

Institution: University of Brighton		
Unit of Assessment: D32 Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory		
Title of case study: Transforming understanding of design and its histories		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2011 – 2017		
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:
Jeremy Aynsley	Professor of History of Design	2014 – to date
Guy Julier	Professor of Design Culture	2011 – 2018
Annebella Pollen	Principal Lecturer, Reader (2020 – to date)	2010 – to date
Lucy Kimbell	Principal Research Fellow	2013 – 2015
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 <p>History of Design research at the University of Brighton (UoB) has transformed understanding of design as an important socio-material practice. The research raised the profile of design and material culture for publics and professionals as a means of understanding and representing history and society. By uncovering previously overlooked and under-researched subjects and by re-defining design concepts and frameworks this research has united diverse audiences and stakeholders, inspired new creative practice and built capacity for design to address live policy issues. The research has contributed to the growth of new and diverse audiences and also led to the expansion of the Policy Lab at the UK Government's Cabinet Office from 1.4 to 18FTE with an annual turnover of more than GBP1,000,000.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>Building on its international position as a nucleus for the subject, History of Design research at UoB has pioneered new methods of analysis and practices of interpretation. This has led to transformed understandings of how design is valued, represented and consumed through research, which is undertaken in partnership with a range of stakeholders from within the cultural industries and, in particular, museums, galleries and policymakers. The research that underpins this case study develops strategically from an impact case study submitted to REF 2014. At UoB the period from 2014 saw accelerated engagement with design history research that underpinned the establishment of the UoB Centre for Design History in 2017.</p> <p>Design history research at UoB continues to provide a framework for addressing contemporary questions of society, identity and culture through historical analysis of the formation of design, and through pioneering new methods to engage specific user groups and stakeholders with innovative approaches to social design. Research stretches across disciplinary boundaries to re-define traditional narratives of design, with particular emphasis on interrogating design's international and transnational networks. At the interface of object-based studies, museum curatorship and design history, Professor Jeremy Aynsley and Dr Annebella Pollen's research into previously under-represented figures and movements has revealed the significance of historical examples of design practice for contemporary academic, social and political debates about its significance as a form of cultural production. Building on Professor Guy Julier's longstanding expertise in the history of design and design cultures, Julier and Dr Lucy Kimbell's research into social design extended the application of design tools to new contexts to understand and reframe contemporary challenges for positive societal benefit.</p> 2.1 Creating new insights into identity and cultural history <p>Drawing on overlooked material across a range of collections and sources, research by Aynsley and Pollen has led to publications and exhibitions (Wolfsonian Florida International University and Whitechapel Gallery). Extending his earlier enquiry into histories of graphic design,</p>		

Aynsley's research on Julius Klinger (1876-1942), a leading figure within Austrian poster design and graphic art, investigated how individual, group, urban, commercial, religious and national identities can be shaped and defined through graphic design [Reference 3.1]. Locating her research at the interface of dress history and social history, Pollen's work on the British Woodcraft Movement, with a particular focus on the Kindred of the Kibbo Kift (1920 – 1951), extends the enquiry through an exploration of art, craft, design and dress as contributing to identities through radical strategies of resistance and reform [3.2].

2.2 Identifying links between design history, contemporary culture and social issues

Drawing on the holdings of the Wolfsonian FIU, one of the most significant collections of Klinger's work in the USA, and with reference to materials at the Kunstbibliothek, Berlin and Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna, Aynsley's research placed Klinger's body of work within its Viennese context. The research cast new light on the overlooked historical importance of the Jewish contribution to Modernism in design and Klinger's perceptions of the impact of American modernity on Europe through his response as a designer [3.1]. Pollen's exploration of the historical aesthetics of creative oppositional cultures, mystical beliefs and alternative spiritualities, located and analysed largely un-exhibited and unpublished substantial public and private collections of Kibbo Kift artefacts, uncovering a largely forgotten aspect of British art, design and social and cultural history. Through detailed historical analysis of designed artefacts and a focus on symbolism in dress and design, Pollen's research offered new insights and interpretations that connect the Kibbo Kift and their practices with contemporary popular public discourse on youth culture, design activism and radical resistance [3.2]

2.3 Applying social design as a tool for collaboration

Informed by an equivalent understanding of design as a productive social force, while seeking proactively to apply this within a contemporary context, research undertaken by Julier and Kimbell in 2014 and 2015 was instrumental in identifying and defining 'social design' as an emerging field of enquiry and practice capable of mobilising design processes for societal benefit through new forms of cross-disciplinary and multiple stakeholder collaboration [3.3]. Two AHRC-commissioned projects *Mapping Social Design* (2014) and *Developing Participation in Social Design: Prototyping Projects, Programmes and Policies* (2015) first sought to understand and map social design research and then to test co-produced design-oriented research towards collective and social ends. A parallel AHRC-funded fellowship for Kimbell that built on the related research [3.3] and was hosted by the Cabinet Office in the UK Policy Lab, provided an opportunity to extend the understanding of design beyond the realm of specialised professionals. Through her participant observation in the team, Kimbell translated insights from research into emerging design innovation practices in the Civil Service and, as a researcher, critically assessed this development [3.4]. Julier later argued for a concept of 'design citizenship' in the public sector, to provide a channel for governments to connect with people and the material culture within which people recognise themselves as citizens [3.5]. This built on the work developed through the Design Salons series at the V&A Museum, bringing together design industry practitioners and academics, as part of Julier's V&A fellowship. Together, these helped to advance research into the complex, dynamic and pervasive role of design in contemporary society [3.6].

3. References to the research

[3.1] Aynsley, J., (2017). *Julius Klinger: Posters for a Modern Age*, Miami: The Wolfsonian, FIU. [Quality validation: Invited curator at an international institution with exhibition extended via a tour].

[3.2] Pollen, A., (2015). *The Kindred of the Kibbo Kift: Intellectual Barbarians*. Donlon Books. <http://donlonbooks.com/products/the-kindred-of-the-kibbo-kift-intellectual-barbarians-by-annebella-pollen> [Quality validation: Winner of Most Beautiful Swiss Books Prize (2015) and related to an exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery (2015 – 16)].

[3.3] Armstrong, L., Bailey, J., Julier, G., and Kimbell, L., (2014). *Social Design Futures: HEI Research and the AHRC*. University of Brighton. <http://mappingsocialdesign.org> [Quality validation: The result of a project funded by the AHRC and supported by the V&A].

[3.4] Kimbell, K., (2015). Applying design approaches to policy making: Discovering policy lab

https://researchingdesignforpolicy.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/kimbell_policylab_report.pdf

[Quality validation: The result of a project funded by the AHRC].

[3.5] Julier, G., (2017). *The Economies of Design*. London: Sage Publishing [Quality validation: A significant monograph reviewed in the journals: *Visual Communication* and *The Design Journal*].

[3.6] Armstrong, L., and Julier, G., (2016). Interactions in the museum: Design Culture Salons at the Victoria and Albert Museum, in Farrelly, L., and Weddell, J., (eds.) *Design Objects and the Museum*. London: Bloomsbury, pp.159-168. [10.5040/9781474268820](https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474268820) [Quality validation: Chapter in a peer-reviewed edited collection].

Key research grants

Guy Julier [PI], AHRC [AH/L503952/1], 2014, Mapping Social Design, GBP121,712.

Guy Julier [PI], AHRC. [AH/N504269/1], 2015, Developing Participation in Social Design: Prototyping Projects, Programmes and Policies, GBP50,087.

Lucy Kimbell [PI], AHRC [AH/M005445/1], 2015, Research Fellowship – Co-designing an evaluation framework for design in the context of policy, GBP63,243.

Annebella Pollen [PI], AHRC [AH/M004570/1], 2015 – 2017, Picturesqueness in Everything: Primitivism, futurism, mysticism and resistance in the art, craft, design and dress of British woodcraft groups 1916 – 2016, GBP130,333.

4. Details of the impact

This programme of research and the resulting exhibitions and publications have transformed understandings of design in contemporary society and led to increased recognition of and capacity for design in the programmes of cultural, research and policy organisations. The research of Aynsley and Pollen presented previously under-represented cultural figures and groups in public art venues, affecting public audiences, museum professionals and creative practitioners by providing new insights into the tangible connections between historical and contemporary individual and collective cultural identities. Complementing this historical focus, Julier and Kimbell's work on social design pushed the boundaries of design practice to reshape understanding of design as a socially impactful process.

4.1 Reshaping gallery strategy and curatorial practice

As the guest curator of the exhibition at the Wolfsonian FIU, Aynsley introduced the designer Julius Klinger, whose work had not previously been the subject of a solo exhibition in the USA, to a new public in Miami, Florida [Source 5.1]. For the Wolfsonian, the Klinger exhibition was both a testbed for hosting a graphic arts exhibition and for a show with a monographic focus on a little-known designer. This greatly increased the organisation's understanding of its own collection. The success of the Klinger show led the Wolfsonian to review its curatorial practice, intensifying its engagement with graphic arts. This led to the development of a number of subsequent Wolfsonian projects including a monographic exhibition of Cuban illustrator and art director Conrado Walter Massaguer; an exhibition on early Soviet propaganda posters; an installation and accompanying virtual exhibition about HIV/AIDS awareness posters; and daylong "Posterfest" events in 2018 and 2019, celebrating posters as a communications medium [5.1]. In 2020, the Poster House Museum in New York, which opened in 2019 as the first US museum dedicated to posters, will host the exhibition (4 March – 15 August 2021). Aynsley's research for the exhibition also led to the acquisition of later works by Klinger from his final period in Vienna, which has expanded and strengthened the Wolfsonian's collection [5.1].

Pollen's research into the arts, crafts, design and fashion of the Kibbo Kift, a forgotten moment from the history of British design, underpinned the exhibition *Intellectual Barbarians: The Kibbo Kift Kindred*, co-curated by Pollen. The reconstruction of this history brought the context and cultural life of this group into the present, described by Jon Savage, a leading cultural critic and author of some of the most influential works on youth culture, as 'a revelation' which 'reconstructs a radical moment lost to history' [5.2]. Hosted by the Whitechapel Gallery – the site of a major Kibbo Kift exhibition in 1929 – the exhibition provided new knowledge that led the gallery to develop a deeper understanding of its own history. The exhibition attracted 225,000 visitors in its five-month run (2015 – 2016) [5.3]. The particular history encountered in this exhibition brought to the gallery a range of groups including schoolchildren, academics and

those interested in design, ecology and politics. Notably many individual visitors were distinct from the usual art world followers. The materials received renewed interest upon the close of the exhibition, with requests for research and loans coming from Tate Liverpool to inform the research and development of their own planned exhibition [5.3].

4.2 Deepening public engagement with historic and contemporary culture through design

In its six-month showing, the Klinger exhibition, which offered unique insights into his life and work and the displacement he experienced, supported the Wolfsonian to meet its aim to connect its collections with contemporary societal issues. The show raised awareness of the contribution of Jewish designers to European modernist design, with visitors articulating both a sense of loss and valuing the role of the exhibition in honouring the contribution of talented designers [5.1, 5.4, 5.5]. Through arranging special programs including a tour and reception for Miami's American Institute of Graphic Arts chapter and the April 21 Posterfest event, co-organised by the Wolfsonian with AIGA and Adobe, the exhibition enabled the Wolfsonian to fulfil its outreach goal to engage creative professionals as a target audience [5.1, 5.5].

Pollen's detailed presentation of the peculiarities of the Kibbo Kift with bold images of the design and artefacts attracted diverse audiences with reviews published in specialist craft, fashion, costume, popular culture and design blogs and journals, as well as mainstream press coverage (*The Guardian* and the *Financial Times*) [5.2]. In October 2015, BBC Radio 3's *Free Thinking* broadcast with Michael Rosen, explored Pollen's narrative on Kibbo Kift youth culture, costume and art alongside a nuanced reading of Rosen's latest anthology that explores the same period through the lives and experiences of his parents and grandparents. This broadcast shows how, through the research and exhibition, public perceptions of the Kibbo Kift have moved from the idea of an isolated group to one connected to history, society and modern culture [5.6]. Pollen's book and Whitechapel exhibition led to new forms of artistic expression in the fashion industry. Sadie Williams, a London-born Young British Designer whose fashion collections juxtapose modernity with applied craftsmanship, cites Pollen's work as the main source of inspiration for her Spring/Summer 2018 collection [5.7, 5.8]. Williams, who in 2016 was named in *Forbes Magazine*'s "30 Under 30" list for the Arts, brought the Kibbo Kift-inspired collection to London Fashion Week in 2017. The research informed decisions around the creation of the set design and accompanying visual assets, such as the Spring/Summer campaign imagery and campaign film [5.8]. The opening of this show garnered attention from an influential guest list including: the BBC, *Cosmopolitan* UK, *Harper's Bazaar*, Harvey Nichols, Swarovski and *Vogue*. The collection, campaign material and press coverage reached a global audience with pieces from the collection being featured in editorial photoshoots for several international publications, such as *Russh Magazine*, *Elle*, *Huffington Post* and *SLEEK Magazine*. The combined total audience for this collection, inspired by Pollen's research, was over 150,000,000 and sales of the collection have been made to companies in London, Hong Kong and Japan [5.8].

4.3 Mobilising social design as a tool for contemporary cultural change

Julier and Kimbell's early research into social design, published in the reports *Mapping Social Design* (2014) and *Applying Design Approaches to Policy Making* (2015) contributed insights and recommendations that informed the groundwork for future social design research at a national level. The first of these reports, commissioned by the AHRC, was published to help guide future plans for supporting design research, one of the AHRC's priority areas [5.9]. The report focused on design for social innovation, socially responsive design, and design activism and raised challenges for the field at a critical point in its history. The former Associate Director of Programmes at the AHRC confirmed that these reports informed the Council's approach to its design research strategic funding [5.10]. The research made recommendations for ways that the AHRC's approach could help address demand and 'to encourage a more "applied research" approach' that helped to 'build capacity in universities and deliver benefits through collaborative projects with businesses and public sector organisations' [5.10]. This research informed an AHRC funding call in 2014 for Design Research Fellowships. The reports also provided valuable evidence which 'informed discussions with other Research Councils and InnovateUK on the role of design and design research approaches in delivering economic and social impacts for business, industry and public sector organisations as well as in government policy development' [5.10]. In addition, Julier's work with the AHRC on developing approaches to social

design helped to establish it as a strand of thinking at the V&A. This was supported by the Design Culture Salon Series, curated by Julier at the V&A since 2012, that established a forum for high scholarly debate in the field of contemporary design [5.11].

The parallel AHRC-funded Policy Lab fellowship supported the organisational and individual learning of the Cabinet Office, building the capacity of civil servants to use design methods that explore and frame problems and generate and iterate solutions, bringing a more diverse group of stakeholders into the policy-making process. The Policy Lab pilot was established as part of the Civil Service reform plan under the Open Policy Making agenda; it provided a home to build design capacity through demonstrator projects. The fellowship built on Kimbell's research on the landscape of social design and design thinking for managers. Kimbell designed and delivered workshops and projects, which led to the development of new frameworks that helped to recognise the contribution of the Policy Lab to the policy-making process and its relevance to live policy issues. This connected the pilot to a wider field and the research findings within the report, alongside an internally commissioned evaluation, contributed to the extension of the Policy Lab into a further year of funding. Following this success, the Cabinet Office funded the expansion of the Policy Lab and it now employs 18 staff (grown from 1.4 in its first year) with an annual turnover of more than GBP1,000,000 [5.12].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5.1] Testimonial from the Wolfsonian Director that details how the work around the Klinger exhibition enabled further related projects and a review of curatorial practice at the museum.

[5.2] Savage, J., (2015). The other KKK: How the kindred of the Kibbo Kift tried to craft a new world. *The Guardian* <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/nov/02/kindred-of-the-kibbo-kift-1920s-youth-movement> [Accessed 21st January 2021]. A review which shows how the research reveals a forgotten history. Supplementary material includes further reviews in diverse media. Available as a PDF.

[5.3] Testimonial from the Head of Curatorial Studies at the Whitechapel Art Gallery. This confirms visitor numbers to the exhibition, the impact on audiences and the role it played in creating a deeper understanding of the gallery's history.

[5.4] Klinger: Photographs from the exhibition Visitors' Book. Available as a PDF. This confirms a broad range of visitor feedback on the exhibition.

[5.5] The Wolfsonian FIU Funding Arts Network Final Report. Available as a PDF. This outlines the outcomes relating to the exhibition and curatorial practice, as well as audience responses.

[5.6] BBC Free Thinking. (2015). Man Booker Winner, Weather and Twilight, The Kibbo Kift.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06gsckl> [Accessed on 18th January 2021]. Radio programme and discussion which focuses on the new understanding of the group's history.

[5.7] Sadie Williams, Spring/Summer 2018. <https://www.sadiewilliams.co.uk/ss18> [Accessed on 18th January 2021]. This provides a link to the SW collection inspired by the Kibbo Kift.

[5.8] A report produced by Sadie Williams on all press, reviews, recognition received in relation to her Kibbo Kift inspired collection. Report available as a PDF. This includes a testimonial from Williams detailing the success of this collection and attributes its influence to Pollen's research.

[5.9] Social Design: 'Report outlines future of social design research' (13/10/2014):

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20200923113400/https://ahrc.ukri.org/newsevents/news/futureofsocialdesign/> [Accessed 18th January 2021]. This confirms the importance of the design reports for setting important priorities for the AHRC.

[5.10] Testimonial from the former Associate Director of Programmes on the role these reports then played on funding interventions and the AHRC's approach to strategic priority funding.

[5.11] Testimonial from the former Head of Research at the V&A museum which details the strand of thinking on social design as an approach at the museum.

[5.12] Testimonial from the former Deputy Director - Policy Innovation Unit, Policy Lab and Open Innovation teams, Cabinet Office. This confirms the role the research played in the continuation of the Policy Lab.