

<b>Institution:</b> University of Brighton		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D34 - Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Mobilising visual communication for socio-political change		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2007 – 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Julie Doyle	Professor of Media and Communication	2001 – to date
Olu Jenzen	Reader	2012 – to date
Nicola Ashmore	Principal Lecturer	2011 – to date
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2011 – to date		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>University of Brighton (UoB) research has used visual and participatory communication methods to engage and mobilise activists, artists, young people and citizens in UK, Europe, South Africa and Mauritius. It has forged collective spaces for community, artistic and activist expressions on globally important socio-political and environmental issues including conflict, state suppression, social justice, HIV/AIDS and climate change. This research has advanced collective solidarity and agency within diverse groups and organisations including artist collectives and youth climate activists; created new forms of cultural connection and activist engagement including the involvement of young people in different countries; and changed organisational communication and working practices including in Greenpeace.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Researchers in the UoB Centre for Spatial, Environmental and Cultural Politics have collectively developed research that focuses upon the visual as a mode of cultural representation and participatory practice to address knowledge gaps in environmental, social movements and arts communication research.</p> <p>UoB researchers interrogate the visual as a critical representational practice in climate communication and social activism. Through foundational work in climate communications, Doyle has shown how media, visual culture and science has representationally shaped climate knowledge and action, rendering climate change as a distant future through the separation of humans and culture from nature [reference 3.1]. Doyle contends that cultural and visual communication about climate change (through media, arts and activism) can present more nuanced understandings of human-environmental relations that link climate change to the cultural politics of the everyday [3.2, 3.7]. Addressing a key gap in social movement studies, Jenzen has written extensively on the role of aesthetics and the visual in social activism [3.3, 3.4] funded by the AHRC project <i>The Aesthetics of protest: Visual culture and communication in Turkey</i> [3.8]. Focussing on social media, Jenzen's research demonstrated how Gezi Park protestors in Turkey (2013) used visual and performative forms of communication, to communicate their messages, mobilise supporters and shape the movement's identity. The research not only evidenced emerging new forms of visual rhetoric [3.4] and modes of protest against state suppression but also identified how the movement aimed for social transformation via prefigurative enactments [3.3] of new ways of relating to others in society. These practices were documented and disseminated in visual forms. The legacies of such practices are exemplified in the artist collectives and collaborative activist art practices presented in the AHRC project exhibition (Istanbul 2017) and that were commissioned by the project to respond to the research findings, by exploring collective modes of protest, being and ways of life.</p>		

UoB researchers also utilise the visual as a collaborative creative practice to forge new cultural meanings and to empower marginalised and disparate communities. Ashmore's research uses collaborative activist art practice - through the act of making – to demystify artistic practices and processes, and to foster solidarity and socio-political engagement [3.5, 3.9, 3.11]. Using film, exhibition and public engagement activities, Ashmore investigates how the historically and culturally specific moment of war and conflict at Guernica is translated to a different experience through the collective community-based remaking of Picasso's *Guernica* in UK, South Africa, Mauritius, Syria, Canada, America, Iraq and Afghanistan. In bringing together disparate remakings of *Guernica*, Ashmore's exhibitions and films highlight contemporary concerns about war, conflict, the HIV/AIDS crisis, displaced people, and peace movements [3.5, 3.6]. Similarly, Doyle's research has deployed creative 'making' methods of visual arts, speculative storytelling, and participatory play to engage young people in the UK and Europe with climate change. This interdisciplinary visual research has facilitated young people's socio-cultural and emotional engagements with climate change, increased their feelings of individual and collective efficacy, and enabled the enactment of futures thinking [3.2, 3.10, 3.12].

### 3. References to the research

[3.1] Doyle, J., (2011). *Mediating Climate Change*. Ashgate: Abingdon. ISBN: 9780754676683 [Quality validation: peer reviewed publication].

[3.2] Doyle, J., (2020). 'Creative communication approaches to youth climate engagement: using speculative fiction and participatory play to facilitate young people's multidimensional engagement with climate change', *International Journal of Communication*, 14: 2749-2772. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/14003/3093> [Quality validation: peer reviewed international journal].

[3.3] McGarry, A., Jenzen, O., Eslen-Ziya, H., Erhart, I., & Korkut, U. (2019). 'Beyond the iconic protest images: The performance of 'everyday life' on social media during Gezi Park'. *Social Movement Studies*, 18(3), 284-304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1561259>. [Quality validation: peer reviewed in international journal].

[3.4] Jenzen, O., Erhart, I., Eslen-Ziya, H., Korkut, U. and McGarry, A. (2020). 'The figure of social media in contemporary protest', *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*. [Quality validation: peer reviewed in international journal].

[3.5] Ashmore, N., (2017). 'Guernica Remakings: Action, Collaboration and Thread', *TEXTILE*, 15:4, 376-395. [Quality validation: peer reviewed in international journal].

[3.6] Ashmore, N., (2017). *Guernica Remakings*. Exhibition. The exhibition is accompanied by the text: Ashmore, (2017) *Guernica Remakings*. Nicola Ashmore: Brighton. ISBN 9781999741907 [Quality validation: externally funded by AHRC/GCRF].

#### Key research grants:

[3.7] David Harradine [PI], *Leverhulme Trust* [Artist in Residence Award], 2009 – 2011, 'Here Today: Moving Images of Climate Change', GBP12,070.

[3.8] Aidan McGarry [PI], AHRC. [AH/N004779/1], 2016 – 2018, 'The Aesthetics of Protest: Visual Culture and Communication in Turkey', GBP203,086.

[3.9] Nicola Ashmore [PI], AHRC/GCRF [AH/P00783X/1], 2016, *Guernica Remakings*, South Africa, GBP98,535.

[3.10] Julie Doyle [PI], Austrian Climate Research Programme (ACRP), 2017 – 2019, 'CLIMATES- exploring the role of social norms, self and group efficacy for mainstreaming climate action among young adults'. Total funding: EUR250,000. UoB allocation: EUR28,000.

[3.11] Nicola Ashmore [PI], AHRC/ GCRF. [AH/S005714], 2019, 'Guernica Remakings, North with South', GBP100,634.

[3.12] Julie Doyle [PI], Arts Council Grants for the Arts (ACE) [ACPG-00126134], 2019 – 2020, *The System Change Hive*. Total funding: GBP49,700. UoB allocation: GBP4,600.

#### 4. Details of the impact

Addressing a range of challenging socio-political and environmental issues, including conflict, HIV/AIDS, state suppression and climate change, our visual and participatory communication research has brought together individuals and forged spaces to mobilise collaborative dialogue and reflection across diverse communities and organisations in the UK, Turkey, Austria, Germany, Belgium, South Africa and Mauritius. In doing so, our researchers have built relationships and advanced a sense of collective solidarity and agency; created new forms of cultural expression and activist engagement with social and environmental issues; and changed the communication and working practices of arts and environmental campaign organisations.

##### 4.1 Advancing collective solidarity and agency

Ashmore's *Guernica* banner remaking project (2012-2014) started by involving 12 artists and activists from Brighton and 14 public collaborative sewings in England (V&A, London; Working Class Movement Library, Salford) and India (National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad). The subsequent *Guernica Remakings* combined research and practice to build from a smaller scale banner remaking project to a global collective of remakers. This significantly expanded the geographical reach and scale of its impact across diverse communities and organisations. Through creative workshops and exhibition tours that have brought together 9 international artists, 14 local communities, and 11 cultural organisations in the UK, India, Mauritius and South Africa, Ashmore's *Guernica Remakings* has created visual outputs and vital spaces for collaborative reflection upon challenging issues within and across specific locales and cultures. Comprised of maker workshops, public talks and reflections on the making process – facilitated by Ashmore's film documentation of these processes [5.1] – the differing spaces have built trusting relationships and given voice to marginalised groups beyond their locale. Commissioning the Keiskamma Art Project (KAP) in South Africa to create Keiskamma *Guernica*, Ashmore's documentary series *Guernica Remakings, South Africa* (2018) followed those involved in its making, discussing local Xhosa cultural iconography and textiles. The remaking process enabled the sharing of lived experiences of not only conflict in Southern Africa but also the effects of the HIV/AIDS crisis. The documentary positively impacted upon the wellbeing of 100 members of the KAP collective, creating a space for the wider community to remember conflict and to tell their stories without fear or stigma. It also influenced the way KAP supports artists living with grief linked to the HIV/AIDS crisis by encouraging the use of counselling services available, and selling their art work [5.1].

Doyle's climate communications research was central to the creation of a transformative climate learning retreat in St Gilgen, Austria that brought together 20 young adults and youth climate activists from 8 European countries (Sweden, Germany, Finland, Austria, England, Scotland and Netherlands, Belgium) to co-create their own forms of climate communications. Co-designed by Doyle and the project partners, the multidimensional retreat combined climate science information with participatory workshops on climate communications research and embodied reflections, to explore young people's personal, emotional and collective responses to climate change. In sharing their '*grief and emotions about the [climate] work we are doing*', the young people '*felt empowered*'. Agency was created through '*this community that came together in St. Gilgen*', and the positive '*feeling of connectedness to other people who are keen on changing the world and this feeling that I am not alone*' [5.2]. Forging a collective identity, the young people established themselves as the 'St Gilgen Climate Collective', the legacy of which continues to sustain their climate activism through building '*confidence to stand up for what I believe in*' and applying the retreat experiences in '*everyday life*' [5.2]. Climate communications learning from the retreat has '*been used in real life campaigns*', through the use of humour as a communication device in a Scottish Government food waste campaign [5.3]

Jenzen's research has mobilised the artists' collective to solidify their identity in art practice providing an enduring mode of visual and other forms of political expression beyond protest action that has been suppressed by state authorities. This has particular significance in contemporary Turkey where some Gezi Park protestors are still being persecuted by the state and there is a power struggle between conservative neoliberal capitalist politics and an awakening to collective, emancipative values. For example, 4 Turkish artist collectives were asked to respond to Jenzen et al's social protest imagery research and the prevailing legacies

of the protest in Turkish society. These groups of artists, some of whom had not worked together before as collectives, challenged the notion of individualism, and explored cultural forms linked to the 'Gezi spirit' - the communal and pluralist ethos of the social movement - beyond the effervescent uprising of protest. The subsequent exhibition captured this via a set of artworks on the theme of collectivity as a 'field of solidarity', homing in on the importance of shared creative work in the context of contemporary Turkish authoritarian politics and neoliberal capitalist art market. The work and the exhibition experience consolidated them as 4 artist collectives through which they have continued to produce collaborative work and continued to centre on questions of the meaning and opportunities of collectivity in society especially in response to state oppression [5.4]. The HAH collective (an Istanbul based artist collective with 6 members) reflected, '*The work we did after was always relational, participatory, inviting others*', and their collective identity has helped make '*a stance against the [capitalist] art market*' [5.5]. The Dadans collective has also experienced more openness to collective modes of working after the exhibition: '*It was the first exhibition to [include us] as an art collective. [At the time] the art scene wasn't open to collectives. Festivals said no. [But] we got a lot of interviews after the exhibition*'.

#### 4.2 Creating new cultural connections and forms of activist engagement

Each installation of the *Guernica Remakings* Exhibition responds to its location by incorporating contextual materials and inviting local artist and public responses to the work. At the National Poetry Library, London (2019) two poets were commissioned by Ashmore and Chris McCabe, National Poetry Librarian, to write a poetic response to the exhibition which, alongside a public reading, impacted public participation with the work [5.6] and saw over 30 visual and poetic responses from the general public to the call "what is your Guernica?". People displayed their work in the dedicated display space in the exhibition. Ashmore's *Guernica Remakings* project has initiated further cultural iterations across 3 countries (UK, South Africa, Mauritius,) involving 9 individual artists and 4 artist collectives. Saradha Soobrayen's *Chagosnica* (2017 – 2019) - exploring the conflict linked to the forcible removal of Chagossians from the Chagos islands by the UK government between 1971 – 1973 - was inspired by the *Guernica Remakings* 2017 exhibition in Brighton [5.7]. Ashmore collaborated on the 2019 tour to Salford and London UK; and Rose Hill, Mauritius with 3 international artists and 5 artists from the Keiskamma Art Project, local Mauritian arts organisation pARTage and children's charity Future Hope, Mauritius. This enabled 50 children from disadvantaged families in Port Louis, Mauritius (many of whom do not go to school) to explore their visions of the future and promote a message of peace over conflict, through the production of their own *Kids Guernica, Mauritius* (2019) on a large scale canvas, commissioned by Ashmore. The *Kids Guernica, Mauritius* has since been exhibited in Japan to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Kids Guernica* project, also coinciding with Hiroshima day to mark the day the atomic bomb was dropped. Exhibited outdoors in a public place alongside tens of other *Kids Guernica*'s created globally, thousands of people saw the *Kids Guernica* exhibition and the Mauritius contribution. The collaborative art making process for *Kids Guernica, Mauritius*, helped facilitate dialogue '*between different cultures, respecting each identity...to create a community all around the world with children*' [5.6].

Utilising collaborative making for social change, a group of young adults at the St Gilgen climate learning retreat created a new prototype for a climate friendly travel app – Vojo (<https://vojo.me>) – which is now an official start up entity in Germany, supported by an Accelerator programme UNLEASH+ [5.8]. One of the Vojo team was subsequently selected to become a participant of the Sail to the COP25 campaign (2019): a group of 36 young changemakers from Europe who sailed to the UN conference in Chile (mirroring Greta Thunberg) to call for policy on fair and sustainable travel (<https://www.sailtothecop.com>).

Although the conference was cancelled, the young people continued their journey across the Atlantic to raise awareness of climate change and sustainable travel.

#### 4.3 Changing organisational communication and working practices

UoB's visual and participatory research on socio-political and environmental issues has changed the communication and working practices of arts and environmental campaign organisations in the UK and Europe. Doyle's research collaborations with UK arts charity ONCA

has expanded its 'vocabulary around climate agency and efficacy', helped 'develop holistic approaches' to climate education, influenced its 'emerging organisational values around anti-racist and inclusive practice', deepened its local collaborations, and increased its international research profile [5.9]. Through Jenzen et al's collaborative research the Birbucuk collective in Turkey (focusing upon climate change) has moved from singular artist/activist collective into the role of facilitator for work and dialogue across multiple collectives to accelerate social justice and change towards environmental sustainability [5.5]. Both HAH and Dadans in Turkey now focus on interactive work concerned with how citizens relate to each other in a capitalist authoritarian state [5.5]. Birbucuk now enable public interaction over issues of social justice via larger events, including the Istanbul Biennale, where previously they worked in 'closed' circles accessible only by invitation / membership. [5.4]. This has brought their activism to new and larger publics. Doyle's research has also affected the communication practices of international environmental NGO Greenpeace. Following an invitation to present the research to Greenpeace UK (November 2013), Former Deputy Head of Greenpeace UK Campaigns, stated that 'Doyle's presentation at Greenpeace UK initiated an internal discussion about how we best talk about climate change and what images we use when we do so'. Doyle's research helped its Programme Director 'to democratise the discussion that we are currently having in Greenpeace Australia', and 'to shift 'ownership' of our communications to a more participatory and democratic mode that previously was the preserve of the self appointed few' [5.10].

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5.1] Impact interviews carried out with Keiskamma Art Project, at a closed screening of Guernica Remakings, South Africa, in July 2018. Interviews also included in *Guernica Remakings: South Africa* (2017). This reveals the effects of engagement from a variety of participants.

[5.2] A report on post-project feedback from the 'Cli-MATES' project from participants 6 months after the transformational retreat (October 2018).

[5.3] The Scottish Government 'Food Waste Campaign' by the Leith Agency (April 2019). Available at: <https://leith.co.uk/work/food-waste> [Accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021]. This is an example of ongoing use of the research expertise in further campaigns.

[5.4] Revisiting the Maybe We Will Benefit from our Neighbours' Good Fortune Exhibition 2020 [video], available at: <http://www.aestheticsofprotest.com/blogs/> [Accessed 18th January 2021]. An example of the ongoing work coming out of the collectives.

[5.5] Testimonial responses from the Halka workshop where artists were invited to reflect on key themes of the research and the experience of having participated in the 2017 exhibition.

[5.6] *Guernica Remakings, North with South* (2020). [Documentary film]. This documents the 2019 exhibition tour and features partners from The National Poetry Library, Future Hope, youth workers and multiple poets and artists discussing the value of Guernica Remakings and Guernica Poetica and reflecting upon the impact of the remaking and working with Guernica Remakings and Kids Guernica. Available at: <http://guernicaremakings.com/guernica-remakings-north-with-south/> [Accessed 18th January 2021].

[5.7] Interview transcript from *Guernica Remakings* Curator's Tour and Meet the Makers event that took place at the Plaza, Rose Hill, Mauritius on the 6 April 2019

[5.8] Testimonial from a youth participant at Cli-MATES retreat, of the ongoing impact of his participation on subsequent work opportunities (October 2020).

[5.9] Testimonial from the Co-Director, ONCA, Brighton, UK (October 2020). This confirms how the research has informed organisational practices.

[5.10] Testimonial from the Former Deputy Head of Greenpeace UK Campaigns, and Programme Director, Greenpeace Australia (December 2020) on the effects on modes of communication in campaigns at Greenpeace.