

Institution: University of Chester

Unit of Assessment: 34: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory

a. Overview

The Department of Art and Design at the University of Chester sits within the broader Faculty of Arts and Media and since 2008 has provided study in Fine Art, Photography and Graphic Design. The Department has an academic staff of fourteen FTE located in a workshop / office and studio complex near to Chester city centre. The academic staff is supported by five technical staff with a wide range of expertise spanning analogue and digital systems of designing and making. The population of the site with expertise and research interests in performing arts, music and media subjects such as journalism, has brought a new dimension to the interdisciplinary ambitions within the Department and across the Faculty. This is illustrated with the successful exhibition of 'VEX', a key work in the Tatton Park Biennial 2012, where photography lecturer **Li** secured a £20,000 commission from the Biennial curators, Daniel Arnaud and Jordan Kaplan. **Li** collaborated with **Summers** from Design and **Waite** in Performing Arts to realise this very successful sculptural outcome: <http://www.tattonparkbiennial.org/detail/4371>.

Department staff have been encouraged and supported in their research interests through funded PhD study and research project funding through the Faculty research centre **CCRAM** (Chester Centre for Research in Arts and Media). The centre reflects and facilitates a broad interdisciplinary / hybridity agenda, taking advantage of the ambitions and skill set available. The research centre has provided the forum for research exchange at Faculty level through regular research symposia and the management of Faculty research funds. Through CCRAM the Department made a successful bid to appoint a Research Fellow in Participatory Practice to enhance the Department's cultural economy agenda and develop links across the University, the city of Chester, nationally and internationally. This development expanded our established research interests in cultural memory and materiality, adding work in augmented reality and participatory practice.

The Department also houses Contemporary Art Space Chester (CASC), curated by **Grant**, which is the only purpose built contemporary visual arts space in the city of Chester. Since 2011 it has exhibited challenging high quality work from emerging and established artists and photographers. Its exhibition policy reflects the research interests of the Department of Art and Design, with the cultural memory thread, for example, being supported by exhibitions that have included the work of Tom Wood, Grayson Perry, Dinos Chapman, George Shaw and David Shrigley. Gallery policy is that two exhibitions each year are derived from Department funded and focussed research activity.

Examples of this policy include 'Digital Sculpture' by Richard Hooper, <http://www.chester.ac.uk/art-design/hooper-gallery>, and Tom Wood's work from the Documentary Photography Archive (DPA) shown as part of the Look 13 Photo Festival, <http://lookphotofestival.com/exhibitions/dpa-work-photographs-of-rainhill-hospital-cammell-laird-shipyard/>.

b. Research strategy

Developing from the Research Assessment Exercise in 2008, the Department provision in fine art was expanded to include graphic design and a more focussed provision in photography. Research in graphic design was less mature and reliant on individual staff interest. To address this, and find common ground across the Department, connections were made between design, cultural economy and participatory practice and this is reflected in the public realm cultural economy research with augmented and virtual reality interests in design. Work in materiality and embodied knowledge further enhanced the interdisciplinary opportunities offered. As a result, the Department research strategy is to:

- build upon existing long standing research in cultural memory and materiality;
- develop participatory practice as an impact/dissemination tactic;
- expand the number of active research staff;
- develop public engagement and contribution to the cultural economy of the city and region.

The means to achieve these objectives is to encourage clusters of research activity to form around cultural memory, materiality and participatory practice. New and existing staff who have not been

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research active are supported to engage with research in these or related areas through PhD study, applications for project funding through CCRAM and presentations to the CCRAM symposia and exhibition at CASC.

Staff recruitment to the Department supports the research strategy. The recruitment of **Li**, **Grennan**, **McGuirk** and, most recently, the photographer **Wood** evidences this approach. Established research staff are tasked to bring new and emerging researchers into research projects to build confidence and expand the range of possibilities. **Li** has developed work with **Summers** and **Waite**. **Grennan** is developing research with **Summers** and **Waite** and supporting **Li** and **Kealy-Morris** with their PhD research. **McGuirk** is supporting **Jackson** in the development of her research. Currently 22.5% of the department staff FTE have successfully completed their PhD programmes and 41% are currently undertaking PhD research study clustered around materiality (**Daly**, **Bristow**, **Kealy-Morris**). **Li** is preparing a PhD by publication submission around his work, which involves aspects of participatory practice, and **Summers** has just submitted his PhD research on aspects of cultural difference in virtual spaces. **Summers** work links to that of **Grennan** and **Li** in relation to the participatory nature of new technology and to the materiality cluster in terms of the immateriality of virtual practice also explored by Hooper. Therefore, the current staff PhD studies are directly related to the clusters in the Department. 50% of these current PhD research programmes are due to complete in 2014. The PhD strategy aims to build research capacity and confidence through the discipline of doctoral research and post-doctoral dissemination.

Quayle's work on Kurt Schwitters is a direct development from his doctoral research and is a model of the strategy around Cultural Memory and the development of capacity from doctoral study. The Department hosted the '*Kurt Schwitters in England and the Art of Appropriation*' conference in 2009, which brought together Schwitters scholars of international standing. This conference developed from **Quayle's** research on Kurt Schwitters' work in Britain and its engagement with exile and cultural legacy. This concern with cultural memory is also explored by **Li's** '*Crescendo*' 2010, funded by OCAT, the state Museum and Art Space of Shenzhen, China, and '*Family Village*' 2010, funded by ArtSway, was an extension of his work on his and his family's exile from China. **Grennan's** '*Memories Materialised*' 2013, a £39,000 Heritage Lottery Funded project, created an online archive of memories and personal experiences of people from a short stretch of Stockport Road in Manchester and uses an innovative model of data presentation. **Grennan's** work bridges the cultural memory, materiality and participatory practice elements of the strategy as the digital innovations in data management move to augmented reality and the engagement with communities and artefacts continues a dialogue with materiality and memory.

Bristow's work explores the materiality of the artisanal, craft techniques and mass material culture as exemplified in her work for '*Z Depth Buffer*' 2011 and '*Transformations*' 2012. The practice and pedagogic challenges in the relationship between a creative dialogue with material and emerging technologies and processes is a key area of research interest also explored by **McGuirk** in '*Drawing and Intellectualism: Contested Paradigms of Knowledge*' and by emergent researchers in the Department, **Daly** and **Kealy-Morris**, whose practice based research explores the materiality of photography and the book (**Daly**) and material engagement and pedagogy in design (**Kealy-Morris**). This area of interest has also provided the support for two PhD students, Townsley and Hooper. Townsley's work explored material appropriation and repetition whilst Hooper's work innovated with the development of computer controlled material manipulation to create sculpture.

The Contemporary Art Space Chester (CASC) exhibition space is both a site for research presentation and supports the Department's strategy for greater engagement with the wider community of Chester. The new Head of Department, **Grant**, manages the CASC space and is also a board member of Chester Performs, a key cultural provider in the city. He has contributed to public art projects developed by Chester Renaissance and is a director of PaperBoat Gallery, a new council funded initiative in Ellesmere Port. **Grennan**, Research Fellow in participatory practice, works closely with Cheshire West and Cheshire Council (CWaC) on emerging cultural projects, particularly on the creative use of lighting in the city. These developments tie in with our material / virtual strategy, as there are increasing opportunities in the context of the heritage concerns in a city such as Chester for augmented reality experiences and wider public participation. The strategy going forward is to continue to develop in this direction. This will allow

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the research activity to coalesce around cultural memory, materiality, the virtual and wider participation.

This ambition will continue to be supported by the research centre, CCRAM (Chester Centre for Research in Arts and Media, which has changed its title and remit since the 2008 RAE to include non practice-based research). A post-doctoral researcher (Dunja Njaradi) was appointed in 2011 to oversee the running of the new centre. Since its inception, CCRAM has run a series of symposia (three each academic year) at which staff present research; each event includes an invited keynote speaker, and PhD students from across the Faculty are encouraged to give papers on their developing research. Students on taught postgraduate programmes are also encouraged to attend the events. In the past year Art and Design staff have presented the following at CCRAM events: **Kealy-Morris**, 'The Artist Book: making as visual method'; **Grennan**, 'Register in the guise of Genre: instrumental adaptation in the early comics of Grennan and Sperandio'; **Dilworth**, 'Following a thread'; **Grennan**, 'The Creative Mind Navigator: towards a virtual walk-through adaptation process archive'; and **Carrick**, 'Itchy and Scratchy, MOMA and DADA'.

CCRAM also administers targeted small grants, open to staff across the Faculty; these provide financial support and teaching relief for staff engaged in research projects with definable outcomes. These grants not only aid established researchers, but also give members of staff at a relatively earlier stage of their career experience in bidding for research grants. At departmental level research is a standing item in departmental meetings and the strategic areas of interest inform staff recruitment and bids for capital funding.

Staff members who have received research funds through this mechanism include:

Quayle: £5,000 for this work on Kurt Schwitters' photographic work; £3,000 for the 'Encounter' Exhibition Portfolio edition; £2,000 for the Tom Wood, Documentary Photography Archive (DPA) project.

Bristow: £2,000 to support her 'Concordance' and 'Cloth and Memory' work.

Summers: £1,000 support for his Spatial Design for Multicultural Online Game Environments research trip to Japan.

Li: £1,000 to support work in China on his 'Folk Songs' research project.

McGuirk: £1,500 for his work with the Nordic Summer University; £1,000 in support of conference presentations in Brussels and Porto.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

As a small department the strategy in staff recruitment has been to establish the interdisciplinary potential of a new staff member's research interests at the point of selection. Staff recruited since 2008 have had an express interest in cultural memory (**Li**), craft and materiality (**McGuirk**), materiality and craft in design pedagogy (**Kealy-Morris**), haptic experience and material dialogue (**Grant**), and memory and participation (**Grennan**).

The recruitment of a Research Fellow in participatory practice (**Grennan**) was an innovative shift driven by the recognised need to project the work of the Department and engage a wider community. Allied with the Reader in Fine Art post held by **Bristow**, the Department is able to offer sound mentoring to new staff and emergent researchers. The research strategy has been centred on supporting staff to undertake PhD research and currently four staff are close to completion and two further staff are in the early stages of their study, whilst two staff have left to take up PhD study opportunities elsewhere. New staff are encouraged to participate in research symposia organised through CCRAM and to bid for research funding through CCRAM and the University Research and Knowledge Transfer Office. Departmentally, staff development funding is also available and generally directed at supporting research. **Daly**, **Kealy-Morris**, **McGuirk**, **Grennan**, **Quayle**, **Bristow**, **Summers**, **Dilworth**, **Jackson** and **Li** have all benefitted from this support. In the past two years Department staff have had an increasing presence in the symposia activity and successfully bid for a significant amount of the available funding to support their peer reviewed proposals. **Bristow**, **Quayle**, **McGuirk**, **Grennan**, **Summers** and **Li** have all been successful.

Research features as a topic in the University's annual Staff Conferences and staff have access to training in PhD supervision. **Bristow**, **Turner**, **Quayle**, **Grennan** and **McGuirk** have undertaken

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this training and currently supervise PhD students. The Research and Knowledge Transfer Office also provide support to staff members developing external bids; both **Quayle** and **Grennan** have benefitted from expert assistance in the developing and costing of bid proposals.

Professor Rachel Cooper and Professor Maureen Wayman OBE were appointed as visiting professors in the Department in 2010. Rachel Cooper is Professor of Design Management & Policy and Director of the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts (LICA). Based in Lancaster University's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Professor Cooper has undertaken several advisory roles to national and international universities, government and non-governmental organisations. Professor Maureen Wayman OBE held the post of Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty of Art and Design at Manchester Metropolitan University for seven years before retiring at the end of September 2009. She has worked with numerous universities and colleges in the UK and mainland Europe as well as with external agencies such as HEFCE and QAA as an external examiner, adviser or reviewer on specialist projects. In recognition of her contribution to local and national higher education she was awarded the OBE in the 2010 New Year Honours List. Staff have had the benefit of advice and the network opportunities offered by these two appointments. Professor Wayman has contributed to the CCRAM symposia and taken a mentoring role with staff in developing their research and development interests. The Department's research work is further supported by staff relationships with: the Practice as Research Consortium (PaRC) initiated through Manchester Metropolitan University; the Grosvenor Gallery; Fiesole Art School in Florence; the Littoral Arts Trust and the Kurt Schwitters in England Research Group; the AHRC Landscape and Environment Project; the creative practice-led research network LAND2; the Royal Society of British Sculptors and the Textile Society.

The Research and Knowledge Transfer Office provide training in using research funding databases, and it publishes regular bulletins on research activity, giving details of training and funding opportunities both within the institution and externally. The University of Chester supports activities promoting equality and diversity. There is a long-established annual University Diversity Festival to which all staff and students are invited. The University has a Disabled Staff Group that has been active since 2007 and provides a safe and supportive environment in which to discuss issues relating to disability. The Human Resources Department monitor regularly for equality issues as part of the recruitment process for staff and funded research students.

Looking forward, the Department will work to develop staff members' research careers through CCRAM and through other initiatives, such as a new MRes programme (supervision of MRes projects will help new staff acquire the skills necessary for PhD supervision). The new programme offers the opportunity to cluster research around a lab strategy, whereby research active staff in Art and Design will lead innovation projects within which research students can apply to take their MRes study. These lab areas will focus on cultural memory, participatory practice, materiality and augmented reality, responding to external as well as University based projects. Current key researchers in these areas will lead the lab projects; for example, **Summers** will develop augmented reality in the context of urban heritage and creative interventions. The Department will seek to strengthen and develop links with researchers and groupings at other institutions, both nationally and internationally. This process is on-going, including:

- the work of **McGuirk**, **Jackson** and the Nordic Summer University network;
- **Grennan's** collaboration with David Skilton on an adaptation of Trollope's 1879 'John Caldigate' as a comic book work and his work with the Guildhall Gallery, London, on the production of an augmented reality experience giving access to the creative thinking of the artist William Logsdail in producing the painting 'The Ninth of November 1888';
- **Grant's** work with Spencer on creative risk at Manchester Metropolitan University; and
- **Summers' work** with Professor Christopher Meigh-Andrews on 'Darwin's Garden an Augmented experience', a collaboration with the University of Central Lancashire and English Heritage.

ii. Research students

Currently **Grant**, **Grennan**, **McGuirk**, **Bristow** and **Quayle** are engaged in the supervision of PhD students registered either in the Department or in other University departments or other institutions. **Quayle**, **Turner**, **McGuirk** and **Bristow** have been external examiners for research degrees at

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other institutions. Jill Townsley and Richard Hooper's PhD studies supervised within the Department were closely related to our research concerns, developing outcomes that explored appropriation and material (Townsley), as well as challenging the craft concerns of sculpture through the use of computer controlled manufacture to create art (Hooper). Townsley and Hooper contributed to the development of the Department's thinking on this direction for research and shared their thinking through the CCRAM symposia. Postgraduate Research (PGR) students are supported in conference presentations and in exhibiting their work.

Students are also well-supported by the University. Training and support for PGR students is a shared responsibility at Chester, between the Graduate School (with responsibility for providing generic training and support) and the subject department, which provides supervision and specialist training and support. PGR students are offered face-to-face training sessions by the Graduate School, supported by a Moodle site providing on-line access to training materials written and contributed by academic staff from across all subjects and faculties. Students experience both a central University induction, and a local induction within the department, so that they have a full understanding of the regulations and services provided by central support departments as well as of the local support staff and facilities in the building where they are studying. All students undertake a skills audit to help them to identify their training needs, and they are welcome to attend taught sessions from within the postgraduate curriculum in Fine Art and Design, as well as seminars and training sessions specifically designed for PGR student needs. Students who will be involved in teaching are expected to undertake specific training to prepare them for this activity, and may, if they wish, undertake modules leading to Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, which provides a good basis for future applications for academic posts.

Research students are supported by a team of at least two approved supervisors, one of whom is designated Director of Studies, and who has supervised at least one student to successful completion of the award. Supervision meetings take place frequently, with at least one meeting per month being recorded with outcomes and targets. Following a probationary period of 6-9 months, student progress is reviewed formally. If the student's registration is confirmed at the probationary review, a termly meeting of the full supervisory team reviews progress with the student subsequently and an Annual Progress Review (chaired by an independent academic staff member) reviews progress against objectives and expectations on an annual basis before the Annual Progress Board meeting. Students must submit a report, give a seminar and attend an interview before their upgrade from MPhil to PhD can be confirmed. There is a similar rigorous process to consider applications to transfer to 'writing up' status. Each faculty has at least one Faculty Postgraduate Tutor who is available to see PGR students by appointment and to resolve any issues or questions they may have. Postgraduate Tutors represent their faculty and its students at the regular Graduate School meetings and also represent the Graduate School as appropriate in their faculty.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Department staff have benefitted from £164,000 of funding for their research activity. This is primarily through individually negotiated commissions and support from the University of Chester.

Name	Project	Funded by	Amount
Grennan	Memories Materialised	Heritage Lottery Fund	£39,447
	Colchester Round	Firstsite, Colchester	£35,000
	Truce Tableaux	A New Direction	£35,000
Li	Crescendo	OCAT State Museum Shenzhen China	£8,000
	Family Village	ArtSway	£5,000
	Vex	Tatton Park Biennial	£20,000
Quayle	Kurt Schwitters in Britain	University of Chester	£5,000
	Tom Wood DPA Exhibition	University of Chester	£2,000

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Other Department staff	Research development	University of Chester	£14,500
Total			£163,947

All staff have individual offices, with full IT provision: they have access to a library with extensive physical and electronic resources, and the Department's library budget is used to support and facilitate staff research as well as to support undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. A recent development has been the purchase of artists' books as part of the library provision to facilitate research in this area where cultural memory, appropriation and materiality come together. Currently this collection contains works by: Righton Press, Impact Press, Ensixteen Editions, Ambeck, Wotadot, Talk Sense Press, Incline Press, Serendipity Press, C2 Collective and Bracketpress. The Department has also funded the purchase of the whole Grennan and Sperandio archive of book works as a research resource. This collection of 42 works represents the collaborative output of this very successful internationally recognised creative duo whose work focuses particularly on participatory practice.

The University Library subscribes to over 1,000 printed journals and more than 13,000 electronic journals which can be accessed online. The Library has approximately 260,000 printed volumes in its collections and books can be borrowed from any of the libraries at the University's different sites. The collections also include 15,000 e-books, which are core academic texts plus access to many other online materials. At the main campus library there is 24/7 access to computers, printing and quiet study space throughout the year and extended access to all collections across all sites is provided during term-time and at peak periods.

Within the Department capital expenditure has been linked to research ambitions and as a result £80,000 has been spent on digital to analogue bridging technologies in material handling, image capture and software. Work in digital manufacture and augmented reality has been supported through this investment with the purchase of a laser cutter, Maker Bot 3D printer and 3D scanner in addition to iPads and augmented reality authoring software. The Department has extensive workshop and studio provision which is available to staff and research students 84 hours per week with excellent technical support for 40 hours per week.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

Cultural memory

In July 2009 **Quayle** organised the international conference *Kurt Schwitters in England and the Art of Appropriation* at the University of Chester. The conference was supported by Research Capability funding provided through CPaRA (University of Chester: Centre for Practice and Research in the Arts – the former name of CCRAM). In March 2011 **Quayle** contributed a paper at the MERZMAN Festival in Manchester as part of the conference *Kurt Schwitters in the North West and the Isle of Man* – participation in this event was funded by Staff Development funding. MERZMAN also embraced independent and community-led, curatorial projects in Manchester and the North West. This project has led to further links with the Sprengel Museum Hanover and, in the summer of 2011, field study and archive visits to US institutions. In 2011 **Quayle** was invited to curate four portfolios of artists involved in the conference and exhibition as a contribution to the e-journal *criticaldictionary.com* edited by David Evans (University of the Arts Bournemouth). This included internationally recognised collagist and theorist, John Stezaker. Stezaker, who exhibited a major retrospective at the Whitechapel Gallery in London in 2011, gave the keynote address at the conference organised by **Quayle** in 2009. The *criticaldictionary.com* portfolios curated by **Quayle** were accompanied by an afterword/essay. **Quayle's** research has led to new research related to Schwitters' internment and the cultural and political legacy of this period in history which led to the integration of primarily German and Austrian exiles and Jewish émigrés in British society and culture and worldwide.

Li's work develops similar themes to that of **Quayle** but in the context of the Chinese diaspora. Works such as *'Crescendo'* 2010 were developed from a three-month international artist residency in Shenzhen, Southern China. *'Crescendo'* was conceived as a collaboration between **Li** and ordinary Chinese citizens, confronting the issue of corruption within the confines of Shenzhen's busy underground metro. It was made possible through an £8000 award from OCAT, state

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museum and art space, Shenzhen, China.

Similarly **Grennan's** work '*Memories Materialised*' is an online archive and free publication comprising exclusively the memories of people with personal experiences of a ½ mile stretch of Stockport Road in Manchester 50 years ago, in 1963. The public website and publication were produced as results of a year-long intergenerational collaborative project with 30 people in Levenshulme, Manchester, including training in oral history techniques. The project was led by **Grennan** and his international collaborator Christopher Sperandio, with a team of staff from Great Places Housing Association. 3000 copies of the free publication were distributed locally in March 2013. An Evaluation Report has been lodged with the Heritage Lottery Fund. This participatory work also developed the technology of the digital archive and the means of accessing data through a virtual environment which links to further work by **Grennan** in augmented reality and the work of **Summers**, whose collaboration with Chris Meigh-Andrews, Emeritus Professor at the University of Central Lancashire, constructs an augmented reality experience of Darwin's Garden.

Materiality

Bristow's textiles network collaborations with Sally Morfill and Lesley Millar have explored the materiality of surfaces and objects as the buffers in our experience of moving through the world. '*Depth Buffer*' 2011, '*Bite-Size*' 2009 and '*Cloth and Memory*' 2013 are all collaborative enterprises, which also expand the departmental research in cultural memory and materiality. **McGuirk's** work with James Elkins and with the Nordic Summer University develops themes of drawing and knowing and material engagement contributing to research in drawing and theory. **Daly** explores the materiality of the book in relation to photography whilst **Grant's** work with Brittain at Manchester Metropolitan University on found materials and appropriation echoes the work of **Quayle** on Schwitters and the work of the Littoral Arts Trust, and **Kealy-Morris's** work on materiality and graphic design education. Townsley's doctoral work on appropriations and repetition also reflect these concerns. An extension of the dialogue on materiality is collaborative work on immateriality through the exploration of augmented reality, such as **Summers** and Meigh-Andrews '*In Darwin's Garden*' project, **Grennan** and Sperandio's '*Memories Materialised*', and Hooper's doctoral research on 21st century sculpture and digital strategies of making.

Participatory practice

A developing and unifying strand in the Department research activity is participatory practice and the collaboration of the academic staff with groups and organisations outside the university. **Grennan** (*Memories Materialised*) and **Li** (*Crescendo*) in particular have explored this area, whilst **Grant**, through his links with Chester Performs (*Up the Wall* and *Rogues Galleries*), has curated participatory events in the City of Chester.

Networking impact

With staff increasingly sharing their research, network opportunities have expanded. **Quayle's** continued relationship with Littoral Arts Trust and the Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool, has created workshop and public lecture opportunities. The Department has a good relationship with the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, with **Jackson** presenting public lectures and **Grant**, **Quayle** and **Turner** curating exhibitions at the museum. **McGuirk's** and **Jackson's** development of the relationship with the Nordic Summer University, <http://www.nsuweb.net/wb/sommar/?action=intro>, is offering a new strand of development that will link to the Performing Arts Department's developing relationship with Sweden and Finland. **McGuirk** has been invited to edit the Summer University's latest anthology, entitled *Artistic Research - Strategies For Embodiment*, Editors: Christine Fentz, Emeline Eudes, Tom McGuirk. **Grant** is a Director of the Paperboat Gallery in Ellesmere Port and contributes to the Cheshire West and Chester Council's (CWaC) cultural development strategy through individual public realm projects and board membership of Chester Performs. **Grennan** is also working with CWaC on cultural intervention projects.

Quayle, **Turner**, **McGuirk** and **Bristow** have been external examiners for research degree submissions at MMU, University of Portsmouth, University of Lincoln, LJMU, University of Staffordshire and Anglia Ruskin University.