



Presents:

BRISTOL LIGHT FESTIVAL

2024 Festival Evaluation Report



Over 275,000 people saw Bristol in a new light

February 2024 saw Bristol Light Festival stage their fourth edition, a 10-day spectacular featuring ten immersive artworks in unexpected places across the city.

Exploring the city through colour, light and play, audiences were able to enjoy the festival across spaces in the city centre, Redcliffe & Temple, Broadmead and Cabot Circus.

"Bristol Light Festival has become my favourite event of the year. There are some parts of the city I never see but the light festival encourages access to some of our best buildings and enhances their best features."



ASCENDANCE

A world premiere for Bristol Light Festival, Ascendance was a life-sized projection of an astronaut drifting through a cosmos of vibrant flowers, butterflies and wistful hallucinations floating in the roof of St Stephens Church.

This interstellar installation was a serene space for audiences to sit and contemplate the fragility and fleeting nature of human existence, with a soundtrack composed by Spesh Maloney.

Davy & Kristin McGuire are multi-award-winning mixed reality artists, internationally renowned for their idiosyncratic experiments in digital projection, immersive art and storytelling were responsible for creating this premiere piece for the 2024 festival.

Ascendance saw around 18,000 visitors enjoying the spectacular of the Ascendance installation.



BRISTOL IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA

Dave Buonaguidi, AKA Real Hackney Dave is Hackney-based artist who combines the visual and verbal language of advertising and propaganda with unique imagery and materials of found objects and ephemera.

This installation was inspired by the 'Good Idea' print series, with a love note to Bristol enshrined in huge, eye-catching pink lights.

Bristol is Always a Good Idea was enjoyed by over 10,000 visitors over the period of the 2024 event.



BRISTOL
IS ALWAYS
A GOOD IDEA

ELYSIAN

Elysian was a series of colossal inflatable illuminated arches which were enjoyed in Quakers Friars area of Cabot Circus. The installation was created to allow visitors to walk through and under the impressive inflatables. Elysian provided a unique spatial experience, an invitation to explore the environment in a new and playful way.

Atelier Sisu is an award-winning Sydney-based art practice, led by Peruvian sculptor and industrial designer Renzo B. Larriviere and architectural designer and artist Zara Pasfield. The pair work with a multi-disciplinary team to create experiential environments, installations and unique sculptural pieces. Their direction of work sits between the fields of art and architecture (art-architecture), with particular focus in the realm of public art.

Elysian saw around 30,000 visitors over the period of the 2024 event enjoying the beauty of the installation.



EMERGENCE

Emergence was a huge, mirrored sanctum, completely reflective which provided audiences with a new perspective of a once-familiar space. It was designed to act as a place of contemplation amongst the chaos of the outside world.

This is Loop is the collaborative artistic partnership of artists Harriet Lumby and Alan Hayes. Based at their Somerset studio they have established a reputation for creating large scale experiential installations utilising reflections and illusion at the intersection of technology, science and art. Their playful sculptures invite audiences to be immersed by choreographed audio-visual journeys.

Emergence saw around 33,000 visitors over the period of the 2024 event enjoyed by all.



EVANESCENT

Visitors were immersed in and around the giant inflatable bubbles which appeared in College Green. Evanescent encouraged visitors to playfully explore our delicate world with a sense of wonder and delight.

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Evanescent saw around 32,000 visitors enjoying the immersive spectacular of the Evanescent installation.



PULSE

Visitors were invited to immerse themselves in Pulse, a 40-metre-long audio-visual installation made up of more than 14,000 individual LEDs. Step inside enormous rings of light and experience a new perspective on Bristol. This is Loop collaborated with audio artist Dan Bibby to create the soundscape for this piece. Pulse was situated in the Amphitheatre set within the backdrop of the Harbourside for all to enjoy.

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Ascendance saw around 42,000 visitors enjoying the spectacular Pulse installation.



SWING SONG

Bristol Light Festival's very own Swing Song was back! A set of six interactive swings which lit up and played music as visitors swung back and forth. Flying high for a crescendo or going low for more ambient vibes. The swings played a set of tracks which have been produced especially for Bristol Light Festival.

One swing controls the bass line, another controls the melody, and a third controls drums and percussion. Small movements produced simple tunes, but as users swung higher and higher the tracks evolved into more complex melodies.

Swing Song is based on a concept by Bristol Light Festival and made by Tired Industries.

Swing Song saw over 6,500 visitors enjoying the interactive delight of the very popular swings!



THE NECTARY

A multi-sensory and immersive light artwork, The Nectary invited guests to step inside a giant flower to gain a unique perspective on nature in the beauty of Queen Square

Created as a collaborative project between artist Alison Smith and Dr. Chris Hassall, lecturer in Animal Biology at the University of Leeds, the installation was an art/science crossover highlighting the importance of pollinating insects. The inspiration for the piece came from the work of Phd student Thomas Daily at the University of Leeds, looking into bio-acoustics as a new way of monitoring insect populations by listening to them.

The Nectary saw over 28,000 visitors enjoying the immersive delight of enjoying the sounds of nature within the giant flowers.



THE UNFOLDING

Bristol-based Paraorchestra's No. 1 Classical Chart Album. With a lighting team led by Alex Keighley from SLX, The Unfolding invited audiences to look up within the beautiful grounds of Temple Church. The soundscape by Hannah Peel and Paraorchestra created a meditative experience, while onlookers watched beams of light gently move to the music, to reveal a canopy above them, bringing the building to life through light.

Designer – Alex Keighley

Lighting Designer – Kate Bonney

Programmer – Neil Foulis

Music – Hannah Peel and Paraorchestra

The Unfolding saw over 31,000 visitors over the period of the 2024 event enjoying the spectacular of the installation.



WILDLIGHT

Visitors took a walk on the wild side as animals escaped the giant TV into the streets around them. WildLight celebrated the beauty of the natural world, following the passage of light across the globe, and the curious bioluminescence light, made by creatures such as fireflies, which pierces the darkness of the night.

Left Handed Giant was transformed into a giant retro television set and visitors watched out for the animals who escaped the screen to the surrounding area; dolphins leaping out of the river Avon, penguins peeking around corners, meerkats playing on the wall of Boca Bar and baby elephants stomping around.

WildLight was created as the result of a collaboration between Bristol Light Festival's Creative Director Katherine Jewkes and BBC Studios Series Producer Tuppence Stone.

WildLight saw over 44,000 visitors over the period of the 2024 event which was enjoyed by all.



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** – Free to enjoy and fully accessible
4. **INCLUSIVE** - We curate our programme to be reflective of Bristol, programming artists from a range of backgrounds - celebrating the diversity of our city
5. **SUSTAINABLE** - Work in an environmentally sustainable way across all areas of the festival offering

Bristol Light Festival was founded by Bristol City Centre Business Improvement District (BID) and is presented in partnership with Redcliffe & Temple BID supported by Broadmead BID, Cabot Circus and Visit Bristol.



PLAYFUL

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

- 91% of attendees agreed the city was welcoming
- Attendees agreed that the event was attractive (93%), safe (85%), and unique (85%)
- 68% of attendees were a resident of Bristol or worked/studied in the city. 18% were visiting Bristol for the day and 12% were staying overnight.

"Awe inspiring at times, I really loved visiting the inside of Temple Church lit up and the city centre transformed into a light playground."



SUPPORTIVE

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

- A total of £10.4m spend was associated with all those visiting the festival compared with £6.9m in 2023
- A total of £8.7m of the spend was estimated as additional, occurring as a direct result of the festival taking place, compared with £3.3m in 2023*
- Average spend by each visitor was £26.20 (up from £23.51 in 2023)
- Visitors staying overnight increased from 2023, resulting in a 100% spend uplift, contributing £1,593,380
- 75% of respondents had made their trip to Bristol specifically for the Light Festival (up from 73% in 2023 and 68% in 2022)
- Average dwell time was 3 hours 33 minutes (an increase of 40 minutes versus 2023)

*We engaged a new consultant from 2023 so, although topics were kept consistent for comparison purposes, each consultant takes a different approach to economic impact assessment which needs to be considered when comparing against previous years.



SUPPORTIVE

"Just wanted to drop a quick email to say a huge congratulations on another successful Light Festival - it was probably my favourite so far!"

"A fun, immersive, unique way to spend an evening, seeing the city from a different perspective. I was wowed by the creativity and beauty of the installations."

"Fantastic to be out and about in Bristol with such a great atmosphere. Felt really vibrant."

"Great atmosphere and good to see so many people enjoying it, brightens up the winter nights"



WELCOMING

Free to enjoy and fully accessible

- 30% of attendees had visited Bristol with their family and 24% had done so with friends. 30% had visited with their spouse/partner. Just 16% has visited alone and 2% with colleagues
- 85% of respondents agreed the place was unique

"Bristol Light Festival has become my favourite event of the year. There are some parts of the city I never see but the Light Festival encourages access to some of our best buildings and enhances their best features."



WELCOMING

Demographic of survey respondents:

- The largest proportions of survey respondents 30% were aged 35-44 years
- 7.7% of visitors aged 16 – 34
- 15% of visitors over 60 years
- 63% of all survey respondents were female and 35% were male
- 73% of all respondents lived in the 'BS' postcode (down from 85% in 2023)
- There was a higher proportion of staying visitors (12% versus 4% in 2023)

"A good night out, wouldn't have gone into town without it being on so was a good reason to leave the house in winter!"



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 10 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 55 paid employment opportunities were created for event and creative personnel and organisations throughout the planning and delivery of the event.
- The majority of organisations and artists were commissioned from England with one internationally based artist.



INCLUSIVE: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PAID EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTISTS /
CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS AND EVENT PROFESSIONALS

- 75 artists, creatives and event specialists including operational staff were employed.
- 150 crew, volunteers, suppliers and participants worked at Bristol Light Festival.
- 275,000 live physical audience.



INCLUSIVE: SKILLS AND TRAINING

OPPORTUNITIES CREATED

- Due to the nature and variety of installations at the event, stewards and security personnel given the opportunity to experience different elements of the event, engage with the audience and use their skills to oversee the management of different areas and spaces at the event.
- The extensive creativity involved in the event allowed many of the team and suppliers to utilise their creative and associated skills to be used to create the installations.
- Stewards and volunteers were engaged who lived locally 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 offering

- 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 Queen Square was reused from previous years and made using upcycled materials and off cuts to create, which can be used for years to come and aims to encourage recycling and sustainable practices.
- 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 ACHIEVEMENTS

- 36% increase in website users during the festival (from 50,655 to 68,690)
- 85,249 views of the website map page (up 36% YoY from 62,500)
- 648 downloads of the Guide.AI audio guide (up 37% YoY from 473), with a 5* rating
- Instagram
 - 34.68% increase in Instagram followers
 - 882% increase in reach (33,949 in 2023 to 333,528 in 2024) due predominantly collab posts
 - 87% increase in tagged stories, (998 to 1,869)
- 49.5% increase in cross-channel social media impressions (923,322 to 1,380,619)
- 21.1% increase in cross-channel social media likes (16,362 to 19,817)
- 153% increase in impressions from Visit Bristol takeover (99,083 to 251,649) by doubling the number of posts



PR ACHIEVEMENTS

- PR reached over 4.9 billion people
- 222 pieces of media coverage
- 45 broadcast hits reaching over 13 million across Radio 4, Points West and more including 37 BBC broadcasts
- 158 online and print articles
- National print and online coverage including Sunday Telegraph, the BBC online homepage, The I paper, The Sun print story and Bristol Life cover story
- A tour for 11 Bristol IGers, with a combined reach of 54k+
- A tour for 6 national influencers with a combined reach of 469k+
- From our audience survey, 23% of respondents stated they had seen something in the local or national news, this is up from 13% in 2023



CONCLUSION



Bristol Light Festival made its highly anticipated return (2nd – 11th February) with ten evenings of stunning light installations across the city centre. Ten 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 275,000 visitors to the city centre to explore the city through light, shopping, eating and drinking along the way.

A total of £10.4m spend was associated with all those visiting the festival with a total of £8.7m of the spend estimated to be additional, occurring as a direct result of the festival taking place.

This is a 10% increase on the number of visitors to the 2023 festival, despite having two adverse weather days where footfall was significantly decreased.

THANK YOU

The team would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported the Bristol Light Festival in 2024 and we look forward to working together again in 2025.

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