

<p>Institution: University of Reading</p> <hr/> <p>Unit of Assessment: 35 Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts</p> <hr/> <p>a. Context</p> <p>Film, Theatre and Television (FTT) researches 20th and 21st century performance for stage and screen and its theoretical, aesthetic, cultural and historical contexts. The unit produces both published and practice-based outputs. Research and its impact are supported by the unit's research groups, including Television Drama and Practice-as-Research, and the Faculty's Minority Identities: Rights and Representations Research Group and Beckett Research Group.</p> <p>Since 1996, when FTT was the recipient of the first UK research award on television history (on the BBC Wednesday Play and Postwar British Drama, from the British Academy), the unit has had a successful record of funded research projects (eight in total since 1996 led by a PI in FTT, five of which have been ongoing during the REF period). These have shaped the Unit's impact strategy and delivered impact through engaging creative practitioners, the creative industries, cultural institutions and the general public as participants in, and users and beneficiaries of its research.</p> <p>During the REF period, and supported by these research collaborations, FTT research has:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: documented and reflected on film, theatre and television practice, policy and history, and has thereby enhanced cultural heritage, increased industry and public understanding of these media and provided resources and models for future practice, policy and documentation; 2: provided enhanced public access to archival resources in film, theatre and television; 3: engaged general and specialist audiences and users, such as members of particular diasporic communities, in the creation and dissemination of practice-based theatre research; 4: enhanced understanding of the work of artists such as Samuel Beckett and Finnish artist Eija-Liisa Ahtila through research events and resources which engage the general public. <hr/> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The Department's research has a history of engaging the creative industries and specialised and general public users. Impact has therefore always been integral to FTT's activities, but is now more formally central to research planning undertaken by individuals and the unit as a whole. In this context, FTT's Director of Research and the research groups in the unit and in the Faculty (outlined above) support, help to fund and co-ordinate impact activities and strategy.</p> <p>The Unit has had two core strategies for research impact prior to and throughout the REF period, which have enabled the delivery of the types of impact outlined in the Context section:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Securing funded research projects which have collaborations and industry interaction at their core: Through industry-facing conferences, workshops, seminars and interviews, FTT has built up a sustained series of research collaborations with cultural institutions and creative industries (including the BBC Information & Archives, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and Century Films) and creative artists (such as David Edgar, Tony Garnett, Phil Redmond, Cameron Roach and Siân Thomas), many of whom have contributed to conferences and, in some cases, published outputs. <p>As an interdisciplinary unit, we share resources and promote and publicly disseminate and debate between and across media disciplines and professionals. For example, the Acting with Facts project (AHRC 2007-10, PI Paget) interviewed film, theatre and television actors and other practitioners encouraging them to reflect on their performances in and approaches to documentary theatre and film, thereby deepening their and their audiences' understanding and appreciation of this cross-disciplinary genre. Interviews with 23 actors can be publicly accessed online at http://www.reading.ac.uk/ftt/research/ftt-actingwithfacts-interviews.aspx. The academic-industry dialogues initiated by this project continued with meetings in May 2012 and July 2013 at King's College Cambridge, focused on the legal and ethical dimensions of fact-based drama, involving Paget, David Edgar, Louise Hammersley (BBC legal expert), and Oliver Goodenough (Vermont Law School), playwright and screenwriter Neil McKay and HBO</p>

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executive Colin Callender, with other legal and creative practitioners. This research therefore continues to impact on international creative policy and practice across media.

This process of sharing research with creative industries and practitioners is also followed by individual researchers in the unit (Gibbs's research on mise-en-scene for example, has impacted on specific films by Jamie Thraves, especially *The Cry of the Owl* (2009) as acknowledged in the screen credits).

- 2) **Funding and public dissemination of practice-as-research outputs** which have been submitted in every Research Assessment Exercise since 1996. FTT has a long-standing tradition of disseminating practice-based research. During the REF period this included showcasing performance experimentation to school drama teachers and pupils, and engaging in dialogues with invited actors, directors and dramatists (e.g., Alecky Blythe, Terry O'Donovan), some of whom are FTT alumni. We have developed important collaborations with community organisations such as the Polish Centre in London (POSK), and the Islington Chinese Association, which have supported and hosted performances. We fund an annual, public facing research production, which has directly supported the dissemination of Murjas's and Thorpe's research.

Alongside these core research-led strategies sits an **active programme of wider public engagement** with the appreciation, documentation and dissemination of televisual, screen and theatre practice, heritage and resources through websites (as above), blogs (see British TV Case Study) and public talks. For example, Butler has contributed to the public interpretation and dissemination of artist's films (by Eija-Liisa Ahtila, for example) through catalogue essays and panel discussions (Tate Modern, London, November 08). Throughout the REF period, the unit has contributed to the public dissemination, discussion and appreciation of the University's Beckett Archive, the world's largest collection of resources relating to Samuel Beckett. The department was actively involved in the University's EU-funded 'Researchers Night' in September 2011, which attracted approximately 500 visitors to its programme of events, including a public lecture by Bignell on Buster Keaton and Samuel Beckett. Further projects such as 'Beckett and the Phenomenology of Doodles' (Leverhulme 2006-9) have enriched public awareness of Beckett as a visual creative artist through exhibitions world-wide of artist Bill Prosser's interpretations of Beckett's manuscript doodles (such as *Art et Littérature* in Paris, and the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas).

The impact of these strategies and engagement has been a) to **instigate debates about industry practices**, b) to **fund the production, archiving and sharing of knowledge and resources between the academy and the cultural industries and institutions** (for example, in the Spring of 2013, the Arts Council requested a series of seminars from the research team of an AHRC funded project on the role of the Arts Council of England from 1945 to 1995, in order to promote an institutional memory), and c) to **extend access to and enjoyment and understanding of cultural heritage to the general public through their direct engagement with practice-as-research outputs as well as public-facing talks and blogs**.

c. Strategy and plans

Over the next five years, the unit will build on its successful strategies of working with the creative industries and cultural institutions through individual research and collaborative, funded research projects whilst developing and expanding its public engagement programmes for general audiences and specific communities through practice-based research. To this end, good practice and expertise in external grant application and management and impact planning is now shared through mentoring schemes and through the unit's research groups.

The unit will further enhance public access to and engagement with cultural and archival resources through **UK and international research partnerships**: for example, the AHRC-funded project, 'Staging Beckett: the Impact of Productions of Samuel Beckett's Theatre in the UK and Ireland', is compiling a publicly available database of and selected research materials on all professional productions of Beckett's theatre in the UK and Ireland as a pilot for a broader performing arts database to be hosted by the V&A. We are working on a partnership with AusStage and IbsenStage (University of Oslo) in order to extend the global compatibility and the user base for the Staging Beckett database, and, when launched, the performing arts database.

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The arrival in April 2013 of FTT's Professor of Film, Lucia Nagib, who has extensive links with international filmmakers such as Fernando Meirelles, is enabling us to build on our international creative partnerships. **In 2013/14, we will launch a FTT-led, University wide Centre for Film Aesthetics and Cultures (CFAC)** that will examine diverse political, historical and cultural contexts of filmmaking and will create international networks and cultural exchanges between academics, filmmakers and producers. This initiative will increase visibility and understanding amongst creative practitioners and general audiences as well as scholars, of the diversity of models of contemporary filmmaking and film heritage from a global perspective.

We are **developing additional mechanisms to enhance public engagement** with our research productions, such as pre-performance visits, websites and post-performance visits. Audience members of Murjas's devised performance, *Surviving Objects*, in June 2013, responded to the historical events (deportation narratives of the post-WWII British-Polish community) and issues (such as individual and cultural memory) raised by the performance on feedback forms and in post-performance discussions. The Department's 2011 move into the purpose-built Minghella building on the University's Whiteknights campus, with dedicated theatre, television and film production spaces and investment in digital technologies, has enhanced public visibility for our practice-based research, and we will continue to capitalise on this.

The unit will **expand the engagement of specific and general audiences in the archival resources of the University through performance**. For example, in 2013/14, funded by the Arts Council, Murjas will collaborate with the University's Museum of English Rural Life and Reading Museum on a series of practice-led research performances and installations based on the Evacuee archive (materials relating in particular to the evacuation of children during World War II, but also including other materials on UK and international evacuation and resettlement) and the Huntley and Palmer's archive (in relation to World War I ration biscuits) held at the University of Reading's Special Collections.

We are developing further our **partnerships with particular creative groups and individuals in order to share our knowledge and skills base with the creative sector**. As an example, Taylor worked with the theatre company, Dante or Die, facilitating the Arts Council England-funded development process and sharing performance practice expertise with the company to devise their experimental piece *I Do* (2012-13, Almeida Festival and other venues). Murjas will be working with Reading Repertory Theatre on three Arts Council-funded performances of works by Polish playwright Slawomir Mrozek, one to be presented at the Young Vic in the Spring/Summer of 2014.

d. Relationship to case studies

Case study 1 is a model of the unit's impact on the creative industries through funded research projects. It demonstrates how sustained collaborations with institutions such as the BBC, the British Film Institute or the National Public Broadcasting Archives (USA), creative businesses such as Blast Films and individuals such as Cameron Roach were built up across a series of research projects on British post-World War Two television, forming the channels through which the research was taken up and implemented by these users and by the general public. It demonstrates that members of the unit are consulted by industry as media experts and that the unit has had an impact on how television heritage is preserved and disseminated through influencing the content of what is preserved, archived and broadcast or screened to the public.

Case study 2 relates directly to the major area of practice-based research in the unit. FTT was a pioneer in the area of practice-as-research (first recipient of an AHRB practice-as-research PhD award supervised by Taylor), and funds annual research productions for a general audience. FTT's expertise in this area has supported the research of Murjas and Thorpe in their adaptation of practice-based research methods to engage particular audience / community bases. Though Thorpe has left the institution, Murjas continues to expand and develop new methods of public engagement. The case study exemplifies the development of public programmes that involve specific communities in sharing, documenting and reflecting on their heritage, memories and identities, and demonstrates the ways in which practice-as-research methodologies within the unit have led to cultural enrichment for and interactive engagement with both specific and general audiences and communities.