

Institution: University of Sussex		
Unit of Assessment: 32 – Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: Making Art in Tudor Britain: Transforming professional practice and enhancing interpretation in the UK and USA		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000 – 2015		
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:
Maurice Howard	Professor of Art History	1976 – Jan 2016 (now Emeritus)
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact <p>Howard's research on art in context made a foundational contribution to the major 'Making Art in Tudor Britain' (MATB) (2007-2014) project. Utilising and extending an interdisciplinary collaborative model honed in Howard's own research, MATB brought together museum curators, conservators and academic art historians whose fields had traditionally been distinct. With Howard as Chair of the project's Steering Group, MATB turned these differences into generative strengths. Focusing on paintings in the National Portrait Gallery (NPG), the team studied the material practices of Tudor and Jacobean painting, explored specific production contexts, and subjected 120 NPG paintings to technical analysis. This expansive approach revised assumptions, enhanced interpretations, and resulted in new discoveries, with significant ongoing benefits to the NPG and its visitors. The project's holistic methodology also transformed professional practice in public and private collections, reaching beyond the UK to the USA; the open access database it produced remains a key reference for conservators, heritage scientists, curators and scholars.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>Funded by the Leverhulme Trust, 'Making Art in Tudor Britain' had roots in Howard's career-long commitment to an expansive, and often collaborative, research methodology that foregrounds material culture in the broadest sense and locates paintings in their architectural context. His books, <i>The Building of Elizabethan and Tudor England</i> (2007, R1) and <i>The Vyne: A Tudor House Revealed</i> (2003, R2) exemplify his distinctive approach to researching the visual culture of the Tudor period. This approach is: rooted in deep and wide-ranging knowledge of archival sources, family histories and networks; fuelled by close scrutiny of often fragmentary material remains; and notable for inclusively highlighting relationships across art forms, from built architecture and designs, to stained glass, floor tiles, tapestries and panel paintings. His pioneering collaborations with non-HEI specialists have resulted in major exhibitions (<i>The Tudor Image</i>, Tate 1994-5), permanent gallery displays (Tudor and Steward rooms in The British Galleries, V&A, 2001), collaborative doctorates (with Knole, National Trust, 2011) and significant published catalogues (<i>Catalogue of Paintings</i>, Society of Antiquaries, 2015). He is particularly adept at drawing together different areas of expertise and diverse approaches in order to generate new perspectives.</p> <p>As Steering Group Chair and Co-I on MATB, Howard was 'the driving force behind the project and in particular its public aspects' [S2b]. The P-I, [text removed for publication], was a former Sussex PhD student, as was one of the project's postdocs, [text removed for publication]. But MATB was a truly interdisciplinary endeavour: [text removed for publication] (then curator at the NPG), brought curatorial knowledge; [text removed for publication] (Co-I) contributed collections-based technical expertise that complemented the technical knowledge of Co-I [text removed for publication] (The Courtauld). Howard provided historical and art-historical expertise, his architectural and applied arts research facilitating links to country house collections and access</p>		

to libraries and archives. He also supervised one of the project's PhD students, [text removed for publication].

MATB subjected the NPG's collection of Tudor and Jacobean portraits to focused investigation, and through this expanded understanding of early painting practice and the production of portraits. Whilst the Gallery holds the largest public collection of such paintings in the world, its Early Collection had not been comprehensively studied since 1969, and the provenance of many paintings remained uncertain. As an extended collaboration between art historians, curators, conservators and other heritage scientists, MATB brought archival research and art historical analysis together with scientific techniques such as infrared reflectography, x-ray, photomicroscopy, pigment and media analysis, and dendrochronology to develop a set of new, interdisciplinary methodologies and, ultimately, a model for looking at, investigating and presenting Tudor and Jacobean painting. Howard provided: a specialist understanding of the paintings' original material environments (the building and architecture of the time); a demonstrated capacity to 'read' objects closely; and distinctive consideration of art forms usually considered separately [R1, R2]. The project team examined over 120 paintings from the NPG alongside 30 works from other public and private collections. A key innovation of the project was to examine groups or pairs of comparable paintings together, where previously it was standard practice to consider them in isolation. This close, comparative scrutiny, underpinned by Howard's unparalleled knowledge of the fabric of Tudor buildings, resulted in new discoveries about the paintings' original physical contexts.

The project's findings were shared through conferences, workshops, publications, exhibitions and a website - <https://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/making-art-in-tudor-britain/> - which was launched in 2011 and included case studies, reports and abstracts from related conferences and workshops [R3]. The website also provided access to the project database which delivered further technical and art historical information about the paintings that were examined as part of the project - searchable by sitter or by artist. A prizewinning collection of essays, *Painting in Britain 1500-1630: production, influences and patronage* (2015) was described by one reviewer as 'comprised of nearly thirty genuinely ground-breaking studies that result in one truly pioneering book' [R4]. Howard was a co-editor, took a focused lead on eight of the twenty-four essays therein, co-authored the general introduction with Cooper, and wrote a further introduction to the section on 'Patronage, Markets and Audiences.' The project culminated in the NPG exhibition *The Real Tudors: Kings and Queens Rediscovered* (September 2014-March 2015) and a larger exhibition followed – *Les Tudors* at the Musée du Luxembourg, Paris – in 2015. Howard contributed an essay to the *Les Tudors* catalogue which examined the depiction of Tudor architecture interiors in later centuries, looking specifically at the staging of operas on themes from Tudor England in the 19th century [R5].

Through its collaborative, interdisciplinary approach, MATB produced a critical mass of data and established a new approach for understanding artistic practices, influences, materials and patronage in Britain between 1500 and 1620 which 'now informs every serious study of art of the period' [S1].

3. References to the research

- R1.** Maurice Howard, *The Building of Elizabethan and Tudor England*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007, pp. 256. Available on request
- R2.** Maurice Howard and Edward Wilson, *The Vyne: A Tudor House Revealed*, with Edward Wilson, London: National Trust, 2003. Available on request
- R3.** Making Art in Tudor Britain (website), National Portrait Gallery
<https://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/making-art-in-tudor-britain/>

R4. Cooper, T., Burnstock, A., Howard, M. and Town, E (eds.), *Painting in Britain 1500-1630: Production, Influences and Patronage*, Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2015, pp. 400. Awarded the Historians of British Art Book Award for an Exemplary Multi-authored Book. Available on request.

R5. Maurice Howard, 'L'architecture du cour Tudor: le vrai et l'imaginaire du 16^{ème} au 19^{ème} siècle', *Les Tudors*, exhibition catalogue, Paris : Musée du Luxembourg, 2015, pp.124-37. Available on request.

Grants

Maurice Howard, Tudor Painting: production, influences and patronage, Leverhulme Research Grant, (January 2011–December 2013), total £248,144, of which £75,603 to Sussex.

4. Details of the impact

Changing professional practice through a new methodology

'Making Art in Tudor Britain' created a model for investigating paintings that involved examining them in groups and inviting specialists from different disciplines into the studio to apply their combined knowledge and expertise to the works. This innovative approach developed from Howard's own research practice, which 'provided a model for working that was collaborative and naturally multi-disciplinary' [S6]. His experience, expertise, and professional networks meant that he was at 'the fulcrum' of the research process [S6]. MATB has subsequently had a transformative impact on professional practice at the NPG – where curators and conservators now take a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach. But it has also changed practice in other national and private collections, in the UK and USA. The rigorous standards developed by the project have become benchmarks across the sector; 'the project is respected as a model for the technical and intellectual study of any period of art production, not only for its specific outcomes, but also for its methodologies' [S1].

For [text removed for publication], curator at the National Gallery, the project built upon Howard's 'over-arching approach of bringing together the knowledge of many different disciplines' [S2b] and was able to generate 'completely new ways of looking, investigating and presenting the painting of this period' [S2a]. She notes, for example, that MATB 'completely changed views on Holbein's legacy in England as a result of the more accurate dating of the various versions of his portraits in the NPG collection.' [text removed for publication], curator at the National Trust reports that the MATB model has had a 'lasting impact...being instrumental in how the National Trust now develops research questions and how we identify work in our collection from this period for art historical and technical investigation (for example, with potential examinations of portrait sets or copies and variants of portraits of key sitters, or potential explorations of the early collecting habits of major patrons)' [S3].

The project's impact on professional practice reaches beyond the UK. It can be seen at The Yale Centre for British Art (YCBA) which used MATB's approaches and findings to inform their Paston Treasure project (2018), as well as a forthcoming YCBA / Tate Britain exhibition on Tudor panel painting. [text removed for publication] explains that the MATB analysis 'has allowed rigorous comparisons to be made between and amongst thousands of paintings (particularly portraits) long associated stylistically, or not understood as related at all' [S1]. At Denver Art Museum, the project 'has changed the way we look at painting in the early modern period, introduced new techniques of investigation and provided new documentary evidence', with their collections benefitting 'enormously from work undertaken...following Dr [sic] Howard's model' [S4].

'Key' to 'making the project more than the sum of its parts', Howard's research has also had a 'huge impact' on the professional development of the project team [S5]. Postdoctoral Fellow [text removed for publication] is now a senior curator at NPG and describes Howard as crucial 'to developing the next generation of scholars' [S5]. Postdoctoral Fellow [text removed for publication] is now [text removed for publication] at the Yale Center for British Art. He has led the adoption of MATB methodologies to examine the Center's own collection of 35 Tudor paintings alongside other public and private collections in the USA and is currently working with 6000 pictures from the NPG Heinz archive using the MATB model. For [text removed for publication], Howard's 'deep knowledge of houses, inventories and collections...enabled us to make sense of

all the new things we were learning from our research...[he] provided a model for working which was collaborative and naturally multi-disciplinary and in doing so he broke down barriers created between art history on one side and science in the other' [S6].

Enhancing interpretation through collaboration leading to new attributions

'Making Art in Tudor Britain' challenged the dominant model of public and private collections confining their research and conservation activities to their own works. Howard's reputation and expertise in the broader historical context and country house settings was again 'key' to ensuring that the NPG were able to examine their Tudor and Jacobean paintings alongside those borrowed from public and private collections [S6]. This created a body of new information that 'has resulted in a more integrated understanding of painting methods, techniques and practices'; 'this research has considerably broadened our understanding of artistic practice in this period, particularly in the area of workshop practice and technique' [S7].

According to [text removed for publication], curator at the National Trust, MATB 'has developed and modernised our understanding of artistic production in England and Scotland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' and 'stands as the key survey of early painting production in the British Isles' [S3]. For [text removed for publication], 'the full-scale technical examination that this project has entailed has resulted in the reassembling of many groups of family portraits long separated, and the sure identification of artist's hands and workshops, creating a new understanding of artistic practice and patronage across England and the British Isles' [S1].

The impact of working collaboratively across collections and sharing this technical and art historical data online in a searchable project database is far-reaching. The project's 'enormously important' website [S2b], which includes the database, narrative case studies and reports on individual works (including 17 case studies), is used as a research resource by conservators, heritage scientists, curators and scholars at every level, reflecting the diversity of expertise brought together by the project [S2b]; since its launch in 2011/12 (page views 50,404), the website's visitor numbers proceeded to increase, reaching – for example – 73,517 in 2013/14 and 75,668 in 2014/15 [S8].

The project continues to enable public and private collections to catalogue their Tudor and Jacobean paintings more fully and accurately. Use of the MATB database and methodologies has led to the reattribution of a series of celebrated paintings, including one to Marcus Gheeraerts [S6], and in 2017 enabled the Hamilton Kerr Institute to re-attribute a painting in private hands to the miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard (Bayliss, Carey and Town, *The Burlington Magazine*, 2018: S9). It was subsequently included in the major NPG exhibition, *Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver* (2019).

Sharing new interpretations and heritage science processes in new ways

Howard's recognition that museum visitors want to know more about conservation has also been one of MATB's major innovations. Until 'Making Art in Tudor Britain' the complex nature of this work was difficult to communicate because there was insufficient institutional confidence in presenting this often-hidden work and its complex processes to the public. Thanks to Howard's encouragement for 'everything to be presented publicly' [S2b], the project raised public awareness of the layered histories of a painting's surface and established a successful model for sharing conservation findings with new audiences: 'the project, its website and the major book... led to completely new ways of looking, investigating and presenting the painting of this period' [S2a]. Throughout the project, the NPG ran seven free gallery displays, viewed by thousands of visitors, and developed new learning sessions including 'Questioning the Tudors', delivered to 2,430 pupils in 81 sessions. A further learning session 'Meet the Conservator' is still running, reaching 360 pupils in 6 sessions a year providing a legacy of ongoing impact and increasing reach [S8]. The project culminated in the NPG exhibition *The Real Tudors: Kings and Queens Rediscovered* (September 2014-March 2015), attracting 224,239 visitors and extensive press coverage, and the subsequent larger exhibition, *Les Tudors* (128,270 visitors) at the Musée du Luxembourg, Paris [S8]. Howard's public lectures and contribution to curatorial conferences continue to extend the reach and significance of the impact. His annual lectures on physical and technical aspects of the 16th-century country house for the Attingham Trust Summer School

communicate the project's research findings and methodology to leading curators from across the world.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- S1.** Testimonial from [text removed for publication], Yale Center for British Art, May 2019.
- S2.** Testimonial from and interview with [text removed for publication], National Gallery, London (a) June 2019, (b) December 2020.
- S3.** Testimonial from [text removed for publication] curator, the National Trust, May 2019.
- S4.** Testimonial from [text removed for publication] curator, Denver Art Museum, May 2019.
- S5.** Interview with [text removed for publication] curator, National Portrait Gallery, London, December 2020.
- S6.** Interview with [text removed for publication], Yale Center for British Art, December 2020.
- S7.** Charlotte Bolland and Tarnya Cooper, *Making Art in Tudor Britain* (2007-2015): report for Historic Royal Palaces (2015).
- S8.** National Portrait Gallery, *Making Art in Tudor Britain* project statistics, January 2020.
- S9.** S. Bayliss, J. Carey and E. Town, 'Nicholas Hilliard's portraits of Elizabeth I and Sir Amias Paulet' *The Burlington Magazine* 160 (2018), 716-26. Available on request, or from: <https://www.burlington.org.uk/archive/back-issues/201809>