

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University for the Creative Arts		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 32		
Title of case study: The Role of Studio Pottery in Developing the Local Economy and Changing Museum Exhibition Practices [https://research.uca.ac.uk/5591/]		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010-2020		
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:
Professor Simon Olding Professor Glenn Adamson	Director of Crafts Study Centre Professorial Fellow	01/08/02 – present 14/10/19 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - ongoing		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? Y/N No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Research at the Crafts Study Centre has developed impacts relating to knowledge and appreciation of studio pottery, increasing its recognition and stimulating economic and cultural activity. The impacts benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The community local to the Crafts Study Centre in Farnham, Surrey, which has been enriched by the economic benefits of a local network of craft practice and activity in which the Crafts Study Centre plays a key role. In 2020 this activity was calculated to be worth in excess of £50 million per annum to the local economy, and Farnham was recognised with the designation of 'World Craft City' by the World Crafts Council. • The institutions hosting exhibitions resulting from collaborative research by the CSC with a global reach. The Yale Center for British Art in the USA and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge have been enabled to enhance their presentation of studio pottery and their interpretation of their own collections, and to share them more effectively with audiences. 		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>The Crafts Study Centre (CSC) at UCA is a university museum with an internationally-important collection of modern British craft (ceramics, textiles, furniture, wood, calligraphy and significant maker archives). Its mission is to share these collections and foster scholarship on and engagement with the crafts, through research, exhibitions, writings and events. Professor Simon Olding has led the CSC since 2002, delivering research including exhibitions, writings and a prolific programme of events, both scholarly and public-facing, at the CSC and beyond. The CSC is at the centre of UCA's wider research in modern craft which also includes the International Textile Research Centre and the work of researchers including Howard and Millar (see REF2).</p> <p>Through the development of its collections, publications and programme of exhibitions and events, the CSC is an important locus of crafts research in an area (Farnham and the Surrey Hills) where craft is important economically and socially. The CSC's research and activities also have a global reach, most notably in this case study in the major exhibition of British studio pottery, <i>Things of Beauty Growing</i> (2017/18). Within the broader area of the crafts, the case study focuses on research in ceramics.</p>		
Crafts Study Centre research on historic and contemporary ceramics		
<p>A central, longstanding strand of Olding's research is the development of scholarly and public understanding of important ceramic artists, past and present, with this research both drawing on and developing Craft Study Centre collections and resulting in a programme of exhibitions at the CSC in Farnham. Recent examples include exhibitions on the artists Ladi Kwali, Nao Matsunaga, Angus Suttie, Richard Slee and Michael OBrien (see R1). Two of these exhibitions have been co-curated with Magdalene Odundo, professor <i>emerita</i> and UCA's Chancellor. Olding's essay 'Of Plate and Place', commissioned by the Ceramics Research Centre at the University of Westminster investigates ceramic artists' interactions with</p>		

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museum collections and their histories (R2) and in his series of 18 essays for *Ceramic Review* (2003-2021) he has shared this research with wider, non-academic audiences.

A key strand in this research is Olding's contribution to new understandings of the work of pioneer ceramicist Bernard Leach. In 2010 Olding published *The Etchings of Bernard Leach* (R3), the first book to consider Leach's two-dimensional works, demonstrating new insights into an aspect of Leach's practice that is important for understanding his ceramics. This work became the standard point of reference on Leach's etchings, establishing Olding's expertise in this area. It has led to important additions to the canon of Leach's work, most notably in the acquisition by Olding for the CSC in 2019 of a previously unknown corpus of early works on paper, significantly enhancing the CSC archives. Olding has researched these new works and existing CSC holdings for a new (2020) book and exhibition at the Crafts Study Centre (R4). This research will also result in an exhibition at the Mashiko Museum of Ceramic Art, Japan (output delayed due to COVID-19, now scheduled for January to March 2022).

Ceramics research with a global reach: *Things of Beauty Growing*

Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery (R5) is the single most high-profile project within the ongoing body of work on ceramics by Olding and the CSC, and it has taken the research to global prominence through an exhibition developed collaboratively with the Yale Center for British Art (YCBA) and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, supported by a major Yale publication (470pp) co-authored and co-edited by the exhibition curators with contributions from other important figures in the field. Olding co-curated *Things of Beauty Growing* (ToBG) with Yale scholars Martina Droth (then Head of Research) and Glenn Adamson; Olding and Adamson have worked together since 2012-13 when Adamson was Chair of CSC's Board of Trustees. Although at the time this research was undertaken he was not employed by UCA, he joined the University as Professorial Fellow in 2019.

Things of Beauty Growing traced major typologies of the ceramic vessel form, highlighting the manner in which ceramic traditions can be reclaimed and reinvented through constant reference to the medium's own history. It offered a new reading of British studio pottery, examining its international and intercultural origins and influence. It was the first ever summative British studio pottery show in the USA, the first decorative arts exhibition held at the Yale Center for British Art, and the first public showing of works from the significant private collection of John Driscoll. The book was recognised with 2 prizes, the 2018 American Ceramic Circle Book Award and a 2019 Historians of British Art Award.

References to the research (submitted to REF2 or available via links or on request)

Quality is evidenced by peer-reviewed publications, peer-reviewed funding, commissioning of the work by important museums and galleries, and recognition in awards and prizes.

Things of Beauty Growing (exhibition and book) was reviewed extensively and positively in the academic and general press (see S2).

- R1** Olding, S. (2015 – 19) *Crafts Study Centre Curation*, **Multi-component Output**, a linked series of exhibitions at the Crafts Study Centre, UCA, Farnham
[<https://research.uca.ac.uk/5592/>]
- R2** Olding, S. (2013) 'Of Plate and Place', Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media (London: University of Westminster) [Online: <https://cream.ac.uk/ceramics-research-centre-uk/essay-series/contemporary-essay-8-simon-olding/>]. AHRC-funded
- R3** Olding, S. (2010) *The Etchings of Bernard Leach*, **Book**, (Farnham: Crafts Study Centre and the Leach Pottery) [<https://research.uca.ac.uk/1049/>]
- R4** Olding, S. (2020) *Bernard Leach: Discovered Archives*, **Multi-component Output**, **REF2**, comprising book, *Bernard Leach: Discovered Archives*, edited by Olding and with 2 chapters authored by Olding, and accompanying exhibition at CSC; exhibition *Leach in Japan: unpublished etchings, drawings and lectures*, Mashiko Museum of Ceramic Art, Japan (Mashiko exhibition component delayed) [<https://research.uca.ac.uk/5549/>]

R5 Olding, S., Adamson, G. and Droth, M. (2017/18) *Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery*, **Multicomponent Output, REF2**, comprising exhibition (Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, CT, September 14 to December 3 2017; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, March 20 to June 18, 2018) with book of the same name (Yale Center for British Art, The Fitzwilliam Museum and Yale University Press, New Haven, London and Cambridge, 2017) ISBN 9780300227468. 2018 ACC Book Award; 2019 Historians of British Art Award. [https://research.uca.ac.uk/view/projects/Things_of_Beauty_Growing.html]

Funding (total £504,982):

- CSC funded by HEFCE/Research England: latest 5-year award 2017, £70,000 pa
- 2008 – 2012 Heritage Lottery Fund Collecting Cultures grant, £185,000, Olding PI: funded purchase of etchings by Bernard Leach
- Art Fund, 2013, £14,246 for purchase of Leach works
- Arts Council England / V&A Purchase Grant, 2019, £16,648 for purchase of Leach works
- *Things of Beauty Growing*, 2017-18, funded by Yale Centre for British Art (amount not disclosed) and Fitzwilliam Museum (£268,088)

4. Details of the impact

Dissemination of the research: pathways to impact

The 11 ceramics exhibitions held at the CSC in Farnham between 2014 and 2020, including those in **R1**, have shown the work of 40 ceramic artists to 19,305 visitors. Over the same period, the centre has hosted 238 research visits specifically focussed on the ceramics in its archives and collections. The CSC regularly loans works to other museums and galleries, and since 2018 has kept data on visitors viewing CSC works in this way. The total for 2018-19 was 162,400 (subsequent data disrupted due to Covid-19). As well as its exhibitions, the CSC runs a programme of conferences, symposia and public-facing lectures and 'in conversation' and 'meet the artist' events (<https://www.csc.uca.ac.uk/programme>). It participates each year in events for Farnham Craft Month (all **S1**).

Things of Beauty Growing (ToBG) attracted a total of 67,203 visitors in the USA and UK. At the Yale Center the exhibition-proper had 15,869 visitors, and Claire Twomey's 'Made in China' installation, located in the museum's entrance court, was seen by 30,400 visitors. At the Fitzwilliam Museum 47,000 people visited ToBG, and figures for the first month of the run show that its visitors were 55 per cent of total museum visitors (all **S1**). At each museum there was a full programme of audience engagement events (**S1**; **C2**). *Things of Beauty Growing* (exhibition and book) was reviewed widely in the specialist and general press; *Crafts* described it as 'huge (and hugely impressive)', and *Apollo* named it 'a revelation' (**S2**).

Impact: CSC's Crafts Research Contributes to the Local Economy

The CSC is part of a network of crafts organisations in Farnham and the Surrey Hills, and is an important pillar in the identity of Farnham as a centre for the crafts. The research undertaken by Olding at the CSC and disseminated in the local community and beyond contributes to the economic and social impact of the crafts in Farnham and the local area.

In 2020 Farnham (designated a Craft Town since 2013) achieved World Craft City status, following an application to the World Crafts Council. The application, led by Farnham Town Council and Farnham Maltings, cited prominently within its 'unique set of interconnected partners' UCA's School of Crafts, the University's International Textiles Research Centre and the Crafts Study Centre, with its 'unrivalled collections' (**S3**). Farnham's Town Clerk notes that 'Professor Olding and the Crafts Study Centre have been key partners in developing Farnham Craft Month since 2013' and the CSC's partnership with the council and other local crafts bodies 'underpinned the application for Farnham as a World Craft City' (**C1**). Rosy Greenlees, President of the World Crafts Council, noted how 'the fascinating heritage of craft in Farnham is matched by the superb quality of its contemporary activity from the Craft Study Centre at UCA to the craft fairs at the Farnham Maltings' (**S4**).

This impact was measured in a research report completed in 2020 by consultants Parker Harris which benchmarked Farnham against the findings of the Crafts Council's *Market for Craft* report (2020) (S5). The report focused on the need and opportunity for development at a pivotal moment – the granting of World Craft City status, which coincided with the unprecedented disruption to the economy and creative industries caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Its chief aim was to identify opportunities and make recommendations, noting that *'the announcement of Farnham having World Craft City status presents a timely opportunity for the stakeholders in the craft market locally to work together to maximise the potential'*. The report assessed Farnham's existing craft infrastructure, with a special focus on ceramics, noting that the Crafts Study Centre is *'a unique asset for the area'* with growing sales from its shop (up 85 per cent from 2018 to 2019) and steadily increasing numbers of visitors, and that it *'hosts an excellent exhibition, lecture and symposium programme within its gallery spaces'*. One of the report's key findings was that the total economic impact of crafts activity in the Farnham and Surrey Hills area, to which CSC contributes, is in excess of £50 million per annum (S5).

Impact: Changing Museum and Gallery Exhibition Practices

The institutions with which Olding worked on *Things of Beauty Growing* have been enabled by the research to develop their curatorial practice and achieve new interpretations of studio pottery and other works in their permanent collections, developing their audiences.

At the Yale Center for British Art, which holds large and important collections of British fine art, the Director attests to the innovative role of the exhibition in bringing decorative arts and material culture into the museum for the first time as *'a means to explore the broader history of British artistic and material production with our audience'*. The main exhibition was prefaced with a huge installation of almost 80 standing vessels in Claire Twomey's work *'Made in China'*. The majority of these were installed in the museum's entrance hall, but a number were *'displayed in other areas of the building and throughout the museum's galleries of historical British paintings and sculpture, further challenging audience members to reflect on the relationship of art, craft, and industrial production'* (C2).

At the Fitzwilliam Museum the Keeper of Applied Arts states that Olding's research for ToBG ensured that the exhibition included *'highlights from our own, excellent collection of British Studio Pottery'*. The museum did not have in-house expertise on this collection, and Olding's research *'proved invaluable, both in helping to choose the ceramics that were included in the exhibition in New Haven and Cambridge, but also in helping us to further understand our collection and improve the cataloguing and documentation of it.'* This directly addressed one of the museum's strategic priorities, *'to research and make accessible parts of the collection about which little is known'*. Olding's research helped the museum to *'transform our interpretation and labelling'* of studio pottery objects in the core collection, *'thereby permanently improving the information available to our almost-half-million visitors per year. This information was also added to our online collections database and is therefore accessible to online visitors around the world.'*(C3)

Also at the Fitzwilliam, ToBG led to new acquisitions. The exhibition raised the profile of studio pottery and as a result *'the number of modern ceramics offered as gifts and bequests increased dramatically'*. The Keeper sums up the influence of the exhibition on the Fitzwilliam's curation; *'it has fundamentally altered the way we permanently interpret and display our collection of modern British ceramics, as well as ceramics more generally'* (C3). The Fitzwilliam followed up ToBG with a display of ceramics by Magdalene Odundo alongside African and South American material from the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, responding to the Arts Council's Case for Creative Diversity project (C3).

For both Yale and the Fitzwilliam, *Things of Beauty Growing* helped to connect with audiences in new ways. The Fitzwilliam Museum's visitor books contain comments such as *'Wonderful! Inspiring! Among your best exhibitions!'; 'informative and deeply inspiring'; and 'wonderful exhibition. Especially enjoyed placing of 12th century next to modern'* (S6). The

museum ran 21 events to accompany the exhibition, including talks, children's workshops and a tour for blind and partially-sighted visitors. The Keeper of Applied Arts notes that through these activities, the exhibition 'allowed the Museum to reach out to its key audiences' (C3). Commenting on *Things of Beauty Growing* at Yale, critic Garth Clark noted that it fulfils an 'excellent job of educating visitors about the British studio pottery movement, and, because of its accessibility, gaining converts in the market' (S2). Yale ran a full programme of events to engage visitors with the exhibition, 'allowing students, scholars, collectors, and distinguished artists to present British studio pottery in exciting new ways, challenging traditional definitions of this artistic arena and disassembling nationalist agendas that limited the exciting international nature of the field' (C2).

Things of Beauty Growing stimulated considerable wider interest in studio pottery, directly leading to further exhibitions. In the UK, the Crafts Council's annual Collect craft showcase presented *Masters of British Studio Pottery* 'inspired by *Things of Beauty Growing*', stating afterwards that it 'proved one of the highlights of the fair, receiving an overwhelmingly positive response from Collect visitors' (S2). Oxford Ceramics Gallery staged *Masters of Studio Pottery, Part II* to 'complement' *Things of Beauty Growing*, and in London Erskine, Hall and Coe gallery staged *British Ceramics* specifically to coincide with *Things of Beauty Growing* (S2).

Through the exhibitions at Yale and Cambridge and those inspired by them, the research has in turn benefitted the careers of artists. An example is one of the 3 makers commissioned to create moon jars for *Things of Beauty Growing*. The exhibition marked the first showing of this artist's work in a public institution in the US, as well as his first engagement with the Moon Jar form. The commission led him to create pieces exhibited at Marsden Woo Gallery in London and to be selected for the 2019 Korea International Ceramic Biennale, a juried competition. The artist credits Olding's research with developing his practice: 'the context of the history of British Studio Pottery helped me understand my practice in a deeper way.[...] Ideas and processes gained . . . continue to guide my practice and will be an important aspect of my works for the foreseeable future' (C4).

Olding's work on acquiring and interpreting the CSC's new collection of Leach works on paper in 2019 falls in part under the 'local impacts' section of this case study, as it contributes to the CSC's collections and has resulted in an important exhibition at the CSC in Farnham. This work also crosses over into this second section, impacting the global development of the curation of studio pottery, with benefits for museums and galleries. The important new acquisition and Olding's research on it has resulted in new interpretations (R4), as explored in the Mashiko Museum's exhibition (see R4, exhibition delayed due to Covid-19). A curator from Koriyama City Museum of Art, Japan, has confirmed that Olding's 2020 Leach book has been registered as a document of the museum, as research it contains contributes to the museum's understanding of objects in its collection. The book has been lodged in libraries in other key museums with Leach holdings: the Minge-Kan, Tokyo; Ohara Art Museum, Kurashiki; the Asahi Beer Oyamazaki Villa Museum of Art, Kyoto.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

(available from UCA on request; S = documentary/online source; C = corroborator/testimonial)

S1 Studio Pottery Quantitative Report

S2 Studio Pottery Media Report

S3 Farnham Town Council and Farnham Maltings, Farnham World Crafts City Application

S4 Farnham World Crafts City announcement press release

S5 Parker Harris Consultants (2020) *Socio Economic Impact of Crafts within Farnham and Surrey Hills AONB*

S6 Fitzwilliam Museum visitor feedback

C1 Testimonial from Farnham Town Clerk (Corroborator 1 in REF submission system)

C2 Testimonial from Director, Yale Center for British Art (Corroborator 2)

C3 Testimonial from Keeper, Applied Arts, Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge (Corroborator 3)

C4 Testimonial from participating artist, *Things of Beauty Growing* (Corroborator 4)