

<p>Institution: University of Hertfordshire</p> <p>Unit of Assessment: Panel D (34): Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory</p> <p>a. Context</p> <p>Since 2008, the unit's research interests have expanded to embrace both curiosity-driven and applied research. Alongside strengths in the fine arts, art and design history, and practice-led research, the unit supports applied forms of research into film, TV, media, and latterly design that have a public interest and benefit. The development of the Media Research Group (MRG) in 2010 was part of the unit's strategy to foster public interest and benefit in media; the formation of the Creative Economy Research Centre (CERC) in 2013, is part of a parallel plan to generate impactful interdisciplinary research in film and media across the schools of Creative Arts, Humanities, Education and Business. In 2013, the unit also established the Design Research Group (DRG) to explore home-based applications of 3-D printing. The School of Creative Arts has made a strategic commitment to support applied research with public and commercial benefit as evidenced in its policy document entitled 'The School of Creative Arts: Research Pedagogy and Scholarship'. The non-academic user groups that benefit from the unit's research include the broad category of members of the public that visit exhibitions; local cultural agencies and museums and their visitors; public organisations at home and overseas who determine public policy on doctoral education in the arts; and consumers of new technology.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The unit's approach to impact has been to orient a significant part of its research to issues that facilitate greater public and institutional engagement, and to establish a public-facing platform for the dissemination of its research in art and design, art and design history, media, and film. Each of the unit's research groups have an impact plan, and financial support is specifically targeted at impactful research. To this end, we work with the public through local museums and heritage agencies, as evidenced by Simpson's AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award designed to share research on George Bernard Shaw with volunteers at the National Trust. Research on the objects in the construction of museum space helps shape the public's experience of Shaw's work. A commitment to impactful research underpins Berry's documentation of the lives of the Elstree Film Studio's ex-employees in the Elstree Project, disseminated through public screenings, and conferences. The formation of G-VERL (Games and Visual Effect Research Lab) in 2013 led by Richardson was part of an international research group examining the application of games and special effects to artists' films.</p> <p>The unit's artists have also made public engagement a central part of their research. Nelson has explored ways in which organic forms in art can be used to understand the cellular mutation of cancer. Here, art is used as a methodological tool to question mechanistic views of the disease and to place its representation in a public-facing interdisciplinary context. His research was disseminated through a public conference, 'Anarchy and the Organism' staged with University College Hospital London, in which the public and members of the medical profession were invited to examine ways in which art could cast a new light on our attitudes to cellular mutation.</p> <p>St James has examined ways in which new media have expanded the public's access to portraiture. He has engaged with the public through exhibitions at home and overseas to disseminate his innovative work on portraiture. His inclusion of work in national public collections in the UK and those in China are part of a strategy to take an essentially Western form, rethink it in terms of new technologies of dissemination, and apply the form to a new context in public fora.</p> <p>Biggs' work on the epistemology of practice-led research has had an impact on doctoral education and in the formation of public educational policy overseas. His research has informed debates on educational policy overseas, including the Swedish National Research School in Architecture, which coordinates all doctoral education in architecture in Sweden. Biggs is also a member of the</p>
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Reference Group for the Australian Learning and Teaching Council's project 'Examination of Doctoral Degrees in the Creative Arts'.

Support for Impact

The unit has supported impactful research by earmarking funds for the development of public-facing projects. Support is also facilitated through competitive funding at university and research institute levels. It received a total of £22,500 from the university's internal grants competitions in 2011 and 2012. Each of the unit's four research groups has been tasked with addressing impact as part of their plans for the next five years. Examples of the groups' commitment to impactful research include the Theorising Visual Art and Design (TVAD) group's increasing work with heritage organisations; appointments made to a multi-disciplinary research centre for the Creative Economy; the unit's funding of the Elstree Project; and its work with the university's Heritage Hub.

The unit also works closely with UH Arts and Galleries, a £500,000 per annum university-sponsored organisation designed to share research in the cultural industries within the community. A programme of public lectures, Design Talks and Art Talks, sponsored by UH Arts provide a platform for the dissemination of the unit's research to the public. The 2013 Art Talk lecture series is themed around 'Impact', to explore and share the term's meaning and ways in which impact might be broadened and contextualised.

The School of Creative Arts' staffing policy now recognises the importance of impactful research in new academic staff appointments. Where appropriate, job descriptions for appointments are informed by the need to recruit staff whose research has clearly defined non-academic beneficiaries. Evidence includes the appointment of a professor of film (**Richardson**) to work with the Media Practice group undertaking research on artists' application of special effects in the film industry, and the appointment of **Rabikowsa** to the Theorising Visual Art and Design group to examine work on heritage and urban regeneration. The unit has also appointed a visiting researcher to work alongside the unit's designers to explore the domestic applications of 3D printing.

At unit level, funding has been used to encourage impactful research by supporting projects from early career researchers and others that have a public-facing dimension, with £12,000 having been allocated over the last three years. There have been two professorial appointments (**Richardson** and **Miller**), the latter co-funded with the Hertfordshire Business School to work with the new Creative Enterprise Research Centre.

Staff in the unit have been helped to achieve impact through university support and provision for attendance at expert and policy meetings, and other networking events with non-academic users. A dedicated team provides support for Knowledge Transfer activities, while the Marketing and Communications team helps to organise publicity and PR for events, and also provides staff training in media engagement. The university's media team actively seek out opportunities to publicise and disseminate research. A Research Grants Team advises on impact plans and statements, and a Research Information System records and disseminates impact evidence.

c. Strategy and plans

Over the next five years, the unit is committed to reorienting part of its research to facilitate greater public engagement. Future plans aim to consolidate aspects of the unit's work, recognising the value of impactful individual research while building hubs of collaborative activity that have public benefit and participation as part of their remit. The School has addressed impact as part of its research strategy set out in 'The School of Creative Arts – Research Scholarship and Pedagogy' (June 2013). Some of TVAD's members (**Adams**, **Simpson**, **Rabikowska**) plan to reorient curiosity-driven humanities-based research to explore issues around Heritage through working with local museums and heritage organisations both in the UK and overseas. This includes **Rabikowska's** research with the University of Katowice into heritage and social regeneration.

The Media Research Group will address issues of public engagement with local film history and the history of technology. Particular emphasis will be given to working with local organisations that have international cultural significance – Shaw’s Corner, Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, Bletchley’s National Museum of Computing – but which lack the academic resources to fully explore and disseminate their collections.

The Media Research Group has recognised that much of its own work on TV, film, games and popular culture has significant public appeal, and its members aim also to work alongside the Heritage Hub to ensure broader public participation. **Biggs** and the Research into Practice Group will continue to work with agencies overseas. Having formed professional relationships with government agencies in Sweden and South America, the group plans to develop these in Australia, particularly in the field of the epistemology of creative writing.

The unit will also support impactful design research in digital printing and additive manufacture, and has appointed a research associate from industry to explore creative and commercial applications of the medium. As part of the university’s business-facing strategy, the School is committed to exploring the commercial applications of research and has established a range of School-wide seminars and symposia to address the public benefits of our research.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two case studies are examples of the unit’s commitment to fostering impact from its curiosity-driven research by promoting public involvement in art forms that address extra-artistic issues. Both case studies are based on **Nelson’s** work. In the first, **Nelson** has been supported to examine ways in which organic sculptural form can be used as a means to understand scientific concepts, specifically ideas of organic repetition and its use as tools to reflect on cellular mutation in the form of cancer. The School and the Wellcome Trust contributed £5,000 each to fund the production of a book of essays, *Anarchy in the Organism* (Black Dog, 2013), arising from his project of the same name undertaken with the UCL Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre, and contributed resources for an international symposium on the public understanding of cancer. **Nelson’s** sculpture took the idea of visual representation of complexity theory and cellular mutation, and used visual images produced both by artists and diagnostic visual imaging technicians to explain a life-threatening disease as part of a natural process. Evidence of the impact of the research has been captured through interviews with 167 participating cancer professionals, patients and relatives, over 80 per cent of whom agreed that it expanded the remit of art in hospitals to provide a ‘new way of looking’ and thinking about a ‘taboo subject’. Lord Stone, Chair of the health charity DIPEX, saw **Nelson’s** art as a ‘sensory’, ‘visceral’ rather than ‘logical’ way of conceptualising disease. In September 2013 **Nelson** was awarded £23,310 from the Wellcome Trust to exhibit *Anarchy* in a touring exhibition in the UK. In October 2013 **Nelson** edited a collection of essays from contributors – including patient representative Gilly Angell’s essay ‘A view from the other side – a patient perspective’. The book is distributed in the UK, Australia and the US.

Nelson’s *Plenum* examines the interstices between art and science. Again, art’s remit is expanded beyond its normal bounds to address some of the ways in which representations of the passage of time have cosmological and theological implications, and to show the findings in a public context. The work functions as a cross-disciplinary, secular *momento mori*. **Nelson’s** work was supported with a €199,500 grant from the EU Culture Fund (awarded to the Artichoke Trust, who commissioned the installation) to show the work at a range of international festivals, each accompanied by symposia with contributions from experts and the public outside the art world, in order to maximise its impact. Evidence of the level of public participation can be seen in the more than 240,000 visitors to the festivals and their benefits to the local economy, and the extensive critical reception by the art world and media. Work on *Plenum* is ongoing, and it plays to larger audiences in performance and online contexts.