

<b>Institution: University of Salford</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: D34 Art and Design, History, Practice, Theory</b>
<b>Title of case study: “Copper Kingdom”: Contemporary visual art as a catalyst for community revitalisation through the reinterpretation of industrial heritage</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p><i>Copper Kingdom</i> has established the creative reinterpretation, through contemporary art practice, of the abandoned Parys Mountain Copper Mine, in partnership with the communities of North Wales and a range of public and private sector organisations, demonstrating the following impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting cultural engagement with an industrial legacy in an area hit by the cessation of traditional industries;</li> <li>• Introducing heritage led initiatives for community revitalisation through contemporary art practice, engaging local communities, improving the quality of the environment, promoting local businesses, encouraging tourism, and celebrating the area's unique industrial heritage;</li> <li>• Extending the reach of the project methodology to the link between the copper mining heritage of other communities in the UK.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p><b>The key researchers and positions they held at the institution at the time of the research are as follows:</b> Jill Randall, (from 1997) Head of the Research Centre for Contemporary Fine Art &amp; Critical Theory in the School of Art &amp; Design, and 0.6 Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader for BA (Hons) Visual Arts Course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>(2007-2012):</b> Randall’s research resulted from an Artist/Industry partnership project instigated by Randall, with the financial support of an “Artists at Work” Award won in open national and international competition, from Cywaith Cymru Artwork Wales, (Arts Council equivalent).</li> <li>• Randall’s research is focused on industry and manufacturing and its creative possibilities for the visual artist, made especially for or inspired by site, place and heritage. Randall has developed an innovative approach to creative community engagement, establishing Artists Residencies in factories, quarries and museums, “setting up studio” within workplaces and visitor attractions, and making the creative process transparent and accessible to the workforce, local communities and visitors, a number of which have been involved in the creation of artworks.</li> <li>• Parys Mountain, Amlwch, Wales, is an extraordinary place, an extreme environment, with its own “terrible beauty” of amazing colours, and a post-industrial landscape where corrosion is accelerated. Randall’s research focuses on the potential of this legacy to inspire artworks and she has collaborated with the community in the production of artworks for a major solo exhibition, “Golden Venture”, at The National Waterfront Museum, The National Industrial Museum of Wales, Swansea, 2nd July–18th Sept 2011.</li> <li>• The body of artistic research demonstrates how contemporary art practice can be used to expose and reinterpret information about materials science and industrial processes, in this case, the alchemy and chemistry of copper itself and its by-products, through degradation and process on material. The research involved a multi-disciplinary approach, collaborating with geologists and archaeologists, bringing a new perspective and a more rounded approach to a site normally interpreted by scientists, and the exchange of skills and information. It demonstrated how the visual arts can be a mechanism for cultural regeneration and re-engagement.</li> <li>• The research capitalised on the unique characteristics of the abandoned copper mine site and its prior economic function to develop an innovative and creative developmental methodology through the visual arts, linked to developing tourism at the site and actively engaging local communities of all ages in the understanding and promotion of the site. The project developed a substantial resource of visual imagery to use in new products and public art, a body of drawings, sculpture and video.</li> </ul>

- The project developed the design of “Copper Kingdom” “branding”; forming a series of icons representing the industrial legacy, which can be reproduced at any scale and used in a range of ways, from signage to large scale sculptural works and functional detailing in street furniture have been developed through working with 5 local businesses developing design ideas incorporating “Copper Kingdom” theming.
- Public Art commissions in the built environment in Amlwch, Anglesey in partnership with Menter Mon and Anglesey County Council have been developed over five sites, resulting in artworks interpreting and celebrating the area's industrial heritage.
- Partnership working and business development has included the training and mentoring of 3 local metal fabricators based in North Wales/Anglesey in the fabrication of the public artworks.
- Designs for craft products derived from copper mine objects and artefacts suitable for market to be manufactured by and in conjunction with local craftspeople have been developed. Examples include copper jewellery and textile designs, prints and souvenir objects. Events were held on August 3rd and 4th, 2012 to launch scheme at the “Copper Kingdom” Centre, Amlwch.

### 3. References to the research

#### Key outputs

1. Major solo exhibition, “Golden Venture”, at The National Waterfront Museum, The National Industrial Museum of Wales, Swansea, 2 July–18 September 2011, comprising 32 new works. <http://jillrandall.co.uk/exhibitions/golden-venture-exhibition/>. (REF 2)
2. Bi-lingual exhibition catalogue (2011) “Golden Venture”, Designed by Alan Kelly, based in Amlwch. ISBN 978-0-9557263-2-3

#### Key grants

3. “Artists At Work” Award Cywaith Cymru Artwork Wales (2005–2008).
4. Exhibition development and production was supported by awards from Menter Mon £1,090 (2010).
5. National Waterfront Museum £2,000 (2011).

### 4. Details of the impact

**Context:** Amlwch is a “*small town on Anglesey, which has suffered rapid economic decline in recent years*”<sup>1</sup>. The *Living through Challenges in Low Income Neighbourhoods* study examined the salience of ‘place’ in the daily lives of a sample of residents living in six low income neighbourhoods in Britain in the period 2008–2010. The Study found, in relation to Amlwch:

*“The industrial history and heritage of Amlwch has complex impacts on residents’ sense of esteem. Several residents spoke with pride about the role of industry in the town’s development and the characteristics of its population...However, the loss of this industrial base, and its perceived impacts on employment and the social dynamics, was more keenly felt in Amlwch than anywhere else. Many participants referred to the slender thread on which the economic fortunes of the town were seen to depend.”*<sup>2</sup>

With a focus on creative reinterpretation through contemporary art practice of the industrial legacy of the area, Randall has succeeded in supporting the introduction of heritage-led initiatives celebrating the area's unique industrial heritage; improving the quality of the environment; engaging local communities; promoting local businesses and encouraging tourism.

- **2005-2008:** During her 3-year Artists Residency at Parys Mountain Copper Mine, Amlwch, Anglesey, once the world’s leading centre of copper production, Randall developed a working relationship with Menter Mon (Anglesey Enterprise), which included her being

<sup>1</sup> *Living through Challenges in Low Income Neighbourhoods: Change, Continuity, Contrast*, A Research Project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University (June 2011)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

awarded a Consultancy investigating the potential for public art in the town of Amlwch in July 2009 and resulting in the development of creative designs which were made into high quality artworks in the public realm, including a series of visual “Amlwch Icons”, detailing in fencing, gates, and in signage at five sites, which are being used to reinforce the special identity of Amlwch, and contributing to the economic development and regeneration of Amlwch and Anglesey.

- **2011:** A solo exhibition, *Golden Venture* at The National Waterfront Museum in Swansea (NWMS), in 2011, the culmination of Randall’s 3-year Artists Residency in Amlwch, exhibited artworks Randall produced in response the copper mine site. *Golden Venture* attracted 75000 visitors to the NWMS, promoting Amlwch and its extraordinary industrial heritage within a national and international context. The exhibition celebrated the enormously important and often overlooked historic and industrial links between Amlwch and Swansea.
- The exhibition demonstrated how contemporary art practice can be used to reinterpret information about materials science, unlocking the creative and intellectual potential of copper and its role in regeneration through heritage.
- A bi-lingual exhibition catalogue, designed by a local Amlwch company, was produced, *Golden Venture [1]* which described the context and making of the work, and copies were available free to museum visitors, providing an important legacy for the project.
- **2012:** Randall was invited by Menter Mon (Anglesey Enterprise) to bring *Golden Venture* to the new “Copper Kingdom” Centre, Amlwch, which opened in June 2012, as its inaugural exhibition, the first opportunity to exhibit work produced at Parys Mountain close to the site, and to enable the local community to see and engage with the work. The exhibition featured 2 days of events comprising practical workshops with the local community and a specialised Workshop/Symposium with local creative industries where Randall supported local craftspeople to develop objects and artefacts through to market production, offering mentoring and professional development. Designs for craft products derived from the copper mine have been developed by Randall, including copper jewellery and textile designs, prints and souvenir objects.
- Anglesey County Council Highways Department have adopted some of the design ideas and are working with Randall to develop the “A5025 Artworks” scheme, regenerating a route through to the town and increasing the visibility of the industrial legacy. These public artworks both enhance the townscape and draw attention to the unique industrial legacy. Consultation exercises took place with the public at every stage of the design and 3 out of the 4 sites have provided training and business development for metal fabrication businesses based in North Wales and on Anglesey, enabling them to expand their range of expertise. A report commissioned during Consultancy for Menter Mon “Public Art in Amlwch Report”, August 2009, sent to the Welsh Assembly, investigated and reported on the potential for public art in Amlwch and formed the basis for commissioning contracts awarded for subsequent public art works.
- With *Copper Kingdom* shortlisted for the Guardian’s Heritage and Museum Awards 2013, Welsh Assembly Minister for Culture and Sport John Griffiths said: *‘I’d like to congratulate Menter Mon and the Copper Kingdom for being the only attraction in Wales to be shortlisted for this award. The attraction makes clear the history of Parys Mountain, the town and the port and is a valuable asset for the area.’*
- **July 2013:** Randall has established links with mining heritage sites in Cornwall with the aim of establishing networks for developing the success of her partnership with the community of Amlwch and public sector bodies of Amlwch and Swansea of using visual art as a catalyst for community revitalisation through the reinterpretation of industrial heritage.

##### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

a) Link to the Copper Kingdom exhibition

[http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/whatson/?event\\_id=5067](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/whatson/?event_id=5067)

b) Link to Randall’s work on Parys Mountain Copper Mine and Amlwch Industrial Heritage Centre, Amlwch, Anglesey, North Wales <http://jillrandall.co.uk/current-projects/parys->

mountain/ and Golden Venture <http://jillrandall.co.uk/exhibitions/golden-venture-exhibition/>

- c) At The National Waterfront Museum, Swansea, Curator of Exhibitions
- d) At Menter Mon (Anglesey Enterprise) Director, Menter Mon.
- e) At Anglesey County Council, Project Manager, Anglesey Physical Regeneration Scheme, Highways.