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| Institution: UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON |
| Unit of Assessment: 34 |
| Title of case study: Afterall: Research and Publishing Organisation. |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Afterall is a research and publishing organisation founded in 1998 by Research Fellow Charles Esche and Professor Mark Lewis at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London (UAL). Afterall focuses on contemporary art, and its relationship to wider theoretical, social and political fields. Researchers associated to Afterall undertake and commission research, which is disseminated to an international audience through publications and events. Afterall impacts on the cultural sector and an extended audience by providing a platform for critical and creative responses to art, curatorial and cultural practice and by shaping discourse in this area. The significance and wide reach of this impact is demonstrated through partnerships and high-profile cultural events, publication reach, and support from the cultural community.</p> |
| <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>In 1998 Esche and Lewis co-founded Afterall, with the aim of providing an arena for exploring new ways of writing about contemporary art, at a time when discussion was often limited to exhibition reviews or artists' monographs. During its 15 years of operation, Afterall has undertaken an in-depth and wide-ranging analysis of the relationship of contemporary art and curating to the history of art, and the social and political contexts from which both emerge. Afterall's journal and series of books, engaging with the diversity of art practice, have developed a new area of knowledge in relation to exhibition studies, and contributed to the understanding of specific areas of cultural interventions (such as particular artworks, specific exhibitions, art and the moving image, art and social change, and art in Eastern Europe). Projects are developed at UAL by Esche and Lewis (Afterall editorial directors), who are both researchers and also active at an international level as curator and artist respectively. Work is undertaken in collaboration with an academic team including Pablo Lafuente (Reader in Art, Context and Theory and co-editor <i>Afterall</i> journal and <i>Exhibition Histories</i> book series), and Dr Lucy Steeds (Pathway Leader MRes Art: Exhibition Studies and co-editor <i>Exhibition Histories</i> book series). The Afterall 'project' in its diverse forms is an internationally recognised vehicle for the dissemination of a new way of thinking through the relationship of creative practice and intellectual debate.</p> <p><i>Afterall</i> journal, was launched in 1999, offering an in-depth analysis of artists' work, along with contextualising essays. According to its founding editors, the journal sought 'to discuss the work of contemporary artists and relate their ambitions to the wider social, political and philosophical framework within which the art is produced [...] and to create a platform where art could take its place alongside other primary practices as a way of understanding and reflecting on the world.' The journal examines the work of individual artists or artists' collectives in depth, looking at the conditions of art in the world, and focusing on art's socio-political function and capacity for commentary. Each issue is a research project using editorial and curatorial methods; the editorial team conduct research into an area or a problematic, then commission writing on this topic by both world-renowned figures and younger scholars.</p> <p>In 2006 the imprint <i>Afterall Books</i> was launched, complementing the journal's focus on artists' practice, with dedicated research into areas of knowledge within the wider field. The <i>One Work</i> book series, asks sole authors to investigate influential single works produced over the last 50 years and their effect on subsequent artistic and cultural practice. It offers a canon that encompasses divergent areas of art and theory, as well as different cartographies and social and political contexts. The series <i>Critical Readers</i> looks at significant areas of modern and contemporary art practice, through the commissioning and reprinting of texts. For example <i>Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader</i> (Esche) co-edited with Will Bradley (in 2008), constitutes a study of statements and works by artists who wished to intervene in processes of social change. It</p> |

contains newly commissioned essays and a comprehensive collection of artists' writings and manifestos. The *Exhibition Histories* book series (launched in 2010) focuses on exhibitions of contemporary art from the past 50 years that have changed the way that art is seen and made. Each title in the series addresses a different theme in the history of curatorial practice, with specific reference to a particular exhibition or cluster of exhibitions. Examples include *Making Art Global (Part 1): The Third Havana Biennial 1989* and *Making Art Global (Part 2): 'Magiciens de la Terre' 1989* (the second and fourth titles in the series), published in 2012 and 2013. These two titles constitute a rethinking of the recent history of contemporary art from a transnational perspective.

Afterall Online (launched in 2006) is a dedicated platform for new writing connecting the various lines of enquiry explored through the journal and the books. It features specially commissioned material including interviews with artists, photo-essays and texts on exhibitions, books and events. *Artists at Work* is an example of a regular strand of questioning published by *Afterall Online*. By directly asking artists how they came to make their work or what approach they brought to a specific exhibition, concept or location, this series of interviews offers insight into the thinking behind a wide range of art practices, from film-making to architecture to self-publishing. In addition, *Afterall's* programme of public screenings, workshops, seminars and conferences, serve both to facilitate development of research, and to act as a dissemination channel for the research already undertaken. The international *Artist as Curator* conference (2012) at UAL followed three earlier conferences on the history of exhibition practice (Academy of Fine Arts Vienna in 2008 and Tate Britain, London in both 2009 and 2010) and included presentations by high-profile academics, artists and curators. As with the previous three conferences, the research commissioned and presented is being developed into several publications.

3. References to the research

1. *Afterall* journal (1999) Spring/Summer issue. Foreword by Mark Lewis and Charles Esche. UAL on request.
2. Lewis, M. (2006-) *One Work* book series (series editor). Examples include: Noack, R. (2013); *Sanja Iveković: Triangle*; Buchmann, S. Hinderer Cruz, M.J. (2013) *Hélio Oiticica and Neville d'Almeida: Block-Experiments in Cosmococa – program in progress*; Bordowitz, G. (2010) *General Idea: Imagevirus*; Company, D. (2011) *Jeff Wall: Picture for Women*; Wood, C. *Yvonne Rainer: The Mind is a Muscle* (2007). *Afterall* and MIT Press. These five titles are selected from the 30 *One Work* book series published to date. UAL on request.
3. Esche, C. (2005) *Modest Proposals*. Istanbul: Baglam Press. [Book of selected writings by Esche]. UAL on request.
4. Steeds, L. et al. (2013) *Making Art Global (Part 2): Magiciens de la Terre 1989* [Edited book]. Includes chapter by Lafuente From the Outside In: 'Magiciens de la Terre' and Two Histories of Exhibitions. *Afterall & Koenig. Exhibition Histories* series. eds Esche, C. Lafuente, P. O'Neill, P. Steeds, L. Books. Listed in REF2.
5. Esche, C. and Bradley, W. (2007) *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader*. [Edited book]. *Critical Readers. Series*. eds Esche, C. and Woodley, C. *Afterall & Tate Publishing*. UAL on request.
6. Lafuente, P. (2011) Ricardo Basbaum, or that Elusive Object of Emancipation [Journal article]. In: *Afterall* journal issue 28, Autumn/Winter. UAL on request.

4. Details of the impact

Esche and Lewis, in collaboration with the organisation's academic team, direct *Afterall's* research activity through its printed and digital publications and events. They have developed an influential model for rethinking the relationship between artistic practice and the discourses developed on and around it, and on the way artistic and curatorial practice relate to wider cultural and socio-political contexts. Art critic and historian, Professor Hal Foster describes *Afterall* journal as 'a rare publication that is actively read and seriously considered by artists, critics, historians, and curators alike, and in turn this makes it a precious forum where these different voices can communicate.' Impact on the work of artists, curators, institutions and audiences is demonstrated through the reach of its publications, institutional partnerships, ongoing third-party financial support, and

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participation in high-profile cultural events. For example, Esche's appointment as curator for the 2014 edition of the *Bienal de São Paulo*, which he will co-curate with Lafuente and Galit Eilat (announced 04/13). The *Exhibition Histories* conversations, organised with the Whitechapel Gallery in London since January 2013, are four public events per year prompted by the *Exhibition Histories* series and each focusing on the work of an influential curator. The Whitechapel Gallery Head of Education and Public Programmes states that it is '*our strong belief that this partnership contributes to critically expand the discourse, scope and reach of the Whitechapel's programme.*' In addition to this, the recent restaging at Fondazione Prada, Venice, of Harald Szeemann's 1969 exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* in 2013 draws on the *Exhibition Histories* publication *Exhibiting the New Art: 'Op Losse Schroeven' and 'When Attitudes Become Form' 1969* (2010), evident in the invitation of Esche and author Christian Rattemeyer to contribute to the publication accompanying the restaging. Research for *Exhibition Histories* has developed into a strand of pedagogy that brings a new perspective into art history, for example via the MRes Art: Exhibition Studies (led by Steeds and Lafuente) at Central Saint Martins, and its partner institution CCS Bard, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

An indication of the significance of Afterall's impact is its designation as an Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation. The ACE Annual Review for 2011/12 praised its '*excellence of product in terms of content, design and production*' and '*high quality contributions selected by editors who all have an in-depth and diverse knowledge of the contemporary art scene and related critical debates*'. The report also states that '*continuing excellence of content, design and production of the journal is clear from consistent levels of subscription and advertising revenue and the renewal of partnerships with noted international institutions*'. Afterall is supported by its ongoing funding and collaborative relationships with academic and non-academic institutions. Core partnerships have been established with institutions such as Universidad Internacional de Andalucía-arteypensamiento, Seville, Spain (since 2009) and the Smart Museum of Art and Open Practice Committee, University of Chicago, Chicago, USA (since 2012), as well as with non-academic organisations such as Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, the Netherlands (since 2009) and MuHKA, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, Belgium (since 2007). Distribution of Afterall publications is managed by leading international publishers. Since 2010, *Afterall* journal subscriptions have been managed by the University of Chicago Press. *One Work* is distributed by The MIT Press. *Exhibition Histories* is produced in collaboration with the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna; the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson; and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, and distributed by Koenig Books (Europe) and Distributed Art Publishers (outside Europe). Two Afterall publications from the Critical Readers book series have been published in collaboration with Tate Publishing including *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader* (2008). Through these networks and collaborations Afterall guarantees intellectual exchange, diverse resources and extensive distribution networks.

In the 2012/13 academic year *One Work*, *Exhibition Histories*, *Afterall* journal and *Afterall Online* were responsible for 70 new commissions. *Afterall Online* showcases contributions from younger writers, writing about emerging artists. These platforms give artists and writers the opportunity to present their work in a discursive arena independent from commercial considerations, and within a contextualised setting that encourages analysis of the relevance of their work in relation to changes in the world. ACE has recognised Afterall's '*distinctive editorial mission*' and this fosters exploration and examination in a way not available elsewhere in the field. The focus is on writing that is both in-depth and accessible, in order to bring the analysis of diverse artistic practices to a broad audience. The research reaches artists, academics, art professionals and art students. Displays in major bookstores such as Tate Modern, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Vancouver Art Gallery and many more, reach gallery and museum audiences. In addition, public talks are held outside of academic and gallery spaces, e.g. hosting critic and curator Lucy Lippard at the New York Art Book Fair (2012).

Afterall journal is distributed worldwide and stocked by organisations such as Foyles, BFI Film Store, National Gallery of Scotland, and Tate Modern in the UK, and available at major international museums such as Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; and The New Museum, New York. It can be found in

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bookshops in cities such as Hong Kong, Amsterdam, Istanbul, Tokyo, Warsaw and Berlin, as distributed by Central Books. Institutional subscribers include Sotheby's Institute of Art, USA; Getty Research Institute and Museum, USA; National Gallery of Canada; and the Guggenheim Museum, USA. From June 2012 to June 2013 total print and electronic circulation for the journal was 210,965, rising from 162,674 in 2011/12. In the last year, over 8000 books in the *One Work* and *Exhibition Histories* series have been sold, and early titles continue to be stocked and sold by bookshops more than five years after publication. Since 2008 there have been 47 reprints of Afterall articles, by publishers such as Koenig, the ICA, and Whitechapel and The MIT Press.

Afterall is actively responding to the move to digitisation in publishing. E-books complement its digitisation, which includes online open access to a number of articles from the journal. Articles are available from the online digital library JSTOR, reaching individuals in over 160 countries. Data provided from JSTOR shows that the total for full-text HTML requests from May 2012 to May 2013 as 7,037 and full-text PDF requests as 12,561. Afterall offers e-subscriptions to individuals, has produced e-books of the *One Works* series for the last five titles in the series, and will continue to do so for forthcoming titles across *Afterall Books*.

Afterall's work has been the subject of media attention and has been recognised by prizes and awards. Jonathan Jones on The Guardian website (04/09) stated that '*Afterall seems aware that art exists within a larger world. That's much more worthwhile than offering secondary access to a glamorous "art world" that doesn't exist*' and Frieze magazine has described *Exhibition Histories* as '*an invaluable resource*' (01/11). David Company, commissioned by Afterall to author the *One Work* publication *Jeff Wall: Picture for Women*, received New York International Center of Photography Infinity Award (2012) for the publication. *Exhibition Histories* book *Making Art Global: The Third Havana Biennial 1989* (Rachel Weiss et al., 2011) was shortlisted for the Art Book Prize in 2012. Afterall's strong local and international presence is made evident through its many collaborations on symposia and screenings. During the REF impact period it has collaborated with institutions and organisations such as: Escola São Paulo, São Paulo; New York Art Book Fair and Artists Space, both New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Frieze Art Fair, Iniva, Tate, The Showroom and Whitechapel Gallery, London.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Shaping critical and creative responses to art, curatorial and cultural practice:

1. Statement from Professor, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University. UAL on request.

Evidence of extension of reach and significance via partnerships and cultural events:

2. Statement from Head of Education and Public Programmes, Whitechapel Gallery, London. UAL on request.
3. '*Lucy Lippard talks to Afterall's Lucy Steeds*' at the Whitechapel Gallery, London.
http://www.whitechapelgallery.org/shop/index.php/fuseaction/shop.product/product_id/1602
4. Statement from Publishing Director, Tate Publishing. UAL on request.
5. 2014 edition of the *Bienal de São Paulo* curatorial team at
<http://www.biennialfoundation.org/2013/04/the-brazilian-paper-folha-reports-that-charles-esche-the-director-of-the-van-abbemuseum-in-eindhoven-the-netherlands-has-been-tapped-to-serve-as-curator-of-the-2014-sao-paulo-bienal/>

Publication reach and support from the cultural community:

6. ACE Annual Review for 2011/12 UAL, trading as Afterall. UAL on request.
7. Information on the 2012 New York International Center of Photography Infinity Award. Available from <http://www.icp.org/support-icp/infinity-awards/david-company>
8. Jones, J. (2009) *Why must art magazines be so glamour obsessed?* Available from <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2009/apr/16/art-magazines>