

Discover your artistic neighbourhood

Bournemouth Emerging Arts Fringe Festival showcases a dazzling array of home-grown talent including award-winning artists, writers and film makers, prepare to be entertained

WORDS: Helga Brandt



'We live in such a unique location, with its combination of urban setting and award-winning seafront'

A Home Away explores the meaning of 'home' through interviews with the local community

From living costumes and a mysterious hermit to maverick music and theatrical performance the Bournemouth Emerging Arts Fringe – or BEAF, as it's more commonly known – showcases the remarkable variety and quality of home-grown creative talent. From 4 – 12 May this independent festival, now in its third year, will bring a myriad of art to the community with a focus on the Boscombe area.

"We live in such a unique location here, with its combination of urban setting and award-winning seafront," says Festival Director, Carol Maund.

"However, what is probably not so well known is the wealth of uniquely talented and sometimes award-winning artists, writers or filmmakers who are coming from or are living in the area.

"The BEAF Festival reflects the stories, the culture and the communities that make up the fabric of this place, especially here in Boscombe, which is a melting pot of creativity, but doesn't always get the credit for it. BEAF provides the opportunity for people to discover their artistic neighbourhood, which is often right on their doorstep."

LIVING COSTUMES & GROWING FEET

Ashley Peevor initially studied fashion design, but later also completed a Fine Arts degree in Bournemouth. "Unless you become a well-respected couture designer you are always limited to just churning out items that fit neatly into that 'fashionable' box," explains Ashley, who is one of the performers at this year's festival. "Whereas Fine Art excited me because it allowed me to explore the question 'what is the furthest you can take an idea?'"

Fascinated by mythologies that feature the personification of nature, Ashley specialises in 'living costumes'. These are part-sculpture part-performance based projects that involve carefully crafted suits made from living grass and flowers.

"I tailor and change the way in which the suits are constructed. My first was a crude grass and cress suit, when I wore it people would come and take bites out of me as I walked along," he laughs. "That experience taught me that the performance and interactive side of the work was totally different to any other costume work I had done previously. Since then I have chopped and changed the process many times, utilising science, my research and tailoring

skills from my fashion days to constantly improve it."

Ashley's latest creation, the suit he will be using at BEAF, is based on hydroponic techniques as using soil made the suits very heavy and restricted the shapes he could create. Hydroponics has enabled him to make soil-less suits that can be grown indoors throughout the year. It has also opened up the opportunity to make more complex shapes and to keep the suits alive to be reused.

"I want to create living costumes that are shaped by the place and people that grow them," says Ashley. "The suits I have created for this festival feature plants and flora specific to Bournemouth, so that it is visually a construct of the habitat and flora that lives here naturally." He is also working directly with Avonwood Primary School in Bournemouth. "They are growing 30 pairs of living feet that they will be invited to use for the performance during the festival. And a smaller select group from the school will be taking complete control over the new 'living costume' performance. They will decide how it will move and interact with the audience and its surroundings."



Ashley Peevor

Grass Man - one of Ashley Peevor's living costumes. This one is made of growing grass



Street Theatre mayhem with Rimski & Handkerchief



Bubble Bo Peep - a 21st century shepherdess

Lisa Davies

STREET THEATRE IN BOSCOMBE

Next to Ashley's living costumes, there are a number of other live art installations and performances that will bring a touch of magic and adventure to the festival. Performance duo 'Language, Timothy!', aka husband and wife team Neil and Trac Pawley, will introduce the public to **The Analogue Hermit**.

Based on the phenomenon of 'Ornamental Hermits', who became popular in the 18th century as a source of amusement for the wealthy, their 'Bournemouth Hermit' will be in residence on 4 May at the Royal Arcade shopping centre, where a tour guide will be at hand to share the hermit's legend. Another street theatre duo to look out for is musical mavericks Rimski & Handkerchief – famous for their extraordinary bicycle piano and double bassicle. Their brand-new show, **Wind Up At Home**, invites you into their fantastical mobile 'house', where tables turn, mice wear cardigans and music is made in the unlikeliest of ways.

Festival goers are also likely to encounter **Bubble Bo Peep** (aka Lisa Davies from Squidge & Pop) and her sheep around Boscombe Precinct during the first half of the festival. This 21st century shepherdess in a sparkling LED dress will be wowing audiences young and old with brilliant bubbles of all shapes and sizes.

Tony Arney



'I want to create living costumes that are shaped by the place and people that grow them'

Ashley Peevor with pupils at Avonwood Primary School as they start to 'grow' some feet for him



Wind Up At Home - expect the unexpected

BEAF AT A GLANCE

So, how does all this wonderful art and performance come together? During the festival's opening weekend, on Saturday 4 May, there are events at Bournemouth Natural Science Society, on the beach and other unusual locations throughout the day. In the evening the exhibitions preview trail around Boscombe Precinct and the After Party at Chaplin's offer a chance to meet some of the artists, and on Sunday the fabulous BEAF Film Festival takes place at the Shelley Theatre.

On the Bank Holiday Monday

(6 May) the BEAF Street Festival, on and around Boscombe Precinct, will be a rich mix of live performances, music, buskers, arts installations and workshops, where you will encounter some of the colourful characters mentioned earlier.

Exhibitions and events take place throughout the festival, culminating in the closing weekend, including Art in the Park at Churchill Gardens on Saturday 11 May.

For the full festival programme, pick up a brochure or go to our website b-e-a-f.co.uk

THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

It is a sign of our times that another subject of this year's BEAF is 'identity'. Two events focus on home and migration.

A Home Away by DerringDo explores the meaning of 'home' through interviews with the local community, while **Migrating Words and Melodies**, (12 May, Shelley Theatre) performed by musicians Jack Maguire, the Budapest Café Orchestra and the Company of Fools, with playwright Sharon Muiruri Coyne, evokes the plight of refugees through history.

Scott Lavene's one-man search for identity will lead him on a musical journey through the canals of England to find **The Truth About Men** (9 May, Shelley Theatre) so he can try and become one.

And finally, following the ground-breaking 2018 BEAF commission *The Vodka Hunters*, award-winning writer and director Nell Leyshon is creating a new site-specific work - **Secret Voices: The Outsiders Project** - with a group of outsiders from Boscombe. Staged in a former department store (TJ Hughes Building at the Sovereign Centre) and accompanied by a newly commissioned sound work from British/Iranian musician Deena Jackman, this poignant, and at times shocking, production reveals the Secret Voices of the cast. They are real voices, speaking from a prison cell, a dark street, an empty room ... voices waiting to be heard, and stories wanting to be told.



'The BEAF Festival reflects the stories, the culture and the communities that make up the fabric of this place, especially here in Boscombe'

Migrating Words and Melodies at the Shelley Theatre is a journey of music, words and images to evoke the plight of refugees through history

Richard Jeffery



Plate 30 - Analogue Photography exhibition by Attila Pasek at The Factory

A CELEBRATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY & FILM

A special focus for this year's BEAF is photography. Presented under the umbrella 'Gallery of Photography', there are exhibitions, workshops and artist talks in various venues, celebrating the diverse photographic practice across the community, from analogue photography to contact printing. A **Silent Print Auction** at The Old School House in Boscombe gives everyone the opportunity to take home some real photographic jewels.

'**God Has No Favourites**' is an intimate photographic exhibition (at the Royal Arcade) by Lauren Forster (laurenforster.com) that explores Lauren's response to her mother's cancer diagnosis. While Attila Pasek (attilapasekphotography.com) explores **Analogue Photography** at The Factory Studios (107a Haviland Road).

The **BEAF Film Festival** (5 May, Shelley Theatre) offers a fresh selection of short films, from the hottest film-making talent in Bournemouth and beyond. While **Topia**, a video art installation at the Sovereign Shopping Centre (5 -12 May) by Lottie Lashley, asks us to decide whether we are living in a 21st century dystopia or utopia.

For the full festival programme of events, exhibitions and performance go to our website b-e-a-f.co.uk or pick up a free brochure locally.