ARTS AND HUMANITIES
A pioneering project that breaks down the barriers between science and technology and cultural heritage is transforming the way we view history.

How do you both bring history to life and change the boundaries of our knowledge about it? The University of Brighton-led European Network of Excellence in Open Cultural Heritage (EPOCH) – has brought together over 600 technologists and heritage experts to create working methods and a common vocabulary and to set an agenda for future research. The network is also developing tools for recording and analysing cultural objects, and for strategic planning and socioeconomic impact evaluation within cultural organisations.

These tools were identified in the EU’s final review as making “ground-breaking progress in developing innovative methods and theory in the economics of cultural heritage”. EPOCH, which was coordinated by Professor David Arnold of the Cultural Informatics Research Group, has spawned a number of centres of expertise and played a key role in the establishment of Digital Intangible Heritage of Asia.

The network also gave rise to 3D-COFORM, a four-year University of Brighton-led project which began in 2008. Its aim was to make 3D documentation practical and sustainable for cultural heritage institutions, and to enable mass 3D-acquisition by these organisations.

The multidisciplinary project, a collaboration between 19 partners, culminated in the Reshaping History exhibition held in Brighton in 2012. 3D-COFORM ran over 30 deployment experiments, combining tools to address curatorial challenges, test technologies and integration, raise awareness, and train a new generation of heritage professionals. The 2012 exhibition showed each stage of the integrated workflow in 3D exhibits demonstrating innovative technologies applied to iconic heritage content. For example, Michaelangelo’s David, where plans have developed to use 3D modelling to determine whether cracks in the statue are getting larger over time.

The 3D-COFORM exhibition was designed to inspire and inform people working in cultural heritage and the public about the potential of 3D computing within the cultural heritage world. The exhibition has been shown around the world, and been translated into both Italian and Portuguese, attracting more than 10,000 visitors and considerable international media coverage. It arrived in Brazil in August 2014 for a two-month run in a new gallery opposite Sugarloaf Mountain and is planned to tour several locations. Stephanie Smith, Sussex Finds Liaison Officer, Portable Antiquities Scheme, called it “an absolutely brilliant undertaking explaining why 3D technology has the potential to completely change the way we create, incorporate and explore archaeological finds.”

Not only has the 3D-COFORM project provided the tools necessary for 3D work in cultural heritage, but it has played a vital role in establishing a new interdisciplinary area between science and engineering and arts heritage, cemented through the new EPSRC-funded Centres for Doctoral Training in Science and Engineering for Arts, Heritage and Archaeology.

The 3D-capture and associated processing tools developed by the project enable researchers in the arts and humanities to study cultural artefacts in ways that have not been possible before, for instance, enabling broken artefacts to be reassembled and accessed online. The 3D technology has already exposed brush strokes on Rubens’ “The Young Anthony”, a painting of the young Van Dyck, that suggest it was, in fact, a self-portrait. The project has become a leader in digital cultural heritage, attracting interest from cultural bodies such as the Berlin State Museum, the Louvre and the Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels.
The project has delivered breakthrough work on several aspects of the development of 3D technology for the cultural heritage sector. The 3D-COFORM project introduced heritage institutions and the public to the applicability of 3D within the sector.

Chris Vastenhoud, Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels

The project has also contributed to international standards in the interchange of cultural heritage information and has been instrumental in introducing 3D models to Europeana, formerly the European Digital Library. 3D-COFORM established a Virtual Competence Centre for 3D, which will provide independent advice on 3D technologies to cultural institutions and has widened public access to heritage information. Professor Arnold said: “Not only will 3D technological innovation transform working practices for cultural professionals, but the public are used to digital technology and this has raised their expectations. 3D brings history to life in a way that photos cannot and the internet opens up heritage material to a much wider community.”
A leading thinker on sustainability has come up with the notion of emotionally durable design. His theories are now making an impact with some of the world’s biggest brands.

We live in a throwaway society, but why do we discard things that still work and how can we design products that consumers will want to keep for longer? These are questions that a University of Brighton academic has been investigating for the past decade. Today, his research is making an impact in the design studios of some of the world’s leading businesses.

“We seem to be addicted to the new,” said Professor of Sustainable Design Jonathan Chapman, “and I find the relationships we have with products fascinating. Our research with consumers identified change over time as the key issue. We need to create relationships between consumers and products that get continually reinvented, and that’s the dominant idea of emotionally durable design: I’m arguing for the design of new experiences, not new products.”

One of the biggest impacts has been at leading sportswear brand PUMA, where Professor Chapman’s ‘50 Ways of Thinking and Doing Sustainable Design’ toolkit now has centre stage at the company’s five design centres around the world. He devised a sustainable design competition with PUMA, run exclusively with students at the University of Brighton, to develop cutting-edge sustainable design proposals to advance thinking across PUMA’s product categories (see image). Together with PUMA, he also led the 2012 sustainable design master-class series, joined by lead designers and strategists from Adidas, IDEO, H&M, Seymourpowell, Marks and Spencer, ASOS, and other leading consumer businesses. These expert sessions featured keynote lectures, exhibitions and workshops from a range of invited sustainability specialists, including College of Arts and Humanities academics Nick Gant and Tanya Dean.

The corporate mood has fundamentally shifted over the past 10 years. Emotionally durable design was once described as radical or interesting, today’s leading businesses describe it as strategically important.

“Chapman’s research has advanced our thinking on sustainable design,” said PUMA’s Global Director PUMA Safe Dr Reiner Hengstmann, “and made a considerable contribution to our quest for enhanced resource efficiency, and increased product and brand value. His lectures, masterclasses, workshops and training films have helped to move our sustainability story forward by shaping the attitude
Chapman’s research has advanced our thinking on sustainable design and made a considerable contribution to our quest for enhanced resource efficiency, and increased product and brand value. His lectures, masterclasses, workshops and training films have helped to move our sustainability story forward by shaping the attitude and approach of our designers and management teams.

Dr Reiner Hengstmann, Global Director, PUMA Safe Supply Chain, PUMA

Professor Chapman’s research has been widely adopted by professional designers at some of the world’s largest businesses including Sony, Philips, H&M and Clarks. Today, the term ‘emotional durability’ is adopted by designers, students and educators around the world, providing valuable shorthand for the psychological factors that determine the endurance of products.

As well as extensive media coverage in the UK and around the world, emotionally durable design has been highlighted by the House of Lords as a key tool in reducing e-waste and increasing the lifespan of domestic electronics. Written and oral evidence was presented to the Lords’ Science and Technology Sub-Committee, which in turn informed the Government’s latest Waste Policy Review in 2011, placing Professor Chapman’s research at the leading edge of a sustainable future.
The Smart e-bikes project, led by Dr Frauke Behrendt, investigates how the public engages with electrically-assisted cycling, and considers how policy, training, design and product development might lead to a higher uptake of e-bikes in the UK, potentially reducing carbon emissions and improving health.

The e-bikes used in the study (also known as pedelecs) are electrically assisted bicycles that enable people to cycle for work or pleasure with optional motorised support. The rider still has to pedal but the rechargeable battery assistance can make it easier to cycle, especially against the wind or uphill.

Smart e-bikes have been loaned to 100 commuters and community groups for trial periods of six to eight weeks. The fleet of bikes have specially developed monitoring systems with sensor integration. Each e-bike looks and works similarly to an ordinary bicycle but includes the rechargeable electric motor.

The amount of assistance from the motor reduces with increasing speed and cuts out altogether once the bike reaches 15mph or if the rider stops pedalling.

E-bikes can encourage more people to cycle – or encourage people to cycle more. They are particularly useful for commuters who want to arrive unruffled, older age groups, people with physical limitations, tourists and ‘last mile’ delivery of goods. The Smart e-bikes project monitors data for the bike’s location and the rider’s activity, and feeds to an online interface for analysis. Riders can also view their own data and share it via social media. This data sharing turns singular e-bikes into a networked fleet.

The future vision is to make the greater Brighton and Hove city region the UK model for demonstrating the game-changing potential of electrically assisted bikes. While the social, economic and environmental benefits of e-cycling have already been demonstrated in several European countries, the UK still has to realise this potential. E-bikes, and especially ‘smart e-bikes’ could be a showcase for the local innovation at the intersection of the high-tech industry and sustainable technology. The aim is to work with local, regional and national institutions, government, and industry towards an evidence-based e-bike strategy that includes leisure cycling, commuter cycling, cycle tourism and ‘last mile’ delivery.
Several local companies have consulted the project researchers on their business and developing innovations, for example regarding the tracking of fleets and goods. One of them is ReCharge, with Founder Sam Keam stating: “The smart e-bikes project has supported us in developing our vision for more sustainable urban logistics…Brighton struggles with congestion, air pollution, lost business productivity and a reduced quality of life because there is too much traffic – a fair chunk of which is vans whizzing around delivering goods.”

Use of such bikes will therefore be of potential health benefit to all those who need to increase their levels of physical activity and who use them in preference to undertaking less active types of travel or activity.

Nanette Mutrie, Professor of Physical Activity for Health, University of Edinburgh
Bob Harber, one of our Brighton-based e-cycle trainers stated: “It gives new horizons to people who might otherwise have been in a car. I love to observe the sudden realisation of possibility by those participating in the e-training.”

The project is positioned at the intersection of more traditional cycling research, mobile media studies and user-centred design. It has aimed to understand electric cycling as a unique mode of transport, with distinctive potential and challenges in the UK context.

We are starting to work in partnership with Frauke Behrendt from the Smart e-bikes research project to put together a CPD (continuing professional development) trainer training module to submit to the Department for Transport for possible inclusion in the Bikeability suite. This will extend our reach to adult audiences and respond to the growing public interest in e-bikes.

David Dansky, Director of The Association of Bikeability Schemes CIC

Augmented with video cameras, mobile phones and other sensors to collect more qualitative and ethnographic data, this investigation into the full potential of smart e-bikes promises to have a positive effect on many issues in the contemporary city, from traffic to individual well-being.
Dr Tom Ainsworth’s recent research utilises behaviour design theory to encourage beneficial exercise amongst patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). At the intersection of a number of disciplines, including design, social psychology and healthcare, his research seeks to enable the development of design interventions that influence a person’s attitude or behaviour for the benefit of their health.

The research identifies ‘designable factors’ – ideas, objects, and environments (virtual and real), which are specific to people with RA. These can then be understood and selectively influenced to increase the ability and willingness of patients to engage with long-term therapeutic exercise recommendations. Dr Ainsworth’s work also explores existing motivations and interests in the activities of daily life that can be targeted to incorporate therapeutic exercise interventions.

The study demonstrates that traditional approaches to design that focus primarily on ‘desirability’, ‘inclusivity’ and ‘mass market’ are not, in their current form, adequate to address the complex health needs of modern society. His research argues for design innovations that integrate health into everyday life and promote resilience in health, enabling people to live longer, happier, lives, and reduce the need for long-term assistance and support.

Through his research, Dr Ainsworth aims to increase the integration of objects and environments that encourage healthy activities into the home, the workplace and social spaces through the development of new business models and design values. The growing impact of his ideas has nurtured close collaborations with colleagues at Brighton and Sussex Medical School and Arthritis Research UK, in addition to co-developing new projects with a range of external partners including the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design at the Royal College of Art and the Design Council UK.
Understanding past violence

From the Troubles in Northern Ireland to Apartheid-era South Africa, and from the Balkans in the 1990s to England in the 1940s, academics at the University of Brighton are helping to understand violent conflict and its effects on those who survive it.

“Those who cannot remember the past, are condemned to repeat it.” Spanish philosopher George Santayana’s insight has particular resonance for a group of researchers from across the arts, humanities and social sciences, who are focusing on the ethical and political justifications of violence, and the way in which cultures deal with their experiences and fear of conflict.

Cultural and social historian Dr Lucy Noakes from the College of Arts and Humanities engages with the relationship between the social and cultural history of war and the cultural memory of warfare in post-war societies. She has recently explored the impact of wartime death on the psychic, geographic and cultural landscapes of post-World War Two Britain, finding shifting ground as cultural memories evolve.

“Wartime propaganda of the ‘chirpy cockney’ endured for decades and influences cultural memory today,” said Dr Noakes. “The notion of ‘we’re all in it together’ is a valuable political trope still in use – nowadays to describe austerity rather than the Home Front – but in the 1940s there was a stronger reality attached to the phrase. But this reinvented cultural memory doesn’t reflect the people wetting themselves with fear when the air-raid siren sounded. It’s very hard to talk about bad memories, and it’s much easier, indeed quite seductive, to adopt the publically acceptable cultural memory rather than the repressed fears of the individual.”

Related research on the First World War led to Dr Noakes’ involvement as co-investigator in one of five AHRC-funded public engagement centres in conjunction with the Heritage Lottery Fund. The aim of the UK Gateways to the First World War co-ordinating centre is to provide support for community projects that bring together academics and members of the public through research and commemoration of the war at its centenary. “The centre directly supports community groups funded by a range of HLF programmes, particularly through its new £6m First World War: Then and Now community grants scheme,” said Dr Noakes.

Activities organised through the Gateways project include talks, open days and study days to help understand the legacies of conflict and the process of commemoration, and to support this practice within local communities. The Gateways project, which will also provide research training, and link with schools and education projects, advises on sources and archival work, as well as creating opportunities for reflection on what it means to commemorate the centenary of the First World War.

Graham Dawson, Professor of Historical Cultural Studies in the College of Arts and Humanities has explored the ways in which individuals and communities deal with the past within conflict resolution processes, and his widely respected work has resonance with Dr Noakes’ current research. Professor Dawson’s work is about composing a narrative notion of the experiences of the past, helping to make us feel composed about the present. Individual narratives might be factually flawed, our memories unreliable, but our narratives are composed to help us deal with the sometimes difficult and traumatic, or perhaps just inconvenient, memories that are hidden away.

Photograph: The British Airborne Division at Arnhem and Oosterbeek in Holland. O’Brien (Lieut). © IWM
University of Brighton research on digital technologies and inclusion has had an impact on sustainable community development in the south-east and beyond and has helped promote peace following post-election violence in Kenya.

The University of Brighton puts community engagement at the very heart of its mission. This is apparent in its pioneering research on digital communities. Gillian Youngs, Professor of Digital Economy, said: “Brighton is one of the leading universities in innovative community engagement based on a distinctive cross-disciplinary ethos of working with communities.” The College of Arts and Humanities research on digital technologies in rural communities extends from Brighton to Kenya to help create democratic and inclusive spaces for people to interact.

The University of Brighton’s work in this area has always placed user needs at the centre of the digital revolution. In the 1990s research by Professor Karamjit Gill developed a model that brought together researchers, practitioners, entrepreneurs and social and cultural actors in ways that emphasised individual creativity and personal empowerment in the emerging networked society. This work has been built on by researchers such as Dr Peter Day, a Senior Lecturer in the College of Arts and Humanities, and Professor Flis Henwood, Professor of Social Informatics in the College of Social Sciences, in ways that have explored different dimensions of the digital divide and led to research that looked at how breaking down that divide could reinvigorate civil society.

A pilot study for the Community Network Analysis & Information and Communication Technologies project found that digital technologies would reach a more inclusive group of people if they were shown to have an application to people’s everyday lives. At the same time, Nick Gant, a researcher in the College of Arts and Humanities, developed a community planning and networking tool, Community21 (Digital Toolbox for Sustainable Communities), which brings together a range of digital interface, participation and content management methods to enable communities to utilise smart technologies in the co-design of their future.

The project has spurred greater involvement and inclusivity in community planning and design and has enabled local people to adopt roles as the lay ‘architects and planners’ of their own community futures and neighbourhoods under localism legislation. Uniquely, this has included the collaborative design of new, freely available technologies or ‘digi-tools’ developed for children and old people who have taken part in digital citizenship and envisioning workshops.

“Action in rural Sussex (AirS) adopted the research in its Business Plan and its CEO, Jeremy Leggett, said: “The principle of neighbourhood and community planning is now vital to our policy implementation phases.”

Research on digital communities has also had international applications. Dr Day worked with ITSkills4RuralKenya, a charity that focuses on removing barriers to digital literacy.
Through the provision of audiovisual filming technology, training and enhanced access to ICT in the community – over 200 centres in rural Kenya received 20,000 computers, potentially reaching two million people. Dr Day then extended the university’s research in Kenya as part of a peace and reconciliation process following inter-tribal tensions in the wake of the 2007 election.

The researchers worked with the Focus Youth Initiative and as a result young Kenyans from across ethnic groups created videos that reflected on post-election violence. The process helped to build a sense of political empowerment. Together with a number of groups and organisations from Kenyan civil society these researchers have formed a partnership network called CommunityMedia4Kenya. They are currently working on developing community information centres using networked Raspberry Pi technology and setting up a community radio initiative in the Rongo area of Migori County.

Professor Youngs, whose long-standing work on inclusion and digital technologies informed an inquiry on Designing the Digital Economy which she co-chaired, said: “Brighton’s multidisciplinary work on digital technologies is research-informed, but focused on practical applications in specific locations. This approach creates a rich tapestry, showing how the university is working in creative and multi-faceted ways with communities.”
THE ART OF INCLUSION

University of Brighton academics have been pushing the boundaries that separate art and life, and developing a more inclusive approach to performance.

The world of performance art is becoming more inclusive and engaged, in no small part due to the work of academics at the University of Brighton. Professor Liz Aggiss, Billy Cowie and Alice Fox from the College of Arts and Humanities have pioneered different ways of working with marginalised and under-represented communities in new and unexpected places.

Their work has been seen by people in over 40 countries via 230 performances, public screenings, festival presentations and widespread online dissemination, and has won international media coverage. Using musical composition, voice, sound, choreography and time-based media technologies, they cover issues such as ageing, identity and disability in their performance practices, and seek to blur the relationships between performers and audiences and art and life.

Professor Aggiss and Billy Cowie’s work saw them named ‘performance ambassadors’ by the British Council as part of its Forward Motion tour to promote UK art. The tour included lectures and masterclasses by Professor Aggiss and their long-term collaboration has pushed the boundaries of screen dance, blurring the line between high art and popular culture. They have been invited to international festivals and their award-winning dance for camera work Motion Control, featured in Time Out: London’s Top Ten Dance Videos on the Web, has had around 100,000 YouTube views. Motion Control generated debate about inclusion, feminism and geopolitics. Other work has included 3D and holographic dance installations.

Fox’s research has led to paradigm shifts in how inclusive performance is viewed by, for example, government-funded bodies, community groups and arts organizations. Her work on inclusive performance includes the Artists on the Move project with partners in Ireland and the Netherlands. The project involved each organisation giving a public exhibition and creative workshops to share best practice. Fox’s Side-by-Side was commissioned by the Arts Council and London’s Southbank Centre and attracted over 6,500 visitors. It brought together 150 able-bodied and disabled artists, representing the collaborative approach and outlook of 30 international organisations.

Fox and Dr Hannah Macpherson from the School of Environment and Technology are just embarking on writing the first book on the theories, research methods and practice of inclusive arts: Inclusive Arts Practice and Research: a critical manifesto. Fox, founder of the university’s pioneering MA in Inclusive Arts Practice, says the book, to be published in spring 2015 by Routledge, could be seen as a manifesto for inclusive performance. It is based on her own experiences and those of a wide range of influential artists and thinkers from Europe and the United States, including Jude Kelly, Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre, US artist Suzanne Lacey, Anna Cutler Director of Learning at Tate and Andrew Pike from Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent (KCAT) Arts and Study Centre.

The book will identify what inclusive practice is, what makes it unique and how it is situated within historical, cultural and contemporary practice. True to the discipline the book itself will be collaborative, an image-rich hybrid of academic essays and accessible summaries. The cover will be designed by an artist from the learning disabled Rocket Artists, of which Fox has been Artistic Director since 2003. She said: “Our aim is to name and describe inclusive performance and position it as an emerging practice.”
The exhibition shifts a paradigm by making us understand that art created by people with different life experiences gives us fresh perspectives on ideas around what is possible for an artist, both practically and emotionally.

Jude Kelly, Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre

Photograph: Alice Fox and Louella Forrest Measures of Bodies performance, European Academy of Childhood Disability conference, Brussels.
Photograph: Left – Eumig C16, a 16mm amateur cine camera from the 1950s. Right – A Pathé Baby 9.5mm amateur cine camera from the 1920s.
As well as being a fascinating resource for anyone interested in the past, the archive has special value to museums and to broadcasters as well as academics and researchers. Recently, film-makers from France and from the USA have found important resources for programmes on the Second World War. A short film of children from Hove putting on gas masks has become emblematic of life in wartime Britain for a global audience. By engaging with local communities, national and international museums and broadcasters SASE has developed new public audiences for contemporary and historical screen culture that have generated over £1.8m in income, with total audiences exceeding 25 million.

The past decade has seen a revolutionary change in how film archives operate with the arrival of the internet. “Being part of a networked world has transformed every aspect of our work,” said Dr Gray. “When the archive was established in 1992, if you wanted to see our films you physically came to where we were. An AHRC grant helped us build a digital catalogue and present some of our content online, which was a fundamentally important step: sharing our collection online means that serendipitous things happen.”

Brighton has provided a moving past for the region, the nation and beyond. There are many ways of accessing the past but moving images offer a unique insight into how we lived our lives during the twentieth century. One of the University of Brighton’s leading art and film historians has been instrumental in opening up the world of film through Screen Archive South East.

From rural life to seaside holidays and from wartime information to peacetime celebrations, a unique record of life in south-east England has been collected, preserved, curated and made available through Screen Archive South East (SASE) and its Director Dr Frank Gray, a member of the University of Brighton’s College of Arts and Humanities.

“The interesting thing about a film archive is the number of different ways in which it’s used,” said Dr Gray. “There’s an assumption that a film archive serves the needs of film historians, but the reality is that we transcend the specificities of film and film history and serve multiple histories, whether it’s domestic and social history, or rural and agricultural history, or military and conflict history.”
One interesting example is a film-maker from Germany who came to live in England in the late 1930s but who returned to Germany after the war. The Dresden International Short Film Festival presented a retrospective of Peter Sachs’ work and the web catalogue provided the vital link. “It turns out that one of his very earliest films was created for a tinned meat and fish firm in Chichester, and without our online presence the creators of the retrospective would never have come across this unique film.”

The link with higher education is critical for a film archive’s core research and pedagogical function. As an art and film historian, Dr Gray is constantly focused on the many and varied histories contained in the archive. “Each film represents so many things and since the vast majority of our films are non-fiction, they are intimately engaged with aspects of everyday life, and of commemoration, so they’re the perfect complement to other archival sources such as paper archives, oral histories and even archaeology.”

The role of the archive is multi-faceted and inspirational, as well as representing solid intellectual and academic capital. “We’re opening doors to different histories and making connections,” said Dr Gray. “We’re making people inquisitive about their past, we’re articulating history through the moving image, and we’re providing a resource for teaching and research, for museums and for artists.”

Frank Gray’s public activities through his leadership of Screen Archive South East and Cinecity have brought film alive to the city of Brighton and Hove and have been a driver for the city’s ongoing success in all aspects of the film cluster. Frank has nurtured a public/private sector partnership that was successful in making Brighton and Hove the centre for the audience development of cultural cinema in the South East.

Donna Close, Head of Arts, Royal Pavilion, Arts & Museum
Dr Rajguru and her colleague Dr Nicola Ashmore have, as early career researchers, worked alongside historian Dr Louise Purbrick, whose experience working in community projects in post-conflict societies, particularly Belfast, have guided the Remaking Picasso’s Guernica project from its inception. Dr Purbrick’s own scholarship brings an understanding of how gallery spaces are used for political debate, and the recognition of art as practice and process rather than being motivated only by the display of finished objects. Dr Rajguru’s work investigates intervention projects that revisit works of art framed by art history and reinterprets them to construct new meanings. Through the process of collective making in public spaces using craft methods, the Guernica remaking subverts the iconic painting made by a singular male artist in his studio. It is unsigned and does not claim mastery over sewing techniques. It instead chooses to focus on the universal meanings embodied in the shapes in Guernica, and establishes the stitch as a suitable medium that is also universal, and translates these meanings through the collective making process. Dr Ashmore worked closely with activists on the production of the central figure of the textile piece, the horse, and is developing analysis of other collective recreations of Picasso’s work. Working collectively has created a dialogue that involves an exchange of people’s experiences of sewing, of art, activism, anti-fascism and aerial bombardments of civilian populations. This important dialogue has continued through public sewings involving hundreds of people, recorded in the stitches that hold the banner together. To reveal these links in the context of protest art, Dr Rajguru has developed a curatorial link with the Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, instigating two public sewings and contributing the Guernica banner for display.

Dr Megha Rajguru is a member of the Remaking Picasso’s Guernica collective, formed in 2012 to remake the iconic Guernica as a textile protest banner. The banner-makers have reinterpreted Picasso’s famous shapes as a method of reflecting upon and protesting against recent wars and loss of life. The shapes made by the collective have been sewn onto the banner, in affiliation with public institutions, by hundreds of people in public places from Manchester to Ahmedabad.
The Victoria and Albert Museum is the world’s greatest museum of art and design, and for nearly 20 years researchers from the University of Brighton have helped transform the Museum’s role in shaping contemporary design cultures.

Design influences our world at every turn, from the products we buy to the way we interact with our public services and, increasingly, to the way we use digital tools to obtain information online.

“For much of the twentieth century, museum collection and acquisition policies were about the beauty of the object and its function in documenting changing tastes,” said Professor Guy Julier, the University of Brighton Principal Research Fellow in Contemporary Design at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A). “More recently, we’ve been thinking in deeper ways about the role of the object, and that has had a clear impact on the role of the curator. We want to tell stories using objects, not simply present the object itself.”

Professor Julier’s predecessor as Research Fellow, Professor Jane Pavitt, played a key role in developing methods of curation and using research and scholarship to provide context and communicate social and cultural meanings to broader audiences. Professor Pavitt drew a number of important conclusions that impacted on all aspects of curation and acquisition policies. Outcomes focused on rigorous object scholarship and included the curation of a number of important V&A exhibitions, as well as other initiatives to develop younger professional audiences and connect with the creative industries. These collaborations continue to grow via initiatives like the Design Culture Salons hosted by the V&A, which bring together academics, critics and practitioners to discuss key contemporary design issues.
PARTNERS IN CURATION

The University of Brighton’s research has helped to transform Museum approaches to acquisitions and promoted wider public understanding of post-war design in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Researcher involvement in V&A exhibitions has created new engagement with design from specific periods and has progressed practical understanding of design and its cultural impact as well as prompting public dialogue and debate. In particular, these collaborations have had a positive impact on how different Museum departments work together and how the V&A as a whole works with universities.

The V&A puts research at the interface with public display, reception and education. This is in keeping with the ambitions of a new university culture and encourages a highly productive relationship. “Research asks critical questions,” said Professor Julier. “It can ask deeper questions dealing with the complexities of modern life. Museums are fundamentally important as places where the public are provoked to think about their world.” These questions emerge across the V&A’s activities, such as the Museum’s own Rapid Response Collecting strategy, which looks beyond the ‘intrinsic’ qualities of an object to its social, economic and political impact. For example, a newly acquired pair of Primark cargo trousers manufactured in Bangladesh, becomes in the wake of the Rana Plaza factory collapse a symbol around which people can debate issues of globalisation, the fashion industry, consumerism and the environment. The potential of objects such as these to provoke reflection and discussion remains a key focus of the Brighton-V&A research collaboration.

Museums also play an inspirational role for students and practitioners, and the relationship between them and higher education organisations is long-standing and important. “Higher education today is structurally looser than it was,” said Professor Julier, “with many different modes of learning including online and blended approaches.”

“Museums are reacting to this new landscape in lots of positive ways and universities feed back into museums too. I supervise a range of PhD students who use the V&A as a central resource, and their research contributes to the ongoing impact.”

Brighton’s contribution has changed the landscape in an important area of museum work and will have an impact for years to come.

David Anderson, former V&A Director of Learning and Interpretation, now Director General of National Museum Wales
Changing culture through photography

Drawing on their international reputation in photography, the university’s researchers have changed the way images can be used to help us engage with our history and identity. From playing a key role in reconciling divided communities to creating the way public projects such as the Millennium Dome are recorded and displayed, these innovative practices have demonstrated the cultural impact the medium can have.

Professor Mark Power, a member of the prestigious, international Magnum group, said: “For me, photography has real legitimacy as a medium of critical artistic significance within the wider cultural economy and public sphere.” His projects, in which large-format camera work produces astonishing effects of light and line, have given new interpretative context to a number of popular national icons and local people, including the BBC’s Shipping Forecast, the varied people within his Black Country Stories, and the documentation of construction projects such as the Millenium Dome and the Airbus A380, the largest plane ever built.

Emma Chetcuti, the Director of Multistory, has stated: “Mark’s work has made an impact, in particular, on the local people who took part in the project and who came to see the work at The New Art Gallery Walsall, with the work affording them the opportunity to imagine themselves and where they came from differently.”

Through such projects, photography at the University of Brighton captures the changing nature, regeneration and transformation of places, playing a part in the making of history and heritage, while developing the way art is used to understand public memory. Drawing together historical and practice-based approaches, Dr Louise Purbrick works alongside photographer and university colleague Xavier Ribas on the AHRC-funded Traces of Nitrate project, which visualises the land, cityscapes and material histories of nitrate mining in Britain and Chile, exploring the legacies of British colonial intervention, and how material culture holds the past in the present.

The project has produced an exhibition in collaboration with international partners and a prestigious international contemporary art venue, the MACBA-Museo d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona. The exhibition will tour to another two major venues in the UK and Spain.

Fellow photographer Julia Winckler, oscillating deliberately between photographic and archival research, has developed photography as a medium through which collective memories can be reconstructed and given a renewed cultural presence. Her research communicates the capacity of photographs to unearth both personal and cultural memories and to support processes of remembrance. Winckler’s Traces exhibition at the Austrian Cultural Forum brought important responses from the Association of Jewish Refugees, acknowledging that her work made “the private public, the individual universal, transforming the most humble photographs into images so utterly powerful.”

The exhibition also led to her appearance on Tikkun Spectrum Jewish radio, which offered insights into how creative photographic practices can help overcome the trauma of disappearance associated with the Holocaust. The engagement of the public with photography of this kind was described in a review: “Robert Lowell said, ‘A poem is an event … not the record of an event.’ This show is an event because it enables the viewer to re-realise loss and discovery, absence and presence” (Clare Best, The London Magazine, May 2012).

The reputation developed by its major practitioners and theorists allows the university to play a key role in the engagement of audiences with photography. Forming and supporting exhibitions and publications, including the Brighton Photo Biennial, the university has encouraged and contributed to critical debate around the changing uses and increasing cultural prominence of the medium, whether this is in the methods of visual storytelling that develop identity, or in the cultural position of photography in the public sense of heritage.
“Our research has helped to enrich the public imagination with the recognition of photography as new cultural capital,” said Professor Power. “We’ve succeeded in deepening cultural experiences and insights for audiences, and we’ve strengthened the place of photography within the creative economy, helping to build and sustain audiences.”

Photograph: Julia Winckler, Traces, from Part 2: Searching, Near Auschwitz-Birkenau.

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Photograph: Conall Gleeson performs a musical interaction with the sound-object, Large and Small by German artist, Peter Vogel. Presented in the Exhibition Sounding out the Museum, at the University of Brighton, curated by Conall Gleeson and Jean Martin.
Towards new ways of listening

Researchers at the University of Brighton are challenging the ways we engage with sound and reflect on the value of music in our lives. The impact can be heard across a wide range of scholarly activities, from the use of sound to empower marginalised communities, to the exhibition of sound in gallery spaces, to the understanding of cosmological theories.

“Audiences act as co-producers in the making and understanding of an artwork,” said Conall Gleeson, researcher in performance, sound and music. “They perform an active role in constructing the experience of listening and making sound.”

He continued, “The mobility of audiences, within the context of a gallery, offers the contemporary sound artist a range of challenges that differ from that of the concert-hall composer. Historically, music for seated listeners focused on the temporal sequence of sound. The presentation of sound in galleries, however, tends to allow for the free and open movement of sound and the flexible movement of audiences. Audiences in turn orientate their experience of artworks according to their interests and preferences.”

The idea of an open and fluid co–production of experience and meaning allows for a strong and purposeful exchange of ideas, histories and cultures between audiences, artist and artwork.

Dr Mikhail Karikis explores the experience of communities through the sounds and music that inhabit their everyday lives. He recently worked with the last generation of female sea-workers living on the South Korean island of Jeju. Drawing upon the sounds of breath and the songs of their work Dr Karikis developed an installation that framed the lives and industry of the sea-workers within the context of questions concerning the anthropological and the global economy.

Professor of Sculpture, Charlie Hooker, develops installations, audio-works and sculptures that produce sound from invisible elements of the natural world, creating works such as Timeline, an audio installation triggered by cosmic ray activity. Through recent links with the Brighton Centre for Regenerative Medicine, he is now creating a new interactive immersive audio–visual environment triggered ‘live’ by cell and tissue growth as it develops in petri dishes in a controlled laboratory environment.

Gleeson’s own work questions the relationship between composer, performer and audience through experimental practice, whilst encouraging a more mindful understanding of the way sound influences our emotional and intellectual lives.

He has utilised the apparatus of the seventeenth science laboratory to make music. His Bell Jar Orchestra consists of a series of bell jars; inside of which, is an automated hammer that repeatedly strikes a small bell. The volume of sound is controlled not by the how hard the hammer strikes the bell, but by varying the air pressure inside of each bell jar.

When a vacuum, there is no sound. When full of air, the sound is at its loudest. The work recontextualises the intellectual heritage of the seventeenth-century scientific enlightenment, and aestheticises the scientific methodologies, apparatus and laws that stem from this period.

“Constantly innovative in its use of technologies, both traditional and emerging, and far-reaching in its materials and processes, Hooker’s work simultaneously embraces and questions new scientific and artistic knowledge, not for its own sake alone, but primarily to communicate his working of this material with an audience.”

Dr Kevin Atherton, Head of Postgraduate Pathways, National College of Art and Design, Ireland
The future storyteller

Stories are how we define our identities and describe our past; they are the way we talk about our family relationships and about our place in the world. Fundamentally, our recognition of self and society depend upon how we tell each other stories. Today, researchers from a range of disciplines across the University of Brighton are building insights and understanding about the place of storytelling in our information-rich world.

Storytelling is one of the oldest ways of communicating. Before written history, oral tradition helped people to create identity and understand society. Today, storytelling is being used to explore relationships between cultures and across continents.

Professor Paul Sermon is working on an AHRC-funded project to link central Delhi and London as part of India’s UnBox Festival. Alongside seven other UK researchers, Professor Sermon’s research examines the particular challenges relevant to today’s society, as it aims to reimagine the role of citizens and to consider the implications of this for the management of services and infrastructures within future cities.

The digital revolution is coming quickly to India, and one of the project’s aims is to leave a legacy for people in Delhi which presents a distinct, narrative-driven approach to technology rather than a conventional social media experience.

“We’ve looked for analogies for the impact we’re trying to create and one is San Francisco in the 1970s,” said Professor Sermon. “Computer networks were just beginning to emerge and were an experimental medium in shaping the artistic community, creating links between artists in different places and across disciplines. There’s a very clear sense that technology had a big influence on art and on society in California and that’s part of our ambition today.”

“People have been moved from so-called slum areas into new government-agreed settlement zones,” said Professor Sermon. “They’re allocated plots measuring three by four metres for new homes and we’ll be using the same sized spaces to create two cubes, one in London and one in Delhi, which we can merge into the same video space, connecting two worlds and creating a space where people can have playful but meaningful experiences, controlling technology not through a keyboard and mouse but using their bodies to help inform this process of becoming an engaged and responsible citizen.”

The project will also examine how ephemeral and un-rehearsed stories can be captured, creating a documentary archive where participants record their experiences and build a picture of responses which can be preserved for the future, becoming an ever more valuable ‘snapshot’ record over time. The project’s outcomes are of relevance not just to India, but to other countries around the globe, as the UN estimates that by 2050, 70 per cent of the world’s population will live in cities and the burden on public services will increase.

Stories can have psychological benefits too. Mark Dunford leads the Silver Stories research partnership, which uses digital storytelling to gather stories from older people across six countries and tests the use of the digital storytelling methodology as a pedagogical tool to train healthcare professionals working with older people. Digital Storytelling is a collaborative process which enables people to tell their stories, in their own voices using still and moving images and voice-over soundtracks. The workshops enable disenfranchised and vulnerable groups to represent themselves and re-associate with particular episodes in their lives, at the same time joining with a collective, community history.

Stories can also be told through installation art, and Professor Matthew Cornford, as one half of the partnership Cornford & Cross, has created a body of work that builds new understanding of human histories. It Happened Here (2010) involved the removal of the formal courtyard garden in The Commandery museum in Worcester, the site of the defining battle of the English Civil War in 1651, replacing it with turf specially transported from County Derry/Londonderry in Ulster. The installation of a lawn, a key convention of an English garden, acts as a war memorial and reminder of a traumatic historical narrative. It Happened Here continues Cornford & Cross’s commitment to making site-specific installations that create new stories about historic conflicts, such as the narrative explored in Words are not Enough (2007), a temporary peace garden positioned over an abandoned Cold War era nuclear bunker.
Take my picture

Photograph: 3x4 pilot project installation at UnBox Labs Ahmedabad in India, February 2014, Paul Sermon.
A key outcome of this project will be a data integration model, developed in collaboration with Dr Roger Evans, a computer scientist from the university’s School of Computing, Engineering and Mathematics. This model will be created in conjunction with visual media experts, filmmakers and archive curation specialists, and will be supported by a new framework of standards for recording data during the production of films. The long-term aim is to create opportunities for filmmakers to consider the data assets alongside the visual assets.

Central to the research is the creation of a new language, one to describe the various aspects of data so that they can be organised and searched, and one that will apply equally well to TV. The BBC Archive Development team is currently working on an innovative approach to create a searchable database of subtitles which can link to archived TV schedules to identify specific footage. The learning from this will feed into the ongoing research underway through the DEEP FILM Access Project.

Digital audiences are continually evolving, finding new ways of engaging with content, and the film and TV industries are struggling to keep up with developments. "There’s a commercial imperative for the film industry to get on board," said Dr Atkinson. "Making of’ content is massively popular, but the notion of physically purchasing a film on DVD or Blu-Ray is in decline with the rise of on-demand content. Studios need to monetise their ‘behind the scenes’ content and our approach, which aims to enable more interactive access, could be commercially very attractive.”
The University of Brighton’s pioneering work in the history of design has changed the way design is taught and the way it is viewed.

Professor Cheryl Buckley, editor of the Journal of Design History, the leading journal in this field, moved to the University of Brighton at the end of 2013 because of its “huge impact on the history of design as a national and international discipline.” “There is no other comparable institution,” she said. “Brighton put the history of design on the map, and through its undergraduate and postgraduate work has helped to build capacity in a subject that underpins and reinforces the central position that design has occupied in post-war Britain.”

Research carried out at the university has influenced the form and content of design courses around the world. For instance, the work by Professors Lou Taylor, Jonathan Woodham and Guy Julier has contributed significantly to the expansion of design and dress history as a field of study since the 1990s at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, with their work becoming one of the mainstays of reading lists around the globe. Research by Dr Louise Purbrick on material culture of the everyday, Dr Paul Jobling on graphic design, fashion and masculinities, and Professor Catherine Moriarty on design curation, has further extended the range and reach of history of design at the university.

But it is not only in the academic sphere that the University of Brighton’s work on the history of design has had a significant impact. It has filtered through to the general public through collaborations with a variety of organisations and institutions including museums across the world. The unique archives the university houses, such as those of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design, the International Council of Graphic Design Associations and the Design Council Archive, provide invaluable research connections to the design professions.

The latter came to Brighton in 1994 as a result of the research on design and the state conducted by Professor Woodham. His book, Twentieth Century Design, Professor Julier’s The Culture of Design and Professor Taylor’s The
The quality of Brighton’s collections and the excellence of its stewardship of these were important benchmarks for how we would establish and maintain our archives at RMIT. Further to this, the impact Brighton has had on the design professions, particularly in their understanding of how design is produced, marketed and consumed were important considerations for RMIT’s operations.

Professor Harriet Edquist, Director, RMIT Design Archives, Melbourne, Australia
How do you create sustainable urban living? University of Brighton researchers have developed high-profile ways to promote sustainable living, which have captured the imagination of both their peers and the public.

The University of Brighton’s Waste House has become a platform for promoting sustainable design. The project originated in 2008 when Duncan Baker-Brown, an architect and Senior Lecturer at the university, took part in a TV documentary challenge to build Europe’s first prefabricated house out of compostable materials. The six-day build was filmed live and broadcast at the end of each day on the Channel 4 programme The House that Kevin Built, part of Grand Designs Live.

The building was the first A* rated house for energy performance, as well as the first prefabricated dwelling constructed with replenishable and compostable materials. It was later dismantled and its components were used in new builds around the UK.

In 2012 Baker-Brown decided to redesign and rebuild the house using waste and surplus material in response to the fact that the equivalent of one house of waste goes into landfill for every five houses we build. One of the main aims of the project was to prove “that there is no such thing as waste, just stuff in the wrong place.” During a major fundraising campaign, The Mears Group, a local construction company with a national portfolio, offered to underwrite the whole house, ensuring the site was safe and with other key partners, including Cat Fletcher from FREEGLE UK, the real potential of waste as a valuable resource was reinforced.

Through Mears the project was connected to City College Brighton and Hove, and as part of the college’s annual building project 70 students worked on the Waste House in their workshops and over 250 students helped in total including those on site. Brighton & Hove City Council has since incorporated Baker-Brown’s research on eco-retrofitting and waste minimisation into its award-winning sustainable planning policy. The Waste House is also a case study supporting Brighton & Hove City Council’s One Planet Living Action Plan the first of its kind in UK.

The house, which stands on the University of Brighton site at Grand Parade, is open to the public and offers an educational space as a new design tool. The house includes peepholes where you can see the materials used in its construction, including 20,000 toothbrushes, two tonnes of denim jeans, 4,000 DVD cases, 2,000 floppy discs, 2,000 used carpet tiles (used
In 2005 Professor McEvoy founded the spin-off company Dwell Vent, which tested and refined the design innovations with partners in Denmark, Ireland and Poland through a €278,000 EU Intelligent Energy Europe Programme grant. Since 2010, Professor McEvoy has led a €6.3m EU Interreg IVA project, Innovation for Renewal (IFORE), in partnership with two large-scale housing associations, to adapt the award-winning ventilation system to 200 social housing units in the UK and France as part of wide-ranging investigation into retrofit technology. The project has led to a saving of over 40% a year on heating bills for residents who have been engaged in working towards the re-branding of their communities.

Viljoen and Bohn’s highly regarded research conducted worldwide over a period of 10 years shows how urban space can be redesigned to incorporate food growing. Published in the influential book *Continuous Productive Urban Landscapes: Designing Urban Agriculture for Sustainable Cities*, and its recent sequel, *Second Nature Urban Agriculture: Designing Productive Cities*, their research has influenced policymakers in London, Rosario, Burkina Faso, Almere, Berlin and Middlesborough. In Middlesborough, the researchers’ participation in a Design Council project led to the development of 17 new allotment sites, the establishment of an annual town meal which feeds over 2,500 local residents with locally grown food, and the use of school-grown food in over 30 local schools. Their research has been debated at venues including the 2012 Venice Biennale and examples of its practical implementation have been cited by the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability as model examples for delivering urban sustainability.

The Waste House is one of three interconnected projects which have generated new design thinking and innovation around sustainable urban living. It stands alongside Professor Mike McEvoy and Dr Ryan Southall’s work on passive ventilation systems, and Andre Viljoen and Katrin Bohn’s research into urban agriculture. Professor McEvoy and Dr Southall’s whole house ventilation system incorporating heat reclamation without the use of electricity has been the subject of research grants funded by the European Union and the Carbon Trust.

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The City Council has drawn considerable inspiration and valuable guidance from working with Duncan and his work has advanced policy and practice for sustainable design across the city. His contributions have influenced a considerable number of development schemes in the city which now has one of the finest portfolios of sustainable buildings of any UK town or city.

Martin Randall, Head of City Planning & Development
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