

**Edinburgh Art Festival Commissions Programme 2022**  
*The Wave of Translation*

Our 2022 commissions programme invites artists and audiences to explore and respond to sites and situations beyond the city centre, unfolding westward along the Union Canal, which this year celebrates its 200th anniversary.

Originally built to transport coal into the city, the canal today serves as an important 'green lung'. As a focal point for leisure activities and new housing developments, the canal connects communities, and embodies the many transformations and translations that have shaped urban life in Scotland and further afield over the past two centuries.

The participating artists who work across performance, installation, sound, graphic-design, writing and choreography question the complexity of our histories and how we live today. Through ways of working which place value on community centred practice, on collaboration and collective learning, this year's programme invites us to think about change across time, technologies, political and social structures, and our desires for the future of our city.

The 2022 Commissions Programme also includes:

**Community Wellbeing Collective: Watch this Space**

30 July to 28 August: Westside Plaza Shopping Centre, Wester Hailes Road, EH14 2SW

**Nadia Myre: Tell Me of Your Boats and Your Waters – Where Do They Come From, Where Do They Go?**

28 July to 18 September: A co-commission with Edinburgh Printmakers; Union Canal at Fountainbridge and Edinburgh Printmakers, Gallery 2, Castle Mills, 1 Dundee Street, EH3 9FP

**Emmie McLuskey: Channels**

28 July to 28 August: A series of commissions for public sites and digital spaces produced in partnership with Associate Artist, Emmie McLuskey: with new works by **Hannan Jones, Janice Parker, Maeve Redmond, Amanda Thomson**, and *Background Noise Radio*. Various sites on the Union Canal.

For full details of sites, opening hours and booking information, visit [www.edinburghartfestival.com](http://www.edinburghartfestival.com)

**Edinburgh Art Festival Core Funders**

Creative Scotland  
The City of Edinburgh Council

**Project Supporters and Partners**

Bridge 8 Hub and Paddle Cafe  
The Sorted Project  
WHALE Arts



**Project Funders**

Supported by the PLACE Programme,  
a partnership between Edinburgh Festivals,  
The Scottish Government, the City of Edinburgh  
Council and Creative Scotland.

**Pester and Rossi: Finding Buoyancy**  
Bridge 8 Hub and Paddle Cafe,  
Calder Crescent,  
Edinburgh EH11 4NE  
28 July to 28 August

**Cover:** Artist Sarah Kenchington working on Pester and Rossi's  
*A Float for the Future* at Bridge 8 Hub, 2022. Photo: Julie Howden.

Design: James Brook, [www.jamesbrook.net](http://www.jamesbrook.net)

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**Pester and Rossi:**  
*Finding Buoyancy*

Edinburgh Art Festival Commissions Programme 2022



**Pester and Rossi Finding Buoyancy, 2022**  
Installation of sails, Bridge 8 Hub and Paddle Cafe  
Devised in collaboration with local participants.  
Sail banner drawings and words created by participants at WHALE Arts in collaboration with  
Pester and Rossi, sail banners designed and produced by Pester and Rossi.

**Pester and Rossi Setting Sail, 2022**

Performance, Sunday July 31, 2022

Devised in collaboration with Rhubaba Choir, Sarah Kenchington and local participants.

**Acknowledgements**

With special thanks to all those who have taken part in the project:

*Finding Buoyancy* sail banners and *Setting Sail* lyrics evolved through responses by local people and staff at WHALE Arts to *Finding Buoyancy – Sound Meditations* audio journey featuring: Pester and Rossi, Emma McIntyre, Rachel Walker, Catherine Weir, Sarah Messenger and Angela Cummiskey, produced by Charlie Knox (Trudat Sound).

**Participants included:** Dhuha Al-Lami, Pauline Carroll, George Chen, Liz Dickie, Eoghan Howard, Norman Jones, Duncan Leuchars, Eunice Main, Heather Marufu, Allan James McNaughton, Ema-Sayuru Nyx, Seona O'Flaherty, Carol Paterson, Holly Ramsay, Lillian Shipton, Gemma Smith, Emily Violet Stevenson and Rose Xu.

**Sail Banner Installation:** Owen Clarke

*Setting Sail* songs and performance devised in collaboration with Rhubaba Choir and local people: Pauline Carroll, Norman Jones, Eunice Main, Heather Marufu, Allan McNaughton, Seona O'Flaherty, Holly Ramsay and Emily Violet Stevenson.

**Rhubaba Choir Co-ordinators:** Timothea Armour, Ellen Munro, Lara Macleod

*A Float for the Future* raft devised in collaboration with Sarah Kenchington and local people: Norman Jones, Allan James McNaughton, Ema-Sayuru Nyx and SCOREscotland Women's Group.

**The Sorted Project:** Karen Bradford, Michelle Fleming, Grace Pow

**Bridge 8 Hub and Paddle Cafe:** Sean Barry and team

**WHALE Arts and The Wester Hailes Canal Connections Trail Steering Group:** Tiki Muir and all the people who joined us for the celebration day.

**Videography and Photography:** Jassy Earl  
**Additional Photography:** Julie Howden

**Edinburgh Art Festival**  
**Community Engagement Manager:** Holly Yeoman  
**Programme Support:** Lizzie Day, Rona Forbes  
**Event Producer:** Anna Lomas



## Finding Buoyancy

Threading through lockdowns and postponements, *Finding Buoyancy* is a project of perseverance, hunting for hope in uncertain times. In 2019 Pester and Rossi were invited by Edinburgh Art Festival to help mark the upcoming 200th anniversary of the Union Canal. During the next two years, together in workshops and alone, through sonic meditations, drawing and raft building workshops, members of WHALE Arts were asked to listen to and look closely at the canal, to take part in the creative act of staying afloat. Over time, those metaphorical buoys and banners became literal ones; rafts and sails bearing the words and drawings of people who took part in the project.

The first time that the Rhubaba Choir met everyone involved in *Finding Buoyancy* was in May 2022, in the Performance Space at WHALE Arts. We handed out post-it notes and felt tips for everyone to write down the sounds, songs and memories that they associate with the canal. There's a story about a blind badger cub adopted by a family of foxes. A poem about a bee. *Everything that lives on the canal.* Swans, ducks, different kinds of weather. Words like calm and tranquil. *Unity of the people, love of the people, light rain, we circle we cycle.*

The badger didn't make it into the songs we've written to sing as we travel from Wester Hailes to Lochrin Basin. Other lines from the post-it notes and previous workshops did:

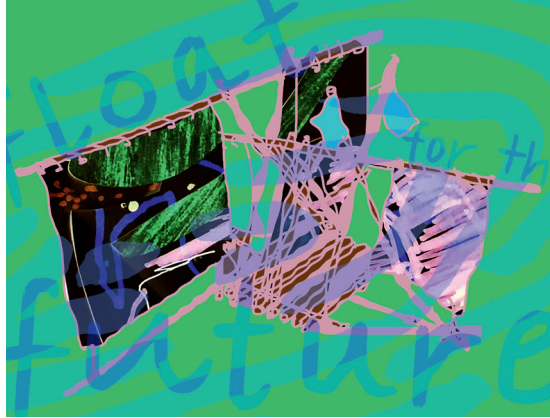
*I see the rain sometimes on the water  
Don't you ever dare settle petal  
Birds and bells  
Sea breathes high  
Sea breathes low  
I see the moon sometimes on the water.*

A month or so later, we see the boat for the first time. It's also the first time that we've met in person with some of the people helping bring the project together, who've all been emailing each other for some time – the three of us Rhubaba Choir co-ordinators, the team from Edinburgh Art Festival, the crew of the sixty-foot canal boat, *Panacea*, all floating on a not-quite-straight course on the aqueduct over the Edinburgh City Bypass.

When the rest of the choir join us for the *Setting Sail* performance, we'll travel from Wester Hailes to Lochrin Basin, very slowly through all the landscapes and neighbourhoods that we're singing about. A collaboration between artists Pester and Rossi, WHALE Arts group members and us, a choir begun by artist-run space Rhubaba that will accept anyone without audition, so long as they're willing to listen to the group and work together.

The canal is our watery chorus line, stringing us together, musically, geographically. We've been listening to the canal, and when we sail along it singing, we'll be throwing those words and sounds back out to the ducks and swans, like a bicycle bell echoing under a bridge. For the past two hundred years it's always been the case – that it's not water that flows along a canal but people.

**Timothea Armour,**  
co-coordinator, Rhubaba Choir



## Pester and Rossi

Ruby Pester and Nadia Rossi are based in Glasgow and work collaboratively under the artist name Pester and Rossi. Their practice derives from visual art, and leads to creating live art, sculpture, installation and public interventions, in response to people and places. Pester and Rossi embrace a collective working approach, hosting public events and workshops, often working with people to inform their practice.

Recent projects include: *Pulpworks* Sandbox Residency with Glasgow Sculpture Studios 2019; *Infinity Pitch: Play By Your Own Rules* with Platform Glasgow and Learning & Education at Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art Newcastle 2018; and *The Happenstance: a Living Library of Ideas exploring Freespace* – led by WAVEparticle with Architecture & Design Scotland for the Biennale Architettura 2018 Venice.

## Partners and Collaborators

### Bridge 8 Hub and Paddle Cafe

Home to Pester and Rossi's commission for 2022, Bridge 8 Hub is Edinburgh's first canal-based urban outdoor activity centre, located just 20 minutes from the city centre, ideal for exploring local waterways, hills, biking trails and countryside.

### The Sorted Project

The Sorted Project is an Edinburgh based charity based on board Panacea, a stunning purpose-built canal boat. The project supports men and women managing recovery relating to substance use and mental health, and provide a wide range of training and volunteering opportunities.

### WHALE Arts

WHALE Arts is the cultural anchor organisation for Wester Hailes, set up by local people in 1992. It is a building-based and place-based community-led charity and social enterprise which acts as a conduit between the community and creative opportunities through the delivery of projects, programmes and events and by connecting the community with city and national partners. WHALE Arts work hard with partners to share and celebrate the quality creative and cultural projects that happen in the area and to build upon these successes to inspire and empower residents, workers, artists, and designers to continue to demonstrate the power of creativity as a driver of social change.

### Image credits:

A selection of images relating to the making of *Finding Buoyancy*: Sail banner drawings and words created by local people in collaboration with Pester and Rossi. Images of artworks courtesy of the artists.

*A Float for the Future* raft building, flag making and Rhubaba Choir Session, part of Wester Hailes Canal Connections Trail, 20 May 2022. Photographs: Julie Howden.