

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: Birmingham City University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 34 – Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory</p>
<p>Title of case study: New models for linking artists and their work with diverse communities, significantly extending the public accessibility to art</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) Led by Professor John Butler at the School of Art, BIAD/BCU, a programme of research was embarked upon to create, develop and evaluate a series of models linking artists and their work with diverse communities under-represented in audiences typically brought into contact with the visual arts. The effects of this research have been to make new connections between cultural providers and to engage diverse audiences with art that they would not normally encounter. This has, <i>inter alia</i>, re-invigorated the regional art scene, contributed to the regeneration of areas of Birmingham and extended the cultural offer of the nation's second city. The impact of these models is recognized by the region's political leaders and celebrated by the public and artists. The work is acknowledged with substantial and continuing national and other funding, so far exceeding £2.1m.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) Starting in 2004 a programme of research commenced to create and test new models for stimulating collaborative practice, facilitating open access and generating innovative arts activity across a diverse set of stakeholders. These models were trialled and tested in the field via the successful execution of local, regional and global networking projects. These models have informed continuing developments and provided bases for devising and validating further novel art schemes. The approaches taken were devised to avoid setting up or reinforcing islands (or silos) of cultural activity. This programme has resulted in the development of a range of delivery projects leading to the establishment of a robust, laterally networked scheme which triangulates university, commercial and non-commercial arts environments with the expertise of multiple contributors, such as artists, curators and cultural theorists [see Butler REF outputs 1, 2, 3 and 4]. This new and innovative cross-city/regional networking scheme has been delivered and validated using two key approaches:</p> <p>Approach 1: Urban revitalisation and regional arts development Professor Butler created urban revitalisation models that informed the establishment of three unique platforms for public accessibility and arts development within disadvantaged localities: Eastside Projects (EP), Turning Point West Midlands (TPWM), and the International Project Space (IPS). The Birmingham School of Art, in collaboration with EP (director Wade) received National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) recognition (2010 – present) for its ability to encourage and sustain local talent, provide funding opportunities, garner major international exposure, and deliver city-wide workshops, exhibitions and seminars linking non-commercial and university research environments [Corroborating evidence 1, 2 and 4]. TPWM, through its focus on regional development (West Midlands) and links with artists, galleries, museums, universities, local authorities, national agencies and businesses, has successfully built social, cultural and economic capital for the region [Corroborating evidence 1, 2 and 6]. This has been underpinned by artist-in-residencies, innovative artist mentoring, research and development programmes (http://tinyurl.com/tpwm-development), and, with its lead partner, The New Art Gallery Walsall, the showcasing of young artists (http://newartwestmidlands.org/). The selection of the work is by internationally renowned curators and artists. IPS (2002–12) provided a unique opportunity for urban revitalisation linking the University with local disaffected youth by providing studio-based exhibition space, mentoring and skills exchange with over 21 projects receiving national/international recognition and acclaim, (http://tinyurl.com/IPS-recognition) especially <i>Revolution, I Love you: 1968 in Art, Politics and Philosophy</i> (2008). IPS was central in shaping the career paths of a number of now prominent artists and curators [Corroborating Statement 3]. The projects in this approach were supported via Arts Council England and local/regional bodies, with</p>

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funding of over £2.1m [See **Corroborating Statement 1, 4; Butler REF Output 1, 2, 3, 4; Wade REF Output 1, Derbyshire REF Output 1**].

Approach 2: Delivering art to public spaces

Butler's second approach tested art integration within environments not usually employed for this purpose (canals, city streets, shopping malls). The two most successful models validating the research were *The Rootless Forest* (2011–13) led by BIAD's Wheatley Artist-in-Residence, Beth **Derbyshire** and *Kalaboration* (2008–12) in partnership with Drum Arts Centre, BIAD/BCU and Rogueplay Theatre. Supported by the [London 2012 Inspire Programme](#), Arts Council England (ACE) and Birmingham City Council, *Kalaboration* simultaneously celebrated the 2012 Olympic Games and the 50th anniversary of Jamaican independence, linking local and international artists in cross-city street festivals with projects that included the massively popular [graffiti knitting](#) [**Corroborating evidence 5; see also Butler Ref Output 3**]. *The Rootless Forest*, with its partners (including ACE, BIAD/BCU, Canal & River Trust, IKON, The New Art Gallery Walsall, Walsall Council, Afghan Action, The British Legion, Birmingham City Council, South Asian Arts) tested the use of interactive multi-media technologies on a massive scale via a floating story-telling platform that enabled difficult subject matter to be explored through the medium of art. Over one million people were involved. In excess of £400K was raised from local authority, commercial/non-commercial and Arts Council funding bodies in support of these projects. [**Corroborating evidence 1; cf Derbyshire REF Output 1**]. At the global level, Professor **Butler** initiated a strategy to solidify British-Chinese visual arts communication and cross-cultural exchange by establishing, with Professor **Jiang** as Director, the [Centre for Chinese Visual Arts \(CCVA\)](#). The global approach partnered the city government in Guangzhou province with commercial UK-Chinese regional interests and the University. Raising in excess of £250K in funding from the Guangdong Museum and £300K from the Grandview Group Jiang curated *The Unseen: The Fourth Guangzhou Triennial* (Guandong Museum of Modern Art, Guangzhou, Sep–Dec 2012) with over 1.5 million viewers. [See **Jiang REF Output 4**].

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

- 1) Butler J and W Law (2012). *Turning Point West Midlands wins Arts Council Grant*. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/turning-point-west-midlands-wins-arts-council-gran/>
- 2) Wade G (2008). *Eastside Projects wins as one of the top 18 Group Shows worldwide*. *Frieze Magazine*, http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/group_shows_2008/
- 3) Jiang J (2012). *The Unseen: Fourth Guangzhou Triennial* (28 Sep –16 Dec 2012). <http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/the-unseen-the-fourth-guangzhou-triennial/>
- 4) Jiang J (2008). *The Revolution Continues*. London: Saatchi Gallery and Jonathan Cape, http://magazine.saatchionline.com/articles/artnews/talk_chinese_contemporary_art
- 5) Butler J and Sergeant I (2012). *Kalaboration*. www.kalaboration.co.uk
- 6) Butler J, Hunt A and Bonacina A (2004-2013). *International Project Space*. <http://internationalprojectspace.org/exhibitions/>

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

By triangulating university, commercial and non-commercial arts environments with multi-disciplinary expertise of artists, curators and cultural theorists, this work has facilitated the bringing of art to public spaces not usually associated with artist run events and exhibitions. This has impacted on urban revitalisation and contributed to regeneration through regional arts development. The evidence is as follows:

Impact from Approach 1

In 2008, after several years of developing cross-city arts innovation and networking platforms, Eastside Projects (EP) was established (<http://www.eastsideprojects.org>) as one of the first entirely art school/artist-run and staffed initiatives in the country. Led by Director Gavin **Wade**, practicing artists, curators and designers collaborate together through the [unique model of integrating curatorial space with its programming](#). EP's opening exhibition, *This is the Gallery and the Gallery is Many Things* was listed by *Frieze* magazine as one of the 18

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most influential group shows worldwide in 2008 (Michael Stanley, critic - <http://tinyurl.com/frieze-worldbest>), featured on BBC's *The Culture Show* [**Corroborating evidence 7**] and later cited in MIT's influential *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, (O'Neill, 2012, pp. 120–121). Since its inception, it has received **£528,808** of Arts Council core funding [**Corroborating evidence 1**] and **£360,000** from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation *Breakthrough Award* (2010–5) (<http://www.phf.org.uk/news.asp?id=1058>). Additional significant funding has been secured from various sources (the European Cultural Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn, Birmingham City Council, Future Jobs Fund and other international national councils, e.g. Mondrian and IASPIS, Sweden) [see **Wade REF Output 1**]. ACE described EP as a vital project “which has brought high quality art and curation to the city.” [**Corroborating evidence 1**]. In 2011 BCU, in respect of EP, was awarded the prestigious National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) (<http://tinyurl.com/ace-bcu-npostatus>), one of only two university-linked/artist-led galleries ever to be offered such recognition. EP has had over 250 events, performances and workshops, including 54 exhibitions showing work by more than 260 artists, including **8 Turner Prize** nominees and 60 practitioners from the West Midlands. Through its associate membership scheme, [Extra Special People](#) (targeting early career artists), 14 one-year training posts have been established. Featured on BBC's *The Culture Show* (Oct 2011), EP has continued to receive [worldwide recognition](#) for its efforts, with the Director of The IKON Gallery noting that it continues to have an “on-going rejuvenating impact on the area, providing a hub for artists’ studios and galleries.” [**Corroborating evidence 4**]. The Leader of Birmingham City Council further commented that EP is “impacting positively on the cultural offer and the cultural environment of the city” which “aligns with our greater desire at the City Council to see the continued regeneration of Eastside and the development of Birmingham as a leading international destination for new visitors and businesses.” [**Corroborating evidence 2**]. It is clear that the work of Eastside Projects has brought significant benefit to the wider cultural landscape of Birmingham and beyond.

The impact of Turning Point West Midlands (TPWM) on the cultural ecology of the region (<http://www.tpwestmidlands.org.uk/>), specifically in its focus on artist development, is also well attested. [**Corroborating evidence 1, 2**]. In an independent report carried out by Annabel Jackson Associates (AJA) in July 2013 [**Corroborating evidence 6**], interviewing nearly 100 different artists in the region, AJA concluded: “Turning Point West Midlands has had a strong impact on the region...” with “...more than 80% of respondents saying that TPWM has increased the awareness of opportunities for artists, and actually increased the opportunities for artists.” (AJA, p. 27). Some of the feedback from local artists and curators, referenced in the report, is also pertinent here, with one curator noting that TPWM “enabled me to strike up relationships with artists, venues and other curators that I wouldn't have otherwise.” Another commented, “TPWM is the beating heart of the visual arts infrastructure in the region.” (AJA, p.14). Awarding **£345,684** to the scheme since 2010, Arts Council England noted, “TPWM is in a unique position to be located within a higher education institution and nationally this model stands out as a strength in comparison to other national networks” [**Corroborating evidence 1**] <http://tinyurl.com/butler-tpwm-funding>. One result of this successful partnership is that ACE has asked the School of Art to lead on art market development in the region [**Corroborating evidence 1**]. [International Project Space \(IPS\)](#), initiated by **Butler** (2002–12) held 21 major exhibitions, each of which generated their own impact through reviews in national newspapers and popular magazines [See **Section 3, no. 6; Butler, REF Output 4**]. The wider impact of IPS was to develop the careers of a number of now prominent artists/curators. One curator, shortly to take up the directorship of Spacex in Exeter, and a judge of the Tate's annual *Turner Prize* (2012) attested to the “crucial initial period of development and support” that he received as director/curator of the International Project Space, which was foundational to his successes over the ensuing years [**Corroborating evidence 3**].

Impact from Approach 2

The Rootless Forest (2011–13) is acknowledged by The Visual Arts Relationship Manager at ACE as a project which “engaged with audiences who would not normally have been brought into contact with art of this nature,” [**Corroborating evidence 1**]. It was cited as supporting

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the Arts Council's mission to build creative partnerships with other national agencies and generated significant media interest [**Derbyshire REF output 1**]. Further praise by ACE was directed at BIAD/BCU's four-year festival project, *Kalaboration*, with Rogueplay Theatre and [The Drum](#) (a nationally important cross-cultural arts business, dedicated to South Asian, Caribbean, African and European artists). Running as part of the Cultural Olympiad and in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Jamaican Independence, the festival had funding from the [Olympic 2012 Inspire programme](#). With a *Young People's Programme* engaging 74 young people as creators/participants over a 6-month period, it produced one of the most reported mass collaboration projects, [Knit 2 Together](#), involving over [400 local community knitters](#) and literally covering the city (including the façade of Birmingham Museum) with "graffiti knitting". An [estimated 2 million people encountered the work](#). The last six months of the programme engaged a total of 83 artists and 462 participants and was memorialised on the cover of [The Sunday Times](#) (*Spectrum magazine*, 1 Jul 2012). The impact of *Kalaboration* was signalled by ACE as helping "groups under-represented in audiences for visual arts in the city," whilst the CEO of The Drum underscored the critical importance a festival of this nature offered to businesses in the visual arts, like The Drum, particularly citing the way in which BIAD "widened participation in the cultural sector" through its work with diverse communities. [**Corroborating evidence 5**].

Finally, the impact of work undertaken through global outreach afforded by the Chinese Centre for Visual Art (CCVA), led by Professor **Jiang**, is further evidenced by [The Revolution Continues, the inaugural exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery in London in 2008](#), which not only broke the visitors record (initially set by the 1997 YBA exhibition, *Sensation*) with over 525,000 people, but became the most popular contemporary art show in the world at the time. His next major work, *The Unseen*, was part of the *Fourth Guangzhou Triennial* in 2012, attracting approximately 180,000 visitors to the museum and over a million members of the public to Guangzhou Grandview Shopping Mall, one of the largest shopping centres in China. The Director of IKON Gallery, Birmingham, who co-curated the 2012 Guangzhou Triennial with Professor Jiang, has observed that Jiang's pre-eminence, in promoting Chinese artists in the UK and China, has "[enhanced]...possibilities for cultural exchange between Chinese and British arts scenes, building links, understanding and knowledge which will benefit projects they might share in the future." [**Corroborating evidence 4**].

The new models for making art publically accessible, developed by Professor **Butler** at BIAD, can be seen to have brought significant benefit regionally, nationally and internationally during the period 2003–13 inspiring innovative arts expression, developing regional artistic talent, engaging diverse audiences and enriching the wider cultural landscape. This has been done by successfully nurturing, sustaining and strengthening lateral networking across the city, the region and for the global cultural arts, creating new links and diminishing restrictive islands of cultural provision. In recognition of his contribution to collaborative working in this field, Professor **Butler** has been awarded honorary doctorates from the Universities of Cluj-Napoca, Romania (2004) and Plymouth (2007).

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

1. Visual Arts Relationship Manager, Arts Council England.
2. Council Leader, Birmingham City Council.
3. Turner Prize Judge, 2012.
4. Director, IKON Gallery, Birmingham.
5. Executive Director, The Drum, Birmingham.
6. Annabel Jackson Associates, Ltd. *Turning Point West Midlands Evaluation Report* (2013). <http://tinyurl.com/o5d79km>
7. [Eastside Projects](#). *BBC Culture Show: Feature*. 28 Oct 2011 <http://tinyurl.com/pq9jabx>
8. [Kalaboration](#) (2008-2013). <http://www.kalaboration.co.uk/> with *Sunday Times* (1 July 2012) cover and feature article. <http://tinyurl.com/nzc3o7d>
9. [The Rootless Forest Springs Up in Birmingham](#) (5 Sep 2012). <http://tinyurl.com/omwkhmr>
10. [The Revolution Continues](#): *The Guardian*. 14 December 2008. <http://tinyurl.com/pynewzj>