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| <b>Institution:</b> The Courtauld Institute of Art  |  |  |
| <b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 32 – Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory  |  |  |
| <b>Title of case study:</b> The Courtauld Collection: Samuel Courtauld and Impressionism  |  |  |
| <b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2008 - 2019  |  |  |
| <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> |
| Dr Barnaby Wright   | Deputy Head of The Courtauld Gallery and Daniel Katz | 2007 – Present                               |
| Dr Karen Serres   | Curator of 20 <sup>th</sup> -century Art             | 2012 – Present                               |
| Dr Ketty Gottardo   | Curator of Paintings                                 | 2016 – Present                               |
| Dr Alexandra Gerstein   | Martin Halusa Curator of Drawings                    | 2005 – Present                               |
|   | McQueens Curator of Sculpture and Decorative Arts    |  |
| <b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2018 - 2020   |  |  |
| <b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N</b>  |  |  |
| <p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Samuel Courtauld was arguably the foremost collector of Impressionist artworks in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Britain, yet there has been relatively little exploration of his significance or the wider art historical relevance of his collection, the foundational gift of The Courtauld Institute of Art. Comprehensive research undertaken by The Courtauld's curatorial team has provided national and international audiences with the opportunity to understand more about Samuel Courtauld, his collection, and his family history, and to explore their own links with his ground-breaking collection. Through major exhibitions in France and Japan, the curatorial team shared new technical and art historical research with a very wide public and recontextualised the collection as a whole by presenting it alongside personal artefacts, correspondence, and photographs to understand Samuel Courtauld's vision of art. Their research has been used innovatively in national partnership activities – co-curating displays with local communities, training and networking for museum professionals and volunteers, underpinning oral history projects, expanding displays of local history collections – to enact Samuel Courtauld's intention for the collection: that it be used for the benefit and enjoyment of society.</p>  |  |  |
| <p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Since 2008, The Courtauld's curatorial team has carried out a sustained inquiry into the life, legacy, and art historical significance of Samuel Courtauld, whose precocious understanding of the importance of Impressionist painting, drawing and sculpture led to the foundational donation for the institution's collection. Their research has focused on two main areas: (1) determining the historical, political, and social contexts for Samuel Courtauld's acquisition of an outstanding collection of Impressionist works in the early 20th century, and (2) expanding the body of knowledge around the Impressionist collection on a technical and art historical level to support the effective and compelling display and interpretation of these works.</p> <p>The story of Samuel Courtauld's collecting was addressed previously in two publications: Douglas Cooper's <i>The Courtauld Collection</i> (1954) and the Courtauld exhibition catalogue <i>Impressionism for England</i> (1994). As the curatorial team began to investigate works in the Impressionist collection that had not been examined in any depth in earlier publications, including works on paper, they realised that much remained to be unearthed regarding the contextual and technical analysis of the collection. This led to new discoveries about individual works and bodies of work, which were disseminated through a series of catalogues and exhibitions: <i>The Courtauld Cézannes</i> 2008 (stylistic, contextual and technical research into paintings, drawings and letters by Cézanne held in the collection) [R2]; <i>Renoir at the Theatre. Looking at La Loge</i> 2008 (research into the imagery of the theatre in painting to show how novel Renoir's depiction was at the time); <i>Cézanne's Card Players</i>, 2010 [R3]; <i>Toulouse-Lautrec and</i></p> |  |  |

*Jane Avril. Beyond the Moulin-Rouge*, 2011 (with a focus on the dancer Jane Avril, her friendship with Lautrec and her medical condition, 'St Vitus' Dance), all curated and edited by Wright (Daniel Katz Curator of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Art at The Courtauld Gallery 2007 - present, appointed Deputy Head of The Courtauld Gallery in 2016) and *Collecting Gauguin. Samuel Courtauld in the '20s*, 2013 (showing Gauguin's versatility as an artist and focusing on the reception of Gauguin in the United Kingdom) [R4], curated by Serres (Curator of Paintings, The Courtauld Gallery). Serres also published an article showing how new technical research, carried out by conservators at The Courtauld in partnership with the Italian National Institute of Optics, proved that a long-doubted story about a lost self-portrait by the neo-Impressionist painter Georges Seurat was, in fact, true [R5].

The temporary closure of The Courtauld Gallery in 2018 presented the curatorial team with an opportunity to embark on an intensive campaign of new research, building on their initial findings and resulting in a fresh understanding of the Courtauld Collection as a whole. They were particularly interested in addressing questions about Samuel Courtauld's approach to collecting; his contention that art offers ways to reinvigorate society and enrich people's lives; and how he placed himself within the wider artistic context of his day. Gerstein (Curator of Sculpture and Decorative Arts) focused on the history of the Courtauld family from their arrival as Huguenot refugees in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and highlighted the role played by Courtauld's ancestors and siblings in a widespread tradition of philanthropy, as well as their background in craftsmanship and manufacturing, especially in silver and textiles. Serres examined previously overlooked correspondence, invoices and archives at The Courtauld and other institutions, which gave a clear sense of Courtauld's understanding of art as a vital element for the enrichment of society and its individuals. Wright reassessed the reception by collectors, national museums, the public and contemporary artists of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism in Britain since the 1870s to put Samuel Courtauld's collecting in context, looking beyond writings by art critics, which had been previously examined but did not give a complete picture, and Gottardo (Martin Halusa Curator of Drawings) provided new findings into the chronology of works in the collection, and moved beyond the 1994 catalogue's focus on paintings to undertake a systematic technical study of its woodcuts, pastels, and drawings. Serres drew on all aspects of this research in her role as lead curator of *The Courtauld Collection: A Vision for Impressionism* [R1] at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris in 2019. She also edited the accompanying catalogue, to which all members of the curatorial team contributed key essays drawing on their new findings. This same body of research then fed into the curation of *Masterpieces of Impressionism: The Courtauld Collection* [R6], which toured Japan in 2019-20. An important wealth of new knowledge about the Courtauld Impressionist collection, Samuel Courtauld's motivations for collecting, and the wider philanthropic and industrial legacy of the Courtauld family has been generated through this extensive period of research by The Courtauld's curatorial team.

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

[R1] *The Courtauld Collection: A Vision for Impressionism*, ed. K. Serres, with contributions from K. Serres, K. Gottardo, B. Wright and A. Gerstein, (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2019). Published to accompany an exhibition of the same name. Lead curator: K. Serres. (Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, 20 February 20 – 17 June 2019). **[Submitted as an output to REF2 for Serres]**

[R2] *The Courtauld Cézannes*, exhibition curated by B. Wright (The Courtauld Gallery, 26 June – 5 October 2008), with accompanying catalogue edited by B. Wright (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2008).

[R3] *Cézanne's Card Players*, exhibition curated by B. Wright (The Courtauld Gallery, 21 October 2010 – 16 January 2011), with accompanying catalogue edited by B. Wright (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2010)

[R4] *Collecting Gauguin: Samuel Courtauld in the 20s*, exhibition curated by K. Serres (The Courtauld Gallery, 20 June – 8 September 2013), with accompanying catalogue written by K. Serres (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2013).

[R5] K. Serres and A. Burnstock, 'Seurat's Hidden Self-Portrait', *The Burlington Magazine*, CLVI, April 2014, pp. 240–242.

[R6] *Masterpieces of Impressionism: The Courtauld Collection*, exhibition curated by B. Wright and K. Serres with Satomi Tanaka and Natsuko Ohashi (Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, 10

September – 15 December 2019, Aichi Prefectural Museum in Nagoya, 3 January 2020 – originally 15 March 2020; closed 2 March 2020 due to Covid-19, and Kobe City Museum, installed but never opened due to Covid-19), with accompanying catalogue with an essay by K. Serres, 'The Courtauld Collection', pp. 16-27 (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, 2019).

**Research quality:** exhibition catalogues were reviewed by specialists in The Burlington Magazine, among others, after publication. Copies of all outputs can be made available on request.

#### Grants received

The Courtauld Connects capital project received a total of £9.4million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2016. Of this, £99,032 was allocated to National Partnership projects and exhibitions which built on the curatorial team's research, as outlined in the section below. More details can be provided on request.

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

##### Increasing understanding of Samuel Courtauld and his Impressionist collection

Led by Serres, the team worked with private and public partners to reconstruct the full breadth of Courtauld's original collection. Coupled with their previous research, this enabled the exhibition *The Courtauld Collection: A Vision for Impressionism* at the Fondation Louis Vuitton (20 February – 17 June 2019) which included photographs, correspondence, publications and personal objects relating to Courtauld and wife, Elizabeth, fully contextualising the works and establishing the international significance of the Collection rather than just being an exhibition of Impressionist works. It attracted 483,000 visitors [1]. 12,132 copies of the catalogue (French and English), and 10,000 shorter 'album' versions (French only) were sold [7]. Over 6,900 people attended events (1,800 on 5 April with Virtual Reality experiences; 1,320 people at closing night event 7 June, with exhibition mini-tours). [11] The catalogue was reviewed as '*outstanding*' with the Burlington Magazine asserting that it '*adds very significantly to our knowledge of Courtauld the man, his family background, [and] aspects of his collecting*' [9]. Reviews praised the exploration of Courtauld as a collector while presenting visitors with well-researched and fresh perspectives on a familiar genre [9]; Financial Times: '*this collection will shine, as one man's deeply personal yet historically pitch-perfect gathering of exceptional works*' [9]; Paris Red Guide: '*it is one of this show's strengths and qualities that it manages to shed new light on the workmanship, colors, lines and shadows of these masterpieces unique anywhere in the world*'. Reviews appreciated the contextual explanation of the contemporary reception of the works [9]. French reviews also focused on Courtauld's French heritage noting that many works were being seen in France for the first time for 60 years [9].

The second exhibition, which built on this new presentation and reading of the Impressionist collection generated by the curatorial team and gave visitors access to the body of new technical and contextual knowledge, was *Masterpieces of Impressionism: The Courtauld Collection*. This exhibition toured Japan in 2019-20, featuring as part of the British Council's 'UK in Japan' programme, and was co-curated by Serres and Wright alongside Japanese co-curators. In Tokyo, the exhibition drew an audience of 346,000 and, despite having to close prematurely due to Covid-19, 84,000 visitors attended in Nagoya [2]. Postgraduate students from the University of Tokyo, Kyoto Institute of Technology, and Hitotsubashi University, who contributed along with Serres and other Japanese academics to a Japanese edition of the catalogue, were provided with dedicated seminars, built on the research material in *The Courtauld Collection* exhibition catalogue [2]. *Masterpieces of Impressionism* presented innovative research for the benefit of visitors: the works were arranged thematically, with reference made to the Impressionist artists' interest in Japan and Japanese art and accompanied by large didactic wall panels to present different aspects of the team's research, including x-radiographs and illustrative comparisons [2,3]. Elements of this technical research were also reproduced in the Japanese press [2], making clear the interest and importance of this feature of the curatorial team's research. The Chief Producer of the Cultural Projects Department at The Asahi Shimbun, who collaborated on curating the exhibition, noted the success of the exhibition: '*Though Samuel Courtauld himself was little known in Japan, this exhibition widely publicized his achievements and his collection [...] There is definitely a new interest in Samuel Courtauld and the Impressionists as a result of*



*this exhibition.*’ A long-term result of the ‘*success of this exhibition*’ is that the Asahi Shimbun ‘*would like to plan other exhibitions focusing on a collector and his/her collection.*’ [10]

### **Supporting the professional development of partner museum professionals**

The research created training and networking opportunities for museum professionals as part of The Courtauld’s National Partnerships programme, which enabled communities living near former Courtaulds’ factory sites to explore the history and legacy they share with The Courtauld. Workshops, including presentations from the curatorial team, networking, research, access to the curatorial team’s publications and training days involving the curatorial team fed directly into multiple curatorial projects with: Braintree District Museum; The Harris Museum, Art Gallery and Library, Preston; Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry; Ferens Art Gallery, Hull; Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Ulster Museum, Belfast [5]. Partnership curators and volunteers selected works from the Courtauld Collection for exhibitions, alongside their own collections and local history objects relating to the Courtauld family and factories.

The opportunity to engage directly with the curatorial team’s expertise enabled museum professionals to increase their art historical understanding of the Impressionists and The Courtauld Collection, and to incorporate that knowledge into their curatorial practice, resulting in expansions in their audiences. During a one-on-one visit to The Courtauld’s stores with Gottardo in early 2020 to discuss her research and select works for a co-curated exhibition, the Curator of Art at Ulster Museum commented that it gave her a new understanding of ‘*the sheer range within the Courtauld Collection*’ and that it was ‘*wonderful to see the breadth*’ of the collection [5]. A previous collaborative exhibition project at the Ulster Museum in 2018 (8 June – 28 October), in which Modigliani’s work, *Female Nude* (1916) was loaned from The Courtauld and displayed alongside other works from Ulster Museum’s collection, attracted 45,988 visitors, with 41% surveyed reporting they had come specifically for the Modigliani exhibition. In addition, 83% of respondents stated they had never visited the Courtauld Gallery and 63% stated this was the first time they had had the opportunity to see an original work by Modigliani.

The workshops and training also benefited those at partner museums in better understanding and utilising their own collections and exhibitions. In preparation for the exhibition *Radical Drawing: Works from Coventry and The Courtauld* (18 October 2019 – 19 January 2020), four staff and volunteers from the Herbert Museum attended an exhibition development day held at The Courtauld on 6 August 2019. A Learning Officer from the Herbert team stated that the opportunity to attend the workshops and undertake this co-curatorial project led to ‘*a better understanding of the works in [our] own collection*’ [4]. In another case, the co-curatorial project opened up avenues for museum professionals not usually involved in this activity to gain new knowledge about the curatorial process. A Visitor Services Assistant at the Harris in Preston in *The Artful Line* exhibition (15 February 2020, reopened 3 August 2020 following Covid-19 closure) stated the importance of seeing works from The Courtauld Collection in person and that by being able to ‘*understand why they had been hung as they had*’, the exhibition ‘*has given me a small insight into the work that goes into creating meaningful relationships between artworks*’. This meant it was ‘*the first exhibition I’ve understood, rather than simply looked at*’ [5].

### **Engaging local communities in cultural activities**

The team’s research on the Courtauld family, their philanthropy, industrial history and legacy had a direct impact on museum audience development, shared practice and individual cultural empowerment. Using this research, the Courtauld’s public programmes staff supported volunteer training in oral history documentation and film making at The Herbert, The Harris and Braintree District Museum. Volunteers interviewed former Courtaulds’ workers about their memories and experiences; films were included in exhibitions, alongside Courtauld family history drawing on Courtauld research, including at Braintree’s *Courtaulds: Origins, Innovations & Family* (1 February 2020, closed due to Covid-19 lockdowns and moved online) [8]. In Coventry, ten young people interviewed former Courtaulds’ employees. Their film was shown at the Herbert’s *Radical Drawings* exhibition [8]. Participants felt more ‘*engaged with local heritage*’ and ‘*connected to the local population*’; their involvement ‘*sparked [...] interest in joining similar projects in the future*’ [6]. A project facilitator acknowledged the value of the blueprint: such

inclusive oral history projects would allow them to 'support the building of skills, knowledge and develop confidence and enjoyment of Coventry's history with young people' [8]. At Braintree, a volunteer confirmed 'I would like to see the museum do a lot more oral history and I'd love to be involved in it', [4].

Local communities also benefitted from the opportunity to participate in co-curating projects which drew connections between the Courtauld Collection and their own shared history. In addition to museum professionals from the National Partner museums, volunteers were invited to attend training workshops involving the curatorial team. At the Harris, 100 members of the community from Red Scar, the site of a former Courtaulds factory, were involved in selecting a work from The Courtauld Collection after learning more about Impressionism and the paintings in the Collection. They chose Eugène Boudin's *Deauville* (1893) and many then took the lead in creating the exhibition *Deauville: Preston's Courtauld Connection* (10 February - 20 May 2018) [5]. This exhibition received 18,322 visitors and 337 attendees at the 11 connected events, including a reunion of Courtaulds' factory workers which led to 'new donations to the collection relating to the factory' and a talk by Serres on *Deauville* and the wider Courtauld collection [4,8]. This engaged a new audience with the interpretation of a work from The Courtauld, both as curators and as exhibition visitors, in a way that resonated with their own personal experiences and provided a new model for inclusion of communities in the processes of exhibition-making at a local level. This successful approach to meaningful community engagement with exhibition-making and the enthusiastic response it generated inspired another partner, the Ferens in Hull, to adopt it in their co-curatorial Courtauld project in 2019-20. There, 123 16-25-year-olds voted for a work from The Courtauld collection – *Antibes* by Claude Monet – and a group of nine are subsequently developing an exhibition and programme of connected events with The Courtauld curators, which will open in May 2021, following delays due to Covid-19 [4]. Throughout these projects, the curatorial team have delivered specialist talks – both in person and virtually – at the partner museums, providing insight into the works on display and further unpacking the relationship between local communities, Samuel Courtauld, and the Courtauld Collection. These co-curatorial exhibitions are set to resume as Covid-19 restrictions ease and will continue beyond the re-opening of the Courtauld Gallery spaces.

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

Where sources cannot be accessed through URLs, PDFs have been provided. Individuals available to corroborate claims listed with the sources they have provided.

[1] The Courtauld Annual Reports 2018/19, including exhibition visitor numbers (page 10): <https://assets.courtauld.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/04154919/Courtauld-Institute-of-Art-Annual-Report-and-Financial-Statements-2018-19-electronic-version.pdf>

[2] Press coverage of *Masterpieces of Impressionism: The Courtauld Collection* exhibition, Japan (some content in Japanese)

[3] Images of text panels and installation views of *Impressionism: The Courtauld Collection* in Japan (some content in Japanese)

[4] 2020 Report on the Courtauld Connects National Partnership Programme

[5] Courtauld Connects National Partnership Programme blog: <https://sites.courtauld.ac.uk/nationalpartners/stories/> Corroboration available from Curator of Art, Ulster Museum.

[6] Ulster Museum Modigliani exhibition report, compiled by National Museums Northern Ireland

[7] Publication sales reports for exhibition *The Courtauld Collection: A Vision for Impressionism* (contains content in French)

[8] Video, press releases, and blogs relating to oral history and co-curated National Partner exhibition projects.

[9] Press coverage dossier of *The Courtauld Collection: A Vision for Impressionism* exhibition (includes documents in French and Spanish)

[10] Testimonial and corroboration from Chief Producer, Cultural Projects Department, The Asahi Shimbun.

[11] Public Programmes report for *The Courtauld Collection: A Vision for Impressionism* exhibition, Fondation Louis Vuitton (content in French). Corroboration can be provided by Head of Education Programme, Fondation Louis Vuitton.