

Institution: University of Chester		
Unit of Assessment: 32 Art and Design		
Title of case study: Beyond Documentary – Tom Wood and the DPA Work: The Performative Moment and the Rise of Socially-engaged Photographic Art Practice as an Agent of Change		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2012 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Cian Quayle	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Dr, Associate Professor	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2007 – ongoing
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2012 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

Since 2012 Dr Cian Quayle has researched and contextualised previously unseen work by world renowned photographer Tom Wood. The project led to new exhibitions, events and publishing outcomes: *The DPA Work - Photographs of Rainhill Hospital and Cammell Laird Shipyard* in its various iterations is the result of two commissions by the Documentary Photography Archive, undertaken by Wood in the late 1980's/early 1990's. Quayle's research and collaboration with individuals, museums, galleries and publishers, has made this work available to new, non gallery-going audiences as well as benefitting those same individuals and organisations, who were involved in the project as it developed. Wood's photographs can be viewed as an historical document of event, time and place, but their new contextual understanding extends beyond their documentary function as the work is a pre-cursor to debates and practices related to contemporary, 'socially-engaged' photography as an agent of change. The exhibitions and publication of this research has also led to new perspectives related to unemployment, mental health and wellbeing, and the care of the elderly. The use of material from public archives was also significant for the organisations involved in relation to the new contextual understanding of the deindustrialisation of Britain and the deinstitutionalisation of healthcare from the late 1980s and early 1990s.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Quayle joined the University of Chester in 2007 and is Associate Professor and Programme Leader for BA Photography. As the project progressed Quayle assumed multiple roles as practice-based, principle-investigator, critical theorist, archivist, editor and curator. Quayle was also able to invite the participation and contribution of others across an eight-year period. Fisher has described the the role of 'independent Researcher-Curator' as follows: 'a complex one, often involving raising funds, promoting ideas to publishers and museums as part of making the research public.' (1) In 2007 Quayle first invited Wood to guest lecture and later teach at the University of Chester, which led to Quayle's investigation and study of the two commissions. Each body of work is defined by Wood's unparalleled access to the subjects photographed, how they are represented and how the understanding of this material was subsequently recontextualised. The research and context reflects on the fragility of lived experience, and how identity is defined by work, community and place. The basis for the Rainhill commission coincided with the introduction of the government's *Care in Community* policy in 1988, and Wood photographed the day-to-day experience of patients, prior to their moving out of the institutional setting of the 'mental hospital'. In a similar way, we also witness the impending impact of redundancy of the shipyard workers whom Wood photographed at Cammell Laird; Each institution at the time being the largest of their kind in Europe (1).

The DPA was founded by Audrey Linkman, in Manchester in 1985, as an art historian-led initiative which: "focused on the history of working people, disadvantaged communities and minority groups whom [...] had largely been written out of the script" (Linkman). Wood's DPA commissions were originally initiated in collaboration with the Open Eye Gallery and the mental health charity MIND. Quayle subsequently made contact with Linkman, and Dave Govier, archivist at Greater Manchester County Record Office where the DPA collection is held. The subsequent re-evaluation

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of Wood's archive of approximately 6000 photographic negatives, prints and contact sheets, which bar a handful of images exhibited and published elsewhere, had literally not seen the light of day. Quayle's commission of new writing by Linkman re-examined the legacy of the DPA commissions, alongside acclaimed poet Clare Shaw's response to the Rainhill images (1). Quayle also investigated the history of both institutions; This involved the study of photographs, artefacts and documents related to the century-long history of Cammell Laird Shipyard at Wirral Archives Service. This, important contextual material was then integrated within a series of exhibitions and ultimately in the edit and design of a collection of photobooks (2). The study of the Rainhill holdings at the Public Records Office at Liverpool Central Library was also linked with a recovered collection of turn-of-the century patients' admission photographs from Rainhill Hospital. Georges Didi Huberman's study of Charcot's 'Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière' (1878) in *Invention of Hysteria* (2003) and Hugh Welch Diamond's *Inmates of the Surrey County Asylum* (1856) form part of the methodological framework by which Wood's photographs were re-evaluated. Quayle's plinked both bodies of work whilst exploring the photographic embodiment of photography's performative moment, which was also highlighted in Leo Fitzmaurice's review of the Rainhill exhibition (3).

The research underscored photography's potentiality in its narrative, social and political capacity as an agent of change, which extends beyond its documentary function. The visibility and representation of constituencies who are disenfranchised, without a voice, underrepresented or otherwise marginalised begs the question as to what extent photographic images provide a voice for those imaged – as a form of speech or 'ventriloquism' (3 & 5). This notion was further developed by Clare Shaw following her introduction to Wood's Rainhill material (1). Quayle provided Shaw with a collection of the Rainhill images as the inspiration for Shaw's new poetry, which were first performed in 2013 (1). In his writing Quayle cited Walter Benjamin's seminal 1931 essay *A Short History of Photography* in which the celebrated literary critic and essayist refers to photography's *use-value* as an object and instrumental tool (1). The image as a performative moment and event, and photography's potential to activate change can be traced back to Benjamin's concerns, which were social and political as well as medium-specific in their aesthetic significance. This provided a socio-historical and critical touchstone for the context of the project and future exhibitions (4), and the way in which this material was reconfigured each time following Benjamin admonishment: "For the situation, Brecht says, is complicated by the fact that less than ever does a simple *reproduction of reality* express something about reality. A photograph of the Krupp works or of the A.E.G. reveals almost nothing about these institutions."

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

The following individual outputs are listed with an outline breakdown of their constituent elements:

1. Tom Wood – The DPA Work: Photographs of Rainhill Hospital and Cammell Laird Shipyard in Look 13 Liverpool International Photography Festival, Parallel Programme. Contemporary Art Space Chester, University of Chester, 2013. Two consecutive exhibitions and a poetry reading event. Each as itemised, researched and curated by Dr Cian Quayle with an exhibition catalogue / pamphlet with an introductory text (10,636 words):
 - Photographs of Rainhill Hospital, 1988 - 1990, April 1 - May 13, 2013
 - Poetry Reading by Clare Shaw: Facilitated & Organised by Dr Cian Quayle, May 13, 2013
 - Photographs of Cammell Laird Shipyard, 1993 - 1996, May 16 - May 26, 2013
2. Quayle, C. *Tom Wood – The DPA Work: Photographs of Rainhill Hospital and Cammell Laird Shipyard* (3 vols. boxed edit & designed by Cian Quayle & Tom Wood with Gerhard Steidl). Gottingen, Germany: Steidl (Catalogue Spring / Summer 2019: ISBN 978-3-95829-347-2)
 - Vol. 1 Photographs of Rainhill Hospital, 1988 - 1990
 - Vol. 2 Photographs of Cammell Laird Shipyard, 1993 - 1996
 - Vol. 3. Rainhill Archive Portraits, 1890 – 1899
3. Quayle, C. (2016) 'Audie Murpfy is Dead (Sic)' in *Tom Wood – The DPA Work: Vol. 1 Photographs of Rainhill Hospital, 1988 - 1990*

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4. Concurrent exhibitions organised and facilitated by Dr Cian Quayle in conjunction with the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum in the Independents Biennial in Liverpool Biennial, 2018:
 - Tom Wood Photographs of Cammell Laird Shipyard 1993 - 1996, July 14 - Sept 2, 2018
 - Cian Quayle – Detours and Dislocations: In the Footsteps of Malcolm Lowry, July 14 - Aug 26, 2018: <https://www.artinliverpool.com/events/ib18-williamson-art-gallery-detours-and-dislocations-cian-quayle/>
5. Quayle, C. APHE Summer Conference – Photography and Collaboration: *Tom Wood The DPA Work (A Reprise / Revoiced) Photographs of Rainhill Hospital and Cammell Laird Shipyard*. Coventry University, July 10 - 12, 2019

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

Prior to this project Wood's DPA photographs were not only unseen but uncatalogued as they had effectively lain dormant since the unedited deposit of photographic film negatives, contact sheets and work prints; Linkman reflected upon the way that this process formed part of the agreement, which all the photographers entered into upon being commissioned (10). Even Wood had not had occasion or time to revisit his own work before Quayle instigated this project. The exhibitions also included Quayle's skill in crafting handmade, darkroom and digital photographs as fine prints. The curation of exhibitions included archival documents and photographs, and the edit and design with Wood of new books, incorporating new writing and poetry, which Quayle commissioned (11).

As an under-utilised resource, the DPA's seminal commissions includes a selection of the UK's leading 'documentary' photographers of the last fifty years, including Martin Parr (7). The context of Wood's commissions has been redefined to not only to highlight the significance of Wood's work when it was first made, but to also establish the curatorial relevance and meaning revealed in its reconfiguration. The performative nature of photography as embodied practice was highlighted in Leo Fitzmaurice's exhibition review of the Rainhill exhibition at CASC: 'But by looking carefully, which Wood does, at the movements of the person, and then by looking carefully at the recordings of these movements, Quayle has put Wood's time to use. Quayle understands that it is the time and the space that gives this work meaning. For it is the study of these prosaic movements within time and space, which communicates the poetry of what might lie beneath the surface' (6).

With reference to Quayle's research and its interrogation of Wood's work 'shot at a poignant time for Liverpool city region'; Sarah Fisher (1) has stated how: 'there is still much to uncover about peoples history through unseen works – which is evident in the audience numbers to his [Wood's] exhibitions in Liverpool [...] which attract 'a high percentage of local people who are not generally gallery goers (as evidenced through the Open Eye Gallery's audience survey evaluation which captures postcode information).' Fisher further described the impact as follows: 'The research is important to the Open Eye Gallery because as a charity we have no funds to support research into the impact of historical gallery programme has had on its communities. Open Eye Gallery particularly recognises Quayle's rigour in working with Wood's archive. Undoubtedly, this research, together with Quayle's post-production work [exhibition & book outcomes] led to public impact through the curation of previously unseen works embedded within the presentation of bodies of work in two exhibitions that revealed new social insights' (1).

Quayle was able to rearticulate the presence and aesthetic representation of Wood's subjects, which has opened up new insights on a social and political level (6). The tangible visibility felt in the material presence and histories of people's lives is given new meaning. Quayle's research and reference to Walter Benjamin is echoed in Shaw's involvement as an interpretative voice in the way that the institutionalised lives of those photographed and represented have been 're-voiced' (12). Each individual's story is also a collective one, which is still raw in its currency in the way that work and life-after-work is played out on a personal, societal and ethical level. Alongside the audience at large, the demographic of 'non gallery goers', who visited the Open Eye Gallery and the Williamson Art Gallery, still feel and remember the impact of the decline of industry and unemployment in their recognition of these images as historical as well as highly emotive documents (8). The context today is pertinent – the Cammell Laird images foreshadow a period

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of mass unemployment and recession in the 1980/90s. In the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 the spectre of mass unemployment and recession looms large once more as issues of wellbeing, mental health and the care of the elderly are foremost in the public mind, and the consequences of this were felt regionally as well as nationally – then as well as now.

The project also had a heritage-based and cultural significance through the collaboration with museums, galleries and archives. Archivist William Meredith described how Quayle's research the Cammell Laird material at Wirral Archives Service was particularly: 'important in promoting and increasing the visibility of the Cammell Laird collection (and of Wirral Archives, as the holder of this collection), and the background information drawn from the collection was crucial in providing historical context to Tom Wood's photographs' (2). Having seen the DPA Work exhibitions, which Quayle curated at CASC in 2013, Principal Museums Officer Colin Simpson collaborated with Quayle and Wood to bring the exhibitions to a 'wider audience' as part of the Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture in 2018: 'Many of the prints were hitherto unseen and Cian and Tom together curated a remarkable and revelatory selection. A large gallery was dedicated to this work (53.6 linear metres) and the opportunity was taken to explore the Williamson's archive of related B&W prints and glass negatives taken by Cammell Laird photographers in the first two decades of the 20th century, several of which were scanned and printed [by Quayle] at the University of Chester for the exhibition. In addition, it was possible to expand the selection of work on display to include a painting, a half-block model, archive material and ship's plans, items drawn from both the Williamson's own collection and Wirral Archives. The selection of Tom Wood's prints on display numbered 70+ from postcard to A0 size. The response from the public was very positive, as an appreciation of the history of an important local industry when it was at a particularly low ebb: between 6th July and 2nd September 2018 the exhibitions at the Williamson drew 5,775 visitors. Building on the connections made in the development of these exhibitions, the Williamson presented in 2018 a major selection of British documentary photography *Distinctly*, with work by ten photographers including Chris Killip, Martin Parr and Tish Murtha and, subsequently, exhibitions with Stephanie Wynne and Craig Easton as part of the LOOK 19 photographic festival. In addition, the major Arts Council England-funded photographic project with Alan Ward *Photographs from Another Place* came to fruition in 2019. (3).

Notwithstanding the significance of the outcomes generated through Quayle's research and collaboration with Wood (9), the project has benefitted others whom he either engaged creatively, influenced, employed or commissioned. From the outset of the research Quayle involved the participation of BA Photography students at Chester including Claire Davies, who worked with Wood on a residential Experiential Learning placement. Following graduation and postgraduate study Davies exhibited in The Guernsey Photo Biennial (2014). Tony Hayes also described the origin of his socially-engaged photography project at Heathside Mews Care Home in Warrington, and his sensitivity to the vulnerability of the residents, and how via Quayle's guidance provided 'the opportunity to discuss these issues with an established practitioner [might] not only benefit the project, but also aid my development as a photographer', leading in turn to Hayes' own exhibitions and books which followed in 2018 (5). Natalie Meer was employed as Operations Manager at the Open Eye Gallery, which also incorporates the opportunity to take on 'curatorial work' (1). St Clare has stated how Quayle's research and introduction to Wood's working methods was the 'catalyst' for her socially engaged project, which has 'given vulnerable young women the opportunity to participate in photographing, editing and curating their own high profile exhibition' at the Williamson Art Gallery and Sailing School Gallery in New Brighton [in 2019] (4).

The Open Eye Gallery subsequently commissioned St Clare and Fisher commented: 'In 2019 Suzanne developed a significant project called *Women of Iron*, uncovering the untold stories of women engaged with Cammell Lairds which was exhibited at the Williamson – an interest of St Clare's which grew out of the research she did with Quayle' (1). St Clare reflected on the success of the projects which followed: 'The opportunities that have materialised as a result of the Cammell Laird exhibition have been varied and have had positive outcomes for the young women who participated. British Atlantic Survey supported the exhibition at the Williamson Art Gallery and this enabled the group to participate in a VIP private view launch where they presented and discussed their work to a wide and professional audience. The exhibition ran for several months at the

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Williamson and the young women were able to take relatives, friends, social workers and discuss their involvement, technical skills and artistic input into the project. The group received the prestigious Ambassadors of Wirral awarded to those who have made a significant contribution to Wirral culture. This was not only a momentous occasion for the group but it has been beneficial to the young women when they have applied for jobs, college and universities (4).'

The project was further enhanced through the collaboration with the publisher Steidl as the pre-eminent publisher of artists' photobooks, which will extend the reach of the project and its impact through their reputation and expertise in fine printing, worldwide sales and distribution (11).

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

- (1) Letter from Executive Director, Open Eye Gallery: <https://openeye.org.uk/>
- (2) Letter from Archivist, Wirral Archives Service, Birkenhead
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/wirral-archives-service/documents-we-hold/cammell-laird-shipbuilders>
- (3) Letter from Principal Museums Officer, Williamson Art Gallery & Museum, Birkenhead:
<https://williamsonartgallery.org/contact/>
- (4) Testimonial Statement by Director of VidA Creative (Artist, photographer & educator)
<https://theguideliverpool.com/this-new-photography-exhibition-puts-cammell-lairds-female-workforce-through-the-lens/>
- (5) Testimonial Statement by Tony Haynes Photography
- (6) Rainhill Hospital Exhibition Review (2013)
- (7) Spectrum Photographic Services: <https://spectrumphoto.co.uk/tom-wood>
- (8) The Culture Diary: Tom Wood Cammell Laird Shipyard, 1993 - 1996 exhibition
<https://www.theculturediary.com/events/tom-wood-cammell-laird-shipyard-1993-1996-exhibition>
- (9) Liverpool Echo: <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/photos-cammell-laird-slowly-declining-14843507>
- (10) Greater Manchester County Record Office: Documentary Photography Archive
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/manchesterarchiveplus/albums/72157625960866545>
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/manchesterarchiveplus/5444435243>
- (11) Steidl Catalogue 2019 (pp.108 - 109): https://steidl.de/assets/mime/-UTQ3ZXDMcn,7cBxtW2c4dCQZ2XvBx6DERPP,MsOpsAOiHdce/Steidl_WWP_SS19.pdf
- (12) Information provided by poet: <https://poetryschool.com/residency/meet-digital-poet-residence-clare-shaw/>