

Institution: Leeds Metropolitan University

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

a. Overview

This submission comes from a strong tradition and genealogy of innovation in practice, research and pedagogy. The Leeds School of Art was created in 1846 and during the period between 1955-65 was deemed to be one of the most revolutionary in the world, its ethos being based on Harry Thubron's 'basic research' course on the principles of the Bauhaus. In particular the fine art programme at Leeds Polytechnic had a reputation for experimentation and innovation in practice and included members of the FLUXUS Group and the renowned writer and artist Jeff Nuttall among its staff. This innovation continues in the School's current research aims, which have a genuine affinity with this innovative history, particularly in its approaches to practice based research and the reflected currency of video, performance and sound works in the context of Art and Design Practice.

Our key aim in terms of Art and Design research at Leeds Metropolitan University remains the commitment to produce challenging and innovative scholarly work reflecting the ethos, and history, of our academic community. Research has been closely tied to the creation of a sustainable community of researchers and research students, the nurturing of collaborative activities and curriculum development. If we look back to 2008, an important research group for us was the New Modes of Practice (NMP) Activity. This focussed on the "immaterial, nomadic and socially interactive approaches to art practice and its curation" and there was an emphasis on the use of video and film sound and newer technologies, as well as installed and site-specific work. This strength has been built on during the subsequent five year period and is identifiable both in our outputs and in our impact case studies.

The school structure comprises subject groups in Art, Architecture and Design. These groups are closely associated and understand each other through a school management structure and some of the research themes that are identified in the submission's impact case studies. The structure allows for focus in specific areas of practice and yet provides a rich, diverse and equal character to its identity.

This history and structure displays a pedigree and track record of collaboration that has encouraged and enabled staff to take a progressive, cross-disciplinary approach to their work, and many of the resulting research outputs evident happily cross boundaries and engage in initiatives which impact significantly on cultural life, professional activities, education, policy making and public discourse. At the time of RAE the unit made developed a specific set of targets in terms of the future of our research. In particular continuing support, and development, of New Modes of Practice and international dissemination of this work is particularly evident in the work of Mellors, Lewis, Dunn and Bloor. Including the "continued regular publication of /Seconds"(see Lewis). The unit has a strong practice based element to its research, though the nature of much of the practice is supported by the publications of Bamford and Kill. This is particularly evident in the work being undertaken in performance and collaboration. Bamford's solo-authored book particularly has had significant impact within the unit, and beyond. It has been extensively reviewed by Gaillard, J [2013] in Cultural Politics: An International Journal 9[2]: p.233-237. Duke University Press <http://culturalpolitics.dukejournals.org/content/9/2/233.extract> by Ashley Woodward in H-France Review, Keith Crome for Journal of The British Society For Phenomenology Tbc in Zetesis: International Journal for Fine Art, Philosophy and the Wild Sciences. Bamford's book has been adopted as recommended reading at Dundee University and Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design (Art & Philosophy Now) and The Courtauld institute of Art (Global Conceptualism)

b. Research strategy

The Unit strategy has primarily built on its RAE 2008 strand of 'New Modes of Practice'. This has been reflected in the staffing, management and planning. Through new appointments and the

subsequent development of new and mutually beneficial research themes, that identify the strengths of the Unit's progressive practitioners, writers and curators in performance, video and interdisciplinary modes of practice. The generation of interest in immaterial approaches to art practice that extends beyond traditional studio cultures has also been maintained and the Unit has sought to internationalize the scope of its research as identified as an aim in RAE 2008. A new school structure has been put in place during the last five years that has helped researchers to operate across disciplines enabling more diverse activity. Some key elements of our RAE 2008 submission have been maintained, for instance the web-based journal /Seconds, [Lewis, output 1] that has provided continuity and stability to the Unit's coherence. As a research fellow during the period of RAE2008 Lewis has since been made a permanent member of staff as a 0.6 fraction. This has reinforced the Unit's ambitions in curating and postgraduate pedagogy. Other approaches to curating are evident in several of the outputs [Bloor, Judd and Lewis] which in turn is a reflection of a developing importance of collaboration to the Unit activity. Collaboration with organisations beyond the University is evident [Offeh...] as is that with other professional individual practitioners [Macbeth, 3.] These collaborations have brought a sense of cohesion in the Unit identity and outlook that is particularly articulated in the collaborative work of Chris Bloor and Nathaniel Mellors [Bloor 1, 2, 3] This cohesion is not only relative to co-working but evident in the nature and themes of individual practice and research. Themes that have led to the identification of two distinct research strands, experimental practices and the expanded field of performance, both of which have sought to extend the New Modes of Practice strand from RAE 2008.

As evidenced in the impact case studies the two strands are individual cognate entities but with an interdisciplinary thrust and several points of convergence. Experimental practices has provided a platform for approaches across curating, video/film sculpture, performance and the installation of works embracing multimedia contexts and processes. This interdisciplinary work is evident in all of the research of Nathaniel Mellors, as well as Bloor, Dunn, Lewis, and Macbeth. The Expanded Field of Performance has been established through identifying common ground in the work of researchers working across a diverse range of temporal and recorded performative approaches, Offeh, [live performance responding to site specific culture, art performance, cabaret and theatrical convergences] Charnley [collaborative performance investigating cultural and historical translation] Mellors [Scripting and directing actors/collaborators in filmed performance that interrogate and challenge the structure of language] and Macbeth [Absurd translation of literary material into ambiguous performances] This largely practice-based research has been reinforced by the writing and criticality of Kiff Bamford and Rebekka Kill. In 2011 the appointment of Dr Kill as the head of School gave significant fresh momentum to the Unit research strategy and was particularly instrumental in establishing a coherent academic platform for research into performance and live art as well as strengthening, through personal PhD research themes, the connections between research, practice and pedagogy.

Currently providing stability and a sense of identity for both staff and student researchers the two strands also represent the beginnings of a tangible structure that the Unit will build on in the period, 2014-19. The aims and objectives of the forward planning include;

- The establishment of other research groups, potentially including a) pedagogical research, b) interdisciplinary research in Design that will be underscored by the new offering of Fashion at Undergraduate and soon post graduate level, and c) Research into Digital cultures and processing.
- The enablement of a broader range of funding bids.
- Building on current relationships with other Arts Institutions in the area; Henry Moore Institute, Leeds Hepworth Gallery, Wakefield, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, East Street Arts. In 2011 Nathaniel Mellors gave the annual HMI lecture.
- Building links via research and pedagogy that is coherently embedded in undergraduate study, through postgraduate study and into doctoral level research. Recent University PhD bursaries have allowed the Unit to begin five new research students specifically linked to its research themes and ambitions.
- Support for new researchers through the University Personal Development programme. Dr Kiff Bamford has recently been the recipient of an early career research award from the University.

Environment template (REF5)

In 2013 the University has established and funded a new 'Centre of Culture and the Arts' that will provide a much greater sense of unity in the research bases across the Faculty of Art Environment and Technology. It will allow for much greater cross-pollination of research and provide opportunities for the synergy of practice and research. Collaboration with critical writers, theorists and colleagues involved in events and Broadcast media are already taking place with a view to establishing an event/symposia based approach to provide an immediate platform for progress as the REF 2014 period closes. Beyond supporting interdisciplinary research across the Faculty and University a significant aim of the Centre will be to identify and establish partnerships and collaboration with other institutions. Although there is presently a national and international dimension to some individual and collaborative research in the Unit an objective to achieve this at an institutional level will be an imminent concern of the centre's activity.

c. People, including:**i. Staffing strategy and staff development**

Since 2008 the staffing recruitment strategy has purposefully enhanced the Unit's research profile with a combination of emergent and more established researchers. Staff with a diverse set of research interests both culturally and practically have enhanced the research environment and though there is diversity provide a more coherent focus to the research thrust moving forward from RAE 2008. Several members of existing staff have either completed or are presently undertaking PhD research in this time also. These staff have contributed considerably to the collaborative nature of the Unit's research and extended its evidence in the study of students throughout the school, connecting personal and collective research to pedagogical strategies.

Alan Dunn received University research grants in both 2009 and 2010 that enabled the positive trajectory of his current research. Much of this work is collaborative and the support promoted collaboration with a diverse range of cultural producers from Kurdistan, Trinidad and Belarus. Dunn has also been encouraged in working across disciplines within the University with computational linguist Dr John Elliott. (Dunn is presently undertaking a PhD by published work linking his approach to sound Art both to the history of the school and its current pedagogical imperatives).

Postdoctoral researchers Dr Rebekka Kill, Dr Kiff Bamford, and Dr Sean Ashton have all consolidated the Unit research base through the common themes of innovative art practice and critical theories of performance.

Since REF 2014 Nathaniel Mellors has been supported from within the school of Art Architecture and Design in the development of animatronic sculptures, first shown in Altermodern, Tate Triennial 2009 [Mellors, 2] since this point Mellors has developed a much greater international exposure and this trajectory has provided a cornerstone for the Unit developments in experimental practice. Since 2009, Mellors has worked with colleague Chris Bloor [Bloor 1, 2, 3] on collaboratively researched projects, exhibitions and publication. This has provided a focus for a strong sense of collective research that has international reach through curated Exhibitions in SMART Projects Space, Cobra Museum, Amsterdam and Venice Biennale 2011. Beyond REF in January- March 2014, the research will continue to be supported through exhibition in Hammer Museum, Los Angeles and Art Concept, Paris.

Staff identifying with research clusters as described in the research strategy section of this document is a developing mechanism of encouragement and support. Dr Kiff Bamford being awarded an early researcher grant has recently aided the Expanded field of Performance cluster.

Within the Unit informal gatherings are conducted alongside more formal lectures and seminars at which staff share research. Staff are encouraged and facilitated to help and assist each other by collaboration, sharing and disseminating their work, both internally within the School and externally within the University and beyond.

All staff have an annual Performance and Development Review [PDR]. The process identifies research initiatives specific to the individual member of staff identifying a timeline, plan, and support for the activity over the course of the coming year. It also embeds the research into the annual set of other responsibilities that the staff undertake, considering the projects management and achievability. It also enables a mutually beneficial monitoring process relative to time,

outcomes and resources.

Moving into the future the aforementioned Centre for Culture and the Arts will provide support mechanisms for researchers including, bid writing, early research grants and opportunities open to all research active staff to apply for single semester sabbaticals beginning 2014. The centre will also provide for a greater diversity and cultural range in the Unit research themes and enhance the number of staff from a broader range of cultural backgrounds. The centre also aims to develop a web based platform that will enable staff to communicate and share research outcomes and proposals. The site will also serve to provide staff with information about support and funding mechanisms within the University and beyond.

ii. Research students

A key objective for the Unit is to maintain and enhance its 'community of researchers' and postgraduate students. This includes retaining and recruiting research active staff, but also increasing research student numbers from current levels, including students from overseas as well as the UK. All research students take part in a University Induction programme on the commencement of their programme of study. As they progress, students are required to undergo a 'confirmation of registration' viva (3 months for FT students and 6 months for PT students) where their research proposals are considered and assessed. Each student also has an annual progression meeting where they are required to formally report on their progress to an academic panel.

We plan to build on our current level of postgraduate research students, and indeed our current number of enrolled research students has expanded rapidly in the last 12 months with 25 students registered for research degrees that cover the range of work undertaken in the Unit. In June 2012, the Unit was able to offer five PhD bursaries funded by the Faculty of Arts, Environment and Technology and these were awarded to students undertaking research in art and design practice and one study that maps the cultural history of artists in the city of Leeds. Since 2008 our PhD cohort has gone from strength to strength in terms of both completions and also building a body of research that maps against specific themes that are also evident in the broader research themes of the Unit. At the point of the last RAE there was a strong, well established theme that is still evident in our REF submission, around experimental practices in art, then referred to as New Modes of Practice. If we track this theme through the work of our PhD students (who have completed) we can start with the work "Binaries of representation in the first and third world, investigated through art practice utilising test and collaborative performance, drawing on the murders of Crazy Horse, Lorca and Guevara" 2009. Dawood was an established practitioner when he started his PhD with Leeds Metropolitan University. See details here http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/shezad_dawood.htm, his submission, supervised in our Unit, consisted of a feature film, with extensive community engagement, a publication, and an exhibition, focussing on props from the film. While he was at Leeds Metropolitan University, and subsequently Dawood has also collaborated with academic staff (in particular Peter Lewis). Dawood's experience, with us, of collaboration and support for experimental methodologies and multimodal submission is a common narrative in many of our completions. During 2010/11 we had three PhD completions that were explicitly focussed on methodological issues in art practice. Their titles were:-

- Zeppelinbend: Multiplicity, encyclopaedic strategies and nonlinear methodologies for a visual practice
- Claiming the Portable Home / Creative Acts of Identity Placemaking within the Networked digital Domain
- Academic Identity in the Arts-Dialogue, Co-Existence and a Pedagogy of Potentiality

This focus on both identity and experimental, multimodality methodology is also mirrored in the research students theses currently being supported within the Unit and also in staff research – in particular the collaborative practices of Bloor and Mellors, the identity work of Kill and Offeh and the innovative platforms for practice and curation as seen in the work of Lewis and Dunn.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Environment template (REF5)

Art and Design research sits within the School of Art Architecture and Design. The majority of the staff submitted are from within the Art Group, but there is also representation from other parts of the school, Bamford from Graphic Arts and Design, Entwistle from Landscape Architecture and Wanner from Interior Architecture and Design. The School of AAD also includes staff submitted to Unit 16: Architecture, Built Environment and Planning and there is a significant amount of integration between these two groups of researchers – in terms of symposia, research strategy and management and supervision of research students.

The School of Art, Architecture and Design is particularly able to support practice as research as we have excellent facilities in terms of estate, studio and workshop support internally and strong partnerships regionally and nationally to support practitioner researchers.

The School is one of five within the Faculty of Arts, Environment and Technology and the faculty supports an unusually broad range of research activity across five units submitted to REF 2014.

These are Unit 36 plus:

- 11 Computer Science and Informatics
- 16 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
- 35 Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts
- 36 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

Our Faculty also houses three funded research institutes:-

1. The Digital Research Centre

<http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/research/northern-technology-institute-digital-research-centre.htm>

2. Leeds Sustainability Institute

<http://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/research/leeds-sustainability-institute.htm>

3. (NEW) Centre of Culture and the Arts

Staff from the Unit are involved across all three research institutes (listed above) and in addition we are working with The Faraday Centre for Retail Excellence (a non-faculty based centre) in relation to packaging and graphic design and also in relation to our new subject area of Fashion Design – 2014 start.

This research infrastructure, and the networks it generates, are extremely rich at Leeds Metropolitan University. Our Unit, and our approach to research, allows us to take advantage of all of these structures.

The Unit is based in the two buildings that comprise the award winning Broadcasting Place. The Unit has established a space for research students and this physical space is also facilitating interaction with other subject disciplines within the School of Art, Architecture and Design, such as Architecture. The research environment benefits from relations with external organisations in the city and the region, Henry Moore Institute, Hepworth, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, East Street Arts – currently chaired by the Head of School, and the City Gallery. This enables a richer and more diverse space for practice and study that benefits staff and research students alike. Other Art projects and spaces developing in the city have been a direct result of staff in the unit's research and practice, particularly graduate initiatives (Mexico, Woolgather and others) linking the practice and pedagogical research aims of the unit into practical activity that contributes to a developing culture in the visual and performing Arts in the city of Leeds.

Staff have also designed and implemented a design-specific web site [CAGD] for internal use within the Unit; this site supports the learning of research students, research of staff (both those submitted for the REF and others at earlier stages in their research career) and also functions as an online gallery space. This web site also has a commercial potential, and interest has been shown from external organisations.

Table REF4b indicates the spread of research income for the Unit. Improvements are in train. A member of staff has been appointed a Leverhulme Scholar for example and plans are being formulated for future applications for EU research monies under Horizon 2020, the theme of which [working with SMEs and similar organisations] fits well with the research profile and capabilities of the Unit.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

Environment template (REF5)

The research carried out across the Unit comprises a wide range of activities and outputs. It houses a wide variety and range of disciplines, both between and even within the specific Subject Groups. Thus the Unit makes a substantial contribution across the board, including contributions to commercial enterprises, professional Institutes, community groups and individuals, where many staff are very active and involved. Collaboration is already a hallmark of this Research Unit, but the potential exists for more collaboration with other research units across the University.

The strategic aims of the Unit have been to support individual and collaborative research projects across art and design. The primary focus of research is in Contemporary art and is primarily practice based, encompassing exhibition, event, film, performance, and curation. There are elements of theoretical and critical writing that are evidenced by journal and book publication, lectures and symposia [Bamford - *Lyotard and The Figural in Performance, Art and Writing* and *'Acconci's Pied-a-terre: Taking the Archive for a Walk'*, 2012, and Kill - *Facebook is like disco and Twitter is like punk*, 2012, *Exploring Festival Performance as a State of Encounter*, 2013]

Since 2008 there has been a more focused core of research in the unit, enabled by staffing strategies and collaborative synergy amongst researchers. There is a sense that the unit has tried to achieve a more international dimension through its current outputs, particularly reflected in the range of geographical locations and institutional venues evidenced [Bloor - SMART Project Space, Amsterdam, Cobra Museum of Art, Amstelveen, Monitor, Rome, Charnley - The 23rd Festival Les Instants Vidéo, Marseille, Mellors 2011, Dunn, 2012 - ICA, London, Offeh - Barbican Gallery and Studio Museum, Harlem, New York, Entwistle - Stone and Water Gallery, Seoul, Korea, Lewis - Centre for Contemporary Art, Aarhus, Denmark, Macbeth - Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden, Germany, Mellors - ILLUMINations, the 54th Venice Biennale of Art, 2011, Performa, New York 2011, Baltimore Museum of Art]

The unit has maintained the web-based platform /seconds edited and curated by Peter Lewis which brings together a broad range of world wide cultural producers in each issue [issue 14: Special issue on 'Public Space and Democracy', in association with exhibition and symposium at Kasa Gallery, Istanbul organised with Prof. Lanfranco Aceti, Sanbanci University, Istanbul, November 2013] Also the collaborative compilation practice of Alan Dunn [Artists' uses of the word revolution and A history of background, 2009] in which art and music is investigated through collaboration with a broad range of artists spanning a wide spectrum of culture and history. This work also evidences new modes of dissemination in practice and research [Dunn, SOUNDWORKS - a soundwork for an exhibition at the ICA Gallery, London] using online interfaces that may be particularly resonant for the future of the unit.

Individual outputs have been reviewed, supported and featured in international art press publications [Ashton, MAP Magazine 2010, Bloor and Mellors, Nero Magazine Spring issue 32, Dunn, The Wire Magazine issue 329, Mellors, Modern Painters, 2011] broadcast media [Mellors, The 7 Ages of Britain, BBC 1] with several outputs receiving attention in the national press Guardian, Harold Offeh with Duckie, Copyright Christmas, 2012, Observer, Nathaniel Mellors, Ourhouse 2011, Guardian, Venice Biennale, 2011, Nathaniel Mellors and Chris Bloor, Volkskrant, 2011]

Research outputs have been supported and funded including [Charnley - British Council, Arts Council of England and Binaural, Nodar, Dunn - Arts council, England, Mellors, Mellors/Bloor - The Netherlands Film Fund, The Netherlands Fund for Performing Arts, the Amsterdam Fund for Arts, the Mondrian Foundation, the Municipality of Amsterdam and The British Council, Macbeth - Film London, Offeh - The National Trust, The National Trust as part of the grants from Arts Council England, The Heritage Lottery Fund].

Collaboration has been a theme of the environment for the unit during the period since 2008. Including those within the University researching together [Nathaniel Mellors with Chris Bloor HYPERCOLON, The Nest 2011, Alan Dunn with Dr John Elliott] and with those from other institutions [Clare Charnley with Patricia Azevedo (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil) Here We Are and Leave Blank, 2010] and those with artists and producers beyond academia [Rory

Environment template (REF5)

Macbeth with Laure Prouvost The Wanderer 2012, Alan Dunn with Peter Hook and Haroon Mirza, Rebekka Kill with Urban Angels The Heavenly Court of Madame Fantaisiste 2010, Harold Offeh with Duckie, Copyright Christmas, 2012] Nathaniel Mellors has been selected by notable curators Nicolas Bourriaud, Altermodern 2009, and Francesco Bonami, Un'Espressione Geografica, Turin, 2011, and whose publication 'Book A or Megacolon', 2010, includes a critical text by John Welchman.

Awards, grants, and prize winners and nominees include [Nathaniel Mellors - Cobra Art prize winner 2011, Clare Charnley - short-listed The Northern Art Prize, Leeds Art Gallery 2010, Alan Dunn - short-listed for the Liverpool Art Prize 2013, Trudi Entwistle - Artist in residence grant Leverhume Trust, Wanner, RIBA Awards, Shortlist, 2010. Other esteem factors include keynote presentation at the ireality conference at Brighton Digital Festival by Rebekka Kill and her inclusion in Times Higher Education articles <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/403848.article> .