

Institution: Coventry University		
Unit of Assessment: 32		
Title of case study: The Impact of Socially-Engaged Photographic Practice on Attitudes to Homelessness		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 onwards		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Anthony Luvera	Associate Professor of Photography	2014- present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 – Dec 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

This case study draws on Anthony Luvera's socially-engaged photographic research highlighting its influence on creative industry practice and attitudes to homelessness within various audiences at a national and international level. Impact on four key groups is identified:

1. **Individuals with lived experience** - enhanced quality of life through increased cultural participation
2. **Public understanding** of the lived experience of homelessness and issues with Council support - circa 220,000 attendees at physical exhibitions and dissemination through traditional and online media
3. **Parliamentary/Local Authority (LA)** - policy debate informed by the research
4. **Practitioners (galleries/artists)** - documented impact on practice with international reach, including Europe, the USA, and Argentina.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

This case study is derived from participatory, socially-engaged practice research undertaken by Anthony Luvera between 2013 and 2020 (and on behalf of Coventry University since 2014). Luvera embeds himself in the world of those with whom he collaborates. He builds relationships and trust, whilst developing photographic and digital skills, enabling the communication of experiences through photographs and other media. Luvera's participatory methods challenge the 'flying in and out' mentality that can be associated with traditional approaches to the representation of social issues.

Assembly (R1) was co-created with over 50 people with lived experience of homelessness in Brighton and Hove between 2013 and 2014. First exhibited in Phoenix Gallery Brighton (4 October to 2 November 2014), the exhibition comprised over 70 photographs, a 50-minute soundscape, performances by The Cascade Chorus (a community choir for people in recovery from addiction issues), and a public engagement programme at the Phoenix Gallery. *Assembly* continues to be exhibited internationally (e.g. the Goa International Photography Festival) and featured in various publications. It led to a collaboration between Luvera and a participant, Gerald Mclaverty, on the project **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) (R2)**.

FAQ sought to present research about support and services available to people with lived experience of homelessness. In 2014, Luvera and Gerald Mclaverty sent email correspondence to council representatives in 44 cities and towns across the UK, written from Mclaverty's experience of homelessness, requesting information about services provided in each locality. At the heart of *FAQ*, are questions that enquire about an individual's right to access to basic living

Impact case study (REF3)

provisions such as shelter, personal safety, health, food, and communication. The dossier of replies and other materials received from the LAs, was first installed in the gallery space within the exhibition of *Assembly* at Phoenix Gallery, providing the central focus of public engagement events. In April 2017, Luvera and Mclaverty launched the next iteration of *FAQ* at the Tate Modern, followed by a new round of enquiries sent to 61 LAs. In January 2018, working with the Museum of Homelessness (MoH), and after extensive analysis, the findings were exhibited at Tate Liverpool, within its Tate Exchange space, for an exhibition entitled '*State of the Nation*' (R2). The work was installed as a 13-metre wall display, accompanied by an extensive public engagement programme in partnership with individuals, and organisations such as Liverpool Salon, Established Beyond, South Liverpool Homes, Social Policy Forum, The Whitechapel Centre, and University of Liverpool. Considering the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Luvera and Mclaverty conducted further questioning of councils in 2019 to see if the Act had resulted in any discernible change in their behaviour or responses. Emails were sent to 110 LAs and comprehensive analysis of the new data undertaken. Further exhibitions of the 2014, 2017 and 2019 survey iterations, were held at The People's Republic of Stokes Croft in Bristol from 27 November to 12 December 2019, and the '*Taking Place*' exhibition at The Gallery at Foyles in London from 11 January to 29 February 2020 (R2).

Luvera's approach has been shared widely, for example through *Photography for Whom?* (R3) a biannual journal that seeks to present historic text alongside a commissioned piece of writing, to foster critical consideration of socially-engaged photography. *Photography for Whom?* is edited by Luvera, supported by GRAIN, and has a circulation of 800 journals to selected galleries, museums, libraries, and bookshops. The research was also shared with an international audience through the workshop *(Un)making Images Together: Photography and Collaboration* in Riga, Latvia in 2019 (R4) that Luvera delivered alongside artist Vincen Beeckman.

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

R1) Luvera, A. (2014) *Assembly*. Artefact. Submitted to REF2021. Including exhibition at Brighton Photo Fringe, Phoenix Gallery Brighton. <http://www.asocialpractice.com/assembly/> and within the *Portraits from an Island*, curated by Anna Fox, at the Goa International Photography Festival in 2015 <https://annafox.co.uk/publications/portraits-from-an-island/>

R2) Luvera, A. (2014) *FAQ*. Artefact. Submitted to REF2021. Including exhibitions at People's Republic of Stokes Croft, Bristol (2019) - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-50458291>; and at Tate Liverpool (2018) - <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-liverpool/workshop/state-nation/frequently-asked-questions-anthony-luvera-and-gerald>

R3) Luvera (ed) (1st edition June 2019) *Photography for Whom?* including *Introduction* by Luvera. Circulated to 800 libraries, galleries and bookshops - <https://grainphotographyhub.co.uk/portfolio-type/photography-for-whom/>

R4) Luvera, A., Beeckman, V. (2019) *(Un)making Images Together: Photography and Collaboration*, ISSP Workshop, Latvia 12-20 July 2019 <https://issp.lv/en/education/summer-school/2019/workshops-2019/2-anthony-luvera-vincen-beeckman-un-making-images-together-photography-and-collaboration>

The underpinning research is found within written contributions and practice research artefacts. The research has been supported with competitively awarded funding from the National Lottery: Big Lottery Fund, and Assembly was commissioned by Brighton Photo Fringe, supported by Arts Council England.

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

1. Impact on Individuals with Lived Experience of Homelessness

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Luvera has enhanced the quality of life of participants by developing and encouraging artistic and social skills through participatory research practices (R1, R2). Collaborator Gerald Mclaverty states:

“My own perceptions of homelessness have changed as a result of working with Anthony. It’s a soul-destroying position to be in, but my work on FAQ makes me feel I’m making a contribution. It gives me a purpose and a real sense of achievement. I have spoken at events at the Houses of Parliament and the Tate Modern.... The sense of achievement from being part of that work and those events is life-changing.” (S1)

Increased confidence has led to Gerald taking up a voluntary retail position, his first employment role in a significant period. Hugh Morley comments:

“There is no doubt in my mind that the advice, support and encouragement I have received from Anthony during our collaboration has improved my life. Anthony has brought out untapped potential in me and our work has given my life profound meaning.” (S1)

Hugh is currently working with Luvera on a photographic book entitled ‘*At Home in the Universe*’, evidencing how the work has inspired and supported new forms of artistic expression in individuals who previously did not have access.

2. Impact on Public Understanding

The research has enhanced public understanding of the lived experience of homelessness. It has been exhibited to international audiences in world-renowned galleries. *FAQ* (R2) at the Tate Exchange attracted 5,012 people, 49% of the whole gallery figure that week, and a 10% lift over the same week in previous years (S2). Evaluation of the event (S3) demonstrates impact on public perceptions, through a ‘dwell time’ (time/display) of 2 minutes plus (national average: 1 minute) and indicative vox pop comments:

“The shock of understanding what councils aren’t doing to help. 92% of councils haven’t even responded to questions about basic human needs...profound, touching, and upsetting.” (S3)

The show reached a wider audience through *BBC Radio Merseyside*, *The Big Issue*, and *Museums Journal* (45,000 readers and 223,000 monthly online views), as well as being archived on the Tate website (circa 2m hits/week).

Assembly and FAQ (R1, R2) reached circa 210,000 people, as well as a number of influential speakers through presentation at the Gallery at Foyles, London, (S4, S6). During the 2 month exhibition, curators Futurecity (S5), shared the work with 10,000 Mailer subscribers and 4,000 Instagram followers. Sharing with their 6,500 Twitter followers, saw 1,000 visits, 1.5% increase in followers, 192 mentions, and 151.6K impressions. The People’s Republic of Stokes Croft exhibition (S7) saw visitor numbers of circa 650 and coverage in *The Independent* and BBC online (S4).

As a result of the research, during 2020, Luvera worked with journalist Robert Wright on an article about homelessness and the coronavirus crisis: ‘*The lockdown has transformed life for the homeless – but what happens now?*’ (*Financial Times* 24 June 2020). The inclusion of assisted self-portraits highlighted the challenges facing people experiencing homelessness in London, and those working for homelessness charities and grassroots organisations to provide services through the pandemic (S8).

3. Impact on Policymakers

Impact at UK government level, is evidenced through Luvera and Mclaverty’s presentation of *FAQ* to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Ending Homelessness on 25 June 2019 hosted by Chair, Neil Coyle MP. Islington Borough Council (S6), confirmed policy debate within the Council was stimulated by the work (R1, R2), leading to enhanced communications between disparate Council groups:

“As a result of the Taking Place event, I am aware of support groups relating to homelessness, and groups advocating social/council housing. There is synergy within the objectives of both groups but to date, little collaboration. I will bring these two groups together to focus actions and make better use of Council resources.” (S6)

Dissemination of FAQ (R2) across Exeter City Council led to discussions between cabinet members, and a realisation that Council practices must be more coherent:

“Anthony’s work has significantly changed Council perceptions of the needs of those experiencing homelessness in the City..... Anthony’s work has made us acknowledge that a more coherent strategy for support provision is required.” (S6)

The MoH (S3) and People’s Republic of Stokes Croft indicate their campaign communication with LAs has been influenced with FAQ (R2) providing “investigatory expertise” and a valuable dataset:

“...our communications with Bristol Council around homelessness have been enhanced. We now have real-world data to authenticate what we are saying.” (S7)

4. Impact on Practitioners and Galleries

Luvera’s research has altered practitioner approaches to commissioning, curating, and exhibiting work (S7). Research with individuals from marginalised backgrounds (R1, R2) has informed his contribution and oversight as Chair of the Education Committee for The Royal Photographic Society:

“A strategic decision was taken to place more emphasis on socially-engaged photography, reflecting Anthony’s impact on the Society.” (S7)

The Curator for Schools & Young People at The Photographer’s Gallery assisted Luvera on Assembly and FAQ (R1, R2) and now implements a successful socially-engaged approach herself, having received funding for a further 3 years of operation (circa £120k):

“The robustness of Anthony’s approach, combined with its inclusive working practices, directly influenced how I work and have been implemented at TPG through workshop delivery and outreach activities.” (S7)

Luvera has shared his work widely (R1, R2, R4) influencing artists in Argentina, Belgium, Latvia, Norway and USA: *“It helped me ‘find my voice’ in terms of describing socially-engaged work in funding applications”.* (S7)

Documented changes to practice are also evidenced through Luvera’s work with GRAIN, including ‘Photography for Whom’ (R3) and the annual symposium ‘The State of Photography’, (90+ attendees from across the UK). The Director of Projects at GRAIN (S9), provides excerpts from the new business plan evidencing policy change directly influenced by Luvera:

“We rewrote our business plan as part of our relationship with Arts Council England. Socially-engaged work is now at the core of the plan and I would be comfortable in saying that is primarily due to the work we have done with Anthony..... the work is pioneering and important for our current times.” (S9)

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

S1: Interviews: ‘Impact of Luvera Research on Individuals with Lived Experience of Homelessness’, The Innovation Partnership Ltd, February 2021.

Impact case study (REF3)

S2: Testimonial letter of support from Head of Learning at Tate Liverpool, Royal Albert Dock Liverpool, Liverpool, L3 4BB.

S3: Testimonial letter of support from Co-founder of Museum of Homelessness, 6th Floor, St Matthews Church, Brixton Hill, London, SW2 1JF.

S4: Hemmings, A., Luvera, A. (2020) '*FAQ Final Evaluation Report*'.

S5: Testimonial letter of support from Curator at Futurecity, PO Box 77520, London, NIP 3NJ

S6: Interviews: '*Impact of Luvera Research at a Local Authority Level*', The Innovation Partnership Ltd, February 2021.

S7: Interviews: '*Impact of Luvera Research on Practitioners (Galleries/Artists)*', The Innovation Partnership Ltd, February 2021.

S8: Newspaper article with assisted self-portraits by Luvera: '*The lockdown has transformed life for the homeless – but what happens now?*' Financial Times 24th June 2020.

S9: Testimonial letter of support from Director at GRAIN Photography Hub, GRAIN Projects.