

<p>Institution: University of Cumbria</p> <hr/> <p>Unit of Assessment: 34 – Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory</p> <p>a. Overview</p> <p>Art and Design at the University of Cumbria is comprised primarily of staff from both the Fine Art and photography areas within the Faculty of Arts, Business and Science. Whilst these two main areas are situated on separate campuses, each with its unique heritage, rich culture and identity, there is also substantial synergy and interplay between the two. This centres around a common focus on practice based research, much of which is interdisciplinary and links to science, environment, health, archaeology and issues of wider culture.</p> <p>b. Research strategy</p> <p>The research strategy described in the RAE2008 submission was strongly focused on the development of research and scholarship in Art and Design, particularly the evolution from the practice-led Cumbria Institute of the Arts into a flourishing research environment, intrinsically embedded into the wider disciplines of the University, which was only formed in August 2007. The aims were specifically to drive interdisciplinary and practice based research, with a focus on the provision of opportunities and development for professional practitioners as new researchers and to concentrate on key themes including landscape and environmental arts, cultural analysis, applied arts, digital technology and arts and health.</p> <p>The RAE2008 strategy has been successful in terms of the development of research culture, support for and development of staff with more research-engaged practice (see section c for further details). This has also been supported by the deepening interactions between arts staff and staff from other research disciplines, although some of the identified themes have been lost within the unit, due to the effects of restructuring on the profile of the work undertaken. The reorganisation of the Faculty of Arts into the larger, combined Faculty of Arts Business and Science led to the loss of a number of researchers submitted in RAE2008, some of whom took early retirement during this process. It also led to the movement of some pedagogical work, including that focusing on digital technology and e-learning into a central service called the Centre for Development of Learning and Teaching (CDLT). The on-going development of this unit into a non-academic support services has meant that this work has moved out of the direct remit of Art and Design. However, restructuring has also had a positive effect by bringing together diverse disciplines, thereby increasing the quantity and strength of interactions with other academic areas, leading to unique interdisciplinary work. These benefits are also reflected in a number of current interdisciplinary PhD studies, for example, looking at the use of photographs for facilitating the discussion of chronic pain between patients and their families.</p> <p>A further example of the success of the landscape and environmental arts theme, and the unit's engagement with environmental science, is a current project funded by Arts Council England which examines links between archaeology, the environment and Britain's Energy Coast. <i>Cumbrian Alchemy</i> is an international collaboration between Professor of Fine Art Robert Williams and US artist Bryan McGovern Wilson, New York.</p> <p>The forward strategy for the unit is to expand and build on the increased capacity developed within the current REF period. This involves a number of key plans and aspirations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop the practice-based route for PhD, reflecting the strengths and developmental pathways of our academic staff, providing a clear route to engage a wider body of practicing artists with research. • To more widely develop our doctoral offering, including the provision of full time funded PhD studentships (which has been initiated through the provision of a studentship to the unit in 2013). The allocation of funded studentships from a small number available within the institution to this area is a mark of the research development and maturity reached. The

unit's commitment to developing its PhD offering is also reflected in the University's involvement as a core partner in a full stage bid for an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) block grant partnership doctoral training centre with the CREST+ consortium. Whilst we were ultimately unsuccessful in this application, the onward strategy for the area and for the wider Consortium for Research Excellence Support and Training (CREST) is to continue joint development and activity. One element of this will include joint doctoral training provision, in order to provide an extended research environment for our research students, recognising the position of CREST institutions as small and specialist. This opportunity to leverage additional critical mass will be of particular benefit to research students within this unit, due to the number of specialist art institutes within CREST (including Norwich University of the Arts and the University for the Creative Arts).

- **Implementation of the Arts Research Initiative (ARI), as a means to coordinate and promote research activity.** This is a specific initiative to identify and share research activity, promoting syntheses of themes based on the practice of individuals, and to develop new themes for the unit leading to the evolution of new research programmes. ARI will include identifying practice and encouraging linkages between individuals and small groups, catalysing further progress in engaging practitioners with research. ARI is a cross-disciplinary initiative, which draws together Fine Art, photography and other creative disciplines from within and outside of the unit (for example illustration and English).
- **The establishment of Photography in Research & Education (PhiRE) initiative.** This exists to drive a single cohesive research strategy for the photography sub-group, and strengthen internal and external research collaborations.
- **Regenerating the Centre for Land, Environment and Research (CLEAR).** Whilst research falling within the remit of CLEAR has continued, restructuring within the unit has affected the strategic deployment of the centre as a coordinating and strategic entity. A revised strategy for CLEAR is under development, which will drive social engagement, and capitalise on the dynamic of art as a way to engage disciplines as diverse as taxonomy, ecology, museology, animal studies and archaeology in dialogue, and to challenge perceptions and accepted realities. The Centre will engage with academics across Cumbria faculties, and will include developing synergies with the newly established Institute for Leadership and Sustainability (IFLAS). These developments for CLEAR will be in addition to maintaining existing and developing new external research partnerships (see section d for further details).
- **The deployment of newly appointed research leaders to support and further develop research activity.** This will involve the implementation of a programme of events to share research and an enhanced availability of personalised and one-to-one support.

The primary drivers for research post REF2014 will be leveraging and coordinating existing skills and capabilities; capitalising on the unit's involvement with the CREST consortium; enhancing numbers of traditional and practice based PhDs; a strategic engagement with sourcing further forms of external funding and the repositioning of the CLEAR research centre.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

As highlighted by the on-going pivotal role of staff development within the unit's research strategy, the retention and development of staff is acknowledged to be of paramount importance within the unit. The key elements of the staffing strategy are to attract and retain early-stage established researchers with a reasonable record of outputs, and to attract staff with practice experience but little research experience and develop them as individual researchers.

The seriousness with which staff development and driving research leadership within art and design is taken is evident through the promotion of a number of staff members to research positions (one Professor in Fine Art, 2011; and one Reader each in Fine Art, 2012, and in

Photography, 2013). These individuals hold key active roles in the embedding of research in the arts, and demonstrate the University's explicit commitment to rewarding excellent research. Of particular importance is the personal support provided by these individuals to practitioners emerging into research activity, through informal and flexible provision of mentoring and advice. This is also reflected in a number of staff members successfully gaining doctorates within the assessment period.

These recent appointments also exemplify the equal opportunities provided to part-time employees, in terms of career progression, as both Readers hold fractional contracts. This is further reflected in policies providing equal access to research resources and funding for all staff. Additionally, there are no short-term staff appointments within the unit. This is reinforced by the University comprehensive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and a set of related policies and procedures that help to ensure equity of opportunity for all students and staff. This includes positive engagement with stakeholder groups external to the University, particularly with creating access for local community and under-represented groups. Specifically in relation to research activity, the procedures allow monitoring of equality, diversity and inclusion across research student recruitment, progression and completion. The policy is also applied to research staff appointment, promotion and support and, where appropriate, equality impact assessments are completed to evaluate the potential impact of new policy or procedures. The quality of research is maintained on a day to day basis by a Faculty Research Coordinator, who deals with bidding and quality across the unit. Members of the unit are also involved in the University Ethics Committee.

The University is committed to supporting the research development of its staff and fully endorses the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. Whilst the University does not currently have a large number of dedicated research staff (i.e. research only posts), we are committed to providing development and training opportunities to strengthen research capabilities. The background of many staff as practitioners means that the University provision of opportunities to extend skills in research is pivotal in maintaining and developing our future research capabilities, capacities and culture. We are currently undertaking a benchmarking exercise against the principles of the Concordat, and are planning to submit an application for the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2014.

Our commitment to researcher development is fixed as a target to achieve Research Degree Awarding Powers, as stated in the strategic aims on the creation of the University. It is reflected through our engagement with the pilot for the Researcher Development Framework (RDF), which the University subsequently intends to schedule for roll-out to all academic staff. This will be an additional element to help tailor our support mechanisms to the needs of individuals. The intention is to integrate the RDF into research and scholarly planning, which takes place as part of the annual review process. Staff members also benefit from a fixed annual allocation of 25 days Scholarly and Research Activity (SARA) time and access to the Epigeum skills package, Sabbatical Leave funding and Research and Scholarly Development Fund (RSDF). As part of our commitment to developing Early Career Researchers, the University also provides fee waivers and additional support mechanisms for staff to undertake higher degrees to develop their research capabilities following a professional career, for example to undertake PhD.

The unit is engaged with a wider range of external stakeholders, providing engagement opportunities for all staff with a range of charitable organisations, museums, exhibition spaces and local government (see section d for further details). The latter is particularly supported through engagement with deprived Cumbrian West Coast communities, some of which correlates with Arts Council England funding priorities. This is specifically supported by Faculty research and enterprise functions, and includes integration with the Britain's Energy Coast Campus projects and related work. The programme has a significant impact upon the culture of the city of Carlisle, and more widely, upon the North-west and Northern regions. Fine Art graduates make an important contribution to local and regional arts and cultural institutions, such as Tullie House, Florence Mine Art Centre, New Arts North, BANK Gallery, NEO Gallery, Allenheads Contemporary Arts, Grizedale Arts, Lowther Arcade Arts Project, Theatre by the Lake, Cecil Street Project, Workplace Gallery, Gateshead, *Canned Magazine* and within local and regional schools, colleges, and the economy of

the county.

ii. Research students

The University of Cumbria is currently working towards acquiring Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) and there are strategies and policies in place to achieve this, coordinated by a cross-institutional RDAP Steering Group. Research degrees are currently validated by Lancaster University, however, the management, administration and delivery of the postgraduate research programme is entirely managed by Cumbria. The University registers post graduate research students, provides supervision and research training, and manages quality and progression through the Cumbria Research Office and Graduate School.

Research students form an integral part of the research environment in Art and Design, and reflect the interdisciplinary nature of much of the research activity, with a number of PhD topics supervised across disciplines and faculties due to the interdisciplinary nature of the research. The priority given to increasing the numbers is seen in the provision of two studentships and match support commitments within the AHRC DTC bid. All of the PhDs are practice-based and the area is adopting measures to ensure the robustness of research data as informed by RCUK guidelines. Research students are supported by monthly research sessions and a two week summer school, both of which include bespoke art and design elements, for example the 'managing research data in the arts' session in the 2013 Summer School. Doctoral students are also linked to wider development opportunities, through the CREST network; for example, arts PhD students attended sessions of the AHRC funded 'design as a human interface' skills programme in 2013. As mentioned in section a, further collaborative support and training is under development for arts students through the CREST network.

Postgraduate practitioners and researchers, including MA and PhD students, make a significant contribution to research initiatives for the Faculty and the University. In the context of studio practice they constitute a significant part of a broader community of practitioners: staff and students all involved in enquiry, learning, thinking about and making art. This creates a dynamic which focuses in on relationships of support and exchange: tutor-tutor, tutor-student, student-peers, peers-cohort, cohort-programme and, at each strata, the notion of discourse is informed by practice and *vice versa*. In this way, postgraduate activity feeds directly into the programmes at a fundamental level, informing the curriculum delivery, learning dynamic and research.

Postgraduate researchers undertake on-going research in pursuit of their respective Practices. This research takes the form of inquiry, negotiation, practical development, exhibitions and, for PhD students, publication and presentations (for instance at seminars and conferences, nationally and internationally).

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The unit is located across two main locations in Carlisle: the arts campus in Brampton Road and the specialist Fine Art site in Caldewgate. These locations have an effective range of studio space, a fully functioning theatre and a variety of other specialist facilities:

- There are specialist photography facilities at both sites, with a wet photography area specializing in film enlarging and for large, medium and standard format film at Caldewgate, and three digital photography studios with specialist backdrops, lighting and high end DSLR cameras and lenses, as well as large format Epson printers capable of printing up to 44" wide in full archival ink colour at Brampton Road.
- Media resources, including a wide range of broadcast cameras, edit suites, audio equipment (including two separate acoustic studios) and studio facilities, with specialist night vision, movement, light sensitive and miniature cameras.
- Fine print resources available enable screenprinting, monoprints, Intaglio, Lithography and Letterpress, in addition to specialist textile print facilities.

Environment template (REF5)

- Sculpture workshops offer facilities for wood, metal, plastics, plaster, plasma-cutting, sheet material working including welding, hot metal casting and stone working.
- Purpose-built contemporary ceramics studio.
- 3D workshops (particularly for furniture), with tools for 3D work (lathes, drills etc.). Textile facilities are also provided, including a flatbed laser cutter and software.

The dedicated locations for these disciplines have a significant effect on the strength of the research environment. At Brampton Road, the critical mass of diverse creative disciplines (including performing arts, media, graphic design and others) and specialist facilities generate a lively environment, and contribute a critical mass of original research practice. The specialist Fine Art facility at Caldewgate has a unique atmosphere, with a wide range of bookable spaces and project rooms. The spaces are flexible, changing configuration to accommodate practice, events and exhibitions, and providing space for students, academics and other visiting professional artists and researchers to share practice. Visiting lecturers within the assessment period have included Mark Dion; Turner Prize nominees Christine Borland and Ilana Halperin; Turner Prize winner Simon Starling; Professor Ron Broglio, Arizona State University, USA; Northern Arts Prize nominee Tom O'Sullivan; Dr Simon Morris (Information as Material); Professor Jason Simon, City University of New York; Kate Davies, Royal College of Art; and Dr Petra Lange-Berndt, University College London.

Research is driven and significantly enhanced by the dialogic environment created by this specialist site; the creative and inclusive contextual research infrastructure is conducive to creative endeavour, and immerses participants in art research practices.

This supportive infrastructure also relates to how research is maximised and maintained within the balance of wider activities. Research practice is an integral part of the culture, practice and pedagogy of the unit, with the research skills of interrogation and interpretation as part of practice are engrained and taught at every level.

The unit has two major archives, which have been sourced through on-going external collaborations, and which the University has invested in, in terms of funding for preservation and archiving work.

- The Border TV news archive represents a partnership between ITV and the University of Cumbria. The content spans almost 50 years of regional news production for Cumbria, southern Scotland and the Isle of Man, as served by the Border Television Studio in Carlisle between 1961 and 2009. Held within it are news reports from the last 5 decades, encompassing all areas of local life, including unmixed news reports, on air logs of the nightly 'Lookaround' programme, and extensive generic stock footage from across the region. There is also extensive coverage of key local events, which had national and international implications, such as the Lockerbie disaster, the Solway Harvester tragedy, the Foot and Mouth crisis, Carlisle and Cumbrian floods, and the Virgin rail crash.
- The University is also in the process of archiving the Francis Carr / *Landscape and Arts Network* Collection. This archive will provide a working history of the work of Francis Carr and the development of the Landscape Arts Network. The Network was launched in 1993 with the aim of bringing together landscape architects, engineers, architects, artists, educationalists and ecologists: in effect, all those individuals, professional or otherwise, who feel passionate about improving and sustaining the quality of our urban and natural environment. It helps to broaden the context in which we understand art and landscape and continues to inspire practitioners of all kinds and break professional boundaries. Over the past twelve years it has influenced every aspect of art in the environment, including interdisciplinary working practices, creative opportunities, funding streams, academic policy, community involvement and international relationships. As a University with a real agenda and expertise in art and ecology, the archive will be a useful tool in our progression and we aim to open it up to academic colleagues.

A key goal within the next five years is to increase levels of external funding. Within the 2008-13 period, there has been some success in direct external funding to undertake specific projects, such as the £24,000 of income from the Arts Council England to support a US residency and research activity. However, much of the funding received to date has been in the form of contributions to exhibition costs, including support directly from galleries and from other organisations, such as the Henry Moore Foundation and Littoral Arts. The on-going strategy will continue to maximise external income to support the dissemination of research practice, but will also further engage with funding streams to integrate art into wider research questions, for example further Arts Council England work and public-science engagement work through the Wellcome Trust.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

The unit has a number of significant collaborations, many of which are international. A partnership between Cumbria and the University of Gothenburg, led by the longstanding collaboration between Dr Mark Wilson and Professor Bryndis Snæbjörnsdóttir has led to a large number of highly respected outcomes, and has also led to the enrolling of a member of Gothenburg staff to undertake a University of Cumbria PhD. An emerging collaboration for this partnership is with the Global Institute of Sustainability at Arizona State University, USA, with a commissioned art research project and an exhibition scheduled to take place in 2014.

There is also a wide range of collaborative activity with the Mildred's Lane Project in Pennsylvania, USA. Professor Robert Williams is a leading figure in *Mildred's Lane*, through longstanding involvement with the project. The significance of *Mildred's Lane* is evident in the long running project led by Williams, entitled *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum: The Alchemist's Shack*. Work from this project was included in the *Common Senses* strand featuring Mildred's Lane Projects at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA). The Collaborative *Mildred's Lane Project* is a further example of the on-going collaboration with US artist Mark Dion, who is associated with the University of Columbia School of the Arts. Other Dion/Williams collaborative work includes *Theatrum Mundi: Armarium*, recently shown at *The Luminous Interval* exhibition at the Guggenheim, Bilbao in 2011, and at *The Macabre Treasury* at Museum Het Demain, Netherlands. Mildred's Lane has also contributed to the development of other distinct collaborations for Professor Williams, such as with Bryan McGovern Wilson in the Arts Council England supported *Cumbrian Alchemy* project, mentioned in section b.

Members of Fine Art staff have also contributed to the Cultures Of Preservation AHRC funded network, through participation in workshops as part of the project at the Natural History Museum, 2011, and as contributors to the project blog, *Preserved!*

Within photography, the recent *Visualising the Rural* conference, held at Carlisle by the University on 4 and 5 July 2013, attracted national and international speakers and delegates, and is helping to establish new collaborations. These include discussions with Newcastle University through the AHRC funded Northumbrian Exchanges project, and emerging partnerships with the University of Birmingham and the University of the Arts, Rochester, driven initially through the peer review process for the conference proceedings. The topic of this conference, viewing the rural landscape literally through a photographic lens, is a key example of how the CLEAR research agenda will be driven from across the unit, with photography as well as the Fine Art contributing to and shaping the strategy and direction of the Centre. An on-going photography collaboration includes that with University of Chester to exhibit Dr John Darwell's *After Schwitters* work at further locations, following the successful exhibition alongside the Merzbarn Wall at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle. A collaboration is also being developed between Dr Darwell and Jac Scott (artist in residence at the University of Central Lancashire), involving issues around environmental sustainability.

There have also been international collaborative projects through applied arts (textiles) with Australian National University and the Novia University of Applied Sciences, Finland, through the *NETS* and *ghostnets* projects, looking at the re-use of damaging waste materials in design.

The unit also has a wide range of collaborations with non-academic organisations, such as

Environment template (REF5)

Brantwood, Grizedale Arts, Tullie House Art Gallery and Museum, Arts Catalyst (London) and Art Gene. Dr John Darwell is also a steering group member for the photography network, *Redeye*. These interactions allow staff and research students access to facilities and collections, in addition to non-academic placement and sabbatical opportunities, and are highly supportive of the art practice orientation of the research. Whilst such collaborations do not necessarily lead directly to the undertaking of research, access to such stakeholders adds richness to the research process and provides stimulation to the research environment.

Members of the unit have disseminated their work at conferences across the UK, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Sweden, France, Norway, Spain, Canada, Germany, Poland, Turkey, Australia, Croatia, Georgia and the US, often by invitation. The diversity and interdisciplinarity which characterises the research of the group is shown by the range of these conferences: from the conference of *The Association of Social Anthropologists*, *The International Association of Visual Sociologists of the UK and Commonwealth*, to *Places, People and Stories*, *Envisaging Death: Visual Culture & Dying*, Arts and Health and Philosophy of Art, and *The Royal Geographical Society*. The work of Dr Mark Wilson, in particular, is identified as important in the emerging interdisciplinary field of *Animal Studies*, as indicated in the citation of a key collaborative research led artwork as a cornerstone of the discipline (e.g. in *Anthrozoös*, the peer-reviewed journal for the International Society for Anthrozoology, 2012). The interdisciplinary reach of the unit's work is also shown by the recognition through the Arts and Health Award from the *Royal Society for Public Health* for Dr John Darwell in 2009, in the form of a special commendation for contributions to the field of arts and mental health research, for his work *A Black Dog Came Calling*.

The unit also has an extremely strong record of both solo and group exhibitions within the period, both UK and internationally, with the following providing a few key examples: Norway (including Tromsø Polar Museum), Sweden (the Gothenburg International Biennial of Contemporary Art), Bilbao, Spain (Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao), Greece (the Athens Biennial), and Australia. Major works of art were also purchased by the Reykjavík Art Museum, Iceland and by the Nevada State Museum of Art, USA.