

BEACH of DREAMS

A UK-wide coastal arts festival exploring the unique heritage, cultures, and futures of our coastlines.

Case Study Report

For the project ending September 2025

KINETIKA REPORT
2024/2025



KINETIKA
DESIGN THAT MOVES



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Supported by
Historic England

Contents

01	Foreword by Ali Pretty	4
02	Vision and Outcomes	5
	Our Vision	6
	In Numbers	12
03	National Commission by Kinetika	13
	The Beach of Dreams Silks	14
04	Regional Commissions	16
	Threads for Tomorrow	17
	Dawn til' Dusk: Telling and Retelling Dungeness	20
	Cyd-Wrando (Listen Together)	21
	The Power of Nature	22
	Our Siren Song	23
	Tide Line	24
	Collecting Dreams, Shifting Futures	27
	The Beach of Dreams Village	28
	Sonnet of Samsara	29
05	Legacy and Opportunities	31
	Conclusions	32
	Developing Next Steps	35
06	Acknowledgements and Further Reading	37



The Beach of Broken Dreams, Thames Estuary
Photo: © Andy Earl, 2025

Foreword

Beach of Dreams has been evolving across the UK since March 2021, culminating in a month-long festival in May and a spectacular finale in September 2025. It is a natural evolution of our work at Kinetika – a deepening of our artistic practice of walking, talking and making. Through this practice, we invite audiences to look more closely, travel more slowly, and imagine more bravely.

The project began with a question that arose from an earlier walk.

In 2017, as part of *Silk River* – a collaboration between 20 communities from London and Kolkata for the UK/India Year of Culture – we explored our deep connections to the Thames Estuary and the Hooghly in West Bengal. For months, artists and writers from both countries walked and travelled by boat, exchanging stories and creating silk artworks that celebrated the rich, interwoven heritage of these two riverbanks. Among the team was Guardian travel writer Kevin Rushby.

While walking from Tilbury to East Tilbury, we came across an unexpected stretch of foreshore – not sand or shells, but a shimmering mosaic of history. Here, debris from the London Blitz had been deposited on the foreshore creating a beach made of fragments from the past. That evening, Kevin wrote:

“What dreams were shattered when the bomb went off? This is the Beach of Broken Dreams.”

So, I wondered, where is The Beach of Dreams? What if we could shine a light on the many glistening gems, strewn along our fragmented foreshore and piece them together, could we not imagine a different kind of future?

In 2021, we walked 500 miles along the East coast, inviting communities to collectively reimagine their relationship with place. From Lowestoft to Tilbury, people were invited to adopt a mile, walk it, reflect on their connection

to it, and share their dream. Each story became a silk pennant – each mile, a shared act of local leadership and care.

Together, these silk pennants and individual stories formed a poetic national artwork: a ripple of hope stretching along the shoreline. From that single question on a glittering Thames foreshore, Beach of Dreams has grown – not only in scale, but in depth.

Thousands have since been inspired to take part, creating a collective artistic response to the urgent challenges facing our coastlines. Through a month of activity across all four nations, communities came together in celebration and reflection. The vast installation of silks, alongside newly commissioned artworks, was described as magical, transformative, and joyful – inspiring local pride and symbolising unity across the UK’s coastal communities.

So, did we find the Beach of Dreams? Perhaps it’s not one place, but many – a composite of our coastlines and our hopes. A shimmering foreshore made of glass and brick, memory and possibility. It’s not just one beach – it’s a thousand. Not just a project – but a movement.

Thank you for stepping outside, journeying together, for creating the powerful emotional experience that connects us with these extraordinary landscapes.

We urge you to continue, because in the face of collapse, culture can offer coherence. In the face of despair, it can offer direction.

And in the face of fear, it can offer the most radical thing of all – hope, a shared dream of something better.

Ali Pretty

Ali Pretty, Artistic Director
Beach of Dreams and Kinetika



Vision and Outcomes



Sonnet of Samsara, Weymouth
Photo: Mike Johnston, 2025

Our Vision

Beach of Dreams was a UK-wide coastal arts festival celebrating the rich heritage, cultures, and futures of our coastlines in the face of the climate emergency.

Presented by Kinetika in collaboration with national partners, and supported by Arts Council England and Historic England, the festival connected communities across Scotland, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland through a dynamic outdoor and digital programme.

Spanning 1 May – 1 June and September 2025, Beach of Dreams offered a space to reflect, create, and dream: a chance to consider what our coastlines mean today – and imagine what they could become tomorrow. Thousands of participants engaged with creative walks, new artist commissions, local events, writing climate commitments, and more, helping to shape a UK-wide shared journey.

At its heart, Beach of Dreams invited audiences to journey along the UK's coastlines, explore its layered histories and vibrant cultures, confront environmental realities and dream collectively for its future.

Our Purpose and Ambition

Beach of Dreams was conceived in response to some of the most pressing challenges facing communities today – fragmentation in the wake of Brexit, increasing social isolation during the COVID lockdowns, and a widespread sense of powerlessness in the face of the climate emergency.

At its heart, the project set out to explore the impact of co-creating artworks on fostering and strengthening emotional connections to coastal landscapes – and whether such connections could lead to more active, empowered communities ready to take positive action. Through inclusive and creative approaches, participants were encouraged to respond to the challenges of coastal change in imaginative and meaningful ways.

Beyond the festival itself, Beach of Dreams aspired to leave a lasting emotional and cultural legacy to:

- inspire ongoing community engagement with coastal heritage and environmental stewardship
- provide tools, artworks, and experiences that communities can continue to use
- foster a national network of artists, partners, and participants united by creativity and climate action

The Creative Programme

Curated by Artistic Director Ali Pretty, the central **Beach of Dreams programme** united commissioned artists, regional partners, and local communities across the UK to create eight new commissions across eight regions – the Thames Estuary, Colwyn Bay in Wales, South Tyneside, the Ards Peninsula in Northern Ireland, Great Yarmouth, Dungeness, Fife in Scotland, and Weymouth.

During 2024, leading up to two key festival periods in May–June and September 2025, community groups were invited to walk, reflect, and create, engaging deeply with the beauty, stories, and environmental realities of their coastal landscapes.

At the heart of the programme was ***The Beach of Dreams Silks*** – hundreds of naturally dyed pennants, each carrying a dream for a coastal place. Together, they formed a collective expression of hope, memory and possibility, interwoven with the regional commissions throughout the festival (see page 13).

From the villages of the Ards Peninsula in Northern Ireland to the oyster reefs of South Tyneside, the commissions engaged 175 community groups and 2,355 active participants through 1,019 creative sessions. The resulting works spanned soundscapes, dance, sculpture, and textiles – a vibrant mix of disciplines that reflected the diversity of local experience and artistic expression (see page 16 for an overview of the commissions).

Encouraging Nationwide Participation

Beach of Dreams was an open invitation for the public to engage – whether by walking, creating, or experiencing the unfolding story of the programme. Audiences were also invited to make a tangible contribution by sharing a climate commitment, reinforcing the festival’s call for collective action.

The project reached far beyond its core commissions, sparking **UK-wide pop-up events** that brought the festival directly into local communities – from quiet coastal villages to lively seaside towns. Across the UK, hundreds of people joined walks, creative activities, and celebrations that reflected the spirit of their place – from live performances transforming the beach into a moving artwork in Deal, to riverside walks and creative encounters along the River Lea in East London that reconnected urban communities with the water on their doorstep.

By activating everyday coastal spaces and creating moments of shared creativity, these pop-ups allowed anyone, anywhere along the coastline, to become part of the festival – making participation accessible, interactive, and inclusive.

A central part of this engagement was the invitation to contribute a climate commitment – a personal pledge to protect and care for the coast. Participants were encouraged to pause and reflect: *Think about where you are – what are your hopes for this coast in 50 years? What’s your commitment to making that future possible?*

Over 500 **climate commitments** were gathered during the festival, collected both in person and digitally, each one pinned to the interactive map on the Beach of Dreams website to form a growing constellation of shared intentions. Together, these pledges created a powerful collective statement of hope and responsibility – a reminder that small, individual actions can combine to inspire lasting change – and are now helping to shape the ongoing legacy and future direction of Beach of Dreams.



Blend at the Beach of Dreams. Mount's Bay, Marazion Beach.
Photo: © Wildworks, 2025



Gathering climate commitments, South Tyneside.
Photo: © Gilbert Johnston Photograph and Stronger Shores, 2025



Global Village: Bhaji on the Beach, Jaywick.
Photo: © Essex Cultural Diversity Project, 2025

Building a National Network

Central to Beach of Dreams was the ambition to build a national network of partners across the UK, connected through creativity, culture, and care for the environment. From its earliest stages, a group of founding members came together to help shape this network – including Abergale Town Council, Anstruther Improvements Association, Cambo Heritage Trust, Chelmsford CVS, and others across the UK. Together, they formed the foundation of a growing creative community united by a shared commitment to their coastlines.

These founding members went on to play an active role in the festival – developing local projects, hosting events, leading walks, and co-creating silks for the national commission – each contribution reflecting the distinct stories, landscapes, and environmental concerns of their regions.

Key locations outside the regional commissions – including **Cleethorpes**, **Felixstowe**, **Aldeburgh**, and **Findhorn Bay Arts** in Scotland – became vibrant additional hubs for collaboration and creation, each rooted in its own coastal identity yet linked by shared purpose. These partners went on to fully embrace the Beach of Dreams model, producing significant events that stretched across their local landscapes and engaged large numbers of participants and audiences. Together, these places and partners formed the backbone of a national network of artists, organisations, and communities working collectively to celebrate local heritage, explore environmental change, and imagine hopeful futures for the UK’s coastline.

Beyond national connections, Beach of Dreams also inspired creative exchanges internationally – with events and collaborations emerging in **India**, **France** and **Ukraine**, extending the project’s message of hope, cultural connection, and environmental care to new global contexts.



Beach of Dreams: Findhorn Bay Arts, Burghead to Findhorn, Moray
Photo: © Paul Campbell Photography, 2025



Project WAVE: Hamilton MAS, Felixstowe
Photo: © James Crisp, 2025

Dawn Chorus, Aldeburgh Beach
Photo: © James Crisp, 2025



Roundtables and National Residencies

Throughout 2024 and 2025, Beach of Dreams hosted a series of monthly roundtables and four national residencies that brought together artists, environmentalists, and community leaders to share ideas, exchange knowledge, and imagine new futures. Together, the roundtables and residencies created spaces for genuine dialogue and cross-sector collaboration, ensuring that local insights and artistic experimentation contributed to a growing national conversation about how culture and creativity can inspire more sustainable futures.

The monthly roundtables became a vital space for learning and connection across the national network. Each session focused on a different aspect of the project – from walking and writing to sustainable textiles, climate action, and coastal heritage – featuring speakers from across the UK and beyond. Contributors included writers such as Kevin Rushby, commissioned artists including Julie Brook and Rahemur Rahman, environmental experts and activists. These conversations explored the intersections between people, place, and environment, creating a rich dialogue that connected creative practice with pressing ecological and social themes. Through these monthly gatherings, members shared emerging ideas, built new partnerships, and furthered a collective vision for the role of culture in shaping more sustainable futures for our coastlines.

Alongside the roundtables, four national residencies offered time and space for deeper collaboration, reflection, and experimentation. The series included a launch residency in Essex, an artist residency in Morecambe, and a final gathering in Weymouth focused on learning and legacy. Among these, *Where Does Colour Come From?* – a Natural Dye Residency held in November 2024 at Kinetika's studio in High House Production Park, Purfleet – focused on the potential and value of natural dyes and pigments within contemporary creative practice across a two-day programme. Bringing together designer Rahemur Rahman, activist Carry Somers, and artist Nabil Ali, alongside Kinetika's Lesley Robinson and Ali Pretty, the residency examined both the promise and the practical challenges of sustainable dyeing. Participants explored natural processes hands-on, producing *The Beach of Dreams Silks* pennants through plant-based colour and shared experimentation.

The residency deepened understanding of how traditional craft and innovation can coexist, revealing both the environmental complexities and creative possibilities of working more sustainably. As part of the broader Beach of Dreams programme, it demonstrated how collaboration and inquiry can turn artistic practice into a catalyst for change – connecting material process with climate awareness and collective imagination.

"We've learned that natural dyes can have huge visual impact, but also that they can be produced at scale."

– Lesley Robinson, Kinetika Artist



Find Events

- Artist Commissions
- Walks and Journeys
- Talks and Debates
- Performances
- Exhibitions and Screenings
- Workshops
- Community and Activism

Date +

Region +

Free Events

Family Events

A Deeper Dive

- The Beach of Dreams Silks
- Stories
- Climate Commitments



The Digital Experience

Alongside the live programme, Beach of Dreams created a vibrant and interactive [digital platform](#) that extended the reach of the festival across the UK and beyond. Centred on a dynamic, map-based interface, the website invited users to explore the full breadth of the project in an accessible, visual way.

Visitors could navigate the coastline and zoom in to discover stories, artist commissions, and the distinctive silk pennants created by communities across the UK. The map acted as a central meeting point – bringing together the artist commissions, stories, climate commitments, and community events from across all four nations. Users could watch films, listen to audio pieces, read personal reflections, and contribute their own events or climate commitments, building a collective picture of creative activity and climate care along the coast.

The [Stories](#) platform offered behind-the-scenes insights and community-driven storytelling, becoming a living archive of voices, ideas, and action. Contributions from regional partners and commissioned artists illuminated the interconnected ecosystems of people and places working towards more hopeful and sustainable futures. These stories amplified local initiatives,

highlighted the urgent climate challenges facing our coastlines, and invited readers into the creative process behind new work across the UK.

Between October 2024 and September 2025, the website attracted over 31.9k visitors, while wider digital activity through social media reached more than 189,000 people. Together, these digital strands offered new ways to connect, experience, and participate, transforming Beach of Dreams into a festival that could be explored both in person and online.

[Explore the website.](#)

In Numbers

8



1



29
Founding
Network
Members

144
Pop-up
Events

**Regional
Artist
Commissions**

**National
Commission**



500+

**Climate
Commitments**

2.3k



175
Community
Groups
Engaged

**Active
Participants**

344

**Learning
Activities**

1k
Creative
Sessions

109k
Live
Audiences



95% of respondents felt proud of their coastline

48% strongly agreed they had learnt more about climate change and coasts

72% agreed and strongly agreed they intend to take action to look after the coast

189k
Social
Media Reach

31.2k
Digital
Platform
Visitors

65%
'energised'

52%
'motivated'

33%
'proud'

feelings most frequently reports by participants surveyed

The National Commission by Kinetika



The Beach of Dreams Silks, Aldeburgh Beach
Photo: Mark Massey, 2025

The Beach of Dreams Silks

Where does colour come from? *The Beach of Dreams Silks*, sat at the heart of the programme, exploring our connections with our coastlines and the significance of colour in the natural world.

A national artwork by Kinetika, *The Beach of Dreams Silks* is a dynamic, travelling installation composed of hundreds of naturally dyed pennants – each representing a personal story that reflected our relationship with the coast and sea. This evolving tapestry wove together a rich narrative of hope and inspiration for our shared future. Visitors could encounter the installation as it journeyed along the coastline, connecting communities and celebrating the diverse voices of those who contributed. To date, over 850 pennants have been created, each one a fragment of a collective artwork that revealed the profound emotional connections people hold with their coastal environments.

The Concept

In 2021, Beach of Dreams began with a bold idea: to walk 500 miles along the East Coast – one mile at a time – and to collectively reimagine the future of our coastlines. Starting from Lowestoft in Suffolk through to Tilbury in Thurrock, people were invited to adopt a mile, walk it, reflect on their connection to that place, and share a dream for its future.

Each story became a silk pennant – hand-painted and dyed with natural pigments – and each mile was led by the person whose story it told. This simple but powerful act of walking and making transformed participants into storytellers and custodians within their own communities. Together, these pennants formed a poetic national artwork with their stories mapped online. Over time, the model evolved, exploring how emotional connections to place can strengthen community identity and empower people to care for their environments for generations to come.



The Beach of Dreams Silks, Great Yarmouth
Photo: © James Bass, 2025

The National Tour

In 2025, *The Beach of Dreams Silks* embarked on a new coast-to-coast journey, bringing its vibrant tapestry of stories to communities across the UK. As the installation travelled around the UK, leaving from Tilbury and ending in Great Yarmouth, each stop revealed a new perspective on our shared relationship with the sea – from the industrial riverbanks of the Thames to the open sands of Fife and the tidal beauty of the Ards Peninsula.

In many places, communities walked their silk along the coastline before adding it to the national collection – carrying their hopes, creativity, and local pride into the growing artwork. At every stage of the tour, communities gathered to walk among the silks, share stories, and contribute new climate commitments, transforming the installation into both artwork and gathering place – a moving line of colour and conversation that threaded together people, places, and ideas.

“...the flags looked great from a distance, and then I appreciated the varying artwork and colours whilst walking between them. Great way to draw people into the education...”

– Audience Member

Stories and Climate Commitments

Guided by a shared creative process and a resource pack, communities were invited to pause, reflect, and imagine new futures for their coastlines. Each participant responded to the question: *How can we create a better future for our coastlines, our environment, our wildlife, and ourselves?* Through words, images, and creative acts, people translated personal memories and observations into silk pennants and Climate Commitments – pledges for positive change inspired by the places they loved most. From small gestures like beach clean-ups to broader calls for policy action, every story and commitment added to a collective vision of care, resilience, and renewal.

Read the pennant stories and climate commitments.



The Beach of Dreams Silks, Aldeburgh Beach
Photo: © James Crisp, 2025

Regional Commissions



Sonnet of Samsara, Weymouth
Photo: © Tessa Bunney, 2025

Artist Commissions

Curated by Artistic Director Ali Pretty, the creative programme spanned the country, uniting commissioned artists, regional partners, and local communities. Together, they transformed climate concerns into thoughtful, place-based works of art – blending imagination with lived experience to reflect the spirit of our coastal landscapes. From soundscapes and dance to sculpture and textiles, the programme showcased a vibrant mix of disciplines.

Threads for Tomorrow

Thames Estuary
presented by Kinetika as part of T100

What tales does our waste tell? This ambitious commission breathed new life into discarded materials, transforming them into a celebration of sustainability, craftsmanship and cultural connection. Led by renowned designer and textile artist Rahemur Rahman alongside Kinetika and T100, *Threads for Tomorrow* brought together 125 individuals from eight sewing groups from across the Thames Estuary, including the Whitechapel Sewing Group, Inspire and Kinetika's resident group, Kite Spirit. Together, they reimagined 500 Beach of Dreams Silks, damaged in storms along the South Coast in 2023, embroidering fragments into intricate panels inspired by global craft traditions and their local environments. The panels, enriched with naturally dyed threads, 12 different embroidery techniques and repurposed materials gathered from the Thames Estuary, were later assembled into the sails of two



Threads for Tomorrow sewing workshops
Photo: Anne Tetzlaff, 2025



Threads for Tomorrow participants, Tilbury Cruise Terminal
Photo: Mark Massey, 2025

sampan-inspired mobile structures co-designed by Rahman and Kinetika.

A striking carnival costume, created by artist Sarah Doyle in collaboration with students from South Essex College's Royal Ballet and Opera House Costume Construction degree, and the participating sewing groups, served as the centrepiece of the installation. Rooted in themes of sustainable textiles, pollution, and the interdependence of natural and built environments, the project reflected on the hidden stories within waste, the resilience of materials, and the beauty that emerges through reinvention and collective creativity.

The work was unveiled during the national launch of Beach of Dreams at Tilbury Cruise Terminal, a day-long celebration of creativity and community. The event featured two large-scale performances of *Threads for Tomorrow* directed by Charlene Low with choreography from Teodora Dontu and Donna Ogles, involving over 100 local performers. Alongside the performances, visitors explored The Estuary Exchange – a bustling marketplace of workshops, installations and conversations – and joined guided walks led by Kinetika and T100, connecting the Thurrock landscape with the project's wider themes of sustainability and shared imagination.

[Read related stories and watch the film.](#)



*"It's beautiful to see this work
happening. It's very important."*

– Audience Member

Threads for Tomorrow performance,
Tilbury Cruise Terminal.
Photo: Mark Massey, 2025

REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

"I'm proud of what I'm doing... it's art!"

"Collectively when it is put together it sends a wonderful message about why our coastlines are so important and why we have to protect them."

"It makes me feel so inspired, it's just amazing."

– Threads for Tomorrow Participants



Threads for Tomorrow boats which went on to tour the UK during the festival.

*Photo: © Gilbert Johnston
Photography Stronger Shores, 2025*

REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

Dawn 'til Dusk: Telling and Retelling Dungeness

Dungeness

with Anders Lustgarten and Sophie Austin

How do we tell stories with the land?

From dawn to dusk, playwright Anders Lustgarten and wild storyteller Sophie Austin led a 15-hour creative writing workshop that invited participants to explore the layered histories of Dungeness through experimental storytelling and co-creation. Set against the stark beauty of the shingle landscape, the workshop transformed poetry, story and performance into tools for reimagining the past, present and future of this remarkable coastline.

Throughout the day, participants traced the stories embedded in the land – from lighthouse keepers, smugglers and artists to the environmental and social impacts of war and climate change. As the sun rose and fell across

the horizon, the group developed stories, songs and creative offerings dedicated to the land and its past and future inhabitants. Walking the shifting beaches of Dungeness, they responded to its atmosphere and history, writing and performing new narratives that captured the fragility and resilience of the place.

The workshop culminated in the co-creation of a digital film, *Telling and Retelling Dungeness*, documenting the stories, songs and reflections that emerged from this shared process. Demanding both physical and creative commitment, the day embodied the project's spirit of immersion, experimentation and collaboration, leaving behind a living record of voices intertwined with the ever-changing landscape of Dungeness.

[View the film.](#)



Still from the film, *Telling and Retelling Dungeness*.



Jason Singh and participants presenting at *Prom Xtra 2025*

Photo: Deborah Kelty, 2025

Cyd-Wrando (Listen Together): A Dialogue Between Land and Sea Colwyn Bay, Wales

**with partners TAPE Community Film and
Music and The Bay of Colwyn Town Council**

What can be revealed if we truly listen? Sound artist, beatboxer and DJ Jason Singh collaborated with TAPE Community Music and Film, Underground Artist Movement (UAM) and Modulate to create an immersive journey of sound that uncovered the hidden rhythms of Colwyn Bay. The project transformed subtle signals from plants, animals and the coastal landscape into a bespoke soundscape that celebrated the area's natural beauty. Through inventive sound design and community collaboration, Singh invited participants to listen differently – to hear the landscape not as background, but as a living, breathing presence.

Presented at *Prom Xtra*, the large-scale annual coastal festival, the installation guided visitors along three miles of Colwyn Bay's shoreline, blending art, ecology and technology. Augmented reality plaques punctuated the route, each unlocking binaural recordings, voice notes and layers of field recordings that deepened the connection between listener and environment.

The resulting soundscape became both a

"It was an interesting new perspective to see how a tree would sound. I don't think it was something I'd thought about before... it made it seem much more alive to see it transformed into sound."

– Participant

"It's something that we don't hear on a day-to-day... it's bringing that to the forefront, understanding that there is this whole other world right on our doorstep."

– Participant

meditation on place and a celebration of collective creativity – revealing how attentive listening can transform our relationship with the natural world.

[Read related stories and watch the film.](#)



TAPE community workshops, Wales
Photos: John Edwards, 2025; Niall Jones, 2025



Song of the Oyster Reef, Sandhaven Beach
Photo: Tessa Bunney, 2025

The Power of Nature: Kelp, Oysters and Seagrass

South Tyneside with partner Stronger Shores

What lies beyond the water's edge? *The Power of Nature* invited audiences to discover the unseen beauty and importance of the UK's coastal ecosystems through an outdoor photography exhibition by photographer Tessa Bunney and writer Stevie Ronnie. Developed in collaboration with Stronger Shores – a DEFRA-funded Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme led by South Tyneside Council – the project worked with communities across the North East to explore how seagrass meadows, kelp forests and oyster reefs help stabilise shorelines, reduce erosion, and nurture marine life.

Through a series of site-specific workshops with local groups Creative Youth Opportunities, Creative Seed, and Sisters of Shields, participants co-created images, poems and stories inspired by the hidden habitats beneath the waves. The process combined art, science and community engagement, illuminating how human and natural resilience intertwine along the coast.

"I really enjoyed working on the project. And I ended up doing things that I didn't think I was capable of doing."

– Participant

The project culminated in an outdoor photography and poetry exhibition that transformed public space into a window onto these underwater worlds. Alongside it, a beautifully designed booklet of photography and original zines by the groups invited readers to reflect on the fragile ecosystems that sustain us and the shared narratives that connect our coastal communities.

[Read related stories and watch the film.](#)



Workshops with community groups and *The Power of Nature* event day
Photos: Gilbert Johnston, 2025; Tessa Bunney, 2025

Our Siren Song

Ards Peninsula, Northern Ireland
with partner Beat Carnival

What does the sea sing to you? *Our Siren Song* invited audiences on a journey along the Ards Peninsula, where the rhythms of the coastline were transformed into a collective song of celebration and warning. Led by Beat Carnival, the project explored the sea's dual nature – its beauty, mythology and joy, alongside the urgent environmental challenges it faces.

Working with Lead Artist Stephen Beggs and Music Lead Anne Harper, participants helped shape *Our Siren Song* through a series of coastal walks, carnival arts, willow-making, fabric-dyeing and music workshops. Artists, youth groups, performers and environmental campaigners came together to share stories, create artworks and compose music inspired by the sea's call and the fragility of the shoreline.

The project culminated on 17 May in a vibrant carnival pageant through Millisle, leading to a final performance on Millisle Beach, where *Our Siren Song* was unveiled. Against the backdrop of the waves, the event became both a celebration of coastal creativity and a poignant reminder of the need to protect what we hold dear.

Read related stories, watch the film and listen.



Our Siren Song performance, Millisle, Ards Peninsula
Photos: Colm Laverty, 2025



Our Siren Song performance, Millisle, Ards Peninsula
Photo: Colm Laverty, 2025

Tide Line Fife, Scotland with Fife Coast and Countryside Trust

When is it that we are in our element? Artist Julie Brook's commission *Tide Line* posed a simple yet profound question. This evocative tidal sculpture, crafted from locally sourced stones and built at low tide along the Fife coastline, traced the natural contours of the rock bed and engaged directly with the ebb and flow of the sea. The work reflected Brook's deep connection to landscape, developed through walking the Fife coast and collaborating closely with local residents and artists to shape and physically build the work.

Through hands-on workshops with schools and community groups, participants explored their own relationships with the coastline, contributing to a wider meditation on belonging and environmental change. The commission culminated in a performance and choral work, created in collaboration with composer Jay

Capperauld, poet Niall Campbell, and choreographer Aya Kobayashi, which echoed the elemental rhythm of the tides. The live performance was filmed to preserve and share its resonance beyond the event itself.

Tide Line formed the centrepiece of a 12-day celebration hosted by the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, spanning the full 117 miles of the Fife Coastal Path. The journey brought together community groups, artists, and partner organisations, who travelled sections of the route on foot – joined by The Big Hoof on horseback – in a moving exploration of connection between people, landscape and rhythm. The celebration culminated in a joyful Ceilidh at St Andrews, where the Beach of Dreams Silks created a striking backdrop for music, dance and shared reflection on Fife's coastline.

[Read related stories and watch the film.](#)

"It is liminal, betwixt and between spaces, and where magical mystical change is enabled. The contrast between Tide Line and the Coastal Path is profound."

– Participant



Tide Line, Fife
Photo: Dmytro Palienko, 2025

"I have truly learned so much from this project: the speed at which the tide turns, how to build with stone, what creatures and seaweeds live along the shore at Cellardyke, the determination, vigour and enthusiasm of artists, the importance of trusting intuition, how ears can and will get sunburned, the feeling of achieving something which seemed impossible, that grassroots will grow, and that a true team is worth its weight in gold..."

– Participant





The Beach of Dreams Silks, Fife
Photo: Dmytro Paliienko, 2025

REGIONAL COMMISSIONS



Orford Ness Workshops for *Collecting Dreams, Shifting Futures*
Photos: © Jamie Limmond, 2025

Collecting Dreams, Shifting Futures

Orford Ness, Harwich and Great Yarmouth
Funded by Historic England, with partners
Essex Book Festival, Out There Arts and
Kinetika

What role does the shifting coastline play in shaping our collective dreams? This collaborative story-gathering project connected the communities of Great Yarmouth, Harwich and Orford Ness, inviting participants to explore the ways in which coastal change shapes both identity and imagination. Through walks, heritage visits and creative workshops, artists and local groups uncovered the layered histories and shared narratives embedded in these distinctive East Coast landscapes. The project prioritised inclusivity, working with diverse participants to ensure that voices from across generations and backgrounds were heard.

Over the course of the collaboration, 150 stories were collected – personal reflections, memories and creative responses that captured the human and environmental spirit of the coast. These stories were translated into silk pennant designs and digital artworks, alongside new writing, drawings and photographs created by artists and participants alike.

"This has been the best thing that has happened to me in a long time, it has really helped my confidence."

– Participant

The resulting Beach of Dreams Silks were unveiled during a series of free public events and walks held from 28 to 30 May across the three locations. Each community hosted its own celebration, where the pennants formed a vivid display of local creativity and connection. Remaining within their respective communities, the silks now stand as enduring symbols of shared heritage, resilience and hope, reflecting the ongoing dialogue between people and the shifting edge of the sea.

[View the digital maps and watch the films.](#)

Great Yarmouth Workshops for *Collecting Dreams, Shifting Futures*
Photos: Mark Hannant, 2025



The Beach of Dreams Village

Great Yarmouth with Out There Arts and Kinetika

How do temporary, sustainable structures build shared identity and learning? On Great Yarmouth's expansive shoreline, Out There Arts and Ali Pretty of Kinetika joined forces with Joseph Williams of Bamboology and Cie Moso to create The Beach of Dreams Village - bold, sustainable installations that brought together art, architecture and community storytelling. Constructed from natural and reusable materials, the structures wove in *The Beach of Dreams Silks*, assembled with local groups, transforming the beach into a living artwork that embodied both environmental responsibility and collective imagination.

The Village became a space for connection, learning and celebration, exploring how temporary structures can foster belonging and shared identity. Participants and visitors engaged in creative workshops and conversations that linked themes of sustainability, protest and place, reflecting on the ways in which communities can build together - both literally and symbolically

- in response to the changing coastline. The project culminated in a choreographed performance directed by Charlene Low, which animated the installation through movement, colour and music from the Kinetika Bloco. As performers and audiences gathered among the silks and bamboo forms, *The Beach of Dreams Village* stood as a testament to collective creativity and the transformative potential of sustainable design.

Read the related stories and watch the film.



MORPHOSIS, Cie Moso in The Beach of Dreams Village
Photos: © Debbie Besford, 2025



The Beach of Dreams Village procession, Great Yarmouth Beach
Photos: © JMA Photography, 2025

Sonnet of Samsara

Weymouth
with partner Activate Performing Arts,
Kinetika and Attakkalari

How can the water move us? Sonnet of Samsara marked the spectacular finale of the Beach of Dreams festival, presented on the Dorset coast in collaboration with Activate Performing Arts as part of the Inside Out Dorset Festival. The event featured an immersive performance exploring the cycles of existence, displacement, and the climate emergency, where the beauty of the natural world met the expressive power of dance and storytelling.

The performance began at Weymouth Town Bridge, where hundreds of silk pennants, local dance groups, and international artists filled the streets with colour and movement. Led by a Carnival Queen and accompanied by mobile boat structures and live soundscapes from boom bikes, the procession wound through the town, pausing for moments of dance and reflection before reaching Weymouth Beach. There, on the sand, a striking installation of naturally dyed silks framed the finale performance, each pennant representing a personal story of connection to the coast.

Choreographed by Jayachandran Palazhy of the Attakkalari Centre of Movement Arts alongside UK dance artists Charlene Low and Michaela Shaw, *Sonnet of Samsara* brought together contemporary dance, martial arts, and an especially commissioned soundscape composed by Rob Blake in a breathtaking fusion of movement and meaning. Touring across multiple coastal locations, the work evolved with each landscape it touched, culminating in Weymouth as a poetic meditation on impermanence, renewal, and our shared responsibility to the planet's waters and shores.

[Read the related stories and watch the film.](#)



Sonnet of Samsara, Weymouth
Photos: Mike Johnston, 2025



Sonnet of Samsara, Weymouth
Photo: © Tessa Bunney, 2025; Mike Johnston 2025

Legacy and Opportunities



*The Beach of Dreams National Launch, Tilbury, Thames Estuary.
Photo: Mark Massey, 2025*

Conclusions

Beach of Dreams motivated thousands of people to create a collective response to the environmental challenges facing our coastline. Artists, partners, and individuals who took part reflected that the national commission of 850 silks alongside commissioned artworks were magical, transformative, and joyful: resulting in local pride and creating a strong symbolic sense of unity across UK coastal communities.

Across Beach of Dreams, participants described feeling a deep emotional connection with the sea and coastlines, as well as with one another. Many also spoke of a shared sense of belonging to the wider Beach of Dreams network and a collective commitment to caring for the environment. Through creative exchange, collaboration, and cross-cultural learning, participants gained new skills and fresh perspectives – strengthening both their connection to nature and to the communities around them.

Key Outcomes

1. Increased awareness

A total of 109,000 people took part in Beach of Dreams through workshops, performances, and live events, with a further 31,000 and over 189,000 reached online and via social media. Live events were held across the UK – from Kent and Hastings to Great Yarmouth, Harwich, Felixstowe and Orford Ness, through to Cleethorpes, South Shields, and the Thames Estuary, as well as in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland – alongside a touring national commission and pop-up events in 144 locations nationwide.

2. Increased understanding

Quick responses and survey feedback from participants and audiences demonstrated a clear increase in awareness of coastal and

waterway issues, as well as their cultural and historical significance. Many spoke about gaining new insights and understanding, often rooted in the specific coastlines and waterways where they took part. While people felt part of a wider national movement, it was their local connection – and the deeper appreciation of their own area's challenges – that resonated most strongly. The monthly roundtable discussions were frequently highlighted as a particularly meaningful element, encouraging deeper reflection and exploration of these themes.

"It's really nice meeting people from other cultures, other backgrounds and just learning different stitches from each other."

– Participant



Workshop in South Tyneside, Photo: Gilbert Johnston, 2025

3. Emotional Impact

The creativity and joyfulness of events and activities was important to many people to engage, especially when exploring an issue such as climate change that could be depressing. Comments about the beauty of the art, the meaningfulness of it that made them value it and the feelings that the art projects inspired, showed the emotional impact of the works. Many people commented on how the use of creative activity and art is an effective way of engaging people in serious and complex issues such as climate change and the impact of human activity on the oceans.



Threads for Tomorrow workshop, Thames Estuary
Photo: Anne Tetzlaff, 2025

LEGACY

4. Increased Motivation

There was a significant indication through surveys that participants and audiences intended to take action to look after their coastlines. Many of these were very local and practical such as litter picking. Around 500 climate commitments were made across the UK. The commitments indicated that pollution and sewage were a major concern for communities. The focus groups demonstrated that many of the partners had a strong desire to continue building on the legacy of the project. Partners were looking for opportunities to integrate aspects of the project into other events and activities locally.

4. Increased Action for Climate

Encouraging increased action for the climate was a core ambition of Beach of Dreams – an outcome designed to grow and endure as part of the project’s legacy. While it is still too early to assess the full, long-term impact, there are already clear signs of momentum. The significant number of individual Climate Commitments gathered, along with the motivation and dialogue generated through the festival, suggest that tangible action is already taking shape. Participants and partners reported intentions ranging from practical measures such as habitat care, to wider-reaching actions including raising awareness, educating others, and influencing local initiatives. The sharing of ideas

and collective calls to action created a foundation that can continue to inspire change and accountability beyond the life of the festival.

The final national residency and post-event workshop in Weymouth demonstrated strong support for maintaining a continuing network of community and creative leaders committed to climate action. Many regional partners are already developing follow-on projects in their own locations, while emerging collaborations with international partners hint at the potential for new, large-scale initiatives to evolve from this shared foundation.

“Continue to learn about how the coast is changing and what methods can be used to protect it.”

“Teach my kids about coastal erosion and protecting our environment.”

“Raising awareness about pollution, encouraging others to do the same.”

– Participants on an action they will take to look after their coastline



Artist Julie Brook with Fife schoolchildren
Photo: Dmytro Palienko, 2025

Developing Next Steps

Beach of Dreams 2025 has left a profound and enduring legacy across the UK – extending its reach, deepening public engagement, and nurturing new forms of creative and civic leadership.

The festival inspired communities to reflect on their connection to the coastline while empowering artists, partners and participants to explore imaginative responses to the climate emergency. These collective achievements form a strong foundation for ongoing activity and the evolution of Beach of Dreams into a sustained movement for cultural and environmental change:

1. Access, Resources and Tourable Assets

To build on this success, festival commissions and resource packs will remain publicly available, alongside a continuing online presence that connects partners, artists and audiences.

These resources will enable local organisations to create new projects, exhibitions and events rooted in the values of Beach of Dreams, ensuring its creative energy remains accessible and adaptable to different contexts. From Kinetika's national commission and community pennant-making to live music, performance and the mobile boat structures of Threads for

Tomorrow, each element offers a way to continue to transform coastal landscapes into shared moments of joy, reflection and celebration.

2. Ongoing Engagement

Future activity will include 2026 film screenings, public debates and online national seminars addressing key climate issues, developed in partnership with organisations. These events will reflect on the ideas raised through Beach of Dreams 2025, offering spaces for reflection, learning and action at both national and international levels.

3. Collective Advocacy

The strong sense of unity that emerged during the festival demonstrates significant potential for community-led advocacy and systems change. Building on the hundreds of Climate Commitments made during the project, future initiatives will encourage collective action – moving beyond individual pledges towards coordinated campaigns that amplify local voices, influence decision-makers and advance a sustainable coastal future.



*The Beach of Dreams Village, Great Yarmouth.
Photo: © James Bass, 2025*

4. Legacy

Inspired by the model of Beach of Dreams and the shared ambition among partners to deepen and extend this work, Kinetika proposes to develop a national arts and climate leadership programme for women already active in community hubs.

Participants will be supported to lead local environmental arts projects, drawing inspiration from international mentors, specialist seminars, and examples of good practice from around the world. In turn, they will mentor others and champion creative approaches to sustainability – nurturing confidence, visibility, and long-term change.

Through this initiative, Kinetika aims to help build resilient, environmentally conscious communities able to sustain the dialogue, creativity, and collective action that Beach of Dreams began – ensuring its spirit of collaboration and hope continues to ripple outward for years to come.



Illustration of the outcomes of the final national residency and legacy workshop, Weymouth. Illustrator: Daisy Webb, 2025



Beach of Dreams at La Bonne Aventure, Dunkirk, France
Photo: © Jonathan Samson, 2025

Acknowledgements

Presented by Kinetika

Beach of Dreams is presented by Kinetika, a charity and a National Portfolio organisation of Arts Council England. Founded in 1997 by Ali Pretty, Kinetika unites communities through exceptional silk-based designs and immersive public spectacles that inspire social action and transform local environments. Guided by a vision to pioneer community-driven art and design, we aspire to ignite enduring positive change, celebrate cultural diversity, and cultivate resilient, sustainable communities worldwide.

Beach of Dreams is made possible with the support of Arts Council England and Historic England.

Beach of Dreams Team

Ali Pretty, Artistic Director
Donna Plakhtienko, Operations Director
Emma Collins, Marketing Manager
Aniela Zaba, Creative Producer
Maria Bota, Residencies & Seminars Curator
Bibi Delair, Production Assistant
Lesley Robinson, Natural Dye Specialist
Kevin Rushby, Journalist & Stories Writer
Jarek Zaba, Stories Writer
Ava Szajna-Hopgood, Digital Engagement and Content Producer
Scarlett Jumeau, Social Media Assistant
Tori Dance, PR Consultant
Enja Dixon, Rigger
Pete Bateman, Rigger
Matt Lloyd, Design Studio Manager
Jo Dacombe, Consultant, Art Reach

Regional Partners

Activate Performing Arts
ArtMovesFife
Bay of Colwyn Town Council
Beat Carnival
Essex Book Festival
Estuary Festival
Fife Coast and Countryside Trust

Out There Arts
Start Thurrock
Stronger Shores
T100
TAPE Community Music and Film

Network Members

2Ms
Abergele Town Council
Anstruther Improvements Association
Awen Wales
Cambo Heritage Trust
Chelmsford 100 (Chelmsford CVS)
CLP Nature Action Group
Conwy County Borough Council, Llandudno
East Tilbury Primary
Findhorn Bay Arts, Moray
GB Carnival CIC
Gallery 465, Cellardyke Trust
Gateway Learning Community
Largo Communities Together, Fife
La Cuna
LDWA London
Menter Iaith Conwy/Criw Creu
Nature's Rainbow
Our Big Picture
Ports Fest
Quakers - Religious Society of Friends - Hants & Islands, Dorset & South Wiltshire & Bournemouth Coastal Area Meetings
SWECET
The Creative Seed CIC, Sunderland
The Culture House
The New Carnival Company
Thurrock Young Carers
Thurrock Youth Cabinet
U-Turnships
What if We Create

Filmmakers

Fotis Begklis (National Documentary)
Charlotte Ginsborg (Thames Estuary)
Aled Clark and TAPE Community Music and Film (Colwyn Bay)
Stephen Hurrel (South Tyneside)
Will McConnell (Ards Peninsula)
Demi Sutherland (Fife)

Mark Hannant (Great Yarmouth)
Chuck Lowry (Weymouth)

Commission Credits

Threads for Tomorrow

Artists: Rahemur Rahman; Sarah Doyle; Kinetika
Participating Sewing Groups: Inspire (East London); Kite Spirit (Purfleet); Leigh Three (Leigh-on-Sea); North Kent College – Art and Fashion Students (Dartford); Red Hot Stitchers (Shoebury); Seevic – USP College – Fashion Students (Benfleet); Subrang Arts (South London); YM Workshops (Purfleet)
Carnival Queen: Sarah Doyle; South Essex College Costume Construction Students; Iola Weir and other makers
Project Management: Michaela Freeman
Soundtrack: Rob Blake
Partners: T100 presented by Kinetika, Tilbury on Thames Trust

Dawn 'til Dusk: Telling and Retelling Dungeness

Artists: Anders Lustgarten; Sophie Austin
Film Credits: Directed and Edited by Sophie Austin; Words by Anders Lustgarten and Ali Pretty; Cinematography by Mike Davies; Music Composition by Isa Suarez; Sound Mix by Flying Studios – London

Cyd-Wrando (Listen Together)

Artists: Jason Singh; Underground Artist Movement (UAM); Modulate
Partners: TAPE Community Music and Film, The Bay of Colwyn Town Council

The Power of Nature: Kelp, Oysters and Seagrass

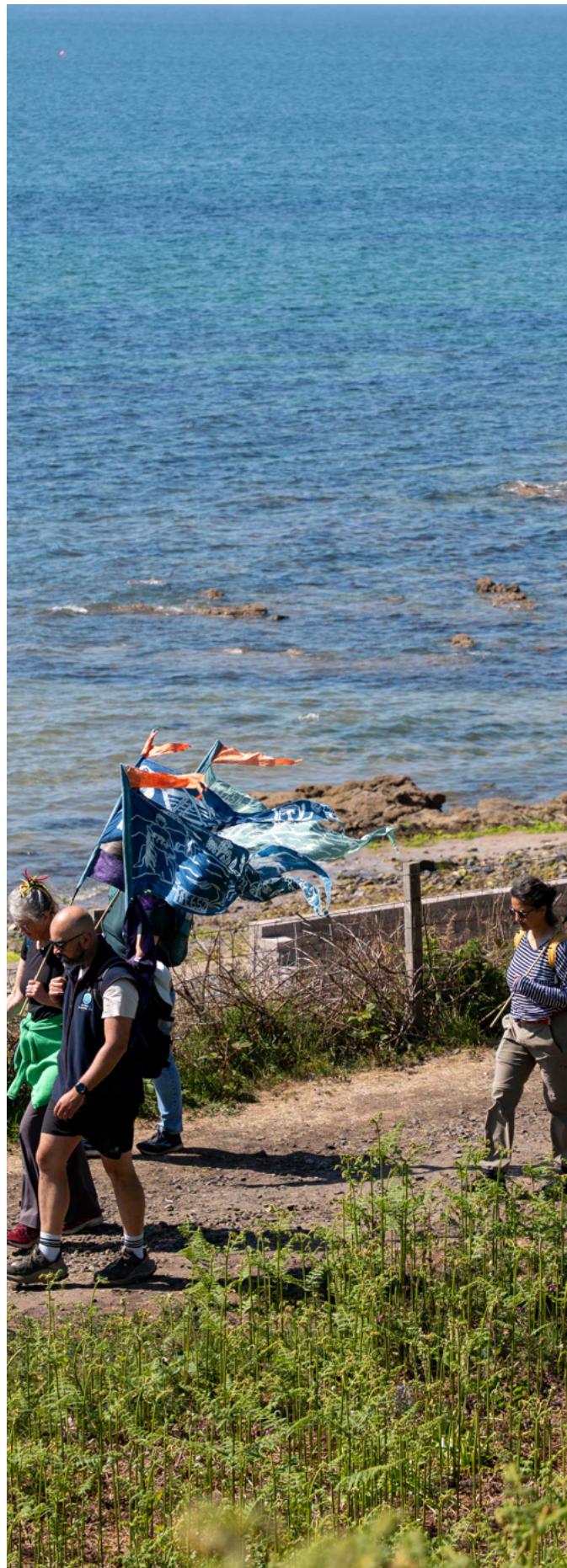
Artists: Tessa Bunney; Stevie Ronnie
Community Groups: Creative Youth Opportunities; Creative Seed; Sisters of Shields
Partners: Stronger Shores; South Tyneside Council

Our Siren Song

Artists: Stephen Beggs; Anne Harper
Partner: Beat Carnival

Tide Line

Artist: Julie Brook
Partner: Fife Coast & Countryside Trust



Fife Coast & Countryside Trust walk, Fife
Photo: Dmytro Paliienko, 2025

Collaborators: Jay Capperauld (Composer); Niall Campbell (Poet); Aya Kobayashi (Choreographer)
Build Volunteers: Ellie Higgins, Rory MacPhee, Alice Clark, Sean Dooley, Chris Roberts and Julia Priestly

Collecting Dreams, Shifting Futures

Funded by Historic England

Collaborating Artists: Marley Karazimba (Harwich); TriggerBliss (Harwich); Lucia Barbagallo (Orford Ness); Emma Kittle-Pey (Orford Ness); Belona Greenwood (Great Yarmouth); Mark Hannant (Great Yarmouth)
Partners: Kinetika; Essex Book Festival; Out There Arts

The Beach of Dreams Village

Artists: Ali Pretty; Joseph Williams (Bamboology); Cie Moso

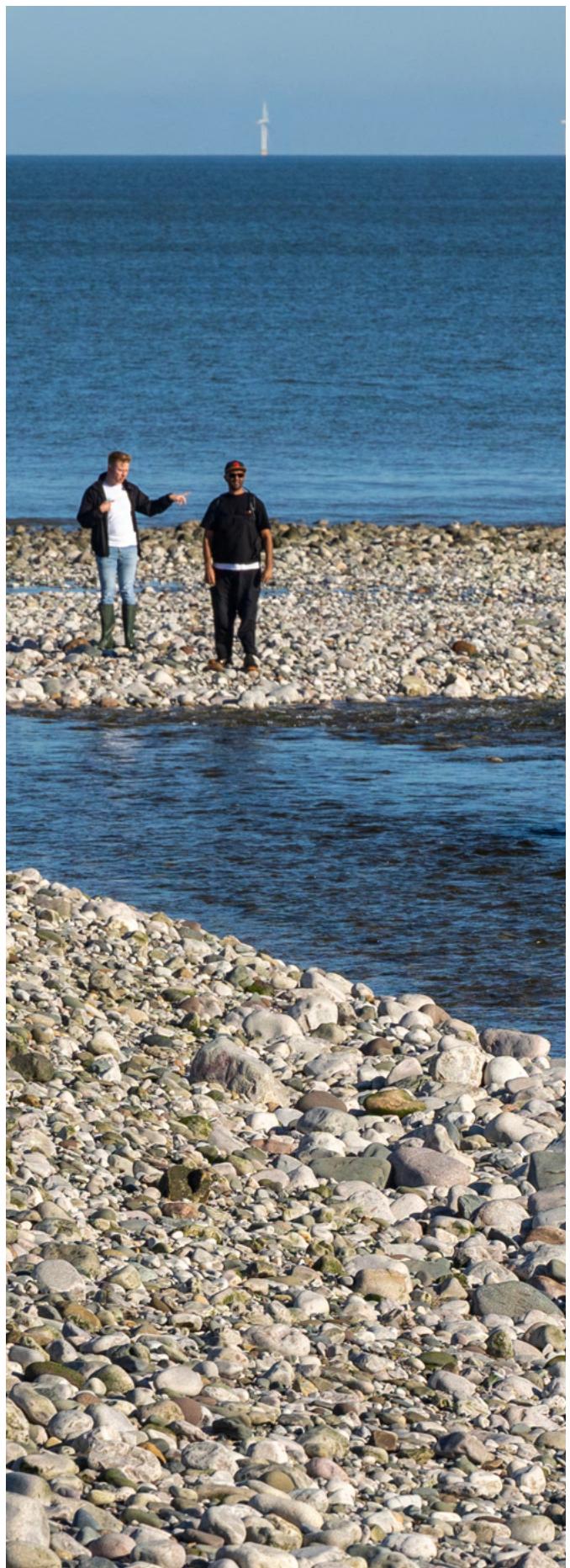
Music: Kinetika Bloco

Performance Direction: Charlene Low

Partners: Out There Arts; Kinetika

Sonnet of Samsara

Artists: Ali Pretty, Kinetika; Jayachandran Palazhy, Attakkalari Centre of Movement Arts
Choreographers: Jayachandran Palazhy; Charlene Low; Michaela Shaw
Soundtrack: Rob Blake
Partner: Activate Performing Arts



Cyd-Wrando (Listen Together)
Photo: John Edwards, 2025

Further Reading

www.beachofdreams.org

Stories

- *Finding the Beach of Dreams*, Kevin Rushby
- *Shining a spotlight on the gems in every community*, Artistic Director, Ali Pretty, on the vision for Beach of Dreams 2025
- *Green is the hardest colour*, Kevin Rushby
- *Stitching Change: Yasmin Malik and Grace Nambafu*, Jarek Zaba speaks with Threads for Tomorrow participants
- *The sound of the honeycomb worm*, Jarek Zaba interview Reece Halstead of North Wales Wildlife Trust
- *Refugee Tales: Ten years of walking and calling for a future without detention*, Jarek Zaba
- *Walking the fringe of gold*, Jarek Zaba interviews Fife Coast and Countryside Trust's Tom Quayle
- *Sewing the Thames story*, Jarek Zaba
- *Historic England Digital Maps*
- *To Dye For: The story behind the colours of the Beach of Dreams Silks*, Jarek Zaba interview Kinetika Artist Lesley Robinson

Explore all the stories [here](#).

Watch the Regional Films

Explore all the films exploring the eight regional artist commissions created by regional filmmakers [here](#).

Useful Resources

- *Beach of Dreams Resource Pack*, Kinetika, 2025
- *Guidance for making and sharing a Climate Commitment*, Kinetika, 2025
- *Guidance for organising an event*, Kinetika, 2025
- *Monthly Beach of Dreams Roundtables*, 2024 -2025

Highlight Press

- *Beach of Dreams: A nationwide creative journey along the UK's fragile, beautiful coastlines*, Creative Boom, Abbey Bamford
- *Waves of creativity bring the UK coastline to life in Beach of Dreams project*, Positive News, Robin Eveleigh
- *Coastal towns to be celebrated in UK-wide festival*, BBC News, Lewis Adams
- *Story gathering project celebrates coastal heritage*, BBC News, Katy Prickett
- *Castaway in Fife: exploring Robinson Crusoe country in east Scotland*, Guardian, Kevin Rushby
- *Beach of Dreams Festival in Fife; Garden Futures exhibition at V&A Dundee*, The Arts Mix, BBC Radio Scotland



BEACH of DREAMS



KINETIKA
DESIGN THAT MOVES



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Supported by
Historic England