

<b>Institution:</b> University of Central Lancashire		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UOA32: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Café Royal Books: Preserving, promoting and making accessible at-risk post-war photographic archives.		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2005–ongoing		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Craig Atkinson	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Senior Lecturer in Fine Art	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2008–ongoing
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> August 2013–ongoing		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No</b>		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Since 2012, Craig Atkinson's inter-disciplinary research project, Café Royal Books, has focused on preserving, promoting and making accessible at-risk post-war photographic archives, specifically British documentary photography. Atkinson has created a new democratic and affordable model for publishing photography and has provided a platform on which photographers' work can be acknowledged. Atkinson's research has led to changes in major international gallery collections. Café Royal Books has made it possible to collect a whole genre of photography that had previously not been comprehensively collected, much of which was unseen and unpublished. This research has become the only comprehensive, live and accessible archive of this type of work. Atkinson has made accessible over 500 bodies of work by over 300 international photographers, publishing 475 titles. There are over 100,000 of Atkinson's publications in circulation, many acquired by major international galleries and libraries, including: Tate, MoMA USA, National Gallery of Canada, Victoria and Albert London, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan.</p> <p>Atkinson's research has re-defined the history of British photography, led to changes in education and learning, and has inspired the production of major new cultural artefacts.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Café Royal Books was established by Craig Atkinson in 2005 to enable the exhibiting, dissemination and collection of art outside of the gallery system, using democratic and affordable publications. There are approximately 100,000 Café Royal Books in circulation globally.</p> <p>From 2012 Atkinson's research has focussed on publishing post-war British Documentary Photography, which for the purpose of this research is defined as: 1960–2000. This includes photographers from the British Isles working abroad and international photographers documenting the British Isles.</p> <p>Atkinson's research involves locating and researching work by these photographers. Recently he has sourced sets of unseen and unpublished work from Serbia, Poland, America, France, Ireland and the UK [2, 6]. All this work had remained unseen and inaccessible in the photographers' private collections, until published and made visible by Café Royal Books. Atkinson curates, edits and sequences the work into individual titles, which form a larger ongoing series and archive. By preparing this documentation in an appropriate way, the publications become accessible and affordable for museums and galleries to acquire. Atkinson creates the widest possible reach by distributing the work globally to hundreds of organisations and outlets, including Foyles, The Brooklyn Museum and The Whitney in New York, through to independent bookshops in South Korea, Japan and the UK. This provides a widely accessible mechanism for people to engage with the publications on an international scale for research purposes, private collections, local interest and personal knowledge.</p> <p>Atkinson's research in the UK and abroad involved visiting major photographic collections, photographers' archives, interviewing photographers and curators. This process has revealed a wealth of photographic work documenting British life 1960–2000, which was at that time were not publicly visible and were absent from collections in the UK and abroad. Atkinson's curatorial process highlighted that there was a gap in this genre of documentary photography for a number of reasons: there was no affordable method for photographers to publish and disseminate their work [2, 6]; publishers frequently only worked with 'known' photographers; there was no print on</p>		

demand publishing service and the cost of financing and distributing a self-published book was prohibitive.

Traditionally, these bodies of work were restricted to publication in newspaper Sunday supplements. Galleries collected Fine Art photography, not documentary photography, perhaps because it was too 'real', too gritty, politically engaged and ephemeral. Independent galleries who put on small exhibitions of this work did not have the facilities to collect and archive the work — when the show came down, the work was gone. The first photographic show at Tate Britain was only held in 2007, 170 years after the photograph was first made. The work has been missing from publications, missing from photographic history and the public realm and from academic discourse. Not knowing what to do with work once it had served its purpose, photographers' negatives frequently remained forgotten, in dusty under-the-bed boxes. Outside of a photographic hierarchy, photographers' work didn't stand much of a chance of being visible. In addition, the demise of traditional print journalism and the closure of several hundred photographic libraries ensured there was no feasible way for a photographer to preserve their work.

Atkinson's initial research found there had not been a comprehensive survey exhibition of British Documentary photography. There was no accessible collection, or realistic way to collect this genre of photography [2, 6]. Yet there are thousands of documentary photographers who worked during the period 1960–2000, making millions of images showing aspects of life during that time. The rare and fragile quality of photographic film negatives means they must be carefully stored to avoid decay, damage or loss. Photographers don't have the facility to do so and only recently have they been able to digitise their work. The photographic record is at risk of file formats becoming obsolete, servers crashing, and data being deleted.

Austerity and budget cuts often put existing collections at risk. The Library of Birmingham's photography holdings are famous and of international significance. However, in 2016, their budget was cut, and the entire photographic, curatorial and archiving team was made redundant and the collection mothballed. *Eight Stories* [1], published by Atkinson, remains one of the only publicly accessible elements of the Daniel Meadows Archive, which formed part of his life's work and was acquired by the library in 2014. Due to its publication by Café Royal Books, an important record of his work was acquired by other major collections.

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

1. Meadows, D. (2015) *Eight Stories*. Southport: Café Royal Books  
Library of Birmingham, ref. MS 2765.  
A boxed set of eight publications and a DVD contains eight movies in relation to the book subjects.  
Subjects:  
Stockport Gypsies 1971.  
Bancroft Shed Weaving 1976.  
Bancroft Shed Engine House 1976.  
Weldone Boiler Fluers 1976–1977.  
Steeplejack 1976.  
Pig Killing 1975–1976.  
Welfare State International 1976–1983.  
Clayton Ward 1978.
2. Spence, J. (2017) *Gypsies and Travellers 1970s*. Southport. Café Royal Books  
The British Library <http://explore.bl.uk/BLVU1:LSCOP-ALL:BLL01019185380>  
Published on the occasion of the Hyman Collection lending Jo Spence's Gypsy and Traveller work to Centro Cibeles de Cultura y Ciudadanía, Madrid from October 19th, 2017 to February 4th, 2018 and La Virreina Centre de la Image, Barcelona from February 18th to May 20th, 2018.  
Subjects:  
Gypsies and Travellers 1970s Men.  
Gypsies and Travellers 1970s Childhood.

Gypsies and Travellers 1970s Homelife.  
Gypsies and Travellers 1970s.  
Co-edited by James Hyman and with a text by Nicola Baird.

3. Various. (2015) Café Royal Books Archive One. Southport: Café Royal Books. Brotherton Library, Leeds University. <http://lib.leeds.ac.uk/record=b3543255>  
100 volumes  
Titles include, amongst others, books by:  
Martin Parr — Chairman, Magnum Photos, JA Mortram, John Claridge, Homer Sykes, Libby Hall, Joni Sternbach.
4. Various. (2017) Café Royal Books Archive Two. Southport: Café Royal Books. Brotherton Library, Leeds University. <http://lib.leeds.ac.uk/record=b3548399>  
100 volumes  
Titles include, amongst others, books by:  
Martin Parr — Chairman, Magnum Photos, David Hurn Magnum, Stuart Franklin Magnum, Tricia Porter, John Deakin, Victor Sloan
5. Various. (2018) Café Royal Books Archive Three. Southport: Café Royal Books. University of South Wales Library [https://whel-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=44WHELP\\_USW\\_ALMA\\_DS21105890340002424&context=L&vid=44WHELP\\_USW\\_NUI1&search\\_scope=CSCOP EVERYTHING&tab=tab3&lang=en\\_US](https://whel-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=44WHELP_USW_ALMA_DS21105890340002424&context=L&vid=44WHELP_USW_NUI1&search_scope=CSCOP EVERYTHING&tab=tab3&lang=en_US)  
100 volumes  
Titles include, amongst others, books by:  
Martin Parr — Chairman, Magnum Photos, David Hurn Magnum, Stuart Franklin Magnum, Tricia Porter, John Deakin, Victor Sloan, George Rodger (founder Magnum photos), Jo Spence, Dafydd Jones, Tish Murtha, Brian Griffin
6. Wiedel, M. (2018) Industries The West Midlands 1977–1979. Southport: Café Royal Books  
National Art Library / Victoria and Albert Museum. <https://nal-yam.on.worldcat.org/oclc/1081311641>  
A boxed set of seven publications Text by Janine Wiedel and archive text by Clive Lancaster from the British Journal of Photography.

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

##### ***Securing archives enables a new history of British photography to be told***

Atkinson's underpinning and ongoing research, as Café Royal Books, has for the first time, sourced, collected, edited, presented and helped preserve several hundred sets of British Documentary Photography made by over 200 photographers from around the world between 1960–2000. This work is previously uncollected, the majority of it unseen and unpublished [A]. Dr Daniel Meadows, BAFTA winning documentarian, on stage at the Martin Parr Foundation symposium, entitled 'British Photography from the 1970s' (20–21 April 2018), described Café Royal Books as, "**singular, significant, and completely unmatched...creating a new history of photography by changing international perspectives of British photography**". [B]

Each publication presents a unique body of work. Each archive box [3, 4, 5] presents 100 volumes, which collectively work to shift our understanding of Britain during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This forms the most comprehensive series and accessible printed archive of this material globally. Dr James Hyman, gallerist, international fine art and photography collector and art dealer said that: "**Craig Atkinson at Café Royale [sic] Books occupies an important and central place in British photographic history, ensuring that work that might otherwise be lost or forgotten is reproduced and thereby preserved.**" [C]

David Hurn (Magnum Photos) in 1973 set up the School of Documentary Photography in Newport, Wales. He has written volumes on 'how to be a photographer' and is cited widely as one of the world's foremost photographers and educators. Hurn has stated that: "**(Café Royal**

**Books) in the documentary field, the most important publishing venture in British publishing”.** [D]

One of the most important documentary photographers of the past 40 years, Martin Parr, former chairman of Magnum photos, has acquired the entire Café Royal Books archive for his foundation. He states: “ **I think (Atkinson’s) big contribution is he’s finding all these lost and obscure bodies of work by people, many of whom I’ve never heard of, that are out there, and he’s actually getting them published...A remarkable archive...without him these bodies of work would have been lost forever...**” [E]. Parr’s recognition of Atkinson’s research and his inclusion of it in his archive allows Café Royal Books to be preserved and accessible in one of the most important photographic collections in the world.

**Influencing the creative Industries and shaping photographic education**

Atkinson’s research is used in many international universities, including Harvard University, University of South Wales Newport, University of Oxford and University of Gloucestershire as examples of affordable and democratic publishing, presenting a wide and unique range of British Documentary Photography through the archive boxes [3, 4, 5]. Cafe Royal Books inspired the next generation of photographers, by recovering a unique, missing section of photographic history, providing new teaching resources and enabling pedagogic innovation. It demonstrated a simple and democratic method by which a photographer can present their work, without relying on a gallery or a major publisher.

Grant Scott, film maker, academic and course leader at the University of Gloucestershire describes Café Royal Books as creating a: “**...paradigm shifting...Internationally important body of work and practice of inquiry that has seen a (Café Royal Books at the forefront of) rediscovery of an approach to photographic image making...Inspired young photographers to see the medium in a form previously unavailable to them...Café Royal Books has become the most important and accessible archive and research facility for British Photography that we have.**” [F]

Chris Killip, internationally revered photographer and Professor Emeritus of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University states: “**CRB is without parallel in the world of photography...The imprint is seen and understood not only as a very significant contribution to British photography but also as an important addition to our understanding of Britain’s recent social history.**” [G]

Atkinson’s research covers many areas of documentary photography. For example, politics, faith, geography, culture and society. By gathering many sets of images within each subcategory, Atkinson has built a previously non-existent visual history of the British Isles between 1960–2000. The work reshapes our perception of life during that time, and influences others who create work based on that historical period.

Lee Hall, the multi-award winning playwright and author of *Billy Elliot*, states: “**That each individual publication has a relationship to the other works in the series make this an unprecedented enterprise. The research that Craig Atkinson has pursued has not only unearthed work which would otherwise be lost but it has contextualised that work and completely reshaped what the documentary photography of the period means...it provides the wider context for that endeavour which has never existed...It is a hugely important cultural intervention. It has been an enormous inspiration for my own work and I feel it is very important to acknowledge the cross-disciplinary nature of the project. It really is hard to say where it will be most significant: in the field of photography, social history, cultural history or Art. It is important in all these areas and this academic contribution to such a live set of cultural debates should be justly celebrated and acknowledged...I am working on several screenplay projects about Britain in the 1970s and 80s...CRB are an invaluable resource in terms of fashion and locations...Some of the storylines have been inspired by the images...I am working on a new film version of Billy**

**Elliot musical...When the film eventually comes out you will see many images directly inspired by CRB photographers.” [H]**

**From major collections to new collectors: accessing new audiences**

Atkinson’s research discovered that major institutions, both in the UK and overseas, have neglected British Documentary photography. In a period when photographic prints are expensive and photographers print sales are down, Café Royal Books has democratised access to documentary photography [I, J]. The publications are available online and in many high street and gallery shops globally. The customer base is wide and varied. Reasons for purchase include: nostalgia, a connection to the subject of a particular title, collectors of photography, photobooks and photographic ephemera.

International galleries, museums, libraries and universities, including those who don’t own a photographic collection of this material, have acquired ready-made boxsets of the books [3, 4, 5]. These include: The British Library, The Victoria and Albert Museum, Museum of Modern Art New York, The Bodleian Library, National Gallery of Canada, The Scottish National Gallery.

These sets are an easy and affordable way for the institutions to form an instant collection, plugging the gap that existed previously. Maria White, former Head of the Artists’ Books Collection at Tate Gallery, UK, states: **“Café Royal Books are important to a collection like Tate Library’s in a number of ways. Firstly they illustrate the intense research and collaboration that goes into what could be assumed to be a ‘small’ publication. These books investigate and reveal photographers’ work bringing it to a new audience at affordable prices...they can be used to illustrate many themes...leisure, class, religion, environmentalism, industrial history, artistic ownership...” [K].**

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

- A. Café Royal Books: An Anarchic Archive, Lewis Bush, *Photoworks*, November 2016. <https://photoworks.org.uk/cafe-royal-books-anarchic-archive/>
- B. Academic paper by Dr Daniel Meadows, BAFTA winning documentarian. Understanding Craig Atkinson’s publishing project Café Royal Books (CRB) as academic research. February 2018.
- C. Statement of support from Dr James Hyman, internationally celebrated Fine Art and Photography gallerist, dealer and collector
- D. Statement of support from David Hurn, photographer. Magnum Photos. Founder of the School of Documentary Photography in Newport, Wales
- E. Café Royal Books democratising collectable and unique photobooks in the UK, Brian Carroll, *Offline photography journal*, October 2018.
- F. Written statement from Grant Scott, author, film maker, founder of the United Nations of Photography, Senior Lecturer and researcher at the University of Gloucestershire.
- G. Written letter of support from Professor Chris Killip, Professor Emeritus of Visual and Environmental Studies, Harvard University (dated March 15 2019)
- H. Written statement by Lee Hall, award winning (BAFTA, Laurence Olivier, Academy...) international playwright (Billy Elliot, Cats, Rocketman...). Received November 11th 2017.
- I. Written statement by Sarah Fisher, Executive Director, Open Eye Gallery, UK. Received October 2017
- J. Written statement from Tracy Marshall, Director of Northern Narratives. Received February 2019)
- K. Written statement from Maria White, former Head of Artists’ Books Collection at Tate Gallery, UK. Received October 2017