

Institution: Teesside University
Unit of Assessment: 34 Art & Design: History, Practice and Theory
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Impact policy in Art and Design is guided by two principles. The first is the quality of research, which is supported by our Research Environment Strategy, the second is reaching out to audiences. The ultimate user group of Art and Design research is an inclusive definition of ‘the public’, even though researchers are engaging in the development of specialist creative narratives and engage with specialist research constituencies. Their aim is to intrigue, stimulate, educate, entertain and effectively share knowledge with a vigorous heterogeneity of audiences. They disorientate existing values, propose solutions to half-perceived needs and, most of all, seek to change social attitudes. Our researchers must collaborate with intermediaries to reach the wide definition of public they seek to affect. Our artists in the Fine Art cluster work with curators and publishers to launch their ideas to as wide a public as possible, our designers in the Design cluster work with commissioners and industrial companies to produce innovative design solutions to long-standing design problems, our digital media researchers in the Digital Media and Moving Image cluster work with electronic device manufacturers to produce user interfaces that make their devices irresistible to the general public, while our film and video makers seek out collaborators to further their contributions to the developing story of experimental British cinema (see REF3b). Impact is measured by their success in reaching new audiences and bringing new knowledge, attitudes and social awareness to existing ones. All our researchers have adapted impact strategies to the specific conditions in their own research fields. Institutionally, IDCA is the vehicle that shares information in support of impact – information is circulated through seminars and by regular emails – and highlights examples of successful distribution policy for all its members.</p> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The strengths supporting impact in the Art and Design Research Group during the REF period were its ability to identify research excellence using recognised indicators of research esteem and achievement, its ability to support such research in terms of funding opportunities, research time and access to research infrastructure. These are allied to a tradition of cultivating audiences, a tradition of collaboration – particularly in the area of film and video production – and a strong network of regional and national partners engaged in research initiatives, with particular strengths in new media research supporting social engagement and regeneration, cultural change and the concomitant development of new economic opportunities. The Environment Template and REF2s give multiple examples of how collaboration in the Digital Media and Moving Image cluster has extended the participants’ creative reach. The habit of collaboration and the ability to reach out to funding organisations such as the BFI, to pitch to broadcasting companies such as BBC, Channel 4 and ATV, and the need to facilitate user-participation have been vital skills. Many of the researchers in this cluster have their own production company as a vehicle to launch research initiatives (Chicken, Haillay, Fenton). Some have chosen to focus on public health issues, while others have produced films whose subject is social deprivation and who give voice to those marginalised by the social changes brought about by the decline of heavy industry. These not only reflect local conditions in the Tees Valley, which is a test bed for regeneration and where the University is committed to playing its part to transform the current economic, social and cultural conditions, but also articulate social issues that are a vital and active part of contemporary political debate, which gives their outputs broad relevance to audiences nationally and internationally. The film-makers in our Digital Media and Moving Image cluster demonstrate the impact principles pursued by all our researchers during the REF period. They identified distribution as the key to growing audiences, both nationally and internationally. Participation is key: participation in BFI funding competitions, film festivals and biennials not only builds audiences, being shortlisted for – and winning – prizes and awards gives added status and expands a film’s audience, all of which fuel partnerships and future funding opportunities (see REF2s: Haillay, Dennis, Elliott, Fenton, Young). One example: the premiere of <i>‘Better Things’</i> at the Cannes Film Festival (2008) led to the opportunity for Haillay to lead a seminar on experimental cinema at the Festival enhancing his standing as a spokesperson for British experimental cinema.</p> <p>The digital media researchers in the Digital Media and Moving Image cluster, like Stockton and Chicken, are recent appointments designed to take to another level our digital design research initiative, Dlab. Dlab was originally conceived in conjunction with the Regional Development</p>

Impact template (REF3a)

Agency 'One North East' as part of the regional design strategy. DLab has been an enormously potent resource for our researchers in animation, design and the visualisation of the virtual. The end-users of the Virtual Environment research outputs made possible by DLab's technical resources include secondary school children with special educational needs and young unemployed adults. The animation resource has been used to great effect by **McKeown** and **Fenton** to put into wider circulation new thinking about disability and congenital clinical conditions. Their outputs have addressed those directly affected by the conditions in new and sympathetic ways. **McKeown** has also affected social attitudes broadly by engaging with the UN World Disability Day and the 2012 Paralympics (see REF3b). The University hosts the Animex International Festival of Animation and Computer Games. **Fenton** is the co-founder of Animex. It is the largest festival dedicated to animation and computer games in the UK. Founded in 2000, the festival takes place annually and attracts some of the biggest names in games, animation and VFX. The festival both brings research to the University from around the world to engage with a regional and national audience and gives context, stature and a focus for evaluation and networking opportunities for new partnerships to our software and animation researchers. **Fenton**, in particular, has benefited from research and distribution contacts resulting from her leadership. Another example of impact is the Art and Design Research Group's relationship with Huntsman, an international chemical manufacturer. A group of researchers, including award-winning photographer **Tsuchiya** and **Beckwith**, undertook an extensive appraisal of the interior spaces of Titanium House to enhance the working environment of Huntsman's employees. The craft-based researchers in the **Design** cluster, and those in the **Fine Art** cluster have adopted individual impact strategies by understanding and defining the contexts in which their practice should be seen. These are evidenced throughout our submission, a good example of which is **Morris** with his residency at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, who connected with, and affected, the growing audience for museum-going and contemporary art.

Finally, research funding has been indispensable to impact. Funding has come not only from the University's research funding but from a multitude of sources and agencies, not only in grants and awards, but also awards-in-kind, such as commissions (BBC, Channel 4, ATV, Whitechapel Art Gallery, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art and biennales), provision of gallery space, catalogues and publicity. Major funding sources successfully applied to during the REF period include ODA (**McKeown**), BFI (**Hailay**), UK Film Council (**Elliott**), Northern Film and Media (**Elliott**), Arts Council England (**Morris**, **McKeown**, **Hinchliffe McCutcheon** and **Draper** through the Renaissance bid), **Randall** (BP Travel Award), Henry Moore Foundation (**Morris**), WarChild (**Fenton**), Wellcome Trust (**Fenton**, **McKeown**), Irish Film Board (**Young**), Leverhulme Trust (Breaker, 2008-12), Creative England (**Young**).

c. Strategy and plans

In the medium term we expect continuity and growth in the impact of Art and Design Research. The Group's strategy on impact has been a work in progress and has been as much focused on future developments – and laying down meaningful impact strategies to deliver these – as it has on ensuring impact for the current REF period. We will seek new means of enhancing impact through new events, productions, publications, festivals, conferences and exhibitions. Researchers recognise research as a medium- to long-term process and continuity and reputation-building are vital connections between the current and next REF period. This is exemplified in the fact that as a result of the success of 'Better Things', the **Hailay/Hopkins** production company Third Films has recently been awarded a BFI Vision Award of £50K per annum over two years 'for film development and company growth'. Their next film 'Bypass' is in an advanced stage of production and the BFI funding provides development finance for film projects beyond that. This aids their ambition to bring to the film-going public a British cinema with a realist, socially-responsible outlook. Likewise **Young**'s film script 'Blood Cells' (produced by **Hailay**) which has been awarded 150K Euros funding from the Venice Film Festival (2013) will reach a wide film-going public as a result of being screened at the 71st Venice International Film Festival in 2014.

Digital media collaborations currently in development include one with Theatre Hullabaloo, subject to a bid to the independent innovation charity NESTA. This is directed at helping grandparents and grandchildren find greater enjoyment out of theatre-going together. There is a development for Northumbria Water on enhancing the customer experience via a digital platform, and a new stage

Impact template (REF3a)

in the well-established collaboration with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust where a mobile app and website to engage young parents – particularly reluctant young fathers – in the process of childrearing is under development by **Stockton**. In all these cases the digital interface, with its popular playful character, allows clever information to be imparted to wider, new, and even resistant audiences. Work is also on-going with Northumbria Healthcare on designs for living quarters for patients with dementia, with the assistance of the Community Engagement Team. Another initiative expected to enhance impact is the recent founding – following a £10K bequest – of the Christopher Dresser Society in conjunction with the Dorman Museum through which new research into Dresser's impact on design is already being mapped out. Additionally the Art and Design Research Group is currently seeking to connect the Dresser initiative with cultural tourism as well as Innovation Centres in the Creative Industries through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Next year's Perc conference organised by **Morris**, which will feature performances and artworks produced in response to Perc's work, will be as innovative a conference as is Perc's work in the canon of literature. As can be seen from these examples, we lay great store by events and other structures that create a context for research and increase the reach of our research to differing, specific audiences. The plan for the incorporation of the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA) into the University is another concrete example of impact-enhancement. The successful Renaissance bid (bringing **Draper** and **Hinchliffe McCutcheon** into the Research Group) already attests to this and will widen the public's access to, and enjoyment of, MIMA's contemporary jewellery collection. An international conference is also planned for 2014 as well as a series of lectures by renowned jewellers. We are planning a new initiative with MIMA to promote critical writing on art, and a digital platform to aid neophyte artists to launch their careers, for which **Stockton** is applying for NESTA/ACE/AHRC Digital R&D funding. While MIMA will remain independent as a curatorial entity of international standing (eg. the recent Alex Katz exhibition), the Art and Design Research Group will enhance MIMA's impact in the region, and beyond, through our skills in audience-creation as outreach is a proven skill at the University. The University will add to this through the Constantine gallery and the proposed MIMA2 gallery which will grow still further the audience for contemporary art and design. Such initiatives demonstrate that the Art and Design Research Group has the experience and expertise to develop still further long-term impactful events and research contexts with an international reach in the next REF period and beyond. We believe we have the infrastructure to support future ambition. To this end researchers are encouraged to participate in conferences, seminars and discussion groups in recognition of the importance of the personal contacts of our researchers as a means to enhancing impact. Impact depends on revolutionary and innovative insights, but their application depends on effective dissemination. Ancillary skills such as effective distribution, publicity and presentation are important enablers of impact. These issues are stressed in the mentoring of all researchers, but particularly in the case of early career researchers. Mentoring emphasises the importance of research as a developmental process and stresses the desirability of long-term research aims and effective research management as an integral part of career development. Finally, the networking effect of new media cannot be underestimated in our impact strategy, and we encourage all researchers to use the networking infrastructure available within the University. IDCA's website policy ensures a web presence for all our major research initiatives, and its ambition is for all researchers to have their own independent web presence. New media is constantly throwing up new audiences and we share new knowledge by espousing a sophisticated use of the multiple channels of distribution that exist today.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies are exemplary examples of research themes consistently developed over a considerable period of time. As such, they represent best practice as promoted by the Research Group. All have used the resources of the University to great effect – none would have accomplished as much as they have without the support of the Research Group and the University's infrastructure. **McKeown** was unable to obtain 'off-the-peg' equipment for some of the techniques he wished to use in his animations; using the University's technical resources he was able to build the equipment himself. Whilst the University has also provided **Hailay**, **Elliott** and **Young** with support, all four researchers quoted have also pursued contacts and opportunities outside the University as a vital aid to impact. **Hailay** has enabled Third Films to be a collaborative tool of great, sustained effect. All show evidence of accumulative impact via their public profiles; all have made a major contribution in their own particular research constituencies beyond HE.