

<p>Institution: University of Oxford</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 34</p>
<p>a. Overview</p> <p>The Ruskin School of Drawing & Fine Art provides an exceptional research environment that enables cutting-edge contemporary artists, art historians and art theorists to work closely together in a world-leading, research-intensive university. Its intimate size and its dedication to fine art practice, history and theory within a stimulating and dynamic interdisciplinary structure allows it to sustain close relations with other academic departments and faculties and it is this that distinguishes it from other, larger art schools. The department supports a flourishing BFA course, a growing DPhil programme, and a wide-ranging portfolio of research activities by its staff, postgraduate students and visiting scholars in which fine art research is prized as a vital component of contemporary culture with a broad range of practical, historical and theoretical references.</p>
<p>b. Research strategy</p> <p>The unique character of the Ruskin as an art school is shaped by its intimate scale and by its integration within a world-leading research university. Staff, postgraduate students and visiting scholars interact readily within the School, and make strong intellectual connections with peers in other departments. Such encounters generate fruitful partnerships and commissions. The core of the Ruskin's research strategy is to provide a framework that offers support for individual and group initiatives whilst identifying particular research clusters that can be developed through targeted appointments, research seminars and network programmes, and appropriately scaled funding bids.</p> <p>The period since the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise has seen important developments in the departmental research strategy. Since 2008 the research strategy has benefitted from significant changes in the organisation of the School. The Ruskin Committee, which oversees all departmental activity, has clarified and improved the School's committee and planning structure with regard to research with tangible gains in terms of strategic planning, academic and other staff appointments, and student number planning. This includes the launch of an MFA programme in 2015, which brings the Ruskin into line with other leading art schools and further enhances its research environment. The appointment of the new Head of School (Gaiger) in 2010 and three new University Lecturers (Gardner, Price and Sworn) in 2012, and the targeted support made available by the establishment of a specialised Research Facilitation team in the Humanities Division, have added fresh impetus to the School's research activities. The five-yearly institutional review in 2012, conducted by members of the University's Humanities Division and Education Committee alongside representatives from the Slade School of Fine Art and the University of the Arts London, strongly commended the Ruskin for its clear sense of direction in terms of its overall recruitment policy and research ambitions.</p> <p>A new concentration of research activities within the department has been focused on supporting work with the moving image. The appointment in 2012 of two new University Lecturers allowed the School to bring in two renowned artist-filmmakers (Price and Sworn) to complement the work already being carried out in this area (Martin). Martin was awarded a Phillip Leverhulme Prize in 2009, Price went on to win the 2012 Turner Prize, and Sworn represented Scotland at the 2013 Venice Biennale. Sworn has also been shortlisted for the 2014 Max Mara Art Prize for Women. The Ruskin's strengths in this area have been built up over the past decade through the organisation of research-focused events with producers, directors, screenwriters and others from the worlds of fine art, cinema and television. In 2013 Martin was offered an Arts and Humanities Research Council Fellowship and successfully bid for an award from the Leverhulme Trust to establish an International Network that allows the School to forge connections not only with other artists and academics, but also with professionals working in the world of mainstream film.</p>

The strategic decision in 2008 to build on the School's expertise in art history and theory has led to the appointment in 2010 and 2012 of two new University Lecturers in Contemporary Art History and Theory (Gaiger and Gardner) and a successful application to the Leverhulme Trust for an Early Career Research Fellow (Schaar). A rich programme of visiting speakers and the establishment of a new Institute for Visual Research (see below) has underpinned a greater interconnectedness between the department's historians, theoreticians and practitioners.

Since 2008 there has been a major restructuring of the School's governance and committee structure, the introduction of new guidelines and procedures to support the delivery of research, and the establishment and consolidation of a highly successful DPhil programme. These changes facilitate cross-disciplinary activity, enabling art practitioners and art theorists to work closely together in a research-intensive environment, and they have been designed to foster a culture of collaborative decision-making that also allows for effective setting of strategic priorities and channeling of resources.

The research of all staff, postgraduate students and visiting scholars is now overseen by the departmental Research Committee, which meets termly and reports to the Ruskin Committee. The Head of School (Gaiger) chairs this Committee, which currently includes the Director of Undergraduate Studies (Catling), Director of Graduate Studies (Gardner), Senior Research Fellow in Fine Art Studies (Bonaventura), the Head of Administration and Finance, and two other members of staff on a rotating basis. The Head of School is the designated Head of Research and also sits on the University Board of Electors for the Slade Professorship of Fine Art and the Inter-Faculty Committee for the History of Art. The Senior Research Fellow in Fine Art Studies is the designated Research Coordinator and also sits on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter Public Art Sub-Committee.

Together with colleagues from the Department of the History of Art and the University's museums, the Ruskin has recently co-founded the Institute for Visual Research as part of the Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities, supported through funding from the University's John Fell OUP Research Fund to stimulate and support research that transcends disciplinary and institutional boundaries. The Institute's mission is to explore the plurality of visual culture in all its aspects: its history, practice and politics of display, as well as its theoretical and philosophical dimensions. A successful application to the Leverhulme Trust (Gaiger) enabled the department to invite Professor Lambert Wiesing of the University of Jena for a 3-month Visiting Professorship in 2013 to work closely with staff, postgraduate students and visiting scholars to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the distinctive approach to studying images that has been developed in German-speaking countries. The Institute was officially launched in June 2013 with a one-day conference on 'Theories of the Image' that formed the culminating event in a series of lectures, seminars and workshops, which were organised as part of Professor Wiesing's visit.

The School views research, public engagement and impact as interrelated components that are supported through a holistic research strategy. It works to sustain close relationships with other arts organisations and a wide range of galleries and museums in the commissioning and display of art. Close links have also been forged with Modern Art Oxford (see REF3a). A central component of the departmental research strategy now and over the next five years is to build on recent successes by submitting high quality grant applications to set up new projects and interdisciplinary collaborations, new international networks and to support more early career researchers. The two main research clusters in the moving image and history and theory will form the basis for large-scale collaborative bids to external funding bodies. The School is also concentrating resources on the establishment of an infrastructure for international interdisciplinary research by developing the programme of the Institute for Visual Research and forging partnerships with other national and international institutes of advanced study.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

Following the appointment of the new Head of School (Gaiger) in 2010 the Ruskin undertook a rigorous review of its academic staffing structure to ensure that it was properly equipped to sustain and strengthen its research culture. The changes simplified the existing structure and provided greater clarity in terms of the research roles of those employed in the School. The appointment in 2012 of three new University Lecturers (Gardner, Price and Sworn) and a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow (Schaar) has given a dramatic boost to the School's outputs. All new staff are participating in the drive to secure alternative sources of financial support from UK research councils and grant-making trusts and foundations. The Ruskin now has ten academic post holders with a 50:50 gender split. Five post holders are practising artists (Catling, Chevaska, Martin, Price and Sworn), three are researchers in the history and theory of visual culture (Bull, Gaiger and Gardner) and two are research fellows (Bonaventura and Schaar).

The department's commitment to recruit research staff of the highest international distinction and potential reflects University policy and is complemented by a commitment to equal opportunities, diversity and wide-ranging support for the career development of individuals at all stages in their careers. Staff are appointed for a five-year probationary period, during which time they are given a departmental mentor, and are placed on agreed national pay scales. There are clear and transparent structures in place for re-grading of posts, to award additional pay on grounds of merit or temporary additional duties, and to retain exceptional staff. In addition, all eligible staff are encouraged to apply for the title of Professor in a regular structured exercise (of which Catling and Chevaska were the most recent recipients).

All staff are eligible after six terms for one term's automatic sabbatical leave, which can be banked to be taken in periods of up to one calendar year at a time. University statutes require the time to be used for research purposes. Leave arrangements also allow members of staff to take up prestigious Visiting Professorships at other universities (e.g. Bull at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and the 'Queen Victoria Eugenia' British Hispanic Chair at the Complutense University in Madrid). The University has extremely generous family leave schemes and support mechanisms and well-established schemes for staff to request flexible working patterns. The devolved structure of the University gives significant responsibility to the Head of School who can respond flexibly to local needs, acting within procedures that encourage equality of treatment.

The University implements the national Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers through its local Code of Practice for the Employment and Career Management of Research Staff and has been awarded the European Union's HR Excellence in Research badge for the support it provides for researchers. A significant range of support is available to the department through the Oxford Learning Institute, which provides the skills training required for researchers to be effective in their research and the careers advice and professional development opportunities to enable career progression.

Similarly, the department benefits from its extensive links with the Humanities Division Research Facilitation Team, including the Assistant Registrar (Research) and the Research Facilitator with responsibility for the Ruskin. Meetings with individuals to discuss their future research plans and the types of funding opportunities available have proved highly effective, as has the attendance of the Humanities Research Facilitator at meetings of the departmental Research Committee.

ii. Research students

The rapid establishment of a successful DPhil programme in the still-emerging discipline of fine art research has been one of the School's major achievements since 2008. The DPhil programme admitted its first students in October 2006 and the first completion was in 2010. As of 31 July 2013, seven students (some with interdisciplinary supervision across the collegiate university) have so far completed their degree; two more students have already completed this term. The School currently has 26 students working towards completion either by thesis alone or by studio practice with thesis. Following the review of academic staff structure, a new member of staff has taken on the role of Director of Graduate Studies (Gardner) and the department has created a new role of Graduate Studio Research Leader (Price). The DPhil programme has proved hugely successful

and has greatly contributed to the research environment of the School. Students and their supervisors have developed confidence in defining, debating and articulating what constitutes research in the context of a university-based art department and how its own distinctive language and rationale can best be developed.

Funding for students is provided by the department, benefaction and designated scholarships from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and Clarendon Fund. Of particular note is the award of one of the two inaugural Charlie Perkins Scholarships for the first Indigenous Australians to study at the University of Oxford (Thompson) and the joint studentship with Modern Art Oxford on the Museum Of Modern Art, Oxford, 1965-1990: Exhibitions, Spectatorship and Social Change (Floe).

Since 2008 the departmental graduate admissions process has benefitted from proactive recruitment of national and international students and from the introduction of clear criteria, additional requirements for portfolio and written materials, and interviews. The number and quality of applications remain high, with more than 30 applicants per annum. The gender ratio of applicants and offers to acceptances has fluctuated, although in two out of the last three cohorts there has been parity in acceptances.

The department runs a weekly graduate seminar, which offers training in research methodology and an opportunity for students to present and discuss their work. There is also a programme of visiting speakers in which art historians, critics, curators and artists present their own research. The series attracts leading figures from the art world, including Anne Wagner, Boris Groys, Mark Godfrey, Tamar Garb and Marina Warner, and is open to other members of the University.

Training is provided in teaching methods and students participate in both group crits (group critiques in studio practice) and tutorial teaching. A Teaching Register for DPhil students was introduced in 2011 and DPhil student involvement in undergraduate teaching has become routine. In 2011 the role of Faculty Teaching and Skills Training Coordinator was taken over by the Director of Graduate Studies and a DPhil teaching training programme was established that meets the requirements of the Divisional policy for Preparation for Learning and Teaching. The programme consists of three main components: (a) training sessions on leading group crits with practical demonstration, and the opportunity to lead group crits through the School's established group crit programme; (b) sessions on art history and theory teaching that cover an introduction to the curriculum, essays and examining, course design and teaching strategies, with further opportunities to observe teaching at tutorials; and (c) training sessions in studio teaching. The postgraduate students are encouraged to engage with strategic thinking about the future of the School through the Graduate Joint Consultative Committee, which meets once a term, and by being represented on the Ruskin Committee (for unreserved business).

Formal mechanisms for monitoring progression are provided by the procedures for Transfer and Confirmation of DPhil Status (the formal stages of progression through the doctoral programme). These key milestones require students to submit a sample of written work and, for those intending to offer studio practice as part of the final submission, a portfolio or exhibition of studio work, together with a statement articulating the aims of the research project. The submission is assessed by two members of staff other than the supervisor, who conduct an oral examination and write a report that goes to the Graduate Studies Committee and to the student. The procedures are explicitly designed to give the students formative feedback so that they can assess – and where necessary improve – the quality of their research.

Student research output has been exceptional. Not only is there an annual exhibition of graduate work held in Oxford, but many of the studio-based students are exhibiting their work on a regular basis and receiving recognition in the form of prizes, residencies and commissions (e.g. Thompson received the Basil Sellars Art Prize from the Ian Potter Museum of Art in Melbourne, his work was featured in the Australia exhibition at the Royal Academy for the Arts in London and he presented the annual Arthur Boyd Lecture of Australian Art at the Australian Embassy in 2013). Students pursuing research by thesis alone are presenting papers at international conferences (e.g. Simoniti's paper *The Epistemic Value of Visual Art* presented at the American Philosophical

Society Conference in San Francisco) and their work is beginning to be published (e.g. Taylor's DPhil thesis has been accepted by Yale University Press). Although the student body is small, it is highly visible within the field of contemporary art (e.g. the presentation of Pope's Olympic Delivery Authority-commissioned Memory Marathon at various high-profile venues to coincide with the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games).

The DPhil programme has developed several characteristics that distinguish it from other such programmes in fine art. Most important is the close working relationship between the practice and theory-based strands of the programme and the productive dialogue in which they engage, both in a structured way at the weekly research seminar and informally in the studios. Unlike doctoral programmes in many other art schools, the Ruskin's DPhil programme benefits greatly from its integration within the University. Over the last few years the programme has built up fruitful collaborative relations with a number of departments and programmes (including Geography, Anthropology, Film Studies, Comparative Government and the History of Art), with the University's museums, and with Modern Art Oxford. Graduate students from the Ruskin School and the Department of the History of Art regularly cross-attend research seminars and lectures by visiting speakers and there is a productive exchange of ideas and approaches between staff and students. A former doctoral student in the History of Art has recently been appointed to a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship (Schaar) and a number of graduates of the History of Art MSt programme have begun DPhils in fine art (Allen, Brandt, Floe and Sanderson). The School is working to extend the connections between the two departments in areas such as training for DPhil students, the development of collaborative research projects, and joint bids for external funding.

The effort to increase supervision capacity through external supervision arrangements involving colleagues from other departments or other institutions has paid handsome dividends. Recent arrangements have involved external supervisors from the Institute for Modern and Contemporary Culture at the University of Westminster and Oxford Brookes University and from the Departments of the History of Art, Education and Anthropology inside the University.

The Ruskin's future plans will see an increase in student numbers up to a maximum of forty PGT and PGR students. This growth in the size of the student body will achieve an appropriate balance between the expansion necessary for the academic and financial stability of the School as a whole and the need to offer an exceptional and unique education to all of its student researchers.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

External research funding has permitted the Ruskin School to generate a large number of important projects and interdisciplinary collaborations with knowledge transfer and public impact benefits in the museum and gallery, arts commissioning, publishing and arts funding sectors (e.g. the London 2012 Festival commission with John Gerrard). These have encouraged greater permeability between fine art in higher education and the wider arts community (e.g. the Elements of Drawing project with the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology). The department attracts finance from the arts funding system that often benefits other faculties, departments and divisions within Oxford whilst creating research opportunities for artists who would not otherwise come into contact with the University (e.g. the Great War Centenary commission with Chloe Dewe Mathews and the Faculty of History).

Since 2008 the department has made numerous successful applications to external grant-making bodies and others, including the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Leverhulme Trust, Arts Council England, Wellcome Trust, British Council, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Radcliffe Trust, Culture Ireland and the European Commission; total research income during the census period is £837,997, not including recently awarded grants at the early stages of implementation. Fresh initiatives introduced since 2008 have focused on providing support for research through individual meetings with the new Head of School (Gaiger), Director of Graduate Studies (Gardner), Senior Research Fellow in Fine Art Studies (Bonaventura) and the Humanities Division Research Facilitator (Ollivere). Staff, postgraduate students and visiting scholars are enabled to pursue external grants by being provided with specific discipline-focused assistance, including details of

additional financial support both internal and external to the University, application criteria, procedures and deadlines.

Many of the School's research activities, including its various Leverhulme Trust-funded projects, profit from the support of the University's John Fell OUP Research Fund and the Van Houten Bequest. The Fell Fund assists with pump-priming, early career researcher start-up funds and support related to bids for external funding. The Van Houten Bequest is used to support projects that do not form part of the normal day-to-day operations of a department and which would not easily be funded from other regular sources. Since 2008 the department has received internal investment from University-wide programmes totaling more than £130,000.

The department has engaged dynamically with the Oxford Research Centre for the Humanities, recently set up to facilitate multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research activities across the University. As well as the activities organised by the Institute of Visual Research and the visit of Professor Dr Lambert Wiesing as a Leverhulme Visiting Professor in 2013, the Ruskin is collaborating with the Centre on the Leverhulme International Networks-funded project on mirror-touch synaesthesia (Martin), a University-funded Cultural Engagement Fellowship to work with curators at Tate Britain on a forthcoming exhibition on the subject of art and the British empire (Thomas), and the Humanitas Visiting Professorships in Contemporary Art and Museums, Galleries & Libraries (see below). The Centre also provides the department with accommodation and support for its Leverhulme Early Career Fellow (Schaar).

The School Library is benefitting from the attentions of a new Librarian, who was appointed in 2012 and administers a resource of around 4,800 lending items and 1,600 reference items, all catalogued and available on SOLO and purchased according to the departmental needs for teaching and research. The reference section of the Library includes a large bequest donated by St Anne's College, which includes rare material from the 1980s. A further key resource for staff and students is the Bodleian's Sackler Library, one of the University's principal research libraries, which specialises in Archaeology, Art History and Classics (Ancient History and Literature). The Sackler Library regularly provides inductions and sessions on acquiring research skills and the Art and Architecture Librarian is proactive in supporting the research culture in fine art.

Electronic and digital media are integral to fine art research at the Ruskin. Individuals are provided with the tools that will facilitate their ideas and practice and build a set of skills, which are personal to them and their work. A range of image- and time-based applications is taught and staff, postgraduate students, and visiting scholars are encouraged to explore beyond the limitations of any particular programme and to use open source hardware and software solutions.

The Ruskin is presently situated on two sites approximately one mile apart. The premises on the High Street house studios, administrative offices and the School Library. A second building on Bullingdon Road houses additional studios and offices plus the main sculpture, printmaking and multimedia facilities. These facilities are overseen by a technician and a specialist in electronic and digital media and provide research support that remains competitive with other leading art schools. The School is currently undertaking a complete redevelopment of the Bullingdon Road site for completion in summer 2015. The construction of a new, architect-designed building will provide an additional 500 square metres of usable space as well as enhanced studio and workshop facilities for staff, postgraduate students and visiting scholars. The redevelopment of the Bullingdon Road site will afford the School the extra space that it needs to realise its strategic priorities, including the re-launch of the MFA programme in October 2015. The introduction of an MFA will provide an important bridge between the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, allowing the Ruskin to continue to attract the best research students internationally and to provide further graduate teaching opportunities.

The redevelopment of the Bullingdon Road site will bring a new and significant focus to the Ruskin School and its association with the local community in East Oxford and beyond. Working with organisations such as Oxford City Council, Modern Art Oxford, OVADA, Fusion Arts, The China Shop and many other community organisations will bring an enhanced learning and teaching

experience for students and staff. It will enable the Ruskin to deepen its engagement with the cultural and artistic life of the area and to develop an expanded programme of activities with public value. The improved facilities in the new building, including a multi-purpose project space that can operate as a gallery/workshop/teaching/performance space, will allow the Ruskin to host public talks, events and exhibitions at the Bullingdon Road site and to showcase the great variety of staff and student work across the full range of artistic media. The redevelopment will contribute to the University's strategic goal of generating and sharing knowledge beyond its immediate environment and of contributing to the cultural, social and economic life of the city and region.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

The School maximises the advantage it enjoys as a component of a world-leading, research-intensive university by fostering projects involving interdepartmental, interdivisional and interdisciplinary collaborations in and outside Oxford. The pioneering programme of departmentally based research by visiting scholars, historically associated with the Ruskin Laboratory, continues to play a crucial role in maintaining and strengthening links with the arts community beyond the University.

Since 2008 the programme has generated projects with Anna Lucas (in collaboration with the Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics); Sonia Boyce (in collaboration with Magdalen College, Oxford and Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge); Rob Kessler and Gabriela Albergaria (in collaboration with Oxford Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum); Nicky Hirst, Tim Head, Annie Cattrell and Peter Fraser (in collaboration with the Department of Biochemistry, Hawkins\Brown and Artpoint Trust); Philip Hoare, Tania Kovats and Jeremy Millar (in collaboration with the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Pitt Rivers Museum and Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology); John Gerrard (in collaboration with Oxford University Sport, Magdalen College, Oxford and Modern Art Oxford); Simon Starling (in collaboration with Green Templeton College, Oxford and Modern Art Oxford); Chloe Dewe Mathews (in collaboration with the Faculty of History, Tate Modern, Stills: Scotland's Centre for Photography, Irish Museum of Modern Art and the Centre Régional de la Photographie Nord – Pas-de-Calais); and the European Live Art Archive (in collaboration with the University of Girona and GlogaurAIR Berlin).

Until 2011 the programme also included the annual Arts Council England Helen Chadwick Fellowship (in collaboration with St Peter's College, Oxford, St John's College, Oxford and the British School at Rome) and the annual Arts Council England Oxford-Melbourne Fellowship (in collaboration with Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford and the University of Melbourne). Recent recipients of these awards have included Jonathan Allen, William Cobbing, Daniel Gustav Cramer, Cath Keay, Christina Mackie, Elizabeth Price, Tom Price and Keith Wilson.

The department plays the major role in selecting and organising the new Humanitas Visiting Professorships in Contemporary Art (Thomas Struth, Shirin Neshat and William Kentridge) and Museums, Galleries & Libraries (Glenn D. Lowry, Malcolm Rogers and Ivo Mesquita) and the annual artist residency at St John's College, Oxford (Matmos, Robert Beavors, Mary Lum, Zeena Parkins, Jordan Baseman, Corin Sworn, Chloe Dewe Mathews and Ciara Phillips). The Humanitas Visiting Professors are invited to conduct masterclasses and seminars with graduate students at the School and the artist residents at St John's College make a similar contribution.

The department employs an integrated approach to practice, history and theory and has a particular interest in the fine art curriculum past and present. In particular, it has built on the outcomes of its projects on *Research and the Artist: Considering the Role of the Art School* and *A Curriculum for Artists* by collaborating with the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology on an expanded version of the *Elements of Drawing* (see REF3a).

To confirm the Ruskin is committed to the highest standards of research in practice, history and theory and to identifying innovative and accessible ways of strengthening the profile of fine art research for the benefit of the scholarly community and the wider public.