



The Playable City Award 2016

The Challenge

Watershed's Playable City Award® returns for its fourth year, challenging creatives from around the world to produce an idea that puts people and play at the heart of the Future City.

The Theme

We invite you to propose an original idea that responds to the theme of Journeys:

How we get from A to B affects a city's liveability, wellbeing, and economic development. Transport and mobility is a key concern across the globe:

- The average commute time in Lagos is four hours
- The Tokyo railway system carries 40 million people a day
- Every Sunday in Mexico city, 35 miles of street are given over to bikes and pedestrians
- Bristol residents spend an average 127 hours each year stuck in traffic
- More than 600 cities worldwide have a bike-sharing program.

From bus rapid transit systems to driverless cars, city bikes to traffic jams - transport infrastructure and efficiency is a key investment area of the future city. But user experience (how people feel about their journey, how they use the time and how they connect with others) is often overlooked. A Playable City approach to urban journeying will start new conversations, imagine new futures and make new connections - person to person, person to city.

The theme of Journeys is broad, the winning idea may address waiting, navigation or transit; it may connect people on public transport, use city bike infrastructure or explore areas of transition from physical crossings to transport interchanges.

Whilst playable can certainly include fun, play and playfulness, there is also scope for wider interpretation that can include more contemplative, nuanced or provocative ideas. We are interested in the purpose underpinning your proposal, as well as the mechanics of what you hope to create.

The Award

Pushing boundaries and encouraging experimentation, this international award sits at the intersection of art, society and technology. We support distinctive ideas, which make use of existing infrastructure and creative technologies to make cities more liveable, hopeful and collaborative.

Previous Playable City Award winners have captured significant global attention and toured worldwide from Austin to Bordeaux, Singapore to Tokyo, so the winning idea must reflect this ambition for international reach, allowing it to be installed in a wide range of city environments. We will select a strong and surprising winning idea, which will be thoroughly tested in Bristol, and then work with the winning team to design and produce an international tour.

The successful creative(s) will be awarded:

- Research and Development commission of £30,000 (to cover fees, travel, development, delivery and production costs of a publicly tested prototype idea).
- A dedicated producer, and access to a team of judges and advisors, who will support you to develop and test your idea, including help with locations, technical infrastructure, interaction design, testing, public space implementation, budgeting, risk assessment and communication
- PR campaign, including tailored media support to maximise the touring potential of the work

- Access to facilities and connection to a vibrant community of artists and creative technologists in the Pervasive Media Studio at Watershed in Bristol
- Development of touring and future opportunities with Watershed's production team

What will we expect from the Award winner?

- The creation and delivery of a publicly tested prototype/trial in Bristol in early 2017
- Delivery of technical specs, budget, project plan and communication assets to inform and support development of national / international touring.
- A generous and open attitude.
- Participation in events and discussions with public, peers and partners
- Participation in media and communication around the Award
- Time spent in residence at Watershed's Pervasive Media Studio in Bristol

In previous years we have commissioned and produced finished projects to a set date and budget in Bristol before looking for further opportunities. This year's award structure has been refocused so we can collaborate closely with the winning team to create an appropriate and ambitious delivery plan for the UK and abroad.

Who should apply?

We are looking for artists, designers, architects, urbanists, interaction designers, digital performance designers, technologists and creative practitioners who can demonstrate a history of delivering high quality, innovative art practice. Individuals or teams can apply. Applicants can work in any field, but creative uses of technology must be integral to the proposal.

One of the aims of Playable City is to broaden the constituency of people currently engaged in imagining city futures. We therefore particularly welcome applications from Deaf and disabled practitioners and practitioners from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background, who are under-represented in this conversation.

We will consider completely new work, projects that have already been conceptualised and the development of existing areas of work but we will not support work that has already been fully realised or presented professionally.

The successful commission may come from anywhere in the world but it will be essential to spend time in Watershed's Pervasive Media Studio during the making process. Due to the collaborative nature of the award it is essential that the successful candidate can communicate in English with confidence.

We encourage you to look at <http://www.playablecity.com> and find out more about Hello Lamp Post, Shadowing and Urbanimals, our previous Award winners.

How we will assess the ideas

- Quality of concept and fit of project to overall Playable City vision and the theme of Journeys
- Originality of concept
- Audience and accessibility - How engaging is the work?
- Potential to tour internationally
- Track record - a demonstrated history of high quality, innovative creative practice to professional standards
- The skills, ability and experience of the proposed team or artist and their ability to deliver the idea

What we are looking for

We aim to commission work that can be experienced by a wide range of people in multiple public spaces across a city, specifically reaching non-traditional communities and areas that aren't usually considered for this kind of work. Be careful not to design work that can only be accessed by a limited range of people with smartphones, or a limited age demographic (e.g. interactive children's playgrounds) as it can exclude many people. Think about how your work reaches a wide and varied audience.

We encourage you to share with us the experience of the people who will engage with your project. What does it feel like to interact with this idea?

Previous winners displayed distinctive approaches to cities as playable spaces, however we are looking for original ideas, not clones of this work in content or approach.

We are keen to avoid leaving a legacy of unusable technology in public spaces and therefore may question the use of touchscreens, doors, pods, or hubs or any technology that is vulnerable to damage and/or likely to become quickly obsolete.

Timetable

Open for applications: July 12, 2016

Close of applications: 17.00 (GMT) August 31, 2016

Shortlist published: September 27, 2016

Judging and Successful commission announced: Late October 2016

Production of Prototype and testing: Early - Mid 2017

Potential Tour: 2017 - 2019

How to apply

If you are interested in applying for The Playable City Award, please fill in the online form in English giving details of you, your proposal and your practice, as much as is needed. You can find the online form at:

<https://www.playablecity.com/apply-2016/>

We are interested in you and your ideas, not your ability to write applications. If you feel there is a medium of application that would better convey your idea and approach than our online form, please get in touch. Please note: we will not be able to return any parts of your application so please do not submit anything that you would not wish to part with.

Deadline: Please submit applications by 17.00 (GMT) 31 August 2016.

Please give consideration to the fact that we will be unable to dedicate more than half an hour to the shortlisting assessment of each submission.

Shortlisting

All submissions will be carefully considered by Watershed and a shortlist will be announced in September 2016. If shortlisted, the image and text provided in your cover sheet will be made publicly available online to encourage public response and debate. The comments will be reviewed in the final judging process but will not constitute a vote.

Judging

The shortlisted submissions will be judged by a panel of industry judges at the forefront of art, society, and technology. The judging panel will be responsible for deciding the successful award winner. Previous judges included; [Clare Doherty](#) Director Of Situations, [TL Uglow](#), Creative Director for Google's Creative Lab in Sydney and [Richard Roberts](#), Design Manger for Jason Bruges Studio.

About Watershed

Watershed is a cultural venue and producer developing cultural engagement, imagination and talent. We are based in

Bristol, but place no boundaries on our desire to connect with artists and audiences in the wider world. We curate ideas, spaces and talent to enable artistic visions and creative collaborations to flourish. We produce work that cuts across film, media, music, theatre, design, visual art, and the creative and technology sectors. www.watershed.co.uk

About Bristol

“Bristol is creativity and innovation” Lonely Planet 2016

Bristol is the largest city in South West England. It has been an important port and trading centre for 900 years and today it is the cultural and business heart of the West of England with a metro area population of one million.

“The overriding characteristic that seems to unite and influence all others is Bristol’s spirit of innovation, creativity and unorthodoxy.” Yellow Railroad

Bristol has a diverse economy including strengths in advanced manufacturing, high-tech/microelectronics, creative digital industries, media, green technologies and two high performing Universities. It was [European Green Capital in 2016](#). Bristol was recently crowned a Leader in Innovation in the first-ever Huawei UK Smart Cities Index.

<http://visitbristol.co.uk>

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/england/southwest-england/bristol>

<http://www.bristolandbath.co.uk>

Contact

If you have any questions or queries please get in touch:

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