

CREATIVE HUB

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# CREATIVE HUB

## MAY EDITION

Welcome to your monthly update on all things creative in Exeter. In our **May** edition we announce our Two Short Nights 2024 commissions, find out more about the latest Gallery 333 installation by Laura Porter and hear from two Scratch artists about how the opportunity has led to their new work in progress pieces. Plus lots more!

### What have you been up to this month?

Have a piece of creative news or an opportunity you'd like to be shared? Send us a message and we'll include what we can in future editions.

### Want more updates, opportunities and creative news?

Follow us @exeterphoenixcreativehub on Instagram and Facebook.



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## Art And Energy Collective: The Mossy Carpet Project



The award-winning Art and Energy Collective have designed a new mass-participation artwork called The Mossy Carpet and you are invited to join in! We asked the collective about how participatory projects and an interest in climate and ecology collide in their creative practice.

### What is the Mossy Carpet and what will you be doing at Exeter Phoenix?

The Mossy Carpet will involve thousands of people making a huge interactive woolly carpet to celebrate climate action.

People have been invited to make pom-poms and textile tufts to add to the carpet as well as to share an audio message of what they are doing for people and the planet and these have been flooding in!

Each Friday from 10-12, in the run up to the Exeter Phoenix Green Festival, you are invited to come along and help us attach all these

pom-poms to the carpet. This will be a relaxed and easy going crafty session where we hope you will meet other like-minded people and find out more about the exciting regenerative activities happening in Exeter.

### What is the importance of community participation in your artworks?

Participatory art is all about drawing out communal and collective creativity. It helps people reconnect with the magic or spark within themselves and find validation in the shared artwork and the community that forms around it.

### How do the elements of Art and Science sit together within your practice?

The Art and Energy Collective is interested in creative and ecological restoration. Since the dawn of humanity (way before the industrial revolution), humans have been makers, growers, musicians, storytellers, dancers, creators. Art is at its core a low carbon activity that brings people together and forms community. Creative skills will help us to navigate whatever the future brings and we will be happier and live better lives if we nurture and regenerate ourselves, each other and all other earthlings.

### What advice would you give to artists wanting to collaborate with communities or across disciplines?

We think that the culture sector has an essential role to play in supporting communities to explore new ideas, find meaning,



*Image Credits: Jim Wileman*



imagine new ways of living, experiment and evolve, make new connections and change the way we live.

We seek inspiration and learning from the natural world which we place at the heart of our practice, and we pay attention to the human and natural energy systems we are part of and dependent on, to help us understand, navigate and find agency in our practice.

We know that engaging with climate and ecological issues can be daunting and overwhelming. We find we can also be excited by the uncertain, unknown, unformed, undefined future that we face. This is the natural realm of creatives who learn how to be with the messy darkness in order to draw out something new and alive.

Fellow creatives - Our messy, mossy, moment is now.

Join [Art and Energy](#) every Friday until 21 Jun at Exeter Phoenix for their Sew-on Sessions | 10am - 12.30pm | Free, drop-in



exeter phoenix  
25

SUNDAY  
30TH JUNE  
FROM 11AM  
FREE ENTRY

Green Phoenix  
festival

GREEN PHOENIX

INSPIRING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE THROUGH A DAY OF CREATIVITY AND ACTION

EXETERPHOENIX.ORG.UK

STUDI@ 74 Wildscreen SIDESHORE COMMUNITY South West Water Ixora Energy Exeter's Owl Sitters



## Two Short Nights Commissioned Artists

We're pleased to announce our 2024 Two Short Nights Commissioned Filmmakers! Six artists have been selected to make works across 5 different categories, from micro short films, to artist moving image works. The completed films will be premiered at the Two Short Nights Film Festival in February 2025.

### Devon Short Film Commission: Micha Colombo - Abigail's an activist now

Micha is an actor and writer working in theatre, film, poetry and storytelling. Her first film, I Want This commissioned by Exeter Phoenix, premiered earlier this year.

Micha's film, working title Abigail's an activist now, is a female-led comedy exploring what happens when unassuming Abigail decides to become a climate change activist on her way home from work.



### South West Short Film Commission: Lydia Jenkins - Fishwife

Lydia Jenkins is a writer-director based in Cornwall. Her practice focuses on female experiences, using colourful analogies to address social and gender issues.

Set in the 13th century, Fishwife focuses on Maggie, a young woman who has been dressed as a shrimp and left on the sea shore as a sacrifice to a sea monster. The film aims to reflect on systematic violence against women as well as contemporary gender roles and expectations.



### 19-25 Devon Film Fund Commission: Sapphire Medeema - Dogs and fireworks

Sapphire pitched Dogs and fireworks, a (gentle) comedy drama, at Two Short Nights 2024 19-25 Devon Film Fund Live Pitch. Sapphire's work to date has been experimental, and Dogs and fireworks is an exciting jump to making narrative short film. The film follows a neurodivergent teenager and her older brother, sitting in a car on the anniversary of their grandmother's death as they discover they have surprisingly different memories of the same family events.



### Micro Short Film Commissions: Natasha Lay - lippie

Natasha Anthea Lay is a Devon-based theatremaker and screenwriter originally from Indonesia and Aotearoa New Zealand. She has been shortlisted twice for Playmarket NZ's Playwrights b4 25 award and her short film Love is Real! (dir. Calvin Sang) was part of the official selection of Whānau Mārama: New Zealand International Film Festival 2020. Natasha is excited to expand her screenwriting practice to filmmaking.



Natasha's micro short film, lippie, is a snapshot of a moment between two friends in the girls' bathroom on a night out during Freshers Week.

### Micro Short Film Commissions: Emma Johnson - Other

Emma is an aspiring stop motion filmmaker currently in her final year at Falmouth University studying for her Illustration Masters Degree. Other will be the first short film she has worked on and she is excited to work with industry professionals to bring this Deaf inclusion short into fruition.



Other will be a short stop motion animation film about a Deaf boy called Oliver. This inspiring story celebrates community and promotes an inclusive society.

### Artists Moving Image Commission: Alice Clough - I would crawl into a horse's left ear

Alice Clough is a research-led artist with a background in archaeology and anthropology. Drawing on theories of posthumanism and vibrant matter, Alice explores themes of wonder, folklore, and powerful materials like flint and horsehair.

Alice is making a film that explores the space between fact and fiction. Inspired by ancient myths and using traditional folk tales as a starting point, she will focus on horse-human relationships to ask what the nonhuman can teach us about kinship and care.



## The Blue Badge Bunch



In May, we will be welcoming The Blue Badge Bunch to Exeter Phoenix. Winners of the Disability Champions Award 2023, expect heaps of fun and insight in equal measure with this interactive gameshow dubbed the 'disability Taskmaster'. Ahead of the performance, we chatted with new host Ems Coombes to find out more!

### **Tell us a bit about yourself and how you got into performing comedy.**

My name is Ems Coombes and I'm the new host of the Blue Badge Bunch.

I've been a comedian for 10 years and I love it. It gives me a chance to be me. I had a brain haemorrhage and a stroke when I was 17 (I'm 44 now) and since then I've had a very flimsy filter.

I had always been a comedy fan, and critic, and had seen many 'comedians' that I had, arrogantly, thought I could do better than!

One day my friend was listening to me, yet again, gas bag about comedy and said, in frustration 'do it or shut up about it!', so I did it, and never looked back. Comedy is a very inaccessible 'job', and tiring but I've never found anything that warms my cockles like comedy!

### **The Blue Badge Bunch is a highly unique family comedy show. Have you performed in anything similar before and what makes this particular show so special?**

Alongside Comedy I run an Inclusive Theatre Company called Strictly Collaborative, for Disabled and non disabled people. I also worked for 'Day of Difference' at the Barbican Theatre, working with children in schools. This was to show that difference is beautiful and not something to be scared of.

These have both fed in quite nicely with The Blue Badge Bunch. The gameshow gives everyone involved, disabled/ non disabled, children/ adults, a beautiful taste of Difference..... and it's not just a passive gameshow...audience participation is rife!

### **What advice would you give to other comedians and performers looking to make their work more accessible?**

If you have an accessible venue, advertise it as such, people need to know! You will find you get an influx of new guests BUT, on the other hand, do not say its accessible when it isn't..... learn the terminology.

It's not just performers and comedians who need to make their work accessible, it's everyone! Look, i'm not saying everywhere should have a disabled loo and no stairs, cos that's not possible, but be a human...

ask, don't get scared, we won't bite... usually..... Just help where you can!

Oh yeah, and come and see [The Blue Badge Bunch](#). You never know, we may even teach you a thing or two!



*Image Credit: Ems Coombes*



## From Scratch Night to Work-In-Progress Piece

Following the success of their Scratch Night performances in January, Mark Jardine and Spot On The Ceiling Productions will be hosting their performances again at Exeter Phoenix having honed and developed the works. We asked how their performances have changed in the past few months since Scratch, and what they have carried forward from the experience.

### What was the most important thing you learned from your Scratch experience?

MJ: The Scratch experience gave me the opportunity to find out if my idea for a show would resonate with a live audience. I had a lot of positive feedback following the performance and this gave me the confidence to further develop my ideas into a full length show, which I will be performing at the Barnstaple Fringe TheatreFest from the 28th to the 30th of June.

SOCP: The thing that really struck me about the scratch night was how important it is to let other performers into your creative process. Not only was it tremendously inspiring to see what other local artists were up to, and how passionate they were about their work, the comments that were eagerly gifted to us were hugely helpful and have made the latest version of the show what it is now. When I'm writing, I often find myself cocooned in my room, avoiding showing my progress to anyone because the piece isn't 'perfect' yet, but the Scratch night really forced me to get out of that cycle and, in that moment of real educational vulnerability, it opened up so many pathways that I wouldn't have even noticed before.

What comes before Scratch? The itch, of course! Scratch Nights have always been a helpful method for creatives to share and gain feedback on work in its early stages. But what about the ideas stage (the itch)?

Find out more about our new [Little Scratch](#) event here!

### What have you been inspired to do since your Scratch performance? Has your way of working changed since?

MJ: The inspiration that the Scratch performance gave me was the impetus to complete the writing of the show. The change to my way of working since the Scratch performance has been the addition of Jacob Blackburn as director and Grace Plant as producer for the project. I met Jacob and Grace at the Scratch night and they are the Creative Engagement Producer and the Community Engagement Producer respectively at the Northcott Theatre, Exeter.

SOCP: During the performance, I knew that the main balancing act would be one between comedy and tragedy. The story I was telling was a difficult one to get off my chest and I'm sure an even harder one to hear for the first time. It's a tough job to figure out how much an audience needs when it comes to light-hearted moments in the face of the overwhelmingly macabre, and some of the most successful



Image credit: Spot On The Ceiling Productions

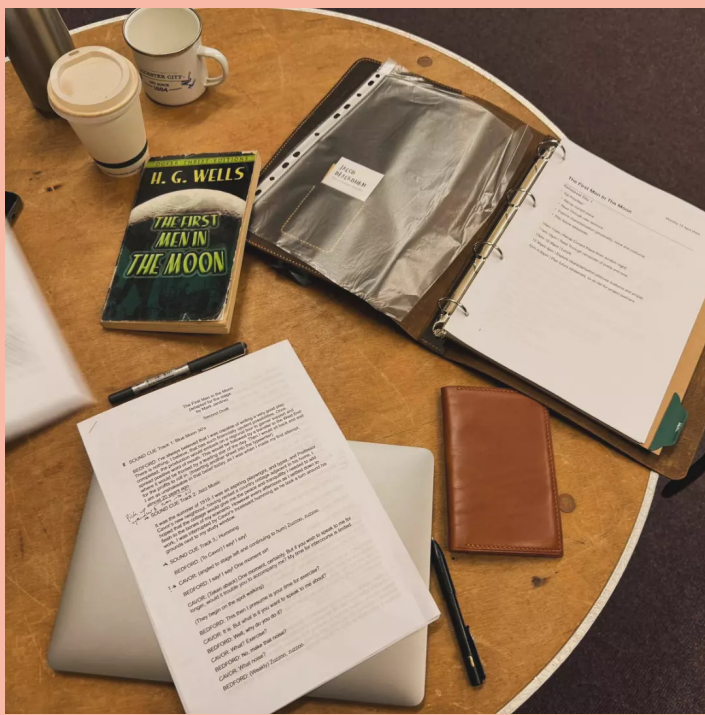


Image Credit:  
Mark Jardine

SOCP: I'm really excited for people to see this latest version of the script that started it all, as well as the new cast who are going to take it over the finish line at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival this August! It's been almost two years in the making now and every time a performance has approached, I have been equal parts ecstatic and manic because I didn't know how it was going to be received or because I wasn't sure that everything was going to go the way we planned it. But now we are all so confident in the piece that I think we're just excited to get back onstage! This story has always meant the world to me because it's based off a real friendship that ended in a tragedy and, while it started as a way to deal with the tempest of feelings that come with a loss, I like to think that now it's a story for everyone to see and to learn from. I couldn't imagine a better way to be getting into gear for the final stretch of SOS BRN and I really hope that people love it as much as I do!

moments in the performance came from reading the room and improvising what I thought was necessary to preserve that balance. With this in mind, we have introduced a lot more improvisation and character work into rehearsals to make sure that the cast isn't necessarily tied to their scripts so that, when they're onstage, they are the ones in charge of knowing what's best because, at this point, it's their show. They're going to be the ones who know what's best for it.

### What are you looking forward to testing out in the next iteration of your piece?

MJ: I have a 'work in progress' performance of the whole show at the Phoenix on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June and I am looking forward to receiving feedback on what is closer to the 'finished article'. Getting involved in the Scratch experience has been the best decision I have made to help develop my creative practice. The support from the Phoenix and the connections made at the event have been invaluable.

Catch [SOS BRN](#) on Fri 24 May and [The First Men In The Moon](#) on Fri 07 Jun at Exeter Phoenix.



Image Credit: Katy Danbury



## Laura Porter: When The Walls Will Talk



Laura Porter is an artist based between North Devon and South London, and is the founding director and curator of Studio KIND in Barnstaple, North Devon. For her new installation in Gallery 333 we asked Laura about the processes in her practice, and her experience of building a creative space in North Devon.

### What processes are important to your practice and why?

I consider my practice to be very much process-based, and much of these processes I have arrived at through a kind of material play. The way I work with the material is the result of a deep excavation into recycled clothing as a workable material - figuring out what it can and can't do, and really testing these limits. It's easily accessible, universal and carries with it a rich history; the socio-political context of the production and waste of clothing, the material language of textiles, the history of fibre art. All of this informs the processes I then develop to make the work.

Working in an analogue, low-tech way is important to me. My practice emphasises the body as a tool, and the energies exuded by the body through this intimate way of breaking down and re-working the fabric. That's why I feel as though my practice always relates back to craft, because the role of the hand is so crucial in the development of this textiles pulp material that I have been working with.

The cyclical nature of the work also feeds back to process. By working with steel, I'm able to cut, bend and re-weld the structures, and by using organic substances to starch and harden the fibres, I'm able to rehydrate the pulp and reapply it to new sculptures. It gives a sense of the work being re-birthed.

### Your sculpture often references the places they're installed in. Is there anything that you're responding to at Exeter Phoenix, and how are you finding working with the specific dimensions of Gallery 333?

When thinking about making work for Gallery 333, I was really focusing on the bits of the building that aren't seen. I'm often photographing buildings in a state of flux, and I have gathered a lot of images of rebar in new buildings that can then become twisted and distorted when the building is later destroyed. Buildings, like clothes, are often discarded and replaced with something new, and shiny, and the work references rebar that is used in construction and the weave

of textiles, within this gridded, middle section. I've been thinking a lot about a post-human world, and ideas around material consciousness, both in the materials we interact with and the built environments we move through. Imagining Gallery 333 as a snapshot into the otherwise unseen inners of a



Image credits: Laura Porter

building that harbours so much energy and activity, I wanted to think about textiles as an extension of our bodies that takes on its own, organic forms, and is growing under the surface.

**Alongside your sculptural practice, you've set up and grown an amazing creative hub in North Devon through Studio KIND. What is the significance of this creative community to you and why is it important that creatives get together?**

I moved to North Devon in my early 20s, after studying in London, and it was quite a lonely experience as a young artist. I felt like I spent the first few years trying to find some kind of arts community and not really getting anywhere, and so Studio KIND. really came out of a yearning for a contemporary space that had both local and national appeal. It's great to be able to bring really exciting artists to our rural community from around the country, alongside championing the work that is coming out of the South West itself, because we do have a really exciting scene in Devon that should be celebrated. I know a lot of people who grew up in Barnstaple with limited access to arts and culture, and so we try and do a bit of everything and address all the different needs. We've been very fortunate to receive so much support and advice from arts organisations across the South West, like KARST, Arts & Culture Exeter, and Take A Part, and we do have a wonderful community in North Devon, with the foundations laid by the likes of The Burton and The Plough, so it's great to contribute this kind of artist-led initiative to our growing creative community and see these networks growing.

**[Find out more](#) about Laura's exhibition which will be open daily from 27 Apr - 23 Jun.**



*Image credit: Reinis Lismanis*



# OPPORTUNITIES

## Exeter Contemporary Open | Deadline Sun 09 Jun

We're thrilled to announce the return of the Exeter Contemporary Open for 2024, our annual showcase of emerging and established contemporary visual artists from across the UK.

The exhibition will run from 13 Sep - 02 Nov 2024 and is open to contemporary visual artists working in any media. The selection panel will particularly be looking for work that reflects current directions, themes and concerns in contemporary practice.

Each of the artists selected for the exhibition will be eligible for one of several cash prizes.

[Find out more through the official website](#)

## Day School 24/25 | Deadline: 31 May

Day School is a year-long programme, offering artists a shared studio space alongside monthly education days with guest artists, support and advice for work and careers, and other professional development opportunities, community projects and social occasions.

Day School is committed to the idea of alternative education as a meaningful response to the current climate of UK arts education provision, and the opportunity to contribute to maintaining a thriving artistic community in the amazing city of Bristol.

Invited guest artists/professionals reflect the many different artistic practices represented in the UK. Day School is an inclusive and welcoming environment, and the artists we work with are selected with these values in mind.

[Apply here](#)



Image credit: Steve McCracken



## Exeter Phoenix 25 doodle

Create a doodle for our birthday!

Exeter Phoenix is turning 25 this year and to celebrate we would like to showcase the creativity of our audience by sharing a wall of your doodles!

Draw our Phoenix 25 logo in your style (see example by artist Steve McCracken) and we'll share our favourites.

**Deadline: 31 May** | email your photos to:

[holly.lawrence@exeterphoenix.org.uk](mailto:holly.lawrence@exeterphoenix.org.uk)



## **Submissions are now open for Two Short Nights 2025 | May 31, 2024 - Earlybird Deadline**

Great stories shape who we are, introduce us to people we've never met and take us places we never knew existed. From animation to documentary, the world of short film invites you to live multiple lives and celebrate variety. Discover storytelling at its finest.

The 23rd edition of Two Short Nights Film Festival will champion and promote short films and the people who make them. The festival is proud to nurture new and emerging talent through selected screenings, workshops and our famous 48 Hour Film Challenge.

[Find out more and apply](#)

## **Creative East Devon Fund | Deadline: 20 May**

The second round of the Creative East Devon Fund is now open for applications. The Creative East Devon Fund provides discretionary financial support to local art & culture initiatives and projects that can demonstrate a commitment to developing the East Devon Cultural Strategy. The scheme is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The maximum grant amount is £3,000. The deadline is 20 May for projects commencing in July 2024.

[Apply here](#)

## **InExeter Communications & Projects Assistant | Deadline Wed 08 May, 12pm**

As the Project & Communications Assistant, you will play a vital role in supporting the team to ensure the smooth operation of projects and communications activities in the execution of our Business Plan. Your role will involve assisting in the coordination of projects, managing communication channels, and contributing to the overall success of InExeter's objectives.

[Find out more and apply here](#)

## **Call for applications: Kevin Elyot Award 2024 | Deadline: 02 Jun**

The Kevin Elyot Award is an annual award of £3,000 given to support a writer-in-residence based at the University of Bristol Theatre Collection. The award holder will use the Kevin Elyot Archive (held at Theatre Collection) to inspire a new dramatic work or other creative or academic outcome. Comprising scripts, correspondence, manuscripts and publicity material, the archive details Elyot's working process from initial idea to finished product.

[Find out more](#)

## **Plymouth Culture Learning and Development Bursaries | Deadline: Tue 14 May**

There is £2,500 available for this final Learning and Development Bursary call out and we are inviting people to apply for up to £600 to fund their learning/development activity.

The bursary can fund part or all of the cost of the activity. The bursary can cover costs like workshop & course fees, travel, accommodation, access requirements. The learning and development activities must support some aspect of your personal development as a creative leader. It is focussing on your leadership skills (managing change, public speaking, working with a team for example), so cannot fund creative skills (such as printmaking, ceramics, painting etc).

[Find out more and apply here](#)

# OPPORTUNITIES





## Events

- [Loves Things Art Fair](#) | Sun 02 Jun, 10am - 4pm | FREE | Exeter Phoenix
- [Bloom Festival](#) | Sun 12 May, 11am - 8pm | FREE | Exeter Phoenix
- [Scratch Night](#) | Mon 13 May, 7.30pm | Exeter Phoenix
- Art and Energy: Mossy Carpet Sew On Sessions | Fridays 12 Apr - 21 Jun, 10am - 12.30pm | FREE | Exeter Phoenix
- [Artist's Talk: Grant Foster](#) | Sat 18 May, 2pm | Exeter Phoenix
- [Social \[practice\]: Creative Roaming 3](#) | Sat 11 May, 10.30am | Dawlish Warren
- [DOCLAB Presents: Chasing The Sun + Q&A](#) | Wed 15 May, 8pm | Exeter Phoenix
- [Exeter Pride](#) | Sat 11 May | All Day | Exeter Phoenix + across the city
- [Pitch Perfect](#) | Wed 29 May, 7pm | Exeter Phoenix

## Exhibitions

- [Grant Foster: Human Made](#) | Sat 27 Apr - 22 Jun | Exeter Phoenix
- [Harriet Bowman: Taking Care Of The Yolk](#) | 29 Mar - 08 Jun | MIRROR
- [Naomi Frears: The Days of the Future Stand Before Us](#) | 26 Apr - 15 Jun | Harbour House
- [John Akomfrah: Arcadia](#) | 30 Nov - 02 Jun | The Box
- [Become an Object](#) | 27 April - 01 Jun | Tremenheere Gallery
- [Fern Leigh Albert: Wild Campers](#) | 10 May - 25 May | Southcombe Barn

Have a piece of creative news or an opportunity you'd like to be shared? Send us a message on the [Creative Hub Facebook page](#) and we'll include what we can in future editions.



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