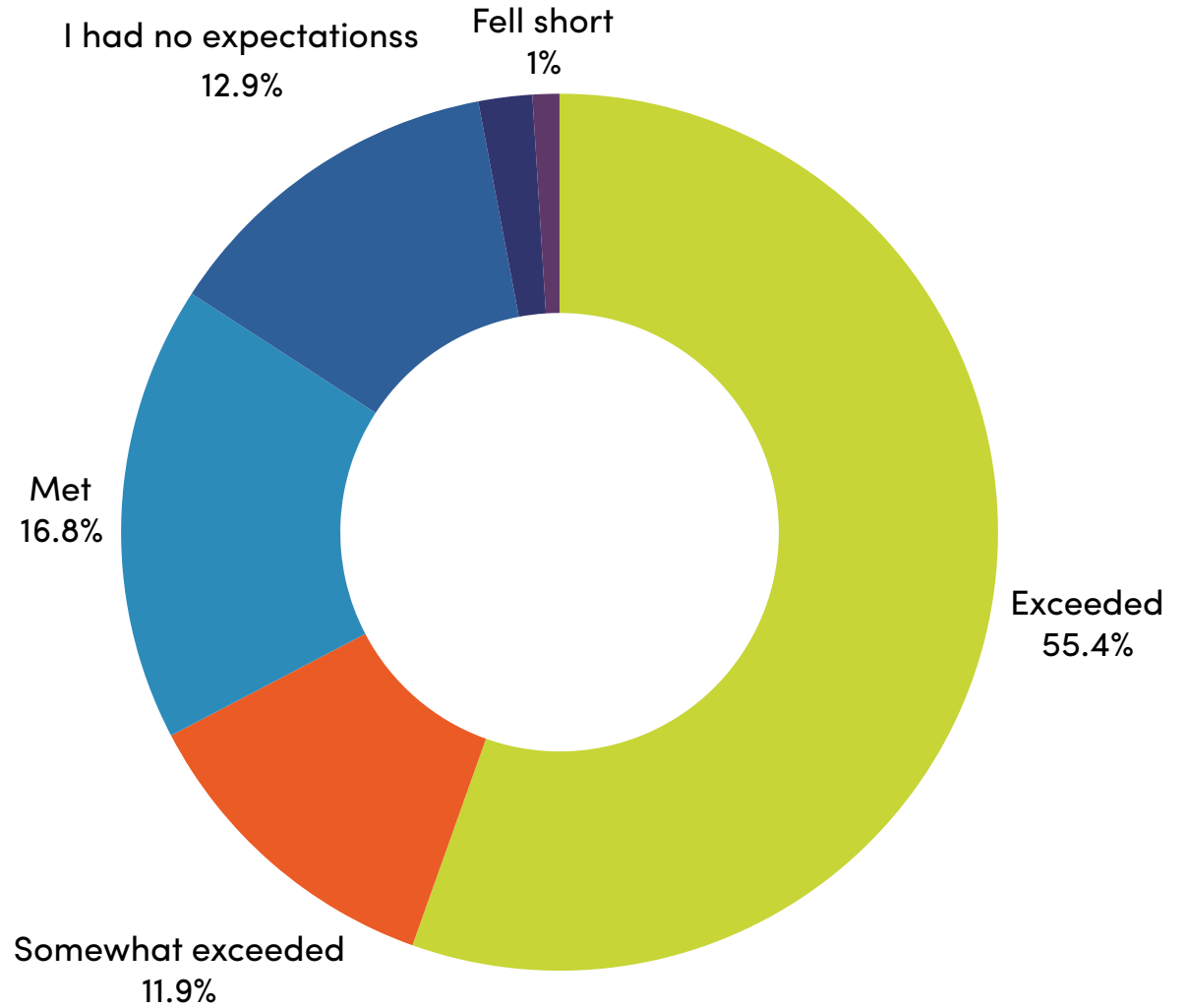




**321**

participated in a  
festival workshop





## EXPECTATION

How did the event compare to your expectations?





ACCESS



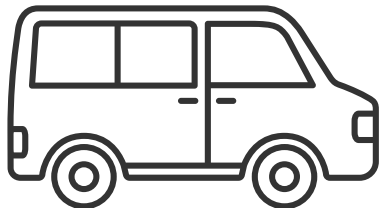
## **EASY READ GUIDE**

We produced a downloadable Easy Read Festival Guide and shared with community groups



## **TALKING LABELS**

Audio explanations of artworks recorded by the artists were available on artwork signage



## **ACCESSIBLE BUS TOURS**

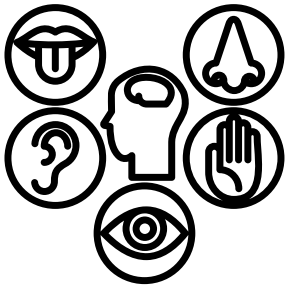
Sponsorship with Weyline enabled two FREE accessible minibus tours of the Festival





## **DAILY RELAXED HOUR**

Limited visitor numbers for a relaxed and stress free visit to the House of Weaving Songs installation.



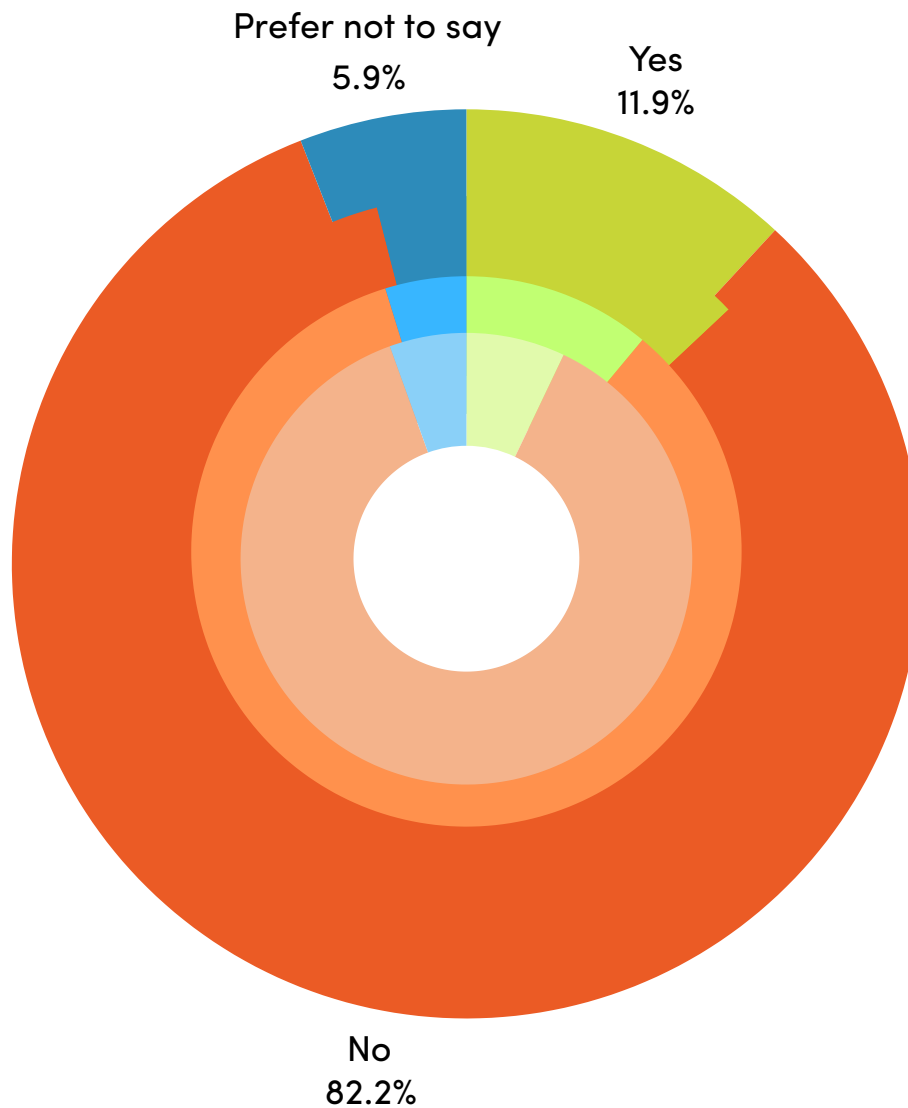
## **SENSORY BAGS**

This year we provided FREE sensory bags for adults and children to accompany their festival visit.



## **RAMPED ACCESS**

Our mobile ramp enabled easy access to venues with limited access for wheelchair users and visitors with prams.

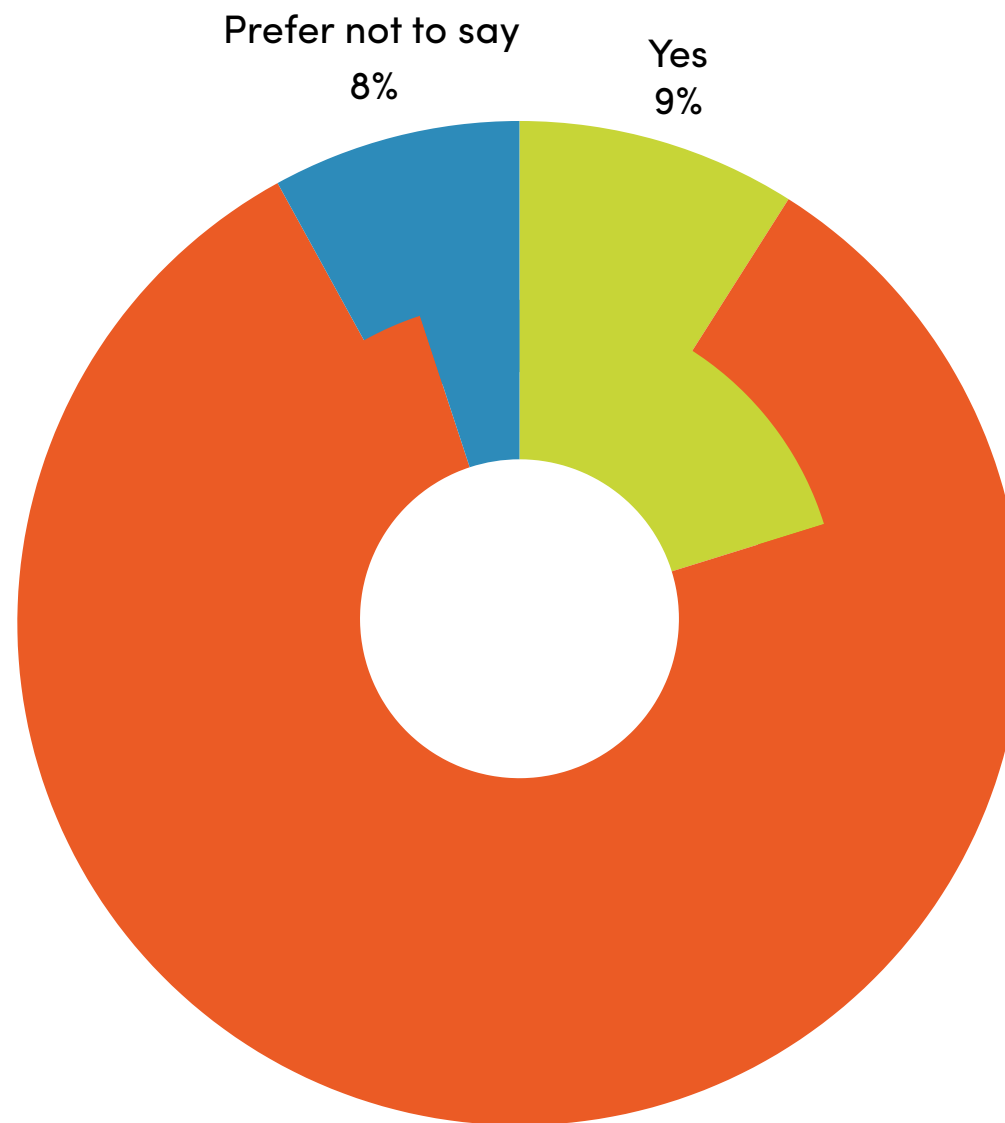


INNER DONUT 2021 responses  
 MIDDLE DONUT 2022 responses  
 OUTER DONUT 2023 responses  
 OUTER DONUT 2024 responses

## ACCESS 2024

Do you identify as a D/deaf and/or disabled person, or have a long term health condition?





INNER DONUT 2023 RESPONSES  
OUTER DONUT 2024 RESPONSES

## ACCESS 2023

Do you identify as neurodivergent?

Being Neurodivergent could include Dyslexia, ADHD etc.

No  
83%

# MARKETING

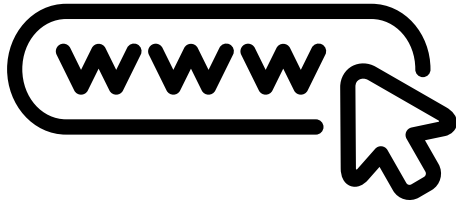






# 27,206K

Social media reach over the Festival period Sept 5th - 8th



# 32,734K

Page views of the b-side festival website July - Sept 2024



# 15,000

Dorset Festivals eco-friendly leaflets were distributed throughout Dorset in August, 6000 free festival 2024 guides, 10,000 At A Glance fliers and 5,000 Fringe leaflets were distributed locally prior to and during the festival.



# 100,325,513

Media coverage reach through 31 new pieces of press inc radio, broadcast TV, online and print



An embroidery project known as The Red Dress, by the British artist Kirstie Macleod, will be on display at the B-side Arts Festival on the Isle of Portland, Dorset. The project provided an artistic platform for people around the world to tell their stories on the dress through embroidery

ZACHARY CULPIN/BNPS



# DORSET MAGAZINE

## Who do *we think* we are?

Migration and identity are the themes of this year's bi-side contemporary arts festival on the Isle of Portland

**T**his bi-side festival, Dorset's internationally recognised celebration of arts and creativity, is returning this September for five days of incredible events, performances and experiences across the island and surrounding waters.

From September 2 to 6, the contemporary arts festival will take over the Isle of Portland, hosting 40 artists who will be exploring their cultural experiences and identity through their work's themes. Who do we think we are?

The festival explores the ways artists that make up the fabric of local life produce art and culture for this important remote coastal area of Dorset. Portland is a deeply connected community of migrants, bringing their ideas to this important community through their talents, and the festival is a celebration of the ways artists that make up that community.

The installations at bi-side are an unique and diverse as the island itself. These include a short film representing the diversity of industries thriving in Dorset - this is the Big Blue Seafood Boat and England's Outer of Eggheadness Britain - the artists will present artwork in the form of 100 works and will be accompanied by live performances of music, dance, and spoken word. These are local and international communities coming together to celebrate their talents, and the festival is a celebration of the ways artists that make up that community.

### TAKING ART AT FACE VALUE



Dorset's a new initiative coming to Portland bringing together artists to create a community of artists who can take their work into the world. This is the Big Blue Seafood Boat and England's Outer of Eggheadness Britain - the artists will present artwork in the form of 100 works and will be accompanied by live performances of music, dance, and spoken word. These are local and international communities coming together to celebrate their talents, and the festival is a celebration of the ways artists that make up that community.

Portland will frequently involve the public with engaging people from all backgrounds and ages



The artist festival people head to and from over the course of a single week

### B-SIDE FESTIVAL



#### THE RED DRESS PROJECT

Running at 5.30pm after a 10 am group class. The Red Dress Project has been announced with a goal to raise £1000 for the Red Dress Project. The artists will present artwork in the form of 100 works and will be accompanied by live performances of music, dance, and spoken word.

#### ON THE FRINGE

Representing the festival's commitment to the arts, the festival will be running from August 11 to September 6, offering a wide range of activities and events. The festival is a celebration of the ways artists that make up that community.

### THE ART OF SIMPLICITY

Artists and photographers in Dorset are bringing the Big Blue Seafood Boat and England's Outer of Eggheadness Britain - the artists will present artwork in the form of 100 works and will be accompanied by live performances of music, dance, and spoken word.

Portland will frequently involve the public with engaging people from all backgrounds and ages

artists that create people in their local area, providing a platform for their work. This is the Big Blue Seafood Boat and England's Outer of Eggheadness Britain - the artists will present artwork in the form of 100 works and will be accompanied by live performances of music, dance, and spoken word.



Portland will frequently involve the public with engaging people from all backgrounds and ages

# ARTS JOURNALISM

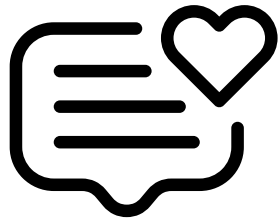






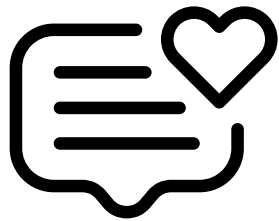
## **BOSLAARTS**

Refugee week Art Persists podcast with Sally Watkins from b-side



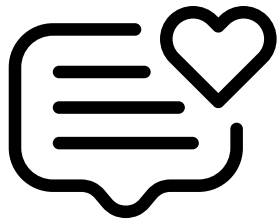
## **VISUAL ARTS SOUTH WEST**

Artist Jessica Rose Taggart's review of the festival and 'How Can I Stay?' event



## **GOWITHYAMO**

Review of Mohammad Barrangi's work at b-side by Jelena Sofronijevic



## **ELLIE BECKETT**

Review of the 2024 festival by Ellie Beckett



# THANKYOU

Headline Festival Feedback 2024 compiled from:  
145 Festival Visitor surveys, visitor comments books, emails and social media posts, Artist surveys,  
volunteer feedback surveys. Documentation by photographers Paul Box, Pete Millson, Jayne Jackson and  
b-side team.