

**activate**  
performing arts

# Sparking possibility

We create opportunities  
for everyone through  
the performing arts



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**Dorset  
Council**





## Mission & values

Live performance has the power to fire the imagination, uplift and connect us. It creates moments that touch hearts and minds like nothing else. It makes memories that last lifetimes.

For over 30 years, we've been promoting, supporting and producing some of the most extraordinary events in the UK. We've brought live performance to unexpected places – town centres, village squares, beaches and hilltops – for everyone to enjoy.

In everything we do, we have just two rules:

**Anything's possible.  
And everyone's invited.**



# A creative family

We exist to promote, support and produce performing arts projects in our communities.

Credit: Roy Riley



Credit: Mike Pettidmange



## InsideOut

DORSET

We produce Inside Out Dorset festival, an award-winning international outdoor arts festival that takes place across the county every two years. Creating extraordinary events in extraordinary places.

Even in the challenged year of 2021 after we had postponed the festival from 2020, we attracted 27,500 visitors. We commissioned and presented an extraordinary range of UK and European artists.

We celebrate Dorset and promote our natural landscape and sense of place. Some of Dorset's most amazing urban and rural spots are transformed with experiences that touch hearts and minds like nothing else.

At the centre of what we do is our belief that performing arts should be accessible for all – no matter what your experience or background. All of Inside Out Dorset 2021 was free to attend.

DORSET

## Youth Dance

Dorset Youth Dance (DYD) is a county-wide youth dance company offering high quality dance experiences for young people who have a real passion and enthusiasm for dance and want to take that extra leap in training.

Focusing on contemporary dance, the company offers classes at three levels, for Juniors (aged 7-11), Seniors (aged 12-18) and Company members (aged 14-25).

The young dancers are led by the inspiring and renowned former Motionhouse dance artist and youth dance leader, Claire Benson. Other amazing artists and companies the young people have worked with include Joshua Nash and Sonia Sabri.

The Remix



Credit: Mike Pettidmange



## Remix

The Remix is an inclusive youth performance company open to young people age 12-19, both disabled and non-disabled, from across Dorset. The Premix is a similar group set up for 7-11 year olds.

The Remix and Premix members include young people with physical and sensory impairments, young people with learning difficulties and non-disabled young people, all with a love of performance and the willingness to stretch themselves and have fun. Remix Originals brings together the original cohort of Remix participants, who are now young adults aged 18 to 25.

## FOR Creatives

To create outstanding events and performances, sometimes creatives need support. We help creatives at all career stages, working in the performing arts make the most inspiring work they can. This is at the heart of everything we do.

Our wealth of experience, gained over more than 30 years, makes us a great sounding board and source of information on all aspects of creating live performance.

We make sure creatives have the connections they need and find their professional community. We help them navigate the unique challenges of making theatre, dance, outdoor or site-specific performances, through practical advice and moral support.

# InsideOut

## DORSET

Seventeen years ago, with Dorset Theatre Promoters Consortium, we created our international festival, Inside Out Dorset, and 15 years ago we launched the first edition of this award-winning international festival. It is arguably the only festival in the UK that works across both urban and rural outdoor locations across a whole county area, presenting distinctive international artists and companies.

Inside Out Dorset 2021 presented 104 free performances by 24 UK and European artistic companies and commissioned local artists with DCMS Culture Recovery Funds. The festival included nine world premieres.

International work in collaboration with our European partners is vital to us.

LAND (Land stewards and artists) is one of our two European partnerships which brings together arts organisations specialised in working in the landscape. Funded by Erasmus +, the current partners are based in the Netherlands, the UK, France, Norway, and Slovakia. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we were delighted to host some of these organisations at our 2021 festival.

Our second European partnership is Green Carpet, a network of four festivals in France, Belgium and the UK that commissions new performances or installations for green spaces in rural or urban locations. Red Herring's The Whistlers, staged at Inside Out Dorset 2021, was the second Green Carpet commission.

As the world becomes ever more politically and socially divided, reaching out to our friends overseas remains a key ethos of our organisation. The richness and perspective our European partners bring is an essential inspiration for so many artists who we work with here in the UK.



Geophonic. Credit: Jayne Jackson



Rodadoras. Credit: Mike Pettidmange

## Our work in the landscape

We celebrate our natural landscape and sense of place. Our team may be small but we come with a wealth of experience. For over 20 years, we've worked closely with landscape, environment, and heritage organisations like the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Forestry England and National Trust.

In 2021 we wrote the first national arts strategy for The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB).

We've also devised and delivered training for land stewards on connecting people to nature through arts and culture. In 2016-2019 we created a three-year celebration project; Life Cycles and Landscapes in partnership with the NAAONB and UK outdoor arts company And Now:, inspired by the present landscape and ancient routes of the Icknield Way.

Our expertise is in presenting live events in sensitive landscapes through many years producing Inside Out Dorset; we can advise on how to do this in a safe and environmentally friendly way.

"This is a festival that presents fresh perspectives on Earth (and) brought audiences closer to nature."

Chris Wiegand, The Guardian

"How lucky we are in Dorset to benefit from such brilliant work brought to us by your excellent organisation."

Dorset AONB





# Inside Out Dorset Signature Events

Outside our biennial festival, we celebrate Dorset, our natural landscape and sense of place in the alternate years through our Signature Events. Dorset's most unique urban and rural spots are transformed with extraordinary experiences in response to national moments of celebration or importance.



Pages of the Sea. Credit: 14-18 NOW

## Pages of the Sea

On 11 November 2018, tens of thousands of people joined Danny Boyle for a unique event to mark 100 years since Armistice and the end of the first world war. Across the UK and Ireland, communities gathered on 32 beaches to say a collective goodbye and thank you to the millions who left their shores, many never to return.

In Dorset, we led the way in presenting the two regional events in Weymouth and Lyme Regis as part of 14-18 NOW's national arts programme. Pages of the Sea was the largest simultaneous coastal arts project to take place in the UK. Large-scale portraits were drawn into the sand on the beaches and washed away as the tide came in – representing a small selection of the millions who gave their lives to the war. An estimated 14,000 visitors attended the event in Weymouth and Lyme Regis.



Dorset Moon. Credit: Mike Pettidmange

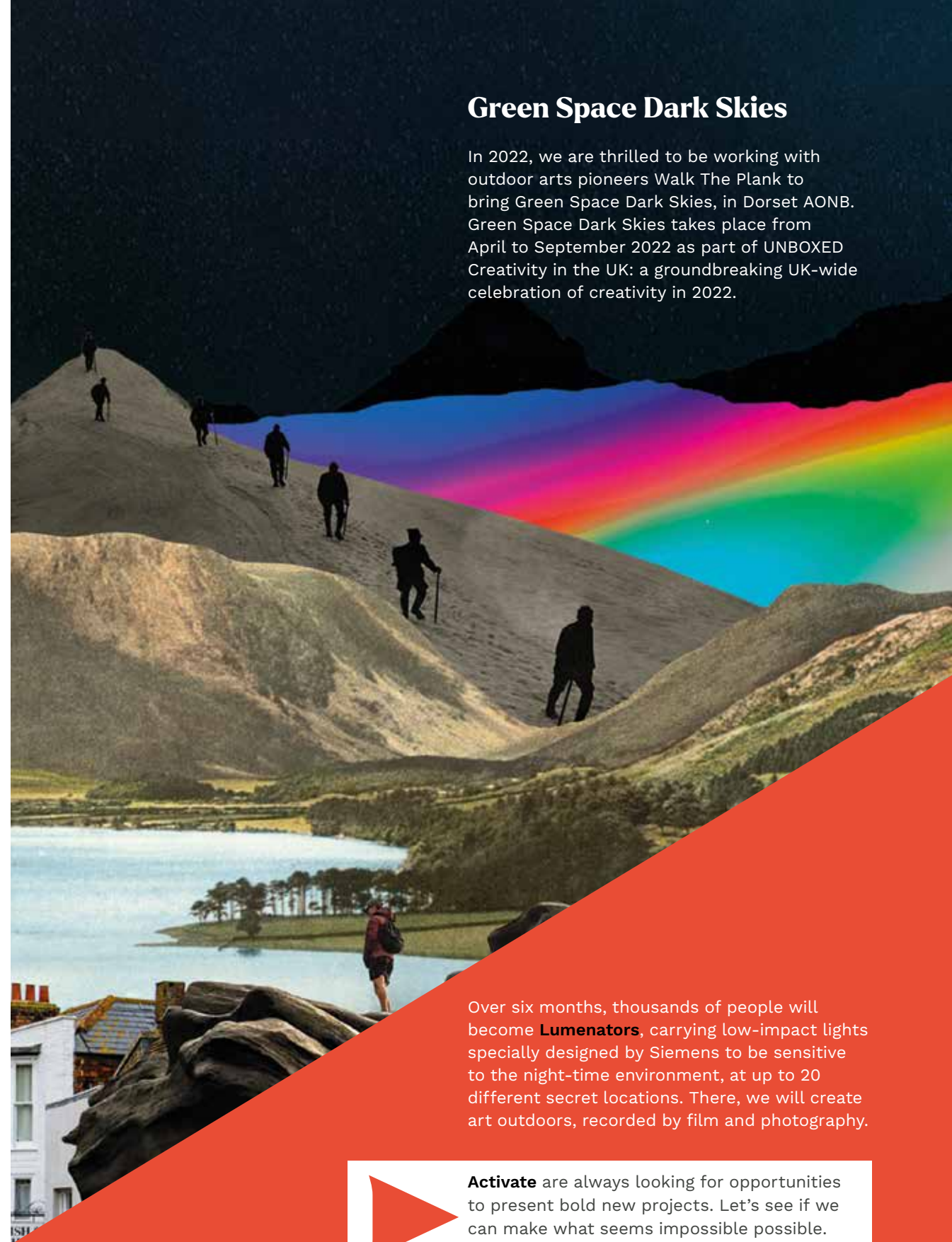
## Dorset Moon

In July 2019, 50 years on from the first moon landing, we joined forces with b-side festival and Bournemouth Arts by the Sea to present Dorset Moon. This was made possible by the Arts Development Company who commissioned Dorset Moon using funding from The European Regional Development Fund and Arts Council England.

An astonishing 41,000 visitors attended Dorset Moon events and 27% of those were visitors to the county. The centrepiece to Dorset Moon events was Luke Jerram's Museum of the Moon, an astounding seven metre diameter globe. All Dorset Moon events were free and had a selection of high-quality participation events and local and national artists commissions that visitors could experience, unique to each individual venue.

## Green Space Dark Skies

In 2022, we are thrilled to be working with outdoor arts pioneers Walk The Plank to bring Green Space Dark Skies, in Dorset AONB. Green Space Dark Skies takes place from April to September 2022 as part of UNBOXED Creativity in the UK: a groundbreaking UK-wide celebration of creativity in 2022.



Over six months, thousands of people will become **Lumenators**, carrying low-impact lights specially designed by Siemens to be sensitive to the night-time environment, at up to 20 different secret locations. There, we will create art outdoors, recorded by film and photography.



**Activate** are always looking for opportunities to present bold new projects. Let's see if we can make what seems impossible possible. Get in touch with us today.



# Our work with communities

For over 30 years, we've created inspiring moments with children and adults of all ages and abilities in surprising spaces for everyone to enjoy.

We promote, support and produce performing arts projects in our communities that are always free to access.

Projects grow from our strong network and collaboration with partners who work in education, health, environment, business, heritage and the arts.

We work with people of all ages and abilities: school children, young people and folk with health difficulties and disabilities.

Whenever we create our events – big or small – we make sure they're made for and with our local communities. Creating opportunities for everyone is important to us. We make sure that exciting national events take place here, such as Pages of the Sea in 2018 and Green Space Dark Skies in 2022.



Pages of the Sea. Credit: 14-18 NOW

Following on from the success of the last two years, Street in the Park was held in Borough Gardens in Dorchester on 7 May 2022 involving participants from our Dorset Youth Dance and Remix groups. Street in the Park also hosted an Up & Coming DJ competition on Air 107.2 FM on the same date.

*"This event has been a wonderful tribute to the memory of our ancestors and I feel privileged to have played a part in it."*

**Navy Veteran**

We believe real change happens with proper, deep engagement: which means we're not afraid to choose quality over quantity.



The Remix. Credit: Rachel Dunford

In 2021 we worked with **Drake Music**, the leading national organisation working in music, disability and technology who we were presenting in Inside Out Dorset, and Dorset Music Services. We enabled 12 young people who are learning disabled to explore the sound world of iPads and traditional instruments. We also collaborated with Forestry England, BCP's Cultural Hub and Dorset artist James Aldridge to inspire 90 children in the forest and the classroom.

In Weymouth, we provided hot meals and puppet making workshops for families in partnership with Dorset Council Holiday Activity and Food programme and puppet maker artist Holly Miller. Their puppets were then displayed in business and shop windows around Weymouth throughout the summer.

We recruit and train volunteers across our events every year. Without their support, our work as a charity would simply not be possible. But we want to make it as special for them as it is for us, so we carefully match our volunteers to the right opportunity.



Holly Miller

*"In this experience I saw things differently, I learned, I connected, I grew as a person and developed a feeling of belonging to my community."*

**Volunteer**

# Our work with the artistic community

## Without artists, we simply wouldn't exist.

We support creatives at all career stages, working in the performing arts to make the most inspiring work they can by providing practical and moral support.

Artists change the way we look at the world and offer a unique perspective. The pandemic revealed how crucial arts, culture and togetherness are to us all, but it was also a very difficult time for so many creatives.

In response to the first lockdown, we offered funding advice to many local artists and we honoured all our pre-pandemic financial commitments to them. We also put out a call to fund ideas for artists to connect people feeling isolated through new micro-commissions – 10 local artists were commissioned and created projects that could be produced within the social restrictions we experienced

Every year, we give advice and support to over 100 artists, and secure work for even more freelancers.

Between 2021 and 2022 we worked with two artistic Associates as a partner on Women Leaders South West: Ruth Pitter and Natasha Nixon. They were part of a cohort of 16 Associates who benefitted from a bespoke development, training and mentoring programme.

---

*"Being an Associate on the programme has meant that we have had time and space to apply our passions to what really matters including how we support more women to tap into their power, creativity and a greater access to art and culture."*

**Ruth Pitter & Natasha Nixon**

Each year we offer artists and creatives seed funding to develop new ideas and co-commission funds to make their work and develop their practice, such as the Young Performance Makers Creative Bursaries. We work with venues in Dorset and BCP through chairing the Dorset Theatre Promoters Consortium and other local festivals to co-present new work in the county.

We also offer training and professional development such as the Do Theatre Outdoors workshops we ran in the 2021, supporting 12 South West theatre artists to develop their work for outdoors. Similar workshops in the past two years have included how to deliver work safely during the Covid pandemic.

We regularly broker introductions for creatives to venues and partners, and collaborate with partners to create new platforms for artists wherever we can.

---

*"Being on a programme and being surrounded by other world-class performers and companies is exciting and feels invigorating."*

**Tamsin Fessey, Angel Exit Theatre**

---

*"The Inside Out / Activate team have supported us with a huge measure of advice and advocacy, encouragement and practical feedback which I believe led directly to our piece being selected by Without Walls to tour nationally."*

**Lorna Rees, Artist**



Geophonic. Credit: Jayne Jackson



# Our touring offer

Activate acts as a producer to these companies, touring their work nationally.

Geophonic. Credit: Jayne Jackson



## Geophonic

Lorna Rees (Dorset, UK)

Geophonic is a site-responsive performance and sound walk that makes audiences more aware of their surroundings. It is a piece that makes us remember that humans are part of nature, too. Some of the sound is naturally occurring, some is made by human voice and others with augmented sound and music. The music is inspired by British folk, psychedelic funk and 90s rural rave culture.

Geophonic is funded by Activate, Jerwood Arts, Arts Council England, Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Gobbledegook Theatre, with support from the Arts University Bournemouth ERDF innovation programme. Geophonic will be performed in Bournemouth in May 2022 and at the Greenwich and Docklands International Festival in August 2022.

## Serving Sounds

Working Boys Club (Dorset, UK)

Serving Sounds is a multi-sensory sound installation that creates connections through music – it's a bar that serves bass rather than beer. Audience members step up to interact with the bar and its sounds for the length of a perfect pop song. There's nothing like your local or hanging out in the beer garden at your local. Serving Sounds is funded by Activate thanks to the support of Arts Council England South West.

Serving Sounds. Credit: Mike Pettidmange



Sense of unity. Credit: Roy Riley



## Sense of Unity

Dundu (DE) and Worldbeaters (UK)

As dusk falls, people gather with friends and neighbours to join a glowing, musical procession through the night in search of two puppets... Illuminated against the darkening sky and steered by a team of five skilled puppeteers breathing life into the figures, we discover Baby Dundu and gentle Giant Dundu in this captivating, unfolding promenade story about the journey from birth to adulthood.

Sense of Unity is a collaboration between specialist German outdoor puppeteers, Dundu and renowned UK percussion ensemble, Worldbeaters. Funded by Arts Council England through Coasters Touring Network and developed on Newbury Corn Exchange's 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space. Sense of Unity has toured to Blackpool, Hastings, Watford, Brighton, Leicester, Milton Keynes and Ashfield, reaching a combined audience of more than 14,000 people.



# Our pledge to the environment

There is a climate and ecological emergency. Climate change is the biggest threat to humanity; one of the greatest threats to biodiversity and we know that nature recovery is an important part of the solution. We believe in protecting the environment and our planet's precious natural resources.

The Covid pandemic has shown us how as a species, we can radically adapt and change our behaviour. During the first stages of lockdown, many of us noticed our local wildlife thriving and quieter streets and skies as people had to stay at home. But the crisis has also created new challenges such as reduced use of public transport and huge increases in single-use products like PPE.

We are committed to providing a quality arts programme in a way that ensures safe and healthy workspaces, events and gatherings for participation, and minimising our impact on the environment.

Now more than ever it's vital we keep a focus on our climate emergency. In 2020 we joined the Culture Declares movement both declaring the emergency and an active member of the South West movement.

Our 2021 Inside Out Dorset festival was themed on climate change and we continue to work with landscape partners on forthcoming events to raise awareness and encourage us all to take care of our green spaces.

**CULTURE  
DECLARES**





# Our impact

31

Promoting, supporting and producing some of the most exciting events in the UK for the past 31 years.

18

18 commissions in lockdown – 16 by Dorset artists.

27.5k

27,500 visitors to Inside Out Dorset festival in 2021

235k

People have experienced our Inside Out Dorset festival since 2007.

700+

We've employed more than 700 freelance artists, producers and technicians over the past four years.

250k

We secured £250,000 investment into the area through our festival alone.

£1m+

An estimate of £1m was spent by our festival audience locally.

72%

72% of people also visited a restaurant, café, pub or bar as part of their visit to Inside Out Dorset.



PR for Inside Out Dorset 2021 appeared in BBC Spotlight, British Theatre Guide, Disability Arts, Dorset Echo, Dorset magazine, Greatest Hits Radio, i newspaper, Planet Radio, Primary Times, The Guardian, The Sunday Telegraph and The Times to name a few!

We create **opportunities for everyone** through the performing arts.





# activate

Sparking possibility

## Activate Performing Arts

7-9 The Little Keep  
Barrack Road, Dorchester  
Dorset, DT1 1SQ

01305 260954

[info@activateperformingarts.org.uk](mailto:info@activateperformingarts.org.uk)



## Support us



Activate is a Registered Charity, no. 1069622 and is Registered in England and Wales as a Company Limited by Guarantee, no. 3439777

