

The logo for Arts by the Sea Festival features a stylized, magenta-colored graphic on the left consisting of a diagonal line and a curved shape that resembles a lowercase 'b' or a stylized '13'. To the right of this graphic, the words "Arts by the Sea" are written in a large, bold, magenta sans-serif font, with "Arts by" on the top line and "the Sea" on the bottom line. Below "Arts by the Sea", the word "Festival" is written in a slightly smaller, bold, magenta sans-serif font.

# Arts by the Sea Festival

**2026 Associate Artist Brief**

## **Key Dates:**

### **Main Festival**

- Friday 25th & Saturday 26th September: Lower Gardens Bournemouth Town Centre

### **Community Festivals:**

- Saturday 5th September: Henry Brown Community Centre, West Howe
- Sunday 6th September: Bourne Hub, Poole
- Saturday 12th September: Townsend Community Centre

## **Background**

Arts by the Sea Festival is Bournemouth's free, annual celebration of art, culture, people and place. The festival brings together large-scale spectaculars, diverse music, intriguing installations, dance, street theatre, participatory experiences, and much more in one unique, celebratory festival.

Originally launched in 2011, Arts by the Sea brings award-winning, cultural experiences to the centre of Bournemouth, as well as into surrounding neighbourhoods, working with schools and communities across the local areas. Our core aim is to bring high quality cultural experiences to all, making culture free, accessible, inclusive and representative. Recognising social and economic barriers, we also have a programme of bite-size Community Festivals which bring the festival out into local neighbourhoods.

Arts by the Sea programmes artistic work of the highest excellence, showcasing the best quality national work. We commission ground-breaking new work and seek collaboration for co-presenting opportunities. We also have a strong focus on supporting local and emerging talent, ensuring local artists are given a platform at all our events and we support artist development through formal processes like the Associate Artist Scheme.

Arts by the Sea is delivered by BCP Council by its Cultural Development Team and is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

The overarching mission at Arts by the Sea is:

- To deliver an inspiring and large-scale annual showcase event in Bournemouth, bringing more cultural and creative opportunities to more people.
- To work with our diverse communities celebrating their culture and creativity and providing more people with inspirational experiences.
- To contribute to placemaking, breathing life into our public spaces, responding to how our audience uses them and inspiring people to see them differently.
- Celebrating and showcasing our location and the natural environment.

### **Arts by the Sea's Associate Artist Scheme**

The Arts by the Sea Associate Artist scheme exists to give a platform to allow an emerging professional artist to produce a new piece of work for the festival. Our Associate Artist scheme not only gives paid work to emerging artists but also gives space for underrepresented artists to be heard and to inspire a new generation of artists, as audiences watch new art forms.

This scheme is open to individuals, groups and organisations.

In 2026, the Scheme will support the development and delivery of a new performance-based artwork (rather than an installation).

#### **Aims of the scheme:**

- To give space, support, and funding to an emerging artist to develop their practice.
- To help the artist reach new and varied audiences through their platform at Arts by the Sea Festival and its Community Festivals.
- To provide opportunities for engagement and research where required, and to provide experience for the artist, leading to skills development and improved confidence.
- To improve access to underrepresented art forms, engaging new or underserved audiences and those emerging within their field.

#### **Artistic Outcomes of the scheme and selection criteria:**

- To develop part of the Arts by the Sea festival event, working collaboratively with the Arts by the Sea team to create a final performance piece to be shown at the festival and our Festival Community Days.
- The piece should be created to be performed outside but can be adaptable to work for indoor showings.

- The piece should be performed on 2 days of the main Arts by the Sea Festival. (the duration depending on the art form). 1 x show on Friday 25th September and 2 x shows on Saturday 26th September.
- The piece should be 'performance-based', presenting an artistic genre that is non-static/ installation-based.
- The work should be developed with reference to this year's theme ELEMENTAL (see theme details at the end of this document).
- The piece should be appealing to a wide range of people, of different ages and backgrounds
- The piece should be suitable for Arts by the Sea Festival and its context within Bournemouth, presenting quality art in an accessible and exciting way that contributes to place-making and inspires audiences.
- The artist should run workshops relating to their performance piece at our three Community Festival Days to engage audiences in a participatory activity, as well as using these festivals as live dress rehearsal for the main festival. If possible, these events should be utilised as warm up shows before the main festival.

**The applicant must either:**

- Practice an underrepresented artform (this is open – we want to hear from you about your practice and in what way it's underrepresented)
- Be an emerging artist or new to your field
- Be an underrepresented artist, facing barriers to the creative sector or getting your work into the public realm.

**Additional expectations**

The Associate Artist should:

- Work collaboratively with the Arts by the Sea team to ensure all engagement avenues are explored – in addition to the Community Festivals, there may be other opportunities to share the Associate Artist's work through additional community and schools partners.
- Check in regularly with the Arts by the Sea team to ensure the Associate Artist's work is being showcased to its best advantage in the programme, and that the selected artform is being championed to its fullest.
- Explore opportunities and practicalities for the piece so it can be ready for onward touring after the scheme ends.

- Keep in touch with the Arts by the Sea team long-term, to help the festival track the long-term impact of this scheme and to facilitate a lasting relationship between the festival and the Associate Artist.
- Provide risk assessments, production documents and PLI insurance.

### **Project Timeline:**

March 2026: Associate Artist Scheme open call and selection process.

March 2026: Introductory meeting with selected artist.

March – July 2026: Research and development process, creation of performance piece.

May 2026: Marketing materials finalised.

August – September 2026: Production and rehearsals.

September 2026: Arts by the Sea festival event delivery.

- The main festival will take place 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> September.
- The Festival Community Days are scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of September.

October 2026: Evaluation

### **Associate Artist Fee**

**£3,500**

The Fee for the 2026 Associate artist must cover all elements of research, development, delivery and production of the Artistic Outcomes including:

- Artist fees
- Performers
- Set and costume materials
- Equipment / technical requirements (e.g. sound or lighting)
- Travel expenses / per diems
- Rehearsal space hire

Payment will be made against agreed milestones, by invoice from the Artist to BCP Council, in accordance with BCP Council's payment terms.

### **Reporting expectations**

- € Monthly online meetings with the Creative Director.

- € The artist will work directly with the Creative Director to ensure that pieces are suitable for the festival audience and fitting with the theme.
- € The Artist will attend site visits with the Creative Director and Production Team to plan delivery of commissioned performance piece.
- € The Artist should be available for the dates of the 2026 festival (25th - 26th September) and the festival's Neighbourhood Community Festivals (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 12th September).
- € The Artist should be available for interviews and media coverage to be arranged with the festival's Marketing Lead.
- € The Artist should agree to assist with and meet deadlines for video content and voice overs for social media content.

## **2026 Festival Theme ELEMENTAL**

The spark of electricity, the grounding strength of earth, the renewing flow of water — these forces shape how we live, move, and create. This year's theme, ELEMENTAL celebrates the powerful energies that connect us to each other and to the world around us.

From the crackle of ideas that light up our imaginations to the steady rhythms that keep us grounded, these forces remind us that creativity is everywhere. They inspire curiosity, build resilience, and help new ideas take root and grow.

Through visual art, sound, movement, and shared experiences, this year's Arts by the Sea becomes a place to explore how energy flows through people, communities, and landscapes. You might feel it in a performance, see it in an emotion, or hear it in the music drifting through the air.

ELEMENTAL invites everyone to take part. Together, we celebrate creativity as a catalyst for positive change, encouraging collective action, sustainable thinking, and a deeper connection to the world we share, starting right here in Bournemouth Gardens.