

Institution: University of Oxford
Unit of Assessment: 34
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The impact of research carried out at the Ruskin School of Drawing & Fine Art is realised through exhibitions, commissions, screenings, performances, publications, conferences, talks and other events. These permit the staff, postgraduate students and visiting scholars to sustain an unusually high level of engagement with general audiences, industry professionals, and pupils, students and teachers in secondary and higher education, and thereby expand the public understanding of the subject. The majority of our researchers are specifically sought out on the grounds of emerging or established reputation and over the past two decades the Ruskin has generated a large number of projects and interdisciplinary collaborations with knowledge exchange and other educational benefits in the museum and gallery, arts commissioning, publishing and arts funding sectors. These activities, which are rooted in fine art practice, the history and theory of visual culture, and diverse aspects of exhibition, commission and event making, have fostered a greater permeability between higher education and wider society, influencing the thinking and behaviour of organisations, policy makers and opinion formers as well as non-academic audiences, beneficiaries and users. The department's regular collaborations with other faculties and departments across Oxford, and with organisations external to the University, provide an important interface between fine art research and broader cultural concerns.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The Ruskin School's approach to impact is grounded in the targeted support offered to the department's staff, postgraduate students and visiting scholars by the Head of School/Director of Research (Gaiger), Director of Graduate Studies (Gardner) and Senior Research Fellow in Fine Art Studies/Research Coordinator (Bonaventura) and by the Research Facilitation team in the Humanities Division. This support, which includes funding, mentoring and advice on internal and external grant applications, is overseen by the Ruskin School Research Committee and encourages individuals to develop research projects that contribute to cultural life, civic society, public discourse, education and policy making.</p> <p>Impact-oriented alliances involving interdepartmental and interdivisional collaborations across Oxford and those that engage closely with the University's museums and other collections have been a standout feature of the School's research programme since the mid-1990s. These have included partnerships with artists in more than twenty faculties and departments, including Archaeology (Simon Callery and Tania Kovats), Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology (Stephen Farthing, John Kippin, Tania Kovats, Jeremy Millar and Hadrian Pigott), History (Chloe Dewe Mathews), Museum of the History of Science (Susan Derges), Music (Sonia Boyce), Oxford University Sport (John Gerrard), and Pathology, Anatomy and Genetics (Catherine Yass, Heather Ackroyd & Dan Harvey, Anna Lucas and Sarah Simblet).</p> <p>The impact of the Ruskin's research activities is underpinned by the maintenance of long-term partnerships that permit sustained knowledge exchange between its staff, postgraduate students and visiting scholars and the broader community. A representative example is the School's research relationships with Oxford Botanic Garden and the Harcourt Arboretum. Artist-led projects, including Alison Turnbull's <i>World in a Chamber</i> (2005) and <i>The Family Beds</i> (2005), which focused on the implications of genetic data for the classification of plants, Rob Kessler's <i>Hortus in vitro</i> (2007), a site-specific installation in the greenhouses at the Botanic Garden, and Gabriela Albergaria's <i>hither and thither</i> (2010), which resulted in an artist's book on the Garden's trees and an installation at the Arboretum, continue to enhance and enrich visitors' imaginations and sensibilities, and contribute to the creative reinterpretation of the scientific and cultural value of these important collections.</p> <p>The department works closely with non-academic audiences, beneficiaries and users to develop</p>

impact from its research projects in a number of ways. For instance, 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*, which were funded by the Prudential, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and Arts Council England, by collaborating with the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology on an interactive website called *The Elements of Drawing*. This provides visitors with full access to John Ruskin's original teaching collection at Oxford alongside his comments on and instructions for their use. With recent funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (Enhancement and Dissemination for Impact), the website was upgraded with additional learning resources and contributions by contemporary artists and writers (<http://ruskin.ashmolean.org/education/8989/9033> and http://ruskin.ashmolean.org/ruskin_now). The impact of the upgrade is reflected in the fact that 320,000 copies of the eight *Learn to draw* podcasts, which were devised for pupils and teachers in secondary education, have been downloaded since the new website went live in May 2011.

Collaborations with organisations external to Oxford play an equally important role in realising impact. The Ruskin's staff, postgraduate students and visiting scholars are the subject of individual and group exhibitions in museums and galleries and are engaged on public projects commissioned by arts agencies nationally and internationally. The regular partnerships with Modern Art Oxford are especially strong and include the SOLO performance weekends, Platform Graduate Awards and the collaborative DPhil studentship on 50 Years of Exhibition-Making at Modern Art Oxford 1965-2015 (Floe) alongside exhibition and archive tours by staff and students, and fully collaborative projects celebrating and shedding new light on major events, such as the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (*Exercise (Djibouti) 2012* by John Gerrard) and the 2012 transit of Venus (*Black Drop* by Simon Starling). The department also enjoys important working relationships with the British Film Institute, Chisenhale, Courtauld Institute of Art, Live Art Development Agency, LUX, Milton Keynes Gallery, Modus Operandi, Tate and the Wellcome Collection.

The Ruskin might be one of the smallest units in Oxford and one of the smallest art schools in Britain yet the scale of its impact greatly exceeds the size of the department. The sub-panel acknowledged this in the last Research Assessment Exercise when it commented that the School demonstrated an exceptionally high degree of influence through numerous panel and jury memberships and directorships, including a number of links with prestigious organisations. Since 2008 individuals have continued to make substantial contributions to the activities of prestigious organisations through membership of panels, juries, executive committees and boards, including the Arts Council Collection, British School at Rome, British Society of Aesthetics, Camden Arts Centre, Cove Park, D&AD, Design and Artists Copyright Society, Film & Video Umbrella, Film London, International Association of Art Critics, Jerwood Charitable Foundation, New Left Review, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Situations and The Elephant Trust.

In addition members of the department sit on the boards of and regularly contribute significant articles to prominent specialist magazines and journals, such as Apollo, Art Bulletin, Artforum, ARTMargins, Art Monthly, Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art, Burlington Magazine, Frieze, London Review of Books, October, Parkett, RA Magazine, The Art Book and Third Text. These articles exert considerable influence on professional and public thinking about contemporary art and the context in which it is produced and consumed.

c. Strategy and plans

The Ruskin School has successfully facilitated impact during the period of assessment and is in the process of formalising this process by developing a dedicated impact strategy, which will be integrated with teaching and research as a central component of its academic and creative work. This strategy will build on existing strengths by deepening and extending partnerships both within and beyond the University and ensure that impact potential is included in the development and evaluation of future research projects by the Ruskin School Research Committee. The Ruskin recognises the importance of equipping researchers with the skills, information, confidence and support needed to communicate their research to a wider audience and to engage effectively with the interests and needs of beneficiaries outside academia. Our strategic priority is to provide

further capacity-building opportunities and resources to researchers, together with appropriate training and support through a combination of presentations, panel discussions, workshops and participatory activities. The department will also work closely with museums, galleries and other arts organisations nationally and internationally to establish an integrated approach to impact and to ensure that the maximum benefits are derived from the diverse networks that characterise its research activities.

The consolidation of the existing evidence-based approach to assessing impact will be crucial for establishing ways in which departmental research can further benefit users beyond academia. Specific plans include work on policy initiatives and knowledge exchange programmes with the newly appointed Humanities Division Knowledge Exchange Officer; developing the cluster of projects on art as research within the emergent fields of 'image theory' and *Bildwissenschaft* ('science of the image'), thereby opening up the potential for impact to a wider range of users; forging further connections between the department's growing research strength in the moving image and the activities of artist-filmmakers and industry professionals working in the creative and cultural sectors; and ensuring the maximum impact by the department's roster of noteworthy visiting tutors.

An example of the latter is the support and resources that have been offered to Sarah Simblet, which further extend the School's long-term partnership with Oxford Botanic Garden and the Harcourt Arboretum. Simblet's 2010 book *Botany for Artists: An Inspirational Guide to Drawing Plants* (Dorling Kindersley) has become a standard teaching text and is widely used outside academia. Since then Simblet has been engaged on a new project with Gabriel Hemery and the Sylva Foundation called *The New Sylva: A Discourse of Forest Trees for the 21st Century*, which investigates mankind's relationship with trees under the experience of increasing environmental change through a creative integration of history, science and art. The dedicated website has been live since 2011 (<http://www.newsylva.com>) and the project is included on the website of the Sylva Foundation, which receives in excess of 20,000 visits a month, helping it to achieve its goal of communicating the ecological and economic benefits of Britain's woodlands to policy makers and opinion formers as well as non-academic audiences, beneficiaries and users. The impact of the project will also be realised through an exhibition and event series, which will be held at the Royal Society in London to coincide with the book launch in 2014, and a subsequent tour of the exhibition to botanic gardens across Britain.

d. Relationship to case studies

The Ruskin School has generated a significant number of projects and interdisciplinary collaborations with knowledge exchange across the museum and gallery and arts commissioning sectors. It has therefore elected to submit two impact case studies that focus on public engagement with contemporary art and visual culture. Both case studies have a particular emphasis on the moving image and reflect the departmental research strength in film, video and animation. This interest is underpinned by three University Lectureships (Martin, Price and Sworn) and the robust links that the department maintains with the University's teaching and research programmes in History of Art and Film Aesthetics.

Each of the case studies offers evidence of audience development and educational gains across a range of cultural settings. The *Legacy Fellowship* comprises an exploration of how the award to London of the Games of the XXX Olympiad inspired the creation of a unique research opportunity for an artist, which addressed itself to the creative interface between art and sport. The exhibition of the research outcomes in Oxford and London had a demonstrable impact on and contributed to the success of the Cultural Olympiad and the London 2012 Festival. *THE WOOLWORTHS CHOIR OF 1979* comprises an exploration of how an artist's research into historical archives and collections of film and photography generated an outcome that had a demonstrable impact on the public awareness and appreciation of contemporary art, specifically through its presentations at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead and Tate Britain in London.