

Institution: University of Reading
Unit of Assessment: UOA 32A Art
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>Overview Research at Reading School of Art is underpinned by the close connection and interdependence of practice-based research and scholarship, encouraging proactive engagements with contemporary art and its audiences. Over the REF 2021 period we have strengthened our research by developing dynamic research partnerships, enabling exchanges of ideas and co-creation of research, and innovative collaborations with galleries, museums, publishers and the cultural sector. We have significantly grown our interactions with the general public and diverse communities to pursue inclusive access to art. This approach has led to a dramatic improvement in our record for research funding, more than doubling our research income from REF2014. This has enabled us to undertake ambitious research projects and firmly establish our growth trajectory for the future. Our success and reputation have also attracted increasing numbers of postgraduate research students who chose to study at Reading.</p> <p>Structure and context Reading School of Art sits within the School of Arts and Communication Design, which also includes the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication and the Department of Film, Theatre & Television. Institutionally, research is organised through research divisions that frequently correspond with departments. Each division belongs to one of the four Research Themes established in 2015. Reading School of Art sits within the Heritage & Creativity Research Theme, led by a Research Dean, who supports and fosters research across divisions and Themes. The introduction of Research Themes across the University has stimulated cross-disciplinary engagement in Art's research, for example, with archaeology and computer science.</p> <p>Art's research strategies are developed by a dedicated Research Division Leader (RDL; Rowlands) and facilitated by the framework and leadership provided by the Heritage & Creativity Research Theme. The RDL's work is supported within the context of our unit by a dedicated Unit of Assessment Lead, an Impact Lead, and a Director of Postgraduate Study. Art's research strategy is reviewed through annual research planning, led by our RDL in consultation with all members of the research division, the Research Dean and Head of School.</p> <p>Research strategy In REF2014 we stated our aim to develop research through the use of archives and collections; to develop and extend research collaborations and partnerships, while prioritising grant capture for distinctive areas of shared research; and to achieve a step-change in our research to ensure vitality and sustainability in the long term.</p> <p>To achieve these aims, our strategic objectives centred on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing innovative, practice-led, theoretical and art-historical modes of enquiry; • Developing and sustaining national and international research partnerships; • Recruiting high calibre research students internationally, around identified research strengths and capacity; • Securing diverse project funding from UK Research Councils, charitable trusts and foundations including the Arts Council, and the EU. <p>Achievement of the first three objectives is described below, whilst the fourth is described in section 3 of this statement.</p> <p><i>Innovative practice-led, theoretical and art-historical modes of enquiry</i> Our ambition has been to develop innovative art research at the interfaces between the production, distribution and mediation of art, its histories and its present. In REF2014 we reported that the acquisition of the Stephen Dwoskin archive by the University of Reading</p>

Special Collections would reinvigorate our future **collections-based research**. This has been achieved through [The Legacies of Stephen Dwoskin](#) a three-year AHRC interdisciplinary project (Garfield PI, 2018-21). Through the archive, the scholarship intervenes in the histories of experimental film to challenge current orthodoxies both in the UK and US. The research project includes practice-based research commissions for artists to make original work in and through the archive, raising questions regarding embodiment, disability and film. The three strands of research are interdisciplinary, examining Dwoskin's cultural and political influence. The digital forensic co-investigators are developing parameters for digital-born material to expand the reach of their cutting-edge research in digital forensics for the humanities and to support researchers through the collaborative research with artists, theorists and historians working on the project. The ongoing archival research will yield **new interpretations**, reassessment and awareness of Dwoskin as a ground-breaking filmmaker, alongside contributing innovations in digital methodologies.

Our collections-based research seeks to **create new audiences, users and interpretations**. This is evidenced in ECR Roithmayr's 'The Humility of Plaster' (2018), an Arts Council funded three-year collaboration with Wysing Arts Centre, Museum of Classical Archaeology and Kettle's Yard at the University of Cambridge. The interdisciplinary research explored the collections of moulds and casts to source narratives and practices and reposition the significance of these techniques and collections towards the practice of contemporary sculpture.

A concentration of research within Reading School of Art focuses on **curating** and the form of **exhibitions**, their histories and politics. Richter's 'Speculative Curating, Performative Interventions' (Migros Museum, Zürich, 2016), and editorship of the discipline-shaping *OnCurating* journal sets out scholarly investigations and theories of curating in the public sphere. Curation is also foregrounded in Rowlands' **practice-based curatorial projects** 'In the Reading Room of Hell' (2018) and 'Exercises in Style' (2019), a satellite event of the Venice Biennale; and Pil and Galia Kollektiv's curated programme at 'xero kline coma', an artist-run space that is a vital testing ground for new and emergent practices. During the assessment period, we have significantly built on this expertise in **curatorial research** with a step-change in the innovative development of 'Reading International'. Through an Ambition for Excellence, Arts Council Award, [Reading International](#) (PI Clausen) critically activated a three-year visual arts programme in Reading. The research project sought to develop and **test curatorial models** between a regional arts community and an international art network.

We maintain an innovative research profile in **publication projects and critical art writing**. Our research practice has been transformed through modes of production and dissemination that address the performative or transversal potential of writing and publishing. Our work in this area has been enhanced with the appointment of Frearson. Her durational writing project 'Wollstonochlincraft 1791-1971', questions the relationship between language and ideological formation; and 'Sic' (Y-Press, London 2017) utilises a global group of micro-workers, contracted through online gig-economy platforms. Rowlands' editorial and curatorial project 'Novel Upstairs' (Kunsthall Bergen, 2016) figures the dispersed scenography of reading practices in contemporary art. Publishing as artistic practice cultivates **research methods of sharing in and through digital and performative contexts**. Ellison's 'Let's Interface the Music and Dance' (2017), workshops performance through non-linear scoring methods; Russell's 'SQRRL' published with Rhizome (2015), explores the mutability of digital form, the way text, image and animation can operate simultaneously as web-based essay, film and large-scale print, in which the formal reconfigurations forge posthuman transformations. Russell's 'Doggo' (Kunsthalle Zurich & NAME Publications, 2017) captures the mutation of digital imagery and the migration of research across scripting, film production and animation in reimagining alternative political futures. These pioneering works, through their **innovative critical methods**, also impact the forms and published outcomes of our postgraduate doctoral submissions.

Building national and international partnerships and collaborations

We have sought to co-produce outputs in collaboration with international museums and galleries for academic and non-academic audiences, as demonstrated in detail in Section 4. A key

element of this aim has been to **lead and encourage new forms of engagement** through our research. This is exemplified by '[Sensory Objects](#)', an AHRC-funded project, led by Allen, aiming to make museums more inclusive by listening to and working with people with learning disabilities. Central to the research is **engaging people with learning disabilities as co-researchers** in partnership with, amongst others, Speke Hall National Trust, Liverpool, Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) and the British Museum.

The social and civic **role of art in the construction of publics** is evident in much of our work, including Kontopoulou's 'Democracy' project (2016), incorporating participatory workshops and exhibition at Tate Modern, published in 'Democracy and Community' (Tate Publishing, 2017); Roithmayr's competitive award of permanent site-responsive sculpture commission, working with architects and London Port Authority; Pil and Galia Kollektiv's 'The Immigrants' (2017); Clausen's 'The People in our Neighbourhood' (2016); and O'Connell's 'Deep Freeze' (2016).

Recruitment of high calibre international research students

We have achieved this through developing national and international collaborations, notably with the [Doctoral Research Platform](#) for Curatorial and Cross-disciplinary Cultural Studies with Zurich University for the Arts (ZhDK). Through this key partnership, we have consolidated a practice-based Doctoral Research Platform for Curatorial and Cross-disciplinary Cultural Studies. As a result of its early success, the platform won a major Federal Swiss funding award (2016) which was match-funded by our partner ZhDK (total £250,000) to resource a three-year related research programme (with the intention to submit for a further three years). This includes project funding and support for Reading PhD students and research staff and offers scholarships for PhD students. The research platform, led by Richter, attracts an international cohort of researchers from the US, Israel and Europe, who all add to the richness of our postgraduate research environment. The funding enhances the sustainability of the collaborative research platform in curating and has enabled Reading School of Art to maximize its already growing international reputation.

Impact

The unit's impact builds on the public-facing nature of its research process, engaging with **museum and gallery policy and practice**, and **projects in outreach and widening participation**, while providing educational opportunities to diverse audiences. We build deep and meaningful relationships with stakeholders in ways that seek to change their practice. Collaborative engagement on projects such as Reading International and Sensory Objects impacts audiences through public accessibility; **empowers audiences through involvement in participatory research practices and creative processes**; and creates the contexts in which they are shown and used. Participation leading to impact is also evidenced in the production and reception of artworks, curatorial projects, performances and museum artefacts, as in the work of O'Connell, Roithmayr, Rowlands and Pil and Galia Kollektiv.

Our Impact Lead (Hellings) works with academics in Art and the University's professional Impact team to fully incorporate impact across research in the division. The Impact Lead, together with the Impact team, develop and deliver a structured programme of workshops and training that is tailored to colleagues' needs, whilst ensuring good practice is identified and shared. Our activities in these areas have been enabled by the University's Building Outstanding Impact Support Programme (BOISP) and external Follow-on Funding, as detailed in section 3.

We are actively incorporating the principles of Open Research in our work, as relevant to our discipline. We are part of the Heritage & Creativity Digital Humanities project which is integrated into the broader programme developing Open Research at the University. Our staff engage with the Open Research conference and undertake training offered by the University. We ensure that our outputs are freely accessible wherever possible, including through green and gold open access. University funding has, for example, supported gold open access publication for Ellison's 'Workshop: making beyond the post-medium condition' (Visual Culture in Britain, 2017).

Strategy for the next five years

We will provide an innovative environment for individuals to develop as researchers, embedding their practice and scholarship within meaningful collaboration. Our future priorities are aligned with the vision to evolve an ambitious and sustainable environment that supports excellence in research.

Our future objectives are to:

- **Strengthen our commitment to inclusive research and engagement:** we will do this through continuing to support our [purpleSTARS](#) and [ArtLab](#) projects, which demonstrate a longstanding commitment and expertise in inclusive research and engagement (see section 4). Kontopoulou's iCare pilot project will investigate new ways of engaging young people at risk of social isolation and mental health problems who would not otherwise participate in cultural opportunities. Supported by Reading Borough Council and the University, the project aims to test creative ideas in collaboration with teachers and young people, to deepen knowledge and impact understanding of social care through art.
- **Grow and diversify our ECR community:** We will seek to expand and diversify our ECR community through post-doctoral fellowships and funding. We are committed to attracting research fellowships allied to our research interests, with high-quality candidates emerging from our postgraduate research programme. We will build on our thriving postgraduate research environment, sustaining quality completions, and securing further funding for our Curatorial Research Platform with ZHdK, through the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF), for scholarships, with a focus on curatorial knowledge and its digital dissemination.
- **Deliver innovation through digital methods and practice:** We will strengthen our distinctive digital approaches and creative engagement through integrating digital developments and practice-based methods to intensify the investigation of art and technology across disciplines, further embedding Open Research principles in our work. We will build on current research undertaken by Frearson, Kollektive, Ellison and Garfield. This will enable us to leverage strong interdisciplinary research that engages Art with other disciplines, building on from Hellings' recent appointment as co-director of the [Centre for Film Aesthetics and Cultures](#) (CFAC). In addition, three AHRC-funded Dwoskin film commissions (Staff, Salmon, Ifekoya; see section 4) will be supported and promoted through Reading International; and we are planning to develop an annual platform for commissions. We will build capacity and share knowledge of the digital potential of research in Art through the Heritage & Creativity Research Theme's Digital Humanities Project.
- **Develop Reading International's legacy:** Building on the success of Reading International and aligned to the University's strategic plans, we aim to build a sustainable arts infrastructure through partnerships (arts organisations, borough council, businesses) that have potential to support artists and creative communities within the region.
- **Grow and deepen collaboration with key partners:** We will continue to prioritise and develop collaborative opportunities for engagement with partners across heritage and culture, including the British Museum institutional partnership described in the Institutional Environment Statement, which offers a framework for interdisciplinary collaboration.

2. People

The vitality of our research environment is founded on a combination of full-time and part-time staff (8 full-time and 4 part-time and one 50:50 job share). A third of our staff are professors,

20% are associate professors and 47% are lecturers. Our staff is diverse: we have a female/male ratio of 60/40, and 53% of our staff are non-British. Our staffing structure provides crucial stability for long-term planning, balanced with artist-researchers engaged with the demands of practice, public engagement and scholarship.

The unit has a doctoral cohort of 36 and approximately 260 undergraduate and postgraduate taught students on teaching-intensive programmes. Our research critically informs our teaching and defines the success of our programmes, whereby the environment thrives from contact with artists, researchers and curators. One of our challenges as a small unit is to coherently plan teaching and research across the division, supporting individual research ambitions and developing strategic funding bids focused on our collective strengths and resources.

During the REF period we have made four new strategic appointments to strengthen expertise across practice-based and scholarly research. Of the four new appointments, three are Early Career Researchers (ECRs). These appointments have expanded strengths in publishing as practice (Frearson), deepened our involvement with public engagement and widening participation (Kontopoulou) and expanded material collections-led research (Roithmayr). Hellings' appointment in 2015 revitalised new approaches to art theory and visual cultures. The success of the AHRC Dwoskin research project led to the appointment of Chamarette (Co-I in the project) as a Senior Research Fellow (2020), together with two full-time PDRAs (Bartliff and Miller).

Supporting Early Career Researchers (ECRs)

All Art's ECRs have a mentor to facilitate their development and access to dedicated support schemes, including training and career development advice. We support ECRs through peer review and sharing good practice with a specific focus on practice-based research, promoting opportunities for ECRs to enhance their research plans and take advantage of interdisciplinary research fostered by the Research Themes. The RDL and HoD ensure that workloads are managed so that they have sufficient time to develop their research portfolios and funding applications. All ECRs initially have reduced teaching loads to enable necessary training and development of their research profile. They are supported in their professional development and encouraged to lead research seminars, building research networks and developing research leadership skills. For instance, Kontopoulou led the [Reading Assembly at Tate Exchange 2020](#); Frearson was funded by the Heritage & Creativity Research Theme to attend the Oxford Digital Humanities Summer School; and Roithmayr was supported to develop his research profile, enabling him to transition from a Teaching Intensive to a Teaching and Research appointment after completing a PhD in 2018.

The effectiveness of these mechanisms is evidenced in the career progression and success of our ECRs. In addition to Kontopoulou's role at Tate Exchange 2020; Roithmayr was promoted to Associate Professor in 2020 and was nominated for a University ECR prize.

Supporting staff, rewarding excellence; celebrating diversity and inclusion

All new staff are mentored by an established member of academic staff, including formal induction into procedures for research planning. Staff are supported through the promotion process with the guidance and advice of a School Personal Titles Mentor. The School of Arts and Communication Design Personal Titles Committee reviews all members of the School, irrespective of career stage, to encourage the widest-possible level of participation. The promotion process allows for and takes account of an individual's personal circumstances, including maternity and adoption leave, ill-health and caring responsibilities. During this REF cycle, 2 members of staff were promoted to Associate Professor and Professor (Roithmayr; Garfield).

Personal Research Plans (PRP) are undertaken annually by all staff and cover a 5-year rolling period. Through the PRP process, staff are encouraged to reflect on their individual research goals and the support they require to achieve them, with emphasis on plans for the production of outputs, impact activity, public engagement and funding applications. PRPs are discussed with

the Research Division Lead, who provides support in the development of short and long-term strategies to address individual aims. The process helps staff identify training and development needs and the different ways in which these can be met, including opportunities provided by the University. PRPs also inform the Performance and Development Review (PDR) in consultation with the Head of Department (Garfield) to align teaching and workload models.

Research leave is crucial to enable staff to devote focused time to research. Research leave is managed and funded by the unit through internal redistribution of workload amongst colleagues. It is based on an established pattern of one term in nine, focused in the Summer term due to teaching-intensive commitments. Art's research leave policy is equitable in providing one term in nine, regardless of career stage or full-time or part-time status. Research leave supports up to four staff per year and prioritises those who are improving the quality of research outputs; those who require dedicated time to complete practice-based research; and those engaging with impact projects and developing research funding applications. Research leave is overseen by the Research Division Committee that meets in each of the three annual teaching terms.

All staff have access to a wide range of training and development opportunities, including training provided by Heritage & Creativity in Social Media and Research, Collections-based Research and Open Access, for example. With support of Research Development Managers and Impact Development Managers, we provide training on development of grant applications, impact and engagement. Staff have benefitted from the funding made available by the Heritage & Creativity Theme to attend the Oxford Digital Humanities Summer School (Frearson, Garfield).

Research leaders and mentors encourage and assist staff to apply to competitive external funding schemes that can include provision of research time. Through Heritage & Creativity's Grant Development College (see section 3), staff receive feedback and specific support to develop grant applications. Funding for pump-priming and grant bid development from the University's Research Endowment Trust Fund (RETF) is also available on a competitive basis, and we support our staff in their applications to these schemes. Six Art researchers received pump-priming funding over this REF period and three staff were also supported through internally funded, competitively awarded, University Research Fellowships.

During the REF cycle, staff in Art had four periods of maternity/paternity leave supported through phased returns to work and flexible working arrangements. We accommodate activities and meetings to ensure that these colleagues, part-time staff, and staff with caring responsibilities are fully included in the unit's activities and have access to all opportunities. We are able to do this through maintaining good organisation, sustained communication and offering a variety of opportunities. Collaboration is vital for Art, discovering new ways of working together and others across disciplinary boundaries. Notably, we have one 50:50 job share (Pil and Galia Kollektiv), who bring an important collaborative approach to research and their joint role as Directors of Postgraduate Research.

Our commitment to equality and diversity is well represented and evidenced in the [Sensory Objects / purpleStars](#) work; in ArtLab's work with primary and secondary schools; and in the Dwoskin project that seeks to establish Dwoskin's significance as a pioneering artist with disabilities. All staff in Art have participated in School of Arts & Communication Design sessions addressing Equality and Diversity; key staff have all undertaken training in unconscious bias, diversity and inclusion to sustain our good practices, including those involved in the construction of our REF submission, who attended REF specific sessions. An Equality and Diversity Working Group in Art was established in 2020 to further develop our thinking and behaviours.

Our output selection process has aimed at optimisation for quality whilst being mindful of inclusivity and fairness. All submitted outputs were selected on the basis of the quality assessments reached through internal peer review processes. These processes are consistent with the institutional peer review framework (ROSS) and require routine review by at least two staff members. In line with the requirements of our Code of Practice, the UOA Lead, in consultation with the RDL and HoD, ensured that all available outputs were treated equally at

the outset, regardless of their form and type, or career stage of the author. This resulted in a balanced portfolio representing the range of research undertaken in the unit. An interim Equality Impact Assessment report carried out at University level in 2020 showed no statistically significant differences across career stage and protected characteristics for the institution and Main Panel D, providing us with confidence that our process is effective. Similarly, a bias analysis for the selected pool carried out in 2021 did not find statistically significant differences in our final selection.

Postgraduate Research

Reading School of Art has a thriving postgraduate research community, with 42 doctoral students engaged in doctoral research at the end of July 2020. Our students come from a variety of backgrounds: in 2019 we had students from 17 different nationalities. Almost two thirds had non-UK students, and of these, 61% were BAME students; 10% had declared disabilities.

Recruitment of PGR students is through targeted networking and mentoring of candidates from our PGT programmes and local, national and international activities. We have also been successful in supporting 9 Reading students progressing from MA to PhD through the census period. In 2014 we launched a new taught MA in Creative Enterprise, working with Reading's renowned Henley Business School to develop ECRs who want to link their academic specialisms to the creative industries. Our postgraduate research numbers have grown significantly since 2014. In the assessment period, we have awarded 27 PhDs, nearly doubling those awarded in the previous REF cycle.

We have gained funding through the **AHRC South West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership (SWW)** for our PhD students, and from University of Reading studentships and regional fee waivers. PhD students in Art have been awarded four ARHC studentships; a University of Reading **Collections Based Research** fee waiver competitive award (O'Donoghue, Tate archive curator); two **strategic University studentships** awarded through the University studentships competition (Lockhart, ArtLab, and Hoel, in partnership with the Lux, Dwoskin).

The Doctoral Research Platform for Curatorial and Cross-disciplinary Cultural Studies with Zurich enhances our research and the experience of our doctoral students. It forges institutional connections between Art at Reading and the doctoral researcher's affiliated institution, for example, with Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Academies of Fine Art in Budapest and Vienna; and increases the strong professional profile of our postgraduate research environment. Our postgraduate researchers from the curatorial platform have taken up key posts across the fields of curating and academia, including Elke Krasny (Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna); Omar Kholeif (formerly Senior Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; currently Director of Collections, Sharjah Art Foundation); Avi Feldman (Goethe-Institut Curatorial Resident, New York).

Progress of students is monitored in line with the University's Code of Practice on Research Students. Doctoral students deliver an annual presentation attended by staff and regular formal evaluations of written work by supervisors and presentations of practice both inside the Art studios and outside within wider context of exhibition. Confirmation of PhD registration after a year of work (or part-time equivalent) is granted only after review by two colleagues of chapter-length submissions and presentation of practice, leading to more timely completions and excellent pass rates.

Students benefit from support provided by the University's Graduate School, which provides desk space, training rooms and social activities. The Graduate School delivers a researcher development programme which provides training in study skills, communication skills, Open Research and research integrity, funding and grant applications, as well as the Preparing to Teach programme, the PGR Leadership Programme and the PGR Women's Development Programme (Sprint).

The School of Art provides induction, regular colloquia and fora for PGR research, often focusing on negotiating **practice-based research methods**, led by dedicated Directors of Postgraduate Study (Kollectiv). Notable annual PhD symposia have included 'Unnaturally Occurring Compliance', hosted at Thames Tower, Reading (2017); 'Criticality and the Politics of Representation' (2016), with guest speakers including Chris Fite-Wassilak, Jennifer Thatcher; 'Surface Values' (2018), with respondents John Chilver and Maggie Roberts.

Doctoral candidates are supported in developing critical interdisciplinary research projects and, where relevant, supervisory teams are drawn from across the University, including with History, Film and English. For example, Melanie Jackson, AHRC SWW DTP researcher, worked closely with University of Reading farms, MERL archive and was co-supervised with Archaeology. Jackson's research investigated the political and social implications of milk, resulting in a co-authored book with Professor Esther Leslie (Birkbeck) and exhibitions including Para/Site, Hong Kong, and Limerick Biennial (2020). A further example is that of Dan Kidner, AHRC SWW DTP researcher, examined ideas of community in the work of political filmmakers from the 1970s. His research was published in a new edition of the 'Nightcleaners', co-edited with Alex Sainsbury; and a touring exhibition 'The Inoperative Community', Raven Row and Muzeum Sztuki, Poland (2016). Finally, Oreet Ashery's PhD by publication examined dying and care in the digital age, winner of the Film London Jarman Award and recipient of the Turner Prize bursary (2020).

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

During the REF period the unit has doubled its research income (spend) when compared to REF 2014 as illustrated below:

Table 1: Research Income

	REF 2014	REF 2021	Increase
Income	401,389	806,071	100%
Per year	80,277.80	115,153	43%
Per Year per FTE	7,042	10,236	45%

We have also doubled our grant capture, being awarded grants for a total of £953,182 during this cycle. We have diversified our funding sources as a key strategic objective, which has injected vitality and sustainability into our research and enabled us to achieve our aspirational 5-year income target within an increasingly competitive environment.

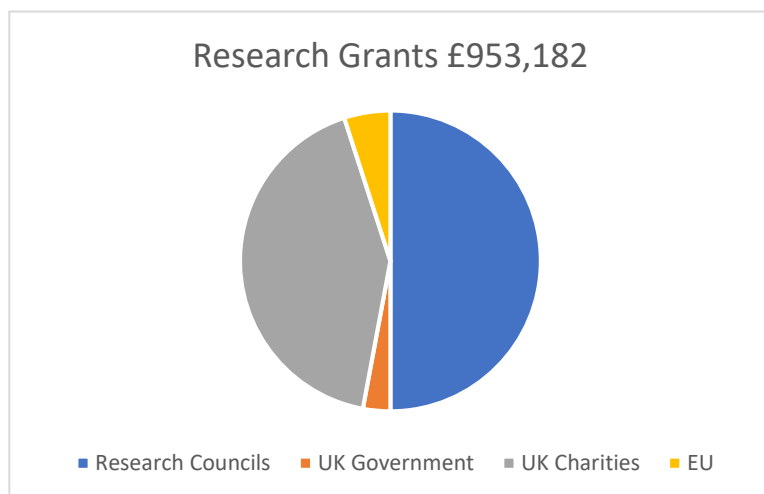


Figure 1: Sources of funding of grants awarded in this REF period

The unit's strategy through the assessment period has been to develop and maintain income, infrastructure and facilities to support its research objectives. To achieve this, we have implemented more rigorous internal peer-review procedures, ably supported by Research and Enterprise Services (RES) and the Heritage & Creativity Grant Development College. Comment on applications is routinely provided at the initial stage, followed by feedback on proposal drafts and impact plans supplied by the RDL and at least one senior member of the division. These procedures have supported staff through the application process ensuring a higher success rate (83% grant success rate). Through this process, we have secured a major **AHRC** award for The Legacies of Stephen Dvoskin (total award £954,797, with £443K to Reading, PI Garfield) and our **Ambition of Excellence Award from Arts Council of England** (£345,000, PI Clausen) which was also matched by £20,000 each from both **Reading Borough Council** and the University. Artistic projects from Roithmayr, Kollektiv and O'Connell have also been supported by ACE (£80,000 +). We have won our first major **Horizon 2020** EU funded research project with EuroNoize £47,401 (Pil and Galia Kollektiv) and diversified funding through charitable trusts and organisations such as **Elephant Trust**, supporting Roithmayr and Ellison's respective practice-based research projects.

Since 2015 the University has invested over one million pounds in new research support posts, increasing the resource available to researchers from several central functions, including dedicated posts for the Heritage & Creativity Theme, comprising research development managers, impact support officers and a business relationship manager. This support is accessible to all staff. It has benefitted Art, for example, by suggesting funding routes, supporting costing for applications, and identifying opportunities for impact and knowledge transfer activities.

Internal University funding, the **Research Endowment Trust Fund (RETF)**, has supported Art's endeavours to secure research income. Seedcorn funding from the Heritage & Creativity Research Theme facilitated Clausen in the development of a major Arts Council Award and Ellison's AHRC funding bid with focus on Digital Humanities.

The University established the Building Outstanding Impact Support Programme (BOISP) which provides professional support for collaborations, partnerships and communication of research leading to impact, and financial resource for impact activities and specialist support. Art received £44,000 to support the development of impact for Reading International (£20k) and Sensory Objects (£24k). This supplemented AHRC Follow on Funding Project – purpleStars, with two impact assistants and engagement activities with the British Museum. For Reading International, BOISP funded the time of an assistant curator to enhance impact of the visual arts programme, alongside social media research communications training.

The University has invested in Art infrastructure via the **Research Equipment and Infrastructure Fund**. An investment of £100,000 in digital equipment revitalised our capacity to develop future research plans across ArtLab and digital research initiatives at the nexus of art and technology. We have also invested in building capacity through fully funded places at the Oxford Digital Humanities Summer School.

Research studios are provided to assist with practice-based research across the division (Clausen, Russell, Roithmayr, Frearson, Ellison have all benefitted from this initiative). We ensure that all staff and PGRs have access to the School of Art's exhibition and performance spaces. A technician (Stead) was appointed in 2018 to support research, alongside support provided for teaching practice. Editing suites, software, cameras and lighting are available and have been enhanced through our increased research income. Our support staff comprise two part-time executive support and one part-time research administrator (Dvoskin, EuroNoize). Support staff facilitate research events and public engagement, including Reading International events and PGR conferences.

As a research-intensive institution, Reading's distinctive research resources include the Library's extensive holdings of artists' books, periodicals and relevant journals. The University is also

home to a range of nationally and internationally significant museums and collections; including the distinctive [Special Collections](#), which now house the Stephen Dvoskin Archive. Working closely with the Special Collections Service, we have sought to align research projects around the Dvoskin archive to aid development of the collections. In this manner, the [Dvoskin project](#) has acted as a driver for staff from the Special Collections Service to acquire new digital preservation skills, building capacity for digital archiving and curation. For example, the Head of Archive Services, Guy Baxter, was involved in the project from the outset and has gained funding from TNA to test new methods of research access for digital archives. Baxter is now organising a digital archive conference in partnership with National Library for Scotland and the Dvoskin academic partners. More generally, collections and archives including Dvoskin and Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) are key to several strands of research activity in the unit, as are the spaces and facilities offered by MERL and engagement with University's Arts Strategy. These enhance Art's distinctive research in forging **new audiences, users and interpretations** and engaging with national and international museums, galleries and collections to share research with both specialist and non-academic audiences.

4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

Research by Reading School of Art helps to shape our discipline and benefits wider society and communities through inclusion, access and building national and international networks and partnerships. Our approach to collaboration, co-creation and participatory research ensures that our work impacts and benefits all involved. By proactively developing and sustaining partnerships, we expand the societal benefits of our research and reach new audiences.

Collaborations and contribution to the economy and society

Building creative communities

Our long-term vision in this area is to work with partners in arts organisations, local councils and business to develop **a sustainable infrastructure** that will support studio and exhibition spaces for emerging artists within the region. This complements the University's Arts Strategy, which articulates the University's ambition to be an activist institution in the visual arts and a regional leader in the field.

Our Ambition for Excellence Arts Council Award for Reading International enabled us to develop a network of partnerships to offer **cultural leadership** and **share good practice in developing cultural organisations**. [Reading International](#) delivered over 60 events during the research project, promoting and commissioning major exhibitions and events including performances, film screenings, workshops and talks, as well as offsite projects and temporary public artworks. Hosted by a **rich mixture of partners** within the town, Reading International produced several major projects each year, in which artists and curators were given a platform to make new work in response to the unique social and historical contexts of Reading. Highlights included exhibitions from Turner Prize nominee Helen Cammock at the Museum of Reading; a campus-based performance from Tel Aviv's Public Movement; and interdisciplinary workshops and exhibition negotiating the history of Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, with Nina Wakeford (curated by two of our PhD students). Additional project funding was secured, including Artis, Cultural Bridges at the EU, Canada Council for the Arts, and Goethe Institut, reflecting the international scope of the research. At Tate Exchange 2019, Reading International hosted a 'Partner Summit', and in recognition of the distinctive blend of research and public engagement, Reading International won the award for **Best Cultural Organisation of the Year, Reading Cultural Awards**.

Inclusion, access and widening participation in Art

Our curatorial and pedagogic research through widening participation activities builds wider audiences from non-traditional backgrounds and communities through focused activities of engagement. Our research seeks inclusive relationships with partners in ways that profoundly change their practices.

Allen's *'Interactive sensory objects developed for and by people with learning disabilities'* has helped **create new working practices for people with learning disabilities**, making public heritage sites more inclusive and enhancing public awareness of learning disability. Work with the British Museum, the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), Speke Hall National Trust in Liverpool, the Tower Group and the Rix Centre, at the University of East London, resulted in more than 60 sensory art and technology workshops and development of a toolkit for engagement. AHRC follow-on funding enabled the [Sensory Objects](#) project to expand and work with RIX Research & Media and The Tower Project's Job Enterprise and Training Service, an inclusive employment agency, to co-develop [purpleSTARS](#) (Sensory, Technology & Art Resource Specialists), providing sustainable employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities to work in museums. *purpleSTARS* was the focus of Tate Exchange 2018-19 and the approach has been adopted internationally by *purpleSTARS Montreal*, Canada.

[ArtLab](#), established in 2015 by O'Connell, is an ambitious widening participation programme that facilitates technology-led research, community participation and Art student research training activities. The initiative began with 'Stellar Projects' a collaboration now in its fifth year, between Maiden Erleigh School and Art at Reading and it currently works through Summer workshops with 10 local widening-participation primary schools in Berkshire. ArtLab's work with schools is concerned with widening participation through **Reading Scholars**, whilst investing in new and emerging technology that supports researchers. Drawing on **participatory research** from Allen, Clausen and Roithmayr, ArtLab develops support for technology-led research, community participation and training through the School of Art. Underlying this idea is a set of core educational values concerning the deeper understanding of computing, digital media and new technologies, which will form part of a vibrant cultural and economically viable society both today and in the future. Utilising new technologies and methods of production – 3D scanning and printing, 360-degree filming, innovative light drawing – ArtLab shares interactive workshops for schools and museums. ArtLab's values align with our research projects, underpinning **art's value to society** and enhancing belonging, ownership, inclusivity, progression, life-long learning, whilst also addressing the role of technology in the creative industries more widely. Over the last 5 years, ArtLab has delivered workshop activities that have reached 8,516 participants and external beneficiaries.

Through the School of Arts and Communication Design's Associate Partnership with **Tate Exchange**, we are able to showcase our research, impact and public engagement. The Tate Exchange programme for 2018 and 2019 was led by ArtLab, including purpleStars researchers and with a focus on educational partnerships.

This blend of engagement, inclusion and technology can also be traced through recent doctoral research projects. For example, Heidi Aishman, *Diffraction Curatorial Practice: Ripples, Gaps and the Space in-between* (2020), explored how power can be shared through recognition of tacit knowledge and technology; and Gavin Larcombe, *Learning through an autonomous experience of art as a social practice* (2020), established a methodology for artists who work as teachers and provides an alternative approach to learning through socially engaged art practice. Among current doctoral researchers, Robyn Appleton considers *Attention through participatory art*; while Jon Lockhart's *Widening Participation Activities in the Arts Using Technology* is embedded within ArtLab; and Bushra Alghamdi explores *The social, political and cultural factors that condition the growth of interactive art and participation in Saudi Arabia*.

Contributions to the research base

Our work has made a significant contribution to the research base in Art, through our role in leading national and international research networks and partnerships.

We have shaped discourse within our discipline through exhibitions, conferences and symposia. We have staged major **international conferences**, as well as numerous **colloquia** and **research seminars** bringing together artists, curators and writers to focus on key research areas. The EuroNoize conference, *Art, Music and Cultural Identity in an Age of Transnational Mobility* at Reading (2018), organised by Pil and Galia Kollektiv, examined performance, music,

cultural identity and nodes of independent production; *On Reading*, organised by Rowlands in collaboration with Bergen Kunsthall, Norway, focused on the act of reading in contemporary art; and Roithmayr's *Humility of Plaster* at Museum of Classical Archaeology, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge and Wysing Arts Centre, explored the materiality of collections.

Our **Research Platform in Curating** with ZhDK Zurich has staged major international conferences with partner institutions including *Curating and Feminist Thought*, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2016) published in *OnCurating*, issue 29, 2016; *De-Colonizing Art Institutions*, organised by Richter, supported by Kunstmuseum, Basel (2017); *Curating on the move*, conference and workshop examining ecology and world-making with the Taipei Biennale (2020), and in partnership with City University, Hong Kong; and *Our Hegemonic Machines*, Bucharest Biennial (2020). The research platform critically utilises the journal [OnCurating](#), edited by Richter, as well as the public symposia and conferences that the platform supports with partners such as the prestigious Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst.

Our reputation for research leads to invitations to deliver lectures and key research presentations. Of particular note are Hellings' contributions to *After Post-Photography* at European University of St. Petersburg (2016), and *Adorno* at Université Rennes (2017); Russell's keynote lecture *Doggo* at the British School in Rome (2018); Garfield's keynote *Black Artists and Modernism Conference On Anwar Shemza*, Tate Britain (2016); Renshaw's *Experiencing Architecture: Inviting Dialogue*, Royal Academy of Arts (2018); and O'Connell's *Transpositions: From science to art (and back)*, Fargfabriken, Stockholm (2017).

We have sustained and **promoted new networks and collaborations** through projects and research events. Reading International's public programme of talks, lectures and partnerships provide an international forum for Reading and offer a visible platform for research within the division. The **Curatorial Network Talks** hosted weekly (through 2017) at South Street Arts, Reading, introduced international curators, sharing methods and models from Shwetal Patel, Kochi Muziris Biennale, India, and Lada Nakonechna, Method Fund, Kyiv to Lozana Rossenova, Rhizome, New York, and Robert Leckie, Gasworks, London. Through 'EuroNoize' (Horizon 2020), Pil and Galia Kollektiv led a consortium including Are, Prague, and Kunsthall Oslo, to investigate the meaning (and sound) of cultural identity in an age of transnational mobility, through a series of conferences and performances.

Our public-facing research outcomes, through **exhibitions, screenings and performance**, are developed in close collaboration with partner galleries and museums internationally and in the UK. The global reach of our research is fostered through collaborations such as: Roithmayr's 'With, and, or, without' Camden Arts Centre, London (2015); Russell's 'Doggo', Kunsthalle, Zürich (2017); Clausen's 'Liquid Trust', Western Front, Vancouver (2015); Renshaw's 'Plan Unplan', Stephen Lawrence Gallery, London (2017), curated by Outside Architecture (a collaborative research group founded by Renshaw).

Garfield and Clausen have held prestigious **Visiting Research Fellowships** at the University of Newcastle and Musashino Art University, Tokyo, respectively. Strong and sustained partnerships with other UK and international universities underpin our research environment. 'The Legacies of Stephen Dwoskin' AHRC project **has enabled us to build collaborations** with researchers from the University of Glasgow and the University of Sheffield, in co-operation with the Lux and BFI, Arsenal Berlin and New York Film-Makers Co-op. The research project includes **practice-based research commissions** for artists to make original work (Patrick Staff, Margaret Salmon, Evan Ifekoya), in and through the archive, raising questions regarding embodiment, disability and film. A panel dedicated to Dwoskin research was hosted at the Screen Conference, Glasgow (2019) preceded by a dedicated Dwoskin Dossier published in *Screen journal*. The ongoing archival research will yield **new interpretations** and awareness of Dwoskin as a ground-breaking filmmaker, alongside innovations in digital methodologies. Findings will be shared at SMCS Society for Cinema and Media Studies and NECS European Network for Cinema and Media Studies.