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| Institution: Edge Hill University | | |
| Unit of Assessment: D34 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management | | |
| Title of case study: Uncovering and celebrating the artistic work of the Lancastrian/Mexican surrealist, Leonora Carrington | | |
| Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 – 2019 | | |
| 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: |
| Prof. Roger Shannon | Professor in Film & TV | May 2007- Oct 2017, Dec 2017-November 2019 |
| Dr. Lora Markova | Postdoc in Film & TV | Jan 2018-Dec 2019 |
| Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015 – 2020 | | |
| Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N | | |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>This research project and associated public engagement has championed the artistic and cultural significance of the Lancastrian/Mexican surrealist, Leonora Carrington, through publicising her work regionally, nationally and internationally via curatorial initiatives, screenings, public events, and close participation in the development and production of two recent feature length films about the artist. The research has uncovered (1) the under-recognized links between Carrington's creative practice and the medium of film; and (2) a collection of the artist's juvenile paintings that had not previously been the subject of scholarly study. The related collaborative activities with key organisations, such as Tate Liverpool, Arts Council England and Fundación Leonora Carrington (Mexico) have played a vital role in bringing under-represented and previously unexhibited work of the artist to wider public attention.</p> <p>The research has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulated the development of a new and vibrant cultural partnership between Edge Hill University and Tate Liverpool widening the cultural offerings in the region. • Increased local cultural awareness and knowledge of work and life of Leonora Carrington whilst adding to the cultural heritage of North West England. • Contributed to the development and production of two significant documentary films about Leonora Carrington further widening cultural awareness of the artist. | | |
| <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Leonora Carrington, who died in 2011 in Mexico City as a renowned Mexican artist, was celebrated as the last living surrealist. Although born in 1917 in Clayton Le Woods, Lancashire, her work has been virtually unrecognized by the general public in her native Britain. Initially associated with Max Ernst and André Breton's surrealist circle in Paris, Carrington reached artistic independence by developing her creative practice across a range of artistic disciplines, including painting, sculpture, tapestry, creative writing, theatrical experiments and cinematic involvements on and off screen. The scholarship on Carrington's <i>oeuvre</i> has favoured the paintings from her Mexican period (1942 – 2011), while the interrelation between her work and the medium of film, and the artist's early formation have gained limited academic attention.</p> <p>The research activities on the project started in 2014 when Shannon proposed to Tate Liverpool to organize a Leonora Carrington retrospective that would raise public awareness of the artist's cultural and artistic significance within regional and national context. The research for the exhibition involved interviews with members of Carrington's extended family who provided a selection of Leonora Carrington's juvenile paintings from the mid-1930s, previously unexhibited to wider audiences. Initiated by Shannon, the cinematic element in the retrospective – screenings of the Mexican film <i>The Mansion of Madness</i> (Juan López Moctezuma, 1973), art directed by Leonora Carrington – triggered further in-depth research into the links between the artist's interdisciplinary creativity and the medium of film. As argued in the 2019 publication [1], because Carrington's creative practice does not directly include filmmaking, the artist's collaborations on</p> | | |

and off screen have been relatively ignored, yet Carrington's cinematic mediations reveal important aspects of her artistic identity. The research focused on Carrington's cameo appearances in two 1960s Mexican productions — *There Are No Thieves in This Village* (Alberto Isaac, 1964) and *A Pure Soul* (Juan Ibáñez, 1965) – that mark the artist's creative collaborations with Surrealist film director Luis Buñuel and magic realist novelists Gabriel García Márquez and Carlos Fuentes. Analyses of Carrington's visual and literary works has revealed a series of recurring Surrealist tropes, autobiographical elements and motifs that, Shannon and Markova argue, are also evident in her cinematic work. The published work explores how Carrington's references to anti-Catholic and anti-bourgeois satire and her feminist position – which can be traced to the artist's early life and experiences in Lancashire - are realised in the artist's on-screen cameos. The research has analysed the intertextual translations between Carrington's paintings and her cinematic set design and revealed Carrington's creative approach towards art directing and costume design, manifested in Moctezuma's surrealist film, *The Mansion of Madness*, and contextualized within her earlier experiments with theatrical scenography.

A publication initially submitted in 2019 and resubmitted to another journal in 2020 [2] explores Carrington's artistic and cultural identity arguing that early experiences of home at Crookhey Hall in Lancashire, her later self-imposed exile and revolt against patriarchy were central to the formation of a cross-cultural imaginary realised in the artist's mature visual and literary works. The article offers a detailed examination of the rhetorical and aesthetic strategies used across a series of five documentary films about Carrington. The films analysed in the article were produced in Mexico, UK, USA and Spain and include *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* (2017), one of two documentaries that credit Shannon as an advisor. The article argues that the documentaries succeed in rendering Carrington's artistic identity as a hybrid entity and utilise domestic spaces to evoke a sense of displacement.

3. References to the research

1. Markova, L. and Shannon, R. (2019) 'Leonora Carrington on and off Screen: Intertextual and Intermedial Connections between the Artist's Creative Practice and the Medium of Film' in *Arts* 8 (1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts8010011> (peer reviewed journal article)
2. Markova, L. (2020) 'Leonora Carrington's *Imaginary Homelands*: On the documentary construction of the artist's cultural and artistic identity' in *Studies in Visual Arts and Communication* 7 (2) pp. 3-13 (peer reviewed journal article) https://journalonarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/001_SVACij_Vol7_No2-2020_Lora-Markova_Leonora-Carringtons-Imaginary-Homelands.pdf

Outputs 1 and 2 are published in rigorously peer reviewed journals of international standing.

4. Details of the impact

Shannon's research on Carrington's early life, screen-based collaborations and artistic and cultural identity have led to partnerships, advisory roles, and public engagement activities. Research on the artist's formative years in Lancaster and her later cinematic work prompted a major exhibition at Tate Liverpool which increased the knowledge and appreciation of Carrington's life and legacy. The innovative exhibition and partnership with Tate Liverpool stimulated interest from filmmakers who benefitted from Shannon's research and advice on the development of Carrington's artistic identity and her previously underexamined cinematic collaborations. These activities have grown the reach of Carrington's work whilst also widening the public consciousness of a previously under-represented artist.

Development of a new cultural partnership between Edge Hill University and Tate Liverpool

In 2014 Shannon pitched a proposal to the Tate Liverpool's Executive Artistic Directors to host a Leonora Carrington exhibition that would uncover unrecognized aspects of the artist's creative practice, acknowledge her Lancastrian heritage and (re)discover the artist's cultural significance in Britain, and specifically in north west England. This proposal came to fruition in March 2015 with Shannon being appointed as a Special Projects Advisor consulting, firstly, on Carrington's involvements in cinema and, secondly on the place and heritage of Lancashire in her work. To

realise the retrospective, Shannon collaborated with Tate Liverpool's curator, Tate Liverpool's Artistic Director, and the Mexican novelist, Chloe Aridjis, was invited to co-curate the exhibition. The exhibition was the stimulus for the development of a formal cultural partnership between Edge Hill University and Tate Liverpool as confirmed in the Tate's annual report from 2015 [A]: "The development of the Leonora Carrington exhibition as part of Tate Liverpool's Surreal Landscapes spring 2015 programme has offered the ideal opportunity to explore the shared values between the two institutions and to formalise a larger partnership spanning across the university [...] Working together on the exhibition has built a positive relationship and has brought value to both the exhibition at Tate Liverpool and to teaching, learning and research activities within Edge Hill University".

For example, the partnership yielded further collaborations that include knowledge exchange events through the Tate Exchange programme and public talks linked to Tate exhibitions hosted by the University, widening the cultural offerings in the region. The Leonora Carrington exhibition was directly informed and stimulated by Shannon's research as confirmed by Head of Learning at Tate Liverpool [B]: "Professor Shannon's research into the relationship between Carrington's work and film and her cultural and artistic identity was the prompt and stimulus behind the exhibition [...] Professor Shannon collaborated with Tate Liverpool's Artistic Director, Francesco Manacorda, and the exhibition's co-curator, Lauren Barnes, taking on a role as Special Projects advisor regarding both the film element and the Lancastrian connections".

Increasing local cultural awareness and knowledge of work and life of Leonora Carrington and adding to the cultural heritage of North West England

The exhibition was displayed at Tate Liverpool for 3 months, March – May 2015 and explored Carrington's diverse creative practice, and displayed key paintings from throughout her career, including 'El Mundo Mágico de los Mayas', which travelled out of Mexico for the first time. The exhibition also drew on Shannon's research on Carrington's involvement in film leading to the inclusion in the exhibition of a screening of *The Mansion of Madness* (dir. Juan López Moctezuma, Mexico, 1973), for which Leonora Carrington was Art Supervisor. "This attention to Carrington and film represented the first time that this aspect of her wide creative practice had been incorporated in such an exhibition and it has since influenced the curatorship of subsequent Carrington exhibitions." [B]

The exhibition its promotion and marketing and associated learning programme had a wide reach including [A]:

- Marketing and promotions materials generated by Tate Liverpool had a reach of over 1,000,000 people.
- Over 15,000 people attended the exhibition.
- 553 people attended events programmed in collaboration with Edge Hill University.
- 128 people attended Tate Liverpool public events.
- 340 school students visited the exhibition and 26 schools received tours, with resources available for schools and teachers for self-directed learning.
- 32 people attended two distance learning talks about the Leonora Carrington exhibition, delivered through the Tate website.
- 827 children and their families attended drop in Surrealist Family Adventure family activity sessions.
- 10,759 parents and children accessed the Family Room in the Clore Learning Centre to visit Pompompom, a family activity installation inspired by the Surrealist Landscapes season.

The Head of Learning at Tate Liverpool confirms that the legacy of the exhibition has been "an increased awareness and understanding of the artistic work and creative diversity of Leonora Carrington. It also significantly added to the interpretation of the cultural heritage of the north west by highlighting the under acknowledged Lancastrian origins of the artist" [B]

In addition to the Tate exhibition, in 2016 Shannon was invited to organize a public discussion on the connection between Carrington's work and film, followed by a screening of *The Mansion of Madness* for the Viva! Spanish & Latin American Festival at HOME, Manchester [F]. In 2018

Shannon's research on Leonora Carrington's on-screen collaborations and cameo performances in two Mexican avant-garde films from the 1960s has been reflected in a screening programme within the "Leonora Carrington: Magical Tales" exhibition organized by Mexico City's Museum of Modern Art (MAM) and Monterrey's Museum of Contemporary Art (MARCO) in Mexico [E]. In 2015 the Institute for Creative Enterprise at Edge Hill University ran an evening 'In conversation with Leonora Carrington' to a live audience, the subsequent YouTube video has received over 1600 views.

Contribution to the development and production of two significant documentary films about Leonora Carrington leading to wider awareness across the UK

Shannon's research has made a significant contribution to the development and production of two documentary films that chronicled the life and work of Leonora Carrington. Shannon was approached by the producers of the BBC commissioned film *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* [C i]. Shannon was formally thanked in the credits of the film. His advice stemming from the research informed the producers of the artist's associations with film and filmmakers alongside the artist's Lancastrian heritage, connection and influence. The producer of the documentary confirms that they "...had a number of conversations with Roger Shannon touching on the research he had embarked upon at the University regarding Leonora Carrington. His advice and the discussions we had were helpful. We were able to thank him in the film's credits, something the BBC doesn't do lightly" [C ii]. The film went on to win two awards – the 2018 Royal Television Society Northern Ireland Award for 'Best Specialist Factual': and the prestigious 2018 Grierson Trust British Documentary Award for Best Arts or Music Documentary [C iii]. The Grierson jury noted in their comments that the film had been particularly successful in 'connecting the subject's biography and inner life to the subject's art in a surefooted way', a notable feature of Shannon's research.

More fundamentally as confirmed by the production company the film and the associated publicity were able to reach a large audience across two screenings on BBC 4 (November 2017 and December 2018) alongside screenings at documentary film festivals and by European broadcasters. As the producer confirms "the film, alongside Professor's Shannon's research, was able to make more people aware of the life and work of a wonderful artist who had been 'lost' to a great many in the UK and wider world. I recognise that Professor Roger Shannon's research interests at Edge Hill University also achieve this goal, and as such we were grateful to share in that endeavour" [C ii].

Shannon's research at Edge Hill University also made a significant and wide-reaching contribution to the development, writing, financing, and production of a second film *Female Human Animal*. The director of this film confirms, "The work undertaken at Edge Hill University about this artist helped me directly not only in research but in contributing to developing, writing, financing and producing the film. At a crucial point in the post production of the film, we were able to draw on Professor Shannon's research in very practical ways. On numerous occasions I discussed the film's approach with Professor Shannon, responding with amendments to the script... approach of the film with regard to Carrington's work, life, history, and related concerns of surrealism, feminism and gender relations that inform the film's thematics, which greatly improved the impact of the film." [D i].

The film was shown initially at Sheffield Documentary Festival followed by over 20 theatrical screenings across the UK and a number of international film festivals [D ii]. The film was also distributed by the online distributor MUBI to over 150 territories including the UK and the USA, as well as being available on the BFI player, further widening the chance for raising public awareness of the artist.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A. TATE Liverpool – 2015 interim report
- B. Tate Liverpool Head of Learning – supporting factual statement
- C. i) The Lost Surrealist - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09j0lp9>
- ii) Statement from Producer of *The Lost Surrealist*
- iii) Film awards

- D. i) *Female Human Animal* – Statement from Director
ii) List of screenings from website
- E. Fundación Leonora Carrington (Mexico) invited Shannon to participate as a speaker on an international panel within the “100 Years of Leonora” Conference, held at National Library of Mexico, Mexico City (6 April 2016) <http://www.leocarrington.com/panel-internacional--international-panel.html>
- F. HOME (Centre for international contemporary art, theatre and film) in Manchester invited Shannon to organize a programme on Carrington’s involvements in film, including a screening of “The Mansion of Madness” (Juan López Moctezuma, 1973), art directed by Carrington. The event took place within Viva! Spanish & Latin American Festival (15 April 2016) <https://homemcr.org/film/the-mansion-of-madness/>
- G. Shannon is acknowledged as an adviser of the documentary *Leonora Carrington: The Lost Surrealist* (2017), pre-screened at EHU Leonora Carrington Centenary Symposium and broadcasted on BBC Four (10 December 2017 and 28 November 2018) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09j0lp9>
- H. Shannon is recognised as an advisor on the experimental documentary *Female Human Animal* (2018), pre-screened at EHU Leonora Carrington Centenary Symposium and available online via BFI Player <https://player.bfi.org.uk/subscription/film/watch-female-human-animal-2018-online>
- I. A number of cultural institutions, such as FACT (Liverpool) and MAC (Midlands Arts Centre – Birmingham) have hosted screenings of the documentary *Female Human Animal* and Q&A discussions with the director Josh Appignanesi, initiated and chaired by Roger Shannon. <https://macbirmingham.co.uk/event/female-human-animal-q-a>