

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: De Montfort University
Unit of Assessment: 34 (Art and Design)
<p>a. Context: The unit has two main strands of impact activity. Research from the Photographic History Research Centre, Fine Art Practice, the Photography and Video Arts Practice Research Group and the Digital Building Heritage Group primarily benefits museums and the heritage sector, while also adding more generally to cultural capital. The Design Unit primarily benefits the processes and products of innovation within business, leading to substantial economic impacts and occasional impacts on the quality of life through the improvement of medical devices.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact: Awareness of the needs of users is a key driver for research across the unit. The Photographic History Research Centre has a supra-disciplinary approach to the social and cultural practices of photography, from the early 19th century to the present day, encompassing the art, science, industry and social networks of photography. The Centre is thus able to respond strongly to the public's rising interest in the history of photography and also in the role of photography in history, packaging scholarly research in ways that illuminate social history and cultural memory. Their major impacts are through exhibitions, public outreach in history and photography, web resources and broadcast media. Through the 'PhotoCLEC' project (funded by HERA, http://photoclec.dmu.ac.uk) the PHRC engaged directly with museums on the international stage and had a direct and measurable impact upon their practice; for example, a training event for curators held in 2011 attracted 95 attendees.</p> <p>Members of the PHRC regularly contribute to exhibitions and accompanying texts – for example, Taylor wrote the accompanying text to the <i>Impressed By Light</i> exhibition (held in New York City, Washington and Paris, and which was seen by 0.5m people). The book was the recipient of the international Kraszna-Krausz Award, http://www.kraszna-krausz.org.uk/andor-book-awards/photography. For the <i>Endless Forms Darwin</i> exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, the PHRC contributed a podcast on the relationship between photography and popular Darwinism, http://www.darwinendlessforms.org/podcasts/.</p> <p>The PHRC has established important archives and open access online repositories. These include: <i>Photographic Exhibitions in Britain 1839-1865</i>, http://peib.dmu.ac.uk/; <i>Exhibitions of the Royal Photographic Society 1870-1915</i>, http://kmd-y.dmu.ac.uk/; Roger Fenton's <i>Letters from the Crimea</i> http://rogerfenton.dmu.ac.uk/; and <i>The Correspondence of William Henry Fox Talbot</i>, http://foxtalbot.dmu.ac.uk/. PHRC researchers also advise heritage and media organisations. They have assisted English Heritage on exhibitions and publications and advised the makers of the BBC's popular "Who do you think you are?" programme, which typically attracts more than five million viewers. Edwards, the director of the Centre, was listed as one of the all-time <i>50 key writers on Photography</i> in a 2012 Routledge publication edited by M. Durden. The Centre actively seeks non-academic routes by which to disseminate its research findings. When a book by a member of the PHRC is published, that member typically addresses a related public event. Thus Edwards' <i>The Camera as Historian</i>, Duke UP, 2012, led to public events in Croydon and with the National Trust.</p> <p>In solo and group shows, as well as in curated international exhibitions embodying historical and critical scholarship, Fine Art Practice and The Photography and Video Arts Practice Research Group display their work to hundreds of thousands of people around the world, thereby contributing to cultural wellbeing. All the researchers in both groups engage in non-academic exhibitions and shows and they often contribute to the theoretical underpinning of these events. They regularly receive recognition (in the form of prizes) for their work. The following examples from one researcher in each group illustrates this approach across the census period:</p> <p>Cattrell: Using data from Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (humans) and topographical Lydar laser scanning (landscapes), Cattrell worked with science departments – Oxford, Newcastle and ICIT/Herriot Watt – to make visible the changes continuously happening inside the human body and brain, as well as shifts in climate and the planet's geology; she designed the trophy for the Clean Equity Award for Excellence in Technology R&D and commercialisation www.cleanequitymonaco.com/awards, images from which were screened in Times Square, New York City; she contributes to exhibitions, for example: <i>Sculpture, Art and Science</i> in the Mori Museum, Tokyo (curated by the Wellcome Trust) which attracted 0.34m visitors; and <i>Coming of Age</i> (Hancock Museum, Newcastle, 2011), which attracted 11,000 visitors; Cattrell was awarded</p>

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the Bombay Sapphire Glass Prize in 2008. This led to a commission for her to create a new, permanent work for the Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail. The piece both commemorates the 21 years of the trail and acts as a memorial to the trail's late founder, Jeremy Rees. This work featured on BBC One's *Countryfile* (11th May 2008).

Meredith-Vula: Artworks – the only modern piece in *Caravaggio E La Fuga*, Palace Gallery, Genoa, Italy, 2010, which attracted 22,000 visitors (the artwork was also featured in a book (Silvana, Italy)); Exhibitions – three posters at Mulliqi, Kosova, in 2009, an exhibition that led to a televised debate; Prizes – Meredith-Vula's short film *Are you Everybody?* was nominated for best short film, Dokufest 10, Prizren, Kosova, and was showcased on Kosovan national TV, - 7m viewers.

The Digital Building Heritage Group is a research cluster that maintains close collaborative links with many public, private and charitable heritage groups and businesses. Over the period 2013-14, it will be collaborating with 11 community heritage groups in digital building visualisation and interpretation projects. Through a fully-funded PhD scholarship, it will also work closely with English Heritage (EH) to develop innovative new 3D digital methods for presenting and interpreting EH's portfolio of historic buildings.

The DBHG advises the Leicester City Council Heritage Partnership on aspects of the city's built heritage and is a co-partner, with the council, in a £1.5m HLF Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) bid with them. It also advises the UK Association of Building Preservation Trusts, The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) and the Association of Heritage Interpretation (AHI) on aspects of the digital visualisation and interpretation of historic buildings and structures. In 2012, funded by the AHRC's Connected Communities programme, the DBHG organised an international conference for community heritage groups at DMU (Cawthorne) with 120 delegates. The group is also the lead partner in an AHRC Connected Communities Heritage Network, which links together eight UK universities (Higgett).

The Design Unit was described by Lord Sainsbury in 2005 as an exemplar of HEI-business interaction: "De Montfort University's Improving Business by Design Programme links academic design expertise with design and manufacturing companies to design and develop new innovative products. For example, the development of a wheelchair that can be used with standard gymnasium and sports equipment, with a potential first year market of £5.5m. Overall, Improving Business by Design can demonstrate a 14:1 return on public sector investment through the development of new markets for UK design and manufacturing companies."

The Design Unit's research in product design is scholarly, empirical, user-led and responds directly to the needs of stakeholders, its impacts on both commercial practice and the social world of employment are usually tangible and immediate. Over the census period, the Design Unit has helped bring to market a large number of new products. Its partners included start-ups and SMEs (e.g. Walkodile, <http://www.walkodile.com/>) and large national and international clients (including BT, Eon, Google, Travis Perkins, Oxford Instruments (Finland) and Petainer (Sweden/Czech R.)). Other members of the Design Unit who are not product designers write and lecture about design and innovation, and also go on directly to change the attitude and conduct of companies engaged in innovation. Boydell's monograph *Horrockses Fashions: Off the Peg Style in the '40s and '50s* (V&A Publications, 2010) led to the launch of a major line of merchandise by the V&A and to consultancy for Brookmann Home on the development and launch of Horrockses Fashions' bed-linen and homeware. The monograph also resulted in public outreach through the radio (*Woman's Hour*, *Nightwaves*), the press (*Sunday Telegraph*, *Stella*, *Saga Magazine*, etc) and public lectures, and it has led directly to continuing work with Leicestershire County Museums service, including a guest curatorship for *Taking the Plunge*, a history of swimwear exhibited at Snibston Discovery Park from May 2013.

Woudhuysen's 575pp book *Energise! A future for energy innovation* (Beautiful Books, 2009) also shows the impact of scholarly research. It has led directly to consultancy for BDR Thermea, Geothermal Engineering Ltd, Land Securities, Mitsubishi, Roca and Yokogawa. Similarly, a book chapter on innovation in pharmaceuticals has led to a €30,000 contract, conducted with DMU's Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, to research for Novartis Oncology on patient adherence to medication regimens for breast cancer. Woudhuysen's work on design and innovation, and specifically as editor of *Big Potatoes: the London Manifesto for Innovation*, continues to influence thinking and practice in the field. For example, Geoff Mulgan, CEO of Nesta, wrote on 16 July 2012: "Woudhuysen continues to be one of the UK's most original and thought-provoking

commentators on innovation. Well-informed and engaging research, such as that in *Big Potatoes*, has been very helpful in stimulating organisations like Nesta, and in the wider field of innovation.”

c. Strategy and plans:

Researchers within the unit are already highly committed to realising and articulating the benefits and impacts from their research, and the unit already provides a recognised body of best practice to embed impact within the research cycle. Much of the research in the unit is driven by the desire to understand the needs of users. A principal focus for the unit over the next census period will be to improve the monitoring and tracking of impacts, whilst continuing to support new researchers to engage with the impact agenda.

The unit will continue its full commitment to the production of world-leading practice, world-leading scholarship and world-leading research. It will also continue to explore all the avenues through which the benefits from these activities can be realised. The unit will continue to seek support for impact-led activities from both the faculty and the university, and will seek to establish a number of formal, strategic partnerships with long-standing external collaborators. The Unit will continue to seek external support to further facilitate applied research, knowledge translation and knowledge exchange – be this through acting as a research provider on TSB-funded projects with partners, through exploiting the national KTP programme to embed our research findings in a business, through our established engaged scholarship models, or through (for example) the ESRC’s Retail Knowledge Exchange call. The unit will continue to focus its impact activities around the heritage sector and around improving design and innovation in business. However the unit will also be proactive in seeking to identify and enable other possible avenues for impact, and it will remain mindful of the cultural enhancement that can be realised by its researchers.

DMU’s Revolving Investment Fund sends out two or three calls per year and can be used for projects that support the translation of research into fully-developed impacts. Examples are public engagement events and the building of links with institutions and stakeholders outside HEIs. HEIF funds have also been made available to the unit to ensure continuity; for example, they helped support the Design Unit when it lost funding as a consequence of the closure of the East Midlands Regional Development Agency.

At Faculty level, the maintenance of research centres, groups and clusters with associated facilities gives those areas an acknowledged status and, particularly with the Design Unit, the infrastructure and resources necessary to project a credible impression to business partners. Funds are also available at school level to seed projects and enhance resources. The unit also recognises that impact can only follow the earlier provision of high-quality research and, to that end, allows all research staff one day a week free of teaching, Readers are allocated half teaching loads in order to concentrate on research outputs and promoting their work, and a research leave scheme (offering one semester free of teaching and administration) operates at university and faculty levels. The University’s Research, Business and Innovation Directorate has a significant role in enhancing research impact, facilitating business engagement, providing advice on fostering partnerships with non-HEI organisations and taking a coordinating role in suitable external funding bids. Regional engagement is a key element of our impact strategy: for example, the unit works closely with Leicester City Council’s Museum Service and has been invited to participate in the council’s major project *The Story of Leicester*. This will provide scholars and artists with an excellent opportunity to apply their ideas to several of the socially relevant themes that inform the project.

d. Relationship to case studies:

The case study on Improving Business by Design describes the Design Unit’s model of engaged scholarship which ensures that high quality practice-based research is translated into meaningful products and services for specific stakeholders.

The Photographic History Research Centre case study illustrates how a co-production approach to research with relevance to the heritage industry can lead to a change in practice across the museum sector.

The case study around *Horrockses Fashions: Off the Peg Style in the 40s and 50s* illustrates how a classical piece of academic design history research can be positioned in such a way to generate mass-market appeal by working closely with museums and other key stakeholders.