

Institution: 10007140 Birmingham City University		
Unit of Assessment: 32 – Art & Design		
Title of case study: “We are not making art for the public, we are the public that makes art”		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Gavin Wade	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Senior Research Fellow in Art Director of Eastside Projects	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2004–2008, 2013–2020
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Research at BCU-hosted Eastside Projects (EP) has created significant civic impact by re-defining the role of ‘publics’ for commissioning artists and in the formation of Birmingham City Council’s Public Art Strategy (2015–19). This is achieved at regional level and led to the commissioning of Turner Prize-winner Susan Philipsz’s £2m public artwork for HS2 Curzon Station, applying EP’s approach to Making Art Public. EP’s activities have stimulated emerging creative practices in development planning, through collaboration with David Kohn Architects, winning the £60m 2020 competition to design Birmingham’s Smithfield Market. The reach of EP’s impact can be seen in its model for artist-curator practice being adopted by international artist-run spaces across the UK and Europe.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>EP is a research space for creative practice at Birmingham Institute of Creative Arts (BICA). EP created the opportunities for a range of research activities set within an ‘artist-run multiverse’, combining critical aspects of traditional and alternative art institutional structures with newly invented approaches such as user’s manuals, long term artworks, upcycling, and useful art. For the researchers in BICA, EP provides an open, accessible space that performs in diverse ways, continuously challenging the role of art and artists in the contemporary world through public evaluation events, policy shows and Extra Ordinary People.</p> <p>All the research on which this ICS is based is enacted through engagement between publics, curators and artists to re-examine the nature and understanding of art’s primary function as exhibition. As an artist-run organisation EP differs from established models of public museums and galleries as it constantly explores collaborative possibilities from an artist-curator perspective, exploring how art can be understood in a variety of ways: as a trade, as a production process, as an activity engaged in policymaking and place-making, and as hospitality. [R1]</p> <p>Making Art Public</p> <p>EP’s practice philosophy focuses on Making Art Public, applied through its operation as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. EP’s aim is to test ways in which art can be useful to society by developing quality public projects focusing on history, people, and concepts of permanence, and by questioning and supporting the local artistic ecology. EP co-curated ‘The Event’, an artist led festival (2009/2011), and ‘Public Art Forum Debate’ at Birmingham City Council Chamber (2013). As we set out in Section 4, this enabled our research to shape the way in which artists and art are involved in development and urban planning processes. [R2]</p> <p>The action-based nature of our work means that research, knowledge exchange and impact are all integrated. For instance, the ACE-funded £230K project (2016-2021) developed new knowledge which was then utilised by EP-based researchers when they were invited by Cherwell District Council to commission a series of public artworks at Longford Park, a large-scale new housing development and country park in Banbury. Through the curatorial activities of EP-based researchers, we tested key concepts of ‘useful art’, and then used these insights, and our strong working relationships with council officers, to update and inform the Council’s ongoing</p>		

approach. By working with world-renowned public art creators, in co-produced projects, EP-based researchers were able to explore: artist-led housing with Studio Morison; the ecology of country parks and housing through an expanded model village of birdhouses with artist Richard Woods; a heated outdoor cast-aluminium sculpture with artist Nicolas Deshayes; and a participatory budgeting process with artist Rosalie Schweiker. As researcher-curators, our co-produced research initiatives enabled the artists to deploy their work in collaboration with stakeholders in local industry, creating a new model of public art production and council commissioning. [R3]

Additionally, EP's public and professional engagement programme *Extra Ordinary People* develops alternative models of art training which focus on collaboration and social responsibility in art practice. In addition, in emphasising co-production, we explicitly challenge a range of 'publics' to become active producers within the art works, not just consumers of culture in the West Midlands.

The Artist and The Engineer

A major development in EP's research on public art is their work on embodying forms that closely reflect the historical identity Birmingham. EP created and published *The Artist and The Engineer* in the form of a children's book that retells the story of Birmingham, adopting the 'heraldic supporters' from the city's coat of arms (an artist and an engineer) and re-presenting historical precedents for collaboration. This story became central for research within EP. Researchers tested concepts of 'layering' (maintaining and integrating diverse cultural positions and old architecture with new in development processes) and 'usefulness in art' through work with local industry, publishing, making, performing, designing, writing production processes, and ideas of upcycling. This research was conducted through a series of reflective and collaboratively authored publications titled *User's Manual* (drafts 1-7 since 2008 [R4]; *User's Manual: Draft 6* (2013) is *The Artist and The Engineer*). A series of exhibitions entitled 'Production Shows' (2016-2018) [R5] were also informed by Wade's *Upcycle This Book* [R6] published in 2017 and Ruth Claxton's development of STEAMhouse (2018–).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

R1. Curated Exhibition: 'This is the Gallery and the Gallery is Many Things X' (6.10.2018 – 22.12.2018), curated by Gavin Wade and Ruth Claxton at Eastside Projects (Birmingham, UK). <https://eastsideprojects.org/projects/this-is-the-gallery-and-the-gallery-is-many-things-x/>

R2. Curated Exhibition: 'Birmingham Big Art Project' (exhibition of shortlisted artists: Brian Griffiths, Roger Hiorns, Heather and Ivan Morison, Susan Philipsz, Keith Wilson), Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, 19.04.2017. <https://birminghambigartproject.org.uk/birmingham-big-art-project-launch-event-gallery-bmag/>

R3. Public art project: *Park Life*, commissioned and co-produced with Eastside Projects (2016 – 2020), featuring artists: Heather & Ivan Morison, Nicolas Deshayes, Richard Woods, Rosalie Schweiker. <https://eastsideprojects.org/projects/park-life/>

R4. Publication: *User's Manuals*, co-authored series of publications (#1 - #7.2) published between 2008-2017; most recent: *Eastside Projects User's Manual #7.2: Policy Manual* (Birmingham: Eastside Projects, 2017); ISBN 978-1-906753-39-9.

R5. Curated Exhibitions: 'Production Show' (curated by Gavin Wade and Ruth Claxton); 'Prototyping/Discovering/Analysing' (01.10 – 10.12.2016); 'Artist House' (20.05 – 15.07.2017); 'Building/Developing/Testing' (27.01 – 22.04.2017), <https://eastsideprojects.org/projects/production-show-buildingdevelopingtesting/>

R6. Publication: Gavin Wade, *Upcycle This Book* (London: Book Works, 2017); ISBN 978-1906012793.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)**IMPACT ON PUBLIC ART (STRATEGY AND COMMISSIONING) IN BIRMINGHAM**

Wade, as a member of the Public Art Gateway Group, informed the writing, development and implementation of the Birmingham City Council (BCC) Public Art Strategy (2015-2019). We have established a range of pathways to impact, positioning EP as a leading voice in regional arts strategy and forming strong partnerships for knowledge exchange. For instance, **Wade's** (2013-2016) Birmingham Post articles argued for developing new approaches to public art. This allowed EP to establish strong relationships with arts officers at Birmingham City Council (BCC). These emerging pathways were enhanced following the government Big City Culture strategy (2010-2015), which focused on developing a cultural infrastructure in the West Midlands, enabling EP to offer leadership in public art commissioning.

EP's research on Making Art Public influenced BCC's definition of public art published in 2015: "Public art is a place-based creative practice: the act of producing permanent or temporary (including participatory and event-based) art within the public realm". **[S01: Evidence from Birmingham Public Art Strategy 2015-2019]** The relationship between EP and BCC allowed EP to lead the commissioning process (appointed in 2015) for the 'Birmingham Big Art Project', a £2 million iconic public artwork to be produced in front of HS2 Curzon Station. **[S02: Extracts from BBAP Artist Brief]** In April 2017 Susan Philipsz's *Station Clock* was chosen after an 18-month public process. *Station Clock* embodies the mission of EP to activate publics in art-making processes. The 12 'digits' of *Station Clock* each represent a tone from the twelve tones of the universal chromatic scale. Philipsz's large-scale aural clock will be made up of 1,092 voices from Birmingham's diverse population recorded in partnership with Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and EP (started in 2019 – on hold due to COVID-19). **[S02: Statements by Susan Philipsz and Chairman of BBAP, Participants Feedback extracted from Birmingham Big Art Project website]**

IMPACT ON CITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (THE ARTIST AND THE ENGINEER)

EP's research into the unique iconography of Birmingham's coat of arms became, according to the leader of BCC, "*a strong reminder not only of our past but of our future as a city.*" **[S03: Testimony by Leader of Birmingham City Council]** EP's mission to bring attention to the history and ideology of Birmingham as a constant collaboration between an artist and an engineer, and their commitment to reinvent the role of the artist and artist-run institutions, led to a partnership with David Kohn Architects (DKA) to design the new £60m market in Birmingham, part of the £1.5 billion redevelopment of Smithfield. The director of DKA acknowledges the influence EP's research had on securing the Smithfield bid: "*Out ambition for collaboration on large-scale projects has taken a leap forward in working with Eastside Projects on the Birmingham Smithfield Markets. ...EP generously shared their intimate knowledge of the city and were co-authors of our approach to the challenge of designing new public spaces for the city. ...EP's previous research into the relationship of art to production, as evidenced by the artist and engineer on the city's coat-of-arms became a central idea in our approach.*" **[S03: Testimony by Director of David Kohn Architects]** To have an artist-run space involved in city development planning on any scale was a novel enactment as observed by Acting Assistant Director Development Planning and Development Department at Birmingham City Council: "*The inclusion of Eastside Projects was not only a masterstroke by DKA, but it was also a brave move and exactly what Birmingham was looking for.*" **[S03: Testimony by Acting Assistant Director Development Planning & Development Department Birmingham City Council, S04: Press coverage]**

IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL ARTIST-RUN INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES (ARTIST CURATOR)

The developing research, co-production and knowledge exchange activity embedded in EP has achieved international reach by becoming a model for other art spaces beyond the UK. For instance, the international presentation platform for visual arts, Kunsthal Gent (KG) in Ghent, Belgium has adopted EP's approach to research. In particular, they emphasise activating and redefining artist-run spaces in city development and planning.

This growing international impact has been achieved through the development of events on artists-run multiverses; a user manual; and Wade's role-modelling of new forms of curatorial practice. The 'Artist-Run Multiverse Summit', organised by EP in November 2018 engaged other international artist-run spaces to discuss their roles in relation to art, curating and communities. Additionally, invitations from international art venues and Biennials, have enabled Wade to present his approach to the wider global public arts community.

As Kunsthall Gent's manifesto makes clear, Wade's research was adopted and has become dominant since their inception in January 2019: "*Kunsthall Gent is a result of the interaction between the impressive architecture of the building and the spatial interventions that will be carried out within it. ... Eastside Projects (UK), serve as an inspiration to us in this: How can architecture and design support exhibition making alongside the curation process? Can architecture and design be understood as a form of curation? Can we imagine a context for exhibitions and exhibition making that produces rather than embodies or represents the exhibition itself?*" [S05: The mission statement of (KG), 2019 and testimony by the programme lead at KG]

EP's publishing of user's manuals became central to KG practice, leading KG to write and publish their own user's manual in 2019, which not only borrows elements from EP's previous publications but also includes Wade's work to support the establishment of KG. The programme lead at KG said: "The user's manual as we know it from EP, through Gavin, sounded like a useful tool for ourselves, for the artists and for the visitors to understand the complex situation, position and ideas Kunsthall Gent had in mind". [S05: testimony by the programme lead at KG, KG user's manual referring to Gavin Wade and Eastside Projects]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

S01: Evidence from Birmingham Public Art Strategy 2015-2019: Collaborations in place-based creative practice

- Selection of Gavin Wade quotes published in the Public Art Strategy (2 times through the policy document [p.2, p.14]).
- References to Eastside Projects influence (4 times at p.7, p.12, p.25, p.37).

S02: Evidence from Birmingham Big Art Project (BBAP), since 2014.

- Extracts from BBAP Artist Brief (ESP named Commissioning Agents, Gavin Wade named Chair of the selection process)
- Statements by Susan Philipsz and Chairman of BBAP regarding *Station Clock* award
- Press reviews of the *Station Clock* public art project
- *Twelve Tones* Participants Feedback extracted from Birmingham Big Art Project website (photographs)

S03: Testimonies regarding Smithfield Market development.

- Testimony by Leader of Birmingham City Council [Named Corroborator 1]
- Testimony by Director of David Kohn Architects [Named Corroborator 2]
- Testimony by Acting Assistant Director Development Planning & Development Department Birmingham City Council

S04: Corroboration of impact of Smithfield Market development

- Press coverage

S05: Corroboration of impact on Kunsthall Gent

- Text extracted from the mission statement of Kunsthall Gent (KG), 2019
- Extract from testimony by the programme lead at KG [Named Corroborator 3]
- Extracts from KG user's manual referring to Gavin Wade and Eastside Projects 15 times (p. 4, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21,31, 37, 38, 39, 42, 44, 47).