

## **Bristol Guildhall: Outline Public Art Strategy**

Site: Former Bristol Guildhall, Broad Street, Bristol BS1 1DE  
Client: Paton Developments working on behalf of Hotel Gotham  
Date: 06 October 2023  
Version: 05  
Status: FINAL



Bristol Guildhall, Broad St entrance (source: Wikipedia)

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This outline public art strategy has been commissioned by Paton Developments working on behalf of their client, Hotel Gotham, who are redeveloping the former Guildhall site into a bespoke luxury 5\* hotel with 75 bedrooms, a spa, rooftop terrace bar, cocktail bar and a restaurant, opening in late 2024.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2 The appointed public art consultant will work closely with the client, their contractors and their interior designers Squid Inc to develop a programme of bespoke site specific contemporary artworks in response to the Bristol Guildhall building, its history, and the wider city context of Bristol.
- 1.3 Public artworks commissioned will need to be a good fit not only with the design ethos of the Hotel Gotham, but also with Bristol – a hugely creative city known for its innovation in the arts, and with a large resident artist community.

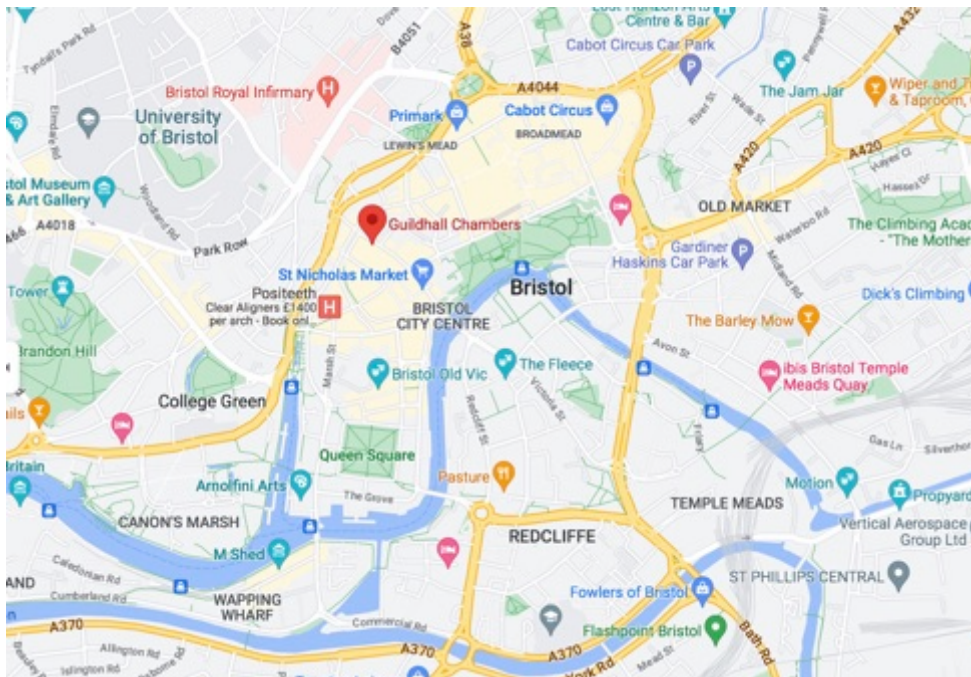
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<sup>1</sup> <https://bespokehotels.com/hotel-gotham-bristol/>

- 1.4 Public art commissioning at Bristol Guildhall will be designed around the principles of high quality, craftsmanship and innovation in the field of contemporary art. Where possible the new works will illuminate the historic qualities of the listed building, be impactful, support wayfinding and placemaking and be inspired by elements of the building and its history. Public art commissions will be located in the most publicly accessible parts of the site and building to ensure they are as ‘public’ as possible.

## 2. Background information

### 2.1 Location



Bristol Guildhall shown in wider Bristol context (Google Maps)

- 2.1.1 Bristol Guildhall is located centrally, in the heart of the historic medieval city centre, opposite Bristol Crown Court but also close to numerous city centre hotels, restaurants, cafes and bars. It is not far from St Nicholas’ Market, historic Castle Park and Broadmead shopping centre.
- 2.1.2 The Guildhall building has frontages onto both Broad Street and Small Street. The main entrance to the new hotel will be from Broad Street. There will also be public access opened up around the exterior of the building via the courtyard connecting Broad Street and Small Street.
- 2.1.3 Bristol today is an established centre for creative innovation and geographically is the gateway to England’s West Country. It has a population estimated c.471,200 at the end of June 2021, based on

census data<sup>2</sup>. It is the largest city in south west England, one of 11 'Core Cities' in the UK and the fastest growing of the Core Cities over the last 10 years. Since 2017 Bristol has also been part of the West of England Combined Authority<sup>3</sup>, a city-region that also include Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire, and is led by the Mayor of the West of England.

2.1.4 Bristol is well connected via public transport, with a major railway station at Temple Meads and an airport.

2.1.5 The city has two universities – the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England (UWE) which runs a number of creative courses. (In 2017/18 there were 54,000 students registered in total at both universities).



Bristol Guildhall showing frontage onto Small St (the courtyard will be accessed through the double doors on the right)

## 2.2 Cultural context – Bristol today

2.2.1 *'The cultural and creative economy is what makes Bristol unique. It is the city's beating heart bringing life into all of our communities.'*<sup>4</sup>

Bristol One City Culture Board [www.bristolonecity.com](http://www.bristolonecity.com)

2.2.2 In 2019 Bristol topped a poll as the most artistic city in the UK, ahead of Brighton and Manchester<sup>5</sup>. It has theatres, art galleries, museums, festivals, music venues, cinemas, a thriving film industry and many

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-and-mayor/statistics-census-information/population-of-bristol>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bristolonecity.com/the-culture-board/>

funded creative organisations with specialisms including circus, dance, writing and new technology.

- 2.2.3 In 2017 Bristol City Council commissioned a strategy for Bristol Culture titled: *'City of Openness, Imagination and Originators'* by Tom Fleming.<sup>6</sup> This strategy recognised 'cultural place-making' as one of six priority intervention areas, aiming to facilitate *'culture-led development and embed cultural elements across the physical and emotional geography of Bristol'*.
- 2.2.4 In 2018 Arts Council England commissioned Bristol Visual Arts Review, a report which explored funded and unfunded organisations and creative activity in the city with a view to informing future Arts Council funding decisions.<sup>7</sup> Between 2023 and 2026, twenty four Bristol-based creative organisations are receiving a total of £10m Arts Council funding – a huge investment in the city's creativity.
- 2.2.5 The city is well represented for visual arts, with gallery spaces including Arnolfini, Spike Island (a gallery with over 70 artists studios), Bristol Museum & Art Gallery and the Royal West of England Academy. As well as Spike Island there are numerous other artists' studio spaces in Bristol including Jamaica Street Studios (an artist-led studio space with around 35 resident artists), BV Studios (120 artists), InBristol (at least 36 studios), St Anne's House, The Island, Hamilton House, Centrespace (29 studios), Estate of the Arts (50 studios) and Mivart Street Studios (50 studios).

## **2.3 Film in Bristol**

- 2.3.1 In 2017 Bristol was designated a UNESCO City of Film<sup>8</sup>, recognising the city's achievements as a world leader in the field of film and the moving image. Bristol hosts 11 annual international film festivals, and is home to the BFI Film Hub South West and West Midlands, a network of 189 cinemas, festivals, arts organisations and exhibitors who work to foster film inclusivity and skills development. The Watershed in central Bristol [www.watershed.co.uk](http://www.watershed.co.uk) is a 3-screen cinema but also a centre for talent development and creative technology. It leads and links many film-based Bristol events together. Aardman Animation (creators of Wallace and Gromit) and the BBC Natural History Film Unit are both based in the city. Bristol Film Unit and The Bottle Yard Studios encourage film production in the city.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/bristol-been-named-most-artistic-2761382>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/767-city-of-openness-imagination-and-originators-a-strategy-for-bristol-culture/file>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.a-n.co.uk/research/bristol-visual-arts-review/>

<sup>8</sup> [www.bristolcityoffilm.co.uk](http://www.bristolcityoffilm.co.uk)

2.3.2 Annual short film festival Encounters (which was established in 1995 and takes place every September) showcases new and emerging talent. In June 2023 they ran a special event with A Wall is a Screen, projecting a series of short films onto outdoor sites within the old city.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.4 Public art in Bristol



A poster for the innovative 1968 exhibition at Arnolfini, including 5 public artworks displayed at sites around the city.

2.4.1 Bristol has long been seen as one of the UK's leading cities for public art commissioning, and the city council has had a public art policy and a dedicated Public Art Officer role since at least 2000. A refreshed Art in the Public Realm website was launched in 2023 at [www.aprb.co.uk](http://www.aprb.co.uk)

2.4.2 Today Bristol is perhaps most famous internationally for its street artworks by graffiti artist Banksy (his first known work in Bristol dates from 1997) and work by other street artists. However Bristol has a long

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.encounters.film/a-wall-is-a-screen-secrets-of-the-old-city>

history of public art commissioning and many other significant local, national and international visual artists have had temporary and permanent public artworks installed in Bristol. Artists include Theaster Gates, Jeppe Hein, Serena Korda, Heather and Ivan Morison, Olaf Breuning, Graham Fagen, Hew Locke, Richard Long, Katie Paterson, Sarah Staton, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Peter Randall-Page, Wolfgang Buttress, Jo Lathwood and Alice Channer. There are numerous examples of public art commissions at Bristol schools, both universities, hospitals and new developments in Bristol including hotels, housing schemes and shopping centres.



Bristol Six Sisters mural project on North Road, Bristol by six female Bristol-based mural artists, completed 2021. Commissioned by UpFest.  
(Artists: Bex Glover, Alex Lucas, Zoe Power, Gemma Compton, Sophie Long and Ejits)

- 2.4.3 Historic public art in Bristol has generated significant discussion and direct action in Bristol in recent times. In June 2020 a 1895 bronze statue of Bristol C17th slave trader Edward Colston (sited in an area known as The Centre, a few streets away from the Guildhall) was toppled and dragged into Bristol harbour by anti-racist activists. Around 14,000 people responded to a survey asking residents what they think should happen to the statue; 4 out of 5 respondents said they thought it should go on display in a Bristol museum. The statue is now held in the collection at M Shed, the museum of Bristol's history.
- 2.4.4 The aspirations of Bristol City Council's City Centre Development Plan includes:
- A joined-up approach for the provision of public art throughout the Broadmead area, including artist led functional design and integration of art in the design of urban fabric and green space

- Public art is a key element of wayfinding and legibility within the built environment, helping to create a welcome at key gateways and communicate the identity of the city
- A wide range of media including physical sculpture, light, sound, digital and environmental artworks as well as temporary installations and happenings
- Prioritising opportunities and building skills for Bristol-based artists and producers from under-represented communities

2.4.5 The Public Art approach for Bristol advocated by Bristol City Council and on [www.aprb.co.uk](http://www.aprb.co.uk) is underpinned by 5 key principles that put cultural experience, creative practice and best practice art commissioning at the heart of:

- **SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT:** Creatively engaging, informing and empowering our citizens, communities and stakeholders
- **VIBRANT PLACEMAKING:** Imagining and contributing to liveable, loved, playful and unique place to live, work and move through
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** Supporting a programme of work that contributes to an environmentally and socially sustainable city
- **QUALITY URBAN DESIGN:** Embedding quality public art and culture into schemes as early as possible to maximise economic, civic and social value for developers, residents and users.
- **CULTURAL ECOLOGY:** Nurturing Bristol's cultural, creative ecology by commissioning artists and producers and providing space to allow their vision and ideas to thrive.

2.4.6 The approach for commissioning public art at Bristol Guildhall will be guided by these five public art principles and the aspirations of the City Centre Development Plan.

### 3. Public art at Bristol Guildhall

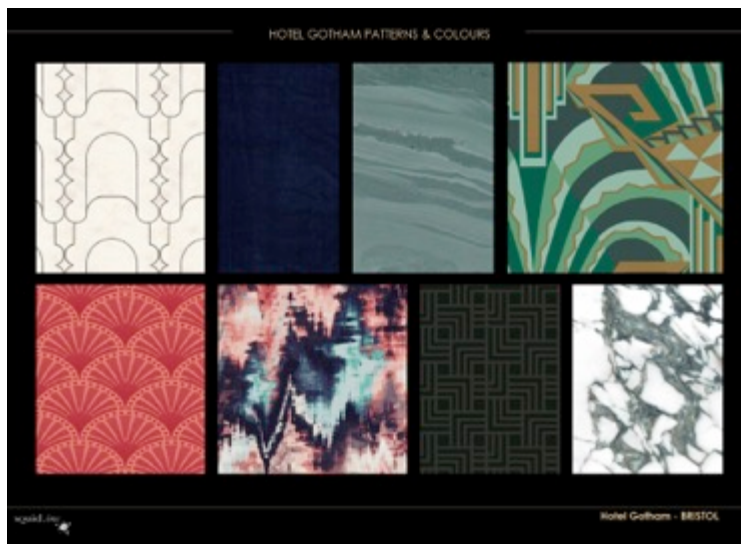
#### 3.1 The Hotel Gotham design concept



Hotel Gotham, Manchester

3.1.1 Hotel Gotham's brand and its interiors styling by Squid Inc is both theatrical and luxurious, inspired by the Art Deco period of the 1930s in terms of materials, colours and forms. The first Hotel Gotham in Manchester is a 5 star luxury hotel with a restaurant and bar, located in a listed, neoclassical former bank building in Manchester's central conservation area designed by Edwin Lutyens in 1928.

3.1.2 While the buildings in Manchester and Bristol are from markedly different eras, the interior designers will bring the same sensibility to the Bristol hotel design. Commissioned artworks, particularly where they are located in interior locations at the hotel, must work in harmony with the interior designs.



Hotel Gotham patterns and materials palette, Squid inc (interior designers)



## **3.2 Approach to public art to date at Bristol Guildhall**

3.2.1 The approach to public art for the Hotel Gotham in Bristol so far has involved a number of artists being invited to present proposals in response to the site following a tour, but without a clear artist brief being issued. These proposals were put forward in 2017 so are now six years old and have not been revisited or developed. No artists were formally contracted to further develop or deliver any of the proposals put forward, and some of the earlier proposals are now no longer relevant given changes to the wider scheme.

3.2.2 These early proposals included:

- a section of carved Corian panelling
- a proposal for some decorative overhead lighting in the courtyard

3.2.3 While we recognise the value of both of these creative responses, there are several issues with proceeding with them. Firstly, a lot of time that has elapsed since the proposals were put forward and since then the work of both artists has changed significantly. Secondly there have been changes within the development that in particular impact upon the Corian proposal, meaning this project would no longer be viable within the development as the Corian panelling has been excluded from current designs. Thirdly the lighting proposal by Kathy Hinde was an adaptation of a pre-existing project elsewhere<sup>10</sup> and therefore would not be considered a genuinely bespoke site specific response to the Guildhall site.

3.2.4 Given this situation we propose to incorporate learning from this process (and the sites/approaches identified) and start afresh with creative commissioning for the Guildhall site. This time a detailed artist brief will be issued for each identified site/commission opportunity. Each brief be used as the foundation of an artist contract for each commissioned artist project.

3.2.5 The public art consultant may consider re-approaching artists who previously submitted proposals (Anna Gravelle and Kathy Hinde) should they still be interested and if their work still feels relevant to the issued artist briefs, but there is no commitment required to follow through on either of these proposals, and it is advised against given the time elapsed and the changing proposals outlined above.

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<sup>10</sup> It was originally commissioned for Kidderminster Arts Festival in 2015 as a temporary project with an additional sound element  
<https://kathyhinde.co.uk/work/luminous-birds/>

### 3.3 Precedent Projects

3.3.1 There is a long history of artists and designers being commissioned to create work for hotels, and more recently the concept of the 'art hotel' has become more prevalent.<sup>11</sup> Also included within this section are a range of artist and designer precedent projects in other similar spaces, that could apply to the design of public spaces in hotels.

#### 3.3.2 Arlatan Hotel, France (2018)

[www.arlatan.com](http://www.arlatan.com)

<https://www.wallpaper.com/art/maja-hoffmann-jorge-pardo-larlatan-hotel-arles>

Conceived as an entire artwork, the interiors of the Arlatan Hotel and artist residence in Arles, France, were designed by Cuban-born American artist Jorge Pardo. The hotel has 30 rooms and 11 artist residences and opened in 2018. Artworks include the bespoke tiling throughout the spaces (including the swimming pool) and lighting. Pardo also painted onto walls, doors and furniture.



Above left: the Arlatan restaurant with walls, floors and lighting designed by Jorge Pardo.  
Above right: the Arlatan staircase with lighting and flooring by Pardo, 2018

#### 3.3.3 Ace Hotel, Shoreditch London (2013 – 2020)

<https://www.wallpaper.com/design/ready-made-go-2-set-to-return-to-the-ace-hotel-with-experimental-forms>

<http://readymadego.acehotel.com/more>

Ace Hotel hosted Ready Made Go, an annual exhibition/installation during London Design Festival which has included functional work by up and coming designers such as furniture, signage, glassware, door handles, soap dishes, cake stands, chess sets, quilts, lighting, sculpture, jewellery and even a climbing wall.

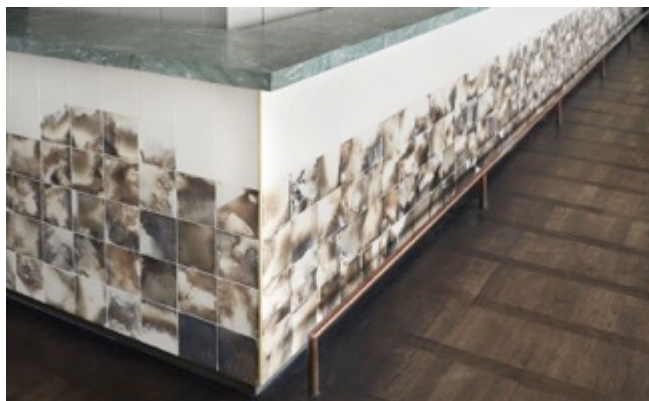
<sup>11</sup> <https://elephant.art/get-a-room-the-rise-of-the-art-hotel/>



Ace hotel Totem stools designed by Michael Marriott, made from waste materials including food packaging, 2017



Ace hotel Cakestand designed by Minimalux, 2018



Ace Hotel smoke fired tiles on the bar, designed by Assemble Studio in collab with Granby Workshop, 2016



Ready Made Go 3 products designed for use at the Ace Hotel by James Shaw, Ian McIntyre and others



Ace Hotel Stacking stools designed by Philippe Malouin, 2015

### 3.3.4 Bulgari Hotel, London (2022)

<https://yinkailori.com/work/yinka-ilori-x-bulgari-hotel-london>

Artist Yinka Ilori was invited to collaborate with the hotel to design a teastand for their afternoon tea offering, to celebrate their 10 year anniversary.



Yinka Ilori teastand, Bulgari Hotel, 2022

### 3.3.5 Art'otel Battersea Power Station, London (2022)

<https://www.the-luxuryreport.com/jaime-hayons-art-at-the-artotel-at-london-battersea-power-station/>

Spanish artist and designer Jaime Hayon was engaged as 'Signature Artist' to shape the design of the bedrooms, suites and lobby at the art'otel in London, that opened in December 2022. His work includes furniture, ceramics, hanging mobiles in the cafe and metal screens.



Above and below: Jaime Hayon designs at the Art'otel



### 3.3.6 Midland Hotel, Morecambe, Lancashire (1930s)

<https://midlandhotelmorcambe.com>

The Art Deco Midland Hotel in Morecambe, Lancashire, a grade II\* listed seaside building, was originally designed with integrated site specific artworks by leading artists of the day including sculptural and 2D work in stone Eric Gill, a fresco by Eric Ravillious (sadly destroyed) and rugs by Marion Dorn (who also designed work for Claridges, the Savoy and Eltham Palace). The Eric Gill works included decorative stone seahorses on the exterior entrance of the building, a circular plaster relief on the ceiling at the top of the internal circular spiral staircase, a 10ft x 16ft Portland Stone bas-relief and a large fresco map of North West England.



Odysseus welcomed from the sea by Nausicaa by Eric Gill, 1933. Bas relief in Portland Stone in the foyer at the Midland Hotel



Triton and Neptune ceiling medallion by Eric Gill, 1933, Midland Hotel, Morecambe



Fresco mural by Eric Ravilious (destroyed), 1933, The rotunda at the Midland Hotel Morecambe



Interior of Midland Hotel showing the circular Marion Dorn rugs (reproduction) bespoke designed for the hotel

### 3.3.7 Clayton Hotel Bristol – Everards Printworks, Broad Street, Bristol (2022)

<https://www.claytonhotelbristolcity.com/public-art/>

The 4\* Clayton Hotel (very close to the Guildhall) which opened in April 2022 commissioned five artists to create new work integrated into the development, including two Bristol based artists (Inkie and the Department of Small Works).



See No Evil mural by Inkie, Clayton Hotel, Bristol



Mind Your Ps & Qs, one of a series of metal inset paving texts based on phrases from the world of printing, Tower Lane, Bristol



### 3.3.8 Moxy Bristol Hotel, St. Paul's Bristol (2021-22)

<https://bricksbristol.org/projects/moxy-st-pauls/>

Artist commissions included a neon internal artwork by Dr Myles-Jay Linton, an internal mural by Lucas Antics, a large painting by Bo Lanyon and Jewels of St Paul's a collaboration between writer Lawrence Hoo and designer Charles Golding, as well as a painting by Bo Lanyon.



Jewels of St Pauls by Lawrence Hoo & Charles Golding, 2021-22



Mural by Lucas Antics, ground floor bar area, 2021-22

### 3.3.9 Other interior precedent projects

The following precedent projects for artist-designed interiors are also inspirations for art commissioning at Bristol Guildhall. These include murals, textiles and wallpaper.



Celestial Mural, Alasdair Gray, the auditorium at The Oran Mor (arts and entertainment venue in a former parish church) Glasgow, 2003



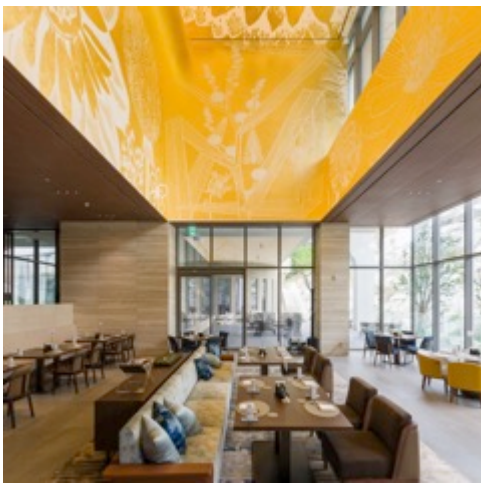
Illuminated, Sinta Tantra, mural in paint and gold leaf, central social space, TwentyTwo hotel, London, 2021



Installation view of The Mouse and the Child by Studio Morison, the Design Commission for 2019 at the NOW Gallery, Greenwich, London.



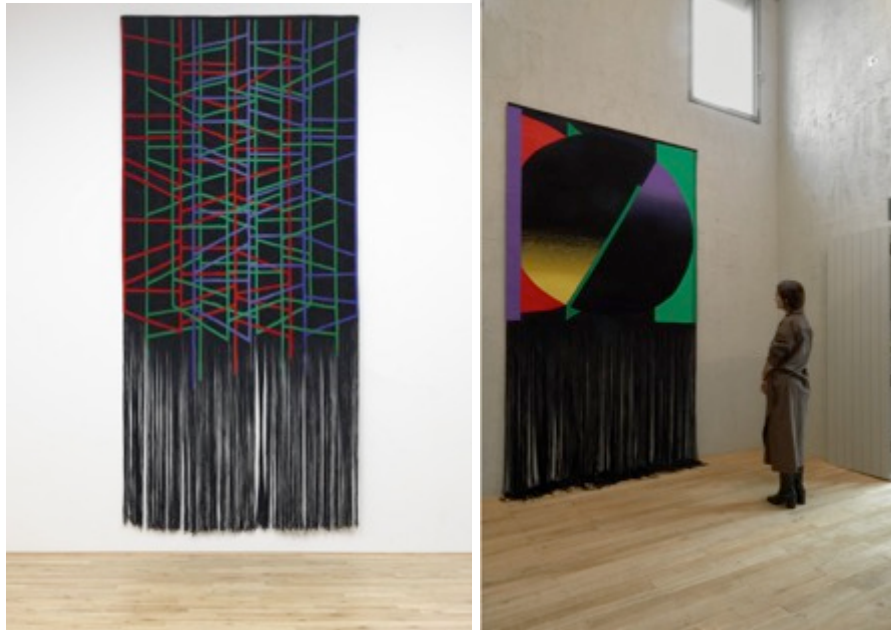
Rug designed by Alexandra Kehayoglou (date unknown)



Restaurant commission, Paul Morrison, mural in 24 carat gold leaf, Korea, 2022. Commissioned by the Hyundai Development Company.



Hayward Gallery Cafe wallpaper by Giles Round, 2017



Above left: The Fallowfield by Eva Rothschild, tapestry, 2018

Above right: Rings of Saturn by Eva Rothschild, tapestry, 2019

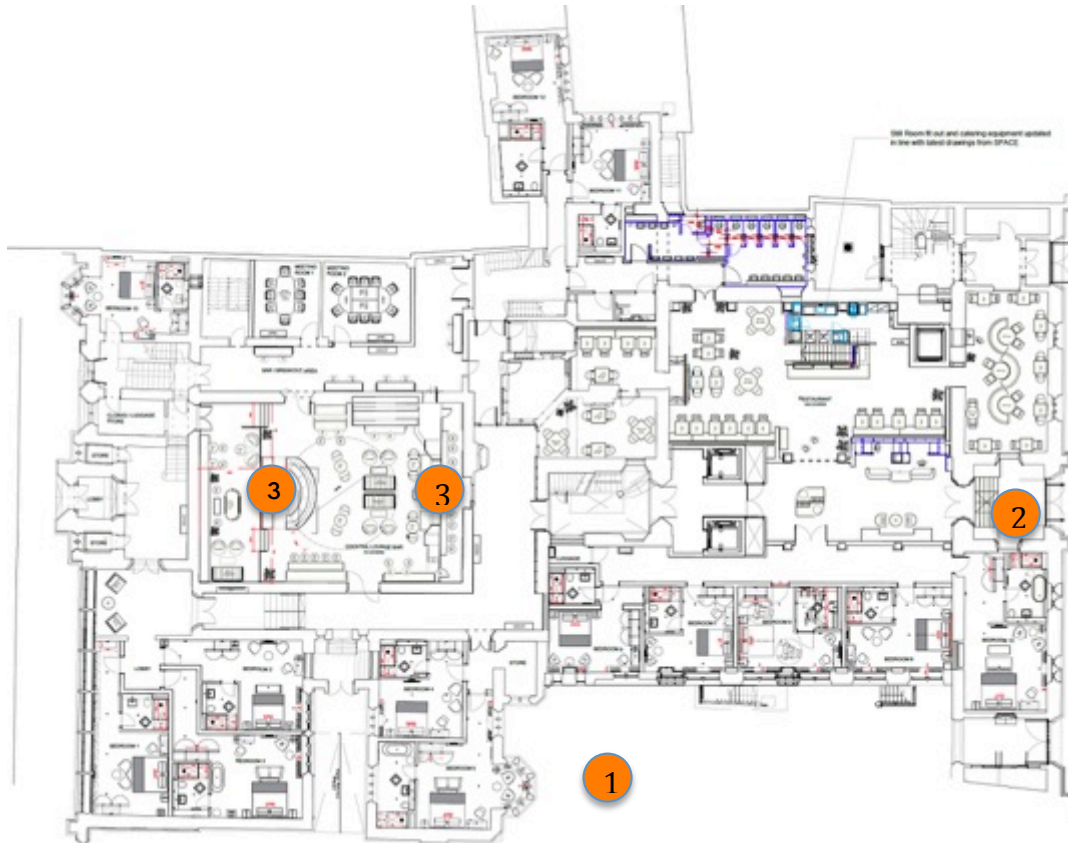
### 3.4 Guiding principles for public art at Bristol Guildhall

3.4.1 The developers of Bristol Guildhall will commission a programme of artworks that are:

- Permanent bespoke contemporary artworks integrated into the development
- In keeping with the owner's aspirations
- Fulfill the planning conditions for public art set out by the Local Authority, and therefore not require separate listed building or planning consent
- Inspired by the long tradition of site specific artworks commissioned for hotels and other key interior spaces
- Designed to be well made using high quality materials and techniques
- Functional where required (eg as lighting, furniture, directional)
- Located in the most public areas of the site, enabling as many people as possible to interact with the commissioned artworks
- Integrated sensitively into the wider interior designs of the building interiors and with its historic fabric
- Designed with sustainability in mind, using sustainable materials, processes, reducing waste and prioritising a sustainable travel approach throughout (eg exploring re-use of waste materials gathered on site during construction, stone, timber)
- Low maintenance and with a maintenance schedule issued by the artist on practical completion

- Commissioned from a well researched list of artists, prioritising opportunities for suitably qualified artists based in the region and those from under-represented communities.

### 3.5 Identified Site Locations for public art commissioning



Site plan indicating three possible site locations for art commissioning (in orange)

3.5.1 Three possible site locations have been identified for art commissioning within this strategy. These sites are:

- I. **The Courtyard** Spanning the exterior pedestrian route connecting Broad St and Small St (exterior)
- II. **The Clock Tower** interior of the 3-storey clock tower at Broad St entrance (a hanging illuminated/chandelier artwork)
- III. **The Courtroom** One or both end wall expanses inside the former courtroom / future cocktail lounge (interior)

3.5.2 It is anticipated that due to the budget available, only two of these three commissions will move forward, however all three options will continue to be explored, and it is possible that a single artist could be invited to produce work for two sites.



Indicative plan showing courtyard area marked as zone 5 (Plan produced by Nash Partnership, March 2021, drawing no 1652/L/010 Amendment T3)

## I. The Courtyard Artwork

- 3.5.3.1 The Courtyard is the most public and impactful of the three possible areas, given it is an exterior site and therefore can be seen by anyone passing the building without going inside, from either Broad Street or Small Street.
- 3.5.3.2 There will be limited floorspace, pedestrian through access will be required 24 hours a day and there may be tables/chairs in the outside area, as well as a new substation, so it is recommended that 2D artwork is installed, or work that is above head height.
- 3.5.3.3 Possible commission opportunities include:
- a commissioned illuminated artwork above head height the distance of the space between the Small St gateway and the Broad St access, supporting wayfinding and making the area safer to navigate at night (the artwork would

supplement other functional outdoor lighting provided, and be designed in conjunction with this)

- a mural or cladding on the new substation in this location, drawing the eye from Small Street.



Above left: View from Small Street looking towards the courtyard area

Above right: Inside the courtyard area, looking towards Broad St

3.5.3.4 Bristol is well known for its murals, both commissioned (Upfest) and uncommissioned (Banksy). There are many highly experienced mural artists based in Bristol and the region who could meet the brief to design and paint an exterior mural in this location. As such this commission could be targeted at artists based in Bristol only, if a mural were pursued. A mural in this location could truly transform it, creating a space that is attractive and feels safer. Murals also provide excellent value for money. a mural would benefit from functional lighting as well, ensuring it is seen as much as possible.

## II. Clocktower Artwork



Indicative plan showing location of clocktower area in orange

- 3.5.4.1 The clocktower will be a 3-storey height space and the main entrance to the hotel, so therefore highly visible to many, even those walking past the Broad Street entrance without going in. Close to the ceiling, this area houses two stone statues of John Whitson and Edward Colston by John Thomas and stained glass by George Rogers of Worcester.

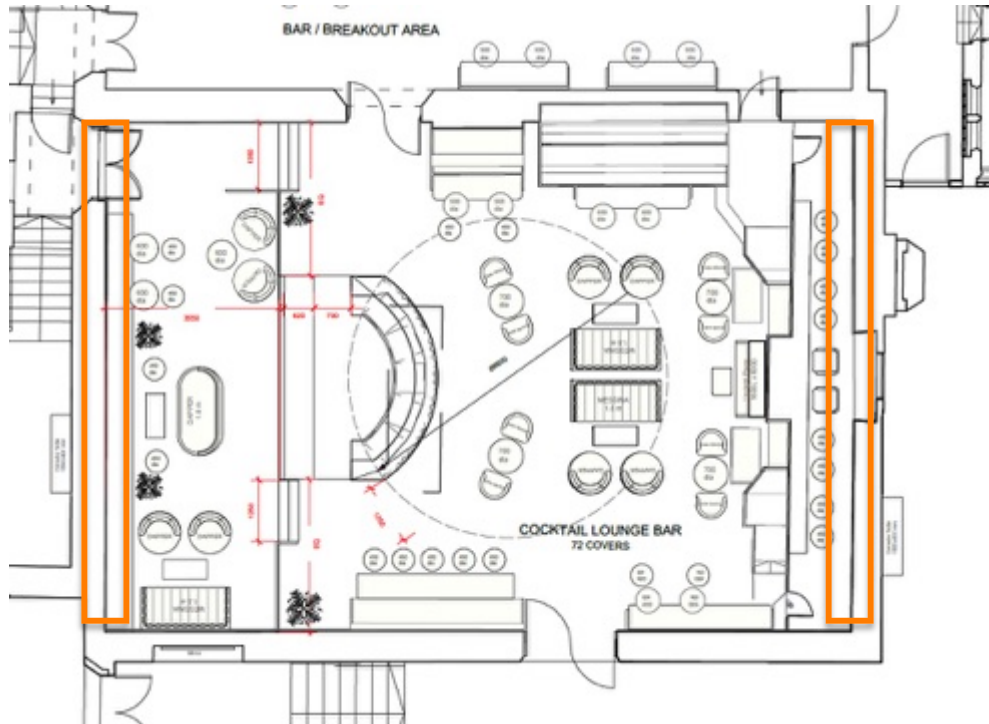


Stone statues in niches inside the clock tower, of John Whitson (c1558 – 1629) and Edward Colston



- 3.5.4.2 There is an opportunity to commission a leading contemporary artist to create a light-based work for this space that will help illuminate the stained glass and interior.

### III. Former Courtroom / Cocktail Lounge Bar



Possible wall surface locations for artwork indicated in orange (TBC via artist brief)

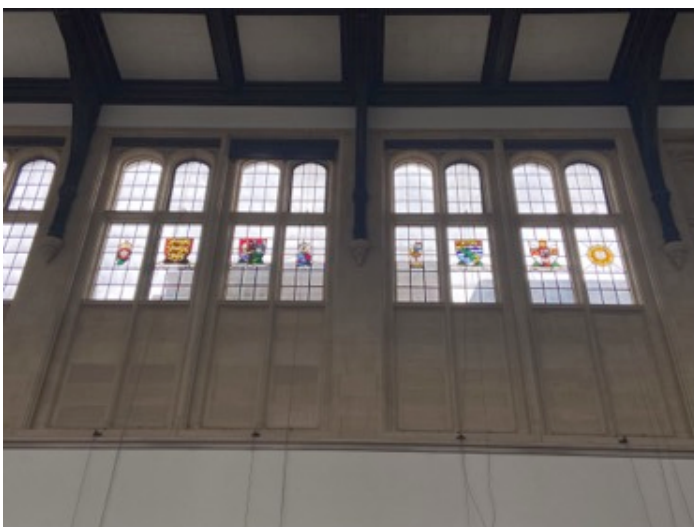
- 3.5.5.1 The contemporary artwork for this large interior space could develop in a number of ways, including:
- a film work commissioned in association with a local Bristol organisation (eg Encounters Film Festival) to be screened at regular intervals onto the walls
  - an interior mural painted directly onto the wall(s)
  - a 2D / relief or hanging work mounted onto the surface of the wall(s) eg ceramic, tapestry/textile
  - a bespoke designed wallpaper designed by an artist



Photos showing walls at each end of the former Courtroom space (March 2023)



Windows along the side of the former courtroom area



Stained glass inside the former courtroom, including heraldic symbols thought to refer to Cabot, Colston, Thomas White & others

- 3.5.5.2 There are several challenges to a film-based work being sited in this area:
- i. The challenge of a work that requires technology that will inevitably become out of date and potentially could fail over time. This is a challenge for a permanent artwork with a long lifespan.
  - ii. There would need to be an ongoing commitment from the hotel operator to continue to screen the artwork – is there a risk that the work may stop being screened or shown, perhaps seeming repetitive?
  - iii. There are windows running along both sides of this space at a high level, these areas will be corridors that will have their own lighting that will spill into the courtroom area. This could have a limiting impact how visible any sort of film work would be, outside of evenings
  - iv. The work would need to be silent, given the use of the space as a bar that will have background music and potentially live performers in the space at times.
- 3.5.5.3 While these are not insurmountable challenges they should be taken into account when further developing the artist brief for this site location.

#### **IV. Bespoke Product Design**

- 3.5.6 Although not proposed for delivery within the available budget, it is also suggested that a bespoke functional ‘multiple’ product could be designed for the hotel by an artist (inspired by the Ace Hotel model). This could be anything from a stool to a quilt or cushion, to a product that could be sold at the hotel such as a candlestick, glass or a special edition print. The product could be used within the hotel and/or on display within the hotel’s guest rooms, and could specifically be offered as a craft or design-based commission for a Bristol or SW region based artist, maker or designer.

#### **3.6 Approach to Community Engagement**

- We will engage with stakeholders with an interest in the history of the Guildhall building, including Bristol Museum and Art Gallery and Bristol City Council, during the development of the artist project briefs, and where relevant, invite their feedback.
- We will liaise with the local authority on any community members who it might be suitable to involve in the artist selection process (eg sitting on an interview panel).
- We will also engage with the local creative community of Bristol during our artist research phase, and share any open call opportunities via

Arts Council England's ArtsJobs mailing list, send opportunities directly to Bristol based artists and circulate opportunities via Visual Arts South West and artists studios' listed above.

### **3.7 Approach to Artist Selection**

- 3.7.1 Artists will be selected based on the quality of their past work, and their initial (paid) creative response to the site. Shortlisted artists will be working nationally and/or internationally, and suitably qualified for the scale of commission opportunity available. As a result, selected artists need not necessarily be based in Bristol or the South West region, but the appointed public art consultant will specifically research and seek out suitable artists based in Bristol and the wider South West region.
- 3.7.2 Artist selection for each commission is expected to be via a selected shortlist following a period of artist research (with the possibility of an 'open call' issued for the Courtyard commission, if a mural). The appointed public art consultant will carry out the artist research and present the shortlist to the client and relevant stakeholders for approval (this includes a Bristol City Council representative).
- 3.7.3 For each commission 3 or 4 artists will be invited to interview and paid a small fee (£250 - £1,000) to cover a) their time to develop a response to the brief for presentation ideally via an in-person interview held in Bristol and b) their travel expenses, inc a site visit.
- 3.7.4 The appointed public art consultant will research artists in the region, nationally and internationally, selecting on the basis of their skills and expertise, and their suitability for these opportunities. Quality of artists selected and the work produced remains paramount.

### **3.8 Budget**

- 3.8.1 A public art budget of £80k excluding public art consultant fees, structural engineer fees, groundwork preparation or other site preparation (eg preparation of external walls, loading calculations for clock tower) and planning liaison has been agreed with the client.

### **3.9 Timetable**

- 3.9.1 The development is fully under way and the anticipated timetable for completion and hotel opening is expected at the end of 2024.
- 3.9.2 We would anticipate for each creative commission:

- 3 months for artist selection including artist research, production of artist briefs, shortlisting and interviewing
- 3-month period for concept design development
- 3-month period for detailed design development
- 6-12 months fabrication/installation (depending on the complexity, listed building consent and planning requirements for each commission)

## Appendix 1: Supplementary background information

### 1. History of the site

- 1.1 The buildings standing at Bristol Guildhall today are Grade II\* listed and were built between 1843 and 1846 in a Gothic Revival architectural style to designs by Richard Shackleton Pope (1793 – 1884) who worked mainly in Bristol and was the District surveyor 1831 - 1874.
- 1.2 The Guildhall was the earliest Gothic town hall in England<sup>12</sup>. The Victorian buildings are on the site of the previous guildhall - first built for a Guild of Merchants in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. A wall and windows from the time of Henry VIII survives and were incorporated into the Victorian buildings.
- 1.3 The Guildhall was used as an assizes courthouse (where the most serious crimes were tried) from the 1860s to 1993. During the Second World War it suffered bomb damage, and in the 1960s much interior remodelling was undertaken. There have been various plans put forward for conversion of the building into a hotel since 2013; the building has been closed since 2010, and there was a major fire in March 2020<sup>13</sup>. Building work commenced on site in January 2023.



Bristol: The Old City, letterpress printed map, illustrated by Simon Tozer, printed by The Letterpress Collective (based at Centrespace studios on Leonard Lane)

<sup>12</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/educational-images/guildhall-small-street-5670>

<sup>13</sup> A detailed article about the history of the Guildhall was published by the Bristol Post in March 2020 around the time of the fire <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/history-guildhall-building-suffers-extensive-3954378>



Above left: 'Colston's House' area of the Guildhall, date of photograph unknown (source: David Martin, BCC) Above right: The medieval roof pieces, now held in the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery Collection

## 2. Architectural context

2.1 The Gothic Revival movement – which spread across the world – was pioneered by architect A.W.N Pugin, designer of the Palace of Westminster (where Bristol Guildhall's stone sculptor John Thomas was employed). Construction of the Palace of Westminster had begun several years before Bristol Guildhall in 1840. The movement sought to revive the styles used in medieval Gothic architecture, incorporating decorative patterns and detailing such as finials, pointed arches and lancet windows. By the 1880s the movement had begun to be superseded by the Arts and Crafts Movement and Modernism, which stood in opposition to Gothic Revivalism.



The Broad St facade of Bristol Guildhall showing stone statues by John Thomas

- 2.2 In terms of how the original Gothic style was carried through to interiors, this often included heraldic motifs in coats of arms, furniture incorporating painted scenes, fretwork in chairs and glazed patterns on bookcases. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Neo Gothic style permeated the 1851 Great Exhibition in displays of lacemaking, carpet designs and even heavy machinery with Gothic detailing.
- 2.3 Pugin's 1841 treatise *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, set out his two great rules of design: firstly, that every feature of a building should be essential to its proper functioning and construction; secondly, that all ornament should consist of enrichment of the essential construction of the building.
- 2.4 For the public art strategy of Bristol Guildhall, we will adopt this same approach: that the artworks (or ornament) should enrich the building – being integrated as a part of the whole, rather than stand alone.

### 3. Existing art at Bristol Guildhall



Stained glass by Rogers of Worcester, with Queen Victoria statue thought to be by John Thomas

- 3.1 The interior of the clock tower and building exterior feature 19<sup>th</sup> century stone statues by Gloucestershire-born sculptor and architect John Thomas, whose other work included sixty stone statues of kings and queens at the Houses of Parliament, twelve dragons ornamenting ceilings at Brighton Pavilion, and the grandiose Atlas Fountain at Castle Howard. According to Historic England, the niches on the exterior of the building on the Broad St facade feature stone sculptures of 'Queen Victoria, Edward III, Foster, Dunning, Colston and Whitson.'





Stone statues & detailing on the building exterior by John Thomas (Broad St facade)

- 3.2 Stained glass windows in the clock tower and throughout the building are thought to be by George Rogers of Worcester, who also made work for Gloucester Cathedral.
- 3.3 The Guildhall buildings include integrated historic artworks depicting some local historical figures that today have a contested and problematic history. There is an ongoing public debate around this issue, in Bristol and nationally. As a result, the developers will continue to seek advice from Bristol City Council, Bristol Museums and Historic England to ensure that any actions relating to these artworks at the Guildhall are in line with best practice and the city-wide approach on similar sites across Bristol.