

<p>Institution: Kingston University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 34, Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory</p>
<p>Title of case study: The Victoria & Albert Museum's programme of modern design historical exhibitions and their public dissemination</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>By influencing the ideas underpinning (and the public dissemination programmes relating to) three key modern design historical exhibitions, i.e:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900 (2011) 2. Postmodernism: Style and Subversion 1970-1990 (2011/12) 3. British Design 1948–2012: Innovation in the Modern Age (2012) <p>design historical research undertaken at Kingston University has impacted on the curatorial and dissemination strategies of London's Victoria & Albert Museum</p> <p>The specific contribution of work undertaken at Kingston University has been the recognition, in the above, of the significance, within the broader picture of modern design history, of the interior as a mediator of identity, taste and style. This was made possible by Professor Penny Sparke's contributions to the advisory panels for the three exhibitions; her authorship of essays in two catalogues; and the contribution of Kingston University's Modern Interiors Research Centre (MIRC), to a public symposium linked to the third exhibition.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The work of Kingston University's Modern Interiors Research Centre (MIRC) (which is led by Professor Penny Sparke and whose members include Dr. Fiona Fisher, Dr. Trevor Keeble (until July 2013), Dr. Patricia Lara-Betancourt, Brenda Martin, Professors Charles Rice and Pat Kirkham, and from 2006-12, Professor Anne Massey) is widely recognised as having established the interior, and its relationship with the cultural themes of identity, consumption and taste, as a key area within the design of the modern era. It has been seminal in transforming the discipline of design history from one that focused on isolated objects to one that now acknowledges the importance of the interior and its attendant cultural themes. Under Sparke's intellectual leadership, MIRC has taken a leading international role in developing and promoting research on the modern interior through its annual conferences and publications which have focused, since 2000, on the themes of: interior design and identity; exhibited interiors; gender and consumption; modernity and modernism; professional and amateur interior design practices; the relationship of interiors to the world of fashion and the theatre and the relationship between architectural and interior design practice.</p> <p>Sparke's personal research (she has been employed by Kingston University since 1999) in the field of design history has focused on the design of the modern interior and the conceptions of gender, identity and taste that informed its production, consumption and mediation in Europe and North America from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.</p> <p>In <i>Elsie de Wolfe: The Birth of Modern Interior Decoration</i> (Acanthus Press, 2005) Sparke examines de Wolfe's contribution to the emergence of the modern interior. As a case study of a pioneer interior decorator and an authority on domestic taste the book charts the territory between amateur and professional worlds. It reveals de Wolfe's construction and manipulation of her gendered identity as an arbiter of taste both for an élite clientele and a wider public audience through her highly influential advice writing.</p> <p>These themes were developed at MIRC's 2006 conference: The Professionalisation of Decoration, Design and the Modern Interior, 1870 to the present. The aim of the conference was to reconsider the developing roles of the architect, interior designer and interior decorator in relation both to professional practice and 'amateur' status. The conference led to the publication of a special issue of the <i>Journal of Design History</i> (volume 21, number 1, spring 2008) on the professionalisation of interior design.</p>

In *The Modern Interior* (Reaktion 2008) Sparke argues that the relationship between public and private spaces is 'central to the formation of the modern interior', which, in turn, is integral to the construction of the 'the modern 'self'. This theme was discussed at MIRC's 2005 conference, Modernity, Modernism and the Interior 1870-1970, which set out to expand an understanding of the relationship and possible tensions between the concepts of modernity and modernism as manifested in the design of the interior. The conference led to the publication of *Designing the Modern Interior: from the Victorians to today* (Berg, 2009), co-edited by: Sparke, Massey, Keeble and Martin.

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

1. Sparke, P. *Elsie de Wolfe: The Birth of Modern Interior Decoration* (New York: Acanthus Press, 2005)

Grant awarded to Sparke: "The work of the American interior decorator Elsie Wolfe, 1865 – 1950", AHRC, 9/5/2003 – 30/9/2003, £4,605.

Reviewed: *Journal of Design History*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2006, pp. 173 -176

Interior Design, vol 76, no.10, August 2005, pp. 200-201

Sunday Times, 27 November 2005, p.50

2. Sparke, P. Martin, B. and Keeble, T. (eds.) *The Modern Period Room, The Construction of the Exhibited Interior 1870-1950* (London: Routledge, 2006)

Reviewed: *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 20, no. 2, 2007, pp.175-177

3. Sparke, P. 'Ettore Sottsass, A Modern Italian Designer' in Ronald T. Labaco, ed., *Ettore Sottsass: Architect and Designer* (Merrell, 2006): 11-31. The publication accompanied the first American exhibition on Sottsass (Los Angeles County Museum, March - June 2006)

Reviewed: *Library Journal*, vol 131, no. 8, 1 May 2006, p. 85

4. Sparke, P. *The Modern Interior* (Reaktion Books 2008)

Grant awarded to Sparke: "The modern interior: designing inside modernity", British Academy, 1/1/2008 – 31/5/2008, £3,663.

Reviewed: *The Architect's Journal*, Dec. 11 2008

Interior Design (US), 1 October, 2008

ARLIS News-sheet, issue 197, Jan/Feb 2009

RIBA Journal Jan, 2009

Times Literary Supplement, July 17, 2009

Times Higher Education Supplement, October 23, 2008

Journal of Design History, vol. 22, no. 3, 2009

Technology and Culture, vol. 50, no, 4 Oct 2009, pp 954-5

Wintherthur Portfolio, USA, Summer/Autumn 2008

Choice, vol. 49, no. 9, May 2009

US Edition – University of Chicago Press, 2008

Chinese edition – Chongqing University Press, 2009

Italian Edition – Einaudi, Milan, 2011

5. Sparke, P. Massey, A. Keeble, T. and Martin, B. eds., *Designing the Modern Interior* (London: Berg 2009)

Impact case study (REF3b)

Reviewed: *Journal of Design History*, vol. 22, no. 4, 2009, pp. 431-433

West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture, vol.18, no. 1, 2011, pp.111-114

Design and Culture, vol. 2, no. 3, 2010, pp. 374-375

The Design Journal, vol. 13, no. 3, 2010, pp. 373-377

Winterthur Portfolio, vol. 46, no. 1, 2012, pp.108-109

Selected as a *Choice Outstanding Academic Title* in 2012.

6. Fisher, F. Keeble, T. Lara-Betancourt, P. Martin, B. (eds.) *Performance, Fashion and the Modern Interior*: (London: Berg 2011)

Reviewed: *Interiors: Architecture, Design, Culture* Vol. 4, Issue 1, March 2013

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

As a result of the research outlined above, Sparke was invited to consult on three major exhibitions at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in the period 2008 to 2012. She drew upon this research to contribute to the knowledge of staff in the Research Department of the V&A, and also contributed essays to exhibition catalogues. Researchers within MIRC went on to deliver a public symposium at the V&A based upon the underpinning research. In this way, the research at Kingston University led to the cultural enrichment of three areas of V&A activity: curation, publication and education.

Curation

Sparke promoted a broader engagement with modern design and the modern interior than had informed earlier design V&A exhibitions, which had largely centred on histories of period and style. She contributed to the intellectual framing and content of the three exhibitions.

- *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900* in collaboration with the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. At the V&A, London (2 April 2011 to 17 July 2011); the Musée D'Orsay, Paris as *Beauty, Morals and Voluptuousness in the England of Oscar Wilde* (13 September 2011 to 15 January 2012); the de Young Museum, San Francisco as *The Cult of Beauty: The Victorian Avant-Garde, 1860–1900* (18 February to 17 June 2012). Exhibition attendance at the V&A: 136,000.

Sparke's main contribution was to ensuring that the curatorial approach included domestic advice literature for amateur home decorators, emphasising its role in the process of taste-making and the shaping of late nineteenth century gendered identities.

- *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion, 1970-1990*. At the V&A, London (24 September 2011 to 15 January 2012); MART, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Trento and Rovereto, Trentino, Italy (25 February 2012 to 3 June 2012); the Landesmuseum Zürich (6 July 2012 to 28 October 2012). Exhibition attendance at the V&A: 110,000.

Sparke's contribution is reflected in the curatorial approach to the work of Ettore Sottsass and his consumer-focused approach to the cultural meaning of design. As a result of Sparke's engagement, the exhibition presented Sottsass as a key postmodern designer.

- *British Design 1948–2012: Innovation in the Modern Age*. At the V&A, London (31 March 2012 to 12 August 2012); and touring dates (Shanghai Art Museum, Autumn 2012). Exhibition attendance at the V&A: 136,107

The exhibition was structured around the themes of: Tradition and Modernity, Subversion, Innovation and Creativity. Sparke was responsible for the curatorial emphasis on the role of interior decoration and design, and the taste-making role of life-style retailing. This influence was most notable in the section on Tradition and Modernity, which prioritised the material culture of the home and the role played by designers such as Terence Conran in shaping

consumer lifestyles through the creation of innovative retail environments.

Publication:

1. Sparke 'Furnishing the aesthetic interior: manuals and theories', in Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle Orr, eds, *The Cult Of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900* (London: V&A 2011). Catalogue print run; 5,000 hardback, 8,000 paperback.

Sparke's essay introduced a section of the catalogue containing five essays structured around the V&A's collections and organisational structure: wallpaper, textiles, furniture, ceramics, metalwork. The essay linked to a section of the exhibition that represented domestic advice literature and provided a broad cultural framework within which to consider the material and object-based examinations that followed.

2. Sparke "'At Home with Modernity": The New Domestic Scene', in Christopher Breward and Ghislaine Wood, eds, *British Design From 1948: Innovation In The Modern Age* (London: V&A 2012). Catalogue print run: 11,000.

Sparke's essay in the above catalogue explored the clear hierarchies of taste that allowed 'home-makers to aspire towards the style of the social group immediately above them'; and the socio-cultural consequences of expanded consumption and the democratisation of lifestyles constituted through the activities of progressive retailers such as Terence Conran.

Education:

Spaces and Places: British Design 1948-2012 (11-12 May 2012) at the Sackler Centre, V&A, London, the V&A's centre for public learning, as part of the British Design Season at the V&A. Symposium attendance: 127.

Working with the Research and Education Departments, members of the MIRC developed and delivered a public symposium that extended the exhibition's reach. The structure and content of the symposium were informed by the Centre's intellectual framing and approach to the study of the modern interior in both public and private contexts, most recently reflected in the introductory essays in Fisher et al. (eds) 2011.

The V&A Head of Research wrote of this event:

"The academic community at the university has proved invaluable in developing a discursive context around our exhibition programme, notably in the case of the recent exhibition *British Design 1948-2012*. In addition to playing a key role in the formation of ideas at the project's early stage, Kingston's researchers helped to convene a major public conference on the topic which will result in a peer-reviewed monograph. This is just one example of the way that our museum/university partnership traverses the realms of the scholarly and the populist, with great benefits to both partners and to the public."

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

1. Vice Principal, Creative Industries and Performing Arts, University of Edinburgh (former Head of Research at the V&A): corroborator of Sparke's membership of the three Advisory Boards, her catalogue contributions, and of MIRC's role in the development of the public seminar
2. Director of The Museum of Arts and Design, New York (former Head of Research at the V & A): corroborator of MIRC's contribution to the Museum
3. Curator, Research Department, V & A: corroborator of MIRC's contribution to the Museum
4. Programme Manager, Adults, Students and Creative Industries, V & A Museum: corroborator of MIRC's contribution to the Museum