

## **Research Environment (REF5)**

### **UoA 34: Art and Design**

#### Summary of Art and Design Research Environment

Ulster's art and design research in REF2014 included art history, critical theory and world leading practice across a wide range of disciplines from Fine art, art history and theory, painting, sculpture, performance, ceramics, textiles and silversmithing through to photography and video.

In addition to books, journal articles and conference publications, art and design research involved over 114 exhibitions and 16 performances including the Venice Architecture Biennale, dOCUMENTA13, and exhibitions at Imperial War Museum, National Gallery, Ulster Museum and Hayward Gallery, and key events in Derry City of Culture Programme. The University Institutional Repository (UIR) makes information about over 1000 art and design publications available to the public.

Ulster University's art and design researchers are members of a Research Institute and work on shared research challenges in cross-disciplinary research groups within the Research Institute on the Belfast and Magee Campuses. Art and design researchers are accomplished in their specialist subjects so it follows that the majority of art and design outcomes are the work of a solo artist, author or designer. Collaboration and teamwork is increasingly important in realizing substantial projects through teamwork and collaboration. The focus is upon research that is relevant to society and that will have impact beyond the University:

- Art, Conflict and Society
- Art and its Contexts
- Creative Ecologies
- Space and Place
- Future and Virtual Worlds

Creative people – staff and students - are at the heart of Ulster University's art and design Research Institute. All staff researchers also teach and individual circumstances are well catered for and reflected in a diverse research community. There is support for research leave to undertake substantial projects and research-relevant staff development and mentoring. The of the Art and Design research environment at Ulster attracts leading academics at all stages of their career including 13 visiting professors. 8 people submitted to the REF2014 are new to the institution since 2008 and 3 are early career researchers whose high quality research demonstrates the forward looking and supportive research environment. 7 renowned emeritus professors retain close links with the research institute.

Belfast School of Architecture is distinctive in being located with related design and creative research in Belfast. The application of research to innovative architecture is recognized in RIBA award winning buildings and highly prized research funding.

Art and Design research is translated into products and services that have a beneficial impact on society, culture, public policy, the economy and wellbeing. The environment and quality of life outside academia is demonstrated in 8 research reports, 7 Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), 7 Fusion programme projects (Fusion is the all Ireland equivalent of KTPs), 43 Innovation Vouchers, 3 Proofs of Principle, 16 disclosures, patent applications/patents for 7

researchers in the Unit 34 (UoA34); 1 Community Trademark granted; 1 UK patent; 3 patents pending in Europe and US, one patent pending International (PCT) Application. 5 spinouts sustained in which the University retains an interest.

Ulster University's Belfast School of Art has played a key role in the development of the creative economy in N. Ireland for over 150 years. Ulster has been in the top UK universities in the UK for PhD completions for more than a decade. Research relevance is a key component in deciding PhD topics. Research supervision is delivered in a Research Graduate School by some of the world's leading figures in the field and. The 37 art and design PhD graduates between 2008 and 2013 contribute to Northern Ireland's highly qualified labour force and play key roles in the burgeoning creative industries sector. During this period the creative industries in Northern Ireland was a rare growth area. The majority of PhD students study full-time and many are recipients of a Department for Employment and Learning NI Research Student Award or Vice Chancellor Award. Art and Design researchers have extensive partnerships both nationally and internationally and its graduates occupy positions in key cultural institutions in Ireland and the UK. Many research students use art practice in their research and Ulster University has close links with many of the galleries and Arts Centres in Northern Ireland and beyond. In particular art and design research between 2008-13 contributed to a vibrant research environment in the Cathedral Quarter and Derry City of Culture.

Art, Design and Architecture researchers at Ulster University secured £4.75M of research income, this is well above the average for artists across the UK and included funding from all major subject research funders (AHRC, Leverhulme, Wellcome Trust, British Council, Nesta and European funding).

Ulster University Art, Design and Architecture research aims to maintain its reputation as a leading provider for art and design education with creative confidence, academic excellence, innovative practice and regional and global relevance. The contribution of researchers was recognized in number of awards including:

- Belford- Textile Society award; 25K Northern Ireland Science Park Award
- Blaney- The Best of British illustration 2011Murphy -RDS National Craft Competition Award of Excellence; California Gold Medal 2012 and the Sam English Award
- Deveney- Anonymous was A Woman \$25K award; New York Photo Awards 20 nominees Best Photography book2008
- Golden -RSUA Best project
- McKenzie- John Moores Painting prize, - long list 2012
- Sheridan - The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) 2013 Best Research Project –highly commended and 4 other RIAI awards 2008-12; Architecture Association of Ireland 2010 1st prize Dublin Parlour Civic Square and special mention
- Walker- Royal Institute of British Architects /Learning Skills Council Higher Education Building of the Year 2008 for Usworth College
- Wylie- Deutsch Borsch Shortlisted 2011 and awarded Bradford Fellowship 2012
- Mackel RIBA Award 2012

The quality of art and design work is demonstrated by acquisitions to major international collections including: Arts Council of Northern Ireland; Ulster Museum; Dallas Museum of Art; Imperial War Museum; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Speed Art Museum, Kentucky and the Tate Gallery.

Contact: Professor Karen Fleming k.fleming@ulster.ac.uk

