

Institution: University of Brighton	
Unit of Assessment: D34 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory	
Title of case study: Expanding the Cultural Imagination through Photography	ICS [3]
1. Summary of the impact	

Our research has harnessed the power of photography to expand the cultural imagination, creating new works and interpretive practices that enrich, illuminate and challenge perceptions of society and the world in which we live. Through exhibition, publication, and public and community engagement, our research has: 1) created cultural legacies for major public (Millennium Dome, Treasury) and commercial (Airbus) projects; 2) provided enhanced cultural experiences to multiple audiences and specific communities in the UK and Europe, provoking reflection on ideas of place and identity, and contributing to processes of cultural memory and reconciliation (Association of Jewish Refugees, Healing Through Remembering) and; 3) expanded photography within the cultural economy, working in partnership (Photoworks, Multistory) to build and sustain audiences for photography within and beyond the region.

2. Underpinning research

University of Brighton (UoB) research in photography comprises three interlocking strands: the positioning of photography as a medium of critical artistic significance within the wider cultural economy and public sphere; the development of forms of visual storytelling that shape contemporary narratives of place, and; photography as a mode of enquiry into cultural history and memory.

In 2003, in partnership with *Photoworks* and the University of Sussex, UoB was instrumental in founding the *Brighton Photo Biennial* to raise the public and professional profile of photography. In parallel, *Photoforum* (2003), launched by GREEN and LOWRY, provided the intellectual underpinning for developments in practice that fostered a critical debate around the medium's changing uses and increasing cultural prominence. Through lectures, conferences and theoretical writings, such as *Where is the Photograph?* (2003) and *Stillness and Time* [reference 3.3], researchers identified and analysed the significant changes that have taken place in our understanding of photography and its place in contemporary culture.

This context has nurtured distinctive bodies of creative research around narratives of place and the documentation of history and heritage. Drawing on his research in visual storytelling, POWER's *The Shipping Forecast* [3.1] gave visual form to the familiar place names recited daily on BBC Radio 4's Shipping Forecast, illuminating a unique element of British popular culture. More recently, *Black Country Stories* [POWER, 2] has critically developed and extended traditions of working-class documentary photography to provide a contemporary visual interpretation of the Black Country's urban landscape. In a similar vein, RIBAS' anthropological study *Sanctuary* [3.2] animated the peripheral landscapes and life of Barcelona, while COOKE's detailed studies *Replacing Arcadia* (2002) and *Riparian* [COOKE, 1] revealed the competing forces of nature and culture acting upon and transforming the contemporary landscape.

Building on these foundations, further research aimed to secure photographic records for posterity that captured the changing nature, regeneration and transformation of places, and the making of history and heritage. POWER's *Superstructure* (2000) recorded the construction of London's Millennium Dome, and subsequent commissions documented major rebuilding and construction projects: *Treasury* (2002); *Saadiyat* (2009/10); *Kings Cross* (2014), and; the Airbus A380, the largest plane ever built (2006). These government and corporate projects informed his contribution to Magnum's *Eurovisions* (2005) and his work documenting the cultural landscape of contemporary Poland in *Sound of Two Songs* [3.5], which offers a nuanced interpretation of place and identity.

A third strand brings photography together with recent research on material culture and cultural memory, deploying methods from museum and archival studies (PURBRICK's 'The Architecture of Containment' [3.4] in Donovan Wylie's *The Maze*, 2004). This approach has informed the development of visual storytelling as a means of representing cultural history and heritage. Deliberately oscillating between photographic and archival research (eg *War, Memory and*

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Photographic Traces in the Twentieth Century [3.6], WINCKLER has developed photography as a medium through which collective memories can be reconstructed and given a renewed cultural presence. RIBAS and PURBRICK's current collaborative study *Traces of Nitrate* (AHRC £264,358) combines these same research strands to visualise the land, cityscapes and material histories of nitrate mining in Britain and Chile, exploring the legacies of British colonial and military actions and how material culture holds the past in the present.

Key researchers:

David Green:	Senior Lecturer (Jan 1992–Nov 2013).
Joanna Lowry:	Principal Lecturer (Jan 2009–to date).
Mark Power:	Senior Lecturer (Sep 1992–June 2003), Professor of Photography (June 2003–to date).
Louise Purbrick:	Lecturer (Apr 1999–Aug 2000), Senior Lecturer (Sept 2000–Dec 2008), Principal Lecturer (Jan 2009 – to date).
Xavier Ribas:	Senior Lecturer (Sept 2000–to date).
Julia Winckler:	Lecturer (Oct 2004–Jul 2006), Senior Lecturer (Aug 2006–to date).

3. References to the research

- [3.1] POWER, M. (1997) *The Shipping Forecast*. London: Zelda Cheatle Press. [Quality validation: submitted to RAE 2001 – Quality Profile for RAE 2001: Rated 5.]
- [3.2] RIBAS, X. (2005) *Sanctuary*. Barcelona, Spain: Editorial Gustavo Gili, S.L. [Quality validation: submitted to RAE 2008 – Output quality profile for RAE 2008: 81% 2* and above.]
- [3.3] GREEN, D. and LOWRY, J. (2005) *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image*. Brighton: Photoworks. [Quality validation: all chapters of this book were submitted to RAE 2008 from institutions achieving 2* and above as profiles.]
- [3.4] PURBRICK, L. (2004) 'The Architecture of Containment' in D. Wylie. *The Maze*. London: Granta, 91–110. [Quality validation: submitted to RAE 2008 – Output quality profile for RAE 2008: 81% 2* and above.]
- [3.5] POWER, M. (2010) *The Sound of Two Songs*. Brighton: Photoworks, in association with Photomonth Krakow. [Quality validation: submitted to REF 2014 see output 1.]
- [3.6] WINCKLER, J. (2013) 'War, Memory and Photographic Traces in the Twentieth Century'. In NIZKIK, J. (ed) *Twentieth Century Wars in European Memory*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. [Quality validation: submitted to REF 2014 see output 4, and also double peer reviewed for conference and for inclusion in the book.]

4. Details of the impact

Our research has led to: the creation of new cultural capital enriching the public imagination; deepening of cultural experiences and insights for audiences and specific communities, and; the expansion of photography within the creative economy to build and sustain audiences.

Creating cultural capital: The creation of new cultural capital has given increased visibility in the public imagination to major public and commercial endeavours (e.g. Treasury, Airbus) as well as to less explored aspects of the cultural heritage of the UK and Europe. Through a sustained programme of commissions and exhibitions, our research has enabled public bodies, cultural institutions, galleries and corporate sponsors to engage new audiences and communities in innovative ways. Their work has enabled audiences to visualise unique features of national and popular cultures, changing urban landscapes, and heritage. Making a significant contribution to cultural life, our researchers have held nine international solo exhibitions and featured work in over 40 other shows since 2008, including at major venues such as the Guggenheim Bilbao, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, George Eastman House, Somerset House and the Art Science Museum in Singapore. POWER and RIBAS have attracted major features in the international press (the *Guardian*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rochester City News*), magazines (*Outlook*, China's leading lifestyle magazine) and professional photographic journals (*Royal Photographic Society*, *PhotoEye* and *Fotografia*) (sources 5.1 and 5.2).

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In 2009 the *Guardian* newspaper identified a selection of images from POWER's *The Shipping Forecast* (1997) for their feature, *100 years of great press photographs* (5.2), thereby attesting to the capacity of such images to endure in the public imagination and underscoring his contribution to the increased recognition of documentary photography within the art market (5.3). The Photoeye nomination of *Sound of Two Songs* (POWER, 2010) and *Concrete Geographies* (RIBAS, 2012) as being among the best photographic publications of the year is a measure of the influence of our research on contemporary photographic practice and its contribution to shaping the market for high-value photographic books, which has drawn increasing cultural attention in the past decade (5.4). The longevity of our researchers' contributions to cultural life has been secured by the inclusion of works in major public collections (British Council, English Heritage, Government Art Collection) during the period (5.5).

Enriching and deepening audience experience and engagement: There is both qualitative and quantitative evidence that our exhibitions have captured the imagination of public and professional audiences alike. The former is expressed in audience responses such as the following on POWER's *Sound of Two Songs*: 'when you study images from another country, strange to you, you are given the opportunity of seeing your familiar surroundings more clearly'; mirrored in the end-of-show ACE report: 'As much as it being a portrait of contemporary Poland, the work talks of travel and its role in our vision of the world' (5.6). And the latter can be seen in the significantly higher-than-anticipated audiences our solo exhibitions have attracted: *Black Country Stories* (38,000) at the New Art Gallery, Walsall (2012) and *Sound of Two Songs* (10,700 people) at the Impressions Gallery, Bradford (2012) (5.6 and 5.7).

In many cases the exhibition or publication has been the starting point for deeper and richer forms of audience engagement. The impact of POWER's *Black Country Stories* project was enhanced by his work with local communities and with students from Walsall and Sandwell Colleges. Stimulating the contemporary re-envisioning of photographic documentary traditions, the project provided participants with the opportunity to exhibit their work alongside POWER (5.7). The transformative success of this project enabled its commissioners (Multistory) to secure a further £415k from Arts Council England's strategic touring fund for a new project *Open for Business*. Multistory has invited POWER to contribute to this project, which will be in partnership with the *Financial Times*, Magnum Photos and the children's charity Creativity, Culture and Education (5.7).

PURBRICK's and WINCKLER's research has created new public understandings of the capacity of photographs to unearth both personal and cultural memories and to support processes of reconciliation. WINCKLER's *Traces* exhibition at the Austrian Cultural Forum brought important responses from the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) acknowledging that her work made 'the private public, the individual universal, transforming the most humble photographs into images so utterly powerful' (Clare Best). The exhibition also led to her appearance on Tikkun Spectrum radio (broadcast to London's Jewish community), which offered insights into how creative photographic practices can assist in ameliorating the trauma of disappearance associated with the Holocaust (5.8). PURBRICK's work with Wylie (2004) led to her sustained involvement with *Healing Through Remembering*. This cross-community organisation addressed the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland, including, through an open call and subsequent workshops, inviting proposals for a 'living memorial museum' on the site of the former Maze/Long Kesh Prison. PURBRICK's contribution to the project and subsequent report contributed to the case for the construction of a peace and reconciliation centre which was awarded £18m support from the EU's Special European Programmes Body (designed by Daniel Libeskind; subsequently withdrawn following political disagreement within Northern Ireland) (5.9).

Expansion of the audience for photography within the creative economy: Over more than ten years, our research strategy has nurtured an infrastructure for photography in the region, which is now home to the UK's largest photography festival. Delivered principally through a partnership between *Photoworks* and the UoB, the 2012 Brighton Photo Biennial 'Agents of Change' saw an increase of over 200% in its audience figures from 2008 (5.10). The convergence and co-location of these organisations (finally realised in 2010), alongside close collaboration with the region's creative and cultural communities, including *Photo Fringe*, has benefited and positioned Brighton & Hove's cultural life and economy as a vital international centre of professional and public photographic discourse. This is underpinned by the co-development of

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research, systematic investment in the Biennial and the foundational legacies of photographic cultures that have emerged from GREEN and LOWRY's *Photoforum* and our sustained partnership with *Photoworks* (5.10).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 Testimonial available from Magnum detailing the commissions in the period that are a direct result of projects such as A 380, *Superstructure* and *The Treasury Project*. The testimonial also highlights why POWER's work has drawn the attention of significant commercial and public bodies.
- 5.2 Copy of the Guardian's *100 years of great press photographs* series (2009) in which POWER's *The shipping forecast* is featured. Available at: <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.brighton.ac.uk/docview/244481315> [Accessed: 8 November 2013]. Supplementary evidence includes a list of exhibitions in the period and a selection of press releases and reviews for POWER's and RIBAS' work.
- 5.3 Testimonial available from world-leading Magnum photographer that highlights POWER's role in British photographic documentary practice.
- 5.4 Screenshots taken from the PhotoEye website highlighting the selection of POWER's *Sound of Two Songs* as Best Book of 2010. Available at: <http://www.photoeye.com/bookstore/citation.cfm?catalog=ZE208> [Accessed: 8 November 2013]. Supplementary evidence includes the selection of RIBAS' *Concrete geographies* as Best Book of 2012.
- 5.5 Listing of POWER's works in the Government Art Collection. <http://www.gac.culture.gov.uk/artist.aspx?id=129284> [Accessed: 8 November 2013]. Supplementary evidence includes listings of POWER's work in the V&A Collection, English Heritage and the British Council Collection. A list of collections in which RIBAS' work is held is also available.
- 5.6 Impressions Gallery (Bradford) Report for the exhibition *Sound of Two Songs* (POWER). The report includes visitor data, comments book, and the Arts Council England report.
- 5.7 Testimonial available from Multistory detailing the effect of the *Black Country Stories* exhibition on the local population and how it has led to the development and funding of a new project *Open for Business*. Supplementary evidence includes press reviews of the exhibition and discussion of POWER's work online.
- 5.8 Review from the Association of Jewish Refugees of WINCKLER's exhibition at the Austrian Cultural Forum. Available at: <http://www.ajr.org.uk/index.cfm/section.journal/issue.Jul12/article=10782> [Accessed: 8 November 2013]. Supplementary evidence includes a recording of the interview on Tikkun Spectrum radio, a review of the exhibition in *London Magazine*, and visitor comments on the exhibition.
- 5.9 Testimonial available from the Director of the Liverpool Biennial detailing the relationship between PURBRICK's work with photographer Donovan Wylie and her subsequent involvement in the *Healing Through Remembering* project and the development of the Peace Centre. Supplementary evidence includes a report produced on behalf of the *Healing Through Remembering* project and press coverage detailing the development of the Peace Centre.
- 5.10 Testimonial available from the Director of Photoworks highlighting the importance of photographic research at UoB and the effect this has had on the structure of the Photo Biennial, visitor numbers, and visitor experience.