

Institution: The University of Huddersfield
Unit of Assessment: 34 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
Title of case study: Cultural Enrichment Through Public Engagement
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The two-year ROTOR programme of exhibitions and events has been a cornerstone of the University of Huddersfield's efforts to introduce new audiences to contemporary art and design, as encouraged by successive Arts Council policies for enhancing public engagement. As well as raising awareness, inspiring curiosity and providing cultural enrichment, it has initiated changes to local authority policies on providing cost-effective, high-quality cultural services and has functioned as a vehicle for research into how the impact of such programmes can be captured. As such, it has served as a model partnership for local authority and university sectors in offering cultural leadership, generating and measuring engagement and delivering public services.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>In 2010 a Work Foundation report warned that the UK's creative industries were at risk of failing to fulfil their potential to drive growth and innovation. Successive Arts Council policy goals have also underlined the importance of greater engagement and collaboration with a view to attracting and inspiring new audiences and so ensuring the arts are "sustainable, resilient and innovative". Launched in 2012 in partnership with Huddersfield Art Gallery, the University of Huddersfield's ROTOR programme aimed to address such concerns by providing a broad spectrum of exhibitions reflecting the breadth of the UK's creative and cultural industries.</p> <p>Crucially, the goal was to present work in a manner accessible and attractive to a wide range of new audiences. To this end, ROTOR drew on national and international exhibition-research by staff at the School of Art, Design and Architecture. All of this work had a history of public engagement, which helped establish an evaluative platform from which ROTOR could advance its prime objectives, including measuring impact beyond academia. All ROTOR exhibitions and events were free to the public and involved researchers working in close collaboration with local authority cultural service managers. Underpinning research for ROTOR I and II included peer-reviewed exhibitions from national/international cultural organisations.</p> <p><i>Flight</i>, an exhibition of work by Dr Lisa Stansbie (Head of Department, Art and Communication), launched ROTOR I. It formed part of a wider body of research, including <i>Portmanteau</i> (Halle 14/g39, Leipzig, Germany, 2011) [1], exploring sculpture and film through the use of Airfix model aeroplane kits. Comprised of sculptures, photographs, drawings and a sound piece, the exhibition was staged from January 28 until March 24 2012.</p> <p><i>Insufficient Allure</i>, a curated exhibition by Kevin Almond (Head of Department, Fashion and Textiles) and Kathryn Brennand (Fashion Senior Lecturer), investigated historical and contemporary aspects of creative pattern cutting. Underpinned by Almond's article in <i>The International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education</i> [2], it contributed new knowledge to the field and led to the first peer-review international conference on the subject. The exhibition ran from April 7 until June 6 2012.</p> <p><i>Mining Couture</i>, an exhibition by Claire Barber (Lecturer in Textile Crafts) and Professor Steve Swindells (Director of Research), explored conceptual connections between coal-mining and fashion through the metaphor of "seam". It drew on two public art commissions, from Leicestershire County Council for Snibston Discovery Museum (2011/2012) and Somerset County Council for <i>Maximum Exposure</i> (2011), and the publication of <i>Mining Couture: A Manifesto for Common Wear</i> by Blackdog in 2012 [3]. The exhibition was held from June 16 until August 11 2012.</p> <p><i>Patrick Procktor: Art and Life</i>, curated by Dr Ian Massey (Subject Leader, Communication Arts and Design), was the first exhibition of Procktor's works since his death in 2002. It highlighted new research on stylistic developments in 1960s/1970s British art and was underpinned by Massey's 2010 book of the same title [4], which included primary research at Vicenza's Galleria Ghelfi,</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

Venice's Galleria del Cavallino and Munich's Galerie Biedermann, as well as extensive interviews with David Hockney, Celia Birtwell and others. The exhibition ran from August 25 until December 1 2012.

Sisyphus, an exhibition by Dr Jill Townsley (Course Leader, Contemporary Arts and Illustration), launched ROTOR II in 2013. It explored repetition and labour through appropriated materials and was underpinned by research previously shown at, among others, the Gallery Athens Institute of Contemporary Art, Georgia, USA (2012) [5]. The exhibition was staged from January 26 until April 13, 2013.

3. References to the research (view links using Google Chrome)

Outputs:

1. Stansbie exhibition: *Portmanteau*, Halle 14/g39, Leipzig, Germany, 2011

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/10324/>

2. Almond journal article: 'Insufficient Allure: The Luxurious Art and Cost of Creative Pattern Cutting', *The International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 3(1), 2010, pp. 15-24. ISSN 1754-3266

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/8510/3/AlmondInsufficient.pdf>

3. Barber Swindells book: *Mining Couture: A Manifesto for Common Wear*, 2012, Black Dog, London. ISBN 978 1 907317 92 7

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/17473/>

4. Massey book: *Patrick Procktor Art and Life*, 2010, Unicorn Press, London. ISBN 9781906509095

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2-kBScAaLCYM0RNZTY0ZXhYNmc/edit?usp=sharing>

5. Townsley exhibition: *Upcycle*, Athens Institute of Contemporary Art, Georgia, USA, 2012

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/17244/>

Grants, funding etc:

Leicestershire County Council public art commission for Snibston Discovery Museum, Barber-Swindells, *Mining Couture*, 2011 – £20,000

Somerset County Council public art commission for *Maximum Exposure*, Barber-Swindells, *Mining Couture*, 2012 – £6,500

Lectra sponsorship for *Creative Cut* peer-review international conference on creative pattern cutting, February 2013 – £3,000

4. Details of the impact (view links using Google Chrome)

ROTOR has transformed public views on the significance of contemporary art and design and initiated change to local authority policy decisions to provide cost-effective, high-quality cultural services. It has also generated practical models, best practice and further research on public engagement strategies for partnerships between universities and cultural sectors.

ROTOR I attracted more than 14,300 visitors. Another 1,100 attended related talks, interpretation tours, workshops, film screenings, reading groups and other accompanying events designed to encourage further public participation. A number of methods were used to gauge the extent and success of the engagement arising from each exhibition, including questionnaires to gather quantitative feedback from visitors and gallery staff; the devising and incorporation of relevant

information systems; evaluation reports; and workshops, both “in-house” and public, to assess objectives and outcomes. Feedback demonstrated how ROTOЯ increased access, opportunity and understanding for a wider audience and shaped attitudes and knowledge.

Hundreds of responses collected at Huddersfield Art Gallery indicated a diverse range of ages (from as young as four) and nationalities (e.g. French, American, Finnish, Irish) among visitors to the exhibitions [a]. This feedback also revealed different interpretations of content, the ways in which visitors had been informed and inspired and how people’s views of the gallery and art in general had been changed. Comments included “Lots of wonderful inspiration to take away”, “Amazing and thought-provoking”, “A revelation” and “Great work – might help me with my ambitions”. In an online follow-up survey 60% of respondents said visiting the exhibitions had changed their opinion about art and/or design, while 90% said they had learnt something new [b]. Kimiyo Rickett, Assistant Director of Leisure Services at Kirklees Council, has remarked: “ROTOЯ... has attracted new audiences to the gallery and into the town centre. It has allowed people to engage with research outside of the academic institution and has provided new opportunities for people to share in and understand the School’s research. The exhibitions have been thought-provoking and memorable.” [c] Ruth Gamble, Huddersfield Art Gallery Manager, states, ‘The partnership’s really important – we’re very aware at the moment that we don’t want the Art Gallery to be...standing alone in Huddersfield. We want to be part of a bigger discussion about visual art, and involvement and engagement...[ROTOЯ] meets a lot of our aims in terms of going forward.’ [g]

ROTOЯ has also strengthened community links and benefited a range of local organisations, such as the Workers’ Educational Association. Judith Boardman, a tutor for Speakers of Other Languages with the WEA’s Crosland Moor branch, who led a group of multi-ethnic, adult learners on a visit to a ROTOЯ exhibition, said: “[Before] they believed art was for other people and not for them. This was completely changed by the visit. It was a hugely successful trip and provoked lots of discussion... [which] further enhanced learners’ understanding of each other and helped cement relationships of trust and respect.” [c] The group’s experience was later used as a topic for discussion in a functional skills speaking and listening exam and was also shared with and praised by WEA regional and national managers. Other groups to have drawn on the ROTOЯ experience include local performance dance group Turvey-World Dance, which incorporated *Sisyphus* into two of its performances, and West Yorkshire art and health organisation HOOT, which took inspiration from *Sisyphus* for a workshop at the 2013 Grassington Festival and for work with people with dementia [d]. ROTOЯ also collaborated with Kirklees Library to disseminate exhibition content, leading to new book purchases and increased lending. Kirklees Library assistants have reported a 50% rise in borrowing for the books selected for the ROTOЯ reading group, including some that were rarely borrowed previously, noting: “[ROTOЯ] has been very positive... It brings the University into a different space.” [g]

ROTOЯ has provided further cultural enrichment by acting as a conduit for bringing nationally and internationally commended work to Huddersfield and West Yorkshire. *Sisyphus* won the 7th International Arte Laguna Prize, Venice, in March 2013, while *Insufficient Allure* became a permanent exhibition (*Behind the Seams*) when it was acquired by Leeds’ Armley Industrial Museum following its ROTOЯ appearance. ROTOЯ exhibitions have been reviewed in *ROTOЯ Review* by (among others) art historian Jonathan Harris, feminist art critic Griselda Pollock and *Art Monthly*’s Peter Suchin, as well as in (among others) *The Independent*, *The Guardian* and *Frieze* [h]. Online surveys have shown ROTOЯ has strongly influenced views about local culture, with visitors’ comments including “It’s more cutting-edge than I had realised”, “My ideas about its role in Huddersfield have changed” and “[ROTOЯ] makes [the work] relevant to the broader public in terms of cultural ownership” [b]. Rickett has noted: “We have a huge number of creative industries [which] can benefit enormously from having an interaction with the University. ROTOЯ helps to make that connection and bring the work out to those people.” [c]

Drawing on the ROTOЯ experience, in May 2013 the School organised a symposium at London’s Institute of Contemporary Arts to examine methodologies of measuring public engagement to inspire new audiences and practitioners via cost-effective public services [i]. Speakers at the event,

entitled *Public Engagement and Impact: Articulating Value in Art and Design*, included Dr Claire Donovan, Reader in Assessing Research Impact at Brunel University; Dr Sarah Shalgosky, Curator of the Mead Gallery at the University of Warwick; Peter Murray CBE, Executive Director of Yorkshire Sculpture Park; and Dr Paul Manners, Director of the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement. Some 80% of delegates, including artists, academics, cultural researchers and representatives of national and international art venues, recognised a change in their understanding of “public engagement”. The related *Engage* website attracted more than a thousand visits from 17 countries, while the ROTOЯ weblog has received more than 4,000 visits from over 50 countries [j]. Dr James Harvey, a research impact specialist at consultancy CommsConsult Ltd, used ROTOЯ as a case study for an article on the Research to Action website as an exemplar case study for other organisations involved in partnerships.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (view links using Google Chrome)

a. Visitor transcripts and analysis: written-in-gallery feedback age range, nationalities, cultural enrichment etc.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2-kBScAaLCYLXE1UDNMT0I3TIk/edit?usp=sharing>

b. Exhibition visitor feedback – transcripts and analysis of online survey

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B2-kBScAaLCYRIFCSG82MFNNVU/edit?usp=sharing>

c. Stakeholder testimonials: Kimiyo Rickett, Assistant Director Kirklees Communities and Leisure Communities, and Judith Boardman, ESOL and functional skills tutor, Workers’ Educational Association, Crosland Moor group

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B2-kBScAaLCYLWtKZU1OUUnZeEE/edit?usp=sharing>

d. Images of public engagement – evidence of interaction and participation with school groups, Saturday Art Club, young people and family workshops

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B2-kBScAaLCYb0RCMnBaalF4NEU/edit?usp=sharing>

e. Images of artist/designer-led events (public talks, launch events, reading groups, film screenings etc.)

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B2-kBScAaLCYV2tFbWJ2MVISOWM/edit?usp=sharing>

f. Images of public marketing, audience development and outreach

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B2-kBScAaLCYMXF5YjJ2OTIZeWM/edit?usp=sharing>

g. Transcribed stakeholder interviews demonstrating changes in awareness and understanding of art and design research, university/cultural sector, developing cultural infrastructure etc.

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B2-kBScAaLCYeVJmZ2V0WU14M1U&usp=sharing>

h. Media reviews (sample):

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B2-kBScAaLCYb0VXb0pvN2RhZIE/edit?usp=sharing>

i. ICA symposium summary

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B2-kBScAaLCYay1KMHo4V1JWZTA/edit?usp=sharing>

j. ROTOЯ weblog

www.transdisciplinarydialogueanddebate.com