

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Central Lancashire		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA 32: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Making Histories Visible		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2000-2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Lubaina Himid Christine Eyene	Professor of Contemporary Art Guild Research Fellow	1990-2020 2013-2020
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2017-2019		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</b> Lubaina Himid, CBE, the 2017 Turner Prize winner and her Making Histories Visible archive of work by Black artists, has significantly transformed the landscape of modern art in Britain and internationally. Himid has supported and mentored young Black female artists and grass-roots artistic organisations, such as Root-Ed Zine. She has worked extensively with renowned international and national galleries, such as the Tate, London and the Walker Gallery, Liverpool to influence changes in curatorial practice, identifying the lack of representation of Black artists in their collections and changing gallery acquisition strategies through long-standing engagement with curators. Himid has generated new ways of thinking between artists, institutions and pioneered innovative ways of engaging the public. Himid's <i>Five Conversations</i> show at the High Line, New York, attracted 8,000,000 people and informed their elementary schools after-school programme. Himid's <i>Our Kisses are Petals</i> exhibition at the BALTIC Centre of Contemporary Arts, Gateshead featured an extensive public engagement programme, attracting visitors who would not normally engage with gallery spaces and events. Himid's research has transcended beyond artistic and curatorial circles to engage in wider societal debates on the representation of Black lives in the media, through her residency with <i>The Guardian</i> newspaper.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</b> All the key research that underpins this impact has been developed by Lubaina Himid, artist and curator and others including curator Christine Eyene in Making Histories Visible (MHV) over the past twenty years. Throughout her years of practice as an artist and a curator Himid has utilised a network of Black Women Artists who have contributed to the dynamism of MHV and built a unique cultural space that has promoted social inclusion and literally changed the landscape of how Black women's art is viewed nationally and internationally by curators and opinion formers. As Maria Balshaw, Director of Tate says, this work has given "<b>visibility to the intersectional contributions of Black women artists to the development of Black art, on the one hand, and British feminist art on the other.</b>" [A] She often works with emerging artists while nurturing diverse, curious and interested audiences. The underpinning research consists of a range of exhibitions of her work and curatorial interventions. The research can usefully be divided into two themes with various research outputs linked to them.</p> <p><b><u>Making Visible and Challenging Stereotypes</u></b> Himid's research seeks to explore and address the lack of visibility of the work of Black women visual artists in museum collections and temporary displays of contemporary art in Britain. Crucial to this intervention was her curation of the 2011 Tate Britain show <i>Thin Black Line(s)</i> [5] that displayed the work of pioneer Black Women Artists placing these hitherto marginalised cultural workers at the heart of the establishment [6]. Simultaneously, her work explores the ways ideologies that encourage racial stereotyping are perpetuated even in the most liberal of media and promotes a method through the work of challenging this. As part of her 2017 Turner Prize winning exhibition [1] Himid displayed <i>Negative Positives: The Guardian Archive (2007-2017)</i>. In this work she showed how the history of caricature still infects the body politics of the depiction of Black People in the 21st Century. Himid's subsequent residency at <i>The Guardian</i> newspaper promoted new ways of thinking about the depiction of racialised bodies. This illustrates the real-world effect of her praxis which culminated in her commission to make a G2 front page for <i>The Guardian's</i> Race and Equality edition in June 2020.</p> <p><b><u>Enriching the Art Museum Experience Through Collaborative Engagement</u></b> Himid's interventions come through the unique way in which her own exhibitions challenge curatorial orthodoxies. Himid's methodology combines roles as artist/curator, mentor/educator,</p>		

institutional advisor/archivist to engage multiple local artists, educators and the wider public who want to talk to each other through ‘the exhibition’ or the MHV archive and curatorial project. For instance, in MHV, Christine Eyene has worked in parallel with Himid, focusing on African artists in Europe and in the diaspora, foregrounding hitherto marginal voices in a series of exhibitions in Europe and Africa culminating in her directorship of the Casablanca biennale (2019). British examples include Himid’s Turner Prize winning exhibition. This showcased the Prize’s aim to invite people to talk about the effects of Britain’s colonial history and its impact upon the everyday life of citizens of colour. Works such as *Swallow Hard: The Lancaster Dinner Service* revealed hidden histories about slavery. Also of note are her touring Arts Council exhibitions. At Spike Island, Bristol [1] she initiated a programme featuring young Black British artists in response to her work and at the BALTIC in Gateshead where her work with flags led to a deep engagement with local communities through live performance, poetry and music [2]. International exhibitions such as at Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe [1,3] encouraged curators to engage local black artists and publics previously unaccounted for by the institution. Himid brought her unique methodology to North America, engaging new publics with her High Line sculptured pieces accompanying the exhibition at the New Museum [4]. Overall, museum directors welcome what Balshaw describes as her “**focus on audiences, to better account for wide-ranging lived experiences**” [A] which museums often find difficult to represent.

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

1. Lubaina Himid Touring Exhibition (ACE Strategic Touring Grant £288,000) culminating in 2017 Turner Prize win.  
*Navigation Charts*, Spike Island Bristol, 2017; *Invisible Strategies*, Modern Art Oxford, 2017; *The Place is Here*, Nottingham Contemporary, 2017; *The Truth is Never Watertight*, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, 2017; *Warp and Weft*, First Sight, Colchester, 2017; *The Turner Prize, winning exhibition*, Ferens Gallery, Hull, 2017:
2. Lubaina Himid *On the Night of the Full Moon* Berlin Biennale 2018 and *Our Kisses are Petals* BALTIC Arts Centre 2018  
*On the Night of the Full Moon*, exhibited at all venues: KW Institute for Contemporary Art; Akademie der Künste; ZK/U Center for Art and Urbanistics.  
*Our Kisses are Petals*, BALTIC Art Centre, Newcastle, 2018. Exhibition and Public Programme developed with artist/tailor Richard Bliss.
3. *Gifts to Kings*, Mrac, Sérignan, 2018
4. *Work from Underneath*, New Museum New York 2019, exhibited simultaneously with *Five Conversations*, High Line Sculpture Park New York.
5. *Thin Black Line(s)*, Tate Britain, 2011. At the core of this work is a conceptual reframing of the image of black and Asian women themselves.
6. *Meticulous Observations*, 2017-2018, Walker Art Gallery. Includes pieces selected and curated by Himid all by women artists, from the Arts Council Collection.

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

Himid has had a significant impact on the visibility of Black women artists, on challenging traditional curatorial practice, on innovative public engagement and in making Black histories visible. The Holberg prize winning art historian Griselda Pollock has outlined the significance of Himid’s impact: “**She [Himid] has worked ceaselessly as both an artist and a curator, seeking to ensure the visibility of many other Black women artists of her own generation while also supporting emerging Black artists. ... She was awarded the prestigious Turner Prize in 2017, a much-deserved acknowledgment of her extraordinary range as an artist addressing the complex histories of Europe’s relation to Africa and African peoples as well as challenging contemporary racism in both art and the media.**” [B]

#### Inspiring and Supporting Young Black artists

Himid’s research has helped to inspire and support new forms of artistic expression with young Black artists in the North West of England and beyond and has supported community-based and grass-roots artistic forms of expression. Root-ed is a zine founded by Amber Akaunu and Fauziya Johnson and aims to promote, support, represent and inspire creative people of colour within the North West of England. Himid has supported the zine since its conception by featuring in their first edition (March 2018) and using her research profile to help spread the Root-ed zine message. In July 2020, at the height of the Black Lives Matter movement, Himid was

commissioned to produce a Guardian newspaper G2 cover for the race and equality issue. Proceeds from this commissioned piece went directly to ROOT-ed zine to help to support emerging young artists of colour. The founders of ROOT-Ed zine state that: **“Lubaina’s involvement in ROOT-ed Zine has had a significant and direct impact on our ability to reach large audiences, including young BIPoC artists in the North West. Her continuous support demonstrated to the arts institutions, to other artists, and most importantly to our generation that hope is not lost when you’re a person of colour in the arts.”** [C] They also discuss the significant inspirational impact Himid’s 2017 Turner Prize had. It was **“important for us to see a WoC [woman of colour] as a nominee. Through her artwork we were awakened to the research...it really inspired us personally in our university art development...we do not see artists of colour in museums and galleries. It’s always something to do with a special event – like a Black History Month exhibition, rather than it being a part of a normal exhibition schedule.”** [C] Himid’s work has not only had a significant impact on the zine members as artists but has also led to critical conversations with their families and communities on the issues facing Black artists [B]. Emerging Black women artists have been inspired too: Joy Labinjo describes the significant and long-standing impact of Himid’s research on her: **“The influence of the 1980s Black Arts Movement is apparent; Labinjo cites Sonia Boyce, Lubaina Himid and Claudette Johnson as artists that ‘similarly provide room for black people to breathe and tell their own story, rather than perform a sensational or preconceived narrative.’”** [D] The artist Jade Montserrat has discussed the importance of Himid as exemplar and mentor: **“Lubaina...informs the means and shape of my own generation and will continue to do so for a long time to come. Lubaina Himid’s exemplary work ethic and productivity has a significant influence. ... Himid’s resolution to memorialise and narrate invisible histories, ... influences the way I see, read and prioritise the discussion of the Black Atlantic, and African diaspora.”** [E] In January 2020, to celebrate 35 years of Himid’s commitment to communal activism and the promotion of new and young Black women artists she brought together pivotal artists from the 1980s with the younger generation of emerging artists in a unique event to make cross-generational links that had a significant impact in the field. The two-day conference, *Creative Conversations: Black Women Artists Making and Doing* investigated the links between African diasporan women’s literary and artistic cultures. It culminated in a public event and an ‘in conversation’ between Himid and the Scottish Makar, Jackie Kay (175+ attended). The event brought together Black women artists (including Marlene Smith and Ingrid Pollard) with academics and curators (80 participants). The director of the Chisenhale Gallery, Zoe Whitley said it succeeded in **“bringing together a multi-generational cross-section of visual artists, poets, filmmakers, musicians and writers from across the UK (as) a vital step in de-centring notions of a London-based British art world”** [F].

### **Changing Curatorial Practice: Collaboration with Public Art Venues**

Himid has had a significant impact on the curatorial and collection processes and practices of numerous high-profile art galleries and has enabled them to adapt to changing cultural values. Himid has collaborated with museum professionals resulting in enhancements to collection policies, interpretation practices and exhibition programmes. As Dr Maria Balshaw CBE, Director of the Tate indicates, Himid has had a significant long-standing relationship with the Tate that has led to critical impacts relating to curatorial practice. Balshaw goes on to state: **“Lubaina’s presentation of Thin Black Line(s) [2011] at Tate Britain initiated a sustained curatorial enquiry into the work of Black British women artists from the 1980s onward, that has now had a deep impact on acquisitions and display strategy in this area. Artists such as Ingrid Pollard, Maud Sulter, Sonya Boyce, Chila Kumari Burman, Claudette Johnson, Barbara Walker are all represented in significant ways in the collection and [the] museum aims to continue to collect, exhibit, and share work from artists of their generation and their torchbearers. The impact of their artistic, research and teaching practices is understood more profoundly because of the explorations and debates Lubaina’s work fostered.”** [A] Balshaw goes on to highlight the continuing impact that Himid has had on governance and strategy at the Tate: **“Beyond this artistic standing, we are particularly grateful to Lubaina for the support that she gives to Tate in developing its strategy and broadening the impact of its work. For a number of years, she has sat as one of two artists on Tate**

**Britain's Advisory Council. In this role, she advises on a wide range of important issues and activities at Tate Britain, including curatorial, research, learning, visitor experience, diversity and inclusion, communications and the digital. Lubaina brings unique and influential insights to these discussions, complementing the originality and pertinence of her work in the strategic contribution she makes.**" [A] In similar interventions, Himid works with the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool to change curatorial practice. Fine Art Curator Charlotte Keenan highlights that before Himid's *Meticulous Observations* exhibition in 2017 there were only two art works by Black female artists in the collection, one of which was Himid's own work. Keenan states: **"Meticulous Observations' sought to respond to this chasm in the collection. Curated by Lubaina from the Arts Council Collection, it featured work by several Black British women 'missing' from the Walker's collection. A rich dialogue has unfolded between the Walker and the artist [Himid] in the ensuing years, finally taking shape in the present projects to develop our collection and stage a linked exhibition, 666: Black Girl Magic. Critical to these conversations has been the opportunity to reflect with Lubaina on the circumstances that have led to the present situation."** [G] Curator Charlotte Kennan indicated: **"We have long been aware of the need to diversify the Walker's collection but our discussions with Lubaina Himid have been instrumental in helping us to identify and formulate a concrete direction for us to pursue. ... to address what she has described as the 'double invisibility' of Black British women, who face discrimination due to their gender and race."** [G] Himid's ongoing working relationship with the Walker Art Gallery has been instrumental in the establishment of an advisory group of artists and museum professionals to enhance heritage preservation and interpretation, as well as to provide a space for research-led engagement with under-engaged audiences. Keenan indicates that Himid's role has been instrumental in identifying the current problems of representation in gallery acquisitions and collections. This collaborative curatorial process has delivered more inclusive curatorial and collection policies.

**Generating New Ways of Thinking: Collaboration between Artists, Audiences, Organisations and Experts to improve inclusivity and visibility**

Himid's praxis consistently leads to interventions that enable new relationships to be forged between galleries and their communities. For example, The High Line, New York, a former elevated rail line that has now be turned into a park, commissioned Himid's installation *Five Conversations* as part of their 2019-2020 programme. This featured five reclaimed wooden doors from traditional Georgian townhouses painted with portraits of everyday stylish women. The doors were installed in Gansevoort Woodlands on the park and were viewed by approximately 8,000,000 people **"sparking dialogue among our visitors, neighbors, and colleagues."** [H]. Art Associate Curator Melanie Kress said: **"In her signature way, Himid brought the two-dimensional medium of painting into our three-dimensional world."** [G] The huge success of this open-air public art installation **"was the inspiration for our elementary after-school program, who studied Himid's artworks and then made their own portraits painted on doors, mimicking Himid's style while learning about portraiture and how artists can cross between sculpture and painting."** [H] Himid's exhibition, *Work from Underneath*, opened at the New Museum, New York in June 2019, as part of a series of exhibitions that feature the works of artists at their first New York museum presentation. **"Himid's exhibition featured a major new sculpture realized for the 4th floor of the New Museum ... along with a series of new paintings presented in a total installation."** [I] Director of the New Museum, Massimiliano Gioni stated: **"The exhibition was visited by approximately 50,000 people and gathered significant press coverage from all over the world."** [I] Gioni went on to outline the significance of this exhibition in America noting that: **"In the many reviews, Himid's role in the British Black Arts Movement was often mentioned, which goes to indicate how much curiosity and receptiveness there has been in America for a fundamental and healthy reassessment of the history of contemporary art in the English speaking world and beyond..., the impact of her exhibition was greatly amplified because her work always acts by constantly expanding and questioning the institution of art history and its accepted categories."** [I] Natalie Bell, former Curator at the New Museum highlights a series of public events that ran parallel to the exhibition. This programme featured an 'In Conversation' with Himid, two New Perspective Tours, 'Outside the Box' and a family



orientated event (approximately 230 attendees) [I]. Himid's *Our Kisses are Petals* exhibition (May-October 2018) was commissioned by the BALTIC Centre of Contemporary Art, Gateshead as part of the Great Exhibition of the North. The full project, consisted of an exhibition, an embedded local community events programme, Raising the Flag, plus a publicly sited flagpole atop BALTIC's building. Katie Hickman, curator at the BALTIC states: **"The exhibition received 145,777 visitors. BALTIC had extremely positive feedback on the installation which encouraged our audiences to move the works themselves, rearranging the positioning of the phrases to create their own poems."** [J] The exhibition led to strong and meaningful interactions between the organisations staff and visitors [J]. The community events programme: **"included choirs, drumming circles, school children and professional bands. The happenings began outside on BALTIC Square, and gathered large passing audiences, the performers then led visitors into the exhibition, including those who previously may have found barriers to entering a large arts institution. The strength of the informality, generosity and quality of this events programme within such an inviting installation for our audiences, cannot be overstated...It is a project that remains significant in BALTIC's history and evidences the importance of accessible local community programming and the impact it has in welcoming non-art specialist audiences, aligning with BALTIC's values; placing our artists and our local communities at the heart of our organisation."** [J]

### **Making Histories Visible: Raising the Profile of Invisible Histories**

The Making Histories Visible (MHV) archive is an interdisciplinary visual-art research project based in the Centre for Contemporary Art (School of Art, Design and Fashion) at the University of Central Lancashire. It collates scarce and ephemeral work by Black British artists and has pioneered making this material accessible to as wide an audience as possible. Significantly, the archive holds documents about historical exhibitions which are key to understanding the 1980s Black British Art movement. The archive includes materials that are often overlooked in collections, such as handwritten notes by artists, curators and gallery owners that give unique insights into the activism of these artists and the challenges they've faced. The founders of Root-ed zine have stressed the impact of MHV, stating that: **"the research that Making histories Visible has undertaken has helped us a lot in understanding ... methods for connecting with artists and audiences in more innovative and relevant ways. Even just by the way that the archive is accessed is a very connection focused experience that introduced and formed relationships between a handful of artists of all backgrounds, ages and locations."** [C] The presence of the MHV archive enables and inspires artists to **"see their art as activism, as conservation and archiving, and most notably - as important to keep as it's valuable."** [C] In 2018, *The Guardian* newspaper (print readership 2,932,000 per month), commissioned Himid as an artist in residence, **"a residency which radically changed their editorial and production practice."** [B]. This was a result of her long-standing use of *Guardian* images in her artistic practice and resulted in her engaging in dialogue with editorial staff to critique the newspaper's photographic editorial practices [K]. This dialogue explored issues of potential bias in editorial decision making and opened up conversations about representation in the newspaper, highlighting that the printed press had an **"extraordinary habit of placing negative text, about something else entirely, next to images of black people"** [K].

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

[A] Director Maria Balshaw, CBE, Director of the Tate Testimonial

[B] Griselda Pollock Review

[C] Root-ED Zine Testimonial

[D] Joy Labinjo Interview

[E] Jade Montserrat Testimonial

[F] Zoe Whitley, Director of Chisenhale Gallery Testimonial

[G] Charlotte Keenan, Curator at Walker Art Gallery Testimonial

[H] Melanie Kress, Art Associate Curator at the High Line Testimonial

[I] Massimiliano Gioni, Director, New Museum and Natalie Bell former curator, New Museum Testimonials

[J] Katie Hickman curator at BALTIC Centre of Contemporary Arts Testimonial

[K] Guardian Residency Video and Article

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/dec/03/lubaina-himid-guardian>