

<b>Institution: Birkbeck, University of London</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 34 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory</b>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>This Art and Design submission involves researchers from two Departments: <b>History of Art and Film, Media and Cultural Studies</b>, in the School of Arts, since 2010 housed in Gordon Square, Bloomsbury. Art and Design research at Birkbeck spans a wide range, chronologically (medieval to the present day), geographically and in terms of medium and intellectual approach. In addition to research on art, design and film, Birkbeck is known for its interest in ‘the long history of new media’ (including photography and digital arts). There is a substantial body of work on arts and media institutions – museums, galleries and film organisations – focussing on aspects of production, distribution and exhibition. Issues of memory and memorialisation are explored by a number of staff, in Middle Eastern, African and Western contexts. Colleagues share a concern with questions of how social, political and economic factors interact with the visual arts and the media (film, television, photography and the digital).</p> <p>The main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences for our research during this assessment period have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Museums, galleries and heritage institutions in this country and overseas</li> <li>BFI and other public film organisations</li> <li>Overseas cultural and diplomatic organisations</li> <li>Charities such as Changing Faces</li> <li>Arts, media, and digital practitioners and professionals</li> <li>Local government</li> <li>Educational institutions beyond HE including the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst</li> <li>The general public</li> </ul> <p>Through extensive engagement and collaboration, our researchers have contributed in significant ways to the cultural environment in this country and abroad. They have enhanced the work of public institutions and professional practitioners in the arts and media thus extending the impact of our research to a diversity of audiences.</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>Central to Birkbeck’s mission is a dedication to the transformative role of higher education and to academic research at both a societal and individual level. Birkbeck students, a high proportion of whom study part-time, include many who are (or aspire to be) employed in arts and media organisations that are directly relevant to the research interests of staff. This unique student body contributes to the intrinsic significance of public engagement and user-involvement in our work as researchers. Staff in our Unit of Assessment pursue this commitment through a range of different activities which engage public audiences with the processes of scholarship. We see such work as a responsibility of academia, but also as an integral part of our scholarly enquiry. Our approach to impact promotes partnerships and collaborations with museums, galleries and heritage organisations, along with a variety of other non-HEI bodies (including film organisations).</p> <p><b>Dissemination and public engagement:</b></p> <p><b>Exhibition planning and writing for catalogues.</b> We encourage colleagues to disseminate their research through working on exhibitions, in this country and abroad. The AHRC-funded ‘Vienna Café’ project (2006-9) initiated by Dr. Tag Gronberg and Prof. Simon Shaw-Miller involved collaboration with the Austrian Cultural Forum and other Austrian non-HEI partners, culminating in a touring exhibition (RCA London, and north America) and an accompanying public festival of music and film events in London (2008). Gronberg contributed to the exhibition catalogue for ‘Facing the Future: The Portrait in Vienna 1900’ (National Gallery London, 2013). Dr. Gabriel Koureas organised exhibitions of contemporary Cypriot and Greek art in Cyprus (2011) and in Thessaloniki (2011 and 2012). Dr. Kate Retford contributed to the exhibition catalogue and the audio-guide for the 2011 exhibition ‘Johan Zoffany RA: Society Observed’ (Royal Academy of Arts, 2011-12).</p> <p><b>Public events and writing.</b> Birkbeck’s underlying ethos of public engagement encourages staff to disseminate their research by giving public lectures, talks and workshops, in museums, galleries,</p>

**Impact template (REF3a)**

schools and at festivals in this country and overseas. (eg. National Portrait Gallery, Tate Britain and Modern, ICA, Feminist Library, Royal Festival Hall, National Museum of Wales, Louvre, Prado, Metropolitan NY, NFT, Cannes Film Festival, Berlin Museum für Fotografie.) Research is showcased during the highly successful annual Arts Week, and at other public conferences and seminars at Birkbeck. Our research has also been disseminated through the media. As an expert on the display and representation of Africa in museums, Prof. Annie Coombes has been interviewed on South African television and on Australian radio. Gronberg appeared in the documentary film 'Altenberg: The Little Pocket Mirror' (2012), premiered at the Neue Galerie NY and London Freud Museum. Prof. Lynn Nead has appeared on documentaries on 'Rude Britannia' (BBC4, 2010), 'Victoria's Children' (BBC2, 2012); she was interviewed on the subject of women and boxing for Woman's Hour (2011). Prof. Laura Mulvey's film *23 August 2008* (co-directed with artist Mark Lewis and Faysal Abdullah) was screened at the NY and Berlin Film Festivals (2013). Mulvey's films *Riddles of the Sphinx* and *Penthesilea* (with Peter Wollen) have been reissued on DVD and Blu-ray, and launched with screenings in Berlin and at the BFI (2013).

Birkbeck's External Relations Unit helps to promote public engagement with research by publicising research findings and liaising with media professionals. Dr. Wendy Earle works with the School of Arts as Impact and Knowledge Transfer Manager. The Birkbeck Research Blog (<http://blogs.bbk.ac.uk/research/>) and regular podcasts highlight significant research achievements. The School's Digital, Online and Social Media Co-ordinator assists researchers to connect with a range of publics using social media and Birkbeck's websites to publicise their research and promote public events. A growing open access repository of college research allows free public access to researchers' journal and conference outputs.

**Collaborations and consultancies.**

Staff regularly engage in consultancy and advisory work, both in this country and overseas. As consultant for the Memory Box Heritage Company, Coombes drew on her research on heritage developments in South Africa. She is also consultant on the African Union Human Rights Memorial for Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Nead was a member of the Museum of London Advisory Board (2002-8) and is currently on the Exhibitions Group for the Foundling Museum, London (2011-). She collaborated with the Curator of Paintings, Guildhall Art Gallery, London on an events programme to accompany the 'Victoriana' exhibition (2013). Several colleagues have deployed their research on illness and physical impairment in working with non-HEI organisations and groups. Dr. Suzannah Biernoff was advisor to the Changing Faces charity (2009-10) and (as member of the advisory board of the AHRC Likeness and Facial Recognition Network) worked with the National Portrait Gallery and the Wellcome Collection (2010-2011). Dr. Fiona Candlin gave the keynote lecture at a 'Visual Impairment Training Day' at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2011). In conjunction with the UK Film Council and the BFI, Prof. Ian Christie has been involved with addressing the cultural impact of UK film and has participated widely in seminars on impact in Belfast, York, Bristol, Edinburgh, Brussels, San Sebastian. Dr. Dorota Ostrowska is a Board Member of the professional association European Women's Audiovisual Network. Birkbeck's online Experts Database supports public access to staff expertise.

**Collaboration with non-academic professionals and practitioners.** Colleagues collaborate with non-academics in a process of knowledge exchange across a broad spectrum of issues. The Vasari Research Centre (VRC) was established in 1989 to collaborate with museums and other public bodies in working on digital imaging projects and has played a key role in establishing new digital collections at the V&A (see Case study 2). Collaboration with Film London led to the formation of an important archive of London films (see case study 3) Internationally, Candlin participated in 'The Object Research Lab' Amsterdam, a series of conversations between artists and academics (2009). Through the AHRC-funded project 'Terrorist Transgressions', Koureas organised a 2-day event 'The Invisible Enemy' in partnership with the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (2011). The Impact and Knowledge Transfer Manager has supported the development of collaborative practice through successfully encouraging funding applications to the AHRC knowledge exchange hub, Creative Works London and enhancing impact pathways in grant applications.

**c. Strategy and plans**

The strategic focus for the development and enhancement of research impacts are the three

## Impact template (REF3a)

research centres with which this UoA is closely associated – Vasari, Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image (BIMI), launched in 2013, and the History and Theory of Photography Research Centre (PRC), launched in 2012. Each research centre will develop and support a widening range of collaborative research activities and promote knowledge exchange:

Colleagues in Vasari (led by Dr. Nick Lambert) are currently in discussions about a digital display project with the National Maritime Museum and the V&A. A project with museums in Hamburg, sponsored by Hamburg City Council, is also under consideration.

The PRC (led by Dr. Patrizia di Bello and Nead) will facilitate knowledge exchange with professional photographers, archivists and museums and galleries. As well as organising events at Birkbeck's new Forum for the Arts, PRC is in discussion with Tate Britain and the National Portrait Gallery about joint collaborations.

BIMI (led by Mulvey) is in charge of the strategic development of Gordon Square Cinema (opened 2007, designed by prize-winning Surface Architects) as a space for special public screenings and film-based events. It holds the London Screen Study Archive and which works with Film London on its Heritage Lottery Funded project to reveal the film collections of outer London boroughs and develop a network of voluntary film archivists. It will collaborate with Birkbeck's new Derek Jarman filmmaking unit to develop practice-based research with young filmmakers. It is exploring opportunities for collaborative knowledge exchange oriented research with the British Film Institute and the journal *Afterall*.

Alongside and complementing the work of the research centres public engagement and knowledge exchange will be cultivated through the following:

**Birkbeck Forum for the Arts** was recently established at Gordon Square, with the help of HEIF development funds and a private donation, to promote a more effective interface with the public. It incorporates the Birkbeck Cinema and includes a new exhibition space (the Peltz Gallery), a fully equipped performance space and a redesigned café. It provides the facilities to expand national and international collaborations and partnerships.

**Staff development.** Annual Staff Research Away Days include consideration of research projects and activities with impact and knowledge exchange potential. The Impact and Knowledge Transfer Manager is developing systems for helping staff, particularly early career researchers, to develop their research impact pathways and their collaborative and networking skills.

**Research grant applications** for funds which support knowledge exchange and public engagement will continue to be actively encouraged and supported. Opportunities such as Creative Works London will be pursued, through the work of the Knowledge Exchange Manager, to test different ways of working with a wider range of non-academic partners.

### c. Relationship to case studies

The three case studies selected for submission represent a range of important knowledge exchange achievements by colleagues in this Unit of Assessment. These are indicative examples of how our UoA's research in three established areas (digital culture, film, Viennese visual culture) has achieved impact of national and international reach and significance, supported by the approach and strategy outlined above.

Case study 1, 'Madness and Modernity: mental illness, the visual arts and architecture in fin-de-siècle Vienna' – involved two popular exhibitions in London and Vienna' and exemplifies the use of exhibitions to work with partners in London and Vienna to promote public engagement with new research insights.

Case study 2, 'Computer Arts – establishing technoculture collections' represents ground-breaking work based in the Vasari Centre which led to the establishment of a new collection of digital art at the V&A.

Case study 3, 'London Screen Studies Collection: bring London's film heritage to light', outlines a project that contributed to the British Film Institute's major initiative to systemise and protect Britain's film heritage. Colleagues also collaborated with Film London to establish London's Screen Archive.