

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Edinburgh		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 32 (Art & Design: History, Practice and Theory)		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Peripheral Impressionisms: Challenging Perceptions of Impressionism		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2008 – 2017		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name:</b> Frances Fowle	<b>Role:</b> Personal Chair of Nineteenth Century Art	<b>Period employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2005 – present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014 – 2019		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Fowle's research into the notion of 'peripheral' impressionisms has led to large-scale international exhibitions with three major impacts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economic impact: boosting the market for the work of the exhibited artists and generating revenue for arts institutions through catalogue sales and high visitor numbers (over 518,000 in total).</li> <li>2. Influencing curatorial strategies: prompting art institutions to reassess the importance of Impressionist art produced outside France and adopt a more global perspective.</li> <li>3. Shaping public perceptions of Impressionism: introducing previously overlooked artists to new and diverse audiences and stimulating media, critical and public discourse.</li> </ol>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Fowle's transnational approach to Impressionism has brought to light global networks of artists, critics, dealers and exhibitions in France, Britain, the USA and the Nordic countries [3.1, 3.2, 3.3]. This has led her to develop the notion of 'peripheral impressionisms' - 'those impressionisms located outside France and ... those artists side-lined in earlier histories of Impressionism' [3.1].</p> <p>The research challenges established scholarship that has tended to focus on France and canonical male artists. The concept of peripheral impressionism has enabled Fowle to propose strong alternatives to these dominant discourses, which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acknowledge inter- and transnational artistic and art-critical networks operative across Britain, Europe and the USA between the 1870s and the First World War, and artistic adaptations of Impressionism in relation to national styles.</li> <li>2. Re-evaluate artists within France previously not associated with Impressionism, or hitherto considered 'minor', such as Charles-François Daubigny.</li> </ol> <p>Her research has revealed that Impressionism evolved into a more complex, hybrid style than previously acknowledged, one with national variations.</p> <p>Fowle's insights into such dynamics have afforded exciting scholarly and curatorial potentials and new ways to engage the public. This was demonstrated by the two high-</p>		

profile exhibitions that she organised in her capacity as Senior Curator at the Scottish National Gallery, to which she is seconded.

*American Impressionism: A New Vision 1880-1900* was a collaboration with the Terra Foundation for American Art in Chicago and the Musée des Impressionnismes, Giverny [3.4]. The exhibition explored the origins of American Impressionism, relations between American artists and Europe, issues of national identity and the American market for and critical reception of French Impressionism. It opened at the Musée des Impressionnismes (28 March 2014 – 29 June 2014), with the adjusted title, *L'impressionnisme et les Américains*. The next stage at the National Galleries of Scotland (NGS) (19 July – 19 Oct 2014) was the first time that the work of the American Impressionists had been shown in Britain. The exhibition then travelled to the Thyssen Bornemisza Museum, Madrid (4 Nov 2014 – 1 Feb 2015), with the title *Impressionismo Americano*. Fowle was co-curator, author of one of the two main essays in the catalogue (fully illustrated in colour and published in English, French and Spanish) and lead curator for the National Galleries of Scotland presentation.

*Inspiring Impressionism: Daubigny, Monet, Van Gogh* was presented at the Taft Museum, Cincinnati (20 Feb – 29 May 2016), the National Galleries of Scotland (25 June – 2 Oct 2016) and the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (21 Oct 2016 – 29 Jan 2017) [3.5]. The exhibition was the first ever monographic show of Daubigny. It explored intersections between naturalism and French Impressionism, and the impact of the market and softer networks of influence in artist colonies outside Paris. Fowle was project leader at all of these venues. She was lead curator in Edinburgh, co-author and editor of the exhibition catalogue (published in English, French and Spanish) and author of a second book, *Daubigny and Impressionism*, which summarised key research insights for general audiences and therefore helped facilitate impact [3.6].

### 3. References to the research

3.1. Fowle, F. (2017) 'Peripheral Impressionisms', *H-France Salon* 9:14, 5-7. (Can be supplied by HEI on request)

3.2. Fowle, F. (2017) 'Nordic Artists' Colonies 1870-1914'. *Art in Translation* 9:2, 183-189 (part one) <https://doi.org/10.1080/17561310.2017.1339253> and 9:4, 419-538 (part two) <https://doi.org/10.1080/17561310.2017.1405646>

3.3. Fowle, F. (2008) *Impressionism and Scotland*. Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland (exhibition and book). (Can be supplied by HEI on request)

3.4. Fowle, F., Brettell, R., Bourguignon, K. M., (2014), *American Impressionism: A New Vision, 1880-1900*. Paris: Editions Hazan (exhibition and book). (Book submitted in REF2)

3.5. Fowle, F., Ambrosini, L., Dijk, M. Van. (2016) *Inspiring Impressionism: Daubigny, Monet, Van Gogh*. 2016, Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland (exhibition and book). (Book submitted in REF2)

3.6. Fowle, F. (2016) *Daubigny and Impressionism*. Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland (Can be supplied by HEI on request)

#### 4. Details of the impact

Fowle's research has generated economic, cultural and profile-raising impact for museums and boosted the market for the work of the exhibited artists. The two exhibitions based on this research, *American Impressionism* and *Inspiring Impressionism*, were notable popular successes attracting over 518,000 visitors in total [5.4]. They have introduced new and wider audiences to little-known artists and stimulated debate about received ideas of Impressionism among academics, curators, the press and the public.

##### 1. Economic impact

Both exhibitions raised the profile of peripheral impressionist artists and boosted the market for their work. Following *Inspiring Impressionism*, auction prices for Daubigny's paintings increased substantially, with examples of his work selling for double or three times the estimate. On 31 October 2017 a *plein-air* sketch by Daubigny, *Vue du Château Gaillard*, with an estimate of USD25,000-35,000, fetched USD75,000 at Christie's New York. On 22 May 2018, a Daubigny *Orchard*, similar to those shown in the exhibition, sold at Sotheby's New York for nearly three times the estimate (USD30-50,000; hammer price USD137,500). On 26 November 2018, another Daubigny study, *Les plaines d'Auvers, travaux dans les champs*, with an estimate of EUR35,000-40,000 sold at the Hôtel Drouot in Paris for EUR88,400 [5.1]. The above sale prices are highly unusual, since all three auction houses are experienced at setting realistic estimates and Daubigny's work had never previously achieved such high prices. James Mackinnon, Member of the Society of London Art Dealers, confirmed that *Inspiring Impressionism* contributed to 'a stronger appreciation within the commercial art market of the outstanding importance of Daubigny' [5.2].

The exhibitions generated economic and profile-raising benefit for the cultural institutions involved. This was evident from the sponsorship, ticket and catalogue sales and related retail activity. *American Impressionism* received USD600,000 funding from the Terra Foundation [5.3], more than any other exhibition in the history of National Gallery of Scotland. It received 100,000 visitors at the Musée des Impressionnismes, achieving record attendance for that summer period compared to previous exhibitions at the museum [5.4]. Catalogue sales in Edinburgh (nearly 2,000 copies) were higher than any other exhibition that year, generating GBP35,600 (41% of the NGS's publishing annual income) [5.5].

*Inspiring Impressionism* was seen by 321,773 visitors worldwide, of which 238,474 were in Amsterdam [5.4]. Visitor figures were 63,160 in Edinburgh, larger than any other paying exhibition over a five-year period [5.4]. Visitor figures in Cincinnati were 20,139, 'an all-time record for an exhibition at the Taft' [5.4]. The catalogue and Fowle's book *Daubigny and Impressionism* sold nearly 5,000 copies in total [5.5]. With a related boost in wider retail sales, the exhibition was one of the two most successful for the National Gallery of Scotland that year, generating GBP76,517 in catalogue sales alone (57% of the gallery's publishing income) [5.5]. Christopher Baker, Director of European and Scottish Art and Portraiture at the National Gallery of Scotland, confirmed that since 2014 Fowle's exhibitions have made 'a significant contribution towards the public programme', 'raising the institution's profile [...]' as well as attracting research funding and corporate sponsorship', and have had 'a huge impact on areas of the Galleries such as retail [...] and restaurant and have boosted visits to the website' [5.3].

## 2. Shaping curatorial approaches to Impressionism

As a result of *American Impressionism*, Fowle was invited to lead public symposia on the American artist George Bellows at the Barber Institute, Birmingham (3-4 November 2016) and on global Impressionism at the National Gallery, London (25 February 2017) [5.6]. Through her direct consultation with an international network of curators, Fowle's transnational approach to Impressionism has influenced other major exhibitions and their nomenclature. These included *The Glasgow Boys: Scottish Impressionism* (Drents Museum, Assen, 2015-16) [5.7] and *Van Gogh and Britain* (Tate Britain, 2019) [5.7], in which works by Van Gogh were juxtaposed with works by Scottish artists.

The foregrounding of the American-born impressionist artist Mary Cassatt in the marketing of the *American Impressionism* exhibitions in France and Spain appears to have prompted a change in attitude amongst French curators. In 2014, the French museum world rejected the title 'American Impressionism' for the exhibition at Giverny (instead opting for the title *L'impressionnisme et les Américains*) on their understanding that Impressionism was primarily a French phenomenon. However, by 2018, the *Mary Cassatt* exhibition at the Jacquemart-André Museum in Paris was marketed as 'An American Impressionist in Paris'. This was a significant departure from the customary representation of Cassatt as part of the French Impressionist circle.

## 3. Shaped public perceptions of Impressionism, introducing previously overlooked artists to new and diverse audiences and stimulating media, critical and public discourse

The exhibitions sparked extensive press response and public debate around Impressionism, national styles and the evaluation of canonical artistic movements. Reviews praised *American Impressionism* at the National Gallery of Scotland as a 'sparkling exhibition' (*The Financial Times*), an 'astonishing show' (*The Herald*) and 'planted with surprises' (*The Observer*) [5.8]. Critics noted that it challenged existing ideas about Impressionism: *Country Life Magazine* commended it for shedding light 'on artists little known outside America', while *The Independent* identified as 'brave' and 'rewarding' the decision to juxtapose American and European works [5.8].

Visitors to *American Impressionism* enjoyed being introduced to unfamiliar artists: 'Some beautiful paintings by painters I'd never heard of'; 'I never considered Sargent to be an Impressionist till today' [5.10]. A varied accompanying programme of educational events ensured the broadest possible reach, including guided tours for school and university groups, events for community groups including those living with dementia and practical workshops for adults. Fowle's lectures and guided tours attracted particular praise, a typical comment being: 'your brilliantly effortless talk was fascinating, entertaining and revelatory' [5.9].

*Inspiring Impressionism* was selected as a critics' choice by over eight major international publications, receiving a five-star review in *The Scotsman*, four-star reviews in *The Telegraph* and the *List*, and coverage in the *New York Times*. Reviewers praised it as 'that rare thing, an exhibition that tells us something new about the Impressionists' (*Apollo*), 'full of surprises' (*The Herald*), a 'fascinating exhibition [that] offers a genuinely fresh perspective' (*The Scotsman*), and an invitation 'to rethink the origins of Impressionism' (*The Burlington Magazine*) [5.9]. Visitors appreciated learning about Daubigny: 'Daubigny was just a name to most of us but not now ... a magnificent exhibition' [5.10].

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

- 5.1. Collated sales information from Christie's, Sotheby's and Hôtel Drouot
- 5.2. Testimonial from the Society of London Art Dealers
- 5.3. Testimonial from Director, European and Scottish Art and Portraiture, National Galleries of Scotland
- 5.4. Attendance figures for all venues
- 5.5. Email with catalogue sales figures from Retail, National Galleries of Scotland
- 5.6. Emails from Barber Institute, Birmingham and National Gallery, London
- 5.7. Emails from Drents Museum, Assen and Tate Britain, London
- 5.8. Collated press on *American Impressionism* and *Inspiring Impressionism*
- 5.9. *American Impressionism* visitor book comments supplied in Terra Foundation for American Art Final Report
- 5.10. Email with visitor feedback from Cupar U3A Art History group