

Institution: UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
Unit of Assessment: D34 Art and Design
Title of case study: Turner and Italy: Exhibiting and the Creation of New Audiences
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The impact was based on research on William Turner by Hamilton; its aim was to contribute to the cultural enrichment of audiences in Britain and Europe and to promote wider public understanding and knowledge of the work of Turner. It culminated in the Exhibition, <i>Turner and Italy</i>, staged at the Palazzo del Diamante, Ferrara, Italy (16 November 2008 to 22 February 2009); the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh (27 March to 7 June 2009); the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (15 July to 25 October 2009). Through the significant numbers of paying visitors and purchase of exhibition catalogues the research also contributed to the local economy. It was the first exhibition on Turner in Hungary, ensuring creation of public awareness and knowledge of his work by a new international audience.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The background to the exhibition was an extended body of research undertaken over the past sixteen years by Hamilton into Turner, resulting in a number of prior exhibitions and books devoted to the artist and his times. The research, which also led to a number of book publications into Turner and the artistic and cultural life of early nineteenth-century Britain, focused on two distinctive themes: Turner's relationship to Italy and, as part of the wider cultural and social background, his engagement with contemporary natural-scientific discourses. With regard to the latter, Hamilton argued that the recurring interchange between the Royal Academy and the Royal Society, and the exchanges between artists and scientists, were part of the crucial backdrop to Turner's work and profoundly shaped his treatment of landscape. Outputs by Hamilton that emerged out of this research include the following monographs: <i>Turner – a Life</i> (Hodder & Stoughton, 1997), <i>Faraday: the Life</i> (HarperCollins, 2002), <i>London Lights. The Minds that Moved the City that Shook the World</i> (John Murray, 2007). Exhibitions curated by Hamilton include: <i>Turner and the Scientists</i> (Tate Gallery, March – June 1998); <i>Turner: the Late Seascapes</i> (Clark Art Institute, MA, June – September 2003, Manchester City Art Gallery, October 2003 – January 2004, Burrell Collection, February – May 2004) and <i>Turner's Britain</i> (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, November 2003 – February 2004).</p> <p>The exhibition <i>Turner and Italy</i> represents one strand of this ongoing body of research and, falling into the census period for REF, provides the focus for the case study. It comprised 104 works, being 32 oil paintings, 51 watercolours and drawings, and 21 prints by Turner, and including comparative works by Claude Lorrain, Richard Wilson, Piranesi, J R Cozens and William Allan. Based on close analysis of primary artworks and contemporary textual sources, it examined Turner's engagement with Italian subjects, his use of classical mythical narratives (including their use as political allegory), and foregrounded his relation to the classical landscape tradition. It also documented his visits to Italy in 1802, 1819/20 and 1828, and the works that were produced as a consequence, as well as exploring the impact of Turner's Italian travels on his later work.</p> <p><i>Turner and Italy</i> sought to bring this aspect of Turner's work to a wider public, in Scotland, Italy and Hungary, as well as to illuminate in a scholarly and accessible manner his central position as an artist in the nineteenth century. With loans from Tate, Birmingham MAG, Manchester Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Beaverbrook Foundation, New Brunswick, the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne and other lenders, the exhibition brought together works that are otherwise dispersed across numerous international collections, and had a powerful and timely impact on the public understanding and enjoyment on Turner's art. This was particularly the case in Budapest, where it brought Turner's work to the attention of the Hungarian public for the first time.</p>

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

- 1) James Hamilton, with contributions from Christopher Baker, Nicola Moorby and Jacqueline Ridge - *Turner and Italy* (Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, 2009). 160 pp. ISBN: 978-1-906270-16-2. Italian edition: *Turner e l'Italia* (Ferrara, Ferrara Arte, 2008). 255 pp. ISBN: 88-89793-08-2. Hungarian edition: *Turner és Itália* (Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts, 2009). 136 pp. ISBN: 978-963-7063-65-7 **[listed in REF2]**
- 2) James Hamilton, *Turner: a Life* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1997, republished in 2007) 384 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8129-6791-3 **[available from HEI on request]**
- 3) James Hamilton, *Turner and the Scientists* (London, Tate Gallery, 1998) 160 pp. ISBN: 978-1854372550 **[available from HEI on request]**
- 4) James Hamilton. *Faraday. The Life* (London: HarperCollins, 2002) 448 pp. ISBN: 978-0002570824 **[available from HEI on request]**
- 5) James Hamilton, *London Lights. The Minds that Moved the City that Shook the World* (London: John Murray, 2007) 416 pp. ISBN: 978-0719567438 **[available from HEI on request]**

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

The exhibition aimed both to enhance the cultural life of the cities hosting the exhibition, and also introduce overseas audiences to the work of this major British artist. It made a significant contribution to public understanding; for audiences in Ferrara the light cast on the relation to Italy of a British artist was of particular relevance while in Budapest the exhibition introduced the work of Turner for the first time. The exhibition thereby enriched the cultural offer of the institutions – enabling them to appeal to a wider audience and, through the considerable number of paying visitors to each venue, having a positive economic impact on the institutions.

Beneficiaries included both general members of the gallery-going public as well as specific groups, including school children, community groups, the hard of hearing, the visually impaired and family groups. Visitor numbers indicated the relevance and popularity of the subject. These were: 93,949 (Ferrara), 65,801 (Budapest), and 45,002 (Edinburgh) (sources 1-3). Visits to the exhibition in Ferrara and Budapest were particularly high; in Hungary this may have reflected the fact that this was the first Turner exhibition to be held. Audiences included those local to the cities staging the exhibition, as well as those from a wide international range of countries. The exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue written largely by Hamilton, the guest curator, with further essays by Nicola Moorby (Tate Britain), Christopher Baker and Jacqueline Ridge (both National Galleries of Scotland). It was published in English, Italian and Hungarian editions. Sales figures indicate a wide readership was reached: 5,189 copies of the Italian edition were sold (the catalogue was, in fact, sold out); 2,189 copies of the English-language edition were sold, while 893 were sold in Hungary (sources 1-3). The latter figure is in proportion to the smaller population of Hungary.

Additional events were organised to enhance the impact of the exhibition with audiences. In Budapest 92 guided tours were organised, attended by 1840 visitors, with 16 additional tours of the Museum+ programme (with late evening opening) attended by 560 visitors. There were 10 school class visits involving 250 schoolchildren. A visitors' book was kept, with comments by Hungarian visitors as well as many other nationalities, including the USA, Belgium, Russia, Czech Republic, Britain, Finland, Italy, Brazil and Australia. The overwhelming positive responses indicate that the exhibition achieved its goal of promoting wider public understanding of Turner (source 4).

In Ferrara, Ferrara Arte, together with the Conservatorio "Frescobaldi" (Ferrara Academy of Music) and the Teatro Comunale (the City Theatre), organized a series of concerts inspired by Turner intitled *Il suono dell'arte. Metamorfosi musicali nel secolo di Turner* between 17 January to 21 February 2009 with 643 people attending the concerts. A visitors' book was not kept, but 4,996 visitors were interviewed by gallery staff, with a 96.01% positive rating.

In Edinburgh an educational programme was organized, with public lectures, exhibition tours and workshops, both for general audiences and also for specific groups such as adult learners, the

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deaf and hard of hearing, the visually impaired, children, school groups. These were attended by 3150 participants. Four concerts were also organized at the National Gallery on themes linked to the exhibition. A visitors' book again confirmed the positive contribution of the exhibition towards cultural enrichment and the promotion of public understanding (source 5).

The exhibition was widely covered in national and international press. It was reviewed positively in: *The Telegraph* (13 April 2009); *The Guardian* (27 March 2009); and in *Corriere della Sera*; *La Repubblica*; *La Stampa*; *Il Giornale*; *La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno*; *Il Giorno*; *La Nazione*; *L'Osservatore Romano*; *Il Giornale dell'Arte*; *The International Herald Tribune*; *New York Times* (31 December 2008); BBC News online (25 March 2009). The substantial visitor numbers, particularly in Italy and Hungary indicate the success of the exhibition in generating public interest in Turner Hamilton's research on Turner has also had an impact on national and international media. He was interviewed on the BBC Radio 4 "Today" programme of 15 November 2011 (source 6). He also features as advisor and participant in a documentary film, *The Genius of Turner: Painting the Industrial Revolution*, broadcast on BBC 2 on 26 April 2013 (dir. Claire Bevan). He also advised on and took part in a film for Japanese NHK TV, *J M W Turner: Snow Storm - Steamboat off a Harbour's Mouth* (60mins) that was broadcast in Japan on NHK TV on 6 June 2012. His work on Turner has also been a central source of information for the Turner biopic film by Mike Leigh filmed in 2013. As Leigh noted in correspondence with Hamilton, "your book continues in its role as something of a bible" (source 7).

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

- [1] Factual statement provided by Press Officer from the National Gallery of Scotland, listing visitor numbers, numbers of catalogues sold and other activities.
- [2] Factual statement provided by Palazzo del Diamante listing visitor numbers, numbers of catalogues sold and other activities.
- [3] Factual statement provided by Communications Officer of the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, listing visitor numbers, numbers of catalogues sold and other activities.
- [4] Visitor's book for the exhibition in Budapest, transcribed into an Excel document, available on request.
- [5] Copy of the visitor's book for the exhibition in Edinburgh, available on request.
- [6] BBC Radio 4 Today interview of 15/11/11: Available online at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9639000/9639943.stm
- [7] Factual statement provided by the Director.