

The Importance and Impact of AHRC-funded research, August 2017

The Arts and Humanities investigate the values and beliefs which underpin both who we are as individuals and how we undertake our responsibilities to our society and to humanity globally. They explore human interactions and the evolution of identities over time. They help us understand not only how individuals and societies operate, but why and with what consequences, both for themselves and for others. Our historical past, literary and artistic achievements, ability to translate across cultures, and the foundations of knowledge itself: these are all essential elements of Arts and Humanities research. They are also crucial to our capacity to live together in an increasingly interconnected world and to change that world for the better.¹

The UK's reputation as a creative powerhouse rests on the new knowledge and cultural experiences generated by the Arts and Humanities. Our rich and varied heritage makes the UK distinctive and will continue to do so in the coming decades. The fast-growing publishing, TV, film, fashion, music and gaming industries, alongside world-renowned theatres, galleries, libraries and museums, are central to the economic future. The Arts and Humanities are the crucible shaping the skilled people, ideas and products at the interface between creativity and technology upon which that future turns.²

The AHRC exists to promote and channel the research that:

- provides profound insights into ourselves and the nature of the world around us, thereby enabling diverse communities and their citizens to play a full and responsible part in society and to live rich and thoughtful lives;³
- brings a deep cultural understanding into the realm of international development to tackle problems of world poverty, resource scarcity, state and environmental fragility and respect for human rights in new and productively different ways;⁴
- sustains the UK's flagship cultural institutions that preserve the nation's and the world's extraordinary heritage and act as a calling card to the

¹ [10 Years of the AHRC: A Decade of Supporting Excellence in Arts and Humanities Research](#) (2015); [The Human World: AHRC Strategy 2013-2018](#) (2012); [AHRC Impact Reports](#) (2007-2016) and [case studies](#). For specific themes and initiatives see: <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/themes/> such as, for example, AHRC's current [themes](#) and former initiatives such as [the Landscape and Environment](#) Programme, the [Religion and Society](#) Programme and the [Beyond Text](#) Programme.

² [Creative Exchanges](#) (2016) [Leading the World](#) (2009);

³ [Creative Living Knowledge](#) (2016) and the [Connected Communities Programme](#); [Exploring Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) (2017), [Health and Wellbeing: the contribution of the arts and humanities](#) (2012)

⁴ For example, the AHRC's contribution to the [Global Challenges Research Fund](#) and the AHRC's [Human Rights Research and Impact Timeline](#).

rest of the world, alongside local arts organisations as pillars of community cohesion, urban regeneration and civic life;⁵

- addresses the distinctive needs of the fastest-growing, creative sector of the UK's economy (and indeed the global economy) for the greater fusion of artistic design, digital and computing skills.⁶

⁵ [A Decade of Success: Supporting Research in the UK's major culture and heritage organisations](#) (2017), the Digital R&D Fund

⁶ [The Brighton Fuse](#) report and the [Creative Fuse North East](#) project.