

PRESS RELEASE

Public invited to board SEE MONSTER: North Sea gas platform transformed into major public art installation in Weston-super-Mare



SEE MONSTER, part of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK. Photo credit: PA/Ben Birchall

SEE MONSTER, a decommissioned North Sea offshore platform transformed into one of the UK's largest public art installations, will welcome the public onboard for the first time from Saturday 24 September at the Tropicana on Weston-super-Mare's seafront. This world-first transformation aims to inspire conversations about reuse, renewables, and the great British weather.

SEE MONSTER, commissioned as part of UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK, features four publicly accessible levels animated by a 10-metre-high waterfall; a multi-level 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

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seaside micro-climate; artist-designed experiments in sustainable energy generation; a seated amphitheatre, unrivalled views out to sea from the helideck and, at its base, a broadcast studio.

The entire construction is 35 metres tall – 15 metres taller than the Angel of the North and just 11 metres shy of Nelson’s Column and can be experienced from the SEE MONSTER viewing platform at the Tropicana, seafront, beach and on board for free.

The transformation of an industrial structure into a public installation suitable for visitors is an unprecedented engineering achievement that has been led by Leeds-based creative studio NEWSUBSTANCE. In July, the 450-tonne platform was transported by sea on a barge as large as a football pitch 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.

SEE MONSTER’s Garden Lab, will feature 9-metre-high trees, plants and grasses, selected to be resilient to salty breezes and Atlantic gales; SEE MONSTER’s roar, the waterfall, will continually recirculate through the pools at its base; and the impact of the weather will be seen and heard as the wind moves through the installations and garden, intended to prompt discussion about the science behind the great British weather and how it can support a sustainable future.

WindNest, designed by artist Trevor Lee, brings together art and renewable energy and comprises two rotating airborne pods, generating clean energy through wind and solar technology that will power the irrigation system for The Garden Lab. WindNest is made in collaboration with Land Art Generator Initiative, an art and design-led renewable energy team that looks for innovative solutions to help achieve a net-zero carbon future.

Kinetic sculptor, Ivan Black, has created two sculptures representing the sun and moon that are set in motion by the wind. Sections of the sculptures rotate on their symmetrical axes and are designed to be in constant chaotic but graceful motion. Made from aluminium, they are designed to withstand the elements particularly the corrosive salt in the sea air and to instil a sense of wonder as to how they work. Ivan describes them as much as works of engineering as art and said: “I hope they will inspire others to think creatively about engineering.”

Patrick O’Mahony, Creative Director and Founder of NEWSUBSTANCE said, “SEE MONSTER is an incredibly unique project, made possible through cross-sector collaboration and the ambitious nature of the UNBOXED commission. We are incredibly excited to be the first people in the world to reuse a structure in this way, with its potential to provide a blueprint for future global reuse projects.

“From the roar of the waterfall to the shimmering scales, we invite our audience to ascend the monster, running through clouds and exploring wild gardens until they reach the summit where they can see our monster’s home from a new perspective. We are thrilled that the public can now board SEE MONSTER, after witnessing its transformation over the past few months. We

hope this once-in-a-lifetime experience, that started as an experiment in education and creativity in Weston-super-Mare, will go on to have a much greater and long-lasting legacy.”

Dr Ella Gilbert, scientist, British Antarctic Survey and climate science advisor to SEE MONSTER said: “SEE MONSTER reminds us how our industrial history has shaped our climate, and how we can transform our future by repurposing infrastructure like oil and gas platforms. We know about the negative impact of our dependence on fossil fuels. Less often do we hear about the ways in which we can transform society for the better.

“SEE MONSTER is an opportunity to see and hear about the kind of solutions and possible futures we can create together and to be awed and amazed by the spectacular sights and sounds of the weather; to be excited by the science behind it; and to learn how it helps us understand our planet.”

UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK is a celebration of creativity taking place across the UK until 5 November. Presented in over 100 locations around the UK, it features ten major multi-site and digital creative projects that share new ideas and possibilities for the future and are produced by creatives from across science, technology, engineering and the arts.

Martin Green, Chief Creative Officer, UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK said, "SEE MONSTER is an inspirational and awe-inspiring project that embodies the ambition of UNBOXED, to celebrate creative collaboration across science, engineering and the arts. The transformation of a decommissioned platform into one of the UK's most ambitious public art installations has been an unprecedented undertaking and offers a blueprint for the reuse of industrial structures that everyone involved should be proud of.”

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Stuart Andrew said: “Since March, UNBOXED has showcased the UK's excellence in creativity through each of its 10 commissions.

“Bringing together artists and engineers, SEE MONSTER is another example of how this programme is showcasing the UK's creative sectors and engaging communities right across this country with great days out and cultural experiences.”

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.

North Somerset Council have supported the project throughout and have been integral to bringing SEE MONSTER to Weston-super-Mare.

Mark Canniford, Executive Member for Placemaking and Growth at North Somerset Council, said: “The Monster continues to offer a huge boost for our local economy at this time of year, and the final stage of people boarding the platform will bring additional visitors to North Somerset during the autumn months, beyond the peak tourist season.

“The calibre and originality of the recent drone shows, which attracted tens thousands of people, have given us all a flavour of what to expect. If the Monster’s arrival was the appetiser and the drone show was the starter, we are all in for a real treat with the main course – the boarding – which is not to be missed.”

Listings information:

SEE MONSTER

Tropicana, Marine Parade, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1BE

24 September to 5 November 2022

Free, no booking required

Viewing platform and onboard visits (weather dependent): 9am-9pm

seemonster.co.uk | @seemonsteruk | hello@seemonster.co.uk | 01934 626 982

Media enquiries:

Jeanette Ward | UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK

Jeanette.ward@unboxed2022.uk | 07729 930 812

Lyn Winter, Inc. | NEWSUBSTANCE

seemonster@lynwinter.com | +1 213 446 0788

A selection of images are available to download: <https://tinyurl.com/SEEMONSTERPRESS>

SEE MONSTER x Natural History Museum Events

SEE MONSTER presents a programme of events in partnership with the Natural History Museum following the museum’s recent exhibition, *Our Broken Planet: How We Got Here and Ways to Fix It*.

SEE MONSTER x Our Broken Planet audio experience

Monday 26 – Friday 30 September

Helideck, SEE MONSTER

Free, no booking required

As our demand for the earth’s resources increases, forests are becoming farmland, plastic is filling our oceans and the climate is heating rapidly. Discover our audio experience on the Helideck to find out more about the consequences of human actions and learn of cutting-edge solutions from nature, from the scientists rushing to mend our broken planet.

SEE MONSTER x Our Broken Planet interactive installation

Tuesday 27 – Thursday 29 September, 10am – 5pm

Tropicana Event Space

Free, no booking required

Would you rather – never buy new clothes, or eat insects for every meal? Join Natural History Museum scientists and educators in discussion, debate, and hands-on activities to explore your own relationship to the planetary emergency and how far you would go to solve it.

Panel discussion: Resourcing the Green Economy

Tuesday 27 September, 6 – 7.30pm

Tropicana Event Space

Free, booking required

Bringing together scientists, industry and local experts, this panel will focus on the long-term goal of creating a self-sustaining circular economy. How can we repurpose and reuse minerals and technology to power green energy, while reducing consumption and recycling waste. How far along are we in the journey to a zero-waste future and how can we ensure resourcing the shift, including further mineral mining, is done in the most environmentally responsible way.

Meet the Scientists

Wednesday 28 September, 10am – 5pm

Tropicana Event Space

Free, no booking required

Meet the scientists! Living sustainably has never been more important, but new, green technologies are reliant on metals and minerals that are in short supply. Find out how scientists at the Natural History Museum are tackling the climate crisis by researching how to locate and extract different metals ethically and sustainably; how do we mine a sustainable future?

Two generations on a sustainable future

Online via SEE MONSTER Studio from Wednesday 28 September

Free, no booking required.

What can we learn from a conversation between a young climate activist and a scientist from the Natural History Museum? This recorded discussion will capture the differing perspectives of local environmentalist Archie Matthews, representing Weston-super-Mare's Climate Justice Revolution and Professor Richard Herrington, an NHM scientist working towards a low-carbon future. Find out what solutions they envision to create a more sustainable world.