

## AN ISLAND NATION: CALL FOR PARTNERS

### *Investigating the inland swimmers of this Island Nation*

Created by Francesca Millican-Slater, Produced by Pippa Frith,  
Supported by Birmingham Repertory Theatre



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*'We are an Island Nation, or rather, a Nation of Islands surrounded by water; protected by it, reliant on it, isolated by it, economic systems built on it. And beyond the coast lines, inland, there's the rivers, lakes, brooks, streams, marshes, puddles, fountains and pools. Swimming Pools.*

*Old pools; Victorian and Edwardian edifices kept open by community, Lido's and the outdoors. New pools; built for commonwealth, competition and public health, splash pools, leisure pools, slides and flumes. The pools knocked down and built again: Municipal Pools, an institution of this Island Nation since the Bath and Washhouses Act in 1846.*



*Describing The British Isles as 'An Island Nation' has been used to political and personal appeal throughout the spectrum of differences in the discussions on leaving the European Union: I'm going to swim to Europe and back in the municipal pools up and down the United Kingdom, talking to people who swim inland, investigating who we are as an island nation of inland swimmers as we set sail to leave a union behind.*

*I'll swim a mile in each pool across the villages, towns and cities of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It won't be every pool in the country, 42 in total to mirror the 42 miles it would take to swim to France and back again.*

*I swim this journey with an expectation to be challenged, to listen and to find out more about what it means to be 'British' now. To ask questions, and find new ones; What is a typical British Town? Or City? Or Village? What does it mean to be British swimmer? Or a swimmer in Britain? Why do we swim? Are we a swimming nation? Should we be? What does it mean to be an Island Nation?'*

**Watch a short film about the project here: <https://vimeo.com/236776080>**

### **Overview of the Project:**

We want to create an itinerary that travels through a cross section of urban, suburban and rural pools, swimming in a mix of large (Olympic, Commonwealth Pools), standard (25 meter/ yard leisure centre pools old and new) and the unusual (outdoor small pools and lidos, volunteer run). The project would take in a continuous journey of approximately 3 months spread across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern



Ireland. As part of the four countries it feels important to consider destinations in the Channel Islands and the Islands of Scotland when looking for pools and partners.

The itinerary will aim to take as much distance as possible within it's 42 destinations, and consider an equal bearing of places that voted majority leave and majority remain in the EU Referendum. The swim would start and end in a pool that sits on the South East coast looking out to (the rest of) Europe.

Francesca is interested in the history of each pool, as old or new as that may be, and how people feel about the town, city, village or area that it is located. We would use the pool, differing activities and Francesca swimming to Europe and back (in British pools) as a jumping off point to talk about what it means to be a British Swimmer. Or a swimmer in Britain. We envisage that these conversations would be initiated in two ways: actively targeting specific groups who use the facilities and an open space for general users to have conversations and share stories within the swim facility.

Targeted groups could be any regular user group from AquaFit to Water Polo to Mother and Baby or anything between and beyond! The project would include contact work before the swim to build a time and incentive, reason and offer for people to talk to Francesca. Francesca would be keen to join in the groups activities where possible so there is opportunity for in depth conversation and engagement.

For the general public a short performance, suitable for families, would be offered (possibly more than once a day) that will tell different stories about the history of swimming and pools in the UK. This would be followed by an open space for people to share memories and stories about their relationships to swimming and pools with Francesca. This short performance could also be offered to the targeted groups as a specific incentive.

In each pool we would ask one group or person to design a swim badge, based on a template, that reflects that particular geographical area place and pool to be displayed on a swimming costume documenting the swim.

There would then be 'the one-mile swim' in which people are invited to join in or spectate. With all those who participate in 'the one-mile swim' being awarded with a '*I swam a mile for An Island Nation*' swimming badge.

The project itself is a constant gathering and documenting of the interactions, conversations and discoveries in pools and the places themselves. Throughout there would be realtime documentation in an online space allowing for conversations to continue and gather momentum throughout the period of the swim.



### **Call for Partners:**

To make this exciting project happen we are looking for 42 partner locations. Each partner location will have an 'arts partner' and a 'pool partner.'

#### ***Arts Partners***

Arts Partners will be theatres / arts venues, including village halls / communities centres or venues regularly presenting art; arts centres; festivals etc... who have existing relationship with local pools OR are very interested in building new relationships with local pools.

From our arts partners we need on-the-ground knowledge of the local area, support in spreading the word about the project to local audiences and communities and support around dialogue with the local pool

partner.

In the longer term, we'd love to explore ways to present any further outputs from the project in partnership.

### **Pool Partners**

Pool partners are indoor or outdoor swimming pools who have a track record of engaging with arts activity, or are specifically interested in the idea of this project, and are keen to engage and be part of the process.



From our pool partners we need to be able to come and swim a mile in your pool. We want to work with you to tell your regular swimmers about the project and explore possibilities for engaging with existing regular groups (this might be aquafit groups, formal training groups, groups who come for lessons, ladies only, mother and baby groups etc...). We are also very interested in working with disability-led groups including D/deaf swimming groups, Blind swimmers and more.

We would occupy a small space, perhaps in a foyer, or changing room, while we're at your location where we can talk to the public, and site the performance (this would have no technical requirements, and be very simple in set-up - designed specifically for this purpose).

In the longer term, we'd love to explore ways to present any further outputs from the project in partnership.

### **Basic Timeline:**

<b>Autumn 2018</b>	<b>partnership building and fundraising development:</b> During this period we will be contacting potential partners, and developing relationships to help inform our fundraising activities. We will not be seeking all 42 partners during this period, but we are keen to secure a reasonable number. Funding applications will be completed and submitted by the end of the calendar year.
<b>Spring 2019</b>	<b>confirmation of funding, further partnership development:</b> Once funding is secured further partnership development activity will take place, and further partners secured. In addition, the route for the project will be planned in full detail.
<b>Spring / Summer 2019</b>	<b>The Swim:</b> The swim will take place over approximately a 3-month period, with 42 locations visited, and travel and rest days built in.
<b>Summer / Autumn 2019</b>	<b>Evaluation &amp; next steps:</b> Reflecting with partners on the activity undertaken to-date the team will decide on next steps for the project (determining outputs - possible show, film, book, further engagement activity etc...).

### **Contact Us**

To express an interest please contact the producer:

Email: [pippafrith@gmail.com](mailto:pippafrith@gmail.com) | Telephone: 07500 015298

Just get in touch and let us know you're interested, and we can chat from there. We know each partnership will be slightly different and have different needs - it's part of what makes the project exciting!

**Not for you?** If this project doesn't feel right for your organisation, but you know one that might be interested, PLEASE do pass this document onto them then encourage them to get in touch directly with us. To find out more about this project and Francesca's work, please visit [francescamillicanslater.co.uk](http://francescamillicanslater.co.uk)