

Institution:	GOLDSMITHS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
Unit of Assessment:	21: Politics and International Studies
Title of case study:	Artraker Fund and Award
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)	

Buckley’s research on the relationship between art and conflict has led to the establishment of the Artraker Fund. The Fund was established in 2012 and awards art that helps raise awareness, communicate, stimulate debate and transform our understanding of war, violent conflict and social upheaval. It is intended to show how art can play a central role in transforming our understanding and experience of war, violent conflict and social upheaval. Buckley’s research on the role of art in the co-creation of ‘experiences of freedom’ has helped to show why such a fund is necessary, and to distinguish it from other art prizes. It stresses the potential of art to co-create experiences of freedom when they are most needed and least accessible.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)
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Buckley has been working on the relationship between art, war and terrorism since 2001. Her research investigates conceptual, aesthetic, material and symbolic frameworks of violence in which war and art are both implicated. She joined the Department of Politics at Goldsmiths as a lecturer in 2007 from Newcastle University.

The catalyst for Buckley’s research was the many exhibitions, which sprang up in the aftermath of 9/11. In 2003 as Head of Education and Research at John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton, she was responsible for the *Intervention* exhibition, which explored artists’ responses to the ‘War on Terror’ and the philosophical contradictions implicit in doing so. It did this by asking artists ‘What is the role of art and artists in times of war and terror?’ Buckley began to build up a large back-catalogue of interviews with artists and curators, the purpose of which was specifically to explore and understand the relationship between art and conflict. Questions as to the relationship between art and terrorism were further expanded in her ‘Workshop of Filthy Creation’ essay, published in *Review of International Studies*,^[1] wherein, by exploring how contemporary artists deal with terror/ism in their practices, Buckley was also able to scrutinise the role of the imagination in the construction of experience.

Buckley’s subsequent research returned to these themes in order to develop them substantively both at research and teaching levels. Her earlier writings, for example, ‘Terrible Beauties’⁽²⁾ written in 2005 in response to the *Art in the Age of Terrorism* exhibition (Millais Gallery, Southampton Solent University, November, 2004) and published in Coulter-Smith and Owen (*Art in the Age of Terrorism*, PHP, London 2005) was instrumental in informing the shape of the new MA Art and Politics programme which Buckley set about designing on arrival at Goldsmiths in 2007. One of only three such programmes in the world - the only other two comparable programmes in the world were the MA in Aesthetics and Politics at Cal Arts and the MA in Arts Politics at Tisch School of Arts, NYU (Latour’s MA in Experiments in Art and Politics was not set up in Sciences Po until 2010) - Buckley’s essays and research were formative in the design of the new Masters’ degree at Goldsmiths. Here, Buckley was able to consolidate earlier research and present it directly in ‘Art and Politics 1’, a compulsory core course in the new Masters programme. Following on from *Art in the Age of Terrorism*, she was able to show that in times of conflict, art can make interventions, which hold the potential for meaningful change to occur. In tandem with this, Buckley’s revised ‘Terrible Beauties’ essay was also published in *b.rumaria 12* in 2009, alongside other key texts by Slovoj Žižek, Retort, WJT Mitchell and Peter Weibel, which also dealt with the relationship between art and conflict.

Since then, Buckley has consolidated and developed her work in subsequent publications and at international conferences. Building on earlier themes, her work carved out a number of different strategies for dealing with the role of imagination in the construction of experience during times of conflict. Here, for example, she wrote a chapter entitled ‘Mohamed is absent. I am Performing: Contemporary Iraqi Art and the Destruction of Heritage’, in *The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq*, edited by Peter Stone and Joanne Farchakh Bajjaly.⁽³⁾ The essay showed how Iraqi artists, at the height of the occupation in Iraq, were nevertheless able to seize a moment of opportunity in the face of destruction of their heritage. This publication went into paperback and in January 2011 was

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awarded the James R Wiseman Book Award by the Archaeological Institute of America. The book was described, by *Times Higher Education*, which made it Book of the Week, as “the definitive account of the desperate, avoidable cultural tragedy of Iraq for many years to come”.

Disseminating her research at conference level, Buckley was an invited speaker at ‘Medium and Message: Conflict Photography in the Digital Era’, 3-5 May, 2011,⁽⁴⁾ an international conference held by University College Dublin Clinton Institute’s Photography and the International Conflict Research Centre. She spoke also at the International Conference for Electronic Arts, in Istanbul, on a panel with other highly influential artists and thinkers whose work deals with art and conflict in the post 9/11 era, e.g. Wafaa Bilal, Joseph DeLappe and Rita Raley.⁽⁵⁾

Buckley’s essay for *Photoworks*⁽⁶⁾ similarly appealed to a wide audience and showed how the photographs of a small group of Iraqi women could recover and set into motion a mode of collective political action and the formation of newly empowered political subjectivities.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Evidence for international quality of the research: Noted specifically below refs 1, 2, and 3.

All are available on request from Goldsmiths Research Office.

1. Buckley, B. ‘The Workshop of Filthy Creation: Or Do Not Be Alarmed, This is Only a Test’ in [Review of International Studies](#), Vol. 35: pp. 835-857, Cambridge University Press, Oct 2009.
This is a highly ranked, high impact factor, rigorously peer reviewed journal that publishes original research and review articles.
2. Buckley, B. ‘Terrible Beauties’ in Coulter-Smith and Owen, *Art in the Age of Terrorism*, PHP, London 2005, pp.10-33; ISBN 1-903470-41-2.
Book published in connection with *Art in the Age of Terrorism* exhibition, Millais Gallery, Southampton Solent University November, Nov 2004–Jan 2005 ([review](#)). Although ‘Terrible Beauties’ was originally published in a collection of essays accompanying the exhibition it was singled out for re-publication in an influential special issue of *b.rumaria* 12 in 2009, where it is included along with other essays dealing with art and terrorism by internationally acclaimed writers including Slovoj Žižek, Boris Groys, WJT Mitchell, Retort, Peter Weibel and others. For this reason, Buckley was interviewed by Channel 4 News responding to a fresco entitled *The Age of Shiva* by Mark Sinckler. The work depicted the wreckage of the bus destroyed in the 7 July London terror attacks - See more: [clip 3](#).
3. Buckley, B. ‘Mohammed is Absent. I am Performing’: Contemporary Iraqi Art and the Destruction of Heritage’ in *The Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq*, eds., Peter G. Stone and Joanne Farchakh Bajjaly, Boydell Press, August, 2009; pp.298-318; ISBN 978-1843834830.
The book won the prestigious James R. Wiseman Book Award by the [Archaeological Institute of America \(AIA\)](#). The AIA is the largest and oldest of its kind. Founded in 1879, it has nearly 250,000 members in the United States, Canada, and overseas. The publication was supported by the [British Institute for the Study of Iraq](#) (Gertrude Bell Memorial) which promotes, supports and undertakes research in Iraq and neighbouring countries. It was also supported by the UK National Commission for UNESCO.
4. ‘Iraq is Gone: Conflict Photography in the Digital Era’. Paper presented at [‘Medium and Message: Conflict Photography in the Digital Era’](#). International Conference held by University College Dublin Clinton Institute’s Photography and International Conflict Research Centre 3-5 May 2011
5. Buckley, B. Panellist on ‘If You See Something Say Something: Art, War, Surveillance and the Sustainability of Urgency in the Post 9/11 Era’, at [ISEA conference](#), Istanbul, Sept 09, 2011.
6. Buckley, B. [‘Open Shutters Iraq’](#), in [Photoworks](#), Issue 16, Spring/Summer 2011, pp 82-83. [photomagazine review]

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The uniqueness and significance of the *Artraker Prize* have to do with the opportunities that it creates for change to occur, even in conflict-ridden communities and locations. The first *Artraker Prize*, presented on International Peace Day, 21 September 2013, but awarded during the Impact assessment period, was won by Alexia Webster, a South African photographer who will use her prize fund to set up temporary Street Studios in Tanzania and Chad, where hundreds of thousands of Sudanese refugees from Darfur are living in camps. Webster, who previously worked with the Blikkiesdorp and Chiawelo peoples (two South African communities affected by structural violence), was awarded the prize money for her ability to create images that are deeply significant for the individuals caught up in violence, rather than for western consumers of ‘conflict photography’ or ‘art’. Such photographs are made, not for the western art market, but for those who are separated from family members, have few possessions and little money to print images of themselves. By creating and freely distributing family photographs, Webster helps people reassure distant friends and family as to their safety and survival, and in so doing, they are able also to affirm their identities and resist their own categorisation as ‘displaced persons’ or ‘refugees’. This work (which Buckley calls “neither art nor politics”) seeks to affirm identity and self-worth, rather than to be valued as aesthetically interesting or as documentary evidence: it has huge significance for ordinary people, who through no fault of their own, have been thrust into highly traumatic circumstances. For this reason, Buckley’s influence on *Artraker* had the effect of turning it from being a prize into an ‘anti-prize’, a turn which is explicitly acknowledged on the website. It rewards not the achievement of the artist, but the potential for change that the artist creates.

Buckley’s research on the potential of art as a change-maker was the key influence on Manali Jagtap, founder of Inca Consulting (16) and Buckley’s former MA Art and Politics student, in her decision to set up the *Artraker Fund and Prize*. Her teaching and institutional expertise profoundly impacted on the nature of the award and helped to situate it as the only one of its kind in the world today.

The Fund and Prize exist to “help shape and inspire through the medium of art how people and organisations understand, engage and respond to conflicts, and to become the recognised home for powerful conflict art and artists.”

It uses a three-pronged approach to realize this vision:

1. Showcasing conflict art as a profound communicative tool to understand the complex issues of conflict
2. Influencing stakeholders – decision makers, NGOs, the public, art critics
3. Building relationships and communities with artists and organisations

Buckley’s impact on Jagtap can also be seen in her exhibition work. In her Deptford X show of 2012 Jagtap used footage filmed in 2011 to bring visitors face to face with a life-size projection of Asari Dokubo, the first warlord of the Niger Delta, whose attacks on oil installations sent petrol prices soaring around the world. In her work, Dokubo speaks about his decision to take up arms, his choice of violence over non-violence, life in the creeks, his childhood, identity and conversion to Islam, and his insurgency before being incarcerated seven floors below the State intelligence headquarters in Abuja. This and other examples demonstrate the correlation between Buckley’s research on art and conflict, Jagtap’s practice, and the establishment of *Artraker*. She is now Academic Advisor to the Fund. She was invited to act as one of the jurors for the first year of the prize (2013), and to sit on the Advisory Committee for the Award.

In its first year the Award attracted over 300 entries from artists and practitioners across the world. They included some high-profile artists with highly established international reputations (e.g. David Cotterrell and Vong Phaophanit, who have exhibited in institutions from Tate Modern to Venice Biennale), but also from little-known groups and workshop organisers in conflict areas from Zimbabwe, Korea, Congo, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Georgia, Syria, Iraqi Kurdistan, Cameroon, former Yugoslavia, Israel, Palestine, Ukraine and many other regions. The jurors included experts from both the art and peace-making and peace-building disciplines to assess the submissions to the *Artraker Fund*. This is a unique situation in terms of art awards, and is the only one of its kind in the world. By bringing together these diverse communities of practitioners, the Fund opened up ground for exchange between peace-makers and peace-builders, and artists operating in this environment

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while using very different kinds of methodologies. In this way, its impact is already a significant one, offering challenges to existing conventions on how to judge art.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Many websites that testify to the impact of the fund, including the selection below. All of these webpages are also available on request from Goldsmiths Research Office.

7. <http://artraker.org/>
8. Coverage by The Guardian of the artists short-listed for the Artraker Award (the world's first prize for artists working in conflict zones) demonstrates the huge media interest that the award generated and the high impact of the award in the first year of its establishment. Buckley's research, institutional and teaching expertise on art and conflict profoundly impacted on the creation and establishment of the Artraker Award, Fund and organisation.
9. Coverage by The Art Newspaper based in NY demonstrates the high impact, internationally, of the Artraker Award. The Art Newspaper is a monthly publication of around 100 pages of news and debate about the art world: it has a huge international readership comprising of arts professionals, public policy-makers and those with a professional as well as personal interest in the global art market.
10. Trebuchet is an internationally read magazine publication, which champions contemporary art of all forms, activist politics and informed, high quality writing. Arguing that images wield moral authority and political responsibility it provided substantive information about the rationale for the Artraker Award and the larger debates surrounding the role of art in relation to conflict.
11. BBC World Service (Weekend 21.09.2013) carried an interview with Alexia Webster, the South African photographer who won the first Artraker award on International Peace Day (also [here](#))
12. Art Radar Asia, the only editorially independent online news source writing on contemporary art across Asia, reported on the role of Artraker in relation to African Art and described how "photographs of South Africa's poorest citizens" won the first ever [award for conflict art](#).
13. The [Artraker website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Linkedin](#) pages show not only the widespread interest in the award but also include details, news stories and information dealing with the relationship between art and conflict, in a wide variety of settings around the globe. Readers contribute to the debates and circulate via other social media.
14. Culture+Conflict is a not-for-profit agency, research project and website founded in 2011, which focuses on the role of the arts and culture within conflict and post conflict situations across the world. AHRC funded, Dr Buckley sits on its Academic Steering Committee. The [weblink](#) shows its coverage of the Artraker Award but also explains its aim to increase the involvement of arts and culture in conflict and post-conflict situations, build greater understanding of their value, and foster the exchange of knowledge and perspectives with other sectors also engaged in conflict and post-conflict work: the political and diplomatic community, NGOs, international development agencies, academia, the media, and the many peace-building initiatives worldwide. Buckley's role within Art+Conflict was very influential on the foundation of Artraker, both of which believe that arts and culture have a vital role to play among the complex, competing agendas of conflict resolution, not least in their unique ability to communicate the powerful personal and political issues of conflict.
15. [International Alert](#) is one of the world's leading peacebuilding organisations. With nearly 30 years of experience, it works with local people as well as advising governments, organisations and companies on how to support peace. It is a [founding partner](#) of the Artraker Fund.
16. [INCAS Consulting Ltd](#) Is a founding partner in Artraker. Since 2003, it has worked at the intersection of security, development and corporate investment, in order to provide services in war-torn and fragile countries. Its home page features a tab linking directly to the Artraker website.

Individuals who will provide statements on request include the Director and Co-Founder of Artraker; the Chief Executive of Inca Consulting; and Co Director, Culture+Conflict *RCA [details provided confidentially in separate REF fields]*