

<b>Institution:</b> King's College London		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 27 English Language and Literature		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Shakespeare400: Collaborating with London's Cultural Sector to Create New Understanding of Shakespeare in Contemporary Culture		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2010–2016		
<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>
Gordon McMullan	Professor	From 1995
Lucy Munro	Professor	From 2013
Sonia Massai	Professor	From 2003
Hannah Crawforth	Senior Lecturer	From 2009
Elizabeth Scott-Baumann	Senior Lecturer	From 2013
Sarah Lewis	Lecturer	From 2013
Sally Barnden	Postdoctoral research associate	From 2016
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2016–2017		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N</b>		

### 1. Summary of the impact

Shakespeare400 (S400) was a five-year cultural partnership project created by McMullan and led by King's to mark the Shakespeare Quatercentenary in London in 2016. In co-ordinating a shared season of public exhibitions, performances, creative projects and educational and other events created collaboratively with a consortium of 23 major cultural partners, we:

- reinvigorated engagement with Shakespeare both by cultural organisations and their publics;
- demonstrated the continued creative significance of Shakespeare in contemporary culture;
- stimulated new work inspired by Shakespeare;
- helped democratise access to Shakespeare; and
- demonstrated Shakespeare's contemporary cultural significance both locally and globally.

The S400 season – underpinned by King's research on textual and theatrical contexts, poetic form and cultural afterlives – created new knowledge for a wide, diverse set of audiences, representing a significant instance of focused, large-scale, collaborative cultural/creative impact informed by the sustained work of a collective of researchers. In consortium partners' words, S400 *"brought together a wide and varied body of organisations to enable London and the world to explore [Shakespeare's] legacy in scholarly and diverse artistic forms"* [A] and *"led to [the] creation of new artistic works engaging with the public and widening participation in academic research"* [G].

### 2. Underpinning research

The impact of S400 was underpinned throughout by the research of members of the Department of English and the London Shakespeare Centre at King's. S400 emerged initially from King's research into the role of former King's professor Sir Israel Gollancz in the 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary, which provided historical impetus for our facilitation a century later of London's Quatercentenary celebrations [3]. Gollancz's work – in particular the diversity of contributors to his *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare* (1916), arguably the first 'global Shakespeare' publication – inspired our creation of a season of cultural activity drawing directly on King's research for cultural and creative work expressing the ongoing vibrancy of Shakespeare's plays and poems in the contemporary imagination. Beginning with King's longstanding partners, Shakespeare's Globe and the British Library (BL) (our collaborators in two taught MAs), the consortium eventually comprised 23 organisations (see legacy website), plus associate member the British Council. Events created by all partners drew on King's research into Shakespeare's works and their original contexts as well as the afterlives of those works and of the larger cultural phenomenon called 'Shakespeare'. Our research falls into four distinct fields – editing/textual scholarship, cultural/theatrical contexts, poetry/poetic form, and cultural afterlives – each of which informed the impact.

**Editing/textual scholarship.** King's is known for sustained, long-term work in Shakespearean editing. McMullan has edited several plays, including *Henry VIII* for the *Arden Shakespeare* (3rd series); he is a general editor of the *Arden Early Modern Drama* series and a general textual editor of *The Norton Shakespeare* (3rd ed.). Munro has edited multiple early modern plays and is editing *Henry IV, Part 1* for *Arden Shakespeare* (4th series). Massai has edited multiple early modern plays, is editing *Richard III* for *Arden Shakespeare* (4th series) and has published extensively on early modern textual processes. King's research into textual issues underpinned in particular the BL exhibitions and the MOOC by informing discussion of the construction of the author in the period and of the difference it makes to our understanding of Shakespeare's own and subsequent cultural moments to be aware of the original and later publication contexts for his works.

**Cultural/theatrical contexts.** King's research in this area is extensive. Munro's work on the early modern theatre industry for *The Children of the Queen's Revels* (2005) and *Shakespeare in the Theatre: The King's Men* (2020), her chapter in the prizewinning *Shakespeare on the Record* collection and an essay for *Shakespeare Quarterly* that was described by the periodical's reviewers as "sophisticated, nuanced, and supported by meticulous research", has tangibly enhanced understanding of theatre history [4,5]. Research by Crawforth for *Shakespeare in London* helped reshape understanding of the legal disputes in which Shakespeare was embroiled, demonstrating the embedding of the plays in specific urban locales [1]. Crawforth and Lewis's research for *Family Politics in Early Modern Literature* (2017) informed understanding of the familial contexts for the plays and poems and for the extant documents of Shakespeare's life, including his will, and underpinned the impact of the MOOC and of the two exhibitions, determining narratives and the choice of objects for display.

**Poetry/poetic form.** King's research in this field, notably Scott-Baumann's co-edited collection, *The Work of Form* (2014), and the research that led to Crawforth and Scott-Baumann's essay collection, *The Sonnets: The State of Play* (2017), has enhanced understanding of the radical nature of the sonnet and reshaped understanding of the relationship of form and history in the study of poetry. This research underpinned the creative collaboration with Royal Society of Literature (RSL) poets and the widening participation/schools work by showing the combination of formal discipline and imaginative innovation that drove Shakespearean poetic creativity.

**Cultural afterlives.** King's research on Shakespeare's cultural afterlives and on the generative, global role of Shakespearean creativity is highly regarded. McMullan's research has increased understanding of the 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary and of the origins of global Shakespeare, while his work on late style has transformed understanding of late-life creativity in (and beyond) Shakespeare by demonstrating the inadequacy of universal, transtemporal definitions of artistic 'lateness' [2,3]. Massai's groundbreaking work on global Shakespeares, beginning with *World-wide Shakespeares* (2005), insists that 'global Shakespeare' is always also 'local Shakespeare'; her work on Van Hove's Shakespeare productions extends this analysis to contemporary non-Anglophone adaptation. King's research on Shakespeare and still photography, leading to Barnden's monograph, *Still Shakespeare and the Photography of Performance* (2020), demonstrates the new life that visual images drawn from Shakespeare's plays acquired with the invention of the camera [6]. This research collectively underpinned the BL exhibition, the MOOC, support for performances at the Barbican and the 'Still Shakespeare' animations.

### 3. References to the research

1. Crawforth, H. J., Dustagheer, S. & Young, J. (2015). *Shakespeare in London*. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare.
2. McMullan, G. A. & Wilcox, Z. (2016). *Shakespeare in Ten Acts*. London: British Library. (Includes McMullan's 'The Tempest at the Blackfriars', Massai's 'Shakespeare Across the Globe', Munro's 'Restoration of King Lear'. Shortlisted – Society for Theatre Research Book Award 2016.)
3. McMullan, G. A. with Mead, P., Grant Ferguson, A., Flaherty, K. & Houlahan, M. (2018). *Antipodal Shakespeare: Remembering and Forgetting in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, 1916–2016*. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare.
4. Munro, L. (2019). Shakespeare and the Playing Companies. In H. L. Crummé (ed.), *Shakespeare on the Record: Researching an Early Modern Life* (pp.131–42). London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare. (Includes an introduction co-written by Munro; the Janette Harley Prize of the British Records Association was awarded jointly to Munro and editor Crummé for this book.)
5. Munro, L. (2020). *Shakespeare in the Theatre: The King's Men*. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare.

6. Barnden, S. (2020). *Still Shakespeare and the Photography of Performance*. Cambridge: CUP.

#### 4. Details of the impact

S400 culminated in a London-wide celebration of the Shakespeare Quatercentenary across 2016. King's research directly influenced and informed consortium partners' creative outputs, helping demystify Shakespeare for new audiences, innovate across media, express Shakespeare's local and global impact, change public perceptions of the value of Shakespeare for today's culture and tangibly enhance the practice of partner organisations [B,C]. Given King's location, our existing relationships with key partners and our recognition that Quatercentenary events would emerge organically in Stratford and other UK and global locations, it felt appropriate to focus our consortium on London – although, in the event, S400 impact had a broader geographical reach.

#### **Reinvigorating engagement with Shakespeare: cultural organisations and their publics**

With our cultural partners, we reinvigorated public engagement with Shakespeare by refocusing attention on the intersection between Shakespeare's life, the era in which he wrote and the full range of his works, dramatic and poetic. We challenged the 'heritage' approach by rethinking Shakespeare's legacies in new and living contexts for a substantive local and global audience.

Two exhibitions were at the heart of the S400 programme. King's research in textual, cultural and theatrical scholarship underpinned both, informing choices of document and object for display and discussion. The exhibition *By Me William Shakespeare: A Life in Writing*, a collaboration and co-curation with the Head of Early Modern Records at The National Archives (TNA) featuring documents including Shakespeare's will, emerged directly from King's research. She stated that King's research brought *"significant original knowledge to the development of [the exhibition] narrative"*, determining the stories told and the items displayed, thus directly increasing audiences' access to knowledge. She noted that *"McMullan, Munro and Crawford's research was pivotal to the interpretation of the documents and to the structure of the exhibition, [...] shaping our understanding of the establishment of the Globe, the controversy over Essex's rebellion, the social and poetic ramifications of Shakespeare's involvement in the Bellot and Mountjoy affair, the significance of the spectacle described in the Lord Chamberlain's book and the context of the production of the plays listed in the Audit Office books"*. She reported that TNA asked the 7,030 exhibition visitors to rate their levels of knowledge about Shakespeare both before and after visiting the exhibition, showing that there was an average 26% increase in knowledge across the audience, with one audience group ('cultural Londoners') increasing their knowledge on average by 45% [D]. TNA practice has been directly and positively affected by this experience due to developing new levels of confidence in innovation and public engagement. The Head of Early Modern Records stated that the identification of new visitor groups resulted in new funding being directed to TNA's exhibition and engagement strategy, marking an important strategic shift [D].

The BL's exhibition *Shakespeare in Ten Acts* was also directly underpinned by King's research. Massai, McMullan and Munro were members of the exhibition advisory board, providing input into planning and content for display, and their individual research directly informed specific sections of the exhibition. The exhibition was *"the second most highly rated of all BL exhibitions"* since the current BL opened (91% average enjoyment rating), second only to their Harry Potter exhibition, attracting 33,956 visitors, with over 8,000 being first-time visitors to the BL. Reviews celebrated the exhibition as *"a show of shows guaranteed to disarm even the most jaded visitor"* (TLS) and as *"A hit. A palpable hit!"* [historiamag.com]. The BL lead curator noted that King's research *"help[ed] to determine the Library's approach to controversial and disputed areas of scholarship"*, adding that *"[McMullan, Massai and Munro's] advice helped us to ensure that our interpretation was accurate and up-to-date and that our overarching narrative was fresh, compelling and soundly based on scholarship. This is especially true of the sections of the exhibition which they worked on most closely and the corresponding chapters they wrote for the exhibition book"* [H]. Co-edited by McMullan and the BL curator, this book included chapters by Massai, McMullan and Munro, sold 5,234 copies (significantly more than is normal for a BL exhibition book) and was shortlisted for the Society for Theatre Research Book Award 2016.

Engagement with King's research through membership of the S400 consortium increased audiences for partner organisations and demonstrated the value of researcher/artist collaboration: *"Globe events received a substantial increase in attendance because of [...] S400"* (Director of Education, Globe) [C]; *"the success of S400 has been in the development of formal and informal links with other creative institutions across London [and] has already sparked further fruitful collaborations"* (Head of Culture and Learning, BL) [E]; *"partnership with King's was very important*



to us, an experiment in how academics and artists can work closely together to make artworks stemming from research and respond to it creatively” (Head of Artists’ Moving Image, Film London) [G]. Moreover, partner organisations continue to collaborate as a result of S400: the Globe now collaborates with the Royal Collection Trust as a direct outcome of S400; Film London’s Head of Artists’ Moving Image stated that “being part of the S400 consortium allowed us to get to know representatives of key cultural organisations. Those contacts and networks are of great importance to us” [G]; the BL’s Head of Culture and Learning noted that after BL staff were “introduced to colleagues at Shakespeare’s Globe by academic staff at King’s”, they “struck up a good working relationship with Globe Education which led to jointly-run learning workshops” [E].

**Demonstrating the significance of Shakespeare for contemporary cultural production/stimulating new creativity inspired by Shakespeare** Collaboration between King’s academics and cultural partners generated innovation across media and productive intersections between research on Shakespeare and contemporary creative practice, notably in poetry and animated film. King’s research inspired cultural organisations to work in new ways, drawing directly and creatively on the Shakespearean past and commissioning boldly in the present, inspiring artists to reimagine Shakespearean creativity and to innovate in their own practice.

*On Shakespeare’s Sonnets* was a major collaboration created by Crawforth and Scott-Baumann with the RSL, Arden Bloomsbury and the British Council. Together they commissioned 37 new poems by RSL poets responding to Shakespeare’s sonnets – published as *On Shakespeare’s Sonnets: A Poets’ Celebration* (2016) – and a subsequent set of global readings and schools workshops (see ‘Sprung from Shakespeare’ below). The RSL Director noted that the collaboration “informed a broader change in the way the RSL works between commissioning, event programming and working with research; the positive experience of collaborating with a range of partners and gaining the benefit of academic expertise has emboldened our approach to commissioning, and we have now increased the number – and diversified the forms – of publications we produce annually. This project demonstrated how academic researchers, publishers and writers can come together to produce efficiently organised, wide-reaching, intellectually rigorous and creatively stimulating work for live audiences and readers for years to come” [F]. The collection reached fourth-best-selling poetry anthology on amazon.co.uk and the poems featured on Poetry on the Underground posters, were recorded by the Poetry Archive, formed a key element of the British Council’s 2016 Shakespeare Lives season and received positive and extensive coverage in the media from the UK to Asia [B]. Reviewers noted in particular the generative power of Shakespeare in the present, applauding the editors for demonstrating his continued role as inspiration for new creativity. *The Independent* noted that “it really is extraordinary that these sonnets, first published in 1609, can still be engendering such a range of new ideas and ways of expressing them”, while the *Daily Mail* observed that “[t]his exciting collection reminds us that themes of ageing, love, lust and emotional cruelty transcend time”.

King’s collaboration with Film London for ‘Still Shakespeare’ resulted in a series of innovative short animations directly informed by Barnden’s research and shown globally at festivals in numerous locations from Mexico to Ukraine, one winning prizes at festivals in Britain and the United States in 2018. Film London’s Head of Artists’ Moving Image described ‘Still Shakespeare’ as “a hugely successful experiment in creative collaboration between artists and academics[, producing films] of the highest quality and gaining critical acclaim internationally” and noted that “the five artists formed a close working relationship with Barnden” and “valued her expertise and the opportunity to share her knowledge”; she noted that, through the collaboration, the “research found a creative output that enabled it to reach beyond the academic circle” [G].

**Democratising access to Shakespeare/demonstrating Shakespeare’s local and global significance** Shakespeare is often viewed both as a writer whose work is for a privileged few and as a specifically British writer, especially in London where his name and work are a key part of the heritage offer for tourists. Through S400 we used our research to help extend democratic access to Shakespeare locally and globally both by demonstrating Shakespeare’s worldwide significance and by demystifying his work so as to make it accessible to as wide a range of people as possible.

At the **local** level, Crawforth and Scott-Baumann’s work on the connection between Shakespeare’s sonnets and contemporary poetry led to Sprung from Shakespeare, a Widening Participation programme offering workshops for teachers and pupils at 13 inner London schools with low university entrance rates, reaching a total of 529 students. A schools’ poetry competition attracted 40 submissions, concluding with an event at which the awardees read their sonnets

alongside two major contemporary poets (the winning participant, noting that she had assumed poetry competitions were for more privileged individuals, reported that her success *“gave me the confidence to enter another free competition and I was shortlisted [for the] Keats-Shelley Prize”*). Subsequently, these activities led to the Shakespeare Academy, run by Crawforth, reaching 1600 pupils across 10 London state schools. Responses from a typical Year 11 workshop showed 100% agreeing they ‘learned something new’ and 75% agreeing that the event had ‘influenced their critical thinking about Shakespeare’ and that they ‘understood more about the contexts for Shakespeare’ and felt ‘more confident about their knowledge of Shakespeare’; in one Year 9 workshop, 75% ‘learned something new’ and learned ‘more about Shakespeare’s context’, and 68% felt ‘more confident about their knowledge of Shakespeare’ [I].

At the **global** level, King’s research – notably Massai’s work on global Shakespeare – helped partners demonstrate Shakespeare’s generative worldwide reach. The BL’s Head of Culture and Learning commented that the *“global outlook”* Massai brought into the BL’s exhibition planning, informing advance marketing, helped *“account for the fact that ‘Shakespeare in Ten Acts’ attracted a higher number of overseas visitors than is normally the case for BL exhibitions”*, with visitors commenting positively on discovering the ‘worldwide’ reach of Shakespeare both now and in the past [E]. The Barbican’s S400 season drew on Massai’s research on global Shakespeare and also on the work of director Ivo Van Hove for support activities for their productions of Van Hove’s *Kings of War* and of the indigenous Australian *King Lear* adaptation, *The Shadow King* [H]. The overall reach of S400 extended far beyond London: on 23 April 2016, #Shakespeare400 was the top trend on Twitter (including new contributions and retweets) for the whole of the UK (8,387,138) and throughout 2016 there was extensive national and international media attention [B].

Crawforth and Scott-Baumann’s collaboration with the RSL, *On Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, demonstrating the connections between the sonnets and contemporary poetry, became the focus for the British Council’s global Sonnet Exchanges programme, which included readings by poets in over 16 countries from Armenia to South Korea, generating new poetic creativity and increasing global awareness of the contemporary generativity of Shakespearean poetry.

The S400 MOOC, Shakespeare: Print and Performance, led by Lewis (FutureLearn with King’s, the BL and Shakespeare’s Globe) ran four times (2016–20), reaching 19,000 participants across 120 countries. The most geographically far-reaching S400 collaboration, the MOOC engaged a socially diverse audience both locally and globally. It emerged directly from King’s research on textual, cultural, stylistic and theatrical issues and embodied our key external partnerships with the BL and Globe. Participants praised the MOOC for demonstrating Shakespeare’s global significance – *“I am much more aware of the global impact of his work”* – and for demystifying and democratising Shakespeare: 73% agreed that ‘this course has changed the way I think about Shakespeare’s works’, and individual participants commented as follows: *“I have always been taught that Shakespeare was only for the rich or extremely clever people: this is not so – it is open to everyone”*; *“I can’t even begin to tell you how it has changed me, apart from saying that my thoughts and understanding have undergone a sea change”*; *“as a teacher, I will use some of these lessons to introduce Shakespeare in my classrooms”* and teach *“what I have just learnt, which is very different from what is taught at school”*; *“the things I’ve learned [...] have seeped into my bones and carved grooves in my brain that were not there before”* [J].

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

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- A. Letter of Chief Executive, Shakespeare’s Globe.
  - B. Web pages of global media reviews and interviews about Shakespeare400, By Me William Shakespeare, etc; web pages of partner organisations highlighting activities under S400 banner.
  - C. Testimony of Director of Education, Shakespeare’s Globe.
  - D. Testimony of curator and Head of Early Modern Records, The National Archives.
  - E. Testimony of Head of Culture and Learning, British Library.
  - F. Testimony from Director, Royal Society of Literature.
  - G. Report on Still Shakespeare by Head of Artists’ Moving Image, Film London.
  - H. Testimony of curator, British Library.
  - I. Widening Participation data attesting to the enhancement of learning by participants.
  - J. MOOC data attesting to the impact of King’s research on participants.