

<b>Institution:</b> University of Sheffield		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D-25 Area Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Shaping UK programming of East Asian visual culture to challenge public perceptions		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2012–2020		
<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>
Mark Pendleton	Senior Lecturer, Japanese Studies	1 January 2012–present
Kate Taylor-Jones	Professor, East Asian Cinema	1 September 2015–present
Jennifer Coates	Senior Lecturer, Japanese Studies	1 September 2019–present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2017–2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)  <p>Taylor-Jones's, Pendleton's and Coates's research has enabled East Asian cultural organisations in the UK to widen their audiences and present programmes to challenge the existing narrative about East Asian cultures. Using their core research themes around gender, colonialism, and visual culture, they have worked in partnership with cinemas, museums, artists and architects to curate events and programmes. By combining in-depth analyses and outcomes arising from their research, they demonstrate to audiences the complexity of these rich art forms. These programmes have introduced new audiences to a whole range of East Asian art and visual cultures at a moment when this canon is set to rise and expand.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)  <p>The work of Taylor-Jones, Pendleton and Coates challenges the view of homogenous East Asian societies and disrupts and debates existing boundaries and spaces. They have worked individually and as a team to develop and explore cultural and artistic representation and engagement.</p> <p>Through the development of methodologies for working with artists and visual materials, Pendleton comes to three conclusions that have informed subsequent approaches to curatorship and public engagement. Firstly that material and visual items operate as thresholds or windows that provide unique insights into the relationships between lived pasts, presents and futures (R1). This in turn developed his work on co-creation between academic and non-academic partners and the conditions in which to make it flourish. By working with artists and letting them speak through their own work, Pendleton concludes that structured conversations, without emphasis on coproducing output leads to a better understanding of both artistic and academic discipline (R1). Thirdly in his specific use of the Yamanote line on the Tokyo subway as a case study, Pendleton demonstrates how visual and material items interact with specific urban spaces allowing the exploration of both the historical and the contemporary in new and innovative ways (R2).</p>		

This approach to diversity and the challenging of traditional historical narratives is a common link between all the researchers. Taylor-Jones's work shows how the cinema industries of East Asia were heavily and often controversially intertwined with the Japanese colonial period and how this era has had long term effects, both positive and negative, on the contemporary East Asian film world (R3). The study's key findings articulate colonial era Korean cinema as part of a much wider matrix of early cinematic tradition and circulation than previously supposed. Rather than seeing cinema as imposed onto colonial territories from Japan, the territories themselves developed and maintained unique film cultures during this period and these were heavily influential in the period following Japan's defeat. This dramatically expands the more familiar premise that places Korean cinema into the context of a specifically national debate, rather than seeing it as a 'cinema of Empire' with transnationality at its core. The project clearly charted the legacy of colonial cinema and offers tangible and clear case studies on how the colonial past bears direct relevance to the modern day East Asian cinema industry.

Both Taylor-Jones's and Coates's work explores female experience during both colonial and contemporary periods and proposes a visualisation of gender that is expansive and fluid, such as Coates' work presenting the complexities and layering of the star personas of female Japanese actors in the 1960s and Taylor-Jones's exploration of women and modernity in 1930s Korean cinema. For Taylor-Jones the result of this is the idea that colonial spaces, past and present, are where dominant discourses are both confirmed but also undermined, by men and women. Coates' explorations of gender and creativity in Japanese golden age cinema offers new engagement with this area of cinema research (R4). Coates' recent research on cinema audiences in Japan picks up on themes in both Pendleton's and Taylor-Jones's work exploring the examination of gender as a key factor in the development and dissemination of East Asian visual and material culture, and how digital cultures are circulating and challenging dominant modes of representation. This is illustrated in the 'digital-born' art practice of artists like Rokudenashiko who uses 3D printing, showing how technological advances are shaping arts practices today. (R6)

In combination, Taylor-Jones's, Pendleton's, and Coates's work brings into sharp relief the cultural, historical, and social elements of East Asian visual and material culture. Their research not only encompasses archival and analytical approaches to the artefacts they explore, but have also worked on developing methodologies, Coates on Digital Personhood, Taylor-Jones on colonial cinema, and Pendleton on co-creation, for exploring these works in a modern public context.

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

University of Sheffield researchers in **bold**

- R1.** López Galviz, C., Bartolini, N., **Pendleton, M.**, & Stock, A. (2017). Reconfiguring Ruins: Beyond Ruinenlust. *GeoHumanities*, 3(2), 531–553.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2373566x.2017.1374874>
- R2.** **Pendleton, M.**, & **Coates, J.** (2018). Thinking from the Yamanote: space, place and mobility in Tokyo's past and present. *Japan Forum*, 30(2), 149–162.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2017.1353532>
- R3.** **Taylor-Jones, K.** (2017). *Divine Work, Japanese Colonial Cinema and its Legacy*. Bloomsbury Press. Available on request.

- R4. Coates, J.** (2020). 'Creativity at the Margins in the 'Golden Age' of Japanese Cinema (1945–1965)' in Otmazgin, N. and Ben-Ari, E. (eds.) *Creative Context: Creativity and Innovation in the Media and Cultural Industries*. Springer. Available on request.
- R5. Taylor-Jones, K. E.** (2018). Shopping, sex, and lies: Mimong/Sweet Dreams (1936) and the disruptive process of colonial girlhood. *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema*, 10(2), 98–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17564905.2018.1518362>
- R6. Coates, J.** and Haapio-Kirk, L. (2019). 'Gender in digital technologies and cultures' in **Coates, J.**, Fraser, L., and **Pendleton M.** (eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*. Routledge. Available by request.

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

##### **Research-based curation to widen the reach and appeal, and to challenge perceptions of East Asian visual culture.**

Taylor-Jones, Pendleton and Coates have long-standing relationships with the Korean Cultural Centre, (KCCUK), the British Film Institute (BFI), the Korean Film Archive and the Japan Foundation. They have worked with these organisations on a number of festivals and initiatives aimed at bringing Japanese and Korean film and visual culture to UK audiences. Bringing research expertise to film, art and other visual cultures has meant a growth in understanding of the varied visual cultures of East Asia. The KCCUK, BFI, Korean Film Archive and Japan Foundation have been able to draw this into their programming and to their audiences. Taylor-Jones, Pendleton and Coates have been able to challenge the popular perception of what drives these cultures, as well as widen the audience for what was previously a niche area of interest. The recent popular success of Korean cinema means that they have been able to harness the perfect moment to place a critical spotlight on East Asian film and culture.

##### **Expanding public understanding of Korean film, history, and culture**

As a result of previous work with them on the Korean Touring Programme and knowing that she had expertise in early and classical Korean film, the KCCUK invited Taylor-Jones to propose a programme of 17 films for the BFI Early Korean Cinema series. The series ran in February 2019 in London and then toured the UK including Sheffield, Glasgow, and Belfast. This era of Korean cinema had never been presented, beyond one-off exceptions, to UK audiences before. As well as brokering the international exchange between the BFI and the Korean Film Archive that made the films available in the UK, Taylor-Jones's research and knowledge enabled the KCCUK to make visible and accessible crucial aspects of the history of East Asian cinema, highlight the impacts of Japanese colonialism on early Korean cinema as well as look at its relationship with wider cinematic traditions of the time. As the KCCUK programmer Hyunjin Cho notes, "By working with Kate, we were able to use her research in this area to programme films that are little known in the UK. As well as co-directing the film programming, Kate's expertise, particularly regarding the impacts of Japanese colonialism on early Korean cinema and its relationship with wider cinematic traditions at the time, was instrumental in programming accompanying talks, presentations, and Q&A sessions." (**S1**). For the BFI, the film festival and association with Taylor-Jones enabled BFI staff to have a better understanding of the films that were shown and so improved visitor services (**S2**). The collaboration also enhanced their screening scope by enabling accompanying talks, presentations, and Q&A opportunities to facilitate public engagement with the visual records of Japanese Imperialism, early Korean culture and history

and enhance their offer. As a result, the festival drew higher than expected audiences and “was drawn from a wider demographic than some of our other programmes.” (S2). The series received wide coverage in highly influential film publications such as Sight and Sound, All the Anime and Film London (S3, S4). The KCCUK notes that “The success of this series in terms of audience engagement with the subject matter, and the active support we have received from Kate and the University of Sheffield, are encouraging as we look to the future at new collaborations and public engagement opportunities” (S1).

### **Establishing a credible, educational, and inspirational Japan Now North Festival**

The Japan Now festival, celebrating art, culture, literature, and film, has been established in London since 2016. It aims to use art and culture to promote mutual understanding and cooperation between Japan and the UK. Until 2017 it was London-based but as a result of Taylor-Jones’ previous work with the Japan Foundation, the organisers approached Taylor-Jones, and together they developed a parallel festival which would take place in the north of England. Its key themes were shaped by Taylor-Jones and Pendleton’s research (2017-19), joined by Coates’s in 2020. The Programme Director of Japan Now notes that the Sheffield team “*greatly expanded the scope and curatorial ambition of Japan Now...driven by the expertise of the team, and guided by their individual specialisms*” (S5).

Their research highlights that UK audiences often receive only limited and stereotypical examples of Japanese visual and cultural products. By creating a programme based on these findings, they were able to use theories of collaborative working in the arts industry (Pendleton) to programme female artists and documentary filmmakers and writers who had engaged with minority experiences outside of Japan, drawing upon both Pendleton’s and Taylor-Jones’s work on space, gender, and the challenging of normative ideals (R1-5). The Senior Arts Programme Officer at the Japan Foundation notes that working with the Sheffield research team “*afforded the festival an intellectual credibility and underpinning ethos that was important to establish in the new iteration of the Festival in Sheffield*” (S6). The Festival’s three iterations have brought world-renowned artists to Sheffield for the first time, for example filmmaker and photographer Mika Ninagawa, filmmaker Megumi Sasaki, whose film ‘A Whale of a Tale’ was premiered at the Festival in 2018 and writer Sayaka Murata (‘Convenience Store Woman’).

In 2020, Coates’s research (R7) was used as the basis for a theme on futures, to highlight that although Japan is seen as a leader in technology, it faces challenges common to other nations, including an ageing population and overcrowding. In doing this, it helped audiences to see the UK commonalities with Japan and provide ideas on how we might also tackle social problems.

Brendan Griggs, Chief Executive of the Great British Sasakawa Foundation, who part-fund Japan Now, notes that the researchers’ “*knowledge of Japanese art and popular culture and in particular their nuanced approach to contemporary issues such as gender and sexuality, enabled them to curate a programme which has proved both educational and inspiring for audiences from a variety of backgrounds*” (S7).

Through close collaboration with cultural partners, the public understanding of Japan and Japanese culture outside of the mainstream discourses have been significantly extended and the relationship between the audience and Japanese culture has been changed. Almost all (94%, 2018, 99%, 2019, 90% 2020) attendees learnt something new, over half said they would seek out more Japanese media and 49% wanted to read more about Japan. Thirteen percent wanted to learn Japanese language as a result. Comments such as “[I] really love this exposure for women artists, showing...a more authentic insight on Japanese culture” demonstrate that the

aims of the festival were met and audiences appreciated the unique nature of the events they saw (S8). Sasakawa Foundation's Chief Executive also noted that *"We were delighted with the outcome: a significant improvement in the knowledge and appreciation of contemporary Japan amongst new audiences in the South Yorkshire region"* (S7).

In addition, the attempt to widen the audience for Japanese cultural events by bringing Japan Now to the North was a success. The positive reception of events for the Festival in the North, driven by their quality, instilled confidence in organisers to expand their geographical reach. As the Programme Director notes, all three researchers' *"knowledge, enthusiasm and desire to educate about Japan is inspiring and Japan Now North has gone on to become a festival model which has been adopted in other regions in the UK, particularly in Norwich, where 'Japan Now East' took place in February 2020"* (S5).

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

- S1. Testimonial, Film Programmer (former) Korean Cultural Centre
- S2. BFI Programme Manager- indicated in verbal discussions with Kate Taylor-Jones. Member of staff on furlough, unable to make contact and get a formal statement, as per mitigation statement. Letter of support from BFI to support the funding bid, indicating some of their ambitions for the project.
- S3. Media coverage of Early Korean Film Series (<http://bit.ly/3IB8Lji> and <http://bit.ly/3vIkPEd>), and 'Rediscovery: The Lost World', Tony Rayns [Sight and Sound Magazine, March 2019](#).
- S4. Wakelet Charts, detailing media coverage
- S5. Testimonial, Director, Modern Culture/Programme Director, Japan Now
- S6. Testimonial, Senior Arts Programme Officer, Japan Foundation
- S7. Testimonial, Chief Executive, Great British Sasakawa Foundation
- S8. Feedback from Japan Now North