

Institution: University of Brighton		
Unit of Assessment: D32 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: Reshaping public histories and cultural memories through photography		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012 – 2018		
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:
Darren Newbury	Professor of Photographic History	2013 – to date
Louise Purbrick	Principal Lecturer	1999 – to date
Xavier Ribas	Senior Lecturer	2000 – to date
Julia Winckler	Principal Lecturer	2004 – to date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact <p>Research in photography at the University of Brighton (UoB) has given a renewed public presence to previously obscured or marginalised histories. In collaboration with public institutions, museum professionals and community activists, this research has validated the lives and experiences of mining communities in Chile, working class and immigrant communities in Toronto and Paris, and communities subject to forced removal in Cape Town. New bodies of photographic work, the recovery and reactivation of historical photographs, and innovative curatorial and interpretive practices have enriched processes of public history and cultural memory for marginalised communities and stimulated debate on questions of place, identity and the environment amongst wider publics.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>Over the past decade, photography researchers at UoB have developed a distinctive combination of practice-based, curatorial and historical methodologies that address questions of public history and cultural memory. Photography has been used as a medium to examine and represent forms of global interconnectedness, leading to new understandings of place and identity. Specifically, the programme of research has engaged with communities subject to forms of economic exploitation, political oppression and social marginalisation at sites in Canada, Chile and South Africa, and their interconnections to Britain, France and Spain.</p> <p>In Chile, <i>Traces of Nitrate</i> (AHRC-funded, 2012 – 2018), led by photographer Xavier Ribas in collaboration with art historian Dr Louise Purbrick, studied the visual histories and material legacies of British investment in Chilean nitrate mines. Examining sites, artefacts and images, the research traced the route of nitrate from natural mineral state processed in the Atacama Desert through transported commodity and stock market exchange value to become part of the material and symbolic inheritance of London mansions and country estates. The research generated new photographic studies of geographically disparate but historically connected landscapes accompanied by an analysis of nitrate's visual and material culture. The research addressed a lack of historical understanding and cultural awareness of the significance of the nitrate industry and contributed to the new art of political ecology through exhibitions and public events as well as scholarly publications [References 3.1, 3.2].</p> <p>In Toronto and Paris, archival and photographic research by Dr Julia Winckler revealed a complex picture of the representation of children in public space, making visible connections between working class migrant neighbourhoods caught up in processes of rapid change.</p>		

The Wished-for City (SSHRC-funded, 2013 – 2017) combined research methods from social work, photography and archival scholarship, resulting in a major exhibition *From Streets to Playgrounds: Representing Children in Early 20th Century Toronto* [3.3]. Together with colleagues at Ryerson University and University of Toronto, Winckler formed an interdisciplinary research team of artists and scholars from the social sciences, visual studies and fine art. Studying largely forgotten archive collections this research revealed visual histories of children photographed at work and play. Winckler used her extensive experience of examining the role of photography as a medium through which collective memories can be reconstructed and given a renewed cultural presence. Providing a comparative dimension, Winckler researched (2016 – 2017) and curated a companion exhibition of Marilyn Stafford's largely unknown photographs of Parisian children. The exhibition afforded rare insights into the lives of children in one of Paris's poorest neighbourhoods, which was later demolished [3.4].

In Cape Town, Professor Darren Newbury's research, in collaboration with District Six Museum (2013 – 2014), explored the value and significance of returning dislocated photographs, representing difficult and painful histories. Through a curated exhibition, Newbury extended his previous research on this collection into a South African context [3.5]. The photographs, made in the late 1940s and early 1950s, provided a unique and largely unknown visual record of a number of central and peripheral locations in Cape Town, including one of the most extensive records of Windermere, a peri-urban location, which was subject to forced removal to facilitate the creation of the racially segregated city. The collection had left South Africa for England in 1952 and was unknown to the communities documented. Combining Newbury's historical and curatorial research with the distinctive and widely cited community-based approach to cultural heritage and post-apartheid memory developed at District Six Museum, the research reactivated the photographs through an exhibition and subsequent events [3.6].

3. References to the research

[3.1] Ribas, X., (June – October 2014). *Nitrate* [exhibition and publication], Exhibited at Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA). Touring to Bluecoat, Liverpool (April – June 2015), and Museo Universidad de Navarra (October 2015 – March 2016). [Quality validation: AHRC Funded and selected for PhotoEspaña 2015, Photography Book of the Year (Spanish category)].

[3.2] Acosta, I., Purbrick, L., and Ribas X., (September – November 2017). *Trafficking the Earth* [installation and publication], Exhibited at Museo de Arte Contemporáneo [MAC], Santiago. Touring to Photo 50, The London Art Fair (January 2018), and Tierra, Centro de Arte y Naturaleza (CDAN), Huesca (October 2019 – April 2020). Published by Intuitive Editions/Editorial Gronefot, London and Santiago, 2017. [Quality validation: Funded by AHRC and donated to permanent collection of the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende].

[3.3] Chambon, A., Good, B., Lightman, E., Ingelevics, V., Anderson, M., and Winckler, J. (September – December 2016 and April – July 2017). *From Streets to Playgrounds: Representing Children in Early 20th Century Toronto* [exhibition]. Exhibited at City of Toronto Archives Gallery [Quality validation: Funded by SSHRC, Canada].

[3.4] Winckler, J., (March – April 2017). *Photographic Memories - Lost Corners of Paris: The Children of Cité Lesage-Bullourde and Boulogne-Billancourt, Photographs by Marilyn Stafford* [exhibition]. Exhibited at Alliance Française Gallery, Toronto and Maison de la recherche de la Sorbonne nouvelle, Université Sorbonne, Paris (November 2020) [online]. [Quality validation: Built on SSHRC funded research and funded by the Alliance Française Gallery].

[3.5] Newbury, D., (2015). Going and Coming Back: Curating the Post-Apartheid Archive, in Morton, C., and D. Newbury (eds.) *The African Photographic Archive: Research and Curatorial Strategies*. London: Bloomsbury, 157-75. [Quality validation: peer-reviewed edited collection].

[3.6] Newbury, D., (2015). Relocating the Heseltine Photographic Collection at District Six Museum, *African Arts*, 48(2), 64-77. [Quality validation: peer-reviewed journal publication].

Key research grants

Xavier Ribas [PI], Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), 2012 – 2016, *Traces of Nitrate: History and Photography Between Britain and Chile, 1879-1914*, [AH/I021671/1], GBP264,357.

Follow on funding: AHRC, 2017 – 2018, [AH/R001391/1], GBP80,030.

4. Details of the impact

4.1 Shaping Inclusive Public Histories

District Six was the site of the most notorious forced removals of the apartheid period, designed to destroy its mixed-race community. District Six Museum was founded as a place of memory for those who had been forcibly removed and is now a site of symbolic importance for wider struggles against racism and apartheid. In collaboration, UoB research enabled the museum to extend its coverage to under-represented areas of the city and deepen public understanding of the impact of apartheid policies. The museum attracts around 60,000 visitors per annum and the exhibition '*received enormous interest from local scholars, visitors, school groups and ex-residents*' [Source 5.1]. It '*gave visitors who suffered displacement the opportunity to reconnect*' and enabled other visitors to gain '*a deeper understanding of Cape Town's fractured history*' [5.2]. Donation of a digital version of the collection has provided the museum with '*an important and invaluable heritage resource*', one which allows audiences to appreciate the city '*before the institutionalisation of apartheid's segregation policies became an enforced law and before District Six was "stripped" of its character*' [5.2]. Images in the collection made available by Newbury's research have been integrated into the re-design of the permanent exhibition and are used in museum programmes, benefitting local community audiences and national and international museum visitors over the long term [5.2].

From Streets to Playgrounds, co-curated by Winckler at City of Toronto Archives Gallery, utilised UoB research to enrich public understandings of inner-city childhood histories and produced new intergenerational perspectives. Centred on archival photographs of a poor neighbourhood in Toronto once populated by immigrant families, the exhibition prompted emotional responses and public debate in the media (*Radio Canada, National Post, L'Express, Toronto.com*), which focused on changing attitudes to children in public space: '*Vous ne pouvez pas imaginer nos enfants d'aujourd'hui dans la rue, comme dans ce temps-là. Ils possédaient les rues, c'était leur espace*' ('*You can't imagine our children in the streets like in those times. They owned the streets, it was their space*') [5.3]. Its impact was reinforced by a companion exhibition on the displacement of the urban poor in Paris, which was sponsored by Alliance Française and comprised historical photographs by Marilyn Stafford digitised and meticulously restored by Winckler, with subsequent enlargement revealing new details. This exhibition testified to the ubiquity of practices of demolition and dispersal and attracted extensive media coverage (*Radio Canada, ChoqFM, Le Métropolitain*). *L'Express*, a leading francophone newspaper, underlined its significance – '*Pour que les enfants du Paris de l'après-guerre ne soient plus "invisibles"*' ('*So that the children of Paris after the war are no longer "invisible"*') – and described it as a tribute ('*un hommage*') to the children [5.4]. In addition, Marilyn Stafford commented that the Toronto exhibition made it possible to share her 70-year-old photographs with new audiences: '*it means a lot to me that these photographs have so much meaning to other people now, people with personal connections to this part of Paris [...] I am delighted that these children are coming back to life*' [5.5]. Former residents of the Cité Lesage neighbourhood recognised their own childhood experiences in the photographs and developed a dialogue with Winckler, bringing their unique experiences to the subsequent Paris exhibition and research event. These individual and public media responses attest to the capacity of this work to validate past lives lived in circumstances of poverty and marginality, and to establish new historical perspectives and connections.

The communities of the Atacama Desert (Chile) are among the most economically exploited in the world and were subject to extreme political repression during the Pinochet years.

Through exhibitions and public workshops, the photographic research, led by Ribas and Purbrick, alongside their collaborators has given visibility to individual and community experiences through the political focus of documenting the inequalities of the extractive industries. The exhibition *Trafficking the Earth*, curated by Acosta, Purbrick and Ribas and toured in Chile, Spain and the UK, traces stories of appropriation through a documentary process. Recently accepted into the permanent collection of Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende (MSSA), Santiago, the exhibition is the first and only body of work on mining in Chile in the museum collection. Commenting on its significance, the museum director stated that it made *'a valuable contribution to raise the profile of these histories and concerns with our visitors and users of the collection, and, ultimately, to one of our main objectives: changing the ways in which local organizations and communities can understand and represent their histories'* [5.6].

4.2 Invigorating museum education and public discourse

UoB research has changed the way in which archivists understand the value of photographs as a means of engaging audiences and communicating historical understanding, invigorating approaches to the interpretation of photographs. As confirmed by exhibit technicians, archivists and an archive educator, the method of display in *From Streets to Playgrounds* was not only *'visually stunning'* but also increased the extent and depth of public engagement: *'This led to an increased interest in not only coming to the exhibition, but also visiting the archives'*. It also fostered a more collaborative archival practice: *'it pulled in so many of our staff from all areas of the archive [...] it made us really step up and produce, perhaps more than we had in the past'*. The photographic presentation enhanced the audience experience, providing *'a deeper layered interpretation'* that audiences visibly responded to: *'the idea of why, why are these images framed the way they are'* [5.7]. In particular, the use of archival photographs placed alongside counterpoint modern images offered a *'contemporary opportunity to talk about playgrounds'* and other spaces in the city. Ultimately the exhibition provided a *'whole new way of getting people to see things in our photos that they had never seen before'* [5.7]. The companion exhibition on Marilyn Stafford's work was also shown as a virtual exhibition in 2020 with associated events and a study day, led by the Sorbonne at the University of Paris (where it was due to be held as a physical exhibition). Staff who took a leading role in the delivery of this exhibition confirmed that this event clearly fitted the objectives of the organisation with the photographs bearing witness to the living conditions of immigrant communities that encapsulate enormous historical, human and political significance [5.8].

At District Six Museum, the research helped open broader consideration of instances of displacement and informed current debates about ownership of city spaces [5.2]. The research contributed to the educational programme supporting the exhibition and raising awareness of forced removals. A special site tour was developed, enabling photographers and visitors to visit the sites documented in the exhibition, which *'brought the reality of forced removals and the geography of Cape Town's divided city into sharper focus'* [5.1]. The research has continued to enhance the work of the museum in its engagement with ex-residents, youth groups in Cape Town and museum visitors. In 2014, photographs from the exhibition contributed to visual literacy workshops as part of the *Restoring Humanity* project to prepare community youth facilitators from historically segregated townships for work on sites of memory. In 2016, several photographs from the Heseltine collection were used for the *Huis Kombuis* (Home Kitchen) food and memory project, which validated the knowledge of community elders through reconstructing culinary heritage. The photographs acted as *'triggers'* and provided *'a significant link between memory and place'* [5.2].

In Chile, the research has served as an inspiration and a resource for environmental and mining activists, including through a public seminar organised specifically for activist groups. Chile Sustentable, an environmental activist group, stated that the work *'makes the conflict over resources between mining corporations and communities more visible'* and, in so doing, *'our work as activists benefits from a wider public understanding of what is at stake'* [5.9]. Fundación Relaves responded that connections made through the research have enabled them *'to generate a more effective fight against the mining industry and its devastating'*

consequences on the environment [5.10]. The work has witnessed extended reach through the project webpages (~170,000 unique page views) and exhibitions in Spain and the UK. In the UK, the exhibition reached ~17,000 visitors at Bluecoat, Liverpool's centre for the contemporary arts. In Spain, in addition to the *Nitrate* exhibition at MACBA (2014), which attracted over 53,000 visitors [5.11], an exhibition on the relationship between art and extractive processes was curated at the Centro de Arte y Naturaleza (2019 – 2020) in direct response to Ribas' Chilean work. This exhibition attested to the capacity of the research to provoke and inform '*urgent public debates... about the extractive industries and how their effects can be recorded and represented, making international connections and raising public and artistic awareness in relation to the environment*' [5.12].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5.1] District Six Museum, Annual Report 2013 – 2014. This report confirms visitor numbers and feedback on the exhibition.

[5.2] Testimonial from the Exhibitions Manager, District Six Museum. This confirms the impact on the museum itself, and the ongoing recognition and impact on public viewers.

[5.3] Mouch, L. (3 April 2017). Quand les rues du Ward appartenaient aux enfants: Le début du 20e siècle en photos aux Archives de Toronto. *L'Express*: <https://l-express.ca/quand-les-rues-du-ward-appartenaient-aux-enfants/> [Accessed: 18th January 2021]. A press article that includes the quote on changing attitudes to children in public spaces. Supplementary evidence includes other articles in the media.

[5.4] Mouch, L. (13 March 2017). Pour que les enfants du Paris de l'après-guerre ne soient plus. *L'Express*: <https://l-express.ca/pour-que-les-enfants-du-paris-de-lapres-guerre-ne-soient-plus-invisibles/> [Accessed: 18th January 2021]. Press article that shows the significance of making the children's stories visible.

[5.5] Testimonial from Marilyn Stafford on the role of her works in the Toronto and Paris exhibitions and her personal experience of the response from public audiences.

[5.6] Testimonial from the Museum Director, Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende, that includes confirmation of the addition of the exhibition content into the Museum's permanent collection, and the significance of this for their audiences.

[5.7] *From Streets to Playgrounds*, video archive: <https://www.fromstreetstoplaygrounds.com/video-archive>. [Accessed 18th January 2021]. A video containing interviews and statements on the impact of the exhibition from museum professionals.

[5.8] Testimonial from the Head of the Unit for the Development and Dissemination of Cultural Studies Research, Department of Research and Doctoral Studies, Sorbonne Nouvelle, that confirms the success of the virtual exhibition and the significance of the documented histories alongside the organisation's objectives.

[5.9] Testimonial from Executive Director, Chile Sustentable, that confirms the impact of the work on their role as an activist group.

[5.10] Testimonial from Fundación Relaves that confirms how the exhibition has supported the work in fighting against environmental consequences.

[5.11] A report on sources confirming visitor statistics from Museum of Contemporary Art Barcelona (MACBA) and Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool; and screenshots confirming website pageviews. PDF available.

[5.12] Testimonial from Director, Centro de Arte y Naturaleza, an exhibition in direct response to the work that has informed public debates.