

Activities & Achievements

WATERSHED

"Watershed are setting a precedence here...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.

[Read more here](#)



Bristol's Watershed

Watershed opened on 7th June 1982 in the first floor of two refurbished Grade II listed dockside sheds on Bristol's historic harbourside - the same year saw the launch of Channel 4, the Commodore 64 and Sony's first CD player.

Watershed opened as Britain's first Media Centre, championing independent media creativity and emergent art forms. It has held to those founding principles of open access, cultural diversity and innovation, forging an international reputation for developing audiences, ideas and talent.

"Watershed has been a beacon for film and the arts more generally. It has been consistently ahead of the pack in the way it meets the needs of audiences and has delivered real benefit not just to Bristol and the South West but to the UK's creative economy as a whole." **Lord Puttnam of Queensgate, CBE**

Since 1999, the original focus on film and photography has developed to embrace cultural and technical change enabled by digital technologies. Working with Bristol-based companies and individuals from the local creative cluster, and researchers from University of Bristol and University of the West of England, Watershed has become a pioneer in producing digital creativity collaborations crossing cultural, commercial and academic sectors.

“Watershed is a prime example of a highly connected, flexible, porous piece of cultural and creative infrastructure. 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. This is because it has developed organically over the years to become totally embedded in place.”

UK Creative Economy Programme





In 2007 Watershed purchased the headlease on the buildings which house it - known as E and W Sheds. This enabled significant expansion and in 2008 we launched the Pervasive Media Studio - a research space which brings together a network of over 200 artists, creative companies, technologists and academics working on emergent ideas, experiences and applications in digital media with both cultural and commercial potentials. This multi-disciplinary lab is a leading international hub for creative technologies embracing collaboration, research, innovation, incubation, production and teaching.

It is a formal partnership between Watershed, University of the West of England and University of Bristol.

“Over the decades everything about film and media has changed and Watershed has always kept ahead of the wave, especially when it came to embracing the game-shifting digital technologies. It’s been truly inspiring to see Watershed thrive and excite people.”

**David Sproxton, Executive Chairman,
Aardman Animations**



Who we are & what we do

“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

Our venue

In the building there are three cinemas, a flexible events/festivals suite of three interlinked rooms, the Pervasive Media Studio, the linked Studio 5 workspace for freelance creatives and micro companies, workspace for young people, and a large café/bar. All areas are fully accessible. Watershed delivers a diverse cultural programme of films, events, festivals, artist commissions, workshops and conferences with audiences and participation at the heart of the organisation.

We are distinctive in our attitude to curation and programming innovating at the intersection of art, technology and society: playfulness, relevance and care are key. Watershed takes a hands-on approach to nurturing and developing talent. We respond to emerging opportunities and constantly develop new mechanisms to support the people we work with. We create environments where artists and creative companies work collaboratively with technologists and academics to explore new genres and experiences at the intersection of creativity and

computing. We work with schools, school leavers, universities, graduates and early career artists to support people in discovering and developing their creativity. We are rooted in Bristol, but place no boundaries on the collective imagination of our collaborators. We actively build and leverage creative networks, believing diversity of people, experience and culture is an asset. Watershed plays a vital hub and connecting role in the city region's cultural and creative economy, creating pathways to new knowledge and new practice.



“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





Key Achievements

Watershed is a major contributor to the creative and cultural landscape of Bristol. It commands respect as an innovator which actively opens doors to participation and connects people from diverse communities bridging culture and commerce, art and technology.

Watershed is one of the leading UK independent cultural cinemas dedicated to screening the broad range and diversity of UK independent and world film. We are the lead organisation for the Film Hub South West one of 8 regional Film Hubs which make up the BFI's Film Audience Network developing audiences and filmmaking talent across the regions and nations.

“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

2018 / 2019 Cultural Cinema at
Watershed Facts and Figures

29,913

young people aged 24 & under
attended our overall offer

3,631

screenings of 420 titles
from 53 countries

157,000

total annual admissions

939

screenings of
87 British
Independent titles.

16,439

film event beneficiaries

229 Q&A's
& talks



Watershed develops and hosts a diverse range of film festivals and events throughout the year including Cinema Rediscovered a festival showcasing the rich history of film and platforming new restorations, contemporary classics and film print rarities. We are a partner with Bristol City Council in developing and promoting the city's status as UNESCO City of Film.

Partnerships are key to Watershed's film cultural programme which include collaborations with St George's and Colston Hall in Bristol to present Filmic an exploration of the creative connections between film and music, Encounters Festival and BFI NETWORK Talent Executive to showcase new and emerging

filmmaking talent and Come the Revolution a Black programming collective to develop audiences. The screening of a film is the springboard to a deeper discussion with audiences and we provide a range of opportunities through our Conversations About Cinema strand for debate and discussion.

“Cannes! Bologna! Bristol! The only places to have screened the new ravishing restoration of Billy Wilder’s The Apartment so far. #CineRedis18’s screening tonight was tremendous. Bravo @CineRedis @wshed”

Audience Comment via Twitter

Pervasive Media Studio at Watershed

In 2008, Watershed launched the Pervasive Media Studio – an arts and technology research space designed to develop talent and new ideas in the cultural and creative economy.

By co-locating a network of artists, creative companies, technologists and academics, we support the exploration of ideas, experiences and applications over time. Today, the Pervasive Media Studio has an international reputation for collaborations crossing cultural, commercial and academic sectors. We are a collaboration with University of the West of England and University of Bristol, and have a thriving community of artists, creatives, academics, technologists, start-ups and industry, exploring early-stage ideas in the sphere of creative technology.

“I’m two months into an experience that is significantly changing my life.”

Aiden Moesby, Artist in Residence at Pervasive Media Studio.



We offer fixed desk space and hot desking, meeting space and event space. Over ten years we have been home to hundreds of residents and thousands of others have passed through, sharing learning, ideas and questions to build a thriving network of practice.

“As a business and entrepreneur I fully appreciate everything that Watershed offers Bristol. Watershed is playful; it encourages expansive thinking and curiosity. Great products and experiences are built by teams with diverse backgrounds, skills, knowledge. This value is at the heart of Watershed and you see it whenever you engage with them.”

Sammy Payne,
Open Bionics

The Pervasive Media Studio is supporting a growing community with 165 residents and an active alumni of 450 creatives. Since 2008 we have supported:

102

cultural and creative businesses

10

Universities to collaborate with us on long term programmes

103

residents to work internationally

Producing new experiences:

Layered Realities Weekend 5G Showcase

In March 2018, Watershed and the Smart Internet Lab of the University of Bristol produced Layered Realities, a series of public space commissions exploring 5G technologies which was the world's first urban testbed for public users of 5G.

We asked artists and creatives to really test the capability and potential of 5G. In response they created brilliant, meaningful experiences ranging from **spectacular 3D-like projections**, to a **gorgeous virtual reality dance piece**, a **guided tour** on which you take a walk through time, and a **programme of critical talks**.

Over 3000 people came to experience the work. This was testament not only to the great teams at Watershed, We The Curious and the University of Bristol, 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!

"I'm really proud to live in Bristol actually, and the fact that we are leading the way in terms of technology and creativity."

Audience member

"It makes me understand what that technology can do and why it's exciting for positive reasons."

Audience member





Showcasing and nurturing new talent

“It feels unreal that my desire to see St Pauls moving forward in a positive direction has come to fruition.”

Community activist and teacher Sauda Kyalambuka (African Voices Forum),
Beyond Boundaries participant

“We would not be the cinema we are today without Hub support.”

Exeter Phoenix

As the lead organisation for Film Hub South West, Watershed offers access to training, funding and networking opportunities to some 140 Hub members including cinemas, mixed art venues and festivals. Our new rolling fund, Beyond Boundaries, also supports creative practitioners (with a focus on under-represented groups) to make their ideas reality – from building a brand to reaching new audiences; working towards a more inclusive industry and cinema experience.



DepicT!, Watershed's international short film competition as part of Bristol's Encounters Festival also connects fresh voices from across the globe with the film industry with the support of leading industry partners including BAFTA, BFI NETWORK, Channel 4, Aardman Animations and The Royal Photographic Society.

Through the Hub Watershed provides vital support to creative talent at the start of their filmmaking career, recognising the quality and value of difference and that great stories and talent can come from anywhere.

We are home to one of ten Talent Executives appointed throughout England as part of a major BFI NETWORK initiative to discover new voices, nurture new talent in filmmaking and support creative networks across the South West regional activity.

"It's the first time I have attended a foreign festival and I had a unique and incredible experience. I have overcome the geographical and language barriers between our countries, and as a result I realise that there are no barriers."

DepicT! Award winner
Leonid Grigurko, Russia

**“Rife isn’t just a job,
it’s a community
brimming with
opportunity
and positivity”**

**Mikael Techane,
Rife Content Creator 2018**

Rife is an online Magazine hosted by Watershed that covers the stories that matter to young people. Everything we publish is created by under 24s, because we believe their voices should be part of the media landscape so it is relevant and representative.

“In 2015 Rife helped me find my voice...then encouraged me to use it. I felt valid, and began to understand that what I had to say was important. And only a few years later - I’m writing films and TV shows!”

Yero Tim-Bui,
Rife Content Creator 2015

Rife changes lives. Over the past 4 years, 8 cohorts of young Content Creators have undertaken 6-month paid placements at Rife. It’s as much a professional development programme as it is a magazine. With structured support, our Content Creators make personal essays, opinion pieces, interviews, articles, videos and photos, on topics they feel passionate about and that resonate with other under 24s. By the end of their 6-months, they’ve produced an impressive portfolio of online content to kickstart their creative careers.

They also gain a whole new set of transferable skills, a new perspective on the creative industries, bags of confidence and a network of contacts that are invaluable as they head into the future. Our Alumni have gone on to gain commissions, undertake academic study, found their own creative startups and gain employment with companies that include amongst others The Guardian, Gal-dem, Watershed, Channel 4 & Random Acts, BBC (TV & Radio), the British Film Institute, Bristol Post, Bristol 24/7, The Metro, the Royal Shakespeare Company, Rising Arts Agency, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Soho Theatre and more!



Rife isn't just about the young people we work with at the magazine - or even our growing audiences online. It is also about working with groups of young people across the city to co-create films, articles, and events to amplify their stories and opinions too. For a sense of the quality and importance of these stories, take a look at [In Our Hands](#). A short film made by an all-female team of under 24s, exploring equality and how women can live freely in today's society.

"Without sounding super corny Rife has changed my entire professional practise! It was my first creative job in the sector, and threw up so many incredible opportunities. It was a work environment that encouraged me to be playful, experimental, and take risks; something very rare in this industry."

Jasmine Thompson, Content Creator 2016

"The Rife internship was an integral first step in my career, and had I not done it, I absolutely don't believe I would be doing the job I am now, working as Deputy Editor for Bristol24/7."

Jess Connett, Content Creator 2014

660,000

visitors to Rife magazine online in the last 5 years, viewing 1.13 million pages.

30

content creators

Rife has paid and trained over 30 content creators who all now work in the creative industries, where they offer fresh ideas that are creating change.

43

students

In the last two years, we've hosted 43 work experience students from 19 different schools across Bristol at Rife's HQ, Watershed.

8,000

young people

We've reached over 8,000 young people through workshops and events that have been created in partnership with schools and youth organisations and run by Rife peer mentors.

Residencies

Watershed is passionate about supporting ambitious creative practitioners to get ideas off the ground. Every year, we invite applications to our funded Residency Programme. Through an open call, we seek ideas that blend creativity and technology, **food futures, bionic limbs** and **theatre to makes us think differently**, are just some of the brilliant projects we have supported.

The 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



Residencies are based at the Pervasive Media Studio, where participants become part of our growing community of artists, creative companies, engineers, academics, scientists, technologists and tinkerers, who work on new and emerging ideas.

Guided through a gently structured process, we encourage practitioners to research and shape their ideas so by the end of the residency, they have a great story about the journey they've been on, some interesting experiments and really well-formed ideas to take forwards.

Growing up as a Deaf person in a hearing world, Jonny Cotsen's work explores communication between Deaf and hearing people. Through joining the Residency Programme Johnny developed an idea to create a 'Hearing Hearing Aid' (HHA) a device that challenges hearing people to really think about what it means to listen. It's a whole new direction for his practice and it is already exciting funders and audiences alike.

"Watershed gave me an opportunity to explore my artistic development. Not only have I had excellent mentoring which helped me to discover a new direction in my practice but I felt I was welcomed in a community that gave me a lot of comfort and confidence.

I believe networking, talking, playing and having fun is absolutely the core of making good exciting work. Even though my funded Residency has now ended, I continue to be part of the Pervasive Media Studio community, a community that is supporting me in the next phase of my practice."

Jonny Cotsen
Artist in Residence

Research and Development

Since 2008 Watershed and the Pervasive Media Studio has been designing and delivering new R&D methodologies to the creative sector.

Working closely with the Creative Economy Unit at UWE Bristol and other Universities, our programmes explore the potential of new technologies to produce new products, experiences and jobs. Having spent ten years taking ideas to prototype through the Sandbox methodology, we have evolved our methods to include a focus on inclusive innovation, place-making and knowledge production. With £10m+ funding from Research England and the Arts and Humanities Research Council we have initiated two major new projects. The South West Creative Technology Network and Bristol+Bath Creative R&D cluster will explore themes like Immersion, Automation, Data and Performance through fellowships, prototyping and talent development.

"Play Sandbox has been one of the best funded projects I've ever been involved with. A genuinely progressive partnership between industry and academia, it combines meaningful financing, sensitive support and input, and a laser focus on good commercial product design. It has enabled me to create a real momentum and excitement around my new business from industry partners and investors alike."

Alex Fleetwood, Sensible Object



"It is the heart of the ecosystem - the UK lead of virtual reality and augmented reality working alongside other key players such as BBC, Aardman and the Universities."

Tom Fleming, Conversations

Art + Technology exploring the Future City



“It’s like having a super change maker that has 15 different super powers... experimenting does not feel lonely anymore, learning from mistakes does not feel like a one-woman struggle, and thinking different feels like a challenging mist of joy!” Leticia Lozano, Mexico City

In 2013 Watershed launched Playable City as a creative programme exploring the impact of digital technologies in the future city. Playable City began as a people-centred counterpoint to the Smart City concept, where serendipity, hospitality and openness are key. Playable City is active across five continents in cities as diverse as Recife, Bristol, Lagos and Tokyo – in each place it has created a connected innovative community of interest exploring their own city’s issues and opportunities. Previous winners of The Playable City Award have won Public Art and Design Awards, spawned successful businesses and our work has now generated a global talent development process, Creative Producers International, to take the work to a new level.

Creative Producers International is our global talent development programme inspired by the need to find and work with like-minded practitioners in different cities across the world.

Currently we are working with a group of fifteen exceptional international Creative Producers, from a range of different backgrounds, disciplines and perspectives, who bring with them a huge amount of varied experience. Through the Creative Producers International we want to develop true change makers, who engage with their own creative communities, citizens and city authorities, and show how the art sector can be empowered to be at the heart of decision making in our cities.

To date Playable City has reached over 1.1million people across 5 continents and work with 74 international partners in 9 cities.

“Bristol marries new technology and creativity with its industrial heritage – Watershed reflects the city’s reputation as a media capital.” The Guardian

How we are governed, managed and funded

Watershed is structured as a group of three companies, the parent company Watershed Arts Trust Ltd which is a registered charity and two wholly owned subsidiaries, Watershed Trading Ltd and Watershed Ventures CIC. The Arts Trust delivers the core programme, Watershed Trading Ltd manages hospitality and Watershed Ventures is a CIC with a mission to support enterprise in the creative economy.

Watershed's governance structure reflects and supports the Group structure and its organisational core values, culture and needs. It provides the management capacity and expertise to deliver Watershed's overall aims and objectives.

The Board, which administers the Charity, meets 5 times a year and is chaired by James Touzel. The Executive Team is led by the CEO, Clare Reddington who reports to the Chair of Watershed James Touzel. Watershed delivers consistently high quality cultural impact, at scale and with depth of engagement.

“Watershed is the beating heart of Bristol”

**Stephen Fear
Entrepreneur**

Watershed provides excellent value for money with a total income of £5.9 million in 2017/18 leveraged on arts revenue funding of £849,249 (Arts Council England National Portfolio and Bristol City Council Key Arts Provider Grant in Aid). Watershed is a resilient organisation which constantly develops as the operating environment develops.

It benefits from three year investment agreements with Arts Council England and Bristol City Council. Watershed has 101 full time equivalent staff and works with another 100 associates and

collaborators at any one time. Watershed holds the unexpired term of a 100 years on the head lease to E&W Sheds and occupies 60% with 40% let producing income for Watershed. Through active building management we have a mix of independent tenants and we work with them to animate the adjacent public spaces to create a distinctive and welcoming destination at the gateway to Harbourside.

Watershed is a Registered Charity No 284188 and a Social Enterprise Mark Holder.

Inclusive

We are people led. We listen to and engage with the broadest range of people.

Open & Honest:

We provide a culture and environment that is trusting, trusted and trustworthy.

Celebratory

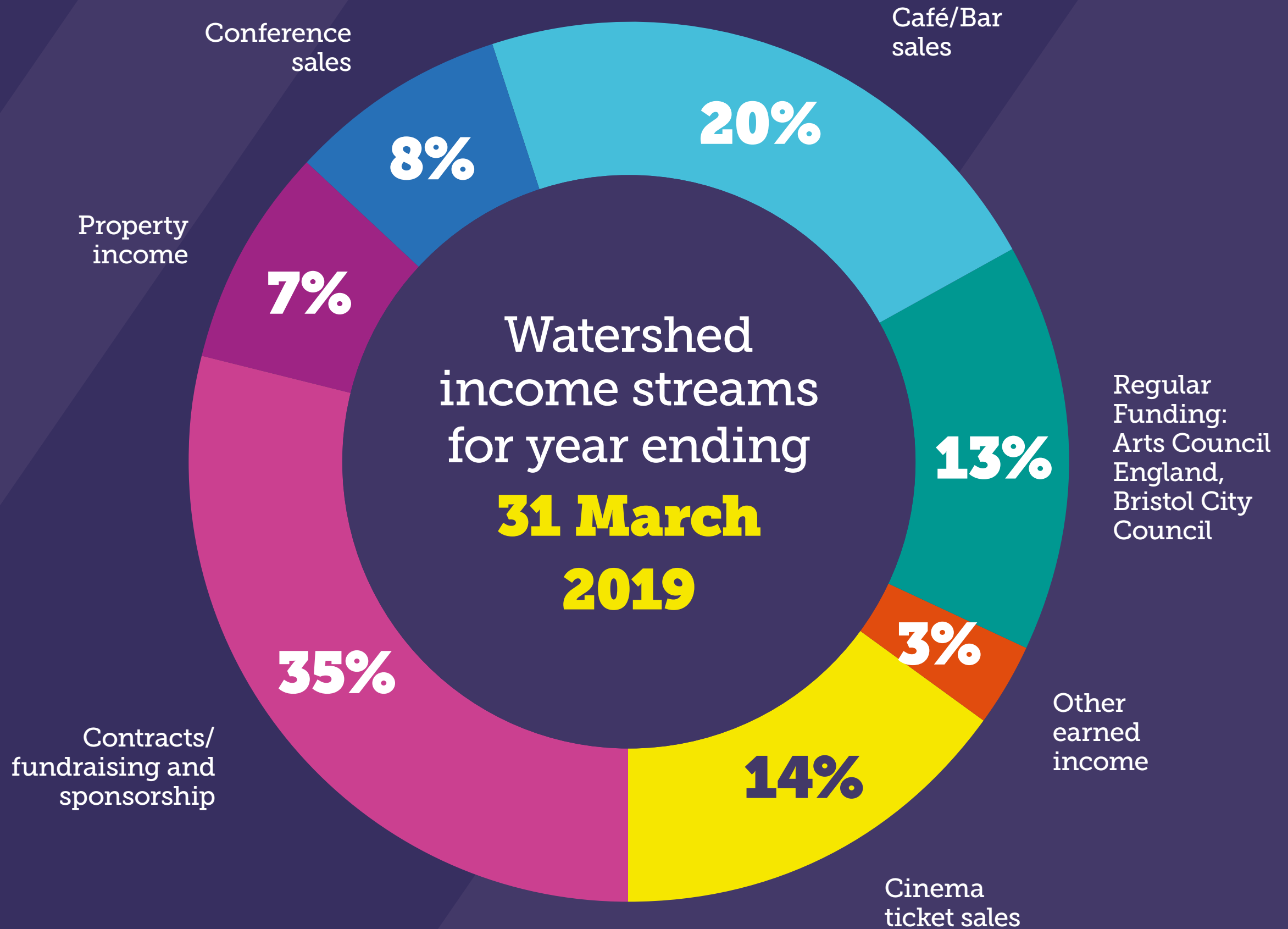
We celebrate culture, creativity and wonder.

Entrepreneurial

We are inventive, try new ideas, experiment, learn and share.

Make things Happen

We approach opportunity and challenge creatively, collaboratively and with a can do attitude.



"It is one of Bristol's most popular and well-loved venues, with an exceptionally large cross-section of the city using it."

Bristol Post

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

Audience member

"Watershed has made an enormous contribution to my career so far. The PM Studio is like a permanent extension of what Watershed offers: professional and creative support, introductions to collaborators and funders."

Hazel Grian, writer/director

"The Watershed was central to my understanding of the history and possibilities of cinema. Without it I wouldn't have been inspired to produce the films that I have made, and for that I am incredibly grateful."

Iain Canning, producer of
The King's Speech and Shame

"An inspirational hit of Culture."

Sunday Times

watershed.co.uk



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ENGLAND**

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