

Institution: University Of Chester
Unit of Assessment: 34: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The Department of Art and Design at the University of Chester 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 Department has endeavoured to enhance the cultural infrastructure of the city through the sharing of expertise and the promotion of events and interventions that have engaged a non-academic public. This activity has ranged from exhibition curation and public lectures at the Grosvenor Museum (Turner, Jackson, Quayle, Dilworth and Grant), curation of the exhibition of the Methodist Modern Art collection (a not well known but significant collection of 20th century and contemporary Christian art) at the Wesley Church Centre Chester as part of its bicentennial celebrations (Grant), cultural infrastructure development as part of Chester Renaissance and Chester Performs (Summers, Moore and Grant), a conference on Kurt Schwitters (Quayle), and participatory practice development with Cheshire West and Chester Council (Grennan). The Department has also made facilities and expertise available to artists in the region through its Access Resources in Art and Design (ARIAD) which was allied to the AA2A (Artists Access to Art Schools) scheme that helps artists and designers in the area to realise some of their ambitions through access to expertise and facilities in the Art and Design Department. 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 key 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/.</p> <p>Whilst this is a local and regionalised approach, staff have also engaged with non academic audiences at a national and international level. For example, Quayle's work with the Littoral Trust in promoting and preserving the creative legacy of Kurt Schwitters' work in England, and Li's work 'VEX' at the Tatton Park Biennial, http://www.tattonparkbiennial.org/detail/4371/, and 'Crescendo' in Shenzhen, China (website archived to: http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20121009125849/http://www.artsway.org.uk/programme/artsway-associates/visit-the-artsway-associates/dinu-li/). Grennan, Research Fellow in participatory practice, was appointed to the Department in 2012 to further this strategy and, together with his creative partner, Christopher Sperendio, has a long established portfolio of public impact projects – most recently the 'Memories Materialised' project in Manchester, www.memoriesmaterialised.com. This work has developed from and directly relates to the research interests of the Department; in particular: cultural memory, exploiting the work of Quayle, Wood, Grennan and Li; participatory practice in the context of Grennan, Li and Grant; and dialogues with materiality (Bristow, Summers, Moore and Hooper).</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Cultural memory and its relationship with materiality has been a key concept in the research developed within the Department. Research in this area has been pursued by Quayle and Bristow since 2005 and was identified as the platform for future departmental research following the 2008 RAE submission. Building upon this the Department's approach to impact is to engage with and develop cultural participation within the City of Chester and North West region. To pursue this agenda the recruitment of Grennan, Li and Wood has strengthened our research in documentary and participatory practice, whilst the appointment of McGuirk has contributed to the theorisation of materiality. Support for Summers' doctoral research in cultural difference in virtual spaces and his work on augmented reality has opened up new and related opportunities for virtual participation and public engagement with virtual data.</p> <p>Exhibition and public events are an important part of the Department's approach to impact. Staff</p>

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research has informed the curation of exhibitions at the Grosvenor Museum Chester (**Turner, Jackson, Quayle and Grant**) and Whitworth Art Gallery Manchester (**Bristow**), whilst **Li**'s collaboration with **Summers** and **Waite** in the production of 'VEX' at the Tatton Park Biennial met with great public acclaim. **Grant** is a member of the board of Chester Performs, a key producing organisation in the city and has contributed to contemporary art intervention projects such as 'Up the Wall' 2011 and 2012 and 'Rogues Galleries' 2013, <http://www.roguesgalleries.co.uk/>. He has advised Chester Renaissance, Chester's commercial redevelopment agency, on cultural projects within the city and is a director of the Paperboat Gallery in Ellesmere Port, a community culture initiative. **Grant** has curated and advised the congregation of the Wesley Church Centre on the exhibition of the Methodist Modern Art Collection, <http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/artcollection/image8.htm>.

Within the University of Chester, impact is rewarded through being one of the criteria considered explicitly in applications for promotion to Professor or Reader. The annual Performance and Development Review (PDR) process also explores impact both in terms of opportunities for commercialisation of research, and public engagement activities and opportunities. The University's Research and Knowledge Transfer Office monitors all funded projects closely, and one aspect of this monitoring is a report on impact activities. Where appropriate, this can lead to a cross-referral to the University's Knowledge Transfer grant schemes which can pump-prime commercialisation of research outcomes. **Quayle, Bristow, Li, Grennan, McGuirk, Summers** and **Daly** have all benefitted from this form of funding.

c. Strategy and plans

Strategy:

The Department's impact strategy has been driven by the recognition of the contribution the Department of Art and Design can make to the concept of cultural economy and in particular to the development of visual culture initiatives within the city of Chester and North West region. This has been explored by contributions to organisations such as Chester Performs, Chester Renaissance, the Grosvenor Museum, Chester Cathedral, the Littoral Arts Trust, Great Places Housing Association Manchester, the Wesley Church Centre and Cheshire West and Chester Council, as well as providing a contemporary visual art gallery in Contemporary Art Space Chester (CASC) and public access to resources and expertise through the Access Resources in Art and Design (ARIAD) scheme.

Li's appointment offered a research bridge from work in cultural memory to participatory practice and the recognition of these possibilities resulted in the recruitment of **Grennan** as a Research Fellow, whose projects such as '*Memories Materialised*' contain elements of the whole Department focus in cultural memory, a dialogue with the nature of materiality, public participation and the exploitation of new technology environments. '*Memories Materialised*' developed a new model of data collection, which provided the basis for presentation of an online environment in which a schematic map, a searchable location archive and a virtual walk-through present representations of the subjects' recollections. This interaction between cultural memory, participation with a wide audience group and the construction of a virtual space where this material can be explored is an excellent example of the emerging possibilities in which the Department is developing resource. The approach to impact is supported strategically through the annual PDR process, as well as through the allocation of staff development funding, capital spending and research grants.

Plans:

Participatory practice will continue to be a key area of research development and a primary opportunity to contribute to the cultural development of the wider community. Emerging research from collaboration between **Grennan** (Art and Design) and **Waite** (Performing Arts) points to a successful cross faculty contribution. **Li**'s 'VEX' artwork is a successful example of this cross departmental and public realm initiative.

The Department plans to be a significant contributor to cultural economy development planning, in particular the concept of the 'Cultural Offer' as an attraction to inward investment. **Grennan**'s participatory practice role will further enhance this relationship and he is currently working with Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC) on projects with this focus. In particular, the use of lighting and projection in the context of heritage spaces is currently being explored collaboratively

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with the Council. **Quayle's** work with the Littoral Arts Trust will continue to develop public understanding of the Schwitters legacy in Cumbria and, in particular, the development of the site of Schwitters' Mertz Barn work in Elterwater. The opportunities afforded by augmented reality, as researched by **Summers** and **Moore**, and their application as non-destructive interventions in the context of heritage sites (such as 'Rogues Galleries' and the 'In Darwin's Garden' project), links directly to **Grennan's** participatory practice work internationally with Sperandio and locally with the collaboration with CWaC. This is regarded as a very fruitful emerging research area that will be further supported through the development of a Masters by research (MRes) strategy linked to a Cultural Innovation Lab located in the Department of Art and Design. The innovation lab will recruit research students to work with specific academic researchers on projects driven by stakeholders outside the University. Re-animating urban spaces through projection, light and augmented reality is currently in development and builds upon the work of **Li**, **Summers** and **Grennan**.

The continued research around contemporary attitudes to material and material manipulation (**Bristow**, **McGuirk**, **Daly**, **Kealy-Morris** and **Grant**), appropriation (**Quayle**, **Grant**), and virtual material and digital craft (**Summers**, **Moore** and **Carrick**) will be enhanced through collaboration with the Computer Science and Information Systems Department and the new Faculty of Science and Engineering and shared with a wider public through the Access Resources in Art and Design (ARIAD) scheme. Members of organisations such as Cheshire Artists Network (CAN) already benefit from this strategy.

The recruitment of **McGuirk** to the Department has also brought a link to the Nordic Summer University initiative, establishing a link with Sweden and Denmark, <http://www.nsuweb.net/wb/sommar/?action=intro>. This link complements **Jackson's** links to Norway and her work on Nordic light in painting, and both **McGuirk** and **Jackson** have contributed to the Summer University since 2011. The Performing Arts Department have established links with Sweden and Finland; therefore it is clear that there is an opportunity to develop a cross faculty Nordic research group. **McGuirk's** work in particular, although centred on drawing and the body, contributes to the performance area of work of the Nordic Summer University. **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.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two case studies cited are selected for their relationship to the three strands of research activity in the Department and the projects' impact beyond the academy.

Grennan's 'Memories Materialised' involved innovation in the collection of cultural memory of a particular site and engaged with a non academic audience with the purpose of establishing a more cohesive community. The innovation continued with the development of the virtual means of materialising these memories and the linking of memory with real and virtual space. This latter aspect of the work links to **Summers'** work on augmented reality and the 'In Darwin's Garden' project. The research will be further developed through collaboration between **Grennan** and **Summers** on two further projects exploiting **Grennan's** approach to data organisation and **Summers'** work in augmented reality presentation.

Li's 'Crescendo' work developed from his 'The Mother of All Journeys', published in 2007 – a research project about the memories of time and place from a particular individual's point of view and the implication this may have on personal and political contexts as well as the local and the global. In his case, the cultural memory aspect related to his relationship with China. This aspect of **Li's** work connected directly with departmental interests in memory and exile (**Quayle**) and memory and material (**Bristow** and **Daly**) and, of course, the issues of memory and archive explored by **Grennan**. The participatory practice element in the relationship with the Chinese villagers has a strong resonance with the work of **Grennan**, whilst the delivery technology exploits the digital to broaden the opportunities for dissemination. The work gave a particular group a voice and also contributes to the emerging dialogue about change in China and its impact upon the world. **Li's** work has continued with departmental funding for his 'Folk Songs' project, which works with karaoke singers born in China in 1949, the so called 'Golden Generation', who now sing to karaoke machines in the 'People's Parks'. This photographic work is being shown at the PhotoEspaña13 festival.