

<b>Institution: University of Warwick</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 30 History</b>
<b>Title of case study: Material Culture, Display and Global Narratives</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)          Warwick's Global History and Culture Centre (GHCC) is internationally renowned for its ground-breaking research into the study of globalisation and global material culture. The GHCC has established unique collaborative partnerships with leading heritage institutions in the UK and overseas, which facilitate sustained exchanges of knowledge and expertise between historians and curators. This has enabled new approaches and methodologies in global history to be utilised in the culture sector, leading to marked changes in practices of interpretation and display of material objects in museums. In addition, sustained dialogue between Warwick scholars and the art world has enriched the tools and analytical skills art consultants draw upon in interpreting objects and collections, enhancing their commercial value.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)          Globalisation has created the need for cultural and educational institutions to situate their activities in new contexts that are global in scope. Led by founding Director Professor Maxine Berg (1978-present), GHCC research has introduced new perspectives on material life and economic development, and the relationship between consumption and production. This research has revealed the early modern period as a time of dynamic connections and that material culture played a central role in forging enduring, transformative global exchanges.</p> <p>Building on existing research in global history and material culture in Asia and Europe, Berg's seminal article 'In Pursuit of Luxury' (2004) reshaped the field, challenging the idea of the cross-cultural encounter as the paradigm for East-West relations. She demonstrated that importation of material goods from the East was key to the development of European, and especially British, consumer markets and production technologies. Using case studies of porcelain, textiles and lacquer to demonstrate the transfer of knowledge and manufacturing technologies from Asia to Europe, Berg showed the connection between global, luxury, European consumerism and industrialisation. She challenged the idea of a linear narrative of 'import-substitution industrialisation' and of western exceptionalism as the origins of industrialisation, and introduced 'luxury' and 'pleasure' as the missing links in conventional constructs of the industrial revolution.</p> <p>The role of knowledge transfer in processes of industrialisation, production and consumption is further developed in Professor Giorgio Riello's (2007-present) innovative research on the role of Indian cotton textiles in global economic development. In 'Asian Knowledge' (2010) Riello demonstrated that from the early eighteenth century European knowledge and practices of textile printing differed markedly from their Asian counterparts. The transfer of codified and tacit 'inter-continental' knowledge expanded Europe's 'epistemic base' of the productive process and enabled the development of European centres of calico printing. In <i>Cotton</i> (2013) Riello further argued that from 1750 Europe's path to cultural development and economic growth was led by this one commodity. By the early nineteenth century cotton textiles had reconfigured production and trading relationships between Europe, India, China and the Ottoman Empire.</p> <p>Dr Anne Gerritsen's (2001-present) work on Jingdezhen porcelain demonstrates both the impact of production for global markets on local society and the transformations that resulted when Chinese porcelain became embedded within different cultural contexts in the Middle East, Africa and Europe. Her research reveals that Jingdezhen was 'global': the export of material culture connected it to a worldwide network of economic relations and encouraged Europeans to travel to China with the specific purpose of understanding the technologies of porcelain manufacture.</p> <p>Professor Margot Finn's (2000-12) research focuses on the intersections between social, legal, economic and colonial/imperial experience in Britain during the 'very long' nineteenth century. Her project 'The East India Company at Home 1757-1857' examines the domestic and imperial routes whereby Asian luxury goods entered the homes of Britain's governing elite in the Georgian period.</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

She argues that propertied families associated with the East India Company used their privileged access to Asian trade, finance and material objects to fund their acquisition of country houses, which underpinned new power bases in Britain. This research reveals the emergence of a 'global' material aesthetic in Georgian and Victorian Britain.

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

Berg, M., 'In Pursuit of Luxury: Global Origins of British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present*, 182:1 (2004), 85-142.

Finn, M., 'Anglo-Indian Lives in the Later Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 33:1 (2010), 49-65.

Gerritsen, A., 'Fragments of a Global Past: Ceramics Manufacture in Song-Yuan-Ming Jingdezhen', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 52:1 (2009), 117-152.

[REF2]

Gerritsen, A., 'Global Design in Jingdezhen: Local Production and Global Connections', in G. Riello, G. Adamson and S. Teasley (eds), *Global Design History* (Routledge, 2011), 25-33.

Riello, G., *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[REF2]

Riello, G., 'Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of Global History*, 5:1 (2010), 1-28. [REF2]

#### Evidence of Quality:

All articles are peer reviewed. *Cotton* was described as 'a remarkable volume full of insight and originality, particularly in its highly ambitious but generally successful inter-disciplinary approaches ... the book will be of interest to a readership well beyond the audience for world economic history, including cultural and social history, the histories of art, design, fashion, and of course, textiles themselves' *Reviews in History*, review no. 1436 (20.06.13).

#### Research Awards:

##### Maxine Berg

Guggenheim Fellowship, Guggenheim (John Simon) Memorial Foundation, 'Manufacturing the Orient: Global Origins of British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century', October 2003-September 2004, £22,941.

AHRC Research Networking Grant, 'Global Arts: East Meets West. Creativity and Cultural Interchange in the Early Modern World', September 2006-August 2008, £24,501.

##### Margot Finn

ESRC Research Grant, 'Colonial Possessions: Personal Property and Social Identity in British India', October 2004-December 2005, £46,816.

Leverhulme Trust Research Project Grant, 'East India Company at Home, 1757-1857', September 2011-August 2014, £220,860.

##### Anne Gerritsen

AHRC Research Grant (Early Career), 'Global Jingdezhen: Local Manufacturers and Early Modern Global Connections', October 2008-September 2010, £168,923.

##### Giorgio Riello

Pasold Research Fund, 'Global Culture of Indian Textiles', January-August 2007, £1,100

Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship, 'Global Cotton: Why an Asian Fibre Made Europe Rich', May 2011-December 2011, £35,548.

Philip Leverhulme Prize: Early Modern Global History, November 2011-October 2014, £70,000.

AHRC Research Networking Grant, 'Global Commodities: The Material Culture of Early Modern Connections, 1400-1800', January 2011-December 2012, £36,709.

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

Since its establishment in 2006 the GHCC has developed close partnerships with museum and heritage organisations around the world, informing and influencing curatorial practices.

Collaboration with curatorial staff has provided opportunities to enrich and broaden their knowledge of and engagement with global narratives in the interpretation, and approaches to curation and display of material objects. More specifically, the GHCC's research introduced the concepts of global exchange, commodities and divergence between Asia and Europe into the interpretation and display of objects, offering new methodologies and knowledge that shaped the design and content of refurbished galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum and Ashmolean Museum and an exhibition at Bath's Museum of Asian Art. Collaboration with art world professionals has similarly

extended their knowledge base and interpretative skills, and had a direct economic impact in building the value of material objects.

Following the success of the AHRC funded research network 'Global Arts' (2007-9), Riello and Gerritsen established the 'Global Commodities Network' in 2010. These networks facilitated a series of international workshops and sustained dialogue with leading national and international museums, including the V&A and Ashmolean. Our research influenced the methodologies and approaches employed in the refurbishment and creation of new galleries displaying global material cultures. In particular, the research fed into the Ashmolean's development of the 'East meets West' galleries and a change in the museum's approach to interpretation. The museum's textile curator has emphasised that the input of GHCC scholars extended the ideas of the gallery team about global material cultures, specifically the role of material objects in establishing and developing global connections, which 'became historically grounded from the work of Maxine Berg and other Warwick colleagues'. Riello's scholarship on cotton and Berg's interpretation of Asian products enabled 'the material, the objects and the material culture to be represented and analysed with a historical perspective'. 'Articulating and hearing others [global scholars] articulate' the role of material objects in new narratives of global history helped the gallery team 'become more precise' in contextualising the 'objects in such a way that makes historical sense' to the public.

In 2009 Riello contributed to the refurbishment of the new European galleries at the V&A. The museum's senior textile curator acknowledged that Riello's research 'played a crucial role in the initial concept and proposal presented to the museum's senior management [FuturePlan II Steering Group] and informed the curatorial approach to (re)interpretation'. As a result the new galleries adopted a chronological approach that opens 'up the history of making and using objects in a way that reflects ... Gerritsen's work on the "global" and the "local" and Berg's scholarship on the pursuit of luxury and pleasure'. The collaboration encouraged the V&A to emphasise global connections in the selection and interpretation of objects; this has led to the inclusion of a small display on Spain and South America and revisions to the Catholic Church display, which now exhibits objects from Asia and South America alongside those of Europe. Work with GHCC scholars demonstrated to the V&A 'the value of building understanding and trust between academic researchers and museum curators' and the benefit of academic research in 'providing intellectual support for major gallery projects'. The Head of Research at the V&A described the collaboration as 'an ideal match between a global museum and Warwick, moving into the field of global history in a very innovative way that is particularly anchored in material culture'. Referring to the opening of the ceramics gallery in 2009, he said its 'whole premise ... is that ceramics is a medium of global exchange. Without the conversations we have had with Warwick partners and reading the work of Gerritsen, Berg and Riello it would have been impossible to have done that gallery in that way ... the methodology as well as the specific knowledge that has been developed at Warwick was a blueprint for the ceramics galleries'.

Gerritsen used her research on the production and trade of porcelain from Jingdezhen to inform interpretation and display in 'Chinese Ceramics and the Early Modern World' at the Museum of East Asian Art, Bath (September-December 2010). Her scholarship offered the museum's curator 'a broader perspective on the influence of Chinese ceramics around the world', leading to a change in display practices. By introducing a global historical perspective into the interpretation of the ceramics collection, the curator was able to 'move away from the art historical and anthropological approach ... allowing me to really highlight the historical context in which ceramics were produced and consumed'. The exhibition, seen by some 3,000 visitors, presented new narratives of material culture intended to challenge viewers' ideas about the history of globalisation. Visitors were struck by 'the extent of the communication of ideas across vast distances and over hundreds of years, the strength of the networks between producers and consumers, and the extent of early modern global trade'.

Finn's research on the East India Company and the material culture of British country houses underpinned a training workshop for 18 staff and volunteers at Compton Verney, which took place in April 2013. Participants learnt to situate the objects and documents in their collections in a global context and demonstrate to the public the global genealogies of country house interiors. The Head

of Programming affirmed that 'the workshop has helped me to think more broadly about the context and history of objects and how this might inform our plans'. Feedback from gallery assistants revealed an increased understanding of the types of questions that should guide object analysis and one noted that this 'offers a broader understanding of objects and paintings that goes beyond the generally narrow focus of traditional art history teaching'. The innovative methodologies used in Finn's research project, specifically the integration of findings generated by amateur local and family historians, have found a wider application in influencing the development of an exhibition on the concept of 'The Future' to be held in 2017 at the V&A. The Head of Research confirmed that Finn's 'sophisticated methodology' of crowd sourcing has encouraged himself and other curatorial staff to think about 'the way technology erodes traditional modes of curatorial expertise'. As a result, he plans to 'minimise and possibly do without standard curatorial interpretation and have the interpretation entirely provided by a whole catchment of interested parties and visitors'.

GHCC research has a direct economic impact on the value of the material objects it embeds in these global narratives. As a leading New York art dealer notes, his business model depends on an 'ability to build value into objects because of the questions and issues I raise around them'. Engagement with GHCC research changed his understanding and approach to material culture, resulting in greater awareness of the intersection of personal biography and the relationships between people, represented in objects, and Berg's ideas about 'agents of knowledge' and 'material divergence'. In his words, he now sees 'not just what is in front of you but the implications of what it says with respect to the consumer and the maker'. GHCC research thus 'represents an advantage to me but also represents a way in which further impact could engage the commercial community'.

Through this series of collaborations, Warwick research has played a vital part in shaping the ongoing transformation of interpretative practices and display in museums of worldwide significance, and in producing new visions of global meanings and stories connected to objects.

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

Independent statements to corroborate impacts claimed in the case study:

Textile Curator, Ashmolean Museum

Senior Curator (textiles), Department of Furniture, Textiles and Fashion, Victoria and Albert Museum

Head of Research, Victoria and Albert Museum

New York Art Consultant

Online article about the new V&A ceramics galleries:

'The Ceramics Galleries: old and new' (<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-ceramics-galleries-old-and-new/>)

'Chinese Ceramics and the Early Modern World' Exhibition, 04.09.10-12.12.10:

Testimonial from the Curator, Museum of East Asian Art, Bath and exhibition programme

BBC Radio Bristol Online, 'BBC ceramics expert Lars Tharp at new Bath museum show', 30.07.10 ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/bristol/hi/people\\_and\\_places/history/newsid\\_8871000/8871873.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/bristol/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8871000/8871873.stm)).

Online reference to the 'East India Company at Home' project:

Blog posting 'The East India at Home Project – The University of Warwick', *Countryhouse* reader (14.03.12): 'It may be academic, but this has not made it exclusive or entirely high-brow ... many more academic institutions could take heed of this method of promoting similar research, as it would definitely benefit those hungry to discover more about specialist areas of heritage study.' (<http://countryhousereader.wordpress.com/2012/03/14/the-east-india-at-home-project-the-university-of-warwick-2011-2014/>)

Non-academic publication on the 'East India Company at Home' project:

Helen Clifford, 'Unlocking the Past', the *Magazine of the National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies*, Winter 2011, 28-30 (<http://view.digipage.net/?id=nadfasreviewwinter2011>); quarterly readership, 77,500.