



BRISTOL CITY CENTRE  
Business  
Improvement  
District

Presents:

# BRISTOL LIGHT FESTIVAL

2023 Festival Evaluation Report



Redcliffe  
& Temple  
BID

# Over 250,000 people saw Bristol in a new light

February 2023 saw Bristol Light Festival stage their third edition, a 10-day spectacular featuring eleven immersive artworks in unexpected places across the city.

Exploring the city through colour light and play, audiences were able to enjoy an extended trail route across the city with spaces in Redcliffe & Temple, Cabot Circus and the City Centre, as well as a new addition of Broadmead.

*“And seriously, does any city have more creative and energetic business improvement bodies?”* Bristol Life Magazine



# OPHELIA

A show stopping addition to this year's Bristol Light Festival was 'Ophelia', a stunning light installation that creates a life-size hologram of Shakespeare's famous character. The installation references Millais' famous painting of the drowning Ophelia, recreating the scene with intense colour, gentle movement, air bubbles and swimming fish, this piece is emotive and mesmerising.

Set in the stunning surroundings of St Mary Redcliffe Church, visitors to the festival were able to have a rare opportunity to enter this historic venue at night and view 'Ophelia' – an experience that was sure to give goose bumps!

The inclusion of St Mary Redcliffe Church saw 75% of the visitors who usually never or rarely were able to visit the church so an extra level of enjoyment was created with the addition of this visually stunning artwork and saw a footfall of over 23,000 people enjoying Ophelia and the stunning building.

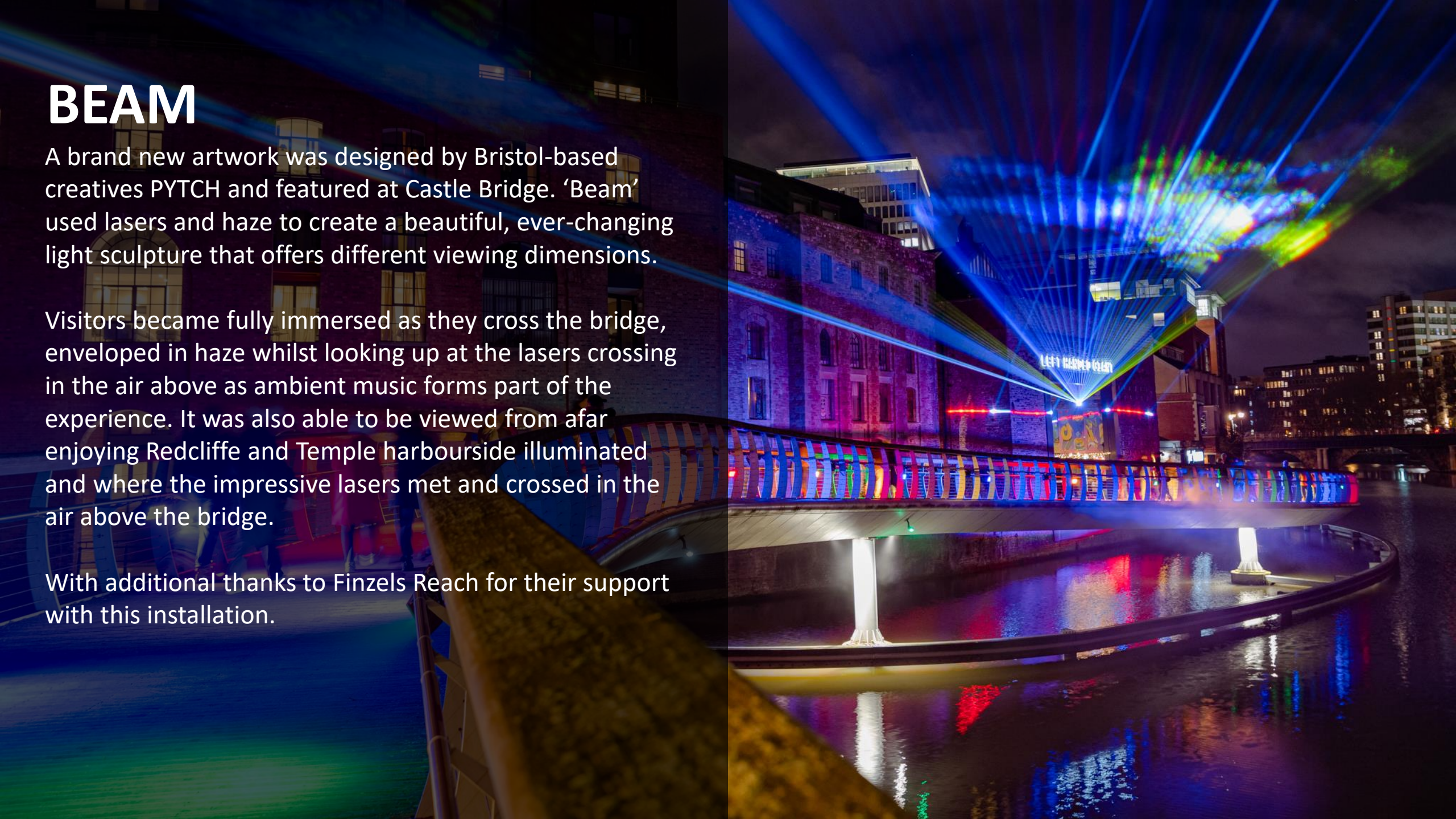


# BEAM

A brand new artwork was designed by Bristol-based creatives PYTCH and featured at Castle Bridge. 'Beam' used lasers and haze to create a beautiful, ever-changing light sculpture that offers different viewing dimensions.

Visitors became fully immersed as they cross the bridge, enveloped in haze whilst looking up at the lasers crossing in the air above as ambient music forms part of the experience. It was also able to be viewed from afar enjoying Redcliffe and Temple harbourside illuminated and where the impressive lasers met and crossed in the air above the bridge.

With additional thanks to Finzels Reach for their support with this installation.



# CONTINUUM

Continuum was a fun, captivating installation that invited visitors to walk between 25 mirrored monoliths, exploring a maze of reflection and light. This interactive piece captured the imagination of all ages as they walked around, through and amongst the mirrored pillars with family and friends. It was located at the historic Temple Church which had been under renovations and closed to the public for many years, bringing an exciting new location for this year's festival.

illumaphonium is a duo of artists based in the South West that specialise in large scale interactive installations transforming public spaces into a place for music and discovery. Continuum captured the imagination of all ages and was enjoyed by visitors to the event with a footfall of around 25,000 visitors over the period.

With additional thanks to English Heritage for their support with this installation.



# FESTIVAL AIMS

1. **PLAYFUL**- animate the city at a traditionally dark time of year, choosing artworks which are joyful and appealing to all ages
2. **SUPPORTIVE** - Create opportunities to spend leisure time in the city centre to benefit local businesses and organisations
3. **WELCOMING** - Reduce anti-social behaviour, creating playful spaces for all the family in the city centre
4. **INCLUSIVE** - Showcase & engage local creative enterprises, artists and organisations
5. **SUSTAINABLE** - Work in an environmentally sustainable way across all areas of the festival offer

Bristol Light Festival is Presented by Bristol City Centre BID  
Supported by Redcliffe & Temple BID, Broadmead BID, Bristol City Council, West of England Combined Authority & Cabot Circus.



# PLAYFUL

*Animate the city at a traditionally dark time of year, choosing artworks which are joyful and appealing to all ages*

## BLF 23 OUTCOMES:

- 92% of attendees agreed the city was welcoming
- Attendees agreed that the event was attractive (94%), safe (85%), and active (95%)
- 80% of attendees were a resident of Bristol or worked/studied in the city. 16% were visiting Bristol for the day and 8% were staying overnight.

*"We were 3 adults, no kids, and had a fabulous time playing, walking, exploring, interacting. I love art, colour, music, experimentation, play, architecture and Bristol so it was a dopamine delight!"*

*"Excellent, glad it was on for longer this year and new installations were amazing."*



# SUPPORTIVE

*Create opportunities to spend leisure time in the city centre to benefit local businesses and organisations.*

## BLF 23 OUTCOMES:

- A total of £6.9m spend was associated with all those visiting the festival
- A total of £3.3m of the spend was estimated as additional, occurring as a direct result of the festival taking place
- Average spend by each visitor was £23.51
- Local business turnover as a result of the total additional associated spending at the festival was estimated at approximately £4.6m
- Staying visitors spent an average £62.70 per person during their visit





# SUPPORTIVE



*“The Light Festival we saw an increase across all days, especially in the evening. Giving us the busiest week of the year and beat last years record, becoming the busiest week since opening!” Business on Corn Street*

*“I loved it. It is a wonderful addition to Bristol's culture scene and I look forward to it each year. The world can be a gloomy place so it's really important to have things to look forward to. I hope it is something that continues every year now.*

*“I was really impressed! Visited BLF for the second time. Even though I liked the one that was in 2022, I enjoyed the 2023 one more - there were more interactive installations - that made my child very happy. Great idea!*

# WELCOMING

A nighttime photograph of a grand, multi-story stone building, likely a historical or cultural institution. The building's facade is illuminated, and its windows are lit up with vibrant, colorful lights in shades of blue, purple, and pink. A prominent clock tower is visible on the left side of the building. The sky is dark, suggesting it is nighttime. The overall atmosphere is festive and welcoming.

Reduce anti-social behaviour, creating playful spaces for all the family in the city centre

## BLF 23 OUTCOMES:

- 49% of attendees had visited Bristol with their family and 41% had done so with friends. 21% had visited with their spouse/partner. Just 6% has visited alone and 2% with colleagues
- 90% said it enabled them to experience something they normally wouldn't have access to.

*"I had the best time! I came back a few times with friends and once on my own to see Ophelia in the church which I missed the first time. My mind is blown!!! I loved it and I love Bristol"*

*"We loved it, it was a nice journey over from Bath and was great to spend the evening getting our steps in and enjoying the lights. We're still covid anxious so it's nice to have free things to do outside. It was very busy though! We came on the Saturday evening. Great show, stewards were really friendly and the artworks were all amazing- so well selected for colour and play!"*

# WELCOMING

## BLF 23 OUTCOMES:

- 87% of attendees agreed that BLF was inclusive for all people and groups from different cultural and social backgrounds.
- 81% agreed it reflected Bristol's identity as a city.
- The *Guide.AI* audio and text festival guide was downloaded 473 times and has a 5\* rating.

*“We loved the light festival which seems to get better each time! Both my children are autistic, and this event is so sensory that they are able to access and enjoy all of the exhibits. It is such a fun and relaxed multi sensory experience - we all really look forward to attending.”*

A night scene at a light festival. A purple neon sign reads "ALRIGHT MY LUVVER" across a metal truss structure. People are walking on a stone path illuminated with purple and yellow lights. In the background, city buildings and streetlights are visible under a dark sky.

ALRIGHT MY LUVVER

# WELCOMING



## Demographic of survey respondents:

- The largest proportions of survey respondents 30% were aged 35-44 years
- 3% of visitors aged 16 – 34
- 12% of visitors over 60 years
- 75% of all survey respondents were female and 23% were male
- 85% of all respondents lived in the 'BS' postcode area
- 8% lived elsewhere in the wider South-West region and the same proportion were UK residents who lived elsewhere outside the South-West region

# INCLUSIVE: CREATIVE BUSINESSES

BENEFIT LOCAL BUSINESSES AND ORGANISATIONS –  
SPOTLIGHT ON BRISTOL, & BEYOND

Bristol Light Festival worked with businesses across the city and region to deliver the 11 installations, to benefit and support a huge number of Bristol based businesses including hotels, bars, restaurants, cafes and shops.

- Over 50 organisations directly supported the delivery of the festival with emphasis on using Bristol and locally based businesses where possible.
- Around 45 new paid employment opportunities were created for event and creative personnel and organisations.
- **5 ORGANISATIONS AND ARTISTS** were commissioned internationally.



# INCLUSIVE: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PAID EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTISTS / CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS AND EVENT PROFESSIONALS

- 50 artists, creatives and specialists were employed.
- 160 crew, volunteers, suppliers and participants worked at BLF.
- 250,000 live physical audience.



# INCLUSIVE: SKILLS AND TRAINING

## OPPORTUNITIES CREATED

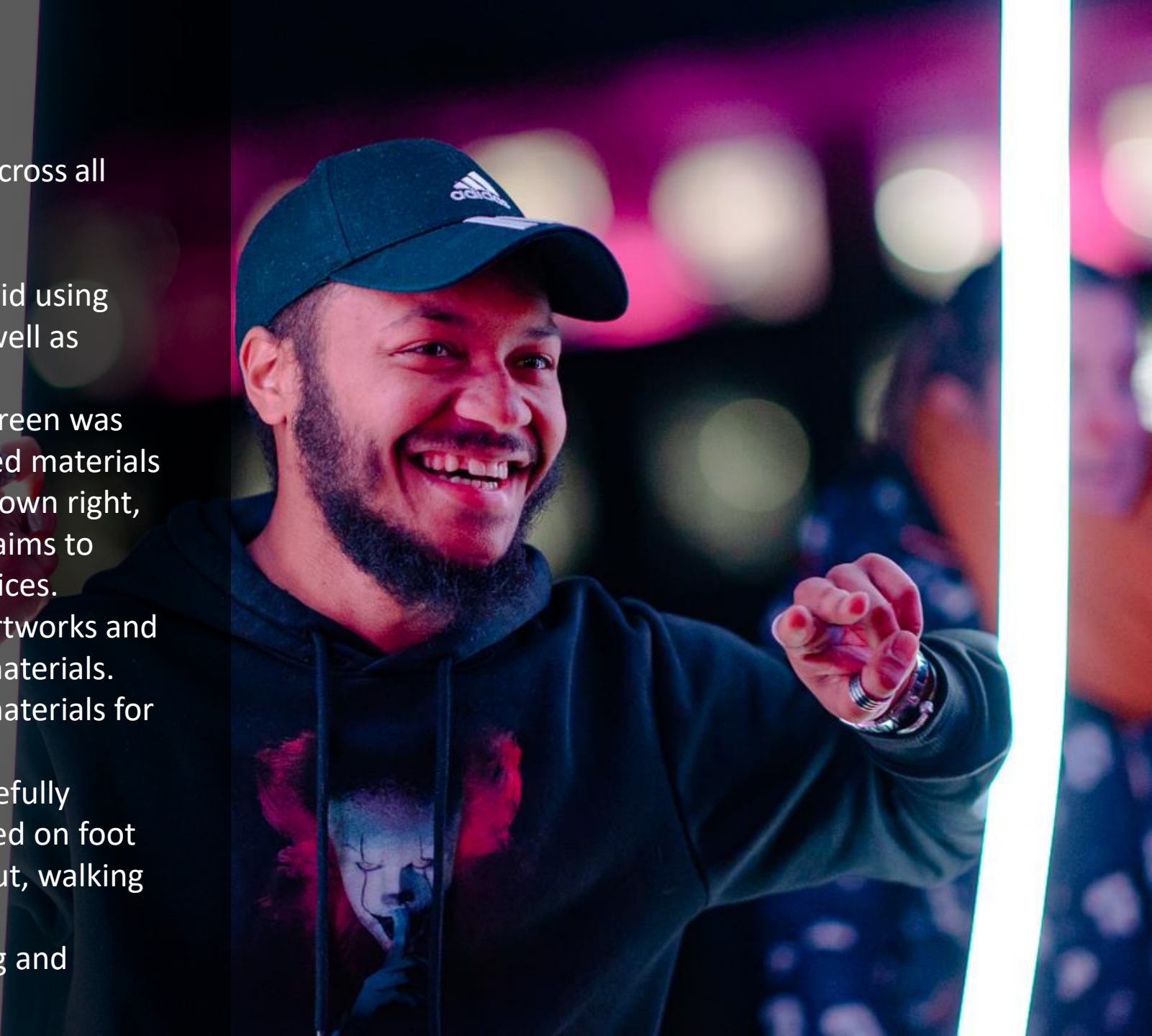
- Volunteers and participants were provided with an online training session, facilitated by the creative director, event production team and the health and safety lead.
- 30 volunteers worked on the festival, and were mentored by the crew, and creative team. Many of these used as part of their University studies for placements and to gain a further insight into the industry.
- Stewards were engaged who lived local and able to showcase their skills at customer interaction and supporting the safe and effective delivery of the event.



# SUSTAINABLE

Work in an environmentally sustainable way across all areas of the festival offer

- All installations were powered from the grid using existing power sources across the city as well as energy-efficient lighting.
- The festival information kiosk in College Green was reused from 2022 and made using upcycled materials and off cuts to create an installation in its own right, which can be used for years to come and aims to encourage recycling and sustainable practices.
- The programme included the reusing of artworks and installations to minimise the use of new materials. Morag Myerscough used all repurposed materials for her 'Let it Shine' artwork
- The locations of the installations were carefully selected so that the festival can be explored on foot and encourage people to get out and about, walking from one location to the next.
- Levy payers / businesses provided catering and refreshments in established restaurants.





# MARKETING & PR ACHIEVEMENTS

- PR campaign reached 98 million people
- 118 pieces of media coverage
- 15 broadcast hits; including 8 interviews reaching 5.5 million across ITV West, BBC Points West and more
- 98 online and print articles
- National print and online coverage including Daily Telegraph, Candis and Countryside
- A tour for 30 Bristol IGers, with a combined reach of 350k+
- 23.57% increase in BLF Instagram followers
- 62,500 views of the interactive website map
- 473 downloads of the Guide.AI audio guide (up 294% YoY from 120), with a 5\* rating
- 476 uses of the 30% off First Bus tickets (up 815% YoY from 51)
- Visit Bristol Instagram takeover with an audience of 78.8K, reaching 161k
- Cross-channel social media impressions: 923,322



# CONCLUSION

Bristol Light Festival made its highly anticipated return (3rd – 12th February) with ten evenings of stunning light installations across the city centre. Eleven playful, immersive, and colourful artworks illuminated some of Bristol's well-trodden paths as well as some unexpected places to create a city-wide event that was enjoyed by all.

The installations were met with excitement and delight as visitors of all ages and backgrounds explored the trail of light artworks created by world-renowned artists and the best of Bristol talent, all installations making their debut in the city. The programme was carefully curated to evoke feelings of discovery, play, peace and reflection, and people used the event as an opportunity to spend time with family, friends and loved ones whilst enjoying the city centre.

Bristol Light Festival attracted a total of 250,000 visitors to the city centre to explore the city through light, shopping, eating and drinking along the way.

A total of £6.9m spend was associated with all those visiting the festival with a total of £3.3m of the spend estimated to be additional, occurring as a direct result of the festival taking place

This is almost double the number of visitors to the 2020 edition. The 2023 festival was incredibly well received by all those attending and enjoying the event. The external research and visitor evaluation carried out showed that the extended period of the event, the variety and high quality of installations was loved by all attending the 2023 event.

# THANK YOU

The team would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported the Bristol Light Festival in 2023 and we look forward to working together again in 2024.

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A large illuminated sign reading "CHEERS DRIVE" in a stylized font, set against a brick building at night. The sign is mounted on a metal truss structure and is illuminated with blue light. The building behind it is a multi-story brick structure with several windows. The overall scene is dark, with the blue light from the sign providing the primary illumination.


[bristolightfestival.org](http://bristolightfestival.org)

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