

Section A		
The fields in this section are mandatory.		
Institution: Leeds Arts University		
Unit of Assessment: 32 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: Feminist-Surrealism: Seeing the Unseen		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2015-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dr Catriona McAra	Role(s) (e.g. job title): University Curator	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: January 2015-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
Section B		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>The case study focusses on the impact of feminist-surrealist research at Leeds Arts University on national and international public collections and their audiences. This research has contributed to greater public recognition of artists Dorothea Tanning and Leonora Carrington, raising their profiles for new audiences. It overcomes media myths towards more nuanced understandings of how these artists speak to contemporary issues such as well-being and creative ageing, feminism and intergenerational cooperation. The research comprises long-term revisionist histories of these artists, activating their legacies to drive a contemporary feminist curatorial investment in acknowledging women's creative achievements.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>This research is feminist-revisionist focusing on women's participation in surrealism, with specific focus on Leonora Carrington (English-Mexican, 1917-2011) and Dorothea Tanning (American, 1910-2012), and how their legacies are leading a feminist awareness in contemporary artistic practices by younger generations. The research campaigns for greater awareness and understanding of their creative outputs with themes that speak to contemporary issues such as well-being, creative ageing and intergenerational cooperation.</p> <p>It is often claimed that Carrington and Tanning have been overlooked and are rarely understood as household names. Rather than perpetuating this systemic view (which has been found to exacerbate the erasure), this research takes a more critical view of the factors that have delayed or obscured their reception in order to remedy. The research thus seeks to challenge the existing and limiting hagiographical narratives and more fully champion their achievements and reach.</p> <p>Placing Tanning and Carrington into dialogue with contemporary artists in exhibition contexts promotes an intergenerational awareness. The critical aftermath of exhibitions often requires re-activation. The research has found that important curatorial and scholarly work by women promoting creative women tends to get overlooked in turn. The historiography has therefore</p>		

been vital – acknowledging the history of feminist approaches to the study of surrealism as well as the history of curating feminist-surrealist shows.

The case study is based on long-term art historical research and curatorial practice. The outputs that have developed from this research are numerous, including: a monograph (2017); a co-edited volume (2017); two journal articles (2018; 2019); a book chapter (2020); two research exhibitions (2016; 2020); a keynote lecture (2017).

The monograph is the first book-length, theoretical study devoted to Tanning's literary output and how it influences contemporary culture. Other outputs include the first significant academic essay collection on Carrington with Manchester University Press, leading to a public talk simultaneously translated into Spanish (200+ attendees) at Biblioteca Nacional de México for Carrington's centenary (April 2017).

Outputs also include the curation of concentrated peer-reviewed research exhibitions: one at Leeds Arts University Gallery repositioning Carrington alongside contemporary artist Lucy Skaer (b.1975); and a guest-curation at Sedona Arts Center, Arizona (2020), a contemporary recreation of Peggy Guggenheim's *31 Women* (1943). This was a juried exhibition (220+ applications) selecting 25 contemporary artists to exhibit alongside six historical women from the original show.

This research has been disseminated at numerous public galleries, including: National Galleries of Scotland on two occasions (92 attendees, September 2016; 42 attendees, February 2020) as well as by invitation to a Tate Modern roundtable discussion (March 2019, 100+ attendees) on Tanning to coincide with a major survey of her work curated by Alyce Mahon and Ann Coxon. A dinner speech was delivered by invitation from Marina Warner at the Artist's Dining Room (January 2018), and the researcher spoke with Turner-prize winner Tai Shani and @thegreatwomenartists curator Katy Hessel on a panel, 'Rebel Muses,' at Cheltenham Literary Festival (October 2019). The research builds on work by Patricia Allmer (2009) and Anna Watz (2017) with whom the researcher shared a discussion panel (Rennes, June 2016).

3. References to the research

1. McAra, C. (3 – 26 January 2020). *31 Women*, Sedona Arts Center, Arizona [exhibition]
2. McAra, C. (2020). 'A Feminist Marvellous: Chloe Aridjis and the *Female Human Animal* in *Leonora Carrington: Living Legacies*, edited by A. Cox, J. Hewison, M. Man and R. Shannon. Delaware: Vernon Press. <https://lau.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/17627/>. [book chapter]
3. McAra, C. (2019) 'Glowing Like Phosphorus: Dorothea Tanning and the Sedona Western' in *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas*, volume 10, number 1. 84-105. <https://lau.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/17492/>. [article]
4. McAra, C. (2017). *A Surrealist Stratigraphy of Dorothea Tanning's Chasm*, New York: Routledge. [monograph]
5. McAra, C. (2017). 'A Nonagenarian Virago: Quoting Carrington in Contemporary Practice' in *Leonora Carrington and the International Avant-Garde*, edited by Jonathan P. Eburne and Catriona McAra. Manchester University Press. <https://lau.repository.guildhe.ac.uk/17431/>. [chapter within co-edited volume]
6. McAra, C. (2016). *Leonora Carrington/Lucy Skaer*, Leeds Arts University. [exhibition + catalogue]

Evidence of the quality of the research must also be provided in this section.

- All of the research outputs have been through a rigorous peer-review process prior to publication. (At Leeds Arts University there is a peer-review process for exhibition proposals, reviewed by an International Advisory Board. The curator was invited to jury the Sedona exhibition based on her international research profile).
- The book chapter output 'A Feminist Marvellous: Chloe Aridjis and the *Female Human Animal*' was the result of an invited keynote lecture for the 'Leonora Carrington Centenary Symposium' at Edge Hill University.
- The journal article output 'Glowing Like Phosphorus: Dorothea Tanning and the Sedona Western' was positively peer-reviewed by leading scholar Professor Katharine Conley (Dartmouth University): "a strong original piece of writing and research that sheds new light on what we know of this eventful period in the lives and work both of these two major surrealist artists [...] their painting, sculpture, and writing is indelibly brought to life in McAra's essay."
- The exhibition output *Leonora Carrington/Lucy Skaer* (2016) was positively reviewed by Professor Derek Horton (retired Leeds Beckett University) for *Corridor 8 Magazine* (2016): <https://corridor8.co.uk/article/review-leonora-carrington-lucy-skaer-leeds-college-of-art/>
- The book chapter output 'A Nonagenarian Virago: Quoting Carrington in Contemporary Practice' was singled out for praise in a review by Caroline I. Harris (Princeton University) for *Woman's Art Journal* (2019). The book received further coverage in *Times Literary Supplement*, *London Review of Books* and *The Burlington Magazine* (all 2017).
- The co-edited output *Leonora Carrington and the International Avant-Garde* received £300 funding for image rights by the Association of Art Historians (2015).
- The monograph output *A Surrealist Stratigraphy of Dorothea Tanning's Chasm* was published by Routledge in their prestigious Studies in Surrealism series, and reviewed positively by Anna Kérchy in *Americana* e-journal: <http://americanajournal.hu/vol13no1/kerchy-rev> The book was also cited in the catalogue for the major survey of Tanning at Tate Modern (2019).

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

The primary beneficiaries of this research are creative women (of diverse protected characteristics) who identify with surrealism. One of the most empowering aspects of this research is its ability to open intergenerational conversations between feminists of different ages and backgrounds.

The research speaks to younger generations of feminists. For example, *The Debutante* magazine acknowledged the impact of this research by interviewing the researcher for their inaugural issue, 'A Feminist-Surrealist Manifesto' [1]. At Cheltenham Literary Festival during a panel for 'Rebel Muses' [2] 6 out of 14 respondents claimed this research had changed their views, with one stating that they had "learned something new" and another stating that the critique of rediscovery narratives "really hit home." When asked if this research had changed their views on surrealism, one respondent claimed: "definitely, I'm off to research."

This research has been of significant interest to older generations of under-recognized artists who have been making work for many decades. For example, the curated show *31*

Women in Arizona provided a platform and vocabulary with which to articulate their practices. The 220+ applications for *31 Women* demonstrate the reach and currency of this topic as well as the effect of this revisionary approach abroad. An Australian exhibitor said:

“The inclusion in this juried group has essentially been a 'passport' into a burgeoning, swelling, contemporary, international feminist art movement and I couldn't be more pleased with the possibilities this will provide my career”
[3]

The exhibition attracted over 5400 visitors during its four week run. Over 50 people attended the public lecture. Such dissemination is leading to an increased understanding of the topicality of feminist-surrealists by gallery visitors and art enthusiasts. 21 out of 32 respondents felt this research had changed or expanded their views on surrealism, with 12 believing it had changed their views on feminist art-making **[4]**.

The research is contributing to a greater awareness and representation of work by feminist-surrealists for public curators in museum collections. For example, the researcher has consulted on blockbuster shows, 'Dorothea Tanning' at Tate Modern (2019) and 'Dreamers Awake' at The White Cube (2018), advised on a recent acquisition by Tanning (*Tableau vivant*, 1954) at the National Galleries of Scotland (2019), and contributed to its interpretation (public lecture, February 2020). A Tate curator claims the impact of this research as follows:

“[McAra's] book was very helpful to my curatorial research on Dorothea Tanning in many ways. Most of the existing literature on Tanning to date is largely biographical and not written from a scholarly position. It was refreshing to read a text which digs a little deeper into Tanning's output. I found [her] work on *Chasm* to open up new ways of thinking about many of Tanning's key works” **[5]**

On the occasion of the Tate show, the researcher was interviewed by *Stylist Magazine* (approx. 404,392 readers January – June 2019), arguing for a fuller public awareness of Tanning's work:

“[...] Tanning was an incredibly accomplished artist who had a huge impact on the surrealist movement,' says Dr Catriona McAra, a curator at Leeds Arts University who has written extensively on Tanning. 'The very fact that she is not a household name is crucial, considering her skill. It's time she is reconsidered on her own turf' [...] 'She was ahead of her time in terms of gender politics, she didn't want to be categorized. She felt it would limit her”
[6].

At the Tate roundtable discussion, an audience member claimed on social media that the research made them want to read Tanning's novel **[7]**. A collector of Tanning and Carrington, called the research “outstanding” **[8]**.

The artists' estates and commercial gallerists are further beneficiaries of this research, in terms of valuation. The research is recognised among the game-changers for increasing the market for later work by feminist-surrealists. For example, in an *Artsy* article (550,000 readers per month) exploring acquisitions internationally, the researcher's work is noted:

“In the case of Tanning, for instance, collectors hanker after the more figural work of the 1940s, while her more abstract pieces made after the late '50s—complex, swirling atmospheres of undulating form and color, described by scholar Catriona McAra as “kaleidoscopic”—go relatively overlooked” **[9]**.

In summary, as a result of this research, the media narratives around feminist-surrealists are changing. The research is leading to more gender-balanced representations in public art museums, and making those who practice as feminist-surrealists feel a greater sense of purpose and belonging.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of ten references)

- [1] R. Ashenden, R. and M. Gilroy (2020). 'Interview with Catriona McAra: Rebellion is My Bloodline!' *The Debutante*.
- [2] *Rebel Muses* audience feedback forms (October 2019).
- [3] Artist testimonial
- [4] *31 Women* audience feedback forms (January 2020).
- [5] Curator testimonial
- [6] Keegan, H (2019). 'The dark, intriguing legacy of surrealist artist Dorothea Tanning,' *Stylist Magazine*:<https://www.stylist.co.uk/visible-women/dorothea-tanning-tate-modern-exhibition/258825> [Accessed 29 January 2020]
- [7] Twitter feedback (2019): <https://twitter.com/AtelierStark/status/1107196927010107392>
- [8] Twitter feedback (2016):
<https://twitter.com/millerista/status/718873090206396416?s=20>
- [9] Thackara, T. (2018). 'The Market for Female Surrealists Has Finally Reached a Tipping Point,' *Artsy*: <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-market-female-surrealists-finally-reached-tipping-point> [Accessed 30 November 2018]

Additional contextual data

The fields in this section are mandatory, where applicable. The information will be used in post-assessment evaluations and will **not** be routinely provided to panels. This information should be provided in a separate web form and is not included in the five-page limit.

Name(s) of funder(s): Association of Art Historians

Global Research Identifier of funder(s) (<https://www.grid.ac/>):

Name(s) of funding programme(s):

Grant number(s):

Amount of grant (in GBP): £300

ORCID for each named researcher, where held: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7680-4134>

Name(s) of formal partner(s):

Country/countries where the impact occurred:** United Kingdom; Arizona, Mexico.