

<b>Institution:</b> University of Leeds		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D32		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Revitalising place through interdisciplinary art practice at a time of environmental and social change: increasing arts participation, cross-arts working and local community action.		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2012 - 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Dr Judith Tucker	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Senior Lecturer	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2003 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013 ongoing		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014</b> <u>No</u>		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) A series of practice-led research projects in Northeast Lincolnshire benefitted local people, community groups, creative practitioners and the wider world of environmental, interdisciplinary arts. Wide impact was achieved through fieldwork, exhibitions and an extensive programme of public engagement. The projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mobilised community action by developing a sense of place-value based in the past, present and future of localities</li> <li>• enhanced engagement in environmental debates in contested rural areas facing change, and related these to wider issues.</li> <li>• introduced new regional audiences to innovative cultural experiences of viewing, producing and showcasing site-responsive arts.</li> <li>• popularised environmental interdisciplinary practice in national and international settings</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) This case study was developed from Dr Judith Tucker's (visual artist/academic at the University of Leeds) and Professor Harriet Tarlo's (poet/academic at Sheffield Hallam University) collaborative and interdisciplinary practice-led research. Tucker is an academic and award-winning artist with extensive expertise in landscape, place and environment in contemporary art. She is a founding convenor of Land2, the national landscape and visual arts research network. The research was predicated on site-based fieldwork and has an extensive, ongoing exhibition record <b>[R:1]</b>. The two fieldwork locations in N.E. Lincolnshire were chosen for their relevance to debates about land stewardship. Tucker's paintings/drawings and Tarlo's texts allow diverse audiences at home and abroad to examine intimate relationships between people and place, understand the 'naturalcultural' balance of our environment (Haraway) and thus the importance of all citizens' responses to ecological change at a local and global level.</p> <p><i>Outfalls</i> (2015 -2018) focused on the now defunct Louth Canal, exploring the past, present and possible futures of the waterway, thus raising questions, pertinent throughout the U.K. and beyond, about what might become of relics of our industrial heritage and surrounding landscapes? How would potential restoration affect the canal? How much and what kind of intervention is desirable and how might the arts contribute to local decision making in relation to environmental concerns, place value and well-being? These research questions are explored in Tarlo's and Tucker's series of atmospheric drawings and poems.</p>		

*Project Fitties* (2013 ongoing): Close to the resort town of Cleethorpes, the Humberston Fitties chalet park is one of the last remaining functioning plotlands in the U.K. where many once flourished. It is visited by locals and holidaymakers from Northern post-industrial towns. During the period of research, it was under threat, from east coast tidal surges and from the transition from public to private ownership, raising fears that its heritage and environmental status would be undermined. Flood risk, community resilience and land stewardship were key issues. How could local people value, maintain and sustain the 'naturalcultural' heritage of their unique residence. How could artistic practice contribute to this? The work produced investigated the relation of social, environmental and energy politics on micro and macro scales including paintings and landscape poems situating the Fitties in the wider Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) marshes and beach.

Both projects were longitudinal, facilitating extensive public engagement and community debate. Important was community understanding of place in relation to class, marginalisation, taste and aesthetics [R:2]. Tucker and Tarlo drew on theoretical research in ecopoetics; phenomenology; new materialism; psychogeography and walking and fieldwork studies: areas of the environmental arts and humanities in which they have significant individual and joint ongoing publication histories [R:3&4].

Research, fieldwork, engagement with stakeholders, participatory arts, creative practice and critical analysis operated symbiotically and produced new creative outputs [R:5&6]. Exhibitions and publications included material drawn from community-written memory cards and interviews. Both projects showcase methods for achieving consultation with local inhabitants over landscape decisions via interdisciplinary artistic practice around place, history, memory and present and future concerns.

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

#### 1. Exhibitions

Judith Tucker and Harriet Tarlo, **Project Fitties works** shown at the following selected exhibitions: "Excavations and Estuaries", Abbey Walk Gallery, Grimsby, 2013; "Excavations and Estuaries", Hull Institute of Art and Design, 2015; "Behind Land", The Muriel Barker Gallery, Fishing Heritage Centre, Grimsby, 2014; *In the Open* Cambridge 2015; "Contemporary British Painting", Marylebone Crypt, London, 2015; "Fitties", Cleethorpes Discovery Centre", 2016; "More in Common," APT Gallery, London 2018, Collyer Bristow Gallery 2018, Arthouse1 2018, 2020, Westminster Art Library 2019, Rogue Gallery Manchester, 2019, Paint Hard, Middlesborough, 2019, Jackson's Painting Prize 2018/19 Category prize winner 2020. Westmorland Landscape Prize 2019. Vitalistic Fantasies, the Cello Factory, London 2020. The project received funding from the Arts Council; North East Lincolnshire Council. Catalogues, artists' book, flyers available. See also [www.projectfitties.com](http://www.projectfitties.com) for evidence.

Judith Tucker and Harriet Tarlo, **Outfalls works** shown at the following selected exhibitions: *In the Open* Sheffield 2017; "Neverends", The Muriel Barker Gallery, Grimsby Heritage Centre, 2017; "Under East Wind", the Ropewalk Gallery, Barton-on-Humber, 2018; Groundwork Gallery, Kings Lynn, 2018; Yantai Landscape Biennale, Yantai Art Museum, China, 2018 and "Outfalls", Louth Navigation Trust, 2018. *Made in Britain* Muzeum Narodowe w Gdańsk National Gallery of Poland 2019 and *Beyond Other Horizons: Contemporary paintings made in Britain and Romania*, Iasi Palace of Culture, Romania 2020. The project has received funding from the Arts Council; HEIF funding; North East Lincolnshire Council; Arts Meridian, the British Council. Catalogues, artists' book, flyers available. See also [www.projectoutfalls.com](http://www.projectoutfalls.com) for evidence.

2. **Journal Article:** Tucker JA and Tarlo HAB 'Poetry, painting and change on the edge of England' *Sociologia Ruralis* (peer reviewed European journal) 2019. (Article focusing on the impact work with local people carried out as part of the Fitties project in peer-reviewed European journal of Rural Sociology).
3. **Journal Article:** Tucker JA and Tarlo HAB "'Off path, counter path': Contemporary Walking Collaborations in Landscape, Art and Poetry" *Critical Survey* 2017 105–132. (Article focusing on the collaborative walking element of our work and others for a special issue of this peer-reviewed English Literature journal on Walking)
4. **Book chapter:** Tucker JA and Tarlo HAB "'Drawing Closer": An Ecocritical Consideration of Collaborative, Cross-Disciplinary Practices of Walking, Writing, Drawing and Exhibiting', in *Extending Ecocriticism: Crisis, Collaboration and Challenges in the Environmental Humanities*, ed. William Welstead and Peter Barry (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017. 47-69).
5. **Artists' books:** Harriet Tarlo and Judith Tucker, *Outfalls: poems and drawings and neverends: poems and paintings*, Leeds: Wild Pansy Press, 2018 and 2019 (artists' books related to projects; can be made available on request)
6. **Journal editorial** Tarlo HAB & Tucker JA (2019) Cross Multi Inter Trans: a contextual introduction, *Green Letters*, 23:3, 219-230, Editorial of a special issue edited by Tucker and Tarlo concerning cross disciplinary place based practice.

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

##### **Preserving and protecting heritage and environment**

This research has contributed to preservation of the sites concerned and mobilised community action. The chair of the Fitties Community Interest Company (CIC) writes "Project Fitties' work in 2016 highlighted both the history and ecological importance of The Fitties Chalet Park to a wide audience from our chalet dwellers to a much wider global community." She acknowledges that the formation of the CIC in 2016, and their agenda, was directly influenced by Project Fitties [A]. Place value also increased: "I will think a little differently of the Fitties now when I walk the dog each Sunday morning through there." [B]. In collaboration with the Louth Navigation Trust (LNT) many outreach events were organised during 'Outfalls'. Members of the LNT, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, the Mayor of Louth and the public viewed an exhibition and discussed their differing priorities for the canal. As a result, a small grant was given by the Mayor to the LNT to support preservation work. Local relations and sense of collective place value improved - "sometimes seeing the place through someone else's eyes makes you cherish it even more" [B].

##### **National Dissemination, Increasing Access to Arts and Improving Arts Provision**

The Groundwork Gallery, Kings Lynn, invited Tarlo and Tucker to organise and host a study day in 2018 entitled "**Conserve? Restore? Re-wild? art & ecopoetics rise to the challenge**". This attracted 40 specialist speakers and participants from around the U.K. including writers, artists, scientists, interested public and representatives from The National Trust and Wildlife Trust. Feedback forms stated how the event "crystallised some key issues", was "hugely inspiring" and that the mix of scientists and artists produced "surprising perspectives". [D and B]

Public engagement events included 15 public talks in libraries, warehouses, marquees and galleries; a mentoring scheme; 8 poetry and art workshops; a children's art and poetry competition; 5 guided creative walks and memory card workshops. Events at Grimsby Fishing Heritage Centre in 2014 attracted 115 participants, a live audience of 2337 and a broadcast/online audience of 57,000. 12 out of 39 local respondents to a 2016 Fitties event,

had never or rarely attended a poetry event and 37 said they would attend a similar event in the future [E]. It was reported how the Outfalls weekend in 2018 "attracted a wide range of people and of all ages who would not normally attend an art exhibition" [F]. A local curator reported that the work "encouraged pride and esteem in our area". [G]

The Principal Arts Officer for NE Lincs [H] writes how the project "clearly convinced the powers that be that an Arts Development Team remains something NE Lincolnshire needs." From 2014-2019 a local curator featured place-based works and poetry in programming at galleries in Grimsby and Brigg influenced by the projects [G]. As a direct result of the research, two ongoing annual arts events now occur. The CIC inaugurated an annual *Fitties Festival* with 120 participants and the LNT commenced *Culture on the Canal*, an ongoing programme of events, attracting audiences of 60+. Encounters with the work benefitted writers and artists from N.E. Lincs over 6 years of activities, developing the careers of twenty individuals [B].

#### **Inspiring new writer/artist collaborations**

The director of The Groundwork Gallery [D] notes "A number of artists said it gave them the courage to contemplate trying to combine visual art and writing. ...[this] has been carried through to other gallery events." An American poet [I] writes of the impact of the research, "It has helped me think through the rich possibilities for place-based artistic collaboration ... my fifth book of poetry ... is a collaboration with the Delta photographer Maude Schuyler Clay". Tarlo and Tucker featured over sixty such collaborations into two public group exhibitions: *In the Open Cambridge 2015* (New Hall Women's Art collection) and *In the Open Sheffield 2017* (SIA Art Gallery; Bank Street Arts). Two exhibitions were curated that "build on precedents set by Tarlo and Tucker" (Curator Camilla Nelson, Plough Gallery, Devon) [C].

#### **Popularising interdisciplinary environmental artwork to national and international audiences**

Images from *Project Fitties* and *Outfalls* have been included in over 30 exhibitions from local spaces, to national galleries in London and internationally in China, Poland and Romania. An ongoing relationship was formed with the curator of the Yantai Art Museum who wishes to continue future collaborations, stating "What emerged was that despite our differences in locality there was much in common and that art and poetry can affect how we feel about landscape and place." [J]

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

- [A] Testimonial from the Fitties Community Interest Group.
- [B] Sample feedback forms from some aspects of the outreach programmes.
- [C] Radical Landscapes Exhibition, The Plough Arts Centre: The importance of the work to the creation of the exhibition (video links and exhibition details).
- [D] Testimonial from the Director of the Groundwork Gallery.
- [E] Project Fitties Questionnaire Data from local launch and exhibition 2016.
- [F] Louth Navigation Trust Evaluation.
- [G] Testimonial from a local artist and curator.
- [H] Testimonial from the North East Lincs Council Principal Arts Officer
- [I] Testimonial from a professional U.S. Environmental Poet, and Professor of English at the University of Mississippi.
- [J] Testimonial from the curator at Yantai Art Museum.