

Institution: University of Sussex

Unit of Assessment: UoA 36 Media Studies

1. Context

Sussex research in Media and Film engages the full breadth of the field, and addresses its cultural, social and political significance, aiming to build critical awareness and challenge public understandings. Engagement with and impact on non-academic users are therefore central to our strategy in each of our key research fields: digital technologies; the cultural politics of sound and listening; media and cultural histories and transformations; well-being and public science/knowledge; media arts, film and visual culture; and media publics and politics. Impact has been achieved in the areas of civil society, cultural life, public discourse and services, and policy-making, and ranges from the local to the international. Users of our research include:

- **Arts/cultural institutions**, including national libraries, galleries and museums. Photographic work on migration detention has been exhibited in galleries across the UK, and in Canada and Germany. Films have been shown in major galleries and film festivals in the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Italy and Taiwan. The *Global Queer Cinemas* project has influenced film-festival programmers from Mumbai and New York. The project '*Noise: A Human History*' will be held by the British Library Sound Archive, as will an archive of personal voices about the WLM arising from the '*Sisterhood and After*' project.
 - **Broadcasters and their publics**. Hendy's research on sound history led directly to the Radio 4 30-part series, *Noise: A Human History*. Research on Multiplatforming Public Service Broadcasting has been used by the BBC, Channel 4 and independent broadcasters. Thomas's (BBC/AHRC-funded) research on radio listeners online has been used by BBC radio and web producers. Broadcasters have used Krutnik's work on the Hollywood Left (Radio 4 and US radio interviews), Bull's work on mobile sound technologies (multiple interviews on TV, radio, national and international print media) and Highmore's research on cultural histories of the everyday (consultant and on-screen expert/presenter for *Electric Dreams*, BBC4 2009).
 - **Education users and beneficiaries**. Migration detention research has been used in migration studies, sociology, literary and cultural studies. The Historical Association has used work on the British LGBT Civil Rights Movement and the history of LGBT communities; the film '*Playing a Part*' has been used by LGBT History Month (London). Outputs from the *Sisterhood and After* project have been used by British Library Learning and The Women's Library's educational arm. Work on expertise and digital transformation has been used by Brighton schools to raise skills levels in digital media amongst primary-school children.
 - **Performing arts and cultural producers**. Both academic and creative-practice research have been used in dance, theatre music and broadcast productions. Research on gay men's digital interactions led to K.S. Dance Co.'s production of '*We2*' (2010–11), a 60-minute multimedia dance piece; and *Motherland* (2010), a Theatre/Performance project directed by Juliet Stevenson and scripted by Natasha Walter, used Friend's photographic work on immigration detainees and their stories. Motion-capture research led to '*Concerto X: Guimarães*', a live performance with a 17-piece orchestra performed for the European Capital of Culture 2012.
- Activist/campaigning groups**. Bail for Immigration Detainees, Dover Detainee Visitor Group, the Testimony Project, and the Yarl's Wood Befrienders have used research on migration detention. Work on refugees and resilience has been adopted by service-providers and -users in Brighton. Thomas' (ESRC-funded) research on 'suspect communities' has been used by the Home Affairs Committee, the Communities and Local Government Committee, and Irish and Muslim community members and leaders. The Terrence Higgins Trust uses research on gay men's sexual health and media to inform their policies and practices around sexual health education for gay men.

2. Approach to impact

To fulfil our aims, sustainable external partnerships have been crucial. We have constructed these

Impact template (REF3a)

in three ways:

- **Building long-term relationships with users and beneficiaries:** here *planning for impact* – on institutions and their publics – is integral to the relationship. Thynne and Friend have longstanding relationships with curators, galleries and festivals, including Jeu de Paume, Pompidou Centre, Virreina Centre de L'Image and MOCA Sydney. Hendy has an established relationship with the BBC, Hendy and Jolly with the British Library, Bull with Fondazione Insuono in Italy, Norman with Telefonica Foundation, Madrid, Highmore with Tate Britain and the Design Museum, Jolly with Tate Modern, Maltby with the Ministry of Defence.
- **Staff involvement in the organisation/governance of arts, media and cultural organisations,** which then leads to sustainable relationships. Examples are Krell's membership of the Board of Fabrica Gallery, Grant's involvement with Cinecity, Thynne's with See, the Brighton Documentary Festival, and Norman's with Dance Digital, Mute Publishing. Here, impact plans and activities result from these primary relationships.
- **Responsiveness to external approaches** following research dissemination. Bull's membership of the advisory board of California-based Portal Player, of Future Trends Forum, and appointment as advisor to Fondazione Insuono resulted from the high-profile media appearances, interviews and public talks that followed publication of his work on uses of new privatised sound technologies. Mowlabocus' long-term work with THT resulted from publicity around the publication of his work on 'Gaydar Culture'. Exhibitions of Friend's work on immigration detainees and their stories and resulting publicity (in the *Guardian* and other newspapers) inspired both the 2010 creation of *Motherland*, and the use of this work by campaigning organisations. In these cases, response to outcomes of effective dissemination has forged relationships resulting in – often less predictable – pathways to impact.

Support for staff in developing and tracking impact from their research has been through:

- **Direct funding plus administrative support.** The School has provided funding and core administrative support (a HEIF-funded Impact Support Officer) for public activities in support of impact development. These have included joint workshops with THT for the development and dissemination of health-promotion policy and activities, and public workshops in support of work by Hendy, Lacey and Jolly held jointly with the BBC and the British Library. At University level, funding has enabled the tracking of impact, the Research Theme in Digital and Social Media co-funded and co-organised workshops on digital transformation and a new regional archive centre, and the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts – an interface between research and public arts activities – co-organised and funded public workshops/ seminars.
- **Research leave and financial support for impact-related activities,** such as support for Thynne to re-version and reproduce films in French, and Friend to deliver public talks and workshops around exhibitions of her work in the UK, Canada and Germany. Mowlabocus was supported as visiting researcher at Microsoft Research New England, and Bull in his role as advisor to Fondazione Insuono.
- **Support to take up roles with public bodies.** Grant's work with Cinecity, Thynne's with See, Krell's with Fabrica, the work of Highmore, Richardson and Hendy with broadcasters, and Jolly's with Tate Modern, have all been supported through allocated time and financial support.
- **Support in the construction of a public face for staff research.** Individual public websites we support include www.melaniefriend.com, davidhendy.co.uk, and <http://laidbare.dev.scip.org.uk>. Major collaborative ventures include the development of Reframe, an online platform for the publication of both academic work and creative practice aimed at a readership beyond the academy. Via its website and social media platforms, content is being shared and used by LGBT film festivals, health-promotion agencies, activist groups and even Canadian secondary-school curricula. Group sites include The Sussex Centre for Cultural Studies, which targets events at third-sector communities in partnership with non-academic user- groups, such as the Queer Spiritual Spaces site. All are supported financially and administratively by the School.

3. Strategy and plans

In order to build further critical awareness and challenge public understandings we plan to extend

Impact template (REF3a)

our engagement with and impact on non-academic users across all our areas of research excellence, through building on existing partnerships and developing new ones, providing support – through funding and allocated time – for staff to forge the relationships that can lead to long-term partnerships, further developing the public face of our research, and building internal awareness and capacity through impact mentoring, training and peer review. Specifically we shall:

- **Continue to strengthen and develop our partnerships** with broadcasters, arts and cultural producers and exhibitors, education-users, and public-users such as government bodies, charitable foundations and community groups. Hendy's work with the BBC, for example, has led to BBC proposals for an extended (7-year) research partnership around oral history/BBC and Mass Observation archives. Jolly is extending work with the British Library in a new research project, and exploring oral histories of women's liberation in China, in partnership with China's Oral History Association. Maltby's new ESRC-funded project builds on her earlier research relationship with the Ministry of Defence, and Mowlabocus' impact on the health-promotion policies of the THH has led to new partnership research to test effectiveness, and consultancy with the Medical Research Council.
- **Support staff in external engagements** that enable future partnerships. This includes:
 - sustained engagements– e.g. the Brighton Sound Day series (knowledge exchange with new media/arts SMEs in Brighton/South East), British Library/BBC sound seminar;
 - investing in regular facilitators able to effectively bring research to specialist (skills-based) and local communities – e.g. via an arts community consultant who operates as a HEIF-funded Impact Support Officer; and
 - supporting network projects designed to enable the dissemination and impact of primary research to be felt more broadly and directly by relevant groups – e.g. Bassett's engagement with EPSRC CCN+ digital transformation/cultures and communities programme as CI, and O'Riordan's network on digital knowledge and sustainability.
- **Further develop the public face of our research.** *Reframe* is in the early stages of its development/evolution into a wider platform; future plans include open-video publishing projects. The Attenborough Centre will be fully operational in 2015 as a venue for festival and arts events, and a space for public engagement with a wide spectrum of our research activities. In addition, we shall continue to mount public-facing events and activities designed to produce pathways to impact through our research centres and our HEIF-funded Impact Support Officer.
- **Build awareness and capacity** through impact-centred mentoring and staff development, and through impact-aware peer review of research proposals, led by the School's Research Director and supported by its research infrastructure. These are, in turn, supported by the University's Research Impact Officer and support infrastructure.

4. Relationship to case studies

Case studies reflect both our aims and our approach to achieving impact, as follows:

- The impact of Friend's work on public discourses around, and understanding of, marginalised or 'othered' groups, including refugees, exemplifies the value of longstanding relationships with curators and galleries. It has been supported financially and through leave.
- The impact of Mowlabocus' work on the policies and practices of the Terrence Higgins Trust arose initially from a local approach from THT, indicating the importance of local embedded engagement, which can then produce impacts on a far larger scale. It is supported through direct funding, administrative support and leave.
- Hendy's impact on cultural understandings of sound as a dimension of social history arises from a longstanding partnership with the BBC, actively cultivated via Impact events programmes and continuing dialogue. It is supported through direct funding, administrative support and leave.
- The impact of Jolly's work on public debates around, and understanding of, feminism is achieved through long-term partnerships with, and involvement in, educational, campaigning and heritage organisations. It is supported by direct funding, administrative support and leave.