



## The Playable City Award 2015

*Putting people and play at the heart of the Future City*

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### The Challenge

Following on from growing international success, Watershed's Playable City® Award returns for its third year. The challenge is to produce an original piece of work that uses creative technology to engage with the notion of cities as playable, malleable, and idiosyncratic public spaces for all. We invite you to propose an idea that responds to this theme and can debut in Bristol, UK in 2015 and tour internationally in 2016.

### The Theme

All over the world governments and tech companies are investing in smart systems for cities, using networks and sensors to join up services and collect data, as a drive for efficiency. The Playable City Award asks us to imagine how we might make our cities more liveable, nuanced, open and permissive.

In this third annual call for ideas we are interested in proposals that interpret the theme in an entirely new way, offering *your* perspective on the concept of Playable City. 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 meaning underpinning your proposal, as well as the mechanics of what you hope to create. Be brave.

Key words to consider: permission, connectedness, configurable, hopeful, liveable, challenge, participation, perception, provocation, community, people, experience and change.

### The Award

Pushing the boundaries and encouraging experimentation, this international award sits at the intersections of art, society and technology.

Your proposed idea must be designed to be publicly installed/playable in Bristol, UK in the first instance, with the potential to be toured to other international cities. It will use technology in an integrated and interesting way – you may wish to explore how you would use the new experimental Bristol Is Open high capacity fibre and mesh wifi network which is currently under development – see more at <http://www.bristolisopen.com>

The successful artist(s) will be awarded:

- Production Support Award of £30,000 to include all creatives fees, development and delivery of the commissioned work. In addition there will be a modest budget available for accommodation, travel and expenses subject to agreement of the project details with the selected award winner

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- Practical support and expertise in producing the work including securing locations, technical infrastructure and understanding local culture
- National PR campaign, including tailored media support for artists to maximise their potential to communicate the work internationally
- Access to facilities and connection to a vibrant community of artists and creative technologists plus the opportunity for discussion/collaboration with both peers and public during the production process in the Pervasive Media Studio at Watershed in Bristol
- A high profile showcase event to launch the completed work
- Development of touring and future opportunities with Watershed's production team
- A trip to Tokyo in October 2015 to share learning from the Award as part of Watershed and British Council's Playable City Tokyo programme
- Some professional documentation of the work, including images and promotional video of the project

What do we expect from you?

- The creation of something highly original, expertly realised and inspiring, to be installed in Bristol in September 2015
- A generous and open attitude. A willingness to participate in events and discussions with public, peers and partners
- Participation in media and communication around the Award
- Some time spent in residence at Watershed's Pervasive Media Studio in Bristol

### 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.

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 some 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.

### Previous award winners

We encourage you to look at the documentation on the site of previous winners, which includes production videos, interviews sharing their process and news of what has happened to the projects since the Award.

Winner of Watershed's 2014 Playable City Award: Shadowing by Jonathan Chomko and Matthew Rosier gave memory to Bristol's city lights, enabling them to record and play back the shadows of those who passed underneath.

<http://www.watershed.co.uk/playablecity/winner/2014>

Winner of Watershed's 2013 Playable City Award: Hello Lamp Post encouraged people to look at the city with fresh eyes and engage with systems we take for granted by allowing people to communicate with everyday objects within the city. <http://www.watershed.co.uk/playablecity/winner/2013>

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## Assessment criteria

- Quality of concept and fit of project within the theme
- Originality of concept
- Audience and accessibility – How engaging is the work?
- Track record - a demonstrated history of high quality, innovative creative practice
- The extent to which this opportunity is valuable to the applicant and their practice
- The skills and ability of the proposed team or artist to deliver the proposed idea
- Touring – How well would the project translate to other sites?

## What we are less interested in

We have now run a number of Playable City initiatives and are starting to become familiar with some of the tropes and clichés that come up when exploring the theme. To help you to avoid these, here are some pointers:

- We aim to commission work that can be experienced by a wide range of people in public space. Be careful not to design work (e.g. an app or QR code project) 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 think about and articulate the experience of the people who will engage with your project. If helpful, ask yourself, what does it feel like to interact with this work?
- Previous winners displayed distinctive approaches to cities as playable spaces, however we are looking for original ideas, not clones of this work.
- Some proposals rely heavily on installing screens, particularly touchscreens, or doors as digital 'portals', pods, or hubs in public spaces that are vulnerable to damage and likely to become quickly obsolete, we are keen for supported projects not to leave a legacy of dead tech in city spaces.

## Timetable

Open for applications: 24 February 2015

Close of applications: 7 April 17.00 GMT

Shortlist published: 5 May 2015

Judging and Successful commission announced: June 2015

Production of Winning Project: Summer 2015

Artwork installed: Autumn 2015

Potential Tour: 2016

## 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

<http://www.watershed.co.uk/playablecity/playable-city-2015-submission>.

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We are interested in you and your ideas, not your ability to write applications, so feel free to use whatever medium you think will best convey your idea. Please get in touch (details below) if you would like to discuss an unusual submission format. 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 send applications to by 7 April 2015, 17.00 (GMT).**

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

### Shortlisting

All submissions will be carefully considered by Watershed and a shortlist will be announced in April 2015. 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. The panel will be chaired by Clare Reddington of Watershed and will include Tom Uglow, Director of Google Creative Labs, Sydney, Miguel Sicart, author of Play Matters, Claire Doherty, Director of Situations and Jason Bruges, Founder of Jason Bruges Studio. Additional Judges will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

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### 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](http://www.watershed.co.uk)

### About Bristol

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 is European Green Capital 2015.

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

### Contact

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

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