

The Honorary Graduate: Fiona Francombe

The Orator: Lynn Barlow

Fiona Francombe is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Arts

Fiona Francombe is Site Director of The Bottle Yard Studios in Bristol. She has managed the seven-acre film and television facility owned by Bristol City Council since it opened in 2010.

Fiona's working knowledge of production, extensive industry contacts and longstanding commitment to championing the skills of regional crew, have been integral in transforming the Studios from a set of disused bottling warehouses into a bustling business hub, which today brings a host of benefits to South Bristol. Over 500 FTE jobs were generated on site in 2018, and the Studios contributed to an estimated £15 million inward investment spend into Bristol from filming-related activity.

An established base for film and TV production, The Bottle Yard attracts UK and US titles of all scales and genres. It is also home to 23 businesses delivering specialist creative, digital, technical and audio/visual expertise. 2018 saw the launch of a Media Production Diploma delivered in an on-site classroom by further education provider Boomsatsuma, and close collaboration with UWE enables students to benefit from using the Studios when vacant to enhance their coursework and to have experience of negotiating with, and working in, a professional environment.

Fiona started her career working in theatre, including the Manchester Royal Exchange and the Royal Shakespeare Company, before moving into television in 1990 when she joined the BBC's Drama department in London. Three years later she relocated to Bristol and worked for more than 14 years as a Location Manager and Line Producer for TV drama, before going on to manage Production Liaison for South West Screen and Creative England.

Fiona sits on the Royal Television Society West committee and Clifton College Council. She is a member of the Bristol UNESCO City of Film steering group and the Mayor of Bristol's C4 steering group, which was instrumental in Bristol winning the bid to become a Channel 4 creative hub.

Made at The Bottle Yard Studios

The Spanish Princess (STARZ), Hellboy (Lionsgate), Fortitude (Sky Atlantic), Poldark (BBC One), The Crystal Maze (Channel 4), Tipping Point & Tipping Point Lucky Stars (ITV), Eric, Ernie & Me (BBC Four), Ill Behaviour (BBC Two), Three Girls (BBC One), The White Princess (STARZ), Broadchurch (ITV), Trollied (Sky1), Crazyhead (E4/Netflix), Sherlock: The Abominable Bride (BBC One), The Living & The Dead (BBC One), Andy's Prehistoric Adventures (CBeebies), Galavant (Disney/ABC Studios), Wolf Hall (BBC Two), The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies (ITV).

The Honorary Degree is awarded in recognition of Fiona's exceptional contribution to film and TV production.