



Section A		
Institution: University of St Andrews 		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 32: Art and Design: History, Practice, and Theory		
Title of case study: Fostering Scottish art through research, collaboration and engagement: The <i>Ages of Wonder</i> exhibition at the Royal Scottish Academy.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000 - 2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Tom Normand	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Senior Lecturer	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 01 August 1986 – 28 January 2018
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 01 August 2013 - 2019		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
Section B		
1. Summary of the impact		
		
<p>An artist-led life drawing class in one of the <i>Ages of Wonder</i> exhibition rooms (Image credit: Royal Scottish Academy website)</p>		
<p>Tom Normand's research on Scottish art and the history of the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA) has contributed new understandings of the legacy and present-day relevance of this institution, promoting its role as a leading space for the cultivation, preservation and dissemination of Scottish artistic heritage. This is exemplified by the exhibition <i>Ages of Wonder. Scotland's Art 1540 to Now</i> (RSA, 4 November 2017-7 January 2018), co-curated by Normand and inspired by his research.</p>		
<p>The <i>Ages of Wonder</i> exhibition and the research and collaborative work that led to its conception and realisation have:</p>		
<p>1. Generated curatorial strategies and institutional capacity building through a research-driven exhibition plan and partnership between the RSA and the National Galleries of Scotland, in collaboration with the universities of St Andrews, Edinburgh and Dundee, which leveraged GBP160,000 in funding to support a public-facing exhibition featuring 440 artworks, conservation work on over 100 RSA collection's artworks and digitisation of 98 books and albums, as well as the single biggest exhibition-related expansion of the RSA collections (117 new artworks) via funded commissions and donations.</p>		
<p>2. Enhanced public knowledge and appreciation of Scottish art and the history and legacy of the RSA through the engagement of 67,178 people (visitors - general public, school children and artists), who participated in over 18 live artistic events, 28 tours and visits, 4 talks and 1 symposium. The exhibition and its programme of activities were widely covered in Scottish print and social media, TV and radio, and specialised reviews with unanimously positive praise. This success led to wider dissemination through two touring exhibitions reaching seven venues across Scotland.</p>		

2. Underpinning research

Investigating the history of Scotland's rich artistic heritage, from ancient times to the contemporary world, has been and continues to be central to the research agenda developed by the School of Art History at St Andrews. Since joining the school in the early 1980s, Tom Normand's research has contributed to this collective work, focusing on the history of Scottish art and its engagements with Scottish history, national identity, and artistic internationalism.

Normand's work since 2000 has led to a greatly revised and expanded understanding of one of the key institutions in the promotion of Scottish art and the development of Scotland's cultural identity: the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA), founded in 1826. A major academic book published by Normand in 2000 revealed the central role that RSA academicians played in the development of early twentieth-century Scottish art (R1), while wider-circulation publications on Scottish photography (2007) and on particular academicians have offered new interpretations of more recent artists (R2, R3). Following up on the sense that close attention to the art of RSA academicians could also offer "*an index of the history of Scottish art [...] and as such a representation of the quality and character of Scotland's visual culture*" (R4), in the early 2010s Normand began a multi-year project on the history of the RSA. Normand initially published a book on works from the diploma collection of the RSA (2012) that shed new light on the range and quality of the RSA collection (R4). Normand's research on the RSA and its wider context and legacy also informed his contribution to a major survey on British art (R5).

In late 2013 Normand's project developed into a collaboration with the RSA and associated scholars around Scotland, with Normand proposing an exhibition and publication that would provide a comprehensive new account of the history of the RSA, one that would fully recognize it as a valuable constituent of the culture of the nation. The resulting book (R6) – edited by Normand and including two essays by him – charted the history and character of the academy's collections, set these in the context of the social and cultural history of Scotland, and provided new high-quality illustrations of many significant but inaccessible works, many of which had been kept in storage for years.

3. References to the research

R1-R4 are single-authored, substantive academic studies; R1 (peer reviewed) was published by a recognised academic press. R5 (peer reviewed) is a major essay in a highly respected book series. R6 is a substantive collection of scholarly essays, edited by Normand (who also contributes two of the essays).

[R1] T. Normand, *The Modern Scot: Modernism and Nationalism in Scottish Art 1928-1955*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000; 208p; ISBN: 0754601005.

[R2] T. Normand, *Scottish Photography: A History*. Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2007. 192p. ISBN: 9781906307073.

[R3] T. Normand, *The Constructed Worlds of Calum Colvin*. Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2019. 192p. ISBN: 9781912147892.

[R4] T. Normand, *Portfolio: Treasures from the Diploma Collection at the Royal Scottish Academy*. Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2012. 128p. ISBN: 9781908373526.

[R5] T. Normand, "55° North 3° West: A Panorama from Scotland". in *A Companion to British Art: 1600 to the present*, Arnold, D. & Corbett, D. P. (eds.). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013; pp. 265-288 (11,000 words; 2 illustrations); ISBN: 9781405136297.

[R6] T. Normand (editor and author of two essays), *Ages of Wonder: Scotland's Art 1540-now*. Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Academy, 2017; 248p; ISBN: 9780905783383.

4. Details of the impact

Tom Normand's research on Scottish art and the history of the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA) (see section 2) led to the co-curation of the exhibition *Ages of Wonder. Scotland's Art 1540 to Now*, 4 November 2017-7 January 2018. According to the RSA, this was "*the largest exhibition of its collections in its history as an institution*" (S1, p. 5). It was praised as "*undoubtedly a hallmark*

exhibition, not only for this particular institution but for the exhibitional history of Scotland in general" (S2, p. 6).

Normand's research and the *Ages of Wonder* exhibition, including the collaborative work that led to its conception and realisation, have contributed to (1) the generation of curatorial strategies and institutional capacity building, and (2) the enhancement of public knowledge and appreciation of Scottish art and the history and legacy of the RSA.

1. Generation of curatorial strategies and institutional capacity building

Scottish cultural heritage representation and interpretation through a collaborative partnership which resulted in the *Ages of Wonder* exhibition (late 2013-2018)

Since 2000, Normand has not only published four books and a number of essays on modern Scottish art (R1-R6), but has built relationships with multiple Royal Scottish Academicians and major figures in the Scottish art world, being made an Honorary Royal Scottish Academician in 2010. In late 2013, Normand first proposed an exhibition to the RSA, intending to examine the history of this institution through an exploration of its collections. The starting point of the exhibition would be a historical event: the 1910 transfer of artworks from the RSA to the National Galleries of Scotland (NGS). Normand reworked the proposal over the next two years in dialogue with the RSA President, Collections Curator, and Director. Normand's historical research into the collection and insights into the significance of the 1910 transfer of works thus formed the basis for the exhibition and subsequent research. This was then developed by Normand as co-curator alongside the RSA team in partnership with the NGS, who together leveraged GBP160,000 in funding for the exhibition (S1, pp. 51-53). Among the curatorial plans conceived and implemented was the idea of staging live artistic practice in the galleries as a reminder of the RSA's pedagogical remit, and devoting a gallery to a recreation of how artworks would have been displayed in Victorian times (the "Victorian hang") (S1, p. 7). In the final stages of exhibition development, Normand took the lead on research on specific works to be displayed and for the exhibition publication, to which he contributed as author and editor (R6). The exhibition project also benefited from the collaboration of the universities of St Andrews, Edinburgh and Dundee. In addition to Normand's key input, the University of St Andrews contributed to the funding of the above-mentioned exhibition publication (S1, p. 53). The University of Edinburgh collaborated through the loan of artworks for the exhibition (S1, pp. 27-28). Both the universities of Edinburgh and Dundee collaborated in educational events, and contributed to two of the exhibition's live activities: the Live Life School (drawing) and the Live Printmaking (more about these below), which featured artists and students from the Edinburgh College of Art and the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Dundee (S1, pp. 18-19, 21).

The *Ages of Wonder* exhibition ran from 4 November 2017 to 7 January 2018 and occupied the whole of the RSA building, "*a powerful statement of its own*," as one reviewer remarked (S3, p. 3). Featuring 440 artworks, including RSA artworks transferred to the NGS in 1910 as well as other works acquired by the RSA throughout its existence, it was "*the largest exhibition ever of its [RSA's] own collection, which represents one of the most significant assemblies of Scottish art in the world*" (S4, p. 3). The exhibition received praise for its novel and original curatorial approach, with one reviewer, from *Expose Art Magazine*, highlighting how *Ages of Wonder* "*unfurls the undeniably interesting history of the Academy in a manner which distances itself from the norms of traditional exhibitional practices*" (S2, p. 3). Commenting on Normand's contributions to the exhibition project as a whole, the RSA President at the time states: "*In forty years of collaboration in artists' publishing, exhibition-making and cultural infrastructure, developing Ages of Wonder with Tom was one of the most satisfying projects. I must stress the importance of his contribution, not only in the book but also to the form and content of the exhibition, particularly in interpretive texts and through his contributions to the catalogue*" (S5, p. 3).

Cultural heritage preservation through conservation work on the RSA collection (2014-2018)

As part of the *Ages of Wonder* exhibition a range of new conservation projects on the RSA's collection was undertaken: 90 artworks were given professional conservation treatment, 98 books and albums were digitised, and 100 artworks were given new mounts and frames (S1, pp. 11-17).

Ages of Wonder served as a catalyst and provided a framework for such conservation work to be funded and executed.

This conservation work has enhanced the usability of these artworks, enabling them to be displayed and studied in the future, and ensuring that their place in Scotland's art history is foregrounded as a result. It has also allowed for RSA to develop new strategies for the care of the collection. In the words of the RSA collections' Chief Curator: "*When the proposal that led to Ages of Wonder was first received from Tom Normand in late 2013, it focused attention on directing annual budgets towards more conservation to ensure the best of the collections were available to be exhibited. [...] [T]he outcome of the project was not only a better preserved collection – with more items receiving conservation in period than ever before – but a better understanding of where strategies of care needed developed into the future*" (S6, p. 2).

Cultural heritage creation through the expansion of the RSA collection (2017-19)

The new attention given to the RSA as a result of the research and exhibition offered an unprecedented opportunity for the expansion of its collection. *Ages of Wonder* brought 117 new artworks through a mixture of funded commissions and exhibition-related events (S1, pp. 25-29). "*More than any other exhibition*", the RSA has commented, "*and second only to major bequests and gifts from artists' studios, Ages of Wonder has had the single biggest impact on the development of the collections in the RSA's history*" (S1, p. 32).

Among these commissions, Scottish artist Calum Colvin's studio installation within the RSA building served as inspiration for a new commission beyond *Ages of Wonder*: an in-gallery installation by Colvin for the Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum in Dunfermline (2018) (S1, p. 14). Another work especially commissioned for the *Ages of Wonder* exhibition, Richard Murphy's display cabinet *Wunderkammer*, has created permanent display potential for around 60-70 RSA collections' objects (S1, p. 13).

2. Enhancement of public knowledge and appreciation of Scottish art and the history and legacy of the RSA (2017-2019)

Building awareness of Scottish art through audiences' engagement with the exhibition and participation in its programme of activities (2017-2018)

New knowledge and appreciation of the RSA and its role in the history of Scottish art was communicated primarily through the *Ages of Wonder* exhibition and its companion publications (an illustrated exhibition catalogue and the volume of essays edited by Normand). The importance of the exhibition and its ability to reach broad audiences and reshape their views of Scottish art were demonstrated, first, by its attendance figures: 67,178 people (general public) visited the exhibition over 63 days (average of 1,066 people per day), "*the highest number of visitors for any full building RSA exhibition since visitor numbers began to be recorded for Annual Exhibitions in the RSA Annual Reports*" (S1, p. 40). This compares with 27,264 people (visitors) over 38 days (average of 717 people per day) for the RSA's most recent free exhibition, the 2013 RSA Annual Exhibition (S1, p. 40), and approximately 54,000 people (visitors) over 101 days for the NGS's 2017 *Beyond Caravaggio* exhibition (average of 534 people per day) (S7, p. 25). The RSA Visitor Book recorded a varied audience, comprising predominantly local Scottish/British members of the public as well as a number of international visitors: "*Amazing way to make us understand the art*", reported a visitor from Mexico; "*I liked the Battle of Bannockburn [...] I have been learning about it at school*", stated a Scottish visitor; "*Impressive in range and size. Inspired me to pick up a membership form*", said another Scottish visitor; "*Incredible experience compared to most major exhibitions*"; "*Deeply awe inspired by some of the work*" (S1, pp. 64-66).

Knowledge and appreciation of the RSA and Scottish art was also communicated through the programme of activities associated with *Ages of Wonder*, which included 14 tours, 14 educational visits, 4 talks and 1 symposium, aimed at the general public, school-aged children and adult learners (S1, pp. 21-22). Worth noting was a series of artist-led live events, the Live Life School and the Live Printmaking, where 9 life drawing sessions and 22 printmaking sessions were demonstrated in the galleries, in front of the audience, often with the public joining in – echoing the RSA's centuries-old role as a teaching institution (S1, pp. 18-19). According to the Visitor Survey, 30 people (general public) responding out of 136 (22% of respondents) highlighted the life

drawing and printing sessions as particularly appealing (S1, pp. 60-63).

Informing the wider public through press coverage and specialised reviews (2017-2018)

Ages of Wonder attracted the attention of the Scottish media, including newspaper, radio, and television coverage (e.g. cover of *The Scotsman*; airtime on STV News and BBC Radio Scotland; features in *The Herald*, *The Times*, *Metro*, *The National*, *Edinburgh Evening News*, *Edinburgh Reporter*) as well as reviews in specialised publications and fora (*Scottish Art News*, *Books & Ideas*, *Expose Art Magazine*, *Georgina Coburn Arts*) (S1, pp. 37-39). Reviews were unanimously positive: “*Ages of Wonder leads us through the many and diverse ways in which the Academy in its long history has championed and still champions the cause of the visual arts in Scotland*” (S8, p. 2); “*an exhibition brimming with possibilities in terms of how we might perceive and celebrate Scottish Art differently*” (S3, p. 4); “*The idea of the Wunderkammer [cabinet of wonders] is, indeed, a rather apt analogy for the entire exhibition*” (S9, p. 3).

Wider dissemination to rural parts of Scotland (2018-2019).

Elements of the *Ages of Wonder* exhibition connected with the life drawing and printing live events toured Scotland to bring portions of the exhibit to areas where major examples of Scottish art are hard to access, due to their distance from the major museums and galleries of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The touring exhibition *The Art of Etching* was hosted in 5 venues, while *The Life School* was hosted in 3 venues (S1, pp. 23-24). Feedback from at least 3 of these venues, located in the towns of Ayr (on the south west coast of Scotland) and Linlithgow (in the south east), indicates that these exhibitions received highly positive responses from visitors and brought in far higher than usual audience numbers to the venues. The *Art of Etching* exhibition attracted 5,439 people (general public visitors) at the Maclaurin Art Gallery in Ayr. Reflecting how this touring exhibition heightened the sense of local identity and local culture, one visitor noted: “*Amazing to have 1st touring show from RSA – including “our” Brydens*” [re: Scottish artist Robert Bryden (1865–1939)]. Regarding the *Life School* exhibition in Ayr (1,994 people (general public)), another visitor noted: “*Great exhibition! – especially as RSA touring Scotland and bringing this to our area!!*” (S10, pp. 2-3). And in relation to the *Life School* exhibition in Linlithgow, a report from West Lothian Council’s Music and Public Art Officer states that “*we have had 4,706 [people] visitors for the duration of the show, which is almost twice as many as we usually have for a single exhibition*” (S10, p. 5).

Rooted in Normand’s research on Scottish art and with his input as co-curator, the *Ages of Wonder* exhibition has helped to change public perception and appreciation of the legacy of this institution and the history of Scottish art more broadly, while contributing to preserving and expanding the RSA collections for present-day and future generations.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [S1] *Ages of Wonder* Exhibition Evaluation, including Visitor Survey and Visitor Book, Royal Scottish Academy (2018)
- [S2] Review of *Ages of Wonder* Exhibition, *Expose Art Magazine* (accessed 14 September 2020)
- [S3] Review of *Ages of Wonder* Exhibition, *Georgina Coburn Arts* (23 November 2017)
- [S4] Review of *Ages of Wonder* Exhibition, *Scottish Arts News* (17 November 2017)
- [S5] Statement from a Past President of the Royal Scottish Academy (3 September 2020)
- [S6] Statement from the Collections Curator of the Royal Scottish Academy (2 September 2020)
- [S7] National Galleries of Scotland Annual Review, 2017-2018 (2018)
- [S8] Review of *Ages of Wonder* Exhibition, *The Scotsman* (18 November 2017)
- [S9] Review of *Ages of Wonder* Exhibition, *The Herald* (11 November 2017)
- [S10] Feedback on touring exhibitions *The Art of Etching* and *The Life School* (2018)