

# Octopuses & Other Sea Creatures: Executive Summary



***Octopuses and other Sea Creatures*** is a large-scale immersive audio-visual installation and theatre performance inspired by the 'Octopus Medicine' poems by Becci Louise. Taking the Octopus as our medicine animal, will encourage audiences to develop a connection with the ocean, both as an otherworld and an eco-system upon which our own, terrestrial lives, thoroughly rely. Sited in Portsmouth Cathedral over three nights the event will be co-created by local creatives and community members guided by experts in the field of immersive audio-visual, scenographic and theatrical production.

**Project dates:** 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

<https://one000plateaus.com/>

<https://tworiverspress.com/shop/octopus-medicine/>

## OUTLINE

Octopuses and other Sea Creatures is a large-scale immersive audio-visual installation and theatre performance inspired by Becci Louise's 'Octopus Medicine' poems. Through participation, audiences will acquire a connection with the ocean, both as an otherworld and an eco-system upon which our own lives rely. Sited in Portsmouth Cathedral over three nights the event will be co-created by the local community guided by experts in immersive audio-visual production. Originally staged as a small-scale production in 2019, it will be re-envisioned for a new location, with increased community participation, co-creation, skill-sharing and with a new story. The project will demonstrate ambition, quality, environmental responsibility, inclusivity and relevance by:

- Engaging mentors with experience of delivering high-quality productions to support creative project leads and development of new skills for professional artists in new fields of practice.
- Issuing an open call for local creatives to contribute to a collectively narrativised, immersive experiential arts event.
- Running networking events promoting the project, extending the project's network of creative participants and generating new collaborative partnerships within the local community.
- Encouraging the sharing and exploration of ideas outside of a formal hierarchy in the devising and planning of a cross-disciplinary arts event.
- Running a series of public workshops in immersive theatre out of which will emerge a core group of practitioners who will devise an immersive theatre performance.
- Commissioning a giant Octopus Puppet in collaboration with performing arts students at the University of Portsmouth.
- Commissioning a composer to work with the cathedral choir and other community members to generate a sonic soundscape for the production and the making of 'sound machines' from recycled materials.

- Running video art workshops aimed at local artists who will generate an immersive 'undersea' audio-visual environment for installation into Portsmouth Cathedral, providing an undersea setting for the final performance.
- Running creative making workshops targeting young people from Post Industrial Families and the BAME community that will produce sea creatures and puppets from recycled plastics as décor for the final performance and an opening parade.
- Working in partnership with Revolution Plastics and the University of Portsmouth to stage a mini expo exploring marine conservation themes which may include citizen science activities, workshops and talks.
- Running a poster competition aimed at schools and colleges that seeks to enhance the environmental literacy of Portsmouth residents.
- Delivering a large-scale immersive audio-visual installation and performance event at Portsmouth Cathedral as part of a larger arts festival for 3 or more nights in November 2021.
- Responsibly recycle materials used in the production under the guidance of Portsmouth City Council.

## IMPACT

Portsmouth has a symbiotic relationship with the sea, it simply would not exist without it. Generations of local people owe their livelihoods to the sea, having served in or helped to service the Royal Navy, fished in local waters, or worked in our tourism industry. Two key issues have brought that relationship into sharp focus, the new sea defences about to be built in Southsea and the global focus on the damage pollution is causing to our oceans. Alongside this the recent launch of Portsmouth Creates whose stated ambition is to develop the island's creative industries, supporting marginalised communities and working to plan city-wide initiatives and 'milestone events' chimes with our own ambitions for our project. Additionally, the recent creation of *Revolution Plastics* at University of Portsmouth, a strategic neutral knowledge broker in the global plastics debate, linking business, government and society. Working in partnership with Portsmouth City Council, Portsmouth Creates and Revolution Plastics the project aims to: provide a cultural opportunity to help local people to revisit their relationship with the waterfront that they have long taken for granted at a time when its power threatens the city and the harm we have done to it threatens the planet, have a wide impact on the creative and cultural economy by staging a ground-breaking mile-stone event and contribute to the cities transformation to a sustainable future.

## WHO IS INVOLVED?

Roy Hanney (Creative Producer) <http://one000plateaus.com/>

John Sackett (Creative Producer) <http://www.big-adventures.org/>

Pamodzi Creatives (Anna Flynn & Roni Edwards) <http://www.pamodziecreatives.com/>

Joe Hufton (Immersive Theatre Director) <https://www.joehufton.co.uk/>

Thomas Buckley (Audio-visual Artist) <https://www.thomas-buckley.com/>

Matt Wingett (Author) <https://www.lifeisamazing.co.uk/>

Angela McMahon (Artist) <https://angelamcmahon.net/>

As well as: Rusty Sherriff (Sonic Artist), Pickle Herring Theatre (Matt Smith, My Friendly Planet (Tina Sanchez), Lawn of the Dead (James Waterfield).