



## Activity & Achievements



Stormy Shed.  
Photography by Toby Farrow



Electric December Ambassadors.  
Photography by Kirsty Mackay



danceroom Spectroscopy.  
Photography by Paul Blakemore

### Introduction

**'Watershed is one of the most culturally upbeat and lively venues in the UK.'**

*Mark Kermode, Journalist /Film Critic*

Watershed opened on 7<sup>th</sup> 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 the 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 Computer Science and University of the West of England Arts & Creative Industries, 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. 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, and in 2012 became the home for REACT, one of four UK creative economy hubs funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. REACT extends the partnership to include the Universities of Bath, Cardiff and Exeter.

**'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.'**

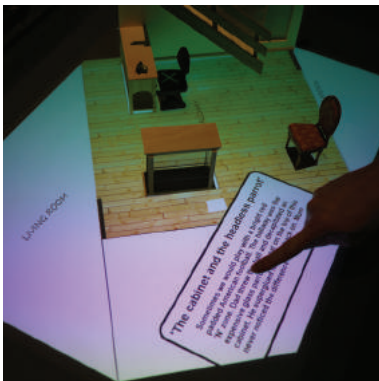
*David Sproxton, Executive Chairman, Aardman Animations*



Watershed's 30th Birthday Celebrations  
June 2012. Photography by Toby Farrow



BAFTA Preview of Shame with Producer  
Q&A. Photography by Benjie Croce



Living Film Set  
by Analogue, part of Theatre Sandbox 2010



BikeTAG Play Test: Colour Keepers by artists  
Tine Bech, Bang & Lee and Julian Sykes.  
Photography Max McClure© 2013

## Who we are and what we do

With the integration of digital technologies into our creative practice, we gained a reputation as a digital innovator, but this is only a small part of Watershed's story. We have come to understand how much we value our role as a producer and developer of talent; the high degree to which collaboration and innovation have become central to our practice; and perhaps most importantly that Watershed has a key role to play within a broader creative ecology, which we have helped build, but which ultimately sustains us.'

*Dick Penny, Watershed MD introduction to Producing the Future*

In the building there are three cinemas, a large Café/Bar, flexible conference and events spaces and the Pervasive Media Studio. 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 to our approach.

Watershed takes a hands-on approach to nurturing and developing talent. We respond to emergent opportunity and constantly develop new mechanisms to support the people we work with.

We produce 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, young people out of school, universities, new 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.

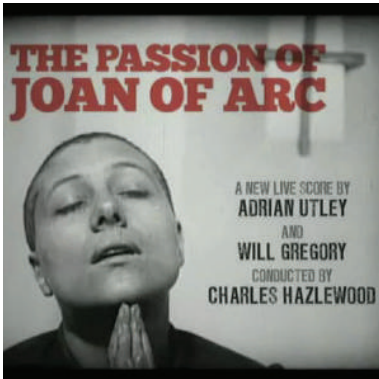
**'Watershed epitomises the strength and diversity of the UK's creative industries. At once an innovator, a catalyst for cross media collaboration, and an environment for talent to develop, be challenged and flourish. For 30 years Watershed has held a unique place in the UK's cultural, technological 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, DCMS*





*Lovers Rock Director's Q&A, Black History Month. Photography by Benjie Croce*



*The Passion of Joan of Arc world premiere of a new musical score*



*Mail, Maps, Motion. Photography by Graham Brown, Plaster*



*Future Producers. Photography by Hannah Higginson*

## 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.

### Leading Independent Cinema

Watershed is the lead organisation for one of the nine Film Hubs around the UK that make up the BFI Film Audience Network (BFI FAN), a ground-breaking initiative developed by the BFI to enable organisations and film experts in the independent cultural exhibition sector to work in partnership to boost film audiences across the UK for specialised and independent British film. Watershed is also a recipient of the Europa Cinemas Entrepreneur of the Year Award, selected from among the 1,000 cinemas that belong to the network in over 500 cities across Europe. This reflects the adventurous approach that Watershed has taken to developing new ways of connecting with its audiences and reaching out towards a wider public.

*'We didn't just watch a film, we shared an emotional, cinematic and personal journey together. Quite frankly cinema-going will never be the same again.'*

*Roger Griffith, Ujima Radio on watching 12 Year's A Slave at Watershed.*

### Pioneering new music and film

Watershed has been a pioneer in developing performance of live music/ film collaborations. We commissioned musicians Adrian Utley (Portishead) and Will Gregory (Goldfrapp) to create a new score for the classic silent film, 'The Passion of Joan of Arc' (Dir: Carl Theodor Dreyer 1928 France). The world première performance took place at Colston Hall, Bristol, and then toured to London Southbank & All Tomorrow's Parties Alexandra Palace, Krakow Opera House and New York's Lincoln Center.

*'I can't really imagine having developed this interest as fully as I have, without Watershed.'* Adrian Utley, Portishead

### Producing new experiences

As part of London 2012, Watershed curated a spectacular evening of one-off commissions and collaborations blending cutting-edge music and film including Mail Maps and Motion, a commission which brought together Joanie Lemerrier from international projection experts AntiVJ with Adrian Utley from acclaimed band Portishead. The programme, which was conducted by Charles Hazlewood, saw a host of world-renowned musicians and artists perform live to 3,000 people in one of Bristol's most iconic buildings - The Digby Wyatt Building at Temple Meads.

*'Moving to the PM studio was the starting point for the label AntiVJ and moved it from a small one person freelance activity to an international collective with five visual artists, a sound composer and a producer, delivering large scale projects around the world, from South Korea to Beijing, Montreal, NYC, and Mexico City. The studio is the one space / creative hub that makes me come back to the UK.'*

*Joanie Lemerrier*

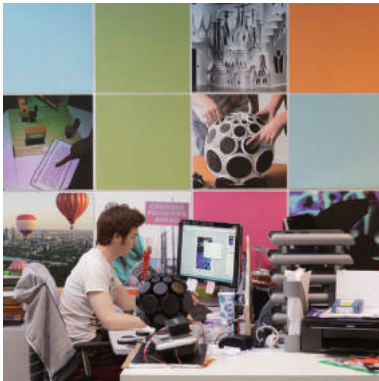
### Nurturing young talent

Watershed works with young people to spark their imaginations and develop their ideas, identities and relationships as people, professionals and citizens of the world. Future Producers is an annual talent development programme for 18 – 25 year olds. Mentored by industry professionals, the young people lead on the design and delivery of Watershed programmes, developing the skills and competencies associated with being a producer in the cultural and arts sector.

*'Thank you for this opportunity you have completely cemented my plans to pursue a career in film'. Future Producer Sophie Shippen*



DepicT! 2012 Winner.  
The Fat Cat by Mole Hill



Pervasive Media Studio.  
Photography by Sam Frost



Theatre Jukebox  
by Stand and Stare



Watershed's 30th Birthday Celebrations  
June 2012. Photography by Toby Farrow

## Showcasing new talent

DepicT! is Watershed's high-profile online micro short film competition for new and emerging creative talent. The concept is simple – come up with a compelling, imaginative idea and distil it into 90 seconds. The goal is to uncover distinctive voices and new creative talent and to offer them a prime industry platform at Encounters Short Film and Animation Festival, the UK gateway to the world's foremost short film and animation awards, including the Academy Awards®, BAFTA, Cartoon D'Or and the European Film Awards. We work with partners to give films maximum exposure including Channel 4, BBC Big Screens, Royal Photographic Society, cinema tours and international showcases with British Council support.

**'DepicT! is the perfect creative challenge. 90 seconds to do your best means its not some daunting shoot but a manageable task that forces your screen writing and editing skills to be super sharp.'** *DepicT! 2013 Winner Ninian Doff*

## Graduate and new talent residencies

We offer a unique opportunity for recent graduates, or people starting out in their careers, to develop an original idea with the support of the Pervasive Media Studio producers and collaborators. A recent success is Adam Place who joined the Studio on a residency in 2010 to develop his idea for a revolutionary new electronic instrument. nuDesine has now launched the Alphashere in China, Japan, USA and Europe.

**'The Studio was the first real break to making something happen.'**  
*Adam Place, nuDesine Alphashere*

## Artist residencies

Watershed hosts a number of Artists Residencies each year. Residencies are based at the Pervasive Media Studio and offer practitioners' time to explore, share and make new work. Past residents have come from varied disciplines including craft, choreography, magic, music, visual arts, robotics, theatre and many more. Residencies take place over a structured two-month period, but our support often runs beyond this timeframe: Heidi Hinder is an artist with a focus on jewellery design. In 2010 she received a Craft and Technology Residency to develop Money No Object, an exploration of using human interactions as triggers for digital payments systems. Since completing the residency, which was produced in partnership with the Crafts Council, she has presented at high profile events in both the cultural and the finance sector and secured development funding from the Awesome Foundation, Birmingham City University and Unltd. She continues to be resident in Pervasive Media Studio and is also developing the project with London's V&A Museum.

**"Through Watershed I've met whole networks of people who have opened new doors for me, leading to new avenues for my work. The residency has given me more credibility, created new opportunities and totally changed my career path."**  
*Heidi Hinder*

## Crossing boundaries

Part video game, part art installation, part social experiment, danceroom Spectroscopy fuses 3D imaging with real quantum mechanics to visualise how your own energy field interacts with the hidden atomic world. Theoretical Chemist David Glowacki first joined Pervasive Media Studio in 2011 with an idea to apply mathematical physics to human motion and quickly found two key collaborators through the Studio system. Some years later and his research project has transformed into an interactive educational installation and dance show drawing national and international acclaim. Danceroom Spectroscopy has shown at events around the world, its won the RTS Best Digital Innovation Award and has toured the UK and Europe.

**'Watershed has provided me a unique and vibrant venue in which to interact and collaborate with a wide cross section of skilled people with diverse backgrounds in art, science, and technology. It's rare to find a space that offers the possibility of this range of interaction - a real complement to the university research environment.'** *David Glowacki, Computational Chemist*





*Shadowing: Winner of the 2014 Playable City Award shadowing.cc  
©Toby Farrow Creatives*



*Ghosts in the Garden by Splash & Ripple & Steve Poole, UWE. Part of REACT Heritage Sandbox. Photo: Silicon19 Media.*



*Sky Orchestra, by Luke Jerram, performing over London*



*Give Me Back My Broken Night by Uninvited Guests and Circumstance. Photo by Jenny Rhiannon Davies*

## Sandbox innovation methodology

In 2008, Watershed created and produced Media Sandbox, a funding scheme designed to develop early-stage ideas, without pre-determining their value. With an emphasis on knowledge-sharing through labs, events, blogs and social media, the scheme also offered access to peer support and industry expertise.

**'Theatre Sandbox, the crucible where present and future theatre meet and spark.'**  
*Lyn Gardner, The Guardian*

The Sandbox methodology became the linchpin of REACT, one of four UK Knowledge Exchange Hubs funded by Arts and Humanities Research Council. Themes explored so far are Heritage, Books & Print, Future Docs, Objects and Play. Since Sandbox began the methodology has been shaped and developed into a highly effective open-innovation system that delivers results in a compressed timeframe

**'Confidence comes from working around like-minded people and being given space, enthusiasm and feedback to try out new ideas. Watershed allows you to get things done without compromising your creativity.'**  
*Simon Johnson, Slingshot*

## Art + Technology exploring the Future City

In 2013 Watershed launched Playable City as a creative programme exploring the impact of digital technologies in the future city. The Playable City is a people-centred inflection of the Smart City concept, where serendipity, hospitality and openness are key. It includes an international award - 2013's Hello Lamp Post project was selected from 100 international applicants. It was also shortlisted for the Design Museum's Designs of the Year. Further afield, Playable City Global Labs have been delivered with creatives from South East Asia and Brazil and we have presented across the world, including showcasing at Future Everything Manchester, SXSW Austin Texas, and World Design Day Bilbao.

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

## Alumni support and mentoring

A key foundation of Watershed's success in developing talent and ideas is the responsive approach to supporting both talent and idea over extended time periods. This has delivered a steady pipeline of talent and successful innovation. It has also built a highly connected alumni group to help support and mentor the next wave of talent and ideas.

**'I found Watershed an incredibly open environment – winning the Bursary was a sea change for me – both in terms of longer term commission that I could spend time creating, and also the space for dialogue and debate I found there. The PM Studio has given me space for new collaborations – and it has also been an incredible advocate for my work.'**  
*Duncan Speakman, artist*

**'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. 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. So what is Watershed's particular creative x-factor, its galvanising magic?... The interest it takes in each person's creative journey.'**  
*Luke Jerram, inventor, researcher, scientist, artist*



Watershed.  
Photography by Geoff Causton



Europa Cinema of the Year Award



Hello Lamp Post by PAN Studio,  
Winner of the 2013 Playable City Award



Film Nation Event at Watershed

## How we are governed, managed and funded

Watershed Arts Trust Ltd is a registered charity, governed by a Board of Trustees with 12 members led by Chair, James Touzel. Watershed has two wholly owned subsidiary companies and operates as a group with common values and brand. Each company has specialist expertise and responsibility.

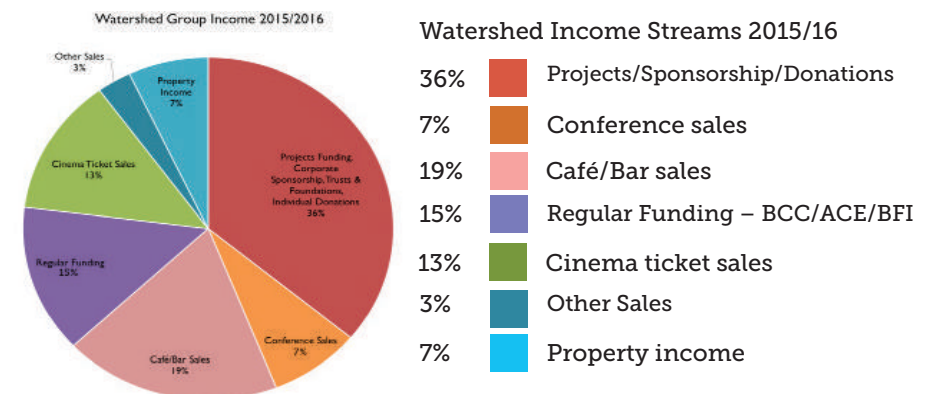
Watershed Arts Trust leads on public engagement through exhibition, festivals and work with young people; Watershed Ventures CIC manages the Pervasive Media Studio and leads on innovation and developing talented people; Watershed Trading Ltd manages the catering and conference services. Each presents a distinct offer to target communities of interest creating a range of routes into engagement with Watershed.

The executive team is led by the Managing Director, Dick Penny MBE, who reports to the Chair of Watershed. The team includes leading specialists in Clare Reddington, Creative Director and Mark Cosgrove, Cinema Curator.

Watershed delivers consistently high quality cultural impact, at scale and with depth of engagement. It provides excellent value for money with a total income of £5.9 million in 2015/16 leveraged on arts revenue funding of £926,250 (Arts Council England National Portfolio, Bristol City Council Key Arts Provider & British Film Institute 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 88 full time equivalent staff and works with another 100 associates and collaborators at any one time.

Watershed holds a 110 year headlease on E&W Sheds – Watershed 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 the beating heart of Bristol'**  
Stephen Fear, Entrepreneur

Watershed is a Social Enterprise, an Investor In People and Charity No 284188. Watershed is driven by the following shared values:  
People Led | Entrepreneurial | Make Things Work | Open & Honest | Celebratory





Content creators for Rife Magazine Bristol's youth-led online platform, [rifemagazine.co.uk](http://rifemagazine.co.uk)



Digital Dishes participants – part of the Lifelong Learning Programme Grundtvig Workshops. Photography by Barney Haywood



Audience at Lover's Rock Preview part of Black History Month. Photography by Benjie Croce



Crafts Council Artist Residency Heidi Hinder. Photography by Tas Kyprianou

**'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*

## Beneficiaries

During 2015/2016 the headline statistics were:

- Total visitors to Watershed for all purposes 413,404
- Paid admissions for screenings, talks and events 159,180
- People engaging with projects beyond Watershed 118,799
- Loyalty Card scheme members 19,354
- Young people attending events 27,387
- Artists and creatives supported 311
- Cultural and community organisations collaborating on projects 50
- University students engaged in study modules 41
- Academics collaborating on research projects 102
- Businesses collaborating on projects 75
- Website visitors 1,569,646

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

*Audience member*

**'You've given me so many opportunities...Everything I've written on my UCAS form has happened through Watershed.'**

*Tessa aged 18*

**'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. Looking forward to another extraordinary 30 years.'**

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

**'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*

## Pervasive Media Studio at Watershed

Talent and ideas are the vital raw materials for Watershed's public programme and for the wider cultural and creative economy. The Pervasive Media Studio is the focus for our work with emergent ideas and talent.

**'... the Pervasive Media Studio (at Watershed in Bristol) is one of the places that is most inspirational in this regard. It may even point to what a future university may look like - combining research and practice with an understanding of how to grow spin-out companies, all set within the context of the arts.'**

*Andrew Prescott, Professor of Digital Humanities, King's College London.*

The Studio is supporting a growing community with 140 residents and an active alumni of 221 creatives. Since the launch in 2008 we have supported:

- 92 new cultural and creative businesses
- 9 businesses to trade internationally
- 55 artists to develop work which has shown internationally
- 10 universities to collaborate with us on long term programmes

**'Watershed was actually the main reason I relocated to Bristol... The word I always come back to with Watershed is 'meritocracy'. As an institution it is so removed from the impenetrable workings of the art world. It really does feel open, welcoming and fresh.'**

*Joe Magee, illustrator & filmmaker*