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DESIGN HISTORY IN BRITAIN  
FROM THE 1970s to 2012:  
CONTEXT, FORMATION, AND  
DEVELOPMENT

J. V. GOODING

PhD

2012



DESIGN HISTORY IN BRITAIN  
FROM THE 1970s to 2012:  
CONTEXT, FORMATION, AND  
DEVELOPMENT

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## Abstract

This thesis discusses the development of design history in Britain from the 1970s to 2012, arguing that it is a clear example of a network of relationships, intersections of ideas, approaches and intellectual influences that are representative of the complexity of current academic practice. This study engages with discourses and debates concerning attempts to define academic recognition in a subject area that resists drawing boundaries and is by its very nature multidisciplinary. The period with which this study is concerned is characterised by considerable change in society, the approach to education and academic endeavour, and the consumption of histories. All of these changes have significance for the formation and development of design history, in addition to its contribution to academic practice and its impact beyond narrow scholarly circles.

This thesis acknowledges that the overlapping and interweaving of threads of knowledge, methodology, approaches and paradigms is a feature of contemporary academic practice, and applies the concept of *communities of practice* to discussion of the multiple types of scholarship that have constituted design history. In doing this no claim is made for design history as a distinct academic discipline but rather it is discussed as a much broader academic network. Additionally, the thesis offers an evaluation of the role of this network, including the Design History Society as a distinct community of practice, in the context of developments in education, academic changes, museums and publishing. This leads to a consideration of the various arenas in which the products of design history are consumed thus demonstrating the importance and impact of the network outside academia.

## **Acknowledgements**

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Any research project involves interactions across a wide network and many individuals have contributed influence and assistance, both practically and intellectually. These include those who inspired my interest in writing histories; from Frank Hedley my school history teacher; Ludmilla Jordanova for initial assistance on an A' level project and subsequently as tutor on my degree at the University of East Anglia; to tutors and staff on the V&A/RCA History of Design MA, including John Styles, Helen Clifford, Jeremy Aynsley, David Crowley and Katrina Royall. Also members of the Design History Society during my time as a member of the Executive Committee; especially Barbara Burman, Grace Lees-Maffei, Nicola Hebditch, Kirsten Hardie, Ruth Facey, Lesley Whitworth and Juliette Kristensen. I would also like to thank many of the members of the wider design history network who have often reminded me of the importance of design histories. I am indebted to Linda Sandino and Liz Bruchet the co-ordinators of the Design History Society and Association of Art Historians oral history projects and all interviewers and interviewees. Additionally, any project such as this involves the help and assistance of librarians and archive staff at various institutions who all deserve my thanks, they include; Elizabeth James from the National Art Library at the V&A, and staff from, the Royal College of Art, Northumbria and Teesside

Universities, the Design Council Archive, the National Archive, the Museum of Brands and Packaging and the Design Museum. I would also like to acknowledge those who donated to the DHS archive papers and provided documents for use in this project, including Malcolm Gee, Jonathan Woodham, Christopher Bailey, Charlotte Benton, and Bridget Wilkins.

Finally, friends and family have offered emotional, practical and financial help. These include fellow historians Claire Longworth, Claire Jones and Carla Cesare. Thanks also to my parents and parents-in-law, particularly Len Gooding for proof-reading my text. Lastly, but most importantly, it is an honour for me to thank Scott Gooding for all his support through these challenging and exciting years.

Dedication

For Scott and Jasper.



## **Declaration**

I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. The work was done in collaboration with the Design History Society.

Name: Joanne Victoria Gooding

Signature:

Date:

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## **Introduction**

This thesis examines the development of design history from the 1970s primarily in Britain; arguing that current intellectual practice is the product of a complex network shaped by its formation, relationships, approaches, ideas, and outputs. This initial chapter has several distinct purposes; firstly, it clarifies the research questions, articulates the scope, aims and objectives of this research and it outlines the methodologies used. Secondly, it discusses the key influences considered throughout the thesis; these include consideration of the network of relationships, events and institutions that shape the intellectual framework within which design history occurs. Thirdly, it addresses the nature of academic practice and the areas of enquiry that discuss design and designed objects; asking what *design history* is and what debates surround it. Fourthly, the chapter explores the nature of writing history; this section includes a discussion of the parameters and necessary limitations that have been imposed on the study in order to make it achievable. Finally, the structure of subsequent chapters will be explained in terms of how broad thematic discussion and case studies interweave with a chronological framework.

### **Aims, objectives and methodology**

This thesis discusses the development of design history in Britain since the 1970s. The explicit research questions addressed are; why did design history develop as a distinct type of historical practice? What does that practice look like and how is it

constituted? What is design history's relationship to art and design practice? How does design history operate as a network in Latourian terms and how is this articulated?<sup>1</sup> This study will necessarily engage with discourses and debates concerning the nature of historical enquiry and the issues to be considered when attempting to define a subject area, academic discipline, community or network. It also considers the individual and institutional relationships that were central to the development of design history in an academic context. The term 'practice' is used to describe the activities ordinarily undertaken by an individual; for lecturers and scholars that may encompass study, research, writing, discussions and teaching; for artists and designers the term 'practice' is taken to connote their creative practice. Recently art and design historians have raised concerns regarding the future of the academic discipline in the context of changing education policy and a drop in demand for pure art and design history courses at undergraduate level. This research will evaluate the impact that design history has had in the academic world, the writing of histories, the museum sector, and on education in the creative sector. In doing this it will bring additional evidence forward in the debate over the future of design history.<sup>2</sup>

Evidence for the current standing of design history includes the recent publication of several introductory texts and readers, which demonstrate the relevance of

<sup>1</sup> Bruno Latour is a key figure associated with Actor-Network Theory which is clearly articulated in: Latour, B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social - An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

<sup>2</sup> Meetings discussing the issue include: "Are we in Crisis? Challenges in Teaching and Research in the New Century", a joint meeting of the AAH and DHS, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2004 at UCE, Birmingham; "Histories of British Design: Where Next?" V&A, London, 6-8 July 2006 organised by the Yale Center for British Art in collaboration with the V&A Research Department and co-sponsored by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art; and recently a strand entitled "The Current State of Design History" at "What's the Use? Critical Histories of Art & Design Colleges," The annual conference of the College Art Association, 20-23 February 2008, Texas.

design history in an academic setting. Additionally developments in how history is presented for consumption in museums and new media show the impact and relevance of design history.<sup>3</sup> None of the recent texts and readers on the subject elucidate the practical and institutional histories of the emergence of design history; this is where this thesis offers an original perspective.

Design history in *Britain* is the primary focus of this research; but it is not limited merely to an institutional biography or a narrative history of the Design History Society (hereafter referred to as the DHS), rather it is a broader project. Accordingly, this thesis goes beyond an examination of the DHS as an organisation to consider the broader intellectual network associated with creating design histories, although it has been partially shaped by using the Society as a start point for research. The DHS was originally a UK-based organisation that emerged due to a particular set of contextual circumstances prompted by the British educational system and since then it has evolved to becoming more international. Discussion of widening geographies for design history on the international stage is beyond the scope of this thesis, although there are references to key developments in the United States and Europe throughout the text. It is only in recent years that design history has become discernable in Africa, Asia, Australasia and South America.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Recent publications include the introductory text by Fallan, K.(2010) *Design History: understanding theory and method*, Oxford: Berg; and anthologies and readers include; Doordan, D. ed.)(1996)*Design History: An Anthology (Design Issues Reader)*Boston: MIT Press; Clark, H. & Brody, D. (eds),(2009) *Design Studies - A Reader*, Oxford: Berg; Lees-Maffei, G. & Houze,R. (2009)*The Design History Reader*, Oxford: Berg; Adamson, G.(2009)*The Craft Reader*, Oxford: Berg; and Highmore, B (ed.)(2009)*The Design Culture Reader*, London: Routledge. Developments in museums include major re-display projects at national museums such as the V&A, and recent television programmes such as BBC series *The Genius of Design* and *At Home with the Georgians* show the wider impact and relevance of design history.

<sup>4</sup> These developments will be discussed in chapter seven.

The theoretical, methodological, and subject focus of design history has always been fluid and the variety of methods and approaches to design, and designed objects, is one of its strengths. Reference is made to the ‘domain’ of design history, taking the meaning of ‘domain’ to be the scope or range of any subject or sphere of knowledge.<sup>5</sup> This term is used rather than ‘field’ or ‘subject’ as it does not imply a restricted canon of approved topics but is fluid and inclusive. As such it is most suited to the variety of research and scholarly activities undertaken by those in the broad design history network. This thesis proposes three main discursive contexts to these activities. Firstly, those approaches that were formed with reference to design practice and art and design education. Secondly, design history as part of wider historical practices including economic, social, and cultural history, and perhaps more specifically art histories, visual culture and material culture studies.<sup>6</sup> Thirdly, design history as it emerged in relation to changes in the museum world and links to museum studies and museology.<sup>7</sup>

The thesis offers an historical narrative that critically situates design history and its various methodologies within the framework of the educational, museological, and publishing sectors in Britain. It combines empirical study and qualitative critical

<sup>5</sup> As defined in the Chambers Dictionary. Use of this term throughout this thesis is influenced by the work of Etienne Wenger on Communities of Practice, as discussed below in subsection *Networks, Communities of Practice and Interactions* and further discussion of literature on the terms ‘field’ and ‘subject’ is given in subsection *Discussing Design as a subject*.

<sup>6</sup> It is important to note here a significant input from other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, cultural theory and popular culture studies. Discussion of changes in art history can be charted through readers such as; Harris, J. (2001) *The New Art History – A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge; Harrison, C. & Wood, P. (eds) (1992, 2003), *Art in Theory 1900-2000 – An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell; Fernie, E. (ed.) (1995) *Art History and its methods - a critical anthology* London: Phaidon; Preziosi, D. (ed.) (1998) *The Art of Art History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; and Edwards, S. (ed.) (1999) *Art and its Histories: A Reader* New Haven: Yale University Press

<sup>7</sup> Key work in this area is done at the Centre for Museum Studies at Leicester University under the guidance of Susan Pearce and her colleagues; for example Pearce, S.M. (ed) (1994) *Interpreting Objects and Collections* London: Routledge; another key text is Vergo, P. (ed) (1989) *The New Museology* London: Reaktion. Many museum curators also see their practice as being that of a design historian.

analysis of events, institutional developments, individual contributions and key texts, with in-depth case studies to explore particular aspects and events of importance. It draws on sources which include; archive evidence, incorporating the 'private' records of government committees and academic societies; 'public' documents such as government reports and society newsletters; published texts such as conference proceedings course materials and historical publications; and oral sources, both formal and informal.<sup>8</sup> Oral history evidence used offered the testimonies of individuals who contributed to this period of history. This enabled personal relationships, both positive and negative, to be revealed that might not have come to light through these other sources.<sup>9</sup> The testimony was then corroborated with documentary evidence from official and public sources wherever possible. For a more detailed consideration of the methodological problems encountered when utilising oral sources as evidence see discussion later in this chapter and also the section in Chapter Four.

In *Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault introduced the idea of 'discursive formations' in relation to history-writing, suggesting history as chains of ideas formed through the interrelation of people and events.<sup>10</sup> Due to the sources of archival and oral history evidence this research initially drew upon this notion and the associated

<sup>8</sup> For example, minutes of meetings from committees of the Council of National Academic Awards, and minutes of the executive committee meetings from the Design History Society. Public documents include the Coldstream report and published newsletters of societies such as the Design History Society and the Association of Art Historians. Published texts and works of Design History are themselves primary sources for a study of this nature. Oral sources come both through informal conversations and through the recorded 'oral history' testimonies given to the Design History Society Oral History Project and the Association of Art Historians 'Voices in Art History' project.

<sup>9</sup> Examples of this are that Tim Putnam lodged with Bridget Wilkins, and Adrian Forty shared a house with key feminist authors.

<sup>10</sup> Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London: Tavistock Publications, p38



idea of the genealogy as a guide for research.<sup>11</sup> This acknowledged that historical discourse had an ongoing character, and whereas an 'archaeology of knowledge' offers a snapshot or slice of history a 'genealogy of knowledge' offers a different emphasis by considering the process without offering judgment.<sup>12</sup> During the initial stages of research attempts were made to construct an academic 'family tree' of influences, considering scholarly mentor-mentee, student-tutor, and peer relationships, and to map these against events and institutions, and unpick intersections and different generations. An unfeasible task, this would have provided an incomplete picture of the design history community. Throughout the research it became clear that a key feature is the matrix of relationships, both personal and professional, and so this thesis utilised two key theoretical approaches; philosopher Bruno Latour's work on Actor-Network Theory, which proposed a theory examining related events and individuals as actors in a network, and also on the work of social learning theorist Etienne Wenger on communities of practice.<sup>13</sup>

### **Networks, Communities of Practice and Interactions**

Bruno Latour is recognized as a key figure among a group of science and technology studies scholars in Paris. This group applied methods from science and engineering to consider natural and social networks. Actor-Network Theory (ANT) proposes the consideration of societies and networks as having many dimensions; and that in order to describe them one must recognize that they have:

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, and Topp, W.(2000) "Knowledge system diagnostics: applying Foucault's archaeological framework to organisations" *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*,17(4)pp.365-75

<sup>12</sup> Kendal, G & Wickham, G.(1999) *Using Foucault's Methods*, London: Sage Publications, pp29-32.

<sup>13</sup> Latour, B. *op.cit.* and Wenger, E. (1998) *Communities of practice-Learning, meaning, and identity*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press

“a fibrous, thread-like, wiry, stringy, ropy, capillary character that is never captured by the notions of levels, layers, territories, spheres, categories, structure, systems.”<sup>14</sup>

This theory is particularly pertinent for the consideration of the topic of this thesis as it problematizes the interconnections between ideas, events and individuals. Latour argues that sturdiness is more easily achieved by “weaving and twisting ties that are weak by themselves”, he perceives that; “strength does not come from concentration, purity and unity, but from dissemination, heterogeneity and the careful plaiting of weak ties.”<sup>15</sup> This reflects the characteristics of design historical research activity where its strength comes from the interweaving strands of relationships, activities, methods, and theories; there is no single compulsory path. The links between the design history community and Latour were made explicit in the 2008 DHS conference where Latour was invited to give a keynote address to delegates’.<sup>16</sup> The conference highlighted the relevance of scholarly notions of networks for design practice and design history, with the conference organizers stating that;

“The theme Networks of Design responds to recent academic interest in the fields of design, technology and the social sciences in the ‘networks’ of interactions within processes of knowledge formation..[that] emerges from actor-network theory (ANT)... Studying networks foregrounds infrastructure, negotiations, processes, strategies of interconnection, and the heterogeneous relationships between people and things.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Latour, B. (1997) *On Actor Network Theory, A few clarifications*, Article for Online Resource, Centre for Social Theory and Technology (CSTT), Keele University, <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-I-9801/msg00019.html> (Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> July 2008)

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Design History Society annual conference, University College Falmouth, 3-6 September 2008. See conference proceedings; Hackney, F, Glynn, J. & Minton, V (eds.)(2009) *Networks of Design; Proceedings of the 2008 Annual International Conference of the Design History Society (UK) University College Falmouth, 3-6 September*, Universal-Publishers, and Latour, B.,(2008) *A Cautious Prometheus? A Few Steps Toward a Philosophy of Design (with Special Attention to Peter Sloterdijk)*, Keynote lecture for the Networks of Design meeting of the Design History Society, Falmouth, Cornwall, 3 September 2008. see archived conference website at <http://www.networksofdesign.co.uk/>

<sup>17</sup> Text taken from the call for papers for the Design History Society’s 2008 Conference *Networks of Design*.

The theme was particularly pertinent to the broad range of academic approaches and wide subject matter addressed by design history and as such has informed this thesis. The conference provided an opportunity for academic researchers from 'the social sciences, technology, material culture, cultural geography, information technology, and systems design, and design theory and history'<sup>18</sup> to get together to discuss issues in the same domain demonstrating a shared interest; indeed a 'community of practice'.

The concept of *communities of practice* is age-old although the terminology and theorising about the concept is more recent and associated with the work of social learning theorist Etienne Wenger and social anthropologist Jean Lave.<sup>19</sup> Wenger argues that a *community of practice* is a group of people with a shared passion or concern for something they do who through interactions learn how to do that thing better. His definition "allows for, but does not assume, intentionality" in learning, "learning can be the reason the community comes together or an incidental outcome of members interactions." Not all communities or groups are *communities of practice*, Wenger identifies three particular crucial characteristics; the *community*, the *practice* and the *domain*. As a *community*, members build relationships that help them to learn from each other through discussions and joint activities. Members of the *community of practice* develop their *practice* through "a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems" and a community of practice goes beyond being a mere group of people or network of connections by its members having a "shared

<sup>18</sup> Hackney, F, Glynne, J. & Minton, V (eds.) *op.cit.*, introduction.

<sup>19</sup> Wenger, E. (1989) *Communities of Practice – Learning, Meaning, and Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Wenger, E(2006)*Communities of practice - a brief introduction*  
<http://www.ewenger.com/theory/p.3>

competence" and a commitment to a domain. However that domain is "not necessarily something recognized as expertise outside the community".<sup>20</sup> Although there are similarities between a *community of practice* and a *network*, the domain is the characteristic which distinguishes the two concepts. Wenger argues that you could belong to the same network as someone although not be aware of it whereas a relationship is articulated on a certain level within a community of practice. This thesis argues that there are many different *communities of practice* relating to design history within the broader *network* of design history and it will identify various examples of significance, although due to the parameters of this work and the nature of the topic an exhaustive and comprehensive list is unachievable.<sup>21</sup> The two linked concepts of boundaries and peripheries are of particular importance for discussion of design history and they feature as a key aspect of Wenger's discussion surrounding communities of practice. Wenger argues that, "communities of practice cannot be considered in isolation from the rest of the world, or understood independently of other practices" their enterprises are interconnected and "as a result, engagement in practice entails engagement in these external

<sup>20</sup> Wenger, E. (2006) *op.cit.* p.2

<sup>21</sup> As different communities of practice are continually forming and evolving there is nothing to be gained from attempting to categorically list them due to the inevitability of change and likelihood of omissions. However it is useful to suggest examples, these include but are not restricted to academic groups, hobby and special interest associations, and campaigning organisations. Examples of a particular focus on distinct topics include The Costume Society, focusing on fashion and dress collections, their histories and often considering issues relating to gender. Available at <http://costumesociety.org.uk>, (no date) (Accessed: 3rd January 2012) Additionally the Centre for the History of Retailing and Distribution (CHORD) which often has overlaps with both gender and fashion, but also business history. See, <http://pers-www.wlv.ac.uk/~in6086/chord.html> (December 2011) (Accessed: 3rd January 2012) Other communities of practice surround organisations such as The Twentieth Century Society and the National Association of Fine and Decorative Arts (NADFAS). The Twentieth Century Society (formerly the Thirties Society est 1979 following an exhibition on the topic) is a specialised conservation organisation which campaigns for the safeguarding of architectural heritage. Connections are clear as its offices are in the same building as the Association for Art Historians, 70 Cowcross Street London. NADFAS was founded in 1968 following the formation of the Chiltern Antiques group. The group had clear connections with the V&A, receiving encouragement from its Director Sir Trenchard Cox, who later became the Associations President. Source, "A brief History of NADFAS" available at <http://www.nadfas.org.uk/> (Accessed: 3rd January 2012)

relations”.<sup>22</sup> This thesis looks at these boundary relationships between design historians and other groups within academic scholarship, educational provision, publishing and the museum world.

The conceptual model of communities of practice has recently been applied by Steve Herne to a discussion of art educators in secondary education and this has some issues that overlap with concerns articulated in this thesis.<sup>23</sup> Namely the contested relationships that are evident when historical, critical and theoretical concerns are introduced to students of art, at all pedagogic levels. He argues that this social theory, and consideration of discourse and boundary objects, can be helpful when examining the complex interactions that still occur between groups who often have conflicting ideas concerning critical and contextual studies. His key concern is the interaction between educators in a museum and gallery context, where there continue to be issues that are frequently encountered in the design history network relating to “crossing boundaries between institutions, subject and pedagogical content knowledge, conceptions of the discipline of art and design, [and] the role of gallery education.”<sup>24</sup> This thesis uses this social-theoretical model in tandem with actor-network-theory as articulated by Latour and addresses a similar, but much broader and complex, topic - the development of design history.

The application of the theoretical approaches offered by Wenger’s Communities of Practice and Latour’s Actor-Networks demonstrate the complexities of drawing boundaries around organisations. Stephen Fox argues that both these theories,

<sup>22</sup> Wenger, E. (1989) *op.cit.* p.103.

<sup>23</sup> Herne, S., (2006) “Communities of practice in art and design and museum and gallery education,” *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 14(1), pp.1-17.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

supported by Foucault's work on power, demonstrate that examining a singular organisation as a unit of analysis is unfeasible as "it is comprised of communities, not simply sub-cultures."<sup>25</sup> Mindful of this it is clear that looking solely at the development of the DHS as an organisation would not be a useful approach for analysing design history in this thesis. However, using both theoretical approaches together helps to consider the relationships between groups and how they may mesh together.

Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is also useful theoretically for this thesis as it comments on how history has been written, the role of disciplines, and approaches such as literary analysis.<sup>26</sup> He dismisses the idea of a *total history*, and discusses the role of disciplines in moving attention away from "past units like 'periods' or 'centuries' to the phenomena of rupture of discontinuity".<sup>27</sup> Foucault's methods for exploring knowledge were not offered as a coherent statement of historical methodology but Gavin Kendall and Gary Wickham argue that three ideas can be seen as the "cornerstones" of a "Foucauldian method"; these are archaeology, genealogy and discourse.<sup>28</sup> Warren Topp suggests that Foucault's *archaeology* can offer a diagnostic framework to help uncover an organisations 'rules of formation' however this approach was not deemed suitable for either the DHS as an organisation or the wider design history community, due to the fluid nature of

<sup>25</sup> Fox, S.(2000), "Communities of Practice, Foucault and Actor-Network Theory," *Journal of Management Studies*, 37 (6), pp. 853–868. p865

<sup>26</sup> See discussion in the introduction to; Foucault, M., (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London: Tavistock Publications.

<sup>27</sup> According to Foucault total history seeks to "reconstitute the overall form of the civilisation the principle-material or spiritual-of the society, the significance common to all the phenomena of the period" see, *Ibid.* pp. 4-9.

<sup>28</sup> Kendal, G & Wickham, G.(1999) *Using Foucault's Methods*, London: Sage Publications

these entities.<sup>29</sup> Initially the ideas of *genealogy* and *discourse* were attractive as a method of approaching this research. The number of researchers describing themselves as design historians is relatively small when compared to other areas of academic discourse and it is possible to consider 'family' relationships, indeed some writers on the subject have even spoken in terms of the different 'generations' of design historians.<sup>30</sup> However, in the light of considerations of 'communities of practice' and Latour's concerns with networks and their complexity, it became clear that the unpicking of a genealogy or academic family influence or line of descent was unsustainable.

### **Discussing Design as a subject**

A key issue throughout debates surrounding design history is discussion of the domain; the scope and range of this particular sphere of knowledge. This issue is allied with attempts to define design history as either a 'subject' or 'discipline'; these terms could almost be used interchangeably but each is subtly different. Here use of these terms has been influenced by Walker's discussion of defining the object of study for design history.<sup>31</sup> The *subject* refers to the range of topics and themes studied and as such is a similar term to a 'field of studies'. A *discipline* is linked to learning and instruction within education and academia, this term suggests that there are parameters and control; as Walker argued "establishing the boundaries of the subject [is] the first task of any new intellectual discipline" although this

<sup>29</sup> Topp, W.(2000)"Knowledge system diagnostics: applying Foucault's archaeological framework to organisations," *Systems Research and Behavioural Science*,17(4), pp.365-75

<sup>30</sup> For example Jeffrey Meikle and Guy Julier, for examples see discussions in their articles: Meikle, J.(1998)"Material Virtues: On the Ideal and the Real in Design History,"*Journal of Design History*,11(3),pp. 191-199 and Julier, G. & Narotzky, V.(1998)"The Redundancy of Design History" *Practically Speaking conference*, December Wolverhampton University. Available at [www.lmu.ac.uk/as/artdesresearch/papers](http://www.lmu.ac.uk/as/artdesresearch/papers), (Accessed: 25<sup>th</sup> January 2007)

<sup>31</sup> Walker, J.A. (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*. London: Pluto Press. pp.22-37 and pp.45-67

“essential” act “gives rise to arguments about limits”.<sup>32</sup> The discussion of boundaries and peripheries has been, and remains, of great importance in relation to design history. Arguably, design history is an area of academic activity, a ‘community of practice’ or more broadly a ‘network’, that resists definitions or boundaries. Hence by drawing parameters around discussion of its evolution and development, this thesis will inevitably entail omissions of many interesting and potentially fruitful areas of discussion.<sup>33</sup> Articulating what is meant by *design* poses a particular problem for design historians. Disagreement surrounds the scope of the term ‘design’, to what extent are architecture, craft, the decorative arts, and mass media included as acceptable subject matter for the design historian? The issue of boundaries is also acute when considering design practice, art installations, visual and material cultures. In relation to academic practice when design history emerged as a sub-discipline of art history in the 1970s the issue of what was appropriate subject matter became the focus of many debates, initially informally, and latterly in print.<sup>34</sup> Rather than intentionally limiting the discussion by presenting a narrow definition of terminology here, this thesis argues for a fluid domain of design history instead of using the terms ‘field’ ‘subject’ and ‘discipline’ which suggest implicit boundaries and parameters.

Clive Dilnot’s seminal essays on the state of design history were first published in 1984 and here he articulated the problems and possibilities in what he termed the

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.22

<sup>33</sup> An example of this might be the intersections between architectural history and design history; a subject that is arguably worthy of a doctoral thesis in its own right.

<sup>34</sup> These debates will be discussed in further detail throughout the thesis in chronological order.



field.<sup>35</sup> Although these contributions are over thirty years old, and many contextual changes have occurred during this period, they remain central to discussion of the role and state of design historical scholarship in Britain and also America. Dilnot argued that design practice and designed objects were of a high enough status to be worthy of academic study but that there was a danger of design history becoming isolationist. He identified that design historians needed to be aware of making their practice relevant for their audience and explained the issues that faced them. Another pivotal text that discussed design historical practice was *Design History and the History of Design* by John A. Walker published in 1989.<sup>36</sup> This book, aimed at students and young scholars working in this “new and thriving field”, followed Dilnot’s thesis by offering grounding for discussions of design historical practice from a theoretical perspective.<sup>37</sup> The subtleties of the variety of approaches to ‘history of design’, defining the object of study, and the differences of opinion when trying to identify a body of material were noted by Walker: “the very act gives rise to arguments about limits.”<sup>38</sup> It also made explicit the differences between the two similar terms; *design history* is described as the practice of theorizing designed objects within a social and historical framework and as a branch of history; whereas *history of design* refers to the object of study itself. This key text on design history did not explain the initial emergence of design history; Walker argued that “a detailed account of the origins and development of Design

<sup>35</sup> Dilnot, C. (1984) "The State of Design History, Part I: Mapping the Field" *Design Issues*, 1(1) pp.4-23 and; Dilnot, C. (1984) "The State of Design History, Part II: Problems and Possibilities" *Design Issues*, 1,(2) pp. 3-20

<sup>36</sup> The first text to provide an overview and critique of the field of Design History and History of Design was; Walker, John, A. (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*, Pluto Press,

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, An additional work aimed at students is Conway, H. (1987) *Design History - a Students' Handbook*. London: Routledge

<sup>38</sup> Walker, J. A., *op.cit.*, p.22

History [was] beyond the scope of [his] book.”<sup>39</sup> Recent publications have also omitted to address the importance of the relationships between certain individuals and institutions.<sup>40</sup>

The contemporary relevance of Dilnot’s 1984 essays were demonstrated in 2008 when they were the central focus of discussion and reassessment at the College Art Association conference strand “The Current State of Design History”.<sup>41</sup> Here papers, and subsequent responses by Dilnot, charted the changes in focus of design history over the decades from an initial concern with the production of objects within a socio-historical context, to consideration of consumption, and then concern for mediation and how design objects operate within social practices.<sup>42</sup> The refusal, or inability, of design history to settle on a single definition or to draw boundaries around an accepted genre of objects is arguably one of the strengths of the discipline. This strength can also have negative impact leading to a certain lack of solid identity for the discipline; indeed many academics practicing design history might not define their work as such.<sup>43</sup> This doctoral research aims to examine this issue of boundaries and peripheries by looking at the networks surrounding design historical practice.<sup>44</sup> It draws on evidence from the DHS’s papers and the detailed

<sup>39</sup> Walker, J. A., *op.cit.*, pp.16-17

<sup>40</sup> Lees-Maffei, G. & Houze, R. (2010) *The Design History Reader*, Oxford: Berg and Fallan, K. (2010) *Design history: understanding theory and method*, Oxford: Berg

<sup>41</sup> Clark, H. (2008) *The Current State of Design History – Introduction to Strand* [Co-convenor of strand at College Art Association Conference 20-23 February 2008 – recorded onto CD] Texas: Conference Media. Contribution to the strand was made by Grace Lees-Maffei to represent the subject from a British perspective.

<sup>42</sup> Lees-Maffei, G. (2008) *The Current State of Design History* – [Paper given to strand at College Art Association Conference] CAA 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, 20-23 February 2008 Dallas Texas, CD Recording, Disc 1, track 2.

<sup>43</sup> The open and inclusive nature of design history, in terms of subject matter and approach, may eventually cause it to diversify to too great an extent.

<sup>44</sup> The Design History Society provided partial funding for a research studentship in association with Northumbria University; this thesis is the product of that studentship.

Oral History Project that the Society has also funded.<sup>45</sup> It offers new knowledge by discussing the circumstances of the emergence of design history; it will also consider the importance of networks and relationships to the development of an area of academic practice which otherwise has very fluid boundaries; and it will assess the appropriateness of applying Actor-Network Theory and the concept of Communities of Practice as methodologies. Additionally, it will consider the various arenas in which design history research has had an important impact; and will also address design history's evolution in the light of new concerns for the consumption of history in sites other than academic circles.<sup>46</sup>

### **Writing Histories**

It is important to question the nature and scope of writing history in order to situate design historical practice within broader general historical practice. As clarified by Walker, design history focuses on *history* and uses designed objects as evidential sources. The wide varieties of approach evident in written design histories demonstrate the complexities of historical practice, and factors influencing the creation of historical outputs. This section considers overall trends in historiography and some key issues in the craft of history-writing that have relevance for design history and this thesis; including my own role as a historian.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> The Design History Society Oral History project is a seven year project to record the life stories of eminent design historians. The project is co-ordinated by Dr Linda Sandino, Camberwell College of Art and the V&A, and has provided useful source material for this thesis. Interview excerpts are available on the Voices in the Visual Arts website; <http://www.vivavoices.org/> A more detailed examination of the issues considered in the use of Oral Histories is given later in this chapter in subsection *Writing Histories* and additionally in chapter 4.

<sup>46</sup> These directions for study were influenced by the work of Bruno Latour, Etienne Wenger and Jerome De Groot. See Latour, *op.cit.* Wenger, *op.cit.* and, De Groot, J.(2009) *Consuming History*, London : Routledge

<sup>47</sup> It is pertinent here to acknowledge my own educational background. My BA (Hons) in the History of Art and Architecture is from the School of World Art Studies and Museology at the University of East Anglia (1999) which was followed by postgraduate study in the History of Design (Design and

As Mary Fulbrook stated in her 2002 discussion of the nature of historical enquiry; “Historians have never agreed about the nature of their craft: and yet this has never prevented people from continuing to engage in historical investigation and debate.”<sup>48</sup>

There have been many debates, some still ongoing, concerning the various theories of history. A key author who posed the question “what is history?” and also questioned basic assumptions of history-writing was E.H. Carr.<sup>49</sup> He argued that the discovery of information concerning the past involves two main agents. Firstly, the sources of information, be they archive documents or artefacts; and secondly, the interpreter, interrogator, or historian. Writing in the introduction to a new edition of Carr’s classic publication Richard Evans states that despite many of his views being outdated, Carr’s main suggestion that all historians carry intellectual and personal baggage with them, and that all the sources used contain their own biases, has nowadays become “part of the basic conceptual equipment of the historical profession.”<sup>50</sup> In answer to the question he had set himself, namely *what is history?*, Carr answered that “it is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts: an unending dialogue between the present and the past.”<sup>51</sup> Debates concerning the purpose and the scope of historical practice, or

Material Culture 1650 to present) at the Royal College of Art on their course taught with the Victoria and Albert Museum (2001). At UEA Professor Ludmilla Jordanova introduced me to Design History; she also invited me to attend a Visual Culture studies group – now as I reflect on my own influences as an historian I recognise the significance of these events in formulating my own approach to history-writing.

<sup>48</sup> Fulbrook, M, (2002) *Historical Theory*, London: Routledge, p.12

<sup>49</sup> Carr, E.H., (2001) *What is history?*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. London: Palgrave. New introduction by Richard J. Evans. p.xxxiii Originally published in 1961.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* p.xxxii

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* p.24. Carr gave a series of lectures at Cambridge University in which he expounded his views on writing history; these lectures were given at a time when the majority of historians and academics were male and so references within the text are in the language of the time; such a gender bias in language would not be acceptable today. Key dates are given for the

the philosophy of history, follow the line of enquiry initiated by E.H. Carr in 1961. They can be seen in the work of scholars such as Hayden White, Arthur Marwick, Keith Jenkins, and John Tosh.<sup>52</sup> The emphasis that historians have given has understandably changed over time according to the methods used to approach the past and the questions that are asked of it; this gives a plurality of approaches in history-writing which are inextricably linked to the contexts in which these histories were written. This is of significance when approaching the different types of design historical writings in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Two key approaches in 20<sup>th</sup> century historiography that are of particular significance are the *Annales* group and Marxist scholarship. The interdisciplinary approaches to history-writing characterised by the *Annales* group proved especially important for scholarship in the post-World War II period as it paved the way for the development of social and cultural histories in the 1970s and ultimately the emergence of design history as a subsection of history-writing in Britain.<sup>53</sup> Alun Munslow argues that *Annales* was a “social science inspired history” and it offered a

institutionalization of historical scholarship by Oliver Daddow in his 2008 article “Exploding History: Hayden White on disciplinization”, *Rethinking History*, 12(1)pp.41-58. Oxford established a chair of history in 1866 and Cambridge three years later in 1869. By 1875 history was being taught to undergraduates, and in 1886 the journal *English Historical Review* was established.

<sup>52</sup> Examples include: White, H.(1978)*Tropics of Discourse - Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press; Marwick, A.(2001)*The New Nature of History - Knowledge, Evidence, Language*, London: Palgrave; Jenkins, K.(1991)*Re-thinking History*, London: Routledge and; Tosh, J., (2007) *The Pursuit of History*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, Pearson Education, London, In his preface Tosh acknowledges that his book belongs to a genre of writing about the discipline of history which began with Carr’s 1961 publication. The text has never been out of print and was re-issued on its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a new introduction by Richard Evans.

<sup>53</sup> Although sometimes erroneously referred to as a ‘school’ of historians these are the writings of historians associated with the journal entitled *Annales: economies, societies, civilisations* established in 1929 at the University of Strasbourg. The founders, French historians Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, reacted against the empirical methodology of traditional 19<sup>th</sup> century historiography, and also against the separation of history writers from other intellectual disciplines; by criticising narrow and limited outlooks and narrative histories their approach was for a more total approach to the past influenced by geography and anthropology. For a detailed discussion on this see: Ashplant and Smith (2001), *Explorations In Cultural History*, London: Pluto Press, p.20 onwards and also; Black, J. and MacRaid, D.M. ( 2000) *Studying History*, London: Palgrave, p.67

more broad approach than the narrow narrative histories that had been written previously. Marxist historiography places society and class at the centre of its model for historical change and also made a major impact on the scholarship that was produced in the post-war period.<sup>54</sup> The importance of Marx's interpretations for writing of histories was seen as early as 1959 as Gardner observed;

“By stressing the relevance to historical explanation of technology and economic factors in the particular way he did, Marx in effect redrew the map of history. In doing so he made it difficult for historians to ever look at their subject in quite the same fashion as they had done before; this is surely the mark of the considerable and original thinker”.<sup>55</sup>

One of the key texts of social history, EP Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* of 1963, takes class as its central focus and puts this in the context of culture, politics and economy; this interpretation is often described as Marxist historiography.<sup>56</sup> In post-war Europe dramatic social and cultural changes gave rise to changes in history writing: the new topics and approaches seen in the earlier part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were coupled with more overtly political and philosophical approaches. The changes in the pace of historical enquiry, allied with influences from other disciplines, developments in methods and radical changes in the professional circumstances of historians were prominent in the newly expanding education sector. The emergence of cultural studies, and the Birmingham School of Contemporary Cultural Studies, was seen as highly politicised and individuals associated with this such as Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall have been described as

<sup>54</sup> Munslow (1997) *Deconstructing History* London: Routledge, p.8

<sup>55</sup> In 1979 Melvyn Rader identified three main models which he saw Marx using to interpret history. These were; firstly, dialectical development that society would proceed through strife of opposites that are interdependent and conflict with one another, that is to say the give-and-take of arguments; secondly, a more materialistic view that the base supports the superstructure; and thirdly, an organic totality, with society being “a differentiated and dynamic structure, rather than a static unity.” Rader, Melvin, (1979) *Marx's Interpretation of History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. xviii - xxi. The second view is of particular interest to design historians; where we see the mode of production, the “base”, supporting the “superstructure” of society with its politics, state, laws and cultural activities. Quotation from, Patrick Gardner, (1959) *Theories of History*, Glencoe Ill.: The Free Press, as quoted in Rader, M ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Black and MacRaild D. M. *op. cit* p.76.

“cultural Marxists” and part of the British New Left.<sup>57</sup> Hoggart, Hall and their contemporaries E.P.Thompson and Raymond Williams are members of a distinct community of practice and typically hailed as the founders of British Cultural Studies. Melissa Gregg re-evaluates Hoggart and presents him as offering a revolutionary challenge which urged “the questioning and rupturing of canons”.<sup>58</sup> The notion of going beyond an accepted canon or using a singular methodology is a key one for the discussion of design history offered in this thesis.

The central doctrine of epistemology asserts that true knowledge of the world comes from sense perceptions and is derived from experience or observation. As it is impossible to experience past events, historians therefore must make use of information that comes from sources which have survived from the past and give us testimony, whether witting or unwitting, to these events. In a detailed exploration of the relationship of empiricism, knowledge, and history writing Stephen Davies argues that for two centuries this one main theory has underpinned “most of the practices and arguments of professional historians.”<sup>59</sup> Ludmilla Jordanova has pointed out that historical knowledge must be distinguished from speculation and belief which come to us through opinion, ideology and myth.<sup>60</sup> This is where

<sup>57</sup> Gregg M, (2003), “A Neglected History: Richard Hoggart's Discourse of empathy”, *Rethinking History*, 7, 3, 285-306, pp287 See also: Procter, J.(2004) *Stuart Hall*, London: Routledge

<sup>58</sup> Gregg. *Ibid.*, p.289 Gregg presents Hoggart's contemporaries of the 50s and 60s as giving a *fiscal* interpretation of class character; in contrast this to Hoggart offered a *cultural* definition of class. She suggests that this overturned the terms of the debate, moving away from focusing attention on production and the political and economic model to a social and cultural concern with consumption; these approaches would have an impact not only on sociology and social sciences but on social and cultural history-writing. Hoggart believed that culture was something that was learned and lived, and he sought to change teaching practices and seek relevancy in education. The changes that were seen in education during the 1960s and 70s, the development of new universities and an expansion of polytechnic sector, are of the great significance to my thesis.

<sup>59</sup> Davies, S., (2003), *Empiricism and history*, Palgrave, London, p 1

<sup>60</sup> Jordanova, L. (2000) *History In Practice*, London: Arnold p.108

objects and written records can give evidence of past events and enable the historian to create meaning through the interrogation of sources.

It is not only history, as an academic discipline, that has changed significantly during the last thirty years but also other areas of the humanities and social sciences. Timothy Ashplant and Gerry Smyth noted that traditional subjects have been reshaped and new subjects have emerged; they give examples of women's studies and cultural studies and comment that interdisciplinary exchanges have become more common.<sup>61</sup> Anthropological approaches to the study of society, using a broader range of items for evidence, also brought strength and diversity to the intellectual discussions concerning social history and its methods and approaches. This challenged the preconceptions often held by traditional historians about high culture and low culture. Ludmilla Jordanova views this as a significant contribution to the radicalization of history in the post-war period, which, she argued, "involved taking seriously many phenomena that had previously been neglected and rejecting the frameworks that had trivialised them, which both broadened the scope of history and invited a sympathetic response to behaviour previously thought to be alien, even threatening."<sup>62</sup> Despite these significant positive changes in the craft of history-writing there still remain scholars who appear to be threatened by these changes and solely value a traditional limited type of political history scholarship, dismissing other kinds of history as superficial. John Lukacs in *The Future of History* offers his thoughts on the direction of the discipline of history arguing that the

<sup>61</sup> In their study of cultural history Ashplant and Smyth argue that the last twenty years have seen "far reaching changes in the ways in which humanities and social sciences have conceived of both their objects of study and their methodologies." Ashplant, TG & Smyth G (eds) (2001) *Explorations in Cultural History*, Pluto Press, London. p. IX

<sup>62</sup> Jordanova, L. *op.cit.* p.76.



profession has sunk to a low level in the search for new subjects.<sup>63</sup> Richard Evans' review of the book he lambasts Lukacs' book as "a blast from the past" which displays "breathtaking ignorance" and suggests that "Lukacs' standpoint is really that of someone who learned his craft in the 1950s and hasn't moved on since then".<sup>64</sup> Evans defends the changes in the craft of history-writing arguing that;

"One of the glories of modern historical scholarship has been its diversity and its unquenchable curiosity about every aspect of the human experience".

This thesis positions design history within this broad and diverse range of historical scholarship and argues that the researchers surrounding design history have played an important role in enriching the production of written histories by expanding the range of source evidence that is now used by historians. An example of which are the interesting observations on the use of objects as historical sources made in Lubar and Kingery's volume *History from Things*.<sup>65</sup>

This thesis draws on recorded oral history interview sources in addition to document-based archival evidence. Within 20<sup>th</sup>-century historiography, the development of oral history occurred in a chronological parallel to design history. It developed in the 1970s due to the favourable contextual circumstances offered by new directions of intellectual enquiry in the humanities and social sciences and the possibilities offered by emerging new recording technologies. The two approaches to uncovering histories have many similar features, the clearest being an openness to interdisciplinarity. They both operate on the periphery of the traditional academic history-writing, consider non-written sources of evidence, and are of

<sup>63</sup> Lukacs, J. (2011) *The Future of History*, Yale University Press

<sup>64</sup> Evans, R.J. (2011) "Review: *The Future of History* by John Lukacs," *THE*, 9th June 2011, p.59

<sup>65</sup> Lubar S. and Kingery, W.D. (eds) (1993) *History from Things – Essays on Material Culture*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press

significance outside an academic environment. Marta Kurkowska-Budzan and Krzysztof Zamorski argue that,

“Oral history is likely the most democratic discipline; it is neither contained solely within history, nor certainly even limited to academic history... neither class, nor ethnicity, nor age, nor gender limits the oral historian.”<sup>66</sup>

The similarities are clear, Alessandro Portelli argues that oral history is permeable and borderless, “a ‘composite genre’ which requires that we think flexibly, across and between disciplinary boundaries, in order to make the most of this rich and complex source.”<sup>67</sup> Similar parallels to the evolution of oral history practice and design history practice are also revealed in Lynn Abrams assertion;

"oral history has emerged from, and found a foothold in, disciplines and departments other than history. Indeed, the historical profession kept oral history at arm's length for some time, not quite trusting it as a legitimate historical source."<sup>68</sup>

The same suspicion was encountered by design historians with their use of objects as primary sources upon which to base their historical practice. Despite the continued criticism of the oral history method's validity in some circles Abrams argues that ‘oral history is now a tried and tested research practice.’<sup>69</sup>

This thesis has benefitted from two oral history projects supported by the DHS and the Association of Art Historians (hereafter referred to as the AAH).<sup>70</sup> Both projects sought out contributors whose careers had close connection with the academic organisations seeking to promote and professionalise aspects of art and

<sup>66</sup> Kurkowska-Budzan, M & Zamorski, K (2009) *Oral History – the challenges of Dialogue*, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, p.xiv

<sup>67</sup> As quoted in Abrams, L (2010) *Oral History Theory*; London: Routledge, p3

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* p.5

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* p2.

<sup>70</sup> Dr Linda Sandino, at Camberwell and the V&A, led the Design History Oral History Project as part of a wider ‘Voices in the Visual Arts’ project. Available at <http://www.vivavoices.org/> (Accessed: 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009 onwards) Recordings are also kept among the DHS's papers at Northumbria University. The AAH has also recently undertaken a similar project ‘Voices in Art History’ guided by Liz Bruchet, information and excerpts available at; <http://www.aah.org.uk/projects/oral-history> (Accessed: 10th October 2011)

design history.<sup>71</sup> Due to factors such as willingness or reluctance of subjects to be interviewed, and also practicalities of scheduling time to undertake the recordings, the testimonies available at the time of my research were partial and necessarily only presented a subjective view from certain members of the design history network. No archive or project can ever be comprehensive, as that is the nature of historical research, but it must be noted that the DHS Oral History project is ongoing at the time of writing and further interviewees may offer testimony that presents events in a different way.<sup>72</sup> Louisa Passerini noted that oral sources are highly subjective, are an expression of culture and include “the dimensions of memory, ideology and subconscious desires.”<sup>73</sup> The issue of how memories are produced and shaped by the interviewee through their politics and experiences is a key aspect that presents a challenge to oral historians. The topics of individual, popular, and collective memories have been addressed many scholars, have been the focus of study groups such as the Popular Memory Group and have been collected in publications such as *The Collective Memory Reader*.<sup>74</sup> It was sociologist

<sup>71</sup> My involvement in the project was to recommend individuals to be interviewed and also make suggestions of topics for the interviewer to raise. Due to practical and ethical factors I did not directly undertake the oral history interviews myself: firstly, geographical and time-bound limitations prevented me undertaking the interviews personally; and secondly, and arguably more importantly, due to my own close connection with this project I did not wish to influence or guide the testimony of interviewees. On certain occasions I did follow up testimony given in interviews by cross-referencing with documentation, frequently when dates and events were contradictory, but I also had occasion to re-interview subjects about their testimony. This was the case with Professor Jonathan Woodham who I visited and interviewed at Brighton.

<sup>72</sup> Interviews with individuals who had a close connection to key events in the development of Design History had yet to be completed. For example, Charles Saumarez-Smith was being interviewed by the British Library's National Life Stories project and the recording had not been made available to researchers, also Jeremy Aynsley was being interviewed by the DHS project in 2012 as this research was being concluded. There are also instances where individuals have been approached but are reluctant or unable to be involved in the project at this point in time.

<sup>73</sup> Passerini, L ( 1979) “Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism” *History Workshop Journal*, 8 : 82-108, p84 as quoted in Abrams *Op cit.* p7

<sup>74</sup> For more on this see: Popular Memory Group “Popular Memory: Theory, Politics, Method” in Perks, R. & Thomson, A. ( eds) (2006) *The Oral History Reader*, London: Routledge pp.43-53 ( also included in *The Collective Memory Reader*), Schater, D. (1996) *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind and the Past*, New York: Basic Books. Ricoeur, P. ( 2004) *Memory History, Forgetting*, Chicago:

Maurice Halbwachs' insights into the study of memory in 1925's *Social Framework of Memory* that first theorized the concept of 'collective memory' inspiring a wide contemporary use of the term.<sup>75</sup> A key point from Halbwachs that is pertinent for the use of oral histories in this thesis is his argument that individuals cannot remember outside their group contexts as these social frameworks are inextricably linked to what and how we recall. Oftentimes it is the groups that provide the opportunity to recall memories and this is the case of both the DHS and AAH projects. These projects, and the events surrounding the individual interviews, provide an occasion and the stimulus for the creation of memories in suggesting that there is an 'history' to be actively collectively remembered. Linda Shopes warns of an additional pitfall, that of a "celebratory impulse" that surrounds many community interviews of this kind, and this challenge for interpretation is also relevant when using the recordings from both projects.<sup>76</sup> The ethical and methodological issues encountered in the use of oral history evidence within this thesis will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Much focus has been given to the scholarly and intellectual complexities surrounding the *production* of historical narratives and more recently, scholarship from Raphael Samuel, Jordanova and Jerome DeGroot has additionally considered the arenas for the *consumption* of historical narratives.<sup>77</sup> Jordanova argued, in *History*

University of Chicago Press; and also the collection of scholarship presented in, Olick, J.K., Vinitzky-Seroussi, V. & Levey, D (2011) *The Collective Memory Reader*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>75</sup> Olick, J.K., Vinitzky-Seroussi, V. & Levey, D. *Op.cit.* p16

<sup>76</sup> Shopes, L. (2002) "Oral History and the Study of Communities: Problems, Paradoxes, and Possibilities" *The Journal of American History*, 89(2) p591

<sup>77</sup> Raphael Samuel explored the distinction between the professional historian and the unofficial histories represented in contemporary culture and the heritage industry in Samuel, R.(1994)*Theatres of Memory- Volume 1 Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, London: Verso. Jerome De Groot develops Samuel's argument and prompts further consideration of the varied areas in which history

*in Practice*, that the genres used by public history are different from those of the academic discipline.<sup>78</sup> These perspectives on the activity of history-writing were expanded in DeGroot's examination of the consumption of history, or 'the historical', by everyday society.<sup>79</sup> He argues that despite some overlap between the interpreters and consumers of 'the historical', 'the past' and 'heritage' there are a variety of distinctions between the worlds of *professional historians* (as scholars, intellectuals, and museum curators) *cultural producers* (from the entertainment worlds of film and television, novels and computer gaming), and *expert amateurs*, (collectors, hobby genealogists, or historical re-enactors). This text overlaps with scholarship that engages with museology and the heritage industry touching in particular on popular culture, which is an arena where design history has made a significant contribution.

## **Chapter Structure**

The structure of this thesis uses the somewhat artificial construct of dividing discussion into decades. By imposing this chronological framework there are a number of areas of overlap where themes and issues cross decades, and chapter divides. To address this, the key discussions are placed into the chapter, or decade, where the greatest influence and impact is judged to have occurred.

is consumed, see De Groot, J.(2009) *Consuming History, historians and heritage in contemporary popular culture*. London : Routledge

<sup>78</sup> Jordanova discusses the topic of 'Public History' in, Jordanova L. *op.cit.*

<sup>79</sup> De Groot, J., *op.cit.*p.3

Chapter one examines the emergence and formation of several distinct communities of practice of design history within the context of broad educational developments that occurred in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s. Discussion centres on the important and complex relationships between art history, contextual studies and design education that led to the emergence of a design history network. Early design history activity will be discussed in relation to the first conferences and publications, the formation of various groups and societies, and three broad approaches to design historical practice. Chapter two offers detailed case studies relating to educational provision of design history during the period. Firstly, early degree-level course provision within the polytechnics demonstrates three clear approaches to 'histories of design', and secondly, the Open University A305 *History of Architecture and Design* course and its significance as a key area where early networks were formed. Issues concerning methodology linked to these case studies are also discussed.

Chapter three discusses the establishment of an evident design history network during the 1980s. The activities of some members of this network can be seen consolidated as a distinct area of academic practice with the practical structures associated with a discipline; educational courses, an academic society with annual conferences, and a journal. Chapter four evaluates the importance of the academic societies the AAH and the DHS for the development of the network during this period; and considers the role played by the *Journal of Design History* and its editorial board.

Chapters five and six consider the decade of the 1990s which saw further development and activity of the various design historical communities of practice and the wider network. A theoretical debate of importance during this period will also be examined through the 1995 special issue of *Design Issues*, which highlighted how networks were beginning to expand across geographical boundaries. This period saw broad intellectual changes and the impact of design history extend beyond the educational sector. Key developments include an increase in publication of design historical scholarship, changing approaches to the interpretation and display of objects within a museum setting, and chronological and subject expansion of topics addressed by design historians to go beyond narrow focus on industrial design and reassessing modernism. The case studies in chapter six emphasise developments that see design history extend beyond education into the museums sector and are addressed through two Victoria and Albert Museum case studies: the masters level course with the Royal College of Art, and the major British art and design galleries redisplay.

Chapters seven and eight bring discussion up to date; the decade of the 2000s saw a wider geographical focus and broad changes in design pedagogy which prompted another period of self-reflection among design historians. This period also saw the wider impact of the types of research methods utilised by design history as interdisciplinarity became more widely recognised academically. The funding of two large research projects which included work of design history scholars indicates the broader recognition of the important scholarship being undertaken by members of the design history network. The academic recognition was consolidated by the

publication of a new introductory text and several scholarly readers for the discipline.

The conclusion will summarise the key arguments made throughout the chapters and reflect upon the position of this particular research within this. It will also offer some thoughts for consideration regarding the future challenges and direction of design history.





## **Chapter I**

### **The 1960s and 70s –The context for and events influencing the emergence of a Design Historical Network**

This chapter initially considers the context for design history during the period from the late 1960s to the end of the 1970s, addressing the significance of changes that were occurring in intellectual activity and educational provision within the particular set of social, political and economic circumstances of the time. It identifies and evaluates the main developments and important events, institutions, and organisations that shaped early design history activity and contributed to the emergence of several different communities of practice and a broader network. Changes in art and design education during this period led to contextual circumstances that saw the emergence of design history as a distinct field of studies leading to the establishment of an academic discipline in the late-1970s and early-1980s. These changes gave the opportunity for like-minded researchers and academics to gather together at a series of conferences which discussed designed objects and approaches to writing the history of design. Early design history conferences fostered relationships, scholarly activity, and publications: these will be examined through their publications and testimony of delegates. These conferences demonstrated three main directions for design history and also illuminate the debates surrounding the gradual emergence of a specialist academic society for design history. The emergence of the DHS from the AAH demonstrates how key differences in intellectual and theoretical approaches are intrinsic to discussions surrounding the critical analysis of design and the writing of designs' histories.

## **Context**

During the 1960s it became clear that demographic change, post-war population growth, and a rapidly-changing society required significant transformation in educational provision in Britain. The Robbins committee report in 1963 argued for sweeping changes to the British education system, and a wider variety and number of institutions providing higher education.<sup>1</sup> The 1960s saw the expansion of university provision, with seven new universities built, the idea for a revolutionary new approach to accessible education through the Open University, and the beginning of broader changes in the college sector.<sup>2</sup> Britain in the 1970s suffered economic hardship that had political and social implications; the decade saw the ‘winter of discontent,’ the oil crisis, the three-day week, striking workers and record unemployment figures.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps in response to the despondence and hardship evidenced in many sectors of society, it became clear that changes in educational provision should include the promotion of a greater technical skills base within the population in addition to the expansion of opportunities in more traditional scholarship. The development of the polytechnics during this period

<sup>1</sup> The Robbins committee had a remit “to review the pattern of full-time higher education in Great Britain”, it reviewed training provision in education and technical colleges and was not solely focused on the universities. Silver, H.(1990) *A Higher Education-the Council for National Academic Awards in British Higher Education in 1964-1989*, London: The Falmer Press. p.7 Committee on Higher Education (23 September 1963), *Higher education: report of the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins 1961-63*, Cmnd. 2154, London: HMSO

<sup>2</sup> For example: the University of East Anglia (UEA), Essex, Kent, Lancaster, Sussex, Warwick, and York. Rich, T. “The New Universities” in Warner, D. & Palfreyman, D. (2001) *The State of UK Higher Education – Managing Change and Diversity*, Milton Keynes: Open University. A government white paper, *The University of the Air* was submitted in February 1966 this led to the establishment of the Open University that aimed to widen access to higher education and use the BBC.

<sup>3</sup> An excellent analysis of the political and social context of Britain is offered in: Sandbrook, D.(2006) *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties*, London: LittleBrown. For a discussion of the economic and political events of this period see: Lee, C. (2000) *This Sceptred Isle - Twentieth Century; From the Death of Queen Victoria to the dawn of a new Millennium*, London: Penguin, pp.335-379

brought opportunities for this as well as new educational pedagogy.<sup>4</sup> In addition to new technical courses there was increased availability of arts, social science and humanities courses, and part-time and evening education reflected social changes allowing widening participation for growing numbers of women and mature students.<sup>5</sup> Many of the polytechnics had been formed by merging established technical and arts colleges together, and this brought residual problems which were to be brokered by the regulatory body, the Council for National Academic Awards (the CNAA).<sup>6</sup> This changing educational sector in Britain, particularly the expansion of higher education through the polytechnics, provided the context for the growth of design history.

There were certain positive cultural and intellectual developments during this decade that offered useful perspectives for early design historians. In academia these include new approaches to art history, a reassessment of history with a specific focus on gender, outputs from the developing field of cultural studies, new philosophical perspectives, and publications in anthropology. In the wider popular sphere there were publications linked to exhibitions and also the new public interest in antiques history and heritage as promoted by various BBC programmes. The BBC had created several landmark documentary television series, often with accompanying publications, such as Kenneth Clarke's *Civilisation* (1969) and Dr Jacob

<sup>4</sup> For an evaluation of polytechnics see Pratt, J. (1997) *The Polytechnic experiment-1956-1992*, Milton Keynes: The Open University Press. In 1965 the Secretary of State for Education and Science announced a binary policy to establish polytechnics and the 'binary policy' of two tiers of Higher education ended with the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act which saw these institutions designated as new universities. Pratt argues the binary policy to have been; "remarkably robust, surviving changes of government, economic constraints and major policy changes elsewhere in the education system."p.3.

<sup>5</sup> Pratt, *op.cit.* pp56-69. Widening participation again became a key concern for higher education following policy decisions by the Blair government in the new millennium.

<sup>6</sup> These changes occurred whilst many art colleges were still reeling from the widespread changes brought about with the introduction of the National Diploma in Art and Design (DipAD) Pratt gives a table of the 30 Polytechnics and their constituent colleges, the date of designation, and subsequent post-1992 university title. See *Ibid.* p.2 [Table 1.1]

Bronowski's *The Ascent of Man* (1973) that addressed the evolution of human culture and society through examining its art and its science.<sup>7</sup> BBC2 commissioned John Berger's influential series *Ways of Seeing* (1972) and its arts series *Arena* was established in 1974. Additionally the independent terrestrial channel ITV screened the London Weekend Television-produced *Aquarius* (1970-1977) and *The South Bank Show* (from 1978).<sup>8</sup> The BBC had also been broadcasting antiques-based quiz show *Going for a Song* from 1965 to 1977 and began the broadcast of *Antiques Roadshow* in 1979. The popularity of these programmes with the general public is evidence of an increased interest in objects as a way of engaging with the past, although the programmes grew out of a connoisseurial and trading context rather than a broadly historical or academic one.<sup>9</sup>

In the academic and intellectual world there were several key texts and new journals published. The publication that accompanied John Berger's BBC series *Ways of Seeing* opened up new approaches to art history that positioned art in relation to everyday life rather than focusing on artistic technique, style, and connoisseurial concerns such as attribution. It became a key text for students of

<sup>7</sup> The dates given are transmission dates. Both of these series were commissioned by David Attenborough when he was the controller of BBC2. Both series are available from the BBC on DVD. [www.bbc.co.uk/archive](http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive). For comments on the impact of *Civilisation* and a growing appreciation of art see Excerpt 3, Interview of Charles Avery, by Liz Bruchet, 7 April 2011, from Association of Art Historians Oral Histories, <http://www.aah.org.uk/projects/oral-history>, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> October 2011. Also Chapter 8 of Walker, J.A. (1993) *Arts TV: a History of Arts Television in Britain*, London: John Libbey & Co.

<sup>8</sup> For an excellent history of arts television of this period see Walker, J.A. (1993) *Op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> There are areas where the expertise overlaps with Design Historians; In Flavia Swann's oral history testimony she gives anecdotal evidence of sharing her expertise on Tunbridge ware with an expert from the programme *Going For A Song*, Hermione Waterfield (Director and Keeper at Christies) She also mentions the programmes presenter Arthur Negus. Swann, F & DHS (2009) *Oral History Project Interview with Flavia Swann*, Track 9 [6.50]. More recently design historian Paul Atterbury is a regular expert on *Antiques Roadshow*.

art history and was also on reading lists for courses such as cultural studies.<sup>10</sup> Historians saw the important beginnings of feminist history with Sheila Rowbotham's *Hidden from History* published in 1973, developments in cultural studies and the influence of literary studies were demonstrated with the 1976 publications of Raymond Williams *Keywords* and Bourdieu's *Distinction* in 1979.<sup>11</sup> Of particular importance in relation to the interpretation and use of objects were new approaches to anthropology studies as demonstrated by Douglas and Isherwood in *The World of Goods* and Dick Hebdige in *Subculture - The Meaning of Style*, both published in 1979.<sup>12</sup>

For the design history network changes in art and design education were particularly important in creating the conditions for the development of a distinct approach to history, however there were also tentative advances towards multi- and cross-disciplinary historical practices that are also significant. The intellectual context in the late 1960s was such that new approaches were challenging traditionally held views on the writing of history. In 1966, the *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) published a series of articles that announced 'New Ways in History' with articles written by history scholars worldwide.<sup>13</sup> This series

<sup>10</sup>Berger, J (1972) *Ways Of Seeing*, London: BBC and Penguin Books, see also discussion in chapter 10 of Walker, J.A. (1993) *op.cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Rowbotham, S.(1973) *Hidden From History: 300 years of women's oppression and the fight against it*, London: Pluto Press; Williams, R., (1983)*Keywords - A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 2nd edn. London: HarperCollins; Bourdieu's text was based on research done in the late 1960s and 1970s, published in French 1979, English translation see, Bourdieu, P.(1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

<sup>12</sup>Other key texts during this period by Nikolaus Pevsner and Reyner Banham will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter as they are of direct, rather than contextual, importance. Douglas, M. & Isherwood, B. (1979) *The World of Good: towards an anthropology of consumption*, London: Allen Lane; and Hebdige, D (1979) *Subculture - The Meaning of Style*, London; New York: Methuen

<sup>13</sup> The first TLS special issue *New Ways in History*, published on 7 April 1966, had British contributors. This was followed by *New Ways in History - 2* on 28 July with scholars from the United States and Commonwealth countries, and *New Ways in History - 3* on 8 September with Latin America and continental European scholars.

demonstrates that the debate concerning historical methodology was becoming contentious; it included contributions from some key proponents of social history, such as Eric Hobsbawm and E.P. Thompson, and presented views on the new approaches shown in the French *Annales* history-writing.<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey Wasserstrom argues that these articles celebrated a move away from “top-down and disciplinarily insular forms of political history,” to new methods of historical inquiry and demonstrated an increasing interest in the use of interdisciplinary techniques, although not explicitly using the term.<sup>15</sup> When in 1969 the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* was founded, published by the MIT Press in America, it accredited the *TLS* series as its original inspiration for “the ‘new history’ style” that it was promoting. This was evident as they encouraged contributions from authors who employed “the methods and insights of other disciplines in the study of past times and [who brought] a historical perspective to those other disciplines.”<sup>16</sup> The journal continued to publish what it called “methodologically innovative” articles and its pages provide evidence of the beginning of an intellectual shift, an academic change, towards the acceptance of historical outputs that crossed traditional academic divides.

<sup>14</sup> Contemporary reflections on the supplements were varied; the *Times* acknowledged reaction to the series published in its *TLS*: “There are quite sharp confrontations between those who accept the “quantification” of history and those who dislike it and between reviewers who are and are not impressed with the products of the *Annales* school of French Historians.” “*TLS* New Ways in History” *The Times*, Thursday 8th September 1966, Issue 56731, p.14.

<sup>15</sup> Wasserstrom, J.N.(2007), “New Ways in History, 1966 2006.” *History Workshop Journal*, 64(1), p. 273.

<sup>16</sup> Text from the “More about *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*” section on the publisher’s website; <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/page/about/more/jih> (Accessed June 2011). “The *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* was founded to employ the methods and insights of other disciplines in the study of past times and to bring a historical perspective to those other disciplines. *JIH* still publishes methodologically innovative articles and reviews in the “new history” style that it pioneered and has now developed for twenty-five years--successfully integrating a variety of topics without limit to a particular geographical area or chronological period”.

Journals established during this period show evidence of welcoming these new approaches to history-writing. In addition to the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* the 1970s saw the beginning of the publication of *Oral History* (est. 1972) and *History Workshop Journal* (est. 1976) that were indicative of new communities of practice within the wider historical network that arguably offered a more democratic approach to history-writing.<sup>17</sup> Scholarship in the history of art had an outlet in the new journal *Art History* (established by the AAH in 1978) and critical views relating to the history of art and visual culture were to be published in *Block* (est. 1979) at the end of the decade.<sup>18</sup> It is also interesting to note that in addition to scholarly publications, there was growth in the publication of books for collectors of design objects by publishers such as Shire Publications and the Antique Collectors Club.<sup>19</sup> These developments in cultural and intellectual activity demonstrate new approaches to both *history* and *design*. However, of critical importance were the changes in art and design education, early conferences discussing design, and the

<sup>17</sup> "From the very outset History Workshop has been centrally concerned with the creation of historical knowledge and understanding outside the narrow boundaries of the historical profession and of higher education." Mason, T., (1986) "The Great Economic History Show," *History Workshop Journal*, 21(1) pp.3-36; see also, Selbourne, D., (1980) "Critique: On the Methods of the History Workshop," *History Workshop Journal*, 9(1) pp.150-161.

<sup>18</sup> *Block* was of particular significance to early design historians during the 1980s and will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3. Other new journals *Ceramic Review* (est. 1970) and *Crafts* (est. 1973) demonstrated a growing interest in contemporary craft production.

<sup>19</sup> Antique Collectors Club publications covered a diverse range of topics relating to connoisseurial activity and collecting decorative arts. Some examples from the 1970s include: Brook-Hart, D. (1974) *British 19th century marine painting*, Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club; Haslam, M. (1975) *English art pottery: 1865-1915*, Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club; Antique Collectors' Club (1976) *The Birth of 'The Studio', 1893-1895* Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club; Antique Collectors' Club (1977) *Pictorial dictionary of British 19th century furniture design* Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club. Shire Publications were often smaller pamphlets and could often be bought in shops at small museums. They include several different series such as "discovering," "lifeline", a series of illustrated biographies, "shire Albums" illustrating architectural, collecting, domestic, industrial, rural and social themes. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century they promote themselves with the tag-line the "home of History, Heritage and Nostalgia." Sources: Shire (1992) *30 years of Shire publications- A bibliography for collectors 1962-1991* Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications and <http://www.shirebooks.co.uk/> (Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009). Some examples from the 1970s include: Tames, R. (1972) *Josiah Wedgwood: an illustrated life of Josiah Wedgwood, 1730-1795*, Aylesbury: Shire Publications; in the "lifelines" series; Jessup, R. (1974) *Anglo-Saxon jewellery* Aylesbury: Shire Publications; in the "Shire archaeology" series; Bell, R. (1978) *Discovering Old Bicycles* Aylesbury: Shire Publications, in the "discovering" series; and, Fearn, J. (1977) *Domestic Bygones*, Aylesbury: Shire Publications, in the "Shire Albums" series.



formation of academic societies such as the AAH and DHS. Particularly influential was the huge shift that occurred in art and design teaching following the Coldstream reports.<sup>20</sup>

### **Changes in Art School Education**

The National Advisory Council on Art Education (NACAE), which reported in 1960, (latterly known as the first Coldstream report) revolutionized British design education by recommending the new 3-year diploma in art and design (DipAD) with a pre-diploma foundation component.<sup>21</sup> The new diploma aimed at raising academic standards to align courses with the ‘liberal education’ of the humanities, rather than the vocational education that art schools already provided.<sup>22</sup> Although the report itself was not prescriptive in terms of curriculum content, it made it very clear that art and design students should study three elements of ‘historical and contextual’ study in addition to their practice and these were introduced to DipAD

<sup>20</sup> It is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss the wide scope of undergraduate art and design education nor to examine the role of research in art and design itself, as this is being done elsewhere. The Tate Gallery, with Professor Nigel Llewellyn as the principal investigator, is currently [2009-13] undertaking a detailed research project supported by The Leverhulme Trust: ‘*Art School Educated: Curriculum Development and Institutional Change in UK Art Schools 1960-2000*’. For details see; <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/majorprojects/art-education.htm> (Accessed 12th September 2011) ; An excellent series of publications by the National Society for Education in Art and design (NSEAD) with Intellect Books covers issues relating to art education at all levels. The *International Journal of Art and Design Education (ijADE)* also provides current scholarship in this area. See for example: Romans, M.(ed.)(2005)*Histories of Art and Design Education: Collected Essays*, Bristol: Intellect Books; Hickman, R.(ed.)(2005) *Critical Studies in Art & Design Education*, Bristol: Intellect Books; and Hardy, T. (ed.)(2006) *Art Education in a Postmodern World*, Bristol: Intellect Books. Current scholars working in the area of design research are supported by the Design Research Society the <http://www.designresearchsociety.org/joomla/index.php> and this can overlap with the areas of Design Studies, as discussed within this thesis.

<sup>21</sup> The National Advisory Council on Art Education (NACAE) was set up in 1959 chaired by Sir William Coldstream. The New diploma was conceived as a “liberal education in art”. Pratt, J. (1997) *The Polytechnic Experiment-1956-1992*, Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, p126. For a discussion of the role of Newcastle University in pioneering “foundation art courses” and contribution of Victor Pasmore see; Wilson, S, “Art and Design Education in Post-war Newcastle” in Fawcett, H. (ed.) (2007) *Made in Newcastle – Visual Culture*, Newcastle: Northumbria University Press.

<sup>22</sup> National Advisory Council on Art Education and the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design: Coldstream Report. National Archives: ED 54/467

courses from 1961.<sup>23</sup> It initially advocated that a practical design course should include a history of art component covering “several significant periods of time”; secondly, that students should learn the history of their own particular specialism: “a course in fashion should include the history of costume, a course in furniture the history of furniture and so on”; and finally, the section which caused most controversy, the importance of “complementary studies” or;

“any non-studio subjects, in addition to the history of art, which may strengthen or give breadth to the students training. We do not think that any specific subjects should be prescribed.”<sup>24</sup>

It has been argued that this separation of “the thinking and expressive from the technical and practical” would be emphasised further in the 1970s when the Council merged with the validating body for polytechnics, the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), and academic standards were aligned to be degree-equivalent.<sup>25</sup>

These changes highlighted two problems, firstly, the shortage of teachers with knowledge of twentieth-century art history, and more significantly, the lack of

<sup>23</sup>“Lisa Tickner recalls being amongst the first cohort and graduating in 1963. Excerpt 1, Interview of Lisa Tickner by Liz Bruchet, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011, from *Association of Art Historians Oral Histories*. In order to give context to the discussions that occurred surrounding the emerging discipline Design History it is important to understand the approaches to art education that existed. Dick Field proposed that teaching should be centred around the subject and, interestingly for Design History, should draw on a range of disciplines including criticism and history, this approach to education paralleled the prevalent educational theories in other subject areas. See Field, D (1970) *Changes in Art Education*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. In the introduction to the National Society for Education in Art and Design’s anthology *Critical Studies in Art & Design Education* Richard Hickman points out that debate in art and design education has paralleled that in education theory generally. The two main educational philosophies, either a subject-centred or a student-centred approach, can be seen in the two different approaches to art with either education *in* art, or a more student-centred education *through* art.

<sup>24</sup> The quotations in this sentence are taken directly from the first Coldstream report, as quoted in; Strand, R. (1987) *A Good Deal of Freedom-Art and Design in the public sector of higher education, 1960-1982*. London: CNAA, p12

<sup>25</sup> On emphasis of theory over practice see Wilson, S, “Art and Design Education in Post-war Newcastle” in Fawcett, H. (ed.) (2007) *Made in Newcastle – Visual Culture*, Newcastle: Northumbria University Press. Diplomas were revalidated as degrees from 1971. The NCDAD and CNAA merged in 1974. Pratt, J. (1997) *The Polytechnic experiment-1956-1992*, Milton Keynes: The Open University Press p126

definition of what was appropriate for 'complementary' study; as Thistlewood pointed out, "any form of study could be legitimised."<sup>26</sup> This environment caused controversy but also brought an opportunity, as it provided a fertile ground for the development of design history as an academic discipline. The boundaries of acceptable subject matter, approach and method were fluid, and this contributed to the intellectual flexibility of design historical methods and approaches.

The controversy surrounding the changes was evident when resentment built towards the necessity for a theoretical and historical component within art colleges. This was initially highlighted following an inspection of facilities and staff in 1961 where over 100 courses failed to meet the standards and many colleges were left with no approved diplomas.<sup>27</sup> Lisa Tickner has noted the friction between staff that was caused by the subsequent introduction of university-trained lecturers to the art colleges to provide knowledge of 'culture' and context.<sup>28</sup> The anger extended beyond the staff to the students; who were concerned about the confusion over curriculum content and changes in the organisation of their qualifications and the colleges. In 1968 a six-week sit-in protest at Hornsey College of Art, known as the 'Hornsey Affair', and a protest at Brighton College of Art publicly highlighted the

<sup>26</sup> Thistlewood, D. "Curricular Development in Critical Studies" in Hickman, R (ed)(2005) *Critical Studies in Art & Design Education*. Bristol: Intellect Books. op.cit p.58

The lack of prescriptive curricula and subject content meant that graduates of philosophy, politics and sociology were being employed in art colleges to provide supporting courses.

<sup>27</sup> The newly-established National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design NCDAD inspected colleges for their facilities, fine art base, staff, and ability to provide the required complementary and art historical studies. 201 courses at 72 colleges applied to give the new diplomas but only 61 courses at 29 colleges were approved. Statistics given in, Wilson, S, "Art and Design Education in Post-war Newcastle" in Fawcett, H. (ed.) (2007) *Made in Newcastle – Visual Culture*, Newcastle: Northumbria University Press. Also given in Strand, (1987) op.cit p18.

<sup>28</sup> See Tickner, L.(2008) *Hornsey 1968- The Art School Revolution*, London: France Lincoln. For other discussions of the problems of art students see: Lloyd-Jones, P.(1975)"Art Students and their Troubles", *Leonardo*,8 ( 1),pp61-65. For a general discussion of student unrest during the late 1960s see Habermas, J (1971) *Toward a rational society = student protest, science, and politics*, London: Heinemann; G. J. DeGroot (ed) (1998) *Student protest: the sixties and after*, London: Longman; and, Fraser, R (et.al) (1988) *1968: a student generation in revolt*, London: Chatto & Windus.

problems within art education.<sup>29</sup> Gillian Naylor recalled the importance of this event at Brighton with students demanding,

“...we want to study the history of our subject. Art history is all very well, it’s fine, but why can’t we learn more about contemporary issues and more about our subject... and this was the revolution that was going on.”<sup>30</sup>

In part response, the National Advisory Council on Art Education (Coldstream Council) and the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design (Summerson Council) published a ‘joint report’ in 1970.<sup>31</sup> This made two main recommendations; firstly, that the study of Fine Art was no longer necessarily central to studies in design; and secondly, and more importantly for the development of design history, the new report offered clarification over the meaning of complementary studies.<sup>32</sup>

“We saw the ultimate purpose of complementary studies to be two-fold:

- a) To equip the student with a number of ways of collecting, ordering and evaluating information relevant to his ends
- b) To enable the student to appreciate the relationship between his own activities and the culture within which he lives.”<sup>33</sup>

It was “an integral part of the student art and design education, informing but not dictating to the creative aspects of his work” and should be in the hands of

<sup>29</sup> For discussion of the protest see the publication produced by the staff and students involved: Association of Hornsey College of Art, (1969) *The Hornsey affair, students and staff of Hornsey College of Art*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. Also Ashwin, C (1982) *A Century of Art Education 1882-1982*, Middlesex: Middlesex Polytechnic. For more on the unrest at Brighton see: Woodham, J. & Lyon, P., (eds) (2009) *Art and Design at Brighton 1859-2009: from Arts and Manufactures to the Creative and Cultural Industries*. Brighton: University of Brighton

<sup>30</sup> Naylor, G. & DHS (2007) *Oral History Project Interview with Gillian Naylor*, Track 13: 19:45

<sup>31</sup> The joint report of the National Advisory Council on Art Education (Coldstream Council) and the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design (Summerson Council) was entitled ‘the Structure of Art and Design Education in the Further Education Sector’; this acknowledged that confusion was widespread over the guidance offered in the first report. National Advisory Council on Art Education and the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design: Coldstream Report 1970. National Archives ED 54/467.

<sup>32</sup> “We now would not regard the study of fine Art as necessarily central to all studies in the design field.” Coldstream Report 1970. As quoted in Strand *op.cit.* p102.

<sup>33</sup> National Advisory Council on Art Education and the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design: Coldstream Report 1970. National Archives ED 54/467.

dedicated staff “based on intellectual disciplines and processes which are distinct from those of the studio.”<sup>34</sup>

Nikolaus Pevsner, the chair of the panel for the History of Art and Complementary Studies, was not content with the extra clarification and lack of prescriptive content for the intellectual level of these studies. He submitted a ‘Note of Dissent’ that was published in the report where he expressed his concerns over the level of studies;

“Education is not easy and cannot be... it is clarity of thought and expression, it is an unbiased recognition of problems, it is the capacity of the discussion and it is ultimately understanding [the students] must achieve. But to understand the facts one must know the facts; to know the facts, one must learn the facts, and to choose the relevant facts, one must have a surplus of facts. That is the unpalatable truth. Unpalatable to many students, and unpalatable also to some of the staff teaching studio subjects.”<sup>35</sup>

In acknowledging the friction and differences of opinion between studio staff and history and complementary studies staff concerning academic rigour he highlights a key issue: the integration of theory and practice, which remained within the Polytechnic sector.

When the two regulatory organisations, NCDAD and CNAA, merged in 1974, a new Committee for Art and Design, with distinct subject-specific boards, oversaw standards when the Dip AD was translated into a degree with honours.<sup>36</sup> In 1975 - 76 a major review was undertaken, which Strand declares was a “watershed”

<sup>34</sup> Quotations from paragraphs 38 and 39, joint report, *Ibid*.

<sup>35</sup> Quotation from Nikolaus Pevsner “Note of Dissent” in the 1970 report of the Coldstream and Summerson councils. As quoted in Strand *op.cit.* p104.

<sup>36</sup> The committee boards included many members who previously sat on the NCDAD.

moment.<sup>37</sup> Many courses had been in existence for 12 years and had had time to establish their identities; this evaluation was of great significance to staff.

“There were a number of clear and admirable examples of amicable relations and fruitful co-operation between main studio and complementary studies staff. Where this situation existed, there were few problems and much excellent work was being done. In other cases, it must be conceded that visiting parties found evidence of mutual mistrust or indifference, even of hostility, with a consequent reluctance to collaborate.”<sup>38</sup>

The reasons given for this mistrust were varied, but Pevsner’s concerns over intellectual rigour, certainly featured as a causal factor. An additional factor was concern over who should teach subject-specific history. Art historians were seen as intruders, both within the studio environment and within the timetable.

The History of Art, Design and Complementary Studies (HADCS) Board set up its own working party with representation from the other subject boards, but following discussion it was decided that in order to solve the problem compromise was needed.<sup>39</sup> A conference was held at the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (the RSA) to discuss the place of the history of art and design within degree courses and aspects of art and design education. It acknowledged the changing boundaries of subject areas and the necessity to integrate theory and practice more thoroughly.<sup>40</sup> This led to a change in the

<sup>37</sup> The review covered all courses and involved 140 subject board members working over eight months to visit polytechnics and colleges around the country.

<sup>38</sup> As given in Strand, *op cit* p161. Robert Strand was Member/deputy chief officer, National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design NCDAD – 1968-1974 and then Registrar of Art and Design: CNAAD, 1974-82.

<sup>39</sup> The Graphic design boards had challenged the necessity for complementary studies to be a separate component during assessment, in response In October 1976, when the working party submitted its report to the Committee of Art and Design, a subcommittee of the AAH requested that it and HADCS join together to convene a conference to discuss the place of the history of art and design within degree courses.

<sup>40</sup> AAH and HADCS conference, “History of Art, Design and complementary studies in art and design education courses” 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1977 Royal Society of Arts.

Five keynote papers were presented covering aspects of art and design education, but of significance is that the conference chair, David Bethel noted, according to Strand that, “One of the problems

structure of the CNAA boards with the HADCS board being phased out in 1982 and its representatives spread across all the other subject boards to provide representation for art and design history in a more integrated fashion.

The above debate demonstrates the important position that art and design historians played within the framework of practical art and design education provision. Those individuals teaching contextual studies to practical students formed a specific *community of practice*, sharing a domain, having conversations and interactions about similar concerns and ultimately becoming important *actors* in a wider *network*. The regulatory boards were an important constituent in building networks and communicating development in design history curriculum content and pedagogy across the country. In addition to design history as contextual study, there were scholars who were interested in a critical approach to visual and material culture that went beyond the scope of art history. The exact provision of early design history in the 1970s, as individual lectures, seminar series or modules taught on related humanities degree is complex to catalogue – this is due to the nature of course titles and relatively sparse survival of records of curricula during this period. Developments in the polytechnic sector, and the first steps to widen participation in Further and Higher Education, enabled new courses to be offered in History of Art and Design with modules on design history and other new disciplinary areas such as film studies.<sup>41</sup> Evidence in the papers of the regulating

already identified...had been the boundaries of disciplines did not remain static, and he reported that the subject board structure was being looked at to ensure that it remained able to react effectively to new submissions from the colleges.” Strand *op cit* p.207-8

<sup>41</sup> Courses first taught in the 1970s included; Newcastle-upon-Tyne Polytechnic, B.A. (Hons) History of Modern Art and Design from 1973 (Later History of Modern Art Design and Film); North Staffordshire Polytechnic, B.A. (Hons) History of Design and Visual Art; and courses at Birmingham and Middlesex. Details taken from announcements in the DHS newsletters and CNAA committee minutes show that from 1980 these also included: Brighton Polytechnic, B.A. (Hons) History of

body, the CNAAB, indicates that there were several modules being taught and courses planned at the end of this decade which points to the prior existence of design history provision. But a significant amount of evidence of design history teaching from this early period is hidden from history, difficult to uncover through documentation, and surviving mainly in the memories of students and academics. Again their definitions of design history differs over time, and elements of design history were being taught on a variety of differently-named courses, but it is clear from the number and distribution of courses seeking approval by the CNAAB committee that design history was developing all over the country during the late-1970s with many of the first courses being taught in the 1980s.<sup>42</sup>

An area where many of the key issues and debates that relate to the development of design history as an intellectual activity are seen was among those involved in teaching in art schools and in the polytechnics established from the early 1970s. Many design historians, and potential design historians, found employment within the environment of the art college and polytechnic sector initially teaching practical

Design; Manchester Polytechnic, B.A. (Hons) History of Design; Sheffield City Polytechnic, B.A. (Hons) History of Art, Design and Film; Leicester Polytechnic, B.A. (Hons) History of Art and Design in the Modern Period; Masters degrees became available in 1981 at: City of Birmingham Polytechnic, M.A. History of Art and Design and Middlesex M.A. History of Design.

<sup>42</sup> Professor Flavia Swann, who established one of the first BA degrees in Design History at North Staffordshire Polytechnic, gives anecdotal evidence that supports this: "This [North Staffordshire] was the first Design History degree. Sheffield Hallam, Manchester, Leicester (now De Montfort) and Newcastle all set up Design History degrees around this time (1976-78), although Newcastle Polytechnic course emphasized architectural and fine art history... Brighton started a course early 1980s." Swann, F. & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with Flavia Swann*, Track 5. It is unclear in which particular order these courses were validated and Brighton Polytechnic often claims to be the "first" design history degree. There is nothing to be gained by ordering the institutions but what is clear from the evidence is that there was an environment that was receptive to the establishment of design history across the country. The archive evidence held at the National Archives does not offer comprehensive details, however the papers relating to course validation held by the Open University offer the potential for further research on this. The records of the CNAAB are distributed across several archive locations. The Modern Records Centre Archives at Warwick, The Open University's Validation Services in Milton Keynes and the National Archives at Kew. Due to practical limitations I prioritised looking at the CNAAB deposit held in the National Archive as this contained the council's minutes, from 1964-85, and annual reports, for the period 1964-89.



design students, and only latterly educating 'would-be' historians of design. There were two main types of students who encountered design history within the higher education system; firstly, and generally in a greater number, the practical design student who was encouraged through complementary or contextual studies to engage with a history, or histories, of their own practice; and secondly, the student with an interest in a more in-depth study of histories of art and objects.

The formation of early design history courses, distinct from contextual provision to practical courses, was a key factor in the development of design history and highlighted a variety of approaches; thus it is more precise to refer to the emergence and development of several Design Histories. The key themes that this brings to light can be used to illustrate the parameters of the subject and three distinct approaches. Chapter Two gives a case study examining three of the first design history courses and discussion reveals some of the complex problems that individuals associated with these particular communities of practice encountered. It also illuminates different approaches to design during this period, an issue which continues to be subject of debate among some scholars.

### **Early conferences and publications**

The main developments in education and its regulation, discussed above, were arguably the most significant factors in the institutional development of design history and key for establishing mechanisms of communication among scholars, lecturers and students. The institutional frameworks provided by education facilitated subject specific meetings and conferences thus reinforced communication and the establishment of a network of like-minded scholars. Between 1975 and 1977 significant conferences held at Newcastle, Middlesex and Brighton

Polytechnics reveal the variety of directions that design historians were taking in their approaches to writing about design that would be reflected in education course provision. The first three conferences were organised before the DHS came into existence but it was at the Brighton conference that the Society was formed.<sup>43</sup> This section will discuss how these meetings demonstrate design history as a network in the Latourian sense, it looks at the issues they raised and considers their impact on the direction of early scholarship.

Actor Network Theory (ANT) is a methodological stance and not a way of explaining how or why a network is formed. As such ANT is suited to the discussion of the formation and evolution of design history presented in this thesis due to the complexities encountered from its ever-evolving nature.<sup>44</sup> Design history has a wide variety of *actors* that interact together forming a single broad *network*. These *actors* include individuals, their ideas, events and technologies or materials; examples are the academics, researchers, tutors expressing a wide range of ideas or research outputs through events, conferences and meetings formulated around materials, object collections and museums. Another important element of ANT is that the relationships between these *actors* are constantly performed and evolving. The early conferences also demonstrate a variety of *communities of*

<sup>43</sup> The first conference was organized by the division of art and complementary studies at Newcastle along with members of the AAH Design History Publications sub-committee, and at Middlesex Bridget Wilkins instigated the formation of the Design History Research Group working party. Stephen Bayley erroneously states that the first three of these conferences were organized by the DHRG in the introduction to Design Council,(1979)*Design History - Past, Process, Product*, London: Design Council; however many of the same individuals were associated with both the DHP subcommittee and the DHRG.

<sup>44</sup> For detailed explanations and discussions of the application of Actor Network Theory see: Latour, B,(2005)*Reassembling the Social - An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, and Law, J & Hassard, J.(1999) *Actor Network Theory and After*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing

*practice* in the differing approaches to the broad and fluid academic activity of design history.

The four-day conference held in 1975, at Newcastle Polytechnic's division of History of Art and Complementary Studies, was widely regarded as being the first design history conference.<sup>45</sup> The title of this conference was broad, "Design 1900-1960", which allowed for a variety of subject matter and approaches.<sup>46</sup> Several of the papers addressed topics that were related to those discussed in early publications such as Nikolaus Pevsner's *Pioneers of Modern Design from William Morris to Walter Gropius*, or Herbert Read's *Art and Industry*, such as W.R. Lethaby, the Bauhaus, and Le Corbusier.<sup>47</sup> Others were object focused, considering chair design, electrical appliances, and American automobiles. A sociological approach, giving consideration to environments and contexts, was also shown in papers on 'the owner occupier boom in domestic architecture' and 'Design for living: a socialist utopia of 1935'.<sup>48</sup> The topics discussed allowed for a variety of different approaches: the reappraisal of previous literature, discussion of production techniques, and consideration of consumers. The conference was a starting point for the later discussions on appropriate subject matter and method in design history but the most significant feature of this conference was its role in establishing

<sup>45</sup> Some sources indicate that there was an initial seminar at Coventry's Lanchester Polytechnic in 1972 referred to in a Design Council publication and also recollection by Adrian Forty. He notes that this was organised by John Heskett. There is little documentary evidence of this, and the recollections from those who attended are vague.

<sup>46</sup> Published with the longer title of "Design 1900-1960: Studies in Design and Popular Culture Of The 20th Century"; Faulkner, T. (1976) *Design 1900-1960 Studies in Design and Popular Culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Newcastle: Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic

<sup>47</sup> Pevsner, N. (1970) *Pioneers Of Modern Design From William Morris To Walter Gropius*, Harmondsworth: Penguin and Read, H., (1934) *Art and Industry; the principles of industrial design*, London: Faber and Faber

<sup>48</sup> Bridget Wilkins "The owner occupier boom in domestic architecture." in; Faulkner, T. (1976) *Design 1900-1960 Studies in Design and Popular Culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Newcastle: Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic. Colin Cunningham "Design for living: a socialist utopia of 1935." in Faulkner, T. (1976) *Design 1900-1960 Studies in Design and Popular Culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Newcastle: Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic

a nascent design historical community and the building of networks between like-minded scholars.<sup>49</sup> At this point the term 'design historian' was already being confidently used by participants as can be seen in Tim Benton's paper 'Background to the Bauhaus'. The importance of personal relationships is evident here as Penny Sparke recalls being advised to attend the conference by her mentor Peter Reyner Banham, (who spoke at the conference), and at that time promotion of the conference would have been mainly through word of mouth.<sup>50</sup>

These relationships between early design historians continued to be of importance in the second conference "Leisure and design in the 20th century" organized by Bridget Wilkins and held at Middlesex Polytechnic in April 1976 where conference delegates included many of those that attended the first Newcastle conference.<sup>51</sup> The Middlesex conference gave an opportunity for like-minded design historians, or potential design historians, to debate the nature of the discipline. The debates surrounding the nature of disciplinarity were not explicitly evident in the subject matter of papers, but recollections from delegates suggest that there were

<sup>49</sup> Among the eighty conference attendees included the organiser architectural historian Thomas Faulkner, and several individuals associated with the Open University's A305 course Tim Benton, Adrian Forty, and Reyner Banham. Source; Norman Oliver 'Design Studies Conference in Newcastle' *AAH Bulletin* No 1. Interestingly, the gendered terminology used in Benton's paper reveals the assumption prevalent at that time that historians were all men, but historian Bridget Wilkins was also contributing a paper to the conference and Penny Sparke was among the delegates.

<sup>50</sup> Banham was mentor to Penny Sparke whilst she was doing her PhD. Sparke, P & DHS (2007) *Oral History Project Interview with Penny Sparke*, Track 1

<sup>51</sup> The conference proceedings were published by Design council as *Leisure in the twentieth Century*; Design Council,(1978) *Leisure in the Twentieth Century*, London: Design Council. These indicate the members of the early design history network who attended as speakers and there were also a selection of invited speakers from non-academic institutions such as designers and sociologists; for example Dr Stanley Parker, from the social survey division of the office of population, censuses and surveys speaking on "Leisure in the 20th century-a sociologists view". Other speakers from non-academic institutions included: Alan Self from ICI plastics division; architect Rosemary Ind; and publisher David Johnson.

discussions each evening, and 'long into the night', about what design history was and what its approach should be.<sup>52</sup>

Wilkins outlined the aims and scope of the history of design presented at the conference because "the nature and status of the History of Design as a discipline [was] not clearly understood and accepted" at that time and it was under "scrutiny" in the educational world.<sup>53</sup> This approach to the field of studies presented the argument that design history sought to examine artefacts "by reference to a wide range of criteria - social, technological, psychological, political and economic... within a historical context."<sup>54</sup> This reacted against the application of art historical methods to design artefacts, which Wilkins described as "a sort of applied art connoisseurship" that neglected consideration of the important social function of design and designer. Design history was not to be restricted to considering artefacts that were considered visually beautiful or decorative, and "to succeed, it must bridge the gap between the traditionally specialised academic disciplines and - more important - a much more forbidding chasm between the arts and sciences."<sup>55</sup> These views prompted controversy as did the topic of 'leisure' which, at the time, was not considered to be suitable for academic consideration.<sup>56</sup>

The title of a conference the following year at Brighton Polytechnic, "Design History - Fad or Function?," revealed that the primary issue of concern amongst

<sup>52</sup> Wilkins. B. & DHS (2007) *Oral History Project Interview with Bridget Wilkins*, Track 5 - contains recollections of informal gatherings which extended late into the night where the nature of Design History was the topic of conversation.

<sup>53</sup> Wilkins, B. 'Introduction' in Design Council,(1978)*Leisure in the Twentieth Century*, London: Design Council p.5

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Wilkins. B. & DHS (2007) *Oral History Project Interview with Bridget Wilkins Track 4* (11 min 43 sec)

early design historians was to provide evidence that design history had its own identity and function within an intellectual and educational framework. It was not a passing 'fad', and had the potential to become an established academic discipline in its own right.<sup>57</sup> Penny Sparke introduced the conference and declared that; "the newly emergent discipline of design history has by now spread its roots quite quickly and established itself firmly enough to show that it is here to stay."<sup>58</sup> Unsurprisingly, given the title of the conference, it was here that design history's own academic organisation, the DHS, was created. This was a key moment of importance giving structure for communication between the network of individuals interested in the area, and formalising design history in an intellectual and educational framework. The conference was also a major development because it helped to establish parameters for discussion and offered examples of the variety of design histories.

The papers at Brighton demonstrate that there were pluralistic approaches to the discipline. When Penny Sparke reflected on the conference, after the publication of its papers in 1978 she identified three different approaches.<sup>59</sup> These were firstly, a history of 'designing', secondly, a branch of social history taking designed artefacts as its starting point and thirdly, "a more deliberately 'art historical' tack, examining the problem of style and its analysis in objects."<sup>60</sup> Several papers addressed the issue of the creation of the discipline from an intellectual, practical and institutional perspective. Clive Ashwin's paper 'Art and design history: the parting of the ways?'

<sup>57</sup> The conference was held in 1977 and was the second set of conference papers published by the Design Council; Design Council (1978) *Design History: Fad or Function*, London: Design Council.

<sup>58</sup> Sparke, P., 'Introduction' in *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Sparke, P (1978) "Design History: Fad or Function?-Some Afterthoughts" *Design History Society Newsletter number three*, December 1978, pp. 14-16.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

discussed the emergence of a distinct disciplinary identity and was one of the first key examples of published work discussing the nature of design history as a discipline.<sup>61</sup> This paper gave the institutional background in the light of educational changes brought about by government reports; arguing that art history had neglected the study of design and was not suited to providing design students with an “economic, technological or sociological mode of analysis.”<sup>62</sup> He highlighted two differing concerns for curriculum content, whether students were to be taught a ‘body of knowledge’ related to their discipline, or to develop cognitive skills involving logical thinking, the scientific use of evidence, and the ability to synthesise and communicate information. Roger Newport also discussed issues relating to teaching designers and John Blake from the Design Council discussed ‘the context for design history’ and attempted to define boundaries of design history from the perspective of designers and the Design Council.<sup>63</sup> At this particular point there was not enough published research to engage in a thorough historiographical analysis of the young discipline, but Open University librarian Anthony Coulson discussed his work compiling a design history bibliography.<sup>64</sup> Other papers at the conference presented the results of research, and were actually ‘doing’ design history rather than merely ‘talking about doing’ it.<sup>65</sup> The following year the theme of

<sup>61</sup> Ashwin, C. “Art and design history: the parting of the ways?” in Design Council (1978) *Design History: Fad or Function*, London: Design Council. Bridget Wilkins had also published work in the Association of Art Historians Bulletin. See, Wilkins, B.(1976)“Teaching Design History,” *AAH Bulletin*, Number 2.

<sup>62</sup> Ashwin, C. *op cit.* p.99

<sup>63</sup> Newport, R., “Design History: Process Or Product” and Blake, J., ‘The Context for design history’ in Design Council (1978) *Design History: Fad or Function*, London: Design Council

<sup>64</sup> Coulson, A “ Towards A Design History Bibliography” in Design Council (1978) *Design History: Fad or Function*, London: Design Council

<sup>65</sup> Papers such as Penny Sparke on the growth of the American Design Profession in ‘From a lipstick to a steamship; Alan Self on ‘Streamlined Expresses of the LNER 1935-39’; Suzette Worden on consumer advice in the 1930s; Peter Vickers on ‘American and British personal transport design in the 1950s and 1960s; and Mark Turner on “The Silver Studio’s contribution to British wallpaper design 1890-1930”. See: Design Council (1978) *Design History: Fad or Function*, London: Design Council

discussing the nature of design history continued at the first DHS conference “Design History; Past, Process, Product”.<sup>66</sup> The fact that these two early conferences explicitly addressed the nature of the subject is evidence that design historians felt the need to emphasise their separate identity from art history in a strong manner.

The growing need for a separation of design history from art history, and to a lesser extent architectural history, revolved around several key debates that were of particular importance to individuals, or members of the community of practice, who were connected to teaching.<sup>67</sup> The issues that were of greatest importance will be examined in detail in a later section of this thesis which discusses the creation of the DHS by some members of the AAH and others, the case study given in Chapter Four. However it is also important not to malign the important scholarship that was occurring in both art and architectural history as this arguably provided a necessary defining intellectual backdrop. Here there is clear evidence of the importance of networks, both in terms of personal links and relationships, but also in terms of subject matter, ideas, theoretical and methodological approaches. An example of a scholar whose work and influence overlap several different areas of the network is Nikolaus Pevsner; an art and architectural historian closely linked

<sup>66</sup> This was the 4th Design History conference and the 1st by the Design History Society, held at Canterbury, Kent. Published as: Design Council (1979) *Design History - Past, Process, Product*, London: Design Council.

<sup>67</sup> Architectural History communities of practice often had closer connections to early Design History due to the overlap in subject matter between interiors, the objects within them, and the buildings surrounding them. There are also connections due to key individuals associated with modern architecture also designing ‘iconic’ chairs, for example Mies Van Der Rohe, and Le Corbusier.



to the regulation of art school education and whose publications on architecture and design pioneers are discussed later in the chapter.<sup>68</sup>

The publication of the papers presented at the early design history conferences are examples of new design history scholarship.<sup>69</sup> During this early period there were few specific design history publications due to a variety of practical and theoretical limiting factors. These included questions concerning the content and focus of this new discipline and, additionally, the audiences for these publications. There were a varied range of resources in adjacent areas such as decorative arts, collecting, social history, business history, technical literature and biography that were of interest, although these might be characterized as “dominated by the interests of the collector and the coffee table.”<sup>70</sup> At the Brighton conference Anthony Coulson discussed the difficulties in putting together a design history bibliography at that period.<sup>71</sup> Compiling a list of available published resources for use by design historians and teaching staff had been one of the first tasks of DHS, although this

<sup>68</sup> Pevsner’s contribution to the art and architectural history network in Britain was reassessed by scholars at an international conference held in July 2002 at Birkbeck College to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. The resulting papers are presented in: Draper, P (ed.) (2004) *Reassessing Pevsner*, London: Ashgate. In addition to editing the 47-volume *Pelican History of Art* series Pevsner’s “Buildings of England” series for Penguin was published from 1951 to 1974 and comprised 46 volumes. For more, see [www.pevsner.co.uk](http://www.pevsner.co.uk) by the Pevsner Books Trust which contains essays on several topics relating to the series. His texts on architecture and design, and their reception by the design historical community are discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>69</sup> The 1975 Newcastle Polytechnic conference was self published and the Design Council published conferences during the period 1978 to 1985, these included; Design Council (1978) *Leisure in the twentieth Century*, London: Design Council; Design Council (1978) *Design History: Fad or Function*, London: Design Council; Design Council, (1979) *Design History - Past, Process, Product*, London: Design Council; Hamilton, N (ed.) (1980) *Design and Industry: The Effects of Industrialisation and Technical Change on Design*. London: Design Council; Design Council (1981) *Svensk Form*, London: Design Council; and also Design Council (1985) *From Spitfire to Microchip*, London: Design Council.

<sup>70</sup> Coulson, A (1978) “Towards a Design History Bibliography” in Design Council, (1978) *Design History: Fad or Function*, London: Design Council.

<sup>71</sup> Coulson described his four main lines of enquiry to be; a history of institutions, educational changes and conceptual evolution, distinctive areas of design activity, product design in specific materials, and the activities of particular designers covering a period of approximately 100 years. His methodology was to search the subject catalogues of key libraries across the world and indexes of scholarly articles. *Ibid.* p.88

was initiated by the Design History Publications subcommittee of the AAH and the Design History Research Group.<sup>72</sup> Coulson was the art librarian at the Open University and the resulting book was published by the Design Council in 1979.<sup>73</sup>

Before the widespread use of computer technology in libraries, Coulson's *Bibliography of Design in Britain 1851-1970* was of great significance to art librarians as "an invaluable guide... to build resources in the developing history of design history."<sup>74</sup> It was an important bibliographic contribution surveying published resources available but the book attracted criticism at the time of publication from some design historical communities of practice, "for its supposedly 'Pevsnerian' selection of topics," despite this it remains an important stage in the development of design history.<sup>75</sup> Coulson's publication was also significant as part of the Design

<sup>72</sup> In his acknowledgements to the bibliography Coulson thanks Tim and Charlotte Benton, Hazel Conway, Clive Wainwright, Roger Newport and all members of both the Design History Publication Subcommittee of the AAH and the Design History Research Group (by then the newly-formed Design History Society). Coulson, A. (1979) *A Bibliography of Design in Britain 1851-1970*, London: Design Council. There is also mention of the formation of this committee in the *Bulletin of the Association of Art Historians*.

<sup>73</sup> Coulson, A. (1979) *Op. Cit.* Anthony Coulson's contribution was acknowledged in the course texts for Open University course A305. See: OU A305 (1975) USA 1890-1939, *Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939, Units 7-8*. Anthony Coulson was highly respected as a picture researcher, a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Design History* and an active member of ARLIS, the Art Libraries Society. Throughout his career he did a great deal to further the work of art and design historians. He served on the Association of Art Historians Design History publications sub-committee (1977-82); the British Library Interim Committee on Art Documentation (1984-6); and was also closely associated with the CNAA, serving on the Art and Design subject board (1982-6) and the Panel of Specialist Advisers (1984-90).

<sup>74</sup> When Coulson's bibliography was published he was very clear that this was an introductory bibliography as he wished it to give information on accessible works, but he also commented that a comprehensive bibliography was not possible "given the enormous span of the subject and the lack of serious historical research and documentation in so many areas." Coulson was very clear in the chronological and geographical parameters that he chose to limit his bibliography to manageable proportions. Coulson, A. (1979) *Op. Cit.* p.1. When Charlotte Benton evaluated Coulson's contributions to design history she felt that Coulson was being overly modest in describing his work as "introductory" when in fact the scope of his project was very ambitious. Benton, C. (2000) "Obituary: Anthony Coulson 1944-2000" *Journal of Design History* 13(3), pp.245-247

<sup>75</sup> Quotation from Benton *Ibid.*, p.246. The publication was structured in six sections, with additional introduction and subject finder. These were: a table of important dates; a section on 'fostering design' which included educational developments, official organisations, exhibitions museums and collections; a selection of resources on 'design and designers', which included theories of design, design methods, chronological studies, key designers, and technical social and economic factors; a

Council's first venture into the area of design history publishing as opposed to design promotion and practical literature.<sup>76</sup>

Of importance in establishing the foundation for publications relating to design during this period were several works by Nikolaus Pevsner, written in the 1930s and reprinted in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which adopted the procedures of art and architectural history.<sup>77</sup> Pevsner's work had provided a starting point, and although his approach was criticised by many, particularly his prioritization of the trajectory of design leading to a modernist canon of excellence, he remained a significant pioneering figure and was among the scholars invited to be patrons of the DHS.<sup>78</sup> This status was not solely due to his publications, but also his defining role on the Coldstream committee and promotion of academic standards in practical art and design education. The importance of networks and personal relationships is evident when looking at the direct influence of Pevsner on another key scholar of importance to design history. Pevsner was mentor and PhD supervisor to Peter Reyner Banham and is credited for providing the 'original impulse' for Banham's *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* in which Banham argued against his

large section covered 'areas of design activity' structured by individual design discipline; final research sections covered 'journals' and 'bibliographies, and indexes, abstracts and catalogues'.

<sup>76</sup> The Design History publications by the Design Council included; the early Design History conferences; a small series of monographs on design pioneers (which followed in the tradition of Pevsner, a focus that is understandable considering the aims the Design Council); and Bayley, S (1979) *In Good Shape - style in industrial products, 1900 to 1960*, London: Design Council

<sup>77</sup> First published in 1936 as *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* the text was revised and reprinted in 1949, 1960 and again in 1975. Pevsner, N, (1970) *Pioneers of Modern Design from William Morris to Walter Gropius*; Harmondsworth, Penguin; Pevsner, N (1968) *The Sources of Modern Architecture and Design*; London, Thames and Hudson; Pevsner, N. (1968) *Studies In Art, Architecture And Design Volume 2 Victorian And After* London: Thames and Hudson. These publications surrounding the Modern Movement and its evolution tended to glorify particular "heroes and classics" and focused on the production of particular iconic item by specific named designers.

<sup>78</sup> The first patrons of the Design History Society in 1979 were: Gillo Dorfles, Peter Reyner Banham, and Nikolaus Pevsner

mentor's assessment of the Modern Movement.<sup>79</sup> Banham's *Theory and Design* and his journalistic articles written for *New Society* have been described by Penny Sparke as representing a major "shift in how material culture was seen."<sup>80</sup> Selections of these articles were compiled in Sparke's *Design By Choice* and the posthumous volume *A Critic Writes*.<sup>81</sup> An indication of Banham's significant contribution to early design historical writing is shown by the series of annual memorial lectures organized by the DHS in association with the Royal College of Art and Victoria and Albert Museum history of design course.<sup>82</sup> Reyner Banham's *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* of 1960 focused the Modern Movement and the influences on the attitudes of architects in the early twentieth-century. Another important publication that also took this approach was Siegfried Giedion's *Mechanisation Takes Command*, initially of 1942 then reprinted in 1970. Tim Benton regards this book as the guiding text of design history;

"the key text to this day is still *Mechanisation Takes Command*, that is the absolute bible, the defining bible of design history. In that you find almost all the methods of dealing with objects, from extremely symbolic and spiritualised through to very pragmatic and empirical documentary design

<sup>79</sup> "...this book is dedicated to those who made it possible and necessary to write it: to Nikolaus Pevsner for the original impulse, and the guidance constantly and ungrudgingly given" Banham. R.(1960, 1962)*Theory and Design in the first Machine Age*,2nd edn. London: Architectural Press The relationship between Pevsner and Banham is addressed in detail by Nigel Whitely; Whitely, N. (2004) "The Puzzled *Lieber Meister*: Pevsner and Reyner Banham" in Draper, P. (ed.) *Reassessing Pevsner*, London: Ashgate.

<sup>80</sup> *New Society* was a magazine that established a new approach to popular culture; published from 1962 to 1987 it gave an outlet for new views on the arts and social sciences. "Over the next decade *New Society* did indeed establish a new way of taking popular culture seriously, an approach which combined (as Gross required) intellectual analysis with equal measures of personal confusion and enthusiasm. The pick of these Arts in Society pages were collected by Paul Barker for Fontana in 1977, in a book which I find as illuminating now as I did when I first read it. Here is John Berger on portraits, nudes, and the photos of Don McCullin; Reyner Banham on sunglasses, crisps, and the container terminal;" Frith, S. (1995)*Speaking Volumes: New Society (1962-87)*THE 27 January 1995 Penny Sparke accredits Banham as a major influence on her own work, describing his work as "pivotal". Sparke, P & DHS ( 2007) *Oral History Project Interview with Penny Sparke*; Track 1

<sup>81</sup> Banham, R & Sparke, P.(1981)*Design By Choice*, New York: Rizzoli and Banham, M. Et. Al.(1996)*A Critic Writes: Essays by Reyner Banham*, Berkeley: University of California Press

<sup>82</sup> Banham died suddenly in 1988. The commemorative lectures became an important point in the design history networks calendar and invited a broad range of researchers engaged with design history to speak on topics of interest. A volume of these essays has been published; Aynsley, J. & Atkinson. H.(2009)*The Banham Lectures: Designing the Future*, Oxford: Berg

history. And that I think is, if you want a centre of design history, for me that's it"<sup>83</sup>

Benton's succinct description of the foci of Giedion's work is arguably still valid; the text fused art historical method with more technical and historic approaches.<sup>84</sup>

Among the literature for designers, Victor Papanek's *Design for the Real World* of 1972 is identified by Coulson as an example of a "growth in the literature stressing the visual/perceptual aspects of design" and a "plea for design to adopt a much broader role."<sup>85</sup> At this time there was a dearth of general surveys relating specifically to design in Britain; the exception to this was Fiona MacCarthy's *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, subtitled *Design in Britain 1830 to Today* published in 1972. MacCarthy's text was initially badly presented to the market, as its publishers reflected later the "unfortunate" title meant that the topic was unclear and the book was not regarded by academics as a serious text.<sup>86</sup> Confusion over the book title resulted in poor initial sales. When in 1979 the text was re-issued, it was given the new title of *A History of British Design 1830 – Today*. As Coulson had discussed at the Brighton Conference, determining what sources and publications could be used by design historians was problematic due to the wide range of subjects that were of potential interest; this was compounded by indistinct titles. An additional problem was faced when categorising and cataloguing books in libraries. If the wide range of scholars associated with the broader network of design history were struggling how

<sup>83</sup> Benton, T & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Benton*, Track 6 [16:24]

<sup>84</sup> Giedion died in 1968. His approach to objects had influence upon subsequent histories of science and technology.

<sup>85</sup> The next section present texts relating to design methods, encompassing special case design, ergonomics, computer-aided design and management; followed by engineering design, design consultants, and a section on the craftsmanship.

<sup>86</sup> Ashfield, K., "The Publication of Design History" in Design Council (1979) *Design History - Past, Process, Product*, London: Design Council

to define their activities, then the problem was increasingly difficult for both librarians and publishers.<sup>87</sup> During this period, however, the art publishers Studio Vista had produced a wide series of illustrated books on a variety of topics of interest to design historians; these included Gillian Naylor's works on the *Bauhaus* and the *Arts and Crafts Movement*, Bevis Hillier on *Art Deco*, in addition to architectural history and handbooks of graphic design.<sup>88</sup> The dictionaries and encyclopaedia that were available at this time demonstrate an understandable bias from publishers towards the known market for collectors and dealers of antiques and the decorative arts.<sup>89</sup>

Increasing the publication of design history was an issue of particular urgency in establishing the visibility and credibility of the field of studies as an academic discipline, and when the DHS constitution was written an important role for the society was to "disseminate and publish" research.<sup>90</sup> At the first conference organized by the DHS, Keith Ashfield presented a paper that detailed the concerns

<sup>87</sup> In later years the society for Art Librarians (ARLIS) would work with the DHS to provide information for librarians: 16-19 April 1982, Course "Methods and Materials Of Design History" Van Mildert College, University of Durham

<sup>88</sup> Naylor, G.(1971)*The Arts and Crafts Movement - A Study of its sources, ideals, and Influence on Design*, London: Studio Vista; Naylor, G.(1968)*The Bauhaus*, London : Studio Vista; and, Hillier, B. (1968)*Art Deco*, London: Studio Vista. Other books published in the late 1960s included instructional design books by Ken Garland, Michael Hutchins and David Pye. Garland, K.,(1966) *Graphics Handbook*, London: Studio Vista; Hutchins, M.,(1969)*Typographics: a designer's handbook of printing techniques*, London: Studio Vista and Pye, D.,(1967)*The Nature of Design*, London: Studio Vista

<sup>89</sup> Osborne, H. (ed.)( 1976) *The Oxford Companion To The Decorative Arts*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; and, Flemming, J. and Honour, H. ( 1977) *The Penguin Dictionary of Decorative Arts*, Harmondsworth: Penguin

<sup>90</sup> Design History Society constitution: "2 Purposes, the objects of the Society are to promote the study of and research into design history and to disseminate and publish the useful results thereof. In furtherance of the above object but not further or otherwise the Society may;.... 2ii procure to be written and print, publish, issue and circulate either gratuitously or otherwise such papers, books, periodicals, pamphlets and other documents as shall further the said objects." Oxford University Press publishes the Society's academic journal. As the decades progressed the Society would also have relationships with other publishers; for example Berg published the Society's volume on the Reyner Banham Memorial lectures; Aynsley, J. & Atkinson. H.(2009)*The Banham Lectures: Designing the Future*, Oxford: Berg

from the perspective of the publishers.<sup>91</sup> Ashfield argued that new disciplines suffered within the marketplace due to the small number of students and the environment in which they were taught. In addition publishers were wary of the polytechnics as this was a new market of which they had no experience.<sup>92</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that during the 1970s the first key design history publications were published by the Open University and the Design Council - organisations whose main concerns were not primarily market-driven. The Design Council was a government-funded organisation to promote interest in design practice and at the Open University accessible publications were key for distance learning pedagogy. Due to the Design Council's educational agenda, it collaborated with the Design History Research Group aiming to expand from the business and technological focus of their previous publications to developing provision in this new area. The production costs of printing papers from the early design history conferences were minimal so this was an appealing venture.<sup>93</sup> The Council also drew on this source of researchers to commission several texts, although papers in the Design Council Archives show that there was no specific criterion for publications, thus resulting in a range of books that was somewhat adhoc.<sup>94</sup> This development does, however, demonstrate the importance at this early stage of informal networks and personal relationships, many of which were

<sup>91</sup> Ashfield worked for George Allen and Unwin, the publishers of Fiona MacCarthy's *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, Ashfield's paper was published in the conference proceedings; 'The Publication of Design History' in Design Council,(1979) *Design History - Past, Process, Product*, London: Design Council

<sup>92</sup> Ashfield started by giving a direct comparison with the social sciences, a similarly young academic discipline before discussing the polytechnics: Ashfield *Ibid.*, p.30. "one of the problems of selling design history books, however, and one of the things that frightens publishers, is the places in which it is taught - the polytechnics."

<sup>93</sup> Publications report as at 15<sup>th</sup> August 1979 "Education Design History market" and Letter – 27 Sept 1979 in same file. Design Council Archive, Design Archives Brighton University.

<sup>94</sup> Report on publications for HoD (Head of Division) on 9 April 1979, Design Council Archive, Design Archives Brighton University.

facilitated through the education system, the DHRG and subsequently the DHS.<sup>95</sup> The Open University's *History of Architecture and Design A305* course had an important and direct influence on the emerging design history network. Its course books and readers were extremely important for the spread of design history across the country where they could be found in polytechnic and community libraries. The written and organisational style of the publications demonstrates direct influence from their production as a component part of the specific didactic pedagogic strategy used in distance learning. The course books were for use in conjunction with audio and visual materials as part of a cohesive learning experience.<sup>96</sup> This was particularly suited to the discussion of the visual dimension of designed objects but, understandably, could not recreate the experience of the physical dimension of artefact-based study.<sup>97</sup> Arguably the Open University course is the most significant development of this period as it influenced the many areas of early design history activity; its influence can be seen in education, publishing, intellectual direction and the development of networks. It is the subject of a detailed case study in chapter two.

<sup>95</sup>Penny Sparke gives an anecdote of the circumstances surrounding the commissioning of her monograph on Ettore Sottsass for the Design Council series. She recalls meeting Paul Burrell in the lunch queue at a seminar, when discussing the Design Council doing a series of Design Monographs Sparke suggested doing a book on Sottsass; Burrell challenged Sparke to "Go away and do it"; Sparke, P. & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Penny Sparke*, Track 2. Sparke, P.(1982) *Ettore Sottsass*, London : Design Council. DHS

<sup>96</sup> Black and white illustrations in texts were supplemented by colour slides, radio recordings, and television programmes. ( See Appendix A )

<sup>97</sup> Artefact-based study was an important part of the learning experience offered by many design historians teaching in art colleges. Adrian Forty gives the example of teaching through encouraging students to curate an exhibition of electrical appliances, this was done in the context of electricity shortages; Flavia Swann discusses the development of the Design History Study collection at North-Staffordshire Polytechnic; Sources: Forty, A & DHS ( 2007) *Oral History Interview with Adrian Forty*, and Swann, F. & DHS ( 2009) *Oral History Interview with Flavia Swann* Other colleges across the country built informal resource collections for teaching; many of which are now formalized; eg Museum of Domestic Architecture (MoDA) at Middlesex, and the Plastics Design Study Collection Bournemouth became Museum of Design in Plastics (MoDiP) See Chapter 7 for discussion of these.



The market share for design history outputs was limited to 'scholarly' publications and also 'academic' publications; each with its own problems for both authors and publishers<sup>98</sup>. Ashfield explained to the first DHS conference that design historians needed to prove that design history was a growing area so that publishers, who were primarily concerned with economics and the potential market, should take a chance on the new discipline. 'Scholarly publications' had low market expectation, high production cost and high cover price, and the market was limited to the peers of the writer and libraries and institutions around the world. 'Academic publications' on the other hand had the potential for higher sales and distribution to students with texts often based around a teaching syllabus. The lack of a consensus of opinion about what the subject should actually encompass was therefore a specific problem:

"One group of people will teach this kind of design history, or teach it in a particular way, and someone else will say 'no, that's not right, that's not what design history is. We teach this or that other thing.' So there is no basic area emerging that would satisfy a publisher's marketing department."<sup>99</sup>

It required publishers to gamble on the new discipline and initiate publishing in the area to prove that there was a market to sustain publications.<sup>100</sup> Together the early publications of the Design Council and the Open University were important to the development of design history because they paved the way for other publishers to enter the market by proving that there was audience demand.

<sup>98</sup> Here I make a distinction between 'design history outputs' as work produced by members of the design history network as opposed to art books which are heavy on illustration but poor on interpretations; examples being collector and antiques guides.

<sup>99</sup> Ashfield 'The Publication of Design History' in Design Council, (1979) *Design History - Past, Process, Product*, London: Design Council. p.30. The proceedings of the first DHS-organised Design History Conference at Canterbury.

<sup>100</sup> "some publisher is going to take a chance at some stage; and once publication starts it is likely to continue... what everyone is afraid of doing is publishing, or indeed writing, first, but as soon as the start is made I am sure that there will be more and more activity in this field." *op.cit.*

### **Academic Societies: Formalising ‘communities of practice’ into a Discipline**

In terms of practical and institutional frameworks, Britain is a country where the evidence of design history as a *discipline*, rather than a *field of studies*, was most strongly seen at this time.<sup>101</sup> Of central importance to the academic integrity of a subject, and fundamental in transforming an “area” or “field” of studies into a “discipline,” is the formal apparatus of educational provision, an academic society, annual conferences, a newsletter, and a scholarly journal. In Britain, the nascent design history network was supported by several communities of practice. Firstly, by those linked to the formal education institutions, such as the CNA and polytechnics which were facilitating teaching; and secondly by the academic societies such as the AAH and the DHS that were enabling communication among scholars. The AAH was founded in 1974 and from the outset issues relating to the teaching of history of art and design in polytechnics were of key importance. Theoretical issues underpinned debates that occurred between the AAH and the newly forming community of design historians. In particular arguments surrounded the approaches to objects, categories of objects including 'the everyday', questions of aesthetics, and the value of social and political approach to analysis drawn from adjacent academic areas. It is evident from articles in early AAH bulletins, the formation and activities of its subcommittees, and debates at their annual conferences that design history was growing in importance and it was only three years later that a separate society, the DHS, was established. The relationship between these two groups is particularly illuminating and reveals debates between the two disciplines. Apparent in the 1970s, it became increasingly important during

<sup>101</sup> Kjetil Fallan has argued that Design History as a discipline “is a relatively recent phenomenon” by comparison to other humanities disciplines, and I would not take issue with this. Fallan, K.(2010) *Design history: understanding theory and method*, Oxford: Berg p.ix

the following decade and thus it forms a case study in Chapter Four which evaluates the importance of academic societies and their journals in the direction and development of the discipline.

The formation of the AAH, its various special-interest subgroups and subcommittees, and finally the separation of design historians into their own society during the latter part of the 1970s was a major development in the formation of the discipline. It is significant because it gives an indication of the variety of networks and relationships that were interwoven at this period. The AAH had two subgroups of particular interest to the development of design history; the 'Art History in Art Education' (or *Art and Design Education Group*) and the Design History Publications Committee. The first group considered the recent changes within art education and addressed 'the problems of the history of design.'<sup>102</sup> This group produced a questionnaire surveying the variety of art and design history educational provision across the country and the issues that were of particular concern.<sup>103</sup> This resulted

<sup>102</sup> This group had 13 members; they produced a questionnaire surveying provision of the subject across the country. Source: *Bulletin of the Association of Art Historians*, No. 1, November 1975.

<sup>103</sup> The findings of this survey regarded the following; firstly, the naming, staffing and structure of departments which discovered that art and design historians could be found in departments with names ranging from 'History and Theory of Art and Design,' to 'Humanities' or 'General Studies'. "Staffing and Structure. Out of 36 replies 18 groups of staff were organized in departments, usually with the title 'History of Art' or 'Complementary Studies' or a combination of the two. The variations included a department of 'History and Theory of Art and Design,' one of 'Art History and Communication' and one of 'Arts Research'. A further 10 groups of staff were located in larger departments of schools, 6 of which contained the terms 'Humanities' or 'General Studies' as part of their name." Information compiled by the Group for Art History in Art Education. Secondly, the level of qualifications held by staff came from a broad range of different institutions and ranged from PhDs to no qualifications at all. [University of London, Leeds University, Edinburgh University and College of Art, East Anglia, Manchester University, Sussex, Cambridge, Durham, Newcastle, Reading, Nottingham, Essex, Hull, Oxford and Birmingham Glasgow Keele, Lancaster, the Royal College of Art, the Slade and also some staff holding qualifications various colleges and polytechnics. Information compiled by the Group For Art History In Art Education] Thirdly, practical concerns such as the types of courses being taught and the planning, teaching methods, assessment, involvement in student recruitment procedures, opportunities for research, and relationships with other departments. Finally, the questionnaire asked "what aspects of the teaching of art and design history do staff feel are in urgent need of discussion and/or research by the Art and Design Education Group?" The majority of answers to this final question showed a preoccupation with the role and

in the clear evidence that there was a preoccupation with the role and status of design history within the art education curriculum, and it was felt that it was in need of urgent discussion. The existence of this sub-committee and the quantitative research it compiled demonstrates how intertwined the two disciplines were due to opportunities for employment and education policy and regulation at the time.

The AAH initially embraced design history within its own conferences in 1976 and 1977, but the difference in focus, definitions and boundaries between some art historians and early design historians rapidly became clear.<sup>104</sup> Within the AAH, a number of individuals found that they had shared concerns and formed an offshoot, the Design History Publications Committee. The group was formed in 1977 initially with twelve members chaired first by Tim Benton and then by Hazel Conway.<sup>105</sup> The aims and objectives of the group were to investigate the field of design history publications and survey the courses across the country and identify the resources available to the design historians. Many members of this group formed the more

status of Design History within the art education curriculum. See: *Bulletin of the Association of Art Historians*, No. 1, November 1975.

<sup>104</sup>Flavia Swann recalls that some members of the AAH, such as herself and David Jeremiah, were keen to embrace design history. Swann, F. & DHS (2009) *DHS Oral History Interview with Flavia Swann*, Track 6. The AAH conference at Glasgow in 1976 included a strand called "British 19th-century art, design and social history" and the 1977 conference in London was divided into three sections; taste, design and period studies. Subtopics included 'The Artist's Profession', 'Arts Belief and Morality' and 'Design Illustration'. The 'Design and Illustration' strand had contributions from David Jeremiah, Dorothy Reynolds, Tim Benton, Celina Fox and Isobel Spencer. Contributors to the 'design' strand included Gillian Naylor, Bridget Wilkins, and Flavia Swann (nee Petrie). Details of these conferences are given in; *Bulletin of the Association of Art Historians*, No. 2, February 1976 and *Bulletin of the Association of Art Historians*, No. 3, October 1976.

<sup>105</sup> The Design History Publications Committee was first announced in *Bulletin of the Association of Art Historians*, No. 5 October 1977. First meeting took place on May 13 1977. The committee members were; Tim Benton (Chairman, Open University), Paul Burrall (Design Council Publications), Hazel Conway (Gwent College of Higher Education), Tony Coulson (Open University), Chris Green (Courtauld Institute of Art), John Heskett (Sheffield City Polytechnic), Gillian Naylor (Kingston Polytechnic), Leela Meinertas (Victoria and Albert Museum), Dorothy Reynolds (Sheffield City Polytechnic), Jessica Rutherford (Brighton Museum), Gaye Smith (Manchester Polytechnic), and Clive Wainwright (Victoria and Albert Museum).

distinctly activist Design History Research Group.<sup>106</sup> The achievements of these two similar groups included the organisation of separate design history conferences, working successfully with the Design Council to publish academic research in the form of the proceedings of early conferences, and most significantly the emergence of the DHS as a separate entity.<sup>107</sup> Tim Benton recalls; “it was out of that group, at one of these conferences, which I chaired the session that the Design History Society was formed” and that “was the group that launched it”.<sup>108</sup> These individuals had already met for the conferences between 1975 and 1977 at Newcastle, Middlesex and Brighton polytechnics – the latter where the group formalized and established the DHS in 1977.

One of the DHS’s important functions was to provide structure and organisation for a network or community of like-minded scholars and students. It was a central point for a discipline with fluid intellectual boundaries that was unsure of its identity and had no clear definition of the subject it promoted. The enthusiasm for design history, as a distinct discipline from art history, is demonstrated by the numbers of individuals associated with the new society at the time of its formation. Initially listing fifty founding members, the DHS rapidly grew to three hundred and two members by the end of the decade.<sup>109</sup> Amongst the aims and objectives were the

<sup>106</sup> Penny Sparke recalls that the Design History Research Group was formalized at Middlesex. Sparke, P. & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Penny Sparke*, Track 6 [3:14] This group included herself Bridget Wilkins and Charlotte Benton.

<sup>107</sup> See detailed discussion of the conferences and the early design history publications by the Design Council earlier in this chapter.

<sup>108</sup> Benton, T. & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Benton*, Track 3 [11:20]

<sup>109</sup> Seven committee members plus forty-three founding members were listed in the first newsletter; additionally 37 new members were listed. DHS (March 1978) *Newsletter 1*, p3 Tim and Charlotte Benton and Stephen Bayley were also key founders of the society. DHS (2008) *Interview with Gillian Naylor*. Membership statistics taken from ‘list of members’ pamphlet, June 1980, The Design History Society. Document held within the society papers. By the time the first newsletter was published there were eighty-seven members, and the 302 members by the end of the decade were comprised of 257 individuals and 45 institutions.

practical measures of promoting communication and information exchange amongst these members through;

"a programme of meetings organised to coincide with exhibitions of design; compiling a list of unpublished research projects in design history and educational sources, museums and private individuals; an annual conference at which a variety of papers will be presented; securing the publication of papers in design history presented by members at its conferences and meetings; arrange joint conferences or meetings with other organisations with similar or complementary interests."<sup>110</sup>

These practical measures were accompanied, to a lesser extent, by theoretical concerns of defining the subject matter and methodology for design history.

The first newsletter, in March 1978, aimed to open up this theoretical discussion of the Society's role and objectives. These remained the same as those promoted by the Design History Research Group and also hinted at the early disagreement on some key issues. Contributions from founder committee members Noel Lundgren (Chair) Penny Sparke (Secretary) and Alan Crawford (Treasurer) initiated this discussion, with slight differences of emphasis but with a common theme being the open and inclusive nature of the society. Lundgren felt that "a truly comprehensive view of design history will in its own time emerge from the Society's policy of positive collaboration with designers, technologists, professional institutions, industrial archaeologists, researchers and educators."<sup>111</sup> This was slightly contradicted by Crawford's view that the society need not concern itself with abstract issues like defining "what design history is", or with "aggressive policies to further the development of the discipline. It is enough that there is a growing number of people whose interests fall into this area that we can help them by

<sup>110</sup> 'aims and objectives / constitution / application forms' pamphlet, 1978 and also promotional flier, the Design History Society. Document held within the society papers.

<sup>111</sup> "The role of the Society" in DHS (1978) *Design History Society Newsletter no 1*, March 1978,

meetings conference and a newsletter.”<sup>112</sup> Sparke’s contribution acknowledged the diversity in approaches by suggesting the society would “provide a much-needed platform where all levels of interest in the subject can be represented.”<sup>113</sup> She said that this would follow the initiative of the Design History research group, with the new committee seeing its role as “essentially organisational” and hoping to “keep discussion open on the widest possible front.”<sup>114</sup>

A key activity of the society was to organise an annual conference to give a forum for design historical research, and to provide opportunities for the various communities of practice to perform, negotiate relationships, and allow interactions within different sections of the broader network. Following publication of papers from the first 1975 conference, by Newcastle Polytechnic Press, the Design History Research Group, with members of the AAH Design History Publications sub-committee, had succeeded in persuading the Design Council to publish proceedings from the Middlesex and Brighton conferences.<sup>115</sup> The AAH Design History Publications committee worked with the DHS and Design Council to support research and publications including “a bibliography of the history of design”, and a register of research in progress in design history.”<sup>116</sup> The early activities of the DHS, as documented in its Newsletters, indicate that the design history network was thriving: an academic society had been established, publications were being promoted, Anthony Coulson’s bibliography was close to publication,

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Faulkner, T. (ed) (1975) *Design 1900-1960: Studies in Design and Popular Culture of the 20th Century*. Newcastle: Newcastle Polytechnic; Design Council (1976) *Leisure and Design in the Twentieth Century*. London: Design Council and, Design Council (1978) *Design History: Fad or Function?* London: Design Council

<sup>116</sup> As discussed earlier in this chapter, the bibliography was compiled by Tony Coulson of the Open University. DHS ( March 1978) *Newsletter 1*, p.3

Wolverhampton Polytechnic was planning a design history research collection, and a forum for debate was opened up.<sup>117</sup> Issues raised included an interest in the geographical scope of design history and some questioning of whether a museum of modern design was needed.<sup>118</sup> In 1979, the links to Europe were forged by the announcement of Italian professor and scholar Gillo Dorfles as Society patron and occasional references to the work of Design Historians in Scandinavia.<sup>119</sup> At the same time, although Victor Margolin contributed information about developments in America, the focus remained limited primarily to developments and events in Britain until almost three decades later.<sup>120</sup> The DHS Newsletter's pages were supplemented by reviews of exhibitions, requests for research information and the announcement of several day events, and exhibition listings. The early Newsletters also shared the personal details of the Society's members to enable communications in a period before data protection laws and electronic mailing-lists.<sup>121</sup>

The circumstances surrounding the formation of the DHS show that design history was fully established at the end of the 1970s as early design historians were brought together through meetings, exhibitions and conferences that gave them an

<sup>117</sup> The constitution was accepted at the 1978 AGM and 1979 saw the appointment of 3 patrons for the society; Professor Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, Professor Reyner Banham and Professor Gillo Dorfles. Patrons announced in *Newsletter 5*.

<sup>118</sup> The pages of the newsletters show an early interest in broadening the geographical scope of Design History; as early as the second newsletter (July 1978) Dorothy Reynolds contributed a 'Design History Report From Abroad' detailing archives and sources available of interest to the design historian in Paris, readers were encouraged to contribute from discoveries made on their holidays "summer vacations may provide an opportunity to you to write similarly about other countries" Source: Editorial, *DHS Newsletter 2* (July 1978) p1. Victor Margolin contributed 'Design History Overseas'. Listing books published in the USA.

<sup>119</sup> Editorial *DHS Newsletter 4* mentions possibility of a joint seminar with Scandinavian Design History groups in Oslo. This was held from the 9-11<sup>th</sup> November 1978 at the Museum of Applied Arts, Oslo, Norway. Conducted in English participants from Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Britain contributed papers.

<sup>120</sup> See chapter 7 for a discussion of the expanding geographical boundaries of the subject and discipline.

<sup>121</sup> Oxford University press now holds all data of the members of society; due to data protection laws it is often complicated to share/access information about the membership of the society unless their exact permission has been given.



opportunity to debate issues of shared interest. Throughout the 1980s the DHS fulfilled the function of sharing information about these events and exhibitions, teaching methods, research and publications, through its Newsletters that were published three or four times per year prior to the launch of its *Journal of Design History* in 1988. The role that the Society played by enabling communication, organising events, and providing opportunities for the dissemination of new academic research, became increasingly significant during the next decade and will be the focus of a detailed case study in chapter four.

### **Key themes**

Discussion of design history is made complex by its variety and inability to be neatly defined or categorised. The concept of a fluid and constantly evolving network has been raised in this initial chapter; additionally, within this broader network relationships are performed in a variety of separate communities of practice. Primarily, this chapter has emphasised the importance of education as a context for design history, or to continue the terminology a distinct community of practice. It was within educational environments that the importance of discussing the parameters of the subject emerged and the three major types of design historical practice were revealed. Firstly, there was an approach to a 'history of design' that focused mainly on the production process, emphasising the biographies of great designers, discussing iconic objects and design organisations and groups. This was mainly seen in the context of critical and contextual studies in art and design schools and showed the discipline's origins within art history and architectural history. Secondly, there was an approach to designed objects of all types that considered their position within cultural and social history; this approach was

associated in particular with academics at Middlesex Polytechnic and it expanded due to developments in museum studies in later decades. Thirdly, there was an approach which questioned how an object was interpreted and discussed that had its basis in literary theory. These themes and approaches identified during the 1970s continue to be areas for discussion about the identity of the subject and feature in discussions of its parameters. A second context for the discussion of design history was within the academic societies that emerged during this period, most specifically the AAH and the DHS. The emergence and evolution of these societies demonstrate the importance of structures for communication. Although undoubtedly art and design history existed amongst informal networks prior to the establishment of these societies, the organisations gave, and continue to give, formalization and an air of authority when discussing the disciplines in the context of government-funded education and research. The role of these societies, and how they involved and changed is another major theme of this thesis.

This chapter has introduced some of the main developments and key themes during the period from the 1960s to the 1970s. Whilst chapter two addresses the same chronological timeframe, it provides detailed analysis of the importance of educational changes by discussing case studies of early design history course provision in the polytechnics and the role of networks in relation to the Open University's *History of Architecture and Design A305* course. Additionally, it will also address some of the key theoretical and methodological issues that arise from using the concept of communities of practice.



## **Chapter Two**

### **The 1960s and '70s**

#### **The Importance of Educational changes examined through discussion of Early Design History in the Polytechnics and the Open University**

The complexity of interactions between different communities of practice within a broader network is a major theme throughout this thesis. One particularly important context for the formation of relationships and the airing of debates about design history is the provision of 'history of design' within education. The 1970s period brought sweeping changes in the provision of art and design education which provided the fertile environment for design history to grow - initially as components of contextual studies - and then developing into individual modules and stand-alone degree courses. New pedagogical attitudes enabled the provision of part-time and distance learning that opened up higher education to a broader range of students, allowed experimentation in the curriculum enabling the development of new disciplines and approaches. The early educational provision of design history reveals many key theoretical, methodological and practical issues in the emergence and development of the discipline and it is worthy of in-depth discussion. This chapter offers case studies of two key educational areas: firstly, the early provision of subject-specific design history courses in the Polytechnic sector that also revealed three significantly different approaches; and secondly, the history of architecture and design course offered by the Open University. This course demonstrated the importance of academic relationships and networks, the significance of technical and publishing advances in distance learning pedagogy, and is

important for linking educational provision with the publishing sector. This chapter will also address some of the practical research problems involved with using the theoretical construct of 'communities of practice' in relation to unravelling academic networks.

### **Case study I - Early Design History courses in the Polytechnics**

By the late 1970s there were a broad range of design courses and humanities courses that already contained elements of design history and the CNAAC had offered encouragement in taking the subject from simply a component constituent of art and design education to an academic discipline in its own right.<sup>1</sup> The recommendation of the Coldstream Report and the Summerson Council had given the impetus for the emerging discipline and had revealed a strained relationship between design students and 'art history'. The inspectors were interested in these debates and keen to address the problems; this provided a favourable context for the emergence of degree courses in the subject.<sup>2</sup> Tim Putnam recalls that.

“when design history began to emerge at the level of something more programmatic than an individual academic constructing a particular course unit, something which could begin to be taken as the subject more seriously I believe the government took an interest.”<sup>3</sup>

The design history degree courses that were being established across the country at the end of the 1970s were diverse in subject matter and approach; despite having a common denominator of the necessity of accreditation by a CNAAC committee.

<sup>1</sup> Cheryl Buckley recalls 'doing design history' on her undergraduate art history course at new-university UEA. Design history subjects and approaches might have been taught as component sessions of modules, or single lectures, on broader art history courses. This is a 'hidden history' that is difficult to uncover but could make a fruitful area of research if primary sources could be discovered.

<sup>2</sup> Tim Putnam notes that this did not get as far as writing a government White Paper. Putnam, T & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam Track 2*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

The different emphases and approaches can be seen if we look at the testimonies of three historians at institutions which typify these approaches; Flavia Swann at North Staffordshire Polytechnic , Bridget Wilkins at Middlesex Polytechnic and Penny Sparke at Brighton Polytechnic. North Staffordshire Polytechnic is recorded as having one of the first BA Design History degrees; Middlesex Polytechnic the first MA in Design History and Brighton Polytechnic the first PhD research studentships.<sup>4</sup> For ease of discussion a simplification of the approaches taken by these institutions can be broadly classified as emphasising 'history of subject in design education' (Swann at North Staffordshire), 'social context, culture and method' (Wilkins at Middlesex) and 'object and designer in economic context' (Sparke at Brighton).

The *BA (Hons) History of Design and the Visual Arts* course at North Staffordshire was formulated within the context of a significant local industrial history of ceramic design and manufacture.<sup>5</sup> Flavia Swann gives testimony of her political struggle to establish the design history course with the management of the Polytechnic in the late 1970s.<sup>6</sup> She used her experience as a member of the CNAAGraphic Design board, as an examiner for lower level art education, and as a guest lecturer at

<sup>4</sup> There were also important developments at other institutions, such as at Newcastle Polytechnic which hosted the first Design History conference and Manchester Polytechnic which hosted the Design Council slide collection as a valuable resource. The course at North Staffordshire Polytechnic is recorded as one of the first BA Design History degrees although the development at Brighton is contemporaneous and often also claims to be pioneering; Middlesex Polytechnic offered the first MA in Design History and Brighton had the first PhD research studentships. See later and footnote 36. Also, Woodham, J. & Lyon, P. (eds) (2009). *Art and Design at Brighton 1859-2009: from Arts and Manufactures to the Creative and Cultural Industries*. Brighton: University of Brighton

<sup>5</sup> Course title source: Council for National Academic Awards, History of Art, Design and Complementary Studies Board, Meeting 20 – 16<sup>th</sup> March 1981, National Archives DB3/2059

<sup>6</sup> Swann, F & DHS ( 2009) *Oral History Interview with Flavia Swann* Track 3 - North Staffordshire (Stoke-on-Trent, now Staffordshire University) no longer has a specific Design History department but it was of great significance in the late 1970s and 1980s

polytechnics across the country to reinforce the network of relationships with art and design history communities across the country.<sup>7</sup> Swann saw that there was a possibility of establishing design history but it was necessary to emphasise the 'history of subject', specifically ceramics, due to the heritage of the locality.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, North Staffordshire's course addressed both the local needs and national issues concerning the role of contextual studies in design education. Due to a lack of quality images available, a design study collection was formed and object-based study became an important element of the teaching.<sup>9</sup> The division of the curriculum was of particular interest at North Staffordshire because it directly addressed the problematic relationship between practical design education and design history. As one observer commented, the course at North Staffordshire was very important;

"especially in terms of... the relationship which you might imagine that could take place between study of the history of design and informing design practice because Stoke had a rather flexible way of allowing people to combine theoretical studies and studio studies and keep the other 2/5 or 3/5 or either way"<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> North Staffordshire attracted staff members in the early part of the career who would go on to be significant contributors to the design historical community, namely Jonathan Woodham, Hilary Grainger and Christopher Bailey. The External examiner for the course from 1980 to 1984 was Gillian Naylor; source: Council for National Academic Awards, History of Art, Design and Complementary Studies Board, Meeting 20 – 16<sup>th</sup> March 1981, National Archives DB3/2059

<sup>8</sup> Swann, F & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with Flavia Swann* Track 5

<sup>9</sup> Flavia Swann and Jonathan Woodham decided to form a handling collection of objects from 1880 to 1980 for teaching purposes. In the spring of 1981 a collection was formed by searching attics, junk shops, and putting out requests on local television. Students on work experience helped cataloguing the collection before Swann managed to fund raise to employ a part-time curator in 1987. The collection, now the Staffordshire University design study collection, contains magazines, newspapers, advertising material and packaging, in addition to fashion, ceramics, plastics and other products. The collection remains in use at the University today and is called the "Betty Smithers design collection". See article by the curatorial advisor, Pam Inder, in the *Design History Society Newsletter* number 81 (April 1999) and also the Staffordshire University's website:

[www.staffs.ac.uk/faculties/art\\_and\\_design/studio\\_and\\_facilities/design\\_collection/](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/faculties/art_and_design/studio_and_facilities/design_collection/). Oral History testimony also: Swann, F & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with Flavia Swann* Tracks 7 and 8.

<sup>10</sup> Putnam, T & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam* Track2 17:00 North Staffordshire was radical at the time, but 10 years later it was criticised for failing to integrate theory and practice.

The integration of theory and practice became a persistent problem when teaching contextual studies or design history to practical students on design courses.<sup>11</sup>

The first design history postgraduate course to be established was at Middlesex Polytechnic and the evolution of this course clearly demonstrates the theoretical issues associated with the discipline in its early stages. The key instigator of this new course at Middlesex, Bridget Wilkins, held passionate beliefs that debates surrounding a methodology for design history were of primary importance for the discipline and that these should take precedence over practical issues such as forming an academic society.<sup>12</sup> For Wilkins it was important to train the next generation of tutors who would have an impact throughout the educational system and with a course at postgraduate level, rather than undergraduate, students could be self-reflective and engage in the debates that were ensuing about the nature of design historical practice.<sup>13</sup>

The inception of the course was long and drawn out and it went through two examinations by the CNAAB before approval and much of this was due to the

<sup>11</sup> The resistance to theoretical and historical sections of a practical remains to a significant extent today and has its roots in historic events. Several projects have been undertaken to examine this in more detail; these include "Writing Purposefully in Art and Design (Writing PAD) Project founded in 2002 at Goldsmiths college and in collaboration with art and design colleges across the country and world. See project website at [www.writing-pad.ac.uk/](http://www.writing-pad.ac.uk/) and its associated Journal of Writing in Creative Practice. Also the University of the Arts Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design runs several frequent courses and conferences. See centre website at <http://www.arts.ac.uk/cltd/>

<sup>12</sup> Many design historians, and potential design historians, were employed within the art college and polytechnic sector and many had been embroiled in the debates surrounding subject matter for historical and contextual studies. Bridget Wilkins had been employed at Hornsey following the disturbances and, as an active member of the Design History Research Group, brought new methods and approaches to teaching practical students the historical and theoretical component of their course. "I can remember being quite radical." Wilkins, B. & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Bridget Wilkins* Track 2

<sup>13</sup> Wilkins, B. & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Bridget Wilkins* Track 7



pioneering nature of the course.<sup>14</sup> After the first visit the 'history of art and design and complementary studies board' panel acknowledged "the validity of the concept underlying this course proposal and its potential value to the emerging discipline design of design history."<sup>15</sup> The panel, which included Flavia Swann and Gillian Naylor, was keen to support the course and foster its development. The key members of staff, Wilkins and Tim Putnam, drew on the expertise of a broad range of staff, many of whom were from the design historical network which had met at the Middlesex conference in 1976, and were associated with the visual and cultural studies journal *BLOCK*.<sup>16</sup>

Those associated with *BLOCK* were responding to the complex issues involved in teaching history and theory within an art and design setting. Although based in an art history department, a key feeling was that art history was not suited to discourses about visual culture and design.<sup>17</sup> Barbara Stafford argues that,

"*BLOCK* was an initiative that was very much of its time and place: a manifestation of the cultural logic of a newly self-conscious, historicised and politicised initiative in the cultural realm; and a simultaneous and allergic reaction to the idealism of academic art history."<sup>18</sup>

There were few outlets for the communication of ideas and research by individuals in this arena and therefore it was a publication of great significance to the network of people associated with design history.

<sup>14</sup> Documentation from the CNAA archives shows that the initial proposal was made in November 1977, a first visit was made in February 1978, and a second visit in April 1980. "CNAA History Of Art And Design And Complementary Studies Board Report Of A Visit To Middlesex Polytechnic on the 22nd of April 1980" National Archives DB 3/ 2058

<sup>15</sup> CNAA History of Art and Design and Complementary Studies Board report of a visit to Middlesex Polytechnic on the 22nd of April 1980" National Archives DB 3/ 2058

<sup>16</sup> Published from 1979 to 1989 *BLOCK* will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter that examines issues of significance during that decade.

<sup>17</sup> Stafford, S. (ed.)(1996)*The BLOCK reader in visual culture*, London: Routledge p.3. "BLOCK came out of an art history department but also out of a frustration with what passed for an account of 'art' and 'history' in the modern university."

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xi

The particular group of individuals associated with *BLOCK* were also involved in the development of the MA course. They were ‘actors’ in this particular network, and are a clear example of the importance of both formal and informal relationships. These individuals spent time outside of the University debating the focus of the MA course, as Wilkins recalls:

“we spent many hours in my house with a couple of other historians thrashing out how we can approach it, how we could teach it, and how we could raise questions about methodology. It doesn't seem important now but it was desperately important then.”<sup>19</sup>

She also notes the critical input from Reyner Banham during the inception of the course.<sup>20</sup> The course took design history in a direction that was clearly intended to divorce the subject from its roots in history of art and architecture and place it firmly within the political concepts of culture that were being explored within the pages of *BLOCK*.<sup>21</sup> The curriculum content demonstrated this with elements focusing on; "a history of design as a social activity", "the history of the development of production processes", "social and cultural history", a project on “design and analysis in its social context” and also "studies in design innovation".<sup>22</sup>

This change in emphasis was clearly noted by the CNAA party; “the visiting party drew attention to the commitment of the course not to objects but to the social

<sup>19</sup> Wilkins, B. & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Bridget Wilkins* Track 5

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Track 7. Bridget Wilkins describes Peter Reyner Banham as ‘helpful but brutal’ in his critical evaluation of elements of their course planning.

<sup>21</sup> See further discussion in following chapter. *BLOCK* was important for building a network, an example of this is the opportunity for interactions provided by the conference held at Middlesex in 1980.

<sup>22</sup> CNAA History Of Art And Design And Complementary Studies board report of a visit to Middlesex Polytechnic on the 22nd of April 1980” National Archives DB 3/ 2058, “The content of the course - 4.10,” pp.7-10.

process of design.”<sup>23</sup> This emphasis was strongly defended by the course team who felt;

"that hitherto design history had been too closely aligned to architectural history and had treated inadequately certain aspects of product design, which were equally important to the understanding both of the period and of the historical development of design. It was explained that with this concept of the degree, the course had not been designed around the study of individual designers and their products but had approached the subject from the point of view of the concept of design within social and cultural wider context.”<sup>24</sup>

The development had occurred during the end of the 1970s but it was not until 1980 that the course was approved and had its first cohort.<sup>25</sup> In the following decade the institution remained significant as host to the “Middlesex Curriculum Centre for Art & Design History” and Pembridge Press.<sup>26</sup> John Walker taught at Middlesex and his book *Design History and the History of Design* grew out of the debates about methodologies for design history that surrounded the development of this first MA course in ‘History of Design’ at Middlesex.<sup>27</sup>

The juxtaposition of the 1976 and 1977 design history conferences, at Middlesex and Brighton respectively, had clearly demonstrated different approaches to design history.<sup>28</sup> Penny Sparke, a key figure in founding the DHS and associated with Brighton Polytechnic at this point, reflected on this aspect of the 1977 conference in an article in the society's newsletter;

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, “Concepts and structure of the course- 4.2” p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Concepts and structure of the course -4.8 p6.

<sup>25</sup> The CNAA panel gave its initial conditional approval for a period of three years rather than the standard five-year review. *Ibid.*,

<sup>26</sup> The Curriculum Centre publications included Clive Ashwin’s 1980 and 1982 texts: Ashwin, Clive (1980) *Theoretical Studies and the Foundation Course*, Middlesex Polytechnic and, Ashwin, Clive(ed)(1982)*The art and design historian as author : problem of problems of research, writing and publication*: Middlesex Polytechnic.

<sup>27</sup> Walker, J.A. (1989)*Design History and the History of Design*, London: Pluto Press

<sup>28</sup> Middlesex Polytechnic hosted the second conference on 20th century Design History April 1976 “Leisure and design in the 20th century”, which advocated a clear separation from a connoisseurial art-history approach to objects. The proceedings were the first to be published by the Design Council as ‘leisure in the 20th century’. Design Council (1978) *Leisure in the twentieth Century*, London: Design Council.

“the purpose of the conference was to present a multifaceted view of the function of design history by selecting papers which came at it from different perspectives”<sup>29</sup>

The publication of the papers gave the opportunity to reflect on the focus and approach taken by contributors; Sparke commented that; “on re-reading the Brighton papers the question of 'which history or histories' seemed to emerge even more strongly as a vital question that needs more careful thought.”<sup>30</sup> Sparke’s own approach considered the design profession and its formation and function.<sup>31</sup>

She regarded this as;

“design history at its 'purist' locating its focus within the industry/ production/ designer relationship and discussing issues that relate to that and that alone. If there is a place at the centre of the design history complex, this approximates to it, providing essential material for any wider historical discussion of design.”<sup>32</sup>

This particular approach to design history was evident in the course taught at Brighton. Records from the CNAA visiting party showed that, although reservations were expressed by the committee, the BA degree in *history of design* was first approved in January 1980.<sup>33</sup> The document acknowledges the troubled context in which the course emerged, that the degree was a 'new course in a new

<sup>29</sup> Sparke, P (1978) "Design History: Fad or Function?-Some Afterthoughts" *Design History Society Newsletter*, number 3 December 1978, pp.14-16

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p.14

<sup>31</sup> This approach was also taken by other contributors; Alan Self, Mary Vitoria, Jude Freeman and Hazel Conway. Sparke, P (1978) "Design History: Fad or Function?-Some Afterthoughts" *Design History Society Newsletter*, number 3 December 1978, p.14. Sparke focused on issues related to production, it would be over 15 years later, in 1995, before her book addressing consumption and gender politics would be published. See, Sparke, P (1995) *As Long as It's Pink – The sexual politics of taste*, London: Pandora.

<sup>32</sup> Sparke, P (1978) *op.cit* p.15

<sup>33</sup> The course was first approved in January 1980. Although there was a significant period of time when there was no senior course leader. This was when Penny Sparke left to set up the course at the Royal College of Art. CNAA History of Art and Design and Complementary Studies board report of a visit to Brighton Polytechnic on 13/14 May 1982 in connection with the BA (Hons) courses in Fine Art and History of Design. Section 3.3 – p6. National Archives DB3/2064. Corroborated by Penny Sparke in interview. Sparke, P. & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Penny Sparke*

subject', and there were some organisational problems within the institution.<sup>34</sup>

Gillian Naylor drew on her experience of working at the Council of Industrial Design, part-time contextual studies teaching at Kingston Polytechnic, and her knowledge of the approving committees. Naylor recognised the importance of locating the subject within an art historical framework; "I knew that if a history of design course was going to be approved that it would have to follow the same sort of format as histories of art and histories of architecture, which had been examined."<sup>35</sup>

Despite this difficult start Brighton Polytechnic became a key centre for teaching and research in design history. The Polytechnic supported several research assistantships during the latter part of the 1970s which helped feed into the degree course and this was an early example of funded design historical research that was not necessitated by teaching.<sup>36</sup> In later years, once the Polytechnic had University status, it attracted a variety of design archives including the Design Council Archive, which provided excellent source material for new scholarship, and under Jonathan Woodham's leadership the University established a Centre for Design History Research and hosted the Higher Education Academy's Art Design and Media (HEA-ADM) subject centre.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* Also corroborated by Penny Sparke in interview. Sparke, P. & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Penny Sparke*

<sup>35</sup> Naylor, G & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Gillian Naylor* Track 13

<sup>36</sup> Penny Sparke recalls the research studentships were: Jude Freeman (1974 working on 40s and 50s), Suzette Worden, (PhD on 30s furniture) and Cyndy Manton (On architecture interiors) [PS did not recall surname or topic, details from Conference Proceedings] They helped to organise the DHS Conference at Brighton. Sparke, P. & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Penny Sparke* Track 2.

<sup>37</sup> Woodham, J. & Lyon, P. (eds) (2009). *Art and Design at Brighton 1859-2009: from Arts and Manufactures to the Creative and Cultural Industries*. Brighton: University of Brighton, and Woodham, J. & Worden, S. (1986). *From Art School to Polytechnic: Serving Industry and the Community from Brighton, 1859 to 1986*. Brighton: Faculty of Art and Design, Brighton Polytechnic.

The courses at North Staffordshire, Middlesex, and Brighton evolved in the context of shared concerns for educational provision, but demonstrate subtle differences of approach due to institutional circumstances and the perspectives of key individuals who established the course. The Staffordshire course was influenced by its geographical location within the centre of the ceramics industry, a concern for the future employment skills required by its students, and the politics of Flavia Swann who was strongly linked to the art historical community. The Middlesex course, at postgraduate level, allowed for a more theoretical and self-reflexive historiographical approach; this was influenced by the intellectual community at Middlesex and paid due regard to the political concerns at the institution following the Hornsey demonstration. Brighton reflected the beliefs of founding course staff Penny Sparke and Jonathan Woodham. It prioritised discussion of the design profession in economic context, but shaped by art historical practices also related design activity and its production to named individuals and organisations, though within a social and economic context. A unique aspect of Brighton was the funding of original doctoral research that would feed into the course, and in later years its research culture and proactive steps by staff would attract a major Design Archive resource and see Brighton establishing a centre for research excellence.<sup>38</sup>

These case-studies are examples of the variety of approaches to course provision within the polytechnic sector across the country during the late 1970s and 1980s. Some courses had close links with practical provision such as Manchester: others demonstrated links with local industrial history; such as Coventry (cars and aviation

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Woodham and Paddy McGuire discuss saving the Design Council archive in Woodham, Jonathan M. (2001) "Culture, Politics and Humanities: Designing Design History for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" *Research Papers - Centre for Research and Development in Arts and Architecture*, University of Brighton. As mentioned earlier Brighton now has a Centre for Design History Research and also hosts the Higher Education Academy's Art Design and Media (HEA-ADM) subject centre

production), Leicester (furniture and shoemaking), Birmingham (silversmithing), and Winchester and Leeds (textiles).<sup>39</sup> Other courses linked design historical provision as a component of the broader study of modern art and film, such as Newcastle Polytechnic's BA(Hons) *History of Modern Art, Design and Film*, and Sheffield Polytechnic's *History of Modern Art, Design and Film* course.<sup>40</sup> This demonstrates that design history course provision was evident across the country and not restricted to southern institutions and those surrounding the capital city.<sup>41</sup>

Due to the origins of the discipline, growing from contextual studies provision in the art colleges, the majority of courses were seen within the Polytechnic sector. There were however elements of the history of design being taught within the University sector, although this is generally more difficult to research and categorise due to the University sector's validation of their own courses and the initial lack of a national regulatory body. This area of "unwritten" and hidden design history education in University curricula would merit further detailed research. However one rather less conventional University course of great importance to the development of the design history was the distance-learning course developed by the Open University.

<sup>39</sup> Leicester's BA (Hons) *History of Art and Design in the Modern Age* —was approved September 1975 and Birmingham also proposed an MA *History of Art and Design*.

<sup>40</sup> Sheffield also had links to the local industrial heritage of steel production and cutlery-making.

<sup>41</sup> In addition to the courses at Brighton (BA *History of Design* approved from September 1982 Source: CNA A Report of Visiting Party National Archives DB3/2064) and Middlesex (whose MA was approved from 1981, Source: CNA A Report of Working party, National Archives DB3/2064) there were design history courses approved at Winchester School of Art *Post-Graduate Diploma in History of Art and Design in the Modern Period* approved from September 1986 (Source HAD Report, National AArchives DB3/2917. The proposal made by Central School of Art and Design in 1983 to the HADCS board was rejected as disappointing, ( Source: File Report of Consultative Meeting, HADCS Board National Archives DB3/2067)

## **Case study 2 - Open University Course A305- History of Architecture and Design 1890-1939 and its publications**

It is useful for this study to discuss the Open University's third-level arts course A305 in *History of Architecture and Design* as it offers an excellent example of a network in Latourian terms. It demonstrates the importance of actors and their interactions, giving a clear example of the intersections between the educational system, new research, technological advances, publications, academic societies, and personal relationships. These had an important impact on the formation of a design history community, the establishment of design history as a distinct discipline in the 1970s and its consolidation in the 1980s.<sup>42</sup> Clive Dilnot described the A305 course as "the single most important work of design history to have emerged in Britain."<sup>43</sup> It was important on two levels: firstly, for its content and the contribution that the course team made to the direction of design historical scholarship; and secondly, for its pivotal role in influencing new design historians and the teaching of design history in the higher education sector.

Tim Benton was the key figure in the relatively large academic team which drew on a broad range of scholars to provide the material for the twenty-two unit course.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> The full title of this course was A305 *History of Architecture and Design 1890-1939*, its first presentation was in 1975.

<sup>43</sup> Dilnot, C. (1984) "The State Of Design History Part 1: Mapping The Field", *Design Issues*, 1(1), p.15

<sup>44</sup> Tim Benton, who became chairman of the CNAA History of Art and Design subject board, was employed by the Open University as an art historian. The course team also included: Sandra Millikin, Geoffrey Newman, Lindsay Gordon, Clive Lawless, Liz Deighton, Nick Levinson, and Charlotte Benton. Source: acknowledgment page in course text: OU A305 (1975) *Introduction Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939* Units 1-2, Milton Keynes: Open University. At the time of writing Professor Benton was still employed by the Open University. Photographic historian Aaron Scharf was the OU's first professor of art history and it was due to his influence that Benton joined the University. Benton worked on several courses, the first foundation course, a Renaissance architectural history course, an Enlightenment course, before Scharf proposed that they work on a third level course on design and architecture. The idea was Scharf's but then he "dropped out completely" leaving Benton to organise the course. Benton, T & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Benton*, Track 1.



Many of the individuals involved were key contributors to the establishment of the design history network in a variety of ways. These included developing its claims for academic disciplinary by having key roles in the DHS, by their input to education through teaching and membership of the CNA subject boards; or through the publication of their work. This course demonstrated the importance of personal networks and some key contributors to the course content included Stephen Bayley, Clive Wainwright, Stefan Muthesius, Bridget Wilkins, Adrian Forty, subject-specialist librarian Anthony Coulson and Professor Reyner Banham.<sup>45</sup>

The approach taken by the course demonstrates the impact of studies in the history of art and architecture, understandable as it was based in the history of art department, but it was also influenced by available scholarship and resources. The approach was broadly empirical, and it was structured around a pedagogic style that prioritised the use of primary sources. The aims of the course were to give an introduction to the study of architecture and design, by looking at documents, images and objects. The course was never intended as a complete survey, but aimed to introduce key ideas and approaches to studying objects. The introductory units gave students an awareness of the skills needed and this was followed by a critical examination of the factors that affected design.

<sup>45</sup> Stephen Bayley made Contributions to unit 11; Clive Wainwright worked with Geoffrey Baker and Francine Haber on Units 3-4; John Milner and Aaron Scharf Contributed unit 11; Stefan Muthesius and Bridget Wilkins worked on Units 5-6. Denis Sharp contributed Units 9-10, William Curtis contributed to Units 17-18; Adrian Forty contributed Unit 20 and the course librarian was Anthony Coulson. Reyner Banham contributed Unit 21 "Mechanical Services" and also commented on units 11 and 12 "The New Objectivity." OU A305 (1975) "The New Objectivity" - *Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 - Units 11-12*, and OU A305 (1975) "Mechanical Services" *Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 – Unit 21*.

The course set books included an anthology *Form and Function* compiled by Tim and Charlotte Benton with Dennis Sharp, Pevsner's *Pioneers of Modern Design*, and Banham's *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*.<sup>46</sup> The recommended reading section gave guidance on other more detailed sources with indications of the usefulness, and drawbacks, of these works.<sup>47</sup> The work in the course books was supplemented by multimedia resources which utilised technological advances to enhance the student experience. These included television programmes, radio programmes and also an accompanying collection of slides.<sup>48</sup> The inclusion of images was particularly important as these resources were not typically available at the time. Clive Dilnot described the course content as "remarkable"; and it is worth outlining the topics included and approaches taken here.<sup>49</sup>

After introducing methods and approaches to study much of the course content was structured around a framework of notable or named designers and stylistic categories which came from the Pevsnerian tradition.<sup>50</sup> The course team expressed some misgivings with having to use style labels such as the Arts and

<sup>46</sup> Benton, T.J & C.A & Sharp, D (eds) (1975) *Form and Function*, Crosby Lockwood Staples / The Open University; Pevsner, N. (1970) *Pioneers Of Modern Design From William Morris To Walter Gropius*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, and Banham, R. (1960) *Theory and Design in the first Machine Age*, London: Architectural Press.

<sup>47</sup> Students were advised that certain works were "in our view ...the best introduction to the principles and problems of the industrial designers," [Pye, D. (1967) *The Nature of Design*, Studio Vista]; "full of jargon, but clever and amusing" [Jencks, C (1973) *Modern Movements in Architecture*, Pelican]; or "particularly well-illustrated". [Benevolo, L (1971) *A History of Modern Architecture*, Routledge] The advised reading list also indicates the scarcity of resources for students one comment was made that; "If you do manage to find this book, do read it." [Hitchcock, H-R. (1970) *Modern Architecture - Romanticism and Reintegration*] Recommended Reading section in OU A305 (1975) *Introduction- Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939*, Units 1-2.

<sup>48</sup> See Appendix I for list of Open University television programmes for course A305 *History of Architecture and Design 1890-1939*. The development of Video Cassette Recorders (VCRs) at the end of the 70s, becoming widely available from the 1980s also enabled these programmes to be recorded by individuals and institutions: certain local and college libraries contain copies of these programmes. Source: Walker, J.A. (1993) *Arts TV: a History of Arts Television in Britain*, London: John Libbey & Co. p6, p.139, and p.222

<sup>49</sup> Dilnot, C. *Op.cit*, p.15

<sup>50</sup> Early sections on methods included a television programme by Geoffrey Baker on the workings of an architect and a radio programme by Benton entitled "What is Design?"

Crafts movement and Art Nouveau. But when this was done the course materials encouraged students to engage in critical reflection of the implications of this. At the beginning of the course book for units three and four this issue of applying a stylistic term to discuss the objects created during a particular period was introduced;

“Art Nouveau is a style label with a specific period connotation which is taken by most scholars to begin in the 1880s and end some time after 1902 and before 1910. It is mostly used of the decorative arts, where it is most appropriate, but it is also employed for architecture. It has come to be used very loosely to describe almost every kind of work in the 1890s, and one of the tasks of these units is to try to pin down and therefore limit its use to cases where it does not confuse the issue.”<sup>51</sup>

The next course book, units five and six, broadened the approach to the period 1900-1914 in Europe and the reaction to Art Nouveau style by considering a more complicated range of both stylistic and social issues.<sup>52</sup> Several developments in architecture and design were considered here, with the material written by architectural historian Stephan Muthesius and design historian Bridget Wilkins. Topics and discussions included the vernacular revival, the Viennese contribution, classicism and pre-war German architecture, French Beaux-Arts tradition and then industry and machines in the Werkbund and Behrens design for AEG. It is not surprising that many topics covered in this unit, and later ones on the International Style and Le Corbusier, give emphasis to the modernist tradition.<sup>53</sup> The history of designed objects in relation to modernist discourses is also the focus of *Design 1920s* which continues the discussion of the Bauhaus, looks at modernist

<sup>51</sup> Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Units 3-4: Art Nouveau* Milton Keynes: Open University.

<sup>52</sup> Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Units 5-6: Europe 1900-1914* Milton Keynes: Open University

<sup>53</sup>

Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Unit 17: Le Corbusier* Milton Keynes: Open University, and Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Units 13-14: The International Style* Milton Keynes: Open University.

tendencies in French design, and discusses the importance of furniture as an architectural element. The set book for this part of the course was *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* by Reyner Banham.<sup>54</sup>

These sections of the course engaged with discourses surrounding modernism and guided students to make critical reflections on the critics and historians of design. Examples of this are when students were asked a question such as; “Do you accept Pevsner’s view that the ‘International Modern’ is a more rational style than the styles and forms admired and encouraged by the DIA?” Then guided by the tutor’s response that, “I think that Pevsner overstates the rationalism of the ‘International Modern’.”<sup>55</sup> Additionally, the course is self-reflexive in that it considers the geographical locations under study, ideologies and disciplinary boundaries. The geographical location widens to look at developments during the 1890 to 1939 period in the USA; with units seven and eight considering differences in American Culture and impact on architectural style.<sup>56</sup> Disciplinary boundaries are acknowledged by highlighting that Expressionist ideology in Europe was first seen in art and literature, before making “a major incursion” into architecture.<sup>57</sup> The course then revisits architectural history in units eleven and twelve on *The New Objectivity* by studying design in Holland and Germany by looking at the work of De Stijl and the early years of the Bauhaus.<sup>58</sup> This focus on architecture continues with

<sup>54</sup> Banham, R. (1960) *Theory and Design in the first Machine Age*, London: Architectural Press. Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Units 15-16: Design 1920s* Milton Keynes: Open University.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17

<sup>56</sup> Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Units 7-8: USA 1890-1939* Milton Keynes: Open University.

<sup>57</sup> Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Units 9-10: Expressionism* Milton Keynes: Open University

<sup>58</sup> Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Units 11-12: The New Objectivity* Milton Keynes: Open University

*The International Style* in units thirteen and fourteen, *Le Corbusier* in unit seventeen and *English Architecture of the 1930s* in unit eighteen.<sup>59</sup> The course up to this point had offered students a survey of major developments and ideological issues in architecture and design of the period, but importantly also encouraged critical reflection on the topics being taught.

The most interesting section of the curricula for the promotion of a new design history approach are units nineteen and twenty entitled *A Survey of Design in Britain 1915-1939* and *The Electric Home – A Case study of the domestic revolution of the inter-war years*. In these units the focus moves away from considering great movements or individuals and considers the function of objects within a social context, rather than studying exceptional examples in terms of formal analysis and aesthetic merit, as might be done in certain types of art history.<sup>60</sup> These units were considered by the authors to be “substantially different from most of the rest of the course” by allowing the students to look at their immediate environment and the design they found around them in relation to government intervention, critical thinkers and theoreticians, and also the domestic sphere.<sup>61</sup> Interestingly both authors, Geoffrey

<sup>59</sup> Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Units 13-14: The International Style* Milton Keynes: Open University, Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Unit 17: Le Corbusier* Milton Keynes: Open University, and Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Unit 18: English Architecture 1930s* Milton Keynes: Open University.

<sup>60</sup> Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Unit 19: A Survey of Design in Britain 1915-1939* Milton Keynes: Open University, and Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Unit 20: The Electric Home – A Case study of the domestic revolution of the inter-war years* Milton Keynes: Open University

<sup>61</sup> Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Unit 19: A Survey of Design in Britain 1915-1939* Milton Keynes: Open University and Open University Course Team (1975) *A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Unit 20: The Electric Home – A Case study of the domestic revolution of the inter-war years* Milton Keynes: Open University

Newman and Adrian Forty, were lecturers in complementary studies at art and design colleges.<sup>62</sup> *A Survey of Design in Britain 1915-1939* studied the efforts of the Design and Industries Association to improve standards, popular tastes, and it critically evaluated the “moderne”. It is interesting that there is also detailed discussion of the “cross fertilisation of ideas and styles between artists, architects and designers,” and an examination of “the role of publicists and spokesmen of the modern movement” such as Nikolaus Pevsner and Herbert Read.<sup>63</sup> The unit then explicitly states that it will “re-emphasise that developments in art and design do not follow a straight line of ‘progression’; at any one time a whole range of different ideas, tastes and styles is observable.”<sup>64</sup> This demonstrates that members of the course team were aware of issues in the writing of design histories that were of importance to the broader network of design historians and was not solely art historical in its approach.

Another interesting departure from an art and architectural history approach was evident in *The Electric Home - A Case study of the domestic revolution of the inter-war years* the unit prepared by Adrian Forty.<sup>65</sup> The focus of this unit was “Economic and Social Change in the Home Environment” and it was based on research that Forty had prepared, inspired by Reyner Banham and Theodore Zeldin, that would

<sup>62</sup> Geoffrey Newman was the senior lecturer in the department of complementary studies at Croydon College of Design and Technology. Adrian Forty was also a lecturer in complementary studies at Bristol.

<sup>63</sup> Unit 19 *Op.cit.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, Open University Course Team (1975) A305 Arts: a third level course – History of architecture and design 1890-1939 Unit 20: *The Electric Home – A Case study of the domestic revolution of the inter-war years* Milton Keynes: Open University

<sup>65</sup> OU A305 (1975) Unit 20: *The Electric Home – A Case study of the domestic revolution of the inter-war years*

later become the major design-historical text, *Objects of Desire*.<sup>66</sup> Adrian Forty recalls being invited to write the unit and that Benton emphasised that it should be “design for the home, and not focussed on famous designers”.<sup>67</sup> This unit revealed an engagement with history through everyday objects, the domestic sphere, and feminist debates.<sup>68</sup> This addressed the gender and class discourses that were intellectually fashionable at that time. Forty recalls that there was a; “stimulus to do research on non-iconic design” and that “...the bit that I did falls outside the character of the rest of that course.”<sup>69</sup>

The pedagogic style used on this course opened up art and design history education for environments beyond the museum, art gallery, and lecture-hall by using high-quality published course-materials in conjunction with technological innovations in broadcast radio and television.<sup>70</sup> The methods used to teach were revolutionary and drew on the cutting edge research that was being undertaken by the Institute

<sup>66</sup> Forty, A.,(1986) *Objects of Desire – Design and Society since 1750*, London: Thames and Hudson  
Adrian Forty discusses being introduced the idea that history could be about everyday life by Theodore Zeldin “this idea that history could be written from below, that history was ... about ordinary life” Forty, A & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Adrian Forty* Track 3: “[23:20] and also recalls that Peter Reyner Banham was an influence while he was undertaking his master's thesis on radio cabinets at the Courtauld; “He didn't in anyway tutor me but he provided a kind of ...umm... impetus to do it.” *Ibid.*, [32:16]

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, Track 6.

<sup>68</sup> It is interesting to note that in his private relationships Adrian was connected to feminist intellectuals. Testimony from his oral history interview reveals that in the 1970s Forty lived in Notting Hill with group of friends, including Rozsika Parker, all were connected with the magazine *Spare Rib*. At the time Parker and Grizelda Pollock were writing *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (published in 1989 by Pandora) while he was writing *Objects of Desire*. This gave Forty a close connection with feminist intellectuals in '70s London such as Michele Roberts, Alison Fell, and Ann Scott. Forty also made minor contributions to *Spare Rib*. *Ibid.*, Track 9.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, Track 10 [11:35]

<sup>70</sup> Michael Young, the 1950s campaigner behind the Consumer Association, had seen the sweeping social political changes of the 1960s and championed the idea of using broadcast media for education although the idea had been mooted in 1926 by educationalist and historian J C Stobart whilst working for the BBC. Former Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair acknowledged the contribution of Michael Young, Lord Young of Dartington, “Few people have made such a contribution to our society in so many different areas as Michael Young. On consumer rights, on widening access to education through the Open University, and on social entrepreneurship, he coupled radical thought with practical action.” BBC(2002)“Blair Leads tribute to OU founder - Obituary: Michael Young” BBC online news archive, 16 January 2002,<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1762699.stm>[ Accessed: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008]

of Educational Technology. Members from the institute worked closely with the faculty when developing teaching materials; attention was given to exercises, the use of images, the use of discursive text and even the most basic details such as the length of sentences and typographic concerns regarding layout.<sup>71</sup> The materials provided by the course were of such a high standard in content and approach that they became used by many people beyond the students enrolled on A305.<sup>72</sup> The Open University course supported its students with a network of tutors and many of these tutors became design historians and members of the DHS.<sup>73</sup>

The impact on tutors within both British and US education systems is evident. Tim Benton reflects that;

“most people who taught in design history in the 80s looked to that course, and it had a big influence. Even now you meet people in America, for example, who teach in architecture schools who would not only have these units, but also the TV programmes which were sold in bootleg copies in America.”<sup>74</sup>

In his work examining courses across Britain for the CNAAB, Benton encountered many tutors who had taken the A305 course;

“we had twenty tutors who took the course and later taught on some of the most influential of the design history courses around the country. So there is a direct relationship.... there is a direct evangelical effect.”<sup>75</sup>

Even for those design historians who did not have a direct link, by tutoring or studying this course, the published material relating to the course units were widely available in polytechnic and college libraries across the country. The course books were among some of the earliest publications that included consideration of

<sup>71</sup> Benton, T. & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Tim Benton*, Track 2

<sup>72</sup> Gillian Naylor recalls using the course books on the MA History of design at the RCA.

<sup>73</sup> Benton recalls that “a lot of people who were tutors on my course the history of Architecture and Design were members of the Design History Society.” Benton *op.cit.*, Track 3

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, Track 6 [ 19:00]

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, [23:00]



designed artefacts from a socio-historical, or design historical, perspective. Gillian Naylor recalls the dearth of published resources available for use on the core reading list for the postgraduate history of design course that would be taught by the Royal College of Art the following decade; but among the few publications available the Open University featured strongly.<sup>76</sup>

In terms of networks, the course produced and consolidated relationships between individuals in the nascent design history community, both within the academic course team, through the national network of tutors supporting the course, and the students themselves. In education it had a wide impact on education pedagogy throughout the college sector, and brought the subject matter of design, and the approaches of interdisciplinary design history, into the university sector from its origins in art colleges and polytechnics. The course also made a big impact in the publication of design history, its course materials were widely available in libraries across the country, and it paved the way for other publishers to acknowledge that there was a growing market for publications relating to design.

### **Communities of Practice and the Domain of Design History**

In Wenger's discussion of the complex social landscape of practice, he explains the complexity of interconnections between boundaries and peripheries, and in attempting to differentiate a practice there is inevitably an interlocking between

<sup>76</sup> See chapter 6 for further discussion of the joint V&A/RCA MA History of Design course. Naylor, G & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Gillian Naylor* Track 16 [21:00] Interviewers question: do you remember what the key texts were when you were teaching a Royal College? Response: Not many 'key texts' available, "it was very hard" suggested reading list was Open University History of Art programme, by Tim and Charlotte Benton. "Had a lot of history of design and architecture in it"

multiple communities of practice.<sup>77</sup> The case studies in this chapter have revealed this as an important feature of the development of design history within education. Design history is a domain of knowledge, with a broad range and scope, which enables multiple communities of practice. Examples of these communities discussed in the previous chapters are multifarious, and include: contextual studies tutors, design tutors, art school management, CNAA subject board members, CNAA examining panels, members of the Summerson and Coldstream committees, the Open University course team, OU tutors, student cohorts across the country, student protestors, delegates at the various conferences discussed, members of the AAH, the DHS and their subcommittees. Thus design history cannot be considered in separation from other scholarly areas that deal with design, with art, with objects, or with history as it operates on the boundaries and engages with external relations. This extends beyond the sphere of teaching and learning in art and design education to the design profession. An example is the interconnection with the Design Council when publishing conference proceedings. Across the broader network, this thesis also considers the evolution and development of design history in its engagement with other communities of practice such as museum professionals, for more detailed discussion of this see Chapter Six.

The evolution of design history has a key feature which is common to many communities of practice; it operates on the periphery between two practices, and this was clearly illustrated in its evolution within the art schools. Often a new

<sup>77</sup> See previously quoted text, “As communities of practice differentiate themselves and also interlock with each other, they constitute a complex social landscape of shared practices, boundaries, peripheries, overlaps, connections, and encounters” Wenger, E. (1989) *Communities of Practice – Learning, Meaning, and Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p18. Wenger also states, “communities of practice cannot be considered in isolation from the rest of the world, or understood independently of other practices.” *ibid.* p103

community meets resistance in coming up against established structures. Wenger offers an example from academia arguing,

“many long-lived communities of practice have their origin in an attempt to bring two practices together. New science disciplines, for instance, are often born of the interaction of established ones.....it is difficult to establish criteria for what is valuable are the fringes of established practices, and the burgeoning of promising new practices is not always easy to recognise because they do not fit well within existing regimes of accountability.”<sup>78</sup>

Design history is an example of a new discipline created by bringing together some of the established practices of scholarly art history with artists and design practitioners in the Colleges and Polytechnics, and demonstrates the potential conflict when merging the theoretical and practical, the creative and academic within an established structure. Later discussion in Chapter Five also gives further examples of these intersections between design history and related academic areas in the humanities and social sciences when discussing the assessment of research quality in the universities.

Wenger also argues that communities of practice are not distinct groups with a closed ‘membership,’ and an important feature is the ability to have varied levels of involvement, and this means that the peripheries are important sites for the interaction of learning and development;

“communities of practice can connect with the rest of the world by providing peripheral experiences to people who are not on a trajectory to become full members. The idea is to offer them various forms of casual but legitimate access to a practice without subjecting them to the demands of full membership”<sup>79</sup>

An example of this peripheral involvement in the design history community of practice within art education is the design degree student asked to engage with the domain through their final year dissertation.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

These case studies have revealed the importance of the context of art and design education as a stimulus for the development of the discipline, an arena for communities of practice to form, and as a key element in creating the varieties of approaches to the domain of design history. The most significant factor is the importance of the individuals working together driving course development, accreditation, and provision. This is directly linked to communities formed through membership of CNAAC visiting panels, attendance at conferences, and personal relationships informed by professional links. Due to the complexities of its formation it is essential to refer to design histories in the plural, as there will never be a single definition of, or boundary for, the activities undertaken by scholars working in this area. Other terms used within this thesis are the *domain* of design history, to refer to the wider range of topics, or field of studies, where design historians and members of the design history network focus their research activities.

Key features of the design history network revealed in the case studies given in this chapter are that despite many points of convergence, between individuals, topics, pedagogic approaches, source materials, there are also innumerable points of difference. As clearly there is no single approach to the domain of design history either as subject or discipline; it is therefore pertinent to use the concept of communities of practice. Personal and professional relationships are key factors in the development of communities of practice and academic networks and are therefore important for this thesis discussing the formation and evolution of design history. Having established the contextual circumstances of the domain, and the potential for the formation of an academic discipline area in the light of changes in

educational provision in the 1970s, the next two chapters move to look at the institutional frameworks that enabled the consolidation of this new scholarly area and features that contributed to discussions claiming a disciplinary status for activities within the design history network.

## Chapter 3

### The 1980s - The Network Establishes Itself as a Discipline

The chronological frame for this chapter, which discusses the social, political, economic context for intellectual and educational changes, is the decade of the 1980s. In addition this chapter also identifies some of the main theoretical and practical developments that occurred in design history. This decade saw design history firmly established as a distinct subject in the educational sector, going beyond 'contextual studies' at art colleges.<sup>1</sup> A key development in this period was a sustained interrogation of the nature of design history, in terms of subject matter, methodology and theory within the pages of the journals *BLOCK* and *Design Issues*, and through the establishment of the *Journal of Design History*.<sup>2</sup> The period also saw the beginnings of wider publication of design history texts, and broader changes in the museum sector. The development of academic networks and their interactions are discussed in detail through two case studies in chapter four. Firstly, the relationship between two academic societies - the AAH and DHS - will be examined to illustrate the debate concerning subject and disciplinary boundaries and methods. Secondly, a brief review of the academic literature produced in the *Journal of Design History*, focusing on its particular importance as a means of

<sup>1</sup> This period saw design history education extend beyond the colleges and polytechnics when a new relationship was made with the museum sector as evidenced by the establishment of the RCA/V&A course. Although established in this decade the course will be examined in further detail as a case study in the 1990s, as this was a period where more impact was seen.

<sup>2</sup> These issues were also debated at the Middlesex Curriculum Centre for History of Art Design, and at the Design History Society's tenth conference.

furthering the development of design history networks by providing opportunity for the publication of research in the domain.<sup>3</sup>

## **Context**

The early years of the 1980s saw a continuation of the political and economic uncertainty that had been seen during the 1970s. Additionally, terrorist atrocities, riots, and war in the Falklands were challenging events that arguably helped to reinforce Margaret Thatcher's new Conservative government.<sup>4</sup> The year 1984 saw industrial action with the miners strikes, and economic change with the beginning of the privatisation of national companies.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to the decline of British industrial economy, a new enterprise and consumer-economy flourished and with it the beginnings of the IT revolution that would have a great impact in the following decade. This was a contradictory period, with unemployment and hardship for an increasing number, yet contrastingly a pursuit of home-ownership, extravagant salaries and consumption of material goods for those in work.<sup>6</sup> The decade started in recession, developed a "get-rich-quick" culture, and then ended in recession, but the over-riding Thatcherite philosophy was to reduce government intervention and

<sup>3</sup> Due to the interdisciplinary nature of design history, scholarly work has been published in a wide variety of journals within the humanities and social sciences. Another area where outputs of those associated with the wider design history network can be seen is within the pages of *Art History* the *Economic History Review* and *Business History*. Further discussion of the debates in the pages of *Design Issues* will be given in Chapter Five.

<sup>4</sup> The IRA terrorists went on hunger strike in prison and their campaign caused terror on the British mainland, including the bombing of the 1984 Tory conference at Brighton. April 1981 saw riots in the streets of Brixton and later in the year unrest across the country. Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in April 1982 instigating the Falklands War. Thatcher was re-elected in June 1983 with a huge majority. Lee, C.(2000) *This Sceptred Isle - Twentieth Century; From the Death of Queen Victoria to the dawn of a new Millennium*, London: Penguin pp.380-420

<sup>5</sup> "Between 1983 and 1987 the main sales were of: Jaguar cars, British Telecom, British Aerospace, Britoil, Cable & Wireless, the Trustee savings bank, British Gas, British Airways, and Rolls-Royce." Marwick, A.(2003) *British Society since 1945*, 4th edn. London: Penguin p.267

<sup>6</sup> Hardship was seen mainly in Northern cities with predominantly mining and industrial-based jobs in decline, whereas prosperity grew in the new enterprise-based jobs which were more frequently based in the south of the country.

encourage a free-market and entrepreneurial activity.<sup>7</sup> Traditional social structures were re-aligned with money and possessions arguably more important than class background as a defining characteristic; young urban professionals working in highly paid professions in banking and communications, with often ostentatious conspicuous consumption, were derided by many as "yuppies" and became the focus of satire and caricature.<sup>8</sup> With increasing prosperity for some in Thatcher's Britain, an awareness of "designer" products prompted discussions of the relevance of "design" and "style" amongst the public as well as in creative circles. The 1980s has been called the "designer decade" and it is significant that it was at this time that design history established itself as an academic discipline.<sup>9</sup> The intellectual developments of the period reflected the social and cultural context. Social problems regarding inequalities in the treatment of members of the multi-ethnic community by the authorities resulted in riots at Brixton and this paralleled the rising importance of race and gender studies among the intellectual community.<sup>10</sup> This increasing consumption of goods in society stimulated academic studies of mass consumption with an associated focus on 'things'.

Some cultural theorists, including those examining design, began to use anthropological frameworks to study contemporary culture and it was, in part, from this that material culture studies developed. Additionally, 'Postmodern'

<sup>7</sup> Vinen, R.,(2009)*Thatcher's Britain: The Politics and Social Upheaval of the 1980s*,London: Simon & Schuster

<sup>8</sup> "Yuppies" referred to young urban professionals, or young upwardly mobile professionals. The Harry Enfield character "Loadsamoney" was a popular caricature of this social group. Buckley, C.,(2007)*Designing Modern Britain*, London: Reaktion p.201

<sup>9</sup> The phrase "designer decade" became used colloquially. More recently the term was used within the Postmodernism exhibition at the V&A showcasing design of the period 1970 to 1990.

*Postmodernism: Style & Subversion 1970–1990*, was on display from September 2011 to January 2012.

<sup>10</sup> "One of the most striking changes in the humanities in the 1980s has been the rise of gender as a category of analysis." From the introduction to Elaine Showalter's (1990) *Speaking of gender* cited in Storey, J (1993) *An introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, Hertfordshire, Harvester Wheatsheaf.



approaches threatened to destabilise any consensus regarding an aesthetically determined 'canon' of design and designers, and the influence of structuralist literary theory can be seen in debates questioning the notion of the 'author.'<sup>11</sup> This was taken further by consideration of the notion of the audience and viewer. The social and cultural context for art, and interpretations and readings of art, were explored in 'new art history' (or histories) during the early 1980s and in parallel to this, new approaches to the study of visual culture developed.<sup>12</sup> These debates questioned traditional frameworks for presenting knowledge to the public within museums; at the same time academics and museum curators began to talk about a 'new museology'. The museum sector saw significant changes during this period, both theoretically and practically. Under the Thatcher government, museums had to attract paying customers and raise revenue; this changed the emphasis of museums, from primarily repositories of objects and knowledge, to environments for attracting, engaging and entertaining visitors.<sup>13</sup>

As discussed, art and design education played a vital formative role for design history in the 1970s. Many design historians found employment teaching the important academic component, 'historical and contextual studies', on vocational

<sup>11</sup> Roland Barthes declares the "death of the author" in a classic essay from 1967. Other key sources are, *Image Music Text* from 1978. Also see Foucault, M. (1966,1970) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, London:Tavistock Publications

<sup>12</sup> New Art History's development dates back to the previous decade. See: Rees, A.L. & Borzello, F. (eds) (1986) *The New Art History: an Anthology*, London: Camden Press.

<sup>13</sup> Roy Strong was witness to the changes in the museums sector which were greatly affected by Thatcher's move from direct to indirect taxation and at the beginning of the decade when the institutions had to become commercial businesses, both the Science Museum and the Victoria and Albert museum sought independence from government control. The Victoria and Albert museum will hereafter be referred to as the V&A, unless used otherwise in a direct quotation. Strong discusses the general shift from museums having the sole purpose of education to being places for public entertainment; and gives the example of the commercial wing of the V&A with sections of the museum being available to hire for private dinner parties. Strong also gives the example of the new director of the National History Museum's sending staff to Disneyland to consider public experience. Strong, R.,(1997) *The Roy Strong Diaries: 1967-87*, London: Phoenix paperback, pp.298-300

art and design education diplomas and degrees. This provided the context for the growth of subject-specific courses and the discipline. Chapter two provided case studies of the development of this design history educational provision at degree level, when courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level went through the accreditation process, and many courses had their first cohorts in the early 1980s. Staff often taught on both types of course, which resulted in a complicated situation as lecturers were torn between commitment to the discipline and its use in teaching within design education.<sup>14</sup> The issues this raised have implications throughout the short history of the discipline. Tim Putnam argues that the relationship between design historians and design education was a challenge and a threat;

“...I think it has to be said over a long historical trajectory that at the undergraduate level the consolidation of courses in history of design has been something that has not been as helpful to the subject as one might have hoped because it often went hand-in-hand with a withdrawal of involvement in the development of the subject as part of design education.”<sup>15</sup>

This increasing separation between the two similar areas was shown by removing the reference to Complementary Studies in the CNAA's HADCS accreditation board. The establishment of the new 'History of Art and Design' board in 1983, chaired by design and architectural historian Tim Benton, was evidence of design history's growing institutionalisation.<sup>16</sup> Benton has subsequently commented that it

<sup>14</sup> “what began to be an issue in the 1980s.... in institutions [Brighton is an example where the formation of the subject was particularly strong early on] where degrees in design history began to be taught in their own right... the staff involved could be very much torn between, or feel implicitly that they would have to make a choice in their orientation between, the priority of the development of the subject in its own right and its use in vocational education”. Putnam, T. & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam*, Track 2

<sup>15</sup> Putnam, T., & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam*, Track 2 - 40.30

<sup>16</sup> Benton was appointed to the 'History of Art, Design and Complementary Studies' board in September 1982 and he oversaw a change in its name and focus. The first meeting of the newly-named board took place on 6th December 1983. DB3/2067 - The chairman of this board was a key figure in design history education, Tim Benton, and the vice-chairman an established art historian Marcia Pointon. Other significant members of the Design History Society were also present on the

was timely that the board looked at the way the elements of the History of Art and Design were being validated and reviewed by committees of the Council other than that for art and design, as the Council was at that time undertaking a review of the role and responsibilities of its various committees.<sup>17</sup> Benton is one individual whose professional activities operate across several communities of practice, and illustrates the complexities of the interweaving influences on the development of a design history network and its development as an academic discipline. In Latourian terms he was an actor in the network of relationships that exist within design history; helping to create and strengthen these interactions through educational provision. For six years he was on the CNAAs History of Art and Design committee and then moved on to examine several of the emerging design history courses.<sup>18</sup> Additionally his role as part of the Open University community of practice has already been discussed in the case study in Chapter Two. Understandably, when any individual is asked to recall their contributions to past events in which they were involved many wish to present themselves in a good light. When interviewed for the DHS's project he viewed the impact of his career as considerable: "I played quite a significant role...a godfather..."<sup>19</sup> Whilst this assessment of his own contribution could be overstated, and in theoretical studies of memory and

board, John Heskett, Roger Newport, Pat Kirkham, Bridget Wilkins, and Gregory Votolato. By meeting 6, in 1986, other significant names included Jonathan Woodham, Jeremy Aynsley, and Anthony Coulson.

<sup>17</sup> With the changes in bureaucracy in the CNAAs the newly-named board had requested information concerning other committees of the council which might have responsibility for validating other courses containing elements of History of Art and Design. In its second meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 1984 the board received a list of these committees which included; the fashion and textile design board, the fine art board, and the graphic design board. It is interesting to note that the printed list of board members in the file does not include architecture courses even though architecture courses are mentioned within the minutes. This was probably due to some courses coming within the purview of the technology board despite having a history of architecture content. Another example of the intermeshing of networks. Point 20.I DB3/2068

<sup>18</sup> Benton was the first examiner on the Middlesex Polytechnic MA and the examiner on the Design History BA at North Staffordshire Polytechnic. He also examined on the RCA History of Design MA.

<sup>19</sup> Benton, T & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Benton*, Track 3 – 17;21

recollection this is termed a “prestige- enhancing shift”, there is little to be gained from ranking the impact of individual actors when considering the complexities of a network.<sup>20</sup>

Other significant developments during this decade show the growing interest in addressing the issue of pedagogy and curriculum content. These demonstrate both the consolidation of the discipline in education and the importance of networks. This period saw several Polytechnics establish collections of artefacts for object-based teaching and study. Often these were the personal items of lecturers, but on occasions these were deposited into special collections at the library, or later formalised into museums at the institution. Examples include: the electrical appliances collected by Adrian Forty when teaching at Bristol Polytechnic, the previously-discussed study collection at North Staffordshire Polytechnic, and the collection at Middlesex Polytechnic which would later form the basis for the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA).<sup>21</sup> Other resources include the Camberwell College Archive, the Central St Martins Museum and the plastics collection at Bournemouth Polytechnic.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> On memory and the oral history interview see, Abrams, L.,(2010)*Oral History Theory*, London: Routledge, p.85.

<sup>21</sup> Forty, A & DHS (2007) *Oral History interview with Adrian Forty*, Track 4. Betty Smithers Design Study Collection at Staffordshire University available at: [www.staffs.ac.uk/faculties/art\\_and\\_design/studio\\_and\\_facilities/design\\_collection/](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/faculties/art_and_design/studio_and_facilities/design_collection/) (Accessed: 14th October 2009); Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture available at: <http://www.moda.mdx.ac.uk/> ( Accessed 13th June 2010)

<sup>22</sup> Camberwell College of Art's Archive is now part of the University of the Arts. Available at: <http://www.arts.ac.uk/library/archives-collections/camberwell/> (Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011). Central St Martins Museum contains teaching collections from St Martin's School of Art and the Central School of Arts and Crafts/Design available at: <http://www.csm.arts.ac.uk/museum/> (Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011) and Bournemouth's Museum of Design in Plastics available at: <http://www.modip.ac.uk/> (Accessed:11th November 2011)

The challenges faced teaching in the art colleges drew individuals together across the network through meetings and conferences that focused on teaching methods in both contextual studies and design history.<sup>23</sup> Also significant was the development of the Middlesex Curriculum Centre for Art & Design History. Middlesex Polytechnic, formed in part by the former Hornsey College of Art, was particularly well suited to develop the curriculum centre for History of Art and Design due to the awareness of the complex issues involved.<sup>24</sup> The centre organised conferences and seminars relating to aspects of the subject area and published conference papers and books to disseminate the information to a wider audience.<sup>25</sup>

A key figure connected to Middlesex Polytechnic was Bob Fox, the national subject inspector for Art History and also the institution inspector for Middlesex. Both Flavia Swann and Tim Putnam have argued that he had a significant role at government level in the development of design history in terms of education and

<sup>23</sup> The AAH Polytechnic's and Colleges Sub-Committee organised a conference on 'History and Theory of Art and Design on studio based courses' 16 March 1984 at Middlesex Polytechnic. The DHS newsletter refers to a conference in September 1984, organised by Tim Putnam, Clive Dilnot and Jeremy Aynsley at Coventry, entitled "Design History and Design Education" but a reference in the editorial of Newsletter 23 implies that this might have been cancelled. A study course on 'The Information Needs of Design Practices' on 17 May 1985 was organised by the DHS & ARLIS, Newsletter 26. This issue has remained of importance; there were several conferences in the 1990s including Manchester 1996 and Glasgow 1997, and more than a decade later, in 2010, a series of symposia on teaching in relation to design education was been organised by the DHS teaching officer.

<sup>24</sup> Bridget Wilkins was employed at Middlesex following the sit-in and became a key individual in formulating a particular approach to design history.

<sup>25</sup> "The Curriculum Centre for the History of Art and Design (Middlesex Polytechnic) was established in September 1979 to promote and monitor the development of the history of Art and design as the subject at all levels and in all sectors of education". The one-day conference on the theme "theoretical studies and the foundation course" jointly sponsored by Middlesex Polytechnic and the National Standing Conference for Foundation in Art and Design Education (NSCFEAD), 6th June 1980 was reported in: Ashwin, Clive (1980) *Theoretical Studies and the Foundation Course*, Curriculum Centre for the History of Art and Design Middlesex Polytechnic. Quotation from Ashwin, C.(1980), p 2.

the importance of the DHS.<sup>26</sup> Putnam accredits Fox with recommending to the Department of Education and Science that the subject needed promotion on a national level;

“he was an example of somebody, if you like ‘from the boffins side’, who was beginning to think along the same lines as many individuals who were teaching and the HMs, of course, formed their views in relation to the discussions which they had with people who were teaching. And it was Fox’s recommendation that led to the department deciding, the Department Of Education And Science, deciding the subject of design history needed to be developed nationally. And they did various things to promote that development”<sup>27</sup>

This was important for the DHS and its role enabling communication nationally. The inspectors were keen that academics belonged to a professional network or association. Putnam, again, recalls that;

“the creation of the Design History Society was certainly supported by the Inspectorate at the level of encouragement given to institutional management that individual members of staff who were teaching in a subject should be supported to attend, to belong, to give papers and seek publications in the subject with which they were teaching.”<sup>28</sup>

This is an interesting point, although design historians were not working in a research intensive, well-funded, university sector, the management of polytechnics were encouraged by the subject inspectors to promote professional academic activity among members of teaching staff.

### **Developing the publication of scholarship in the domain of design history**

This period saw a favourable context for the consolidation of the network into an academic discipline, intellectually, and as part of educational provision in design education. The main developments are seen in three key areas; firstly, wider

<sup>26</sup> Swann, F DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with Flavia Swann*, Track 4 and Putnam, T & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam*, Track 2

<sup>27</sup> Putnam, T & DHS *Op.Cit.* [06.30]

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, [09.10]

opportunities for the publication of intellectual debates amongst the pages of new academic journals and scholarly books; secondly, a clearer articulation of the complex issues over subject matter and methodology between 'history of design' and 'design history' in print; and, thirdly a broader location of the subject as the relationship with museums became firmly established.

Arguably the most significant development of the 1980s was the increasing opportunity for scholars to publish papers concerning the history of design and design history. Publications were seen in scholarly, academic and populist imprints.<sup>29</sup> Most significant in terms of demonstrating a clearly established academic audience were the establishment of the journals *BLOCK*, *Design Issues* and the *Journal of Design History*.<sup>30</sup> Of particular interest are papers that directly address the nature of the discipline, for example by Putnam and Hannah in 1980 and Dilnot in 1984.<sup>31</sup> Due to the wide network of design history and broad interdisciplinary nature of the subject, scholars producing work that might be described as design history also published in a variety of publications such as *Art History*, *the Burlington Magazine*, *The New Left Review*, *the Studio*, and historical journals such as *History Workshop Journal*, *Business History* and *Economic History*. Owing to its links with the DHS, and formative role in shaping design history in Britain, the *Journal of Design History* is the focus of a case study in the following chapter.

<sup>29</sup> Scholarly publications include the journals of academic societies, academic texts were aimed at students, and populist imprints included Design Council books and art publishers such as Studio Vista and Thames and Hudson.

<sup>30</sup> *BLOCK* was established in 1979 and continued throughout the 1980s. *Design Issues* and the *Journal of Design History* were both established in 1984 and 1987 respectively.

<sup>31</sup> See more detailed discussion of these articles later in this chapter. Hannah F, & Putnam, T.(1980)"Taking Stock in Design History" *BLOCK* 3 and Dilnot, C.(1984) "The State of Design History I: Mapping the Field", *Design Issues*, 1(1)pp.4-23 and "The State of Design History 2: Problems and Possibilities", *Design Issues*, 1(2)pp.3-20

The journal *BLOCK* was produced from 1979 to 1989 by a group of intellectuals associated with Middlesex Polytechnic. It provided a vital forum for interdisciplinary issues related to art, design and culture and it was an "outgrowth of radical publishing of the 1960s and 70s."<sup>32</sup> The pages of the journal give evidence of a particular community of practice among the intellectual network associated with an educational institution. Its roots were in the debates that surrounding teaching in art schools, and Sally Stafford recalls that early intentions were to publish material that directly related to these problems.<sup>33</sup> Other similar issues included the challenge to traditional scholarship: "to try and intervene in the discourses that defined and validated visual culture", and *BLOCK* was also "committed to challenging the dominance of the Canon'.<sup>34</sup> In this, the agenda of the *BLOCK* editorial board paralleled that of certain design historical communities of practice. Putnam, a member of the original editorial board, subsequently described it as a "magazine of "art" design and cultural politics [that] included different kinds of writing and crossed disciplinary boundaries... what later became known as visual culture."<sup>35</sup> The aims of the journal were closely allied to those of many members of the communities of practice associated with design history, and *BLOCK* clearly demonstrates the interweaving and interconnections of networks. Examples of articles published included Philippa Goodhall writing on 'Design and Gender, Barry Curtis' reflection on the Festival of Britain, Tony Fry 's article 'Unpacking the

<sup>32</sup> Examples of these publications include *History Workshop Journal* and *Radical Philosophy*. *BLOCK* had circulation of about 2000, this included institutional libraries but the main purchasers were individuals. Source: Putnam, T & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam*, Track 4 [11.45]

<sup>33</sup> Stafford, S. (ed.) (1996) *The BLOCK reader in visual culture*, London: Routledge, p.xii Sally Stafford was a member of the editorial board.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xiii.

<sup>35</sup> The Editorial board consisted of members of staff at Middlesex Polytechnic; Jon Bird, Barry Curtis, Melinda Marsh, Tim Putnam, George Robertson, Sally Stafford and Lisa Tickner. Putnam was also to become a key member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Design History*, and remains the only original member on the board today. Putnam, T & DHS *op.cit.*



Typewriter' along with Dick Hebdige's contributions including discussion of the Italian scooter and a 'Shopping spree in Conran-hell'.<sup>36</sup> Before the establishment of the *Journal of Design History* later in the decade, *BLOCK* was a useful resource for design historians around the country.<sup>37</sup> It is an example of a central point of focus for the broader network, in Latourian terms it is an *actor* in the network, and as such it has parallels to other important events and committees that contribute to the forging of relationships and connections; such as the CNAA boards, the DHS conferences, and latterly the *Journal of Design History* editorial board.

The journal *Design Issues*, published by MIT press, was initially established at the School of Art and Design at the University of Illinois in Chicago. This American-based publication slightly predates the *Journal of Design History* and has often been a site for discussions on the nature of design history in Britain and worldwide.<sup>38</sup> The journal is evidence of the importance of networks; it has close connections with members of the design history community in Britain, and the DHS.<sup>39</sup> Victor Margolin, the first editor of the *Design Issues*, was an active member of the DHS in Britain, often contributing information about developments in America to the

<sup>36</sup> Goodhall, P. (1983) 'Design and Gender' *BLOCK* Issue 9; Curtis B (1985/6) One Continuous Interwoven Story (the Festival of Britain) *BLOCK* Issue 11; Fry, T (1982) 'Unpacking the Typewriter' *BLOCK* Issue 7; Hebdige, D (1981) 'Object as Image: the Italian scooter' *BLOCK* issue 5, and Hebdige, D (1989) 'Shopping spree in Conran-hell' *BLOCK* Issue 15.

<sup>37</sup> "In 1987 the Design History Society began to produce its own journal, and the critical perspectives established on the subject in *BLOCK* increasingly set its terms of reference." Stafford, S. *op.cit.*, p.132. Putnam, T & DHS *op.cit.* [16.45] "You often find when you talk to design historians who were active in the 80s, you often find that they know, or knew, about *BLOCK* and found it important at the time;"

<sup>38</sup> *Design Issues* first issue slightly predates the *Journal of Design History* publishing four years earlier in 1984 (*JDH* was first published in 1988)

<sup>39</sup> Academics from the British design history community have been involved with the journal since its inception, these include: Hazel Clark was a guest editor in 2003 and on the advisory board of 1994-97; Jonathan Woodham has been on the editorial board from 1994 had also contributed some review articles; Penny Sparke was on the advisory board from 1984-93. Other names on the advisory panel included John Heskett, Nigel Whiteley and Paul Greenhalgh; article and review contributors from the British design history community include Christopher Bailey, Cheryl Buckley, Alan Crawford, Nigel Cross, Clive Dilnot, Gillian Naylor and Barbara Usherwood.

Society's Newsletter. He also contributed an article to the first issue of the *Journal of Design History* clarifying the state of design history in America.<sup>40</sup> It was within the pages of *Design Issues* that Clive Dilnot's articles on the state of design history were published in 1984 (see later discussion) and a decade later an entire issue was devoted to questioning the relationship between design history and Design Studies.<sup>41</sup> In 2004 the journal celebrated its 20th anniversary with a special issue that reflected on the design writing within its pages. The 'Introduction' from the first issue of 1984 was reprinted there which suggested that the journal had been established due to a lack of historical and theoretical perspective on design education in the United States. Margolin argued that there had been a "long tradition of discussing design as a significant social and cultural practice in Europe"<sup>42</sup> but now there were signs of a change in direction regarding thinking about design in the United States. *Design Issues* was founded as a publication that would provoke controversy and debate, and not strictly a scholarly academic journal. Denis Doordan joined Margolin, and Richard Buchanan, to become the editorial panel of the journal; Margolin and Doordan had met at one of the first panels on design history in the States, at the College Art Association conference in 1984. Margolin's influence, as a design historian, was seen in the first two issues when Dilnot's articles on the methodology and historiography of design history

<sup>40</sup> From 1984 to 1987 Margolin was the main editor and from 1993 to 2004 Victor Margolin was editor along with Richard Buchanan and Dennis Doordan. He frequently contributed a section in the DHS newsletter listing "new books on design and related subjects in the United States" issue 11 in 1981 through to issue 75 in 1997; and Margolin's article on design history in the United States Margolin, V.(1988)"A Decade of Design History in the United States 1977-1987" *Journal of Design History*. 1(1), pp.51-72.

<sup>41</sup> Dilnot, C. (1984) "The State of Design History I: Mapping the Field", *Design Issues*, 1(1)pp.4-23 and Dilnot, C. (1984)"The State of Design History 2: Problems and Possibilities", *Design Issues*, 1(2)pp.3-20. The spring issue in 1995, volume 11 issue one was devoted to discussing the relationship between design history and design studies.

<sup>42</sup> Margolin, V. (2004) "Reprint –Introduction 1984" *Design Issues* 20(1) pp.10-11.

appeared.<sup>43</sup> Margolin had used his connections with the British design history network of the DHS, through colleague John Heskett, to invite Dilnot to author this article and initiate the debate concerning the development of design history on a larger geographical stage.<sup>44</sup> Another significant article written by a member of the British design history network was published within the pages of the journal, Cheryl Buckley's 'Made in Patriarchy'.<sup>45</sup> Here Buckley furthered the debate about the writing of histories of design by introducing considerations of gender and consumption; arguing that women's contributions to design had been ignored and that this was as a "direct consequence of historiographic methods."<sup>46</sup>

The articles in the pages of *Design Issues* addressed issues of relevance to current design practitioners as well as theoreticians, critics, and historians of design including the nature of design practice itself, the position of design within society, and the role of design in a globalised context. This broad scope facilitated the overlap and intersection of several small, but distinctly different, communities of practice. In Britain this audience was also the intended focus for the publications of the Design Council, which, as a government –funded organisation was able to publish for a niche market. The Design Council had no explicit agenda relating to design history primarily because its purpose was more directly linked to the promotion of a relationship between business and design, and the role of

<sup>43</sup> Leon Bellin, an artist and one of the founders, proposed the name of the journal and hoped for a commitment to controversy and debate. Buchannan, R., Doordan, D. & Margolin, V. (2004) "Introduction 2004 - 20th anniversary issue," *Design Issues*, 20 (1), pp.1-9. Dilnot, C. (1984) *op.cit.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* p3 – Margolin attended several conferences of the DHS in England. John Heskett would later move to teach at the Chicago Institute of Design, where Margolin was a design historian. Clive Dilnot had been invited as the keynote speaker to the second symposium on the history of graphic design at Rochester Institute of technology in 1985.

<sup>45</sup> Buckley, C. (1986) "Made in Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design", *Design Issues*, 3(2), pp.3-14

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3

consumers. The Council looked forward rather than back but at the end of the 1970s and during the early part of the 1980s the growing demand in the 'education design history market' was recognised and the Council began to fund design publications.<sup>47</sup> There was neither explicit policy nor a balanced or comprehensive programme for publishing but the annual report of 1981/82 indicated that the area of publishing in design history was commercially successful.<sup>48</sup>

The DHS conferences had provided the Council with an output that was virtually 'ready-done' with low production costs.<sup>49</sup> In addition to these, and Coulson's bibliographic text, other publications included a short series of monographs profiling designers written by design historians.<sup>50</sup> These books included *Ernest Race* by Hazel Conway, *Ettore Sottsass*, by Penny Sparke and *Harry Peach, Dryad and the DIA* by Pat Kirkham among others. Nikolaus Pevsner's *Pioneers*, celebrating

<sup>47</sup> 15th August 1979 Publications report, Design Council Archive Papers. This had been acknowledged in the annual report of 1977/8 p21 "Design education - Educational books. "The council published its first book to meet the growing demand for information on design history; *Leisure In The 20th Century* (a collection of papers given at a design history Conference."

<sup>48</sup> Quotations from the minutes of Design Council meetings include: "A detailed publishing programme was required and there was a need for the Council to define its publishing policy more clearly. Mr Bishop said that activity should align itself more closely with the aims of the Council" [Minutes 26th November 1980.] Future publishing; "Mr Constable felt that the programme at present was not sufficiently balanced." [Meeting 3rd June 1981] heads of department meetings. Design Council Archive: Publications "The council's book publishing activity continued to provide a cost-effective medium for disseminating a variety of information on design related subjects to a wide range of audiences Six new titles appear during the year, including commercially successful books in the area of design history,"... " [ Annual report 1981-82p.10]

<sup>49</sup> The six publications included; (1978) *Leisure in the Twentieth Century*, (1978) *Design History: Fad or Function*, (1979) *Design History - Past, Process, Product*; Hamilton, N (ed)(1980) *Design and Industry: The Effects of Industrialisation and Technical Change on Design*. London: Design Council; (1981) *Svensk Form*; and (1985) *From Spitfire to Microchip*, London: Design Council. Records show that the low production cost; "Design History; past process product" were £890 for a 1000 copy print-run, and as there were no authors royalties they would "break even on sale of 384 copies". Other statistics given include: "Sales: all through Design Council @ 66.6% - £2.50 per copy; break even on sale of 384 copies = 38.4% of present order. Potential return to Design Council - £2473= 253% of direct costs" Source: Design Council Archive

<sup>50</sup> The full series included: Conway, H. (1982) *Ernest Race*, London: Design Council; Sparke, P., (1982) *Ettore Sottsass*, London: Design Council; Blake, A., (1986) *Milner Gray*, London: Design Council; and Kirkham, P., (1986) *Harry Peach, Dryad and the DIA*, London: Design Council. Also; Glancy, J., (1988) *Douglas Scott*, London: Design Council; and Nahum A., (1988) *Alec Issigonis*, London : Design Council

individual designers, was the historiographical model that was followed by the Design Council for this series. Two further publications accompanied exhibitions held in the middle of the decade at the V&A; *Did Britain Make it? British Design in Context 1946-86* commemorating the anniversary of the *Britain Can Make It* exhibition of 1946 and *Street Style: British Design in the 80s* in 1987 reviewing “popular British design trends in fashion, graphics and alternative product design” both of these exhibitions served the Design Councils agenda of verifying the role of design in the economy.<sup>51</sup> Another commissioned book by the Design Council during this decade was Nigel Whiteley’s *Pop Design; Modernism to Mod* which offered a discussion of design that reflected the new direction of design historical scholarship, reflecting on social history and context for design, rather than a connoisseurial approach merely promoting the reputation of elite design heroes.<sup>52</sup> The Design Council’s approach to design history publishing was ad hoc; diverse approaches are seen that are a result of the relationship between the author, and their perspective, combining with the Council’s business focus on justifying the positive economic role of design.

The first design history publications were closely linked with traditions of publishing for the history of art and architecture; focusing on the author of the work, the formal stylistic qualities of the object, and individual masterpieces. Bevis Hillier’s text *The Style of the Century* focused on analysing stylistic change across the decades of the 20th century.<sup>53</sup> Deyan Sudjic’s *Cult Objects - The Complete Guide to Having It*

<sup>51</sup> Sparke, P. (1986) *Did Britain Make it? British Design in Context 1946-86*, London: The Design Council; and McDermott, C.(1987) *Street style : British design in the 80s*, London : Design Council Quotation from Annual Report 1986/7, Design Council.p.15

<sup>52</sup> Whiteley, N. (1987) *Pop design; Modernism to Mod*. London: Design Council.

<sup>53</sup> Hillier, B.(1983, 1998)*The Style of the Century*,2nd edn., London: The Herbert Press

All similarly prioritised specific masterpieces of design in a text that also offered a reflection on the increasingly consumerist society of the 1980s.<sup>54</sup> This structure of the book demonstrates the significance of so-called 'designer' objects, chapter titles indicate the value placed on conspicuous consumption; 'are you what you own?', 'the importance of being Burberry', and the 'pride of possessions'. The 'History of Design series' of books published in 1983 by Pembridge Press, based at Middlesex Polytechnic, were produced by members of the initial community of practice linked to design history, who we may describe as the 'first generation' of design historians. Clive Ashwin provided a sourcebook for further study of graphic design history, Penny Sparke examined the professional role of the designer, and Jonathan Woodham reflected on government intervention in design.<sup>55</sup> The contents page of Woodham's volume shows a structure which firstly indicates an almost art historical approach in Part I, then a more inclusive design historical approach focusing on both the design organisations and consumers. The good intention of a balanced design historical approach suggested by the title *The Industrial Designer and the Public* and its foreword did not materialise, this was possibly due to the type of source-material available at this time. However, the book gives a good basic introduction to the debate on "good design" and the apparent potential that it held for social improvement. These texts laid the necessary groundwork for further analysis; as little had been published previously, these simple narratives were required before they could be critically reassessed.

<sup>54</sup> Sudjic, D., (1985) *Cult Objects - The Complete Guide to Having It All*, London: Paladin books.

<sup>55</sup> Pembridge History of Design Series included: Ashwin, C. (1983) *History of Graphic Design and Communication – A source Book*; Pembridge Press ; Sparke, P. (1983) *Consultant design: The history and practice of the designer in industry*, Pembridge Press and Woodham, J., (1983) *The Industrial Designer and the Public*, Pembridge Press. My use of the term 'generation' is an implicit reference to a later article by Guy Julier and Vivianna Narotzky, who talk about the design history network in terms of genealogy.

A key design history text in this decade was Gillian Naylor's 1985 analysis and reassessment of the Bauhaus; in this book Naylor revisited her groundbreaking previous work on the *Bauhaus*, published in 1968, and applied critical perspectives learned through experiences of being involved in early teaching of design history.<sup>56</sup> The Bauhaus had remained a focus of publishing due to its close links to histories of artists and architecture and also due to the large volume of the source material available for researchers. At the same time publishers were keen to publish books concerned with the 'Modern movement' and the 'good design' debate, as there was a discernable market for these publications.<sup>57</sup> Other texts that show influence of early design historical discussions are Penny Sparke's *An Introduction to Design and Culture* and Adrian Forty's *Objects of Desire*, both published in 1986.<sup>58</sup> In her text Sparke expanded the subject focus from the professional role of the designer, as discussed three years previously, to examining mass produced consumer items within their cultural and economic context through a series of artefact case studies. This text was presented as a "cultural history of 20th-century design" and combined thematic and chronological approaches to present an introductory narrative.<sup>59</sup> Forty's text was published by the art publishers Thames and Hudson, and was their first foray into the world of design history rather than the decorative arts. This text also positioned standard consumer goods within social contexts, but expanded a discussion of design history beyond its chronological restrictions to the 20th century by starting in the middle of the 18th century. It presents the history of

<sup>56</sup> Naylor, G.(1985)*The Bauhaus Reassessed: Sources and Design Theory*, London: The Herbert Press; Naylor, G.(1968)*The Bauhaus*, London : Studio Vista. Naylor had experience teaching at Kingston and Brighton, and would then go on to teach on the V&A RCA MA Design History course.

<sup>57</sup> This preoccupation is also reflected in the exhibitions staged by Boilerhouse project at the V&A and the new Design Museum. See discussion later in this chapter.

<sup>58</sup> Sparke, P.,(1986) *An Introduction to Design & Culture in the Twentieth Century*, London: Routledge, and Forty, A., (1986) *Objects of Desire – Design and Society since 1750*, London: Thames and Hudson.

<sup>59</sup> Sparke, P., *op.cit.*, p. xiii

design as “also the history of societies” and offers up discussions in a thematic way.<sup>60</sup> Both Sparke and Forty’s texts were republished in the following decade and became key texts on reading lists for both practical design students and design history students.

Another key market for publications were academic texts for the education market. The publications by Conway and Walker, published at the end of the decade, were aimed at students as an introduction to the practice of design history, and draw on the debates concerning the nature of the discipline that had occurred between lecturers and within the pages of academic journals.<sup>61</sup> Conway’s book offers a basic introduction to the practical activities undertaken when researching design, and as such is indicated by the subtitle “a Student’s Handbook”; Walker’s text, which was also aimed at students, has a more theoretical agenda.<sup>62</sup> In their approaches both of these books address a different type of student; Conway’s audience ranges from the practical design student embarking on the dissertation component of a degree to first-year design history students; whereas Walker’s text had grown from debates surrounding the Masters level degree course at Middlesex Polytechnic and addresses a student at a higher level. Both texts show evidence that publishers felt compelled to contribute to this new scholarly area and their existence provides

<sup>60</sup> Forty, A., *op.cit.*,p.8 Forty was an architectural historian and taught contextual studies at the Bartlett School of architecture, London. When asked by the Design History Society oral history project he still defined himself as an architectural historian.

<sup>61</sup> Conway, H.(1987) *Design History - a Students' Handbook*, London: Routledge; and Walker, J.A. (1989)*Design History and the History of Design*, London: Pluto Press; John A. Walker’s publication tried to offer clarification surrounding the academic discipline *design history* in relation to the field of studies *history of design*.

<sup>62</sup> This text engages in the discussions that had been raised by Clive Dilnot surrounding the problems of writing history and defining the object of study; see discussion later in this chapter.



solid proof that design history was becoming a recognised and established “new and thriving field”.<sup>63</sup>

### **Debating subject and methodology in the Design History domain: intersections between ‘history of design’ and ‘Design History’**

Walker’s text discussed the situation towards the end of the 1980s, when it was increasingly possible to determine a variety of approaches to design history, or design histories. These were based broadly on categories employed by new art histories; and included: ‘the materials and techniques approach’, ‘the comparative method’, ‘content analysis’, the ‘typological approach’, ‘National Histories of Design’, ‘Anthropology and Design History’, ‘the Social History Approach’, and ‘structuralist and semiotic approaches to design’; also discussion of feminist approaches to design history were represented by a chapter by Judy Attfield ‘FORM/female FOLLOWS FUNCTION/male: Feminist Critiques of Design’.<sup>64</sup> The debate surrounding the correct or appropriate method for study had roots in the evolution of design history and its relationship to design education. A key text, which has become a standard starting point for debate is Dilnot’s 1984 two-part article *The State of Design History* published in *Design Issues*, but at the beginning of the decade Tim Putnam and Fran Hannah’s article “Taking Stock in Design History”, published in *BLOCK* in 1980, was an important earlier contribution to the debate.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Notes on the cover text of Walker's book.

<sup>64</sup> Walker, *Op cit.* pp.199-225

<sup>65</sup> Hannah, F., & Putnam, T., (1980) “Taking Stock in Design History” *BLOCK* Issue 3, republished in Stafford, S. (ed.)(1996)*The BLOCK reader in visual culture*, London: Routledge, pp134-147

To a certain extent, Putnam and Hannah's article can be seen as an early manifesto about the nature and future direction of design history, arguing that analysis should focus on the variability of the significance of objects; "how artefacts and their representation change significance as they pass out of the conditions of their conception and production ought to be a high priority problem in design history."<sup>66</sup> This questioned the focus on 'authorship' and emphasised the importance of consumption to design history. Yet they also offer a warning for the future of the subject, arguing that "far from being a greener pasture free from the contradictions of art history, design history is in fair danger of becoming an academic backwater."<sup>67</sup> This was due, they argued, to a large extent to its shaky foundations in design education. Design history had defined itself in opposition to art history and it suffered from complexities of the eclectic 'borrowing' from other fields such as business history, history of technology or social history. Although the authors do not use the terminology of 'networks' and 'communities of practice' their call for the extensive cooperation across the country acknowledges that they do exist in a nascent form. At this point the DHS was in its early stages, courses were beginning to be taught and committees met to discuss issues of common interest, but the authors warn that this institutional consolidation may have been creating merely an *illusion* of a new subject. However, these communities of practice continued to grow in strength and number and relationships continually evolved throughout the decade taking account of the possibilities offered up by the contextual circumstances despite the problems that were encountered.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p144

<sup>67</sup> Fran Hannah and Tim Putnam in Stafford, S. (ed.) (1996) *The BLOCK reader in visual culture*, London: Routledge, p135

Dilnot's articles provided a starting point for many subsequent and recent discussions about the discipline. They have offered readers clarification of the issues, 'problems and possibilities' that were of concern to early design historians.<sup>68</sup> The problems of defining the object and method of study were identified as a key challenge by Dilnot who stated that it was; "bafflingly difficult to survey or define design history in its present state."<sup>69</sup> He explained that the academic world had little consideration for the study of design and that the worlds of design and technology had been 'discouraged' from self reflection in the form of 'historical, cultural or philosophical-analytical study'<sup>70</sup>. This was due to what he defined as a combination of "rampant anti-intellectualism" and a "hierarchical dominance" of the fine arts and history of art. The exceptions to this were the study of architecture and some associated areas; such as the history of the decorative arts, design history's 'academic antecedent' Nikolaus Pevsner's *Pioneers of Modern Design*, and typographic history.<sup>71</sup>

According to Dilnot, the development of suitable contextual conditions for the study of popular culture and design occurred in the 1950s and 1960s; it was during this period that 'design came of age', *design* and *style* were seen to express values, and there began to be an 'acceptance of industrial culture'.<sup>72</sup> During the late 1960s

<sup>68</sup> Published in the first volume of American journal *Design Issues* in 1984. For further discussion about the circumstances surrounding the publication of these articles see previous section on academic publications in chapter 2. Dilnot, C.(1984)"The State of Design History 1: Mapping the Field", *Design Issues*,1(1)pp.4-23 and Dilnot, C.(1984)"The State of Design History 2: Problems and Possibilities", *Design Issues*,1(2)pp.3-20.

<sup>69</sup> Dilnot, C.(1984) "Mapping" *op.cit.*, p.12.

<sup>70</sup> Dilnot noted that in Raymond Williams 1976 published vocabulary of culture and society 'Key words' the words *design* and *technology* were absent. Williams, R (1976) *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and Society*, London: Fontana. Dilnot, C., "Mapping" *op.cit.*, p.7

<sup>71</sup> *Op.cit.*, pp.8-9. Pevsner's *Pioneers of Modern Design* was published in 1936.

<sup>72</sup> Dilnot states that design emerged in the public consciousness following 'consumer revolutions of the post-war period, the institutionalisation of design, the expansion of art and design education, and the explosion of youth and pop cultures.' The 1952 exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian

and early 1970s an emerging design literature was seen following the writing models and forms of art and architectural history,<sup>73</sup> and contextual conditions in British education allowed for the new area of design history to emerge. Dilnot identified four general areas of focus in the early literature of what he called the ‘new design history’ in Britain, which demonstrate the variety of approaches to subjects and methods during the early days of the discipline.<sup>74</sup> It is of value to quote them in full here, before discussing their relevance;

1. *“A continuation of the traditional histories of the decorative and minor arts as applied to the subject matter of design, decoration, and ephemera of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.*
2. *A focus on Modernism.*
3. *A focus on issues of design organization.*
4. *A focus on the social relations of various kinds of design.”*<sup>75</sup>

The approaches to these areas placed emphasis on history of individual designers and the professional activity of design. He stated that this was “explicitly or implicitly... the focus of the majority of Design History written and taught today” and an additional problem in the literature was that there was; “little explicit consideration of aims, methods, or roles of Design History in relation to its actual or potential audiences” these issues were elaborated in the second part of the article - ‘problems and possibilities’.<sup>76</sup>

decorative arts at the V&A, the foundation of the Victorian Society in England (1957), and this society with a history technology in America (1958) are given as examples of increased interest in industrial culture. *Op.cit.*, p.10

<sup>73</sup> For example a revised version of Pevsner’s *Pioneers* was reissued in 1960, and Reyner Banham’s *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* published in 1960.

<sup>74</sup> He additionally identified four main principles, and an associated four absences in the early literature. Dilnot, C.(1984) “Mapping” *op.cit.*, p12

<sup>75</sup> “Traditional histories of the decorative and minor arts as applied to the subject matter of design, decoration, and ephemera of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” were discussed further on p12, Modernism on p14, issues of design organisation on p17 and the social relations of various kinds of design on p.19.

<sup>76</sup> Dilnot, C.(1984) “Mapping” *op.cit.*, p12

The key to the problem, according to Dilnot, was that early design historians had “at best an incomplete grasp of their would-be subject matter” and also that ambiguity over the definition of the term *design* itself gave rise to a “range of design histories”.<sup>77</sup> Dilnot offered a warning, all-be-it in a footnote to his main text, that the tendency towards fragmentation inhibited real debate and that diversification might lead to the possible disintegration of the discipline.<sup>78</sup> In certain areas of design historical activity a ‘canon’ was being almost subconsciously created; “a canonical list of "important" designs and designers is rapidly being established, despite that the critical arguments for their inclusion in such a list remain almost unstated”.<sup>79</sup> He also cited Roland Barthes work on mythologies and warned that design historians were in danger of creating a mystique around design and a mythic set of values which made “the very real possibility of turning the writing of history into the writing of myth.”<sup>80</sup> So the challenge for early design historians was complex; in order to determine the business for design history they needed to problematise the concept of design, critically evaluate the idea of a *canon* for subject matter, and consider whether the audience for their writing was the designer or the historian. Dilnot cited the work of art historian Michael Baxandall who emphasised the function of images and the importance of reading objects and images as evidence.<sup>81</sup> This led him to present design historians as having an important role in exploring design as evidence of society, rather than limiting their outputs to histories of the design profession. At the third design history conference Roger Newport had also warned that design historians were in danger of talking "a

<sup>77</sup> Dilnot, C.(1984) “Problems and Possibilities”, *op.cit.*, p.3

<sup>78</sup> See footnote number seven in *Ibid.*, p.4

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6

<sup>81</sup> See, Baxandall, M ( 1988) *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy – A primer in the Social History of Pictorial Styles*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

completely different language from designers”; thus early design historians were in danger of separating themselves from *both* historians *and* from designers.<sup>82</sup> The argument made here for design historians to move away from the focus on a narrow history of design and, instead, explore designed objects as a form of social history was stated again in Walker’s *Design History and the History of Design*.<sup>83</sup>

John A. Walker’s text has similarities to Dilnot’s in that it has become a widely accepted starting point for students and scholars when approaching discussion of the discipline. The *Design History Reader* edited by Grace Lees-Maffei and Rebecca Houze points out that it was Walker who made clear the distinction between a *field of studies* ‘history of design’ and an *academic discipline* ‘design history’.<sup>84</sup> The book’s publication at the end of the 1980s indicated that a decade after the establishment of an academic society, design history had moved from a nascent and formative state to a more secure established position that was recognised by both the intellectual and educational sector and the publishing world. This text offered a theoretical discussion and critiqued the variety of histories of design that had been written in terms of their basic concepts and methods. Walker’s view was that “since design historians are *historians* it is the *history* of designed objects which concerns them, that is, objects in particular periods and social contexts, objects undergoing changes through time.”<sup>85</sup> Walker tackled the complex issues of ‘Defining the Object of Study’ as Dilnot had done, and also discussed the evolution of ‘The Word/Concept ‘Design’,’ and general problems of history-writing and

<sup>82</sup> Roger Newport, "Design History: Process or Product?" in *Design History: Fad or Function?* (London: Design Council, 1980), p89 cited in Dilnot, *Ibid.*, p.7

<sup>83</sup> Walker J.A. (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*, London: Pluto Press

<sup>84</sup> Lees-Maffei, G., & Houze, R., (2010) *The Design History Reader*, Oxford: Berg p1 and Walker J.A. *op.cit*

<sup>85</sup> Walker J.A. (1989) *Op.cit* p.59

historiography. A significant issue raised was the challenge of interdisciplinarity as applied to the discipline. This linked to the consideration that the broad 'scope of the subject', its fluid boundaries, and its inability to set a definition were not viewed as strengths of the discipline but as a threat;

"unless the object of study of design history is precisely defined the sheer magnitude of its possible subject matter will reduce the research to impotence. The young discipline could dissipate itself among a thousand topics and find itself disputing the roles and territories of a dozen existing academic disciplines."<sup>86</sup>

Walker argues that the discipline should take the partial studies of design and draw them together by analysis of how they interrelate. The model proposed to show the networks of relationships and practices involved in discussing design, and thus address design history's complex field of research, was the production-consumption model and Walker presented this in diagrammatic form (See Appendix 2).<sup>87</sup> This demonstrates that the main focus of much design history at this time was the production of, and the analysis of, objects; in Walkers promotion of a model of production *and* consumption he aims to 'correct this imbalance'.<sup>88</sup> At this time there was no key design historical text dealing with design and consumerism and so a chapter is devoted to the discussion of *consumption, reception and taste* in an attempt to underscore the importance of this as a future direction for research.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>86</sup> "Design historians envisage that they will use concepts, theories and methods drawn from other disciplines such sociology, anthropology, linguistics, art history and economics" p.35 See chapter 2 "Defining the Object of Study", *Ibid.*, pp.22-37

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p.71, also reprinted in Lees-Maffei, G., & Houze, R., (2010) *The Design History Reader*, Oxford: Berg, pp281-284

<sup>88</sup> Walker J.A. (1989) *Op.cit* p.174

<sup>89</sup> There is evidence of research in these areas in the 1990s and research project cultures of consumption in 2000s. See discussion in later chapters.

Another area of research discussed separately was Judy Attfield's discussion "FORM/female follows FUNCTION/male: Feminist Critiques of Design."<sup>90</sup> Attfield noted that her feminist critique of design was added as a postscript to Walker's publication, and during the 1980s although there was a growing interest in gender issues and feminist approaches, women's relationship to design remained a subsection of design history. The increased scholarly interest in this area was demonstrated by several events and publications, their frequency escalating in the latter part of the decade, which reveals the existence of a particular community of practice that had a distinct impact in shaping the writing of design histories. Feminist perspectives on scholarship were initially represented at conferences; firstly by individual papers, then gathering momentum with distinct strands and entire conferences devoted to the relationship of women and design. As early as 1976 Lisa Tickner had demonstrated a feminist approach through her discussion of women wearing trousers in a paper given at the *Leisure in the Twentieth Century* design history conference.<sup>91</sup> Attfield regarded this essay as offering a significant change in the approach to writing about clothing, namely viewing design change as a "symbolic representation of...social changes"<sup>92</sup> Tickner acknowledges two key influences on her career at this time. Firstly, the "family-like grouping" of individuals at Middlesex Polytechnic (formerly Hornsey College of Art) and secondly, female art historians, such as Rosika Parker and Griselda Pollock, she had met through the

<sup>90</sup> Attfield, J. "FORM/female follows FUNCTION/male: Feminist Critiques of Design" in Walker, J.A. (1989) *Op.cit.*, pp.197-225

<sup>91</sup> Tickner, L (1977) "Women and Trousers: unisex clothing and sex role changes in the twentieth century" in Design Council,(1978) *Leisure in the Twentieth Century*, London: Design Council

<sup>92</sup> Attfield, J. *Op.cit.* pp.208-9. Attfield's discussion also cites Tickner's articles for feminist magazine *Spare Rib* in 1976 discussing dress reform as an agent of social change.



Women's Art History Collective.<sup>93</sup> This is a clear example of the intersections between and across the intellectual networks. The existence of two themes on fashion and costume in the AAH's 1982 conference established that there was a body of work being undertaken on clothing.<sup>94</sup> The following year an entire conference was devoted to *Women in Design*.<sup>95</sup> This growing evidence of academic interest in gender issues and design was predominantly linked to discussion of fashion and dress.

Fashion historian Lou Taylor argues that the mid-1980s was a period that saw huge change in the approaches to scholarship in this area. Taylor declares that, "the entire field of dress history/dress studies [had] burst across old boundaries and [flourished] ...in a far more open-minded multi-disciplinary atmosphere."<sup>96</sup> Texts that were instrumental in this included Parker's *The Subversive Stitch* (1984), and Elizabeth Wilson's *Adorned in Dreams-Fashion and Modernity* (first published in 1985).<sup>97</sup> Parker's text presented a history of embroidery as an approach to locating changing notions of 'the feminine'. This subsequently contributed a history shaped by the designed object; as she stated, "to know the history of embroidery is to

<sup>93</sup> Tickner, L. (2011) Interviewed by Liz Bruchet. For AAH Voices in Art History Project, 7th June. Excerpt 2 Available at, <http://www.aah.org.uk/projects/oral-history/interviews/interview-with-lisa-tickner> (Accessed 12th December 2012) The Women's Art History Collective was founded in 1974.

<sup>94</sup> At the 8<sup>th</sup> AAH conference held at Manchester from 26th- 29th March the academic sessions included: "The artist and historic costume: some aspects of the use made by artists of historic dress in art." Organised by Aileen Ribeiro, (Courtauld Institute) and Josephine Miller, ( Birmingham Polytechnic) and also, "Design and the Fashion Industry" Organised by Hilary Grainger and Gillian Salway, ( both from Department of History of Art & Design, North Staffordshire Polytechnic,) which included Lou Taylor as a speaker. Source: *AAH Bulletin* No 14

<sup>95</sup> Organised by Cheryl Buckley and Lynne Walker this 1983 conference was held at the ICA in London. See review in DHS Newsletter No. 20 (Jan 1984)

<sup>96</sup> See; Taylor, L. (2002) *The Study of Dress History* Manchester: Manchester University Press. Also Taylor, L. (2004) *Establishing Dress History* Manchester: Manchester University Press.p.279

<sup>97</sup> Parker, R (1984) *The Subversive Stitch – Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* London: The Women's Press. Wilson, E. (2003) *Adorned in Dreams – Fashion and Modernity* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: I.B Tauris.

know the history of women.”<sup>98</sup> Parker trained as an art historian and was an actor in networks associated with feminism, such as the Women’s Art History Collective and *Spare Rib*, but there are also direct connections to the design history network as Adrian Forty read and commented on the manuscript of *The Subversive Stitch*.<sup>99</sup> Many of the previous publications on costume and dress had taken a connoisseurial approach and could be regarded as a subset of histories of the decorative arts. Wilson’s text pioneered the approach to garments as objects and positioned discussion within a larger cultural context. The text marked a significant change in scholarship on clothing and dress, as Taylor argues it was, “seminal to the acceptance of ‘fashion’ as a legitimate field of study.”<sup>100</sup> As Taylor implies dress history, or dress studies, was becoming a separate area of enquiry and a distinct subsection of histories of designed objects. This particular community of practice maintained this separation from the wider design history network, and the following decade fashion history established itself as a separate subject.<sup>101</sup> In much the same way the community of practice surrounding Graphic Design also began to maintain a degree of separation and difference with its own conferences and publications.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Parker, R. *Op.cit*, Foreword to the first edition.

<sup>99</sup> Forty is acknowledged in the text. Forty also discusses how he shared a house with Parker and several of the feminist intellectuals associated with the magazine *Spare Rib*. Forty, A & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Adrian Forty*.

<sup>100</sup> Taylor, L. (2004) *Op.cit* p280

<sup>101</sup> The journal *FashionTheory* published by Berg was established in 1997.

<sup>102</sup> The community of practice surrounding Graphic Design History has links with America. In April 1983 scholars gathered together at Rochester Institute of Technology for the First symposium on the history of Graphic Design. Historical writing was included in the AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts) Journal See: Heller, S. & Finamore, M. (1997) *Design Culture - An Anthology of Writing from the AIGA Journal of Graphic Design*, New York: Allworth Press. Stephen Heller also edited a series of texts from 1994 to 2006 called “Looking Closer” offering critical reflection on current and historical graphic design; for example Heller, S et al. (eds) *SERIES Looking Closer - Critical Writings on Graphic Design*, New York: Allworth Press, Co-publishers American Institute of Graphic Arts. In Britain scholars such as Teal Triggs, Jeremy Aynsley, David Crowley and Rick Poyner contribute to the Graphic Design History community of practice. A symposium was held at London College of Communication in 2005, *New Views: Repositioning Graphic Design History*. October 2005.

Stephen Heller accredited Phillip Megg's, the author of the survey text book *History of Graphic Design*, with launching a "Graphic Design History movement."<sup>103</sup>

Cheryl Buckley's 1986 article *Made in Patriarchy*, published in the same journal as Dilnot's 'State of Design History' essays *Design Issues*, argued for repositioning of women within design history.<sup>104</sup> Buckley evaluated the location of women within a patriarchal and capitalist system, where their role in relation to design was firmly as consumer and particularly within the domestic sphere. She offered a critique of the dominant modes of design historical enquiry that were often informed by Modernist debates. Attfield had written several short articles for the scholarly press on the position of women in design before presenting her analysis of feminist critiques of design in Walker's 1989 *Design History and the History of Design*.<sup>105</sup> Here she similarly argued that,

"Design History still suffers from its provenance in the Modern Movement, where to some extent it remains, sealed in a time lock which still considers form the effect of function, and a concept of design – the product of professional designers, industrial production and the division of labour – which assumes that women's place is in the home."<sup>106</sup>

<sup>103</sup>Philip Meggs' text was first published in 1983 and is currently in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition ( 2006). Meggs, P. 1983 (1998) *A History of Graphic Design*, 3rd edn. New York: John Wiley & Sons. In Stephen Heller's "reader of the graphic design history movement." Meggs' was accredited as a central figure for the community of practice. Heller, S & Ballance, G. (2001) *Graphic Design History*, New York: Allworth Press, p.x. For further reflection on this see; Poyner, R. (2011) "Out of the Studio: Graphic Design History and Visual Studies" Available at:

<http://observatory.designobserver.com/entryprint.html?entry=24048> (Accessed: 3rd April 2012)

<sup>104</sup> Buckley, C., (1986) *Made in Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design*, *Design Issues*, 3(2), pp, 3-14. A later reworking of this article over a decade later summarised the changes feminist and gender studies in relation to design. Buckley, C. (1999) "Made in Patriarchy: Theories of Women and Design – A reworking" in Rothschild, J. (1999) *Design and Feminism – Re-visioning Spaces, Places, and Everyday Things*. Rutgers University Press.

<sup>105</sup> Attfield, J. (1985) "Feminist Designs on Design History" *FAN ( Feminist Arts News)* 2(3) .Attfield, J. (1985) "Defining the Object and the subject...the perception of women in design history" *Times Higher Education Supplement* 1st February 1985 .Attfield, J. (1987) "Invisible touch...what design history can gain from a feminist perspective" *Times Higher Education Supplement* 19th June 1987. Walker, J.A. (1989) *Op.Cit*.

<sup>106</sup> Attfield, J.. (1989) *Op.Cit* p.200.

Walker concurred that “feminism...calls into question many of the basic assumptions and practices of the discipline” and that if its lessons were taken seriously “then the predominantly masculine discourse of design history would be transformed.”<sup>107</sup> These views parallel, or were possibly directly informed by, the arguments made by Buckley. The first main publication that contributed to reassessing writing women into design histories was published at the end of the decade, Attfield and Pat Kirkham’s “A View from the Interior” brought together a selection of essays and was published by the Women’s Press.<sup>108</sup> This demonstrated the increase in scholarship and the same year, 1989, also saw further academic developments in relation to women and histories with the establishment of the journals *Gender and History* and the *Journal of Women’s History*. An example of influences across the network and the presentation of new scholarship in dress and gender in the wider sphere came in the form of the 1989 BBC television series *Through the Looking Glass*.<sup>109</sup> This series, along with the accompanying book, was created by Wilson and Taylor for BBC’s continuing education department. It presented a history of dress from 1860 that was informed by social history, cultural criticism, and the scholarship being undertaken on the design history degree course at Brighton Polytechnic.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p.199

<sup>108</sup> Attfield, J & Kirkham, P (eds) (1989, 1995) *A View from the Interior - Women in Design*, 2nd edn. London: The Women’s Press

<sup>109</sup> The BBC TV series *Through the Looking Glass* was first broadcast on BBC2 from November 1989. The series was produced by Suzanne Davies and Robert Albury and prepared in consultation with the Continuing Education Advisory Council. For more see, Taylor, L. & Wilson, E (1989) *Through the Looking Glass: A History of Dress from 1860 to the Present Day*. London, BBC Books.

<sup>110</sup> “Acknowledgements” *Ibid.*, p.7 Graduates of Brighton’s undergraduate degree course were thanked for allowing quotations from their research undertaken on the course. Additionally Paddy McGuire (also tutoring at Brighton) Amy De La Haye, and a variety of curators of costume collections, including the V&A, were also given credit.

Social history and cultural criticism were only two of several areas of academic study that had influence on design history during the early 1980s. Activities in economic and business history, anthropology and material culture demonstrate further dimensions in the academic network, the differing threads of knowledge that, akin to Latour's interwoven strands in actor networks, make up the complexity of academic interdisciplinary practice. Amongst historians of technology a new direction to scholarship surrounding objects was proposed at a workshop organised by Trevor Pinch and Wiebe Bijker.<sup>111</sup> Here a social constructivist approach to technology was proposed and a new field or community of practice was created; the results of the conference formed the text *The Social Construction of Technological System* which demonstrates the results of interdisciplinary influences<sup>112</sup>. Several publications in Britain demonstrated the start of this complex interdisciplinarity and made explicit reference to it.<sup>113</sup> An example is evident from Bernard Denvir's text *The 18th Century, Arts, Design and Society*, which proclaimed that its intended audience was "students of art design... and economic and social historians more generally."<sup>114</sup> Anthropology was another discipline area that offered publications of interest to design historians during the latter part of this decade. Arjun Appadurai's *The Social Life of Things* addressed designed objects as commodities within a

<sup>111</sup> A workshop was held at University of Twente, the Netherlands in July 1984. In attendance were Bruno Latour and Ruth Schwartz Cowan. Bijker, W.E., Hughes, T.P. & Pinch, T. (eds.) (1987) *The Social Construction of Technical Systems – New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*, Boston: MIT Press p xl

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.w

<sup>113</sup> British publications of importance in adjacent discipline areas, such as History, included McKendrick, N., Brewer, J. & Plumb, J.H. (1982) *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-century England*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, and the Longman series A Documentary History of Taste which included; 'The 18th Century: Art, Design And Society 1689-1789' and other periods including 'From the Middle Ages to the Stewarts - Art, Design and Society Before 1689', 'The Early 19th Century-Art, Design and Society, 1789-1852', and 'The Late Victorians-Art Design and Society, 1852-1910'.

<sup>114</sup> Denvir, B. (1983) *The 18th Century: Art, Design and Society 1689-1789*, London: Longman. Part of the series "a documentary history of taste in Britain" quotation from cover text.

cultural framework and offered interesting models of study for design historians.<sup>115</sup> Publications in material culture and cultural anthropology such as Daniel Miller's *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* also contributed to discourse on design in contemporary culture as well as historically.<sup>116</sup>

### **Establishing a relationship between the domain of Design History and museums**

A major development during this decade was the growing relationship between the design history network and the museum world. Key events included; initially, the growing discussion of the new role of museums, and the politics of display in museums, as discussed by the 'new museology'; secondly, the inclusion of design objects and popular culture within exhibitions and galleries in national collections; and also the link between education and museums as evidenced by the establishment of the History of Design course at the Royal College of Art and Victoria and Albert museum in 1984.<sup>117</sup> The significance of this course on the direction of design historical scholarship became more evident during the 1990s, and is the subject of a case study in chapter six. The impact of 'new museology', the development of design-focused displays at the V&A Conran Boilerhouse project, permanent galleries in the V&A, and the new Design Museum was considerable. Designed objects had been displayed in local museums as social history and examples of everyday life, and National Trust properties had been furnished with examples of the decorative arts that showcased the life within a country house, but

<sup>115</sup> Appadurai, A (ed.) (1986) *The Social Life of Things - Commodities in cultural perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Miller, D.(1987) *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell

<sup>116</sup> Miller, D.(1987) *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell. Victor Margolin notes that Miller participated in several conferences sponsored by the Design History Society and this observation demonstrates the overlap of different Communities of Practice across the network. Margolin, V.(1995)"Design history or design studies: subject matter and methods", *Design Issues*, 13(2)

<sup>117</sup> Vergo, P.(ed)(1989) *The New Museology*, London: Reaktion

designed artefacts from the twentieth-century were not routinely or actively collected or displayed in national museums of the decorative arts.<sup>118</sup>

With the publication of Robert Lumley's *The Museum Time Machine* and Peter Vergo's *The New Museology*, published in 1988 and 1989 respectively, debate shifted to consider the politics involved in displaying objects and constructing histories within the museum setting. The main impact of these publications was seen in the following decade, and will be discussed in more detail in chapter five, but the 'New Museology' acknowledged that museums place a "certain construction upon history" and that a shift in emphasis was needed that moved attention from the *methods* of museum practice, to the more contested area of the *purpose* of a museum.<sup>119</sup> An important change at the museum was the creation of a specific research department dedicated to utilising the knowledge and scholarship within the museum to present the collections afresh,<sup>120</sup> Additionally, the significant changes imposed by the Thatcher government saw national museums reflect on their role as revenue-making attractions for the public as well as repositories for storing the artefacts pertaining to our heritage.<sup>121</sup> The 1980s was a time of increased public interest in contemporary design and museum curator Christopher Wilk noted that

<sup>118</sup> The 1980s saw the rise of interest in the country house, new magazines were published such as "World of Interiors" by Conde Nast, and the *Antiques Roadshow* was popular Sunday night TV viewing. This was linked to the rise in the wealth of some sectors of the populations; it was now becoming socially acceptable to display wealth, be rich and ostentatious.

<sup>119</sup> Vergo *op.cit* p2

<sup>120</sup> The Research Department, headed by Charles Suamarez-Smith, had been part of the sweeping changes undertaken by Strong's successor Elizabeth Esteve-Coll when political circumstances determined that a new direction was needed for the museum, and museums had to prove their wider impact to justify receiving government funding McDermott, C.(2007) *Design - The Key Concepts*, London: Routledge, p.229

<sup>121</sup> See earlier reference in this chapter, and especially footnote 11, to Roy Strong's directorship of the V&A. Strong, R.,(1997) *The Roy Strong Diaries: 1967-87*, London: Phoenix paperbacks

the profile of 20th century design within the V&A was elevated significantly during this period with the reassessment of hierarchies;<sup>122</sup>

“During the directorship of Roy Strong (1974-87) the curatorial departments of the Museum actively began to collect twentieth-century objects...[and] ...the 1980s saw the Museum dramatically raise the profile of twentieth-century design within its walls.”<sup>123</sup>

Key to this was the V&A developing a relationship with the Conran Foundation that allowed the use of the Boilerhouse space to exhibit industrial design, and also the opening in 1983 of the "British Art and Design 1890-1960" gallery.<sup>124</sup> The chronology of exhibitions, compiled by Elizabeth James of the National Art Library, gives the extent of design exhibitions previously held at the museum.<sup>125</sup> Prior to the Boilerhouse project there had been a few examples organised by the Circulation Department of the museum, for example, “Modern Chairs” and “The Pack Age: a Century of wrapping it up” showcasing Robert Opie’s collection of packaging and advertising.<sup>126</sup> Many of these exhibitions had been instigated by other

<sup>122</sup> Wilk, C “Collecting the Twentieth Century” in Baker, M. & Richardson, B. (eds.)(1997)*A Grand Design - The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, London: V&A Publications, p.352

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 349 and 352.

<sup>124</sup> Terence Conran was on the board of trustees of the V&A, which also included Christopher Frayling historian from the RCA. Strong, R.,(1997) *The Roy Strong Diaries: 1967-87*, London: Phoenix paperbacks p.355. The first exhibition in 1981 of industrial design in the Boilerhouse is an example of a public funded institution in collaboration with the private sector. The V&A press notice suggest that the arrangement was for the Conran Foundation to renovate the space and use it for a period of five years before moving on to its own premises. ("Art at work in the Boilerhouse," V&A press notice, 22nd October 1980) This later moved to the Design Museum, Shad Thames.

<sup>125</sup> James, E.(1998)*The Victoria and Albert Museum - A Bibliography and Exhibition Chronology, 1852-1996*.London: Fitzroy Dearborn. This publication gives information up to 1996 personal correspondence and research has provided further information. From 1990 the museum began to publish 'Research Reports' which also give information on the displays held and books published.

<sup>126</sup> “Modern Chairs” 22nd July - 3rd August 1970 Circulation dept and Whitechapel Art Gallery, and “The Pack Age” 11 December - 31 January 1975 Robert Opie who was an early member of the DHS. Opie later established his own museum in Gloucester and then moved to Notting Hill, it is now the Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising and tells a history of consumer culture <http://www.museumofbrands.com/>



external organisations such as the Arts Council, the British Council and the Crafts Advisory Committee.<sup>127</sup>

The establishment of the Boilerhouse enabled the museum to pursue a new direction and, potentially, attract a new audience by displaying contemporary and recent design. The temporary exhibition space was funded by the Conran Foundation and its purpose was “to stage shows designed to stimulate contemporary design.” In this it fulfilled Roy Strong’s ambitions to have ‘provocative’ exhibitions that drew out the talents of the younger curatorial staff and allowed the museum to comment on current issues.<sup>128</sup> The Boilerhouse project at the V&A resulted in over twenty design exhibitions between 1982-86 which were organised by Stephen Bayley, a long-time associate of Conran and member of the DHS.<sup>129</sup> The topics of exhibitions ranged from object-focused to designer-focused and took the general ‘history of design’ approach that focused on pioneers and aesthetic considerations. When thought was given to the consumer,

<sup>127</sup> Examples of exhibitions organised by outside organisations include: “An American Museum of Decorative Art and Design” (14th June - 12th August 1973) organised by the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Cooper-Hewitt Museum; also “Thirties: British Art and Design before the war” (25 October - 13 January 1979-1980), organised in collaboration with the Arts Council of Great Britain and held at the Hayward Gallery, London. “High Victorian Design”(November 1974- June 1975) a touring exhibition organised by the V&A and the British Council [for the National Programme of the National Gallery of Canada. Other venues on the tour included, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Manitoba; Vancouver Art Gallery; Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Musée du Québec]; and “ Say when, and what and how and why”(15 November - 12 February 1977-1978), organised by the Crafts Advisory Committee. The press release described this as, “a game juxtaposing craft and art and industrial design and grouping objects to form questions and invite reactions...Pouring vessels will be the illustration for this exhibition...” [press release]

<sup>128</sup> The Conran Foundation was an education charity set up in 1981 with money from the stock market floatation of Terence Conran’s chain of Habitat stores. Usherwood, B.(1991) “The Design Museum: Form Follows Funding” *Design Issues*,7(2)p77; Other quotations taken from: Strong, *op.cit.*, p.140 and p.249 In Diary entry from 9th February 1974 he declares his wishes for the museum “there are some very good young people and the point is to draw out their talents, let them have their heads, and we ought to raise the roof within a year or two. I want to get the 20th century into that place[the V&A] and make it alive and comment on our times”

<sup>129</sup> Barbara Usherwood gave the number exhibitions as 23 in her article; Usherwood, B.(1991) “The Design Museum: Form Follows Funding” *Design Issues*,7(2)pp.76-87; but on counting those listed by James’s exhibition chronology there appear to have been 26. Cheryl Buckley also refers to a planned exhibition on women designers, but this did not appear on the list.

it was generally in a paternalistic approach favoured by the Design Council and sought to educate audiences to appreciate “Good Design” and make “good choices”. Some examples of exhibition titles include; object-focused; ‘Royal Flush: a celebration 100 years of the Water-closet,’<sup>130</sup> ‘The Bag’<sup>131</sup> and ‘The Car’<sup>132</sup>; designer-focused; ‘Design: Dieter Rams’<sup>133</sup>, ‘Issey Miyake: "Bodyworks"’,<sup>134</sup> and education in aesthetic choices, such as; ‘Taste’<sup>135</sup> and ‘The good Design Guide’.<sup>136</sup> Some had explicit commercial links such as ‘Sony Design’<sup>137</sup> and ‘Coke! Coca-cola 1886-1986: designing a megabrand.’<sup>138</sup> The approaches to objects taken by these exhibitions is indicative of the way that histories of design were being written at that time.

The Boilerhouse name would later be used at the Design Museum for the temporary exhibition space when Conran’s industrial design museum opened in Butler Wharf in 1989. The foundation of the museum was a product of both the cultural context of the time and changing circumstances in museum funding. The 1980s had seen the beginning of a commercially-driven side to museums that became a necessity following changes imposed by the Thatcher government.<sup>139</sup> Barbara Usherwood discussed the new museum within the pages of *Design Issues* in 1991, when she proposed that the museum was a "tangible representation” of the "fascination with design issues from the fundamental to the superficial" that been

<sup>130</sup> 1 April - 6 June 1982

<sup>131</sup> 3 August - 3 October 1985 The exhibition was on Plastic Carrier Bags

<sup>132</sup> 17 October - 14 November 1985

<sup>133</sup> 1 July - 19 August 1982 *Design: Dieter Rams* (Head of Design at Braun)

<sup>134</sup> 26 February - 9 April 1985

<sup>135</sup> 14 September - 24 November 1983

<sup>136</sup> 22 January - 11 February 1985

<sup>137</sup> 24 March - 3 June 1982

<sup>138</sup> 9 April - 15 May 1986

<sup>139</sup> “one of the prime activities in the museum was now to be seen to be revenue engendering. As the Thatcher revolution switched from direct to indirect taxation the role of the museum was to woo the pound from the public's pocket. For the first time museums were hit by customer power. They could no longer ignore the public. The public had to be attracted, enchanted and entertained.” Strong, R., (1997) *The Roy Strong Diaries: 1967-87*, London: Phoenix paperbacks p.299

celebrated in the increasingly wide range of design magazine and periodicals that had arisen in the 1980s.<sup>140</sup> On its opening the museum was criticised for being similar to a trade fair and providing subliminal advertising for the museums benefactor. The links with promotion of British manufacturing industry through design became clear when the government Department of Trade and Industry contributed a three-year grant to the museum and Margaret Thatcher opened the museum. Criticism from certain members of the design history network was that the museum presented a particular aesthetic value judgement rather than positioning objects within a broader context. However, the museum gave another arena for the interaction of communities of practice associated with the design history network, in particular a link between the world of contemporary design and its history; and helped to reinforce the educational relationship.<sup>141</sup>

The main areas of strength during this decade were the consolidation of the discipline and reinforcement of networks and communities of academics interested in new approaches to the history of designed objects and in uncovering history through design. The discipline was gaining strength and recognition through academic routes, in publishing, and in the museum sector. This was shown by the development of undergraduate degrees across the country, several courses at postgraduate level, for example the MAs at the RCA/V&A and at Middlesex Polytechnic, and wider scholarly and academic publishing. The initial ventures into publishing pursued by academic and government organisations, such as the Open

<sup>140</sup> Usherwood, B.(1991) "The Design Museum: Form Follows Funding" *Design Issues*,7(2)p78

<sup>141</sup> The museum supported scholarship with its range of temporary exhibition and publishing activities, latterly by providing publicity and the development of a web-based presence. The museums website offers history of designed objects, podcasts and in 2012 launched a mobile smartphone application. Source Design Museum Press release for iPhone App, Available at: <http://designmuseum.org/media/item/79644/4607/Collection-App-media-release-FINAL.pdf> (accessed June 2012)

University and the Design Council, demonstrated that there was an audience for scholarship on design and proved that there was a market for subsequent publications. This had a growing significance in the following decade. The period also saw the beginning of a strong relationship with the museum sector.

Other institutions and developments of importance to the design history network that deserve detailed discussion and evaluation include the role of academic societies during this period. The DHS's increased role for the design historical network during this decade, in instigating its own academic journal to provide an arena for the publication of research and offering a professional forum of communication for the disparate communities of practice associated with the domain of design history across the country, will be assessed in a case study in the following chapter.



## Chapter 4

### The 1980s

#### **The Importance of Academic Organisations for the Design History Network; evaluating the significance of the DHS and the *Journal of Design History*.**

The circumstances of the 1970s had seen the emergence of new ways of thinking about design, with an acknowledgment of its difference from art history. At the same time there was impetus for the formalisation of networks of art and design historians by way of the founding of the Association of Art Historians in 1974 and the Design History Society in 1977. One of the pervading themes throughout this thesis is the importance of theoretical issues concerning the boundaries of design history subject matter, appropriate approaches and methodologies for design historical research. Additional concerns of various communities of practice linked to the domain of design history relate to pedagogy and curriculum content when teaching design history in the context of design education and as an emerging humanities discipline in its own right. These issues are clearly played out in the relationship between the AAH and the DHS, and this chapter discusses and evaluates the importance of the role of academic societies in the late 1970s and into the 1980s. It was during the 1980s that the DHS became increasingly significant; by organising events, achieving recognition and charitable status, and fulfilling its mission statement to promote events, activities and the dissemination of research in order to further the discipline. Factors that contributed to the academic integrity of an area of studies, and thus helped confer disciplinary status, include the identification of a distinct community of scholars, annual conferences,

and a peer-reviewed journal for the publication of new research. Arguably the consolidation of design history, and its transformation into an academic discipline, came with the establishment of the *Journal of Design History* in 1988. Both the academic societies and the *Journal* become points of focus, almost akin to *boundary objects*, for a collection of different *communities of practice* each with a different agenda and concerns. Etienne Wenger refers to the work of sociologist of science Leigh Star when discussing boundary objects. Star coined this term to describe objects that coordinate the perspectives of various constituencies for the same purpose.<sup>1</sup> The multifarious debates can be difficult to uncover merely through the written sources available; thus recent oral history research projects at both the DHS and the AAH offer some additional clarification, although these sources have inherent problems.<sup>2</sup> This chapter culminates with a discussion of the issues of memory, validity and reliability that arise from using these recordings as historical sources.

### **Case Study I – Evaluating the role of the Design History Society**

Focusing on the development of the DHS in a case study this thesis argues that as an organisation it operated in a similar way to a boundary object, and as such is an actor in Latourian terms. Furthermore it is a central point for a variety of different communities of practice that enabled intersections and exchanges that facilitated

<sup>1</sup> Star, S.L. (1989) *The structure of ill-structured solutions: boundary objects and heterogeneous distributed problem solving*. Working paper, Dept of Information and Computer science, University of California, Irvine cited in, Wenger, E. (1989) *Communities of Practice – Learning, Meaning, and Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p105.

<sup>2</sup> The DHS funded a 7-year oral history research project recording the life stories of eminent design historians as part of the societies 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. The AAH Voices in Art History research project records the stories of those art historians involved with AAH during its founding era. See DHS recordings on the Voices in the Visual Arts site; <http://www.vivavoices.org/> and the AAH recordings on <http://www.aah.org.uk/projects/oral-history>

the design history network. This case study addresses the following; firstly, the theoretical issues that came to light when it separated from the AAH in the late 1970s; secondly, it reflects on DHS activities at national and regional level in terms of conferences, representation on academic panels and the support of small events; and thirdly, it considers the DHS's role in promoting academic endeavour by facilitating communication, by supporting students and scholars, and by publishing new research in its Journal. It will then evaluate the overall contribution of the Society to securing the status of a distinct discipline; arguing that its role was of great significance as disseminator of information and facilitator of communication in the early decades. This importance has subsequently diminished as its primary function has been surpassed by technological advances in information sharing and social and academic networking.

Due to changes in education during the 1960s and 1970s, regarding teaching contextual studies and art and design history, lecturers had shared concerns and this provided the impetus to group together to form an Association of Art Historians in 1974.<sup>3</sup> The membership consisted of lecturers at colleges and universities, along with collectors, antiques dealers, connoisseurs, and museum curators. Articles in the association's newsletter *The Bulletin* demonstrate that theoretical and pedagogic concerns regarding the boundaries of the discipline, notions of the art history canon, and approaches to curriculum content were very

<sup>3</sup> The AAH held its first official meeting at the Barber Institute of Fine arts in 1974. The AAH recently conducted an oral history project to explore the issues that were involved in the founding of the association. The project was coordinated by Liz Bruchet and has an excellent website at: <http://www.aah.org.uk/projects/oral-history>.



much of concern. There was 'considerable' concern about the 'history of design' because;

“the subject is ill-defined and meagrely researched; there is no obvious organ for the publication of research;[and] teachers are difficult to find since there is no recognised training for design historians.”<sup>4</sup>

The Association had special-interest sub-committees to further debate on this and a variety of other issues relating to teaching contextual studies.<sup>5</sup> These included the group for Art History in Art Education, the Design History Publications Sub-committee and the Design History Research Group, as discussed in chapter one. Within these sub-groups, or *communities of practice*, a key debate that frequently occurred was the relationship of design history to the Association of Art Historians, specifically regarding the differences in subject matter and methodology.

An example of this can be seen in an article on the teaching of design history published in the second issue of the AAH bulletin by Bridget Wilkins. Wilkins, well-positioned to represent the theoretical debates that were taking place in design history from her experience at Middlesex, was asked to write about "Teaching Design History" for publication in the newsletter of the AAH.<sup>6</sup> Wilkins recollects that this caused controversy that centred on a crucial conflict over the need to move away from art historical methods.<sup>7</sup> The article outlined the problems with a connoisseurial and stylistic approach to design and suggested that the Polytechnic

<sup>4</sup> *Bulletin of the Association of Art Historians*, No 1, p 2.

<sup>5</sup> There are references to the following groups in the AAH Bulletins, the Oral history testimonies, and papers within the Design History Society papers; Group for Art History in Art Education, the Design History Publications Sub-committee and the Design History Research Group. The group for art history in art education had 13 members, the aims of the group were “to obtain information about the place of art history in colleges of art, polytechnics, etc. They were also to consider the problems of the history of design” *Ibid*.

<sup>6</sup> Wilkins, B (1976) “Teaching Design History” *Bulletin of The Association of Art Historians* No.2.

<sup>7</sup> Wilkins notes that there is little documented evidence of the early conflict between art historians and design historians. Wilkins, B & DHS (2007) *Oral History Project Interview with Bridget Wilkins*, Track 4. As the editor notes in *Bulletin of the Association of Art Historians*, No. 7 “With two issues a year ding-dong battles are hardly going to be perceptible”.

sector could facilitate the interdisciplinary approach that was needed, however Wilkins subsequently believed that the edited and published article mis-represented the importance of these concerns for the direction of design history methodology;

“they had deleted and edited out the crucial bits about social history, technical history and so on, and about how these things were used and how they were produced so it seemed as if I was writing something about design history that particularly fitted with the Art Historians Association and that really wound me up.”<sup>8</sup>

When, it became apparent to Wilkins that the edited version published in the *Bulletin* lacked the particular emphasis intended she circulated a memorandum to Polytechnics across the country which expanded upon the published text.<sup>9</sup> Despite being edited, the article still prompted a vehement response from Kathleen M. Wells, published in *AAH Bulletin* 5. Wells commented on both the article and on Wilkins memorandum that design history should reject art historical traditions of ‘applied art connoisseurship’ and stylistic analysis, and that teaching should not ‘perpetuate ill-founded concepts’ but should embrace an interdisciplinary approach. Wells argued that Wilkins’ calls for a ‘reconstructed design history’ as the history of the artefact would “cause alarm up and down the country among College authorities” because “the psychologist, the semiologist, the economist, the political theorist, the engineer, the historian and the sociologist will all be needed to study it.”<sup>10</sup> She also held up Pevsner’s *Pioneers* as standard reading and that specialists in history of architecture and the arts were essential for teaching design history, although Wilkins had neglected to list them as important. Indeed Wells argued that this omission was “bewildering” and it was “so obvious that it is a little embarrassing to have to say it” that specialists in the history of art, architecture and

<sup>8</sup> Wilkins, B & DHS (2007) *Oral History Project Interview with Bridget Wilkins*, Track 4.

<sup>9</sup> As noted in *Bulletin of The Association of Art Historians* No. 5

<sup>10</sup> Wells, K ( 1977) Letter ‘ Design History’, *Bulletin of The Association of Art Historians* No. 5 October 1977

the decorative arts were essential to the study of design; “how can the history of the artefacts be studied without the visual and decorative arts associated with them?.”<sup>11</sup> A concern for a multi-disciplinary approach to artefact analysis was that it would require a “hydraheaded academic apparatus.”<sup>12</sup> These concerns for the approach to history of design, the focus of the discipline and the use of interdisciplinary methods, as identified by Wells were reflected in debates held at the design history conferences held at Middlesex Polytechnic and Brighton Polytechnic.<sup>13</sup> As a consequence a number of design historians came to the view that the AAH could not attend to all the concerns that were important for design history and it was therefore necessary to separate from the Association and form a new society.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s the conferences organised by the AAH often did include sessions that were specifically focused on design, addressing the interests of its members via subcommittees and the DHRG. An example is the AAH’s 1976 Glasgow conference with its section on “British Nineteenth Century Art, Design, and Social History” organised by Philip Barlow, David Bindman, and Michael Kitson.<sup>14</sup> The reason for including this section was to address the problems of such an extensive variety of approaches “because it seems to be warranted by the current state of research” and, as announced in the call for papers, it aimed “to encourage the growth of the inter-disciplinary approach

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> 1976 conference “Leisure and Design in the 20th century” at Middlesex, and 1977 conference “Design History Fad or Function?” at Brighton. These conferences have been discussed in more detail in the previous chapter concerning the 1970s.

<sup>14</sup> Philip Barlow, Birmingham Polytechnic, David Bindman History of Art Westfield College, and Michael Kitson, Courtauld Institute. *Bulletin of The Association of Art Historians* No 1p2

established at last year's inaugural meeting.”<sup>15</sup> Further years saw the inclusion of design as a topic in relation to the history of taste, at the 1977 conference, and the study of style, at the 1978 conference; which did not directly embrace the theoretical differences that Wilkins argued for, separating design history from merely being linked to connoisseurship and consideration of aesthetic merit.<sup>16</sup> It was at the 1977 conference that individuals from education, museums and libraries and with a specific interest in design history met and formed the Design History Publications Sub-committee, an official group within the AAH established “with the full support of the Executive Committee”.<sup>17</sup> This demonstrated that there was neither vehement nor total resistance to the concerns of members of the design history communities at the time. Other examples are the sessions at the 1979 conference organised by Flavia Petrie (later Swann) from North Staffordshire Polytechnic, that were more unequivocal in their inclusion of design and demonstrating her involvement the communities of practice surrounding the CNAA and teaching on design courses.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup>The quotation continues....”it is hoped to attract distinguished social, and possibly literary and economic, historians from outside the membership of the Association. Because of the more advanced state of architectural research, the discussions will centre on painting, sculpture, illustration, design, and related areas of industrial archaeology. How the artist earned his living; collecting and art institutions; the influence of politics and religion, of technology and of the new industrial economy, on design; the processes of design in industry; these are only a few of the topics which may be considered.” Call for Papers for Glasgow conference *Bulletin of The Association of Art Historians* No 1 p2

<sup>16</sup> AAH 3<sup>rd</sup> annual conference, Institute of Education, London University, 25-18 March 1977, History of Taste, Three sections: Taste, Design, Period Studies; and AAH 4th annual Conference Gwent College of Higher Education, Cardiff ,31 March – 3 April 1978, The study of style in art and design. Source: information compiled by Liz Bruchet from the Bulletins of the AAH, as part of the AAH Oral History Project.

<sup>17</sup> This was discussed in chapter one. See announcement of the Design History Publications Sub – Committee and its aims in *Bulletin of The Association of Art Historians* No. 6 January 1978 p3

<sup>18</sup> The AAH 5<sup>th</sup> annual Conference, Institute of Education, London, 30 March-2 April 1979, including sessions entitled Art Architecture and Design During the French Revolution; Art, Architecture and Design During the Second Empire; Art, Architecture and Design in Britain 1880-1914; Aspects of Nineteenth Century London; Art and Design 1914-1918; and Art, Architecture and Design in the 1920s.

Despite the inclusion of these design-focused sessions, there was sufficient interest amongst individuals for distinct design-focused conferences separate from the AAH events, as discussed in chapter one. At the Brighton conference *Design History Fad or Function* in 1977 it was agreed by many lecturers teaching art and design history, some of whom were active in the AAH sub-committees, that a new organisation *The Design History Society* should form as a separate entity from the AAH. Design history was not a passing ‘fad’ and in order to ‘function’ a society could work to build a network of design historians by promoting communication, through a newsletter, conferences, and establish the subject at national and regional level. This role later expanded to the promotion of research and small events and to represent design historians concerns on academic panels. The DHS annual conferences were important for disseminating research and building communities around the domain and consolidating relationships between scholars throughout the network. In the 1970s they enabled like-minded individuals to come together to discuss and create the conditions for discrete disciplinary status. Interestingly, the term *discipline* was being used at this early date, and Tim Benton had used the term when announcing the DHP sub-committee in the *Associations Bulletin* No 6 in January 1978.<sup>19</sup> Once the early design history conferences of the late 1970s had debated the parameters of the field of studies, and the existence of the subject with potential for the status of an academic discipline had been justified, conference topics then became more empirically focused as scholars approached new materials that had not been the focus of prior scholarship.<sup>20</sup> As Penny Sparke noted, the

<sup>19</sup> “Tim Benton (Open University) writes as Chairman:”... “Ten nominees were agreed on, to include representatives of the design history discipline in Polytechnics and universities, of Museum staff and art librarians.” [my emphasis] *Bulletin of The Association of Art Historians* No. 6 January 1978 p3

<sup>20</sup> (See Appendix C for list of conferences) Conferences soon returned to a more narrow focus on the producer and the object at Canterbury in 1978. *Design History: Past, Process, Product* organiser Stephen Bayley *DHS newsletter* No 2, July 1978 / Introduction to Design Council publication; and

conferences “started off quite broad and then they got a bit more focused.”<sup>21</sup> In the 1980s the themes of the conferences indicated that a broad approach was encouraged, and by the 1990s the geographical spread of locations for the conferences is evidence of the popularity of the subject and extent of the network.<sup>22</sup> At a practical level the conferences were devised by individual institutions rather than by the DHS executive committee but they were a significant part of the work done by the Society in furthering the academic integrity of the discipline.<sup>23</sup>

The conferences provided an opportunity for the interaction between different communities of scholars interested in the domain of design, the building of personal and professional connections, and are an example of the DHS’s important function in facilitating connections and building the design historical network. Other examples of the DHS promoting academic endeavour and supporting scholars and

Keele in 1979 *Design and Industry*, University of Keele and Ironbridge Gorge Museum, 24 papers presented; “on and around the main theme of ‘the effects of industrialisation and technical change design’” *DHS newsletter* 5, July 1979, p3. [24 papers were announced but only 17 of these were reproduced in the Design Council publication of the conference papers] The reason for this return to empirical research is symptomatic of the situation early design historians found themselves in, they were approaching new material; Tim Benton felt that this was a positive feature; “one of the reasons that design history was so refreshing in the 70s was that a lot of it was virgin material, nobody had written about it and nobody had taken it seriously...” Source Benton, T. & DHS (2007) *Oral History Project Interview with Tim Benton* Track 6 [12:10]

<sup>21</sup> Sparke, P. & DHS (2007) *Oral History Project Interview with Penny Sparke* Track 6 [3.14]

<sup>22</sup> The 1977 conference “Design History - Fad or Function?” discussed the emergence of the discipline and saw the formation of the DHS, and the 1978 conference “Design History; Past, Process, Product” consolidated the discipline. The tenth annual conference returned to evaluate the discipline: 1987 “Design History: Past Present Future.” Themes in the 1980s show the importance of feminist scholarship; 1983 “Women in design”; social contexts: 1985 “Crafts - Forms and Social Contexts”, collecting, 1988 “Collecting the Twentieth Century; and a continued debate on teaching and pedagogy; 1984 “Design History and Design Education”. Conferences in the 1990s were in the following locations: Manchester, Southampton, Glasgow, Plymouth, Middlesex, Brighton, University of Huddersfield, and Nottingham.

<sup>23</sup> The conferences had a somewhat *ad hoc* method of organisation with institutions feeling that each year they were starting afresh, this was helpful in that they had the freedom to introduce new aspects but problematic because with no direct guidance from the Society there was often a feeling that each year the conference team was ‘reinventing the wheel’. It was not until 2005 that the executive committee created the role of conference liaison officer to give guidelines for the conference organisation; the first conference liaison officer was former Society Chair Barbara Burman.

students were seen from the late 1980s following the attainment of charitable status in 1987 and DHS committee member Christopher Bailey saw this as an opportunity to expand the Society's activities.<sup>24</sup> In addition to the regular commitment of the Society's conference they supported an annual lecture, in memorial of Peter Reyner- Banham, from 1989 which again gave an additional opportunity for networking and interaction.<sup>25</sup> Charitable status brought with it a responsibility of the DHS to fulfil its stated objectives, which were: "to *promote* the study of and research into design history and to *disseminate* and *publish* the useful results thereof".<sup>26</sup> In its early years the Society had struggled financially when relying solely on membership fees and this had limited its capability to support events financially, but following the establishment of a regular income source from the *Journal of Design History* published by Oxford University Press from 1987 the Society entered the 1990s in a stable financial position.<sup>27</sup> To fulfil its duty in promoting study in 1996 the Society began to offer funding for a number of free student places to the annual conference and from 1998 initiated a student essay prize.<sup>28</sup> To promote scholarship the small events award started in 1999, an annual MPhil / PhD Bursary award to help with research expenses, a Scholarship Prize initiated in 2002

<sup>24</sup> Charity number 327326 – 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 1987 "the gaining of charitable status gives us a freedom in law which we could take advantage of to expand greatly the activities we carry out" Report to the Executive Committee "The Next Ten Years", 26<sup>th</sup> February 1988, DHS Archive papers.

<sup>25</sup> A recent publication gives details of these lectures. Aynsley, J. & Atkinson, H. (2009) *The Banham Lectures: Essays on Designing the Future*, Oxford: Berg. Scholars contributing to the lectures include: Adrian Forty, Elizabeth Collins Cromley, Frank Dudas, Tomas Maldonado, Richard Sennett, Penny Sparke, Charles Saumarez Smith, Ruth Schwartz-Cowan, Gillian Naylor, Paul Barker, Richard Hamilton, Jeffrey Meikle, Cedric Price, Beatriz Colomina, Professor Sir Christopher Frayling, Professor Pat Kirkham, Tom Karen, Professor Mark Haworth Booth, Professor Peter Cook, Professor Tim Benton, Alice T. Friedman, Source:

[http://www.designhistorysociety.org/events/reyner\\_banham\\_lecture/index.html](http://www.designhistorysociety.org/events/reyner_banham_lecture/index.html)

<sup>26</sup> Charity number 327326 -registered 15 Jan 1987. Register of Charities - Charity commission [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk) (visited 10 January 2010) (My emphasis)

<sup>27</sup> OUP provided income from the journal sales from its inception and took over the management of revenue from membership in 1992. See explanation that OUP now handles membership subscriptions given in *DHS Newsletter* No.52/3 – April 1992

<sup>28</sup> This year's conference was at Middlesex.

to recognise important recent scholarship and also several one-off projects were funded.<sup>29</sup> Each of these distinct activities contributed to the consolidation of the Society as a point of contact for many individuals, at different points in their careers, to engage with the variety of activities connected to those in the design history network.

Although the Society was important in helping to establish a network of design historians, and acted as a forum for those that shared an interest in analysing the material world and the histories that can be discovered through objects and artefacts, it is also important to acknowledge that this network extended into a wider interdisciplinary academic community. Membership of the Society is not necessarily representative of the wider community of design historians as a whole; figures indicate that the DHS is a rather small society in comparison to the larger membership of other historical societies such as the AAH or the Economic History Society.<sup>30</sup> Some historians do not take up membership, or their membership fluctuates throughout their individual career progression.<sup>31</sup> A common trend is that membership peaks at around the time of the annual conference, as delegates and

<sup>29</sup> The first winner of the Scholarship Award was Tanya Harrod and the First recipient of the PhD bursary was Fiona Hackney. The Society made a donation to the National Life Story Collection at British Library in 2001 to financially support the recording and transcription of life stories of designers. An increase in income in the 21st century, brought about by changes in the way that researchers pay for articles online, enabled the Society to celebrate its 30th anniversary with a series of larger financial contributions to research, an Oral History Project and supporting a doctoral studentship. This research is a product of that funding and draws on the oral history project for additional evidence.

<sup>30</sup> During the initial years the AHH had 500 members whereas the DHS had only 85. In 2010 the EHS had 1,300 members whereas the DHS fluctuated around 150—200. Source DHS archive papers and <http://www.ehs.org.uk/members/default.asp>

<sup>31</sup> For example John Styles states that he “was not a joiner” of academic societies, although he did take out membership during his time leading the V&A /RCA history of design course. Styles, J. & DHS (2009) *DHS Oral History Project Interview with John Styles*



speakers join the Society.<sup>32</sup> Due to the broad scope of design historical activity members of the Society are also members of other academic communities according to their specific interests.<sup>33</sup> This important factor concerning the nature of scholarly activity in the design history domain resulted in rejection of the model of an institutional narrative history of the DHS within this thesis and prompted the use of the concepts of *communities of practice* and their interactions, or role as *actors*, within a broader *network*. However, it is important to note the DHS's role as a *boundary object*. As Jeffrey Meikle argued, in his review of the Society on its twentieth anniversary, the Society had significant importance in the establishment and evolution of what he terms the "field" or the discipline of design history. He stated that "the very existence of this society of like-minded souls has encouraged my own professional activities over the years."<sup>34</sup>

As Meikle had found, an awareness of the existence of like-minded scholars served to encourage researchers and expand the design historical community. The Society acknowledged that many events were geographically focused in the south of the country and there was a need to encourage awareness and activities on a more national level. A regional network was set up 1990 to provide representation in the various regions, provide a point of contact for new members and to organise local events to help raise awareness of the DHS. This initially started with nine members across the country operating as points of contact but by the end of this

<sup>32</sup> The DHS had long acknowledged that it needed to promote membership of the Society itself as bringing benefits as strong academic organisation was essential for healthy future of the discipline. It established the post of Membership Benefits Officer in 2001. Source *DHS Newsletter* No. 88.

<sup>33</sup> DHS membership questionnaire 2006 - result showed that members were also linked to other societies such as; Wallpaper History Society, Mediaeval Dress and Textile Society, Museum Association and the Design Research Society. DHS Archive papers.

<sup>34</sup> Jeffrey Meikle is a cultural historian and professor of American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin who frequently writes on design. Meikle, J.L. (1998) "Material Virtues: on the Ideal and the Real in Design History", *Journal of Design History*, 11 (3), pp.191-199

decade it was more formally structured with a regional coordinator on the executive committee.<sup>35</sup> This was an important development facilitating the development of the design historical network at a time when technological advances, such as use of the Internet and mailing lists had not yet taken place. As the decade progressed attempts were made to formally establish design history in the north of the country, a Northern Design History Group was formed in 1995 with academics from Teesside, Durham and Newcastle and there were several events the following year organised as part of the 'Visual Arts UK 1996' Festival.<sup>36</sup> This distinct *community of practice*, the Northern Design History Group, had initially formed due to the enthusiasm of new academics at young universities, but failed to sustain momentum beyond a few years. This was in part due to changing circumstances of the individuals that were driving the group, and also partly due to lack of financial support for events from the central DHS committee based mainly in London.<sup>37</sup> The temporary existence of this group is an example of a characteristic seen across the design history network, both geographically and chronologically, small group initiatives suffer from lack of longevity. Arguably, the DHS has never been able to function as a nexus of the design history network due to the transient nature of membership as a whole, and more importantly of the core members of the Executive Committee, all of whom are unpaid volunteers.

<sup>35</sup> *DHS Newsletter* No. 46 lists the first set of representatives as: Keith Bartlett, Central South and South West England; John Hewitt, North West England; Francis Bugg, North East England; Pierre Elena, North and East Midlands; Barbara Tillson, South and West Midlands; Charlotte Benton, East Anglia; Juliet Kinchen, Scotland; Harold Birks, Devon and Cornwall; and Jeremy Aynsley, Southeast England. The first regional rep coordinator was Paul Caffrey in 2001. *DHS Newsletter* No. 91.

<sup>36</sup> This group was announced in *DHS Newsletter* No 64, 1995. The following year *DHS Newsletter* No. 71, October 1996 detailed several events that were occurring in the north-east of England with reports provided by Paul Dennison and the University of Teesside and Shelagh Wilson University of Northumbria at Newcastle. It is interesting to see networks at work here; the newsletter editor at this point was Barbara Usherwood also based in the Northeast.

<sup>37</sup> Information from a conversation between the author and Barbara Usherwood (Teesside University), Middlesbrough 2008.

Communication from the DHS to the disparate members of the network was a key concern at the end of the 1980s. At the beginning of the following decade new publicity material was produced in an attempt to boost the society, aid a membership drive and “present a fresh-face.”<sup>38</sup> The public face of the Society was presented through its literature, newsletter and *Journal*, and from 1997 its website.<sup>39</sup> The post of Electronic Media Officer was created in 2000 and later merged with the newsletter editor role to become the post of Communications Officer, this was one step in coordinating the function of interacting with the membership. Further website redesigns occurred in 2002 and on the occasion of the 30th anniversary in 2007/8.<sup>40</sup> By the end of this decade when the website was established, and a JiscMail mailing list allowed announcements of events by e-mail, the communication of information to the wider design historical community became easier. This meant that membership was no longer essential to hear of events through a hard-copy printed newsletter; in a response to this the committee established the post of membership benefits officer in 2001 to research ways of making membership more attractive.<sup>41</sup>

The role of the Society in promoting design history in an educational context became of increased importance from the 1990s when there were further changes in higher education. The Society joined together with the Association of Art

<sup>38</sup> Hazel Clark (1991) "a Note from the Chair " *DHS Newsletter* No. 51 p2

<sup>39</sup> Website first launched in April 1997 (*DHS Newsletter* No 72) and moved to be hosted by Brighton University server in October 1998 (*DHS Newsletter* No 79) the web developer was Dr Lesley Whitworth and the site benefited from the close links that the university had to the Design Council Archive for image content. (Information from a conversation with Dr Whitworth, Brighton 2009)

<sup>40</sup> The 2002 redesign and organisation by Claire Longworth enabled the setting-up of the society's own domain name: [www.designhistorysociety.org](http://www.designhistorysociety.org) rather than being tied into a university server. The 2007 redesign was co-ordinated by Juliette Kristensen; at this point it was realised that visual identity of the Society needed a radical overhaul and the job was put out to tender to a design company rather than continuing the previous pattern of reliance on individuals donating time and expertise.

<sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Currie was the first membership benefits officer.

Historians and other groups to represent art and design historian lecturers working in further and higher education and represented design historians on a variety of government committees.<sup>42</sup> In 1999 and into the spring of 2000 the Society was approached to nominate panel members for the Quality Assurance Agency drafting group for subject benchmarks for degrees with elements of design history.<sup>43</sup> This episode is discussed in greater detail in chapter five, but it is noted here as it demonstrated that the discipline became recognised in the academic community and the DHS had a contributory role in shaping art and design history education standards for the future.

Arguably the most effective and significant contribution of the DHS was through the *Journal of Design History* which promoted and shaped scholarship. Closely linked to this is the importance of the annual conferences for driving scholarship and forming a community through networks and relationships. The initial three-year publishing contract negotiated with Oxford University Press in 1986 was extended due to the success of the *Journal*. Throughout this decade the editorial panel of the *Journal* continued to be a key force in promoting and shaping scholarship in design history and giving a valuable arena for the publication and promotion of new approaches to writing histories through, and of, designed objects.<sup>44</sup> The pages of the journal helped to reinforce the multidisciplinary nature of design history through the variety of articles accepted and the books reviewed; it also gave an additional arena

<sup>42</sup> NSEAD / AHEAD / CoSAAD / CHEAD / HEFCE / QAA / HEA-ADM

<sup>43</sup> QAA (2002) *Subject Benchmark Statement - History of Art, Architecture and Design* - AR 056 3/2002, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Barbara Burman and Christopher Bailey represented the DHS.

<sup>44</sup> Members of this panel in 1990 were: Christopher Bailey (Editorial Secretary), Wolverhampton Polytechnic; Charlotte Benton (Production Editor), Cambridge; Annie Coombes, Birkbeck College, London University; Anthony Coulson, The Open University; Pat Kirkham, Leicester Polytechnic; Pauline Madge, Birmingham Polytechnic; Tim Putnam, Middlesex Polytechnic; Jonathan Woodham (Reviews Editor), Brighton Polytechnic

for the discussion of the parameters of the subject.<sup>45</sup> A second important aspect in the relationship between the Society and its journal is that the revenue brought in made the Society financially secure.

During its existence, the significance of the DHS as an institution has fluctuated. It played an essential role at the time of the establishment of the discipline, and at particular moments in time during the 1980s and 1990s, but its influence has subsequently diminished. Among individuals establishing design history there were differences of opinion about the necessity for a separate academic organisation. Some argued that the concerns of design history should be integrated to the Association of Art Historians, as initially the subject was too vulnerable to break away, whereas others felt that theoretical and methodological issues concerning the discipline needed to be firmly agreed before a Society could represent the researchers and lecturers in the subject.<sup>46</sup> The difficulties surrounding the eclectic nature of design history were due to the context in which the discipline had grown, within the art and design schools. The formation of an academic society was essential within this context, as the government inspectors advised lecturers to take

<sup>45</sup> Examples are: in 1993 Adrian Forty's "A Reply to Victor Margolin", *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1993), pp. 131-132 – engaging in the debates about the discipline. and in 1998 - Jeffrey L. Meikle's contribution on the 20th Anniversary of the Design History Society "Material Virtues: On the Ideal and the Real in Design History" *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1998), pp. 191-199. Also, more recently in 2009 Grace Lees-Maffei's "The Production – Consumption – Mediation Paradigm," *Journal of Design History*, 22(4) pp.351-376 Other examples of issues debated within the Journal's pages are: concern over the discipline in HE - SCCCMSHE: Howard Newby's Address to the Annual Conference. University of Westminster, 7 January 1994 reported by Christopher Bailey; Bailey, C., (1994) *Journal of Design History*, 7(2), pp.149-150; a review article by Judy Attfield on the relationship between Material Culture and Design History: Attfield, J (1999) "Review: Beyond the Pale: Reviewing the Relationship between Material Culture and Design History", *Journal of Design History*, 12(4), pp. 373-380

<sup>46</sup> This debate is recounted in the oral history testimonies of Flavia Swann and Bridget Wilkins; Flavia Swann, at North Staffordshire, maintained her connections with the Association of Art Historians, founded in 1974, and was the editor of the *Bulletin*. Swann was working to mould the AAH to accepting the concerns and methods of design history. Bridget Wilkins argued that decisions need to be made concerning the direction of the discipline before forming a society. Wilkins, B & DHS (2008) *Oral History Project interview with Bridget Wilkins* [Track 4] Swann, F & DHS (2009) *Oral History Project interview with Flavia Swann* [Track 6]

membership of professional societies, in order to give a sense of recognition and validity to their activities in this new area. The second important function was as disseminator of information and facilitator of communication among a diverse network of interdisciplinary scholars, although in later years, this has been surpassed by technological advances in information sharing and social and academic networking. Once the Society had worked to establish and develop the identity of the subject within education, during the late-70s and 80s, the 1990s allowed the society to work towards enhancing the academic standing and intellectual strength of the subject. This was facilitated partly by the society becoming financially stable, being academically recognised through its journal, and making links outside academia with research cultures in museums.<sup>47</sup>

The society's main source of income was via its journal, administered by Oxford University Press and by 2000 the society was financially secure; Barbara Burman, elected to the post of Society Chair in April 1999, stated "as we see from the accounts we are not poor, but I would not encourage members to think that we are rich," but as the decade progressed the balance sheet would become healthier with increased income from the *Journal* due to new technologies allowing online access to individual articles.<sup>48</sup> Entering the new millennium gave members of the Society's Executive Committee cause to reflect on the progress been made by

<sup>47</sup> The 1990 DHS conference held at the V&A successfully worked towards this aim because of its links to the museum and the new research department. 1990 Conference "industry and anti-industry" was held at the V&A, this event would have helped the museum work towards establishing its research profile in addition to helping the Design History Society enhance the academic standing of design history as a discipline. See the discussion later in this thesis about the relationship of the museum to research under the directorship of Elizabeth Esteve-Coll. Hazel Clark (1991) "A Note from the Chair" *DHS Newsletter* No 51 p2

<sup>48</sup> Under Burman's leadership the society reflected on the best way to extend its core charitable activities and make effective use of its financial capabilities. Barbara Burman (1999) 'Chairs Annual Report Given at AGM on 11 September 1999' *Design History Society Newsletter*, No. 84, January 2000, p2

design historians and consider possible directions for the future. This decade was a time of contrast; it was a period when the society saw itself become financially secure and the discipline began to demonstrate its impact on the worlds of museums and publishing, but this was countered by small membership numbers, threats to the subject in education and renewed concerns about the identity of the discipline. A fear concerning the relatively small membership numbers was that the Society was failing to be relevant as a force for consolidating the academic community of design historians.<sup>49</sup> Part of the problem was that the membership base did not fully reflect the richness in diversity and scope of the subject. Barbara Burman characterised this by stating that; "we don't fully reflect the rich interdisciplinary possibilities we might imagine for our field, nor do we have as many members as we might, for example, from secondary education, museums, design practice and collectors."<sup>50</sup> Yet despite appearances a questionnaire undertaken in 2006 demonstrated that despite a small membership of only 215, the DHS was incredibly diverse in the background, employment type, subject interest and geographical location of its members.<sup>51</sup> The survey demonstrated that Society members also had membership of a wide variety of other organisations that reflected their special interests, this demonstrates that individuals in the design history network often belong to several communities of practice; but that the DHS

<sup>49</sup> The executive committee tried to tackle this issue by creating new promotional leaflet for the society in 2001 and reorganising the executive committee responsibilities to create the new post of electronic media officer that was separate from membership secretary. A working party was formed to try to develop strategies for increasing membership but by the midpoint of this decade little progress had been made. Logistical problems have been identified due to the fact that the membership database was administered by Oxford University press, the producers of the Journal, and a combination of data protection laws and limited time resources from committee officers meant that few developments were made.

<sup>50</sup> Barbara Burman (1999) 'Chairs Annual Report Given at AGM on 11 September 1999' *DHS Newsletter*, No. 84, January 2000, p2

<sup>51</sup> The 215 members at October 2006 comprised 20 institutions, 157 personal members, and 38 student members. Members came from 21 countries. Membership survey undertaken by Kirsten Hardie and Nicola Hebditch, October 2006, *Design History Society: Membership Questionnaire 2006*, DHS archive papers.

remained 'an important communication network for design historians internationally'.<sup>52</sup> Others proposed that the Society was "a helpful institution bringing a nexus of disciplines into dialogue," was "efficient, original, properly academic," and that amongst the members there was a great deal of activity where "everyone appears to be deeply involved."<sup>53</sup> But this was balanced by more negative views of the Society as "dull but necessary," rather "cliquey," "very British centred, parochial sometimes," "promising but not well known" and "possibly a bit old-fashioned."<sup>54</sup> The new millennium gave the Society opportunity for self-reflection where it had realised that it was at a moment of transition. In a reaction to views expressed by society members the executive made a commitment to raising the Society's profile internationally, promote its charitable activities, and become more dynamic and diverse. The 30th anniversary was seen as an opportunity for a major rebranding exercise of the society and to fund key research activities.<sup>55</sup> Although the Society has evolved due to a changing academic landscape, and there are other sources of information and support for the wide community of scholars, it still holds true to its core aims of promoting the dissemination of research and operating as a central point for those interested in such a multidisciplinary area, subject and discipline. The conferences are an important activity of the Society members that serves to facilitate interaction between disparate members of the network but arguably the most significant contribution that the society has made to the development of the design history network is its promotion of academic

<sup>52</sup> Quotation from an anonymous Society member, *Design History Society: Membership Questionnaire 2006*, DHS archive papers.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Juliette Kristiansen, the communications officer, oversaw a rebrand in the graphic identity of the Society; and the editorial committee oversaw a redesign of the Journal. Research activities included the Oral history project, the PhD studentship, the book concerning the society's Reyner Banham Memorial lectures and support for the Design History reader edited by Grace Lees-Maffei and Rebecca Houze.



publication, through the *Journal of Design History*, and the ensuing continued research in the domain.

### **Case study 2 – The *Journal of Design History*.**

The journal of the DHS is one of the most important areas in which development of the intellectual focus of the design history discipline in Britain can be seen; the editorial board is also an influential community of practice. The creation of the *Journal of Design History* itself was firm evidence of the increased demand for the dissemination of current scholarship in the subject area which had struggled to find an outlet in existing publications, and formerly only been served by the multi-disciplinary journal *BLOCK*.<sup>56</sup> Other opportunities for circulating design historical work were severely limited to occasional articles seen in other publications such as *Business History*, *Economic History Review*, and *Art History* in the 1970s and 1980s, or journalistic articles in magazines or newspapers such as the *Burlington Magazine*, *Country Life*, the *New Left Review*, or Sunday newspaper supplements.<sup>57</sup> The *Journal* promoted scholarship, by offering a formal outlet with academic publishers Oxford University Press, helped to consolidate the newly established discipline, developed

<sup>56</sup> There were possibilities for Design Historical research to be published in other journals and connoisseurial magazines such as *Burlington Magazine*, and later the journal *Design Issues* would also provide another outlet. The *Journal of Design History* took nearly 20 years to achieve similar circulation to *BLOCK* (2000) Source: Putnam, T. & DHS (2008) *DHS Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam*, Track 4 [11.10]

<sup>57</sup> For example articles that overlapped the concerns of design history such as: Porter, J. H. (1971) "The Development of a Provincial Department Store 1870-1939" *Business History* vol13 (1); Walker, R. B., (1973) "Advertising in London Newspapers, 1650-1750" *Business History* v15(2); Weatherill, Lorna (1986) "The Business of Middleman in the English Pottery Trade Before 1780," *Business History* v28 (3); Harvey, Charles & Press, Jon, (1986) "William Morris and the Marketing of Art" *Business History* v28 (4); and Corley, T. A. B. (1987) "Consumer Marketing in Britain 1914-60" *Business History* v29(4). Reyner-Banham's journalistic content on Design was featured in the *New Left Review*. Other magazines were more concerned with the collectors and connoisseur market.

scholarly networks, and helped guide the theoretical direction of the discipline as it developed.<sup>58</sup>

The journal of the AAH, *Art History*, had been established a decade earlier in 1978 the year that design historians had separated from the Association. Its editorial board consisted of a selection of scholars from the university sector and was supplemented by an international advisory panel.<sup>59</sup> The editorial for the inaugural issue of this journal reveals an awareness of concerns regarding disciplinary boundaries between the two approaches. *Art History* claimed that it did not set out to be exclusive, had a flexible approach, and would welcome a range of articles. As there were few journals offering an outlet for the variety of approaches to the history of art, so the editorial board proposed,

“It is thus a prime responsibility of *Art History* to provide the subject with more room for growth, and this means that in the exploration of new fields of research; no materials, no tools, no methods and no language will be excluded.”<sup>60</sup>

This provided hope for design history scholars; although *Art History* would continue to concentrate on traditional scholarship, “the internal analysis of an object”, but would also be open to work that studied “art according to a wider definition.”<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> There is no surviving documentary evidence of the decisions made during this time by OUP to offer the publishers perspective on bringing this journal to the market. Author’s liaison with current OUP humanities journal publisher.

<sup>59</sup> Editor: John Onians (UEA, University of East Anglia), Editorial Board: Michael Baxandall (Warburg), Jane Beckett (UEA University of East Anglia), Tim Clark (University of Leeds), John Golding (Courtauld Institute), George Henderson (Cambridge University), Robert Hillenbrand (University of Edinburgh), John Shearman (Courtauld Institute) and William Vaughan (UCL) The International advisory panel included scholars from across the world; Jan Bialostocki (Warsaw), Andre Chastel (Paris), Otto Demus (Vienna), Allen Ellenius (Uppsala), J.G. van Gelder (Utrecht), Oleg Grabar (Cambridge, Mass), Han Janson (New York), Xavier de Salas (Madrid), Roberto Salvini (Florence), Otto von Simson (Berlin), Bernard Smith (Sydney), Source: *Art History*, Vol 1. No 1, 1978.

<sup>60</sup> John Onians Editor (1978) “Opening Editorial” *Art History* 1(1). There was implicit reference to debates concerning boundaries that had arisen in the context of art and design education; “Some however may feel that an editorial policy of indiscriminate openness is no policy at all, while others may think that the suggestion that all things are possible, let alone fruitful, is at best naive.”

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

Although there was no explicit reference to the term 'design' there was evidence that methods of 'new art history' and 'design history' would be welcomed when looking at art in context as a 'document of human culture';

“This broader interest may naturally lead us to turn to those in other fields, to anthropologists and archaeologists, to students of history and society, of thought and letters, to psychologists and even neurologists.”<sup>62</sup>

Despite indications that the scope of the journal might encompass the work of design historians this was not the case in the early issues of the journal; where there were very few articles concerning either subject matter or methods of interest to design historians. The DHS felt that this gap in academic publishing needed to be filled, and despite publishing scholarship in its newsletter, increasingly there was a demand for a journal that was more open.

Establishing the *Journal of Design History* required a consensus of opinion regarding its aims and objectives and the potential audience it served. In the editorial for the first issue, editor Christopher Bailey emphasised the interdisciplinary and open nature of design history; “happy to have made a space for debate, to create a centre for discussion, which at present occurs, if it occurs at all, on the margins.”<sup>63</sup> The fear that many journals “ossify only very shortly after sounding [their] clarion call to action” was not realised as the *Journal of Design History* continues today to provide an outlet for scholarly research in the field well into its third decade of production.<sup>64</sup> The role of the publication as a *boundary object* and central point for the disparate communities of practice seen across the broader design history network is very significant, and in addition to the role of the DHS conferences it

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Bailey, C. (1988) “Editorial” *Journal of Design History*, Vol.1 (1)

<sup>64</sup> At a celebratory reception for the Design History Society's 30th anniversary Tim Putnam celebrated the redesign of the *Journal* for its 21st birthday year.

has importance in establishing the status of design history as a distinct scholarly activity. Tim Putnam argues that the editorial board guided the subject from the mid-1980s to mid-1990s; “For first ten years of the journal, I think that the Editorial Board of the *Journal* probably played a more important role in defining the subject than any other institution.”<sup>65</sup> As has been seen before, regarding the fluidity of definitions for what constitutes design historical activity in its relationship to academic disciplinarity, the editorial policy of the *Journal* and the initial editorial statement made by Christopher Bailey were slightly contradictory regarding academic status. The policy aims stated an ambition “to help consolidate design history as a distinct discipline” yet Bailey’s comments rejected any grandiose claims regarding its potential role in formalising the discipline.<sup>66</sup> This conflict, in the opening issue of the *Journal*, emphasises the contested academic territory of design history even a decade following the establishment of the DHS; the opening editorial of the society’s own journal stated that it did not aim to “trumpet the claims of a new discipline” nor did it “bid for academic territory”.<sup>67</sup> Yet, during its first few years the existence of the *Journal* contributed to fulfilling this role. The members of the DHS and wider design historical community that contributed to the running of the *Journal* helped to direct scholarship and reiterate design history’s claim to disciplinarity and academic recognition. The key issue here was a resistance to draw boundaries or offer a narrow definition. The aim was to encourage interdisciplinarity and promote links with other disciplines studying material culture, although there is no explicit reference to art history.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Putnam, T. & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam*, Track 6 [20.20]

<sup>66</sup> Editorial Board (1988) “Editorial Policy” Front matter *Journal of Design History*, 1(1)

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> “The widespread recognition of the cultural significance and economic importance of design will provide a broad base on which to build and the journal seeks to promote links with other disciplines exploring material culture, such as anthropology, architectural history, business history, cultural

The editorial board was important for the development of networks throughout the latter part of the 1980s and into the 1990s, just as the CNAA boards had helped form professional relationships from the 1970s to the 1980s. The board was quite large due to the varied nature of the discipline, ten board members and twenty-four advisors. The individuals on the editorial board were from the UK; three members were based in the Midlands, Christopher Bailey in Wolverhampton, Pat Kirkham in Leicester, and Pauline Madge in Birmingham; the others were located in the South and included Charlotte Benton, Colin Chant, Annie Coombes, Tim Putnam, Penny Sparke, and Jonathan Woodham. However, the twenty-four advisors extended the geographical distribution and came from a diverse range of institutions across the world. This gives an indication of the extent of the network at this point in time. Advisors included Tim Benton and Nigel Cross from the Open University, historians Raphael Samuel from Oxford University and Jonathan Zeitlin from London University and from institutions outside the UK, such as Clive Dilnot from Harvard, Otakar Macel from Technical University Delft, Victor Margolin from the University of Illinois, and Jeffrey Meikle from the University of Texas. Other members came from educational institutions and museums from across Europe and Asia.<sup>69</sup> The editorial board proactively sought to address the

studies, design and management studies, economic and social history, history of science and technology, and sociology.” *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Stanislav von Moos from the University of Zurich, Anty Pansera from Istituto Superiore d’Arte at Monza, Kumar Vyas from National Institute of Design Ahmadabad, Roxana Waterson from University of Singapore and Frederic Wildhagen from the National College of Art and Design in Oslo; museums staff included Helena Dahlback-Lutteman from the National Museum Stockholm, Eva Fagerborg from Nordiska Museet in Stockholm, and Milena Lamarova from Prague’s Museum of Decorative Arts; other individuals were Geoffrey Beard, Alan Crawford, Tony Evora, John Heskett, Stewart Johnson, Stefan Muthesius, Gillian Naylor, and Roger Newport. Source: Editorial Board and Advisory Board, Front matter *Journal of Design History*, Vol.I (1)

question of what good design history was or should be.<sup>70</sup> Putnam recollects importance of this to the board, stating that in the 1980s and 90s there was;

“...explicit emphasis, and a lot of time was expended, on getting some reasonable consensus of view among the editors about what was good and what wasn't good and what wasn't worth publishing.”<sup>71</sup>

The contents of early issues acknowledge the heritage of the discipline, its move away from Art and Architectural History, and included responses to Herbert Read, Pevsner and Banham.<sup>72</sup>

Contributions reveal trends in subject matter, changes in methodological approach and intellectual concerns over the decades of its publication and can be examined in addition to patterns seen in conferences, events, education curricula, exhibitions and book publications to establish the main changes with the design history discipline. A key area where changes of scholarly concerns and shared interests of different communities are seen is in the themed Special Issue publications. Over twenty-one years of publication, with each volume normally being published over four issues, there have been twenty-two special issues.<sup>73</sup> Several themes which have endured; firstly, questions concerning issues of ‘modernism’; secondly, the

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Putnam, T. & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam, Track 6* [17.50]. The DHS archive papers do not currently include full records of the Editorial board meetings. This would be a valuable resource for future research.

<sup>72</sup> Volume 1 contained reactions to Read, Banham and Pevsner: Kinross, R. (1988) “Herbert Read’s “*Art and Industry: a history*”; Putnam, T. (1988) “The Theory of Machine Design in the Second Industrial Age”; and Madge, P. (1988) “An Enquiry into Pevsner’s *Enquiry*”. All articles in *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 1 (No.1 & 2)

<sup>73</sup> The titles of the special issues, in chronological order, are: ‘German Design - New Perspectives’, ‘Crafts’, ‘Graphic Design History’, ‘Ecological Design’, ‘Design, Stalin and the Thaw’, ‘Craft, Culture and Identity’, ‘Craft, Modernism and Modernity’, ‘Design Commercial Expansion and Business History’, ‘Eighteenth-Century Markets and Manufactures in England and France’, ‘Technology and the Body’, ‘Approaches to Renaissance Consumption’, ‘Domestic Design Advice’, ‘Anxious Homes’, ‘Disseminating Design: The French Connection’, ‘Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships between Design, Craft and Art’, ‘Publishing the Modern Home: Magazines and the Domestic Interior 1870-1965’, ‘The Global Future of Design History’, ‘Do It Yourself: Democracy and Design’, ‘Design and Polity Under and After the Ottoman Empire’, ‘Eighteenth-Century Interiors—Redesigning the Georgian’, ‘Professionalization as a Focus in Interior Design History’, ‘Ghosts of the Profession: Amateur, Vernacular and Dilettante Practices and Modern Design’.

importance of debates around craft can be clearly seen with several special issues directly concerning this topic; thirdly, a consideration for the domestic space and discussion of the home.<sup>74</sup>

One of the underlying issues seen in design historical scholarship in a response to art historical and archaeological historical methods, is a re-evaluation of issues of Modernism. The first special issue of the *Journal of Design History* intended to further develop the debate in this area; the editorial team stated that they “would like to present a rather broader picture of German Design in the twentieth-century” as there had been “a general unwillingness to pursue a revisionist argument, in relation to the design of the period, in any detail”.<sup>75</sup> The editorial team suggested areas in which further research was needed and suggested that a systematic approach be taken to analyse “the careers of individual designers, the history of institutions (schools of art and design, museums, professional groups), and of particular sectors in which design plays a significant part.”<sup>76</sup> These themes endured with articles published on a regular basis that engaged with debates concerning Modernism.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Special Issues relating to Modernism were: “German Design - New Perspectives’ 1988 Vol.1 3&4, ‘Craft, Modernism and Modernity’, 1998, Vol.11, No.1. Special Issues relating to Crafts were: “Craft” 1989 Vol.2 No.s 2&3; ‘Craft, Culture and Identity’, 1997 Vol.10, No.4; ‘Craft, Modernism and Modernity’ 1998, Vol.11, No.1; and ‘Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships between Design, Craft and Art’, 2004, Vol. 17 No.3. Special Issues relating to Domestic space and the home were: ‘Domestic Design Advice,’ 2003, Vol. 16, No.1, ‘Anxious Homes’, 2003, Vol. 16. No.3, ‘Publishing the Modern Home: Magazines and the Domestic Interior 1870-1965’, 2005, Vol.18, No.1.

<sup>75</sup> *Journal of Design History*, 1988, Vol. 1 issues No. three and four: a special issue on ‘German design-new perspectives’ contained contributions by Anna Rowland, Nicholas Bullock, Gunter Berghaus, Heiner Jacob, Christopher Harvie and Robin Kinross’s review article on recent literature in the area. Benton, C. (1988) “Editorial” *Journal of Design History*,1(3/4)

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> For example: Charlotte Benton (1990). “Le Corbusier: furniture and the interior”, *Journal of Design History*,3(2&3); David Matless (1990) “Ages of English Design: Preservation, Modernism and tales of their history, 1926-1939.” *Journal of Design History*, 3(4); Peter McNeill (1992) “Myths of Modernism: Japanese Architecture, Interior Design and the West, c.1990-1940” *Journal of Design History*,5(4); Ken Montague (1994) “The Aesthetics of Hygiene: Aesthetic Dress, Modernity, and the body as sign”, *Journal of Design History*,7(2); Cheryl Buckley (1994) “Design, Femininity, And Modernism: Interpreting the Work of Susie Cooper.” *Journal of Design History*,7(4); Victor Buchli

In the late 1980s and 1990s the editorial board was keen to publish work on craft due to a concern for the status of craft activities and objects within the intellectual community in relation to art and design histories and because of close parallels between the history of design and the history of craft.<sup>78</sup> The 1989 special issue was the first of four special issues that sought to address the subject.<sup>79</sup> Christopher Bailey argued that the academic study of the crafts was less advanced than in other related areas, due to different methodologies applied to research in the area dividing an examination of the object from its context.<sup>80</sup> The papers within the 1989 special issue resulted from the 1985 DHS conference held at Wolverhampton.<sup>81</sup> The main aim of publishing the selection of papers was to reassess approaches to the crafts;

"to foster a critical and historical approach to the crafts which is concerned with the activity of crafts as well as the form, with crafts as innovation as well as tradition, and with crafts history as cultural practice rather than nostalgic celebration".<sup>82</sup>

(1997) "Khrushchev, Modernism, and the fight against petty bourgeois consciousness in the Soviet home" *Journal of Design History*, 10(2); The special issue on craft modernism and modernity in 1998, *Journal of Design History*, 11(1) ; Karin Hiscock (2000), Modernity and 'English' tradition; Betjeman at the Architectural Review, *Journal of Design History*, 13(3); Shelly Wood Cordulack (2005) "A Franco-American Battle of Beams: Electricity and the Selling of Modernity." *Journal of Design History*, 8(2); Yasuko Suga (2006) "Modernism, Commercialism and Display Design in Britain: the Reimann School and studios of industrial and commercial art, *Journal of Design History*, 29(2); Eli Rubin (2006) "Before of Socialism Without Ornament: Consumption, Ideology, and The Fall and Rise of Modernist Design In The German Democratic Republic, *Journal of Design History*, 29(2); Yasuko Suga (2008) "Modernism, Nationalism and Agenda: crafting "more" Japonism", *Journal of Design History* 21(3).

<sup>78</sup> "we will continue to publish works dealing with a history of all craft processes and products of all ages, mindful of the fact that, before the onset of mechanised serial production, the history of design (and indeed much of the history of technology and science) is identical with a history of craft" Bailey *op.cit.*.

<sup>79</sup> Bailey, C (ed.) (1988) *Journal Of Design History: Special Issue "Craft"*, 2 (2/3); Harrod, T.(ed.) (1997) *Journal Of Design History: Special Issue "Craft, Culture and Identity"*. 10(4); *Journal of Design History* both containing papers from the conference "Obscure Object of Desire? Reviewing the crafts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century" held at University of East Anglia in January 1997; and 'Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships between Design, Craft and Art', 2004, *Journal of Design History*, 17 (3)

<sup>80</sup> Bailey, C.(1989)"Editorial" *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 2 (2/3)

<sup>81</sup> "Crafts - Forms and Social Contexts" Design History Society Conference, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> September 1985, Wolverhampton Polytechnic – Conference organised by Christopher Bailey.

<sup>82</sup> Bailey, C. *op. cit.* The papers were divided into groups: firstly, 'sociological and economic perspectives' offering different approaches to how the crafts are defined within Western culture: secondly, 'other cultures and the uses of crafts' to explore how ideas of craftsmanship have been



The objects considered by crafts historians were not the product of large-scale industrial mass-production rather their sites of production were studio-based or domestic. This issue prompted consideration of gender debates and also issues surrounding professionalization. Buckley argued in *Made in Patriarchy* that the development of craft history from design history complicated the challenge of redefining design to include craft production, stating “to exclude craft from design history is, in effect, to exclude from design history much of what women designed.”<sup>83</sup> She also noted that women’s craftwork and gender had not, to that point, been considered even by craft historians.<sup>84</sup> Judy Attfield drew attention to the reluctance of scholars to deal with the crafts due to their association with small-scale home production,

“Even though crafts and their history are now gaining some credibility as an area worthy of study there is still a lot of snobbery and resistance to considering the amateur category.”<sup>85</sup>

The DHS conference, special issues of the *Journal of Design History*, events supported by the Crafts Council, and the scholarship of craft historian Tanya Harrod went some way to addressing these issues.<sup>86</sup>

related to ideas of social and national identity: and finally a section entitled 'institutions and social structures' examining how the crafts have fought to define themselves. The issue also made consideration of education with the inclusion of two articles on craft education. Susan Bittker “Report on a Survey of Recent Crafts and Design Graduates of Scottish Art Colleges” (pp. 219-228) and Anne Channon “Education for Crafts”(pp. 228-230) *Journal of Design History* 2(2/3)

<sup>83</sup> Buckley, C (1986) “Made in Patriarchy: Toward a Feminist Analysis of Women and Design” *Design Issues*, 3(2) p7.

<sup>84</sup> Here she cites an article from the DHS’s Newsletter surveying craft history; Wood, P. (1985) “Defining Craft History” *DHS Newsletter*, 24, pp.27-31

<sup>85</sup> Attfield, J. “FORM/female follows FUNCTION/male: Feminist Critiques of Design” in Walker, J.A. (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*, London: Pluto Press p.216

<sup>86</sup> The Crafts Council, much like the Design Council, had an agenda to support education and scholarship in the crafts as well as supporting the work of craft makers. Their magazine *Crafts* had been established from 1973. An example of their work with the DHS was the support of a study day organized by Gillian Naylor, on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1984, this was a tie-in to their exhibition on the Omega Workshops ( held 18<sup>th</sup> January to 18<sup>th</sup> March 1984) The impact of government bodies such as the Crafts and Design Council on scholarship would be a fruitful area for further research. Also, see discussion later in this chapter about Tanya Harrod’s use of oral history interviews and her DHS scholarship prize.

Ten years on from the publication of the conference papers and Attfield's essay, two further special issues of the journal edited by Harrod showed evidence of a change in attitudes towards scholarship in the crafts. A conference at the University of East Anglia, entitled "Obscure objects of desire? Reviewing the Crafts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century," had shown a "collective advance in craft scholarship."<sup>87</sup> Craft activity was no longer in a "cultural cul-de-sac" rejected by historians of fine art and architecture, nor was it still separated from design by Modernist discourses that had seen the arts and crafts movement as merely a part of the development towards an idealised vision of mass-produced design.<sup>88</sup>

A detailed discussion of craft opened up the consideration of creative activity within domestic space, this moved discussion away from regarding design merely as a professional or mass produced activity, or considering interiors merely in terms of styling, decoration and ornament. In the late 1970s and 80s Adrian Forty's work for the Open University course, further developed in *Objects of Desire*, had emphasised the importance of 'the everyday' and objects within the home and was a contribution to new literature that readdressed domestic spaces, debates on gender and the significance of the role of the consumer.<sup>89</sup> An exhibition, seminars, conferences, research projects and publications during the 1980s and early 1990s

<sup>87</sup> Harrod, T. (1997) "Introduction" in *Journal of Design History*, 10(4), p.34. See also, Harrod, T. (1997) *Obscure Objects of Desire: reviewing the crafts in the Twentieth Century*, Conference papers, Crafts Council.

<sup>88</sup> "constructing a coherent account of modernism in design, - creating foundations and frameworks – requires simplification and exclusion. These early histories propagandising text emphasised rationality, technology and functionalism. Work produced in small quantities appeared largely irrelevant, as were objects made for the domestic interior unless they were mass produced." Harrod *Ibid*.

<sup>89</sup> Examples include American publication Schwartz-Cowan, R., (1983) *More Work for Mother, The ironies of household technology from the open hearth to the microwave*, New York: Basic Books; Buckley, C 1989 articles "The Noblesse of the Banks" Craft Hierarchies, Gender Divisions, and the Roles of Women Paintresses in the British Pottery Industry 1890-1939", *Journal of Design History*, 2(4) pp.257-274, Sparke, P. (1995) *As Long as its Pink: The Sexual Politics of Taste*, London: Pandora

demonstrated that the direction was of increased significance.<sup>90</sup> This contributed to a key shift in theoretical approach, a move away from traditional considerations of production and the producer to a more balanced focus also considering the consumption and use of design.

Changes in the direction of scholarship are demonstrated by the articles published in the *Journal*. Key trends seen within its pages are; initially, an establishment of the territory of the discipline, engaging with art history approaches in order to establish difference. This is followed by the use of new source material and establishing fresh areas of research which help broaden the discipline.<sup>91</sup> Then topics new and old are considered from new perspectives, for example moving from a focus on the production of the object and its creator to the consumption of the object and its user. This follows models for considering the material world proposed by material culture theorist Jules Prown.<sup>92</sup> The 1990s sees a concern for cultural identity, paralleling scholarship in adjacent disciplines of cultural studies and visual cultures, and also a broader interest in national identity with the advent of 'BritPop' and 'Cool Britannia' (see later discussion in chapter five). The late 1990s and 2000s see a consideration of how design advice had been communicated, and focused on mediation, and Grace Lee-Maffei reflected on this trend in an article proposing a

<sup>90</sup> Some examples include; Seminar at Middlesex "The Common Object - Object as Representation/ Representation as Object" May 1983, DHS Conference at the ICA "Women in design" 4<sup>th</sup> November 1983 with exhibition, V&A household choices project and exhibition 1990, mentioned in issues of the DHS newsletter. The DHS symposium "Consumer Culture" April 1991 was referred to in newsletter 67, October 1995, as being a key event in raising the emphasis on consumer culture and consumption in Design History.

<sup>91</sup> For example, broadening a focus on mass-produced design to include craft activities, see discussion on Modernism and Craft. Then expanding the discipline by broadening topics both geographically and chronologically.

<sup>92</sup> Prown, J.(1982)"Mind in Matter: an Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method", *Winterthur portfolio*,17(1)

Production-Consumption-Mediation paradigm.<sup>93</sup> Other topics focused on by the *Journal* demonstrate a focus on the methodology applied for the study of topics in the design domain such as oral history; and also widening chronologies with a concern for period studies in the Eighteenth-century and the Renaissance. The new millennium saw a return to assessing the professional designer and considering the amateur designer, reviewing the global scope of design history and self-reflection reassessing the current state of the discipline.

### **Oral Histories and Design Histories**

A key methodology used by some historians, and also design historians, during more recent decades has been the oral history interview. Oral history, as a method for gathering testimony from individuals concerning their place in history and recollections of past events, has been a particular method employed during the same chronological time-frame as the development of design history as a practice. Both approaches to history writing have certain similar characteristics; they use unwritten sources as a basis for research prompting the interpretation of new ‘oral’ and ‘material’ sources; both cross academic disciplinary boundaries; both are what Lynn Abrams describes as “theoretically promiscuous”; and historians in both of these networks were initially viewed with suspicion from the established history-writing community.<sup>94</sup> Abrams argues that the legitimacy of oral history sources as evidence has been questioned by certain sections of the historical profession

<sup>93</sup> See discussion of the views offered in this article later within this thesis, Chapter seven. Lees-Maffei, G. (2009) "The Production–Consumption–Mediation Paradigm", *Journal of Design History*, 22(4), pp.351-376

<sup>94</sup> Abrams, L. (2010) *Oral History Theory*, London: Routledge, p17

resulting in suspicion and the same argument could be made for those scholars creating design histories using objects, *things*, or material culture.<sup>95</sup>

There are several key examples of the inter-relation of the history and design history networks. A key project in craft history by Tanya Harrod comprised the recorded interviews undertaken during her research for *The Crafts in Britain in the Twentieth Century* and exhibitions and articles; this is now deposited with the British Library.<sup>96</sup> The first decade of the twenty-first century saw the society further establishing links with oral history; firstly, in 2001 the DHS made a donation to the National Life Story Collection at British Library to financially support the recording and transcription of life stories of designers; in 2006 a special issue of the JDH edited by Linda Sandino focussed on oral history in relation to design practice; and in 2007 the society launched an oral history project. The DHS-funded oral history project recorded the life-stories and personal recollections of individuals involved in the design history community.<sup>97</sup> These recordings were a key source of primary information offering testimony concerning the careers of a variety of individuals involved in teaching, regulating, writing and publishing design histories over the last

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, p 5. The reference to histories from *Things* calls to mind the title of an important collection of essays on material culture; Lubar S. and Kingery, W.D. (eds)(1993)*History from Things – Essays on Material Culture*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

<sup>96</sup> Harrod, T,(1999) *The Crafts in Britain in the Twentieth Century*. New Haven: Yale University Press. The British library catalogue entry states “The Tanya Harrod Crafts Interviews (catalogue no: CI 355) collection comprises nearly 60 interviews with craft practitioners., such as Janet Leach, Ann Sutton, Michael Casson, Patrick Heron and Gillian Lowndes. Almost half of the recordings were made for Tanya Harrod’s book – ‘The Crafts in Britain in the Twentieth Century’, Yale University Press, 1999 - whilst the remaining interviews were research for exhibition and catalogue essays as well as for a number of articles.” Source; [www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/sound/ohist/ohcoll/ohart/arts.html](http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/sound/ohist/ohcoll/ohart/arts.html). Harrod’s book was significant to the design history network in expanding the domain and was the first winner of the DHS Scholarship prize for “a significant original contribution to the field of design history.” Text from DHS website; [www.designhistorysociety.org/awards/scholarship\\_prize/index.html](http://www.designhistorysociety.org/awards/scholarship_prize/index.html)

<sup>97</sup> The Design History Society Oral History Project was co-ordinated by Linda Sandino. Sandino also edited a special issue of the *Journal of Design History* on oral history in relation to design practice. see: Sandino, L. ( ed) (2006) *Journal of Design History*, 19(4).

forty years and often revealed information that was otherwise unavailable from documentary sources. However, there are often complex issues to be considered when using information gleaned through these interviews; as Arthur Marwick put it, this type of source can be “inherently... highly problematic” due to the fallibility of human memory.<sup>98</sup> In their discussion of critical developments in the historiography of oral history Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson claim that it was from the 1980s that studies began to consider the relationship between memory and the practice of history.<sup>99</sup> The political implications of memory have become the focus of scholarship in history, anthropology, museums and cultural studies as well as being of importance to contemporary political and intellectual debates where ideas of memory often have significant power.<sup>100</sup> This has developed from postmodern discussions of the nature of narrative, the role of the author, and debates relating to literary theory. The key concerns of importance when using oral testimony are the reliability of memory and its relationship to truth; memory can be subjective and partial, and it is also concerned with representation as well as recollection. Interviewees may have a particular version of events that they want to present, just as the interviewer and listener may have their own particular agenda when guiding and interpreting the recorded recollections.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Marwick, A.(2001)*The New Nature of History - Knowledge, Evidence, Language*, London: Palgrave, p.171

<sup>99</sup> Perks, R. & Thomson, A. (eds) (1998) *The Oral History Reader* 2nd edn London: Routledge. p.1

<sup>100</sup> For examples of this see volumes in the Routledge Series “Studies in Memory and Narrative” edited by Chamberlain, Thompson, Ashplant et al. Of particular interest is the introduction to: Hodgkin, K & Radstone, S (Eds) (2003) *Contested Pasts- The Politics of Memory*, London Routledge in the same series.

<sup>101</sup> Oral history interviews can encounter a series of legal and ethical issues. There is a great deal of work on the role of the oral history interviewer, and the attempt to be neutral when guiding an oral history life story recording. The participant’s selection of the events to recount is important when considering the relevance of particular life events. On legality and Ethics see the Oral History Society Guidelines: “Is your oral history legal and ethical?” at <http://www.ohs.org.uk/ethics/index.php>

In addition to problems regarding the nature of this type of source, with its reliance on memory, there are complex issues surrounding the selection of participants and their own agenda. When individuals were approached to participate in the project some were enthusiastic, others were reluctant or even refused to be recorded, and practical considerations also prevented certain key individuals being involved. The reluctance or refusal of participants might stem from a variety of reasons; ranging from modesty about the validity of their recollections and observations to a reluctance to reflect on a period that might coincide with painful personal memories.<sup>102</sup> Taking these issues into account oral history evidence on events routinely requires confirmation from other sources if possible, however despite these challenges the testimony can also reveal information that may not be evident otherwise.

The oral history evidence did reveal debates and disagreements that would have been inaccessible through documentary sources. A clear example regards the editing of the article authored by Bridget Wilkins for the *AAH Bulletin*.<sup>103</sup> This document had layers of meaning that only became apparent following oral history testimony which prompted further cross-referencing of research sources. Had this article been taken on face value the debate of particular importance regarding the direction of the discipline and its relationship to the AAH would not have been uncovered. Another example is the disagreement over the priorities of the design history community when setting up a separate academic society.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> The process of recording of oral history can be similar to a therapeutic experience. It is often most acute when asking people to reflect on wartime experiences, but even in reflecting on professional experiences can uncover uncomfortable memories. There is much research about the potential problems this may cause.

<sup>103</sup> See, Wilkins, B.(1976)"Teaching Design History," *AAH Bulletin*, Number 2.

<sup>104</sup> This was particularly evident in the relationship between Wilkins and Swann as revealed in their interviews.

Consideration has had to be taken to ensure that this thesis did not merely become a narrative of a singular organisation and the life stories of individuals closely associated with it as uncovered through the oral history interviews. It was also pertinent to acknowledge that the interviewees were subjects, Kurkowska-Budzan, and Zamorski argue that this raises a fundamental ethical issue, “they are not ‘objects’ of analysis, but rather partners and participants in a dialogue about the past.”<sup>105</sup> This thesis has attempted to provide and maintain a balance to give acknowledgement of the role of this academic society within the framework of discipline-creation, both official and unofficial. It is also situated as a community of practice, a ‘boundary object’ that can function, or to put it in Latourian terms an actor, with influence on individuals involved in the network. The DHS is one area of important consideration but this must be assessed in the light of other influences such as educational change, intellectual patterns, museological trends, publications and new audiences and methods of consumption of histories.

This chapter has given two detailed case studies to elaborate the themes discussed in chapter three. The 1980s saw the consolidation of the design history network and its establishment as a young discipline with the academic accoutrements of an organised society and a scholarly journal. These measures enabled the disparate community of historians and educators working within the subject area to have a central point of contact, sources of information and output for research. Both of these developments served to foster relationships and build distinct communities of practice which developed associations already made in the previous decade that

<sup>105</sup> Kurkowska-Budzan, M & Zamorski, K (2009) *Oral History – the Challenges of Dialogue*, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, p.xiv



were situated mainly within an educational framework, for example courses, awarding committees and those associated with the CNAA. The case studies have also revealed the debates that occurred as the design history community sought to justify its distinct identity and separation from its closely-related organisation the AAH. The DHS's role was significant in establishing practical measures of difference, whilst the *Journal* was important in defining the theoretical and methodological differences and helped to direct scholarship and reinforce design history's claim to the status of an academic discipline. The following chapter will consider the developments that had most significance on the design history network during the following decade, the 1990s.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The 1990s - Development and consolidation of the Design History network as an academic discipline**

This chapter considers the development of the design history network in the 1990s, as its varied communities of practice become more institutionalized within education, the museums sector and in publishing. Starting with a consideration of social, intellectual and academic contexts the chapter then addresses the main developments in four key areas. Firstly, issues relating to rapid expansion in higher education and associated considerations of assessing research quality; secondly, debates between the different communities of practice represented by design studies and design history; thirdly, the impact of new museology, and a reassessment of the role of the museum as researcher, interpreter and mediator of objects and histories; and finally, the increasing scope of publishing in the domain. In Chapter Six the key issues raised are highlighted by two case studies of events that occurred within the institution of the National Museum of Design and Decorative Arts, the V&A; these are the masters level course in design history taught jointly with the Royal College of Art, and the development of the major redisplay of the British Galleries.

Politically, this decade saw a significant change in government with the end of the Thatcher era, the conservative Major government and, the election of Tony Blair and the New Labour party in 1997. This was a period that saw rapid technological development as society entered the digital age and the 'dot.com' boom saw many internet companies start up. Computing became increasingly accessible to all, once

the realm only of scientists it was now encountered frequently within both the workplace and, increasingly, the home. Renewed discussion of national identity was prompted in areas of intellectual and popular culture. The British creative world was promoted on an international stage, with the YBA Young British Artist's as seen in Saatchi's *Sensation* exhibition at the RA (1997), music culture promoted under the banner of "Britpop", politicians interacted with youth culture and the media widely used the phrase "Cool Britannia".<sup>1</sup> The new government brought in swingeing changes to the educational sector and, in transforming polytechnics into new universities, attempted to eradicate social divisions and set a target that higher level education should be accessible for 50 percent of school-leavers. Blair's government also introduced means-tested tuition fees for higher education.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis has argued that by the start of the 1990s the design history network, with its wide variety of different communities of practice, had the scholarly trappings required to become established as an academic *discipline* rather than remaining merely a *field of studies*.<sup>3</sup> The interdisciplinary methods used in design history were part of broad intellectual changes that were occurring and part of a shift in approaches to conducting historical research and writing. Objects and

<sup>1</sup> The phrase "Cool Britannia" is widely regarded to have been first used in a 1996 article in Newsweek magazine written by journalist Stryker McGuire. In July 1997 Tony Blair invited many artists' musicians and designers, along with business leaders to a drinks reception at 10 Downing Street, this became known as the "Cool Britannia" party. 'Sensation – Young British Arts from the Saatchi Collection' exhibition was shown from September-December 1997 at the Royal Academy of Arts, London. For more on the London art and cultural scene during this period see: Collings, M.(1997) *Blimey! - From Bohemia to Britpop: London Art World from Francis Bacon to Damien Hirst*, London: 21 Publishing; Rosenthal, N, et al.(1998) *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection*, 2nd ed. London: Thames & Hudson; and, Stallabrass, J.(2006) *High Art Lite: The Rise and Fall of BritArt*, London: Verso

<sup>2</sup> "One of Tony Blair's most radical reforms came in when, in 1998, following means testing, many university students in England paid tuition fees for the first time." Source: [www.number10.gov.uk/history-and-tour/prime-ministers-in-history/tony-blair](http://www.number10.gov.uk/history-and-tour/prime-ministers-in-history/tony-blair)

<sup>3</sup> Although the term *discipline* brings with it the unhelpful necessity to define boundaries, which, design historians were unwilling to do, See previous discussion in chapter three

images were seen as products of the wider cultural environment and, among certain scholars, were being referred to as *material culture* and *visual culture*.

The work produced and described as material culture and visual culture often has links to the work of design historians in both its subject and approach to the interrogation and analysis of sources. Parallels can be seen with new approaches to art history, as demonstrated in the communities of practice associated with *BLOCK*, and also new museology, whose impact would be seen during this decade.<sup>4</sup> The similarities in work produced in these areas demonstrate the network in action; there are interactions between these different actors, the object, the image, the method, the individual researcher, the institution, the community of practice, and these occur within a network that operates in a particular domain relating to designed artefacts. There is clear evidence of a variety of communities of practice coming together with new approaches, although the trappings of academic recognition for material culture and visual culture through the establishment of journals and introductory texts for students came a little later in the decade.<sup>5</sup>

Material culture studies had a history of being linked to evolutionary studies in anthropology but by the 1980s anthropologist Daniel Miller argued that it had evolved into "something of a residual box, housing otherwise 'homeless' interests

<sup>4</sup> "The New Art History?" Conference 1982, Middlesex Polytechnic; The publications of *BLOCK* magazine, see Stafford, S (ed)(1996) *The BLOCK Reader in Visual Culture*, London: Routledge; Rees, A.L. & Borzello, F. (eds) (1986) *The New Art History: an Anthology*, London: Camden Press; and, Vergo, P.(1989) *The New Museology*, London: Reaktion

<sup>5</sup> *The Journal of Material Culture* was established in 1996, *Visual Culture in Britain* in 2000 and the *Journal of Visual Culture* in 2002. Introductory texts for students included: Walker, J.A. & Chaplin, S..(1997)*Visual Culture: an Introduction*, Manchester: Manchester University Press; Barnard, M.(1998) *Art, Design and Visual Culture – An Introduction*, London: Palgrave MacMillan; Mirzoeff, N.(1999)*An Introduction to Visual Culture*, London: Routledge and for Material Culture Lubar S. and Kingery, W.D. (eds)(1993)*History from Things – Essays on Material Culture*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press

such as the link between archaeology and social anthropology, or cross cultural studies in the arts and technology."<sup>6</sup> Similar discussions about nomenclature and methodology were occurring amongst scholars in America connected to Material Culture Studies: Thomas Schlereth suggested the term material culture as a suitable generic term for describing physical remains of the human past, or designed objects, and to describe scholars as "material culturists."<sup>7</sup> He stated his initial motivation "was simply to coin an appropriate covering term that would encompass the diverse cadre of researchers working with material culture evidence: historical archaeologists, cultural anthropologists, historians of technology, cultural geographers, art, architectural, and decorative arts scholars, folklife researchers, and cultural historians to name but the tribes leading clans."<sup>8</sup> Arguably this is a clear example of the interactions between scholars and topics as different actors in a network, operating in much the same way as certain types of design historical practice. Although he uses a different vocabulary to describe the varied communities of practice (clans) in an academic network (tribe) there are striking parallels. Schlereth's text also offers an analogous discussion over the description of activity in the discipline or field which could also be applied without alteration to Design History;

"my own preference in the discipline-field discussion is to see the enterprise, at least for the present, as a mode of enquiry primarily (not exclusively) focused upon the type of evidence. Material culture thus becomes an investigation that uses artefacts (along with relevant documentary, statistical, and oral data) to explore cultural questions both in certain established disciplines (such as history or anthropology) and in

<sup>6</sup> In studies in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century anthropology has been linked to discussions of evolution. Miller, D. (1987) *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, preface

<sup>7</sup> "Material Culture or Material Life? Discipline or Field? Theory or Method?" in Schlereth, T.J. (1990) *Cultural History and Material Culture – Everyday Life, Landscapes, Museum*, UMI Research Press. p.17

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

certain research fields (such as the history of technology or the applied arts).”<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, Miller regarded the lack of disciplinary allegiance as an academic freedom claiming that material culture studies provided a liberating force for a range of disciplines.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the 1980s Miller had complained that there was no academic discipline "which sees as its specific project to examine the nature of artefacts as cultural forms."<sup>11</sup> Some second-generation design historians would draw on this and attempt to promote the transformation of *design history* from a "form of pseudo-art history" one that focused on the production of design and biographies of 'great designers' and an over-emphasis on modernism, into a more consumer-focused study concerned with social context.<sup>12</sup> The case could certainly be made that material culture studies broadened the scope of design history, away from a focus on production, to the use of objects by consumers.

Although this thesis takes its primary focus to be the Design History network that originated in Britain the complex nature of any actor network, as previously argued, precludes the drawing of boundaries. Discussions of events in American scholarly communities of practice, such as given above, are necessarily included when they have a particular parallel or impact on the broader design history network. The

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p.26

<sup>10</sup> Daniel Miller is highly regarded for his contributions to debates on anthropology and material culture studies. Miller acknowledges Adrian Forty's contribution in "why some things matter" the introductory essay to his volume on material cultures. *Ibid.* His later edited collection *Material Cultures* contains work by Alison Clarke, one of his doctoral students who would later become known as a Design historian. See, *Ibid.* and Miller, D.(ed.)(1998) *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter*, London: Routledge. The opening editorial for the *British Journal of Material Culture* (March 1996) advocated a rejection of disciplinary due to the limitations that this brings.

<sup>11</sup> Miller, D.(1987) *op.cit.*, p.110

<sup>12</sup> Miller, D.(1987) *Ibid.*, p.142 "First, and perhaps most bizarre, is the field entitled design history. As conventionally studied, this is clearly intended to be a form of pseudo-art history, in which the task is to locate great individuals such as Raymond Loewy or Norman Bel Geddes and portray them as the creators of modern mass culture. .... In effect this design history is the study of the industrial artefact which quite ignores the consumer." Examples of biographies include the early series of monographs published by the Design Council and a concern with modernism is evident in the work of Pevsner, Examples concerned with social context, that were being published contemporaneously with Millers work include BLOCK and Forty, A (1986) *Objects of Desire*, London: Thames and Hudson.

rationale for giving attention to activities in Britain is primarily due to the unique context presented by developments in educational provision and institutional histories. However, in discussing Material Culture studies here the scholarship from America such as that from Thomas Schlereth, Kenneth Ames or Jules Prown had particular influence.<sup>13</sup> Later in this chapter there is also discussion of American scholar Victor Margolin and American journal *Design Issues* at points of key interaction and influence. Similarly the influence of the associated communities of practice surrounding Histories of Technology in America will also be discussed in chapter seven.

In 1997 John A Walker, the author of *Design History and the History of Design*, co-authored an introduction to visual culture where the overlap between various disciplinary areas was made explicit.<sup>14</sup> The origins of visual culture studies were, according to Walker, "shaped... by theoretical developments in Art, Architectural and Design History, and in Cultural, Film and Media Studies"<sup>15</sup> as well as by the changes in art and design education that were to continue throughout the 1990s. This shift in theory and the use of interdisciplinary method was the focus of a series

<sup>13</sup> "Tom Schlereth has simultaneously served as chief chronicler of the material culture movement and as one of its major actors...No other person in America has been as fully or as frequently identified with the study of material culture. No other person has done so much to publicise and promote material culture scholarship" Ames, K. Cover text and Foreword to *Ibid.* Also see: Schlereth, Thomas (Ed) (1985) *Material Culture A Research Guide*, University Press of Kansas. Kenneth Ames was a founding member of the Decorative Arts Society, director of the Winterthur Summer institute, editor of the *Winterthur Portfolio* and *Material Culture* and had scholarly connections with the University of Delaware as adjunct associate professor of art history. The work of Prown also has a direct influence on the British design history network featuring on the reading lists of the V&A/RCA History of Design course. Prown, J. (1982) "Mind in Matter: an Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method" *Winterthur Portfolio*, 17 (1)

<sup>14</sup> Walker, J.A. (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*, London: Pluto Press; Walker, J.A. & Chaplin, S. (1997) *Visual Culture: an introduction*, Manchester: Manchester University Press. Interestingly Walker was also author of the introductory text to design history: Walker, J.A (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*, London: Pluto Press

<sup>15</sup> Walker, J.A. & Chaplin, S. *Ibid.*, p.48

of essays in the December 1995 issue of the *Art Bulletin*.<sup>16</sup> Art historian James Herbert argued for the acceptance of interdisciplinarity;

“Everyone involved in the heated debate over interdisciplinarity, curiously, appears to be on the same side. One would be hard pressed to find an art historian of any methodological stripe who was not, in some basic sense, in favour of it. All practitioners of the discipline agree that the productive exchange of information and analytic tools between scholarly fields is meritorious, and should be encouraged”<sup>17</sup>

This view supports the intellectual interactions and connections that were being seen across scholarship in the wider domain. Malcolm Barnard, writing in 1998 on art design and visual culture, drew heavily on Walker’s 1989 text, but supported the view that design history is one of many disciplines that is important for the study of visual culture.<sup>18</sup> He stated that “any satisfactory account of visual cultures must be historical and sociological in nature and that it must pay close attention to visual production as a set of signifying systems”<sup>19</sup> However it is clear that Barnard was aware of different approaches to writing about designed objects; he reviewed the “design history” written by Pevsner, and dismissed this as unsuitable for approaching visual culture due to the idea that there is a progression in design to some sort of modernist ideal. Nevertheless he saw Banham’s work as having potential for approaching visual cultures; a “design history that can deal with mass-produced goods of all kinds, and which does not conceive those goods as either unworthy of study or as leading to some combination of good design, is clearly to

<sup>16</sup> Ginzburg, C. (1995) “Vetoed and compatibilities.” *The Art Bulletin* v. 77 p. 534-6; Herbert, J. D. (1995) “Masterdisciplinarity and the “pictorial turn”. *The Art Bulletin* v. 77 pp. 537-40; Mitchell, W. J. T. (1995) “Interdisciplinarity and visual culture. *The Art Bulletin* v. 77pp. 540-4; Reese, T. F. (1995) “Mapping interdisciplinarity.” *The Art Bulletin* v. 77 pp.544-9; Spitz, E. H. (1995) “Warrant for trespass/permission to peer.” *The Art Bulletin* v. 77 pp. 550-2

<sup>17</sup> Herbert, J.D *Op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Barnard, M. (1998) *Art, Design and Visual Culture*, London: Palgrave Macmillan

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33



be welcomed."<sup>20</sup> Barnard's conception of design history is somewhat limited by the focus on older writings of "history of design" such as Pevsner and even some early publications by Penny Sparke.<sup>21</sup> The emphasis in these publications was in demonstrating only particular types of design historical writing being produced by members of a growing wider network which was extending the scope and approach to scholarly outputs in the domain.

An increasing amount of scholarship concerned with gender issues emerged across the intellectual network, following calls from feminist academics in the 1980s to consider women's roles as both designers and consumers. Attfield and Kirkham's anthology *A View from the Interior* first published in 1989 was re-issued in 1995. In the same year Sparke's *As Long as it's Pink: The Sexual Politics of Taste* appeared with acknowledgement that earlier discussions of design had underplayed the role of consumption and gender.<sup>22</sup> Her treatment of gendered material culture here engaged with the rhetoric of Modernism, modernity, and design reform. Yet it also addressed the gendered notions of 'taste' as a feminine quality and 'design' as masculine. The anthology of essays *The Gendered Object*, edited by Pat Kirkham, demonstrated the interrelations of gender and objects.<sup>23</sup> The topics discussed ranged from interiors to fashion and were addressed by scholars taking approaches influenced by design history, film studies and cultural studies. An area where gendered debates were particularly evident was among the community of fashion and dress historians. Here interactions and intersections within and across

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p52

<sup>21</sup> For example: Sparke, P. (1983) *Consultant Design: The History and Practice of the Designer in Industry*, London: Pembroge Press, Sparke, P. (1986). *Design Source Book*. London: Macdonald

<sup>22</sup> Sparke, P. (1995) *As Long as it's Pink: The Sexual Politics of Taste* London: Pandora. Sparke acknowledges the "pioneering work" of scholars such as Cheryl Buckley, Pat Kirkham, Judy Attfield, Anthea Callan, Suzette Worden, Lee Wright and Angela Partington. p.xi

<sup>23</sup> Kirkham, P. (ed.) (1996) *The Gendered Object* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

communities of practice are clear. Many scholars came from teaching to fashion students within the art schools or on the dedicated History of Dress or Fashion courses at the Courtauld, London College of Fashion, Winchester School of Art and Brighton.<sup>24</sup> This particular group of scholars interested in the historical and cultural consideration of fashion and dress was a distinct community of practice, but like any community it had many links; also an important group were curators of costume collections within museums.<sup>25</sup> Key publications during the 1990s included the fashion reader *Chic Thrills* (1992) edited by Juliet Ash and Elizabeth Wilson which presented new scholarship on fashion and dress taking into consideration cultural and economic factors.<sup>26</sup> Christopher Breward's *The Culture of Fashion* (1995) also went beyond consideration merely of style and offered an academic treatment of fashion history informed by the research on fashion and dress from across the wider design history network.<sup>27</sup> Breward had connections with many communities of practice; the Royal College of Art and the V&A through the MA History of Design course, the London College of Fashion, and the museum world through the involvement with exhibitions. Network interactions are also shown through the V&A's 1997 exhibition *The Cutting Edge* and accompanying publication edited by Amy De La Haye. The same year saw the inaugural issue of the journal

<sup>24</sup> Courses ranged from the Courtauld's History of Dress course, with a distinctive approach informed by art history, to Brighton's Fashion and Dress History.

<sup>25</sup> Institutions such as London College of Fashion, Central St Martins, and the V&A were also important boundary objects here. Scholars associated with these institutions include; Caroline Evans, Jo Entwistle, Amy De La Haye, Christopher Breward, Juliet Ash, Avril Hart and Susan North.

<sup>26</sup> Ash, J & Wilson, E. (1992) *Chic Thrills-A Fashion Reader* London: Pandora

<sup>27</sup> Breward, C (1995) *The Culture of Fashion - A new history of fashionable dress* Manchester: Manchester University Press. Breward also published scholarship on gender, expanding the considerations of women and feminism to include masculinities. Breward, C (1999) *The Hidden Consumer - Masculinities, fashion and city life, 1860-1914* Manchester: Manchester University Press. This was not the first published analysis of men's clothing and gender; see Juliet Ash's essay "Tarting Up Men: Menswear and Gender Dynamics" in the anthology Attfield, J & Kirkham, P ( eds) (1989,1995) *A View from the Interior - Women and Design*, 2nd edn. London: the Women's Press. Breward also published prolifically in the 2000s, including; Breward, C (2003) *Fashion (Oxford History of Art)*Oxford: Oxford University Press

*Fashion Theory*, edited by American cultural historian Valerie Steele.<sup>28</sup> In the editorial Steele celebrated the community of researchers working in the area, “scholars across the disciplines have begun to explore the relationship between body, clothing and cultural identity.”<sup>29</sup> This development demonstrated that there was the separation of a distinct community of practice within the design history network.

### **The expansion of Higher Education and consideration of Research Quality**

This intellectual and academic context offered ideal conditions for the development and consolidation of a design history network, but it was the rapid expansion of higher education during this decade that presented both opportunities and challenges to those advocating a disciplinary status for design history. As this thesis has argued it was the educational policy changes that occurred in the 1970s that provided the context for the formation of design history; these developments changed the shape of higher education and introduced the complex relationship between the design historian and the art and design practitioner in relation to the teaching of ‘historical and contextual studies.’ Throughout the 1980s, design history became established with the validation of subject-specific BA degrees, and joint degrees linked to art history and film studies. In addition there were an expanding number of lecturers and researchers working at HE level in the polytechnic sector. The 1990s saw major political policy changes relating to education; this resulted in a rapid expansion in the number of 18-30 year-olds accessing higher education, and increased targets from 10% to 30% in the early part

<sup>28</sup> Valerie Steele studied cultural and intellectual history before specialising in fashion as cultural history. She is director and chief curator of the museum at New York’s Fashion Institute of Technology. Source: <http://valeriesteelefashion.com/blog/biography/>

<sup>29</sup> Steele, V. (1997) “Letter from the Editor” *Fashion Theory- The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture*. 1(1) p.1

of the decade and then from 30% to 50% with the election of a Labour Government in 1997.<sup>30</sup> This was followed in the same year with the Dearing report on the shape and structure of higher education in the UK.<sup>31</sup> The future shape of research and teaching at all levels was of concern to members of the design history network, along with others teaching in the art and design sector, and several seminar sessions and conferences were held on the subject bringing together varied communities of practice.<sup>32</sup>

Prior to momentous institutional changes in 1992, the year 1991 saw three events of significance; the “Design History and Higher Education” seminar, a meeting at the CNAA to discuss the implications of the end of the binary system, and a conference entitled “Art and Design in Education” at the National Research Conference. Hazel Clark, the outgoing chair of the DHS, was concerned about the diminishing role of design history in higher education at a time of significant change in the sector; and an informal event “Design History and higher education Seminar” was hastily arranged bringing together a small number of people representing ten educational institutions to share their experiences.<sup>33</sup> Discussion covered political and practical issues relating to teaching design history and it is clear that although experience across the country was varied there were common areas of significance. A positive outcome of this was a recognition that certain design historians were "receiving considerable support from their institutions both

<sup>30</sup> Changes in Government Policy, QAA(2003) *Learning from Subject Review 1993-2001*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, p.9

<sup>31</sup> Great Britain. Dearing (1997) *Higher Education in the Learning Society*, London: HMSO .

<sup>32</sup> “Design History and Higher Education Seminar; The Design Museum, 22nd June 1991, seminar at CNAA 1 October 1991 i and “Art and Design in Education” National Research Conference, The Brighton Centre 5-8 December 1991

<sup>33</sup> Clark, H. (1991) "Design History and Higher Education Seminar; The Design Museum, 22nd June 1991" *DHS Newsletter Number 51* pp.2-4 15 people attended representing 10 different institutions.

academic and financial, to develop the discipline" this was seen to be due to two reasons.<sup>34</sup> Firstly, recognition that design graduates need a broad variety of skills, "much more than the narrow vocationalism which went unchallenged in some quarters in the 'designer' 80s" which was merely the implementation of many of the recommendations of Coldstream report.<sup>35</sup> Secondly, institutions felt that humanities courses and design history courses were cost-effective to run, and extremely cheap in comparison to studio-based courses.<sup>36</sup> Other major areas of discussion were problems with resources, and the changes in the internal structure across institutions. Common issues of concern in educational ventures across the country were identified which included higher student staff ratios, new style contracts for teaching staff, increasing numbers of international students, and changes to the structure of teaching and assessment.<sup>37</sup> Credit accumulation and transfer schemes (CATS) and modular courses were being widely introduced in institutions across the country. This move was seen as positive for design history and other non-studio options, however one example was given of resistance to students selecting only theoretical and historical modules in order to attain accreditation. Clark reported;

“Many institutions are very keen to adopt modularity and several have already done so. However, in one the studio staff have disallowed students taking wholly theoretical modules in order to achieve their degrees. The argument is that a design degree must include studio practice.”<sup>38</sup>

This was seen as staff reacting in order to protect their role. A specific area of concern for lecturers was that art history and design history were being moved

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Despite this Clark felt that many colleges were employing strategies that revealed indications of crisis management and gave the example of a new craft studies degree which closed after one intake due to the high cost of running it. *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*p.3

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*p.3

from faculties of art and design to the faculty of humanities. This issue would have implications for the direction of the discipline and its relationship to History, on the one hand, and practical design education on the other. Arguably this is pivotal to how design history has been perceived, and also a key factor in shaping the discipline for the future. Politically, Clark urged design historians to try to sell the discipline within their institutions "ideally by ensuring that one of their number is in a position of influence" she acknowledged that it was becoming increasingly difficult to construct a national picture in the light of all "different educational, financial and political scenarios in each institution."<sup>39</sup> The conclusion to the day was that more opportunities were needed for art and design historians to get together to discuss common issues and it was agreed that a further meeting would occur later that year in Brighton at the National Research Conference.

Prior to the Brighton event the CNAA organized a seminar immediately before the final meeting of the Committee for Art and Design.<sup>40</sup> This gathered together representatives from the network of tutors in art and design education to discuss the consequences of the end of the binary system. In this meeting it was explained that when the CNAA's charter for approving degrees was rescinded major education institutions would then have their own power for accreditation. The major implications of this for the design history network was the potential removal of a significant community of practice; those examiners who travelled the country auditing the quality of educational provision of design history and contextual studies, who had provided a major guiding influence and support to design history

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> 1 October 1991 See, "Art And Design Post CNAA -A report of the seminar at CNAA 1 October 1991" *Bulletin Association of Art Historians* No. 43, November 1991,p3

educators. The committee and its visiting panels were arguably instrumental for knowledge transfer, or Actors in the network, and reorganization meant the potential removal of these important groups. What would fill the lacuna left by the abolition of the CNAA and the forum for discussing standards that was provided by its subject committees when individual institutions were awarded their own powers? As design education was particularly strong in the polytechnics due to its emergence in the art and design schools and departments following in the 1970s, it would be particularly important to consider the implications of the binary divide and facilitate communication, in particular as the domain was less well represented in traditional university settings. A result of this institutional framework had been that research had not been a significant consideration, in terms of funding, within polytechnic institutions. With the transfer to university status forthcoming this was a key issue of concern, and was the subject of the Brighton conference.

The National Research Conference on Art and Design in Education held at Brighton from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 1991 saw involvement of the DHS, along with eleven other organizations linked to art, craft and design education.<sup>41</sup> The contributors to the conference came with a variety of backgrounds and differing views on a definition of research in an art and design context. The meeting also gave an opportunity to discuss the forthcoming Research Selectivity Exercise, later

<sup>41</sup> The organizations involved in national research conference were: Association of Centres for Art and Design Teacher Education (ACADTE), Association of Advisers and Inspectors in Art and Design (AAIAD), Association of Art Historians (AAH), Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB), Chartered Society of Designers(CSD), Conference For Higher Education Art And Design (CHEAD), Crafts Council (CC), Design History Society(DHS) Design Research Society(DRS), Design and Technology Association(DATA), Independent Schools Art and Design Association (ISADA), National Society of Education in Art and Design (NSEAD), Council For National Academic Awards(CNAA), Group For Education In Museums (GEM) National Association for Design Education (NADE) Source: conference flyer in Design History Society Papers. Also see: 1991 Conference 'Art and Design in Education'" DHS (1991) *DHS Newsletter 51 – October 1991*

known as the Research Assessment Exercise, and how research might be categorized and defined. Suzette Worden, reporting on the conference to the DHS Newsletter, expressed concern that definitions of research were being “framed to meet political or resource issues” as much as by “the needs of the discipline and its expansion.”<sup>42</sup> With the imminent restructuring of the higher education sector the issue of research funding had implications for the future of the academic status of design history. Gillian Elinor discussed this in detail in “Research across the Binary Divide” as this was seen as a central part of the proposed government package to abolish the division between polytechnics and universities.<sup>43</sup> Elinor argued that it was essential for colleges and polytechnics to “switch from their cautious, even niggardly approach to research funding” but also that research bodies needed to be open to new research by those in the Polytechnic and colleges sector.<sup>44</sup> The 1990 Roith report had advised the Polytechnic and College Funding Council (PCFC) to increase its funding of research, however this was not immediately forthcoming: researchers had a few other alternatives for research funding these were the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the British Academy. Elinor’s conclusions from examining the statistics of awards made showed a bias towards the university sector and were not promising for promoting the scholarship of design historians who were working with the polytechnic sector.<sup>45</sup> There was also criticism of the British Academy’s inability to administer a research council for the humanities and it would not be until 1993 when a government White Paper

<sup>42</sup> Worden, S (1992) “National Research Conference – Art and Design Education” *DHS Newsletter* No. 52/3

<sup>43</sup> Elinor, G. (1991) “Research across the Binary Divide” *Journal of Design History*, 4(4) pp.251-253 - this article was based on paper delivered to the annual conference of the Association of Art Historians in April 1991

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.251

<sup>45</sup> “The British Academy’s apparent bias against polytechnics may, in the case of art and design history at least, reflect in part a bias as the subject matter.” *Ibid.*, p.252



*Realising Our Potential* advocated a reorganization of the research councils, and the 1997 *Dearing Report* and 2004 *Higher Education Act* which later led to the formation of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).<sup>46</sup> Despite the problems in humanities research there was a limited amount of research being undertaken and moves were being made to quantify these research activities.<sup>47</sup>

The Further and Higher Education Act of March 1992 brought about the abolition of the binary policy of education at universities and polytechnics. John Pratt argued that the binary policy had been 'remarkably robust' with polytechnics surviving major policy and funding changes in the 1980s and removal from the local authority sector under the 1988 *Education Reform Act*.<sup>48</sup> Polytechnics had been institutions that were open to new kind of students, with increasing numbers of mature students and female students accessing part-time and evening education they had also nurtured growing subject areas such as education and the arts.<sup>49</sup> The colleges that had joined together to form polytechnics brought with them diverse academic traditions, technical colleges had many courses that were highly vocational with a highly didactic pedagogy, whereas art colleges had, as Pratt claims a "less directive and sometimes apparently anarchic tradition".<sup>50</sup> Despite this the polytechnics were key areas for the emergence of new ideas and approaches, and for developing

<sup>46</sup> Herbert, J (2009) *Creating the AHRC*, Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy.

<sup>47</sup> Professor Brian Allison addressed the practical issues relating to research; he discussed his work recording research in Art and Design on several databases considering research projects, research institutions and research resources. His research index, the Allison Research Index of Art and Design (ARIAD), was due to be published in electronic format and he had just presented detailed information to the IBRAD steering group of the, soon to be dissolved, Committee for Art and Design of the CNAAC. Minutes of the IBRAD steering Group, 16<sup>th</sup> May 1991, Committee Art and Design, Council for National Academic Awards, National Archives DB3/2907

<sup>48</sup> Pratt, J. (1997) *The Polytechnic Experiment-1956-1992*, Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, p.3

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.56 "the fastest-growing subject areas in the polytechnics were in fact education, languages, other arts, and art and design and music."

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* p.108.

disciplines to emerge within an educational environment, and this was particularly the case for design history.

The subject of validation of courses by CNAAB subject boards had been controversial, the CNAAB was concerned with raising standards, but arguably this in turn stifled experimental courses. Both Harold Silver<sup>51</sup> and Pratt made the observation that as many CNAAB subject boards had traditional university staff in order to have a course successfully validated "the surest way of getting course approved is to present it as a traditional academic course".<sup>52</sup> Gillian Naylor had argued this case in relation to design history courses; a similar format to traditional art history needed to be presented to the validating boards in order to get courses approved.<sup>53</sup> As polytechnics were becoming universities a number of questions were raised; what implications did this have for course validation, subject development, and pedagogy? What were the options for polytechnics to still maintain a level of difference in the development of new subjects, models of course provision (such as part-time and evening classes) and what implications would there be for quality and academic standards with the demise of the CNAAB? Following from this, what implications would this have for the wider network of design historians and their claims for the academic credibility afforded by disciplinary status.

<sup>51</sup> Silver, H.(1990) *A Higher Education-the Council for National Academic Awards in British Higher Education in 1964-1989*, London: The Falmer Press

<sup>52</sup> Quotation from Silver given by Pratt *op.cit.* p.110

<sup>53</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2 Naylor, G & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Gillian Naylor*, Track13 "I knew that if a history of design course was going to be approved that it would have to follow the same sort of format as histories of art and histories of architecture, which had been examined. ( E.g. Courtauld degrees)"

The consequences of the demise of the CNAA brought about by the 1992 *Further and Higher Education Act* were of great significance for those in the design history network working in academia. John Hewitt and Christopher Bailey articulated the implications of these changes for design history in a series of three articles in the DHS newsletter.<sup>54</sup> The CNAA's Committee for Art and Design had been an important community of practice, facilitating communication across the design-historical network and developing criteria and standards for the subject area in higher education; the activities of the committee in validating and accrediting courses and maintaining guidelines were an intrinsic part of the development of the Design Historical network and its subsequent consolidation into a distinct academic discipline. Hewitt emphasized the importance of the complementary studies component in Art and Design education and the support that the committee gave to issues of quality in this area; he felt that this was an area which "need[ed] constantly to be argued for."<sup>55</sup> The implications of the changes for research activity were also highlighted as funding for teaching was separated from that for research. Representatives of art and design subject areas were concerned that there was no critical oversight of Art and Design Education with the demise of the CNAA and so formed a steering group, Association for Higher Education in Art and Design (AHEAD). The primary issue of concern for this group was "to demonstrate and support academic integrity" for design historical study as institutions modularized provision and art and design more generally.<sup>56</sup> Concern was also expressed that the Research Assessment Exercise would for the first time bring art and design into

<sup>54</sup> Hewitt, J.(1992)"Life after CNAA: episode one" *DHS Newsletter No 52/3*; Bailey, C. (1992) "Life after CNAA: Episode Two" *DHS Newsletter No 52/3*; Bailey, C. ( 1992) "The Way AHEAD – or, Life after CNAA, Part Three" *DHS Newsletter No 55*

<sup>55</sup> Hewitt, J. *op.cit.*, p.5

<sup>56</sup> Bailey, C. *op.cit.*

a new framework for funding, and that the new emphasis under HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council) would “increasingly be on subject comparators at national level.”<sup>57</sup> Shakeup of the education system meant that other national bodies were in a state of transition; the Committee for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD) and the National Society of Education in Art and Design (NSEAD) announced that they would merge fully from 1994, and work with AHEAD to ensure a “strong single voice for art and design”.<sup>58</sup>

At a time when members of the DHS were reflecting on the implications of the changing intellectual landscape and the position of design historians within it the AAH was also promoting debate on the issue. In an ‘open forum’ article within the pages of its *Bulletin* members of the AAH were encouraged to consider strategies for the Association and its future direction.<sup>59</sup> The events of 1992 were momentous for all members of the wider design history network, no matter how they identified or categorised their activities, and this is evident from the concerns expressed by both organisations. The, unnamed, author of the AAH article explicitly acknowledged the existence of several varied schools of thought among the membership, which could be regarded as differing communities of practice, but cautioned that this could have “important repercussions” in this changing environment.<sup>60</sup> Reflecting on the history of the Association these distinct groupings were identified through the creation of sub-groups and sub-committees, which ultimately led to separation and the formation of the DHS in the case of one

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> The inter-relation of these organizations is an area worthy of further detailed research.

<sup>59</sup> “Open Forum – Towards a Strategy for the Association of Art Historians,” *Bulletin of the Association of Art Historians*, No. 45, May 1992, pp.6-8.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, although the author is not stated it is interesting to note that the Chair of the Society at this time was Dr Nigel Llewellyn.

particular community of practice, but this had implications for the professionalization of art history. The concern for formalising the activities of art historians is evident throughout the history of the AAH, whose constitution makes explicit reference to the “desire to professionalise[sic]the practice of Art History.”<sup>61</sup> However, it is noted that the existence of “different internal constituencies” and lack of homogeneity makes this aim unachievable; this comment indicates the negative aspects of having manifold approaches to the academic study of art and artefacts across the art and design history network.

One factor contributing to the desire of the AAH to professionalise and delimit standards of practice was the university sector’s emphasis on being able to measure and quantify academic merit. The Research Assessment Exercise took place in 1986, 1989, 1992 and 1996, 2001 and 2008. It was only from the 1990s onwards (the decade with which this chapter is concerned) that ex-polytechnic institutions were included. Departments were assessed according to research excellence, and in turn RSE/RAE results had an impact on the level of funding available to the university. Bill Readings calls this a turn to the “discourse of excellence” and argued that the British turn to “performance indicators” by introducing ties of funding to research excellence would result in poor morale and failing university departments;

“The long-term trend is to permit the concentration of resources in centres of high performance and to encourage the disappearance of departments, and even perhaps of universities, perceived as 'weaker'.”<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> The main focus of the article is professionalization and the rhetoric of management theory.

<sup>62</sup> Readings, Bill (1996) *The University in Ruins*, Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University p.36  
Reading uses the term “performance indicators, as discussed by Michael Peters in Peters, M (1992) " Performance and Accountability In 'Post-Industrial Society': The Crisis Of British Universities" *Studies in Higher Education*, 17 (2)

The research assessment exercise, and the funding implications that the results brought, focused attention on the differences between the old and the new university sector. In the DHS's October 1993 *Newsletter* an extract from the AAH *Bulletin* was reprinted which emphasized the importance of this issue; Eric Fernie, chairman of the RAE panel, explained how the panel conducted the assessment.<sup>63</sup> The issue of the old and new universities warranted five points that varied from clarification, to concern, onto hopeful optimism. He noted that while none of the older universities received a grade lower than 'three' no new university had achieved higher than 'three'; this point was of particular concern for the morale of staff employed in the new sector. He felt the need to clarify how the panel viewed the grading;

"we consider a '3' as a good grade. This needs to be stressed because of some comments (not to my knowledge concerning art history) which have been made since the publication of the results. In addition, even though this means that grades 1 and 2 were below the standard, we would like to make it clear that we saw many opportunities for departments with these grades to improve their results in the next exercise. In particular, some of the new university departments with grades of one or two nonetheless have on their staff scholars of high standing whose position needs to be acknowledged by their institutions."<sup>64</sup>

As the majority of courses of design history were within the new universities this event indicates that the fears expressed by John Hewitt and Christopher Bailey, a year earlier, were well grounded.<sup>65</sup>

The assessment panels were well aware that the opportunities for ex-polytechnic staff to produce research outputs was affected by their terms of employment, and that older universities had built on the experience of the previous two research

<sup>63</sup> Fernie, E. 'UFE Research Assessment Exercise' extract from *Bulletin* Association of Art Historians, Number 49 reprinted in *DHS Newsletter No 59* pp.4-5

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Hewitt, J.(1992) "Life after CNAA: episode one" *DHS Newsletter No 52/3*; Bailey, C. (1992) "Life after CNAA: Episode Two" *DHS Newsletter No 52/3*; Bailey, C. ( 1992) "The Way AHEAD – or, Life after CNAA, Part Three" *DHS Newsletter No 55*

assessment exercises. They recognized that staff in new universities had needed to fight against different institutional structures, and respected this:

“[the new universities] have not on the whole encouraged research either by provision of sabbatical leave or by the form of staff contracts, which makes the achievements of those departments which have a successful research base all the more remarkable. We have no doubt that given the same context as the older universities; a number of ex-polytechnic departments will appear among the ‘4’s and possible ‘5’s in the next exercise.”<sup>66</sup>

They also pointed to the interdisciplinary nature of much of the work that the new universities and varied character of departments which Fernie noted was “likely to provide the basis for future success.”<sup>67</sup>

Two key issues that had emerged from the Research Assessment Exercise in 1992 were, firstly, the prerequisite attributes for a graduate from a higher education institution and, secondly, what that meant specifically in this particular subject area. On the 30th May 1996 a large seminar was convened with delegates from over 25 subject associations, learned societies, higher education lobby groups and professional bodies.<sup>68</sup> Christopher Bailey attended to represent both the DHS and the AAH. The main aim of the seminar was to discuss preliminary studies on the nature of “graduateness” and obtain feedback in the context of individual disciplines. Data had been collected across a variety of institutions using a 'graduate attributes profile (GAP)' ; this form divided skills into ability categories of subject mastery, intellectual and cognitive, practical, self and individual, social and people. But, there were major concerns about the categorization of skills: as was pointed out by a representative of the 3-D design Association, the form was "fundamentally flawed

<sup>66</sup> Fernie, E *op.cit.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>68</sup> Bailey, C. (1996) "Subject associations and the HEQC graduate standards programme - a report to the executive committee of the Design History Society," *DHS papers*

by the separation of intellectual and practical forms of knowledge" - an issue that was continually under discussion in the context of HAAD and contextual studies; a second issue was that "much doubt was cast on transferable skills, both as a basis the comparison of courses in different subjects, and as a pedagogic concept."<sup>69</sup>

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) needed to set in place strategies to ensure that public funding was providing a good quality of education despite there being continued debate concerning the criteria for "graduateness"; in order to assess standards the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) was established in 1997 with the aim of assessing student achievement and the student learning experience across the 140 higher education institutions across the country.<sup>70</sup> The task in hand was large and complex, considering there was no longer the subject-based framework provided by the CNAA, as a QAA report acknowledged the institutions varied "greatly in size, subject provision, history and statement of purpose" with each having the "autonomy to determine its institutional mission and its specific aims and objectives at subject level."<sup>71</sup> A perceived weakness of the QAA was that it did not set targets, but merely assessed an institution in relation to their own aims and objectives and it measured "the extent to which each subject provider is successful in achieving its aims and objectives." Six categories of provision were scrutinized these were: 'Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation[sic]'; 'Teaching, Learning and Assessment'; 'Student Progression and Achievement'; 'Student Support and Guidance'; 'Learning Resources' and 'Quality

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> The HEFCE funded education in over 140 Higher Education institutions and also 75 Further education colleges.

<sup>71</sup> QAA (1998) *Subject Overview Report – QO10/98 – Quality Assessment of History of Art, Architecture and Design 1996-1998*. p2



Assurance and Enhancement'.<sup>72</sup> This did little to assist the subject area in setting parameters for their discipline, but it did introduce a sense of anxiety as institutions were inspected (as had the early CNAA NCDAD inspections in the 1970s) and forced institutions to focus on the student experience and measuring student achievement.

The findings of the Subject Overview Report in 1998 support the overall picture of the issues that had been reported by Bailey. The lack of a clearly defined “canon” or strong disciplinary boundaries added to problems when setting targets and standards for measurement and assessment. The report noted that definitions concerning subject matter and interdisciplinarity were 'suitably wide' and that in visits to 37 institutions although the importance of contextualising art and design was acknowledged “almost every subject provider” had a different emphasis on chronological frameworks or aesthetic, philosophical and contextual approaches.<sup>73</sup> The approaches were so varied across institutions that it was difficult to define what the curriculum content for "history of art" or "history of design" should be. In terms of aims and objectives the report noted that within the "diverse nature of the discipline" it was possible to discern "certain general characteristics" and these included the development of visual literacy, critical and analytical skills, an understanding of key concepts theories and methods, and an ability to discuss works of art and design within “appropriate historical, intellectual and cultural contexts” however these definitions were fluid.<sup>74</sup> A weakness that was perceived by the assessors in about one third of the institutions was that students had little understanding about the nature of the discipline itself: this is hardly surprising, given

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4

that academics themselves were still engaged in defining and re-defining. A counter argument to this would be to note that there were publications available that could inform students understanding of their discipline, such as the student handbooks by Marcia Pointon, Hazel Conway and John Walker, although it is true to note that we had yet to see the results of the surge in publishing that occurred in the mid-1990s which would not yet have filtered through to the curriculum in time for this assessment.<sup>75</sup>

In a review of the overall assessment process Christopher Kenyon, writing in a QAA document *Learning from Subject Review*, made it clear that the process was always contentious;<sup>76</sup> but despite having had problems the process ensured that education providers in the sector were more self-critical, rigorous and systematic in the design and delivery of curricula in the domain. An additional result of the process was the new emphasis and focus on implementing defined learning outcomes for student achievement.<sup>77</sup>

The Quality Assurance Agency reports mark a new emphasis on “learning and teaching” that would become of increasing significance throughout the late 1990s and on into the 21st century.<sup>78</sup> This emphasis would later become particularly acute when changes in student funding and the implementation of tuition fees caused a subtle shift in the politics of the relationship between the student and

<sup>75</sup> Pointon, M (1980) *History of Art: a Students Handbook* – in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition by the time of this report, and also Conway, H.(1987) *Design History - a Students' Handbook*, London: Routledge, and Walker, J. (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*, London: Pluto Press.

<sup>76</sup> QAA(2003) *Learning from Subject review 1993-2001*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

<sup>77</sup> The executive summary of the document explains the scope of the assessment procedure and reflects critically of the findings that come from 2,904 subject review reports across 62 subject areas funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). QAA (2003) *Learning from Subject review 1993-2001*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

<sup>78</sup> The guide to the overall findings of quality reviews found that strategies for teaching and learning were now more common place, with greater clarity relating to learning outcomes and diverse teaching methods. QAA(2003)*Learning from Subject review 1993-2001*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, p5

institution, from being a “learner”, students would later have the more complicated role of a “consumer” of a product.<sup>79</sup> The 1997 Dearing report had made recommendations concerning setting standards for excellence in teaching and the significance of this guidance was seen a short while later when it became important to make the definition of subjects explicit. In 1999 HEFCE invited institutions to host subject centres for learning and teaching excellence in an attempt to promote good practice in Learning and Teaching across the sector.<sup>80</sup> Overall 24 subjects centres were set up across the UK, with the “Art, Design and Communication” centre based at the University of Brighton, and “History” based at the University of Glasgow.<sup>81</sup> These subject centres arguably took over the role previously formally performed by the CNAA subject committees in providing a central focus for the varied communities of practice associated with education; they were important actors in the networks surrounding disciplinary areas in academia, and in the domain of design became a boundary object that would link several communities of practice.

### **Design History and Design Studies –two communities within a network**

As the design history network in the UK was coming to terms with the challenges of negotiating the academic changes following the creation of new universities in 1992, the debate concerning the focus of the discipline was reignited across

<sup>79</sup> These broad shifts in the role and status of the student and the purpose of educational provision are beyond the scope of this particular thesis; for more on this issue see the work of Biggs, the Society for Research into Higher Education, and the current debate within the pages of the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES, now *THE*.)

<sup>80</sup> HEFCE (1999) Press Release 21 December 1999 "UK-wide network will promote good practice in learning and teaching in higher education"

<sup>81</sup> The new Conservative-Liberal coalition government in 2010 have instigated a restructure of these centres with many closing down as part of wide-ranging comprehensive spending review, ‘austerity measures’ and restructuring of government and Quango organizations. The impact and efficacy of these subject centres is an interesting topic worthy of further research.

international boundaries. Victor Margolin, a scholar working in the American educational system who had contributed to the development of design history, continued the debate about subject matter and methods in the domain by arguing for a new approach of "Design Studies."<sup>82</sup> This article was published in the international journal *Design Studies* but had resonance in Britain when Adrian Forty responded in the pages of the *Journal of Design History*.<sup>83</sup> The importance of this debate was made clear by the fact that it was reprinted in a special issue of *Design Issues* in 1995 that refocused attention on "some of the controversies and problems that surround the seemingly simple task of telling the history of design."<sup>84</sup> Margolin argued that design history should strive to produce a 'recognizable body of knowledge' and noted that it had not developed in this way but had grown as a response to initial literature such as Pevsner's. He saw that design history was opening up its topics, but by doing this he argued that it was becoming fragmented.<sup>85</sup> Due to the interdisciplinary nature of intellectual practice at the time, what he called the "dynamic crossings of intellectual boundaries", Margolin felt that early design historians should question "whether design history as it [had] been constituted...[was] a viable enterprise."<sup>86</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Margolin, V.(1995) "Design history or design studies: subject matter and methods", *Design Issues*, 13(2) . Originally given as a talk at conference in Milan in April 1991, and first published in 1992. Margolin, V.(1992) *Design Studies* 18(2) pp104-116.

<sup>83</sup> *Design Studies* was the journal of the Design Research Society, the society was initially founded in the UK in 1966, and its journal had been in publication since 1979. Forty, A. (1995) "DEBATE: A Reply to Victor Margolin", *Design Issues*, 11(1) pp.16-18 previously published in *Journal of Design History* 1993, 6(2) pp131-132. Adrian Forty had previously written the article "Design History: A Politique and a Pedagogy" and had worked on the team writing the Open University A305 course. His book *Objects of Desire* was published in 1986, although written earlier, became a key design historical text. Forty had lived with friends in London who included feminist intellectuals Rozsika Parker. Forty, A.(1973) "Design History: A Politique and a Pedagogy" *AAQ* 5(4)pp.48-49.

<sup>84</sup> Richard Buchanan, Dennis Doordan & Victor Margolin, "Introduction" *Design Issues*, Vol.11 (1) Spring 1995

<sup>85</sup> "we already have a fragmentation into histories of craft, graphic design, and industrial design" Margolin, V.(1995) "Design history or design studies: subject matter and methods", *Design Issues*. 13(2) p.9

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12

Margolin's views were regarded at the time as particularly negative and Forty took issue with them on three major points of difference.<sup>87</sup> Firstly, he felt that the question of judging quality in design, and more importantly trying to assess how people make those judgements, was "essential to the entire activity of design".<sup>88</sup> Secondly, he argued that Margolin had not given the design history community credit for embracing new areas of intellectual enquiry such as cultural studies and anthropology; and also, Forty proposed that there was no need to set boundaries as Margolin had advocated in a search for a 'recognizable body of knowledge'. Margolin's defence was that in order to determine issues of *quality* in design we needed a common understanding of the term *design*; his concern was; "that design history has not developed a self-conscious process of questioning its subject matter".<sup>89</sup> In response to the influence on design history from other areas of intellectual enquiry, Margolin raised the problem that historians had not critically engaged with the methodologies they used from these areas; he asked; "what makes the work produced under these influences design history rather than cultural studies or anthropology? This is a question that has never been answered and is at the heart of design history's difficulties?"<sup>90</sup> He supported this with the observation that there were many people studying design in different fields but whilst they may see design history as a meeting ground they usually identified with their primary

<sup>87</sup>Forty, A & DHS( 2007) *Oral History Interview with Adrian Forty*, Track 013

Discussion of AF's debate with Victor Margolin. AF can't remember why he felt the need to take up the challenge – objecting to PostStructuralist view that VM was promoting – "He seemed to be unreasonably negative about DH and how it has developed for reason that I don't now recall or understand. This was a response of a moment at that time in 1993...reading it again it seems very reasonable, and there is nothing that I disagree with." - suspects that VM might not have had to teach design students.

<sup>88</sup> Forty, A. (1995)"DEBATE: A Reply to Victor Margolin", *Design Issues*, 11 (1) p.16

<sup>89</sup> Margolin, V.(1995)" A Reply to Adrian Forty", *Design Issues*, 11 (1) p.19

<sup>90</sup> Margolin, V.(1995)" A Reply to Adrian Forty", *Design Issues*, 11 (1) pp.19-20

base within their particular institutional context.<sup>91</sup> This demonstrates an awareness of the network and the complexity of multiple communities of practice. Here Margolin raised the issue of the status of design history research within an university educational framework; his argument for recasting *design history* as *design studies* was linked to concerns for the survival of the discipline within an academic framework, survival in the environment of the University depended on making the subject of relevance.

A clear divide was articulated in these writings regarding what the focus of the discipline should be; was design history a particular type of interdisciplinary *historical* practice or should its relationship be mainly with *design* practitioners? This particular issue of definition and purpose in scholarly practice has proven to be pervasive across the network and continues to be re-visited. There is also a difference in the educational background and context for both authors. The issues of particular relevance for Margolin in America are influenced by the educational background, the United States did not have the grounding tradition of art and design education that was seen in Britain following the Coldstream report.

### **The Design History network, New Museology, and Reassessing the role of the Museum**

The broad changes in the higher education sector were very significant for the provision of design history courses, but more important for the broader network

<sup>91</sup> "There are people studying design in many different fields- anthropology, sociology, art history, cultural studies, American studies, material culture, technology studies, and history itself. While design history, as a concept, has provided a place where people from these fields sometimes meet, they usually continue to identify with their primary base and teach in their departments of origin." Margolin, V.(1995) "A Reply to Adrian Forty", *Design Issues*, 11 (1) p20

associated with design history during this decade were developments that extended and consolidated the scope of the discipline in new areas. The themes of networks, interactions, the interweaving of influences and multidisciplinary remained of influence throughout this decade and can be seen at work making links between the educational and academic community with impact in the museum and publishing worlds. This section will argue that during this decade the most significant developments in the design history domain can be seen in museums. This period saw significant developments in museums which operate as particularly important actors in the network, interacting and overlapping the spheres of education and publishing. In both of these broad areas there is clear evidence of shared influences and impact, with the work of design historians both informing and being informed by these developments. These developments are linked to scholarship associated with the *New Museology*; museums had new roles as cultural attractions, and responsibilities as researchers, interpreters and mediators of objects and histories in the public realm.

Two key texts on museums were published at the end of the 1980s that had significant impact of the discussion of museums and their social, political and cultural role throughout the 1990s and also had implications for design history. Firstly, the volume edited by Robert Lumley, *The Museum Time Machine*, proclaimed a need for a redefinition of the role of the museum at a time when the industry was in a stage of growth.<sup>92</sup> Secondly the volume edited by Peter Vergo *The New Museology* gave a name to a new direction in studies relating to museums and exhibitions.

<sup>92</sup> "Museums are an international growth industry. Not only are they increasing in numbers, but they are acquiring new functions in the organisation of cultural activities[sic]" cover text from Lumley, R., (1988) *The Museum Time Machine*, London: Routledge

Additionally, in the 1990s Susan Pearce and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill at the Department of Museum Studies at Leicester University also published research and trained graduates which contributed to significant shifts in the critical discussion and evaluation of the role of museums within society and the way that they were discussed in academia.

The *New Museology* anthology aimed to provoke reaction in the traditional museum establishment and to address issues that were of concern, drawing on viewpoints offered in the literature of adjacent disciplines. Julia Harrison discussed the idea of museums that was held at the beginning of the 1990s and emphasized that the underlying attitude was that a museum was a "overpowering cultural authority"<sup>93</sup>; throughout the 1990s these attitudes were explored and questioned, and a shift occurred which placed more emphasis on the democratic role of the museum and its function as an educational space for the public. Charles Saumarez-Smith, an assistant keeper at the V&A, tutor on the history of design course, and contributor to *The New Museology*, argued that museums needed to reconsider their position on three levels: firstly in terms of conservation of objects, where he believed that the life cycle of an artefact was its most important property, rather than striving to achieve the original state of the artefact; secondly, museums should consider the role of display and how this can affect the status of objects; and thirdly, museums should question the nature and purpose of museum scholarship (here he was influenced by developments occurring in material culture studies).<sup>94</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Quotation from Karp and Kratz (1991) "The fate of Tippoo's Tiger: a critical account of graphic display" p23 given by Julia D Harrison, her emphasis. Harrison, J.D. "Ideas of Museums in the 1990s" in Corsanne, G (ed) (2005) *Heritage, Museums and Galleries – An Introductory Reader* ( London: Routledge)p 39

<sup>94</sup> Saumarez-Smith, C., 'Museums, Artefacts, And Meanings' in Vergo, P.(ed)(1989) *The New Museology*, London: Reaktion. Charles Saumarez-Smith was an assistant keeper at the Victoria and Albert Museum with special responsibility for the V&A/RCA MA course in the history of design.



The end of the 1980s had seen what Robert Lumley describes as “a shift in the museum scene in Britain.”<sup>95</sup> It was boom time for the museums and heritage sector with museums being set up at the rate of one a fortnight.<sup>96</sup> Kevin Walsh offered an analysis of this new “heritage industry” in relation to a post-modern outlook and questioned how the past was being represented.<sup>97</sup> History and the past was being interpreted for the public in a range of locations and environments; in books, on the screen and in a variety of different settings ranging from historic sites, historic house collections and museums to the type of “heritage experience” that some critics compared to theme parks.<sup>98</sup> Kevin Moore offered a model for museums that suggested that they could learn lessons from the popular appeal of the constructed experiences of the past offered in heritage centres and attractions.<sup>99</sup> His 1997 book addressed the representation of popular culture, and thus has a direct correlation to the area of concern for design historians; the representation of the everyday and the telling of histories through designed objects.<sup>100</sup> The reconstructed display and particularly the “period rooms” or “recreated streets” often seen at open air museums such as Ironbridge, Beamish or the Black Country Museum, and, on a smaller scale, at local authority museums across the country, is often a cause for concern for museum professionals who view them in a somewhat disparaging manner. Even in large national museums there is consternation;

<sup>95</sup> Lumley, R., *op cit.*, p.18

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1 and also Palmer, N. “Museums and Cultural Property” in Lumley *The New Museology* p.172 “as no other time in our history has there existed so intense and interest in the preservation of our cultural patrimony. In England, new museums appearing at a rate of one of fortnight: also see report in the Times, 20th August 1988, the figure was produced by the Museums Association which in January 1989, launched ‘museums year’.

<sup>97</sup> Walsh, K.(1992) *The Representation of the Past - Museums and heritage in the post-modern world*, London: Routledge

<sup>98</sup> See; Colin Sorenson’s article “Theme Parks and Time Machines” in Vergo, P.(ed)(1989) *The New Museology*, London: Reaktion

<sup>99</sup> Moore, K(1997) *Museums and Popular Culture*, London: Cassell - part of the series “Contemporary Issues in Museum Culture”

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*

Saumarez-Smith discussed the central theoretical problems and dilemmas surrounding the display of period rooms within the V&A, the main issue of concern that he identified was the reluctance of curators to present these groups of objects in such a way to draw out the social context, key to this were issues regarding authenticity, authority and also audience.<sup>101</sup>

Moore noted the passion of the public for popular material culture displays and gave the example of the "People's shows" phenomenon, instigated by Walsall Museum and Art Gallery in 1990 which led to a national festival with over 47 museums taking part. These shows displayed collections owned by the general public; Moore saw these as being of great significance as an attempt to reflect popular culture.<sup>102</sup> He drew attention to the phenomenon that people respond to "the power of real things in a real place-or an authenticated reconstruction."<sup>103</sup> His model shows a relationship between the power of real place and the power of real things; a heritage experience venue may have no real things and gives full emphasis to interpretations, and this can be diametrically contrasted to a museum which might have an excellent collection of real things but allow the objects to 'speak for themselves'.<sup>104</sup> These can be compared to the heritage experience's lack of a 'sense of place' whereas the historic site is in an original place. Taking this model further a historic house collection would offer an ideal experience by having an excellent collection of real things in a real place, but a museum collection traditionally presents its objects without a sense of place. Saumarez-Smith also intimated that

<sup>101</sup> Saumarez-Smith, C *op.cit.*,

<sup>102</sup> Moore, K. *op.cit.*, p.82

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* p.142

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p.137 See figure 7.1

National Trust properties might be a better place to view original interiors than museums.<sup>105</sup>

Despite the public fondness and appreciation for created representations of the past as presented in period rooms and street scenes and the use of material culture to tell a particular history, curators had tended to be cautious of using objects as historical evidence. During the 1990s it was noted that curators were apprehensive in using objects as a direct source, as it was only in recent decades that this had been given academic attention. Lubar and Kingery's collection of essays that had discussed writing *History from Things* had tried to address the issue.<sup>106</sup> In the preface they set out the problem:

“Too seldom do we use the artefacts that make up our environment to understand the past. Too seldom do we try to read objects as we read books- to understand the people and times that created them, used them, and discarded them. In part this is because it is not easy to read history from things. They are illegible to those who know how to read only writing. They are mute to those who listen only for pronouncements from the past.. But they do speak; they can be read.”<sup>107</sup>

The volume was the result of an academic conference in America where attempts had been made to find similarities across a variety of different academic categories; art history, anthropology, archaeology, history of technology, sociology, cultural studies; the explicit aim was to “pierce the boundaries”.<sup>108</sup> This demonstrated that the complex network surrounding the scholarly interpretation of objects extended internationally. This American approach to the issue may not have been directly

<sup>105</sup> Saumarez-Smith, C. *op.cit*

<sup>106</sup> Lubar S. and Kingery, W.D. (eds.) (1993) *History from Things – Essays on Material Culture*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. Based on Conference Proceedings: “History from Things: The Use of Objects in Understanding the Past” Smithsonian Institute – April 1989. In the following decade, the 2000s, more scholarly attention has been given to the period room display, See discussion about the AHRC Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior and the Modern Interiors Research Centre at Kingston University in chapters seven and eight.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p.viii

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p.x

influenced by design historical methods but it certainly drew on discussions that had started in UK a decade earlier.<sup>109</sup>

An arena where a direct connection of design historical research upon museum displays can be seen is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The following chapter gives two case studies to discuss these links in detail; the Masters degree course jointly taught with the Royal College of Art and the redisplay of the British Art and Design Galleries. The V&A, and its Research Department, is an institution where the connections between actors in the design history network are evident. We could regard the institution of the V&A as a boundary object; it is a site of interaction between many communities of practice involved in the domain of designed objects and their histories. The museum has particularly close links with the DHS, an extensive collection of 'decorative art' and designed objects, and has been a significant arena where debates occurred due to its links with academic study.<sup>110</sup>

At the end of the 1980s the Museum had faced a period of crisis; the government was concerned about the organization of the museum and demanded accountability which subsequently led to changes. The experience was bitter and director Roy Strong left the museum due to disagreements with the board of trustees; many curators lost their jobs, or left their jobs, as a different structure was imposed on

<sup>109</sup> Drawing on the intellectual environment coming from Cultural Studies and "new" art history and early Design History as promoted in the US by Design Issues and the scholarship of Victor Margolin. In the US "material culture studies" was emerging. There was one UK academic at the conference.

<sup>110</sup> The link to the RCA Masters course in design history, its staff and students, Museum has allowed the DHS to use rooms within the museum for many of its executive and editorial meetings.

the museum under the new directorship of Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll.<sup>111</sup> Esteve-Coll hoped that recording the research activities would serve to “alleviate the fears of those who believed that the proposed reorganization of the museum would lead to an instantaneous collapse of all scholarly activity within it”.<sup>112</sup> A Research Department was set up under the leadership of Charles Saumarez-Smith, former head of the MA History of Design course.<sup>113</sup> From 1990 the museum became more aware of the importance of its research activities and an annual report was made of research activity across all departments in the museum.<sup>114</sup> By 1992 it was noted that much of the best quality research in the museum was linked to the development of new galleries and that it was “evident how forthcoming major gallery and exhibition projects provide the engine for new research.”<sup>115</sup> This research was also facilitated by curators and project leaders being seconded to the Research Department, where it was acknowledged that the galleries had “a high degree of authority in the ways in which they engage with the subject areas represented by the displays.”<sup>116</sup> These successes highlighted the challenge of research management that effective support needed to be provided for the

<sup>111</sup> John Styles discusses the changes in his oral history interviews. Styles & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with John Styles* Track 7. Also see Roy Strong’s memoirs for a discussion of his relationship with the trustees of the V&A. Strong, R. (1997) *The Roy Strong Diaries: 1967-87*, London: Phoenix paperbacks

<sup>112</sup> Esteve-Coll, E “Message from the director” research report 1990, Victoria and Albert Museum. Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll was director of the museum from 1987 to 1995.

<sup>113</sup> When Charles Saumarez-Smith became head of the new V&A Research Department the Headship of the MA course was vacant. John Styles subsequently returned to the V&A as Head of Postgraduate Studies in 1991. Styles & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with John Styles* track 7

<sup>114</sup> The reports detail work done by the Research Department and curators in other departments, these were produced in response to criticism of the museum and its ability to “maintain its profile as a leading centre of research in the history of the applied arts” (Message from the Director - Research report 1990) These annual reports are available from the V&A museums website.

<sup>115</sup> Examples given included works by Michael Snodin and Maurice Howard (of University of Sussex) linked to the European ornament Gallery; and Susan Lambert and Jeremy Aynsley linked to the new 20th-century gallery. - Research report 1992, Victoria and Albert Museum.

<sup>116</sup> “The European ornament Gallery and 20th-century gallery benefited from the use of the Museum’s Research Department and its research and to assist with the management of specific research projects. “It cannot be coincidence that both countries have been enthusiastically received by teachers and students. Both have a high degree of authority the ways in which they engage with the subject areas represented by the display.” Research report 1992, Victoria and Albert Museum.

academic content: "we are making progress: but it requires a difficult balance between the demands of academic freedom and the need for effective central management."<sup>117</sup> This comment shows that the relationship between academia and museums, that was evident when forming the V&A/RCA MA course, pervaded the institutional structure.

The curatorial structure of the museum, based around materials, led to difficulties with collecting objects from the everyday. The only department acquiring this category of objects had been the Circulation Department, although this had closed in 1977. When the new '20th Century Art And Design Gallery' opened in 1992 it contained examples of industrial design that had not previously been displayed in the museum such as household appliances and stereo equipment.<sup>118</sup> This would cause debate that continued through the decade about where the wide variety of design objects could be incorporated within the museums curatorial structure. Director of the V&A Alan Borg acknowledged in 2001 that the traditional division of the museum into Primary Galleries and Materials and Techniques Galleries had the effect of placing the V&A in a "curatorial straight-jacket [sic] that is all too often meaningless to our visitors".<sup>119</sup> The move towards a multidisciplinary, and multi-departmental, approach was yet to pervade the traditional museum practice in the

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> The circulation department had a small collection of radios though few additions had been made to this the department's closure in 1977. The circulation dept of the V&A collecting objects for travelling exhibitions, this formed basis of the 20th C collection. When the department closed in 1977 the objects were dispersed throughout the other departments. There is an interesting parallel to the establishment of design history here with a connection to the art schools. Christopher Wilk notes that there was a different culture among the staff of that dept as "most were trained at art schools rather than at private schools and universities" Wilk C "Collecting the Twentieth Century" in Baker, M. & Richardson, B. (eds.) (1997) *A Grand Design - The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, London: V&A Publications. Although this is too early to suggest a correlation, cause and effect, between the influences of design history it does suggest that the Art school environment that had nurtured DH had a different culture and approach to the everyday objects than traditional education.

<sup>119</sup> Borg, A. (2001) "Patron Views: Design in the Museum" *DHS Newsletter* No 89, April 2001, p3. Alan Borg was director of the V&A from 1995-2001 and patron of the DHS from 1998-2001.

institution, although traditional boundaries were starting to be challenged with the large British Galleries redisplay project. (For more on this see case study in chapter six). Christopher Wilk argued that if the museum wished to refer to itself as a 'Museum of design' and to "embrace its Victorian roots as well as to re-create itself for a new century" it needed to address these issues.<sup>120</sup> The physical location of the RCA history of design MA course within the Research Department of the museum, and the research culture promoted by the Thursday afternoon seminars, was one step towards enabling debate on these issues.<sup>121</sup>

At the end of the 1990s museums were under greater pressure to attract big audiences; "blockbuster" art exhibitions at museums such as the Tate, the National Gallery, and major overseas institutions, had the potential to create a big market for commercial activities of the Museums. The traditional catalogue raisonné or exhibition hand list were becoming outdated, and new printing technologies enabled illustrated catalogues to be produced with accompanying essays. The V&A, with its new Research Department, saw this as a chance to demonstrate the importance of the Museum and also raise revenue. V&A Publications produced detailed exhibition catalogues, complete with extensively researched essays, which were significant books which could be read independently of the exhibition. In 1997 *A Grand Design*

<sup>120</sup> Wilk C "Collecting the Twentieth Century" in Baker, M. & Richardson, B. (eds.) (1997) *A Grand Design - The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, London: V&A Publications

<sup>121</sup> For more on this see case study in the following chapter and also the discussion by Wilk *op cit.* p351. The role of education staff became increasingly important within the museum environment during this period. In addition to the conventional functions of a museum, to collect, conserve and display objects, and the commercial functions of the museum shop and restaurant, educational activity gained serious attention from academics, government, the press and sponsors. With the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988, and its 1995 changes the museums educational purpose became more explicit and that same year the V&A education department was established. Later in the decade, 1997, the Design Museum opened the Dyson Centre for design education with sponsorship.

was published to accompany a touring exhibition showcasing treasures of the V&A but it also showcased the scholarship of the museums curators and scholars in the Research Department.<sup>122</sup> The year 1999 saw another lavish publication *The Power of the Poster* accompanying an exhibition of the same name.<sup>123</sup> These publications lead the way for a series of stylistically-led chronological major exhibitions that the Museum put on at the beginning of the 21st century; Art Nouveau, Art Deco, Modernism, Cold War Modern, Postmodernism each with their accompanying scholarly catalogue.<sup>124</sup> Alan Powers argued that this was a global trend with museum catalogues changing from being an item that once was carried around an exhibition to being the souvenir purchased as you leave the exhibition.<sup>125</sup> This development had particular relevance at the V&A due to the new academic department within the museum, the link with the Royal College of Art postgraduate course. Powers also recognized the importance of this as being the site where “design history was building its intellectual foundations and asserting its independence from art history and connoisseurship.”<sup>126</sup> Despite being only one of several ‘boundary objects’ important for the development of design history in Britain, the V&A has particular significance as an example in this thesis as it demonstrates a Latourian network in action. Surrounding the V&A there are a range of *actors* in the design history *network*, these actors encompass individuals,

<sup>122</sup> The exhibition was organized in association with the Baltimore Museum of Art and toured there, and the Museum of fine arts, Boston; Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; the Museum of fine arts, Houston; fine arts museums of San Francisco; before returning to be displayed at the V&A Museum in London from 14th October 1999 to 16th January 2000.

<sup>123</sup> Timmers, M. (ed) (1999) *The Power of the Poster* London; V&A publications.

<sup>124</sup> *Art Nouveau 1890-1914* was on display from the 6<sup>th</sup> April to 30th July 2000; *Art Deco 1910-1939*, was on display from the 27<sup>th</sup> March to 30<sup>th</sup> July 2003; *Modernism-designing a New World 1914-1939* was on display from the 6<sup>th</sup> April to 23rd July 2006; *Cold War Modern – Design 1945- 1970* on display from the 25 September 2008 to 11 January 2009; and *Postmodernism* from 24<sup>th</sup> September 2011 to 15 January 2012. See further discussion in Chapter Seven.

<sup>125</sup> Alan Powers “Artists who redrafted the creative rule books” *The Times Higher Education Supplement* -November 24, 2006

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*



objects, events, ideas, and institutions all interacting to create a network. Examples of *individuals as actors* include the researchers, tutors, authors and curators; *objects as actors*, the galleries, their artefacts, the catalogue publications and the exhibitions themselves; *events as actors* include research meetings, seminars, and lectures; *ideas*, new museology, design history, history of decorative arts; and finally the *institutions*, Research Department, the museum curatorial departments, and V&A Publications.

### **Increasing Scope of Publishing in the Domain of Design**

This chapter has discussed the discipline of design history in relation to the contribution of educational structures, and museum changes; these areas are brought together by the common factor of the production of new scholarship. The new museum catalogues are examples of publications that bring together the worlds of museums, academia and publishing. The area where changes and developments in the design history domain are most clearly seen is within the published literature that disseminates research and scholarship by members of the design history network; and this section considers works that were published during this decade which show the changes in direction in design history studies that these publications demonstrate. The problem of assessing the resources and publications in a new discipline was one of the first issues addressed by the predecessor of the DHS, the AAH's design history publications sub-committee. The unenviable task of surveying published sources in the design history domain was undertaken by specialist art librarian Antony Coulson. Conducting a bibliographic search for design history books is particularly difficult due to the fluid boundaries of the discipline; one needs to question what makes one book 'design history' and

another 'history of design' or 'decorative arts history'? There is no simple solution; there is no Dewey classification for design history in a library, nor can one easily look for design history in the book title or library catalogue.<sup>127</sup> The 1990s saw two significant changes that meant that the publication of books on design were more attractive for publishers; firstly, there was increased market demand and secondly, technological advances in printing made illustrated books less expensive to produce.

Scholarly publications include the literature that helps form the direction of an academic discipline in the production of academic endeavours; these include conference papers, journal articles and academic theses (although many of both the former and latter remained unpublished). During the 1990s a number of new journals began publication and established journals had special issues that directly focused the attention on the scope of design history. Previous discussion of the DHS's role and influence on the wider network concluded that the editorial board of its *Journal of Design History* had the power to direct the academic discipline by its selections, which helped to characterize and promote study in the domain.<sup>128</sup> Some of the new journals established during the 1990s demonstrate new thinking about objects and evidence of interdisciplinary approaches in academia. In 1994 the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* began publication and clearly stated its multidisciplinary approaches and welcomed "debate over the nature and meaning of

<sup>127</sup> By searching for the words "design history" in a library catalogue, books about computer programming are often returned. While researching this section the simplest approach was to consult my own bookshelves and database, reading lists for design history courses, a list of the books reviewed by the *Journal of Design History* and the bibliographies of key texts.

<sup>128</sup> "the real power of the DHS lies on the editorial board of the JDH...reflects the fact that the journal is seen as really what defines and projects the subject and so that is where the real action and power is" Styles & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with John Styles* Track 09. See case study discussion of the DHS and *Journal of Design History* in chapter 4.

heritage as well as its links to memory, identities and place.”<sup>129</sup> The same year a biannual publication of student work from the V&A/RCA history of design programme commenced as the magazine *Things* showcased the work that had been under-taken by students on the course.<sup>130</sup> Sage publishers launched the *Journal of Material Culture* in 1996 with the aim of exploring “the relationship between artefacts and social relations.”<sup>131</sup> Evidence of a more open approach to writing histories came with the publication of the journal *Rethinking History*, published by Routledge, which commenced in 1997. This journal was able to “challenge the accepted ways of doing history”, and allowed for debate to “expand the boundaries of the discipline.”<sup>132</sup> This year also saw the beginning of the Berg-published journal *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* which facilitated the publication of current scholarship contextualising dress and fashion. On a different scale, but of interest in demonstrating the importance of the design history network, was the publication of a collection of essays by postgraduate students on the V&A/RCA history of design course entitled *One Off in 1997*.<sup>133</sup> The work of doctoral students is another key area where the direction of scholarship can be seen, although the readership and audiences for these design history outputs would be even more limited than those for either academic journals conference proceedings or volumes published by student groups. In these cases unless elements of research findings made their way into journals the only locations for accessing this research at this time were through either the British Library or the awarding institution. As

<sup>129</sup> The aims and scope of the journal as given on the publisher's website.

<sup>130</sup> Initially a biennial publication it has now become occasional – see [www.thingsmagazine.net](http://www.thingsmagazine.net)

<sup>131</sup> Aims and scope of the journal as given on the publisher's website.

<sup>132</sup> Aims and scope of the journal as given on the publisher's website. [www.tandf.co.uk/journals](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals)

<sup>133</sup> RCA (1997) *One Off: a collection of essays by postgraduate students on the Victoria and Albert Museum/Royal College of Art course in the history of design*. London: V&A/RCA

technology progressed in the following decade it would become easier for scholarship to spread across the network, both formally and informally.<sup>134</sup>

Academic publishers in Britain were strongly influenced by changes in the educational context. The 1990s saw a definite increase in the numbers of academic publications in the domain of design, and visual and material cultures; these included the publication of several introductory texts to the new disciplinary areas that were now being taught in a larger post-1992 university sector.<sup>135</sup> Malcolm Barnard, author of an introduction to *Art Design and Visual Culture*, acknowledges the changing context that enabled an increase in academic publishing;

"the present volume, for example, is the result of the interests of some parts of the academic community coincided with the interests of the academic publishing industry in the context of increasing awareness of the centrality and significance of the visual and the cultural."<sup>136</sup>

Any attempt to quantify this increase in publication is fraught with difficulty, but a brief survey of the publication dates of design-historical-related texts in a university library gives an indication of the changing publishing landscape. The increase in the first half of the 1990s in comparison to the second half of the decade is clear; from 1990 to 1994 an average of nine books per year are on the library shelves, from

<sup>134</sup> The online publication of research and the development of technology that allows electronic access to journal articles that occurred during the first decade of the 21st century would have a dramatic effect the transmission of academic research enabling easier access to current research. The publishing sector has had to embrace new methods of publication in addition to traditional print format for example, offering articles available to download as PDF files and the development of e-journals.

<sup>135</sup> Introductions to visual culture, 'new' art history, cultural theory and popular culture. For example, Pointon, M.(1986)*History of art: a Student's Handbook* 2nd edn London: Routledge, This text was reprinted in 1992, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition in 1994, reprinted 1994 and 1996 and currently in its 4<sup>th</sup> edition 1997; Conway, H. (1992) *Design History: A Student's Handbook*. London: Routledge; Storey, J (1993) *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, Hertfordshire, Harvester Wheatsheaf. Walker, J.A. & Chaplin, S.(1997)*Visual Culture: an Introduction*, Manchester: Manchester University Press

<sup>136</sup> Barnard, M. (1998) *Art Design and Visual Culture*, London: Palgrave Macmillan p7

1995 to 1999 the average increases significantly to 37 books per year.<sup>137</sup> Publishers had various specialist areas that they served; for example both Phaidon and Thames and Hudson are specialist arts publishers, the Open University Press concentrated on books related to its courses, and Routledge and various university presses publish cutting-edge scholarship often linked to new work published in the journals they print.<sup>138</sup> Thames and Hudson's "world of art" series contains new editions published this decade such as Richard Hollis's *Concise History of Graphic Design* (1994) and O'Hara Callan's reference book *Dictionary of Fashion and Fashion Designers* (updated edition 1998). Oxford University Press included a book on *20th Century Design* (1997) in its 'Oxford History of Art' series and Jonathan Woodham was invited to write this text. He, like many in the design historical community, was keen that design was represented in a history of art series.<sup>139</sup> The publication of this book is evidence of the growing authority of design history and the fact that publishers felt there was a market for a 'text book' on the study of 20th century design.

In addition to the introductory books and reference books on design and design historical study discussed above are the direct products of design history scholarship. The Manchester University Press series "studies in design and material culture" was the main output for design historical publications in this decade and

<sup>137</sup> Data has been taken from a search using Endnote bibliographic software drawing on books owned by Northumbria University library. The 1990 to 1994 total was 45 which divided by five years gives an average of nine; 1995 to 1999 total was 183 which divided by five gives an average of 36.6.

<sup>138</sup> For example Oxford University Press, Manchester University Press, and American institutions such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT press) and Yale University Press.

<sup>139</sup> Woodham, J.M.(1997)*Twentieth-Century Design*, Oxford : Oxford University Press. The book was well received by the design historical community despite Woodham being unhappy with the final product. Woodham comments that he was disappointed with the presentation of the book by the publishers, the choice of image for the cover design, and the indexing and is also keen to update the text in a second edition; he states that he "would write it differently now." Source DHS ( 2008) *DHS Oral History Interview with Jonathan Woodham*, Track 11

continued to publish a wide variety of topics in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The stated aim of the series was to address history by “Placing everyday, mass-produced objects and the decorative arts in their cultural, artistic and historical context, the series presents new sources and approaches to this subject in a concise and accessible form.”<sup>140</sup> Authors of books in the series included design historians Judy Attfield, Christopher Breward, Clive Edwards, David Crowley, Paul Jobling, Elizabeth McKellar and Moira Vincentelli. Topics in the 1990s ranged from craft and ceramics to furniture, graphic design and city planning. The following decade would see an expansion of topics geographically to include issues of globalization and also chronologically to include the Renaissance.<sup>141</sup> At the end of the decade Berg published a series “materialising culture” that was broadly anthropologically based but also included the volume *Material Memories- Design and Evocation* which published papers from a conference organized by the V&A/RCA history design course.<sup>142</sup>

Other categories of publications that often appear on booklists for design students include picture books, coffee table books, design sourcebooks, and books for collectors. Taschen started publishing in 1985 and throughout the 1990s began to produce lavishly illustrated volumes such as *Modern Chairs*, *1000 chairs*, *Design of the 20th century*, and a series of sourcebooks on decorative arts in different decades.<sup>143</sup> Advances in print and market demand saw a particular boom in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with publications such as *Fashion Now*, *Scandinavian Design*, and *1000*

<sup>140</sup> Stated aims of the series - [www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/catalogue](http://www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/catalogue)

<sup>141</sup> Maynard, M.(2004) *Dress and Globalisation*, Manchester: Manchester University Press; O'Malley, M. & Welch, E. (eds.) (2007) *The Material Renaissance*, Manchester: Manchester University Press

<sup>142</sup> Aynsley, J Kwint, M & Breward, C. (1999) *Material memories: design and evocation*, Oxford: Berg

<sup>143</sup> Edited by Charlotte and Peter Fiell ; Fiell, C & P(1997) *1000 Chairs*, London: Taschen. Fiell, C & P (1999) *Design of the 20th century*, London: Taschen, and also a series of source books; *Decorative Art, 1900s, 1910s; 30s, 40s Decorative Art : A Source Book; 50s Decorative Art : A Source Book 60s Decorative Art : A Source Book; 70s Decorative Art : A Source Book*

*Record Covers*. Although these books contained introductory essays the predominant focus was the illustrations of objects; information was given on the producers and designers, but they contained little in the way of social or historical context. Another group of books that had a similar approach focused on 'design classics' and 'cult objects'. Phiadon produced a series of monograph books celebrating design classics, the Design Museum published survey books such as McDermott's *20th century design* (1997) and Dyson's *Design - 20<sup>th</sup> Century Icons* (1999).<sup>144</sup> American publishers Allworth Press, in association with the American Institute of Graphic Arts, produced a series of critical writings on graphic design (edited by Steven Heller) these books don't claim to be design history, as many contributors are designers rather than academic historians, but these books contribute to the large amount of writing in graphic design that began being published in the 1990s.

A final category of books relating to design, material culture and decorative arts could be described as collector's books. These texts often focused on selected categories of object and provided a starting point or resource for those in the design history network; although academics would not class these as the outputs of scholarly work, they still demonstrate expertise. In this category could also be auction catalogues and specialist magazines such as *The Burlington Magazine* and *Apollo*. The Antiques Collectors Club publishes connoisseurial texts and has published a series on design, which focuses on individual designers and takes an art

<sup>144</sup> McDermott, C.(1997)*Twentieth Century Design*,London: Carlton Books and Dyson, J.(1999)*Design - 20th Century Icons* ,London: Absolute Press

historical approach.<sup>145</sup> The extensive collection of Robert Opie, an early member of the DHS and owner of the Museum of Brands and Packaging, is the subject of a 1999 book *Remember When* published by Mitchell Beazley which gives a chronological look at everyday packaging and products. Other books for collectors include Millers guides, targeted at auction-goers, and Shire guides which provide information for enthusiasts and collectors. Shire publications was founded in 1962 and since then has produced several ranges of 'pocket guides' and larger books under the categories, 'Shire Library', 'Shire Discovering Classics' and 'Shire Collections'.<sup>146</sup> The influence of changing approaches to history can be seen in the range of publications from Shire. They have introduced a range recently called 'Shire Living Histories' which shows social history written taking account of developments in design historical method and this makes design history accessible to a wider audience.

The range of books published throughout this decade demonstrate the beginning of a move away from a narrowly-focused range of publications that were limited to celebrating the pioneers of mass-produced and industrial subjects. Although publishers still serviced the market for this type of book they also acknowledge changing intellectual trends and there is evidence of a reappraisal of the approach to publications on the 'decorative arts', design and material culture. This demonstrates the influence of the wider Design Historical network, across the worlds of collecting, curating and educating, and in evidence in the outputs of the

<sup>145</sup> Publications include: E. McKnight Kauffer; Edward Bawden and Eric Ravilious ; Paul Nash and John Nash; Jan Le Witt and George Him; Festival of Britain; Harold Curwen & Oliver Simon: Curwen Press; David Gentleman; David Mellor; Rodchenko; and Lissitzky.

<sup>146</sup> The *Shire Library* gives "accessible and concise introductions to subjects from the worlds of history heritage and collectables," *Shire Discovering Classics* is "a series of pocket guides to a wide range of subjects" whereas *Shire Collections* are larger format luxury paperbacks.



commercial publishing world. The end of the 1980s and early years of the 1990s had seen the establishment and consolidation of a strong academic presence for intellectuals discussing issues of gender, craft, and new cultural and historical approaches to material culture.<sup>147</sup>

Within writings on design there is clear evidence of a chronological expansion. Interest moves beyond 20th century topics such as reassessing modernism and the Bauhaus, or evaluating the “good design” debate, the COID and the Festival of Britain. It also reaches back further in time before the discussion of the 1851 great exhibition and “industrial Britain”. The influence of the scholarship from the Research Department at the V&A, and its relationship with the V&A/RCA history of design course, is seen in Charles Saumarez-Smith’s *18th Century Decoration-Design and the Domestic Interior in England*, and furniture-historian Peter Thornton’s *Form and Decoration: Innovation In The Decorative Arts In 1470-1870* both of these approach decorative arts with a concern for social and historical context.<sup>148</sup> It is also demonstrated by a conference and special issue of the *Journal of Design History* focusing on the 18th century.<sup>149</sup> The design historical focus of the book for the British Galleries also demonstrates the importance of the influence of design history

<sup>147</sup> Academic journals established included: 1989 *Gender and History*; 1989 *Journal of Women’s History*; 1990 *Women. A Cultural Review* and 1992 *Women’s History Review*. A two-part special issue of the *Journal of Design History* was edited by Tanya Harrod 1997 Volume 10(4) “Craft, Culture and Identity” and 1998 Volume 11(1) “Craft, Modernism and Modernity” New approaches were seen in the pages of the *Journal of Material Culture* established in 1996

<sup>148</sup> Saumarez-Smith’s volume was published by Weidenfield & Nicholson in 1993 with the text re-issued as *The Rise of Design* by Pimlico in 2000. An accompanying text by Weidenfield & Nicholson was a Charlotte Gere and Michael Whiteway’s 1993 *19th century design: from Pugin to Macintosh* although this again took the format of Pevsner’s pioneers of modern design. Peter Thornton was a curator at the V&A’s furniture and woodwork department, then curator at Sir John Soanes museum, London. He was also chairman of the Furniture History Society (1974-84). Thornton, P (1998) *Form and Decoration: Innovation In The Decorative Arts In 1470-1870* London: Weidenfield & Nicholson.

<sup>149</sup> For example, papers from a 1997 DHS conference at Brighton published in the *Journal of Design History* special issue edited by Helen Clifford. 1999 JDH 12(3) “Eighteenth-Century Markets and Manufactures in England and France”

and working relationships between curators and academics within the museum.<sup>150</sup> A further example of an expanding chronological scope for design history is evidenced by the establishment of the Renaissance specialism on the V&A/RCA History of Design in 1996; this was an important move in consolidating the presence of design history within the museum, and enabled wider access to archives and resources. As the 21st century begins design historical publications are flourishing; design historians are addressing a broad timeframe and design history has a strong position within academic education, the museum world and publishing.

The most important theme seen during this decade was the expansion of design history in the publishing and museums sector, moving beyond its initial consolidation within an educational framework. The decade had seen institutional structural changes, with polytechnics becoming new universities, and the activities of individual lecturers began to exert wider influence as opportunities arose to publish, which were also driven by requirements of Research Assessment. This development and increase in academic publishing parallels the changes in education; as academic publishers recognized the need to expand their portfolio to cover the new types of courses offered at universities. Design history goes beyond earlier 'history of design' concerns of reassessing modernism and focusing on industrial design that were formed by way of reaction to the disciplines heritage from art history, however there continues to be a debate concerning the boundaries of the discipline in terms of acceptable subject matter, purpose and method, yet these debates are primarily linked to the context of Design education. The broader range of locations in which the influence of members of the academic design history

<sup>150</sup> Styles and Snodin (2000) *Design and the Decorative Arts*, London: Victoria and Albert Museum

network is seen during this period, particularly in museums and publishing, show that the discipline is established and consolidated. This parallels the further expansion during this decade in terms of subject matter and chronological scope. There was an associated increase in scholarship relating to museums and new ideas relating to museology prompted an assessment of the use of objects and critical appraisal of their role as evidence for telling histories. Further changes in the museum world subtly changed the role of the museum; issues related to funding of national museums brought requirements to prove their value to the public and this gave additional impetus for research and education within museums. The following chapter elaborates this issue by the way of two case studies relating to design history in the V&A and reflects on its relevance for the wider development of design history.

## **Chapter 6 – The 1990s - The expanding influence of the design history network:**

### **An examination of design history in the museums sector through the V&A/RCA History of Design MA course and the V&A British Galleries project**

The importance of different communities of practice, events and institutions for the development of the design history network has fluctuated at various moments in time. Initially, communities of practice surrounding educational regulation and events were of most significance in determining the nature and academic recognition of design history activities throughout the 1970s and 80s. These communities of practice occurred in relation to the CNAA, the establishment of degree courses, the formation of the DHS and the editorial board of the *Journal of Design History*. As the previous chapter has discussed, by the 1990s design historians were starting to gain recognition as presenting a distinct approach to scholarship relating to designed objects and this was beginning to have an influence in the museums sector. This chapter will make this explicit by focusing on two significant developments at the V&A; firstly, the joint master's-level history of design course with the Royal College of Art and secondly, the major redisplay of the British art and design galleries at the museum, which was influenced by members of the design history network surrounding the course. Both of these developments demonstrate the gathering momentum of design history as a discipline in its own right and the network of influence in the wider design history domain. This chapter gives explicit examples of the design history network's expansion beyond critical and contextual studies in art and design education, which had been the initial site of its formation,

and into the sphere of historical interpretation of objects for the museum-going public.

As a graduate of the MA course in 2001 I approached this section of research with a certain amount of trepidation, and a concerned awareness for balancing my assessment of the significance of the V&A due to personal links with the institution. This example emphasizes the central significance of institutions such as the DHS and the RCA/V&A's MA course in fostering the network of connections that has enabled, and continues to enable, design history to go from strength to strength. Although still a small area of academic practice, the personal and professional relationships are of great significance for building connections between the strands of the network. Although the V&A/RCA MA History of Design course was established in 1982 it is discussed here because it had increased significance and impact throughout this decade. The V&A's newly displayed British Galleries were opened to the public in 2001 but the formative research and development of this project demonstrates clear links to the research culture in the museum during the 1990s. It is an unequivocal example of Latour's theory showing the inter-relations and influences of actors associated with the design history network. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of how both the V&A/RCA course research seminars and the British galleries also allowed engagement on the periphery of design history communities of practice and served to present design history as an accessible and democratic form of historical practice that will develop further in the new millennium.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Design history increasingly makes history more democratic and accessible to the public in the new millennium by influencing the presentation of history in televised programmes. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Case study I: The establishment and development of the V&A/RCA History of Design course and associated research culture in the museum.**

The importance of the V&A/RCA MA History of Design degree course, founded in 1982, was that due to its close collaboration with the V&A Museum, it expanded the subject's base taking it from its ties with the art school and polytechnic sector into the broader environment of museums.<sup>2</sup> The Royal College of Art is an institution with a long history that is intertwined with the history of art and design in terms of teaching, philosophy, and creative output generally.<sup>3</sup> In much the same way the college's masters' level course in *History of Design* has reflected and contributed to developments and changes in the direction of design history. Tim Putnam has argued that during the 1990s the course had a stronger influence on the nature of design historical studies than the DHS and this viewpoint will be evaluated by considering the course as both a *boundary object* for communities of practice and as an *actor* in the wider design history *network*.<sup>4</sup> This case study will consider the beginnings of the course, discuss the relationship with the V&A, and examine the course curricula to chart changes within the discipline. It will consider how the course has reacted to changes in design history scholarship but will also

<sup>2</sup> It is important for me to declare my personal interest; I am a graduate of the course and studied during the period 1999 to 2001.

<sup>3</sup> From its establishment, in 1837 as the Government School of Design, The Royal College of Art's importance in design education has been great. For an institutional history see: Frayling, C. (1987) *The Royal College of Art: 150 years of art and design*, London: Barrie & Jenkins; Catterall, C. & Frayling, C. (1995) *Design of the Times: One hundred years of the Royal College of Art*, London: Richard Dennis Publishing; and Frayling, C. (1999) *Art and Design - one hundred years of the Royal College of Art*, London: Collins & Brown.

<sup>4</sup> Putnam, T. & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam* Track 6 [21.30] "Certain institutions have been stronger than the Society in terms of maintaining an arena for discussion of the subject". "Recently development of post-graduate course at V&A/RCA has gradually become more important in defining and informing understanding the subject."

examine how it has shaped the design history network by its function as a site for interaction and influence of scholarship by providing an arena for the development of new research and outputs by staff and graduates of the course.

Cultural and film historian Christopher Frayling had been appointed in 1979 to head the “General Studies” Department of the Royal College of Art with a brief to bring about a closer link between theory and practice.<sup>5</sup> Frayling was aware of the growth of design history as an academic discipline, and scarcity of postgraduate provision at the time, and felt that as a postgraduate college the RCA should develop a masters-level history of design course building on its historic links to the V&A museum.<sup>6</sup> The two institutions were close, both in physical geography in South Kensington, and historically, when the museum was seen as a force for educating new designers by offering examples of “good design”.<sup>7</sup> The relationship between the two institutions to form a single course was made possible by the enthusiasm for the project of Roy Strong, the museum’s director, who was keen that the course played

<sup>5</sup> This issue was seen across the art and design college sector; making theoretical and historical work of more direct relevance to practitioners. In an attempt to do this he renamed the department “cultural history”.

<sup>6</sup> At the beginning of the 1980s there was little postgraduate provision in the history of design. Courses included one being developed at Middlesex Polytechnic, as discussed previously, and a Postgraduate diploma in History of Art and Design at Birmingham Polytechnic. [CNAAs report of the visit to Birmingham Polytechnic, July 1981, National Archives DB3/2061.] In 1983 Central School of Art and Design proposed a ‘Postgraduate Diploma in design history’ that was viewed by the visiting committee as poor and ill-thought out, and “disappointing” [File report of a consultative meeting in connection with a proposal from the Central School of Art and Design, held 7<sup>th</sup> July 1983, National Archives DB3/2067] Later in the 1980s a part-time postgraduate Diploma in History of Art and Design in the modern Period at Winchester School of Art was approved for one intake in September 1986. [Report of a visit to Winchester School of Art on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1986, National Archives DB3/2917]

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Frayling would constantly defend the links between the two institutions citing Henry Cole’s educational agenda for the South Kensington museum (V&A) to educate designers and the origins of the Royal College of Art in the education department of the museum. He was the official historian of the Royal College of Art and had published two books on the subject: Frayling(1987)*Op.cit.* & (1999)*Op.cit.* In the course curricula, over its 20 year duration, Frayling would give an annual welcome lecture emphasising the historical connections between the museum and the college. From 1993 this lecture was entitled “100 years of the RCA”. Source: The Royal College of Art, humanities department, rolling programmes.

an important role in both the academic world and in transforming the traditional museum establishment; Strong stated that;

“The aim was to establish design history as a serious academic discipline.... But, although naturally it remained unarticulated at the time, it was also aimed at gingering up complacency within the V&A, where curators too often believed that they alone 'knew'.”<sup>8</sup>

This comment indicates that although design history was recognized in some education sectors there was still some way to go in achieving wider recognition and a broader influence amongst those interested in design and decorative arts.

With Strong's go-ahead the course started very quickly, but the formation of the course was not easy as it attempted to shake up long established traditions in the care of and research of the 'decorative arts'. Strong's diary entries at the time reveal some of the attitudes encountered:

"I am now trying to struggle towards establishing the Royal College of Art/Victoria and Albert Museum MA in History of Decorative Arts and Design. There is the usual violent opposition from a lot of the Keepers who have a withering dislike of the RCA ... In fact it should lift the level of work on the decorative arts, a Cinderella subject as far as art historians are concerned. And do the same for design, now at a low level, and thus provide informed staff at museums and to teach design. It has so far been a bloody saga." <sup>9</sup>

This hostile attitude within the museum was also recognized by staff at the college; Christopher Frayling recalls that “when the idea of the course was first mooted, relationships with the V&A were at an all-time low”.<sup>10</sup> The recruitment of staff demonstrates the importance of networks, as key individuals involved with early design history publication and education were employed, including design history

<sup>8</sup> Strong, R., (1997) *The Roy Strong Diaries: 1967-87*, London: Phoenix paperbacks p249

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.267

<sup>10</sup> Sparke, Naylor and Styles refer to this in their Oral History interviews. Frayling has also commented on it in his publication; Frayling, C. (1987) *The Royal College of Art – One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art and Design* London: Barrie & Jenkins, p.190



pioneer Gillian Naylor and founder member of the DHS, Penny Sparke.<sup>11</sup> Supplementing the college tutors were members of course staff based at the museum; Charles Saumarez-Smith and John Styles.<sup>12</sup> The resistance to the development of the course from certain members of curatorial staff within the museum may have had several causes; firstly a reluctance to share expertise, secondly, a fear that time might be unnecessarily spent on supervising students within the curatorial departments, but thirdly, an ignorance of design history, the aims of the course and how the course would benefit the museum. Gillian Naylor gives an anecdote about one incident where a student selected an item for their first object-based essay that happened to be in a similar area to that which a curator was researching, the department were very unhappy. Naylor recalled, “The place was almost on fire because she was so enraged that someone was working on tassels.”<sup>13</sup> It seems that certain members of curatorial staff might have felt threatened, or even jealous, of the students as they undertook research on objects within the museum collection.

The course was initially entitled “Design and Decorative Arts: History and technology”, but later simplified to ‘History of Design’ when it became clear that the first title was “extremely unwieldy” and signalled the “possibility of two

<sup>11</sup> Gillian Naylor recalls that, although only one part time post was advertised, both she and Sparke were employed on full-time contracts. Naylor, G & DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Gillian Naylor* Track 13 [10:30] Naylor discusses the circumstances surrounding her interview and subsequent employment at the RCA. “He (Christopher Frayling) wanted me because I had published on the Bauhaus and Arts and Crafts and he wanted Penny because she was pioneering the history of design course at Brighton – and he got us both” She also comments on how unusual it was for two female staff to be employed at a time when gender-equality in the workplace was still an issue.

<sup>12</sup> John Styles was initially a Visiting Lecturer before full employment on the course. Styles, J & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with John Styles* Track 5

<sup>13</sup> Naylor, G DHS (2007) *Oral History Interview with Gillian Naylor*, Track 13.

different approaches to two different subjects.”<sup>14</sup> The course needed to be clear that its aim was to explore new intellectual areas and approaches to objects, but in doing so to bring together the different traditions and institutional approaches, and work towards integrating theory and practice;

“...the whole rationale of combining the resources and expertise of two institutions, a museum and a college of art, was based upon the need to reverse at least a century of cultural and institutional divide between history and practice, between contextual and processual methods of understanding three-dimensional form.”<sup>15</sup>

The broad approach to the two-year course structure was to merge different themes and methodological approaches with different chronological frameworks. Course documentation from the first few years of the course is less comprehensive than files from the 1990s; however, the foundations of a broad course philosophy can be seen. There was an emphasis on sound historical research skills, social historical methodology, and an examination of a broad range of designed objects from across a wide chronology; this was supplemented by use of progressive scholarship. This broad course philosophy remained consistent throughout, although subtle changes in the content are evident as it reacted to intellectual influences and new developments in the direction of design historical studies.

Examining the curricula in detail gives an excellent ‘snapshot’ of the academic concerns, educational pedagogy, and subject emphasis within design history scholarship and the discipline over all. The students came to the course with a

<sup>14</sup>This title was given in the first edition of the prospectus. By the 4th year of course presentation, and publication of a volume of essays, the course title had been simplified to the ‘History of Design’. RCA/V&A (1988) *Working Papers I - Studies in Design and Technology* London: Futures Publications. Foreword by Charles Saumarez-Smith.

<sup>15</sup> Saumarez-Smith, C. Foreword to RCA/V&A (1988) *Working Papers I - Studies in Design and Technology* London: Futures Publications. p.xvii

diverse range of academic skills, knowledge and experience which reflected the discipline of design history itself. As Styles explained:

“the history of design is a fairly new field of study, and one that integrates elements from a number of other disciplines-anthropology, sociology, economics, social and economic history, art history, aesthetics, etc etc. There is not yet a very large literature that deals specifically with the history of design. Much of what students on the course are asked to read originates in these other disciplines, each of which has its own, distinct intellectual agenda. The danger here is that the parts threaten to overwhelm the whole. With a variety of disciplines pulling in different directions, there is an ever present risk of losing any sense of a coherent core to the course.”<sup>16</sup>

By the mid-1990s there was a clear balanced approach to the thematic and chronological topics covered in the curriculum. The first year was intensively taught providing wide-ranging intellectual and practical grounding, with the second year involving detailed research for a dissertation. The three terms of the first year were distinct; each with “a different intellectual emphasis, the different chronological period, a different geographical mix, and (to some extent) a different teaching style.”<sup>17</sup> The aim was not to provide a comprehensive survey, but to introduce sufficient diversity for the key intellectual issues to be introduced. The course managed to cover the three main approaches to the subject as identified in the courses at North Staffordshire, Middlesex and Brighton; design history in the context of design practice, this was particularly relevant in the context of the RCA; design history as social and cultural history, and design history relating to the provenance and production of the object, which within the context of the V&A contributed to the expansion of decorative arts scholarship.

<sup>16</sup> Styles, J. (1996) *History of Design-Structure of the Course V&A /RCA* “MA Course In the History of Design,” course documents.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

Within the traditional environment of the V&A, with its collection of high-class fine decorative arts, the course needed to emphasize one of design history's paradigms, an interest in the design of the everyday, but also critically appraise debates surrounding modernism. In this way the course content explicitly addressed the concerns of the variety of different communities of practice whose debates concerning approaches and appropriate subject matter were evident in the pages of academic journals, as expounded by Margolin and Forty and discussed in the previous chapter. This important self-reflexive analysis of the nature of the study of design history also extended to consider issues relating to consumption and material culture.

An example of a seminar course covering this was one first offered by Dick Hebdige in the summer terms of 1987 and 1988. 'Design and Popular Culture' gives clear evidence of the importance of the scholarly network as it drew strongly from the work of the group of intellectuals associated with the *BLOCK* journal at Middlesex.<sup>18</sup> The first presentation of the course covered the approaches to material culture, debates within popular culture, cultural studies and questioned the social functions of taste, and the construction of identity. It encouraged students to consider their own practice and intellectual assumptions when considering debates on culture and when writing history.<sup>19</sup> The second presentation of the course

<sup>18</sup> Information from course documentation held in the humanities department at the Royal College of Art. On the second presentation of this course, the title changed to include 'problems of method and analysis'.

<sup>19</sup> The readings were supplemented by screenings of a selection of Levi television commercials, various pop videos, Ridley Scott's *Bladerunner* and two documentary films by Nigel Finch 'The life and death of the Ford Cortina' and 'My Way'. Nigel Finch produced innovative short films for BBC2's arts series *Arena*. These two programmes were highlighted as important changes in Arts programming by contributors to *The Art of Arts TV: Programme one – documentaries* - BBC four series – first screened at the end of September 2008. The programme referred to in the course guide was

focused on the work of Hebdige and his Middlesex colleague J.A. Walker, utilising Walker's newly-published *Design History and the History of Design*.<sup>20</sup> These texts were also supplemented by Hal Foster's work on Postmodernism, Baudrillard on consumption and Roland Barthes on material culture.

Each cohort of students was encouraged to put their practice into perspective; and from the 1990s a core part of the course was an introduction to the current concerns in the practice of design history.<sup>21</sup> The content of this course gives a clear indication of the changing methodologies, concerns and approaches to design history as the discipline developed. This core course covered key areas of importance to design historical study, and discussed other similar disciplines; individual sessions were taught by all members of the course team, supplemented by the expertise of staff at the college, museum and also another South Kensington institution the Science Museum. The topics covered would remain very similar, perhaps showing slight change of emphasis in due to the staff member teaching.<sup>22</sup> At the end of the decade the course showed a greater emphasis on cultural perspectives, with a slight change in emphasis in the new millennium looking at a variety of approaches to objects, covering topics such as visual analysis, ornamentation, gender debates, the linguistic shift in humanities, consumption, craft

actually entitled "The private life of the Ford Cortina" it screened in 1982 and featured Stephen Bayley.

<sup>20</sup> Walker, J.A (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*, London: Polity Press. This book was published in the year of the seminar course.

<sup>21</sup> From the 1991/2 academic year this seminar course was entitled 'Setting the Agenda' although renamed "Key Concepts in Design History" in 2002.

<sup>22</sup> The timetable for 1991 shows that the topics covered were; 'Historiography of Design History', 'Approaches to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century', 'Dress History and Design History', 'Material Culture', 'History of Technology and Design History', 'The Museum and Design History', and also 'Problems of 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Interpretations.' Influence of a lecturer's personality and interests was also evident, for example, in 1992 Clive Wainwright led a session entitled 'Connoisseurship, the Applied Arts and Design History.'

debates and aesthetics.<sup>23</sup> The variety of theoretical standpoints introduced in these introductory seminars were later examined in further depth in the courses 'Recent Cultural Theory and Design History' or from 2002 'Key Concepts In Design History'.<sup>24</sup>

In reflecting on Putnam's contention that the course had a more significant impact on the development of design history than the DHS it is important to critically evaluate the influence that it had.<sup>25</sup> The importance of the course is seen in several areas; firstly, in its expansion of design history into the museum sector, expanding design historical studies from its origins as a solely college-based or Polytechnic-based subject; secondly, its importance in the creation and maintenance of professional and personal networks, and a sense of community amongst design historians; thirdly, in providing an outlet for current scholarship at all levels; and finally the impact of its graduates as actors in the design history network. The course, and its scholarship, had a highly significant impact on the curatorial direction of the museum, this will be discussed in more detail in the second case study of this chapter. The course was also an important 'boundary object' where scholars from different communities of practice could meet and develop a network of design historians. Examples of this are; the relationships between cohorts or peer-groups, and amongst students and lecturers; events organized by the course, including the

<sup>23</sup>The 1999 presentation devoted one session to cultural studies, and another to cultural history. Course descriptors from 2002 give an overview of design history historiography then have a series of thematic sessions with the titles; 'the representation of things', 'the superfluity of things', the gender of things', 'the language of things', 'the value of things', the making of things', and 'the style of things'. Source course paperwork held in humanities department at the Royal College of Art.

<sup>24</sup>"Setting the Agenda" the third term course 'Recent Cultural Theory and Design History' was often taught by Jeremy Aynsley.

<sup>25</sup>Putnam, T & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam* Track 6 [21.30] "Certain institutions have been stronger than the Society in terms of maintaining an arena for discussion of the subject".

weekly research seminar and the annual Reyner Banham Memorial lecture, which brought scholars and students into contact; the availability of employment opportunities, when the course administrators operated as points of contact for temporary and part-time employment for students, with many graduates of the course going on to teach across the country and the world; and during the early years of the promotion of the DHS to students. The connection between students and the museum curatorial staff gradually improved as the course became more established. This occasionally went beyond students researching their individual artefacts when groups contributed to displays. Infrequently small exhibitions at the museum, such as “Alphabet of Style: style, taste and society in 18th-century London”, displayed the research work of students on the course and helped interactions between the course and curatorial departments.<sup>26</sup> Just as groups had worked together creating exhibitions several cohorts of students also worked towards publishing their work. Examples of these are the *Working papers* publication, *One Off*, and *Things* magazine.<sup>27</sup> *Things* was established by a group of students in 1994 and became an important outlet for new scholarship in design history, and was regarded as such at the time. John Hewitt argued that; “Any space that allows and thereby encourages new writing from young design historians can

<sup>26</sup> “Alphabet of Style: style, taste and society in 18th-century London”, 5<sup>th</sup> December 1996 – 5<sup>th</sup> March 1997 was organized by students from the RCA/V&A MA course in the History of Design using material from the Prints, Drawings and Painting Dept., and students from the V&A/RCA conservation course also put on displays. Source: James, E.(1998) *The Victoria and Albert Museum - A Bibliography and Exhibition Chronology, 1852-1996*, London: Fitzroy Dearborn Also anecdotal evidence of students working on displays, from personal recollection eg Jack Hinton and the Renaissance students

<sup>27</sup> RCA/V&A (1988) *Working Papers I - Studies in Design and Technology*, London: Futures Publications and RCA (1997) *One Off: a collection of essays by postgraduate students on the Victoria and Albert Museum/Royal College of Art course in the history of design*. London: V&A/RCA. *Things* magazine was established in 1994 by students on the course. The stated aims were: “We publish things in the belief that the study of objects can open up new ways of understanding the world. And in the work we present here, we make an ambitious claim: in narrowing our focus to things, we paradoxically widen the scope of our historical enquiry, so that the study of objects both stands alongside, and embraces, the more established disciplines of social, political and economic history.” Editorial of the third issue: It currently operates as an occasional online magazine. Current and archive copies available at [www.thingsmagazine.net](http://www.thingsmagazine.net)

only benefit the discipline.”<sup>28</sup> In the editorial of the inaugural issue they state that their conception of design history offers plurality, giving;

“a great many individual approaches and viewpoints. But they are united, broadly, by an understanding that design history must be, first and last, history. Our work is motivated by a desire to understand the past through its objects, and is subject to the same requirements of rigour as any other kind of historical enquiry.”<sup>29</sup>

The contributions to the magazine reflected the editorial approach of the magazine, demonstrated a variety of approaches, but also acknowledged that the discipline was making a claim for recognition as a branch of history-writing, rather than solely linked to art and design education.

The course produced an exceptional output of new research in design history, offering new approaches to object and material culture. The students learnt a great deal through their own research for essays and dissertations, sometimes drawing on the expertise within the museum curatorial, library and archival staff; but in addition to this a key part of the course was to learn from a broad variety of researchers.<sup>30</sup> The Thursday research seminar was another important networking opportunity facilitated by the course and this overlaps with the course’s role in promoting the dissemination of current and new scholarship. The course offered a forum for other scholars to present research currently in progress at other institutions, and in other disciplines.<sup>31</sup> This session was held on Thursday evenings within the museum and was open to the wider scholarly community.

<sup>28</sup> Hewitt, J. (1996) “Rayon stockings and Finnish mugs; Social Sciences & Humanities Journals” *The Times Higher Education Supplement* February 23, 1996

<sup>29</sup> “Editorial: In Place of a Manifesto”. *Things* 1, winter 1994

<sup>30</sup> In the first term object-based essay students focused on an object in the collection and were occasionally informally assisted by departmental curators. The students also drew on the resources of the National Art Library (NAL) based in the museum, and the museum archive the Archive of Art and Design based at Olympia, opened in 1978.

<sup>31</sup> The timetable for the first seminar in the autumn term of 1984 declared ‘the seminar has been established as a forum for subjects of current scholarly interest in the history of design.’



It is difficult to give a comprehensive picture of the topics and contributors to the research seminars as they were broad in topic and approach, just as the domain was. The seminars were a forum for scholars to test out ideas of research in progress or to debate issues related to recent exhibitions and new publications.<sup>32</sup> Surveying the broad spectrum of contributions demonstrates that subjects ranged from production methods, theory, social psychology, collections, to the representation of objects in fine art.<sup>33</sup> Other contributions looked at the approaches taken, and included research addressing film studies, gender, taste, to research methodologies such as business biography or more generally.<sup>34</sup> Contributors came from institutions as varied as London School of Economics, the University of California, the BBC, the Courtauld Institute as well as from museums, colleges, polytechnics and universities from around Britain.<sup>35</sup> Evident in this wide network of contributors were key members of the DHS and, as the course progressed, graduates of the course who returned when they become established

<sup>32</sup> The research seminar list descriptions suggest that during the period from 1984 to 2008 5 contributions were related to exhibitions and 23 related to recently published books. Source, my analysis of the archive papers.

<sup>33</sup> Dr Craig Clunas (15<sup>th</sup> November 1984) discussed the context for production in "Chinese Furniture workshops"; theory was addressed by John Thakara discussing his book, "Design After Modernism" (27<sup>th</sup> April 1989); Social Psychology in "To Have is to be: Is that the question?" Social Psychology and Consumption", Helga Dittmar, (27<sup>th</sup> May 1993); Collections in "Preserving the material culture of the people Dr JL Kirks collection of bygone York Museum" by Stephen Hayward (11<sup>th</sup> March 1993); the representation of objects in fine art by Marcia Poinon "Diamonds – a girls best friend - Thoughts on portraiture, apparel and possession" (2 December 1993)

<sup>34</sup> Some examples of the difference approaches to subjects included: film studies "A common interest: documentary film and public health" by Tim Boon Science Museum (21<sup>st</sup> March 1991), gender by Cheryl Buckley with "Modernism / Feminism: a case study of Susie Cooper" (7<sup>th</sup> March 1991) and Sonia Livingstone "gendered perceptions of domestic technologies" (16<sup>th</sup> May 1991); taste by Stephen Bayley "Taste" (30<sup>th</sup> April 1992) and Peter Lloyd-Jones "Taste And The Problem Of Design in a Post-Acquisitive Society" (28<sup>th</sup> May 1992); business biography by Jon Press in "Researching Business biography: the career of William Morris" (23 January 1992) and research methods in general by Linda Colley in "Researching Britons" (10<sup>th</sup> December 1992).

<sup>35</sup> Examples of the institutions that contributors came from include: Sonia Livingston from the London School of Economics (speaking on 16 May 1991). John Brewer from the University of California (speaking on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1991), the BBC Nicholas Barker Producer of the BBC2 series *Sign of the Times* (speaking on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1992), Katie Scott from the Courtauld institute (speaking on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1994 on the topic "What was an author? Painting printmaking and wallpaper in Ancien regime Paris,)

academic researchers.<sup>36</sup> Many of the contributors to the research seminar series might not have defined themselves as a 'design historian', with scholars from varied disciplines and different communities of practice, but they do indicate the fluidity of the boundaries and show approaches to objects and histories that fed into the richness of the design historical network.

As previously expressed these Thursday research seminars became an integral part of the London scholarly community and often attracted staff from curatorial departments within the museum; serving as an event (or 'boundary object') which brought together individuals from different communities of practice. They were a connection between the college, the course and the museum's new research department.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Members of the DHS and broader network who have contributed to these research seminars include; (listed in order of contribution) John Heskett ('85), Jonathan Woodham (x2:'85, '01), Clive Dilnot ('85), Barry Curtis ('85) Suzette Worden ('85), Adrian Forty (x3: '85, '90, '99), Hazel Conway ('87), Peter Dormer (x2: '87), Catherine McDermott (x2: '89, ), Judy Attfield (x4: '88, '91, '95, '01), Elizabeth Wilson (x3: '88, '94, '03), Jeremy Aynsley (x2 – '88 – lecturer at Brighton Polytechnic, spring '91 as "course tutor designate" V&A/RCA) Leslie Miller (x3: '88, '92, '05), Juliet Kinchen ('89), John Walker ('90), Fiona MacCarthy, Pat Kirkham (x3: '90, '92, '04) Ken Quickenden ('90), Tim Benton ('91), Cheryl Buckley (x3: '91, '95, '06) Tim Putnam ('91), Stephen Bayley ('92), Deborah Sugg ('92), Clive Wainwright ('94), Robin Kinross ('94), Paul Greenhalgh (x3: '92, '94, '99), John Styles (x5: '91, '94, '96, '97, '07), Barbara Burman ('95), Alan Crawford (x2: '95, '02), Helen Clifford ('96) Tanya Harrod ('98) Vicky Coltman ('98), Gillian Naylor ('99 – when she had retired from the course), Greg Votalato ('99) John Hewitt ('01) Paul Atterbury ('01) Ulrich Lehmann ('02) Tord Boontje (RCA Designer '03) Graduates returning included -Carolyn Sargeantson (x2:'88, '92) Claudia Kinmonth (x2:'89, '01), Elizabeth McKellar (x2:'88, '99), Clive Edwards ('92), Sean Nixon (x3: '93, '97, '01), Christopher Breward (x3: '94, '99, '04), Alison Clarke ('95), David Crowley (x2: Uni of Brighton '97, '06) Celia Lury ('97), Paul Jobling (Staffordshire '97), Angela Gaffney ('97) Kevin Davies ('98), Nic Maffei (V&A PhD – '98), Guy Julier (x3:'98, '99, '07) Susie McKellar ('98) Nicola White ('98) Elizabeth Darling ('99) Fiona Hackney ('99) Viviana Narotsky (RCA PhD '99) Laura Ugolini ('00) Paul Caffrey ('00) Dipti Bhagat ('00), Quintin Colville ('00) Caroline Evans (x2:'00, '06) Leon Doughty (UEA '00) Louise Purbrick ('00) Claire Walsh ('00) Rebecca Arnold (x2:'01, '08) Lisa Hockemeyer ('02) Trevor Keeble ('02) Lisa Godson (Phd '03) Harriet Atkinson ('06)

<sup>37</sup> The Research Department, headed by Charles Suamarez-Smith, had been part of the sweeping changes undertaken by Strong's successor Elizabeth Esteve-Coll when political circumstances determined that a new direction was needed for the museum, and museums had to prove their wider impact to justify receiving government funding. "In the 1980s, though, the museum faced a crisis: government policy required museums become more financially self-sufficient, and this was linked to a general feeling that they should be more accessible to the public. In 1988 the V&A appointed its first woman director, Elizabeth Esteve-Coll, to introduce radical changes in line with this ethos." McDermott, C.(2007) *Design - The Key Concepts*, London: Routledge, p.229

## **Case study 2 - The British Galleries 1500-1900 project**

The large-scale project at the V&A to redisplay the British Art and Design Galleries was conducted through the late 1990s, opening in November 2001, and saw significant changes in the display of designed objects within the museum environment.<sup>38</sup> It demonstrates the influence of changes in the organization of the museum, recent academic thought influenced by members of the design history network, new approaches to museum display and the increasing importance of education and focus on the visitor experience.<sup>39</sup> The museum showed that it was aware of the significance of this redisplay within the trajectory of museology by publishing a detailed volume explaining the processes and discussions surrounding the evolution of the project.<sup>40</sup> Christopher Wilk stated that the museum was at a "crossroads" in terms of its museological approach; publications by curators in the 1990s were starting to show the influence of new ways of thinking but the galleries still reflected a traditional focus of connoisseurship. Changes that had occurred in the 1980s, when the museum moved from being under government control to having trustee museum status, had significance on funding for the project. The high costs involved in gallery renovation and redisplay of an area that constituted 10% of the museum, both in time and finances, meant that the institutional context needed to be right, support was needed from the director and a funding source needed to be secured.<sup>41</sup> A National Lottery Heritage Grant of £16million, from the newly

<sup>38</sup> The project began in 1996.

<sup>39</sup> Working together with Tessa Murdoch, John Styles had a significant impact on the structure of the galleries and states that he was strongly influenced by his experience of teaching design history.

<sup>40</sup> Wilk, C. & Humphrey, N. (2004) *Creating the British Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum - A Study in Museology*, London: V&A Publications

<sup>41</sup> Smaller galleries within the museum had been redisplayed during this period using funding from foreign companies and organizations. Examples of corporate funding include the Toshiba Gallery of Japanese art in 1988, the Nehru Gallery of Indian Art in 1990, Samsung Gallery of Korean art in

established Heritage lottery fund, contributed to the total budget of £31million and meant that British funding was available; this, along with institutional support from the director, enabled the British galleries project to go ahead.<sup>42</sup>

The links between design history and the British Galleries project are clear; it reflected the increased importance of object research within the museum and acknowledged the value of drawing on a multidisciplinary approach.<sup>43</sup> John Styles, a tutor on the V&A/RCA course and historical advisor to the British Galleries project, recollects the importance of embracing new scholarly directions:

“My view, very much informed by my experience teaching the course, was that we should take on board the new work, new research, in cognate fields particularly outside the museum, history, history of consumption, culture, art history, particularly on patronage and who led taste, and combine that with the best of museum scholarship, despite the problems in some areas [of the V&A due to political and organizational change] the scholarship was outstanding.”<sup>44</sup>

The historical framework for the galleries was based on the document that Tessa Murdoch and John Styles had written for the proposal to redisplay a small section of the English Primary Galleries and was scaled up accordingly.<sup>45</sup> The overview for the galleries, published in the appendices of Wilk’s edited collection of essays, sets out the issues of concern surrounding the collections available, the problems of chronological structure, and interweaving broad themes that were of current

1992 and Frank Lloyd Wright Gallery. It was felt that a gallery showcasing British design and culture needed to have funding from within Britain itself.

<sup>42</sup> The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was established in 1994 to oversee the distribution of a share of the National Lottery for Good Causes money for heritage projects across Britain.

<sup>43</sup> The link to design history was made explicit by Christopher Wilk in Wilk, C. & Humphrey, N. (2004) *Creating the British Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum - A Study in Museology*, London: V&A Publications and John Styles also commented on this in his Oral history interview. Styles, J & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with John Styles*, Track 8

<sup>44</sup> Styles, J & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with John Styles* Track 8 – [09:00] He mentions the excellent scholarship of museum curators Michael Snodin and Peter Thornton.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

intellectual concern.<sup>46</sup> These themes were “(i) Style, (ii) Taste and the Consumer, and (iii) Design and Product Innovation” and were directly influenced by design historical methods and research. This is shown not only by the virtue of the research culture and network surrounding the project, but by the explicit agenda of Styles who stated that the themes were chosen to;

"comprehend many of the pivotal issues that have emerged in recent studies (particularly object-based studies) of art and design in the period, without entirely abandoning style-based approach which was the intellectual foundations of the existing British art design galleries".<sup>47</sup>

The project reflected scholarly changes by actively questioning the intellectual assumptions of the museum and looking at the early history of Henry Cole's educational ideals as an "inspiring model for the present day". Although the range of opinions on the nature of display within the museum was "predictably variable", according to Styles, the project team also acknowledged the growing professionalization of the education team and importance of engaging visitors.

The interactions within a network can bring about positive developments in scholarship, but there is also potential for conflict. The project encountered problems as stakeholders with contrasting approaches to objects were brought together; the opinions of curators, conservators, and educationalists were wildly different.<sup>48</sup> The huge grant from the national lottery meant that finances were

<sup>46</sup> Styles, J. (1996) "Themes in British art and design 1500-1900: an overview" Appendix 2 in Wilk, C. & Humphrey, N. (2004) *Creating the British Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum - A Study in Museology*, London: V&A Publications

<sup>47</sup> The themes of Style, Taste and the Consumer, and Design and Product Innovation were displayed in the Galleries under the headings of "Style" "Who Led Taste?", "Fashionable Living", and "What was new?" *Ibid.*, p.235

<sup>48</sup> Styles gives an example of persistent tensions in the approach of museum educators to the venture due to their background in schools and ideas about progressive education, they wanted children to be able to explore the objects through activity areas within the Gallery rather than in a separate educational space. Many of the team, including Styles himself, were sceptical about this and it had not been done widely in museums but this later became a successful and popular aspect of the galleries. Styles, J & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with John Styles Track 8 - Museums of science pioneered interactive areas for children within gallery spaces.*

available to enable the integration of well-designed activity areas; money was also available to override conservation problems of integrating delicate objects such as textiles and dress to the displays.<sup>49</sup> Wider cultural issues, beyond education and museological concerns that underpinned the project were concerns over national identity in Britain: at this point in the 1990s it was not only an academic issue but also of political and popular interest.<sup>50</sup>

The British Galleries presented a chronological story of British history in a new way and were additionally a new development in museology and the consumption of history that transformed public perceptions of the V&A. Styles credits the British galleries as “single-handedly, perhaps rather unfairly, but nonetheless, single-handedly transformed public perception from somewhere that is seen as dowdy to somewhere that is seen as vibrant, exciting and the sort of museum you want to come to.”<sup>51</sup> Although there were certain elements of criticism based on the selection of ‘elitist’ objects on display, the museum acknowledged its own history and collecting policy in the display itself.

Recent scholarship analysing the presentation of design in museums focuses on three areas; the presentation of the period room interior, social history as presented in heritage and museum environments, and display of particular examples of designed objects. Julius Bryant, a keeper at the V&A, has recently argued that when presented and viewed in a broad cross-disciplinary way period room displays

<sup>49</sup> Styles comments that if there were conservation issues they were able to “throw money at it” to solve problems. Track 8 [23.40]

<sup>50</sup> Wilk discusses the importance of Linda Colley's 1992 book *Briton's* for the project team. “Introduction” in Wilk, C.& Humphrey, N.(2004)*Creating the British Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum - A Study in Museology*, London: V&A Publications, p2

<sup>51</sup> Styles, J & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with John Styles* Track 12 [1:46]

have scholarly potential.<sup>52</sup> In his discussion of “new generation” museum period rooms he rejects their presentation as decorative arts displays or local history narratives offering a “form of fiction posing as a history” he refers to certain displays as “aesthetic adventures” that have given the museum period room a bad name. Since the example of the British Galleries project other redisplay initiatives have embraced new interdisciplinary scholarship in material culture studies and seen museum directors and curators collaborate with academics. For example, the British Museum’s new Enlightenment galleries, opened in 2004, and the newly restored rooms at the Geffrye Museum opened in 2006. The impact of new directions in scholarship is clear, as is the importance of interactions within the wider scholarly network, and is implicit in Bryant’s argument:

“...crossing academic disciplines, bringing together evidence from art history, architectural history, the history of business, of furniture, textiles and design, of literature, economics and geography. Scholars from diverse academic disciplines are now helping curators to understand objects as social tools in the processes of history...In the twenty-first century the traditional aesthetic or historical priorities of the period room, that lucid choice between presenting either period style or actual lifestyle, for the visiting connoisseur or the social historian, need no longer apply. Art history has moved on and material culture studies can make sense of both approaches, working together.”<sup>53</sup>

Although Bryant does not refer here explicitly to this as *design historical* method he later cites the major design historical *Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior*, and scholarship from design historians, as important for this new thinking.<sup>54</sup> Also

<sup>52</sup> Bryant, J. (2009) 'Museum period rooms for the twenty-first century: salvaging ambition', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 24(1), pp.73-84

<sup>53</sup> Bryant, J. (2009) 'Museum period rooms for the twenty-first century: salvaging ambition', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 24(1), p.81

<sup>54</sup> The Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior, an AHRC-funded research-project between 2001 and 2006, was a collaboration between the Royal College of Art, the V&A and London University and will be discussed in further detail in Chapters 7 and 8. Jeremy Aynsley was the Director of the Centre and Bryant served on its board. Its publications included: J. Aynsley and C. Grant (eds), (2006) *Imagined interiors: Representing the domestic interior since the Renaissance*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London; A. Vickery and J. Styles (eds), (2007) *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London; . The design historical scholarship he references is: Sparke, P., Martin B., and Keeble. T. (2006) *The modern period*

important when reappraising the presentation of historic interiors in a museum setting is the work undertaken at Kingston University's *Modern Interiors Research Centre*, established in 2004.<sup>55</sup> Trevor Keeble argues that examining the presentation of period rooms entails a broad consideration of debates in a variety of contexts and environments that go beyond the merely academic networks to include; "the National Trust, local authority museums, university museums and art galleries."<sup>56</sup> These examples from the early twenty-first century show the results and influence of the consolidation of the design history networks, the grounding for which was set in the late 1990s in the example of the British Galleries project.

Ruth Adams' article on exhibiting design in London museums does not refer to the British galleries project in the museum explicitly, as her concerns are with 20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary design and particularly with reference to the social forces that underpin curatorial direction.<sup>57</sup> However, Adams returns to the arguments about design's potential as an improving force, and the educational heritage of the V&A, and definitions between design as industry and technology, on the one hand, and design as art or styling, on the other. The comparison is drawn with the Science Museum's display tracking the development of domestic technology, "the secret life of the home", which considers usage and social context whereas comparable items in the V&A are presented in terms of aesthetic merit. She argues that the Boilerhouse Project in the museum was a return to the V&A's

*room: The construction of the exhibited interior 1870 to 1950*. London and New York: Routledge. Bryant has contributed to the Journal of Design History Bryant, J. (2007). "Curating the Georgian interior: from period rooms to marketplace?" *Journal of Design History*, 20(4), pp. 345-50.

<sup>55</sup> Sparke, P., Martin B., and Keeble, T. (2006) *The modern period room: The construction of the exhibited interior 1870 to 1950*. London and New York: Routledge. This book contains papers given at Kingston University in 2003 just prior to the launch of the research centre.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1

<sup>57</sup> Adams, R. (2007) "Exhibiting Design: Art versus Industry?" *Design Principles and Practices: An International Journal*, 1 (2) pp.17-24



foundational premise of education and a step away from the representation of design as art object. However, museums need to justify the inclusion of objects within their collection and Adams argues that here objects attribution and authorship is essential;

“it is clearly problematic for such institutions to entirely abandon authorial or even art historical narratives, or the vitrines that identify their holdings as a different class of objects to those in everyday life-even,or especially when, it is only the presence of the glass case that maintains that distinction.”<sup>58</sup>

This argument does not take account of the changes made in the representation of designed objects by design historical and material culture approaches to object as evidenced in the British Galleries.

Maddalena della Mura discusses the display of designed objects outside the context of art museums.<sup>59</sup> Although not explicitly talking in terms of network interactions and communities of practice she acknowledges the importance of considering different approaches to artefacts in the domain considered by design historians. She argues that science and technology museums have the potential to offer innovative interpretations of designed objects because museums have made a major contribution to how we perceive objects and their histories;

“since long before the discipline of design history was even recognized, they have served as a catalyst of initiatives and discourses, established values and models and produce representations. And, of course, they preserve important heritage, making it available for new interpretations.”<sup>60</sup>

This viewpoint is similar to that expressed by Keeble, that consideration of the display of everyday objects and interiors need to extend beyond the category of the fine art or decorative art museum.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>59</sup> Mura, M.(2009) “Design in museums: towards an interpretive approach the potential of science and technology museum’s”, *Journal of Design History*,22(3),pp.259-270

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*.

Although the British Galleries project still maintained the necessary link to ‘period styles’ and the heritage of the institution, this was approached in a way that situated and displayed objects with consideration of the limitations of the museum’s collection policy, positioned within a social and cultural historical context, and taking consideration of current scholarship. In order to expand on the intellectual issues and historical debates raised in the display, the museum extended its strategy of producing detailed books for major exhibitions to publishing volumes that accompanied the permanent gallery. Styles had worked with Michael Snodin to produce a lavishly illustrated book to accompany the gallery opening.<sup>61</sup> *Design and the Decorative Arts, 1500-1900* was an example of a new type of museum catalogue which was becoming increasingly popular in publishing throughout this decade, it told the story of the galleries but also operated as a text in its own right.<sup>62</sup> It is also an example of the increasing publication of design historical scholarship during the 1990s.

### **The V&A as boundary object for varied communities of practice in the design history network.**

The case studies discussed above are necessarily focused solely around a single institution, the V&A, as a nexus for educational, and museological events that relate to research activities of the design history community at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This national institution was an important site for the development of relationships, the formation of networks, and as a location for the instigation and presentation of

<sup>61</sup> “I’ve never done a book with 1100 illustrations before and it was absolutely nightmarish, but it was worth it” Styles, J & DHS (2009) *Oral History Interview with John Styles* Track 11

<sup>62</sup> Styles, J. & Snodin, M.,(2001) *Design and the Decorative Arts, 1500-1900*, London; V&A publications.

new design historical research. It had a particularly important role in expanding the scope of design historical activity; initially, a niche sub-discipline that had evolved from art history and contextual studies teaching in art colleges and polytechnics, and regarded as a 'Cinderella' subject, connections with the national institution enabled the discipline to expand its influence in postgraduate education, decorative arts scholarship, museum display and publishing. The institution is also important as a central meeting point; essential for professional relationships and also significant for the genealogy of the design historical community. It is possible to see different generations of graduates from the MA course, tutors and students, making an impact in scholarship within the institution, in the wider academic community, across the country, and internationally. Yet additionally, as a public space the institution allows for members of the public to have a peripheral engagement with the wider design history network, as it serves to disseminate current scholarship and tell histories through objects.

This chapter has demonstrated the importance of developments at the V&A in broadening the scope of design history during the 1990s. The joint MA course was significant its role of taking design historical interdisciplinary research methods into the traditional museum establishment and influencing a new direction in research culture relating to designed objects. The design history network's influence was extending beyond the education sector and beginning to have a tangible impact on the presentation of designed objects, through research, interpretation and display to wider audiences. The main demonstration of this was the major redisplay of the British art and design galleries; which not only brought academics and curators together but also helped to change the direction of museum display. Another significant function of the MA course was as a 'boundary object' a site for the

personal and professional interaction of scholars and further consolidation and strengthening of the design history 'network' or community. The course would continue to have a significant impact in the direction of design historical research in the following decade.



## **Chapter 7**

### **Into the 21st century: The evolution of design history and its impact**

This chapter gives an overview of the major intellectual developments in the design history network from 2000 onwards. The key theme seen in this time period is that design history is no longer a niche activity and although design history research goes by many other names, it has a broad influence. In Britain changes were seen in a variety of areas; there was wider dissemination and recognition of design historical research in academic and intellectual areas; significant government policy changes occurred in the distribution of funds and research councils provided funding for multidisciplinary projects; and impact and influence of design history is seen in museums, publishing and the media. Design history also developed globally, partly as a consequence of new technologies of communication enabling the geographical diversification of the design history network. This chapter addresses these areas before concluding by considering the current nature of design historical practice. A feature that is also seen is the beginning of a convergence of art history and design history; much of the focus of debates between the varied communities of scholars had historically focused on their difference and separation, however as the influence of interdisciplinary practice and research is seen across the scholarly network making claims for a distinct novel approach to scholarship is no longer a unique determining factor of design history. There is strength in diversity of method and approach and this is beginning to infiltrate other academic areas, not only relating to art design and museums but also history and geography. It is no longer necessary to engage in continual remaking and reshaping, but now there are

moves towards meetings and intersections in the academic world these pluralities of approach are being recognized as a key feature of current scholarship.<sup>1</sup> Examples of research centres demonstrating interdisciplinary research are seen within this decade, such as the *Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior and Cultures of Consumption*. The next chapter will examine this formal recognition of the importance of broad scholarly networks, interactions and points of convergence in two case studies of these important research centres.

The new millennium brought with it a general feeling of optimism and opportunity. The digital age was established and rapidly developing technologies of communication and information exchanged enabled global expansion, commercially, intellectually and socially.<sup>2</sup> The executive committee of the DHS saw the new millennium as an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the Society. At the beginning of this new century patrons of the DHS were invited to give their views of the discipline in the pages of the society's newsletter and these were resoundingly positive.<sup>3</sup> Gillian Naylor reflected on thirty years of teaching the subject and reflected that design history in Britain had 'come of age' she stated that;

“design history graduates now teach a new generation of historians and designers; they publish and they research; they work in museums and galleries, and they are involved with archives; they work the industry and they work for the media. Design history studies, it seems, can ensure employment. Because funding in universities and colleges now depends on

<sup>1</sup> The Arts and Humanities Research Council currently makes explicit this important feature of scholarship in its guidance documents for research funding applications. It also has a Joint Statement on Subject Coverage with the ESRC. “Subjects and disciplines are continually evolving, and there are inevitable overlaps and boundaries that we share with other award-making bodies especially with other Research Councils.” [www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/Subjectstatement.aspx](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/Subjectstatement.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> By 2000-01 40% of households had a PC and 47 % owned a mobile phone. Marwick, A. (2003) *British Society since 1945* p467.

<sup>3</sup> Gillian Naylor 'Patron Views: Design History: A Personal Perspective' *Design History Society Newsletter*, No. 85, July 2000, p.3; Gillo Dorfles 'Patron Views: Design as a Mirror of Culture' *Design History Society Newsletter*, No. 87, October 2000, p.3; Nicholas Goodison, 'Patron Views: Why Design History?' *Design History Society Newsletter*, No. 90, July 2001, p.3.

publications and research, more material relating to the subject is published annually.”<sup>4</sup>

The influence of this ‘network’ of graduates could be seen across similar academic areas linked to the domain of design history; disciplines such as material culture studies, visual culture studies and design studies.

Material culture studies and visual culture studies have many aspects in common with design history; in terms of subject matter, methodological approaches, and their situation as an interdisciplinary approach to history and culture through analysis of artefacts and visual experiences. The *Journal for Material Culture Studies* was established in 1996 and its similarities to design history’s interdisciplinary approach are clear. There are overlaps in terms of related debates, [consumption, gender, interpretation and ‘reading’ objects as evidence etc] and also in terms of disciplinary networks. The journal claims that it “transcends traditional disciplinary and cultural boundaries drawing on a wide range of disciplines including anthropology, archaeology, design studies, history, human geography, museology and ethnography.”<sup>5</sup> Design historian Judy Attfield made a significant contribution to the debate on feminist perspectives on design and her work was strongly influenced by a material culture approach arguing for closer links between the two subjects.<sup>6</sup> Attfield argued that Material Culture Studies was of great benefit to design history by focusing on the everyday rather than engaging with *history of design* debates

<sup>4</sup> Naylor *Op.cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Journal aims and objectives as given on the publisher's website. Available at: <http://www.uk.sagepub.com/journalsProdAims.nav?prodId=Journal200859> (Accessed: 5th May 2010 )

<sup>6</sup> Attfield’s contributions to feminist literature include: a contribution to Walker, J.A. (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*, London: Pluto Press and with Pat Kirkham; Attfield, J & Kirkham, P.(eds)(1989,1995) *A View from the Interior - Women in Design*, 2nd edn. London: the Women's Press. Also her argument for closer links with material culture studies are given in: Attfield, J ( 1997) “Design As A Practice Of Modernity: The Case For The Study Of The Coffee Table In The Mid-Century Domestic Interior”, *Journal Of Material Culture*, 2(3)pp.267-289



concerning aesthetics, professional practice, ideas of 'good design', and debates around modernity. Attfield had embraced Material Culture approaches as a clear way of distancing design history from its heritage in the aesthetic debates of art history. Examples of this influence can be seen in her use of the concept of 'objectification', informed by Daniel Miller, in her article on carpets published in the *Journal of Design History* in 1994.<sup>7</sup> In Attfield's key texts *Wild Things - the Material Culture of Everyday Life* and *Bringing Modernity home - Writings on Popular Design and Material Culture* the emphasis was;

"to consider the designers, the makers and the users perspectives in the context of the same conceptual playing field in order to recontextualise design within the more general location of the material culture of everyday life."<sup>8</sup>

Attfield's book, *Wild Things*, was regarded by anthropologist Daniel Miller as a pivotal moment which transformed design history into "a study of the intimate relationship between populations and the common form and design of mundane material culture."<sup>9</sup> He credits her with the invention of "a new contemporary design history" which held a respected status within social science and humanities and that moved away from being a subdiscipline of art history. Miller's evaluation must be taken in the context of its writing, Attfield's obituary, and although Attfield's contribution was important the approach had also been pursued by a number of other scholars with Attfield contributing a style of design-historical

<sup>7</sup> Attfield. (1994) "The tufted carpet in Britain: its rise from the bottom of the pile 1952-1970" *Journal of Design History* 7:3, and reprinted in, Attfield, J. (2007) *Bringing Modernity Home - Writings on Popular Design and Material Culture*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp120-132

<sup>8</sup> Attfield, J. (2000) *Wild Things - The Material Culture of Everyday Life*, Oxford: Berg, p.xiii

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Miller (2006) "Obituary Judy Attfield" *Material World Blog*, 19 December Available at: [http://blogs.nyu.edu/projects/materialworld/2006/12/judy\\_attfield.html](http://blogs.nyu.edu/projects/materialworld/2006/12/judy_attfield.html) (Accessed: September 2009) This view was also supported by comments from Alison Clarke and Deborah Sugg Ryan on the same Blog.

writing in book form that had been evident in journal articles and teaching practice for some time.<sup>10</sup>

Key similarities between visual culture studies and design history are seen in the types of objects studied and the relationship to art history as traditionally presented. Both desired to expand the genre, or push the boundaries, of the type of objects analysed as examples of social and cultural worlds. These objects have evidence of human cultural interaction (so not natural landscapes or flora and fauna) and are things with either functional or communicative intent. Visual culture studies, as a term, was being used from the mid-1980s with the advent of *BLOCK* and its ideas stemmed from the 'new art history.'<sup>11</sup> Influences were widely seen in America but it was during this decade that it achieved the academic apparatus of a discipline in Britain, the journal *Visual Culture in Britain* was established in 2000 and the *Journal of Visual Culture* in 2002.<sup>12</sup> There is an interesting connection demonstrating the close links that occur within the network concerned with the domain of design history. The editors of both these journals of visual culture, Ysanne Holt and Marquard Smith, are graduates of the BA (Hons) programme in History of Modern Art, Design and Film at Newcastle Polytechnic, which was one

<sup>10</sup> The approach could be seen in Adrian Forty's work for the OU A305 course, and his *Objects of Desire*. There are also Material Culture approaches evident in articles published by academics at Middlesex. However, this comment is not intended to reduce the significance of Attfield's publication.

<sup>11</sup> Other similar terms also used including: Visual Studies, Visual Culture, and Visual Culture Studies.

<sup>12</sup> *Visual Culture in Britain* was established in 2000, initially published by Ashgate then Manchester University Press it is now published by Routledge. The *Journal of Visual Culture*, first published by Sage in 2002, encourages contributions from a "range of methodological positions" and includes the following topics: film, media and television studies; art, design, fashion and architecture history; visual culture; cultural studies and critical theory; gender studies and queer studies; ethnic studies and critical race studies; philosophy and aesthetics; photography, new media and electronic imaging; critical sociology; history; geography/urban studies; comparative literature and romance languages; the history and philosophy of science, technology and medicine" Source: aims and scope from Publishers website, <http://www.uk.sagepub.com> (Accessed: 5th May 2010 )

of the first group of courses to address design history.<sup>13</sup> Smith gives an excellent examination of the status of visual culture as a distinct subject area in *Visual Culture Studies* and this text belongs to a series of introductory texts defining and arguing for the discipline, its subjects and its methods.<sup>14</sup> Yet in 2005 he argues that too much time is spent justifying the subject rather than doing it, an argument that also holds true for design history.<sup>15</sup>

The various communities of practice relating to the interpretation of visual and material culture within academia; whether they describe their activities as design histories, design studies or design cultures, craft histories, art histories, visual cultures or material cultures; are all part of the same wider scholarly network examining the created world and its objects. The only clear distinction is that the objects are not natural and they have an element of interaction or 'design' from humankind.<sup>16</sup> The interplay of different approaches within these distinct areas of academic practice demonstrates the fluctuations of scholarly trends, with particular groups claiming new emphases on subject method and practice at various points in time. Mitchell had contended in 1995 that "visual culture's primary use may be as a site of convergence and turbulence."<sup>17</sup> The exchange between actors in the network of scholars from both visual culture and design history becomes

<sup>13</sup> Both Holt and Smith continue to teach the next generation of the network. At the time of writing Holt is Reader in Art History teaching at Northumbria University (formerly Newcastle Polytechnic) and Smith is course director of the MA in Art and Design History in the School of Art and Design History, Kingston University, London.

<sup>14</sup> Smith, M. (2008) *Visual Culture Studies*, London: Sage. See also Mirzoeff, N. (1999) *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, London: Routledge; Jenks, C. (1995) *Visual Culture*, London: Routledge, and Walker, John A. and Chaplin, Sarah (1997) *Visual Culture: An Introduction*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, M. (2005) "Visual Studies or the Ossification of thought" *Journal of Visual Culture*, 4(2) pp237-256

<sup>16</sup> So we could also include study of landscape and garden design, built environments, and some work of human and cultural geographers.

<sup>17</sup> W. J. T. Mitchell (1995) "Interdisciplinarity and Visual Culture" *The Art Bulletin*, 77(4) p.540-4

increasingly clear by the end of the decade. In the 2010 conference of visual culture studies a roundtable discussion included key thinkers from the design historical community connected to design studies, visual studies and also cultural studies, terms describing different communities of practice with similar aims and approaches to objects and their interpretation.<sup>18</sup> This is a clear example of the importance of interactions within the networks of scholars, the convergence of viewpoints and ideas. Much time and scholarship has been devoted to claims of academic partition and difference, justifying new directions and separations, but this competition distracts from the benefits of interdisciplinary work. As discussed in the symposium on interdisciplinarity in December 1995's *Art Bulletin* there was general agreement on these positive benefits; Herbert summarised this stating that “*the productive exchange of information and analytic tools between scholarly fields is meritorious, and should be encouraged.*”<sup>19</sup> This stance was also taken by the research council AHRC, which recognised the problem encountered in competition to define distinctions and separation between various areas of scholarly practice. The issue of “inevitable overlaps and border territories” needed to be addressed when practical consideration of awarding funding was considered.<sup>20</sup> With regard to subject coverage the council declared;

“There is no clear boundary between arts and humanities and many other subject areas – notably the social sciences – but a series of interfaces, and many areas of overlap. Moreover, disciplines and areas of study are

<sup>18</sup> The contributors to this discussion: *Session 6 Roundtable: Design Studies – Visual Studies – Cultural Studies*, were: Glenn Adamson (Design/Craft, RCA/V&A), Guy Julier (Design, Leeds Metropolitan University), Penny Sparke (Design History, Kingston University) along with Sarah Chaplin (Architectural Humanities, Greenwich University), Elizabeth Guffey (Design, SUNY, Purchase), Raiford Guins (Digital Cultural Studies, SUNY, Stony Brook). 27th May 2010 – Saturday 29th May 2010

<sup>19</sup> Herbert, J.D., (1995) “Masterdisciplinarity and the ‘Pictorial Turn’.” *The Art Bulletin*, 77(4), pp.537-40. See discussion in chapter 5.

<sup>20</sup> AHRC's *Subject Coverage*, Available at: [www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/Subjectstatement.aspx](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/Subjectstatement.aspx) (Accessed October 2011)

continually evolving, as researchers develop new ways of approaching the study of human culture and creativity.”<sup>21</sup>

The council statement on development of disciplines and scholarly interaction acknowledged the importance of this feature of the scholarly network, a feature that was an essential characteristic of those involved with the design history network.

### **Broad Changes in the Direction of scholarship across the design history Network**

An interesting way to examine the subtle changes in approach to design historical research during the 2000s can be seen in a short case study of the ‘Key Concepts’ course which was central to the *History of Design MA* at the V&A/RCA course.<sup>22</sup> At the beginning of the decade the course had the subtitle of ‘approaches to material culture’ and each session was based around different approaches to objects or ‘things’; these included, *history from things*, *the making of things*, *the style of things*, and also considering definition, language, biography, gender, and value.<sup>23</sup> The key readings showed an influence from anthropology, consumption studies, material culture studies, literary and structuralist theory, and the work of early design historians.<sup>24</sup> The course also considered themes that could be used to approach design historical study: such as ‘power, authority and the state’, authorship, modernity, the vernacular, reproducibility, the public and the consumer, Fordism and post-Fordism and the avant-garde; and different research methodologies,

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> The evolution of this course indicates the differences in approach in part due to the individuals who taught the course, but it also demonstrated overarching changes in design history as a whole.

<sup>23</sup> Course documents – V&A/RCA history of design MA. ‘Key concepts 2001/2-Approaches to Material Culture’ leader tutors Marta Ajmar and Alison Clarke.

<sup>24</sup> The bibliography for the course included Appadurai’s *Social Life of Things*, several works by Daniel Miller, Judy Attfield’s *Wild Things*, works by French theorists and philosophers Bordieu, Barthes, Baudrillard and Latour, and the work of early design historians Clive Dilnot and Pat Kirkham.

theories, approaches and the complexities of interdisciplinarity.<sup>25</sup> The topics covered in the course reflected the variety of intellectual approaches that were of being presented in research and publications during the period. Key changes during this decade saw a shift from focusing on theoretical standpoints, via geographies and globalisation, to the nature of experience. The course content in 2003 focused on issues such as the postmodern turn, postcolonial design history, gender theory, deconstruction and concepts of the everyday and the disciplines that informed these changes.<sup>26</sup> A clear change was seen from 2005 when the course had a new head of studies at the V&A.<sup>27</sup> The course then focused on theoretical aspects arising from geographical boundaries and globalisation, paralleling directions of design historical study at that particular time;

"This final session aims to expand the remit of the course by bringing in theoretical aspects that arise from the geographical and economic dynamics of the globalisation process."<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps one of the most significant changes was in the approach to the course in the summer of 2007. The focus went away from the object or theoretical approaches to the object and its study, and instead focused on the nature of our experience of things; the module descriptor stated that "now, instead of

<sup>25</sup> Approaches and research methodologies; such as oral history, objects as sources, print as source, literary text as evidence, buildings, and "positioning yourself: boundaries, design history and interdisciplinarity" given in course documents – V&A/RCA history of design MA. 'Key concepts in design history-summer term 2002' conveners Juliet Ash and Jeremy Aynsley. Course documents – V&A/RCA history of design MA. 'Key concepts in design for Modern Group.'

<sup>26</sup> Course documents – V&A/RCA history of design MA. "Key concepts in design history-summer term 2003" convener Jeremy Aynsley.

<sup>27</sup> In 2005 the course had a new head of studies at the V&A, Glenn Adamson, John Styles had departed from his position at the V&A in 2003 to take up a professorship at the University of Hertfordshire. During the period of 2003-2005 Ulrich Lehmann and Giorgio Reillo contributed to teaching at the V&A.

<sup>28</sup> Sessions covered; Making and Selling The Nation in a Global Market (Vivianna Narotzky); Tourism and The Tourist Gaze; The Global and The Local: Cultural Assimilation or Appropriation?; Postcolonial Theory and design history: Some Problems; Detritus? Material Culture and Diaspora; and Gender and Globalization. Course documents – V&A/RCA history of design MA. "Key concepts summer term 2005 - globalization, design and material culture " There was also a East/West study Day organized by Craig Clunas from SOAS & Ann Matchette

considering the object as a stable thing with fixed qualities, the contingencies of sensation are the focus.”<sup>29</sup> The senses were regarded not only as 'physiological and phenomenological' but also as 'cultural constructs that vary over time'. Individual sessions discussed ideas of space, visibility, touch, taste and smell, and hearing. This approach was a significant departure from the usual prioritisation of the sense of vision, which is more pertinent for art objects and visual cultures, and embraces the importance of experiencing the physicality of designed objects.

The importance of considering the physical interactions with design, an almost anthropological engagement, was a feature of the material culture approach, as advocated by Attfield. This way of engaging with objects as representative of culture took design history scholarship away from consideration of production and towards detailed consideration of consumption. This distanced scholarship from creative practice, and its roots in the context of the art school, and directed it more firmly towards the social sciences and humanities. Design history scholarship was becoming more aligned with traditional scholarship but the issue of design history's role in relation to the teaching of practical designers remained. Guy Julier and Vivianna Narotsky had argued in 1997 for the redundancy of design history, and this argument had been made with particular consideration of this context.<sup>30</sup> In *The Culture of Design* Julier articulated an approach to designed objects which gave particular emphasis to the issues of importance to designers and the relationship of design practice to social contexts.<sup>31</sup> This was different from the 'history of design'

<sup>29</sup> Course documents – V&A/RCA history of design MA. “Key concepts summer term 2007 - sensation and perception.”

<sup>30</sup> Julier, G. & Narotsky, V.(1998) “The Redundancy of Design History”, [www.lmu.ac.uk/as/artdesresearch/papers](http://www.lmu.ac.uk/as/artdesresearch/papers), Leeds: Leeds Metropolitan University

<sup>31</sup> The first edition was published in 2000. Julier, G.(2008)*The Culture of Design*,2nd edn, London: Sage Publications

approach seen in the 1970s and early 1980s, called ‘popular design history’ by Julier, which emphasised biographies of the great iconic objects and their designers, and also had significant points of difference from the anthropological and museological approaches of material culture studies and Attfields ‘new contemporary design history’.<sup>32</sup> Julier acknowledged the role of both these approaches and positioned *The Culture of Design* as a project to trace the “interactions and tensions” between these two approaches prioritising both the design world and the ordinary. Julier’s concept of ‘design culture’ went beyond an academic framework to embrace the types of usage of the term in journalism and the design industry.<sup>33</sup> It also prioritised the idea of networks and interactions, which were becoming popular within the field of science and technology studies and the philosophies of Bruno Latour;<sup>34</sup> he described it thus,

“ ‘Design culture’, then, is part of the flows of global culture. It is located within network society, and is also an instrument of it. It expresses an attitude, a value, and a desire to improve things.”<sup>35</sup>

A clear feature also shown in this approach was separation from the ideas of hierarchies and “paternalistic notions of ‘good design’,” and in this way it shows parallels to the way that some visual culture scholars had distanced their work from the high art connotations associated with art history.<sup>36</sup> Both of these developments show the pattern of scholars from a community of practice evolving from a larger academic sub-group; namely visual culture evolving from art history and design culture separating from early concepts of history of design. This feature

<sup>32</sup>Foreword to the second edition; *Ibid.*, p.xi

<sup>33</sup> “The term “design culture” has been used more sporadically, and not just in academia. It also has been employed in journalism and the design industry itself” Julier, G. (2006) “From Visual Culture to Design Culture.”*Design Issues*, 22(1)p.64

<sup>34</sup> See discussion later in this chapter.

<sup>35</sup> Following a discussion of the views of Singapore-based art director Daniel Koh. Julier, G. (2006) *op.cit* p70

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p72



of scholars' continually re-inventing and re-shaping approaches to their research benefitted from opportunities presented by an interdisciplinary approach to academic endeavour.

In his article 'Visual Culture to Design Culture', Julier had acknowledged the direction taken by American design historians, such as Victor Margolin, towards studying design and culture under the title 'design studies'.<sup>37</sup> In 2004 the American Design History Forum, part of the College Art Association, renamed itself as the Design Studies Forum, and it made moves to increase its academic recognition when it produced a journal *Design and Culture* in 2009. The journal increasingly looked to the contemporary contexts for design, rather than being primarily historically located, and continued the academic fashion for interdisciplinarity;

"Covering a field that is increasingly interdisciplinary, *Design and Culture* probes design's relation to other academic disciplines, including marketing, management, cultural studies, anthropology, material culture, geography, visual culture and political economy."<sup>38</sup>

This journal again positioned itself within the context of design cultures; "the journal identifies and explores cultures of design and designs of culture."<sup>39</sup> However, it also continued to explore the problematic relationship that design historians had historically encountered within the art colleges; balancing academic endeavour with relevance to design practice. The journal mission statement aimed to offer papers, "investigating the tensions often encountered between critical, analytical, and intellectual activity and traditional studio-based endeavors."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Victor Margolin, (2002) "Design History and Design Studies" in *The Politics of the Artificial: Essays on Design and Design Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

<sup>38</sup> Journal Aims and Objectives from Publishers website.

<http://www.bergpublishers.com/BergJournals/DesignandCulture/tabid/3594/Default.aspx>

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Design and Culture* journal mission statement. Available at: <http://www.designstudiesforum.org/>

A related form of design analysis and scholarship that had some areas of overlap and connections to the broader design history domain was 'design research'. This was distinct from design history as it distanced itself from historical concerns. Design research prioritised the object and its production with an emphasis on contemporary rather than historical practice. Nigan Bayazit argued that the objectives are "the study, research, and investigation of the artificial made by human beings, and the way these activities have been directed in either academic studies or manufacturing organisations."<sup>41</sup> This form of inquiry into design is often referred to in terms of 'design methods' and has more overlaps with science and technology than the links that design history has with the art and humanities. The Design Research Society, an organisation that was in existence prior to both the DHS and the AAH, provides representation for the scholars researching in this area.<sup>42</sup> It is another important strand in the web of relationships in the design network, also interdisciplinary, but significant in expanding geographies with clear links to America, and also extending theoretical debate about design by a more specifically scientific and practical focus.

Other academic disciplines, methods and subject areas also had an increased influence during this decade. These include 'history of technology' and associated 'science and technology studies' (STS), oral histories, and a renewed interest in biography as a framework for approaching particular individuals and histories. Throughout the evolution and development of design history in Britain the direct

<sup>41</sup> Bayazit, N (2004) "Investigating Design Research- A review of Forty Years of Design Research" *Design Issues*, 20(1) pp16-29

<sup>42</sup> The Design Research Society was founded in the UK in 1966; "...to promote 'the study of and research into the process of designing in all its many fields.'" From 2006 the society produced *The Design Research Quarterly*. [www.designresearchsociety.org](http://www.designresearchsociety.org)

connection with ‘history of technology studies’ has been relatively limited, despite there being overlap between subject and source material.<sup>43</sup> This is rooted in the historic division between the arts and humanities on the one hand and sciences and technology on the other; a distinction that is seen in education and also in the museum sector.<sup>44</sup> Despite this there have been tentative links between design history and history of technology, most notably the 1979 Design History Society conference at Ironbridge.<sup>45</sup> As Walker noted histories of design that emphasised materials and techniques of production were, necessarily, “closely related to histories of science, technology and invention.”<sup>46</sup> Since the 1980s there have been remarkable similarities between the two disciplines which, although different communities of practice, have worked almost in parallel. Wiebe Bijker’s *Of Bicycles, Bakelites, and Bulbs* of 1995 expounds his sociological approach to objects as formulated by the scholars who attended the Twente workshop in the mid-1980s and whose ideas were presented in *Social Construction of Technological Systems*.<sup>47</sup> Interestingly two of the participants at the workshop were Bruno Latour and Ruth Schwartz Cowan who would later have links with other areas of the design history network. Bijker noted the problems inherent in the academic and disciplinary

<sup>43</sup> The Society for the History of Technology was established in 1958.

<sup>44</sup> The divide in the 19th century of the South Kensington Museum into two institutions, the Science Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, was a physical demonstration of an intellectual divide. However, from the mid-1980s the history of design course at the V&A contained a module in the history of technology, and often invited speakers from the Science Museum.

<sup>45</sup> The 1979 DHS conference, *Design and Industrialization* was held jointly by Keele and Ironbridge Gorge Museum see the publication of proceedings: Design Council (1980) *Design and Industry* London: Design Council.

<sup>46</sup> Walker, J.A. (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*, London: Pluto Press.p103. The curatorial structure of the Victoria and Albert Museum was initially organised around a materials and techniques approach as its’ intended audience was students, designers, craftsmen and manufacturers. Departments were: Architecture and Sculpture; Metalwork; Woodwork, furniture and leather; Textiles; Ceramics, enamels and glass; paintings; Engraving, illustration and design.

<sup>47</sup> Bijker, W.E. (1995) *Of Bicycles, Bakelites, and Bulbs – Towards a theory of Sociotechnical Change*, Boston: MIT Press, and Bijker, W.E., Hughes, T.P. & Pinch, T. (eds.) (1987) *The Social Construction of Technical Systems – New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*, Boston: MIT Press ( this text was based on the papers given to a workshop at university of Twente, the Netherlands, July 1984)

structures, possibly informed by Latours ideas on actor-networks, and suggested that, “the new approach [taken] may also yield results beyond the classical boundaries of technology studies.”<sup>48</sup> At the end of the 1990s and at the beginning of the new millennium the intellectual shift towards interdisciplinarity started to forge stronger links between the arts and sciences more generally.<sup>49</sup> Kjetil Fallan has argued that design historians became more attentive to the history of technology, and that there are reciprocal moves with historians of technology sharing a greater interest in design history.<sup>50</sup> It has only been more recently that the links become more clearly articulated and there is a significant influence from North American academics; an example of this is the social historian of technology Ruth Schwartz Cowan’s work *Social History of American Technology* which was identified by Victor Margolin as a type of design history.<sup>51</sup> The idea of social relations influencing technology, as indicated in Cowan’s work, is a key aspect of a theory known as the Social Construction of Technology, or SCOT, which Fallan argues;

“functioned as an arena for historians and sociologists of technology, but... has also been essential in the consolidation of science and technology studies (STS) as a distinct field of study.”<sup>52</sup>

The overlap between design history and science and technology studies was made explicit in 2008 when Bruno Latour, philosopher and advocate of STS, was invited

<sup>48</sup> Bijker, W.E., Hughes, T.P. & Pinch, T. (eds.) *op.cit.* p5

<sup>49</sup> A clear example of the link between the arts and sciences can be seen in some the work supported by the Wellcome Trust, for example their Engaging Science arts awards since 2002, their Sciart project, the June 2005 conference on “Science and Arts” <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/News/Media-office/Press-releases>.

<sup>50</sup> Fallan, K. (2010) *Design history: understanding theory and method*, Oxford: Berg, p.58

<sup>51</sup> Margolin, V. (2002) “Design History in the United States 1977-2000”, *The Politics of the Artificial. Essays on Design and Design Studies*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp.127-87. Schwartz Cowan, R. (2000) *Social History of American Technology*, New York: Oxford University Press

<sup>52</sup> It is not the place of this thesis to discuss these adjacent areas; for more on this see discussion by Fallan on SCOT, and ANT. Fallan, *op.cit.*, p.66

to give the keynote address at the DHS annual conference *Networks Of Design*.<sup>53</sup> Latour's concept of Actor-Networks offers a description of how events and artefacts happen through a series of negotiated relationships. Fallan's paper to the conference, on Latour's ANT theory reflected on the importance of this approach to "central issues in human-artefact relations" and how it might be usefully applied for design historians.<sup>54</sup> The presence of Latour as the keynote meant that the conference attracted a very broad range of delegates which further reinforced the interdisciplinary nature of design history and gave a clear demonstration of the extensive scope of the design history network.<sup>55</sup>

### **Higher Education and its Regulation**

This period also saw the impact of significant changes to the funding and regulation of higher education that had occurred in the late 1990s. This had impact on the activities of scholars in old and new universities alike, and affected all areas of academic practice; research, publishing and teaching. Positive measures such as changes in the Research Assessment Exercise measured research outputs and encouraged design historians to publish. The increase in the number of journals during this period is indicative of three practical factors; firstly, the emphasis of the university sector on published outputs for funding; secondly, the fracturing of academic practice into numerous niches or cliques; and thirdly, the financial

<sup>53</sup> Latour, B., (2008) *A Cautious Prometheus? A Few Steps Toward a Philosophy of Design (with Special Attention to Peter Sloterdijk)*, Keynote lecture for the Networks of Design conference, Design History Society, Falmouth, 3 September 2008.

<sup>54</sup> Fallan, K (2008) "An ANT in our pants? A design historian's reflection on Actor Network Theory" *Networks of Design* conference, Design History Society, Falmouth, 3 September 2008

<sup>55</sup> The general response to the paper was that it went over old ground of definition and although from a new perspective it did not add to the debate. So therefore it was disappointing for Design Historians, but of interest for the fresh audience of STS scholars and designers who were interested in the debates that Design Historians had been having for decades. Source; my notes from the question session following the keynote paper, and informal discussions with conference delegates.

incentive for the publisher.<sup>56</sup> The procedures for the assessment of research under the RAE encouraged scholars to consider how their research fit into the defined framework of official assessment panels, and these concerns were also echoed with new demands for clarity and regulating course content in Higher Education.

The Dearing report in 1997 had addressed the concerns of employers who had called for greater clarity over the standards they could expect from graduate students; in the same year the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) was established to provide a framework for academic standards across the country and ensure that guidelines were clear and explicit.<sup>57</sup> Of particular importance for a discussion of design history and in relation to teaching within the art design sector was the establishment of subject benchmark standards under the aegis of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to enable the measurement assessment of HE courses countrywide. Curriculum content had been a focus of heated debate and discussion from the time of the CNAA, and in 2001 the DHS and AAH again had an opportunity to revisit debates on the focus of their discipline areas. The old issues of the separation of history and theory from practice, and the heritage of design history in the context of art and Design education, were again

<sup>56</sup> Alistair Bonnett argues that academic journals and periodicals are cost-effective for publishers as they have editors and authors willing to work for free. "The input costs are low and, if you know your market, the profits can be large." Bonnett, A. (2011) "Are Radical Journals Selling Out?" *THE*, 3 November, pp.34-39

<sup>57</sup> The qualifications framework applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland has its own framework which was part of a wider Scottish credit and qualifications framework. QAA (2003) *A brief guide to quality assurance in UK higher Education*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. p.11. On standards: "Academic standards are a way of describing the level of achievement that a student has to reach to gain academic award (for example, a degree). It should be at a similar level across the UK. Academic quality is a way of describing how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their award. It is about making sure the appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for them." QAA (2003) *A brief guide to quality assurance in UK higher Education*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

evident as design history sat uncomfortably between two subject panels; 'Art and Design', and 'History of Art, Architecture and Design'.

Subject benchmark statements set out guidelines in all subject areas and aimed to 'describe the conceptual framework that gives the discipline its coherence and identity':<sup>58</sup> this gave design historians an opportunity to consider the scope of the discipline and the attributes and abilities required for students of design history. The reports for both subjects have a joint preface clarifying the nature of the collaborative relationship; they state that, "the two subjects have an historic and evolving relationship of separateness and togetherness which both *statements* acknowledge and respect."<sup>59</sup> During the process of negotiating the benchmark statements members from the history of art, architecture and design committee worked closely with members from the art and design committee.

The DHS had two representatives on the panel determining benchmarks for *Art and Design* and *Art, Design and Architecture History* in order to "ensure appropriate and workable criteria by which our subject will be known to wider public".<sup>60</sup> Barbara Burman was joined by Professor Christopher Bailey, editor of the Journal and Head of Department at the University of Northumbria, to represent the DHS and join members of the Association of art historians and other film and architecture

<sup>58</sup> QAA (2003) *A brief guide to quality assurance in UK higher Education*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, p12

<sup>59</sup> Joint preface, QAA(2002) *Subject Benchmark Statement - Art and Design - AR 055 3/2002*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education; and, QAA(2002) *Subject Benchmark Statement - History of Art, Architecture and Design - AR 056 3/2002*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

<sup>60</sup> Barbara Burman (2000) 'Chair's Annual Report [Edit] Given at AGM Friday 8 September 2000' *Design History Society Newsletter* Number 88, January 2001. The initial negotiation about subject benchmarks occurred when Barbara Burman was the chair of the DHS; and she announced details to the societies annual general meeting in 2000. The draft reports had been available on the website of the QAA for all members of the design historical community to access, and had also been circulated at executive committee meetings.

historians.<sup>61</sup> As representatives of the Society Burman and Bailey had been able to succinctly represent the rich scope of approaches and academic areas that encompassed the work of those researching in design history.

"this was a fascinating and rather daunting task and I report it here as a mark of our subject's presence on the map at undergraduate provision in the UK as well as an account of the work of the Society... we hope the statement describes the rich scope and contemporary relevance of what our subject has to offer. In my view, it will make an impact over time and help substantiate and advance the subject."<sup>62</sup>

A key feature relating to the discipline's identity that was clarified whilst considering the academic standards to be benchmarked included acknowledgement of the diversity of subjects, approaches and methods. This was summarised by describing History of Art Architecture and Design (HAAD) as "distinguished by a concern with visual and material culture in both the past and present" but it acknowledged the resistance to defining a specific genre by stating that;

"no single word or phrase neatly encapsulates all the objects or concepts that programmes in HAAD may address. Programmes may be concerned with a very wide range of entities; with everyday objects, images and environments, with works of art, and with the range of artefacts not made as 'art objects' but which have come to be considered as such. The concept of 'art' is widely understood within the subject area is to be contested and historically contingent, and in any case not to be an appropriate categorisation of the many other objects of study."<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> The benchmark group was constituted from nominations made by the AAH, the DHS, and the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain. The group members were: Professor Christopher Bailey (University of Northumbria), Dr Barbara Burman (University of Southampton), Professor Ian Christie (Birkbeck College, University of London), Dr Tom Grettton, chair, (University College London), Professor Deborah Howard (University of Cambridge), Professor Catherine King (Open University), Ms Pauline Ridley (University of Brighton), Dr Evelyn Welch (University of Sussex), Professor Shearer West (University of Birmingham), Professor Alison Yarrington (University of Leicester). Appendix I QAA(2002)*Subject Benchmark Statement - History of Art, Architecture and Design - AR 056 3/2002*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

<sup>62</sup> Barbara Burman (2001) "Chair's Annual Report" *Design History Society Newsletter* Number 92, January 2002.

<sup>63</sup> Academic standards-history of art, architecture and design, introduction 1.3, QAA(2002) *Subject Benchmark Statement - History of Art, Architecture and Design - AR 056 3/2002*, Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education



The committee had successfully managed to offer a definition that encapsulated the broad subject area without establishing restrictive definitions or drawing boundaries.

### **Funding for Research within the domain of design history**

The main source of funding for research at UK universities was from the government which was supplemented by other sources.<sup>64</sup> Funding was allocated under a dual system, individual projects applied to research councils whereas the broad infrastructure funding was provided by the four UK funding bodies following an assessment of their research outputs through the RAE.<sup>65</sup> Arguably, the most significant change in the academic environment for design history from the late 1990s and into the 21st century was the change in the distribution of government funding for the arts and humanities. James Herbert describes the practical, political and theoretical issues that surrounded the funding of Arts and Humanities research and the creation of the Arts and Humanities Research Board during this period.<sup>66</sup> (The Arts and Humanities Research Board founded in 2001 became a Council in 2005; the acronyms AHRB and AHRC both refer to this organisation in its differing forms.)

<sup>64</sup> The guide to the 2001 research assessment exercise states that under the dual support system; funding for research infrastructure is provided by funding bodies, and costs of individual research projects funded by the research councils. This is supplemented, which include; business and industry, government departments, charities and the European Commission. See page 2. Available at: <http://www.rae.ac.uk/2001/pubs/other/raeguide.pdf>

<sup>65</sup> The infrastructure such as “staff salaries, premises, computing and library costs” was provided by the four UK funding bodies; the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE); the Scottish Funding Council; the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, and the Department of Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland. *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Herbert, J.(2009)*Creating the AHRC - An Arts and Humanities Research Council for the United Kingdom in the Twenty-first Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy

Although the British Academy had established a Humanities Research Board in 1994 it was not until the Dearing report of 1997, *Higher Education in a Learning Society*, that a different attitude towards funding humanities research became evident. It was felt that an “understanding of human culture, both past and present, [could] enhance the quality of life and creative output of the nation”<sup>67</sup>

Another report of significance for design history was the Council of Science and Technology’s 2001 report entitled *Imagination and Understanding: a Report on the Arts and Humanities In Relation To Science and Technology*. This addressed areas of specific concern for design historians who had always been aware of the complications of their research area that hovered between the arts and humanities and science and technology. The report argued that it was in the best interests of science and technology to question, and possibly reduce, “the archaic divisions between the arts and the sciences” and this raised the strategic issue of interdisciplinarity.<sup>68</sup> The report had noted that “many of today's most exciting areas of research lie between and across the boundaries of traditionally defined disciplines” and that the current structure of research funding discouraged imaginative research.<sup>69</sup> So the model of research activity that scholars in the design history network had embraced in the 1970s was seen to have great merit and became academically fashionable. An important development followed from these findings, and a pioneering joint programme was launched in January 2002; the AHRB joined with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to fund a six-year

<sup>67</sup> The stated aims of the Arts and Humanities Research Board (hereafter the AHRB), founded in October 1998 and distributed its first funding in the academic year 1999-2000. *Ibid.*, p.19

<sup>68</sup> 2001 *Imagination and Understanding: A Report on The Arts And Humanities In Relation To Science And Technology* - Council for science and technology cited in Herbert, J., *op. cit.* p.34

<sup>69</sup> There were six research councils for sciences and technology and a single board for arts and humanities, the AHRB.

programme *Cultures of Consumption*. There were several projects as part of this programme that saw a great deal of involvement from design historians, these, along with the AHRB's *Centre for the Domestic Interior* established in 2001, will be discussed in the case studies in Chapter Eight. The new focus of arts and humanities research was to be open about any assumptions concerning boundaries of the humanities disciplines; this was a characteristic that had been applied by early design historians. Arguably, members of the design history network had been amongst the first scholars to embrace this new approach to research in the humanities, it then became increasingly important in the 21st century research when it was intellectually fashionable to emphasise interdisciplinarity, social function, and impact.

As has previously been discussed in Chapter Five the major Research Assessment Exercise rated the quality of research produced at UK universities and colleges. Known as the RAE, and first undertaken in 1986 then periodically, this was not only a means of distributing funding for the broad academic infrastructure but also raised the issue of defining and categorising scholarly research.<sup>70</sup> Intellectual endeavour was divided into units of assessment, UoA, to cover particular subject areas, and these were assessed by individual panels of experts. Universities would decide which panels to make submissions to, giving the details of the outputs of their research-active staff. By the 2001 round of assessments it had become apparent that the system of dividing research by subject area was not suited to the current

<sup>70</sup> Further research assessment exercises were undertaken in 1989, 1992, 1996, 2001, 2008 before being replaced by the Research Excellence Framework REF. The assessment is conducted by the four educational funding bodies in the UK; the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE); the Scottish Funding Council; the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, and the Department of Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland.

trends in interdisciplinary research, and came under criticism for failing to fully recognise interdisciplinary and collaborative work between institutions in its assessments. The RAE commissioned a study following the results of the 1996 exercise and concluded that there was “no evidence that the RAE has systematically discriminated against interdisciplinary research.”<sup>71</sup> However, the same study also reported that interdisciplinary research was widespread throughout education with four-fifths of researchers engaging in elements of it, and also that departments and researchers widely believed that the RAE inhibited, interdisciplinary research.

The positive message from this large-scale survey of practices in higher education research was that interdisciplinary research was ‘pervasive’ and that the RAE system needed to be reassessed in order to accurately evaluate the nature and extent of interdisciplinary research. The more negative findings of the report were its strong criticism of the impact of the exercise itself on interdisciplinary research; with one quarter of researchers, and one fifth of panel members, believing that the mode of evaluation taken by the exercise actually inhibited interdisciplinary research. This criticism was strongest in the social sciences, arts and humanities subjects. A specific problem identified was that university departmental structures did not necessarily fit the structures used by the RAE; this resulted in nearly one quarter of departments splitting their researchers between panels or seeking cross referral, this practice was known as ‘boundary critical submission’. Boundary critical submissions were overall rated half a point lower than non-critical submissions. The recommendations of the report were: that revisions needed to be made to procedures for assessing interdisciplinary “boundary critical” submissions; these

<sup>71</sup>The study was *RAE 1999 interdisciplinary research and the RAE*. Source of quotation: RAE “*Briefing note 14, interdisciplinary research and the RAE*”, point 2.

procedures needed monitoring mechanisms to ensure their effectiveness; and, that subsequent feedback and reporting needed to “embrace interdisciplinary research.”<sup>72</sup>

This exercise was only to assess standards of research, rather than the quality of teaching offered. For students, whose own funding arrangements had changed, a main aspect of their HE experience was the quality of ‘learning experience’ offered by the institutions. This decade that saw a transformation of the role of universities; no longer was emphasis solely on research excellence and the creation of knowledge, the realm of the RAE, but also on enhancing the teaching role of universities and the transfer of that knowledge. Institutional and organisation changes were seen to facilitate this with the establishment of the learning and teaching subject support network subject centres and research centres. In 2000 a network of subject centres was established by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) to provide support to lecturers across the country.

The subject centre for design history was the Art Design Media centre based at Brighton and its goal was; “Supporting and developing learning and teaching in art, design, media, history of art and the history of design in higher education.”<sup>73</sup> This centre coordinated a range of training events, symposia and conferences to share examples of best practice, and also used the academic mailing list service JISC Mail

<sup>72</sup> ‘Objective five: recommendations, in “*Briefing Note 15: Interdisciplinary Research and The Research Assessment Exercise*”

<sup>73</sup> The HEA-ADM subject centre (Higher Education Academy – Art, Design, Media) aims to support learning and teaching in art, design, media, history of art and the history of design in higher education, it was established in 2000 and is based in Brighton. <http://www.adm.heacademy.ac.uk/> CLTAD (the Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design) supports professional development for staff of the University of the Arts in connection with the Royal College of Art, and has conferences and training days open to other academic staff. GLAADH (Globalising art, architecture and design history) project aimed to support curriculum development. See websites; <http://www.adm.heacademy.ac.uk/>, and, <http://www.arts.ac.uk/cltad.htm>, <http://www.glaadh.ac.uk/>

to share information to those lecturers who were interested in this area. This work was expanded in 2005 when HEFCE funded the establishment of 74 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).<sup>74</sup> This saw the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning through Design (CETLD) also based at the University of Brighton which was in collaboration with the Royal College of Art the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Royal Institute of British Architects. This is evidence of the strong relationships between institutions that had been forged through design historical networks and with their heritage and experience of design historians teaching in creative design environments. Two other examples of collaborative practice are the Royal College of Art and University of the Arts Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design (CLTAD) and a project to encourage and support practical art and design students to express themselves in written forms, Writing Purposefully in Art and Design (Writing-PAD).<sup>75</sup> This project received HEFCE funding and was led by Goldsmiths College of Art and Design and again brought together the Royal College of Art as collaborator and also Central St Martins.

The 2004 Higher Education Act formalised the recommendations made in the 2003 white paper *The Future of Higher Education*. This led to an increased emphasis on widening participation and enhancing the student learning experience. The Higher Education Academy was established with the goal; “to work with universities and colleges to enhance the quality of teaching and the student experience.”<sup>76</sup> In the

<sup>74</sup> Complete list of funded CETLs available at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/TInits/cetl/final/>

<sup>75</sup> CLTAD offers Continuing Professional Development, Symposia, Advice on Curriculum Development, Teaching Qualifications and Secondments. Available at: <http://www.arts.ac.uk/cltad/>. (Accessed: 26th May 2010)

<sup>76</sup> HEA, (2008) *Higher Education Academy Annual Report 2007-8* London: HMSO

Further Education sector a similar development had occurred a few years previously when teachers within FE colleges began to demand recognition of their professional status. During the late 1990s moves were made that led to the establishment of an independent professional body to help regulate teaching standards, the *Institute for Learning* (IfL) in 2002.<sup>77</sup> The DHS offered support to its members who were teaching in both HE and FE environments, as it had done at its formation in the late 1970s when academics were grappling with the nature of teaching practice. This was shown by support for a Design Pedagogy conference in 2007 at Leeds, and the supporting publication,<sup>78</sup> and the new position of Teaching and Learning Officer on the executive committee, from 2008, with special interest in teaching and pedagogy.<sup>79</sup>

### **The expansion of the design history network globally.**

Further evidence of the secure status of design history, its distinction from traditional decorative arts scholarship, and its growing influence during this decade is seen in significant developments on the international stage. This decade saw an expansion in design historical activity across the world and also an expansion in the subject matter addressed by British design historians. In 2001 the *Globalising Art, Architecture and Design History* (GLAADH) project addressed criticisms that current teaching practice overlooked global subjects and issues.<sup>80</sup> Leon Wainwright argues

<sup>77</sup> IfL is incorporated as an independent professional body on 2 January 2002, at this stage limited to further education as it is at the time of writing. Available at: <http://www.ifl.ac.uk/about-ifl/history-of-ifl>

<sup>78</sup> Hatton, K. (2008) *Design, Pedagogy, Research - Leeds 2007*, Leeds: Jeremy Mills Publishing

<sup>79</sup> Kirsten Hardie was confirmed as the first Teaching and Learning Officer on the committee in 2008. Subsequently the Teaching Officer had coordinated a series of workshops – many of which reassess the old issues covered by previous generations of design historians; most specifically that role of historians in the context of design practice.

<sup>80</sup> The GLAADH project was a response to criticism in the QAA subject report overview of art, architecture and design history that most institutions concentrated on Western art and culture. The initial review carried out in 2001 discovered, in contradiction to the overview, that “47 institutions

that the 3-year project made the intellectual community aware of the necessity of taking a global perspective and curriculum change in this respect but acknowledged that due to the relationship of teaching curricula to research interests it was difficult to embed global issues and topics into the institutional framework of existing teaching.<sup>81</sup>

The issue of globalisation had become an increasingly important area of economic, political and intellectual enquiry, and a special edition of the *Journal of Design History* in 2005 discussed the implications for the study of humanities subjects and in particular “the global future of design history”.<sup>82</sup> Significantly, during this decade, design historical networks and communities grew beyond their previous broadly Eurocentric and North American focus.<sup>83</sup> Many of changes were facilitated by new communication technologies, included the establishment of frequent international conferences at venues across the world, the establishment of new design history societies in other countries, and an expanding focus of the topics addressed by British design historians to include Australasian, Asian, African and South American topics. An example of the importance of this new focus was the new Asian

offered teaching on aspects of African, Asian, Latin American and Eastern European art, architecture and design which was not identifiable in terms of separate courses, but was integrated into courses with more generic titles.” Gieben-Gamal, E. (2005) “Diversifying the Design History Curriculum: a review of recent resources” *Journal of Design History*, 18(3) p.293

<sup>81</sup> Wainwright, L ( 2009) “On Being Unique: World Art and its British Institutions” *Visual Culture in Britain*, 10(1) p.93

<sup>82</sup> Bailey, C (ed.) (2005) “Special issue: the global future of design history,” *Journal of Design History*, 18(3).

<sup>83</sup> The relationship between Britain and America has already been discussed in detail, and there are subtle differences of approach due to the educational framework. Many institutions have an element of design history, either taught in their programmes, through exhibitions, or through funding research. These include: The Bard Graduate Center, New York City; The Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, part of the Smithsonian; and the Winterthur museum. See: [www.bgc.bard.edu/](http://www.bgc.bard.edu/) and <http://cooperhewitt.org/> and [www.winterthur.org](http://www.winterthur.org)



specialism on the V&A/RCA MA course in the history of design which began at the end of the decade.<sup>84</sup>

The papers contributed to the *Journal of Design History* special issue discussed a variety of key areas of concern. These included; the geographical perspectives that had been taken to world histories of design;<sup>85</sup> design organisations and professions in Cuba and Greece;<sup>86</sup> pedagogic developments such as the GLAADH project and the “Transculturation” module piloted at Sheffield Hallam University funded by the project;<sup>87</sup> and an evaluation by Jonathan Woodham of the range of global work by design historians over the past 30 years and considerations for future directions.<sup>88</sup> Woodham argues that following the initial development of design history in Britain in the sectors of education, conferences and publications there was a limited geographical outlook whilst the discipline was “preoccupied with defining and redefining itself”.<sup>89</sup> He gives statistical evidence concerning geographical distribution of membership of the DHS and articles contributed to the *Journal of Design History* over 10 years which demonstrate that global issues and perspectives were becoming of importance at the turn of the millennium.<sup>90</sup> Woodham draws attention to the recent rise in research interest on an international level and development of international conferences on design history. He argues that

<sup>84</sup> The Asian specialism started in 2008. The course programme for this specialism was lead by Christine Guth.

<sup>85</sup> Margolin (2005) “A World History of Design and the History of the World” *Journal of Design History*, 18(3), pp.235-243

<sup>86</sup> Uriate, L.F. ( 2005) “Modernity and Postmodernity From Cuba” *Journal of Design History*, 18(3) pp245-255; and, Yagou, A ( 2005) “Unwanted Innovation-The Athens Design Centre (1961-1963)” *Journal of Design History*, 18(3), pp.269-283

<sup>87</sup> Gieben-Gamal, E. *op.cit.*, and Cooper, R. & White, D. ( 2005) “Teaching Transculturation - pedagogical processes” *Journal of Design History*, 18 ( 3) pp285-292.

<sup>88</sup> Woodham, J.M. (2005) “ Local, National And Global: Redrawing the Design Historical Map” *Journal of Design History*, 18(3), pp.257-267

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p.258.

<sup>90</sup> For these statistics see: *Ibid.*, p.258-9

historians could make use of the networks and resources provided by international design organisations, such as the International Council of Graphic Design Associates (ICOGRADA), The International Council of Societies for Industrial Design (ICSID), and the International Federation of Interior Architect's/Interior Designers (IFI).<sup>91</sup>

The international conferences, referred to by Woodham, became an established part of the design historical calendar throughout this decade; and additionally the DHS's annual conferences began to have an increasingly international flavour, with international delegates, speakers and, in 2006, the first non-British location.<sup>92</sup> The first International Conference of Design History and Design Studies was held in Barcelona in 1999, organised by Anna Calvera at the University of Barcelona, and although still physically located in Europe, the objective was to develop design history in the Spanish-speaking world.<sup>93</sup> Other stated aims were to "facilitate contacts" to "set up a communication network to stimulate collaboration at very different levels" and to "work towards the academic recognition of the subject of design by international bodies such as UNESCO."<sup>94</sup> This event demonstrates that there was;

"sufficient collective energy and experience to develop a more ambitious agenda for the consolidation of design and design historical studies in Spain, bringing together the design schools in Barcelona and the rest of Spain, the countries of the Spanish-speaking world, and those countries in Europe

<sup>91</sup> ICOGRADA established 1963. ICSID established 1957 and IFI established 1963. Here Woodham seems to have been influenced by his own membership of these organisations and also the acquisition of the ICOGRADA archive at the DHRC at Brighton. In his previous research the importance of organisations, and available archives, has been a key aspect.

<sup>92</sup> The 2006 conference *Design and Evolution* held at Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands.

<sup>93</sup> 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> April 1999, "Historiar desde la Periferia: historia e historias del Diseño / design history Seen from Abroad: History and Histories of Design," Barcelona. Advertised in *DHS newsletter* No 81 April 1999. Also, Woodham,(2005) *op.cit.*, p.259

<sup>94</sup> Wording from conference announcement "Design History Seen from Abroad." Advertised in *DHS newsletter* No 81 April 1999. p3

whose research and publications had provided useful developmental materials and models.”<sup>95</sup>

The second international conference was also in the Spanish-speaking country of Cuba. “The Emergence of Regional Histories” conference held in June 2000 included the term “design studies” in addition to “design history” in its broad descriptor. This acknowledges the closer physical location to North America where the term was more widely used at this point, but more importantly the event significantly expanded geographical territories that had previously dominated design historical research. The Cuban event was sponsored by the History of Design Scientific Committee of Barcelona '99 and coincided with a parallel event on teaching design organised by the Cuban National Office of Industrial Design.<sup>96</sup> Again the purpose was to promote professional recognition of the history of design and there were also a number of working groups which addressed key issues that had been pertinent to the discipline throughout its evolution and development; historiography, research, museology, teaching, and the relationship between adjacent disciplines of design and fine arts and architecture.<sup>97</sup>

Subsequent international conferences occurred on a regular basis throughout this decade. At the Istanbul conference in 2002 design history from many countries was represented in addition to methodological discussions.<sup>98</sup> The fourth conference in

<sup>95</sup> Woodham,(2005) *op.cit.*, p259

<sup>96</sup> The national office for industrial design (ONDA), Sixth meeting on design conference dealt with three main topics: “teaching of design; history, studies and theory of design; new information and communication technologies, and some more specific ones like technological innovation and 20 years of the national office of industrial design as the manager of design in Cuba. - in a “sixth meeting on design 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> June 2000 - a three-day conference to be held in Cuba” *Design History Society Newsletter*, number 85, April 2000, p.4

<sup>97</sup> Sixth meeting on design 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> June 2000 - a three-day conference to be held in Cuba” *Design History Society Newsletter*, number 85, April 2000, p.4

<sup>98</sup> “Mind the Map: Design History beyond Borders” - Third International Conference of Design History and Design Studies – Istanbul Technical University, 9-12 July 2002. Discussed by Woodham,(2005) *op.cit.*, p.259. Perla Ambran was a recipient of a DHS award to enable her

Mexico, in 2004, again raised the issue of the boundaries for design histories but this time in terms of geographical focus rather than subject or methodological approach, and there were also discussions surrounding the possible need for an international design history journal and association.<sup>99</sup> The fifth international conference in 2006, *Collecting: a Conference on the Multivocality of Design History and Design Studies* was located in the joint locations of the Baltic state of Estonia and the Finnish capital Helsinki.<sup>100</sup> This conference also included the bi-annual symposium of the Nordic Forum of Design History, which had representatives from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. This conference brought together delegates from over 22 countries and Artemis Yagou, reviewer for the DHS, suggested that this was "a clear indication of the increasing internationalisation of the field of design history" and that there was a "rich and pluralistic debate".<sup>101</sup> These conferences serve to demonstrate the extension of the design history network globally.

In addition to the International Committee of Design History and Studies (ICDHS), the instigators of the conferences in Barcelona, Havana, Istanbul, Mexico and Estonia-Finland, other international organisations were having an increasingly important impact on the promotion and development on design history on the international and global stage. The geographies of design history expanded to include Asia with the establishment of the design history Workshop Japan in 2002; the academic credentials were consolidated with the publishing of its own journal

attendance at this conference, she provided a brief precis of the paper that was presented in the reviews section of the *DHS newsletter* number 96, January 2003, p10

<sup>99</sup> Discussion raised by Oscar Salina. Benincasa, C ( 2005) "Fourth international conference, University of Guadalajara, Mexico, 1-5<sup>th</sup> November 2004", *DHS newsletter*, number 105, April 2005, pp6-7

<sup>100</sup> *Collecting: A Conference On The Multivocality Of Design History And Design Studies*, University of art and design Helsinki, and Estonian Academy of arts, 23-25 August 2006. Yagou, A ( 2006) Conference review *Design History Society Newsletter*, number 111, October 2006,p.7

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*,p.7

*Design History* in 2003, and also when Japan hosted the 6th International Conference in Osaka in 2008 with the support of a number of Japanese academic societies.<sup>102</sup> In 2008 a German design history society *Gesellschaft für Designgeschichte* was also established, confirming the strength of the subject within Europe had extended beyond English-speaking academics.<sup>103</sup> By the end of this decade the importance of the international scope of design history had become clearly evident; Britain's DHS demonstrated the significance of this trend by joining with the International Committee of Design History and Studies (ICDHS) for their 2010 annual conference in Brussels, only the second of the Society's conferences to be outside Britain.<sup>104</sup>

The year 2010 saw further evidence that the design history network was now a truly global with several academic indicators of this in the form of publications, conferences, the *Journal of Design History's* editorial board and research funding.<sup>105</sup> Asia was a particular focus of scholarship, evident in the observations made by the three-part opinion article in the *Journal of Design History*, and also through a

<sup>102</sup> The society's website is at: [www.soc.nii.ac.jp/dhwj/](http://www.soc.nii.ac.jp/dhwj/). For a report of the conference see: Yagou, A (2009) "Another Name for Design: Words For Creation-The Sixth International Conference Of design history And Design Studies, Osaka University, Japan, 24-27 October 2008. *Design History Society Newsletter* number 121, June 2009, p.6

<sup>103</sup> *German Design History Society*. (no date) Available at: [www.gfdg.org/](http://www.gfdg.org/). (Accessed: 8th June 2010)

<sup>104</sup> *Design and Craft: A History of Convergences and Divergence*, was organized by the International Committee of design history and Design Studies (ICDHS) and the DHS and held from the 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2010 in Brussels. The first conference held outside Britain was *Design and Evolution*, 2006 in Delft. The trend continued with the 2011 conference *Design and Activism and Social Change* in Barcelona.

<sup>105</sup> The membership of the editorial board of the *Journal of Design History* at the date of writing (2011) is a good indicator of its global ambitions. Members come from institutions worldwide including: Regina Lee Blaszczyk (University of Pennsylvania), Cheryl Buckley (University of Northumbria), Kjetil Fallan (University of Oslo), Yuko Kikuchi (University of the Arts, London), Grace Lees-Maffei (University of Hertfordshire), Javier Gimeno Martinez (VU University Amsterdam), Peter McNeil (University of Technology, Sydney and Stockholm University, Stockholm), Jilly Traganou (Parsons The New School for Design, New York), and Artemis Yagou (Deutsches Museum, Munich). Source, (2011) Front Matter. *Journal of Design History* 24(3)

conference at the University of Brighton organised by Yunah Lee.<sup>106</sup> This conference, “Design Histories and Design Studies in East Asia” had the subtitle of “Toward a creation of a global/ transnational framework for design histories” and indicates that considerations of transnationalism were having academic currency.<sup>107</sup> This is indicative of a new subsection, actor and also community of practice; those academics with an interest in race, ethnicity and with a particular consideration of cultural interaction and transnationalism. Further evidence of the importance of networks, connections and interaction comes in the form of the publication *Global design history*.<sup>108</sup> The book was the product of collaboration across two funded research projects “Global Arts” and “Towards a History of Design in the Global Economy” and between institutions and organisations such as the Global History and Culutre Centre at the University of Warwick, the Ashmolean Museum Oxford, Northwestern University in the USA, the V&A/RCA course and the DHS.<sup>109</sup>

### **Reflecting on the current state of the design history network**

During this decade a recurring theme amongst the design historical network, much as it had been 30 years previously, was evaluating the identity of the discipline and looking towards its future direction. This issue, which had been of frequent concern in Britain during the 1970s, became increasingly relevant in America where design

<sup>106</sup> (Part 1, by Yuko Kikuchi), PRC/Hong Kong/Taiwan (Part 2, by Wendy S. Wong) and Korea (Part 3, by Yunah Lee) Kikuchi, Yuko (2011) “Re: focus Design: Design Histories and Design Studies in East Asia; Part I” in *Journal of Design History*, 24: 3 pp.273-281; “Design Histories and Design Studies in East Asia: Toward a creation of a global/ transnational frame work for design histories,” Faculty of Arts, University of Brighton, 25th November 2011

<sup>107</sup> For a consideration of transnationalism as a concept and novel research field see; Portes, A., Guarnizo, L.E. & Landolt, P.(1999)The study of transnationalism: pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*,22(2)pp.217-237

<sup>108</sup> Adamson, G., Teasley, S. & Riello, G. (eds)(2011) *Global Design History*, London: Routledge.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface. “Global Arts” was AHRC-funded and “Towards a History of Design in the Global Economy” had funding from the Florence H and Eugene E. Myers Charitable Trust Fund at NorthWestern University. The Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities also provided support.

history was less well established due to differences in educational provision in art and design. The Yale Center for British Art, based in Connecticut, USA, put together a trilogy of symposia to examine the futures for histories of British art, design and architecture.<sup>110</sup> These events were organised by the director and head of research from the Yale Center in association with the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum;<sup>111</sup> the event also received sponsorship from the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain. The event '*Histories of British Design: Where Next?*' concerned the history of design and the decorative arts and was held at the V&A in London to reflect the heritage of academic design history within Britain. This enabled 'senior design historians and leading scholars in the field of design and cultural history' to explore 'past and present agendas'.<sup>112</sup> The event was attended by 124 participants from a wide variety of education institutions and museums, and included presentations, panel discussions, and also breakout sessions within the museum.<sup>113</sup> The issues addressed throughout were the potential problems for design history and these were approached by themed sessions that addressed topics of 'objects', 'hierarchies and boundaries', 'time and space' and also considered three key approaches to design history, namely; 'production', 'consumption' and 'circulation'.<sup>114</sup> As well as key

<sup>110</sup> The first event was "Histories Of British Art: Where Next?", the second was "Histories Of British Design: Where Next?", and the final event 'Histories Of British Architecture: Where Next?'

<sup>111</sup> Amy Meyers, director, Michael Hatt, head of research and Serenna Guerette research administrator, Yale.

<sup>112</sup> Jeremy Aynsley (2006) "Conference review: Histories of British Design: Where Next?, V&A London, 6-8 July 2006" *Design History Society Newsletter*, number 111, October 2006, pp.8-9

<sup>113</sup> Participants included representatives from universities across Britain and America (ranging from Glasgow to Brighton and Pennsylvania to Illinois) and museums include representation from the Tate, the V&A, the Museum of London, the Ashmolean and even included a curator from the National Trust.

<sup>114</sup> "Objects" session chaired by Cheryl Buckley (University of Northumbria and chair of the DHS), including panel members John Styles, Matthew Johnson, Glenn Adamson. "Hierarchies and boundaries" session chaired by Malcolm Baker (University of Southern California), including panel members Jonathan Woodham, Tanya Harrod, and Adrian Forty. "Time and space" session chaired by David Gilbert (Royal Holloway), including panel members Edward Cooke, Craig Clunas, and

scholars from the world of design history were those from adjacent fields including history, English, archaeology and sociology, the conference respondent Jeremy Aynsley felt that this; “gave the event depth and greater resonance, along with a stronger sense of contestation...[ and offered] positions on how engagement with artifactual evidence has developed in recent years.”<sup>115</sup> The event served to consolidate academic disciplinary status of the design history network, or, as Aynsley characterised it, provided evidence that “design history has made its mark.”<sup>116</sup> Yet it also raised the pressing issue, as evidenced by the rise of ‘design studies’, which was that design history needed to further interrogate its relationship to design theory and practice. The seminar served to highlight the differences between different communities of practice across the design history network in the US and Britain. Tim Putnam characterized the relative contributions of US and UK academics as indicative of the differences in the environments that saw the foundation of the subject; whereas in the UK foundations were firmly within design education, arguably a slightly less academic environment, whereas in the US there were firmer academic foundations.<sup>117</sup> British design historians had reached a moment of flux due to changes in the funding and regulation of higher education. Putnam suggested that the seminar had opened up a new impetus;

“Recently people who been involved in teaching design history in British design education felt rather beleaguered in the last five or six years

Trevor Keeble. “Production” session chaired by Tim Putnam (University of Portsmouth and DHS Journal editor), including panel members Giorgio Reillo, Rafael Cardoao, and Paul Greenhalgh. “Consumption” session chaired by Frank Trentmann (director of the ESRC/AHRC Cultures of Consumption project), including panel members Amanda Vickery and Chris Breward. “Circulation” sometimes referred to as “mediation”; session chaired by Lara Kreigel (Florida International University), including panel members Sean Nixon, Catherine Richardson, and Margot Finn.

<sup>115</sup> Aynsley, *op.cit.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p9

<sup>117</sup> Yale/V&A seminar at V&A (2006/7) “has shown a very interesting relationship and difference between the kind of work that's been done, design history in the states and which has been done here” Putnam, T & DHS (2008) *Oral History Interview with Tim Putnam*, Track 4



especially... and it was interesting to see, in the context of that seminar, that there were some perspectives that were being opened up,”<sup>118</sup>

This comment returns attention to the practical considerations faced by British design historians, those of employment circumstances and their subsequent impact on both teaching and the furthering of research.

The increased American interest in discussing approaches to design history, or design studies or design cultures, was demonstrated not only by this Yale event but also by a strand at the College Art Association conference two years later in 2008.<sup>119</sup> “The Current State of Design History”, convened by Hazel Clark and David Brody, took its title and inspiration from Clive Dilnot’s 1984 essays. The strand brought together scholars from both the UK and America to give reflective papers discussing the current direction of the discipline and these issues fed into a *Design Studies Reader*.<sup>120</sup> The key questions that contributors were invited to address were; Who writes design history and for what purpose? How does design history relate to design practice? How has visual culture studies impacted on design history? And also issues of geography, methodologies and content. British design historian, Grace Lees-Maffei presented an overview of the position of design history in Britain.<sup>121</sup> Like many before her Lees-Maffei viewed the disagreements and discussion concerning the boundaries and methodologies as a strength:

“Today design history has the confidence to proceed without a definitive overarching concept of itself, or indeed of design, to which we all subscribe. Indeed, some of the most interesting work in the discipline seeks to extend our

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, Track 4, 19.50

<sup>119</sup> “The Current State of Design History”, College Art Association, 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, February 20<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> 2008, Dallas, Texas.

<sup>120</sup> Scholars speaking in the conference strand were: Grace Lees-Maffei, Bess Williamson, Lisa Fruick, Sarah Lichtman and Teal Triggs. The reader was based on work on the courses at Parsons School of Design: Clark, H. & Brody, D. (eds)(2009) *Design Studies - A Reader* Oxford: Berg

<sup>121</sup> Lees Maffei was closely involved with the British Design historical networks; she was a graduate of the V&A /RCA course, has been an active member of DHS for many years, and also on the editorial board of the *Journal of Design History*,

understanding of the discipline..... As we know scholarship is a collective process, operating through difference as well as consensus,”<sup>122</sup>

The following year Lees-Maffei edited Berg’s *Design History Reader*, a publication that drew together a selection of key design historical texts and was representative of this viewpoint.

As indicated by Putnam’s reference to the “beleaguered” state of those teaching design histories in Britain, there were issues relating to the rapid change in HE education that had impact on academic members of the design history network. Concerns regarding the altering role of teaching the subject in the HE environment led to a joint meeting of the AAH and DHS at the University of Central England in November 2004.<sup>123</sup> The title of the meeting succinctly summarized the issues under discussion, it asked the question; *Are We in Crisis? Challenges in teaching and research in the new century.*<sup>124</sup> There were a broad range of art and design history teachers and researchers from across the country present at the meeting, many of whom were from the new university sector.<sup>125</sup> The new system for university funding, under the RAE, had been criticized for failing to award interdisciplinary projects, or good teaching practice and hence unfairly prioritising the old universities which had a greater tradition of being research intensive in specialist

<sup>122</sup> Strand - The Current State of Design History Grace –Lees-Maffei, Disc 1 / track 2 01:37  
Recording of College Art Association, 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference –Feb 20-23 2008 – Dallas Texas

<sup>123</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> November 2004, *Are We in Crisis? Challenges in teaching and research in the new century*  
University of Central England, Birmingham Joint meeting of the DHS and AAH.

<sup>124</sup> In my former role as a design history lecturer I attended this meeting. Details are taken from my own notes at the event and the review within the Society newsletter; Gen Doy, Malcolm Gee and Chris Breward (2004) ‘Reviews: Are We in Crisis? Challenges in Teaching and Research in the New Century.’ *Design History Society Newsletter*, number 105, April 2005, pp10-11

<sup>125</sup> There were about 40 people in attendance.

areas.<sup>126</sup> Whilst the overall conclusion of the meeting was that the disciplines were not in crisis, due to the strength of teaching and research that Breward had referred to in his address to the DHS AGM. It became clear that there were certainly challenges with regards to course closures at undergraduate level and subsequent job losses.<sup>127</sup> There was considerable discussion about the identity of the discipline and particularly regarding the emerging area of “visual culture” studies; certain members at the meeting felt that this distinct approach had ‘perhaps defused the profile and identity of art and design history’.<sup>128</sup> Once again the notion of identity, definitions and boundaries for the discipline area called into question the status of art and design historical practice. A way forward was to have common propaganda put forward by both the DHS and the AHH in order to support the public profile of the discipline, and also Jonathan Vickery suggested that advisory bodies would help to support particular strategies within the discipline.

A particular flaw with both of these suggestions had its roots in the heritage of the DHS; design historians had felt the need to separate themselves from the AHH because they felt their concerns were not heard, and no consensus was made to the different approaches taken by design historians. These historic problems had not defused, and had, if anything, become more acutely felt as the design history network fractured into multiple communities of practice. The former Society chair

<sup>126</sup> Discussion of the RAE raise the issue that there was now a “retrenchment of the discipline away from adventurous interdisciplinary projects back into very specialist areas, since people wanted to play safe and try to publish with traditional university presses and a small number of journals.”

<sup>127</sup> Design history courses at Staffordshire University and Teesside University were closed. The first reference to loss of employment in design historians came with the chairs conference report at the AGM in 2002. ‘Design historians who have lost their teaching jobs in recent years will know the effects of reorganisation within academic institutions’ Barbara Burman (2002) “DHS conference chairs annual report” *Design History Society newsletter*, number 95, October 2002

<sup>128</sup> Gen Doy, Malcolm Gee and Chris Breward (2004) “Reviews: Are We in Crisis? Challenges in Teaching and Research in the New Century.” *Design History Society Newsletter*, number 105, April 2005, pp10-11

Barbara Burman stated that it felt like “we are back where we were some 20 years ago” with Gen Doy, a representative from the AAH, agreeing that it was possibly more like 30 years ago.<sup>129</sup> But despite the evident differences in viewpoint it was interesting to see that the two organisations were once again joining together to discuss issues in common. This demonstrates that in challenging times the diverse network instinctively felt that it was important to pull together to address the issues, even if this highlighted the differences between their academic and scholarly approaches.

The intersections and overlap of the networks continued during this decade, and there was clear evidence that the partition of the two groups that occurred in the 1970s may no longer be as necessary in the new academic framework. This period saw a subtle change in emphasis in how the AAH described its activities, and role; claiming itself as “the national organisation [sic] for professional art *and design* historians...and activity linked with art *and design history*”<sup>130</sup> There was also evidence of a broader range of topics and approaches at the association’s annual conferences which suggests the influence of the wider design history network. Examples of a design-history or interdisciplinary influence at AAH annual conferences include: *Making Connections* in 2001 at Oxford Brookes University which had sessions that considered methodological issues raised by the breaking down of interdisciplinary boundaries; *ARTiculations* in 2003 at Birkbeck and University College London, which

<sup>129</sup> Gen Doy, Malcolm Gee and Chris Breward (2004) “Reviews: Are We in Crisis? Challenges in Teaching and Research in the New Century.” *Design History Society Newsletter*, number 105, April 2005, pp.10-11

<sup>130</sup> My emphasis. Source AAH website available at: [www.aah.org.uk](http://www.aah.org.uk) The dates of this change are unclear, a new constitution was lodged with the charity commission in 2003. The original focus is maintained in the charity commission description with reference only to “art and visual culture”. Source Charity commission website available at [www.charity-commission.gov.uk/](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/) (Accessed October 2011)

focused on developments in art history “relating to the interdisciplinary and the intermedial”; *Contents- Discontents- Malcontents* in 2006 at University of Leeds which aimed to “stimulate constructive argument about the art and art histories that are the concern of art history; about what art history might once have been; what it has become; what it might be; and even whether there is any life left in it.” But the clearer indication that the two networks were once again merging came in 2009 when Manchester Metropolitan University’s Institute for Research Art and Design (MIRIAD) hosted *Intersections 2009* which focussed on the connections and overlaps of art history with different disciplines, methodologies, and histories.<sup>131</sup>

As the decade continued there were further examples of intersections between the disparate communities of practice. In addition to the Yale-organised event at the V&A looking at *Histories of British Design: Where Next?*, the College Art Association addressing *The Current State of Design History*, and the AAH’s acceptance of a design-history or interdisciplinary influence, there was also a convergence of the two approaches at a conference at the Courtauld Institute. Customarily regarded by many in the design history network as a centre for traditional or ‘classic’ art history, the Courtauld’s Research forum invited design history scholars to address common areas. *At Cross Purposes? When Art History Meets Design History* saw the Institute working with the network of scholars linked to the DHS and the V&A/RCA History of Design Course, and interestingly expanded the chronological frame to focus on the pre-1880 period.<sup>132</sup> The explicitly stated aim was to “foster a cross-disciplinary discussion” combine insights and also question whether there were still areas

<sup>131</sup> Details available at: [www.aah.org.uk/annual-conference/past-conferences](http://www.aah.org.uk/annual-conference/past-conferences) and [www.miriad.mmu.ac.uk/aah09/](http://www.miriad.mmu.ac.uk/aah09/) (Accessed October 2011)

<sup>132</sup> *At Cross Purposes? When Art History Meets design history* 22 October 2011. Organized jointly by Anne Puetz (The Courtauld Institute of Art) and Glenn Adamson (V&A/Royal College of Art)

where the separation into *art* and *design* history remained meaningful. Arguably, the implicit assumption here was that the distinction and separation were no longer necessary in a research area and domain that has such a great deal of common ground. The conference respondent Glenn Adamson argued that the disciplinary divisions created in the past, between design and art history, were there to be worked with and constantly reshaped. This comment is analogous to my own research journey; after initially setting out with an agenda to gather evidence to justify design history as a distinct and discrete discipline, applying the theoretical frameworks of ANT and communities of practice has demonstrated that arguing for the division and fracturing of academic practice is futile. Recent academic events show that there is a new demand for histories that embrace the importance of interactions; and the initial aims of design history and the DHS, to be open and inclusive, show that members of the design history network are best-placed to feed that demand in and beyond academia.

### **Impact of the design history network outside the formal academic sector**

Despite the uncertainty regarding employment and teaching within the educational sector this decade saw a significant impact from the design history network. The influence of those connected with the wider design historical community was seen in museums, associated publications, and also in other areas such as the broadcasting media where the audience for 'the past' and history was the wider public. Design historical multi-disciplinary approaches were merging with other intellectual areas and disseminating into the wider cultural environment. This was a very strong decade for the impact of design history within museums; and the V&A as the National museum of design is a case in point. There were clear influences on

the British Galleries redisplay project at the V&A, as discussed in the case study in Chapter Six, and also on the Museum's sequence of major stylistically-themed 'blockbuster' exhibitions.<sup>133</sup> As a result of changes to funding structures for museums during the late 1980s and 1990s, and also the availability of information through quality photography, television and video, major museums had to work harder to engage the new type of museum visitor or 'consumer'. Philip Wright referred to these phenomena in the context of art museums as being "forced to turn somersaults-chasing endlessly sensational 'blockbuster' exhibitions".<sup>134</sup> These so-called 'blockbuster' exhibitions became a significant museological trend, both nationally and internationally, and helped to transform museum visiting into a particular type of cultural experience. The V&A had always had an extensive exhibition programme but this decade saw the beginning a series of major exhibitions based on period styles such as *Art Nouveau 1890-1914*, *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain*, and *Art Deco 1910-1939*, *International Arts And Crafts*, *Modernism-designing a New World 1914-1939*, *Cold War Modern – Design 1945-1970*.<sup>135</sup> Although this particular type of stylistic taxonomy is particularly outdated amongst researchers, the labels were applied to periods of history as a recognizable

<sup>133</sup> As previously discussed there was a strong relationship between the V&A/RCA history of design course, and in particular the head of the course John Styles, on the curatorial and interpretation team behind the British Galleries project. Blockbuster exhibitions at the museum during this period were; *Art Nouveau*, *Art Deco*, *International Arts and Crafts*, *Modernism*, *Cold War Modern*, *Post Modernism* and also *Brand new*. Dates given in footnote below.

<sup>134</sup> Philip Wright (1989) "The Quality of Visitors Experiences in Art Museums" in Vergo, P. (ed) *The New Museology*, London: Reaktion.

<sup>135</sup> For a comprehensive list of the exhibitions at the museum see; James, E.(1998) *The Victoria and Albert Museum - A Bibliography and Exhibition Chronology, 1852-1996*. London: Fitzroy Dearborn. These were presented roughly in chronological order: *Art Nouveau 1890-1914* was on display from the 6<sup>th</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> July 2000; *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain* was on display from the 5<sup>th</sup> April-29 July 2001; *Art Deco 1910-1939*, was on display from the 27<sup>th</sup> March to 30<sup>th</sup> July 2003; *International Arts and Crafts* was on display from the 17<sup>th</sup> March to 24<sup>th</sup> July 2005, *Modernism-designing a New World 1914-1939* was on display from the 6<sup>th</sup> April to 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2006; *Cold War Modern – Design 1945- 1970* on display from the 25 September 2008 to 11 January 2009. Also *Postmodernism* from 24<sup>th</sup> September 2011 to 15 January 2012.

tag to draw in the visitors.<sup>136</sup> Each exhibition was accompanied by a selection of publications including a lavishly illustrated catalogue containing several scholarly essays. These essays often demonstrated the influence of design historical research methods, or were contributed by individuals associated with the design historical community, for example Tim and Charlotte Benton's involvement with *Art Deco*. Other examples of research impact could be seen in exhibitions such as *Brand New* curated by Jane Pavitt, *Black Style* by Carol Tulloch, *Swinging 60s : Fashion In London And Beyond 1955-1970* by Christopher Breward, and *The Modernist Home* by Tim Benton.<sup>137</sup> Alan Powers discussed the impact of the V&A's series of exhibitions, evaluating them as having performed a valuable role in particular by enabling the loan of objects from abroad, he also referenced the importance of the research department and its relationship with postgraduate design history students.<sup>138</sup>

The V&A, as the national museum of design and decorative arts, clearly had an important role in demonstrating the influence of design history in the museum world and particularly due to its relationship with the RCA/V&A history of design course. But there were other smaller museums which also demonstrated the impact of design history and its intellectual concerns, the changes in the presentation and interpretation of "living museums" and its overlap with historiographical change is an area of museology studies that deserves detailed and separate attention; it is an example of a complex network in action as it not only involves objects their histories and museums, but also interpretation, live

<sup>136</sup> "The people who determine the exhibition programme at the V&A are not the research department, and they are convinced that visitors will respond only to stylistic labels relating to periods in the old-fashioned way. So far visitor numbers seem to have proved them right." Powers, A.,(2006)"Artists who redrafted the creative rule books", *THE*, 24th November 2006

<sup>137</sup> Jane Pavitt curated "Designing in the Digital Age" exhibited from 30th of June 1999-3rd January 2000 and brand new was exhibited from 19th October 2000 to 14th January 2001

<sup>138</sup> Alan Powers review of the catalogue to the Modernism exhibition. Powers, A., *op.cit*



performance and audiences.<sup>139</sup> Rather than pursue a line of enquiry here about the politics and ethics of attempting to recreate history, this thesis will focus on several small museums that clearly demonstrate the design history network. Several small museums and specialist collections started life as resources to be used in teaching contextual studies and design history at Polytechnics and colleges. The Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (MoDA) was established in 2000 and gained accredited museum status in 2006, based at Middlesex University, it provided a resource for researching and displaying the ordinary home with the ambition of making scholarly research accessible to the public. In 2001 the Arts Institute at Bournemouth gained registered museum status for its Design Collection, founded in 1988 and later in 2007 being renamed the Museum of Design in Plastics (MoDiP).<sup>140</sup> The links to design history are clear in the circumstances surrounding the formation of collections and also through personal relationships and networks of staff associated with the institutions; the senior curator of MoDA Zoe Hendon was secretary of the DHS Executive Committee, and Susan Lambert at MoDiP was previously Head of Contemporary Programmes at the V&A and published on the design collection.<sup>141</sup> In London, the Design Museum saw a period of unrest starting

<sup>139</sup> There is scope for further research on the impact of design history in regional and local museums, and particularly in “living museums” such as Ironbridge Gorge Museums; Beamish, the living Museum of the North, Blists Hill Victorian Town, and the Black Country Living Museum, Dudley. See websites: [www.ironbridge.org.uk/our\\_attractions/blists\\_hill\\_victorian\\_town/](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/our_attractions/blists_hill_victorian_town/), [www.beamish.org.uk/](http://www.beamish.org.uk/), [www.bclm.co.uk/](http://www.bclm.co.uk/) Living history museums often merge historical exhibits with live costumed performance. This raises problematic issues relating to historical accuracy. For an introduction to these issues see; Magelssen, S.(2007) *Living History Museums: Undoing History Through Performance*, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press

<sup>140</sup> MoDA published a series of style guides. MoDiP see <http://www.aucb.ac.uk/newsevents/latestnews/modiplaunch.aspx>. MoDiP was the recipient of funding from JISC for the digitization of their collection. The project worked with partners the *Plastics Historical Society (PHE)* and the *UK Centre for Materials Education(UKCME)* Marcia Pointon, professor Emeritus at the University of Manchester provided the project with strategic advice from the perspective of scholars. Source; Lambert, S (2009) JISC Final Report The MoDiP Digitisation Project.

<sup>141</sup> Lambert, S. (1993) *Form follows function? Design in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, London: Victoria and Albert Museum

in 2004 when approaches to curatorial practice and the presentation of design became a subject of controversy. Following a change of director the focus shifted to prioritise “iconography and style”.<sup>142</sup> Benefactor and chairman James Dyson objected to this particular focus on design, he felt that this focus was not true to the original founding vision of Sir Terence Conran which heralded the importance of the “manufactured object and industrial design process”. Dyson felt so strongly that he resigned from his post due to this conflict of opinion on the way products and design history was presented. He accused the museum of becoming a 'style showcase' and said that "by failing to give a lead to the public on the difference between design as styling and design as intelligent problem-solving he believes the museum is perhaps neglecting its purpose."<sup>143</sup> This incident shows the impact of design historical thinking that embraced the ‘everyday’ and the ‘ordinary’ and wanted to put a clear distance between the traditional connoisseurship and stylistic concerns that had been associated with art history and decorative arts scholarship.

The diverse multidisciplinary network of individuals comprising the ‘community of design historians’ may still have a turbulent relationship with both design practitioners and art historians; but as has been alluded to above, there was a renewed interest from the historians and scholars of science and technology, and also from social and cultural historians and museum professionals. Generations of historians have debated their subject matter, philosophies, methodology, and approaches to practice. These deliberations focus on scholarly and intellectual

<sup>142</sup> Alice Rawsthorn was appointed as director in 2001.

<sup>143</sup> BBC News (2004) "Dyson leaves design Museum role" published on the BBC News website, 27th of September 2004 Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/3693994.stm> (Accessed: 17th June 2008).

complexities surrounding the *production* of historical narratives; more recently scholarship has, in addition, considered the arenas for the *consumption* of historical narratives. Raphael Samuel's *Theatres of Memory* explored the distinction between the professional historian and the unofficial histories represented in contemporary culture and the heritage industry.<sup>144</sup> In 1995 a history centre was founded in his name with the aim of encouraging wider participation in history, and from 2009 it was relaunched as an interdisciplinary centre.<sup>145</sup> Ludmilla Jordanova raised the question of the audiences for history in *History in Practice* arguing that the genres used by public history are different from those of the academic discipline.<sup>146</sup> These perspectives on the activity of history-writing were expanded by Jerome DeGroot in his examination of the consumption of history, or 'the historical', by everyday society.<sup>147</sup> DeGroot's text, *Consuming History, historians and heritage in contemporary popular culture*, develops Samuel's argument and prompts further consideration of the varied areas in which history is consumed. He discusses the overlap between the interpreters and consumers of 'the historical', 'the past' and 'heritage'; making a variety of distinctions between the worlds of *professional historians*, as scholars, intellectuals, and museum curators; *cultural producers* from the entertainment worlds of film and television, novels and computer gaming; and *expert amateurs*,

<sup>144</sup> Samuel, R. (1994) *Theatres of Memory- Volume I Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, London: Verso. Samuel was the founder of the History Workshop movement which advocated a radical approach to history that focused on everyday lives and sought to move the study of the past out of the academy to engage the public or anyone with an interest. *History Workshop Journal* was launched in 1976. This is an example of a network in action, along similar lines to the network surrounding Design History argued for within this thesis.

<sup>145</sup> Raphael Samuel History Centre founded 1995, re-launched 2009 combining University of East London (UEL), Birkbeck, University of London and the Bishopsgate Institute. Initial work promoted research into the modern history of East London. Now has a wider remit and encourages a programme of cross-disciplinary research, teaching, and public events with an eventual aim to, "become a national hub for historians working at all levels." Available at: [www.rafael-samuel.org.uk/](http://www.rafael-samuel.org.uk/) (Accessed 15th November 2011)

<sup>146</sup> Jordanova L. (2000) *History in Practice*, Arnold, London. Jordanova discusses the topic of 'Public History'

<sup>147</sup> De Groot, J. (2009) *Consuming History, historians and heritage in contemporary popular culture*. London : Routledge p.3.

collectors, hobby genealogists, or historical re-enactors. This text overlaps scholarship that had been seen in museological literature, concerning the heritage industry, which touches on popular culture as an important area for consideration. Once again it demonstrates the variety of communities of practice that interact in the wider network of actors engaged with the activities of producing histories.

During the first decade of the new millennium there were a growing number of examples of the influence of design historical thinking and approaches in these wider arenas of the consumption of history and the consumption of design. The rapid development of digital media and the internet made it increasingly easy for scholars, students and the interested amateurs to access information; from new programming on the broad range of digital television channels to following online auctions, both specialist and general.<sup>148</sup> Many of these channels showed repeats of old series, but of most interest are the newly-commissioned documentary series, and series in the reality-TV genre. It is in these new programmes that there is the most direct evidence of the popular appeal offered by a design historical approach.<sup>149</sup> Three examples of these series that are closely linked to academic

<sup>148</sup> The new range of television channels included satellite and cable channels and free-to-air channels such as Yesterday and BBC4 on Freeview. This increase in available airtime encouraged the re-showing of old series as well as newly commissioned documentary and special interest series. Example of channels include UKTV History (now called 'Yesterday') showing re-runs of series such as *Antiques Roadshow*, *Fred Dibnah's Made in Britain*, *James May's 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, *Inventions that changed the World*, *The Thirties in Colour*, *Time Shift*, and *Victorian Farm*. Source; [uktv.co.uk/yesterday](http://uktv.co.uk/yesterday). Other channels include *The History Channel*, and BBC4. Online auction sites range from the popular eBay, where small antiques dealers can reach a wider audience and researchers can selectively use the site to attain objects of interest as a starting point for their research, to more specialist sites such as main auction houses and specialists; for example Kerry Taylor Auction specialist in vintage textiles and dress, see [www.kerrytaylorauctions.com/](http://www.kerrytaylorauctions.com/) or Christies at [www.christies.com/](http://www.christies.com/)

<sup>149</sup> For example: *Designing the Decades* BBC2, *The Genius of Design*, *Turn Back Time: The High Street*, *The House that Made Me* Channel 4; *James May's 20<sup>th</sup> Century* BBC and OU; *James May's Toy Stories* BBC. This relatively recent increase in the presence of design history in art and history programming and popular television is an area that is worthy of additional research, although falls outside the parameters of this thesis.

scholarship in the design history network are the BBC series the *History of the World in 100 Objects*, *At Home with the Georgians*, and *If Walls Could Talk*.<sup>150</sup> The links are evident through the domain of artefacts, the approaches to scholarship presented, some direct links to research projects and also the personal connections through presenters Neil MacGregor, Amanda Vickery and Lucy Worsley. The *History of the World* series used a design historical approach by taking 'the object' as the starting point for extrapolating an interpretation of history; although there was a huge chronological timescale and many of the objects were prized treasures from the collection of the British museum, the series was also willing to include examples of items that represented 'the everyday'; both ancient items discovered in anthropological research and more recent examples from modern daily life.<sup>151</sup> In the publication that accompanied the series MacGregor explains the approach taken by the project, stating,

“The history that emerges from these objects will seem unfamiliar to many. There are few well-known dates, famous battles or celebrated incidents. Canonical events...are not centre stage. They are, however present, refracted through individual objects.”...“Ideally history would bring together texts and objects...but in many cases we simply can't.”<sup>152</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Each series had an accompanying or associated publication: MacGregor, N. (2010) *A History of the World in 100 objects*, London: Penguin; Vickery, A.(2009)*Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England*, New Haven: Yale University Press ( this book inspired the series); and, Worsley, L (2011) *If Walls Could Talk - An Intimate History of the Home*, London: Bloomsbury

<sup>151</sup> Examples included in the list of 100 objects are: coins, writing tablets, tools, a tea set, a credit card, and a solar-powered lamp and charger. The programmes were divided into themes, these were: Making Us Human (2,000,000 - 9000 BC); After the Ice Age: Food and Sex (9000 - 3500 BC); The First Cities and States (4000 - 2000 BC); The Beginning of Science & Literature (1500 - 700 BC); Old World, New Powers (1100 - 300 BC); The World in the Age of Confucius (500 - 300 BC); Empire Builders (300BC - 1 AD); Ancient Pleasures, Modern Spice (1 AD - 600 AD); The Rise of World Faiths (200 - 600 AD); The Silk Road and Beyond (400 - 700 AD); Inside the Palace: Secrets at Court (700 - 950 AD); Pilgrims, Raiders and Traders (900 - 1300 AD); Status Symbols (1200 - 1400 AD); Meeting the Gods (1200 - 1400 AD); The Threshold of the Modern World (1375 - 1550 AD); The First Global Economy (1450 - 1600 AD); Tolerance and Intolerance (1550 - 1700 AD); Exploration, Exploitation and Enlightenment (1680 - 1820 AD); Mass Production, Mass Persuasion (1780 - 1914 AD); The World of Our Making (1914 - 2010 AD).

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/about/british-museum-objects/>

<sup>152</sup> MacGregor, *Op. Cit.* pp. xv-xvi.

This demonstrates that a thorough approach to history through objects, as proposed by design history, is an essential part of history-writing. It can help reveal histories of events and people who were either unrecorded or illiterate. This project was a clear example of an actor network at work, constantly being shaped and evolving, the *actors* being the objects, the presenters, the different formats of engaging with the information, and the interactions of public audiences. It worked across media platforms to allow members of the public to be involved, and encouraged reflection on the object surrounding them that might also be able to tell a variety of histories. To encourage this interaction displays were instigated in museums across the country, the programme involved the visitors to *Antiques Roadshows*, and the website encouraged the public to include images of their own objects. This method of enquiry, bringing in an everyday object, had often been used as a teaching method by design historians, and was reminiscent of the ‘peoples shows’ museum project instigated by Walsall museums and art gallery in the early 1990s.<sup>153</sup>

Using a slightly more traditional documentary format both Vickery and Worsleys’ series had followed the scholar on a research journey to ‘discover’ histories through interior rooms. Vickery’s *At Home with the Georgians*, offered viewers the interpretations of the past and histories that Vickery had uncovered, but also presented the historical process and engaged with the wide variety of sources used in the research; including, documents, images, and objects.<sup>154</sup> Worsley, curator at

<sup>153</sup> On the peoples shows project instigated by Walsall Museum and Art Gallery, which spread out to include 47 local museums see; Moore, K.(1997) *Museums and Popular Culture*, London: Cassell.

<sup>154</sup> The sources used by Vickery include: Diaries, novels (eg Jane Austen), Accounts, Paintings, Prints, Caricatures (Visual Culture); Auction house catalogues, masculine knick-knacks gadgets and toys “consumer trinkets” (Material Culture); Buildings and interiors (architecture). She describes

Royal Historic Houses, used a similar format in *If Walls Could Talk* and structured a social and cultural history through the device of the different rooms of the home and their design evolution. In other examples of television series demonstrating the influence of the design history network the long-established relationship between the Open University and the BBC continued, but programming evolved to be popular rather than explicitly tied to curriculum of courses.

### **Developments during this decade for the wider design history network**

The key themes that can be seen through the major developments at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are that the activities of the design history network are no longer niche activities undertaken solely by distinct small communities associated with teaching in art and design practice. Broad influences can be seen in interdisciplinary research culture, museums and the publishing sector, popular culture and entertainment, and on the global stage. The broad scope of design historians subject matter and approaches, and their refusal to be restricted by a narrow disciplinary focus, mean that design history activity is no longer tied to design education or a subset of art historical scholarship. The strength of the subject is in its multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches, seen in a variety of institutional contexts. This decade also demonstrates that much design historical-inspired research and activity goes by other names, such as material culture studies or visual culture studies for example. The identity crisis for the network still continues, as do concerns over pedagogy and the relationship of academic endeavour to design practice, and despite these ongoing debates the activities of members of the design history network continue.

the process of research on screen to the viewer and also in a website blog:  
[www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/tv/2010/12/at-home-with-the-georgians.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/tv/2010/12/at-home-with-the-georgians.shtml)

The new millennium was a contradictory one for the network in terms of maturing as a recognized academic discipline within publishing and museums, yet still receiving challenges to its definition of itself from educators working within the framework of design practice. Intellectually the discipline expanded its focus beyond the focus on the visual and the object to include consideration of the physical and sensory experience of design objects and also how messages are mediated and communicated to consumers. This intellectual expansion went in parallel to significant developments in the funding of multi-disciplinary research projects, and while intellectual flexibility, openness, and interdisciplinarity was a significant strength of design history it did provide obstacles to the assessment of research outputs under the structures of higher education funding. During this decade the DHS continued to have a small membership but this became increasingly diverse and international and followed the trend for global expansion that was seen in both subject matter and location of design historical studies. Interestingly, the focus of the AAH opened up to embrace those connected with Design as it became recognised that the scholarly network of influence was intertwined. The consolidation of the academic activities of the design history network on a global level was echoed by significant developments and improvements in the impact of design history within museums and publishing. Although the academic discipline continue to struggle with notions of definition and boundaries at the end of the first decade of the millennium it remained secure in its intellectual and academic status with a strong journal, an academic society providing a sense of community and promoting research activity. The academic respectability was seen with several research projects, publication of readers and introductory texts; more importantly



impact of this also extended across various popular forms of consuming history in museums and broadcasting. Chapter Eight will look in detail at some examples of these research projects and publications.

## Chapter 8 - The 21st century

**The continuing influence and expansion of the design history network: examined through Research Council-funded Projects and the publication of academic ‘readers’ in the domain.**

The previous chapter argued the case for a solid and significant impact of members of the design history network and the variety of methodology's and approaches they used when researching objects, their histories and cultures. This influence on scholarly practice was analogous to an increasingly interdisciplinary academic community in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Design historical scholarship also had an influence in wider cultural and heritage sectors, and helped contribute to new ways of consuming history and ‘the past’ within museums, in broadcasting and new digital multimedia platforms. This chapter gives a detailed focus on new research and scholarship within the academic community, and the broader dissemination of critical approaches to design and design history in publications. This will be done by two main case studies that give evidence of the strength of the network of design history and its methods and approaches. Addressed firstly are two major research-council funded projects; the *Centre for the Domestic Interior* and the *Cultures of Consumption* project. This is followed by an evaluation of the three subject readers published at the end of the decade; the *Design Cultures Reader*, *Design Studies- a Reader* and the *Design History Reader*. These examples bring forward strong evidence pertaining to the importance of the interactions of a wide variety of actors in the broader academic network. Design history has demonstrated that an open and inclusive approach to scholarship can be beneficial in transforming research.

### **Case study I – Research Council-funded projects that encompass scholarship from the design history network.**

As the academic community entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century it was clear that interdisciplinary research was pervasive.<sup>1</sup> The Research Assessment Exercise evaluation suggested that around eighty percent of researchers working in higher education engaged in at least some interdisciplinary research. In the wider design history network there were also individuals producing research outside the formal education sector, for example journalists and museum curators. The AHRC and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) were the main award-making bodies for scholarship in the domain of the arts, humanities and social sciences, where much of the academic scholarship of the design history network occurred. As such this case study focuses on two projects that had significant input from design historians. It is also important to note that there were (and still are) other funding bodies who were open to applications for financial support from design history scholars; these included the British Academy, The Leverhulme Trust, The Modern Humanities Research Association, the Getty Foundation, and other smaller charitable trusts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Findings from the research assessment exercise evaluation document “Interdisciplinary research and the Research Assessment Exercise” suggested that around 4/5 of researchers working in higher education engaged in at least some interdisciplinary research. This practice occurred in both the sciences and the arts and humanities.

<sup>2</sup> The British Academy is the UK’s national academy for the humanities and social sciences, <http://www.britac.ac.uk> (Accessed: 19th May 2010); The Leverhulme Trust supports “scholarships for the purposes of research and education.” [www.leverhulme.ac.uk](http://www.leverhulme.ac.uk) (Accessed: 14th May 2010); The Modern Humanities Research Association promotes “advanced study and research in the field of the modern humanities” and states it is “concerned to break down the barriers between scholars working in different disciplines and to maintain the unity of humanistic scholarship in the face of increasing specialization” [www.mhra.org.uk/](http://www.mhra.org.uk/) (Accessed: 19th May 2010); the Getty Foundation is based in Los Angeles and its main focus is funding research into the visual arts [www.getty.edu/grant/](http://www.getty.edu/grant/) (Accessed: 14th May 2010); Other small charitable trusts often have a narrow scope, such as the

The AHRC guidelines regarding subject coverage demonstrate the complexity of regulating academic practice when the administrative and financial accountability associated with the distribution of government money necessitates classification.<sup>3</sup> The Council delegates the responsibility of categorizing scholarship to the applicant, enabling those individuals whose work crosses intellectual boundaries to determine their own definition when applying to one of the four peer review panels who determine the allocation of grant monies. Acknowledgement that current trends in scholarship go beyond disciplinary definition or institutional names, in effect recognizing the complex network that is an integral feature of academic practice during this period, is evident from the following direction;

“It should also be stressed that the panel to which an application is directed need not be determined by the title of the department or other unit within an institution in which you will undertake your work.”<sup>4</sup>

This guideline, which is made rather purposefully, makes implicit reference to the inflexibility of the organisational structures within large institutions and allows for innovative scholarship. Although the Council’s peer review procedure is structured across four panels based on “groups of subjects and disciplines” their own guidance allows for interdisciplinarity.<sup>5</sup> This is evident in the ability of applicants to select up

Pasold Research fund, which promotes research into textile history [www.pasold.co.uk/](http://www.pasold.co.uk/) (Accessed: 14th May 2010)

<sup>3</sup>The Research Councils are government bodies funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and as such are responsible for fairly and accountably distributing taxpayers’ money. The Councils website contains many publicly accessible documents regarding its regulations and procedures. “Introduction” *AHRC’s Subject Coverage*, document available from; [www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Documents](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Documents) ( Accessed November 2011)

<sup>4</sup> “Mapping of Subjects to panels” *Ibid*.

<sup>5</sup> The panels are; Panel A, Studies in history, philosophy, religious studies and law; Panel B, studies relating to contemporary arts practice, theory in art, design and media, architecture, visual arts, creative writing, music, dance, drama and theatre studies; Panel C, art history, conservation of art and textiles, dictionaries and databases, cultural geography, archaeology, classics and ancient history and library, information and museum studies; Panel D, journalism, media and communication studies, American studies, cultural studies and popular culture, gender and sexuality, lifewriting, literary and

to three classifications within a panel to identify and define their research area. There are also examples of larger grant applications and major projects that traverse not only subjects and disciplines but also overlap panels and even Councils, this chapter will address examples of these. The AHRC and ESRC acknowledge that it is not possible to rigidly define the type of scholarship that they support;

“There are inevitable overlaps and border territories that are shared with other award-making bodies, especially the Research Councils. Where such overlaps occur, the council’s general principle is one of liberality in defining and interpreting its domain.”<sup>6</sup>

This case-study discusses two examples of major research projects funded by the councils, which engaged members of the design history network. Firstly, AHRC-funded *Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior* (CSDI) and secondly, the jointly-funded AHRC/ESRC *Cultures of Consumption* research programme.

The AHRC funded a five-year research centre to support cross-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research into the representation of the domestic interior with a view to producing innovative new histories.<sup>7</sup> The *Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior* was based at the Royal College of Art and scholars at the college worked together with the V&A and the Bedford Centre for the history of women at Royal Holloway, University of London. The centre built on personal and professional relationships that had been informed by the history of design masters

cultural theory, post-colonial studies, text editing and bibliography, English language and literature, linguistics and modern languages. Source: AHRC’s *Subject Coverage op.cit.*

<sup>6</sup> “Introduction” AHRC’s *Subject Coverage op.cit.*

<sup>7</sup> The AHRB became a full Research Council in 2005. For a full discussion of the change in status see Herbert, J (2008) *Creating the AHRC – An Arts and Humanities Research Council for the United Kingdom in the Twenty-first Century* Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy. So throughout the duration of the five-year project funding was provided by the AHRB from 2001 to 2004, then the AHRC from 2005 to 2006.

course at the V&A and also work on the British Galleries project; as such it is a clear example of networks at work.

Academic networks relating to the wide community of design historians and scholars in associated areas were particularly evident here. Centre director Jeremy Aynsley, was the course director of the V&A/RCA history of design programme and a scholar with close involvement in the design historical network.<sup>8</sup> The centre's associate director John Styles was head of postgraduate studies at the V&A and had a key role as a historical adviser to the British Galleries redisplay project; and the second associate director Amanda Vickery was a historical scholar and co-director of Royal Holloway's Bedford Centre for the History of Women, with a particular interest in women, gender, and material culture.<sup>9</sup> The three centre directors worked with four research fellows, other contributing scholars, research assistants and support staff throughout the five years and additional members joined at points through the project.<sup>10</sup>

The purpose of the centre was to facilitate the writing of new histories of the home by members of the design history network and to do this through organizing a

<sup>8</sup> Aynsley had been Senior Lecturer in Design History at the University of Brighton, course tutor on the V&A/RCA programme from 1991, co-curator of the 20th century Gallery at the V&A, and a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Design History*.

<sup>9</sup> The relationship networks between these individuals was close; John Styles had a professional relationship with Aynsley, forged as colleagues working on the joint MA programme in the history of design, and Styles and Vickery also have a personal relationship as husband and wife.

<sup>10</sup> Research Fellows for the project were Charlotte Grant, Francesca Berry, Flora Dennis, Karen Harvey, and Hannah Greig. Visiting scholars (although members of the V&A/RCA course team) were Marta Ajmar, Alison Clarke, and David Crowley. Later in the project a visiting scholar's scheme was introduced to enhance the staff expertise on the domestic interior and Harriet McKay, former custodian of National Trust property 2 Willow Road, joined the centre. Towards the end of the project management team was enhanced with the addition of Museum expert Nicola Johnson (formerly director of Museum Studies at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia).

programme of symposia, study days, and exhibitions. Its stated aims were expressed on the centres website;

“The goal of the Centre is to develop new histories of the home, its contents and its representation. It pursues research into the changing appearance and layout of the rooms in a range of buildings, from tenements to palaces, the objects that furnished those rooms, the ways rooms and objects were depicted, the manner in which people used them, and how they thought about them”<sup>11</sup>

Among the varied events were academic symposia addressing research methodologies and issues, then as the project progressed conferences and exhibitions disseminating the products of research undertaken within the centre.<sup>12</sup>

The research undertaken was influenced by the variety of approaches to study and dissemination that were widely linked to the evolution of design history; these included object-based study, links with creative practitioners and the use of popular culture such as magazines and films as source material. Evidence of this can be seen in the variety of outputs from the project and also within the pages of the centre’s newsletters’ which publicised related work in museums, art colleges and cinemas.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Project description as given on the centre’s website. Available at, <http://web.rca.ac.uk/csdi/> (Accessed: 19th May 2010)

<sup>12</sup> Examples included; an inaugural symposium, 5 December 2001, *Approaching the Domestic Interior 1400 to the Present* with the invited speakers chosen to “represent and interrogate different approaches to domestic interior from within their own academic disciplines” the source: AHRB CSDI Newsletter 1, Summer 2002, p1. The invited speakers represented the broad range of influences upon design history; including museum curators ( MoDA, and Geffrye Museum) art historians (Katie Scott, the Courtauld Institute) archaeologists ( Matthew Johnson, University College London) anthropologists (Daniel Miller, University College London) and cultural geographers (Paul Glennie, University of Bristol). Subsequent symposia and conferences included: *Representing The Domestic Interior: 1400 To The Present*, (May 2002), *The Post-war European home*, (12 May 2003), the conference *The Modern Magazine And The Design Of The Domestic Interior 1880-1950*, (V&A, February 2003) , *A Casa: People. Places and Objects in the Renaissance Interior* ( May and June 2004); *Domestic and Institutional Interiors in Early Modern Europe*, November 2004 V&A; *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America in the long 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, May 2004 – conference in collaboration with the Huntington Library, California, *The Georgian Interior*, November 2005 ( in association with the British Galleries.)

<sup>13</sup> Examples are: museum and gallery-based study days in connection with the British Galleries at the V&A, MoDA, the Geffrye museum, and a variety of county houses and National Trust properties. Examples of an awareness of the work of creative practitioners comes with the promotion of events such as: *Domestic Bliss* – August 2002, a display at MoDA by students and staff from the Fine art Department of Middlesex University and *Purl* a display of visual art inspired by the domestic design archives at MoDA April – September 2004; Films were the focus of an event at a cinema in Hampstead *Home Movies – A weekend of films about Houses, Domestic Space and the Interior*, January

Key methodological issues that came to light with regards to research undertaken as part of the project included a re-emphasis on the;

“importance of learning from and awareness of different disciplines, the need to assemble different kinds of expertise, and to bring different knowledge and objects of enquiry together without creating banality or reducing the value of expertise.”<sup>14</sup>

There was also an acute awareness of one of the key paradigms of design history; a focus on ‘the everyday’; it was clear that a consideration for the centre was that research into the everyday was often limited by a dearth of objects and surviving evidence, acknowledging the problem that surviving artefacts in museums are often examples of elite collecting policies showcasing only examples of high design. Key links to the design history community are evident with the location of the centre within the V&A/RCA postgraduate programme in History of Design, the backgrounds and experience of the research staff, and the DHS’s support of the postgraduate study days.<sup>15</sup> Collaboration across the design history network was also evident both within the institutions hosting the centre, and its links to other AHRC projects such as the *Material Renaissance* project at the University of Sussex.<sup>16</sup> The enduring products of the project were a series of resources including a database and publications. The first ‘core project’ was a comprehensive database of ‘visual and textual sources charting representations of the domestic interior in

2005, in collaboration with Everyman Cinema and National Trust 2 Willow Road. Source: the centres newsletters.

<sup>14</sup> Report on the inaugural symposium; *Approaching the Domestic Interior - 1400 to the present*, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2001. AHRB CSDI Newsletter 1, Summer 2002, p1

<sup>15</sup> Postgraduate study days supported by the DHS occurred on: 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2002, V&A; source AHRB CSDI Newsletter, Summer 2002, p2, and 9<sup>th</sup> February 2004 source AHRB CSDI Newsletter 4 Autumn 2003 p 5.

<sup>16</sup> Symposium ran at the V&A jointly by the two projects. Source AHRB CSDI Newsletter 2 Autumn 2002, p.1. The focused study “The Domestic Interior in Italy, c.1400-c.1600 was awarded a collaborative research grant by the Getty Institute.



the West from 1400 to the present'.<sup>17</sup> The second major output was a series of 'focused studies' considering the domestic interior in a variety of representative forms, geographical locations, and chronological frameworks and their associated events and exhibitions.<sup>18</sup> These studies resulted in a series of publications that complemented the database as major permanent outcomes of the centre.<sup>19</sup>

This research project reflected the developments that had been made by the discipline of design history. Firstly, in terms of the topic or subject, it demonstrated the importance of domestic interiors and consumption as focus, and although the geographical focus remained Western, rather than the more ambitious project of a global scope, the chronology extended to the Renaissance period. Secondly, the project drew participants from all different disciplines.<sup>20</sup> Also, source material came from archives, objects, and spaces bringing together expertise from the museum world to work with the academic world. It provided clear evidence of the strength and impact of design history as a discipline and as a broader collective network of researchers and scholars who might not describe themselves as design historians,

<sup>17</sup> Project description as given on the centre's website. Available at: <http://web.rca.ac.uk/csdi/> (Accessed: 19th May 2010)

<sup>18</sup> Year one: the domestic interior in Italy, 1400-1600; the modern magazine and design of the domestic interior, 1880-1930; gender taste and material culture in Britain and North America in the long 18<sup>th</sup> century. Source; AHRB CSDI Newsletter 2 Autumn 2002 p 2

<sup>19</sup> The publications covered a variety of topics and approaches and included: Aynsley, J. & Grant, C., (eds.) (2006) *Imagined Interiors: Representations of the Domestic Interior from the Renaissance to the Present*, London: V&A Publications; Ajmar, M.& Dennis, F. (eds.) (2006) *At Home in Renaissance Italy: Art and Life in the Italian House 1400-1600*, London: V&A Publications; Styles, J. & Vickery, A (eds.) (2007) *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830*, New Haven: Yale University Press; Aynsley, J. & Berry, F. (2005) *Publishing the Modern Home, 1880-1950*, a special issue of the *Journal of Design History*, Volume 18 Issue 1, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>20</sup> Invited speakers to the inaugural symposium, fifth of December 2001, "Approaching The Domestic Interior 1400 To The Present", at the V&A saw invited speakers from the following discipline areas; museum curators, history of art, archaeology, anthropology, literature, cultural geography, history, (as detailed in Newsletter 1, Centre for the study of the domestic interior) A later symposium held by the project, "Interior Insights: Design, Ethnography And The Home", 24-25 November 2005 at the RCA, included speakers from other discipline areas such as: social anthropologists, designers, sociologists, Telecom-innovations researchers, media and market research companies, documentary photographers and filmmakers. (As detailed in Newsletter 9, Winter 2005, Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior)

yet who were collectively involved in a major interdisciplinary design history project.<sup>21</sup> The impact of the research outside an academic environment also became clear at the end of the decade when the BBC commissioned a three-part history series *At Home with the Georgians* presented by Amanda Vickery, which brought the research into the public domain, further evidence of the accessibility of design history as a form of communicating histories of the past to a wide audience.<sup>22</sup>

The *Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior* had seen a commitment to the funding of interdisciplinary research in the Arts and Humanities, and the following year, 2002, saw further significant AHRB/C funding. A major project addressing the topic of consumption broadened the scope of multi-disciplinary research and this was joint-funded by the AHRB/C and the ESRC, which distributed funding for social and economic research projects. The *Cultures of Consumption* research programme was based at Birkbeck College, University of London, and directed by historian, Professor Frank Trentmann. This extensive five-year, £5 million, multidisciplinary project had a wider scope than the AHRB's *Centre for the Study of Domestic Interior* because it was interested in analysing contemporary as well as historic issues. The purpose of the project was; "to deepen our understanding of consumption and consumers, past and present, and to highlight political, economic, and cultural

<sup>21</sup> As this thesis has already argued, many academics work in a variety of departmental settings and have other disciplinary labels, yet the product of their research could be described as design history. The same argument can be made for curators, museum managers and educators who might also be engaged in design historical activity.

<sup>22</sup> *At Home with the Georgians*, BBC2, Screened December 2010. Information available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/tv/comingup/behind-closed-doors/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/tv/comingup/behind-closed-doors/) (Accessed 19<sup>th</sup> November 2010). Vickery had also presented a 30-programme series for Radio Four *A History of Private Life*, aired September to October 2010 for which she received an Arts and Humanities Research Council fellowship to enable her to undertake the research. Information available at; [www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/history-of-private-life/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/features/history-of-private-life/) (Accessed: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2010)

implications for the future”.<sup>23</sup> This project was an example of the new trend to provide evidence linking academic practice and its impact on society and politics in order to justify the use of public funds. The range of topics covered by the project extended beyond the usual scope considered by design history, which usually had a starting point of objects and then considered people's relationships and interpretations of them, to include the political impact, financial concerns and ethical and social behaviours.<sup>24</sup>

The *Cultures of Consumption* programme funded twenty-six individual projects which in turn had a larger number of events and outputs. The topics of these projects ranged from an archaeological perspective on methods for consuming water to a management studies approach to the issue of citizenship in the UK welfare state.<sup>25</sup> There were also several projects as part of this programme that saw a great deal of involvement from design historians, or were closely associated with the design history network, and included: Christopher Breward working with David Gilbert on *Shopping Routes: Networks Of Fashion Consumption In London's West End 1945-1979*; Lesley Whitworth at the University of Brighton-based design history Research Centre, on *Towards A Participatory Consumer Democracy: Britain, 1937-1987*; and topics such as Elizabeth Shove's *Designing and Consuming: Objects Practices and Processes*, the housewife in early modern rural England, transnational histories of

<sup>23</sup>Statement from Executive Summary, Cultures of Consumption Research Programme: Phase II Specification.

<sup>24</sup> See full list of projects on the *Cultures of Consumption* project website available at: [www.consume.bbk.ac.uk/research](http://www.consume.bbk.ac.uk/research) ( Accessed 5th December 2010)

<sup>25</sup> *Liquid politics: the historic formation of the water consumer*: Professor Frank Trentham School of history, Classics and archaeology Birkbeck College, and *Modes of consumption and citizenship in the UK welfare state*: Professor Martin Powell, health services management centre, University of Birmingham.

producing and consuming chewing gum; and children as consumers of fashion.<sup>26</sup> The outputs of the project included policy seminars, public debates, conferences, workshops and exhibitions, which included Christopher Breward's *The London Look* at the Museum of London<sup>27</sup>; and also a number of publications, many of which had particular interest to members of the design history network.

Some of the key publications from these projects included; books edited by Christopher Breward, *The London Look: Fashion from Street to Catwalk*, *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis*, *Swinging Sixties* and *Fashion's World Cities* these contained contributions from design historians, many of whom were closely connected with particular communities of practice surrounding the V&A and RCA as graduates of the MA course.<sup>28</sup> This once again demonstrates the importance of individuals, institutions and their personal and professional relationships, in Latourian terms the actors and their interactions, which help to bind the wider design history network together. The volume *The Design of Everyday Life* embraced design historical methods with sociology of objects and design historical influence

<sup>26</sup> *The Housewife In The Early Modern Of Rural England: Gender, Markets And Consumption*, Dr Jane Whittle, Department of History, University of Exeter; *Chewing Gum: Transnational Histories of Consumption and Production*, Professor Michael Redclift, Department of Geography, King's College London; *Social Status, Lifestyle and Cultural Consumption*, Dr Tak-Wing Chan, Department of sociology, University of Oxford; *New Consumers? Children, Fashion and Consumption*: Professor Christopher Pole, School of Social Science, Nottingham Trent University; *Designing and Consuming: Objects Practices and Processes*, Professor Elizabeth Shove, Department of Sociology, Lancaster University.

<sup>27</sup> The Exhibition "The London Look: Fashion from Street to Catwalk" was shown at the Museum of London from 29<sup>th</sup> October 2004 to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Breward, C., Ehrman, E. & Evans, C., (2004) *The London Look: Fashion from Street to Catwalk* London: Yale University Press; Breward, C., (2004) *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis*, Oxford and New York: Berg; Breward, C., Gilbert D. & Lister, J. (eds), (2006) *Swinging Sixties*, London: V&A Publications; and, Breward, C. & Gilbert D. (eds) (2006) *Fashion's World Cities*, Oxford and New York: Berg. *Fashions Worlds cities* and *Swinging Sixties* included many chapters by Design Historians such as; Sonia Ashmore, 'Cosmopolitan Shopping: Marketing the National and Transnational in London's West End', and "'I Think They're All Mad': Shopping in Swinging London', P. Church Gibson, 'Creating the Fashion City on Film, 1953-1961' and Bronwyn Edwards, 'Shaping the Shopping City: Master Plans and Pipe Dreams in London's West End, 1945-1979', and "'Brave New London": Architecture for a Swinging City'.

was seen in the following historical texts: *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750*; *Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives: Historical Trajectories, Transnational Exchanges*; and also, *The Making of the Consumer: Knowledge, Power and Identity in the Modern World*.<sup>29</sup> Lesley Whitworth brought a well-known 'history of design' topic, the Council of Industrial Design, to a new audience of business and economic historians and also contributed chapters to texts on the post-war golden age and the built environment.<sup>30</sup>

The two large research-council-funded projects show that members of the design history network, and the approaches and methods used in design historical research, were making significant contributions to the academic community during this decade; and are examples of the importance of relationships and the extension of networks. A key focus of design historians had been the rejection of restrictive disciplinary boundaries, the acceptance of different academic approaches, and the use of interdisciplinary methods of approaching artefacts and the historical past. Both research projects show that interdisciplinarity and collaboration in research had gone beyond being merely an academic fad or fashion to being an established method of research practice. The *Domestic Interior* research centre based at the

<sup>29</sup> Shove, E., Watson, M. Hand & Ingram, J. (2007). *The Design of Everyday Life*, Oxford: Berg.; M. Overton, M., Whittle, J., Dean, D. & Hann, A. (2004) *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* London: Routledge; Brewer, J. & Trentmann, F. (eds) (2006) *Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives: Historical Trajectories, Transnational Exchanges*, Oxford and New York: Berg; and Trentmann, F. (ed) (2006). *The Making of the Consumer: Knowledge, Power and Identity in the Modern World*. Oxford and New York: Berg.

<sup>30</sup> Whitworth, L. (2005) 'Inscribing Design on the Nation: The creators of the British Council of Industrial Design', *Business and Economic History On-Line*, 3, Whitworth, L. (2004) 'Anticipating Affluence: Skill, Judgement and the Problems of Aesthetic Tutelage', in L. Black & H. Pemberton (eds), *An Affluent Society? Britain's Post-War 'Golden Age' Revisited* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); and Whitworth, L. (2007) 'The Housewives Committee of the Council of Industrial Design: A Short-lived Experiment in Domestic Reconnoitring', in Darling, E. and Whitworth, L. (eds), *Women and the Making of Built Space in England, 1870-1940* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

Royal College, V&A and Royal Holloway also showed that the collaboration between museums and academics, which had been pioneered by the joint course in the history of design, was a very beneficial method of research practice and had come to maturity. The implications of these research projects, and important impact for the disciplinary aspirations of certain communities of practice in the design history network, were that design historians were being embraced by mainstream academia and were no longer seen only according to their relationship with design practice and their antagonistic relationship with art history. These projects arguably demystified the academic contribution of design historians and emphasised that they were a breed of social historians and not merely a specialist sub-group of connoisseurs making aesthetic judgements on a particular type of artefact.

### **Case study 2 –The publication of academic ‘readers’ in the domain of design history**

The collaborative research projects at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century, discussed above, show that co-operation between disciplines was becoming a very viable research form; and also that the sharing of expertise was producing interesting new scholarship and knowledge. The publication in this decade of several ‘readers’ demonstrated recognition of an established audience for, and hence a strong market for, publications relating to the relatively new academic approaches to the domain of design.<sup>31</sup> Publications were seen linked to particular communities of

<sup>31</sup> By ‘relatively new’ I mean in relation to the historiography of History as a discipline. In Penny Sparkes review of Highmore’s *The Design Culture Reader* she argues that: “Over the last decade it has clearly come to several publishers’ notice that design students have, to date, not been well served by the introductory material available to them. As a result a significant number of design-related readers have emerged recently, the assumption underpinning their production being that there is an audience of design students out there who will be helped in their studies by the easy availability of

practice and focused on categories of design such as Graphic Design, Industrial Design, Fashion, Craft, and Interior Design;<sup>32</sup> Additional readers collected together scholarship on objects and also linked to the journals *Block* and *Design Issues* which published articles from academics who engaged in the mediation of design practice and discourses.<sup>33</sup> The texts that are the specific focus of this case study were published between 2009 and 2010 and demonstrate the three different approaches taken by the communities of practice associated with the wider design history network; the *Design Cultures Reader*, *Design Studies- A Reader* and the *Design History Reader*.<sup>34</sup> The readers, by collecting together key publications, were significant publishing milestones indicating the stability of design discourses, but more significantly the acknowledgement by publishers of an established audience and market for the books. Conversely, the volumes show a distinct separation of approaches which appears to reject the inclusivity of a multi-disciplinary approach advocated by design history, and reinforces once again the problems that the discipline encountered due to its heritage within the context of design education.

The 2009 volume edited by media and cultural studies scholar Ben Highmore, *The Design Culture Reader*, was categorized by the publishers as 'cultural studies/design' and is a text that follows Julier's argument that consideration of design must be of

collections of pre-selected and pre-digested writings." Sparke, P (2009) "Review: The Design Culture Reader, Ben Highmore (ed)" in *Journal of design history*, 22(2) pp.191-193.

<sup>32</sup> Other readers include: Heller, S. (ed)(2002) *The Graphic Design Reader*, New York: Allworth Press, and Gorman, C. ( 2003) *The Industrial Design Reader*, New York: Allworth Press; Lillethun, A. & Welters, L. (eds.) (2007) *The Fashion Reader*, Oxford: Berg; Barnard, M. (ed.) (2007) *Fashion Theory: A Reader* London: Routledge; Adamson, G (ed)(2009) *The Craft Reader*, Oxford: Berg; Interiors Forum, (2007) *Thinking inside the box - a reader for interiors for the 21st century*, Middlesex: Middlesex University.

<sup>33</sup> Candlin, F & Guins, R (eds.) (2009) *The Object Reader ( In Sight: Visual Culture)*, London: Routledge; Stafford, S. (ed) (1996) *The BLOCK Reader in Visual Culture*, London: Routledge; Doordan, D. (ed.) (1996) *Design History: An Anthology (A Design Issues Reader)*, Boston: MIT Press; Margolin, V. (ed.) (ed.) (1996) *The Idea of Design (A Design Issues Reader)*, Boston: MIT Press.

<sup>34</sup> Highmore, B (ed.) (2009) *The Design Culture Reader*, London: Routledge; Clark, H. & Brody, D. (eds) (2009) *Design Studies - A Reader*, Oxford: Berg; and, Lees- Maffei, G. and Houze, R. (2010) *The Design History Reader*, Oxford: Berg.

relevance to designers within their society. It moves away from a Pevsnerean model of constructing a canon of 'good' design objects, and focusing on their individual designers, towards a focus on cultural interactions. However, Highmore also recognises the importance of history in relationship to both the practice and scrutiny of design. Highmore's hopes for the utilization of the publication are explicitly stated in the preface; "if this anthology finds something of a home in design departments I will be very happy; if, as well, it finds a home (however small) in departments of the humanities and social sciences I will be ecstatic."<sup>35</sup> He is wary of creating a canon, as any 'reader' threatens to do, and presents design as a series of negotiations whilst also recognizing the "actual object-hood" of design; the collection is divided into sections on "materials and methods", "actors and agents", "object life", "sense and sensibilities", "designing (in) the world", and "design time".<sup>36</sup> The texts within these sections are indicative of the variety of philosophical, theoretical and historical approaches taken by scholars across the wider design history network.

Penny Sparke evaluated Highmore's definition of design as too broad, and boundaries of subject matter as too porous; "there may be a sense of boundary extending for its own sake."<sup>37</sup> His challenges to the territories in which design is considered do, however, reflect the debates that scholars have had about the intellectual treatment of design for the decades since the emergence of design history as a type of academic endeavour. This text is to be welcomed for this, but Sparke's view that it is challenging to readers new to the concept, and study of

<sup>35</sup> Highmore, B. *op.cit.*, p.xiv

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5

<sup>37</sup> Sparke, P *op.cit.*,



design, is also very valid. The text attempts to present a discrete anthology of articles relating to a concept that is firmly situated in an extensive scholarly network, much like design history and Design Studies; both of which resist succinct definition and neat segregation into academic categories and can be challenging to explain concisely.

Highmore, who also edited *The Everyday Life Reader*, was actively involved in helping to disseminate scholarship into the public sphere and was involved in a project which brought the cultural history of artefacts to a new audience, in DeGroot's terms new consumers of 'history'.<sup>38</sup> Highmore was consultant to a BBC4 television series which mixed the time-travel format and reality television format to show how designed objects have changed the experience of family life.<sup>39</sup> A three-part experiment called 'Electric dreams' was part of the Electric Revolution season on BBC4, in this programme a modern family's home was stripped of technological innovations that had occurred within the last 40 years. The time travel experience saw each day represent a year, starting in 1970 and coming up to the present day, with each new 'year' they were provided with domestic appliances and gadgets as they would have been invented. The family was supported by a 'Technical Support Team' to provide advice on the objects being provided.<sup>40</sup> This experiment was like a real-life history of technology and design; the programme was put together

<sup>38</sup> Highmore, B. (ed.) (2001) *The Everyday Life Reader*, London: Routledge.

<sup>39</sup> This programme was reminiscent of the "1900 house" format that has been screened in the late 1990s. There are several new series using this format to present history; for example, Turn Back Time: High Street Dreams, and Edwardian Farm 2010

<sup>40</sup> The support team included Gia Milinovich, a technology writer, Tom Wrigglesworth an audio-visual and communications devices enthusiast and Dr Ben Highmore, who was described by the BBC as a sociologist. Information from: [www.bbc.co.uk/electricdreams/about.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/electricdreams/about.shtml) (Accessed 10th December 2010)

with the assistance of the Open University, and with involvement from Highmore.<sup>41</sup> Other examples of television series that overlap with design-historical subject matter include the 2007 series *James May's 20th century* and a series called *Toy Stories* which looked at the heritage of key brands such as Meccano, Lego, and Hornby.<sup>42</sup>

The design history network has actively embraced new audiences outside academia, both in traditional museum environments and with broadcast and multimedia information about everyday design objects and their histories. This decade has also seen interest in design heritage with trends for vintage, retro and nostalgia seen in fashion, graphics and retail; a phenomenon that arguably demonstrates the far-reaching extent of the design history network, and speaks to the impact of design historians engaging with design practitioners'.<sup>43</sup>

Academic publishers Berg commissioned two readers for publication at the end of the decade that were both closely linked with the network of design historians operating in Britain and North America, and both readers critically engaged with the intellectual territories that had been fought over by the network of design historians that had developed from the end of the 1970s. These were *Design Studies- A Reader* compiled by academics working in North American institutions

<sup>41</sup> The relationship between the BBC and the Open University for educational programming had evolved beyond merely producing course-related material.

<sup>42</sup> This series was also presented by James May; May,J.(2009) *James May's Toy Stories*, London: Conway, and May,J.(2007) *James May's 20th Century*, London:Hodder and Staughton

<sup>43</sup> The cult of vintage objects is a contemporary fascination; television series such as *Mad Men* and musicians such as Paloma Faith stimulated the revival fashion, companies such as Cath Kidston trade in 'retro' objects. For scholarly treatment of these trends see, Guffey, E (2006) *Retro – The Culture of Revival*, London: Reaktion. In Penny Sparke's review of Guffey's book she argues for the impact of design history teaching in art schools on contemporary designers. Sparke, P.,(2010)"Review: Retro: The Culture of Revival by Elizabeth F. Guffey," *Design Issues*, 26 (2), pp.80-81

and the *Design History Reader* edited by academics working in Britain and although these came to the market virtually contemporaneously, they shall be addressed in order of their publication. The authors of the 2009 publication *Design Studies - A Reader*, Hazel Clark and David Brody, both teach in America where the proponent for the Design Studies approach, Victor Margolin, and the journal *Design Issues*, are based.<sup>44</sup> The articles within the reader come from a broad selection of sources geographically although there is evidence of a large number of American texts. In the introduction the authors claim this is;

"the first anthology to closely examine the diversity and complexity of design: as processes, as designed products (including signs and images), as systems, in use, as well as in effects on and relationship to human beings within a range of social and cultural contexts."<sup>45</sup>

These aims are similar to the project of Highmore's reader that was published contemporaneously, and indicates the strong desire for holistic approaches to considering design within a cultural context. The key difference between the two anthologies is that Clark and Brody directly engage with the historiography of writing design histories; the first section of their reader is entitled 'history of design' and engages with the issues of definition that had troubled the nascent design history network and the claims for academic recognition made since its formation in the 1970s. The influences of Clark's early connection with the design history community in Britain and their concerns, and also Clive Dilnot's role as adviser to the editors, are evident in the inclusion of key texts by Forty, Margolin, Walker and Attfield that engage with the issue of the academic direction of design historical practice.<sup>46</sup> Subsequent sections of the text move discussion on from the

<sup>44</sup>Clark, H. & Brody, D. (eds)(2009) *Design Studies - A Reader*, Oxford: Berg. Although this book is published in Britain both authors teach at Parsons the New School of Design in New York.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1

<sup>46</sup> Hazel Clark was the chair of the DHS in 1990 and 1991.

historiographical issues surrounding design to philosophical issues 'design thinking' and 'theorizing design and visuality'; political and theoretical issues, 'identity and consumption' and 'design and global issues'; and practical issues such as production and object-focused study in the sections 'Labour, industrialisation, and new technology' and 'design things'.<sup>47</sup> The editors encourage readers to consider the topics 'holistically' because the "themes, ideas, and concepts covered in each section are intimately interrelated to each other." Also central to this is a clear acknowledgment of the importance of history, with the first section directly acknowledging the debates that informed the development of design history and its centrality for grounding the practice of design in context.<sup>48</sup> The fact that Clark and Brody give due emphasis to discussion of the discipline in their reader may have been influenced by their involvement in the strand on the 'current state of design history' at the College Art Association's conference and subsequent special edition of the *Journal Of Design History* that published papers from this.<sup>49</sup> This interweaving of influences across academic communities in Europe and North America is yet another example of the complex network relating to the domain of the academic study and analysis of design and its histories.

<sup>47</sup> 'design thinking' and 'theorizing design and visuality' - section two and section 3; identity and consumption' and 'design and global issues' sections four and six; 'Labour, industrialisation, and new technology' and 'design things' section five and seven in Clark, H. & Brody, D. (eds)(2009) *Design Studies - A Reader*, Oxford: Berg.

<sup>48</sup> "Starting with the section on History is critical, in that history grounds practice of design in context and explains the connection between material world and the events that surround the thinking and making of specific things." *Ibid.*, p3

<sup>49</sup> The College Art Association is the American equivalent of the UK's Association of Art Historians. At a conference held in Dallas, Texas, February 2008, Clark chaired a strand that reflected on Clive Dilnot's seminal articles on the discipline. Dilnot and Clark have a personal relationship and is an example of the personal and professional networks that have enabled design history to grow. Clark, H. & Brody, D. (eds) (2009) *Special Issue 'Current State of Design History,' Journal of Design History*, 22 (4)

In the *Journal of Design History's* review, by Kjetil Fallan, this reader was accused of casting 'too wide a net' and being too broad in its scope, a similar criticism to that levelled by Sparke at Highmore's *The Design Culture Reader*.<sup>50</sup> This criticism, although a valid one, is likely to be inevitable for any text addressing the diverse subjects, methods, ideologies, theories and approaches that the network of design historical scholars address in their intellectual practice. This particular text was developed in the context of teaching on a course offered to undergraduates, rather than from any topic basis or particular approach and this leads it to emphasis on introducing basic concepts, issues and approaches.

Berg's second anthology relating to design, *The Design History Reader*, again demonstrates the extent of the design history network; its editors, Grace Lees-Maffei and Rebecca Houze, represent institutions on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>51</sup> This collection also attempts to represent a holistic approach to the literature on design and its histories, but the difference of this anthology to that offered by Clark and Brody's *Design Studies* reader is that the emphasis here is firmly on design history as an *historical* practice. It explicitly claims to employ "inclusive definitions of design and of design history" and has a "concern for *all* fields of design history and a holistic approach to comment debates."<sup>52</sup> The emphasis is solely *history* not the complexities of recent approaches to *design*; the general introduction to the book does not engage with the parallel approaches of Design Studies and Design Cultures; these debates are only alluded to briefly where they are represented by

<sup>50</sup> Fallan, K.(2010)"Review: Design Studies: A Reader", *Journal of Design History*,23(1),pp110-112

<sup>51</sup> Lees-Maffei, G. & Houze, R.(2010)*The Design History Reader*, Oxford: Berg. Lees-Maffei is Senior Lecturer in the History and Theory of Design and the Applied Arts at the University of Hertfordshire, and Houze is Associate Professor of Art History at Northern Illinois University.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1

the inclusion of Margolin's article discussing Design Studies, relegated to section 7 of the book on "the foundations, debates, historiography," and a fleeting reference to Design Cultures by way of brief mention of Julier's *The Culture of Design* in the section recommending further reading.<sup>53</sup> This reader works to present design history as affiliated to social and cultural history but it also presents an overview of design historical practice over three decades demonstrating the "three concurrent concerns within the discipline" those of production, consumption and mediation.<sup>54</sup> The inclusion of primary source material such as Adam Smith 'Of The Division of Labour', Adolf Loos 'Ornament and Crime' and texts by Marx, Veblen, Benjamin, Ruskin and Morris, indicate that the intended function of this book is as a source mainly for historians and students of history of creative practice and rather than contemporary design practitioners.

### **The impact and esteem of the design history network and its members**

The case studies in this chapter bring discussion of the chronological development of the design history network as an academic endeavour up to 2011. The members of the design history network have proven scholarly impact within education, publishing and museums, but many scholars have accepted that it remains an academic discipline that is unable to offer a succinct precise definition of itself and its practice. It has demonstrated that its strength remains in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to scholarly enquiry that take objects as their starting point; this has been shown through the case studies of several major collaborative

<sup>53</sup> Chapter 40 reprints "Design History or Design Studies: subject matter and methods' by Victor Margolin from *Design Studies* 1992. Julier, G.(2000 and 2nd edn. 2008) *The Culture of Design*, London: Sage is referred to only in the suggested further reading..

<sup>54</sup> Lees-Maffei, G. & Houze, R.*op.cit.*, p.2

research projects given above. The involvement in these research projects gives evidence demonstrating that the significant characteristic of design history is the importance of network interactions; the interweaving of strands and threads of a variety of forms of academic enquiry and approach. Within the broader academic community members of the design history network, and their methods, are slowly becoming accepted by more traditionally established disciplines, who are acknowledging the benefits of fluid definitions and categories within academic practice.

The major research projects, museum gallery re-displays, and broadcast programmes at the beginning of this century have proven that the approaches to researching and discussing history taken by design historians are becoming an accessible approach to social and cultural history. The public arenas for engaging with object collections and histories are also showing an increasing distance from a narrow elite and connoisseurial engagement with objects based on aesthetic criteria or notions of authorship, provenance or authenticity. Importantly, the inventive practice of design historians, who embrace methods and approaches from a multitude of scholarly styles, contributes to the open and inclusive nature of it as a style of historical practice. This in turn resulted in a high level of accessibility in the public sphere beyond academia, which integrates with the current trend in the academy for making scholarship accessible and proving impact.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> HEFCE ran a pilot project in 2010 to assess the measurement of impact in the humanities. See; HEFCE et al. (2010) *Research Excellence Framework impact pilot exercise: Findings of the expert panels A report to the UK higher education funding bodies by the chairs of the impact pilot panels*, Point 33 of the report of the humanities subject included in the pilot (English) advised that: “impacts included contributing to the creative economy, contributing to national cultural enrichment, extending the global/national knowledge base beyond academia, contributing to civil society, and influencing policy development.”

The competitive nature of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), and its predecessor the RAE, prompts heated debate and discussion over the classifications and categories of assessment used, and contemporary debates on measuring 'impact.' This thesis is not the appropriate place to address the controversies surrounding this current issue, but it does acutely highlight problems in quantifying the humanities subjects and their influence.<sup>56</sup> However, members of the wider design history community have contributed to the "cultural enrichment", disseminating scholarship in an accessible format, and "extending the... knowledge base beyond academia." A positive aspect of this REF-led necessity for researchers to demonstrate their impact and esteem will be that individuals will explicitly state their scholarly activities beyond the core duties of teaching, researching and disseminating their work.<sup>57</sup> This will provide a body of evidence of the different communities of practice to which they belong and their interactions with the broader intellectual network.

In addition to addressing major research projects, the role of design historians within them, and their impact extending the knowledge base; this chapter has also provided evidence that the design history network has a secure position as part of historical and cultural academic endeavour in Britain and beyond. Developments in publishing at the latter part of this decade have demonstrated that publishers believe there is an established academic and scholarly audience for publications relating to the subject area. These publications once again raise the debate of

<sup>56</sup> The pages of the academic press frequently engage in debating this issue. See, for example, Simons, J.,(2010)"REF Pilot: humanities impact is evident and can be measured," *THE*, 11th November.

<sup>57</sup> The recording of academics activities will become standard practice. Esteem indicators will highlight the different communities of practice to which scholars belong such as membership of editorial boards, advisory panels and examining committees.



definition of the subject and demonstrate the subtle differences in approach that are required when teaching the critical consideration of design, and its social and cultural histories, to design practitioners. The discipline cannot distance itself from its own heritage and formation within the context of art and design education; it is still necessary for the design history community to directly engage with the design community as well continuing to nurture and strengthen its position within the history community.

## Conclusion

This thesis has argued that over a relatively short period of time, from 1970 to 2011, design history has become an academic network that embraces a wide range of scholarly and intellectual practices. It has demonstrated that its activities comprise many of the elements required for academic recognition, but also with significant impact beyond the formal academic framework. As this thesis has demonstrated the most significant aspect of design history as an academic endeavour is its multi-disciplinary nature; it is also characterised by scholarly boundaries that have been fluid and underpinned by a variety of methods and approaches.

This study has presented an analysis of a distinctive form of historical practice and discourse that arguably resists definition and boundaries. This issue was particularly acute, with challenges and potential pitfalls, when initially attempting to clearly define the subject and parameters of the research; raising the question, what is design history? In a scholarly area where debates regarding a definitive design historical method and subject matter are perennial the danger of accusations of omitting various areas or of giving undue emphasis on one or other factor was likely. Drawing on the ideas of a domain enabled reference to the diverse and ever-changing range of topics and subjects that are addressed by design historians. Whilst this term threatened to lack precision any other description such as 'discipline', 'subject', or 'field of studies' implied the existence of a barrier suggesting inclusion or exclusion, and with that the threat of creating an accepted canon.

There are many varied viewpoints and whilst scholars may take issue with the particular selection and emphasis given to events here, this thesis posits that that is the nature of academic practice and particularly so in this academic area. As Fulbrook reassuringly observed on the nature of historical enquiry, the lack of consensus on the theories and methods does not stop scholars continuing historical research and discussion.<sup>1</sup> Yet clearly it was necessary to develop a conceptual framework to allow for an assessment of the complexity of this wide scholarly field, its structures, and the interactions between individuals, organisations and institutions.

The distinctive contribution here is a close scrutiny of the emergence and consolidation of a specific area of intellectual practice, design history, and the conceptualisation of this within the theoretical framework articulated by Bruno Latour.<sup>2</sup> New understanding is acquired by applying the concept of networks, and the idea that strength comes through dissemination and heterogeneity, to the area of scholarship known as design history. The concept of networks was used as a way of constructing an overview of the arena of design historical practice in place of any other defining characteristics. The evidence offered by the development of design history as an area of academic activity clearly demonstrates the usefulness of Actor Network Theory. For clarity of discussion it was useful to also engage with Wenger's idea of Communities of Practice, this gave an extra dimension to the definition of 'actors': offering additional emphasis that extends beyond the individual

<sup>1</sup> Fulbrook, M., (2002) *Historical Theory*, Routledge: London, p.12

<sup>2</sup> Latour, B. (1997) *On Actor Network Theory, A few clarifications*, Article for Online Resource, Centre for Social Theory and Technology (CSTT), Keele University, <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-9801/msg00019.html> (Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> July 2008)

to more complex groupings,<sup>3</sup> Approaches informed by theories of ‘Actor-Networks’ and also ‘Communities of Practice’ allowed discussion of the complexity of this multi-dimensional approach to the discussion of objects and their histories; an approach that is called ‘design history’ by some scholars and practitioners but that also goes by other names. Emphasis throughout was on the importance of the interrelation of different *actors* across the variety of *communities of practice* relating to this intellectual *network*.

The initial research question was why this distinct type of historical practice developed and how individual actors came together to form groups, communities of practice, and interact as a network? That network became established in the context of major shifts in social, cultural and educational change during the 1970s. Scholars began to seek opportunities to research topics and areas of historical enquiry that did not fit into the structured, and often hierarchical, world of professional academic historians in the traditional universities. Some felt that prior histories had been inadequate and many topics had previously been neglected due to lack of source material; the open and inclusive nature of design history allowed for new areas of historical enquiry that had previously been lacking. The study of everyday objects, ephemera, and design changes in relation to their various contexts of production and consumption offered sources that enabled scholars to uncover new approaches to the past and the writing of histories. It is no coincidence that these changes occurred in tandem with new academic interest in issues of gender and consumption. Many different groups of scholars and experts

<sup>3</sup> Wenger, E. (1989) *Communities of Practice – Learning, Meaning and Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

emerged during the 1970s with differing perspectives on the interpretation of objects. During the following four-decade period this scholarly network evolved from a distinct group of art and decorative art historians with a specialist interest (albeit with different approaches) to a diverse network spread across the humanities and design disciplines. Design history is discussed here in several ways; as particular communities of practice linked to objects, the wider network, and the broader domain. It is not presented as a unique or distinctive academic discipline, moreover as a complex domain which, to paraphrase Latour, has strength due to its heterogeneity.<sup>4</sup>

Chapters One and Two focused on the period of the 1970s, and analysed many of the events and organisations primarily linked to educational and academic frameworks. These allowed for individuals to interact and form relationships which in turn engendered communities of practice. The initial chapter suggested that the nature of design history was constantly evolving at this time and that in the broader network surrounding design history practice there were several distinct communities of practice. The context of teaching in art education was key here; it provided an initial impetus, it was here that many personal relationships were forged through scholarly mentorship, membership of CNAA panels and committees, the organisation of conferences and courses, and the formation of academic associations and societies. These relationships were interwoven across

<sup>4</sup>Latour, B. (1997) "On actor-network theory- A few clarifications" Available at: <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-9801/msg00019.html> (Accessed: 4th July 2008). Due to the increasing prevalence of interdisciplinary scholarship, and the new emphasis on 'impact' for the Research Excellence criteria used in academia, the relationships and interactions across a wider network that have been so instrumental to the development of design history in Britain may stimulate interest in making academic practice more fluid and inclusive. Research Councils UK (2012) "Pathways to Impact" Available at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/kei/impacts/Pages/home.aspx> (Accessed: 6th October 2012)

different, and often multiple, communities of practice and hence also across the wider network.<sup>5</sup>

A second research question regarded design history's relationship to art and design practice and during the 1970s, as discussed in Chapter One, the two were inextricably linked. The developments in art and design education during this period, specifically the need for an element of complementary or contextual studies to raise courses to degree-equivalent academic standard, created employment opportunities through demand for lecturers. As there was no prior model for tutoring this subject some lecturers sought out their peers for support and guidance, hence creating a community of practice of those individuals connected to teaching theoretical and historical content in a practical art and design context. The background of many contextual studies tutors was art history, and understandably their teaching was influenced by their own knowledge and learning. But the particular topics that were taught often held little interest for the practical students and dissent was evident through a series of protests. Here was an opportunity for tutors using an object-focused approach to contextual studies informed by contemporary scholarship. It was among this group that key debates were seen concerning the growing need for a separation of design history from art history, and to a lesser extent architectural history. Chapter One discussed a series of conferences held in the late 1970s, at Newcastle Polytechnic and subsequently at Middlesex Polytechnic and Brighton Polytechnic. It was argued that these events were important occasions for the interaction of individuals, the

<sup>5</sup>The distinguishing difference between a community of practice and a network is; that while members of a distinct community of practice would be aware of their interactions together in a network the various actors would not necessarily have intent or awareness of their connections.

building of professional relationships, the creation of communities of practice and the subsequent emergence of a design history network. The occasion of the first conference at Newcastle showed the significance of individual actors in an emerging network, and an example given was that of attendee Penny Sparke who had been informed of the event by mentor Peter Reyner Banhan, who was speaking, and he in turn had links with Nikolaus Pevsner, his own mentor.<sup>6</sup> The conferences *Leisure and design in the 20th century* at Middlesex and Brighton's *Design History: Fad or Function* and their associated publications by the Design Council brought together contributors from inside and outside academia and also give evidence of a multiplicity of topics and approaches.<sup>7</sup> These clearly demonstrate that there were several distinct communities of practice within the broader design historical network, each with a particular set of interests. It was also of specific interest that these first publications of research by members of this emerging network of scholars were produced by the Design Council. Chapter One argued that the lack of consensus about the methods and topics of design history, and its inability to define a particular genre and approach, led to a significant amount of confusion among publishers. As they had business-led considerations for the market for publication there was a certain amount of reluctance to commit to a new scholarly area. Publications were therefore produced by organisations with concerns other than solely financial return; namely the Design Council and the Open University.

<sup>6</sup> The web of connections surrounding an individual is also in evidence in the case of Gillian Naylor, initially a contextual studies tutor at Kingston Polytechnic (then Brighton, then the RCA and tutor on their MA Course) she drew on prior experience working at the Council of Industrial Design to inform her teaching and also her knowledge of the CNAA approving committees to inform course design.

<sup>7</sup> Design Council,(1978) *Leisure in the Twentieth Century*, London: Design Council and, Design Council (1978) *Design History: Fad or Function*, London: Design Council.

An important central event, or boundary object, for design history was the Open University's *History of Architecture and Design A305* course. Chapter One argued that this had an important and direct influence on the emerging design history network. Due to the significance of its course materials books, readers and multimedia resources produced by the course team for distributing design history across the country it was the focus of a case study in Chapter Two. Not only was the course important in building an academic community and developing different approaches to the study of objects histories, the Open University's use of radio and television and its relationship with the BBC was of fundamental importance for the later spread of new ways for audiences to consume histories. Further case studies presented in Chapter Two considered design historians acting beyond the parameters of contextual studies in an art and design context and examined the development of degree courses in design history. This demonstrated multiple communities of practice surrounding the approaches taken to teaching design history as evidenced by the courses at North Staffordshire, Brighton and Middlesex Polytechnics. The development of the course at Middlesex is a particularly good demonstration of network interactions. Course designers and staff had links to the communities of practice of the Middlesex conference in 1976, and visual and cultural studies journal *BLOCK*. The CNAAC accrediting panel for the course also shows links to the broader design history network via staff members particularly from North Staffordshire and Brighton namely Flavia Swann and Gillian Naylor. Other connections are the institutions Curriculum Centre for Art & Design History and the publishers of a History of Design series Pimlico Press. The development of design history specific course provision at the end of the 1970s, and the



existence of courses in the 1980s is evidence of the formation of a design history network.

The design history network saw important developments and increasing activity during the 1980s and 1990s when it became apparent that it needed to establish itself on the academic map, go beyond the concerns of art and design education, and engage with approaches to object-based history-writing. In order to become established within an academic framework debates were needed over the scope and focus of the subject in order that courses could be accredited, taught and assessed. Chapter Three discussed the initial debates surrounding subject and method in the domain of design history. In academic terms design history had necessarily defined itself in opposition to existing forms of academic activity, operating at points of intersection with other fields such as business history, history of technology or social history and most clearly with art histories. These are examples of intersections on the boundaries of multiple communities of practice. Despite the lack of consensus on subject and method, undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses were developed representing a variety of approaches at polytechnics' and colleges across the country and at the Open University, with its distinctive and innovative pedagogy. The courses established in the late 1970s, as examined in Chapter Two's case studies, taught successive cohorts throughout the 1980s and the masters' level course at the Royal College of Art, established in this decade, was the focus of a detailed case study in Chapter Six. Just as courses had been of significance in identifying communities of practice and different approaches to the domain of design history, the formation of academic societies was of immense importance to the design history network. Chapter Four argued that the

academic accoutrements of an organized society and a scholarly journal, the DHS and the *Journal of Design History*, saw the establishment of a disciplinary identity of great significance for those teaching and also the wider design history network of scholar. The Society and Journal were important boundary objects allowing for multiple interactions among individuals and groups, and provided the circumstances for two important communities of practice; the Executive Committee and the Journal's Editorial Board. On a practical level these facilitated communication by providing a central source for contact, promotion of research through annual conferences and other events and, arguably more significantly, providing an outlet for publishing research.

Further evidence of the establishment of design history in academic terms was presented by developments linked to assessing the quality of research and teaching provision following 1992's changes to the structure of higher education, when polytechnics became new universities. Driven by the requirements of quality assessment, the QAA and RAE, the DHS was involved in attempting to define subject descriptors and parameters within this formal academic framework. As is evident from the broad scope of the domain and multiplicity of approaches this task was highly problematic, yet it did serve to consolidate the place of design history in higher education beyond solely art and design education.

During the 1980s and increasingly so during the 1990s an expansion of design history beyond art and design education and academia was seen with influence evident in both publishing and museums. Chapter Five argued that this increase in academic publishing occurred as publishers recognized the need to expand their

portfolio to cover the new types of courses offered at universities. Among these publications there was expansion in terms of the subject matter and chronological scope of design history, going beyond topics such as production of industrial design and a reassessment of Modernism to acknowledge new intellectual directions such as the impact of debates on gender and consumption. Many of these developments questioned the academic status quo and similar concerns were expressed with regards to museums. Chapter Five offered an assessment of this reappraisal of the role of the museum in presenting histories. Museums were an important site for the activities of members of the design history network, not only as researchers, curators, and interpreters of histories, but also as audiences. The role of the museum subtly altered during this period, not only due to reassessment from scholars associated with new museology but due to political changes which demanded that institutions prove their value to the public. These changes provided momentum for research and the redisplay of collections and also consideration of their role in recreation and also education. The V&A was the focus of the case studies presented in Chapter Six. The significance went beyond its function as a major repository of collections of decorative arts and designed objects; moreover its importance was how the institution operated as a site for interaction of many of the actors in the design history network. The museum provided the circumstances that allowed for intersections between academic practice, museum display, publishing, and enabled the dissemination of design history to a wider audience. In addition to the institution itself, the MA course and British Galleries project were presented as examples of boundary objects. These allowed multifarious communities of practice to interact, but also enabled a diverse range of individuals a peripheral engagement with the network by visiting events or exhibitions that had

been created or influenced by design historians. The MA course, taught jointly with the RCA, brought together education and the museum world and took interdisciplinary research methods into the traditional museum establishment with considerable influence on the research culture surrounding the analysis of objects and their histories. The MA course's significance also related to the personal and professional interaction of scholars, strengthening the design history 'network'.

The situation at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century was that the activities of the Design History network were no longer niche activities associated primarily with teaching in art and design practice. Design historians' refusal to be restricted by a narrow disciplinary focus resulted in a network with far-reaching influence not only museums and the publishing sector, but in interdisciplinary research culture, popular culture and entertainment, and increasingly on the global stage. Chapter's Seven and Eight addressed the issue that in this network of interlinked communities of practice much design historical- inspired research and activity goes by other names. Chapter Seven argued that while intellectual flexibility, openness, and interdisciplinarity were significant strengths, they did provide obstacles to the assessment of research outputs under the structures of higher education funding and assessment. Yet conversely the *multi-disciplinary* projects such as the CSDI and Cultures of Consumption examined in Chapter Eight's case studies attracted major research funding and academia saw a trend encouraging interdisciplinary and inter-institutional research.

Additionally this thesis acknowledges that the network also sees important contributions from those who have a peripheral engagement with the academic

communities of practice associated with the domain of design history. Collectors, enthusiastic amateurs, antiques dealers, curators, television presenters and designers make an important contribution to the network that cannot be ignored; they are important actors in the dissemination of design history, although as their activities occur outside formal educational frameworks these individuals may be described as 'non-academic' design historians. Design history claims to be open and inclusive; it is not just being created within the parameters of the academy or the art school. This openness was most recently demonstrated by proving to be an accessible approach to the past and various histories for the wider public via new media platforms. This is a distinct strength of the design history network as funding institutions increasingly place emphasis on knowledge transfer, dissemination and the impact of scholarly activity beyond the academy.

Design history has moved beyond its initial moment of importance within the art schools, however, as the research and interpretation of objects in education and museums has changed and a new generation of design historians have also found themselves evolving with many no longer identifying with the term 'design history.'<sup>8</sup> Many researchers in this network do not describe themselves as 'design historians' and they work in adjacent academic areas of the humanities and social sciences. Within academic frameworks of education and scholarly publishing there are many examples of work which can be described as design history. These areas include;

<sup>8</sup> The relationship between scholars and young designers still continue and many of the past issues continue to resurface. The Design History Society established a series of training workshops in 2010 for scholars teaching to design students. The first of these was held in September 2010 at London Metropolitan University; here a keynote address from Grace Lees-Maffei was entitled "*what we should be teaching future designers*".

visual culture, material culture, design culture, design studies, art history, economic history, social history, fashion history, graphic design history, museum studies and curatorship, social history of technology, sciences and technology studies, history of technology, and history of geography. This diversity is not necessarily a problem for design historical method, which accepts multi-disciplinarity. Yet due to the structures of academia in Britain, particularly with regards to research funding, design history needs to retain the identifiers of disciplinarity such as its academic society, its journal, and its scholarly presence in higher education and research.

There is a chance that the term 'design history' may disappear despite there being many design historians working and researching in the academic and museum world. The description and definition indeed is as contentious now as it has been for over 30 years and many design historians working today do not identify themselves as such. This may be for a number of reasons, such as prior training, employment titles, and mainly due to the wider academic community misunderstanding the term. There continue to be clear opportunities for design historians in their original role of teaching history and critical thinking skills to new designers; but in this context there is still resistance to the word 'history' and again the territory is confused with the advent of academics describing, or 're-branding' their activities as 'Design Studies' and 'Design Cultures'. There are also opportunities for the design history network to continue its impact in the interpretation of history through objects in museums of social and cultural history (and local history), in National Trust buildings and Heritage centres, and through television and multi-media platforms. The strength of the network is in its variety; design history is not an academic practice that is restricted to connoisseurship or

the aesthetic interpretation of 'decorative arts' 'interiors' 'period rooms' and 'design classics', but it is an approach to history-writing and discussing objects that makes the past more accessible to the non-academic audience. An intrinsic part of design history is its incarnation as a Latourian actor-network with the fluidity and variety that presents.<sup>9</sup>

This thesis has argued that there is no singular design history, it is a heterogeneous and diverse network. It has also demonstrated the benefits of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary scholarship across higher education, museums, and the extension of this into the public realm through television series and multi-media. This design history network was, in part, initiated due to the experiences of teaching in art school education which contributed to a body of knowledge that aimed to make histories accessible through objects. Recent survey research by the Historical Association has drawn attention to the decline of history-teaching in the secondary school curriculum.<sup>10</sup> The study argued that history was being marginalised at all stages of secondary education. As a result of this report the issue of teaching history in schools was tabled for debate in the House of Lords in October 2011.<sup>11</sup> A possible future direction for this research would be to contribute to contemporary debates on the place of historical studies, and the skills of critical analysis, in the school curriculum. Scholars across the design history network have demonstrated the popular, as well as scholarly, appeal of applying the broad

<sup>9</sup> Latour, B. (1997) *On Actor Network Theory, A few clarifications*, Article for Online Resource, Centre for Social Theory and Technology (CSTT), Keele University, <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-l-9801/msg00019.html> (Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> July 2008)

<sup>10</sup> The report was compiled by Katherine Burn and Richard Harris. "Historical Association Secondary History Survey 2011" Available at: [http://www.history.org.uk/resources/secondary\\_news\\_1290.html](http://www.history.org.uk/resources/secondary_news_1290.html) (Accessed: 19th January 2012)

<sup>11</sup> Debate on Schools: History. Tabled by Lord Luke. HC Deb 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011 cc.401-403

interdisciplinary approach to histories told through everyday objects. This could be utilised as a method for making the study of the past more accessible to future generations and attempt to halt the decline of interest in history in schools. A further and possibly more immediate future direction for this research would be in a scholarly collaboration with the AAH. Almost contemporaneously to the DHS's oral history recordings and this thesis research a similar project was commissioned by the Association. This resulted in interviews and research being undertaken by Liz Bruchet in relation to art historians and their association. As argued here the intersections and overlaps are an intrinsic part of the history of the two organisations, and with the forthcoming 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AAH a joint project would be fitting.

This thesis set out to demonstrate the complexities of current academic practice, and the web of interactions and relationships that inform contemporary scholarship, by examining the formation of an intellectual network linked to the domain of design history. Returning to Latour's contention that networks cannot be captured and described by categorization alone this thesis has argued for the effectiveness of intellectual activity and outputs for design history that are heterogeneous fluid and interconnected, both inside and outside the structures of academia.





## Appendix A

Open University television programmes for course A305 *History of Architecture and Design 1890-1939*.

Source: Walker, J.A. (1993) *Arts TV: a History of Arts Television in Britain*, London: John Libbey & Co. p.222

What is architecture? Architect at work, *Geoffrey Baker*.

The Universal International Exhibition, Paris, 1900, *Tim Benton*.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh: Hillhouse, *Sandra Millikin*.

Industrial Architecture: AEG and Fagus factories, *Tim Benton*.

Frank Lloyd Wright: the Robie house, *Sandra Millikin*.

R. M. Schindler: the Lovell Beach house, *Sandra Millikin*.

Eric Mendelsohn: the Einstein Tower, *Denis Sharp*.

The Bauhaus at Weimar 1919-23, *Tim Benton*.

Berlin Siedlungen, *Tim Benton*.

The Weissenhof Siedlung, 1927, Stuttgart, *Tim Benton*.

The International Exhibition of decorative arts, Paris 1925, *Tim Benton*.

Adolf Loos, *Tim Benton*.

Le Corbusier: Le Villa Savoye, *Tim Benton*.

English flats of the thirties.

English houses of the thirties, *Geoffrey Baker*.

Hans Scharoun, *Tim Benton*.

English furniture.

Edwin Lutyens: Deanery Gardens, *Geoffrey Baker*

The London Underground, *Geoffrey Baker*.

Moderne and modernistic, *Geoffrey Baker*.

The other tradition, *Geoffrey Baker*.

Mechanical services in the cinema.

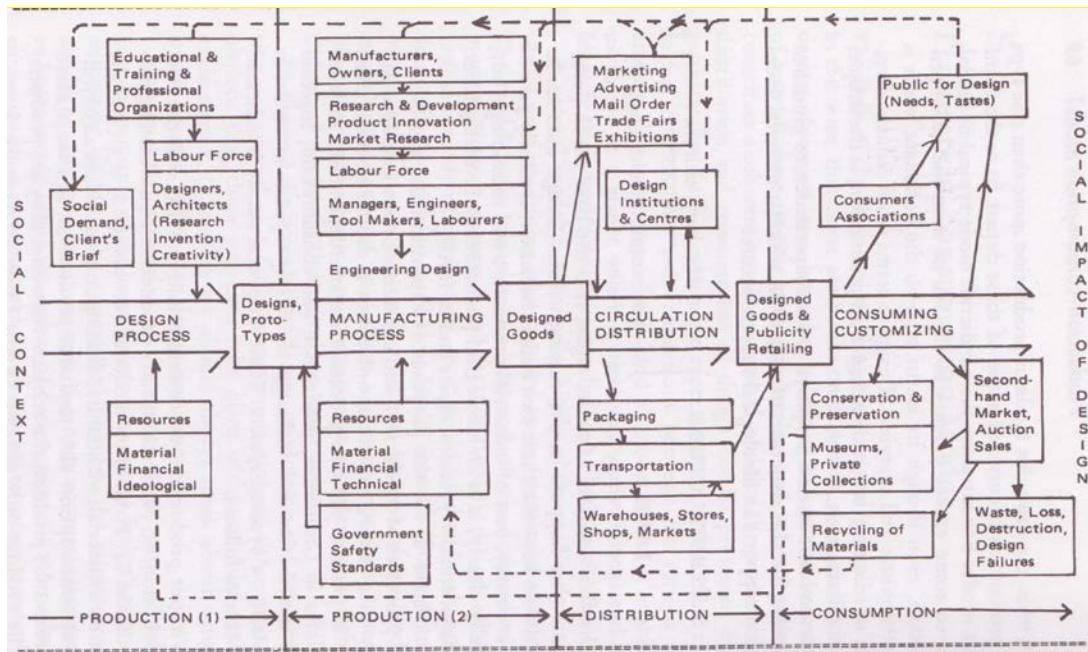
The semi-detached house, *Stephen Bayley*.

The housing question, *Stephen Bayley*.

## Appendix B

J.A. Walker's "Design History's field of research: Production-consumption Model" as given in *Design History and the History of Design*, pp.70-72

Source: Figure 2 in Walker, J.A. (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*, London: Pluto Press, pp.70-72



The image is accompanied by thirteen notes of explanation within the text. Interestingly one of these points out that as the model is only concerned with professional design therefore "the designing which all people do to some extent is ignored".<sup>1</sup>

[Image: permission courtesy of Pluto Press]

<sup>1</sup> Walker, J.A. (1989) *Design History and the History of Design*, London: Pluto Press Figure 2, pp.70-72

## Appendix C

### List of Design History and DHS Conferences

#### **1972 Approaches to Design History**

Lanchester N.B. *Mentioned in foreword to Design Council's published proceedings of the 1979 conference Design and Industry - yet no further documentary evidence of this event has been discovered.*

#### **1975 Design 1900-1960**

Newcastle Polytechnic

#### **1976 Leisure and Design in the Twentieth Century**

Middlesex Polytechnic

#### **1977 Design History: Fad or Function?**

Brighton Polytechnic

#### **1978 Design History: Past, Process, Product**

Canterbury

#### **1979 Design and Industrialisation**

Keele and Ironbridge *Organized jointly by Ironbridge Gorge Museum and the DHS*

#### **1980 Svensk Form**

London

#### **1981 From the Spitfire to the Microchip: Studies in the History of Design from 1945**

London

#### **1982 Design and Public Collections**

London

#### **1983 Women in Design**

ICA London

#### **1984 Design History and Design Education**

Coventry Polytechnic

#### **1985 Crafts: Forms and Social Contexts**

Wolverhampton Polytechnic

#### **1986 British Design in the 1930s**

Manchester Polytechnic

#### **1987 Design History: Past Present Future**

London and Brighton

#### **1988 Collecting the Twentieth Century**

Edinburgh

**1989 Word and Image: History of Graphic Design**

London

**1990 Industry and Anti-industry**

V&A

**1991 Cracks in the Pavement: Gender/Fashion/Architecture**

Design Museum, London *Organized jointly by the AAH, Design Museum and DHS*

**1992 Trading on Design**

Manchester

**1993 Transportation and Movement: "Moving through Design- The Culture of Transport and Travel"**

Southampton

**1994 Design for Selling: The Culture and History of Shops, Shopping and Consumerism**

Glasgow

**1995 ?**

*N.B. Some people recall a conference at Falmouth this year, there is no documentary evidence of this as a design history conference however the "Feminism and the Aesthetics of Difference" conference was at Falmouth College of Arts this year. This year there was also the joint AAH and V&A conference.*

**1995 Objects, Histories, and Interpretations**

V&A, London *Organized jointly by the AAH and the V&A*

**1996 History and Studio Practice: The Role of Historical and Critical Studies in Studio Education**

*Manchester Metropolitan University Organized jointly by the the DHS, the AAH, the Department of Visual Arts at Lancaster University, and Manchester Metropolitan University*

**1996 Futures**

Middlesex

**1997 The Ideal and the Real in Design**

Brighton

**1998 Design Innovation: Conception to Consumption**

University of Huddersfield

**1999 Home and Away**

Nottingham

**2000 Making and Unmaking: creative and critical practice in a designed world**

Portsmouth

**2001 Representing Design**

London

**2002 Situated Knowledges: Consumption, Production and Identity in a Global Context**

Wales

**2003 Sex Object: Desire and Design in a Gendered World**

Norwich

**2004 The Politics of Design**

Belfast

**2005 Locating Design**

London

**2006 Design and Evolution**

Delft, The Netherlands

**2007 Design/Body/Sense**

London

**2008 Networks of Design**

Falmouth

**2009 Writing Design**

Hertfordshire

**2010 Design and Craft: A History of Convergences and Divergence**

Brussels, Belgium *Organized jointly by the International Committee of Design History and Design Studies (ICDHS) and the DHS*

**2011 Design Activism and Social Change**

Barcelona, Spain

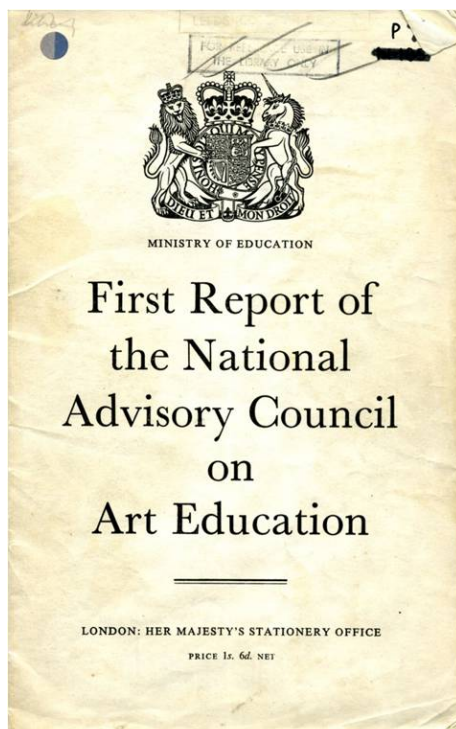
## Appendix D

Images of key publications.



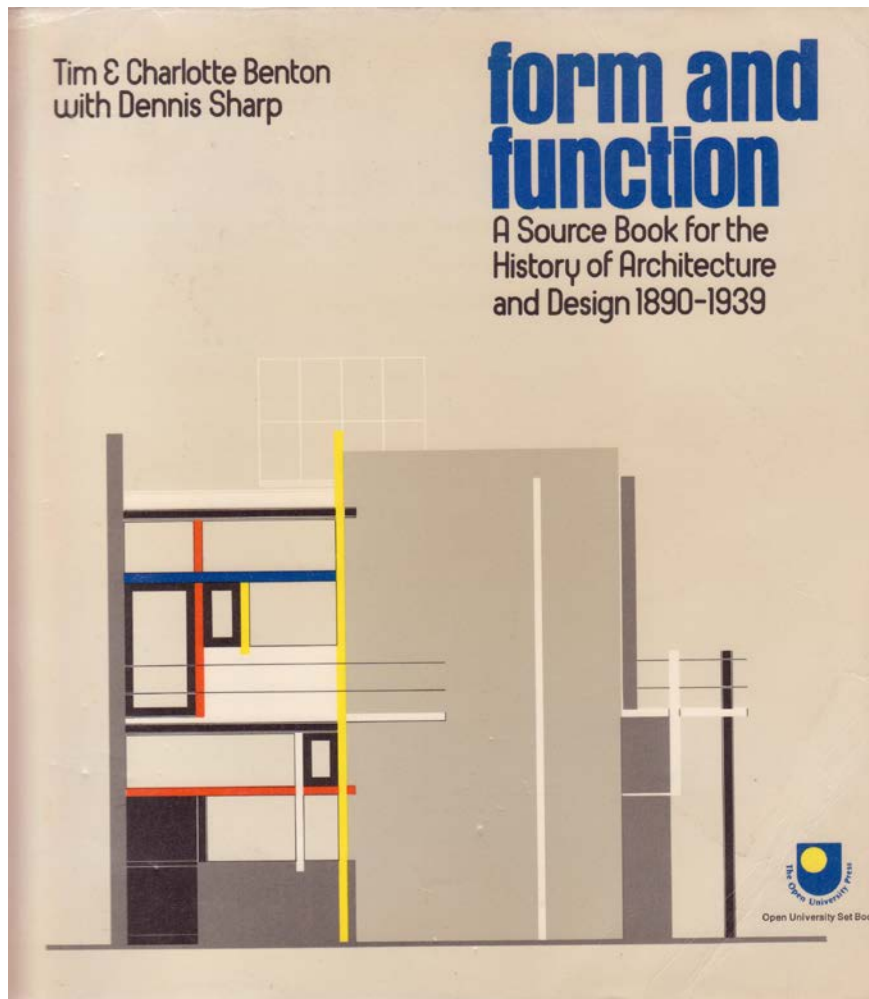
Various editions of Pevsner's *Pioneers of Modern Design* on the shelves at Teesside University Library, formerly Teesside Polytechnic.

(Image: author's own photograph January 2009)



The 1960 Coldstream Report pamphlet. Great Britain. HMSO (1960) *Report by the National Advisory Council on Art Education*, London: HMSO .

(Image: author's own photograph January 2009)

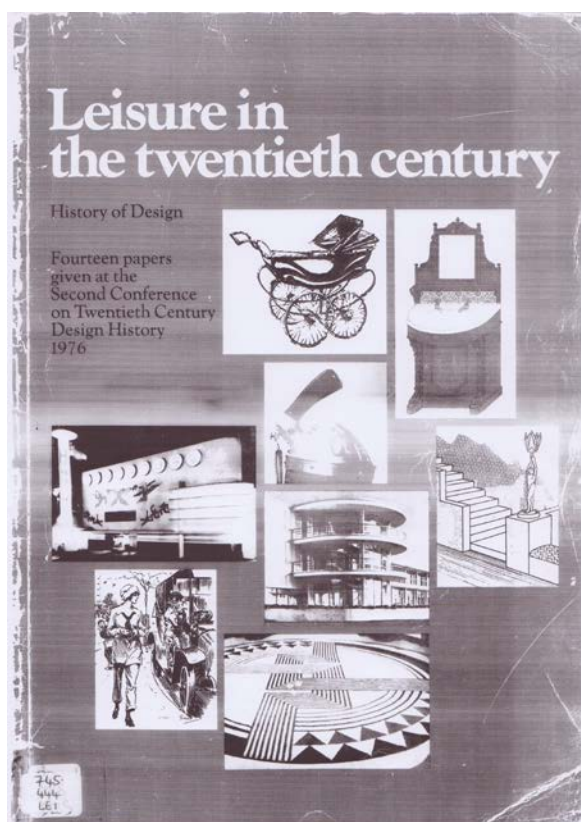


The Open University A305 Course book. 1975 Benton, T. Benton, C., & Sharp, D. (1975) *Form and Function - A Source Book for the History of Architecture and Design 1890-1939* London: Crosby Lockwood Staples. (Image: author's own photograph of book jacket.)

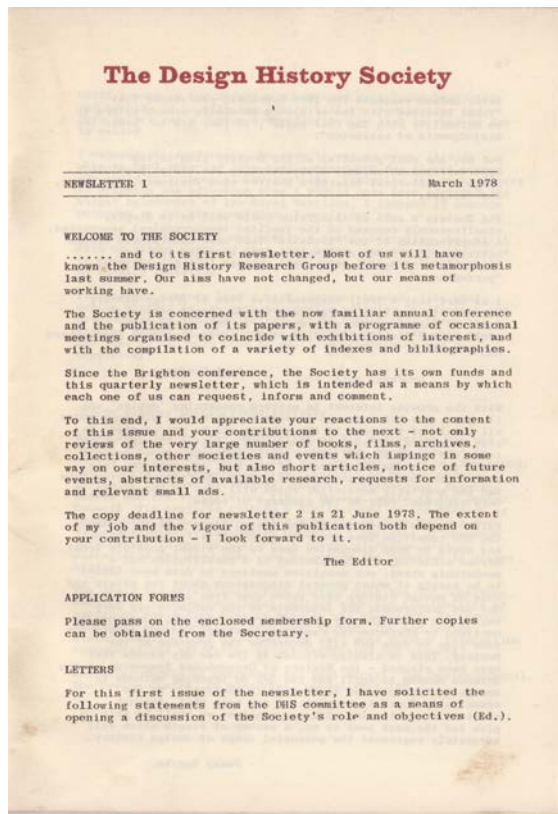




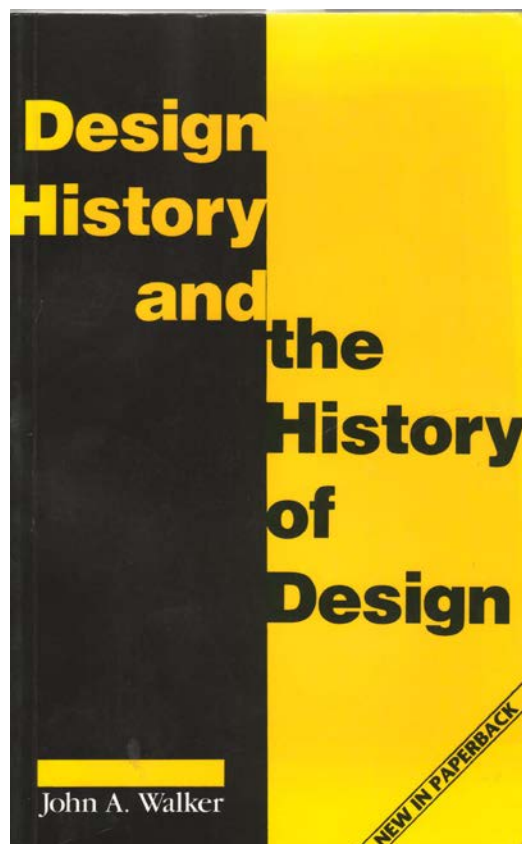
The publication from the first design history conference at Newcastle Polytechnic. Faulkner, T. (1975) *Design 1900-1960: Studies in Design and Popular Culture of the 20th Century* Newcastle: Newcastle Polytechnic. (Image: the DHS papers, The Design History Society and Northumbria University)



The Design Council's publication of conference papers from the Middlesex conference "Leisure and Design in the Twentieth Century", 1976, Design Council (1978) *Leisure in the Twentieth Century* London: Design Council. (Image: the DHS papers, The Design History Society and Northumbria University)



First DHS newsletter, front cover. 1978.  
(Image: Courtesy the DHS papers, The Design History Society and Northumbria University.)



Front cover of Walker, J.A. (1989) *Design History and the History of Design* London: Pluto Press.  
(Image: permission courtesy of Pluto Press.)



## Glossary of Terms

<b>AAH</b>	Association of Art Historians
<b>AAIAD</b>	Association of Advisers and Inspectors in Art and Design
<b>ACADTE</b>	Association of Centres for Art and Design Teacher Education
<b>ACC</b>	Antiques Collectors Club
<b>ACGB</b>	Arts Council of Great Britain
<b>AHEAD</b>	Association for Higher Education in Art and Design
<b>AHRB</b>	Arts and Humanities Research Board
<b>AHRC</b>	Arts and Humanities Research Council
<b>ANT</b>	Actor Network Theory
<b>ARLIS</b>	Art Libraries Society
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>CATS</b>	Credit accumulation and transfer scheme
<b>CC</b>	Crafts Council
<b>CETL</b>	Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
<b>CETLD</b>	Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning through Design
<b>CHEAD</b>	Conference For Higher Education Art And Design
<b>CNAA</b>	Council for National Academic Awards
<b>CoSAAD</b>	Council of Subject Associations in Art and Design
<b>CSD</b>	Chartered Society of Designers
<b>DATA</b>	Design and Technology Association
<b>DHP</b>	Design History Publications sub-committee
<b>DHRC</b>	Design History Research Centre
<b>DHRG</b>	Design History Research Group
<b>DHS</b>	Design History Society
<b>DipAD</b>	Diploma in Art and Design
<b>DRS</b>	Design Research Society
<b>ESRC</b>	Economic and Social Research Council
<b>GAP</b>	Graduate Attributes Profile
<b>GEM</b>	Group For Education In Museums
<b>HAAD</b>	History of Art Architecture and Design
<b>HADCS</b>	History of Art Design and Complementary Studies

<b>HEA-ADM</b>	Higher Education Academy – Art, Design, Media subject centre
<b>HEFCE</b>	Higher Education Funding Council
<b>HEQC</b>	Higher Education Quality Committee
<b>ICOGRADA</b>	International Council of Graphic Design Associates
<b>ICSID</b>	International Council of Societies for Industrial Design
<b>IFI</b>	International Federation Of Interior Architect's/Interior Designers
<b>ISADA</b>	Independent Schools Art and Design Association
<b>Latourian</b>	Refers to the ideas of Bruno Latour, in particular in relation to Actor Network Theory
<b>MIRIAD</b>	Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design
<b>MoDA</b>	Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture
<b>MoDiP</b>	Museum of Design in Plastics
<b>NACAE</b>	National Advisory Council on Art Education
<b>NADE</b>	National Association for Design Education
<b>NCDAD</b>	National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design
<b>NSEAD</b>	National Society of Education in Art and Design
<b>ONDA</b>	National Office for Industrial Design
<b>PCFC</b>	Polytechnic and College Funding Council
<b>PHE</b>	Plastics Historical Society
<b>QAA</b>	Quality Assurance Agency
<b>RCA</b>	Royal College of Art
<b>RIBA</b>	Royal Institute of British Architects
<b>SCOT</b>	Social Construction of Technology
<b>SHOT</b>	Social History of Technology
<b>STS</b>	Sciences and Technology Studies
<b>UKCME</b>	UK Centre for Materials Education
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational Scientifica and Cultural Organization
<b>UoA</b>	Units of Assessment
<b>V&amp;A</b>	Victoria and Albert Museum
<b>Writing-PAD</b>	Writing Purposefully in Art and Design

## Books and Pamphlets

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