

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: University of York
Unit of Assessment: 34, Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The History of Art, more than other disciplines in the humanities, is written and practised in multiple constituencies: in HEIs, in museums and galleries, in the conservation and heritage sectors, and elsewhere. Moreover, alongside this diverse community of practitioners, there sits a vast public audience, keen to experience works of art and architecture at first hand, and eager to learn about their history and significance. The potential for art-historical research to achieve impacts of reach and significance is therefore exceptional.</p> <p>From its inception, the Department of History of Art at York has adopted an outward-facing attitude to our colleagues in cognate institutions, and to our place in the wider community. This culture of openness stems, in part, from the professional histories of our staff, many of whom worked previously in non-HEI institutions. Prettejohn, the current Head of Department, was formerly Curator of Paintings and Sculpture at Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. Professor Emeritus Richard Marks (retired 2008) was Director of the Burrell Collection, Glasgow. Brown was employed by English Heritage for over twenty years. More generally, members of the Department sit on the advisory committees of national museums and galleries, as well as the fabric committees of major historic monuments. Prettejohn, for example, sits on Tate Britain Council and Tate Collection Committee, while Ayers, Brown and Norton sit on the York Minster East Window Advisory Group. We therefore have a long-standing tradition of engaging with non-HEI producers and consumers of art-historical research, and one that predates the national impact agenda by many years.</p> <p>This sustained culture of openness explains why non-HEI institutions want to work with us. Another reason, no less important, is the breadth and diversity of our research, which has few rivals internationally, and which ranges, chronologically, from late antiquity to the contemporary, and, methodologically, from practical conservation to theories of transnationalism, race, gender and sexuality. Our research is organised into five research schools (see REF5), all of which engage with the impact agenda. This range of interests, together with our long-standing commitment to the art-historical object, allows for multiple points of contact with non-HEI users, resulting in many kinds of impact – locally, nationally, and internationally.</p> <p>The Department prioritises three general categories of impact: <i>the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage</i>, <i>the enrichment of cultural life</i>, and <i>the education of civil society beyond the academy</i>. To these ends, our impact strategy is aimed at three principal beneficiaries: conservators of historic artefacts; curators in museums and galleries; the wider public audience for art and architecture. The main kinds of impact we achieve are likewise threefold. Firstly, we inform how, and which, historic artefacts are conserved and preserved. Secondly, we influence how works of art are interpreted and displayed in museums and galleries (through permanent displays, temporary exhibitions, and digital technologies). And thirdly, we influence how the aforementioned interpretations and interventions are presented to the general public. Our three case studies (REF3b) exemplify these three kinds of impact.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Our approach to interacting with non-academic users in 2008-13 was inspired by the success of three major exhibitions in the last assessment period. <i>Gothic: Art for England c.1400-1547</i>, co-curated by Marks at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2003, offered a landmark reassessment of late medieval art. <i>Constantine and the Late Roman World</i>, co-curated by Hawkes at the Yorkshire Museum in 2006, was hailed by <i>The Times</i> as 'magnificent'. <i>Hogarth</i>, co-curated by Hallett in 2006-07, attracted over 200,000 visitors at the Louvre, before transferring to Tate Britain (185,000 visitors) and the Caixa Forum, Barcelona. Inspired by the critical acclaim and popular success of these exhibitions, the Department sought, as a matter of policy, to extend and formalise its long-standing relationships with museums, galleries, and heritage organisations. The moment was a propitious one. The national collections were then in the process of expanding their educational provision, while the Department, with its outward-facing traditions, was keen to extend the reach and scope of its research beyond the academy.</p> <p>Our approach to impact in 2008-13 was therefore centred on the development of mutually beneficial partnerships with non-HEI institutions. In seeking out those relationships, we had five principal goals in mind: 1) to collaborate on exhibitions and other research outcomes, 2) to assist in</p>

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the preservation and conservation of historic artefacts, 3) to maximise reciprocal benefits, including staff development on both sides, 4) to assist with fund raising, and 5) to generate enduring digital resources. Meaningful impact was a desired outcome from the outset, both from our interactions with colleagues in non-HEI institutions and from the interactions with the wider public that the partnerships enable.

In 2009, the Department conceived the idea of a History of Art Research Portal (<http://hoaportal.york.ac.uk/hoaportal/home.jsp>). Developed in collaboration with the University's Digital Library Team and launched in March 2013, this innovative web resource is now enabling public access to the research that is being generated in the Department, primarily, though not exclusively, through the partnerships. The Portal includes free access to, amongst other things, the picture archive of Great Britain's national survey of medieval stained glass, the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi* (over 25,000 images), and *The Art World in Britain 1660 to 1735*, which contains (so far) nearly two million words of primary sources and which has (to date) attracted over 25,100 visitors, including significant visitor levels from 18 countries beyond the UK. By making our research publicly accessible, we seek to maximize the reach of its impact.

Where the partnerships are concerned, we prioritised institutions in York and London. In 2008-13 we reinvigorated our relationships with York Museums Trust (YMT, which includes York Art Gallery and the Yorkshire Museum), York Minster, and the York Glaziers Trust. The cornerstone of our relationship with YMT was a major exhibition at York Art Gallery in 2011-12, *William Etty: Art and Controversy* (see REF3b: *Promoting British Art, 1650 to the Present*). Meanwhile, the appointment in 2008 of Brown to an 0.5 Lectureship, held in conjunction with the Directorship of York Glaziers Trust, cemented our already strong relationships with the custodians of York's medieval heritage (see REF3b: *Stained Glass Apocalypse*). Partnership agreements were signed with Tate Britain in December 2009, with the Victoria and Albert Museum in March 2010, and with the National Gallery in October 2010. These relationships are structured around annual staff exchanges, as well as lectures, seminars, and workshops in alternating venues. Crucially, the partnerships allow for continuing professional development *in both directions*: thus museum curators gain direct experience of teaching and lecturing, while academics (and students) enjoy privileged access to works of art and their affiliated archives. York was one of the first departments to develop partnerships of this kind, and they have since been widely imitated. The partnerships are now flourishing. At the National Gallery, for example, two major exhibitions are in the final stages of preparation: *Strange Beauty: Masters of the German Renaissance*, co-curated by Nuechterlein (February-May 2014), and *Building the Picture: Architecture in Italian Renaissance Painting*, co-curated by Lillie (April-September 2014). Both shows will be free, promising large numbers of visitors, and both will leave an important digital legacy in the form of online catalogues.

In short, the partnerships developed since 2008 have become one defining feature of the Department. They have consolidated a research culture that seeks to achieve impacts of reach and significance as a matter of course, and, by providing opportunities for Early Career Researchers to interact with colleagues in non-HEI institutions (and vice versa), they have spread the benefits of inter-institutional relationships established over many years. The fruits of this culture are apparent from the new partnerships being forged beyond those envisaged in 2008. In July 2013, for example, Ayers was awarded a 40% share of a £1M AHRC project in collaboration with the Palace of Westminster. The project will inform the experience of the Palace's many visitors (703,255 in 2011 alone), while a digital model will inform public understandings of the origins of our parliamentary traditions in architectural space. Impact was built into this project from the outset, as is now standard practice for all large grant applications made in the Department.

The Westminster project also exemplifies the excellent facilities, expertise, and resources that are available to York researchers at an institutional level. These are based in a new £11M Humanities Research Centre (HRC), which, since its opening in 2009, has provided a focal point for humanities impact at York. Ayers worked closely with the HRC's full-time External Partnerships Manager, while the digital model was made possible by the expertise of the Centre for the study of Christianity and Culture (<http://www.christianityandculture.org.uk/>), likewise located in the HRC.

c. Strategy and plans

The Department seeks to build upon the substantial achievements of 2008-13. We will continue to promote the social relevance and cultural capital of our research, and, to these ends, we have identified a clearly defined set of goals, together with an ambitious strategy for their realisation in

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2014-19. Our primary goals are as follows: 1) to nurture our existing partnerships, in order to maximise the impacts already coming on stream and initiate new impacts from new research projects; 2) to initiate new strategic partnerships and, by building upon our existing links with non-UK museums and galleries, extend the international reach of our impacts; 3) to shape the preservation and conservation of the historic environment, particularly medieval architecture and stained glass. Our strategy for realising these goals is already underway. We will develop our *partnerships* into a second phase, and we will ensure that our *Research Portal* remains at the forefront of technology for open-access digital provision.

Developing our partnerships. In 2012, the Department won a £25,000 External Engagement Award from the University of York, enabling an intensive series of meetings, workshops, lectures, and pump-priming initiatives with existing and prospective partners in the first six months of 2013. As a result of this process of review and reflection, we have now consolidated the cross-sector partnerships developed between 2009 and 2012 and laid down ambitious plans for the second phase of their existence. A Partnership Steering Committee was established, chaired by the Head of Department and comprised of the individuals responsible for each of the partnerships. The Steering Committee is responsible for strategic planning, including the development of impact for each partnership. In York, the Department formalised its relationship with YMT. This will lead to major exhibition projects in the next 5-10 years, commencing with *Flesh* in 2017, co-curated by Applin at York Art Gallery. The Department will also play an active role in the Gallery's new Centre for British Studio Ceramics. The London partnerships have likewise been extended and expanded. Our association with Tate Britain will expand in its second five-year phase to the entire Tate organisation. White will co-curate *Mondrian and his Studios: Abstraction into the World* at Tate Liverpool (opening June 2014), while Edwards will co-curate *Victorian Sculpture* at Tate Britain (opening January 2015, following a three-month run at the Yale Center for British Art). Elsewhere, Geraghty and Johns are developing a major grant application on country house inventories in partnership with the National Gallery, beginning with a £13,000 pilot project in 2013-14. The External Engagement Award also allowed us to nurture our links with other institutions in the region (the Baltic, Gateshead; the Bowes, Barnard Castle; the Hepworth, Wakefield; MIMA, Middlesbrough). In the next phase we plan to strengthen the international relationships generated by colleagues' involvement in exhibition projects with museums and galleries abroad (detailed in REF5e). The partnerships will also enable the department to maintain and sustain its leading role in the conservation and preservation of the historic environment, in the UK and abroad. Ayers, who is Vice President of the International Corpus Vitrearum project, is devising a major research project on the technical composition of stained glass. This project, which will involve a consortium of European contributors, will extend our expertise on the conservation of stained glass beyond the UK.

Research Portal. The Portal is now capturing and disseminating the research outcomes of our partnerships, and in 2014-19 we will continue to develop new curatorial, educational, and archival resources. A Steering Group will be established, with external representation and the University's digital humanities support group, to ensure that the Portal remains at the forefront of the field.

d. Relationship to case studies

The three case studies demonstrate our commitment to impact at local, national, and international levels, and illustrate the broad historical and intellectual range of our work. *Stained Glass Apocalypse* describes our impact on the £10.5M restoration of York Minster. *Promoting British Art 1650 to the Present* describes our impact on the curatorship of British art. *De Stijl and the Netherlands' Cultural Canon* describes the impact of White's research on the display and the educational provision of a major public collection in the Netherlands. In all three cases, the underpinning research extends back to the 1990s. Thus the case studies not only exemplify our impact policy for 2008-13, but have directly informed it. Our long-standing connection with York Minster inspired our ongoing commitment to the conservation of the historic environment. Our connections with the custodians of British art alerted us to the huge potential of curatorial partnership agreements. White's collaboration with the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag demonstrated the extent to which contact with non-HEI institutions allows us to reach audiences beyond the traditional boundaries of academia.