

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: University of Essex

Unit of Assessment: 34 – Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory

a. Context

Impact is integral to Art History research at Essex. Particularly due to our expertise in Curatorial Studies and Contemporary and Latin-American art, it is standard practice for our researchers to collaborate with galleries, museums, and other non-HEI partners, and to engage with community groups and the general public. Through various partnerships we bring benefit to our non-academic colleagues, influence the practice of public and private institutions, and increase cultural capital locally, nationally, and internationally. These external partners benefit from our research through: curating exhibitions; consulting on the stewardship, procurement, and display of art collections; planning and delivering public events programmes for the general public and for collectors; and through school outreach activity.

Our primary form of impact involves close working relationships with artists, curators, and galleries exhibiting the work that we study. Through this activity, and with the support of Curatorial Studies expertise, we engage with museums and galleries in developing innovative forms of exhibition, and thereby influence opinion and awareness in diverse publics through debate and discussion of the visual arts. These activities have two main impacts:

- on the practices and policies of collection and exhibition of galleries and museums with whom we work, including: Tate; Royal Academy; Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh; Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon; Vancouver Art Gallery; *firstsite*, Colchester; our own University exhibition space, Art Exchange.
- on public perceptions, values and ideas relating to specific exhibition topics, via maximising interactive engagement and opportunities for learning. We are active in seeking new opportunities to benefit non-traditional audiences and user groups, including hospitals, charities and commercial enterprises, with a view to widening public knowledge and understanding of art and specific issues.

b. Approach to impact

Our research benefits art institutions, public bodies, and the general public by three means:

- 1) Curating exhibitions;
- 2) Collaborations with public institutions; and
- 3) Outreach activities

Curating high profile exhibitions is a very effective means of enhancing the international impact of our research. The popularity of our exhibitions is complemented by catalogues, web-based materials and media interviews. This work also involves co-developing curatorial projects with partners in museums, galleries and other arts institutions. Since 2008 members of the Unit have curated a total of 12 exhibitions; a further 41 were mounted at Art Exchange, the University of Essex gallery. Many of our partnerships develop from our reputation as a UoA that values exhibitions as both a form of research and a means to enrich non-academic cultural understanding. Our reputation for work in Surrealism helped us develop a relationship with the Fruitmarket Gallery's Director, with whom we curated a major exhibition on the close-up in photography and film. *Close-Up* was accompanied by a 100pp catalogue with essays by the curators and an ambitious education programme. Ades, who worked on *Close-Up*, also curated the historical section of *Manifesta 9*, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art (2012), in association with chief curator Cuauhtémoc Medina. *The Deep of the Modern* was attended by 100,866 visitors, and educational events attracted 37,000 participants including a diverse audience ranging from international art professionals to local primary school students and former miners. The exhibition played a significant role in changing attitudes to aspects of industrial heritage and the effects of modernisation. Our curatorial projects are supported by UoA impact infrastructure, with Ades given remission of workload to support her exhibitions.

Our expertise in art history and curatorial studies allows us to develop mutually beneficial collaborative projects with both traditional and non-traditional art partners. One of the more creative

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impacts of our research has been achieved through Colchester Art for Patients (CHAPs), an AHRC collaborative project with Colchester General Hospital that identifies and catalogues the Hospital's art collection. The project exemplifies our use of University support for impact. Our Research and Enterprise Office and Faculty Executive Dean, together with the Trust, identified a need for professional consultancy to assess the collection and to provide training to improve standards of stewardship, with the aim of strengthening the visual arts as a resource for staff and patients in the Hospital. A series of team meetings led to the appointment of an Early Career Researcher placed in the Hospital, leading to an extensive report to the Trustees and recognition of the need to create mechanisms for investment in the collection. One unexpected outcome was the discovery of a long-lost large collage by Nigel Henderson.

We also work with cultural institutions to inform their policies and improve their acquisitions and exhibitions. We work closely with Tate, especially regarding our collection of Latin American art (see case study). Our partnership with the Tate also includes collaborative PhDs. One such student organised a closed symposium with Tate and the Archaeology of Photography Foundation in Warsaw which, according to Tate's Curator of Photography, 'would genuinely feed into the work of the acquisitions committee'. We have also contributed to the development of Colchester's centre for the visual arts, firstsite, with Neil Cox (in the UoA until April 2013) appointed as Chair of Trustees. firstsite now has a dedicated space for our Essex Collection of Art from Latin America (ESCALA), which has to date held 5 exhibitions. In collaboration with the École du Louvre, the Centre for Curatorial Studies co-organised a round table discussion in Fontainebleau, 2013, on the topic 'The Modalities of Museology and Curating: Where to Next?' It probed the different approaches to museology and curating in the UK and France. Finally, our collaboration with charities include Giebelhausen's role as a trustee of Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington, London, from 1995 to 2012, and Peter Vergo's work with St Helena Hospice, Myland Hall, Colchester. He is expected to succeed the present post holder as Chair of the Trustees in 2014.

Many of our outreach activities are co-ordinated by our campus art gallery, Art Exchange. During the period, Art Exchange attracted c.50,000 visitors, of which over 6,000 were school and family workshop participants, while another 4,500 attended adult talks and events. Peter Vergo, working with Tate Liverpool, coordinated the 'Viennese Salon' evening as part of the public events programme associated with the exhibition, *Gustav Klimt: Painting, Design and Modern Life*. Vergo also contributed to the Philharmonic Orchestra's public study day 'Vienna, City of Dreams' held at the British Library, and delivered a public lecture as part of the Holocaust memorial series of lectures held at the Minories, Colchester, as part of the University's public education initiative called the 'Twilight Zone Café'. Further examples include Fraser's tour of an exhibition of Mexican ex-voto paintings at the Wellcome Trust, London. We also conduct school outreach projects. Wade facilitated the 'Art History and Human Rights' project to encourage local primary school children to engage with human rights issues and demonstrate this visually. This involved teaching sessions in three local primary schools and culminated in an art competition and exhibition, which was covered by local press. Wade is also involved in Kid's Uni, an event validated by the national organisation The Children's University. This included a lecture and day-long activity session at firstsite for children aged between 7 and 11. Wade is also spearheading a collaborative project with the University's Learning and Development Unit and the Faculty of Humanities. Microfiction explores a new approach to writing skills and invites members of the public to submit stories written in ten words or fewer. One such competition received over 200 entries. Wade was interviewed about the project on BBC Radio Essex.

The UoA is also supported by University-level resources to help facilitate, deliver, and record impact. Our Faculty Impact Officer helps us to document impact; Ades, for instance, has worked with the Impact Officer to collect information about the impact of her exhibition in Vancouver (see section d for more detail). Our Faculty Research and Business Partnerships Manager advises on our applications for external funding for impact projects, and the University's Communications Office help to produce press release for public dissemination of our research.

c. Strategy and plans

Our future work will continue to cultivate new ways to undertake collaborative work with galleries and museums, and to find new non-traditional external partners to be involved in our impact-generating research projects. Our plans for impact are threefold: develop existing curatorial

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projects, such as those detailed in section b, into new areas; cultivate new international partnerships with museums and public institutions; and undertake fresh public engagement activity through a new Research Council-funded project and the outreach work of a new appointment to the UoA. More specifically:

Curatorial Projects: The success of our projects with the École du Louvre, including museum studies student exchanges, means that more such events and intellectual exchanges are in the pipeline. Ruiz-Gómez's AHRC project (grant application under review) will involve an exhibition of objects from nineteenth-century anatomical and medical museums, doctors' personal collections and the École des beaux-arts. The Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons has agreed to host the exhibition. Ruiz-Gómez is also planning a second exhibition on the ways in which scientific and medical theories influenced the sculptural production of Auguste Rodin, the first modern sculptor. Lodder is contracted as a curatorial consultant to the exhibition design company Quatrefoil, who are organising an exhibition entitled 'Tattoo: Ancient Myths, Modern Meanings'. The exhibition will tour museums in the USA during 2014 and beyond. ESCALA Director, Harwood, is in discussion with the Museum of Contemporary Art, University of São Paulo about future collaborations in museology (including digitising collections) and exhibitions of Latin American art.

Collaborative projects with public institutions: Furthering our work with Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust, we will found a consultancy for regional hospitals facing difficulty in managing art/craft/medical collections. Workshops will be used to facilitate wider relationships between the Trust and visual arts organisations in the region, and we will develop a curatorial programme relating to new spaces under construction with the support of the Faculty Impact Officer and the Research and Enterprise Office.

Outreach Activities: Our new outreach activities will include a series of public events associated with Ruiz-Gómez's AHRC project, including a lecture series and artists in conversation in order to allow the public to debate the contemporary relevance of the 'scientific artwork'. Contemporary artist Lisa Temple-Cox has agreed to conduct a workshop for children during the exhibition, where they will explore the effects of artistic intervention in scientific photography. Podcasts of the lectures and artist talks will be available through the project website, allowing the public to continue to engage with this research. Following on from his successful 'Art History in the Pub' series in London, Lodder will organise public art history and visual culture lectures in Colchester and beyond. Our new school outreach programme will include Wade's work with Kids Uni and with the Microfiction project, with plans to roll out the latter nationally and to create a teaching resource that will be disseminated to primary school teachers online, with the support of the Faculty Web and Communications Officer.

d. Relationship to case studies

Both case studies showcase the way that our researchers work in mutually beneficial partnerships with non-academic institutions.

One important example of our curatorial activity in the last five years was Dawn Ades' exhibition, *The Colour of My Dreams* at the Vancouver Art Gallery. The exhibition demonstrates the way our research enriches the cultural understanding of publics across the world, in this case attracting over 100,000 visitors. The exhibition also changed the Gallery's perception of how First Nations art should be displayed, showing how our collaborations influence our external partners.

Our impact in the Latin American art case study has been achieved through a close working relationship with major arts institutions, including a Memorandum of Understanding with Tate to co-ordinate their Latin American arts acquisitions with the Essex Collection of Art from Latin America (ESCALA). We have also formed a partnership with the PINTA Art Fair, for which we organise public programmes and invite artists to speak about their work. In some cases these artists have broken into UK and US art markets thanks to their speaking appearances at PINTA. ESCALA work closely with Colchester's firstsite and Art Exchange to curate exhibitions and provide a programme of public, family, and school events. ESCALA's website facilitates public online browsing of the collection for approximately 750,000 visitors annually.