

CREATIVE HUB

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## SEPTEMBER EDITION

Welcome to your monthly update on all things creative in Exeter. In our September edition we hear from North Devon based theatre company Kook Ensemble, explore the connection to Dartmoor in the Alluvial Matters project, and hear about Pattern Pushers favourite Exeter memories. 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 on our social media channels and we'll include what we can in future editions.

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

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## Filibuster



Image Credit: Roy Riley

The North Devon based Kook Ensemble brings together a team of world class theatre makers to create original and playful stories. In September they are bringing Filibuster to Exeter Phoenix, a funny and sometimes downright absurd story of fantasy, hope and love inspired by the silent movie comedy giants like Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. Ahead of their show we asked the team what they enjoy most about performing across the South West!

### **What do you enjoy most about touring across the South West?**

Being back home. I have been lucky to have spent many years touring abroad. It has been very rewarding and an amazing experience, but nothing compares to getting back to the North Devon coast. Story telling is so embedded in the south west culture and the audiences are always so warm, open and playful.

### **How do you use your work to engage the local community?**

This is an important topic for us. We are very conscious that as a company we are coming back into an area that I have been away from for a while. We didn't want to parachute in and elbow our way into an existing community. Over the past year we have been running free workshops with local artists at Beaford Arts and for research for our last project "Sand" about dementia and coastal erosion, we established links with Barnstaple Memory Café and Braunton Borrows.

### **What is the importance of touring to rural venues, as well as more established venues?**

Keeping a show elastic is very useful and having the ability to adapt and play in any space shape and form keeps a product alive. It is important to us that the shows are very much a conversation and play with the audience who in the room that night and often the smaller venues are the most joyful.

### **What do you find inspiring as a company based in the South West?**

I was lucky to grow up at time in North Devon when there was a spike in exciting programming. The RSC came to the local leisure centre playing Romeo and Juliette with Mark Rylance as the lead, Volcano theatre were punching hard with their inevitable physical style and a



KookEnsemble



pre-cursor to Frantic Assembly and DV8. Natural Theatre were touring great shows and Theatre Alibi performing inspiring theatre. Orchard Theatre led by the brilliant Bill Buffery were building and touring shows, as well as giving great support to the local community. All of this has built me into the theatre maker I am now.

So in short I find inspiration for the people, the environment and my past.

After shows there is always a sense of community and the conversations we have are often the best part of the night.

To be able to meet with your audience beforehand makes the show much more fun for us and far more personalised for the crowd watching.

It is why whenever I make work I try to start it back home and exactly the reason why we have based Kook Ensemble firmly in North Devon. There is a rich community of artists in the south west, often spread out and isolated but still building work and creating .

Being a new company audience building is key, we are starting with what we know which is running playful workshops based around our approach to building work. Often through these workshops we then discover what each area wants and then adjust accordingly next time we come around.

[Join us](#) for Filibuster on Tue 24 Sep.



Image credit: David Street





## Alluvial Matters



Image credits: Sarah Blissett and Kerry Priest

Alluvial Matters is a collaborative project by Sarah Blissett and Kerry Priest, exploring a series of performance rituals which respond to histories of tin mining on Dartmoor. Ahead of their upcoming installation in Gallery333, we asked Sarah and Kerry about their creative processes and connections to Dartmoor.

“For us, Dartmoor feels like it has a powerful and almost magnetic pull, it has a vibrancy to it that speaks of enfolded layers of embodied deep time that go beyond the human. It’s an alluring place both in terms of its geology and ecology and its rich folkloric and mystical significance. Dartmoor also bears the scars of industrialisation and different periods in human history entangled in

the landscape. The extraction of earth minerals in the form of tin is one example of this and Dartmoor’s connection to tin mining has become almost emblematic of extractivist tendencies that are inextricable from links to colonialism and industrialisation that are responsible for current ecological collapse. Kerry and I have a shared practice that is about embodied listening and poetic responding to resonances within the landscape, this can be through poetic language and movement or sometimes ritual gestures. It was through our walks together on Dartmoor that we began to explore ways of working with some of the histories and material traces that we witnessed in the Dartmoor landscape. As artists, our practice is rooted in ways of exploring embodied connections to the stories and ecologies of a particular environment, Dartmoor feels very special.

Our process started when we began walking together in the Teign Valley and talking about etymological connections between ‘Teign’ and ‘Tin’. We went on some more walks around Dartmoor near the river and then up to some stone circles and eventually to some former tin mines. On one of our first walks, we came across some burnt gorse branches and a patch of scorched charcoal remains in the landscape. We started to trace these connections between what we felt spoke to us and there was almost an urge to create something remedial that



would counter some of the signs of destruction we witnessed. While at the same time, I think it's important to acknowledge that burning gorse is also part of the ecology of Dartmoor and can be regenerative, so we were interested in these enfolded acts of burning that might be a form of destruction but also transformation in some way. There was something potent in a process and practice that was about unearthing tin and alchemy that seemed to connect with the river. I was interested in Bleigeissen, a Germanic ritual that involves molten metal and forecasting or divining the future and Kerry had access to a collection of tin soldiers that we ended up melting down. We began to explore these acts of melting metal in connection with writing and speaking text that told stories about some of the more-than-human ecologies that we had come across in our research. We also had a residency at Dartington last summer that helped us to develop some of the ideas. We would swim in the river on the way to the studio and then experiment with melting some of the tin so fluidity and the element of water were important, also we started to explore ways of making sounds with some rocks we'd collected so we explored ways of generating soundscapes and text through the materials we were working with. The work has taken on a few different iterations since we started our walks on Dartmoor but in our practice it's important for us to be guided by materials, as we have been tracing pathways of tin.



As practitioners, we're also interested in collaboration more broadly, which is why we started [SOAK](#) as an opportunity to share multidisciplinary practice with other artists whose work might take on different forms at different times. I think there's something magic about the South West as a place that seems to nurture and nourish those connections too, between people and place, both in the vibrancy of the landscapes and seascapes and the creative ecology of the artists who live and work here."





## Fishwife: Behind the Scenes



Our annual short film commissions are well underway, and as the artists are busy shooting and editing their works, we asked South West Short Film Commissioned artist Lydia Jenkins for an update on her piece, Fishwife.

At its core, Fishwife is a story about a person who is never encouraged to fulfil their own potential. Within the context of historical and contemporary gender roles, Maggie's story focuses on internalised misogyny and reflects on forms of oppression, such as systematic violence, and how they have been historically used against women. Lydia said:

“It was a really fun and productive shoot, and now we are working to cast the Sea Monster and record the dialogue, shoot the puppet intercut scenes and extra B-roll!”







Image credits: James Miklaucich



Fishwife will be premiered at [Two Short Nights](#), February 2025.

Credits:

Producer: Izzy Noone

Writer-Director/Production Designer: Lydia Jenkins

1st AD: Emily Hester

Script Supervisor: Roel Meuleman

DOP: Becks Bouron

1st AC: Izzy Hall

Sound Recordist: Georgia May 'Peach Audio'

Sound designer: Roisin McClelland

Costume by: Grace Stephenson

Escoffin by: However Knitwear

Costume and art assistant: Rebecca Jackson

Runners and Marshalls: Noah Warnes and Elena Holley

Editor: Holly Booth

BTS Photography: James Miklaucich, Izzy Noone and Lydia Jenkins





## A Q+A with Pattern Pusher



It's Exeter Phoenix's 25 Birthday and to celebrate we are hosting a Birthday Bonanza! Sounds of the past, sounds of the future and sounds from all over the world will harmonise in a musical spectacle, with more surprises on the night. Fresh from a National headline tour, local legends Pattern Pusher will be bringing the party spirit with their catchy retro-pop tunes that will have you bouncing! Ahead of the evening, we asked Pattern Pusher what their favourite memories of Exeter Phoenix were, and what they enjoy most about the South West music scene.

### What's your favourite memory of Exeter Phoenix?

Ali J: The third Pattern Pusher Presents, it was the first time we'd sold out the main auditorium and the feeling walking out on stage is a memory I'll always cherish.

Ben C: It would be seeing Lower Than Atlantis, Don Bronco and Mallory Knox all on the same gig! Better yet it was on my birthday so I felt like all the stars had aligned, 16 year old me was very happy.

Ben G: I've got so many amazing memories here, I've brought in the new year twice playing in the auditorium, as well as seeing some of my favourite acts. One of my most memorable was seeing Everything Everything touring Get To Heaven, there's no-one else quite like them.

### What do you enjoy most about the South West music scene?

Ali J: The South West music scene is so diverse and there's a beautiful cooperation to make things happen, the majority of bands that have made our Phoenix shows so brilliant have been other South West acts.



Pattern Pusher in the Auditorium in 2019. Credit: Rhodri Cooper

Ben C: The great thing about the South West scene is that when something good is on you know about it. Everyone spreads their excitement if they think you should go and see something, so there are always opportunities to see something new and interesting and it's rare to feel like you have missed out.

Ben G: I love the community aspect, once you make a few friends it seems that most people know each other and you're in! There's a real growing scene around Exeter, with some exciting things happening around the city that I'm hoping will give the city identity & put us back on the UK's music map.

### What advice would you give to aspiring musicians in the South West?

Ali J: Focus on your material/songs/visuals and whole package, you can have all the PR, management and equipment in the world but without decent songs and a stellar live show you're facing an uphill battle.

Ben C: My advice is to get out to the venues and make friends, become part of the fabric of your local scene. By sharing your passion for music we can all lift each other up.

Ben G: I'd echo what the others said, work on your own identity, figure out what it is you want to say & sound like, be individual and unique. Talk to other musicians and creatives and inspire each other to dream big. I run Studio 54 in the city centre & I'm always eager to hear people's ambitions and project ideas, it's the best thing to start a recording session on the right foot.

Join us for [Bonanza!](#) on Fri 20 Sep.

# OPPORTUNITIES

## Senior Creative Producer: Plymouth Culture | Deadline: Mon 09 Sep

Plymouth Culture are looking for a talented candidate to lead the design and delivery of our Plymouth Sound National Marine Park Culture Programme through a series of creative digital commissions.

The role will lead the design and production of the 'Sea for Yourself' commissions programme, having full oversight and direction to achieve delivery of the shared ambitions across the partnership.

[Find out more here](#)

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## Making Space: Artist Residencies (Nov & Dec 2024) | Deadline: Tue 24 Sep

Two artist residency opportunities in Paignton town centre in November & December 2024. We have two themed artist residencies available: 'Light Source' and 'People Need People'

[Apply here](#)

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## Tehidy Creative Residency Programme | Deadline: Fri 06 Sep

Call out to creative practitioners across Cornwall and beyond!

We, as part of charity group Creative Kernow, Krowji partnered with Cornwall Council to offer up to four creative residencies at Tehidy Country Park starting in October 2024.

[Find out more and apply](#)





## **Green Phoenix Performance Commission | Deadline: Mon 16 Sep**

To celebrate Exeter's Phoenix's 25th birthday we are offering a £1000 commission to early-career performance makers based in the South West (solo artist or theatre company) to make new work with an environment focus.

The commissioned performance will premiere at the Green Phoenix Festival on Sunday 6th July 2025; a day of creativity and action to inspire a sustainable future. The performance can either take place indoors at Exeter Phoenix or outdoors in Rougemont Gardens.

[Find out more here](#)

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## **Apply for the October Scratch Night | Deadline: Fri 13 Sep, 10am**

Got an idea that needs a platform?

Exeter Phoenix Scratch Night offers artists in need of an audience a chance to stretch their ideas and the opportunity to test their work in the Phoenix Auditorium, along with £150 to help develop their idea and a small amount of rehearsal space before the Scratch Night.

[Find out more and apply here](#)

## **Take Part in the Dead Poets Slam | Deadline: Mon 14 Oct**

Ever wanted to see Bukowski, Byron, Plath & Poe going head to head and toe to toe? Well now's your chance! Six famous poets will rise from the dead, brought to life by six contemporary artists for one night only! They'll battle it out in a chance to win everlasting life, plus a cash prize of £100. Using a mixture of their own poetry, the work of their alias, and some stuff they make up on the night.

[Want to take part? Apply here](#)

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## **Beyond Boundaries 360 | Deadline: Fri 27 Sep**

Beyond Boundaries 360 is a FREE collaborative development programme for South West based individuals and small organisations who are interested in cultural film curation, event production and audience development.

Over a five-month period (Oct 2024 – March 2025), participants will work collaboratively in a series of interactive sessions to develop film events from idea to screen, utilising knowledge gathered over the sessions, in tandem with their own experience.

[Apply here](#)

# OPPORTUNITIES



## Networking



- [Playwrights Cafe Exeter](#) | First Thursday of the month | Exeter Phoenix | £6 OTD
- [Studio KIND. x VASW: Connection, Community, Hope](#) | 27 Sep, 10am - 4.30pm | Studio KIND., Barnstaple | Free
- [Beyond Face](#): Story Tell in Exeter | Starting in Autumn | email [bee@beyondface.co.uk](mailto:bee@beyondface.co.uk) to register your interest

## Professional Development

- [Fuse Artist Development](#) | 20 Jul - 06 Jan | Theatre Royal, Plymouth
- [DOCLAB - September Development Lab](#) | Wed 11 Sep, 7pm - 9pm | Exeter Phoenix
- [Little Scratch Night](#) | Wed 25 Sep, 5.30pm - 7.30pm | Exeter Phoenix
- Physical Theatre & Dance Exploration with South West Dance Hub | Tuesdays, 3.30pm - 5pm | [Find out more](#)

## Recommended Events

- [Phoenix Archive Project workshops](#) | 06 Sep - 30 Sep
- [Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2024](#) | 28 Sep - 07 Dec | KARST, The Levinsky Gallery and MIRROR (Plymouth)

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