

**Institution:**

London Metropolitan University, Sir John Cass Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design

**Unit of Assessment:**

UoA 34 (Art and Design theory, history and practice)

**Title of case study:** *The impact of Installation art on Curating, Collaborations between artists and curators and Artists' Writing*

**1. Summary of the impact** (indicative maximum 100 words)

This case study demonstrates the impact of the Cass' research that has promoted and supported the now pivotal role of Installation art and Artists' Writing on the wider field of artistic and curatorial practice over the last decade and more specifically since 2008.

The body of research based on de Oliveira/Oxley's activities as curators and writers has been instrumental in the development of emerging forms of practice and critical discourse. Installation art highlighted significant changes in the understanding of the idea of the 'medium', the institution and the relationship between artists, curators and audiences. This research is documented on their website [www.writingininstallation.org](http://www.writingininstallation.org).

**2. Underpinning research** (indicative maximum 500 words)**Key Findings and Insights**

Installation art moved from a more marginal practice in the 1980s and became ubiquitous in the new millennium. Nicolas De Oliveira and Nicola Oxley's research looked at the expansion beyond the confines of the gallery space, and, crucially, artists' desire for greater control over the physical space, the context and content of their exhibitions. The gallery culture at the time offered very few opportunities for artists to make new, experimental work in situ, and very little in the way of sustained collaborative practice and engagement with other artists, curators and audiences. Documentation of artworks in gallery spaces was mostly poorly executed. These factors led de Oliveira/Oxley's decision to co-found a number of spaces in a new collaborative and artist-run model including Unit 7 Gallery (1986-1989) the Museum of Installation, MOI (1990-2004) and SE8 Gallery (2009-13). Models for exhibitions and projects were developed over sustained periods in collaboration with individual artists, and later with larger groups of artists, performers and other participants. This collaborative approach meant that members shared a stake in the decision-making, research, creative endeavour and outputs. The exhibitions were commissioned and attracted funding from different bodies (see Section 3: References) who were increasingly interested in the interdisciplinary and contextual approach. Today, Arts Council England's 'Grants for the Arts' consistently stress the importance of developing networks and working closely with audiences (see also section 4).

The research was ground breaking by including scientists, structural and sound-engineers, architects, designers, photographers and writers in the team working on projects. De Oliveira/Oxley's exhibition spaces functioned as laboratories, populated and visited by a growing community of participants who could witness and contribute to installations, performances, readings, screenings, lectures and symposia.

De Oliveira/Oxley's activities and publications have had a wide reach and influence. Their promotion of the role and function of documentation and the archive has supported a shift in contemporary practice; indeed, many artists now see the archival process as an artform in its own right. De Oliveira/Oxley maintain a significant archive of their activities recently collated as a website and resource for researchers.

Concurrently, de Oliveira/Oxley co-authored 2 major books on Installation art, (1994 and 2003) both pioneering volumes, the first at a time when there were no other publications specifically discussing this artform. The impact of these publications resulted in an expansion in Installation art being taught, made, shown, and discussed and led to several other publications by other authors on the subject to the present day.

## Impact case study (REF3b)

The blending of participants' roles in the visual arts has also led to expanded forms of writing, which are no longer limited to catalogue essays written by art historians, but include the writer as a further partner in the process of the work, as is demonstrated by de Oliveira/Oxley's texts and publications.

As a result, we see a downturn in professional, value-based criticism in favour of more speculative forms of writing, undertaken by artists and curators- who frequently cross over from one domain to the other; here, the text does not serve as an explanation of the work, but rather, it offers a parallel output; this new form of writing opens up the field of art-writing,

Key researchers: Nicolas de Oliveira, 0.75 Course leader MA Curating the Contemporary  
Nicola Oxley, formerly Course Leader BA (Hons) Fine Art (left August 2012)

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, Michael Petry, Installation art in the New Millennium: Empire of the Senses – Thames & Hudson, London and New York, 2003
2. Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, Hans Op de Beeck: On Vanishing – Mercatorfonds 2007
3. Nicolas de Oliveira, Stefan Bruggemann – Kunsthalle Bern/JRP Ringier, Zurich, 2007 (Co-Editor and Writer of Monograph/Single Artist's Exhibition Catalogue)
4. Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, The Door Ajar:Patrick Jolley – Gandon Editions 2011
5. Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, Hans Op de Beeck: Sea of Tranquillity – Ludion 2011
6. Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, The Mulberry Tree Press: Partial Fictions , SE8 Gallery, London, 2011.

Both *Installation Art* and *Empire of the Senses* are widely cited in other publications. These include entries in books on visual art, psychology, cultural studies, museum studies and encyclopaedias. Installation art: Empire of the Senses: 17 editions published and held by 1108 libraries worldwide (source Worldcat) Both books are also stocked by major booksellers including international museum bookstores in Europe, the USA and Japan.

Exhibitions curated by de Oliveira/Oxley supporting this research attracted the following grants and financial support from (selected):

Lottery Funding - £30000, Arts Council - £23000, Henry Moore Foundation - £16000, Goethe Institute-2000, Elephant Trust - £1000, Canadian High Commission - £900, Visiting Arts - £2000, British Council - £3000, Conaculta/INBA - £5000, Jumex Collection - undisclosed, Mondriaan Stichting - £4000, Office for Contemporary Art Norway and Billedkunstneres Vederlagsfond - £3500, Greek Ministry of Culture/Ministry of Finance/National Bank of Greece/Alpha Bank/Baron Tossizza Foundation - €350000 combined total, Higher Education Archive Community Fund (HEAFC) - £8800, NEC UK - £2700, South-East London Community Fund (SELCF) - £2700

#### Citations since 2008 include:

Dalia Judovitz, *Drawing on art: Duchamp and company* (University of Minnesota Press, 2010) cited on p.264.

Rebekka Denz (ed), *Geographical Turn* (University of Potsdam, 2010) p.146.

Faye Ran, *A history of installation and the development of new art forms* (Peter Lang, Bern, 2009), preface written, p.1 and 2.

Cameron Cartiere, *The practice of public art* (Psychology Press, 2008) p.53.

#### Reviews and interviews of MOI, SE8 Gallery since 2008:

Preece, Robert // *Sculpture*; Mar2008, Vol. 27 Issue 2, p56-60

Musson, Karl, *Into the Field: David Price*, at SE8 Gallery, in: *This Is Tomorrow Contemporary Art Magazine*, 2012.

Resonance FM 104.4, *Ravelength*, Broadcast from Raven Row Gallery, 60 minute interview with de Oliveira on *Installation art*, Broadcast on 17 June 2011.

Resonance FM 104.4, *Wavelength* (William English) 60 mins discussion with de Oliveira and artist Tina Gverovic on SE8 Gallery projects, Broadcast on 31 May 2013.

## Impact case study (REF3b)

**Web-Links showing sources and citations since 2008:*****Museum of Installation***

Robert Preece: Museum of Installation, Interview with Nico de Oliveira and Nicola Oxley (2008)

<http://www.artdesigncafe.com/museum-of-installation-nico-de-oliveira-nicola-oxley-2008>

Robert Preece, Feeding the Spirit of Adventure

[http://www.sculpture.org/documents/scmag08/mar\\_08/installation/installation.shtml](http://www.sculpture.org/documents/scmag08/mar_08/installation/installation.shtml)

***Installation art in the New Millennium: Empire of the Senses***

Anne Ring Peterson, RIHA Journal 0009, 7 October 2010

<http://www.riha-journal.org/articles/2010/ring-petersen-attention-and-distraction>

Professor Louise Amoore, Lines of Sight: on the Visualization of unknown Futures, Routledge, 2009

<http://dro.dur.ac.uk/6732/1/6732.pdf>

Niamh Ann Kelly, "What is Installation art? IMMA

[http://www.imma.ie/en/downloads/what\\_is\\_installationbooklet.pdf](http://www.imma.ie/en/downloads/what_is_installationbooklet.pdf)

Roann Barris, Empowerment and Manipulation: the Seductive Betrayal of Art

<http://www.radford.edu/rbarris/Seductiveness%20of%20the%20Interval%20essay.pdf>

Silvana Rezende, Ecoarte, <http://ecoarte.info/ecoarte/2010/10/installation-art-in-the-new-millennium-the-empire-of-the-senses-nicolas-de-oliveira-nicola-oxley-michael-petry/>

Alana Keres, Artlies <http://www.artlies.org/article.php?id=44&issue=43&s=>

<http://www.hoepli.it/libro/installation-art-in-the-new-millennium/9780500284513.html>

Emma Leaper, <http://emmalleaper.wordpress.com/>

Performative Installation Course

<https://sites.google.com/site/performativeinstallation/>

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

The impact of the research can be seen in the enhancement of 'cultural life' and 'education' through the creation and evidenced support of new artistic practices.

The 2 books on Installation art were instrumental in narrating the importance of Installation art as a form and a critical discourse, at a time when no such international surveys had been published.

The first book initiates this important polemic and discusses the history of Installation art while contrasting it with new works of the time, while the second book examined Installation art's progression from a marginal discipline to the centre of the visual arts.

The achievement of this research has been the cementing of Installation art both as an artform, and, crucially, as part of a curatorial strategy devised by artists (in collaboration with curators) to control the context and visibility of their work. The research gave a visibility and authority to the discipline that it did not previously have. It influenced other scholars, artists, curators, art students, and made Installation art accessible to a wider public. Indeed, university courses proliferate today that teach Installation art, and actively list these books on their reading lists and course curriculum. The books were produced in different language editions (English, French, Turkish) and sold in large numbers.

Section 3 indicates some of the citations in books, conference papers, scholarly articles and blogs. Equally, the Irish Museum of Modern Art's (IMMA) series of booklets explaining key contemporary developments in art 'What is Installation art?' (2011), draws on and quotes from de Oliveira/Oxley's works on the subject.

De Oliveira has been invited to give papers at prestigious International and National conferences, to discuss the development of Installation art and Curatorial Practice. These are the direct outcome of the curatorial projects and publications and include *The Artist's Studio* at the V&A Museum (2002) *Installation art* (ICA and Whitechapel Gallery, both 2003) and *Treason of Images* (Tate Modern, 2004). De Oliveira also addresses the work and writing collaborations with different artists in other symposia such as *Words don't come Easy*, (at Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon, 2010), *Collaborative Practice*, (Modern Art Oxford, MAO, 2010), *Habitus in Habitat II: Other Sides of Cognition*, Zentrum fuer Literatur und Kunstwissenschaft (ZFL), Berlin School of Mind and Brain, Medizinhistorisches Museum der Charité, Berlin, 2010), *Tickle your Catastrophe: Imagining*

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

*Catastrophe in Art, Architecture and Philosophy (at Vooruit Art Centre/Ghent University , 2009).*

Other publications from this research relate to the development of writing about art and artists; here, the artist and his/her work is seen as the inception of the texts, rather than as an outcome, as a starting point rather than a goal. The monographic writings, in particular, do not attempt to draw comparisons with other contemporary artists, instead building a broader cultural framework and set of references around the featured artist including critical theory, philosophy, literature and sociology. In this way the reader is invited to undertake a wider, more open-ended reading of the work, in which meaning is often circumstantial and implicit, rather than explicit. Here, the texts serve to embed the artists' work in a different cultural landscape as it moves from criticism or theoretical engagement towards other references and forms of writing.

This move can be seen in the work by a number of writers linked to exhibitions at SE8 Gallery, such as Sean Borodale, Jeremy Millar, Ruth Beale, Tamarin Norwood & Patrick Coyle (Antepress), Richard Dyer, George Quasha, Katie Guggenheim, Geopolyphonies and Tom Chivers.

The different models of professional curatorial practice developed by de Oliveira/Oxley through their diverse exhibitions, projects and expanded writing have resulted in taught Modules for UG Fine Art Degrees at LMU and de Oliveira's development and leadership of a unique collaborative master's programme at London Metropolitan University and Whitechapel Gallery. The course foregrounds students' professional engagement and employability through direct partnership with this major exhibition venue.

<http://www.thecass.com/courses/postgraduate/ma-curating-the-contemporary>

Students on the 'MA Curating the Contemporary' (MACC) have curated exhibitions of professional artists such as Jeremy Deller, Lothar Goetz, Langlands & Bell, among many, with the following partners: The Government Art Collection (GAC), the Me-Collector's Room/Stiftung Olbricht, Berlin, the Zabłudowicz Collection, and other organisations. In September 2013 de Oliveira is collaborating with Berlin-based Researcher Dr Annette Loeseke and students from the MACC in undertaking a study of Audience Reception at Whitechapel Gallery.

The impact of this new programme can be seen in the enhanced employment opportunities for the students which have seen recent graduates take up curatorial posts at Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Whitechapel Gallery, the Royal Academy, as well as curating numerous independent exhibitions.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)****Sources to corroborate the impact who have provided a statement:**

1. Eisler Curator and Head of Curatorial Studies at the Whitechapel Gallery, <http://www.whitechapelgallery.org/>
2. Independent Curator and Editor in Chief of 'Color Logics' at Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, Utrecht, <http://www.hku.nl/web/HKUHome.htm>

**Contactable sources to corroborate the impact:**

3. Director of Irish Museum of Modern Art IMMA, <http://www.imma.ie/en/index.htm>
4. Board Member of Momentum, <http://momentumworldwide.org/momentumbboard/>
5. Director of the Chisenhale Gallery, <http://www.chisenhale.org.uk/>

**Further sources to corroborate the impact:**

6. Director of Me-Collectors Room/Stiftung Olbricht, <http://www.me-berlin.com/>
7. Documentation of impact is available at: [http://www.writinginstallation.org/?page\\_id=146](http://www.writinginstallation.org/?page_id=146)