

Institution: University of Sussex		
Unit of Assessment: 27 – English Language and Literature		
Title of case study: Sussex Modernism: Reframing the Region's Twentieth-Century Cultural Heritage		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2015 – 2020		
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:
Hope Wolf	Senior Lecturer in Modernism	September 2015 – present
Sara Crangle	Professor of Modernism and the Avant Garde	September 2007 – present
Helen Tyson	Lecturer in 20th and 21st Century British Literature	September 2016 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2017 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact <p>The 'Sussex Modernism' initiative is centred upon two major exhibitions: <i>Sussex Modernism</i> and <i>A Tale of Mother's Bones</i>. Based on extensive archival research, and innovatively curated, these exhibitions have remapped and reinvigorated the county's early twentieth-century heritage, challenging preconceptions. The first exhibition generated a record number of visitors and catalysed the development of a collaborative regional network of galleries and museums: the 'Sussex Modern' network (www.sussexmodern.org.uk), which began with nine partners, has grown to thirty-six, and is increasingly geared towards fostering cultural tourism and engagement across East and West Sussex. For these institutions and their staff, the 'Sussex Modernism' project has brought clear and lasting benefit: greater visibility, new connections, the enhanced interpretation of their collections, and the economic stimulus of increased visitor numbers.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>Sussex Modernism emerges from a long-established strand of research associated with the Centre for Modernist Studies at Sussex (established in 2003), distinguished by investigations of the social and political freight of modernist experiment, and significant engagement with archives. In 2013, Crangle brought the renowned International Modernist Association conference (650+ delegates) to Sussex on the strength of modernism in the region. Tours were organised to Virginia Woolf's home, Monk's House – whose archive Crangle explores in 'Woolfian Economies' [R1], Charleston (home of the Bloomsbury group), and Farleys House & Gallery (home of surrealists Miller and Penrose). The conference, followed by a series of public talks on Sussex Modernism at the Towner Gallery, Eastbourne (2016), led by now-retired Sussex Lecturer Alistair Davies, recognised for the first time the specificity and significance of Sussex Modernism as a critical and conceptual object of study. Wolf was appointed in 2015 to take the Sussex Modernism research forward. Initially mentored by Davies and Crangle, she brought expertise in modernism – including scholarship on David Jones, poet and member of the Ditchling Guild [R2] and a research interest in life writing – to bear on the discovery of the unwritten and unexpected stories of modernist lives, art and making across Sussex.</p> <p><i>Sussex Modernism: Retreat and Rebellion</i>, an exhibition curated by Wolf in 2017 and accompanying catalogue, was the culmination of these Centre initiatives [R3]. Her research richly connected modernist movements, presenting a new historical narrative about the life,</p>		

interrelations and work of artistic and literary communities in the region. Wolf questioned the view of the metropolis as the primary locus of modernism, examining how artists and writers imagined new realities and challenged the status quo from their rural, wooded and coastal bases. The show and catalogue emerged out of sustained and original primary research in regional, national and private archives that uncovered lost materials and made original connections. As [text removed for publication] at Farleys House & Gallery recognised, 'what is exciting is when people really dig down and come up with new information [...] when you get curators like Hope, who is prepared to take a jump, and bring in a whole load of new [material] from all over the place' [S8]. Around 150 objects were exhibited from numerous museum and gallery holdings across East and West Sussex. Many were identified through Wolf's primary research and publicly displayed for the first time: including a Henri Gaudier-Brzeska coffer that once contained Imagist poetry – 'a significant new discovery' [S1] – and a series of seaside photographs by Surrealist Edith Rimmington. Wolf was subsequently commissioned to write a Sussex Modernism book by Yale University Press.

Two of the artists Wolf exhibited in *Sussex Modernism* were spotlighted in her second exhibition, *A Tale of Mother's Bones: Grace Pailthorpe, Reuben Mednikoff, and the Birth of Psychorealism* (2018-2020) [R4]. This developed and deepened the earlier show's interest in artists neglected by traditional art-historical narratives, and how they complicate assumptions that art made in the county must be comfortingly pastoral. For Pailthorpe and Mednikoff, the need for spatial retreat combined with attempts to bring about social and political transformation. Wolf's research was focused on an under-researched archive held by the National Gallery of Scotland and over two years of investigation she uncovered a wealth of previously unknown literary and artistic materials. The touring exhibition that resulted explored four decades of material drawn from private and public archives across the UK. She paired the artists' work with their psychoanalytic interpretations and constructed a new biographical narrative intertwining the artists' lives with their art and politics. The exhibition was accompanied by a 160-page book, combining essays by scholars of surrealism and psychoanalysis and a lead essay from Wolf [R4]. Wolf subsequently developed the themes of this research in collaboration with Tyson (appointed in 2016), drawing on Tyson's expertise in modernism and psychoanalysis (exemplified in articles on Marion Milner's development of a creative 'method' to escape the snares of mass culture and fascism [R5, R6]). A resulting conference – 'Virus of Hate: Responses to Fascism in Modernism, Surrealism and Psychoanalysis' – was held at the De La Warr Pavilion alongside the show in January 2019. Related initiatives included a year-long display that Wolf and Tyson co-curated with their students and the De La Warr Pavilion called 1935 (<https://www.dlwp.com/exhibition/1935/>), which developed the theme of the 'émigré' artist that was introduced in the Two Temple Place show, and helped to build the Pavilion's reputation as 'an architectural manifestation of social democracy' [S10].

3. References to the research

[R1] Crangle, Sara (2016) 'Out of the Archive: Woolfian Domestic Economies', *Modernism/Modernity*, 23(1), 141-76. Submitted to REF2.

[R2] Wolf, Hope (2018) 'Scaling War: Poetic Calibration and Mythic Measures in David Jones's *In Parenthesis*' in Kate McLoughlin and Santana Das, eds, *The First World War: Literature, Culture, Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 56-73. Submitted to REF2.

[R3] Wolf, Hope (28 Jan-23 April 2017), Exhibition, *Sussex Modernism: Retreat and Rebellion*, Two Temple Place, London; see also Exhibition Catalogue: Wolf, Hope (2017) 'The Making of Sussex Modernism' in *Sussex Modernism: Retreat and Rebellion* (London: Two Temple Place), 8-55 (of 70pp). <https://twotempleplace.org/exhibitions/sussex-modernism/> Submitted to REF2.

[R4] Wolf, Hope (2018-2020) with Rosie Cooper, Gina Buenfeld and Martin Clark. Exhibition, *A Tale of Mother's Bones: Grace Pailthorpe, Reuben Mednikoff, and the Birth of Psychorealism*, De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill, Sussex; Camden Arts Centre, London; Newlyn Art Gallery and the Exchange, Penzance; see also Exhibition catalogue (2019) Wolf, Hope ed. with Rosie Cooper, Gina Buenfeld and Martin Clark, *A Tale of Mother's Bones: Grace Pailthorpe, Reuben Mednikoff and the Birth of Psychorealism* (160pp, Wolf's essay is c. 9000 words). Submitted to REF2.

[R5] Tyson, Helen (2020) "Catching Butterflies": Marion Milner and Stream of Consciousness Writing', *Literature Compass*: <https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12563>

[R6] Tyson, Helen (2020), 'Forebodings about Fascism: Marion Milner and Virginia Woolf', *Feminist Modernist Studies* 10, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24692921.2020.1848334>

4. Details of the impact

Wolf's archival research led directly to the curation of two major exhibitions in London (*Sussex Modernism*) and East Sussex (*A Tale of Mother's Bones*), that reframed the significance of the county's modernist cultural heritage and contributed to reinvigorating a region with a 'poor public perception' due to its 'political and geographical fragmentation' [S1]. The first exhibition helped to reposition Sussex 'as a rich cultural hub' [S2], and its success was a 'catalyst' for investment in – and the development of – a professional museum and gallery network ('Sussex Modern') [S1, S3] and an art tourism trail across East Sussex and West Sussex. The result was increased audiences across the nine original partner venues and increased cultural tourism, particularly in East Sussex. A 'Sussex Modern' website (www.sussexmodern.org.uk) and further investment followed, expanding the number of highlighted cultural destinations in the region to thirty-six.

Reframing Modernist Cultural Heritage with Sussex Museums and Galleries

I. Challenging Preconceptions. Central to the impact is the major exhibition researched and curated by Wolf, *Sussex Modernism: Retreat and Rebellion*, held at Two Temple Place in London (28/01/17 to 23/04/2017). For [text removed for publication] at Charleston, Wolf's 'wish to tell a "radical" rather than a "picture postcard" story of Sussex modernism really clinched the deal' in securing the exhibition at Two Temple Place: a prestigious venue dedicated to bringing attention to regional collections. '[T]here was an anxiety that this was a story which was not fresh and that it wasn't going to be a dynamic exhibition [...] Hope brought new stories to the table... her perspective on the stories [...] and the new artists that she wanted to include in that story convinced Two Temple Place' [S1]. It was also stated: '[Wolf's] research, narratives and particular insight gave the exhibition the excitement and new ideas which were needed to achieve such great publicity for the county, our venues and the story of Modernism in Sussex, and to attract record numbers to the exhibition' [S4].

This was the most popular exhibition the venue has ever staged. 52,597 visitors attended, many visiting the venue for the first time [S5], from at least 20 countries [S6a]. Sponsored by Arts Council England and the Bull Dog Trust, and supported by an education and events programme, the exhibition received coverage from national newspapers including: *The Times*, *The New Statesman*, and *The Guardian* (e.g. 'The exhibition forces us to recalibrate our ideas about the artists and writers who dominated the radical cultural life of Britain 100 years ago' – *The i*); art publications including *Apollo* and *Wallpaper* (e.g. 'After visiting this show, you might think of Sussex differently' – *The RA Magazine*); and regional media including BBC South East [S7]. It was also reported in *The New York Review of Books* [S7]. Wolf newly and unusually combined collections drawn from regional museums, galleries and archives: Charleston, Ditchling Museum of Art & Craft, Pallant House Gallery, Towner Gallery, West Dean House, Jerwood Gallery, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, Farleys House & Gallery, the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill Museum and the Keep. Building on the exhibition's success, nine of these institutions formalised their connection, launching the 'Sussex Modern' network.

The exhibition and its underpinning research facilitated new collaborative approaches to local cultural heritage and the foregrounding of new narratives: 'Lending works to *Sussex Modernism* enabled [Pallant House] to promote the gallery and its collection in a very particular way, underlining local connections and placing lesser known artists in context – visitors were able to more immediately see these connections and explore the cultural heritage of a specific area' [S2]. Farleys House & Gallery saw Wolf's 'clever selection' as underscoring their collection's importance among the 'big hitters': she was 'introducing Farleys' [S8]. Placing objects in a new context (the Mae West Lips Sofa transported from Brighton Museum & Art Gallery to Two Temple Place) offered a way of 'reinvigorating' collections [S9], and her selection of previously unseen work by Duncan Grant was a significant step in Charleston opening up its 'queer stories': 'they weren't stories which had been told before, but since Hope's inclusion of them within the

exhibition they are stories which we are increasingly researching and telling in our on-going work' [S1].

II. New Perspectives. Wolf was able to develop many of these themes further when she was invited by the De La Warr Pavilion to research and curate with the Head of Exhibitions a show on two artists whose work was briefly presented in *Sussex Modernism* but who had barely featured in histories of the region at all: Grace Pailthorpe and Reuben Mednikoff. Built upon Wolf's discoveries made in their underexplored archives, *A Tale of Mother's Bones* (2018-20) toured between venues in the three regions in which the artists lived and worked: Sussex (De La Warr Pavilion), London (Camden Arts Centre) and Cornwall (Newlyn Art Gallery and the Exchange). The Sussex and London shows attracted 23,371 and 21,792 visitors each [S10], and the exhibition received excellent reviews/previews in *The Spectator* ('British Surrealism at its most remarkable and nightmarish'), *ArtLyst* ('Every so often a strange, worthwhile show manifests itself at one of the galleries on Britain's South Coast – an area increasingly beginning to replace Chelsea, or, after that Southwark and Bermondsey as a refuge for artists'), *Apollo*, *Frieze*, *Tate etc*, *Art Agenda*, *The Financial Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Telegraph* [S11].

The show contributed to the continuing reframing of the cultural heritage of the region, highlighting its often unexpected connections to political radicalism, psychoanalytic philanthropy, and occult subcultures. It created opportunities for networking, both cross-regionally and locally (The Pavilion and Project Art Works; Camden Arts Centre, the Freud Museum, and the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, which has founding connections with surgeon and psychoanalyst Pailthorpe): 'Developing partnerships locally and nationally, this exhibition has created further opportunities for audience experience learning' [S10]. Associated events generated some surprising outcomes: after the supporting 'Virus of Hate' symposium the De La Warr Head of Exhibitions reflected that 'the Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Co-ordinator from East Sussex Police [...] contacted us afterwards to [say] that some of the information that she gained during the event would help to inform how they can work directly with Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers to tackle hate crime' [S10]. The exhibition also increased audiences for the participating galleries: the Pavilion show attracted 'the highest proportion of visitors [...] visiting the Ground Floor Gallery in three years', many coming to the venue for the 'first time'; visitors included 226 school children, 246 students, and, via a Project Art Works event, 50 adults with complex support needs [S10]. Interest in the artists' work has considerably grown since the exhibition: in 2020, it was, for instance, shown in a British Surrealism exhibition at Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Stimulating Cultural Tourism and the Regional Economy

Incorporating both exhibitions, the 'Sussex Modernism' initiative has generated new and tangible opportunities for collaboration and regional cultural strategy, and increased audiences for participating museums and galleries. 70% of those surveyed at the *Sussex Modernism* exhibition were 'inspire[d]' to visit Sussex: some spoke of wanting 'to go to all the galleries in Sussex and learn more' [S6b], while others were 'Already planning our holiday to all the Sussex galleries' [S6c]. In the summer of 2017 Ditchling Museum reported visitor figures since the exhibition being 'on average 60% over the forecast' for that time of year [S4]. Farleys noted: 'The *Sussex Modernism* show had a very clear impact – roughly 9% more people came in that period'; it was also stated that some visitors first heard of the House through *Sussex Modernism* [S8].

The 'Sussex Modern' network emerged in response to this success. From a group of nine that were directly involved in supporting the initial exhibition and whose collections were freshly connected through Wolf's curatorial research, it has expanded to become thirty-six partners and a much more significant advocate for the region and its heritage. At the exhibition a 'constellation map', produced by the network, was released, visualising and emphasising the proximity of the regional venues. As one steward reported: 'that did go down really well, people didn't realise they were so close, or they had heard of some of it [...] but didn't realise the other ones were there' [S6d]. Wolf contributed to the interest in 'connecting the dots' on the map by offering an intellectual rationale for viewing the different collections together and by highlighting parts of collections that were less well-known, consequently encouraging new visits ('visitors [...] might not know that we have Surrealist objects in our collection and perhaps make a special outing to

come here' [S9]). Drawing attention to the work of neglected artists, she also suggested new points that might be added to the cultural map.

The cultural tourism prompted by the 'thriving success' of the Sussex Modernism initiative ensured 'investment' in 'Sussex Modern' in terms of finance, time, and infrastructure, including Arts Council funding to develop the 'Sussex Modern' brand [S1, S4]; 'We were able to build on the exhibition by launching an audience development campaign [...] which capitalised on the success of the exhibition' [S2]. East Sussex County Council's [text removed for publication] emphasised the 'positive economic impact' 'Sussex Modern' has had, which the *Sussex Modernism* exhibition 'helped to spawn':

'The fact that the Sussex Modernism exhibition was the highest footfall for a Two Temple Place regional exhibition... the prestige of being at Two Temple Place, the fact it was a collaboration across East and West Sussex and Brighton and Hove...all these really caught people's attention and they are factors which have undoubtedly contributed to its significant impact [...] [T]he opening of the *Sussex Modernism* exhibition in February 2017 was a milestone moment for me in the delivery of the East Sussex Cultural Strategy because it said "look what we have and look what we can do" [...] none of this would have happened without the exhibition at the heart of it.' [S12].

Of the first exhibition, it was remarked that Wolf did not offer a 'tired' or 'comfortable' story of modernism in the county: 'she injected radicalism and excitement and contemporary feel relevant to that story which has significantly bolstered the strength of the ['Sussex Modern'] campaign going forward' [S1]. The show was described as a 'resounding success' in raising 'the profile and perceived value of culture amongst political stakeholders, particularly around perception of the county' [S4]. Wolf continued to present a 'Surprising Sussex' [S7] in her second show, finding further ways to 'highlight underrepresented histories of modernism in ways that resonate so significantly with contemporary political and social contexts' [S10]. Raising visitor numbers, fostering collaborations, and shifting perceptions, the Sussex Modernism initiative continues to have a significant tangible impact on the cultural sector in the county.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[S1] Testimonial from [text removed for publication], Charleston

[S2] Testimonial from [text removed for publication], Pallant House Gallery

[S3] 'Sussex Modern' website, including tourist trail, making a link to the *Sussex Modernism* exhibition. <https://www.sussexmodern.org.uk/>

[S4] Testimonial from [text removed for publication], Ditchling Museum of Art & Craft

[S5] Testimonial from [text removed for publication] The Bulldog Trust

[S6] a-d Responses to Sussex Modernism exhibition a) visitor summary, b) quotes from visitors, c) tweets responding to exhibition, d) quotes from stewards

[S7] Media file for *Sussex Modernism* exhibition

[S8] Testimonial from [text removed for publication], Farleys House & Gallery Ltd

[S9] Testimonial from [text removed for publication], Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust

[S10] De La Warr Pavilion Impact Report and Project Report from Camden Arts Centre

[S11] Press coverage of *A Tale of Mother's Bones*

[S12] Testimonial from [text removed for publication], East Sussex County Council