

PRESS RELEASE
November 23, 2022

SEE MONSTER, the first decommissioned gas platform in the world to be transformed into a major public art installation, has attracted crowds of half a million to explore themes of reuse, renewables and the great British weather. The ground-breaking project in Weston-super-Mare, England has boosted the local economy and has become a valuable learning resource for young people across the country, as part of **UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK**.



In an unprecedented repurposing, Leeds-based creative studio NEWSUBSTANCE transformed a decommissioned gas platform from the North Sea into SEE MONSTER, one of the UK's largest public art installations. Free, accessible and open to all, SEE MONSTER attracted a multi-generational audience of half a million to the Tropicana in Weston-super-Mare to: witness the arrival and transformation of the structure; enjoy a full events programme, including a spectacular drone show and educational activities presented in partnership with the Natural History Museum; and go aboard and explore the structure. SEE MONSTER surpassed previous attendance for any art and cultural project in the local community and has provided a major economic boost for the region.

Funded by

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Commissioned by UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK and conceived by NEWSUBSTANCE to inspire vital and informative conversations about reuse, renewable futures, and the great British weather, SEE MONSTER's engagement was boosted by a dynamic in-person and online STEAM learning programme that enabled over 70,000 school children, young people and students to engage with science and engineering, whilst demonstrating the role that the arts can play in the fight against climate change. Public programming included *Think Tank* community events and workshops that engaged 6,000 participants; digital content including an audio tour and a 360 degree virtual tour allowing guests to explore the monster from day to night, to be accessed by a global audience and in classrooms for online learning.



Within the footprint of SEE MONSTER, a dedicated studio for broadcast, radio and podcast programming has extended the reach of the project internationally, including a podcast collaboration with The Naked Scientists on the circular economy.

Social media activation on owned, partner, and influencer channels including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and TikTok has engaged more than 12 million individuals to date and remains active as conversations about the project and its themes continue.

Patrick O'Mahony, Founder and Creative Director of NEWSUBSTANCE, commented "The transformation of an inherited structure into a public art installation is an unprecedented design and engineering achievement. Having been the first in the world to reuse a gas platform in this way, we hope to have created a blueprint for future global reuse projects, inspiring conversations that inform positive actions. From acquiring a platform and transporting it to the UK by sea, through to the monster's transformation and reimagining of design-led renewables that it showcased, SEE MONSTER demonstrates what can be achieved from cross-sector collaboration. We are hugely grateful for the support of North Somerset Council and the local community for getting behind this incredibly challenging but awe-inspiring project, and to UNBOXED for providing a programme that encouraged innovative and ambitious design."

Phil Batty, Executive Director of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, said "Like other UNBOXED projects, SEE MONSTER demonstrates what is possible when creative minds from science, engineering, art and other sectors come together to collaborate on new ideas. This extraordinary installation has captured the imaginations of local people and visitors to Weston, extending the season and boosting the economy of this great seaside town. The project has provided a platform for solutions-focused discussions about climate, reuse and sustainability. We're grateful for the support of North Somerset Council and the community, who have proudly put their town at the heart of these important conversations."

In July, the 450-tonne platform was transported by sea on a barge as large as a football field to the beach at Weston-super-Mare, famous for having the second highest tidal range in the world. It was then lifted by crane over the seawall onto preconstructed legs within the Tropicana.

The 35 metre tall structure – which could be experienced for free either from the Viewing Deck inside the Tropicana, seafront, beach and by venturing onboard – featured four publicly accessible levels animated by a 10-metre-high waterfall; a slide offering an alternative route through the monster, a 6,000-piece kinetic installation forming the monster's shimmering scales; kinetic wind sculptures; a wild garden of grasses, plants and trees selected to thrive in a seaside micro-climate; experiments in sustainable energy generation; a seated amphitheatre, unrivaled views out to sea from the helideck and, at its base, a broadcast studio.

Dr Ella Gilbert, scientist, British Antarctic Survey and climate science advisor to SEE MONSTER said: "I am proud to have been part of such a transformative project that has used out-of-the-box thinking from its inception. SEE MONSTER has started conversations

about how we can redesign these relics of our industrial past and make them fit for the future. I am excited to see how we can continue repurposing these structures and how we can change the world for the better.”



SEE MONSTER has made a significant impact on the people and businesses of Weston-super-Mare. The project has benefitted the local economy, increasing demand for accommodation, providing job opportunities and generating higher footfall to restaurants, pubs, shops, cafes and surrounding attractions.

Laurence Pratt, Manager of Bay Café, which is operated by the Tropicana, said “Compared with figures from the Bay Café in October 2021, there has been a 60% uplift in people visiting and enjoying the café.”

Paul Batts, Owner of Outdoors & Active, added, “Here at Outdoors & Active we have seen an uplift in visiting customers compared to this period last year, but what is more exciting, is that we have seen customers who we have talked to about SEE MONSTER earlier in the year, return to Weston to visit SEE MONSTER while it was open. They have come from Norway, Germany, France, Austria, and all over the UK, bringing with them friends and family to see this incredible world first! SEE MONSTER has been a great discussion starter, both in terms of the environment and Weston in general. It will be missed by locals and visitors alike.”

“This project has been about so much more than just bringing an old rig to our town. It has changed many of our lives and brought new opportunities, new perspectives, and many new friends”, said Chris Fisher, local resident.



The support of North Somerset Council has been integral to bringing SEE MONSTER to Weston-super-Mare. Cllr Mark Canniford, Executive Member for Placemaking and Growth at North Somerset Council, said: "SEE MONSTER has brought Weston-super-Mare to the forefront of people's minds, with interest in the town reaching across the region and the globe. We've seen an upturn in visitors coming to the town centre, with local organisations feeding back that they've seen a significant increase in footfall during what historically is a quieter time of year. The council is actively looking at the future of the Tropicana and talking to interested parties, looking to build on the positive legacy that SEE MONSTER will leave us with."

SEE MONSTER now begins its dismantlement stage and the return to its decommissioning cycle, having demonstrated to the world the potential of re-use. The 450 tonne former gas platform will be recycled and parts of it will be donated to local projects. The Garden Lab's trees and plants will be used by North Somerset Council in parks and public spaces.

The public can stay connected through SEE MONSTER'S online digital resources, which will continue to provide valuable learning and engagement opportunities to a wide, global audience. SEE MONSTER's dedicated Education and Learning page can be found on the website [here](#). A series of educational resources for primary, secondary, SEND and FE students have been created to be used in the classroom, and will continue to be available online. This includes career talks from local business and SEE MONSTER collaborators, as well as education packs for classrooms, and talks from the Natural History Museum takeover. A variety of free STEAM-based (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) resources are available on the SEE MONSTER website, including those from Land Art Generator Initiative, established to inspire young minds to design their own clean energy-generating artwork. SEE MONSTER's 360 Virtual Tour, the full Audio Tour, and "Weathering Together", an immersive audio experience by sound artist Joseff Harris, are also available to all.

SEE MONSTER arrived at Tropicana, Marine Parade, Weston-super-Mare, UK on 12 July 2022. The structure was transformed throughout the summer, with a drone show awakening moment which commenced on 28 August. The platform opened to the public on 24 September and was extended by two-weeks due to popular demand, before closing on Sunday 20 November 2022.

SEE MONSTER is one of ten major projects commissioned as part of [UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK](#), which has been taking place throughout England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales during 2022. Live events have taken place in over 100 locations, alongside online and broadcast activity, a learning and participation programme, and opportunities for emerging creatives. Projects were produced by creative mind from across science, technology, engineering and the arts, and shared new ideas and possibilities for the future.

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is funded and supported by the four governments of the UK and is commissioned and delivered in partnership with Belfast City Council, Creative Wales and EventScotland.

Images by Sodium Films.

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[A selection of images are available to download here.](#)

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