

<b>Institution: Liverpool John Moores University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: U0A34 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory</b>
<b>Title of case study: The Artists' City</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>'The Artists' City' project at Liverpool School of Art and Design (LSAD) was designed to strengthen Liverpool's creative communities by supporting emerging and early career artists. The research, recognised and supported by Arts Council England, has benefitted established arts organisations in the city (Bluecoat and FACT) as well as newer organisations (Royal Standard and Metal) in their offer to artists by improving the opportunities for artists to access studio spaces, engage with other artists, discuss their practice, and exhibit their work.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>A common interest of much of the research at LSAD has been to connect the practical activity of art-making to the critical and creative networks in the city via a diverse range of activities including artist-focused critical writing, workshops, events, exhibition programmes and critical reviews of the history of art within the civic life of the city. 'Artists' City' is a project that combines theoretical and historically positioned research to connect these activities. It has identified the main ways by which communities of artists can be planned and supported; and it has developed platforms that extend and promote the activities of emerging artists. The research, led by Prof Juan Cruz (Director of School, joined LJMU in 2008), has been awarded almost £70,000 from Arts Council England since 2011 to develop the environment for artists in Liverpool and encourage new artists to take up residence in the region.</p> <p>It has been frequently claimed that Liverpool is the most significant UK centre for art outside London. Julie Sheldon (Professor of Art History) edited, with the Director of the Bluecoat, Bryan Biggs, <i>Art in a City Revisited</i> published in 2009, the first book to culturally assess this claim, as plans took shape for celebrating European Capital of Culture in 2008. The work examined the infrastructure for visual art in Liverpool, the issues it faced, and how it might develop post-Capital of Culture. Whilst the research was rooted in the local, it also looked outside this context to connect with agendas beyond the city, touching on broader themes such as art's role in individualizing our increasingly homogenised city centres. The volume advanced understanding of, and support for, the role of visual culture in urban renewal, inspiring debate in the local press.</p> <p>A theoretical examination of the ways in which contemporary art practice in the city can be sustainable was conducted by Byrne and Morris in their partnerships with European arts organisations. John Byrne's (Principal Lecturer) <i>Autonomy Project</i> (on-going since 2010) facilitated research into contemporary artists' practices in Liverpool and Europe, staging public events for new and emerging artists, including newspaper publications, seminars, Summer Schools (2010 and 2011) and the Autonomy Symposium in October, 2011 in Eindhoven, where speakers included Jacques Ranciere. Neil Morris (Reader in Printmaking) co-founded <i>Eight Days a Week</i> in 1998, combining forty artists drawn from Liverpool and her twin city of Cologne, to investigate new and original strategies for exhibition and creative dialogue. <i>Eight Days a Week</i> is an initiative that facilitates artists from Liverpool and Koln taking part in unique cultural exchanges through an on-going programme of exhibitions, residencies, films, performances, discussions and publications. Since its beginnings in 1998 <i>Eight Days</i> has organised over 90 projects in Liverpool and Cologne and opens up artists' practices to new audiences and new communities, to generate informed, critical and public debate around contemporary art and culture.</p> <p>Allied to this research has been the work of Artists' City towards developing gallery spaces for the new and emerging artists. Cruz's work for <i>No Longer Empty</i> at Biennial 2010 created an accessible cultural and educational hub for artists and the public to come together to create and experience art. Byrne founded the Site Gallery in 2007, in collaboration with Liverpool Biennial, and</p>

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curated over a dozen shows, around half of which featured locally based artists, offering them their first opportunity to publically show their work. The exhibition programme also connected artists to established artists; for example, *The Martha Rosler Library* (12 April - 14 June 2008) extended opportunities for local artists to engage with an internationally acclaimed artist. Since 2012 exhibition research at LSAD has been conducted as part of the Exhibition Research Centre (ERC), led by Dr Antony Hudek (Collaborative Lecturer with Tate Liverpool, joined LJMU 2012). The ERC's exhibition programme supports established, overlooked and emerging practitioners – whether artists or curators. By involving internationally regarded figures who are rarely seen in the UK, alongside Liverpool-based artists and curators, the ERC exhibition programme is an essential component to the future of Artists' City.

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

1. John Byrne, *The Autonomy Project* (on-going since 2010)  
<http://theautonomyproject.org/>
2. Bryan Biggs & Julie Sheldon (eds) *Art in a City Revisited* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009)
3. Neil Morris, *Eight Days a Week* (on-going since 1998)  
<http://www.eightdaysaweek.org.uk/artistneilmorris.htm>
4. Juan Cruz, *No Longer Empty*, The Liverpool Biennial 2010.
5. John Byrne (co-curated with Paul Domela), *Martha Rosler Library*, Site Gallery, Liverpool School of Art and Design Liverpool: Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art, (12 April - 14 June 2008). Byrne J, Domela P., *Martha Rosler Library*. 978-0953676170 /095367617X e-flux book: <http://www.e-flux.com/projects/library/>

## Grants and Funding Obtained:

2011 Juan Cruz, Arts Council England £9,800  
2013 Juan Cruz, Arts Council England £60,000

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

The research for 'Artists' City' has involved substantial engagement with public-facing organisations on Merseyside. Bluecoat, Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT), Liverpool Biennial, The Royal Standard, Metal and LOOK/13 International Photography Festival are among the organisations that have benefitted from the research. We share a strategic aim of championing the value of cultural and creative capital in and from Liverpool and have developed common strategies and initiatives for the development of 'The Artists' City'. We have collaborated with several partners to improve the environment for artists, for example, by working with the artist-led organisation, The Royal Standard, to provide emerging artists with studio space and connecting them to other organisations in the city. Mike Stubbs (CEO at FACT) characterises 'multiple initiatives and peer to peer relationships' which 'led to industry relevant higher level research and practice for staff and students, continued employment for graduates and public platforms for important debate'. LSAD is, he believes, 'an important plate in the tectonics of the city's artistic and cultural renaissance'. Bryan Biggs, Artistic Director of the Bluecoat, affirms that our activities 'have contributed to a lively contextual environment for local visual arts practitioners'. He points to the exhibition programme at LSAD and the partnerships with the Biennial in hosting exhibitions as key aspects of this

The research has substantially improved the City's exhibition offer. Site Gallery attracted over 28,000 visitors during its operational period (2007-09). *The Martha Rosler Library* (12 April - 14 June 2008) had a public programme of events, including public discussions with the artist, which 60 people attended. Since its inception the ERC has curated four exhibitions, each drawing around 300 visitors, while the ERC website now averages 500 visitors a month. The ERC's seminar series in particular has attracted the attention of the growing national and international community of researchers in exhibition studies. Tate Liverpool's Research Centre has developed, in tandem with

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the ERC, a monthly seminar series across Liverpool aimed at examining the city as host and generator of cultural activity. Elizabeth Murphy, Director of the artist-led organisation, The Royal Standard, affirms that 'the exhibition and talks programme at LJMU [is] a constant point of interest and ... expands research interests for the directors in terms of curatorial approach and for studios holders and their personal practice. The programme also provides the opportunity to access key works which would not have the space to be shown elsewhere in the city.' Additionally, LSAD hosted 'New Contemporaries' at the 2012 Biennial, an exhibition to showcase new and emerging artists. LJMU hosted Biennial Conferences in 2008 and 2010, which featured prominent international curators and welcomed international delegates. In 2012 LJMU hosted two major festival strands: 'City States' funded by international cultural councils, and 'New Contemporaries', showcasing national emerging talent. At the Biennial, LJMU and Shanghai University, in partnership with AICA, launched the John Moores Critics Award, which recognises emerging new talent in critical writing about contemporary art and provides an international platform for emerging critics in both countries to connect with their audiences and arts communities.

The research has helped to create a richer environment for emerging artists. Since 2011 LSAD and Metal, the multi-disciplinary residency space for artists in Liverpool, have worked alongside studio groups to develop a joint programme designed to raise awareness of the artists' led scene in the city. Artists are rewarded for their skill and enterprise through new initiatives. For example, LSAD (supported by an Arts Council grant) collaborated on the development of the 'Liverpool Art Prize' with Metal for artists born or based in the Liverpool city region. Ian Brownbill, Director of Metal affirms that that collaboration has diminished the gap between student emerging artists and the established artist community in the City. Allied to this initiative, LSAD has also developed the John Moores Critics Award (with the University of Shanghai) and the John Moores Painting Prize China.

LSAD research into graduate retention and support for new and emerging creative practitioners has led to a new programme, 'Hunting in Packs', for artists in the first stages of developing their careers, enabling access to facilities which would otherwise be beyond their means and networking them within the intellectual hub of the Artists' City. For example, *Thinking City*, jointly developed by Liverpool Biennial, Tate Liverpool and LSAD, a programme of monthly Artist-led public salons, starting in 2013, where emerging artists and the public can discuss the role art and culture can have in the future of the city and its broader social processes.

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

Artistic Director, The Bluecoat

Director and CEO, FACT

Director, The Royal Standard

Director, Metal