

Institution: Kingston University		
Unit of Assessment: 33 – Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
Title of case study: Opening up Film Archives to Educators, Students and Young Filmmakers		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2016 – 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name: Shane O'Sullivan	Role: Senior Lecturer in Filmmaking; Head of Department, Film and Photography	Period employed by submitting HEI: Sept 2014 – 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

As cultural heritage organisations have digitised their collections, creative reuse of this material has remained problematic, beset by questions of copyright law. O'Sullivan's pioneering 'Archives for Education' project provided a new model for the licensing and creative reuse of archive film in education. In collaboration with project partners, including the BBC, the BFI and the Irish Film Institute, student filmmakers were given access to 200 films for creative reuse on course-related projects. 69 higher education institutions in the UK and Ireland have signed up to the scheme, helping students and educators deepen their engagement with film and social history. Through a sustained programme of workshops and presentations, O'Sullivan has increased knowledge, engagement, and access to archives in the field of documentary filmmaking.

2. Underpinning research

Working with moving image archive material is a powerful tool for creative expression and political and historical analysis. However, student filmmakers regularly have no legitimate access to or ability to creatively reuse archive material from publicly held collections. Through a pioneering project, now being expanded with AHRC and IRC network funding, O'Sullivan has provided a new model for licensing and creative reuse of archive material.

O'Sullivan's creative practice as a documentary filmmaker has explored contemporary political history through the creative reuse of archive material. His three archive-driven feature documentaries, *RFK Must Die* (2008), *Children of the Revolution* (2010) and *Killing Oswald* (2013), have been theatrically distributed in the UK, US and Japan and broadcast worldwide. Since his appointment at Kingston University in 2014, he has expanded his creative reuse of archive material to the audio-visual essay. His archive-driven essay film *Anatomy of a Murder – Sirhan Sirhan and Robert Kennedy* was shortlisted for Best Research Film in the 2016 AHRC Research in Film Awards and subsequently published with a research statement in the peer-reviewed online journal *Screenworks* [R1]. O'Sullivan combined archive material, footage of Sirhan's parole hearing, and echoes of his case found in contemporary cinema to play with the nature of memory and cast doubt on Sirhan's conviction. The juxtaposition of archive footage with more recent films offered a way for a younger audience to engage with the nature of the criminal justice system and political memory through the audiovisual history of a famous case.

O'Sullivan has published three peer-reviewed journal articles [R2, R3, R4] on archival film and its creative reuse in documentary production. He has reflected on the creative reuse of archive material in his own practice, using the murder investigations of Robert Kennedy and Benno Ohnesorg to demonstrate the power of video evidence to verify, disprove or manipulate claims [R3]. He has highlighted the political, editorial and commercial constraints limiting access to archive footage, suppressing alternative representations of political and social history [R3]. He

has also investigated the production history of four Cold War training films of the British Security Service, exploring how they anticipated key texts of the sixties spy genre [R4].

The starting point for the Archives for Education project was a peer-reviewed journal article commissioned by the Moving Image journal of the American Association of Moving Image Archivists, exploring the potential of creative reuse of archive material in UK education [R2]. The article drew on an interview O'Sullivan conducted with Paul Gerhardt, Director of Education at the British Film Institute (BFI) about the pioneering Creative Archive pilot he launched when at the BBC in 2005, which sought to open up access to archive material for download and remixing by the public. Gerhardt had since left the BBC and become Director of Education at the British Film Institute (BFI).

Building on this research interview, O'Sullivan identified and explored a gap in provision for student filmmakers in higher education. Drawing on his professional knowledge of creative reuse and licensing archival material, he developed a practice research project to investigate how publicly held archives could be opened up to young filmmakers, and to explore the potential benefits of creative reuse to students in higher education. With the support of the BFI, he devised a pilot scheme at Kingston in 2017 to give student filmmakers access to 12 documentaries from the BFI National Archive for creative reuse on course-related projects under an educational licence.

Following the successful pilot and a workshop at BFI Southbank, supported by the BFI and Learning on Screen, the Archives for Education scheme was rolled out to universities across the UK and Ireland, with fifteen institutions initially signing up to the scheme. Its innovation and potential for the sector were recognised in 2018 when Dr O'Sullivan was invited by Learning on Screen to join their Copyright Advisory Panel, and one of the films produced on the Kingston pilot was nominated for the Archive Award at the Learning on Screen Awards. O'Sullivan subsequently worked with BBC Archive Editorial to research and clear 27 documentaries from their collection for the scheme.

In July 2020, O'Sullivan was awarded research network funding by AHRC to expand the scheme beyond higher education through the Make Film History project, which now offers 200 films to young filmmakers in education and training across the UK and Ireland from the collections of the BFI, BBC, Northern Ireland Screen, and the Irish Film Institute.

3. References to the research

R1 – O'Sullivan, S. (2018) 'Anatomy of a Murder – Sirhan Sirhan and Robert Kennedy', *Screenworks*, Volume 8.1. DOI: [10.37186/swrks/8.1/4](https://doi.org/10.37186/swrks/8.1/4) REF2ID: 33-33-1810

R2 – O'Sullivan, S. (2017a) 'Archives for Education: The Creative Reuse of Moving Images in the United Kingdom', *The Moving Image: The Journal of the Association of Moving Image Archivists*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Fall 2017), pp. 1-19. DOI: [10.5749/movingimage.17.2.0001](https://doi.org/10.5749/movingimage.17.2.0001)

R3 – O'Sullivan, S. (2017b) 'Meinhof, Shigenobu, Kennedy: Revolution and Assassination in 1968', *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture*, 6 (12), pp. 12-40. DOI: [10.18146/2213-0969.2017.jethc134](https://doi.org/10.18146/2213-0969.2017.jethc134)

R4 – O'Sullivan, S. (2017c) 'This Film is Restricted: Training Films of The British Security Service', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Volume 38, Issue 2, pp. 274-95. DOI: [10.1080/01439685.2017.1331630](https://doi.org/10.1080/01439685.2017.1331630) REF2ID: 33-58-2101

Grant

O'Sullivan was awarded GBP23,848 for 'Make Film History' (Aug 2020 – Nov 2021) by AHRC (AH/V002066/1)

4. Details of the impact

O'Sullivan's projects - Archives for Education and Make Film History – provide archival materials for lawful, free, creative reuse through an original and innovative licence. Project partners across the UK and Ireland, including the BFI and BBC, have opened up their archives to new audiences and liberalised their approach to the reuse of their collections in education. This has had a significant impact on both educational and creative practice. With 69 higher education institutions signed up, academic staff use this resource to deepen student engagement with film and social history on course-related projects. Furthermore, O'Sullivan has increased public engagement with the film archive, and documentary filmmaking, through a series of online workshops.

Archives for Education: An Innovative, User-Friendly Solution for Young Filmmakers

In Spring 2017, O'Sullivan ran a successful pilot for the Archives for Education project at Kingston University, licensing 12 films from the BFI National Archive under an education licensing agreement [S1]. The low-risk pilot demonstrated how a small, curated selection of films in themed strands can be cleared for reuse under an educational license.

'The Archives for Education project represents the first time our archive collections have been licensed for creative reuse on course-related projects in higher education and helps us engage with students and academics in that sector. Through our collaboration with the project team, we have developed innovative new workflows to select titles, clear rights, ensure availability digital files, adapt our licensing agreements to the educational, non-commercial needs of the project, and deliver these films to institutions at scale.' Rights Database Manager, BFI [S1]

O'Sullivan shared his project's findings via various channels including the Journal of Media Practice and MeCCSA Practice Network Annual Symposium and a guest post on the Learning on Screen website. and a UK Copyright and Creative Economy Centre (CREATE) symposium [S3] He also organised a workshop at BFI Southbank in October 2017 to announce the national roll-out of the scheme, supported by the BFI, Learning on Screen and MeCCSA Practice Network [S2].

As explained by the Creative Director of CREATE and Research Executive of Learning on Screen [S3], this unprecedented project '*provides a straightforward licensing scheme*' for creative reuse despite the '*complexity of [copyright] legislation and the lack of education and awareness around it*'. He stated that the '*Archives for Education/Make Film History project has had a strong impact on young filmmakers in education*' and '*provided an innovative, user-friendly solution for young filmmakers and educational institutions to lawfully engage and experiment with reuse of protected content whilst also increasing awareness of copyright law.*' '*In addition, the project has provided a new framework that archives and other cultural heritage institutions such as the British Film Institute are now using to adapt their copyright policy and make more materials available*' allowing them to '*make films in their collections available for educational reuse safely and lawfully.*' He concluded that O'Sullivan's work advanced '*learning and the spread of knowledge while preserving economic and moral rights of authors and creators*'.

Archives for Education: Rolling Out the Scheme Across Cultural Heritage Organisations

This first phase of activity led to fifteen institutions signing up for the scheme and BBC Archive expressing interest in contributing material. In January 2019, 27 films were added from the BBC Archive Editorial collection; this has since expanded to 65 films. These were added to the rebranded Archives for Education project, supported by a new website [S4]. The Senior Projects and Partnerships Manager said the '*project represents the first time our archive collections have been licensed for creative reuse on course-related projects in higher education and help us engage with students and academics in that sector*'. Because of this project, the BBC have established new workflows to adapt licensing agreements to enable the creative reuse of material, and better engage with educational institutions. Their involvement in the scheme fulfils their public service remit to make their collections more accessible to the public and to educate and inspire young filmmakers [S5]:

'The research which is being undertaken on this project is a key driver for our involvement so that both parties benefit from the knowledge about what BBC archive content is suitable for, and can be tailored to, different sectors. The schemes have allowed us to work with partners to build a strong network of FE and HE institutions who are an invaluable resource for feedback and to help sculpt the direction of the schemes. The projects allow us to reach the under 35 demographic in a structured way and hopefully inspires creativity in the next generation of young film-makers. Feedback from the participants in the scheme has been incredibly positive to date, and it is heartening to see a true public service being effectively delivered.' - Senior Projects and Partnerships Manager, BBC Archive Editorial [S5]

The BFI have also expanded their available film collection to 71 films, with 25 further films to be added shortly. The project has supported their Heritage 2022 digitisation programme, with a focus on *'the value of creative reuse for young filmmakers in education, training and the community, and its potential impact on their skills, creativity and engagement with our collections.'* It has been written into BFI strategy *'to add 50 BFI titles [to the scheme] each year at least for the remainder of the Heritage 2022 project.'* [S1] By working together on the scheme, the BFI and BBC Archive have developed license agreements, a licensing process and a delivery mechanism to allow institutions to download and use the archive material.

O'Sullivan gave presentations on the project at the British Life on Film: History and the Film Archives symposium at King's College, London, in May 2019, and the London's Screen Archives conference in February 2020. In March 2020, leading documentary exhibitor Bertha DocHouse [S6], inspired by the Archives for Education initiative, *'invited him to run an online workshop ... and Q&A'*. The Marketing Manager describes the workshop as *'by far the most successful event we had produced, booking 457 tickets'*, with 336 of these new to DocHouse events. *'[O'Sullivan] helped us attract a new audience and gave us a valuable new data set for marketing purposes'*. With Zoom at maximum capacity, nearly 250 watched on YouTube, with 30 new subscribers to Bertha DocHouse's channel. As a result of the workshop, Bertha DocHouse received the *'highest [ever] number of submissions'* for their monthly filmmaking competition, with the Marketing Manager believing *'this has also had a legacy impact on some of our subsequent competitions, as a handful of entries have since also drawn on both personal and historic archive material.'* He reflected that this event showed *'the real potential for such workshops within our new business model'* and inspired them to *'run four more workshops'*.

'Perhaps one of the greatest impacts of this event was showing us the real potential for such workshops within our new business model. We have since run four more workshops, and they are still consistently our best-performing offer. Our event with Dr. O'Sullivan also helped us recognise the ability to deliver events like this globally, without being constrained by territory rights, as we tend to be with films. We're now using them to reach audiences across the globe. His workshop also gives us a long-lasting resource, that we can keep using against the backdrop of the various archive films we tend to work with over the years.' – Marketing Manager, Bertha Dochose [S6]

Archives for Education: Rolling Out the Scheme Across 69 Educational Institutions

As a result of these activities and follow-up, 69 HE institutions have signed up to the scheme which now offers access to 200 films from the BBC, the BFI National Archive, Northern Ireland Screen and the Irish Film Institute for creative reuse on student projects. Practice-based academics and student filmmakers have been the main beneficiaries. For practice-based educators teaching film, television and media production courses, this free archival resource helps students engage with film history and explore the evolution of different modes of documentary production in Britain since the 1930s. The educational license agreements governing the scheme are explained to students, educating them about copyright law and professional practice [S4]. Rather than illegally ripping content from YouTube, students learn to work with licensed material from the archives of public and cultural institutions for educational use and integrate legal and ethical best practice into their filmmaking process. The student filmmakers "write" their own histories of Britain through the creative editing of image and sound. This allows them to reflect critically on their own experience versus that of their parents and

grandparents before them. One of the films produced during the Kingston pilot was nominated for the Archive Award at the Learning on Screen Awards in 2018 [S7].

According to a user survey [S8] conducted in September 2020, students are '*delighted to get access to archival material*' and '*with the creative and conceptual possibilities*' offered by the Archives for Education materials. The 5 responding institutions reported that 765 students had access to the materials and that 39 assignments in the 2019-20 academic year used the materials. In 2020, the project website had 4,500 unique visitors and 15,000 page views, showing 200% growth year-on-year [S9]. 72% of visitors came from the UK, with the US, Ireland, Netherlands and Germany the next most popular locations.

Make Film History: Rolling Out the Scheme Beyond Education to All Young Filmmakers

In September 2020, O'Sullivan launched the Make Film History project with a one-day symposium, with the 140 attendees including project partners, archivists, and filmmakers. Regarding their involvement with the project, the BBC have stated how their '*collaboration with the Irish partners helps us to share knowledge and resources and create a network of archives*' [S5] and the BFI were '*very pleased to become a partner on the AHRC-funded Make Film History project, which extends access ... to young filmmakers ... for the next ten years*' [S1].

The Head of Film and Screen Media at the University College, Cork, stated that '*the project has generated new partnership models*' and '*been invaluable ... in broadening my network of contacts with broadcasters, archivists and filmmakers*'. For the almost 150 BA, MA and PhD students enrolled on courses in her department, the Make Film History project '*allowed students to edit a diverse range of archival content from broadcasters and cultural institutions*' and the '*students learned invaluable transferrable skills*'. She describes how '*one of the most striking examples of this came from our [seven] Puttnam Scholars ... Oscar-winning producer Lord David Puttnam ... was particularly impressed with their use of archival material*' [S10].

The MFH team has since presented the project to 45 industry experts at [the IASA - FIAT/IFTA Conference](#) of professional broadcast archivists; and convened three workshops on the creative reuse of archive material at the [IFI Documentary Film Festival](#) in Dublin and the [Cork International Film Festival](#). The network continues to gain '*new partners such as Into Film [a UK-wide charity which supports film education for young people], which will further cement the infrastructure of the project to extend the benefits of the research to ... all levels of education*' [S10].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1 – Testimonial from the Rights Database Manager, The British Film Institute

S2 – Dissemination events

- [Journal of Media Practice and MeCCSA Practice Network Annual Symposium](#)
- [Learning on Screen website](#)
- [Workshop at BFI Southbank](#)

S3 – Testimonial from the Creative Director of CREATE

S4 – [Archives for Education Website](#)

S5 – Testimonial from the Senior Project Manager, BBC Archive Editorial

S6 – Testimonial from the Marketing Manager, Bertha DocHouse

S7 – [Learning on Screen Awards 2018](#)

S8 – Archives for Education User Feedback Survey 2019-20

S9 – Archives for Education Website 2020 Data

S10 – Testimonial from the Head of Film and Screen Media, University College Cork