


Institution: UAL		
Unit of Assessment: 32		
Title of case study: Creative Interventions in Archives and Collections		
		
<p><i>Hylas and the Nymphs</i>, Manchester Art Gallery 2018 © Michael Pollard.</p>		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008–2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by UAL:
Professor Sonia Boyce MBE RA	Chair in Black Art & Design	January 1995–the present
Professor Paul Coldwell	Professor of Fine Art	January 1995–present
Professor Joanne Morra	Professor of Art and Culture	March 2002–present
Professor Eileen Hogan	Emeritus Professor	May 2005–November 2020
Professor John Wynne	Emeritus Professor	May 1999– August 2020
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No.		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>UAL has supported its researchers working across the University in the development of cross-disciplinary and participatory partnerships with museums, galleries, archives and collections. These external projects engage in the critical examination of the processes of collecting, curating and displaying cultural artefacts, creating interventions that have long-term impact, leaving a legacy at the partner institutions. Through the examination of ways in which narratives are constructed, the research has produced creative interventions into these institutions' collections, which have impacted on public and professional understanding of archives and collections through revising the way objects and displays are understood.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>A key project in setting the agenda for this area of research at UAL was Hogan's <i>The Currency of Art</i> [3.1.], a six-year collaboration with ING Bank that brought together researchers in an institutionally supported collective project with the Baring Archive (a</p>		

collection of archival material relating to finance and the history of Barings) to consider methods of examining and working in archives, and to interrogate the roles artists might play in developing better public understanding of an archive or collection. The project focused on how the arts and business communities might engage productively to interpret and reframe the Baring Archive.

Key exemplars of research methods such as public co-curation and museum experiences are found in the work of **Boyce**, **Wynne**, **Coldwell** and **Morra**, all of whom are seen as representing important practice research in this field. **Boyce**'s practice involves working collaboratively, often with an element of improvisation, in order to explore power relations particularly around class, gender, race and sexuality. Notably, she has explored art as a social practice and addressed the construction of power relations in the making and display of artwork in *The Future is Social* (2011) [3.2]. This project focused on collaborative and participatory practice in art, examining the notion of ownership in relation to art created through collaboration, which might include that produced whilst working in an archive or collection.

In *Transplant and Life* (2017), commissioned by Royal College of Surgeons' Hunterian Museum, a direct result of the 'Transplant' project (Harefield Hospital, 2006–2007) [3.3], sound artist **Wynne** brought to his collaboration with the late photographer Tim Wainwright his long-standing research into socially engaged and cross-cultural sound arts practice. During this period as artist-in-residence at London's Royal Free Hospital, **Wynne** extended his exploration of multi-channel installation to examine how to use sound to influence the physical movement of audiences and enhance their experience in gallery and museum spaces, exploring new relationships between sound and still image, and between still and moving image. The work aimed to raise awareness of the issues around organ transplantation and of the varied experiences of patients and donors.

Coldwell's research focuses on revealing hidden meaning and content in order to create new understanding and insights. He introduces site-specific art interventions into 'personality' museums, in order to think about how 'absences' can be made manifest through making. Bringing practice-based archival research into the collection at Kettle's Yard, in *I Called When You Were Out* (2008) [3.4], the sculptor/printmaker uncovered the stories of selected objects from the archive. Responsive to aspects of the house and collection, and reflecting on the presence and absence of domestic life there, Coldwell made a series of bronze sculptures, prints and a film. The work echoed previous approaches to absence, memory and loss developed by **Coldwell** when working with the Freud Museum London in the 1990s. This way of working has evolved as part of a long and sustained engagement with collections including those at V&A, Scott Polar Research Institute and the Freud Museums in London and Vienna, in which the artist has adopted an embedded approach, spending considerable time with the collections and museum staff, to evolve a sense of what might be missing or edited out and, from this, creating new bodies of work.

In *Saying It* (2012) [3.5], **Morra** used her research into theories of psychoanalysis, as they relate to creative production, to explore artists' roles working within a particular collection—the Freud Museum London. The project continued **Morra**'s interrogation of the notion of 'site-responsivity', a research method that defines how an exhibition can make a critical intervention into a site that activates meanings through a dialogue between the site, the works of art, the artists and the visitors. The project was an experiment in audio-visual storytelling through which each visitor was immersed in a psychoanalytic process and could infer their own meaning.

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

3.1. Hogan, Eileen, with Baddeley, Oriana, Collins, Jane, Farthing, Stephen (2011) *The Currency of Art: a collaboration between the Baring Archive and the Graduate School of CCW*.

- 3.2. Boyce, Sonia, *The Future is Social* (2011), a three-year, AHRC-funded project (GBP14,735.00), devised by Boyce, culminating in an exhibition and symposium.
- 3.3. Wynne, John, with Wainwright, Tim, *Transplant and Life* project (2016), Royal Brompton and Harefield Arts.
- 3.4. Coldwell, Paul (2008) *I called when you were out*, Kettle's Yard. Series of works resulting from AHRC-funded project 'Absence and Presence' (GBP15,798.00).
- 3.5. Morra, Joanne (2012), *Saying It*. Exhibition, Freud Museum, London.

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

UAL has supported its researchers to develop external partnerships to produce work in specific contexts of key museums, galleries, collections and archives. Those selected for this case study present the breadth of types of intervention as a method for change employed by UAL researchers and are indicative of the University's success in this area.

Acknowledging **Boyce's** long-term collaborative and often performative practice, to stage critical interventions in institutional archives and cultural memory, Manchester Art Gallery (MAG) commissioned the artist to research, develop and produce a site-specific evening of performances to encourage public engagement with the gallery's permanent collection as part of their ongoing 'The Gallery Takeover' series of events. As part of one 'act' of the artist's *Six Acts* project (2018), **Boyce** worked alongside staff at the gallery to interrogate its curatorial practice as it stood at that point. The artist initiated a discussion about the curation of a gallery called 'In Pursuit of Beauty'. As a result of the debate, it was decided, collectively, to remove one painting temporarily—John William Waterhouse's, *Hylas and the Nymphs* (1896)—explaining that its removal was in order to prompt discussion. Public response for and against the initiative followed across a range of media types, with events at the gallery organised to enable deeper investigation of the issues. Some 927 comments were posted on the MAG website comments page, including: "Removing a painting for seven days has caused it to be seen by a vastly larger audience than would otherwise have been the case. It's the opposite of censorship. It's display plus a fanfare of drums and trumpets". [5.1.] *The Guardian's* Jonathan Jones confronted the debate in a series of articles; readers' letters continued the discussion. [5.2.] [5.3.] "The painting was removed for just a week, but in that time accusations of censorship and virtue-signalling dominated local and national discourse. Comments ranged from calling the move "vitally important" and "courageous", to "a trite PC gesture" that was "born out of the same impulse as book burning". [5.4.] The debate is ongoing—in late November 2020, **Boyce** gave the annual Andrew Carnegie Lecture for Edinburgh College of Art in which she discussed the important nuances of the controversy arising from the removal of the painting (audience: over 300). The Contemporary Arts Society acquired *Six Acts* after the exhibition (2018).

The Currency of Art is an important example of UAL's strategic plan to invest time and resource to create partnerships with other institutions to increase the external impact of the work of its fine artists, and the ideas being explored. The project generated creative responses to the Baring Archive, culminating in exhibitions hosted by ING Bank, including *re:searching* (2010), in which the works produced were exhibited alongside the historical works that inspired them. Participants including pupils from three local secondary schools, and UAL students and staff brought fresh perspectives, distinct from those of financial historians or more traditional academics. This work led to a centrally funded, cross-departmental research network around artist interactions with museums and archives and, subsequently, to two large international conferences supported by the University: *Im/material: Encounters within the Creative Arts Archive* (2016) and the later *Archives & Embodiment* (2019). This group worked in particular across the University's Professoriate, holding regular internal events and talks to explore thematic and theoretical issues that could underpin developments in approach and methodology in this area of work. The collaboration resulted in a UAL PhD student working on *Socialising The Archive*, based around the Baring Archive (funded by a Rootstein Hopkins Research Scholarship). **Hogan** gave papers at *Geographies of Collections* (Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference: The

Geographical Imagination, 2013) and *Creating Art From a Living Archive* (Past Is Prologue Conference, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2014).

Further developing the work on absence so important to his residency at Kettles Yard, **Coldwell's** *Freud's Coat* project, *Temporarily Accessioned: Freud's Coat Revisited* (2017), returned to the Freud Museum, London. As part of this stage of the exhibition, **Coldwell** arranged for the coat bought by Freud for his journey to London in 1938 to be x-rayed by the National Gallery to provide the data for a life-size digital print, called *Temporarily Accessioned-X-Ray*. The work raises issues around attitudes to contemporary migration. (Audience figures: Sigmund Freud Museum Vienna—22,630 visitors; Freud Museum London—6,400 visitors). [5.5.] The artists' book, *Temporarily Accessioned*, has been acquired by galleries including The National Gallery, Tate and Victoria State Library. More recently, **Coldwell** has continued his work around uncovering meaning through a further AHRC-funded research network (GBP30,498.00), *Picturing the Invisible*, which brings together key research academics from subjects as disparate as astrophysics, philosophy, printmaking, psychoanalysis, surgery, forensics and fine art, to examine how they imagine and manifest 'the invisible' from within their own disciplines.

Morra's 2018 book, *Inside the Freud Museum: History, Memory and Site-responsive Art* (International Library of Modern and Contemporary Art) offers a nuanced analysis of the Freud Museums in Vienna and London and their unique relationships to contemporary art, giving a new perspective of the history and practice of psychoanalysis, of museums and of contemporary art. The concept of 'site-responsivity', in particular, has had considerable impact and the book has been widely praised by senior academics and theoreticians. "**Morra**... demonstrates the fruitfulness of revising the relationship between site and the art installed there. The concept [of 'site-responsivity'] will transform our thinking about that special spatiality without which art cannot reach its audiences." (Mieke Bal, 2018). The book has been described as "impressive and thoughtful... For anyone interested in the pervasive influence of Freudian psychoanalytic ideas within conceptual art, this is an important read". (Caroline A. Jones, 2018). [5.6.] An element of **Coldwell's** *Picturing the Invisible* was a solo exhibition at the Sir John Soane's Museum in London (2020). **Coldwell** has been described as "a past master of this type of site-responsive exhibition... Taking his cue from the show's setting—the basement kitchens of the famous architect's grand house in Lincoln's Inn Fields—Coldwell imagined how the unknown cooks and servants who laboured there, out of sight and beyond the pale of cultural history, might have perceived their master's lofty endeavours". [5.7.]

Medical museums and clinical settings are places where the patient voice is often absent. For *Transplant and Life*, **Wynne** was asked to bring the patient voice—in all its diversity—into the medical museum, a space normally dominated by specimens, clinical hardware and medical 'heroes'. Filming, photographing and recording a total of 29 participants—organ transplant recipients, live donors, people on the waiting list for a transplant—as well as specialists, **Wynne's** intervention created an aural and visual body of work. The project also revisited participants from the earlier *Transplant* project, generating a unique longitudinal qualitative study of transplant recipients (with additional support from Royal Brompton and Harefield Arts). The project contributed to both the professional and the public understanding of the experience of receiving—or waiting for—an organ transplant. *The Lancet* described how: "Clare Marx, the Royal College of Surgeon's first female President, spoke feelingly at the launch of how proud she felt to have the testimony of patients put centre-stage, within such hallowed walls, for the very first time. She is right to claim that this modest exhibition is 'the jewel in the crown' of what the RCS has to offer. In proclaiming what matters most to surgeons is their patients, Marx makes a gesture on behalf of our whole community, one that is important and certainly long overdue". [5.8.] One of the surgeons that **Wynne** worked with wrote "In terms of what I have learned, it is perhaps the depth of the impact that having a transplant has on a patient and their family. In the day-to-day ward work, we don't really get a chance to sit down and think about the impact... we pay lip service to it, but do we really think about it deeply? This work certainly allows us to do this." When one Harefield patient

heard some of **Wynne's** recordings, they commented, "I wish someone had told me some of this before I had my transplant". [5.9.]

Approximately 50,000 people visited the exhibition. (Online exhibition visitor numbers: 272,405 page views and 23,427 unique views.) In part, the online element was to ensure that the Museum had a presence during the closure of the Royal College of Surgeons building for major refurbishment. Exhibition reviews and related articles appeared in the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)*, *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* and *The Lancet*. One visitor described the exhibition as "such an informative and viscerally moving exhibit. I have been taken to a different head space and have been exposed to so many new points of view". [5.10.] One patient explained how the act of talking about her kidney transplant to **Wynne** for the project helped both her and her husband to think about the transplant experience itself: "It's actually a really great experience for me because ... I'd never thought about it or talked about it before. And the pictures were there but I'd never ... *looked* at them ... it was kind of cathartic." [5.11.] The exhibition was selected as part of the international SEAD collection (Multidisciplinary Exemplars of Science, Engineering, Art, Design and Humanities) as an exemplar of how artists can provide a new human perspective to scientific and technological issues. [5.12.] Beyond the quantitative data, the nature of the project means that much of the impact was at a personal, intimate level—patients, families and medical staff. Dissemination took place through a six-month series of events around the project, including presentations at 'Encountering Pain: hearing, seeing, speaking' conference, University College London, 2016; 'The Sound of Feelings', presentation at Rethinking Sound 2018, Hanyang University, Seoul, South Korea; 'Transplant and Life: Memory, pain and emotion in the patient voice', presentation at The Sound of Memory Symposium: Sound-track/Sound-scape, Goldsmiths, University of London; 'The Intersection of Research and Practice', keynote address at Research and Innovation: Practice-related Research Conference at Southampton Solent University; and an artist's talk at the Royal College of Surgeons library, introduced by Clare Marx, President, RCS.

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

- 5.1. [Manchester Art Gallery, 8 February 2018, Presenting the female body, challenging a Victorian fantasy public feedback.](#) (927 online posts).
- 5.2. Jonathan Jones, "Why have mildly erotic nymphs been removed from a Manchester Gallery? Is Picasso next?" *The Guardian*, 31 January 2018. UAL on request.
- 5.3. 'Banning artworks such as *Hylas and the Nymphs* is a long, slippery slope.' *The Guardian Letters*. 2 February 2018, UAL on request.
- 5.4. Artsy, [17 March 2020, 'John William Waterhouse's *Hylas and the Nymphs* Changed My Life](#)'.
- 5.5. *Freud's Coat*, Arts Council England report, 20 April 2017. UAL on request.
- 5.6. Mieke Bal (2018); Caroline A. Jones (2018). UAL on request.
- 5.7. [Picturing the Invisible review, Impact Printmaking, September 2019.](#)
- 5.8. [The Lancet, 7 January 2017, Gabriel Weston, 'Perspectives, Transplanted Lives'](#).
- 5.9. Exhibition Review, Transplant and Life, *Medical Humanities*, 11 April 2017. UAL on request.
- 5.10. *Transplant and Life* comment, April 2017. UAL on request.
- 5.11. Transcript of recording made for *Transplant and Life*. UAL on request.
- 5.12. [Transplant and Life: SEAD Exemplars.](#)