Cultural Value Project: Project Summaries
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Grant Holder: Professor Patricia Thomson

Project Title: A critical review of the Creative Partnerships archive: How was cultural value understood, researched and evidenced?

Summary: Creative Partnerships (CP) was the biggest and longest running arts and education intervention in the world. It operated in England from 2002-2011 and worked intensively with over 2,700 schools, 90,000 teachers and over 1 million young people. It touched 1 in 4 schools in the country, and over 6,500 national arts and creativity organisations were involved in CP. Because 70% of the funding went to support creative practitioners, Price Waterhouse Coopers estimated that each CP£1 generated £15.3 of economic value. CP produced an enormous range of artefacts, ranging from literature reviews, research reports, publicity and promotional materials, demonstrations in the form of films and posters, to the annual plans and evaluation reports that each funded school had to submit. To date there has been no analysis of this material to assess what understandings it might have to offer. The archive, now housed at The University of Nottingham, has the potential to contribute further to international understandings about creativity, culture, reform, learning and organizational change. CP understood itself as making a cultural offer. It supported teachers and young people in extended cultural experiences - working on a project with an artist (for example a dancer, sculptor, film-maker, story-maker) or a company (from the Royal Shakespeare Company to a local community arts organization) or a public institution such as a gallery, library or museum. It was presumed that through these projects young people would both learn creatively and learn to be creative. Within CP there were strongly held views that the cultural offer supported children and young people to develop imagination, critical and reflective thinking, leadership, confidence and motivation, wellbeing and a strong sense of responsible empowerment. They were thus able to learn successfully, act as good citizens in their schools and communities and were prepared for 21st century life work and life (Thomson et al. 2009). This project will systematically examine, for the first time, the CP archive in order to see what its literature reviews, research reports and annual plans and evaluation reports might have to offer the AHRC cultural value rubric. As its considerable body of research used highly diverse approaches, this project will use an interpretative approach to critically assess a range of key texts. The project will investigate and document how a cultural experience was understood, and what methodologies and methods were used to investigate CP's cultural offer and the cultural experience of teachers and young people, and will show what kind of data the various approaches produced. On this basis, the project will then offer an assessment of the value of particular kinds of research methodologies and methods, and identity any areas for possible further investigation. It will also offer a synthesis of the various ways in which cultural experience was theorised. The PI for this project is uniquely positioned to undertake this work. She directed the largest national CP research project on school change, was commissioned to produce a literature review on change, and directed two other research projects funded by CP. The signature pedagogies project is one of three legacy projects which offer on going information about artists working in schools. She has co-edited an international handbook, a research methods text and a book series for teachers on creative learning, together with more than twenty peer reviewed papers.

**Grant Holder: Professor Calvin Taylor**

**Project Title: Cultural Value: A Perspective from Cultural Economy**

**Summary:** The Cultural Value: A Perspective from Cultural Economy project proposes to examine a range of academic literatures in contemporary and historical cultural economy, critical theory, philosophy and critical studies in political economy with the purpose of evaluating their potential insights relevant to contemporary academic debates about Cultural Value. This particular Project argues the need to steer a course between two sets of contemporary theoretical positions: a revived anti-economistic aestheticism on the one hand, and the postmodern ironic elision of culture and economy on the other.

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**Grant Holder: Dr Samuel Ladkin**

**Project Title: Against Value in the Arts**

**Summary:** "Against Value in the Arts" brings together thirteen academics and artists from a diverse range of disciplines and artforms, including the history of art, anthropology, literature, languages, political science, music, philosophy, theatre, poetry and cultural studies. Its advances will be of benefit to that inter- and multi-disciplinary set of academics, but also much more widely, including members of the public, arts administrators, the third-sector, educationalists and teachers, and artists. The kinds of ideology this proposal contests are not limited to the UK, so this research is international in its scope. The use of cultural audit, the promotion of entrenched hierarchies via conservative and consumerist dogma, and the assumption of commensurability via economic exchange are global phenomena. "Against Value in the Arts" sounds like a counter-intuitive way to go about describing and defending the value of the arts. This project proposes, however, that it is often the staunchest defenders of art who do it the most harm, by suppressing its dissenting voice, by neutralizing its painful truths, and by instrumentalising its potentiality, so that rather than expanding the autonomy of thought and feeling of the artist and the audience, it makes art self-satisfied, or otherwise an echo-chamber for the limited self-description of people's desires. This project does not argue that the arts have no value; quite the opposite. It argues instead that value judgments can behave insidiously, and incorporate aesthetic, ethical or ideological values fundamentally opposed to the "value" they purportedly name and describe. It argues that even the most ostensibly virtuous of values can become oppressive when disseminated bureaucratically, and as a set of official renderings or statements of artistic accounts, also known as audit culture. "Against Value in the Arts" argues that the greatest possible value of the arts has been, and might continue to be to oppose, rigorously and constitutively, dominant and dominating ascriptions of value. "Against Value" proposes that the best way to engage critically with our society is to suspend presumptions of value, to engender instead a radical indeterminacy, to propose an incommensurability, the critique of any "common measure", even if that common measure pretends to be as neutral as "value". It seeks to antagonize questions about who gets to ascribe value, and how, and to interpret those ascriptions ideologically. "Against Value" will attend to the following: - The Value of "Value". Is the promotion of value in and of itself a virtue? How does it become coercive? How might value in one sphere mean the degradation of value in another? How does value relate to commodification? How does value make assumptions damaging to experimentation and freedom? - Theories of Audit. Description (always flawed, always partial) is installed as
both aim and outcome by cultural auditing. Audit therefore alters the object it seeks to study. Auditing began in economics, but has since been taken up in management, and across the public sector, in part because it can be used to pursue political ends by those in power. How can we refuse to adhere to always partial "self-description", as curtailed by the categories and presumed outcomes of the audit, on behalf of an open-ended, indeterminate, and patient record? How does auditing reflect on contemporary issues such as privacy? - Theories of Exchange: Society is dominated by the exchange values, in particular, the belief that everything can be exchanged via the medium of money. - Dissent, Democracy, Liberality, Emancipation, Trust, Care, Privacy. The project will conclude with reflections on alternative values, and the ways in which value, audit, and exchange may impact damagingly upon them.

Grant Holder: Dr Mark Banks

Project Title: The Values of Cultural Work: ethics, interests and motivations in the cultural and creative industries

Summary: The aim of this critical review is to explore how different values inform and shape processes of work and production in the cultural and creative industries. It examines how various ethics, concerns, interests and motivations are brought to bear on the kinds of 'cultural work' undertaken by artists, musicians, web-designers, film-makers and a whole range of other identifiably creative or cultural workers. In doing so, it hopes to show especially how cultural work, in its varied complexity, can influence workers' own (and wider public) understandings of the character and significance of one particular kind of value - cultural value. While studies of cultural value often focus on the discrete qualities of cultural objects, texts or commodities, or how they are consumed by audiences, this tends to obscure the cultural work processes which have led to the creation of those objects and already part-shaped their particular form and public meaning. But cultural work - and the worker - are at the very heart of the matter of cultural value, since without workers to produce cultural goods, there is nothing for publics and audiences to actually value. What role do workers play in terms of bringing their own (cultural, social, political or other) presuppositions and interests to the creation of cultural goods? And how does this then affect the wider public uptake, value or meaning of such goods? More centrally, however, while cultural workers draw from existing repertoires of value, and create new value, and invest their work with purpose and meaning which influences its public circulation and consumption, they also undertake cultural work 'for themselves', for their own internal purposes, rewards and values. What might these be, precisely? Through detailed review of the existing range of interdisciplinary literature on the empirical contexts of cultural work, this project draws out the value of cultural work for workers themselves. In doing so it questions conventional assumptions that suggest cultural workers are only primary motivated by 'artistic' or even 'economic' interests, and more fully explores the complex 'moral economy' of cultural industry production. By investigating cultural work as one particular set of conditions and contexts under which cultural value is being imagined and produced, the project moves to open up a wider discussion of the particular ethical character and purpose of the cultural and creative industries.
Grant Holder: Professor Miriam Bernard

Project Title: Ageing, Drama and Creativity: a critical review

Summary: This proposal is to produce a critical review on ‘ageing, drama and creativity’, focusing on cultural value as viewed through the lens of older people’s experiences of theatre and theatre-making. The rationale for the review arises from the interdisciplinary work on theatre and ageing we have been carrying out since 2009 through the Ages and Stages projects, which have explored the role a particular cultural institution (the Victoria/New Vic Theatre) has played in the lives of older people in North Staffordshire. Our research, and that of others, has led us to identify a gap in our knowledge: whilst we know quite a lot about the practice of undertaking creative drama-based projects with older people, our conceptual and empirical understandings of how cultural value is viewed by the participants in these projects is much more limited. The review is set against developments in ‘cultural gerontology’ and critical gerontology, which acknowledge the wider social/cultural context of ageing; engage with new theorising and methodologies which cut across the social sciences and the humanities; and recognise the skills, abilities and contributions of older people rather than framing ageing as ‘a problem to be solved’ in contemporary society. Literary and cultural scholars have also become increasingly interested in the artistic outputs of older people, and in how the arts may construct, perpetuate and challenge stereotypical views and existing models of the ageing process. Theatre is a particularly fruitful context for such investigations not least because it is a cultural arena in which older people are particularly active participants. However, whilst older people may be visible as audience members and volunteers, what is less well understood is the cultural value of engaging older people in theatre making itself; how this develops individuals; and the links this may not facilitate between different generations within a given community. The overarching research question to be addressed in this review is: What does the research and literature tell us about the cultural value older people derive from their involvement with theatre in general, and theatre-making in particular? Secondary questions are: What conceptual and theoretical frameworks, if any, have been used to research older people’s experiences of theatre/theatre-making?; What methodologies and research designs have been employed in existing studies? What are the key research findings concerning how older people involved in theatre and theatre-making conceptualise and understand cultural value? We will take a systematic approach to the literature so that we can be as transparent as possible about how our searches were conducted and/or the comprehensiveness of our coverage, whilst also being open to where our searches and networks may lead us. We will begin with the sources we have accumulated over the course of the Ages and Stages project, combined with searches of the main electronic databases in both Social Sciences and Humanities and other search engines. We will also search grey literature, using our established networks and databases such as Open Grey (the System for Information on Grey Literature in Europe [SIGLE]). The Critical Review will be published on our website and we will use our established networks to bring the findings of the project to policy makers and practitioners locally, nationally and internationally. A further aim of the review is to link it to new work with the ‘Ages and Stages Company’ designed to explore participants’ experiences and understandings of cultural value. This is the subject of a separate proposal for a Research Development Award on ‘the cultural value of older people's experiences of theatre making’. We will hold an invited workshop in early May 2014 to present the initial findings from the review. If awarded, the workshop will also feature a new performance piece and findings from the Research Development Project.
**Grant Holder:** Dr Eric Jensen

**Project Title: The Role of Technology in Evaluating Cultural Value**

**Summary:** Methods of evaluating cultural impact still need substantial development to support robust, long-term empirical research on cultural value. Meanwhile, technological innovations have raised new possibilities for evaluating cultural value that promise to increase efficiency, reach and validity beyond what is possible with conventional methods. This proposed project considers several technology-enhanced methods for evaluating cultural value, providing descriptions and critical assessments to elucidate their strengths and weakness. This project focuses on evaluation methodology per se, with the aim of supporting future empirical evaluation and research on cultural value. The project begins with existing research and methodological literature on this topic. This project will review current literature on the use of technologies to evaluate the development of cultural value through events, institutions and digital platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, individual webpages, etc. The project team will identify the strengths and weakness of different technologies and technology-enhanced evaluation approaches to suggest an appropriate framework for making best use of digital technologies in cultural value evaluation. The results of this critical literature review will be able to broadly be applied to a framework that can advance the way in which the value of cultural engagement is evaluated and employed. Methods the methodology employed for this project will integrate a range of research approaches, embracing the partners' knowledge of arts/culture engagement impact evaluation, software design, production and implementation, mixed methods data analysis, visualisation of digital programmes and the requirements for integrating these new modes with more traditional cultural impact analysis. At its core, the project is focused on how we can capitalise on digital technologies to build a robust, evidence-based evaluation framework, while at the same time maintaining a critical perspective with respect to the limits of the technologies' contribution to evaluating cultural value. Critical Review This phase of the research will involve a review of the evidence identified in the scoping review, using transparent, clear protocols for critical appraisal of the studies, predefined relevance criteria, and any extraction and analysis of data, and thus fulfilling criteria of Campbell Collaboration guidelines. Summaries of evidence under appropriate headings will note where evidence gaps or weaknesses occur. Critical Review Process The critical review process will involve the following key stages: 1. Literature identified 2. Decision on relevance 3. Extract/obtain full papers 4. Summarise included papers' methods and applications of methods 5. Critically assess methods in existing literature 6. Identify additional technology-linked methodological options from beyond the existing literature on evaluating culture value 7. Critically assess additional methodological options 8. Prepare table(s) summarising methodological options, strengths and weaknesses and write up report.
Grant Holder: Dr Cornel Sandvoss

Project Title: Fandom, Participatory Culture and Cultural Value - A Critical Review

Summary: If we try to understand the value of culture, we need to first understand those to whom certain aspects of culture matter most: fans and enthusiasts. Being a fan has become an increasingly universal audience experience with most media consumers negotiating the vast range of content that has become available in the digital age through their affective preferences - the television shows, films, novels, sports teams, artists, comics, plays, musicians, genres, poets or composers whom we hold particularly dearly, return to frequently and often gather a large amount of information on. In turn these fan objects serve as a source of enjoyment, sometimes outright pleasure, but also of belonging and an expression of ourselves. In a quickly changing world, they indicate to ourselves and others who we are and thus communicate and maintain a sense of identity. However, fans are not only consumers of media and culture, they are also active participants in culture who in many cases become cultural producers. In the era of digital media in which technologies of media production are easily accessible to most media consumers with, for instance, smart phones boasting HD video and sound recording, free video editing software being widely available, and the internet offering easy distribution routes through portals such as YouTube, LiveJournal or social networking sites, user generated content is an increasingly important part of our media landscapes - much of it driven by fans' enthusiasm and interests. Similarly, fans create value by working collaboratively through review- or wiki-type sites that for many consumers become important spaces of peer information that structure their cultural consumption. Yet, in an environment of unprecedented choice of arts, culture and entertainment that confronts contemporary citizens and consumers, we make the selections that structure our engagements with culture through the affective position of the fan; and thereby tend to choose what we already like, already enjoy and already are familiar with. Hence, the question emerges whether enthusiasm and fandom might also serve to erode the challenges of the unknown, the fantastic and the 'hard-to-make-sense-of' in our cultural encounters, which in the eyes of some literary and cultural theorists constitute the true value or art and culture - and hence their potential to change the world in which we live for the better. This project examines these conflicting positions and answers the question of how we can conceptualise the cultural, social, economic and political value of participatory culture and fandom in the digital age by conducting a comprehensive review of past research on forms of fandom and enthusiasm across the spectrum of culture, media and arts. This review compares empirical findings of different studies and identifies broader trends across studies, critically examines the methodologies on which current findings are based as well as the soundness of their theoretical conclusions, and indicates areas of future research that will be required in order to more fully map the challenges and benefits of fandom and participatory culture.

Grant Holder: Dr Eleonora Belfiore

Project Title: The politics of cultural value: Towards an emancipatory framework

Summary: The purpose of this project is to work towards a rigorous and coherent interdisciplinary theoretical framework for the understanding of cultural value and its mode of operation within contemporary British society from the perspective of social
justice. In this respect, it will push current thinking and research around cultural value beyond the generally predominant focus on a celebration of the various benefits that have been attributed to engagement with the arts and culture (and the value thus generated for both individuals and society) to encompass the more problematic and less savoury aspects of the cultural value problematic. The project's intellectual starting point is the adoption of a social-critical approach to the study of the arts and culture predicated on a focus on the social production of the aesthetic and of the value attributed to it. Key to the understanding of processes of cultural valuation as socially produced is the corollary that the same goes for the nature of processes by which cultural value is denied. More interestingly, this project will explore the extent to which cultural value works in ambiguous ways, so that the same cultural artefact might, on the one hand, generate a variety of positive benefits for the economy, for certain groups or individuals and, on the other, create 'negative value' in the form of symbolic violence and stigmatisation of other social and/or ethnic groups. The project, therefore, aims to grapple with these profound tensions at the very heart of cultural value which of course have important implications both for the development of a rigorous cultural value research agenda and for the public policy discourses that are closely linked to processes of valuation. This project therefore aims to be field-building, in opening cultural policy studies to the as of yet underexplored area of the ways in which cultural policies can be envisaged as part of a genuinely emancipatory political project. It builds on the work of social theorist Erik Olin Wright (2010) on the development of 'real utopias' that can map the way to a more just future, and aims at 'rebuilding a sense of possibility for emancipatory social change' by considering what a cultural policy perspective might offer to this endeavour. The question of how the authority to bestow or deny cultural value is socially stratified will be explored through a combination of theory building work and a case study, which will test the explanatory efficacy of the new theoretical framework, as well as its relevance to policy making and current professional arts practice. The case study at the heart of the project is Our BIG Real Gypsy Lives, a participatory arts project in Lincolnshire that has just concluded. Its aim was the recognition of the value of Gypsies' and Travellers' tangible and intangible heritage in the face of the systematic stigmatisation and cultural value denial this group has endured via highly popular and successful reality TV programmes such as My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding. It was produced and delivered by Cultural Solutions, a Lincoln-based independent cultural consultancy, which are a partner in this project. This choice of case study allows for the research to focus on the case of Gypsies and Travellers living in England, who are a very interesting social group to look at in relation to both cultural value and social justice concerns. Qualitative empirical work will be carried out in the form of semi-structured in-depth interviews with the team and local charity that delivered the project, its funders and key Gypsy and Traveller participants. The case study, and the focus on an ethnic group widely identified as 'cultural value-poor', will allow the project to explore what thinking on cultural value might contribute to the goal of a redistribution of cultural authority and the power to bestow value, alongside more traditional forms of emancipatory politics focusing on economic redistribution.
Grant Holder: Professor Sally Munt

Project Title: Cultural Values from the Subaltern Perspective: A Phenomenology of Refugees' Experience of British Cultural Values.

Summary: This project seeks to understand the value located in a range of arts/cultural activities to refugees, a group new to British cultural life who are often marginalised from 'mainstream' cultural activities, but who are simultaneously expected to adopt a hegemonic national identity of Britishness and henceforward espouse British cultural values. Refugees are a group who typically have experienced forced migration, oftentimes related specifically to their own - often fiercely defended - cultural activities and values in their country of origin. This migratory biography makes for a complex, rich contribution to how we think about the value of arts and culture, and cultural expression, in the UK today. We will investigate the standpoint of refugees on British cultural values, benefitting from their 'outsider within' perspective. British cultural values are not unitary, nor are they precisely definable, they are shaped and refined by participation and engagement. We will seek to identify the components of cultural value embedded in a set of typically British arts and cultural pursuits, based in and around the city of Brighton. We will break down the components to be identified using a range of methods that focus on the discrete senses, and on the particular forms of embodiment that such activities claim. We want to examine carefully what constitutes the experience of involvement in the arts and cultural sphere, so we will also be collecting information on the cognitions and emotions that are attached to such experiences. Refugees constitute a unique case: migrants pay acute attention to the acculturation of British values. This attention can be a protective mechanism, a philosophical choice, an attempt to move away from a traumatized past or culture of origin, an imposed set of norms, or a way of making their enforced dislocation intelligible. Refugees are legally required to learn British cultural values in order to be 'awarded' citizenship, via the Home Office instrument, the 'Life in the UK' Test (which will be interrogated in group discussion). Whatever the reason, refugees have an acute sensitivity and prescient awareness of 'what makes us British'. Yet, often their access to the cultural industries can be severely restricted, due to explicit factors such as economic barriers, and due to implicit factors such as the perceived 'Whiteness' of some art/cultural pursuits (e.g. premier league football, and the opera - two performances that will form part of our programme). This project will take the form of a 16 week course, called 'What is British Culture', offered to 12 women refugees. Through a range of arts and cultural activities, we will assess refugee's embodied experience of participation and reflection, gathering sensory information through creative expression. In order to gather robust data, the course is quite long and demanding; however we have found in previous projects that refugee participants appreciate such commitments as they enable a strong group identity to form, which can continue informally after the planned meetings finish, providing a sustainable resource. As researchers we have our own cultural values: our model is taken from feminist praxis. Feminist epistemologies focus on the way "in which gender does and ought to influence our conceptions of knowledge, the knowing subject, and practices of inquiry and justification" (Anderson 2004). At the core of feminist epistemology is the concept of the situated knower, who produces situated knowledge. Donna Haraway (1998) famously argued that most knowledge, in particular academic knowledge is always "produced by positioned actors working in/between all kinds of locations". Collaborative learning, respect for social difference, creating an environment of mutual support, listening and consideration for others, these characteristics are all
markers of the feminist classroom, cultural values which we hope to emulate in the process of the research.

Grant Holder: Dr Helen Rees Leahy

Project Title: Learning from the Past: Cultural Value, then and now, in principle and in practice

Summary: There are many claims for the benefits to both the individual and society from access to and participation in cultural activities, such as visiting exhibitions and museums. Today these range from improvements in personal wellbeing to increased community cohesion and socio-economic regeneration. These claims relating to cultural value are not new, and contemporary justifications for cultural provision contain echoes of 19th century notions of self-improvement through 'rational recreation' and the 'refining' effects of access to art. However, both then and now, what people actually encountered in the exhibition or museum did (and does) not necessarily conform to these ideals. Instead there is much historical and contemporary evidence to show that people construct their own experiences of cultural value - for example, through their personal motivations for, and social contexts of, exhibition-visiting. The objective of this project is to show how an understanding of how cultural value was conceived, promoted and experienced in the past can illuminate how it is conceived, promoted and experienced today. Many cultural organisations such as museums and galleries have rich and well-documented histories, dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries, but their relationship with these histories is often complex. On the one hand, there is a sense of pride in the institution's founding ideals; on the other hand, there is a drive to innovate and to deliver continuous improvement in response to shifting external policy and funding agendas. As as result, the motivation and resource for disinterested historical research and reflection are not high priorities for institutions. This project aims to address this omission by demonstrating the pertinence of historical perspectives on cultural value - from the perspectives of institutions and audiences - to contemporary policy and practice. Specifically, the project focuses on the claims made for the benefits of visiting exhibitions and museums in the city of Manchester and the evidence of visitors' actual experiences, from the mid-19th century to 2010. A group of historical case studies, each based on specific periods of innovation or change in terms of cultural provision, provides a basis for analysing continuities, shifts and ruptures in the 'public good' rationale for promoting museums and exhibitions. Each case study also compares the objectives of the organizers and patrons/funders with evidence of how the displays were encountered and interpreted by their visiting publics. The sites of study encompass a range of scientific and art exhibitions: the Manchester Mechanics Institute, Manchester Art Gallery, the Manchester Museum, and the Whitworth Art Gallery. In terms of the research methodology, there are complex issues relating the survival and evidentiary status of historical sources and their interpretation, particularly in relation to how 'culture' was experienced and understood by audiences in the past. Surviving sources are partial, fragmentary and often suggestive rather than definitive. Therefore an important further project objective is to interrogate and reflect on the methodological issues arising from this kind of study, and thus provide a reflexive resource for future researchers, postgraduate students and cultural organisations.
Grant Holder: Professor Marie Gillespie

Project Title: Understanding the Changing Cultural Value of the BBC World Service and British Council

Summary: The BBC World Service (WS) and the British Council (BC) are the UK’s largest international cultural organisations: key national-to-global institutions charged with representing British identities and interests. Very well-known and respected abroad, 'at home' in the UK awareness of their activities is low. Little academic research has been done into the cultural value they channel and produce. Our project is ambitious in aiming to produce an analytical and methodological framework adequate to understanding, evidencing and explaining the role of WS and BC and their users in curating, creating and translating cultural value abroad and at home. The project is timely as the future of both organisations is uncertain. Changes to funding and remit make this a vital moment to engage with them in re-assessing their roles. Uses of digital media provide an apt methodological as well as substantive point of entry. Both organisations are investing digitally with the aim of engaging new audiences. For the World Service, internet is as important as radio or television in key markets, and the aim is to curate online audiences in a 'global conversation'. The British Council increasingly uses the internet to share the UK's 'great cultural assets' and so 'build trust' worldwide. Real-time quantitative or 'big' data on user activities presents real opportunities as well as challenges. In order to understand the quality of individual cultural experiences and how such experiences are valued, we use an innovative methodological approach that builds bridges across social sciences and digital humanities. WS and BC are often conceived of in terms of their functions for British 'soft power', 'public' or 'cultural' diplomacy and 'nation branding', or in terms of vague notions of intercultural communication, cultural exchange imbued with cosmopolitan values and aspirations. These perspectives rely on assumptions about the intrinsic value of the cultural experiences these institutions offer. We will test prevalent assumptions about cultural value, drawing on an extensive historical and digital archive created during a recently concluded 5-year AHRC-funded set of projects on interculturality at the WS, and extensive work evaluating BC projects. We will also evaluate several new digital projects carefully selected for locating and analysing their significance for reflective individuals and engaged citizens. Understanding the changing cultural value of the WS and BC through the lens of digital interactions is valuable because they can be tracked and analysed, offering unprecedented insights into users' cultural experiences. Our work will shed light on whether the intercultural dialogue opened up around visual media can be regarded as evidence of trust, a crucial value for both organisations. Arguably digital media change the nature of trust in/resulting from cultural organisations as they no longer exercise the same levels of control over narratives or audiences. Culture and geography are unbound in the digital domain which makes communication across cultural boundaries and 'soft power' influence more complex to assess. New digital projects also involve trade-offs between fundamental organisational values. Peer-to-peer communication relies on recommendation, openness, transparency and engaging the individual in immersive and atmospheric experiences or as current WS editorial strategy puts it, 'Living the Story'. Traditional organisational values of impartiality and objectivity are being challenged and even rejected as colonial vestiges. So how do notions of trust and transparency fit in with notions of cultural value? The project will break new ground in understanding and researching cultural value in international organisations bringing the bird's eye view into dialogue with the snail's eye view or in Weber's terms, arriving at verstehen (understanding) by begreiffen (grasping the bigger picture).
Grant Holder: Professor Stuart Murray

Project Title: Approaching Cultural Value as a Complex System: Experiencing the Arts and Articulating the City in Leeds

Summary: This research project aims to propose answers to what is a notoriously difficult question: what, exactly, makes a cultural or artistic experience valuable? Such a question invites others that add detail and complexity: in what ways does any idea of value connected to the experience differ for those involved - the audience member, performer, or organisation hosting the event? Does a 'successful' experience mean the same thing for everyone who participates? How do individuals and institutions understand and express the value of the cultural/artistic engagement? And what are the best ways of seeking to capture the experience and the value it contains? We will address these questions through a wide-ranging participatory action research programme that looks at a variety of participants in cultural and arts in the city of Leeds, and in so doing we will add another question to those mentioned above, namely: in what ways does a vibrant cultural life provide value in a major urban centre? The project will utilise existing research connections between the University and several partner organisations, large and small, in the city - Opera North, Northern Ballet, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Yorkshire Dance, South Asian Arts, Thackray Medical Museum, Artlink West Yorkshire, Unlimited Theatre, Heads Together - as well as working with the NHS, Leeds City Council and Arts Council England. Our research will use a combination of methods and approaches, and incorporate both range and specific focus. To begin, we will ask each of our partner organisations how they understand the value of the culture they produce and showcase, and what experience they think is created as a result. Bringing these partner organisations together to discuss this is a major part of the project, and an early workshop will facilitate this dialogue and exchange, which will be vital for the design of the next research phase. Following this, the project will focus on a single event - the month-long annual LoveArts Festival that focuses on disseminating NHS policy on good mental health and wellbeing - in order to track how questions of cultural value emerge and are experienced. The research team, which possesses expertise across a range of disciplines, from audience participation research and cultural policy to narrative representations of mental health, will work with Festival staff and those attending events to map, through interviews and participant observation, the different ways in which LoveArts works. In so doing, we will be seeking to both gauge the ways in which mental wellbeing is communicated and understood through artistic experiences, and chart how a cultural festival establishes the parameters (in terms of organisation, performance, audience recruitment etc.) that seek to make this happen. In turn, we will explore how the concentrated urban space of Leeds facilitates these processes, producing a city-specific experience of the arts and questions of mental health. A final project workshop will return to the broad view. We will take the results of our analysis and conversations back to our full range of partners in order to share the conclusions and showcase how the work undertaken with LoveArts, added to the initial sector-wide exchange, can help provide a framework for the evaluation of the cultural/artistic experience in Leeds, understood as a broad category that includes individual reflection, commercial demands, and community cohesion. Our intention is twofold: to suggest to arts organisations, the NHS and Leeds City Council what a conceptual model of an experience of cultural value in Leeds might be; and to produce fine-grained research, differentiated to meet the complexity of our subject matter, that can capture this.
Grant Holder: Dr Harriet Hawkins

Project Title: Experimental Methods for Exploring Environmental Encounters

Summary: It is well recognized that a host of aesthetic strategies - from artistic practice to visual culture more broadly - respond to and even move for action in the face of current environmental change and ecological crises. A key question remains however; "how do the environmental encounters configured by critical art contribute to alternative ecological imaginaries and futures, and foster practices of environmental citizenship?" That this question remains largely unanswered is the result of i) the lack of research methods for exploring the environmental encounters configured by art, and ii) the need for a more sophisticated querying of the components of these cultural experiences, to ask, in short, how does art go to work in the world? The need to query the nature of art's audience and the environmental encounters it can catalyse - simply put the experiences of environmental art - has become a common refrain across communities concerned with the transformative possibilities of these arts practices. This includes diverse groups of artists, art theorists, geographers, environmental scientists, and museum professionals and arts and sciences institutions. Working alongside 2 partner organizations who develop art-science collaborations (Arts Catalyst, London, and Swiss artists-in-labs, Zurich) this RDA responds to these issues by way of a 3-phase project, guided by 2 key aims: 1) To experiment with methods through which to explore the environmental encounters catalysed by art works and their accompanying programming 2) To conceptualize these encounters and the 'components' of cultural experience that constitute them. In addressing these aims the proposed RDA extends the PI's previous work on the transformative effects of art, and responds to specific questions raised by 2 previous research grants on which she worked, exploring respectively, the 'Cultural Geographies of Landscape Art' and 'Art-Science Collaborations: Bodies and Environments.' The latter, an AHRC-NSF funded project, was an international multi-sited ethnography of 6 art-science projects, including the 2 partner organizations. It explored how these projects transformed the subjectivities, knowledge and practices of artists and scientists involved. Emerging during this study, but beyond its scope, was a set of further questions concerning how art-science collaborations go to work on their audiences. As well as having an intellectual force regarding conceptualizing the experiencing and 'work' of art, such questions are highly relevant at a time when multiple stake-holders across the arts and sciences are looking to justify funding, and enhance the benefits of their projects, especially with respect to questions of science communication and engagement. Further, and as with the arts sector more broadly, there is a need to substantiate the often anecdotal evidence upon which claims of environmental arts' impacts rest, as well as, interestingly, a desire to critically reflect on the very ideas of 'evidence' and 'evaluation' that circulate in current funding and policy contexts. The hope across the sector is for the evolution of ideas that are more responsive to the particular aesthetic, social, institutional and political conditions of these projects and organizational ways of working. In response to these issues the RDA unfolds in 3 phases: Phase 1 Organisational Consultation Ethnographic work with partner organisations exploring ideas of evaluation, evidence, environmental encounter, and the existing methods used to examine audience engagement. Phase 2 Methodological Experimentation Developing and testing an assemblage of methods to explore the environmental encounters constituted by art, including ethnographic, visual and participatory techniques, and the use of social media. Phase 3 Conceptual Reflections: Drawing together results with theoretical ideas of art and transformation, and disseminating findings to academic and non-academic audiences.
Grant Holder: Professor Janelle Reinelt

Project Title: Theatre Spectatorship and Value Attribution

Summary: This research development project interrogates the value attribution of theatre audiences. The starting point is the phenomenological description of embodied experiences of individuals who attend the theatre, and the associational networks which influence them to attribute value (or not) to the event in question. Their specific responses to the performance will be combined with information about past theatre experiences and related associations (personal, public, imaginary, or historic) invoked in response to the performance. The impact of the experience will be re-assessed after time has elapsed to see if subjects retain valuations, change their perspectives, integrate their experience into social networks, and/or make use of it in different ways. We also tap memory by asking subjects about a performance they saw one year ago. The project partners with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Young Vic, and the Drum Theatre in Plymouth, identifying three productions to study for each of their 2013-2014 seasons in three genre categories. Audience members will be solicited to participate through the aegis of the theatres (on line and at the theatres). They will provide information to the research team before, right after, and three months after the production, and can also volunteer for follow-up interviews or creative workshops. The theatres will support this project through their websites, by promoting the opportunity to participate to their patrons, and by allowing us access to archives and press materials. The theatres will co-host a dissemination event at project's close. The researchers will ask subjects about their direct experience of the theatre event, what it meant to them, how it made them feel, what other associations it triggered, and what value(s) they would assign to the experience. The purpose of these questions is to see how individuals absorb theatre experiences and translate them into other areas of their lives; how long and strong theatre stimuli last; how cognitive and affective registers process the experience over time. We will be interacting with approximately 120 subjects (10 for each of the 2013-14 performances and 30 for the year-old performance), plus 45 subjects in long interviews, and 15-20 subjects in creative workshops. In addition to this research data, we will harvest data from social media through establishing running Twitter searches through a platform like Tweetdeck, a raft of Google Alerts to capture blog and comment-box mentions of our performances, and use Facebook's search facilities to capture interactions on the social network. These social media data will act as a kind of control group to offset the effect of having the targeted subjects' interest/attention in the performances heightened by being a part of the study. The project is a collaboration between the University of Warwick, the British Theatre Consortium (BTC), and the theatres. BTC is a cooperative of theatre experts (including the PI and CIs) that has carried out previous research for Arts Council England on new theatre writing and co-sponsored a roundtable with the Royal Society of the Arts on Spectatorship to Engagement. BTC is currently running 'The Spirit of Theatre' with Manchester Metropolitan University and The Theatre Library, researching audience valuation and memory in relation to a current production of Mother Courage. This study can be seen as a pilot for the present bid. The PI and one CI are senior theatre and performance scholars, each with expertise on contemporary British theatre and many publications, and the other CI is a creative writing scholar from MMU. The fourth member of the research team is the distinguished playwright David Edgar. The administrator, Jane
Woddis, also holds a PhD in cultural policy studies and has collaborated on other BTC projects. All five are members of BTC.

**Grant Holder: Professor Miriam Bernard**

**Project Title: Ages and Stages: the cultural value of older people's experiences of theatre making**

**Summary:** This proposal aims to assess the cultural value of older people's participation in theatre making. It will do so through a participatory action research approach, framed by a perspective which places emphasis on the skills, abilities and capacities of older people rather than automatically framing ageing as 'a problem to be solved' in contemporary society. The proposal is inspired by our interdisciplinary 'Ages and Stages' project, which has consisted of two related but distinct phases. The first phase (October 2009-July 2012, funded by the NDA programme) explored representations of age and ageing in the Victoria/New Vic Theatre's social documentaries and the role that theatre has played in the lives of local older people. Archival and qualitative data was brought together in the final year of the project to create a new verbatim social documentary performance, 'Our Age, Our Stage', exploring ageing, intergenerational relations and the role the theatre has played - and continues to play - in the creative life of the people of Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire. The second phase (August 2012-July 2013, funded by the AHRC follow-on scheme) has focused on translational work, including evolving the original 'Ages and Stages' group into the 'Ages and Stages Company' and devising an interactive, forum theatre piece about intergenerational relationships - Happy Returns. Both phases have been documented through film, ethnographic notes and diary keeping. The proposed case study of 'Ages and Stages' will involve undertaking secondary analysis of existing research materials and developing the 'Ages and Stages Company' into a 'company of researchers', who will work with us to identify - and to show through live performance - the cultural value of what they have been involved in. Company members will engage in a series of recorded research discussions with each other (both one-to-one and group) exploring their experiences of Ages and Stages; the impacts it has had on themselves; and on others (e.g. their families; friends; the younger people they have performed with). Arising out of these discussions, the Company will then select and agree the issues to be developed into a new, short, piece to be performed before Christmas 2013 to invited audiences of practitioners, policy makers and academic colleagues. The performance/s will be filmed and turned into a DVD. In the New Year, the Company will come back together to co-evaluate the research process. These sessions will also be digitally recorded, transcribed and analysed and, together with the secondary analyses of existing research materials, will form the basis for the final report. An invited workshop (including members of the Advisory Group) will conclude the project in May 2014. The piece will be performed at this workshop as a stimulus to further discussions about the cultural value of theatre making with, and for, older people and, if awarded, the workshop will also include findings from the proposed linked Critical Review on 'Ageing, Drama and Creativity'.

Grant Holder: Dr Claire Pajaczkowska

Project Title: Compassion By Design

Summary: Why is there compassion deficit in the culture of care? How can creative design process generate sustainable empathy in care communities? The paradox of authority is that when used to implement instructions, it generates the coercive and institutionally compliant behaviour that is the antithesis of an activated and spontaneous compassionate responsibility towards others. Nursing staff are especially vulnerable to being made institutionally compliant and deferential. Nursing, as noted by Menzies-Lyth, is frequently categorized as among the least prestigious of the occupations in care institution. Uniforms, titles, work descriptions and conditions can emphasize the impersonal status of the care nurse in the residential care home. This may be further exacerbated by the nurses' own defences against the considerable anxieties that are activated when working with old people who suffer from degenerative illnesses such as Alzheimer's Disease, and those who will never recover independence. The emotional resources needed for end of life care, like those of palliative care, are especially demanding. This research asks if emotional resources can be sustained through a more psychologically nuanced, dialogical process of co creation workshop process as an integral part of the workplace. Alternating mechaniset with opportunities for intervals of creative spontaneity, working collaboratively with families and friends of residents as well as with residents themselves, will provide a means for assessing the beneficial effects of collaborative, co-creation design practice on the care home institution.

Obtaining qualitative, rather than metric, data about the relational quality of cultural experience is crucial. The psychological (Baron Cohen:2012) and psychoanalytical (Bollas:1989, Menzies-Lyth:1960) offer a complex, post-positivist social science. Psychodynamic processes can enable researchers to use their own subjectivity as a legitimate medium for knowledge and judgment of research into emotional experience of art and design research. As a post-modern autoethnographic method, the conscious use of the researchers' subjectivity opens new and innovative ways for approaching creative art and design practices as research processes. This research project applies the concept of integrative co-operation as the basis of creative culture in order to suggest that there may be a way that design can provide an effective means of implementing (some of) the proposals of the Francis Report (2013) into the 'compassion deficit' in cultures of care. Implementing changes in the training of nursing care staff, may best be supported with research data showing that art and design creative processes can provide a means of developing a more sustainable culture of compassion. The way that cooperation acts as an intra-psychic process of integration, of fragmented parts of the self, is understood as the basis for the way that culture is experienced as emotionally meaningful and as socially integrative. Emotional reciprocity actuated through creativity is offered as data. This project aims to gather, test and evaluate the emotional quality of researchers' subjective responses as legitimate and significant research data. How is the creative process a medium for the transmission of emotional experience from one subject to another? What are the ways that this transmission can be best understood as data for use in theorising creative art and design research? How is the subject held, in integrity and solitude, by the 'spirit of the object' (Bollas)? This research project aims to establish analogies between the processes of creativity and of care. It does this by tracing the empathy through which a utilitarian design task is successfully completed in the Alexandra Care Home in Harlow Essex. The case study is then offered for critical
discussion with colleagues in a range of allied fields. Is it possible to create Compassion By Design?

Grant Holder: Dr Gareth Hoskins

Project Title: Locating value: assigning significance in the historical built environment, a trans-Atlantic review

Summary: All places can be thought of in some way as historical but some places are more explicitly "historical" than others. How then do we decide which historical places are most precious and most worthy of public esteem? How is that distinction experienced, identified and ultimately awarded? Valuing elements of the built environment through acts of designation (whether castle, phone box, road sign, parkland, or wilderness) is necessary for any society with a sense of its past and a collective desire to maintain it. But what is the difference between a Grade 1 and a Grade 2 listed building, or a state and national historic landmark, in both a technical sense, and in terms of our qualitative encounters with those places? This research will work with the National Register of Historic Places in the US, English Heritage and CADW in the UK, and an array of non-state groups and initiatives involved in alternative historic designations to investigate how value is assessed through technical procedures and how value is experienced as a quality that is actually apprehended in place.

Grant Holder: Dr Anouk Lang

Project Title: Developing methods for analysing and evaluating literary engagement in digital contexts

Summary: Research into reading and the value that it holds for individuals has been an area of rising interest for scholars within a constellation of related fields, including book history, cultural studies, the sociology of culture and literary studies. However, until relatively recently, researchers have been largely restricted to gathering accounts of readers' experiences from sources with limited evidence such as marginalia or accounts in diaries and letters, which are time-consuming to gather, or from somewhat artificial contexts such as interviews, questionnaires and focus groups, where what Pierre Bourdieu has termed the "legitimacy effect" - which prompts individuals to report on what they consider they ought to have read, or ought to think, rather than what they have actually read or actually think - may hamper the investigation. The advent of social media platforms, and the unprecedented amount of user-generated data they produce, has opened up compelling new avenues for research into reading, an experience long considered personal and private which is increasingly coming into view as a cultural activity whose social dimensions are equally as complex and as vital to understand. Not only has user-generated data from social media platforms given researchers very large amounts of data to work with, it has also added new forms of information, such as numerical ratings of books accompanying descriptive reviews, and information about readers' "affinity" with others depending on the number of books in their shared collections (a more complex version of Amazon's recommendation algorithm that suggests books that users may wish to buy by comparing their purchasing or browsing activity to those of others). With these new forms of data, however, has come a parallel obligation for scholars to develop robust methodologies for their analysis, including the
capacity to make use of the rich metadata - the temporal and geospatial information attached to some of the information produced by users - on social network sites. In the commercial world, such information is already exploited by marketers through such techniques as sentiment analysis - automated analysis that can identify whether a tweet is broadly negative or positive - but such techniques are too crude for understanding the complex interplay between texts and readers as meaning and value are negotiated. This is the gap that this project seeks to fill. By capturing information from two platforms used by individuals to report on their reading and to connect with other readers - Twitter and the book-collection website LibraryThing - it will investigate what this born-digital data can tell us about readers' interactions with texts by taking samples of this data, and exploring and refining the methods that can be used to deal with it, particularly as it contains both numerical and descriptive elements. It will apply techniques of computational analysis to this data to identify significant patterns in relation to three areas. First, thematic and topical information: what do readers choose to foreground when they go to the trouble of broadcasting their thoughts on Twitter or LibraryThing? Second, chronological trends: do particular terms become prominent in online interactions at particular times, and how might these trends relate to events such as the publication of books which achieve mass popularity such as the Harry Potter volumes or Fifty Shades of Grey? Third, geographical influences: do socio-economic factors or the existence of book-related institutions such as bookstores and libraries play a role in influencing the spatial distribution of online interactions around books? By using these disparate methodologies in concert, and finding ways to productively combine them, the project will both advance knowledge about the intrinsic value texts represent to readers, and point to ways that this research can be carried out with ever-larger bodies of data in the future.

Grant Holder: Dr Stephanie Pitts

Project Title: Dropping in and dropping out: understanding cultural value from the perspectives of lapsed or partial arts participants.

Summary: This project aims to explore attitudes towards the arts and cultural value amongst 'culturally aware non-attenders' (Winzenried, 2004; Dobson & Pitts, 2012) - the sector of the population who are receptive to arts involvement, but are currently minimally engaged. Three interlinked interview and survey studies will include people who have previously learnt a musical instrument but no longer play, as well as those with an interest in one art form who are unlikely to attend another. For this substantial sector of the population, their perception of the value of the arts is only partially translated into action, making them a potentially rich source of arts advocacy and involvement, if the means can be found to further activate their latent interest. The three studies will take place as follows: Study 1: The violin in the attic - investigating lapsed musical participation This study will focus on amateur musicians, exploring the experiences and attitudes of those who no longer play, and who commonly cite pressures of time, family, and work as having caused them to cease involvement (Pitts, 2005;2012). Through in-depth interviews with around 30 'lapsed' members of musical groups, this study will explore how the benefits and costs of musical participation are articulated by those who no longer actively participate, and will identify the factors in causing participants to cease their involvement. These findings will shed new light on cultural value as perceived by those who have other priorities in their lives, and will help
to propose strategies for retaining and re-engaging such people as active participants.

Study 2: Loyalty and its limitations - exploring cultural value across art forms this large-scale questionnaire study will explore the articulation of cultural value across genres, by questioning those who attend a narrow range of arts events about their experiences of their chosen genre, and their broader understanding of arts in society. Responses will be sought from audiences in a range of venues, including independent cinema, theatre, concert halls and museums; each will be asked about their frequency of attendance, factors in choices of events, openness to other art forms, and attitudes towards less familiar arts. The study will therefore highlight any differences between the attitudes and experiences of audiences at specific arts events - and so shed light on whether 'cultural value' is generic to arts engagement, or needs to be more subtly defined for different audiences.

Study 3: Cultural value in lives and localities this study will return to the in-depth interview approach used in Study 1, so allowing for comparisons between lapsed arts participants and occasional arts attenders, as well as deepening the evidence from Study 2 with a closer exploration of how attitudes and patterns of engagement are formed in adult life. Around 30 volunteers from Study 2 will be interviewed using a life history approach (cf. Pitts, 2012) to explore their level of past engagement, and how this has shaped their perceptions of the contribution of the arts to their life and to the local community. This study therefore offers another perspective on the factors that promote and inhibit involvement in the arts, and on the articulation of cultural value that surrounds those participation decisions. The project will generate data and discussion of academic interest (to be published in at least two journals of different related disciplines) and of practical value to arts organisations (to be reported through the Sheffield Performer and Audience Research Centre website - http://www.sparc.dept.shef.ac.uk/). Findings will be reported back to arts organisations, local government and Arts Council representatives, so fulfilling the aims of the AHRC agenda on a local, social scale as well as through contribution to academic debate.

Grant Holder: Dr Brian Garrod

Project Title: Investigating the Role of Eisteddfodau in Creating and Transmitting Cultural Value in Wales and Beyond.

Summary: In spite of the growing body of research examining the values of culture and the arts, there has been little if any research looking specifically at the values of traditional cultural events such as Eisteddfodau. Indeed, the most relevant research in this area dates back to the 1970s. Particularly lacking is research on the contribution of cultural consumption to the promotion of elements of culture such as traditional music, dance, literature, performance and visual arts. Nor has there been significant research on the role of such events in sustaining minority languages. The research will focus on two Eisteddfodau, which hold many contrasts in terms of the cultural values they hold. The National Eisteddfod of Wales (Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru) welcomes around 160,000 visitors each year and was first held in its current format in 1861 (although the tradition itself can be traced back to 1176). The National Eisteddfod runs annually each August, usually for eight days, and comprises a vast number of events and competitions. Indeed, the audience is very broad, with many cultural forms included. This Eisteddfod moves around Wales, alternating between the north and the south of the country, thereby impacting on different local communities each time. Its aims are to promote
culture, linguistics and citizenship in conjunction with local economic stimulation (http://www.eisteddfod.org.uk). In contrast, the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod (Eisteddfod Gerddorol Ryngwladol Llangollen) has approximately 120,000 visitors per year, taking place always in Llangollen for six days in July. These visitors come from all over the world. Established in 1947, with participants from over 50 nations taking part, the International Eisteddfod aims to promote culture and world peace (http://international-eisteddfod.co.uk/). The proposed research will be innovative in two major respects. First, the project seeks to reconceptualise the way in which cultural values are understood. Rather than to view cultural values as a reflection of the 'worth' of the cultural activity to the economy, the approach adopted seeks to determine the worth of the cultural activity more broadly in terms of peoples' individual and national identities, social capital formation and use, cultural diversity and understanding, and the promotion of cultural forms such as those practiced at Eisteddfodau (including the use of the Welsh language). As such, the project speaks to three components of value: (1) reflective individuals and engaged society, (2) urban regeneration and community dynamics and (3) understanding the context of international relationships. Secondly, the project will evaluate such values empirically using two Eisteddfodau that have contrasting purposes, formats, participants and audiences. Comparison of these two Eisteddfodau will help gain a better understanding of how people define their identity, their role in society and their sense of belonging in a community through their cultural consumption. For example, the International Eisteddfod is held every year at Llangollen, yet the National Eisteddfod is hosted in different locations around the country. The participant/visitor effects on local communities are likely to be different as a result. Both Eisteddfodau also have 'qualifying' heats in the regions of Wales in the case of the National Eisteddfod, or different nations in the case of the International Eisteddfod. With regard to understanding how cultural is promoted to national and international audiences, the use of two Eisteddfodau are also likely to be very different. Indeed, the two Eisteddfodau have markedly different audiences, with the International Eisteddfod having a worldwide audience and participation emphasis, while the National Eisteddfod has a mainly Welsh focus. This allows the effects of participation and consumption to be compared and contrasted at the two different levels.

Grant Holder: Dr Farida Vis

Project Title: The Cultural Values of Digging

Summary: Activities around digging have become massively popular again in recent years, including in the attention they have received from cultural institutions. Many cultural institutions have in recent year’s recreated wartime (allotment) gardens to highlight a range of different issues and values. Such exhibitions and events, organized during a time of renewed austerity measures, increased concerns around food and the environment, draw obvious parallels to the contemporary moment, offering possibilities to rethink our own values. This project seeks to better understand the myriad of different ways in which issues around digging have re-emerged in recent years, to analyse, understand and measure these by looking at how they have been expressed and mobilized by different people and actors. This can be expressed as actual digging and linked to food production, as more symbolic digging, as performance and event, digging up local histories, or as new forms of gift giving. This proposal is for a Research Development Award to examine these multiple (re)emergent forms of digging and to
establish evidence for their cultural value. In line with the Cultural Value project, this proposed project significantly adds to the development of rigorous approaches to the researching, articulation and use of case studies as evidence for evaluating dimensions of cultural value, in our case related to a range of different ways value is attached to digging. This project will examine these different forms of digging by studying their perceived cultural value through five distinct aspects: digging as 'nation-building', digging as 'lifestyle choice', digging for 'heritage', digging to enable 'community building' and digging as 'gift'. It does this by focusing on two different social scales: looking at both individual and community groups and secondly by examining the mainstream media and recent relevant policy initiatives. The project asks the following questions: 1. What are the different cultural values associated with digging and how are they articulated through the five identified thematic strands as well as the different social scales and institutional levels? 2. How are different historical reference points used to articulate and explain these values? 3. How is digging linked to ideas of citizenship and relevant to what it means to be British today? 4. What are the different imagined futures and societal trajectories associated with these values? The project is specifically interested in the rediscovery, reuse, reworking within a contemporary setting of these three historical motives and movements: the 17th Century Diggers, the wartime Dig for Victory campaign and popular 1970s TV show The Good Life. What aspects are selected, and how are these mobilized across the five different digging themes and within the two social scales and institutions. To answer our research questions, the project develops four distinct, but interconnected case studies, which show the potential for the use and value of such new sources, and associated methodologies, for the identification and evidencing of personal and group experiences, specifically focusing on the use of social media. Our case studies focus on: the UK print media representations of digging, 2000-2012; The Winstanley Festival remembering the Diggers; the recreation of a wartime garden; the Big Dig, a recent initiative that encourages people to 'give' through digging. The project will develop a working paper and two journal articles. The project will host one highly innovative end of project event ensuring dissemination and impact within and beyond academia. Our impact strategy engages the public sector, commercial and private sector, third sector and wider public.

Grant Holder: Dr Michael Eades

Project Title: Bloomsbury Festival in a Box: engaging socially isolated people with dementia

Summary: The Bloomsbury Festival is an established annual event dedicated to celebrating the cultural, intellectual and social wealth of Bloomsbury and its diverse communities. A registered charity, the festival supports community projects year-round that inspire positive change in people's lives through the creation of beautiful art. Via the AHRC-funded Bloomsbury Festival Cultural Engagement Project hosted by the School of Advanced Study, University of London (Feb-May 2013), in 2013 the Festival has drawn upon the interdisciplinary humanities research expertise in the School of Advanced Study to develop and refine its cultural engagement programme. Specifically, it has sought to find a means of both extending and critically interrogating the impact of its work with hard-to-reach and vulnerable social groups in the Bloomsbury and broader Camden areas. Identifying older people with dementia as a core population capable of multisensory cultural engagement, but typically unable to participate in the Festival's
outreach programme, an early outcome of this project has been the establishment of a reciprocal relationship with Age UK Camden’s Dementia Befriending Service, which supports people living with dementia in Camden. Working closely with this service, and drawing upon the expertise of Dr Claudia Cooper--honorary consultant old age psychiatrist to the Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust--the 'Bloomsbury Festival in a Box' project will between August and October 2013 develop, trial, and analyse a peripatetic 'Festival in a Box' outreach project that takes boxes of materials associated with the Festival out to people unable to leave their homes to take part in cultural life. As well as being therapeutic devices, these boxes will form innovative research vessels that will gather qualitative data on the value of cultural participation among older people with dementia in Camden. Carefully designed to include a range of sensory and cultural materials that will prompt narrative responses and recollections from service users, the Bloomsbury Festival boxes will engender social stimulation as well as interests in new activities, ideas and experiences among those living with dementia. The project will therefore benefit not only the individuals directly involved, but the broader research community. The Bloomsbury Festival in a Box will offer service users a unique opportunity to participate in a cultural event from which they would normally be excluded, and will in turn raise awareness of those living with dementia via a highly respected cultural forum. Moreover, it will offer those living with dementia an opportunity to share their knowledge and stories of the area, providing history and insight into Bloomsbury and the surrounding locale. As some service users have lived in the area for many years, participation in the outreach programme will not only be an opportunity for them to actively re-engage with community life, but also to participate in re-narrating the history of Bloomsbury itself. Over the course of weekly visits to the homes of service users, these boxes will become miniature 'archives of engagement', gathering rich and unusual data over the course of the outreach experience. A high level of interest in the proposed research project is anticipated, both within the area and on a national scale. Reflecting this, the final results of the project will be disseminated via a website and an academic publication, and via a one day event that will bring together practitioners and researchers in fields of gerontology and arts and health for a knowledge exchange opportunity intended to further the sharing of expertise and research methodologies in this field.

Grant Holder: Dr Matthew Thomas Brennan

Project Title: The Cultural Value of Live Music: A Case Study of Enthusiast, State-funded, and Commercial Events at the Queen's Hall

Summary: Since 2008 the value of the live music industry in the UK has consistently exceeded that of the recorded sector (Page and Carey 2009, 2010, 2011, PRS for Music 2012). In addition live music in England and Wales has been the subject of a great deal of political interest since the changes in the licensing of it brought about by the passing of the 2003 Licensing Act and the subsequent repealing of some aspects of this via the Live Music Act, 2012. Within Scotland proposed changes to local licensing regulation of live events also caused some political concern in 2012. In sum, live music is the subject of a great deal of political and media attention. This has, however, frequently focused too narrowly on economic value or political intrigue. Less often has the cultural value of live music been considered. We aim to begin to remedy this via an in-depth case study of one venue, the Queen’s Hall in Edinburgh. Built in 1823 and in use as a music venue since 1979, the Queen’s Hall is a multi-genre music venue based close to Edinburgh’s Royal Mile. It is host to a wide range of musical events ranging from pop gigs, through
jazz shows to full orchestral performances. At each of these shows different forms of cultural value are being promoted, performed and received. We will examine the different forms of cultural value that are in evidence via a detailed analysis of the promotion, performance and reception of three musical events. A central area of inquiry here concerns the ways in which different forms of musical value are articulated and perceived across musical genres. Our starting point is promotional practice. Here we build on the previous work of the investigators in constructing a typology of promotional practice - conceived of as enthusiast, state-funded, and commercial. We will examine the ways in which different types of concert promoter understand the musical events which they are constructing and the audiences they are trying to attract. Key questions here concern the sort of cultural values which are illustrated in promotional materials (press, internet, flyers etc) and the ways in which the event itself is constructed on the night (configuration of seating, location of stage etc). We will also examine the ways in which the performers at the events articulate different forms of cultural value. Of particular interest here will be how they construct themselves as performers and audiences as audiences. In what senses are cultural value shared across different audiences and performers. In what ways are cultural values imparted from performers to audiences? However, our main focus will be on cultural value and audiences. Significant issues to arise here will include the ways in which cultural value is perceived and subsequently articulated by audiences. Via a series of audience surveys we will analyse how audiences come to know about musical events, how they determine which ones to attend, what cultural value they place on those events they attend and how they perceive the events following attendance. The use of reflective diaries (covering the period from initial booking to a period of two weeks after the event) will allow for detailed analysis of the perceptions of cultural value attached to different types of live music event and how these are perceived over time. Our interest here is how the articulation of cultural value revealed through our examination of audience surveys and reflective diaries is (or isn't) mediated by promotional practice and, relatedly, genre. Interviews with promoters, performers and venue staff will give further insight into how cultural values are mediated within the live music ecology.

Grant Holder: Dr Catherine Lambert

Project Title: The value of live art: experience, politics and affect

Summary: This research explores the value of live art to a range of difference people, from those who directly participate in a live art project to the general public who engage with an exhibition in a community arts centre. In particular, the research focuses on an art project entitled Fun With Cancer Patients, led by artist Brian Lobel as part of Fierce Festival in Birmingham. Fun With Cancer Patients involves a group of teenage volunteers who are undergoing or have experienced cancer treatment: the young people work on 'actions' of their own devising (these may be photography, writing, performance, whatever the young person chooses) and these actions and the process of creating them are documented at a public exhibition which will be attended by a large, mixed audience over a number of weeks. The topic of cancer, an illness which is likely to affect most people either directly or indirectly, is often talked about in a limited range of ways which do not always express people's lived, emotional and political experiences. Fun With Cancer Patients aims to widen the possibilities for communicating about cancer. The research will follow all stages of the project paying critical attention to the experiences and affective responses of people involved, and it will develop and use innovative qualitative methods in order to explore the value of the art to the individuals involved.
and also in terms of generating broader understandings of cancer. The research aims to contribute to a better understanding of the potential of live art in generating meaningful possibilities for expressing and understanding complex experiences and emotions, and creating alternative knowledge and modes of expression.

**Grant Holder: Dr Mark Rimmer**

**Project Title: Understanding the cultural value of 'In Harmony-Sistema England'**

**Summary:** The value of young people's participation in arts activity has been hotly debated over recent years. Following the 'subsidy revolution' (Elliott 1997), which granted youth-based participatory arts activities greater prominence in the UK since the late 1990s, questions about the value of such activities, and the most appropriate ways of understanding their outcomes, have been raised from a number of quarters (see, e.g., Belfiore, 2002, 2004; Merli 2002; Belfiore and Bennett 2008, Galloway 2009). Indeed, for many commentators, the growing emphasis on assessing and evaluating what have been termed the 'instrumental' outcomes of young people's arts participation risk ignoring what are, for most participants, the very aspects of the participatory encounter which serve to motivate them to engage in the first place: its 'intrinsic' value as arts activity. This project seeks to contribute to recent debates urging the need to transcend the 'instrumental' vs 'intrinsic' impasse (Knell & Taylor 2011) by exploring the ways in which cultural value is understood by stakeholders involved in one novel participatory youth-focussed and music-based initiative currently developing in England: In Harmony-Sistema England. Our choice of this initiative offers a particularly fascinating case for exploration because, where most attempts to link music to forms of social good have employed popular music forms (as part of an effort to appeal to the disadvantaged young people with whom they work), In Harmony-Sistema England, taking its lead from the highly successful Venezuelan El Sistema initiative, adopts an orchestral model and engages young people using the 'high art' form of classical music. While the El Sistema model explicitly invokes the intrinsic dimensions of musical activity as a means of engendering growth and development in participating individuals, it does so with the conscious intention of generating spill-over effects which register at the level of what have been elsewhere termed 'instrumental' outcomes. Yet prioritised throughout projects' activities are those explicitly artistic goals and achievements which serve to motivate young people's participation. While the project has seen great achievements in Venezuela, it remains the case that relatively little is understood, within scholarly circles, about the transformative components of the programme and the ways in which participants' valuation of the cultural dimensions of the project translate into other kinds of (broader) effects. In recognition of the different models of delivery and project partnership currently involved in the different incarnations of In Harmony-Sistema England, as well as the importantly differing local cultural conditions and subjective understandings of cultural value brought by different participants and stakeholders, this project will engage with the concerns sketched above by exploring three different In Harmony projects, located across England.
Grant Holder: Dr David Beel

Project Title: EViDAnCE - Exploring Value in Digital Archives and the Comainn Eachdraidh

Summary: Rural areas have strong place identities, formed through the reproduction of traditional cultural practices alongside contemporary influences. These identities are performed and constructed through a repertoire of knowledge, histories, and customs, and include modes of expression such as story-telling, music and song, poetry and literature, dance and drama. Together with material objects, artefacts, sites and cultural spaces, these form dynamic cultural heritages. Both tangible and intangible heritage activity takes place in remote rural areas. Community based initiatives play an important role in such areas in the collation, production and communication of local cultural heritage. The Outer Hebrides contains 14 of Scotland’s 28 Comainn Eachdraidh (CE) or historical societies which began in the 1970’s with a very specific political and cultural purpose. Within their recent history, there has been a specific turn towards the digitisation of such work but to-date the relationship between the production of lived and virtual heritage is little understood and valued. Community digital archives represent both a major economic asset and a key community resource, having potential as education tools, for empowerment through co-production of local knowledge, to encourage community engagement in local history, and for recreation and tourism consumption purposes. Yet, the conversion to digital archives is not a neutral process. The interrelationship between volunteers, professionals and digital applications needs further interrogation to understand the fluid practices involved. By comprehending these networks of cultural heritage production the value of such digitisation initiatives will be understood in terms of how they assist or problematize community development and cohesion, cultural preservations, individual identity, wellbeing and finally how they contribute economic value to communities.

Grant Holder: Dr Susan Ashley

Project Title: Memorialisation as valuation: Examining public culture at the Chattri Sikh Memorial, Brighton

Summary: The proposed research project aims to broaden the discussion of Cultural Value by studying a site of public culture that may be seen as marginal, unfamiliar or vernacular: the Chattri Memorial near Brighton. Built in 1921 to honour Indian soldiers who fought on the Western Front during the First World War, Chattri is both a sacred place and a space of cultural experiences. The monument is an enduring testament of past values of heroism, but more ephemeral practices of pilgrimage, public display and socialising also suggest changing valuation processes at the site. Culture here is an interaction of traditions, symbols, experiences, emotion, and memories as expressed by descendants, local residents, ethnic organisations, officials, and individuals performing a variety of identity roles. This "thick" site, enlivened by ritual and affective experiences, presents a confluence of factors for analysis: what values are remembered and displayed, but also reshaped and remixed, in material and immaterial forms. The project will: - document the many facets of cultural production and consumption at work within memorialisation here, on several temporal and social scales, using historical methods and ethnographic techniques that engage participants - analyse material and immaterial forms and practices using objective/subjective insights offered by Critical Discourse
Analysis - theorise the changing nature of 'value' implied in themes that emerge within a matrix of historical, positional, textual, processual and pedagogical factors.

**Grant Holder: Dr Patricia (Trish) Winter**

**Project Title: A Somatic Ethnography of Grand Gestures Elders Dance Group**

**Summary:** The research is a partnership between Sunderland University and Equal Arts. It aims to contribute to the debate about how we can better understand the impacts, for individuals and for society, of engaging in arts and cultural activity. It looks in particular at dance and ageing, and takes as a case study an Elders dance group, Grand Gestures. This group of men and women aged 57 to 87 meet for a weekly dance class, perform as a dance company, and also share their skills as volunteers in residential care homes, where they work with people with dementia. The researcher, an older dancer herself, will participate in, observe and interview the dance group over a five month period. The investigation focuses in particular on the significance of bodily awareness senses such as touch, sense of movement (kinaesthetic sensation), sense of where the body is located (proprioception), and physical empathy within the dance group's activity, their individual and personal development, and their interactions with others, including dance interactions and wider civic and social engagements. These sensory aspects of dance are an important and tangible aspect of the experience of dancing, but are not often talked about or evaluated, and the project aims to find some creative new ways of 'speaking' of them not just through words, but also through performance and other media such as film. It will also reflect on the potential usefulness of its particular approach for the evaluation of arts and cultural activity.

**Grant Holder: Dr Charlotte Gilmore**

**Project Title: The enactment of cultural values and taste-making within contemporary classical music**

**Summary:** The research builds on an established and successful interdisciplinary partnership between research organisations from the complementary standpoints of organizational studies and music practice (St Andrews University Management School (PI)), and music 'insiders' (CI) at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), (including artistic research and policy maker partners). It also builds on a track record of successful funded ESRC research among music festivals on which the PI was Research Fellow (ESRC: RES-331-27-0065) and on audience development research (ESRC: RES-187-24-0014) conducted by the PI with one of the proposed partners, the Red Note Ensemble. The PI's background and approach from organisational studies and creative industries brings fresh perspectives to this field; this combined with the 'music insider' CI based at the RCS whose institutional research and Knowledge Exchange activity is centred on music practice results in an unusual and complementary knowledgebase which we hope will add to the Cultural Values project's framework and may be replicated in other cultural and artistic spheres. With the support of Creative Scotland and its networks we will explore whether these innovative methods are replicable across other cultural sectors and art forms. We will employ tried and tested innovative methods in case studies of Red Note and Psappha contemporary music ensembles. Red Note is Scotland's contemporary music ensemble and Psappha is Manchester's new music ensemble. There
are similarities between the ensembles in the musical styles but the audience, location, musicians and management teams are all different. This will illustrate that our methods may be replicated and they will produce theoretical and empirical insights that can enhance our understanding intrinsic cultural value. Our methodological approach acknowledges the complexity of cultural value. Within society there are diverse range of values and meanings associated with these values, especially in relation to cultural value. We propose an innovative way of exploring this complexity, and that is through taste-making. Taste-making is a situated activity that rests on learning and knowing how to appraise specific performances of a practice (Gherardi, 2009). In this way music can be understood by studying the social and organisational practices of its creation, performance and communication, as well as its enjoyment; these are all music practices. Taste shapes and is shaped within difference practices and is refined through negotiation and reflectivity, in order to express aesthetic judgments of it (Gheradi, 2009). For example gaining pleasure from music is a form of attachment socially supported by the respective communities of practice, which have developed vocabularies and specific criteria of taste and value in order to communicate, share and refine the ways in which such practices are enacted. This research will involve exploring such enactments of taste-making among the different communities of music practitioners. Our methods and outcomes could clearly contribute to a framework, firstly through the development of a vocabulary and concept of taste making from alternative positions, and secondly the methods to be used for assessing the different forms of taste and processes would help to enable an evaluation of value. The approach explores perceptions and reflections of a cultural experience before, during and after the performance, and this may allow us to elucidate how the different practitioners value that cultural experience. This way of looking at experience deliberately does so from different perspectives and draws in different disciplines. There is no singular experience and hence no singular perceived value, therefore a methodological approach that can capture the richness and diversity and that can produce focused insights is needed. Reference Gherardi, S (2009) Practice? It’s a matter of taste! Management Learning, 40(5): 535-550.

Grant Holder: Professor Patricia Thomson

Project Title: The experience and value of live art: what can making and editing film tell us
Summary: In 2012 Tate launched the Tanks. Converted from their former function as huge oil containers the Tanks at Tate Modern are the only designated museum space for 'live' art (installation, performance, new media and film) in the world. The Tanks present a unique challenge and opportunity for the gallery to understand the experience of live art, not least as the opening 15 week Art in Action programme attracted 565,000 visitors. A key element of Art in Action was Undercurrent, a multi-disciplinary 11 day festival programmed by and for young people. Attracting young visitors from across the UK, the Undercurrent programme actively questioned how young people engage with and develop mainstream and alternative cultural forms and, as with much live art, troubled the barriers between artists and audience and involved multiple layers of involvement. This study draws on the unique potential offered by Tate as a site of cultural creation and engagement for young people. The project builds on the museum's existing good practice in involving young people working collaboratively with artists in the making and viewing of live and participatory art. It extends this work by
addressing the methodological challenge of accounting for the value to participants of engaging in processes of cultural production. The research is an in-depth case study which explores the potential of a participant-led, creative evaluative methodology to evidence the cultural value of making and viewing live performance in the art museum. In tune with the practice it addresses, this study is cross-disciplinary. It draws on methodological approaches from art practice, ethnography and participant evaluation. The study is both a formative and summative evaluation. Its focus on process relies on an innovative use of the practices of individual and group film editing as a means of stimulating critical reflection. One of its prime contributions will be an assessment of the possibilities offered by film and social media as a means of enabling wider peer assessments of cultural value and on-going critical meaning making. Film also offers a medium for the representation and communication of the participant's experiences to peers and to wider audiences. The case study focuses on 15 young people working as performers and researchers. They will take part in two hour workshops with a dancer. They will work each morning for five days to develop a piece of live art, culminating in a public performance on the fifth day in the Galleries at Tate. The workshops will be filmed by a film-maker and each afternoon the young participants will split into groups and, alongside the dancer, work with the film maker to produce rough edits of the day's activity. Embedded within this editing process will be evaluative judgements, as participants will be asked to shape their films according to the following question: What part of the creative process that you have been a part of do you consider the most valuable, and what does it look like? At the end of each day the rough edits will be posted on a vimeo site. Participants will be invited to comment on each other's films alongside a wider cohort of young people who Tate will recruit as peer reviewers prior to the project. Over the following four month period participants and peer reviewers will continue to edit their own and other's films. The young participants and dancer will reconvene at Tate in March 2014 for a two-day workshop led by the film makers. During these sessions, the group will collaborate to produce one film that takes account of the varied representations of their experience of the dance workshops and performance. This will articulate the cultural value to them of engaging in the process. To gather further evidence of the cultural experiences of young participants and to assess the integrity of the evaluative process, two participant researchers will also observe, film and interview participants.

Grant Holder: Dr Kate Rumbold

Project Title: The uses of poetry: measuring the value of engaging with poetry in lifelong learning and development

Summary: What are the perceived benefits of poetry to people's learning and development at all stages of their lives? How do researchers and practitioners in literature, education and psychology currently express the value of poetry in their separate spheres? How can we best combine those insights into a rigorous interdisciplinary approach that will more effectively measure and evaluate the value of engaging with poetry? A pilot forum of literary and psychology researchers and practitioners at the Shakespeare Institute in October 2011 suggested that poetry could: -- bring a sense of identity and comfort -- connect people to one another -- enhance emotional literacy -- fulfil a civic function and bring together communities To test these impressions, our project will unite a larger team of researchers and practitioners from
literature, education and psychology in a series of interdisciplinary seminars to evaluate collectively the strengths of their respective disciplinary approaches, and to develop new collaborative research methods to measure and articulate the value of engaging with poetry. Seminars will facilitate productive exchange between participants with expertise in: 1) The history of educational uses of poetry, including how poetry accrued ethical values in eighteenth and nineteenth-century anthologies; and current emphasis on cognitive skills 2) Practice-based insights into the affective value of poetry in therapeutic settings, including evidence from work with people from displaced communities to head injury patients that poetry enhances emotional literacy, and can help individuals to process emotional and psychological trauma, often drawing on poems remembered from childhood 3) Scientific evidence from cognitive and developmental psychology, including the role of poetry in autobiographical memory formation, and of rote-learning in promoting neuronal plasticity in the ageing brain 4) Discourses of cultural value as they pertain to poetry, and the institutional challenges of measuring and extrapolating from individuals' 'experiences' of culture To promote genuine reflection and collaboration, participants will address the following questions: -- What research exists across our disciplines about the value of engaging with poetry? -- What constitutes 'evidence' in our respective fields? -- What is the assumed value of poetry in our fields, and how can we test that assumption? How is 'value' defined? -- Which of our approaches, from e.g. subjective well-being analysis to reader response, comes closest to being able to measure, evaluate and articulate people's actual experiences of engaging with poetry? Can existing research techniques transcend individual experiences without simply aggregating them? -- On what forms of measurement do we currently rely, quantitative or qualitative? How could these be combined? -- Does our disciplinary approach tend towards understanding the affective, cognitive or aesthetic role of poetry? How could we better understand these from an interdisciplinary perspective? -- How can we optimise the strengths of our approaches to pilot a new, truly interdisciplinary valuation of the benefits of engaging with poetry? In the second half of the project, the team will test their emerging collaborative research techniques and methodologies at two practical workshops. Working with three different age groups (primary school pupils, university students, older people), the workshops will also use performance practice, in combination with other research techniques, to explore, in particular, the experience of memorising poetry as a mode of engagement. The second workshop will be cross-generational, enabling the project team to draw comparisons between older and younger people's experiences of poetry, and to facilitate research that goes beyond stated benefits to the individual and explores the possibilities of community learning.

**Grant Holder: Professor David Cotterrell**

**Project Title: Squaring the Circle: Examining cultural value through a re-evaluation of Arts Lab**

**Summary:** This proposal has been developed in response to the Arts & Humanities Research Council's Cultural Value Project. Squaring the Circle aims to address the gifting of value to experimental and transitory arts practices. Focussing much of its preliminary research on the short-lived Arts Lab, which operated in Covent Garden from 1967-69, the project considers an organisation which is periodically cited as a prime-mover in the avant-garde of London in the late 1960s, but for which there is currently scant evidence that can express its value in relation to past, present or future cultural ventures. This
project aims to provide a mixed-methodological approach to gathering and assessing data for capturing cultural impact. Research would begin with Arts Lab, but would evolve as new stories and lines of enquiry unfold, suggesting forensic examination. Through archival research, the conducting of organiser, participant and audience interviews and the use of cultural probes, diverse perceptual responses and testimonials will be recorded and collated. This investigation will pose key questions that may be answered differently from disparate user-perspectives. The assembled data will be explored by the research team, employing several research methods to consider a pluralistic approach to qualitative analysis. Key to the agenda for this research project is the proposal to share its generated and collated primary and secondary evidence amongst a diverse selection of invited practitioners drawn from the social sciences, criminology, ethnography, arts and culture, history, geography and economics, who will work to interpret the data in efforts to assess its cultural value. These critical responses will be made available within the web-based project archive and form the basis for public events in Sheffield and London. Mapping and collectively exploring the impact of Arts Lab through its organisers, participants, audiences and those who consider themselves inheritors of the organisation's legacy, the research will seek to fully articulate and expose the plurality of narratives involved in this endeavour and the linked organisations and individuals it reveals. Investigating the allocation of value within the more experimental, ephemeral and experiential arts has been historically difficult and this project aims to introduce new methods for the dissemination of such practices, starting with a case study based in the 1960s, which may continue to hold relevance in the present.

Grant Holder: Dr Hannah Zeilig

Project Title: The arts in dementia care - A Critical Review of cultural and arts practices in dementia care in the UK

Summary: It is generally accepted that the 'arts’ improve the lives of those who live with a dementia. Consequently there has been a proliferation of arts based activities for people with dementia. However, there has been little or no critical evaluation of these initiatives. Similarly there has been little work exploring the views of people with a dementia who participate in arts activities. This lack of research has resulted in an uncertainty regarding the approaches that may be most effective. The proposed review will provide a corrective to this lack of clarity. The work will supply an analytical overview of the existing arts and cultural interventions that are used in dementia care. It will map some of the approaches being used and the gaps in research and knowledge concerning the use of the arts for dementia care. Above all, it will seek the views of people living with a dementia and integrate these in the final report. The major outputs arising from the review will include a critical report on current arts based approaches to dementia care that will contribute towards a new critical paradigm for the assessment of arts and culture based approaches to dementia care. In addition, the review will articulate the perceptions of people living with a dementia concerning the value of arts and cultural interventions to their well-being and health and these views will be central to the re-appraisal of prevalent assumptions about the benefits of arts and culture in the lives of those living with a dementia. An additional major output from the 6 month project will be the development of a dedicated website that disseminates findings in accessible language and therefore reaches beyond academic boundaries to people living with a dementia, their carers and the dementia care workforce. The project will benefit from a
uniquely qualified inter-disciplinary team comprising: the PI - Dr Hannah Zeilig (a research fellow at both the University of the Arts, London and the University of East Anglia) who has over two decades of experience as a gerontologist and has used numerous arts based approaches with people living with a dementia; Chris Fox who will provide clinical/research guidance and is a leading international dementia researcher and consultant old age psychiatrist and the input of the innovator and pioneer of arts based approaches to dementia care: John Killick.

Grant Holder: Dr Alis Elena Oancea

Project Title: Developing Innovative Methods for Configurative Capture of the Cultural Value of Arts and Humanities Research

Summary: The project aims to contribute a refined conceptual model of what constitutes cultural value of arts and humanities research (and what impact evaluation methods are attempting to capture), empirical evidence of how interpretations of cultural value play out in practice (via 35 case studies, 70-100 interviews, and over 20 maps of value networks), and an innovative, in-depth methodological approach to capturing cultural value. The project will engage with scholars from 10 groups of arts and humanities disciplines and from over 20 settings, to ensure that the methods for capturing and articulating value are conceptualized in their own terms, rather than imposing simplifying dichotomies. In addition, the study will explore the experiences, understandings and practices of a further 15 value actors, including public cultural institutions, third sector organizations, cultural engagement initiatives, and other partners, users and beneficiaries of arts and humanities research. The study will draw on social scientific approaches to make a distinctive contribution to enhancing methodological capability to capture cultural value in its richness and diversity. The development and testing of a robust configurative approach (i.e., an approach that explores and maps a field in its depth and richness) to recognising and capturing research value in the arts and humanities will be a core contribution of the study. The in-depth case studies to be carried out will combine attention to institutional and individual experiences, with careful mapping and weighting of the networks within which value is enacted and recognized. The conceptual model and innovative methods for capturing the value of research that will be refined and tested in the project were originally developed in Oancea (2011), drawing on Oancea and Furlong (2005, 2007a, 2008) and Oancea (2007b). This body of work has critiqued excessively instrumental interpretations of the value of research, but sought to move beyond dualist arguments about, for example, intrinsic vs. instrumental value, value vs. impact, articulating vs. measuring value, or social accountability vs. economic accounting. On this basis, the project proposes a textured notion of cultural value. The conceptual model identifies aspects of cultural value and suggests that the availability of evidence and the straightforwardness of the measures we use are in inverse proportion to the breadth and complexity of value realisation. The methodology of the study is driven by concerns for texture, diversity, nuance and ecology. The configurative approach to capturing cultural value will complement the focus on breadth and precision (i.e. aggregative approaches) that has been common in recent efforts to measure cultural value from socio-economic perspectives. A multiple case-study design will ensure both breadth (through 35 case studies of research units, research initiatives, value-oriented programmes, partner and user or beneficiary organisations) and depth (through 70-100 interviews and network
mapping methods "drilling down" into each case). The project will pursue primary impacts on individual and organizational understanding and practices, and secondary impacts on public discourses about the cultural value of arts and humanities research.

**Grant Holder: Dr Helen Manchester**

**Project Title:** Developing Innovative Methods for Configurative Capture of the Cultural Value of Arts and Humanities Research  
**Summary:** There are growing concerns that many young people are increasingly being excluded from the arts and cultural activity as these subjects are being sidelined in schools and lack of funding for the arts is affecting their reach. This study asks a diverse group of young people about the kind of cultural experiences they value and what they feel that they gain through these encounters in order to build a robust argument for the arts to be reinstated in the lives of young people. In contemporary accounts of cultural value young people's voices and accounts have largely dropped off the radar. Where they remain, they have tended to be restricted to analyses of young people's encounters with culture and 'creativity' in more formal cultural institutions and in schools or to debates on the implications of digital cultural spaces. Accounts have often been dominated by instrumental tales of potential future economic benefit and skills development. This project works collaboratively with young people and a network of cultural organisations to explore young people's experiences and analyses of cultural value in order to inform contemporary discussion of cultural value. Building on recent generational and digital culture analyses of youth culture, as well as longstanding theorisations of 'youth cultures' in sociology, cultural studies and cultural geography the study will explore in detail young people's experiences of culture in relation to both the everyday and informal cultural experiences and their experiences of more formal cultural institutions. We believe that young people's voices may cut into the debate about cultural value in new and refreshing ways. The study will be conducted in the wider policy context of the Henley Review of Cultural Education and will feed into policy and research debates around the value of the arts and culture in the development of 'well-rounded' young people. Cultural organisations involved in the project and others nationwide and internationally will gain a better understanding of the diversity of young people's cultural experiences and their responses to it. This will inform changes in policy and practice in relation to arts and cultural provision for young people. Our aim is to increase the evidence available for those working to ensure that all children and young people have meaningful access to the arts and culture in this difficult economic climate.

**Grant Holder: Professor Martin Wright**

**Project Title:** Case Study: Cultural Value of Accessible Theatre  
**Summary:** Many people in society cannot benefit from the full value of cultural events if those events are not made available for them to access. While we tend to think of barriers to access as being geographical (the production I wish to see isn't touring to my part of the country) or financial (I'd love to see that production if I could afford the ticket price), people who have sensory impairments - either because of disability or aging - may additionally experience barriers based on lack of support for their access needs. People who have difficulty hearing a theatre production may need captions. People who
are Deaf may need sign interpretation. People who have vision impairments may need audio description. Just as people in rural communities can feel excluded from culture as 'it all happens in London, never here', people with access needs may feel that those who create culture do not care whether or not they are excluded from being able to participate in that culture. Responding to this need, and prompted by legislation such as the Equality Act 2010, many cultural institutions have shown interest in making their cultural events accessible to the widest possible audience by making them inclusive. The two organisations at the forefront of providing captioning and audio description services to theatres and live events in the UK are StageText (http://www.stagetext.org) and VocalEyes (http://www.vocaleyes.co.uk). While these organisations collect anecdotal evidence and survey evidence from people who attend their captioned and audio-described events, to date there has never been a rigorous and comprehensive assessment of the cultural value that making theatre accessible to their audiences generates. London Metropolitan University have partnered with StageText and VocalEyes to propose a research study that will seek to answer the following question - What is the cultural value of accessible theatre from the perspective of its two main stakeholder groups: to the theatres (and businesses around them) that choose to provide captioned or audio-described performances, either to develop new audiences, or to bring former audiences back into the theatre; and - the audiences that those performances are aimed at (both those that choose to attend, and those who do not) We envisage this research providing rigorous evidence for the value of accessible theatrical performance, and of inclusive cultural activity, for a range of stakeholders; supporting the on-going work of organisations like StageText and VocalEyes, and potentially contributing to increased opportunities for hearing and visually impaired people to engage in mainstream culture. It will further contribute to underpinning inclusive practice in the UK; supporting the nation's beacon status in this area. It will also aim to support and contribute to the on-going embedding of inclusion as cultural practice.

**Grant Holder: Professor Stephen Clift**

**Project Title: Cultural Value and Social Capital: Investigating Social, Health and Wellbeing Impacts in Three Coastal Towns Undergoing Culture-led Regeneration**

**Summary:** From the establishment of Margate's Sea Bathing Hospital in 1791, British coastal resorts were envisaged and portrayed as havens and sources of health and wellbeing. A sophisticated cultural offer was at the heart of these once fashionable resorts, typified by Bexhill-on-Sea's innovative 1935 De La Warr Pavilion with its solarium. Following decades of post-war decline, coastal towns became the locus for some of the most significant economic and health deprivation in the UK. In response, and in part designed to contribute to their regeneration, the three towns of Margate, Folkestone and Bexhill On Sea, that are the subject of the proposed research, have experienced significant, high-profile recent cultural interventions i.e. Turner Contemporary, Margate, the Triennial and other initiatives by Folkestone's Creative Foundation, and the rebirth of the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill. In order to help build a more complete understanding of cultural value, we propose to engage these organisations and their respective geographic communities in assessing and evaluating their social and cultural impacts relating to improvements to health and wellbeing. Research participants will comprise arts and health researchers, staff, participatory art
practitioners, funders, collaborators, partners, volunteers and customers of the three cultural organisations, and local citizens. We will use a mixed methods approach of quantitative and qualitative methodology in action research to understand the work and its impact. The methods will combine established research tools with a modified version of DOTT: the Design Council’s double diamond design process model, which is widely used as an iterative, inclusive method to engage local people and communities. The methods include: 1. Literature reviews relating to arts, culture, health and wellbeing and culture-led regeneration in coastal towns. 2. A questionnaire to audit the activities of the three cultural organisations thought by staff to be of cultural value. 3. Focus workshops to discuss with staff, participatory art practitioners, funders, collaborators, partners and volunteers of the three organisations, their perceptions of the delivery and impact of culture-led activities and their relationship to social capital and cultural value. 4. Pre and post focus group discussions with arts practitioners and participants of three short-term cultural activity programmes, one in each of the cultural organisations, to generate an in-depth understanding of attitudes and experiences. 5. A ‘mind mapping wall’ within cultural organisations where the customer-base is invited to pin up individual ‘mind maps’ illustrating their perceptions of the organisations’ connections. 6. Social media - where the customers of the three organisations will be invited to take part in discussions on social media sites relating to the research topics. The results of data gathered by these methods will inform ‘co-design/co-delivery’ stages of the project which will use a Design Charrette (an iterative, participatory process) to explore and improve the connectivity (physical, virtual, social and cultural) and user experience of the cultural organisations and analyse the extent to which their interior and exterior layouts, programming and (social) media strategies engender connections and opportunities for access and interaction. Our approach blends social capital theory with participatory action research and draws upon a modified version of DOTT: the Design Council’s double diamond design process model, which is widely used as an iterative, inclusive method to engage local people and communities. Our intention is to explore the potential for developing new research methodology that adapts to the needs of cultural value research, which builds on the proven strengths of DOTT and in turn meets the requirements of the research aims, objectives and questions in an innovative and productive manner.

Grant Holder: Miss Deirdre O'Sullivan

Project Title: Mapping Faith and Place: Exploring cultural values in the buildings of South Asian Faiths in Leicester

Summary: The city of Leicester is the most ethnically and religiously diverse in the UK outside London. In addition to established Christian and Jewish communities, successive migrations since the 1960s have resulted in the establishment of a range of faith communities, including Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Muslims and, to a lesser extent, Buddhists. There are several new constructions but places of worship for these faiths have been constructed mostly through the reuse of earlier buildings, often redundant places of worship for other faiths, but also reusing industrial and other buildings. In all, Leicester has about 50 mosques, 10 Sikh temples or gurdwaras, 15 Hindu temples or mandirs, a Buddhist hall, and Britain's only Jain temple. These places are increasingly recognised as an important cultural element in the urban townscape. This project aims to identify the cultural values of these faith buildings in the 21st century. At one level they may be
considered as 'sacred' architecture, but it is clear that they also fulfil other important roles in redefining the shape of the city, creating a sense of belonging (and potentially also alienation) and serving a range of practical functions for their members. Clear objectives have been identified. A group of five buildings, drawn from all of the faith groups noted above, located in different types of neighbourhood, will form the key case studies. Using interviews and observation, members of faith communities, and also non-members, will be invited to share their understandings of the cultural values of these places; and plans and visualisations prepared with expert assistance will be used to chart the relative importance of different aspects of the internal and external spaces and features (Objective 1). The project aims to disseminate the results through local groups and schools, and to the wider academic community, through local outreach, meetings and seminars (Objectives 2 and 3). A final objective involves the development of an existing simple data base to bring it up to date and link it in to a project being developed by Leicester City Council, which provides a platform for social and economic analysis of the city on a ward by ward basis, using census and police data as well as the information collected by the Council (Objective 4). The idea has developed from some earlier work by the applicants in the city (see CVs), which has helped us to establish good networks and links with faith groups. The outputs from the project will reflect this dynamic research process. In addition to academic analysis, short guides and interpretive texts will form a concrete outcome from the case studies. Visualisations will be created, to serve as discursive tools. The developed database will serve as a significant new resource. Through the analysis of this research, we plan to engage with the identification of cultural value from a range of perspectives. Traditionally, within both planning and cultural frameworks, buildings have been valued aesthetically as architecture; a recognised set of further criteria, including integrity, antiquity and uniqueness, as well as association with particular events or people can enhance their value. Judgements are most usually based on acknowledged expertise, which, in the case of these structures, usually foregrounds 'primary function' at the expense of 'secondary use'; this is in itself potentially a serious limitation in the cultural appreciation of these buildings. Current theories about how culture is valued more broadly, such as the distinction often drawn between 'intrinsic', instrumental and institutional value, for example; likewise offer a rather flat and restrictive framework. As a starting point, we aim to extend understandings of value to include such things as emotion, experience and performance, which may prove more significant for the case studies; but we expect that further qualities will arise during the research.

Grant Holder: Professor Sian Jones

Project Title: Valuing the Historic Environment: a critical review of existing approaches to social value

Summary: This project seeks to advance understanding about how experience of the historic environment creates forms of social value, including its contribution to people's sense of identity, memory, and belonging. Value is central to how aspects of the historic environment are designated, managed and conserved as heritage. For much of the twentieth century this was primarily linked to what have been seen as intrinsic historic, aesthetic and scientific values. More recently there has been increasing emphasis, in both public policy and conservation practice, on the social values derived from active use of the historic environment. There are considerable difficulties surrounding how these
different kinds of value should be weighed up against one another. This is exacerbated by a lack of understanding about social value, which falls largely outside of the kinds of expert knowledge traditionally associated with the heritage sector. Furthermore, social value is not readily captured by quantitative methods or easily subjected to instrumental forms of cost-benefit analysis. Through a critical review of existing research, this project will examine current knowledge and understanding of social value. Encompassing the significance of the historic environment to contemporary communities, social value relates to people's sense of identity, distinctiveness, belonging, and place, as well as forms of memory and spiritual association. Particular attention will be focused on the modes of experience, engagement and practice that inform people's relationships with the historic environment. The project will consider the thorny issue of how to deal with the dynamic, iterative, and embodied nature of these relationships and the value created through them. It will also explore increasing evidence that points of crisis and conflict, including those associated with difficult and traumatic forms of memory are particularly potent contexts for the creation of value. The range of methodologies used in existing research and surveys will be critically discussed, along with their application in the spheres of heritage conservation and public policy. Finally, the appropriateness of a conceptual apparatus that tends to quantify and fix values will be examined. The possibilities for capturing more fluid processes of valuing the historic environment will be considered, along with the implications for other spheres of the Arts and the Cultural Sector.

Grant Holder: Professor Peter Lamarque

Project Title: Cognitive and Aesthetic Values in Cultural Artefacts
Summary: The context of the research much that our culture produces does not seem to have obvious benefits in the way that technology does. Nonetheless there is a long tradition of valuing fictional stories, pictures and other "impractical" cultural products for their beauty, for their display of imaginative and other admirable skills, and for their capacity to connect us with other people in our past and present. Thinking about culture in this last way—as a transaction between people over space and time—suggests that these products may have what are sometimes called "cognitive" values, or capacities that enable us to generate and transmit the insight or understanding that goes with various forms of practical and theoretical knowledge. Are beautiful things more beautiful for conveying knowledge? Conversely, if a cultural object spreads ignorance, error and bad judgement, is it thereby less beautiful, less worthy of being called art? These questions form the background of our project. Its aims and objectives the relations between cognitive and aesthetic values, and their place in our cultural practices are complex and we don't aim, in this brief and preliminary project, to fully explain them. Rather, we will bring together expert researchers from a range of disciplines who will contribute their varied and divergent perspectives on this relationship via close analysis of a few concrete cases. We have chosen these cases deliberately to go some way towards recognising that cultural artefacts come in very diverse kinds, and that their cognitive and aesthetic features are very varied. We take first one of the most ancient examples of proto-artistic activity, the animal depictions discovered at Chauvet cave in the Ardèche region of southern France in 1994, some of which are reckoned to date from more than thirty thousand years ago. Our second example is a group of Shakespeare's poems in sonnet form meditating on the subject of time and mortality, while our final example brings us to very recent times and perhaps the most global current artistic form: Ridley Scott's film Blade Runner. Its potential applications and benefits Our project
is first of all a contribution to the AHRC's large scale research initiative into the exploration of cultural value, which takes as its starting point "the different forms of cultural experience, such as, for instance, the aesthetic and cognitive dimensions of our cultural encounters". We believe that our research will be of foundational importance for the project and that our results, preliminary though they will be, will connect with and inform the work of many other scholars working on the project. More specifically, our contribution will be to help clarify what is involved in thinking through the relations between cognitive and aesthetic values, and to illustrate how general theories in this area have application to specific and concrete cases like those we will examine. We expect also for our work to inform the thinking of those involved in the artistic and museum worlds who grapple daily with the problem of presenting cultural objects in a context which best illustrates their various forms of value. Through publications in academic journals and in cultural and artistic magazines and through appearances in the media we expect to provoke and inform debate across society on why artistic and more broadly cultural activity should be valued.

Grant Holder: Professor Flora Samuel

Project Title: The Cultural Value of Architecture: A critical review with specific reference to UK homes and neighbourhoods

Summary: Our proposal is to create for the first time a critical review of the existing research on the cultural value of architecture in the UK focusing on the architecture of the home and of the neighbourhood. 'Architecture' is not limited here to the activities of those with Royal Institute of British Architects chartered status. We refer here to architecture as 'design research' or 'research practice' characterised by the rigorous use of such methods as mapping, consultation, visioning, design, master planning and building. Whilst there is much evidence for value of architectural input in hospitals and schools, the value of architectural input in homes and neighbourhoods remains unclear partly because of the difficulty in setting up controlled test environments in these contexts. Other methods for establishing value need to be developed with some urgency as the architecture of home and neighbourhood has a key role to play in addressing important societal challenges such as the ageing population and energy use. The critical review will provide a framework for evaluating architecture in homes and neighbourhoods that will help policy makers and practitioners to steer the future of the profession. It will focus on three interconnected components or aspects of value: 1. Wellbeing 2. Neighbourhood Cohesion 3. Identity Belonging and Heritage As we are concerned with the aspects of architecture that cut across socio economic categories we will focus on ways of promoting wellbeing to groups rather than individuals. An important strength of this project is the Advisory Group, including key figures from both industry and academia informing our debate with knowledge from a wide spectrum of viewpoints. The project is supported by the Royal Institute of British Architects and will provide evidence for their review The Value and Impact of Architecture. Sitting controversially within the portfolio of the Culture and Creative Industries Ministry the value of Architecture is currently subject to debate. Indeed the government has recently appointed Sir Terry Farrell to lead a study on public policy, design and the built environment. This critical review will be used, via a briefing paper, as evidence in Sir Farrell's enquiry, in this way influencing policy on the development of the profession. Architecture's inability to evidence its own value can in part be put down to a lack of
formal Research and Development culture within the profession. The critical review will influence architectural practice by evidencing and promoting the value of architecture. Initially in the form of a database the critical review will provide the foundation for a series of publication, most notably the Cultural Value of Architecture Report aimed at architects, clients and policy makers. It will draw together other reviews of this subject and provide an important benchmark for future research practice in the area of home and neighbourhood. The critical review will have an important impact on the development of architectural research methodologies which have remained hidden up until now, largely because practitioners rarely articulate what they do in terms of research. Architecture is not just about building, architects are adept at articulating and developing design proposals based on the spatial configuration and visualisation of complex sets of information (quantitative and qualitative). The project will give greater exposure to the methodologies of architecture through the wider Cultural Value project. It will also provide opportunities for the development of new blended methodologies developed through interdisciplinary interaction.

Grant Holder: Professor Lynn Patricia Froggett

Project Title: Public Art and Local Civic Engagement

Summary: This research has a dual focus: it will compare two different forms of contemporary public art and their significance for the development of reflective and engaged citizens in Ilfracombe, Devon, and it will develop an innovative arts sensitive method to work with visual data and visualisation, with the aim of locating the study in cultural experience. It will deploy this alongside a 'citizen's forum', a focus group based 'citizen's forum' to assess their respective merits in enabling members of the community to express their feelings and opinions of these two artworks. The findings will have significance beyond the town and inform policy makers, arts commissioners, evaluators, academics and the arts and cultural sector on the kind of public art most likely to promote identity, belonging and citizenship; also the mechanisms whereby these effects are achieved and can be evaluated In 2012, Ilfracombe was home to two public artworks: the temporary visit of Alex Hartley's Nowhereisland and Damien Hirst's twenty year loan of the 66 ft bronze statue, Verity. These two very different kinds of public art came together in the same year in the same small coastal town. Nowhereisland involved the journey of an artificially created small island from the Arctic to the south-west coast of England as a visiting 'island nation'. As it travelled through international waters, the island was declared a 'new nation' with citizenship open to all. Preparations for the arrival of Nowhereisland had already begun eighteen months previously, with activities and events involving local people exploring the meaning of local and national citizenship within a globalising world. Hirst's Verity was created as a 'modern allegory of truth and justice'. It towers over the waterfront, the tallest example of public art in England. People travel many miles to see it, stimulating regeneration and tourism in the town. Neither artwork has escaped controversy and local citizens have expressed a range of opinions and feelings, positive and negative, about the value of such public art. This research will ask what meanings and values these artworks represent for the local community, why, and in what ways? By facilitating debate in a citizen's forum, and an innovative method of associating to visual data, the research will be looking to understand how the arrival of the artworks is embedded in local memory and imagination, their on-going effects and lasting legacy for people, individually and as part
of the wider community. These questions will be researched with: a literature review, a media and archive review to understand the initial feedback and reactions to the artworks; short interviews with stakeholders and biographical narrative interviews with the artists to understand the artworks' importance in the artist's life work and their intended significance; the Citizen's Forum will stimulate debate and there will be a visual matrix for each of the artworks. This innovative method accesses the visual imagination and those aspects of artistic experience which cannot easily be expressed in words. It will provide opportunities for creative community engagement by introducing ways of expressing feelings and ideas through images that often arise when looking at art. In the visual matrix a group of around 35 participants will be able to express their relationship to Nowhereisland and Verity by offering pictures and images that come to mind when thinking about the artworks. In this way the complex emotional reactions and ideas connected to citizens' appreciation of the artworks can become available for interpretation and analysis by the research team. The findings from the different data sources will be compared and combined and fed back to the participants for further discussion and refinement. The team will report and disseminate the research through web and print based media, conference, seminars and workshop.

Grant Holder: Professor Philip Maurice Davis

Project Title: Assessing the intrinsic value, and health and well-being benefits, for individual and community, of The Reader Organisation's Volunteer Reader Scheme

Summary: This project will investigate the value to individual and community of the BIG Lottery-funded Volunteer Reader Scheme, which has been developed by award-winning charitable social enterprise, The Reader Organisation (TRO), as part of its pioneering outreach project, Get into Reading (GIR). TRO's mission is to create environments where personal responses to books are freely shared in reading communities in every area of life. The GIR model is based on small groups (2-12 people), reading aloud together short stories, novels and poetry. GIR is distinguished from conventional reading groups by its shared-reading method: the literature exists live and performativity in the room; regular breaks in the reading encourage participants to reflect on what is being read, and weigh its language and meaning, often in implicit or explicit relation to their own life-experience, while readers always control their own involvement, contributing as much or as little as they choose. GIR currently delivers over 360 groups, in health and social care settings (community centres, libraries, homeless shelters, schools, hospitals, offices, doctors' surgeries, prisons, drug rehab units and care homes) across the UK. The related Volunteer Reader Scheme engages 70 people at risk of, or suffering from, mental health difficulties, isolation or unemployment in a range of volunteering opportunities at all levels of TRO. Volunteer roles operate at the heart of organisation's reading mission and whilst often still being members of reading groups, volunteers are further involved as: Office Assistants, preparing reading resources for reading groups; Reading Group Assistants, working alongside reading group facilitators: Reading Friends, reading weekly, one-to-one, with isolated older people; Reading Group Facilitators, running weekly reading groups in Residential Care Homes or with the elderly. Volunteers are fully trained and supported by TRO staff, receiving regular feedback and recognition of their achievements and are offered potential for role development: reading-group members may become volunteers; volunteers may become interns or apprentices; apprentices
may become employees. This study will build on the existing collaboration between The Centre for Research into Reading, Information and Linguistic Systems (CRILS) at the University of Liverpool, and its third sector partner, TRO, to develop innovative, interdisciplinary literary and social scientific methodologies for capturing multi-dimensional components of the reading experience. In two separate yet related and concurrent studies, the research will seek (1) to identify the unique value of shared reading as it is actually experienced by the volunteers, as a representative section of vulnerable and needy individuals, as well as examining the relationship of this intrinsic value to collateral benefits. Through comparison of a GIR group with a built environment discussion group, via analysis of transcribed audio-recordings, this study will test the hypothesis that serious literature has power to create both individual meaningfulness and a strongly interactive small community; (2) to test the efficacy of the movement from, and inter-relation between, reading group-membership and future facilitation of reading groups, by comparing the experience of volunteers as continuing group-members and as developing group-helper, gaining increased master. Dynamic and diverse volunteer case studies will be compiled, via interviews, observations, questionnaires, and these will be cross-referenced with routine audit data, to establish the connection between intrinsic literary affect and individual mental health and community well-being. This study will also consider how TRO's recent acquisition of an International Reading and Wellbeing centre, Calderstones Park Mansion House, may serve as a future Merseyside hub to create a larger community of volunteers engaged in reader and other-related activities.