

<p>Institution: University of Cambridge</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: UoA28</p>
<p>Title of case study: Bruno Munari: My Futurist Past</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) Dr Antonello's research on the Italian designer and artist Bruno Munari and his relation with Futurism was instrumental for the realization of an exhibition at the Estorick Collection in London, titled 'Bruno Munari: My Futurist Past', held on 19 September – 23 December 2012. This was the first exhibition of Munari's work in the UK and the very first exhibition outside Italy since he passed away in 1998. It caught the attention of international media, and prompted the engagement of scholars, teachers, and schools at all levels (from primary to university), as well as discussions among practitioners and graphic designers. The exhibition was organized in collaboration with the Miroslava Hajek Archive, Novara, Luca Zaffarano at munart.org, and the Massimo and Sonia Cirulli Archive, New York.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) Dr Pierpaolo Antonello has been a University Lecturer at Cambridge since October 1999, and all underpinning research was undertaken and published while employed at the University of Cambridge.</p> <p>Dr Antonello is an international expert on the relationship between literature and techno-science in 20th century Italy. His research has also focused on Italian Modernism and on Futurism in particular, considered as the most innovative art movement in Italian Modernist art. More recently he has been investigating the nexus between visual art and technology in 20th century Italy, focusing on Bruno Munari as an emblematic case study. Dr Antonello's research has unpacked the subtle and complex relationship of Munari with the second wave of Futurism (1926-1944), a period in his production that has been much overlooked by art critics, but which was also underplayed by the artist himself. Dr Antonello's insight and his active work with archives and key collectors of Munari's work in Italy led to the idea of an exhibition to be held in UK. Given its focus and interest in Italian modernist art, the Estorick Collection was approached to host the exhibit. A new interpretation on Munari's early work has been fleshed out with the material exposed at the exhibition, making evident both the artist's links to Futurism and how much Munari departed from their legacy. In particular, the representation of technology and the question of dynamism in art, key aspects of Futurist aesthetics, has been addressed by Munari in a thoroughly innovative and imaginative way, through both an ironic distancing, and by combining it with formal aspects he borrowed from abstractionism, producing some ground-breaking works, like the so-called 'useless machines', or 'concave-convex', forerunners of kinetic art. This work on Munari is also the first instance of a wider project aimed to investigate the relationship between art and industry in modern Italy with the aim of producing a monograph and a series of exhibitions at international level.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>1. P. Antonello, 'My Futurist Past, Present, and Future', in <i>Bruno Munari: My Futurist Past</i>, ed. by Miroslava Hajek and Luca Zaffarano (Milan: Silvana, 2012), pp. 97-105. This essay is included in the catalogue of the exhibition. An Italian translation of Dr Antonello's essay is also available on the web: http://www.doppiozero.com/materiali/cartoline-da/bruno-munari-il-mio-passato-futurista</p> <p>2. P. Antonello, 'Beyond Futurism: Bruno Munari's Useless Machines' in <i>Futurism and Technological Imagination</i>, ed. by G. Berghaus (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 313-34. Extended on-line version: http://www.munart.org/doc/bruno-munari-useless-machine-pp-antonello-rodopi-2009.pdf. This essay was made available also on Dr Antonello's academia.edu page: http://www.academia.edu/217725/Beyond_Futurism_Bruno_Munaris_Useless_Machines</p> <p>3. <i>Future Imperfect. Italian Futurism between Tradition and Modernity</i>. Special Issue of <i>The European Legacy. Journal of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas</i>, 14.7</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

(2009). Routledge. Edited by P. Antonello and M. Härmänmaa. In 2010 *The European Legacy* was rated among the top 15% of academic journals around the world by the Australian Government's Australian Research Council.

4. *Il ménage a quattro. Scienza, filosofia, tecnica nelle letteratura italiana del Novecento* (Florence: Le Monnier, 2005), 249 pp. ISBN: 88-00-86111-3. This item was part of the 2008 RAE exercise. The Italian department of Cambridge was awarded 5*; 45% of the submitted material was deemed 4* and 53% 3* quality.

All outputs can be supplied by the University of Cambridge on request.

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

Dr Antonello's research was instrumental for the realization of the exhibit. On the one hand he liaised with two key archives — the Miroslava Hajek Archive, Novara, Italy, and the Massimo and Sonia Cirulli Archive, Bologna and New York —, and on the other with the director of the Estorick Collection. He suggested the inclusion of specific works by Munari and supervised the production of the catalogue, also suggesting some of the contributors to the catalogue and liaising with them. His analysis of the influence of Futurist art in the early Munari's production was fleshed out by the exhibition, with the inclusion of almost all the works that Dr Antonello discusses in the essay listed in the references to the research (n. 2). The director of the Estorick Collection acknowledged Dr Antonello's key contribution to the organization of the exhibit, with relevant meetings in Italy and in London, and with a fundamental contribution to the catalogue. The co-curator of the exhibit also flagged Dr Antonello's 'ideational inspiration' for the exhibit, as well as, his 'generous work which contributed to the historical and scientific coherence of the project', and to the 'authoritative academic validation' he gave to the show.

Dr Antonello also gave an introductory Gallery talk at the Estorick on 29 Sep 2012, attended by around 40 people, in which he highlighted to a general audience some of the key features of the exhibition, including Munari's debt to artists such as Enrico Prampolini and Fortunato Depero, as well as its most innovative artistic breakthrough of his early career like the so-called 'useless machines'.

The exhibition was well attended and from the feedback we gathered it is apparent that the exhibit attracted the attention of an international audience: Odessa Swan, from Seattle (USA) on 21.09.12 said: 'Excellent show. I could have stayed in the Munari Projection for hours'; James Knuckles, from California, on 26.9.2012 wrote: 'Very nicely curated exhibition. Thank you'; another anonymous visitor from Italy, wrote in the guest book: 'I would love to see this exhibition in Milan'. More than thirty reviews have appeared in newspapers and specialized on-line magazines, both in Italy and in the English-speaking world, including the following: Alice Rawsthorn, 'At London Exhibition, Celebrating a Visual Master', *New York Times*, 16 September, 2012; Adrian Hamilton, 'Bruno Munari: Back to the Futurists. This rare exhibition of his work reveals an inventive artist who used wit and imagination to make his work accessible', *The Independent*, Monday, 24 September 2012; Laura Gascoigne, 'Keeping the faith', *The Spectator*, 24 Nov 2012; Bruno *Munari: My Futurist Past* was one of Sam Thorn's personal highlights of the year, in *Frieze*, Nov - Dec issue.

The exhibition contributed to a renewed interest in the work of Bruno Munari on an international level. Twenty of Munari's original works were recently displayed at the Firstsite exhibit on Xerographies in Colchester (8 Sept. – 10 Nov. 2013). Four works which were present at the Estorick will be featured at the upcoming exhibition on Italian Futurism at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York (21 Feb. 2014 – 1 Sept 2014). A section of the London exhibit will also be on display during the same period at the Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò at New York University, New York, which will be also hosting a conference on Munari for a more general critical appraisal of his work and of his legacy. Prompted by the London exhibit, other institutions are also considering hosting a retrospective on Munari, like the MUDE in Lisbon, and the YU Contemporary, in Portland, USA.

Because of the versatile eclectic nature of Munari's art, the exhibition lent itself to all sorts of

outreach activities, some of which were self-led, while other were organized by the Estorick Educational Department. Some of the institutions which visited the exhibition were: St Mary Pancras and, William Tyndale, The Italian School (primary); Wollaston School, John of Gaunt School, Harrow School (A-level); Middlesex University, London College of Communication, Westminster University, Birbeck College, City and Guilds of London Art School, London Metropolitan, University of Warwick, Regent's College, Central St Martins (HEI). As part of the evaluation form distributed, the teachers from William Tyndale school, who came with 30 pupils for a 2 hour creative workshop, said their visit was “inspiring”, “engaging” and “encouraged thinking and discussion”; that it “exceeded their expectations”, “met curriculum requirements and learning objectives” and that they were “highly satisfied” with the workshop.

The exhibit was also of great interest for practitioners and graphic and industrial designers. It was reviewed by websites like ‘London Design Guide’, and ‘Archilovers’. A roundtable discussion was organized at the Estorick on 20 Nov 2012: Brian Webb (Webb&Webb), Robert Boon (Inventory Studio) and John Walters (Eye Magazine) explored Munari’s enduring appeal and iconic status within the world of contemporary design, attempting to characterise the nature of his achievement and evaluate its legacy. *Eye*, the international review of graphic design, a quarterly printed magazine about graphic design and visual culture published in London since 1990, devoted the issue n. 85 (2013) to Bruno Munari incorporating some of the insights from the Estorick exhibition.

A roundtable discussion open to the public was also organized at UCL, with the participation, along with Dr Antonello, of Prof Jeffrey Schnapp (Harvard), and Prof Robert Lumley (UCL). Video-recordings of Prof Schnapp’s contribution to the UCL event and of the roundtable with Brian Webb, Robert Boon, and John Walters were made available, as well as relevant material related to the exhibit, both on the Estorick website and on www.munart.org, the most comprehensive website devoted to Munari’s art, to which Dr Antonello contributed with further bibliographical information and general advice about the material that should be included. The site is currently visited by ca. 150 people per day. The importance of the [munart.org](http://www.munart.org) website is attested by the fact that Robert Snowden, art director at the YU Contemporary Museum in Portland (USA), has recently received a grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation to translate the entire website into English to make it available to an English-speaking audience.

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

People who could be contacted to seek opinions on this impact case are the following:

1. Person 1, Director of the Estorick Collection;
2. Person 2, Professor of Italian Cultural History at UCL;
3. Person 3, Lecturer in Art History at the University of Nottingham;
4. Person 4, Co-curator of the exhibit;
5. Person 5, Founder, Cirulli Archive, Bologna-New York.

Other sources:

6. <http://www.munart.org/>
7. <http://www.munariestorick.org/art.php?p=1>
8. Review in *Frieze*: <http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/the-year-in-review-uk/>.