

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: University of Ulster 10007807</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 34 Art and Design, History, Practice and Theory</p>
<p>Title of case study: Photography and the representation of conflict</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Wylie and Seawright’s research extends longstanding work in the field of art and conflict at Ulster. Their photographic work has enhanced public and national understanding of conflicts in which the United Kingdom has been directly involved. Much of this research extends conventional visual responses to conflict by mainstream media agencies and publications, expanding the field by enhancing the long-term documentation of conflict through the production of artworks. Using contemporary art-based contextual and methodological strategies of production and dissemination, the research has provided new material through which contemporary and historic conflict can be commemorated and interpreted in international museum collections, publications and exhibitions.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Researchers at Ulster have made far reaching contributions to culture and scholarship through creative research in the field of contemporary art and conflict for over 2 decades including MacLennan, Seawright, Doherty, McGonagle, Wylie. Earlier research in this area included performance work (MacLennan), curator research (McGonagle) and the work of ‘Interface’ Research Centre which focussed significantly on art and contested space. Seawright and Dohertys’ photographic work from the early 1990’s is widely acknowledged as leading the field in rethinking the representation of conflict in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>This case study specifically concerns impact arising from photographic art and the representation of conflict. Seawright’s monograph <i>Inside Information</i> accompanied a major one person exhibition at the Photographers Gallery in London (1995) that brought together three bodies of work on the troubles in Northern Ireland, produced when he was first a Lecturer in Photography at Ulster between 1991 – 1994. Through inclusion of this work in major exhibitions including the Shanghai Art Museum, Millennium Monument Museum Beijing, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, The British Art Show 5, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb and How We Are – Major survey exhibition/publication of British Photography, Tate Britain, the concept of conflict documentation expanded. These early works have been purchased for numerous national and international collections The significance of that research led to Seawright being selected by the Imperial War Museum for the War Artist Commission in Afghanistan (2002), subsequently published by IWM and the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Subsequent research produced photographic exhibitions and monographs on post-colonial Africa <i>Invisible Cities</i> (2007), <i>UXB</i> (2008) landscape photographs on the sites of buried but unexploded WWII bombs in Northern Italy and <i>Conflicting Account</i> (2009) a visual analysis of the conflicting use of language by the two communities in constructing accounts of the troubles. <i>Volunteer</i> (2011) extends that visual vocabulary interrogating recent conflicts through the landscape of military recruitment offices in the USA. Ulster built upon persistent research in this area by establishing an Art, Conflict and Society research cluster following Seawright’s appointment as Professor of Photography in January 2007.</p>

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Donovan Wylie joined this research cluster in 2009, he is a member of the international photographic collective, Magnum Photos. Shortly afterwards he produced the two volume edition *Maze*, commissioned by the Archive of Modern Conflict, London, published by Steidl International; shortlisted for the 2010 Deutsche Borse Photography Prize; exhibited at the Photographers Gallery London, Paris and Berlin. Wylie was the only photographer granted official and unlimited access to the Maze Prison site, when the demolition of the prison began, symbolizing the end of the conflict in 2007. He systematically documented the fabric and physical structure of the prison, exploring how architecture is utilized as a form of control. *Scrapbook*, co-authored by Timothy Pruce, was published in 2009 (Steidl). The culmination of several years of archival research it combines vernacular photography, newspaper cuttings and artefacts, from the *Troubles* in Northern Ireland, where the personal is mixed with the public, and the private with the collective to create an imagined archive that emphasises highly subjective personal constructions of history. *Outposts / Kandahar Province* was commissioned by the Imperial War Museum in London and supported by the National Media Museum Fellowship in Photography. The photographs of *Forward Operating Bases* constructed in the Kandahar Province of Afghanistan constitute a unique historical representation of the conflict.

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

Seawright, P (1995) *Inside Information*, Photographers Galleries, London.
Collection of 3 bodies of work from Northern Ireland produced and first exhibited 1992-94
 Wylie, D (2009) *Maze* Steidl, Göttingen
2 Volume case bound publication providing a unique documentation of the evacuation of the infamous H- blocks and their and demolition
 Wylie, D (2009) *Scrapbook*, Steidl, Göttingen
 Wylie, D. (2011) *Outposts: Kandahar Province*, Steidl, Göttingen
 Wylie, Fox, Ristelheuber and Leonard (2010) Duetsch Borse Photography Award, Photographers Gallery London.
 Seawright, P (2013) *Volunteer Artist Photo Books*, Dublin/ New York

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

Wylie's recent research has focused on the architecture of conflict. Wylie was the only photographer granted official and unlimited access to the Maze Prison site during its demolition, resulting in the book *Maze II* (2009). This was made available to a public audience of a quarter of million people, with over one hundred thousand visiting the exhibition at The Photographers Gallery London, and extensive coverage in national and international press, including The Daily Telegraph Magazine, The Independent, The Guardian and The Observer, and further exhibitions in Frankfurter Kunstverein e.V. Frankfurt and Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal. His additional publication, *Scrapbook*, a project where the research investigates a personal approach to diary-making in the context of historical record, subverting conventional forms of media representations through the re-structuring of media narratives against personal experiences, received similar public exposure and is cited as an important document within the context of Irish History.

Wylie's ongoing research into the architecture of conflict resulted in 2011 his book *Outposts*, which was a result of negotiations with NATO and subsequent visits to the remote outposts and forward operating bases in Southern Afghanistan. The work has been exhibited at the National Media Museum in Bradford, Imperial War Museum, London, Royal Ontario Museum, and

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included in the exhibition *Topography of War* at Le Bal gallery in Paris 2011 (catalogue). The resulting publication of his photographs constitutes a unique public record of these ephemeral, military and otherwise inaccessible military sites. An important further aspect of dissemination has been the serialisation and publication in mainstream media sources in national and international press including a six-page feature in the *Financial Times Magazine* and reviews/features in *The Daily Telegraph*, *Time Magazine*, and *BBC News* online.

The continued impact of Seawright's earlier work at Ulster takes various forms. Many of the works cited are in national and international museum collections – a complete body of early work from *Inside Information* was purchased for the permanent collection of the Imperial War Museum in 2012. This and later works in their collection (*Hidden* 2002 and *Volunteer* 2009) provide an alternative narrative of contemporary conflict. Associated audio and visual material is also held in the IWM archive and is available for educational purposes. Amnesty International produced an education pack for schools in 2009 containing Seawright's Belfast works. Subsequently they invited him to discuss his research on conflict with 90 Irish school teachers. The workshop was hosted by the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 2010 and led by Seawright. It enabled secondary level teachers to use art practice as a way to open a dialogue with teenagers about war and human rights. The keynote lecture was published by Amnesty as a DVD for teachers in 2011. Impact upon public understanding is demonstrated the featuring of Seawright as one of three photographers in the BBC Documentary *War Photography*, broadcast four times on BBC2 May, June, July and Sept 2008. *Volunteer* was discussed on British Forces Radio and broadcast to troops worldwide (2011). *Conflicting Account* and *Volunteer* were featured in interviews on BBC Radio Ulster Arts Extra (2009) and (2011), and BBC1 Festival Nights (2010). RTE Television's *The View* featured *Volunteer* and it was reviewed on RTE radio and featured in an article by Aidan Dunne in the *Irish Times* (2011) and discussed on BBC Breakfast (2013). Key works were included in major group exhibitions, often drawn from institution collections e.g.: *Fall Out – War and Conflict* in the British Council Art Collection, Whitechapel 2010, *How We Are – Photographing Britain*, Tate Britain 2007/8, *Italian atlas: portrait of a changing Italy*, MAXXI Rome (2008) *Beautiful Suffering - Photography and the Traffic of Pain*, Williams Museum Boston Mass, *Can Art Save Us?*, Sheffield Museum of Art (2009), *The Troubles Archive* OBG/Arts Council of N.Ireland (2009) *The Sublime Image of Destruction* Brighton Biennale (2009) *30 Years of Photography in N.Ireland* MAC Belfast (2013) *Catalyst: Art and War* Imperial War Museum North (2013) and discussed in the Tate Papers article; Moriarty, C & Weight, A *The Legacy of Interaction: Artists at the Imperial War Museum 1981–2007*, Tate Papers (2007)

Wylie and Seawright have made public the research process and contributed to public discourse through numerous presentations and public events reaching audiences from the visual arts, military, human rights, law, charities and NGOs. Public discussions and presentations include: *First Site: Queen and Country* public lecture to an audience of Military personnel at Headgate Theatre Colchester (2009) *Crucial Exposure, Photographing Afghanistan*, Imperial War Museum. London (2012); *Photography, Nature, and Human Rights*, Yale School of Law (2012); *Architecture of Conflict* Yale Art Gallery (2011); *Between Architecture of War and Military Urbanism*. Tallin, Estonia. (2013). *Intersections of Photojournalism and Art*. Harry Ransom Centre. Texas (2013) *30 Years of Art at Conflict in N.Ireland* MAC Belfast public discussion (2013).

Works purchased for key public collections are evidence of how the work is regarded as a visual legacy of conflict representation and include: The UK Govt. Art Collection, The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Ulster Museum, Portland Art Museum, Imperial War Museum, Arts Council Collection, British Council, National Museum of Wales, Archive of Modern Conflict. London;

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National Media Museum, Bradford; Imperial War Museum, London; Whitworth Gallery, Manchester; Harry Ransom Centre, Austin, Texas; Museum of Contemporary Art MAXXI Rome.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

The following are in the public domain- the citations recognise the innovation and impact.

1. Letter from **Head Curator of Photography Imperial War Museum London.**
2. Beyfus, Drusilla '**Donovan Wylie: Deutsche Börse Photography Prize 2010**' The Daily Telegraph Magazine Feature <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/photography/6988852/Donovan-Wylie-Deutsche-Borse-Photography-Prize-2010.html>
- 3 **Coomes** , Phil '**The Landsape of War**' 27 September 2011, BBC News. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-15059179>
4. Rawlings, Nate '**Capturing the Architecture of War Before It's Gone**' Magazine Thursday October 13 2011. <http://lightbox.time.com/2011/10/13/capturing-the-buildings-of-war-before-theyre-gone/>
5. Seawright, Paul '**War Photography**'. BBC Two Duration 30 Minutes. Broadcast Wed 17 Sep 2008 21:30 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00bv2fz>
6. Letter from **Keeper of Art Imperial War Museum, London.**
7. Letter from **Curator of Photographs National Media Museum.**
8. Letter **Head of Education Irish Museum of Modern Art.**
9. Wylie Donovan, '**Outposts**', Financial Times Magazine, September 16, 2011. <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/a3c5a2fe-de75-11e0-a2c0-00144feabdc0.html>
10. Letter from **Head of Art National Museums and Galleries Northern Ireland, Ulster Museum.**