

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution:	University of Northumbria at Newcastle
Unit of Assessment:	34 - Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Research in art and design at Northumbria seeks to engage others with our research practices, outputs and investigations and raise the awareness of our shared audiences. This is achieved through collaboration and continuing engagement with a variety of users, audiences and communities. Impacts include renewed cultural services of interest and relevance to contemporary society, and design innovation. The beneficiaries and users of our research include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals leading the conservation and presentation of our international cultural heritage, specifically museo-historical and critical practices, leading to improved visitor access, engagement and experience at, for example, Tate Britain and Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums. • Artists and performers seeking academic partnership within our regional and national festivals and events as support for their professional development, creative expression and global relevance. • Service providers and policy makers seeking new perspectives on the future of design practice and interaction supporting innovation through science and technology in society. These include: the NHS; design research leads at Microsoft; professionals within the banking industry; and local government and charities, informing policy and practice around ageing (Newcastle City Council, Age Concern). • Specialists leading the environmental and communicative enrichment of healthcare and clinical systems, including new approaches to curating artistic events in healthcare settings. • SMEs in the healthcare sector, who do not have the resources to invest in their own knowledge development, but who benefit from our ERDF-funded Healthcare Technology Development Programme which enables design-led innovation in healthcare product and service development. <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Our co-production of research model places public sector engagement and commercial innovation at the core of our research process. This collaborative approach provides multi-disciplinary insights, from which we generate further research, impact and entrepreneurial activity. Impact activities are supported by our competitively won research grant income, commercial contracts, charity funding, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and networks. In order to ensure different types of impact we actively seek diversely located research users and beneficiaries: private/public, regional/international, broad based demographic audience/specialist users. We ensure that research impacts reach beyond the users directly involved in the research; for instance, research findings are disseminated more widely through our collaborating partners' regional, national and international networks.</p> <p><u>Pathways</u></p> <p>In seeking and developing pathways to impact we are flexible and open to new opportunities to engage a wide breadth of non-academic audiences with our research. Research beneficiaries initially encounter our research through a range of digital, physical and textual platforms: exhibitions, performances, products, services, articles and a programme of dissemination activities including: symposia, conferences, conference contributions, public debates and outreach events. In order to sustain and extend collaboration between our research and external research users, our Research Groups' impact planning fully incorporates funding and work-load support for</p>	

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researchers as they develop relationships and networks with user-communities. We plan time in our research to enable detailed engagement with multiple professions and practices and make available funding for different types of research dissemination; for example public engagement. Researcher's networks, developing or extant, are often formalised as partnerships, including single events developed into annual programmed festivals, or an organised conference transformed into a long-term web-based publication plan.

Collaborations and Partnerships

During the REF cycle, there has been continued and fruitful investment in our research groups and their engagement with external organisations, through research collaboration, contract research and supporting multi-disciplinary networks:

- The Northumbria/BALTIC partnership (*BxNU Institute*) is situated within a shared research resource housed in 'Baltic 39' in Newcastle's city centre and raises awareness of curatorial and critical practices among new audiences. This includes challenging public understandings of clinical medicine and science, disseminated through our exhibitions and symposia such as 2012's 'Death Animations', a consideration of societal, artistic and ethical attitudes to death and the preservation of the body, involving curators and authors alongside bioethics and medical educators.
- Trainee doctors have benefited from Arts' impact on environmental enrichment in NHS hospitals, through curated exhibitions and new approaches to participatory curating, enabling doctors to explore the stories of patients and their personal narratives. The Unit and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust were jointly awarded the Combined Royal Colleges Medal, at the Royal Photographic Society Awards 2011, for 'outstanding contribution to photography'.
- *Visual and Material Culture* continues to collaborate with the North East Museum sector building on a 2012 AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award with the Shipley Art Gallery in Gateshead and an AHRC Cultural Engagement collaboration with Tyne and Wear Museums. Following privileged access to their archives, joint funding bids with Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums are in progress, driven by our complementary plans for public engagement.
- Our research group *Performance and Identity's* Gateshead International Festival of Theatre is supported via partnership with Gateshead Council, which provides resources and estate; the Arts Council England; and the Jerwood Charitable Foundation.

Structure

The Faculty's Research and Innovation and Business and Engagement functions lead a dedicated Faculty Impact Committee. The committee prioritises and targets support that may converge in a single interdisciplinary project, as well as supporting existing HE/non-HE consortia such as the Northumbria/BALTIC Partnership. Discipline-based 'Impact Champions' (senior researchers in Art and Design) allocate impact-related financial and workload support, mentor for individual staff, peer-review funding proposals in relation to impact and develop the Unit's impact strategy.

Funding and Support

Several of our partnerships and collaborations are supported by consecutive research grants. For instance, participation in the AHRC/EPSRC programme Designing for the 21st Century continues through AHRC support as one of six funded UK universities delivering a series of Design for Social Innovation for Sustainability (DESI) workshops in 2012-13. Associated initiatives include exhibitions, publications and broadcasts aimed at improved design thinking, to deliver sustainable social and environmental benefits to communities by strengthening connections between our designers and end-users of design in public, private and third sector organisations.

Researchers applying for external funding for research work closely with the University's Research and Business Services (RBS) to ensure all potential avenues for impact, at any stage of a

proposed research programme, are explored and appropriately supported. Research sabbaticals are planned and evaluated with the impact of research as a requirement. Thirteen staff in this Unit used sabbatical support in 2011/12 to collate evidence of beneficial change arising from their research. In addition, Early Career Researchers are awarded sabbaticals within two years of their start date order to expedite the completion of projects, including the exploration of impact potential.

c. Strategy and plans

During the REF cycle, research groups in this Unit developed through Northumbria's targeted Strategic Investment Fund, benefited from new appointments providing renewed research leadership. Standardised workload hours for impact-related activities were introduced in 2011/12. This process has been complemented by the introduction of public engagement and impact criteria in the person specifications of new appointments, particularly for senior positions. This has increased opportunities for creative, cultural and commercial research; and provided succession planning necessary to sustain external links. In relation to long-term impact, our strategic approach will continue to place user engagement and external partnerships at the heart of our research, through formal and informal collaborative agreements, jointly-funded doctoral studentships, defining our planned visiting fellow or professor roles and with colleagues from industry joining the advisory boards of the research groups across the Unit.

Our longer-term planning includes supporting the development of any early stage research impact identified recently, to ensure that potential for reach and significance is realised in coming years. For instance, researchers in the *Performance and Identity* group utilising 'verbatim theatre' practice and theory, which requires extended contact with non-HE communities, intend to widen their involvement with disability groups, trauma counselling organisations and memorial centres. Synergies between the curatorial research of *BxNU Institute* and the *Visual and Material Culture Group's* museum collaborations will be developed to build further public understanding of, and professional uses of, interdisciplinary cultural histories within museums.

Our fine art conservation researchers, particularly in the fields of collections management and care, will develop their research which benefits public access and informed engagement with historic artefacts. The potential for impact internationally through *Visual and Material Culture* research collaborations with museum professionals (including the Oslo-based Munch Museum, the Oslo National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, The Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, The Cooper-Hewitt Smithsonian National Design Museum in New York and Tate Britain) is described further in three case studies.

The Unit is supporting new interaction with science, technology, engineering and mathematics partners in research projects including investigating new printable, paintable, programmable and 'intelligent' materials which have the ability to transform design innovation nationally and internationally. The *Innovate* research group will focus on the everyday usability of electric vehicles (much of it in collaboration with industry partners at, *inter alia*, Nissan, Bayer and Smith Electric). Our interdisciplinary research in human-computing interaction will continue design-led fusions of a broad range of inputs that are simultaneously focused on creative design practices with, for instance, beneficiaries among the elderly.

The Faculty recognises the importance of providing continuing guidance on impact and has introduced components within its staff training programmes to encourage two-way user-engagement. All researchers develop impact narratives. The Faculty's Impact Committee prepares and delivers impact training, manages the evidence chain, supports relevant applications for external research funding and will evaluate and disseminate knowledge and learning gained from impact case studies. In subject-specific training for PhD students, guidance on transferable skills is being reframed to embrace the delivery of impact outcomes within our disciplines and beyond. This complements the Faculty's extant commitment to providing doctoral researchers with training in 'public engagement' across all of its UoAs.

d. Relationship to case studies**Art Impact Case Studies**

The case studies detail impact on cultural understanding of the UK's international cultural heritage, specifically in a museum context. The studies exemplify the contribution our Unit's research makes to specialist practices and processes and the general benefits these provide for enhancing public engagement with curatorial, conservation, art historical and critical resources.

Edwardians Online led enhancement of Tate Britain's open-access online scholarly research catalogue and impacted on Tate's digital strategy. It exemplifies our approach to collaboration with leading external arts agencies. In leading the development of content for off-site access to Tate Britain's research catalogue, impacts were also achieved through improved visitor attractions.

Making Histories shares with 'Edwardians Online' professional benefits for those undertaking curatorial training. This study was informed by, and has informed, the reframing of national and international debates on design as cultural heritage. The underpinning research improved a key North-East museum's display of artefacts for audiences and directed the curatorial policy for the organisation. This further enhanced the training of a future generation of design curators through new curricula in Britain and the USA.

Ensuring Modern art is seen as Modern artists intended details how research helped to improve conservation and authentication processes specifically in relation to artworks by Munch and Bacon, but with further benefits on authentication methods generally in use.

Design Impact Case Studies

Design-led impact on the UK economy through enhanced professional practice and service delivery reflects our approach to international and regional contribution and leadership. By collaborating with our beneficiaries, they realise their own capacities and develop commercial or entrepreneurial opportunities.

The creation of Intellectual Property and successful business growth - products, jobs and sales exemplifies how our Design researchers' innovations can be applied systematically, in this case the innovative Multiple Perspective Problem Framing approach and its impact on the business-thinking of those leading the development of original exhibition display services and products (with follow-on job creation). The development of an internationally prominent product underpinned the successful growth of an SME and resulted in the creation of jobs and annual worldwide sales of over £1million.

Virtual VJ details how research inspires and engages specialist audiences and users; and motivates engagement with technological development, in this case by research-led practice in audio-visual performance.

Both Design case studies demonstrate how applied design research provides innovative tools with which entrepreneurs can improve their own future commercial plans. The case studies demonstrate how they beneficially and significantly changed these plans and exemplify the Unit's contribution to the UK and other economies.