


Institution: UAL		
Unit of Assessment: 32		
Title of case study: Raising Voices: Visualising Untold Stories		
		
Tom Hunter, <i>Ali / Rose Hill, Brightling</i> , from <i>A Journey Home</i> , 2019		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2002–2015.		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by UAL
Professor Tom Hunter Professor William Raban	Professor of Photography Professor Emeritus of Film	January 1998–present November 1993–September 2020
Professor Pratap Rughani Professor Val Williams	Associate Dean of Research Professor of the History and Culture of Photography	October 2007–present June 1997–present
Dr Sara Davidmann Dr Andrea Zimmerman	Reader Reader	August 2006–present October 2007–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>UAL's research in photography, filmmaking and curation as they relate to the recording and representation of diverse communities is linked closely to ethical questions about the role of documentation. This work tackles ways in which political, cultural and social change can be effected by subverting standard tropes in photography and filmmaking, and by challenging curatorial conventions. The work has influenced the presentation of photography and film in museums and galleries through displaying imagery previously unseen, or not hitherto viewed as a legitimate subject for study or display. Collectively, research has created new approaches that shape the way the 'subject' is represented. The development of new participatory and empathic practices has led to new ways of representing life in Britain. These prioritise inclusivity and diversity, regularly representing marginalised communities</p>		

through creative collaborations, constructing counter-cultural narratives and giving meaning, visibility and value to the dispossessed, excluded, forgotten or obscured.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Key methodological approaches that underpin the impact are given below.

In *Living in Hell* (2003–2005) [3.1.], artist/photographer **Hunter** created photographic images based on grim headlines from his local paper, the *Hackney Gazette*. His work is underpinned by the twin themes of place and identity. Focused on inner city landscapes and spaces, **Hunter** has long referenced classical paintings, through research into how historic painters have recorded, described and given narratives to their environments, lives and subjects. In his work, **Hunter** shifts this previously privileged approach to the representation of marginalised communities. In 2009, **Hunter** developed these themes, reframing classical tropes for *A Palace for Us*, the result of a long-term residency spent on Hackney's Woodberry Down Estate. The project documents 50 years of life on the estate through the testimonies of residents who had lived there since it was first built. The outcome reflects an in-depth knowledge of the area and the deep involvement of the estate's residents in the process of the film's making. [3.2.]

When **Williams** curated *How We Are: Photographing Britain from the 1840s to the Present* (Tate Britain, 2007) [3.3.], she had long tackled the challenges of researching, collecting and exhibiting photography. Whilst, previously, better-known international photographers had been the conventional subject matter for major exhibitions in the UK, **Williams'** approach focused on extending the scope of photographic content, investigating hitherto unexplored family archives and personal collections, and exhibiting the work of unknown photographers or those seen as being outside the canon.

Davidmann's work examines transsexual visibility/invisibility and public/private gender expression. Research during this AHRC fellowship (2007–2010) [3.4.] captured participants' experiences in the contrasting spaces of the street, where only female/male genders are recognised, and in a photographic studio away from the visual regimes of the street or the identity space of the home.

Rughani's work centres the difficult ethical questions and decisions confronted by documentary photographers and filmmakers. It challenges the relationship between ethics and aesthetics in forms of documentary arts and film practice, with a focus on the tension between 'responsibility' and 'artistic freedom'. In *The Dance of Documentary Ethics* (2013), Rughani offered new insights into methodologies of ethically challenging filming decisions in practice-based research, a trajectory followed in *The Art of Not Knowing* and *Are You A Vulture?* [3.5.]

Artist-filmmaker **Raban's** research practice has focused on the 'island' of Britain and its people, alongside a conviction that history is formed by collective memories rather than definitive historical interpretations. *Time and the Wave* (2013) [3.6.] engages with the paradox that the present cannot be reflected upon until it has become the past, by focusing on key London events filmed in 2012 and 2013: the opening of Westfield Shopping Centre at Stratford, the Occupy movement's encampment at St Paul's Cathedral, the Queen's Jubilee Thames pageant and the funeral of Margaret Thatcher. This work addresses the English obsession with nostalgic displays of pageantry, contrasted with political activism.

Zimmerman, in collaboration with **Hunter**, took further the thinking around place and identity in the inner city in *Real Estates* (2015), a six-week series of events at East London's Peer Gallery, supporting 'Estate' [3.7.], a long-term project based around Haggerston Estate, co-ordinated by **Zimmerman**, in which **Hunter** took part. **Zimmerman's** practice-based research investigates historical and contemporary methods in filmmaking—technical, representational, aesthetic and ethical—harnessed to create a filmic language that is often

tender and delicate, supporting her empathic approach to her films' subject matter and characters. *Estate, a Reverie* is a feature-length, highly collaborative essay film that tracks the passing of Hackney's Haggerston Estate, challenging media stereotypes of housing estates, and their inhabitants as a threatening underclass.

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

- 3.1. Hunter, Tom, *Living in Hell and Other Stories*, body of work: 2003–4; *Living in Hell and Other Stories*, book (2005) published to accompany the exhibition *Tom Hunter: Living in Hell and Other Stories*, National Gallery, 7 December 2005–12 March 2006.
- 3.2. Hunter, Tom (2009) *A Palace for Us*, film. <https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/a-palace-for-us/>
- 3.3. Williams, Val and Bright, Susan (22 May–2 September 2007), *How We Are: Photographing Britain from the 1840s to the Present*, Tate Britain, with accompanying book (Tate Publishing).
- 3.4. Davidmann, Sara (2007–2010), *Beyond Male and Female: The Experience of Photography and the Self-Visualisation of Transsexual People* (AHRC Fellowship, GBP223,292).
- 3.5. Rughani, Pratap (2013), *The Dance of Documentary Ethics*. In: *The Documentary Film Book*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- 3.6. Raban, William (2013), *Time and the Wave*, 15:04.
- 3.7. Zimmerman, Andrea (2015) *Estate, A Reverie* (aka 'Estate'). Held in the Arts Council England Collection.

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

In *Justine* (2013), **Rughani** took further the thinking developed for *The Dance of Documentary Ethics*. Premiered at the Stockholm Academy of Art, *Justine* is an award-winning (Research in practice award from the British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies) short documentary film portrait of a young woman with severe neurological disorders. The film has been used to help social services assessors achieve a fuller picture of the experiences of a young person with such conditions and quickly became an important teaching tool at universities in several countries, entering curricula in documentary studies. The film sits at the centre of UAL's *Ethics for Making*, a free online initiative for students, teachers and makers to explore creative arts practice, that builds on **Rughani's** questioning of existing modes of documentation to develop methods of empathic looking and listening. The film was screened and debated at UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 2015, Leicester). The film's methodology has been debated in leading international art and academic conferences and human rights film festivals.

The University has further supported work in this field through its Photography and the Archive Research Centre (PARC, founded by **Williams** in 2003). As a measure of the importance of **Williams** to British photography and its curation, her archive became part of the Martin Parr Foundation in March 2019. The archive reveals the progression of **Williams'** practice, creating a resource for the study and interpretation of photography and cultural networks from the early 1970s, as well as a forming a historical record of the thinking that drove changes in attitudes towards photography. Parr described **Williams** as "one of the most esteemed British photography curators, with a long and illustrious career". [5.1.]

Williams co-curated and devised with Karen Shepherdson, (now UAL Programme Director, Photography) the widely applauded exhibition *Seaside: Photographed* (2019, GBP220,000 ACE Strategic Touring grant; GBP10,000 Turner Contemporary). This photography exhibition (and book), Turner Contemporary's first, presented a set of themes to do with everyday life, whilst showing the British seaside in a personal, empathic way. Critical reception recognised the pertinence of the approach: "Not the least pleasure of this tremendous show of seaside photographs [...] is the sheer rush of revelation", and "...the result of many years' work and quite formidable research on the part of its curators. As a

result, a subject that might have been fluffy and superficial in other hands has been permitted quite astonishing complexity". [5.2.] [5.3.] Central to the project was a 'Call for Works', a tool used infrequently in UK exhibition projects, important because it enabled the curators to venture far beyond already known work to discover bodies of work that had become obscured in the fragmented histories of British photography. **Williams'** objective was to explore a complex topic in a way that would respect both specialised and non-specialised audiences (approximately 12,500 visitors).

Award-winning artist/photographer **Davidmann**, a UAL PhD alumna, was one of the first to receive an AHRC Creative Fellowship (*Beyond Male and Female: The Experience of Photography and the Self-Visualisation of Transsexual People*). **Davidmann** took this work further in *Ken. To be destroyed*, a multi-faceted project based on a family archive that contained images, letters and papers relating to her uncle, Ken, that revealed that he was transgender. The project was disseminated in a series of outputs including a book, six solo exhibitions, two group exhibitions, three events at the V&A, and a co-authored journal article. **Davidmann** won a Philip Leverhulme Prize (The Leverhulme Trust, 2016–2019), and the project was nominated for the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize (2017). *Ken. To Be Destroyed* (2016, supported by PARC) received extensive exposure through international media [5.4.] [5.5.], the venues at which it was exhibited and at a range of conferences, symposia and debates, all of which served to reach new audiences and networks, for example, the LGBTQ+ Archives, Libraries, Museums and Special Collections' 'Without Borders' conference (June 2016). **Davidmann's** work has contributed to raising awareness of trans people's lived experience and to generating greater understanding.

Hunter's body of research has continued to develop the themes evident in his early work. For example, *A Journey Home* (2019), a collaboration with Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, Lucy Bell Gallery and Hastings taxi firm 247247, traces its research roots back to *Living in Hell and Other Stories*. **Hunter** photographed each taxi driver in their favourite location in the town. Their stories were recorded by Hanna Wiebe, a multimedia artist working with sound and photography; these became part of the soundscape for the exhibition. (*A Journey Home*, Hastings Museum and Art Gallery, 2019. 14,252 visitors. Funded by Arts Council England. 11 photographs inspired by paintings in the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery collection). The exhibition attracted local and national media coverage, including *The Guardian* [5.6], *Wallpaper** and BBC South East. Visitors to the exhibition commented: "Brilliant; if only people could view this and not judge people as many do". "Timely subject, gentle, moving approach, brilliant photographs, anything that humanises migrant experience is welcome at present." [5.7.] **Hunter's** work is in many international collections including; MoMA, New York; National Gallery, London and the Smithsonian, Washington. **Hunter's** internationally known image, *Woman Reading a Possession Order*, (now part of the V&A's collection) is part of the exhibition, *Inspiration—Contemporary Art and Classics* (co-curated by UAL research fellow, James Putnam), first staged at Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, then at Ateneum (Finnish National Gallery).

Alongside his work using still imagery, exhibited in both film and art contexts, **Raban's** extensive body of work over the last five decades has impacted on filmmakers and filmmaking. The BFI: "one of the foremost British artists and experimental filmmakers of the last forty years"; "**Raban** has acquired a reputation as one of the most singularly important artists to work in [landscape and nature in film]." [5.8.] While known initially for his landscape and expanded cinema films of the 1970s, in the 1980s, his focus moved towards a more historical and socio-political context: the history of London and the Thames. *Time and the Wave* was screened internationally (e.g. London International Film Festival, 2013; National Gallery of Art, Washington, 2015), and shown as a continuous installation at the Mercosul Biennial in Brazil (2013). It was nominated for the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival (2014). **Raban** runs UAL's Documentary Research Forum, an arena to develop ideas around documentary in film, sound and photography.

Zimmerman's award-winning work engages in an innovative and radical way with those she films, extending the collective ownership to audiences by staging discussion forums at screenings (in prisons and community centres, at film festivals and for disadvantaged young people), often with one or more of the actors taking part. For *Estate*, Zimmerman worked with the residents of the estate—herself one of them—having direct impact on each of the participants. Joshua Oppenheimer, Director of *The Act of Killing*, described *Estate, A Reverie* as “a deeply moving portrait of a community struggling to survive in a boarded-up London public housing project, long slated for demolition. Multi-layered and profound, Andrea **Zimmerman**'s film masterfully immerses us in a dreamlike lost world of misfits, outcasts and survivors whom she films with love and aching tenderness. Her ground-breaking approach to cinema—at once collaborative and performative—creates a work of rare intimacy, a lyrical and gripping vision of the loneliness and disempowerment that haunts life even in the world's wealthiest cities” [5.9.], while Paul Sng (maker of the highly successful *Dispossession: The Great Social Housing Swindle*, 2017) cites *Estate* as one of his key influences: “*Estate: A Reverie* was among a small handful of films that inspired and informed *Dispossession*, a documentary about the mismanagement of social housing. Andrea's empathy and respect for the residents shines through in a tender and powerful meditation on what it means to call somewhere home”. [5.10.]

Multi-cultural working-class voices are underrepresented in the theories and practices of essay film and visual culture. *Estate* produced a visual map that works towards bridging this knowledge gap. For example, **Zimmerman** researched housing policy for the film, interviewing architects, activists, sociologists, poets, residents and council workers as well as filming town hall meetings in order to gather opinions and insights from the local community and housing experts. This work helped to inform understanding of planning, local and government housing policy and, crucially, the voices of residents and other locals who were being impacted. **Zimmerman** also photographed the estate regularly, which led to a photo essay book, *Estate: Art, Politics and Social Housing in Britain* (2010). The ethos of **Zimmerman**'s work seeks to trouble ideological frameworks, especially around class, race and marginalised lives, in order to explore and perform how stories can be told across differences and beyond fixed ways of seeing. Her recent film, *Here for Life* (2019, commissioned by Artangel following an open competition), continues this direction. **Zimmerman** was joint winner of the Film London Jarman Award in 2020 for the film. Artangel: “*Here for Life* fuses fiction with documentary, conjuring up a world where difference makes no difference and hope is given a voice through trust”. Founder of theatre company Cardboard Citizens: “If this film tells us anything about London today, it's that there are many unconsidered lives surviving against the odds. It feels important to tell these kinds of stories today—to hear from people who are often ‘othered’ in a variety of ways—to show a world we don't see enough of”. [5.11.]

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

- 5.1. [Martin Parr on Williams' Archive at Martin Parr Foundation.](#)
- 5.2. *The Guardian*, 19 May 2019, ‘[Seaside. Photographed review—a rush of revelation.](#)’
- 5.3. Seaside Photographed Case Study [canterbury.ac.uk](#). UAL on request.
- 5.4. The New York Times, 16 March 2016, One Artist's Quest to Honor Her Transgender Uncle. UAL on request.
- 5.5. *The Guardian*, 15 April 2014, ‘[The artist who brought her uncle back to life as a woman.](#)’
- 5.6. *The Guardian*, 8 January 2019, ‘[You talkin' to me? The taxi drivers of Hastings—in pictures.](#)’
- 5.7. A Journey Home, ACE funding, Tom Hunter. UAL on request.
- 5.8. BFI [Screenonline: Raban, William \(1948-\) Biography/BFI Screenonline: View \(1970\).](#)
- 5.9. [Fugitive Images: projects, works and films, Estate, a Reverie \(2015\).](#)
- 5.10. Paul Sng, Twitter. UAL on request.
- 5.11. [Here for Life goes digital, Artangel/Modern Films, press release, March 2020.](#)