

<b>Institution: University of York</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 34 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory</b>
<b>Title of case study: Promoting British Art, 1650 to the present</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>York's British Art Research School, judged 'world-leading' in RAE 2008, aims to change the way key cultural institutions represent British art. To advance this aim we have fostered partnerships with museums and galleries at local, national, and international levels. The partnerships have influenced curatorial practices through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• co-curatorship of exhibitions and displays</li> <li>• staff exchanges, which provide continuing professional development</li> <li>• generation of funding for partner organisations</li> <li>• co-production of digital resources</li> </ul> <p>These initiatives have helped partners to display and promote a significantly wider range of British art and to generate new kinds of interpretation for larger and more diverse publics.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>York's art historians have played leading roles in the new approaches, broadly termed 'revisionist', that since the 1990s have revitalised British art studies and challenged the low art-historical status of British post-medieval art. The Department's strategic focus on British art was established with the appointments in 1994 of David Peters Corbett and Mark Hallett. Corbett's landmark conference, <i>Rethinking Englishness</i> of 1997, brought together and galvanised a new scholarly community; its 30 speakers have gone on to become the senior scholars and curators in the field today, including the Director of Tate Britain and Professors in 14 Universities. Since then the Department has consistently nurtured and invested in the field, with 12 additional appointments and a steady stream of promotions (details below).</p> <p>The British Art Research School (BARS) was founded in 2005 to coordinate the History of Art Department's research activity in British art and to develop its potential for impact. To date BARS has supported 14 academic colleagues and 16 completed doctorates in the post-1650 period, the largest concentration of researchers on British art in the world. BARS encourages research on material that was not taken seriously in the past and defines 'British art' broadly. Its work has extended the field beyond the traditional canon to include a dramatically wider range of periods, artists, media, and issues and to situate British art in global contexts.</p> <p>For example, BARS research has called attention to periods both before and after the traditional focus on the canonical masters from Hogarth to Turner and Constable. The AHRC-funded project <i>Court, Country, City (CCC, #3.1)</i> called attention to the period 1660-1735 and changed the focus from 'great masters' to the sites for artistic production and viewing. At the other end of the chronological spectrum, Corbett's research challenged the traditional perception that British modern art was derivative or conservative, and identified distinctive approaches to social and cultural modernity in his key monographs <i>The Modernity of English Art 1914-1930</i> (1997) and <i>The World in Paint: Modern Art and Visuality in England 1848-1914</i> (2004, #3.2). Corbett led the way for a new generation of scholarship on modern art in Britain. His conference <i>Rethinking Englishness</i> generated two co-edited volumes presenting new work by 26 scholars: <i>English Art 1860-1914: Modern Artists and Identity</i> (2000) explored British artists' engagement with modern life and experience; <i>Geographies of Englishness</i> questioned older views of the 'Englishness' of British landscape art and presented new research on national identity and modernisation (2002, #3.3).</p> <p>BARS has held 14 scholarly conferences, many of which have expanded conceptions of 'British art' beyond England to worldwide contexts. These have led to edited collections and special issues of journals, including <i>Anglo-American: Artistic Exchange between Britain and the USA (Art History, 2011)</i>, <i>British Sculpture: Global Contexts (Visual Culture in Britain, 2010)</i>, and <i>Visual Culture and British India (Visual Culture in Britain, 2011)</i>.</p> <p>BARS research has given serious consideration to media and types of art work neglected or undervalued by scholars in the past. For example, Hallett explored popular and reproductive media in his monograph <i>The Spectacle of Difference: Graphic Satire in the Age of Hogarth</i> (1999) and his research for the Tate exhibition, <i>James Gillray: The Art of Caricature</i> (2001). His co-curated exhibition and catalogue, <i>Hogarth</i> (Tate Britain, 2006, #3.4), brought 'high' and 'low' media together. The AHRC-funded project <i>Displaying Victorian Sculpture (DVS, #3.5)</i>, aimed to return sculpture to centre stage in discussions of nineteenth-century British culture; the project supported</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

a postdoctoral researcher and four PhD students.

Finally, BARS research has called attention to issues previously neglected, and often controversial. For example, Hallett's research on exhibition culture and the print market has directed attention away from the traditional concern with elite culture to emphasise the engagement of a wide spectrum of social classes. Edwards's research has explored questions of queer sexuality previously deemed inadmissible in scholarly research, for example in his key monograph *Alfred Gilbert's Aestheticism* (2006, #3.6) and an edited collection based on a groundbreaking scholarly conference, *Anxious Flirtations: Homoeroticism, Art and Aestheticism in Late-Victorian Britain* (2007, #3.7). His innovative work was rewarded by a £70,000 Philip Leverhulme Prize (2006).

The research was carried out by **David Peters Corbett** (appointed 1994, promoted to Senior Lecturer (SL) 1999, Reader (R) 2001, Professor (P) 2004, left 2010, now Professor, University of East Anglia), **Mark Hallett** (appointed 1994, SL 2001, R 2004, P 2006, left 2012 to become Director of the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art), **Jason Edwards** (appointed 1999, SL 2007, R 2009, P 2012), **Jo Applin** (appointed 2005, SL 2013), **Sarah Turner** (appointed as Teaching Fellow 2008, Lecturer 2010), **Elizabeth Prettejohn** (Professor, appointed 2012), and **Richard Johns** (Lecturer, appointed 2013). Postdoctoral Research and Teaching Fellows associated with BARS have included **Rosie Dias** (2003-04, now Associate Professor, University of Warwick), **Sarah Monks** (2007-09, now Lecturer, University of East Anglia), **Kate Nichols** (2010-11, now Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Cambridge), **Claire Jones** (2010-13), **Richard Stephens** (2009-13), **Katie Tyreman** (2012-15), and **Sam Shaw** (2013, now Postdoctoral Research Associate, Yale Center for British Art). It should be noted that BARS also has research strength in Anglo-Saxon and medieval British art, not covered in this case study.

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

- 3.1 *Court, Country, City: British Art 1660-1735*, AHRC Major Research Grant, £478K, 1/10/09-30/9/12, Principal Investigator Mark Hallett, Co-Investigators (at Tate) Professor Nigel Llewellyn and Dr Martin Myrone [Grant application successful after peer review.]
- 3.2 \* D. Peters Corbett, *The World in Paint: Modern Art and Visuality in England 1848-1914* (Penn State University Press/Manchester University Press, 2004).
- 3.3 \* D. Peters Corbett, F. Russell and Y. Holt, eds, *The Geographies of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past, 1880-1940* (Yale University Press, 2002). [Awarded the Historians of British Art prize for best edited volume; selected as a *Guardian* 'Book of the Year', 2002].
- 3.4 \* M. Hallett and C. Riding, *Hogarth*, exh. cat. (Tate, 2006). [The exhibition also travelled to the Caixa Forum, Barcelona and was the first major monographic exhibition on a British artist to open at the Louvre].
- 3.5 *Displaying Victorian Sculpture*, AHRC Major Research Grant, £436K (£313K allocated to York), 1/10/10-30/9/13, Co-Investigator Jason Edwards, with Principal Investigator Michael Hatt (University of Warwick) [Grant application successful after peer review.]
- 3.6 \* J. Edwards, *Alfred Gilbert's Aestheticism: Gilbert Amongst Whistler, Wilde, Leighton, Pater and Burne-Jones* (Ashgate, 2006).
- 3.7 \* J. Edwards, ed., *Anxious Flirtations: Homoeroticism, Art and Aestheticism in Late-Victorian Britain*, special issue of *Visual Culture in Britain* 8.1 (January 2007).

\* Indicates an output included in the Department's RAE submission (2008), described in the panel response as 'world-leading' in British Art studies. 95% of that submission was graded 2\* or above. Outputs can be supplied on request.

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

BARS aims to enable key cultural institutions to represent the wider and more diverse range of British art, explored in its research, to the audiences of today and the future. To that end we have established partnerships and collaborations with museums and galleries that hold significant collections of British art (#5.1), ranging from our nearest neighbour (York Art Gallery), through the most significant nationals (Tate Britain, Victoria and Albert Museum), to the leading institution abroad (Yale Center for British Art). The direct beneficiaries are professional colleagues in these institutions, with whom we work in close collaboration (so the benefits are mutual and reciprocal), but we also aim at indirect benefits to the growing audiences for British art not only in the UK but throughout the world.

*Co-curatorship of exhibitions and displays:* The Department's large AHRC-funded projects have created opportunities for partners to create new displays that showcase neglected works from

their permanent collections. CCC generated two displays at Tate Britain which brought fresh attention to British art before 1735 by placing it in novel contexts: *Court, Country, City* (2010-11) and *Dead Standing Things* (2011-12, reviewed favourably in the *TLS*, 8/6/12); the displays were open free of charge and well attended by the 556K and 1.5M visitors to Tate Britain during the respective periods (#5.2, 5.3). The DVS project team convened workshops at National Museum Wales, Kelvingrove Art Gallery, and National Museums Liverpool which led curators in each institution to rethink the display and interpretation of their sculpture collections (#5.4). Research for DVS also led to two free displays at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, which encouraged the Library and Archive team there to imagine new ways of displaying and interpreting the collections for the public (#5.5). DVS has also supported the research at the Yale Center for British Art and Tate Britain for a major exhibition on Victorian Sculpture (2014-15). York's research on British art pre-1735 and post-1850 has had a broader and more diffuse impact on curatorial practices in partner galleries, including the selection of works for Tate Britain's new chronological circuit (launched May 2013, #5.3).

*Staff exchanges:* The York Department has formal agreements for staff exchanges with Tate Britain (since 2009) and the V&A (since 2010), which create impact in the form of continuing professional development for both curatorial and academic colleagues (#5.1). Tate colleagues are given the opportunity to teach or co-teach MA modules in the Department. In exchange, York colleagues research Tate artworks to produce 'In Focus' projects for Tate's website (see below). The V&A staff exchange involves colleagues from each institution spending an equivalent period in the other each year, to pursue complementary research on under-studied media such as electrotypes, silver, and ivories (#5.6).

*Generation of funding for partner organisations:* The Department uses its research expertise to strengthen grant applications with direct financial benefit to its partners. For example, CCC was based partly on Hallett's research, but conceived from the start as a collaboration between the Department and Tate Britain. Together with Tate Co-Investigators, Professor Nigel Llewellyn and Dr Martin Myrone, Hallett won an AHRC Major Research Grant (#3.1 above), £101K or 21% of which went to Tate. In other cases we have generated grants to support researchers to work on collections or exhibitions in partner institutions; for example, an AHRC Cultural Engagement Postdoctoral Award (February-April 2013) funded Tyreman's project *The Three Graces*, which calls attention to little-known works by Victorian women artists in V&A collections (#5.7); an internal Postdoctoral Award (May-July 2013) supported Shaw's work with Cartwright Hall, Bradford, on an exhibition on the neglected British modern artist William Rothenstein.

*Co-production of digital resources:* Where appropriate, we help our partners to develop their digital resources and web presence. With partners who are already expert in digital and online resources we cooperate to facilitate dissemination to wider publics including growing worldwide audiences for British art. For example, the Tate staff exchange provided the first two 'In Focus' projects published on Tate's website about particular artworks in Tate's collection. Designed to offer scholarly research to Tate's vast worldwide audiences, these multi-voiced, interdisciplinary projects have brought new knowledge to the national collection and helped to establish new professional practices and formats for online dissemination (#5.8). CCC was supplemented by an additional £23K from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (PMC) to build *The Artworld in Britain 1660-1735*, an open-access database which generated over 25K visits in its first two years (including significant visitor levels from 18 countries outside the UK, #5.9). The 'British Art Blog', run by BARS doctoral students, collects and disseminates comprehensive information on events, exhibitions, conferences, and projects in museum, gallery, or academic contexts involving British art; the Blog generated over 104K visits from its launch in January 2011 to July 2013 (#5.10).

We conceive our partnerships holistically and the ideal is to bring together all of the above kinds of collaboration in projects with significant benefits on both sides. The best example from the reporting period is the exhibition ***William Etty: Art and Controversy***, jointly conceived and co-curated by Mark Hallett and Laura Turner, Curator of Art at York Art Gallery (YAG), which holds the largest public collection of this York-born artist (#5.11). Like other Victorian artists, Etty was held in low esteem for most of the twentieth century. Hallett's research on exhibition cultures, Corbett's research on the terms for modernity in British art, and Edwards's theorisations of gender and sexuality enabled new interpretations of Etty's work that emphasised the controversies surrounding his paintings of the nude at public exhibition. Hallett and Laura Turner won a £43K grant from the

## Impact case study (REF3b)

PMC which enabled YAG to employ a postdoctoral researcher to research the objects in the exhibition and write the catalogue entries; the catalogue also included essays by Edwards and Sarah Turner. In addition, the partnership raised £22K to fund the publication of the catalogue, with grants from the Friends of YAG, the PMC, and The Marc Fitch Fund. The exhibition attracted 115,000 visitors, nearly twice the size of the gallery's average audience, including nearly 50 school parties and more than 1500 children. The exhibition also allowed a regional art gallery to attract attention from the national press, with reviews in *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Independent*, and on *Front Row* (#5.11). To maximise the exhibition's long-term impact, the Department created a permanent online version, hosted on its open-access Research Portal, with innovative features including a 'virtual tour' of the exhibition with 'zoom' technologies, extended commentaries on works of art, and curatorial tasks for students, making this not just a digital archive of an exhibition but also an open-access learning and teaching resource; about half the 1400 visits to the Portal (from 43 countries) to date have also visited the Etty exhibition. The online exhibition will serve as a template for future projects with York Museums Trust to provide digital legacies for collaborative projects and public access to archive materials. The success of the entire exhibition project helped YAG to secure an Art Fund grant of £100,000 to buy objects for a new show, *Flesh*, to be co-curated by Applin; this will carry some of the ideas generated by the Etty exhibition into later periods up to the contemporary. The partners are also planning a series of future exhibitions to raise the profile of other York-born artists: the stained-glass maker William Peckitt, sculptor John Flaxman, and Victorian classicist Albert Moore.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1 Letters of agreement between York's History of Art Department and York Museums Trust, Tate, and Victoria and Albert Museum documenting dates and details of partnerships.
- 5.2 Online exhibition resources documenting Tate displays *Court, Country, City* (<http://york.ac.uk/history-of-art/court-country-city/display/>) and *Dead Standing Things* (<http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/display/focus-dead-standing-things-still-life-1660-1740>).
- 5.3 Statement from Dr Martin Myrone, Lead Curator, Pre-1800 British Art, Tate, corroborating impact of *Court, Country, City*.
- 5.4 Statement from Sandra Penketh, Director of Art Galleries, National Museums Liverpool, corroborating impact on curatorial practice of workshop for *Displaying Victorian Sculpture*.
- 5.5 Statement from Ann Sproat, Librarian, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, corroborating impact on displays and interpretation of *Displaying Victorian Sculpture* project.
- 5.6 Statement from Dr Marjorie Trusted, Senior Curator of Sculpture, and Dr Glenn Adamson, Head of Research, Victoria and Albert Museum, on impact of York/V&A staff exchange.
- 5.7 Web pages documenting funding and outcomes of *Three Graces: Victorian Women, Visual Art and Exchange* (<http://www.york.ac.uk/history-of-art/three-graces/>).
- 5.8 'In Focus' articles by York colleagues Jason Edwards and Sarah Turner (outputs from staff exchange with Tate), [www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/edward-onslow-ford](http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/edward-onslow-ford) and [www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/gaudier-brzeska-wrestlers](http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/gaudier-brzeska-wrestlers); online interview by Dr Jennifer Mundy, Head of Collection Research, Tate, about 'In Focus' project, [www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/blogs/focus-interview-jason-edwards](http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/blogs/focus-interview-jason-edwards).
- 5.9 Visitor statistics and content pages for online database, *The Artworld in Britain 1660-1735*, <http://artworld.york.ac.uk/>.
- 5.10 Visitor statistics and content pages for British Art Research Blog, <http://britishartresearch.wordpress.com/>.
- 5.11 Portfolio documenting impact of exhibition, *William Etty: Art and Controversy*, including corroborative statements from Janet Barnes, Chief Executive, and Laura Turner, Curator of Art, York Museums Trust, press review file, and online exhibition resource on History of Art Department Research Portal, <http://hoaportal.york.ac.uk/hoaportal/etty.jsp>.