

WHITSTABLE GAZETTE

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Truly wonderful – that's Biennale's first weekend

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LONG queues formed for many events in Whitstable on Saturday on the opening day of the town's Biennale.

Organisers said the first weekend was a great success and Stephanie Fuller, from Arts Council England, South East, which is supporting the art festival, said at Saturday's launch: "Whitstable Biennale rightly enjoys a growing reputation as one of the most exciting and cutting edge visual arts events in the calendar – particularly because of its focus on artists' film and performance.

"It was a real honour to help launch this year's programme and fantastic to see it so well attended by some of the country's leading figures in contemporary visual arts. A personal highlight was seeing the work of Tanya Axford, but I'd urge everyone to go along and



Kieren Reed designer of the Social Sculpture on Whitstable seafront

choose their own personal favourite from what is a really stunning programme."

Kate Phillimore, the Biennale's satellite organiser, said: "The satellite programme is incredibly strong. We have been very impressed by the very high standard of exhibits. Whitstable is now firmly

established as one of the best places in the UK to spot emerging artistic talent."

This year's Biennale – the sixth – opened on Saturday and runs over the next two weekends, finishing on September 16. It is packed with live performances, screenings, exhibitions, talks and events. Sue

Jones, Biennale director, said: "We have had a truly wonderful opening few days. I'd like to thank everyone in Whitstable for their huge support for the festival. We have had so many messages wishing us well.

"The help and encouragement from Whitstable people has been amazing and everybody has been so kind – even the weather has been generous."

Exhibits include Stages in the Revolution, curated by The Island (Victoria Brooks and Andrew Bonacina), whose programme includes Patrick Staff's series of stages built around the working harbour area.

Artist and writer Jeremy Millar's has a programme of exhibitions and talks and artist Emma Leach has put together live performances for each of the three weekends in unusual spaces in Whitstable.

■ For full details visit www.whitstablebiennale.com