



b-side & Dorset Visual Arts award in partnership with Visual Arts South West

PLATFORM BURSARY 2026

£1000 bursary + mentoring

Deadline: 31st January 2026

b-side and Dorset Visual Arts are offering a £1000 artist bursary open to emerging artists or established artists based in Dorset who would like to develop and experiment with a change of practice. This award is in partnership with Visual Arts South West.

Deadline for applications 31st January 2026

Why apply for a Platform Bursary?

This is primarily a development opportunity, with mentoring support. The bursary includes:

- £1k artist fee (this can be used on travel, materials or other resources that support your work)
- Mentoring from b-side and DVA
- [VASW Practice in Place Blog](#)
- 90 minute mentoring session with VASW Director
- Free one year membership to DVA - DVA Membership includes: Artist profile page of DVA website, monthly member newsletter, access to exclusive DVA showcase opportunities, development resources, support, networking and more
- Potential to create a piece of work to be shown at the 2026 b-side festival

How to apply

Please make sure that your application includes the following:

- A summary description of you and your work (max 300 words)

Please include within this:

- How you hope to benefit from this bursary
- Any ideas of areas of interest that you would like to explore and develop
- Images (10 max) or web links illustrating previous work

Your application and images must be sent as ONE pdf document, please label the document with your name.

Deadline: 31st January 2026

Send your completed application to: sandy@b-side.org.uk please put **PLATFORM BURSARY PROPOSAL** in the email subject line. Your application will be acknowledged so you know we have received it.

If you are unable to apply using this format, please contact us and we can agree on another suitable format for you (e.g. video).

The final selection of Platform Bursary Artists for 2026 will be made by VASW, b-side and Dorset Visual Arts.

Successful Artists will be notified by end of February 2026.

Who else has had a Platform Bursary?

The Platform Bursary has been running since 2018, b-side has offered these opportunities in partnership with arts organisations regionally and nationally including Counterpoints Arts, Arts University Bournemouth, Somerset Art Works, Canford School, Dorset Visual Arts, Diverse City, CODA and Portland Museum.

"My first venture into drawing live/performance but a really positive experience and am looking for opportunities to do more. Have now been selected for a two week performance drawing residential programme in October in Brighton."

Carrie Mason

b-side & DVA bursary

"I was nudged to apply for a bursary because of the mentoring element to the programme and have found that incredibly helpful and beneficial. It happened at a moment where I've begun exploring new directions for making work, so to have the support, encouragement and professionalism of b-side has been really significant"

Lucy Large

b-side & SAW bursary

https://b-side.org.uk/projects/?_sft_project_type=talent-development

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

b-side

b-side is an internationally recognised and locally loved arts organisation that both embodies and enriches its place of origin - the Isle of Portland in Dorset.

This island is the beating heart that inspires b-side's work, but our projects and opportunities extend all over Dorset and beyond.

We work with and commission artists who are as excited by the bigger picture as the smallest detail. Our current 'Common Lands' programme regards Portland as a microcosm to explore relationships to and with land. We invite artists, residents, and researchers to create unique and inventive projects inspired by the themes of 'people' and 'place'. We host big discussions on topics that affect us both locally and globally and create art that exists in unusual and unexpected places.

Underpinning our approach is the recognition of the need for sustainable tourism. We want everyone to be able to experience everything we love about Portland in a way that respects and benefits the island and those who live and work there.

“Geotourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the distinctive geographical character of a place—its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents.”

National Geographic

We produce the b-side festival bringing unique art to local audiences and visitors alike, sharing incredible stories about and with the Isle of Portland, as well as the rest of the world.

b-side is run by a collaborative team of artists, producers and curators with experience in visual arts, live art, performance, social practice, heritage, environment and arts education. In 2012, we were awarded funding from Arts Council England to become a National Portfolio Organisation.

Dorset Visual Arts

Dorset Visual Arts (DVA) is a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity (1113249), established in 2006.

We recognise that artists and makers have different interests and needs in developing their work and careers, particularly in a mainly rural county. We are here to support visual artists, designers and makers at all stages of their career, through a variety of activity.

Our Aims:

DVA champions the advancement and appreciation of arts, design, and craft for public benefit by empowering Dorset's artists and makers to fully realise the potential of their creative practices

This is achieved through:

- Creative Development: Supporting the growth and quality of visual arts through bursaries, commissions, and other opportunities for Dorset's creative community
- Public Programming: Producing Art Weeks events and other curated public programmes that educate in, and promote awareness of, the visual arts, crafts, and making

- Community Building: Providing opportunities for members of Dorset's creative community to connect, share knowledge and experience, showcase their work, and to develop their creative practice and promotional skills

Visual Arts South West

VASW supports, celebrates and promotes the incredible organisations, artists and art workers in the South West. They advocate for people in the visual arts and connect artistic communities; raising visibility, campaigning for diversity, and developing resilience. VASW's core aims include: increased recognition of the value of the visual arts; development of a sustainable, supportive, resilient, and inter-connected sector; and tackling structural and systemic issues in the sector. VASW is based at Spike Island in Bristol, as part of their National Portfolio Organisation funded by Arts Council England. It is an independent organisation connected to the Contemporary Visual Arts Network (CVAN). <https://vasw.org.uk/>

END.