

'If it didn't exist  
it would be necessary  
to invent it'

A collection of interviews exploring  
the creative impact of Watershed

**WATERSHED**



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by Dick Penny, Managing Director, Watershed

Interviewing the artists, filmmakers, teachers and theatre makers featured herein has shifted, fundamentally, my understanding of what Watershed is and how far its influence spreads.

I'd known for a long time that Watershed is more than just a buzzing Café/Bar and an adventurous arthouse cinema: I hadn't realised, until now, its impact on the cultural landscape of Bristol and further afield; the breadth of its enthusiasms across the arts and beyond; and the crucial role it plays in developing hundreds of careers, collaborations and cultural events.

From this small sample you can see, for example, how Watershed has helped a small, arthouse film distribution company to flourish nationally; launched a young Bristol student taking his first tentative dabbings in video art on his career; found an international audience for a pair of visionary Bristol artists and filmmakers; and many more such.

Watershed's inspirational impact on its collaborators can be put down to four major qualities. Firstly, its staff show an endless openness and enthusiasm for the ideas that come their way. When approached by an artist, filmmaker or digital games creator with an idea – no matter how outlandish – the typical Watershed response will be, 'Sounds great. What can we do to help?'

Most of Watershed's day-to-day users probably have a sense of this openness via its diverse, multicultural film programme: in fact, that spirit of enquiry runs right across its activities, from digital media through performance soundwalks to workshops in schools. As Bristol's now world-renowned installation artist Luke Jerram puts it, Watershed's strength is "the interest it takes in each person's creative journey. It's enthusiastic and open-minded – and, crucially, not too hung up on the format of artworks. If an artist isn't quite sure what their piece is going to look at, or what technology it's going to use, Watershed don't see that as a problem."

Innovation – a desire to lead the way in what it produces and helps others to produce – is also central to Watershed's DNA. As Robin Grbich of Trinity Films explains, Watershed is active, rather than passive, in the way it develops its cinema audiences. Accompanying events, such as director Q&As and workshops, are sown in alongside the film programme – helping to build a stronger audience, rather than merely keeping existing fans happy. This spirit of active enquiry, of seeking new challenges and fostering new audiences, is visible across the raft of practitioners I've interviewed.

Connectivity is a third key asset. Time and time again, Watershed put people in touch with others who can help them on their journey – be it connecting a fledgling digital artist with new-media developers Hewlett Packard Laboratories, or giving a Bristol filmmaker some crucial exposure at the Singapore Film Festival.

Finally, and perhaps most crucially, Watershed offers creative people space and time to think. Its support schemes, residencies and bursaries offer the most crucial things in an artist's career: expertise, financial support, a place to come and work, and (in what can be a lonely, ivory-tower lifestyle) a community of like-minded people with whom to share ideas and discoveries. Media Sandbox, Watershed's digital innovation strand (and its physical space, the Pervasive Media Studio), is perhaps the best illustration of this fundamental, career-enhancing support.

Elsewhere, though, the Clark Digital Bursary has helped Luke Jerram to make some of the past decade's most beguiling, inventive and meaningful interactive art. And Duncan Speakman, a PM Studio resident and former Clark Bursary winner, is now a beneficiary of Theatre Sandbox, Watershed's latest funding strand pushing innovation in theatre.

For several people here – filmmaker Geoff Taylor, musician Adrian Utley – Watershed hasn't only provided contacts, opportunities or studio space: it has fundamentally changed the way they think about their art, opening their eyes to new opportunities in their medium. "I simply can't imagine Bristol's cultural life without it," is Utley's conclusion: and, after reading these interviews, I think you'll see what he means.

Steve Wright  
Arts editor, Venue magazine  
venue.co.uk





## Adrian Utley

Best known, thus far, as a member of Bristol's world-renowned music pioneers Portishead... But if – sometime in the not-too-distant future – Utley's name becomes synonymous, instead, with eclectic, beautifully scored film soundtracks, you'll know whom to thank. "I can't really imagine having developed this interest as fully as I have, without Watershed's facilities, knowledge and enthusiasm," Utley explains of his blossoming passion.







Utlely first met Watershed's Head of Programme Mark Cosgrove in the late 1990s, when Watershed screened the film of Portishead's performance at New York's Roseland Ballroom. Soon after, Mark and Watershed Programme Developer Maddy Probst were instrumental in getting the band's video for 'Magic Doors' shown in arthouse cinemas around the UK.

The collaboration developed over time, with Utlely playing a live soundtrack to Watershed's screening, at Bristol's Colston Hall, of the silent film classic 'He Who Gets Slapped'. After that, the Portishead man provided semi-improvised scores to a series of psychedelic 1960s films by visionary UK filmmaker Jeff Keen, for Watershed's bi-monthly film and music evenings 'The Birdman of Alkijazz'.

Then, a few years ago, Cosgrove approached Utlely and Will Gregory (composer and one half of electropop aces Goldfrapp) with an idea to develop a new music composition for a silent feature. Films and film soundtracks had been a huge influence on Will's and Adrian's musical aesthetic: so, how would the two friends like to compose a live soundtrack to one of the absolute classics of the silent era? And so, this spring, Utlely and Gregory composed the musical score to 1928's Expressionist classic 'The Passion of Joan of Arc' directed by Carl Theodor Dreyer. Once again, the film was shown at the Colston Hall to an ecstatic response, with the duo's soundtrack performed live by six guitarists and an 8-person choir.

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“Watershed have been immensely helpful in setting that up,” Adrian explains. “They have provided all the insights and contacts for making it happen, and Mark has driven it along. He got hold of 15 classic silent films for Will and I to watch in the cinema here, which completely inspired us. He and Maddy have also been onto [arthouse film distributors] Artificial Eye with a view to getting the Colston Hall performance released as a DVD. Mark’s a great inspiration – he has so much energy for projects.”

It’s this enthusiasm and openness to new ideas, says Utley, that makes Watershed such a key enabler in Bristol culture. “I simply can’t imagine Bristol’s cultural life without it. The Watershed staff put their whole weight behind projects, both large and small. They are completely receptive to whatever ideas you have, without trying to censor them or destroy your enthusiasms. And I love the fact that Watershed show films they want to show, rather than films they have to show to pay the rent.”

“I think this is only the beginning of my collaborations with Watershed. Soundtracks have always been an important part of what we’ve done in Portishead – we’ve been inspired by everything from Ennio Morricone’s Western soundtracks to Neil Young’s score for Jim Jarmusch’s ‘Dead Man’. I’m often talking to Mark about other possible film soundtracks – he is connected to some fantastic composers like Günter Buchwald and Neil Brand, who spend their whole life composing soundtracks to films. I’m just at the beginning of it all – and I’m very excited by the possibilities.”







## Luke Jerram

Luke Jerram is an inventor, a researcher, an amateur scientist, an artist; a chameleon of sorts.

His multidisciplinary practice involves the creation of sculptures, installations, live art projects and gifts. Since his professional career as an artist began in 1997, Luke has created a number of extraordinary art projects which excite and inspire people around him.



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“I just can’t imagine Bristol without it, to be honest.” Luke Jerram’s summary of what Watershed means to him and many others could hardly be more succinct. An installation artist who works with ideas at the forefront of science, technology and perception, Luke’s extraordinary, involving installations have been experienced around the world. For his ‘Sky Orchestra’, hot air balloons with speakers attached floated over cities, creating a vast surround sound experience and soundtrack to the city’s dreams; current project ‘Play Me, I’m Yours’ deposits pianos in cities across the world for passers-by to enjoy. Invention, innovation and groundbreaking, meaningful experiences are at the heart of Luke’s practice: and his association with Watershed has been long and fertile.

Luke was awarded Watershed’s Clark Digital Arts Bursary in 2006. The project he created out of that award was ‘The Dream Director’, an interactive installation that used music and ambient sound to direct the contents of participants’ dreams as they slept in a series of pods. The installation premiered at Watershed and then, after receipt of an Arts Council touring grant, visited other UK arts centres including London’s ICA and FACT, Liverpool. Out of that project also came ‘Art In Mind’, a book recording Luke’s research and practice, co-produced by Watershed. Later, the venue helped to finance a Bristol visit for the Street Pianos project in summer 2009.







lukejerram.com

Most recently, Luke has acquired a desk at Watershed's Pervasive Media Studio.

"I've been working from home for ten years – but now that I have kids, my office has turned into a nursery and baby-changing room. Watershed offered me a place at the PM Studio, and it's like a paradise. My whole working life has changed. It's an oasis of calm and creativity, a place to think and dream."

"So what is Watershed's particular creative x-factor, its galvanising magic? "The interest it takes in each person's creative journey. Watershed is enthusiastic and open-minded – and, crucially, not too hung up on the format of artworks. If an artist isn't quite sure what their piece is going to look like, or what technology it's going to use, Watershed see that as no problem. They are open to ideas and receptive to enthusiasm."

"The artworks I make are hybrid and very open to possibilities. I might end up making electronic artworks, putting pianos in the street, doing performances – things that don't necessarily fit in a conventional fine art context. Watershed is open to multimedia possibilities in a way that other Bristol institutions aren't. They treat each piece on its merits, and they support local artists."

I just can't  
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honest

A portrait of Anna Wredenfors, a young woman with brown hair, wearing a dark blue polo shirt with a crest on the left chest. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a classroom or office setting. The portrait is set against a dark blue background with diagonal lines.

## Anna Wredenfors

Anna Wredenfors teaches English and Literature and is Head of Media at Fairfield High School, a diverse, multi-cultural school in inner-city Bristol. Anna and Fairfield have a three-year-old relationship with Watershed.







“The relationship was forged through an initial meeting about media literacy,” Anna recalls. “Over time, though, more and more ideas and opportunities arose.”

Anna’s timetable was adapted so that she could spend one day a week at Watershed, developing media projects for the kids. Working with the media centre, she creates links with businesses and individuals keen to share their creative enthusiasm and knowledge. “My work at Watershed is in many ways, like being a broker,” Anna reflects. “I map an overview of subjects taught across the curriculum in my school – and I then seek out people and projects that can be dovetailed with those subjects.”

One of the most stimulating guests Anna has brought to Fairfield through the Watershed link was BAFTA-nominated sound editor Paul Cowgill, who introduced a GCSE Media class to the work of film composer Bernard Herrmann. “Paul gave the students expert advice on the use of sound in film, and kept them gripped as he discussed how sound can be used to give meaning to moving image,” Anna recalls. Other events have included trips to professional media environments, and mentoring of students by BBC professionals during a three-month film project. For Anna, though, the scheme’s greatest success came at the end of 2009, when a group of year 11 students (aged 15-16) contributed to the running of Watershed’s online advent calendar Electric December. The students sourced the short films to be featured, helped to design content for the website, and even planned the launch party at Watershed.

My work at Watershed has hugely supported Fairfield’s status as a specialist performing and visual arts school

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"It's a very dynamic partnership – bringing together the distinct strengths of Fairfield (cultural diversity, specialist status) and Watershed (industry-facing, media expertise) to enhance students' knowledge, skills and understanding of media," Anna affirms. "My work at Watershed has hugely supported Fairfield's status as a specialist performing and visual arts school. It's confirmed to me that teaching and creative media share a lot of vital energy: and that when the two arenas are brought together, the results are inspiring and enriching for teachers and students."

Working with Watershed has also broadened Anna's own teaching outlook and strengthened her enthusiasm for her career. "The tag line 'those who can, teach' doesn't truly reflect the way in which I now view my career. Instead of feeling that I just 'can teach', I'm regularly revitalising my own teaching. I am so fortunate now to work with a range of inspiring professionals, from teachers to filmmakers to Watershed's wonderful programming department. I have developed transferable skills and feel confident working in environments beyond the classroom."

[mswredenfors.net](http://mswredenfors.net)  
[electricdecember.org/09/calendar](http://electricdecember.org/09/calendar)







## Simon Johnson

Simon Johnson is one half of Simon Games, creators of multi-player street games that use cutting-edge pervasive media technology. Johnson and partner Simon Evans, who met during a residency at Watershed's Pervasive Media Studio, are also the co-creators of igfest – a.k.a. the Interesting Games Festival, Bristol's growing interactive games event.



As Simon J outlines, Watershed has played a huge part in the rise of Simon Games and igfest. Simon's association with Watershed began in 2003, when he created a piece for Electric December the digital advent calendar. Over the next few years, Simon contributed films and animations to the calendar. Then, in 2005, he taught Animate Plus, a Watershed-run digital media course for 14-19 year olds. "It was about trying to excite, and inspire kids in all aspects of digital media."

At around this time, Simon's interest in pervasive media and multi-player street games was growing. "I started working with [cult games creators] Blast Theory, who were running street games and interactive theatre around the world. I was experiencing these games at international festivals, and I wanted to get this happening in the UK."

"At the same time I met Clare [Reddington – director, iShed/PM Studio]. She told me about this new space they were developing called the Pervasive Media Studio, and Media Sandbox a programme of residencies for digital artists. It seemed perfect. I got one of the first commissions with a game idea, met up with Simon and we formed Simon Games."

During their residency, the Simons developed a 40-player street game, 'The Comfort of Strangers', which they began touring to international games festivals. "The response was overwhelmingly positive. So we got to thinking, 'why not run our own festival?' We didn't know how, exactly: we'd just get a few like-minded people together."

The duo floated the idea to Watershed who, suitably enthused, gave them support and some funds to kick start their festival. In September 2008, igfest was born. "It was great to have

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Watershed's support," Simon recalls. "Not just financially: in fact, the logistical support was more valuable." For instance, the centre provided them with a Festival Producer, Helen Stevens. "Helen was world-class. She took the many disparate elements and helped us to put them in a coherent order."

Support came in various forms. For its first two years Igfest's HQ was an empty (then), Watershed-owned premises next door to the media centre. In the second year, meanwhile, the duo secured sponsorship – via Watershed links – from Bristol-based HP Labs.

"The advocacy that's been done on our behalf by various Watershed staff has been first-class," Simon confirms.

What makes Watershed so effective at what it does? "Being in Bristol, a strong creative community, does it no harm. But besides that, Watershed is run in a permeable, rather than a top-down style: you're encouraged to get involved, and the more you put in the more you get out. Dick [Penny, Managing Director] leads by enthusiasm and inspiration, Watershed enables you to get things done without compromising your creativity." Its 'welcome-all-comers' attitude is also crucial. "I am quite populist – I want to make 'odd' things like pervasive media as mainstream as possible. Watershed sets out to reach as broad an audience as possible. And it works – you find people there from all different backgrounds."

"Confidence is the key to it all," is how Simon sums up Watershed's impact upon his career. "You can do all kinds of things by yourself, but it's really hard to operate in a void. Confidence comes from working around like-minded people and being given space, enthusiasm and feedback to try out new ideas."







## Eddie Chambers

Bristol art curator and historian Eddie Chambers is the founder of Diaspora-Artists.net, an exhaustive and hugely informative online arts archive. The site contains sample artworks and career profiles of hundreds of artists from 'diaspora' [typically South Asian/ African-Caribbean or South African] backgrounds, now resident in the UK.



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“One of the most interesting features of British art history since World War II has been the increasing numbers of artists arriving into Britain from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean,” Eddie explains. “But despite career successes and various levels of visibility, many of these artists (along with a second generation of artists, sons and daughters of immigrants, later in the 20th century) remained primarily associated with the countries or regions of the world from which they came, rather than the country to which they migrated and in which they practised. This effective marginalising of their work has meant that Britain’s art histories often run along self-referencing, or mutually exclusive lines. Diaspora-Artists.net seeks to challenge this.”

Although Eddie has kept a personal archive of work by diaspora artists since 1985, the online archive didn’t take off until 2008 – and could not have developed as it has without Watershed’s various forms of support. The website owes its beginnings to the involvement of Watershed Managing Director Dick Penny, who helped to secure funding for the site from Arts Council England’s funding strand Thrive.

Once the project was up and running, the building and maintenance of the website was carried out by Paddy Uglow, Watershed’s Online Development Technician. “Paddy has created a superb website – stable, rigorous and easy to use. His contribution has been pivotal.”







Watershed's Head of Programme Mark Cosgrove, meanwhile, has been an important voice on Diaspora Artists' steering committee, while Aikaterini Gegisian (Watershed Digital Projects Co-ordinator, 2006-09) oversaw a successful bid to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding to create a post of Assistant Curator on the site. This post was subsequently filled by artist/curator Karen Di Franco, whose work on developing the project was, says Eddie, "of huge and lasting significance".

"The various individual contributions from Watershed staff have been crucial to the site's development," Eddie affirms. "Watershed has been, effectively, the project's headquarters, both through the invaluable contributions of staff members and through the earlier strategic involvement of Dick Penny and the Thrive project through which the project got off the ground."

[diaspora-artists.net](http://diaspora-artists.net)

The various individual contributions from Watershed staff have been crucial to the site's development









## Geoffrey Taylor

Geoffrey Taylor is a filmmaker, writer, director and producer. Passionate about storytelling on many platforms, he enjoys collaborating with different artists and filmmakers.



Geoffrey Taylor's Watershed associations go back to 2004 when, while studying Media Practice at the University of the West of England, he started work as a cinema usher. Geoff now works as a freelance writer, director, editor and creative producer, with much of his work sourced through Watershed. His UK Film Council digital short 'Breathe' has toured the festival circuit: other films include 'Isabella' (Vividas and Pinewood Studio Comp 2007 which won 2 NAHEMI awards at Encounters Short Film Festival for Creative Filmmaker and Cinematography and the RTS Regional Award 2008) and 'My Grandma' (First Light Best Film 2004).

In 2009, Geoff worked on an intriguing project developed jointly by Watershed, Bristol Old Vic and HP Labs. Using film, theatre and digital technology, 'The Extended Theatre Project' used 12 lightweight cameras to capture on film the excitement and intimacy of a live theatre experience. Working alongside the theatre director Sally Cookson, Geoff's task was to choreograph the suite of cameras and produce the cinematic document of the live piece. A typical example, says Geoff, of Watershed's constant pushing at the boundaries of new media.

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Geoff's interest in multi-camera, layered experience also led to him acquiring a desk at the Pervasive Media Studio for a while. "Watershed has given me the chance to make new connections and open up filmmaking possibilities. They are so much more than just a cinema: they work at the forefront of technologies. For me, it was about going in at a certain level – as an usher with an interest in film –and being introduced to everything else that goes on in the building. You are encouraged to explore, your talents are nurtured."

Geoff cites Watershed's impact on three levels. The annual short film festival Encounters has been one crucial strand: "Encounters opened me up to a whole new world of short film festivals, and I've since been all around Europe with my films. Also, in terms of style, I've been very influenced by the cinema programming at Watershed – it's very diverse, multicultural and international. Finally, the PM Studio has opened me up to the possibilities of pervasive media. I have started to think in terms of more mobile technology pieces, rather than linear films. It has changed the way I think about my work, and made me more realistic about the new technologies and how I can harness them."

[wideeyed.co.uk](http://wideeyed.co.uk)



## Hazel Grian

Hazel Grian is a writer/director who has in the past few years grown a reputation as a world-class maker of Alternate Reality Games. Hazel creates her own projects experimenting with new kinds of storytelling and entertainment using digital media and also works commercially with agencies on games for major NGOs, big brands and Hollywood blockbuster movies.



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The image shows a Facebook advertisement for the game "221B Begins Here". The ad features a dark, atmospheric poster with two men in suits, one of whom is Sherlock Holmes. The text on the poster reads "221B BEGINS HERE" and "SHERLOCK HOLMES IN LONDON". Below the poster, there is a short description of the game and a URL: "www.221b.me".

The Facebook interface is visible, including the top navigation bar with "facebook", "Home", "Profile", "Friends", "Marketplace", "Watch", "Pages", "Groups", "Settings", and "Log Out". The right sidebar shows a "Create an Ad on Facebook" button and an "Advertisement on Facebook" button.



A creator of Alternate Reality Games (ARGs), Hazel has been a resident at the Pervasive Media Studio, part of Watershed's digital innovation arm iShed, for two years now: and the association has had a rich impact on her creative progression. "Watershed has made an enormous contribution to my career so far. It's usually my first port of call whenever I need to talk over an idea or a problem or find a collaborator. The PM Studio is like a permanent extension of what Watershed offers: professional and creative support, introductions to collaborators and funders."

Previously a filmmaker and performer with Bath's world-famous Natural Theatre Company, Hazel developed an interest in interactive narratives and games around 2006. "It was an interesting new way to get audiences engaged online, rather than passively watching films. I was broke, and didn't know how to get some projects going in this new area, so I spoke with Dick Penny (Managing Director) and Clare Reddington (Director of iShed and PM Studio).

"They immediately told me about an artist's residency coming up with Hewlett Packard Laboratories in Bristol, who were looking for a filmmaker to work with their new technology. I applied and got the placement." That started a long and fruitful relationship with HP Labs, with Hazel creating two major ARGs, 'MeiGeist' (which drew some 30,000 online participants worldwide) and 'The Sky Remains'.

Hazel also became one of the first residents at iShed's newly created PM Studio. "Having a social space to work from changed everything. Clare is one of the most proactive people I know: her introductions have led me to major projects with people like Enable Interactive, with whom I worked with on the British Red Cross game 'Traces of Hope'." Dick, meanwhile, recommended Hazel as artist-in-residence alongside Pete Postlethwaite in the stage production of 'King Lear'.

Several major 2009 projects have come about through contacts made at iShed or during the Encounters International Short Film Festival, with Hazel creating games for some major Hollywood movies. The space and time that the studio affords, meanwhile, gives her and others the freedom to experiment – and, if necessary, to fail along the way. "If something goes wrong, it goes wrong. The support is there."

"There's a lot going on in Bristol that people don't realise, including major digital creations for international audiences. And the one place where everyone involved goes to meet is Watershed. It comes down to the people who run Watershed and iShed, their incredible dedication to connecting people up and getting exciting things going. If there was some kind of terrible national catastrophe or if a massive hurricane hit Bristol, I think everyone I know would go to Watershed to have a sit down and decide what to do."



[hazलगriener.blogspot.com](http://hazलगriener.blogspot.com)

There's a lot going on in Bristol that people don't realise, including major digital creations for international audiences







## Taran Burns

As a freelance creative Taran has worked with a variety of different clients and produced films and promotional videos specific to their needs. His specialities include: storyboarding, directing, music production, composing, editing, digital art and photography.



“Watershed has had a huge impact on my creative life,” says video editor and director Taran Burns, who arrived at the arts centre at the age of 17.

“I moved to Bristol with no GCSEs, and my first visit to Watershed was for a three-day VJing workshop held by the Bristol multimedia gurus I Am The Mighty Jungulator.” In conjunction with Jungulator, Taran made a “very strange, psychedelic video piece” using clips he had filmed around the waterfront, accompanied by an audio track of found sounds from around the Watershed building.

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filmmaking

“That was my introduction to Watershed. The Jungulator guys were really pleased with what I’d created, and soon after Noel Goodwin (then project co-ordinator for eShed, Watershed’s youth film and media network) asked me if I wanted to be part of eShed, a new group for young people interested in media making.” Taran became a long-term member of eShed’s steering group. Other work soon came flooding in – organising workshops and events around film releases and then, soon after, helping to produce the Electric December advent calendar and helping out behind the scenes at the Encounters International Short Film Festival. His Watershed links have also led to work on projects with a host of different organisations and schemes, including work behind the scenes at the BBC’s youth talent showcase Blast. All of which, he says proudly, “has made me into a very skilled freelancer capable of a lot of different tasks.”

While working at the centre, Taran was also studying music technology at Access to Music College, going on to study Media Production at Filton College. “Watershed has allowed me to build a new love into my life: media and filmmaking. I can’t thank it enough for the amount of amazing links it has given me to this city. Like so many others, I consider Watershed the home of Bristol’s media – and in retrospect Mark Cosgrove (Head of Programme) and Maddy Probst (Programme Developer) have been the parents of my media career.”

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## Robin Grbich

Robin Grbich is Head of Distribution at Trinity Filmed Entertainment, distributors of arthouse and auteur films around the UK and Ireland. Watershed has become one of the key points on Trinity's itinerary, and an essential catalyst in their growth.





In 2008, Watershed produced 'Between Heaven and Hell' – a touring retrospective of the works of Austrian director Ulrich Seidl, a chronicler of some of the darker recesses of modern Europe. The tour featured screenings of several of Seidl's films including that year's 'Import/Export': accompanying resources including a dedicated microsite and an interview with the director, recorded at Watershed and still accessible via its digital resource dShed.net.

Trinity, 'Import/Export's UK/Ireland distributors, collaborated on the tour. "Mark Cosgrove was a big supporter of 'Import/Export'," Robin recalls. "That enabled us to bring Ulrich to Bristol, do the Q&A here and help develop that audience in Bristol.

"We distribute a lot of auteur films – movies that are driven by the director's voice and vision, rather than by big-name actors. And, unfortunately, many regional cinemas don't manage to develop an audience for that type of film.

For arthouse  
distributors, Watershed  
is one of the crucial  
points on the map



“Watershed, though, is extremely proactive and well-organised: via Encounters and a host of other events, they do a lot to develop audiences in Bristol. So for us to tour a film to Watershed is always a very easy step to take.” More recently, Trinity brought ‘Tales From The Golden Age’ to Watershed – a hilarious send-up of life in the final years of Nicolae Ceauşescu’s Communist regime in Romania. One of the film’s stars, Vlad Ivanov, staged a Q&A session at the cinema.

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UK partner

“Watershed is definitely our most receptive and proactive UK partner,” Robin confirms. “They are very interested in cultural, artistic cinema, and in developing an alternative away from the mainstream cinema world. Programming additional events such as Q&A sessions also gives audiences an extra incentive to go there – to be able to meet filmmakers, get the inside track on a film they might have been affected by or enjoyed, rather than just being passive consumers.

“For arthouse distributors, Watershed is one of the crucial points on the map, and I wish more regional sites were like it. It’s also been crucial in Trinity’s development. If regional cinemas want to programme alternative cinema, they have to go after that audience – they have to be dynamic, not passive.”



[watershed.co.uk/seidl-t-fe.com](http://watershed.co.uk/seidl-t-fe.com)







## Joe Magee

Joe Magee is a Bristol-based artist and filmmaker with a personal practice encompassing a range of traditional and electronic media, including film, animation, interactive art and printmaking.



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Joe has presented work at the International Symposium of Electronic Arts, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, the Victoria and Albert Museum and elsewhere; he has also collaborated with comedian Bill Bailey since 2007 on various projects, including the films for Bailey's recent tour.

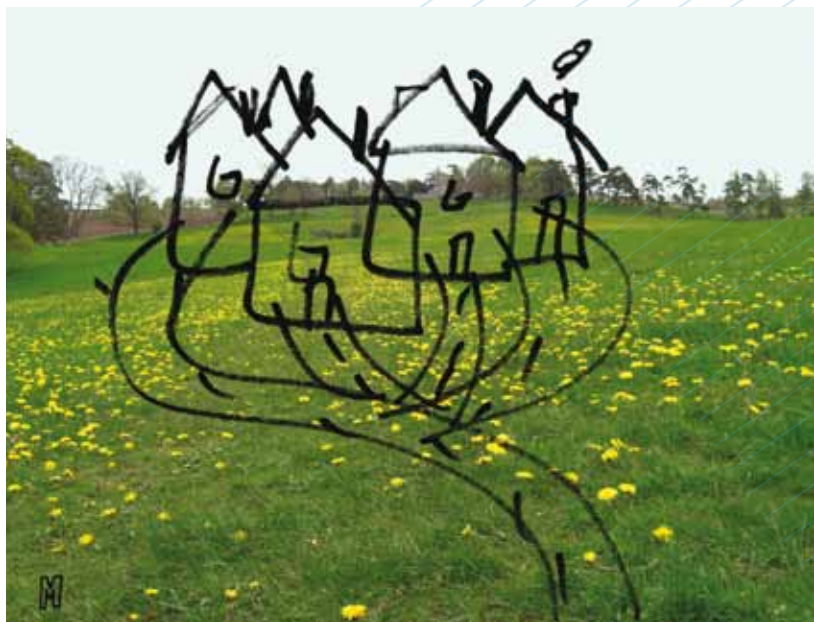
"I have had a vital relationship with Watershed for 11 years," Joe explains.

"The most important part of that has been access to a vibrant network of artists and organisations. As an independent artist, it can be difficult to find the right collaborators, or just to talk about ideas and hear about other activity. Watershed's Café/Bar is rightly celebrated as a conducive and fertile venue."

Joe cites a recent feature film idea that Watershed helped to gestate. "Watershed has encouraged this project. Just from talking to staff there, I was introduced to a top-quality producer, hugely experienced writer, very sought-after sound artist and a real partnership has formed. The team has a bespoke feeling and the project is gathering momentum. Personal recommendations and meetings are hugely important in creative projects. Connecting to people via forums and other e-practices is perhaps less likely to succeed."

Connections, though, are just a part of the story. Watershed has also provided Joe with numerous projects and commissions of its own – including work for Electric December, its annual online advent calendar, and an animation for the centre's contribution to the winter visual art event Light Up Bristol. He's also been selected for a Clark Digital Bursary and submitted a film for Electric Pavilion, an umbrella site for a whole raft of creative content made by Bristolians about their city.





In 2008 Head of Programme Mark Cosgrove selected two of Joe's films to show at a British Council supported event at the Singapore Film Festival. As a result of that screening and a subsequent networking visit to the Festival, Joe's work became the focus in an award-winning publication. "That link will have a knock-on effect for the rest of my career. I've already been involved with a series of subsequent projects - including British Council visits to Singapore and Vietnam, and a residency at Heriot-Watt University in Scotland.

"Watershed is the single most important organisation to my practice in the city."

[periphery.co.uk](http://periphery.co.uk)

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## Duncan Speakman

Duncan Speakman is a Bristol based sound artist who creates work that physically and emotionally engages audiences in public spaces. He employs both sound and walking as a process and/or outcome in the work.









Performance artist Duncan Speakman traces the development of his career back to the Clark Digital Bursary he was awarded by Watershed in 2002. The bursary, and an accompanying exhibition at Watershed, gave Duncan his first chance to experiment with both technology and work in public spaces – two themes that are now central to his practice. “I made a trilogy of pieces about digital communications and their impact on our social behaviour,” Duncan recalls. “I found Watershed an incredibly open environment – I’d say to them, ‘I’d like to do something in the café’ and the response would be, ‘Great – go ahead’.

“Winning the Bursary was a sea change for me – both in terms of a longer-term commission that I could spend time creating, and also the space for dialogue and debate I found there. I met a lot of people who came in to talk about the projects they were doing.”

Later, Watershed put Duncan’s name forward to work with HP Labs on their Mobile Bristol project – a research group focused around locative media technology, and forerunner to Watershed’s Pervasive Media Studio. More recently, Duncan has become a resident at the PM Studio, sharing office space with a wealth of young creatives and companies working at the cutting edge of locative and pervasive technology.

“The PM Studio has given me space for new collaborations – and it has also been an incredible advocate for my work. Getting my work distributed has always been hard, because I’m not making films or object-based work any more. It is harder to ‘sell’ live, pervasive events. So it’s great to have people saying on my behalf, ‘this is really important, you should make this happen in your city’.

The PM  
Studio  
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– and it has  
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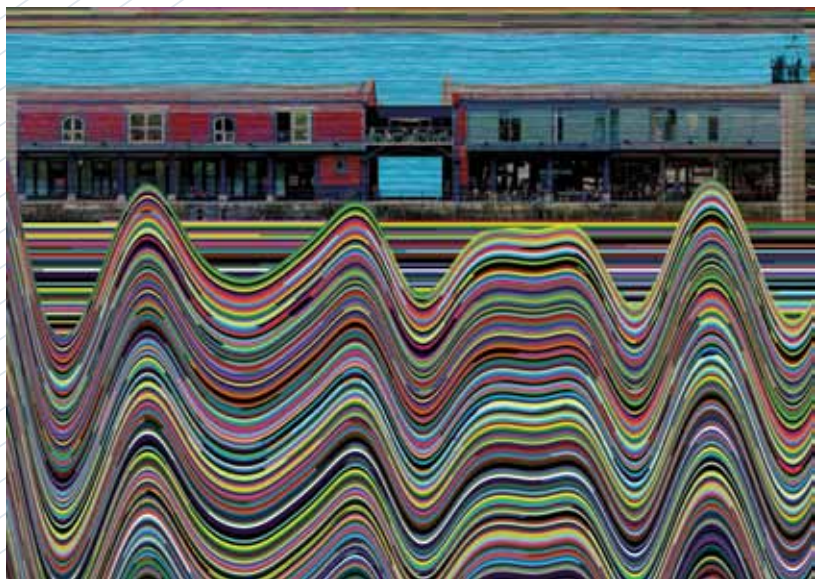
It's a cinema  
centre, on its  
basic level –  
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performance

Over the past two years, Duncan has been creating his distinctive 'subtle mobs': interactive, soundtrack-led experiences that physically and emotionally engage audiences in public spaces. He was also part of a UK artists' delegation invited to the 2008 SXSW Festival, a music, film and interactive conference/festival in Austin, Texas. The group were invited back to chair a panel discussion in 2010. And, in 2009, Duncan was a member of the Vauxhall Collective, for which the car manufacturer sponsors six of the UK's most exciting creatives each year.

The sponsorship gave him free reign to continue existing projects, including the completion of 'As If It Were The Last Time', his latest 'subtle mob' that has already been staged in Birmingham, Bristol, London, Liverpool and will also be performed at Tokyo Performing Arts Market by the British Council and Amsterdam for SonicActs. Again, his PM Studio work was crucial. "I was commissioned under the Theatre category – which wouldn't have happened without [predecessor] 'My World Is Empty Without You', made during my PM Studio residency. If I hadn't made a move towards those more performative works, I would not have been eligible, as there's no Digital Media category in the Vauxhall commission. So that was about Watershed being open to how work could stretch across media forms, and giving me the opportunities to make that work. It's been intriguing, renewing, invigorating.

"For me, Watershed offers two things: connections with other practitioners, and openness to what media arts can be. It's a cinema centre, on its basic level – but it's so open to what else you can do with technology, creativity and performance."





It is the diversity of all the people who engage with Watershed and their collective cultural curiosity that shapes it. So a big thank you to the people featured in this publication for sharing individual snapshots of what Watershed means to them. Watershed is rooted in Bristol but bridges ideas, talent and practice across the creative economy nationally and internationally. Our whole approach is to connect artists and audiences with creative, cultural and commercial constituencies.



The UK Creative Economy Programme echoes Steve Wright's introduction when it described Watershed as "... a prime example of a highly connected flexible, porous piece of cultural and creative infrastructure, of which there are too few examples. Watershed is more than just an arts cinema. It is at once a cultural centre, a business broker, a social networker, a research and innovation facility, a Café/Bar, and a cultural tourist attraction."



**Producing the Future:  
Understanding  
Watershed's Role  
in Ecosystems of  
Cultural Innovation**

by Graham Leicester  
and Bill Sharpe of  
International Futures  
Forum published  
by Watershed.

Our approach is people led, entrepreneurial, ambitious and collaborative. We are passionate about sharing, developing and showcasing creative talent, cultural ideas and emergent practice. Watershed is a space – physical and intellectual – where things can happen and we hope that you continue to enjoy and value the Watershed experience.

Catch up with us wherever you are:  
Venue activity [watershed.co.uk](http://watershed.co.uk)  
Online content [dshed.net](http://dshed.net)  
Innovation activity [pmstudio.co.uk](http://pmstudio.co.uk)

Dick Penny  
Managing Director, Watershed  
Summer 2010

If you would like a free copy please email your request with your name and full postal address to: [communications@watershed.co.uk](mailto:communications@watershed.co.uk)

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P9. Photos by  
Toby Farrow and  
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### Adrian Utley

P11. Adrian on stage  
with Portishead:  
courtesy of aftershow  
[flickr.com/photos/  
aftershow/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/aftershow/)  
(Creative Commons)

P12. Still from  
The Passion of  
Joan of Arc, 1928

P15. Montage:  
Screen grabs from a  
short documentary on  
the development of the  
score for Joan of Arc by  
Rick Holbrook (available  
on DShed.net)

### Luke Jerram

Photos by  
P16. Christopher Jones,  
P19. Paddy Uglow,  
David Boulton,  
P20. Thierry Grobert,  
P21. Luke Jerram

### Anna Wredenfors

P23 & 24. Photos taken  
at Fairfield School  
courtesy of the  
Bristol Evening Post  
P27. Photo of Electric  
December workshop  
taken by students,  
workshop run by  
Kirsty Mackay

### Simon Johnson

P30 & 33.  
Photos of igfest  
(Moosehunt, Circle  
Rules Football and  
Korean Lazer Ball)  
by Andy Molyneux,  
P33 photo of igfest  
(Elephant) by  
Dan Dixon

### Eddie Chambers

P35. Tam Joseph  
(b. 1947, Dominica)  
'Man Sleeping on a  
Train' - detail  
acrylic on glass  
c. 1991  
P37. Barbara Walker  
(b. 1964, Birmingham)  
'Solomon' - detail  
acrylic on canvas  
c. 2005  
P38. Anita Kaushik  
(b. 1967, England)  
'Made in Gt Britain'  
- detail  
mixed media  
1990  
P39. Lesley Sanderson  
(b. 1962, Malaysia)  
'Busts in a  
Landscape' - detail  
Mixed media on paper  
1985-6

**Geoffrey Taylor**

P42 & 45. Photos of dancers and the boy by Jecery Rosini

**Hazel Grian**

P47. Black and white portrait of Hazel by Vanessa Bellaar-Spruijt  
P48. 221b Facebook page credits: '221b', the online Sherlock Holmes movie game made by Hide&Seek / AKQA for Warner Bros. 2009, Hazel Grian worked on the Artificial Intelligence characters in the game  
P51. Daemon video still: 'Daemon' the prototype friendly robot, which Hazel created on the Watershed Artist Residency at the Pervasive Media Studio 2010

**Taran Burns**

P53 & 57. Portraits by Sean Malyon  
P54. Film stills from Urban Messiah

**Robin Grbich**

Stills from Ulrich Seidl films:  
P59. Animal Love,  
P60. Jesus, You Know, Import/Export,  
P61. The Bosom Friend,  
P63. Models

**Joe Magee**

Artworks:  
P67. Swan, Heart of Chairs  
P68. Fake News, Green Belt  
P69. Investigation

**Duncan Speakman**

P70, 72 & 75.  
All photographs of subtmob by Duncan Speakman  
  
P76. Waveshed by Joe Magee

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### **Recommended Reading:**

#### **Producing the Future:**

**Understanding Watershed's role  
in Ecosystems of Cultural Innovation**

By Graham Leicester and Bill Sharpe  
International Futures Forum  
Published by Watershed.  
FFI: [watershed.co.uk/reports](http://watershed.co.uk/reports)

#### **Economies of Life:**

**Patterns of health and wealth**

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