

Our Impact

WATERSHED

Welcome

“This is why we love @wshed and @rifemag. They are not afraid to pave the way with an open mind and encourage access to the arts for everyone in the community.”

Audience response to our BFI Film Academy call, giving 16-19 year olds a chance to be a part of the future film industry.

In an organisation that rarely sits still, 2017/2018 saw a period of significant development for Watershed – as we continued to explore deeper, broader and more inclusive ways to deliver cultural engagement.

Across the organisation our business grew – particularly in cinema where the energy put into reaching new audiences generated unprecedented levels of activity. A personal highlight was the 10th birthday of The Pervasive Media Studio, an event we would have struggled to imagine when we set up this informal and shared space just ten years ago.

Seeing the enthusiasm and curiosity of the 500 people who came through the doors to meet the residents and try out new creative technology projects was energising and we are looking forward to the next ten.

Our work is not confined to our physical footprint, and this year we reached over 100,000 people outside of the Watershed building: we also secured funding for the next iteration of Film Hub South West, a network of over 140 cinemas, film festivals and other organisations across the region. And we launched Creative Producers International, a talent development programme featuring fifteen amazing creatives from around the world.

However, Watershed’s impact is not characterised in a single programme or project, but in our ethos of openness, and responsibility. These attributes are shared across our whole organisation and lead to engaged audiences, flourishing talent and a competitive creative sector.

This ethos is particularly present within our work around inclusion: from hosting the BBC See Hear Festival, which celebrates all things related to sign language and the Deaf community in film and TV, to our ongoing collaboration with Come the Rev, a collective of curators, programmers and creatives committed to exploring and challenging Black life, to micro-residencies which provide financial support for people of colour to join Pervasive Media Studio, our aim is to make ourselves welcoming to everyone, across every part of what we do.

With so much uncertainty in the world, a key focus for the future will be the continued championing and support of young people’s voices – especially those from backgrounds underrepresented in the media. Rife Magazine continues to go from strength to strength – and will soon be starting a Travelling Writers Room in Libraries across Bristol, and publishing a book by young people about the issues that matter to them.

In July 2018 we announced a change in leadership, seeing Dick Penny step down as CEO and myself taking over the reins. I am extremely excited and humbled to be taking on new challenges within an organisation I love, and I am committed to the continued transformation of Watershed – in order to keep ourselves relevant and necessary in changing times.

We can only do that with the continued participation and partnership of you, the people who make Watershed what it is. Thank you for joining us on this brilliant journey – we hope you are ready for at least a tiny bit more.



**Clare Reddington,
CEO, Watershed**

There are **91** full time equivalent jobs at Watershed

1.5 million people visited us on the web

174,000

people bought tickets for our venue screenings and events

6 continents hosted Watershed events or collaborations

36,000 young people engaged with our programme

153

artists and creatives are resident in the Pervasive Media Studio

Watershed Group Turnover in 2017/18 is **£5.87 million**

104,000

people engaged with our projects beyond the venue

You enabled us to open our doors wider



We believe that to realise the true potential of the artists and audiences we work with, we should draw from the widest possible pool of collaborators and ask them to engage with people with different experiences (cultural background, ethnicity, discipline, age etc). Our work is curated to programme and value difference. Carefully co-created and authentic open calls and community partnerships ensure our programme is vibrantly mixed.

Our aim is to build inclusion for minority and under represented groups and increase our understanding of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) experiences in everything we do. This year we focused on delivering engagement in our creative technology programmes. We employed a dedicated Inclusion Producer to help work with BAME artists and creatives with the aim of increasing participation from BAME artists within the Pervasive Media Studio.

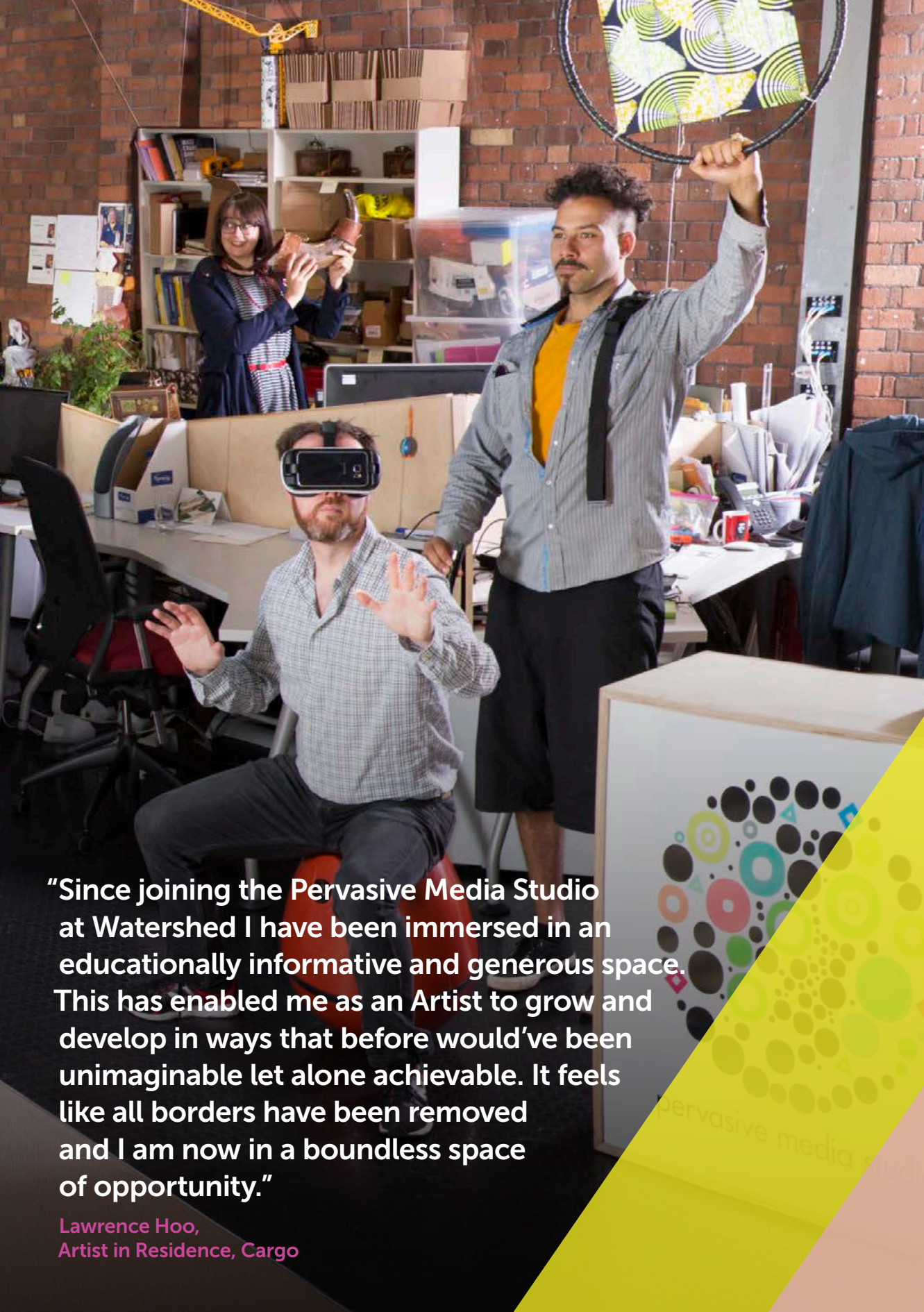
Through a series of initiatives and invitations we have supported three artists with application-free micro residencies and bursaries to join the Pervasive Media Studio.

Our residents programme offers artists support, free desk and meeting space in the Pervasive Media Studio in order to support them to explore new ideas and gain access to a vast range of creative and technical support.

Our Inclusion Producer Zahra Ash-Harper reflects on this work...

“When I started, we had a really good gender balance in the Studio, but we weren’t retaining practitioners of colour in the space. We needed to think about why that might be and what sort of things we could put in place to welcome different kinds of people from more diverse parts of the city. When you’re trying to be inclusive, essentially you’re trying to have a conversation with somebody about the value they see in themselves, and that can take a really long time.”

These new programmes have helped to raise the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents by 107% in one year, bringing the demographics of the Studio to within 1% of representing the wider demographics of Bristol – which is our minimum target.



“Since joining the Pervasive Media Studio at Watershed I have been immersed in an educationally informative and generous space. This has enabled me as an Artist to grow and develop in ways that before would’ve been unimaginable let alone achievable. It feels like all borders have been removed and I am now in a boundless space of opportunity.”

**Lawrence Hoo,
Artist in Residence, Cargo**

“I’m new to Bristol but it seems clear that @pmstudiouk is a powerful place of creativity & interconnectedness. Happy 10th Birthday you wildmakers, dreamers & thinkers.”

Watershed Twitter follower

We also celebrated the Pervasive Media Studio’s 10th Birthday with an Open Day and were delighted that more than 500 curious people of all ages and from all backgrounds came to have a look and play with the exhibitions, games and drop-in workshops from current and past residents. We have been delighted that the representation from BAME creatives in our Studio community has risen steadily over this period.

“Seeing our BAME representation grow to 21% in two years, is progress that could begin to affirm our approach and the foundations of our practice.”

**Zahra Ash-Harper,
Inclusion Producer, Watershed**

“Being commissioned to create the Pervasive Media Studio murals (as pictured on the previous page) was both exciting and challenging. The brief was to create murals that told the story of the Studio, the residents, and the projects that come out of it. From my own personal experience I found the Studio to be an incredibly open and collaborative space, with a huge variety of content being made. My main aim was to represent that – and the only way to capture an accurate depiction was by interviewing the residents, and discovering what people found to be most valuable and enjoyable about being here.

I learnt a lot, I gained so many insights – and the importance of being able to collaborate with people who work entirely differently to you. Being in an environment where you’re allowed to make mistakes and learn from them is incredibly valuable. So much can stem from a single conversation. Being commissioned to create these murals was a complete privilege, and really pushed me to create work that was not only visually outstanding but also told a story of a place that is simply like no other”

**Jasmine Thompson,
Illustrator and Rife Alumni**

“Happy 10th Birthday @pmstudiouk, Bristol is blessed to have Watershed”

Watershed Twitter follower

You encouraged us to take risks

“Very enjoyable day playing in Bristol at #LayeredRealities yesterday – experiencing interactive VR, AR, audio and light works. Love how @wshed projects bring communities together in public space #5gbristol”

Audience member

Whether it's introducing new audiences to our work or presenting new work to the world, we embrace difference and aren't afraid of an experiment. We are fortunate to be of Bristol, a city that is also willing to experiment and try something different. In March 2018 we worked with the Smart Internet Lab at the University of Bristol to present 5G Layered Realities, and we invited audiences to come and explore the future potential of next generation wireless creativity (5G) through a series of free outdoor events ranging from augmented reality (AR)

theatre, to a virtual reality (VR) dance piece, to a spectacular audiovisual installation and a programme of critical talks and demonstrations. Despite heavy snow and disruption, over 3000 of you came to try it all out. This was testament not only to the great teams at Watershed, We The Curious and the University of Bristol who rolled up their sleeves to make it happen, but to the enthusiasm, perseverance and sheer can-do spirit of the people of Bristol who took a chance on experimental new work – even if it was the coldest March since 1962!

“Watershed epitomises the strength and diversity of the UK's creative industries. At once an innovator, a catalyst for cross media collaboration, and an environment for talent to develop, be challenged and flourish. For 30 years Watershed has held a unique place in the UK's cultural, technological and creative sectors. Its value to the local, regional, international economy is immeasurable and I hope that it continues to lead the way for the UK's creative sector, as the UK's creative sector continues to lead the world.”

**Tim Scott,
Head of Creative Industries**





You encouraged innovation

This was also the year that saw us working with partners to understand and introduce VR to audiences – we worked with Limina Immersive, to present the first VR-only arts festival to get VR where it belongs, in front of you our audience.

**“It’s cosy and comfortable.
Nicest way to do VR
I’ve tried so far.
Womb like.”**

VR weekender audience member

This was an exciting opportunity for audiences to discover a range of world-class artistic VR experiences curated by Catherine Allen of Limina Immersive. We foregrounded the stories that made up the programme, rather than the technology, and presented the weekend as an experiment in testing how the audience would feel after a shared VR experience. The packed weekend was a sell-out success showing once again the great appetite that Bristol audiences have for testing/trying new work – thank you for this.

This was also the year that the Virtual Reality Lab was launched, a space for research, development, product design, teaching, company incubation and investment within Virtual and Augmented Reality. We know that Virtual Reality is still in its infancy and are excited about our audiences finding ways to interact, communicate and consume this new art form. If you have not had the opportunity to experience VR yet, then we look forward to offering you the exciting opportunity to do so... watch this space!

You supported new talent

Thanks to the continued support from three families wishing to make a real impact with their gifts, another six talented young content creators joined us at Rife, our online magazine which is a platform for the opinions of young people in Bristol.

Through the work of Rife and the young people who work there we provided 40 workshops in a variety of arts, youth services, community and educational settings, giving young people the skills they need to tell their stories – through photography, filmmaking, illustration, vlogging, creative writing and more.

“Rife isn’t just a job, it’s a community brimming with opportunity and positivity I never thought I would experience within a workplace.”

**Mikael Techane,
Rife Alumni**

“It’s so hard for young people to get their feet in the door, or even know where the doors are. Since being at Rife, my confidence has in general skyrocketed. I don’t feel like anything is impossible. I’m still working out where I want to be, but I’m confident about the future, in my ability and potential – and in a time of uncertainty and instability – that is invaluable”

**Euella Jackson,
Rife Alumni**



What was Watershed's economic, cultural and social impact in 2017/18?

Watershed is a resilient organisation constantly evolving as our operating environment develops. We benefit from four-year investment agreements with Arts Council England and Bristol City Council.

We deliver consistently high quality cultural impact, with depth of engagement, providing excellent value for money with a total income of £5.87 million in 2017/18 leveraged on arts revenue funding of £849,249 (Arts Council England, Bristol City Council). This works out as 15% of our overall income.

The breadth and depth of Watershed programmes is established across cultural cinema, art and technology, with a focus on engaging young people.

Alongside the more visible cultural and social impact we have been talking about here you may be surprised at the range of local and global communities we have worked with, and in the scale of the economic impact of this work.

Pervasive Media Studio residents reported turnover in excess of

£5.4 million

Watershed Group Turnover

£5.87 million

Pervasive Media Studio residents reported secured research funding in excess of

£5 million

Watershed's economic impact in 2017/18 was

£16.2 million

Artist Aidan Moesby's experience of his Pervasive Media Studio residency was 'life changing' in his words. Aidan's practice sits at the intersection of Art, Health and increasingly Technology. His residency gave him confidence:

"The strength of the studios' accessibility is that it is not obtrusive, it is almost invisible. Yet it is so responsive. It is a space that allows me to be me as much as possible, it has been a space where I have been able to find the right conditions to undertake research, to learn and develop – both professionally and personally. It is a place where I feel I have been able to be an artist and whether I identify as disabled or not has largely been irrelevant although not unimportant"

**Aidan Moesby,
Artist in Residence**

This years' Artist's Residency programme made a real difference to the practice of artists Action Hero. Over 6 months during 2018, they travelled over 30,000 km across Europe in a motorhome, recording songs of love, hope, heartbreak, loss and desire, sung by the people they met along the way.

This ever-evolving archive is broadcasting 24/7 from beacons placed, by Action Hero, in meaningful locations across the entire continent. At a time of great change in Europe, Oh Europa! offers a different kind of conversation that they plan to continue for years to come.

"We felt very cared for during our residency and that the Pervasive Media Studio (and the people in it) were genuinely invested in and excited about our project. There's literally no way we would be where we are now without it. The residency has genuinely opened up a bunch of new possibilities that will be felt in our practice for many years."

**Action Hero,
Artists in Residence**

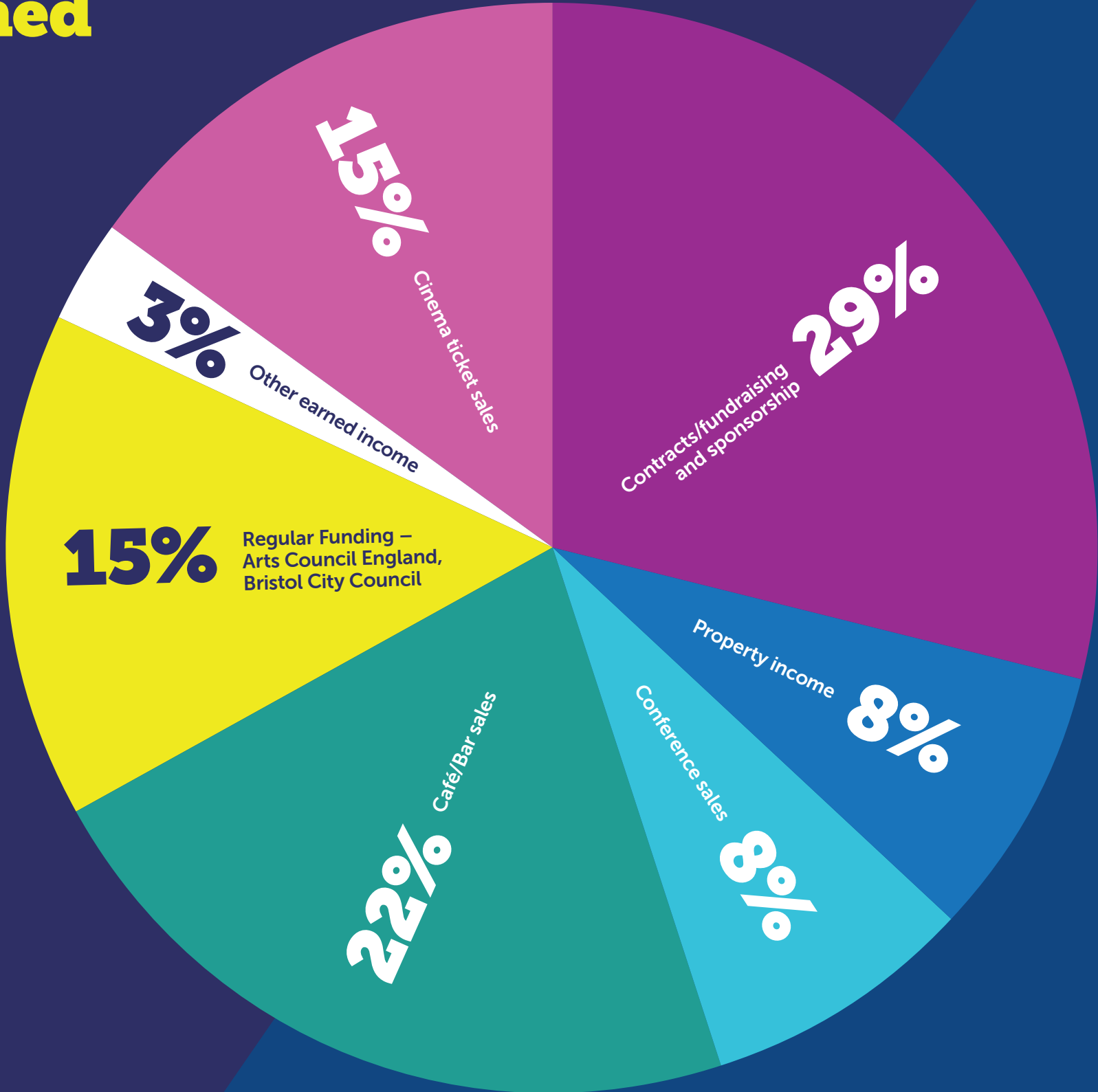
"The whole endeavour is a kind of grand improbable act – Action Hero have in a sense changed Europe."

The Independent



Watershed income 2017/18

Watershed
income streams
for year ending
31 March 2018:





You make a difference

We want to ensure that we are as inclusive, welcoming and accessible as we can be for everyone.

We know that the best way to achieve this is to work with our partners, customers and audiences to learn and develop our skills and understanding of what we need to do to meet your needs in the hope that everyone feels welcome and comfortable here at Watershed. Your gifts to date enable us to continue to offer our audiences the opportunity to join us for director and producer Q&As and other seasonal events, plus provide young people of all backgrounds the opportunity to experience cinema with our young person's ticket offer to see a film for £5 any time, day or night. Thank you!

"The best cinema, @wshed in Bristol is only £5 for under 24's, a great way to get them into foreign, independent and documentary cinema. They take part in multiple events/festivals, throughout the year for cheap prices, and it's run by people who clearly, genuinely love cinema."

Watershed Twitter Follower

Our current ask

In this diverse world we live in, there is an increased need to explore what it means to be inclusive. We feel now, more than ever, that it is important to provide space, place and opportunity for all to access and be able to contribute and participate in our programmes and offer. We are constantly pushing the boundaries with a wish to understand 'what does it mean to feel included?'

With your help, we want to continue to explore new ways for Watershed to remain open and enable access for all.

Please continue with us in making this possible.

"We design our programmes to have local, national and global impact. Our open approach and accessible venue ensure people from all backgrounds feel welcome. By providing the space and opportunity for different worlds to meet, Watershed plays an active role in strengthening the aspiration and the connections of the local ecology."

**Clare Reddington,
CEO, Watershed**



Thank you

Since we launched our individual giving programme in 2015, just over 2879 of you have said 'yes' to supporting us and we've received a total of 5939 gifts from you – our loyal audience and friends. We just can't say thank you enough.

But, what does this mean in reality?

Your gifts translate for us as a 'Yes, we believe in you and what you're trying to achieve – go for it!' And in today's world, with increased cuts in public funding and more and more arts organisations looking to Trusts and Foundations for support, your individual gifts give us the flexibility and confidence to invest in what we, together, feel is important.

So often we are restricted in our next steps as we need to align our mission and vision with others' aims and objectives. Your trust in us enables us to have the freedom to explore, take risks and at the same time create a more open and accessible environment for all to contribute to and participate in.

Thank you!

With warmest wishes from us all,



**Lottie Donovan,
Head of Development**

Photos by:

Paul Blakemore, Jon Aitken, Jon Craig, Roseanna Dias, Jasmine Thompson, Jack Offord.

“Watershed are setting a precedence here: they are saying everyone should be able to see a film at their local cinema, they are saying they will put time and resources into making you as comfortable as possible, they are saying you belong here as much as anyone else, they are saying you are entitled to this space.”

Artist Raquel Meseguer in a [blog](#) about her experience of horizontal cinema viewing at Watershed.

Audience/customer reactions to Raquel's blog...

“Really enjoyed reading this. As a wheelchair user @wshed is one of the most welcoming, wonderful, unassumingly accessible cinema and arts spaces I have been too. I love this place”

Watershed Twitter follower

“On Weds I was horrified to read that a lack of properly equipped accessible loos is forcing people into horrible surgeries and excluding others from society. A very welcome contrast is today's read on how @wshed are taking steps to simply and thoughtfully include everybody.”

Watershed Twitter follower



watershed.co.uk

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Film Forever



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

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1 Canons Road Bristol BS1 5TX