

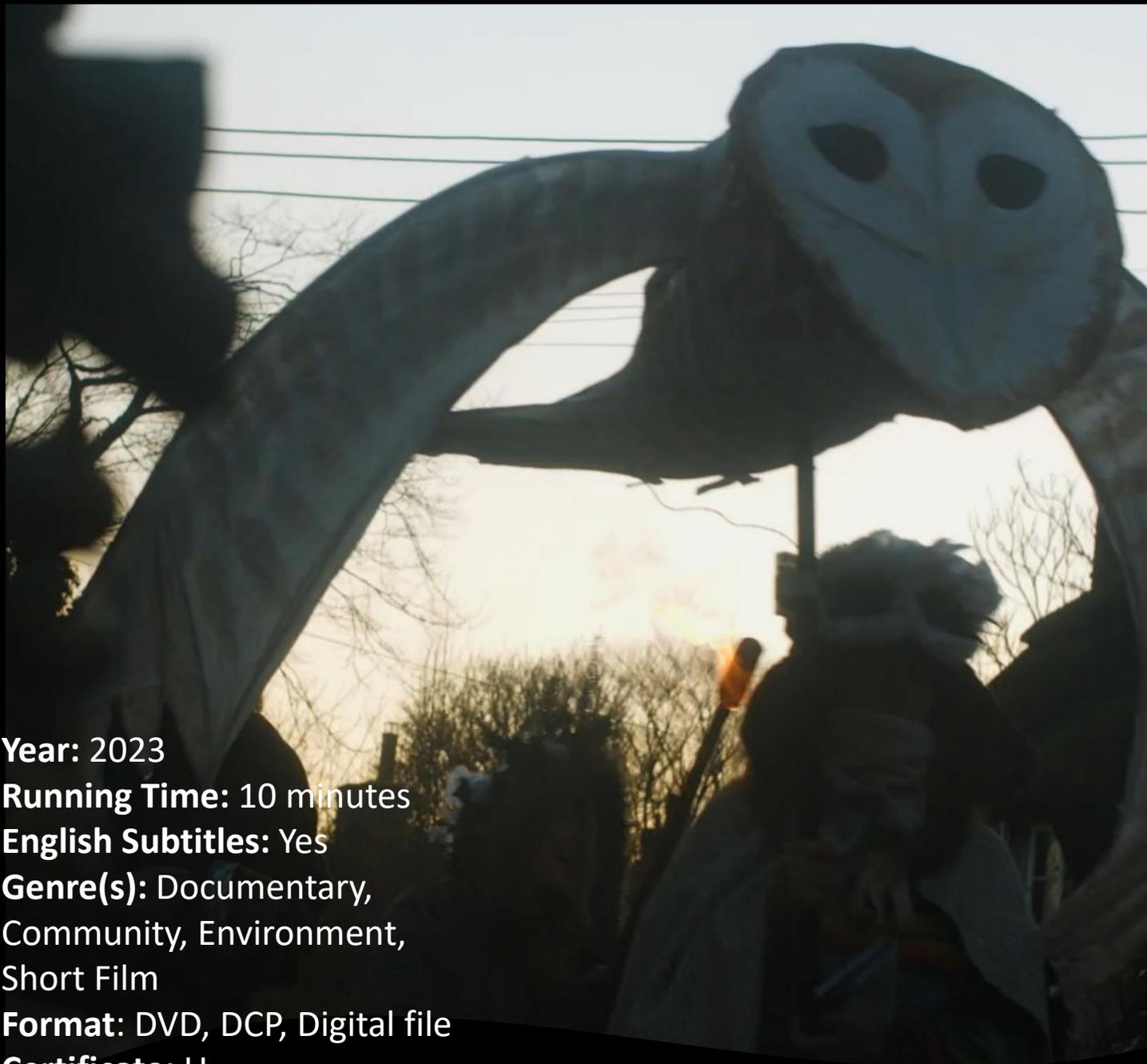
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A folktale for
contemporary times.

A film by Sophie Austin

Screening Pack



Midwinter, a rural village in England, something is stirring in the air...

A short experimental documentary about a community coming together to carry out an ancient ritual in these turbulent times.

Year: 2023
Running Time: 10 minutes
English Subtitles: Yes
Genre(s): Documentary, Community, Environment, Short Film
Format: DVD, DCP, Digital file
Certificate: U

Screeners:
About Awake! by the community
– 3 minutes
AWAKE! the Film
- 10 minutes



Synopsis

“Dorset is light and dark, ecstasy and melancholy.”
PJ Harvey

AWAKE! is a short experimental documentary about a liminal moment in the calendar - midwinter - observed by the inhabitants of a small rural village in England.

Bearing witness to this turning point, the inhabitants gather for a wassail - a centuries old thanksgiving ritual in which folk gather to honour the slow return of the sun and bless the apple trees whose fruit are essential to the village ecosystem.

We watch the preparation, the riotous procession and the offerings given to the apple trees.

Then it's all over, rosy dawn arrives. But the wilder ones are awake, the birds, the musician and the children; acknowledging their place in the family of things.



Screening Suggestions

Awake! is available to screen on its own or to compliment a feature film.

Since October 2023 the film has been screened as part of the experimental programme at Cornwall Film Festival and as part of the Chettle Apple Day where a discussion on community rituals took place after the film led by the film director.

We can offer Q&A sessions after the screening and/or bespoke workshops on Creating contemporary rituals, Community filmmaking, Storytelling with the land.

Awake! can be screened as it is, or why not turn it into a live ritual and invite your community to singalong with subtitles by Matchbox Cinesub the film can be looped so by the second time through, everyone will be singing!



“As a storyteller, I have woken up to the importance of telling new stories about the land we live with, and to document the joy and the melancholy as we adapt out lives within this climate catastrophe.

This film seeks to capture another way of coping with crisis - channeling anxiety and fear into love, joy and gratitude for the land around you.

It is important that we protest and challenge the structures constricting our ability to live in harmony with the planet, but so too must we find ways to give back to the land.

For me, AWAKE! shows a community living in reciprocity, in ritual and in relationship with the land. I hope it’s an inspiring watch and encourages more of us to sing, dance and give thanks for what we have and what we share.”

Sophie Austin, Director

DIRECTOR
SOPHIE AUSTIN



Sophie is a storyteller working across theatre, film and audio to invite contemplation on our place in the here and now.

She collaborates with communities, artists and environments to tell rich and authentic stories and is committed to amplifying lesser heard voices to meet the grief and seek out the joy as we all find new ways of existing in these wild days.

Her latest short film **JUST PASSING** was shortlisted for the Iris Prize Best of British 2023 and is currently available on **CHANNEL 4**. Sophie directed **RISE UP**, a series of 5 short films for young people about the climate crisis which are currently being screened in schools across the UK.

She founded and led critically acclaimed immersive theatre company **Teatro Vivo** for 15 years.

She is currently writer in Residence at **Lesnes Abbey Woods** and a 2022 **Bio-leadership Fellow** where she is working with individuals and organisations across the globe to tell stories about their connection with nature.

PRODUCER
BECKY BURCHELL

Becky is a freelance Arts Producer and Curator, who specialises in 'hopeism'—sharing stories of hope through the arts to help imagine and create a better future. Becky is the founder of CHANGE FESTIVAL. The festival was created as a platform for inspirational performance, music, discussion and workshops that invited audiences to consider their own role in manifesting positive change.

Becky has a background in festivals and was previously the Arts Producer for two of the UKs most popular festivals, Bestival and Camp Bestival, creating areas and experiences across artforms from circus to carnival parades to spoken word. Becky has also worked with folk artist Sam Lee to produce the renowned Singing With Nightingale conservation event series, where musicians perform duets with wild nightingales.





WASSAIL DIRECTOR LORNA REES

Lorna Rees is a live artist who makes innovative, cross-artform work for the outdoors. She tours nationally and internationally with the company she co-founded, Gobbledegook Theatre, and her work is frequently inspired by Earth Sciences, heritage and the environment. Lorna is associate artist for Inside Out Dorset Festival, and she is Co-Chair of Outdoor Arts UK



KEY PRODUCTION CREDITS

- Director - Sophie Austin
- Producer - Becky Burchell
- Wassail Creative Director - Lorna Rees
- Cinematography - Mike Davies
- Sound Artist - James R.G Wright
- Colourist - Edward Webb
- Post-Production Producer - Charles Gillett
- Drone Pilot - Bill Hemmings
- Editor - Sophie Austin
- Studio Recordings - Loz Poulton
- Stills Photographer - Jayne Jackson
- Artwork – Nicky Barfoot
- Subtitles – Matchbox Cinesub

CAST

- Master of Ceremonies - Adam Coshan and Lorna Rees
- Songs led by - Lorna Rees and Rufus Rees-Coshan
- Violin and Original Music by Simmy Singh
- Head Apple - Liam O'Brien

Wassail Created by:

- Eva Arnold, Mali Arnold, Sarah Arnold
- Jez Barfoot, Niki Barfoot, Lili Barfoot, Georgie Barfoot
- Sue Burchell, Becky Burchell, Liam O'Brien,
- Davey Burchell-O'Brien, Jarrah Burchell-O'Brien,
- Anne Dove, Alice Favre, Elfie Harold, Will Harold
- Daisy James, Juliet James, Toby James
- Dora Matthews, Iris Matthews, Jon Matthews, Steph Matthews
- Dave Thorne, Jordana Wakelin, Andy Young



Part dream,
part documentary...

Awake! Licence Fees:

£40 for Volunteer led/ Community Cinema

£150 for Independent Cinema/Festivals

£120 + travel Director Speak Fee

Director led bespoke workshops can also be
arranged

Please get in touch to discuss
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