



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

BRISTOL

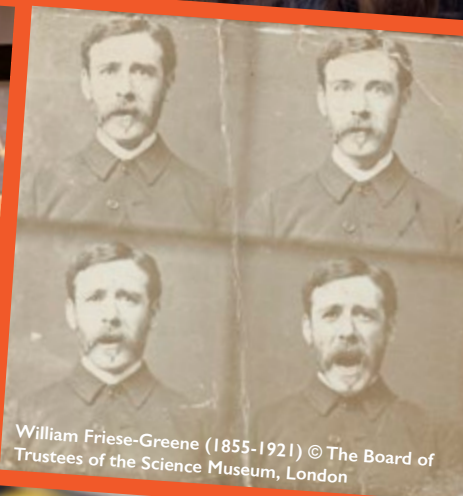


Designated
UNESCO Creative City
in 2017

Bristol UNESCO City of Film UCCN Membership Monitoring Report 2017-21

CONTENTS

- 3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- 4 GENERAL INFORMATION
- 4 CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROGRAMME'S GLOBAL MANAGEMENT
- 5 MAJOR LOCAL AND CITY LEVEL INITIATIVES
- 12 MAJOR INTER-CITY AND INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES
- 15 PROPOSED MID-TERM ACTION PLAN 2021-25
- 19 INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN IN RESPONSE TO AND FOR THE RECOVERY FROM COVID-19





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bristol was designated a UNESCO Creative City of Film in 2017. Since then, our city has been in the global spotlight several times. In 2018 we were the first UK local authority to declare a Climate Emergency and in 2020, following Black Lives Matter protests, a statue of Edward Colston, a 17th Century trader in enslaved Africans, was thrown into the same harbour his ships used to embark from. At the time, I described it as an almost poetic expression of history, but it could have been seen by some as cinematic symbolism. This scene of Bristol's story was seen by millions, and it became even more important than ever that those telling it represented the city's full diversity.



As the local and national film and TV sector is growing at a pace, Bristol's UNESCO City of Film title is now even more significant. The status and its focus on sustainable urban development brings new opportunities to encourage the type of growth that directly benefits people across Bristol's diverse communities. Our refreshed UNESCO City of Film Action Plan focuses on harnessing this growth to enable local training and employment for our most underrepresented citizens. It will connect the moving image sector to our ambitious environmental aims and use the global reach of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to showcase new voices from our city.

The designation brought recognition of Bristol's thriving creative sector and an impetus for collaborative action to benefit our moving image sector. It was a key factor in Bristol's successful bid for a Channel 4 Creative Hub in 2018 and secured national and international creative and educational initiatives. It has encouraged the growth of our filming offer, encompassing world-class TV drama series, natural history programming and award-winning animation feature films.

It brings new opportunities for our vibrant cultural sector charities and businesses, and has helped support our creative freelancers back into work following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bristol has the rare privilege of being in receipt of two UNESCO designations; UNESCO Learning City and UNESCO City of Film. This enables a close alignment across our educational and cultural aims, as well as a strong synergy with UNESCO's ethos and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In recent years, Bristol has led the charge for delivering the SDGs, as the first UK city to complete a Voluntary Local Review in 2019. Fully embedded in our Bristol One City Plan and accompanying policies, the UN SDGs act as a guiding framework for citywide action.

Sustainable urban development is at the heart of Bristol's local and international agendas. Our One City Approach brings together a wide range of public, private and third sector partners within Bristol. They share an aim to make Bristol a fair, healthy and sustainable city. A city of hope and aspiration, where everyone can share in its success. At an international level, we work with the world for local and global benefit, achieving our vision of a stronger, more inclusive city and providing leadership on the global development goals.

Bristol's UNESCO City of Film status is a key component of our international work; strengthening global connections and showcasing our city's creative talent. Our bid for the title was influenced by the desire for worldwide recognition of our cultural heritage and creative industries. By our drive to strengthen our international links through access to a wide-reaching network of cities that all share Bristol's understanding of the crucial role of culture and creativity as a driver for sustainable development.

This Membership Monitoring Report is evidence of the multi-faceted contribution Bristol's moving image sector brings to our cultural offer. It showcases some of the ground-breaking creative work taking place in our city and celebrates Bristol's position as a global leader in moving image production, education and cultural activity.

Marvin Rees,
Mayor of Bristol

2

GENERAL INFORMATION

- 2.1 Name of the city:** Bristol.
- 2.2 Country:** United Kingdom.
- 2.3 Creative field:** Film.
- 2.4 Date of designation:** October 2017.
- 2.5 Date of submission of the current report:** November 2021.
- 2.6 Entity responsible for the report:**
Natalie Moore, Bristol UNESCO City of Film Manager: Bristol City Council.
- 2.7 Previous reports submitted and dates:** This is Bristol's first monitoring report.
- 2.8 Focal points of contact:**
Natalie Moore, Bristol UNESCO City of Film Manager,
Bristol City Council.
- 2.9 Communication officer within the Municipality:** Tara Milne, PR & Marketing Consultant.

- 3.2 Hosting of a previous or future UCCN Annual Conference:** N/A.

- 3.3 Hosting of working or coordination meeting(s):**

Unfortunately COVID-19 travel restrictions prevented Bristol from hosting a 2020 Cities of Film Sub-Network meeting, as intended. Bristol aims to host representatives of fellow UNESCO Cities of Film for a Sub-Network gathering in 2022-23.

- 3.4 Hosting of international conference(s) or meeting(s) on specific issues salient to the UCCN:**

Virtual coordination meetings and training sessions for the launch of Citiesoffilm.org (various during 2019-20).

- 3.5 Financial and/or in-kind support provided to UNESCO in order to strengthen the sustainability of the UCCN in different areas including management, communication and visibility:**

- **2017- present:** Ongoing advocacy, awareness raising and promotional activity of 2 x dedicated posts - Bristol UNESCO City of Film Manager & City of Film Marketing & PR Manager. Raising the visibility of the UCCN title and UNESCO brand through ongoing promotional activity, e.g. signage, brand placement across multiple film event visual materials, advocacy at strategic meetings, inclusion in cultural policy and city investment, travel and tourism campaigns (approx. £45k p/a in financial support).
- **2018 - present:** Leading the ongoing development of Citiesoffilm.org on behalf of the UNESCO Cities of Film sub-network (approx. £2,000 p/a of in-kind support to the Sub-Network).
- **2021:** In kind support to enable a UNESCO UK Commission representative to attend and participate at Bristol Film 2021 event on 21st October 2021. Influencing agenda and developing panel sessions that enhanced visibility of UNESCO in Bristol and supported the roll out of Bristol's UNESCO City of Film Action Plan 2021-25.

3

CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROGRAMME'S GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 Number of UCCN Annual Conferences attended in the last four years:**

The Bristol UNESCO City of Film Focal Point has attended all of the meetings held in person and virtually for the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, including:

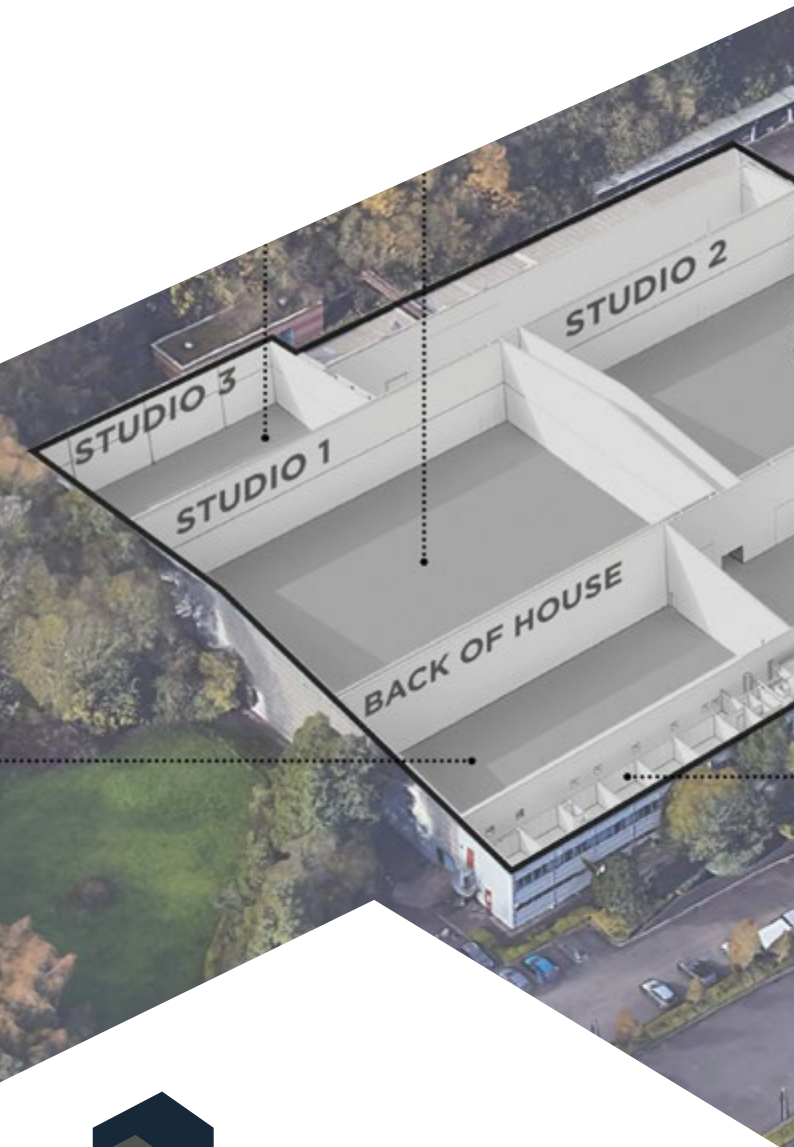
- Krakow/Katowice (Poland) 2018.
- Fabriano (Italy) 2019.
- 'Creative Cities' responses to COVID-19: leveraging the power of culture and creativity (online) 2021.' Bristol, represented by Natalie Moore (Bristol UNESCO City of Film Manager) and Councillor Asher Craig (Deputy Mayor of Bristol), was one of two cities chosen to represent UNESCO Cities of Film at the event; presenting on Bristol's creative response to COVID-19.

3.6 Serving as cluster coordinator or deputy coordinator and period:

Bristol has not yet had an opportunity to serve as cluster coordinator or deputy coordinator to date but would be willing to do so in the future.

3.7 Participation in the evaluation of previous applications and/or of previous Membership Monitoring Reports:

Bristol has participated in all evaluation rounds for new UCCN City of Film applicant cities and Membership Monitoring Reports that we have been eligible to contribute to in 2019, 2020 and 2021.



the Bottle Yard
STUDIOS

MAJOR LOCAL AND CITY LEVEL INITIATIVES

4.1 Film & TV Sector Investment

Expansion of The Bottle Yard Studios

Located in Hengrove, South Bristol, The Bottle Yard Studios is the largest film and TV production facility in the West of England. Since opening in 2010, the Bristol City Council initiative has transformed a disused industrial site into a major creative industries hub. The Studios are set to expand in 2022 following £11.8m investment by the West of England Combined Authority.

The expansion includes conversion of industrial property at Hawkfield Business Park, located less than half a mile from the main Bottle Yard site, into three new stages measuring 20,000 sq ft, 16,000 sq ft and 7,000 sq ft, complete with ancillary spaces including production offices, prop stores, costume/makeup areas and break out areas. A total of approx. 82,000 sq ft (7,600m²) of floor space will be converted, increasing the number of stages available at The Bottle Yard from eight to 11. Improvement works will also be carried out on existing buildings at the main site.

The project, which aligns with regional priorities set out in the West of England Local Industrial Strategy and Bristol's One City Economic Renewal and Recovery Strategy, is intended to maintain and grow film and TV production in Bristol and the West of England. It is estimated that 1,000 jobs will be created over a ten-year period. A key deliverable of the investment is a Workforce Development Programme which will be complemented by ambitions set out in Section 6.1.1 of this report.



Christopher Walken filming *The Outlaws* at The Bottle Yard Studios © BBC/Amazon Studios



Channel 4 Bristol Creative Hub

Bristol welcomed Channel 4 to its media sector in early 2020 after it was chosen as the location for one of the broadcaster's two new Creative Hubs, following a nationwide pitching process. Bristol's pitch featured input from a diverse group of creative partners who based part of their offer on the commitment to harnessing Channel 4's presence in the city to improve social mobility and help bring a new pipeline of talent into the industry.

Bristol is now home to around 50 Channel 4 staff including key decision makers who support the channel's relationship with the production sector, with a focus on supporting genres strongly represented in the South West, Wales and Midlands. Commissioning departments represented include Drama, Factual and Popular Factual, as well as Creative Diversity, supporting Channel 4's on and off-screen diversity.

Bristol City Council and a working group of diverse TV and film organisations involved in the original pitch to Channel 4 continue to work with the broadcaster to ensure that all sections of Bristol's community can benefit from their presence in the city. In late 2020, four Bristol companies were named as recipients of Channel 4's

new Emerging Indies Fund, which supports independent production companies outside London to grow by providing financial assistance for slate development underpinned by commissioner commitment. Indefinite Films was the only company out of the Fund's 11 core recipients to be selected by Channel 4 Drama commissioning team, whilst Drummer Television was selected under Factual. Discretionary awards were also made to Blak Wave Productions and Proper Job.

In March 2021, Channel 4 Skills held a Bristol virtual Open Day aimed at entry level talent looking to break into the TV industry, with a programme of guest speakers. On 10 Sept 2021, Channel 4 was broadcast on Bristol's Big Screen in Millennium Square all day as part Black to Front, a showcase of Black talent designed to improve representation within the TV industry. Channel 4 News broadcast from Bristol Beacon in front of a live audience as part of the day's programming, featuring Black presenters, actors, writers and experts, contributors, and programme-makers.



4.2 Increasing Access for Diverse Regional Talent

Bristol UNESCO City of Film's inaugural Action Plan (2017-21) set out to increase diversity of local access and engagement with film culture. The City of Film designation provides an important platform to showcase diverse talent and initiatives to increase representation of all kinds within the film and TV sector. Diversity and inclusion is therefore a central focus for Bristol UNESCO City of Film's 2021-2025 Action Plan and an intrinsic part of its advocacy work.

Through progressive, collaborative action, city partners have united under the UNESCO City of Film designation to champion initiatives, businesses and new filmmaking talent that are representative of Bristol's diverse and dynamic communities.

In recent years, new stories, initiatives and networks have developed that aim to redress the balance of

underrepresentation on and off screen, provide better access to skills and education and give a voice to people from Bristol's wide range of community backgrounds. These initiatives are essential to the framework of the city's cultural offer; they enable authentic storytelling that originates from our city and engages national and international audiences in our vibrant cultural heritage.

Examples include:

Blak Wave Productions: Launched in 2019, Blak Wave was spearheaded by Dr Somina 'Mena' Fombo (founder of Black Girl Convention) and Bristol filmmaker Michael Jenkins and is one of the only TV production companies out of Bristol's 140 to be black-owned. The company's mission is to revolutionise what stories are being told and who is telling them, resulting in content that reflects society.

Focusing on factual and drama storytelling, Blak Wave have produced films commissioned by the BBC, Channel 4 and the BFI such as *Home Carnival Queen*, *The Shadow of Slavery* and *Pickney*, all of which respond to global events and reflect the lived experiences of black people.

Cables & Cameras

Now a fully established network and hub for POC (People of Colour) filmmakers and creatives in Bristol, Cables & Cameras provides a platform where filmmakers can discuss, share and debate ideas. Founder Gary Thompson identified the need to link Bristol diverse communities to filmmaking and watching opportunities.

From bi-monthly film nights at the independently led Cube Cinema, to staging a guerilla outdoor film screening at the St Paul's Carnival's 50th anniversary celebrations, the network has gone from strength to strength since beginning three years ago. They have also hosted fringe events at major film festivals and become a key voice in Bristol's independent film community.



Cables & Cameras Black Pyramid Retrospective © R. Thompson

Building on ongoing activity at The Cube, Cables & Cameras produced a weekend takeover of Watershed in September 2021, titled 'Inspired'. The event, supported by Watershed, BFI FAN, BFI Network and BFI South West Academy (awarding funds from the National Lottery), included the sold-out premiere of South West-backed BFI NETWORK short film *Pickney* plus Q&A with writer-director Michael Jenkins and lead actor Ajani Cabey. 69% of Inspired attendees surveyed had never been to Watershed before. 80% felt they were introduced to a new type of film and 73% were inspired to watch more films like the one they have seen. 100% rated their experience of the event as very good/good.

CARGO



CARGO is an independent creative collective producing films and creative resources which illuminate untold stories of the African Diaspora. CARGO's core project is CARGO Classroom, an openly accessible set of education tools distributed in partnership with the National Education Union.

Other projects include The People's Platform augmented reality installation supported by Apache and 8th Wall, and Universalcity.co.uk, an interactive site developed in partnership with the University of Bristol. In 2021, CARGO opened CARGO Loft, a professional studio in central Bristol which is freely accessible to local creatives of African and African Diaspora heritage.

CARGO is led by poet, co-founder and Executive Producer Lawrence Hoo, and co-founder and creative director Charles Golding. It is delivered with the support of Arts Council England and Thresholds.

Creative Workforce for the Future's mission was to make the creative industries as representative as the society in which we live. A pilot programme in 2020 saw 50 SMEs from the Bristol & Bath region supporting trainees aged 18-30 from groups not currently widely represented within the region's creative industries; creatives of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic origin and/or those who identify as having a disadvantaged socio-economic background.

Trainees were given work experience placements across organisations specialising in film, broadcast, digital production, animation and post-production. A key aim was to support creative companies to make their workplaces and working practices more inclusive. A host of Bristol production companies (e.g. Aardman Animations, A Productions, Drummer TV, Calling the Shots and Icon Films) and film festivals (e.g. Encounters & Wildscreen) took part in the programme.

Despite the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, following completion of the programme the entire cohort was successful in securing employment with a variety of local and national creative organisations and businesses.

Participants have gone on to win awards, be published, build solid peer networks and portfolios, make meaningful industry connections, secure commissions, receive intensive mentoring and co-design a support network.

Creative Workforce for the Future was delivered in partnership between Watershed, UWE Bristol, Bristol & Bath Creative R+D, Bristol City Council's Culture & Creative Industries Team, Spike Island, Knowle West Media Centre, The Guild (Bath) and Creative Youth Network. The project was funded by the European Social Fund and the West of England Combined Authority.



4.3 Culture, the SDGs and City Partnerships

A One City Culture Board for Bristol

Launched in June 2020, Bristol's One City Culture Board was established in recognition of the need for a connected approach to protecting and delivering the cultural capital that we hold in Bristol. Our culture underpins everything that we do as a city and will be a key enabler in our work to meet the One City 2050 vision.

The Culture Board works to ensure:

- that the sector as a whole is supported and helped to recover and rebuild following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- that inclusion and increasing diversity are at the core of all activity and at the heart of the culture of each Thematic Board;
- that there is a commitment to breaking down silos between sectors;
- that there is open communication between boards when tackling systemic challenges or maximising opportunities;
- that the Thematic Boards are supported in reviewing and updating the One City Plan on an annual basis, ensuring culture acts as an enabler across the six themes;
- that a representative from the Board participates in the quarterly multi-board sessions enabling a culture of cross-sector working as well as reporting key offers and asks to the City Leaders Group.



Global Goals Centre

The Global Goals Centre is a Bristol-based education charity creating engaging experiences that inspire learning and action on climate and equality in our everyday lives. Inspired by the UN SDGs, the programme takes a multi-partner approach to promote creative experiences and deliver inspiring educational projects that are more likely to lead to sustained behaviour change than information alone.

A key driver of the project is the ambition to build the world's first immersive Visitor and Education Centre in Bristol to maximise public engagement and bring the UN SDGs to life. Global Goals Centre has created a valuable online Resource Hub for SDG resources for teachers, businesses and the public.

Projects delivered by the Global Goals Centre include:

Bristol 17

Developed as a countdown to COP26, Bristol 17 showcases 17 local people, nominated by community organisations across the city, who are doing great work towards reaching one of the Goals. One minute videos of these local figures are available online and through a creative installation at Bristol's music venue, Bristol Beacon.



Refugee Voices

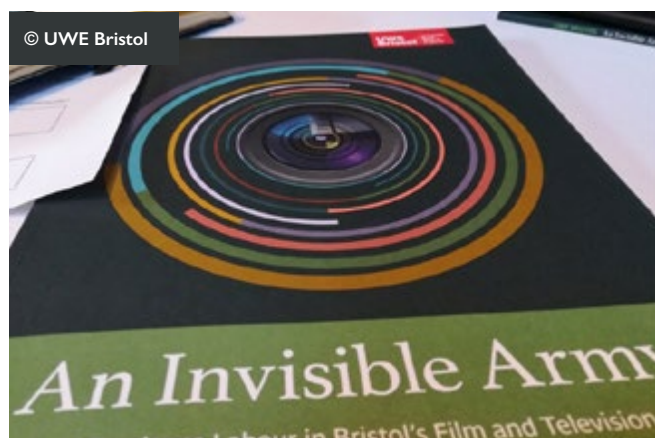
Refugee Voices is enabling local creatives with refugee and asylum seeker status to foster cultural exchange through media and workshops. The project aims to celebrate the cultural gains that migration brings to Bristol, inspire holistic engagement with the complexities of migration in the 21st Century, and highlight how issues of inequality, climate change and war have a role to play in this. A partnership between University of Bristol film students and local schools has led to the commissioning of films and development of an immersive installation to be showcased in local community centres, as well as workshops in schools for young people aged 10-16.



4.4 Research & Innovation

Regional Screen Sector Research at UWE Bristol

From celebrating Bristol's filmic credentials to highlighting the role of freelancers in the creative industries, research undertaken by the University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) has boosted the city's cultural and economic health. Bristol's 2017 bid to become a UNESCO City of Film was aided considerably by Go West, a regional film and TV research report carried out by Prof. Andrew Spicer and Dr Steve Presence of UWE Bristol. Published in 2017, the report demonstrated Bristol's strengths as the UK's third largest centre for screen industry production and revealed the centrality of the BBC's Natural History Unit and Aardman Animations, which had stimulated a vibrant cluster of more than 130 independent screen producers. The study recommended the need for a coherent screen strategy to lobby policy makers and government to provide greater support for the industry.



Further impetus for policy change was provided by Dr Amy Genders' UWE research into the role of freelancers in Bristol's screen economy and culture. Dr Genders' 'An Invisible Army' report, published in 2019, demonstrated the precariousness of freelancers and their invisibility in economic analyses, resulting in their being ignored in policy decisions. Her research not only changed perceptions of freelancers, highlighting their integral importance to the industry, but was also submitted as evidence to the House of Lords Communications Select Committee by The Indie Club, an advocacy pressure group for independent producers and freelancers. This prompted calls for freelancers to be recognised as a vital workforce.

Helping to increase international awareness of Bristol's cinematic roots, UWE's Dr Charlotte Crofts harnessed her own research on local screen history to found the Cary Comes Home Festival, a biennial event celebrating Hollywood icon Cary Grant's Bristol roots which today attracts global audiences. Crofts' research has also influenced Watershed's Cinema Rediscovered Festival dedicated to classic cinema, and the British Film Institute's 2019 Cary Grant season.

UWE Bristol plans to publish Go West 2 in early 2022. The new report will revisit the 2017 research and analyse growth and shifts within the sector over the past five

years, as well as exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sector businesses and freelancers.



MyWorld

MyWorld is a visionary initiative, led by the University of Bristol, that will develop major new research and development facilities and partnerships across the South West with support from global tech giants including Netflix, Google and Microsoft. Together they will pioneer new digital formats and technologies, creating innovative experiences across fiction, documentary, games, and live performance.

The MyWorld creative hub has been awarded £30m from the UK Research and Innovation's Strength in Places Fund with a further £16m coming from an alliance of more than 30 industry and academic partners joining forces in the five-year scheme. The hub is projected to generate more than 700 new jobs and boost the economy by £223m. It will forge dynamic collaborations between world-leading academic institutions and creative industries to progress technological innovation, creative excellence, inclusive cultures and knowledge sharing. In collaboration with the University of Bath, UWE Bristol and Bath Spa University, the project will provide advanced training programmes and talent development feeding into an extensive knowledge exchange network.



The University of Bath's CAMERA (Centre for the Analysis of Motion, Entertainment Research and Applications), a key MyWorld partner, opened its new Innovation Motion Capture Studio at Bristol's Bottle Yard Studios in 2021. Using state of the art technology, SMEs and sole traders working in fields that include XR, game design, VFX, film and TV production and digital content creation, are now accessing free participatory workshops and studio time to learn how to apply motion capture techniques to the needs of their businesses. Sessions cover hands-on experience in movement capture and applications, character animation, digital production technology and DIY approaches to low-cost delivery.



4.5 Exhibition & Engagement

Cinema Rediscovered

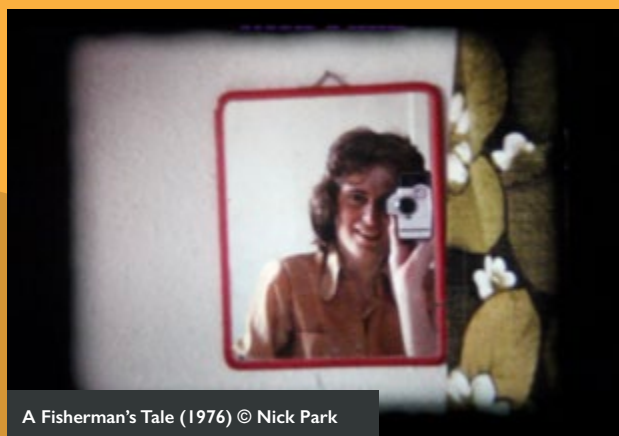
Following the 2017 announcement of Bristol's UNESCO City of Film designation, in summer 2018 Watershed's Cinema Rediscovered Festival celebrated the new title by launching a dedicated strand focusing on Bristol's dynamic film heritage. The festival included a series of outdoor screenings, delivered in partnership with Bristol UNESCO City of Film, held on Bristol's historic Floating Harbour.

Bristol-born writer/director Mike Hodges introduced his 1980 classic *Flash Gordon* and local writer/curator Adam Murray welcomed audiences to view 2018 hit film *Black Panther* on the big screen. A Bristol UNESCO City of Film walking tour by Dr Peter Walsh took film fans around hidden artefacts, local landmarks, including notable filming locations, independent cinemas and the famous Cary Grant statue at Millennium Square.

Subsequent festivals have continued to celebrate Bristol's UNESCO City of Film designation, placing a strong focus on restorations showcasing local film heritage and culturally diverse connections, and developing a dedicated Film Critics' development programme.

After COVID-19 enforced a fallow year in 2020, Cinema Rediscovered returned with its 5th edition in 2021; one of the UK's first in-person festivals to resume following the extended pandemic restrictions which so heavily impacted cinema exhibition across the world.

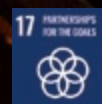
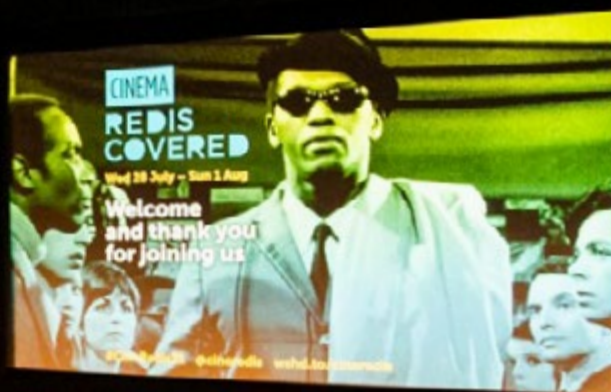
Bristol UNESCO City of Film strand included Opening up the Magic Box, a celebration of Victorian cinema innovator William Friese-Greene on the centenary of his death as part of #BristolFilm2021, delivered with Bristol Ideas and South West Silents; the launch of new film initiatives the Bristol Black Horror Club and Film Noir UK; and special event 'Portrait of An Animator as a Young Man', an in-conversation event with Nick Park featuring a digital restoration of one of his earliest films made when he was a teenager.



Director Mike Hodges introduces *Flash Gordon* screening with writer/broadcaster Samira Ahmed at Cinema Rediscovered 2018 © Jack Offord



© Jack Offord



Film 2021

Film 2021, a year-long programme of activity celebrating the many aspects of Bristol's film and moving image credentials, was launched in March 2021 by Bristol Ideas and Bristol UNESCO City of Film, supported by the city's filmmakers, festivals, venues and studios.

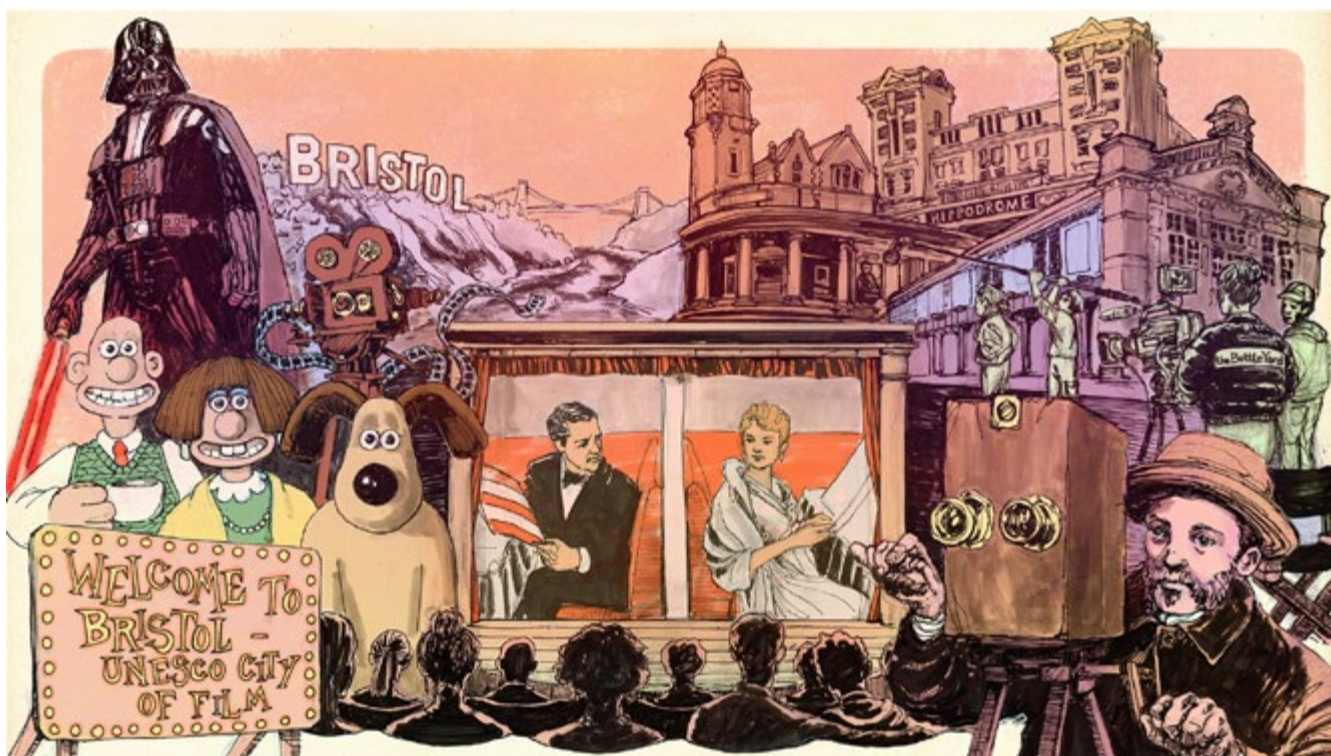
Marking the centenary of the death of Bristolian inventor and early motion picture pioneer William Friese-Greene (1855-1921), Film 2021 includes screenings across the city, walking tours exploring cinema buildings, photography exhibitions, talks and panel discussions, and the launch of 'Opening Up the Magic Box', a special publication reflecting on the experience of watching films throughout the past 70 years, supported by National Heritage Lottery funding.

Given the significant impact the pandemic has had on the city's exhibition and festival sector, with cinemas closed for prolonged periods and film festivals forced to move activity online, postpone (or in some cases, cancel), Film 2021 has encouraged a safe return of audiences

to in-person events celebrating the work of the region's film professionals.

Events have included 'Who Was William Friese Greene and What Did He Do?' with film historian Peter Domankiewicz in May 2021 and 'Maximising the Potential of Film and Cinema in Cities', a day-long event in October 2021 examining the landscape of exhibition and production in Bristol, asking what can be done to build on successes to date and how the film and moving image industry in all its forms can become more sustainable.

This latter event featured Karen Merkel (UK National Commission for UNESCO) in conversation with Natalie Moore (Bristol UNESCO City of Film), discussing why Bristol's UNESCO City of Film status is so significant for the city.



Top: Film 2021 illustration © Willem Hampson; Bottom: 'The Importance of Film and Cinema to Cities' with Karen Merkel & Natalie Moore at Watershed © Bristol UNESCO City of Film

MAJOR INTER-CITY AND INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

5.1 Film for Learning

Bristol is proud to be taking part in Film for Learning, a groundbreaking cross-city film and literacy programme developed and delivered by UK education charity Into Film.

Funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the four year senior leader and teacher professional development project is working with primary schools across Bristol, Bradford and Belfast, with the aim of improving young peoples' engagement, participation and attainment in literacy. All three UK cities involved hold UNESCO designations - Bristol UNESCO City of Film and UNESCO Learning City; Bradford UNESCO City of Film; and Belfast UNESCO Learning City and recently designated (2021) UNESCO City of Music.

Ten primary schools in each city began Film for Learning training in October 2019, with one senior leader and two teachers from each school embarking on a bespoke training programme delivered by a local training provider (boomsatsuma in Bristol) on behalf of Into Film.



Bristol primary school teachers undergoing Film for Learning training © boomsatsuma



Teachers are supported to positively impact pupil learning by developing capabilities to use film across the curriculum, whilst also being supported to become confident film leaders who can share their learning with fellow educators. Now in its third year, Film for Learning's pioneering approach is delivering tangible outcomes for Bristol schools and has established primary school learning methodologies that are significantly enhancing Bristol's creative career pathways.

Outcomes reported in 2021 show that, as a direct result of Film for Learning:

- 93% of pupils in participating schools have improved from 'Working Towards Expected Standards' in literacy tests to 'Working At Expected Standard'.
- 85% of teachers taking part have seen an improvement in pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- 74% of teachers and 79% of senior leaders reported a direct correlation between using film in the classroom and pupil engagement.
- 71% of teachers observed an improvement in pupils' creative writing.

These outcomes are all the more notable considering that they were achieved during an academic year that was heavily disrupted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant amount of teaching took place remotely and delivery of the programme was adapted to support schools as they continued to participate. The positive outcomes of the initiative provide clear evidence that training teachers and senior school leaders to use film in the classroom has a notable impact on literacy engagement and attainment.

The Film for Learning programme has strengthened links between Bristol, Bradford and Belfast. Bristol's UNESCO Learning City title has brought further benefits to local programme delivery, enabling positive engagement with local schools and aims for future collaborative advocacy activity. The three cities will continue to work together to advocate for film for literacy at a local and international level. Outcomes will be shared across the UNESCO Cities of Film Sub-Network and with Bristol and UK education partners.



Film for Learning is delivered by Into Film and funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Bristol's local delivery partner is boomsatsuma.



5.2 Addressing the global climate emergency through natural history programming

It is widely estimated that a third of the Natural History content made around the world stems from Bristol. Bristol production companies such as BBC Natural History Unit, Plimsoll Productions, Icon Films, Silverback Films, Wildspace Productions and many more have given global audiences ground-breaking and award-winning series such as *Dynasties*, *Seven Worlds, One Planet* and *David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet*.

Bristol-made Natural History programming is recognised across the world for its excellence and has become an influential tool for alerting viewers to the climate emergency. In response to *Blue Planet II* (the BBC's most-watched show of 2017), 88% of viewers said they had changed their behaviour after learning about the extent of plastic pollution, highlighted by the programme. Natural history filmmakers are in a unique position to educate and influence viewers to take action that will support a more sustainable future for the planet.

In recognition of Bristol's position as a world-leader in this field, Wildscreen Festival and Wildscreen Network were set up to connect filmmakers, producers, photographers, scientists and conservationists from across the planet – to celebrate stories about the natural world and demonstrate the determination to speak the truth about the man-made threat it is under.

Now the world's biggest wildlife filmmaking festival, Wildscreen has cemented its role as a convener and communicator of stories that address the climate emergency and promote progressive, collective action. During the pandemic, Wildscreen 2020 was delivered as a wholly virtual festival. This move to online festival delivery had a noticeable impact on global audience engagement. It more than doubled the festival's attendance to 2,000 delegates from 42 countries. It created a blueprint for a new, hybrid festival which removes geographical and financial barriers to access and supports a more environmentally sustainable event. It has enabled greater connection between Bristol's thriving Natural History film industry and the rest of the world; promoting increased international exchange and critical dialogue.



The 2020 event included a landmark conversation between Sir David Attenborough and environmental activist Greta Thunberg that, to date, has reached over 80,000 views on YouTube.



Central to the conversation was the role of natural history films in bringing the climate emergency to the world's attention, with Greta reflecting: "Films and movies have the power to open our eyes."

Building on this, in November 2021, Wildscreen hosted Communicating COP26, a one-day hybrid event following COP26 which convened the natural world storytelling industry, conservation organisations, green finance and climate scientists to ensure key messages and actions are translated, so that everyone is empowered to take action to protect our planet.



5.3 Bristol & Dakar - Our City: Your Eyes

Our City:Your Eyes was a 2018 collaborative cultural exchange between Bristol UNESCO City of Film and Dakar UNESCO City of Media Arts (Senegal). Bristol's Afrika Eye Festival and Dakar's Image et Vie Festival led the exchange which saw two young artists from each city take up a two week residency in the partner location.

Bristol filmmaker Pierre Niyongira and rapper/songwriter Joel Douglas (aka Splitz P) travelled to Senegal in September 2018 to explore the heady cultural landscape of Dakar. Following an introduction to the city by the festival team, the artists visited universities, film and music studios, creative hubs, arts and community projects and shared experiences with other young creatives and professionals. The return visit took place the following month when Senegalese filmmaker Kady Diedhiou and festival event manager Fatou Diabel Mbaye flew into Bristol to embark on a similar journey of cultural discovery.

The artists were invited to create a short film documenting their impressions and personal responses to the cultural environment they visited. Resulting films were showcased at each festival and distributed across digital platforms.

Image et Vie Festival Directors Khalilou Ndiaye in Dakar and Afrika Eye Festival Directors Annie Menter and Andy Morgan in Bristol oversaw the project, liaising in Bristol with Come the Revolution, a collective of curators, programmers and creatives committed to exploring and challenging black life experienced cultural expression through cinema.

The project contributed to wider city aims for both Bristol UNESCO City of Film and Dakar UNESCO City of Media Arts and marked the beginning of stronger creative links between the two cities whilst fostering collaboration across the global North and South.



5.4 citiesoffilm.org

Bristol UNESCO City of Film led the design and development of the multilingual Cities of Film website, citiesoffilm.org, which launched in July 2020. The aim of the site is to connect all 21 Cities of Film that are part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, showcasing the work taking place between the cities and enhancing international collaboration.

The website was launched during the week that the postponed 14th Annual Conference of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network was due to have taken place in Santos City of Film, Brazil. It contains profiles for each of the member cities, examples of key initiatives running in each location and news about successes and opportunities between member cities.

The platform is helping the Cities of Film work more closely with one another, enhancing the sharing of best practice, creating new opportunities to collaborate creatively and raising the profile of the UNESCO Creative Cities programme. It was a particularly beneficial online tool during the COVID-19 pandemic; providing digital connectivity and accommodating online forums, such as the 2020 UNESCO Film Cities Film Education and Media Literacy Forum.

5.5 Watershed Creative Producers International

Watershed, Bristol's internationally renowned independent cinema, also the Film Hub Lead organisation for the South West and home to world-leading research lab The Pervasive Media Studio, has long been at the forefront of the city's international activity. From hosting Bristol's many international film festivals to a leading cultural cinema programme and global innovative research and technology programmes, it continues to connect Bristol to international partner cities in exciting and inventive ways.

2020 saw the culmination of Creative Producers International - a project produced by Watershed in partnership with the Creative Economies Research Lab at UWE Bristol, which gathered together a dynamic network of creative producers from across the world with the aim to enhance individual practices, raise ambitions and make real change across the world on a city scale. It enabled a fascinating set of conversations that brought together producers and researchers from Bristol and Liverpool, Mexico City and even the back of a cab stuck in Lagos traffic.



Creative Producers International © Jon Aitken

The project report codifies the work of the three-year programme, offers critical reflection on the role of the Creative Producer in cities across the world, and shares tools and case studies that others can use and learn from. Watershed's cultural film programme is dedicated to a distinctive cultural film offer and audience development. In 2019-20 the cinema programme achieved 152,936 admissions from 3,500 screenings of over 360 films from 54 countries. Through a wide network of local, national and international partnerships ranging from Europa Cinemas, MUBI and Aardman Animations to Il Cinema Ritrovato, Japan Film Foundation, BAFTA, Channel 4 and the British Council, Watershed's dynamic cinema offer provides one of Bristol's most important creative inter-city links.



5.6 #Shortitout

In Summer 2020, Bristol's Encounters Festival, in partnership with Watershed and BFI NETWORK invited filmmakers from all over the world to #Shortitout. Filmmakers were encouraged to submit 90 second films about their experiences in lockdown that were entered into Depict – Watershed's 90 second film challenge that has been running in Bristol as part of Encounters Film Festival for the past 20 years.

The films submitted, many made by first-time filmmakers on basic equipment, reflected the shared emotions of people across the world during the peak of the pandemic and showed how film has the power to connect us on a global level at a time of collective isolation. #Shortitout was supported by digital workshops and masterclasses with leading international filmmaking writers, directors and animators, including Jim Cummings, Desiree Akhavan, Ben Wheatley and Bristol's own Paul Holbrook. These online events were immensely popular with an international reach. 1,290 tuned in live and 10,262 watched afterwards via Facebook, Twitch, YouTube and Vimeo.

5.7 BFI Network backed shorts:

Recent stand out regional short films funded by BFI NETWORK South West (led by Watershed) have included:

The Thing That Ate The Birds (2021) - made by Bristol-based writing-directing duo Sophie Mair and Dan Gitsham (Sketchbook Pictures). The film had its North American premiere at SXSW in Austin, Texas in March 2021 and went on to be screened at multiple international festivals including Tampere Film Festival, Cryptshow, Fantastic Zagreb, LA Shorts, Grossman and Indys shorts.

Know The Grass (2021) - made by Somerset filmmaker Sophie Littman. The film screened in competition at the BFI London Film Festival and was longlisted for a British Independent Film Award. Sophie was also selected as a 2021 Screen International Star of Tomorrow.



6

PROPOSED MID-TERM ACTION PLAN 2021-25

The Bristol UNESCO City of Film Action Plan (2021-25) has been developed to fulfil the city's commitment to developing the film, TV and moving image sector in an inclusive and sustainable way. Its underpinning assertion is that the anticipated growth within the film and TV sector can be a catalyst for local sustainable development. It has the potential to directly benefit the people of Bristol and the city's creative businesses, if it can be harnessed as a tool for improving local outcomes.

Bristol UNESCO City of Film is uniquely positioned to maximise the opportunities that this period of growth presents, and to use the growth challenges to encourage positive and progressive change. Now four years old, Bristol's City of Film status is deeply entrenched in the framework of the local film industry, as well as the cultural landscape, and enjoys the firm commitment and support of partners who have the will and the capacity to realise progress and capitalise on this period of opportunity.

The Action Plan seeks to enable opportunities for sector growth that directly contribute to broader city aims, specifically:

- A reduction in inequality and better access to world-class employment
- Telling Bristol's story and enhancing the city's sense of pride in its multicultural identity
- Minimising the environmental impact of industry activity

6.1 Local Initiatives

6.1.1 Skills

The £11.8m expansion of The Bottle Yard Studios is expected to attract increased levels of High-End TV (HETV) production to the region. The Bottle Yard is located in South Bristol; a district with some of the UK's lowest performing areas for young people going on to higher education. The development of the Studios, which accommodates multiple HETV productions at a time throughout the year, provides a clear opportunity to enable alternative training and employment opportunities for local people.

The HETV Drama Skills Agenda for South Bristol will target young people from under-represented backgrounds living in close proximity to The Bottle Yard, train them in transferable and soft skills that are in high demand by film and TV production teams and partner with production companies to provide work experience placements and pastoral support to kick-start careers in HETV production.

2021-2025 Bristol UNESCO City of Film objectives:

- a) Work with local stakeholders and industry partners to establish a HETV Skills Programme for South Bristol that aligns with and complements The Bottle Yard's expansion plans and associated Workforce Development Programme.
- b) Establish pastoral, financial and employment support mechanisms to help new entrants navigate and establish themselves in a fast-paced freelance environment.
- c) Work with city and regional teams to connect the programme to broader local/regional skills and cultural strategy. Build supportive relationships with industry partners to link the project to national talent development schemes.
- d) In collaboration with industry and training partners, map out Bristol-specific pathways to employment in HETV.



6.1.2 Stories

The COVID-19 pandemic showed how film has the power to connect people, not only within local communities, but to the rest of the world. Bristol stories on film build a sense of place and identity for the city and enable representation of the city's dynamic and multi-cultural communities. Using the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to share our stories on film is a leading priority for Bristol. To do this, we need greater support for the development of stories from within our city that are a true representation of Bristol's diverse culture.

As a UNESCO City of Film, we will foster local screenwriting talent beyond established training schemes and provide writers with tangible opportunities for commissions and industry recognition. This, in turn, will contribute towards the longer-term aim to support and develop the city's drama production company community and stimulate an increase in drama production commissioned within Bristol and the wider city region.

2021-2025 Bristol UNESCO City of Film objectives:

- a) Work collaboratively with city, regional and national stakeholders to promote tangible development and commissioning opportunities for Bristol-based screenwriters.
- b) Partner with production industry bodies and TV networks to enable development opportunities

for drama production companies in Bristol, with the longer-term aim to strengthen and build the drama production base in the Bristol region.

- c) Use the platform of established Bristol film festivals to showcase Bristol screenwriting talent and connect writers to tangible industry opportunities.
- d) Maximise opportunities to screen Bristol stories in community settings. Work with local and national partners to extend independent cinema provision beyond the city centre and encourage community cinema programming.



6.1.3 Environment

In 2018, Bristol was the first UK local council to declare a climate emergency. The Mayor of Bristol has set a goal to achieve carbon neutral status by 2030. Bristol hosts multiple TV drama shoots in the city each year. According to recent industry research, production of an average one-hour scripted drama produces 77 metric tons of CO2 emissions. In order to ensure that productions working in the city can meet targets for carbon reduction, an alignment of city goals and production industry aims is needed. Collaborative action at a city and cross-sector level can fast-track progress in this area.

2021-2025 Bristol UNESCO City of Film objectives:

- a) Encourage local sector commitment to Bristol's One City Climate Strategy and industry standards. Forge local and national partnerships to progress collaborative action.
- b) Support the development of local sector strategic plans for operational change (e.g. The Bottle Yard Studios' Sustainability Strategy and Decarbonisation Plans) and enable the development of local industry sustainability toolkits for film crews working in Bristol.
- c) Share key learning with connected sectors (e.g. events and festivals, transport, theatre) to maximise impact and progress.
- d) Seek out opportunities to screen Bristol-made content locally, nationally and internationally. Use film as a tool for wider engagement in the global climate emergency.



6.2 International Initiatives

Bristol's UNESCO City of Film status is a key driver for international activity, as set out in Bristol City Council's International Strategy. Objectives within this 2021-2025 Action Plan contribute to the city's aims to raise Bristol's global profile, progress international cultural policy, bring cultural and educational experiences to the city, cement cultural links for Bristol's diverse communities and strengthen global partnerships.

Film has the power to break down barriers, to educate and influence change. Bristol UNESCO City of Film's international agenda will use film as a tool for celebrating Bristol's identity and strengthening our UCCN network links. It aims to provide new cultural experiences in our communities and progress ambitions for a more sustainable global film and TV sector.

6.2.1 Celebrating culture & identity

Bristol Census 2021 data shows that since 2010 the city's population has become increasingly diverse and some local communities have changed significantly. There are now at least 45 religions practised, 187 countries of birth represented and 91 main languages spoken in Bristol. UCCN membership provides an opportunity to enhance cultural celebration in the city. We will use our UNESCO City of Film designation to foster creative collaborations that build upon and celebrate our international links and provide even greater connection to the rest of the world.

2021-2025 Bristol UNESCO City of Film objectives:

- Explore UCCN links to enhance the Bristol One City ambition for a local Festival of Language and Culture.
- Support Bristol Diaspora Community aims for the development of a Bristol Nollywood Festival.
- Play an active role in 'Bristol 2023: 650 Years as a City', a celebration of culture and identity.
- Connect ambitions for a Bristol Screen Summit to UCCN network opportunities.

6.2.2 UNESCO Cities of Film International Research Network

UNESCO Cities of Film are home to world-leading educational institutions that shape research and innovation in the global screen sector. UCCN membership provides a unique opportunity to establish connections between our leading research institutions and foster new ways of collaborating. In partnership with UWE and fellow UNESCO Cities of Film, we propose to develop an international UNESCO Cities of Film Research Network that will enhance academic links and influence collaborative international research for the sustainable development of the film and TV industry.

2021-2025 Bristol UNESCO City of Film objectives:

- a) Establish a sustainable International Research Network embedded within the UNESCO City of Film Sub-Network to facilitate discussion and exchange of ideas centring on UNESCO City of Film's three key themes of film education, film heritage and film production.
- b) Foster relationships between academics and other stakeholders from cities within the UNESCO City of Film Sub-Network, stimulating new debate across national, cultural, and disciplinary boundaries.
- c) Produce a set of tangible outputs that will be of practical use to researchers and stakeholders involved.

6.2.3 Exchanging stories on film

Bristol's creative response to COVID-19 (see Section 7) showed how film has the power to connect people across the world. Bristol's aims for showcasing authentic stories from our city, set out in Section 6.1.2, can be enhanced by our international links. The UCCN network offers opportunities to amplify Bristol voices; showcasing the city's identity amongst UNESCO Creative Cities. Through the exchange of stories on film, we will foster closer relationships with fellow UNESCO Cities of Film, develop new educational opportunities and broaden the reach of film within our local community settings.

2021-2025 Bristol UNESCO City of Film objectives:

- a) Utilise Bristol's international film festival links to enable a regular exchange of films between UNESCO Creative Cities and screenings in Bristol and other UNESCO Cities of Film.
- b) Liaise between Bristol cultural and community organisations as and other UNESCO Cities of Film, to screen international films in local community settings.
- c) Partner with Bristol City Council's International team and Bristol's Global Goals Centre to support delivery of projects that connect Bristol's Diaspora and Refugee communities to UCCN aims and activity.

6.3 Estimated annual budget for implementing the proposed action plan

In kind support: Bristol City Council	£70k p/a
Partner financial contributions	£30k p/a
Complementary in-kind support (partner organisations)	£10k p/a
Total budgetary commitment	£110k p/a
Proposed complementary external funding applications (Regional skills/ community funding, AHRC, BFI, British Council, UK Government funds)	£250k over 4 year action planning period

6.4 Plan for communication and awareness

6.4.1 Communications to date

In its first four years, Bristol UNESCO City of Film has founded and developed a series of branded communications channels that together provide a unifying voice for the city's film and moving image sector and its diverse community of creative individuals, organisations and businesses.

The Bristol UNESCO City of Film website - Bristolcityoffilm.co.uk - is an engaging platform profiling the city's long-standing film and moving image successes under the brand strapline WATCH - MAKE - LEARN (encompassing exhibition, production and education strands of activity). Projects for which Bristol UNESCO City of Film is a delivery partner or core supporter are highlighted in further detail and a Latest Activity page is home to time sensitive updates and guest blogs from key voices including filmmakers, festival organisers and decision makers.

Released in 2019, the inaugural Bristol UNESCO City of Film Showreel presents a cross-section of screen-related activity emerging from the city. It was universally well received as an inspiring visual snapshot of Bristol's broad-ranging strengths in the field of film and helped further galvanise the community of City of Film stakeholders. In 2020, Bristol UNESCO City of Film branding was installed at Bristol Airport, raising awareness of the status amongst domestic and international travellers. In 2021, the 'Who's Who In... Skills, Education & Training' digital directory was produced, designed to signpost young people towards film-related education and training opportunities in the city. This was the first in the 'Who's Who In...' series; future instalments are planned for other sub-sectors of Bristol's film and TV infrastructure (production companies, festivals & events, etc.)



On social media, Bristol UNESCO City of Film has built well-established followings on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. These channels enable a continual 'buzz' of Bristol film activity, discussed and celebrated within the city and further afield. International updates from other Film Cities and wider UCCN network members also inform the Bristol audience and provide connections to new opportunities.

Film competitions and festivals have enjoyed improved international engagement with global participants thanks to the reach of Bristol City of Film's channels, particularly during the pandemic where many events were delivered virtually.

Bristol UNESCO City of Film is a consistent and active participant at events in the year-round calendar of festivals, panel discussions and skills open days taking place in the city. Media coverage of such events regularly features Bristol's UNESCO City of Film status. Whether it is being referenced by the Mayor of Bristol in his annual State of the City Address, by Natalie Moore, Bristol UNESCO City of Film Manager in local TV or radio interviews, or by Watershed Curator Mark Cosgrove's introduction to Cinema Rediscovered, the status is firmly woven into the narrative of the city. It features widely as a USP in descriptions of Bristol's creative industries profile.

6.4.2 Future aims

We will continue to raise awareness of Bristol's UNESCO City of Film status and what it means at a local, national, and global level. In 2020, Bristol City of Film PR & Marketing Manager Tara Milne was successfully contracted to deliver three years' communications support, to build on work achieved to date.

6.4.3 Our audience

- Bristol UNESCO City of Film's screen sector stakeholders, comprising filmmakers, festival organisers, venues, production companies, film/TV organisations, training providers and education establishments.
- Bristol's general public, ranging from adult residents with an interest in culture, to school age children interested in careers in film/TV (and their educators and families/caregivers).
- The Film Cities Sub Network, members of the UCCN, UNESCO and other international partners.

6.4.4 Communications plan

To creatively and effectively harness the established communication channels (listed in Section 6.4.1) to promote and profile work carried out under the four Action Points in the 2021-25 Bristol UNESCO City of Film Action Plan:

#1 SKILLS:

A High-End TV Skills Agenda for South Bristol.

#2 STORIES:

Developing and sharing Bristol stories on film.

#3: ENVIRONMENT:

Sustainable filming activity.

#4: INTERNATIONAL:

Building global connections through film.

To continue to provide a unifying voice for Bristol's wider film and moving image sector and its diverse community of creative individuals, organisations and businesses. To identify and implement new branding opportunities to raise visibility and awareness of Bristol's City of Film status in the UK and internationally (e.g. updated showreel, 'Who's Who In' series, further transit advertising, visitor economy/tourism-related partnerships, presence at public-facing cultural events).



6.4.5 Links

www.bristolcityoffilm.co.uk




 @bristolcityoffilm

 @BristolFilmCity
 #bristolfilmcity



INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN IN RESPONSE TO AND FOR THE RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

The catastrophic impact of the pandemic on creative freelancers, charities and businesses led to swift local policy interventions. In April 2020, Bristol City Council's Culture & Creative Industries service quickly established the Culture Recovery & Development group, made up of specialist officers representing the film & TV, arts, festivals & events and museums sub-sectors. The team carried out early sector surveys that painted a stark picture of the economic implications of the pandemic. Notable results included:

56%
of production companies have cancelled planned work



75%
of film/TV freelancers expect to see an **80%** reduction in income



60% feel government support will not sustain their income

11.5 million +
lost visitors and attendees



These survey results and the ensuing work by Bristol City Council's Culture Recovery & Development Team directly influenced two major outcomes for the sector; the development of the aforementioned One City Culture Board and recognition of the unique and essential role that culture and the creative industries play in economic recovery. This was evidenced by the strong presence of cultural objectives within Bristol's One City Economic Recovery & Renewal Strategy (October 2020). The strategy aspires to do more than just help steer Bristol's economy back to where it was at the start of 2020, recreating the existing challenges. Instead, it aims to help point and take us towards a renewed economy, which is more inclusive, sustainable, carbon neutral and ecologically positive. Bristol's UNESCO City of Film Office Manager is a founding member of Bristol City Council's Culture Development Team and continues to play an active role in this ongoing work to support long-term recovery and strategic development of Bristol's Film production and exhibition sector.

During COVID-19, creativity in Bristol continued to thrive. In many ways, art and creativity became a necessary outlet and a means of connecting at times of isolation and uncertainty. The Bristol City Council campaign #WeAreBristol, developed stories on film to unite the city during the height of the pandemic. Films such as City of Hope, We are Still Bristol and Bristol Remembers tell the story of the city throughout and beyond COVID-19 lockdowns. The #WeAreBristol campaign embodies how the people of Bristol are working together to build a city of hope, where everyone that chooses to live here is treated fairly and has the same life chances. During the pandemic this has been more important than ever.

In response to the first wave of the pandemic, young Bristol artists were showcased through Rising Arts Agency's powerful #WhoseFuture billboard campaign. Launched across 370+ sites city-wide, it gave Bristol's young artists the space to amplify their voices and address themes of racism, climate justice, access, leadership and young people's futures.

During periods of lockdown isolation, stories from the city were shared around the world. Bristol-made films covered issues including transatlantic slave history, identity, isolation and migration. Powerful stories included *The Shadow of Slavery* for Channel 4's 'Take Your Knee off My Neck' series, and *We Are Not the Virus* and *Sign Night* for the BBC's 'Culture in Quarantine' strand: all showing how film can connect, educate and empower.



Sign Night, commissioned for Culture in Quarantine (2020) by Arts Council England and BBC Arts © Cathy Mager



Cast of The Outlaws, filmed on location in Bristol in 2020
© BBC/Amazon Studios



Stephen Merchant directs Gamba Cole in The Outlaws
© BBC/Amazon Studios

Periods of lockdown led to high demand for new TV and film content across the UK. Bristol has seen unprecedented levels of filming on location for major TV drama series since production activity was able to resume in Summer 2020. This has provided a major boost for sections of the city's creative freelance workforce, many of whom were without employment. Working with a national screen sector taskforce and local industry partners, Bristol Film Office responded by working to understand the challenges faced by the sector and developing new guidelines to enable filming to take place safely in public spaces.

At a regional level, the West of England Combined Authority, the body supporting economic growth across Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire unitary authorities, initiated a new business support programme and grant fund for the cultural and creative sectors. Launched in April 2021, the Culture & Creative Economy Recovery Fund was aimed at SMEs working in the creative industries, including freelancers, that required support as a result of the pandemic. Creative Freelancer Grants ranging from £1,000 to £3,000 gave some of the most impacted the opportunity to become more resilient by delivering a project over a period of up to six months, that will develop their own creative product, practice or service. In addition, Creative Business Grants of £5,000 to £10,000 funded creative projects that support recovery and resilience, the employment of freelance creatives, engaging local communities and advancing diversity and inclusion.

Administered by Film Hub SW based at Bristol's Watershed independent cultural cinema, the BFI Film Audience Network COVID-19 Resilience Fund supported 22 exhibition organisations across the South West of England region. A total of £183,000 in grants were allocated to organisations in critical need in the face of months of closures and uncertainty.

A reallocation of £1.3m National Lottery funding, plus a £150k contribution from the Mayor of London's Culture at Risk Business Support Fund led to a national roll-out of emergency funding specific to independent film exhibitors. Five Bristol organisations were supported through the programme, enabling them to recover and build future resilience beyond periods of COVID lockdown.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bristol UNESCO City of Film management is fulfilled as part of Bristol City Council's film services, comprising Bristol UNESCO City of Film, Bristol Film Office and The Bottle Yard Studios. These services form a division of Bristol City Council's Culture and Creative Industries team.

Between 2017 and 2021, Bristol UNESCO City of Film activity has been supported by the following organisations:



VisitWest

Advisory support has been provided by BFI NETWORK South West, Encounters Festival, Signifier and Watershed.