

Institution: University of Portsmouth		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 32: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: Contemporary creative practice research: securing the future for 'art-zines' and artists' books		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000 - ongoing		
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:
Dr Jackie Batey	Senior Lecturer	01/01/1996 - to date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014-current		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Dr Jackie Batey's internationally recognized art-illustration practice-based research has influenced the development of independently-published artists' books and 'art-zines' as distinctive creative forms, shaped institutional approaches to their acquisition and preservation and widened accessibility to these ephemeral forms of creative practice. Batey's renowned creative practice research consists of an extensive 20-year corpus of independently-published artists' books and art-zines. Her construction of a field-defining digital research and dissemination platform for art-zines (181,189 website/blog visits) has increased participation and visibility of non-academic artists. Batey's research led directly to curatorial engagement with world-leading institutions and significantly influenced the scope of permanent collections of 89 national and international museums, archives and art institutions, forming an important new historical record and resource.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Since 2000, Batey, Course Leader MA Illustration in the School of Art, Design and Performance, has been at the forefront of independent art-zine and artists' book publishing practice in the UK. 'Art-zines' are typically self-published socially-engaged magazines with small interest-group distribution and circulation while 'artists' books' use the form of the book to experiment with printmaking, photography, poetry, experimental narrative, drawing, graphic design and publishing. Batey's extensive corpus of visual research has created limited editions of handmade art-zines and artists' books that challenge conventional communication techniques and provide alternatives to commercial publication circuits. Batey has also theoretically interrogated her practice as an 'auto-curator' in academic journals (R4, R5) and has personally led international initiatives to consolidate artists' books and art-zines as significant contemporary cultural and artistic practice (R4). Playing an important role in its visualisation of mental health, social inequality, community and the environment for subcultural readers, Batey's research provides unique documentation of contemporary culture and testifies to the cultural value of self-publishing as a viable mode of autonomy for contemporary artists. Batey's serial editions exemplify a contemporary artist whose creative work is disseminated through an intentionally democratic model of digital communication, with free digital access making the works readily available. The corpus of practice research has been independently published through three main vehicles:</p>		
<p>(R1) Damp Flat Books http://dampflat.blogspot.com/p/damp-flat-books-in-collections.html</p>		
<p>Issued 1999-2020 under Batey's Damp Flat Books imprint, 21 titles of limited edition artists' handmade books have been produced, each demonstrating Batey's methodology in the use of her own photography, illustration and hand-drawn type along with text compositing, designing, printing and binding. Juxtaposing everyday 'found' materials, skilled hand drawn illustration, photographic/digital images in visual narrative layouts, themes covered include personal anxiety, loneliness, media disinformation, gender, environmental degradation and social injustice in often satirical representations of the absurdities of contemporary life. This mode of research practice is theorised to engage readers in actively constructing messages through individually-negotiated 'visual readings' (R5, R6). For example:</p>		



Reboot - Limited Edition of 10, 2008, 400mm x 170mm, a double-spiral bound pair of books each of 20 pages; cover is clear acrylic closed with magnetic catches; hand-cut rubber stamp icons are added to final printed pages. Several real capacitors and fuses are threaded into two of the pages.

Here, Batey's montage research methodology amplifies the connection between technological 'brokenness', user anxiety and the ruptures in social placement caused by technology's 'mechanical revolt': she states that 'soon the only tasks left for us will be hand-drawing the 'Out of Order' signs to hang on the machines' (R4). Recording technology failures photographically as well as drawing the language of brokenness, cryptic messages such as disc error and 'are you sure you want to shut-down?' are stamped with hand-cut rubber stamps of familiar computer icons - hourglass, watch, cursor arrow and older legacy icons such as the floppy disk. Scanned legacy peripherals such as SCSI leads and old network cables tangle across the pages, to invoke how technological obsolescence ensnares its users in ideological confusion about 'progress' and the promise of 'instant communication'.

(R2) **Future Fantasteek!** <http://futurefantasteek.blogspot.co.uk/p/all-issues.html>



This series has been independently published since 2006 as a limited edition art-zine with two issues a year - it explores obdurate boundaries between journalism and authorial illustration using satire to reflect notions of 'Britishness'. The series can be read as a sequence, from just prior to the 'credit crunch' through to the 'age of austerity'. The approach is experimental, incremental and reflective, focussing on both the microcosm and macrocosm of living in the UK. Visual humour is developed throughout as a vehicle for change, combining techniques such as pastiche, parody and Socratic irony in new narrative formats. Language is explored using different 'voices' such as anecdotal, colloquial or profane. This text is then translated into drawn commentaries on etiquette, politics and advertising. The 'anxiety of the individual' is a running theme throughout the series with many recurring protagonists and antagonists soliloquizing their notions of 'Das Unheimliche'. The series also physically explores changing technologies with regard to traditional notions of 'the book', with online versions of all issues *Future Fantasteek!* available via an online blog and online PDF readers.

(R3) **Digital Platform: Zineopolis** <http://zineopolis.blogspot.co.uk/p/about-collection.html>

The popularity of the art-zine genre with non-academic makers, readers and collectors (the art-zine is above all a participatory, independent, 'amateur' form) means that such visual communication research reaches well beyond academia, and indeed is based in the grass-roots of authorial practice and independent circuits of readership. Batey has taken a significant lead in connecting and making visible an international network of practitioners, readers, museums and art institutions. This was initiated in 2008 with the establishment of *Zineopolis* as a physical collection of over 300 art-zines held at the University of Portsmouth. The development of an experimental online catalogue took the form of a blog exploring and publicising independent not-for-profit publications; this was seminal in drawing together independent creatives and cultural institutions. Batey's sole research in curating the resulting digital platform *Zineopolis* led to establishing and widely sharing definitions of the specificity of art-zines - clearly differentiating from independent magazines, fanzines, cartoons, small press comics or graphic novels - as social

commentary offered in distinctive non-commercial, uncensored production/exhibition contexts and deploying personal visual strategies.

3. References to the research

(R1) **Batey, J.** (1999-date). *Damp Flat Books* (21 titles + catalogue)

<http://dampflat.blogspot.co.uk/p/artists-books.html>

(R2) **Batey, J.** (2006-date). *Future Fantasteek!* – Serial Zines (Submitted to REF2 ID: 26321956)

<http://futurefantasteek.blogspot.co.uk/p/all-issues.html>

(R3) **Batey, J.** (2008-date). *Zineopolis* digital platform. (Submitted to REF2 as part of ID: 26321857) <http://zineopolis.blogspot.co.uk/p/about-collection.html>

(R4) **Batey, J.** (2014). Art-Zines –The self-publishing revolution: the *Zineopolis* Art-Zine Collection. *The International Journal of the Book*, 9(4), 69-86. <https://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9516/CGP/v09i04/36954>

(R5) **Batey, J.** (2016). Satirical zines about computers, apps and social media: Art-zines from the Zineopolis collection. In *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Illustration & Animation (CONFIA)*, 96-107, Barcelos, Portugal. (Submitted to REF2 as part of ID: 26321857)

(R6) **Batey, J.** (2017). Damp-in-Ditchwater: a satirical staged narrative revealed through an artist's book. *The Blue Notebook* 11(2), 30-41.

(R7) **Batey, J.** (2020). Are you okay? Mental health narratives and authorial illustrations in Art-Zines from the Zineopolis collection. *Information, Medium, and Society: Journal of Publishing Studies* 18 (1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.18848/2691-1507/CGP/v18i01/1-12> (Submitted to REF2 as part of ID: 26321857)

Statement in support of underpinning research quality

The corpus of practice research has been internationally recognised by creative practitioners, librarians, archivists and academics, and articles are published in peer-reviewed quality journals. Note: **R3, R5 & R7** are submitted to REF2 as elements of a multi-component practice research output, ID: 26321857). **R7** was overall winner of the 2020 *International Award for Excellence* from the *Information, Medium, and Society: Journal of Publishing Studies*.

4. Details of the impact

Batey's underpinning research practice has created exceptional expertise that has been sought out for consultancy and has played a key role in establishing long-standing relationships with national and international cultural institutions. It has created wider impact on social-community engagement by attracting new audiences for 'ephemeral' contemporary art practice and secured a corpus of creative practice for future art historians, illustration practitioners and cultural analysts.

Shaping institutional practices: art-zine acquisition and preservation

As a leading proponent of artists' books and art-zines, Batey's practice research outputs (**R1-R3**) have been acquired for permanent location in 89 of the most important national and international special collections and archives (**S10**), 17 in the UK, including Victoria & Albert Museum, Tate Britain, British Library, and 72 world leading international collections. The size of this group of institutions is unparalleled in the field. Batey is one of very few artists whose contemporary art-zines are represented in as many high-profile cultural organisations. By developing professional networks of curators, librarians and archivists, presenting at zine fairs, offering consultancy guidance for collecting her own and others' work and via her digital dissemination portals, Batey has converted her practice into a central focus for the international public visibility of UK art-zines. In 2015, Batey was a founder member of the UK & Ireland Zine Librarians group (70 members) which is affiliated to the US Zine Librarians Interest Group (998 members). This was set up to establish a professional network for those working with the collection, preservation and promotion of zine collections worldwide: as zines are 'increasingly collected within academic libraries and studied in academic research, this group has proved essential in providing support and guidance to all engaged with zine collections. Batey's membership of the group is 'highly valued as she successfully and importantly encompasses both experiences: zine creator and academic' (**S6**). She is also an organising committee member of the Zine Librarians UnConference 2020

international group and consultant for a new special collection of zines at UCLAN.

Recognising the importance of the digital for the future dissemination and preservation of traditionally print-based artist books and zines, *Damp Flat Books* and the *Damp Flat Blog* were especially selected in 2015 by the British Library for their UK WebArchive project which was established to *'capture and archive websites from the UK domain, responding to the challenge of a 'digital black hole' in the nation's memory and to ensure digital heritage is available to researchers in the future'* (S8). Similarly, the United States Library of Congress which holds important cultural artefacts and provides enduring access to them, preserving materials of historical importance to foster education and scholarship: *'Our web archives are important because they contribute to the historical record, capturing information that could otherwise be lost. With the growing role of the web as an influential medium, 'records of historic events could be considered incomplete without materials that were "born digital" and never printed on paper'* (S7). In 2019 the Library of Congress selected digital platform *Zineopolis* for inclusion in its historic research collection of Internet materials related to the Zine Web Archive, considering it *'an important part of this collection and of the historical record'* (S7). Batey is one of only six artists interviewed by the National Art Library of the Victoria & Albert Museum explaining *'what artists' books are, how they are made, where they sit in the field of contemporary art'*. As noted by [text removed for publication], this *'informs the public, through the V&A's website, on the potential of artists' books as creative artwork'* (S1).

The impact of Batey's work on the curatorial decisions of Tate Britain is acknowledged by [text removed for publication] (S2): Batey's research plays a *'vital role'* in Tate Library's work, with the *Future Fantasteek!* zine series having had *'an enormous impact on the collection development within Tate Library's special collections'*. *Future Fantasteek!* was the only zine title within the library's special collections of 5,000+ artists' books and the first title to be described as a zine in the catalogue record *'allowing the Library to actively collect zines going forwards'* (S2). The series formed the basis for the formation of a specific zine collection at the Tate. The new collection now holds over 500 zines and *'saw a hugely successful launch event with over 200 attendees, as well as an overall increase in visitors and requests to view zines in our library reading rooms'*. The Library now *'continues to purchase and catalogue zines, and the launch of the zine collection has significantly raised our profile inviting artists, activists, and zine makers to contact the library to engage with the collection'* (S2). *Future Fantasteek!* continues to be a *'hugely popular zine title accessed by staff, visitors, and academics in our reading rooms, as well as via displays and workshops'*. Tate Library also looked to *Zineopolis* as an example of an existing zine collection to *'inspire research and interaction with its visitors'* (S2).

Batey's influence has extended to international collections. Eminent 'zine archivist [text removed for publication] acknowledges: *'In both my collections, I have been sure to include issues of Dr. Jackie Batey's wonderful Future Fantasteek!'* as they have *'such a perfect understanding of the artistic possibilities of the zine format'* and demonstrates that *'zines preserve alternative voices and provide readers with a new and deeper understanding of different cultural experiences'* (S4). In 2017 - when asked by *The Lily* (an online publication for and about women created by The Washington Post) to select just one zine of particular interest and importance to him - [text removed for publication] selected *Future Fantasteek!* for an article on zines. *'I have come across hundreds, if not thousands, of zines in my career as a zine librarian/archivist, but I knew right away that Jackie's Future Fantasteek! was going to be my choice'* (S4).

Widened accessibility: supporting expressive social practice

The international visibility of *Zineopolis*, with 181,189 website/blog visits (S8), *Damp Flat Books* and *Future Fantasteek!*, together with Batey's extensive conference, interviews, exhibitions and public engagement activities, has enabled museums, galleries, archives and libraries across the world to engage with Batey's curatorial and art-practice research. [Text removed for publication] at the British Library (S5) states that a clear benefit of Batey's research, particularly the *Zineopolis* website, has been to increase public awareness and access to art-zines: *'showcasing zines on the Zineopolis website makes these materials available far more widely than would otherwise be the case and enables a wide range of people to engage with the content'* Further, the social value of these materials is that they take *'social and environmental issues and express them in a different and interesting way, inspiring people to see these issues and their relation to their own life through*

a different medium' information on the platform on making zines 'demystifies the process of zine making' and 'this is particularly useful for young people who have not encountered this format who may find in making a way to express their ideas and experiences or finding in zines an echo of their own feelings on sensitive issues' - 'very few websites combine ideas about zine making with a showcase for contemporary self-made publications' (S5).

[Text removed for publication] states that '*Future Fantasteek! has shared many ideas with the public in the UK and further afield, such as ZineFestPt in Portugal or CanZine Festival in Canada. They are collected by many institutions including here at UWE, Bristol where we have exhibited them in the library.*' The '*significant benefits arising from Batey's research, publications and the Zineopolis collection include awareness and debate of environmental and social issues in contemporary society...which allows the public to experience ideas that relate to them and realise that they have shared values and concerns*' (S1). One aspect of the art-zine is the personal expressive opportunities afforded by the format: Batey's expertise in exploiting the capacity for visual narratives, or autobiographical art-zines, for the exploration of mental health themes in under-represented demographics led in 2019 to her inclusion as paid Illustrator Scholar within an interdisciplinary team for a successful Wellcome Trust research grant application under the 'Graphic Medicine' initiative. This research builds on her expertise to explore the potential of zines to inform and transform understandings about mental health.

Batey's zines, website and substantial lecturing have been used extensively as an educational resource for teaching in national and international establishments and the collections are used extensively by students (at all levels of study from Foundation to PhD), and also by community groups and independent readers. Via library special collections and HE institutions, Batey's work '*has been seen and read by hundreds of students and other library readers*' (S1, S3). [Text removed for publication], Colorado College began collecting zines after recognising the power of zines as counterculture publications, and the importance of libraries collecting them for research use. '*I've been using Jackie Batey's zine, Future Fantasteek! with Colorado College classes for over a decade now. It is easily the most used zine in the collection and I believe it has had the most long-reaching influence, in that many students over the years have used it as a model for their own zines*' (S3).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

(S1) Testimonial from [text removed for publication], UWE Bristol Centre for Fine Print Research 30/09/2019

(S2) Testimonial, [text removed for publication], Tate Britain

(S3) Testimonial, [text removed for publication], Colorado College 03/10/2019

(S4) Testimonial, University Archivist A & M University Cushing Memorial Library

(S5) Testimonial British Library zine collection, [text removed for publication]

(S6) Testimonial, [text removed for publication], London College of Communication 04/11/2019

(S7) Library of Congress archivist selection letter 10/07/2020

(S8) Zineopolis digital platform visits - 03/11/2020

(S9) British Library selection for inclusion in WebArchive Project 19/01/2015

(S10) Map of global locations of Damp Flat Books/Future Fantasteek! serial zines