Manchester Metropolitan University

IMAGES OF RESEARCH COMPETITION 2021

CELEBRATING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

Celebratory Brochure

Research and
Knowledge Exchange

Images Of Research

A research communication competition brought to you by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Directorate.

Researchers and postgraduate researchers were challenged to submit a photograph and accompanying abstract which communicates the impact of their research to a non-specialist audience that celebrates diversity in research.

This year due to the ongoing pandemic, the organisers decided that the competition would be held on an entirely digital platform. Each of the finalists' entries were showcased in an online gallery for a month. The final event, which was held on 24 March 2021, was a virtual event. Each of the finalists were given the opportunity to introduce their research and talk about their entries and there was a panel discussion around the event theme of diversity in research.

Three prizes worth £100 each were available to the winning entries. A panel of experts, including Professor Richard Greene, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange, selected the Judges' Choice awards.

Cosmin Popan's entry, 'Waiting for an Order', won the Judges' Choice Award in the Researcher category, and Hannah Elisabeth Jones' entry 'Can Bio-Based Materials Replace Single Use Plastics' won both the Judges' Choice Award in the Postgraduate Researcher category as well as the People's Choice Award.

Thank you to all those who visited the online gallery and voted for their favourite image. In all, over 630 votes were cast. This celebratory brochure is a compilation of all the wonderful entries received this year. We hope that you enjoy learning about the research taking place at Manchester Met.

If you have any questions relating to past or future competitions please contact the organisers at: **imagesofresearch@mmu.ac.uk**.

"Images of Research is an important part of our annual calendar of research-focussed events, and one I enjoy immensely. It's an interesting mix of photography competition and research symposium. Above all, it's about the clear and effective communication of research ideas to a diverse and non-specialist audience."

Professor Richard Greene
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange

“I wanted to practise being succinct in my writing and to learn how I could deliver impact to an audience in just 150 words. To be completely honest, I found it difficult – but I don’t learn unless I’m challenged! I also wanted to experiment with how I could make my work visually engaging.”

Hannah Elisabeth Jones
Winner – Judges’ Choice (PGR) and People’s Choice

“Images of Research offers you a great opportunity to showcase your research. It encourages you to think concisely and creatively about the broader audiences and impact of your work.”

Cosmin Popan
Winner – Judges’ Choice (Researchers)

People's Choice Award Winner
Judges' Choice Award Winner

(Postgraduate Researcher category)

Hannah Elisabeth Jones

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Can Bio-Based Materials Replace Single-Use Plastics?

The world has experienced thousands of years of humans making natural materials. Synthetics, however, have only existed for approximately 170 years, yet they have already caused incomprehensible damage to the health of our natural environments. In fact, at least 8 million tonnes of plastic waste leaks into our oceans every year.

Over the past century, we have grown to rely on plastic due to its versatility and practicality. However, if we can improve the current environmental situation through replacing crude oil-based plastics with bio-based materials, we must do so. But there are issues here. Bio-based materials tend to have a shorter lifespan – a lack of waterproofness leads to permeability and biodegradation (decreased physical functionality) – and the general perception that these materials are unsterile and unhygienic (decreased emotional durability). So, how can the permeability of bio-based materials be reduced to increase functional capability and encourage acceptance of them for everyday objects?

Images of Research | Award Winner

Images of Research | Award Winner

Judges' Choice Award Winner

(Researcher category)

Cosmin Popan
Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Waiting for an Order

January 2021. A Deliveroo and an Uber Eats cycle courier wait, in freezing cold, outside a restaurant in Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester. Food delivery drivers and riders working for these companies have been classified as essential workers during the COVID pandemic and praised for their efforts to 'feed the nation'. Beyond this rhetoric lies nevertheless a reality where vulnerable workers, most of them males and migrants, often spend long and unsociable hours waiting around: to be allocated an order by an obscure algorithm, to have the food prepared at a restaurant, as this image shows, or for a client to come outside their home to pick up the meal. Some couriers find this a flexible and autonomous job to top up their income, others are stuck in a continuous struggle to feed their families. Investigating their working conditions represents the topic of my research. Follow **@cyclegigs** on Twitter for more details.

Shortlisted Entries

Yasmin Chopin
Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Reflecting on Life and Death

When not immersed by a winter flood, the lakeside offers a pleasant walk and the bench provides a peaceful place to rest and reflect. This PhD entitled ‘Memorial Benches: A Cultural Marker in the Landscape’ will produce a book of non-fiction that aims to encourage a considered response to the humble bench as a private memorial.

With desk and field research, and personal interviews with bereaved friends and relatives, it takes a multi-disciplinary approach towards evaluating the role of memorial benches in contemporary Western society. The ubiquitous bench, when awarded personality by virtue of an inscription, becomes a focus for memory and a secular reminder of mortality. Is this a welcome intervention or a macabre imposition? How do we balance the positive psychological benefits gained from such memorials against the potential damaging impact they have on the environment? These and many other questions regarding equity and suitability will be addressed during this research.

Images of Research | Shortlisted Entry

Chesney Craig

Researcher
Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care

Balancing Research During the Pandemic: A Double Entendre

Throughout COVID-19 restrictions, we have developed a novel, gamified falls prevention intervention for use in Parkinson's. This will form the first research project using HPSC's CAVE environment (pictured).

Falls are a leading cause of disability and death in people living with Parkinson's. Whilst exercise can help, adherence can be problematic due to psychological symptoms, including apathy. Exergames may assist this by combining fun, engaging physical exercises and cognitive stimulation. This project combined expertise in psychology, physiotherapy and digital arts to develop a series of relatable funfair-type games, which target balance and motor coordination deficits in those living with Parkinson's.

The games progress in difficulty across four levels and adapt to the user's movement capabilities. By taking a collaborative approach, we hope to maximise user experience, whilst improving motor outcomes. This intervention may be particularly timely, as lockdown restrictions could exacerbate balance deficits in this group, leading to heightened fall risk.

Images of Research | Shortlisted Entry

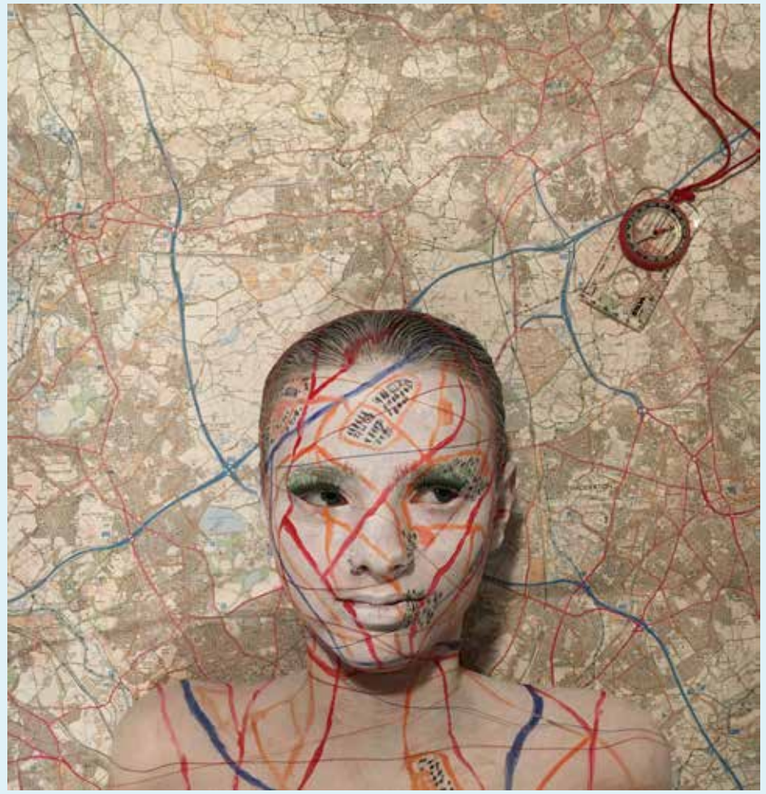
Lara Ferguson

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care

Navigating Complex Transitions & Future Expectations: Young People Leaving Residential Care

Young people leave Local Authority care between 16-18-years old. Whilst it is recognised that some young people leaving care do well, this group continues to be overrepresented in homelessness, unemployment, criminal justice and ill health statistics. These concerns have been particularly noted for those in children's homes. They are more likely to be placed outside of their 'home' local authority, and to experience social isolation and criminality.

The photograph represents the invisibility of these young people and how their experiences are affected by structure, systems and processes which may enable and constrain them. The research aims to gain a critical understanding of the contexts in which young people try to establish a sense of self, plan for their future and transition to 'independence' from children's homes. Improving outcomes benefits society, resulting in social, economic and health gains for young people and savings to public finances, increased equalities and social justice.



Images of Research | Shortlisted Entry

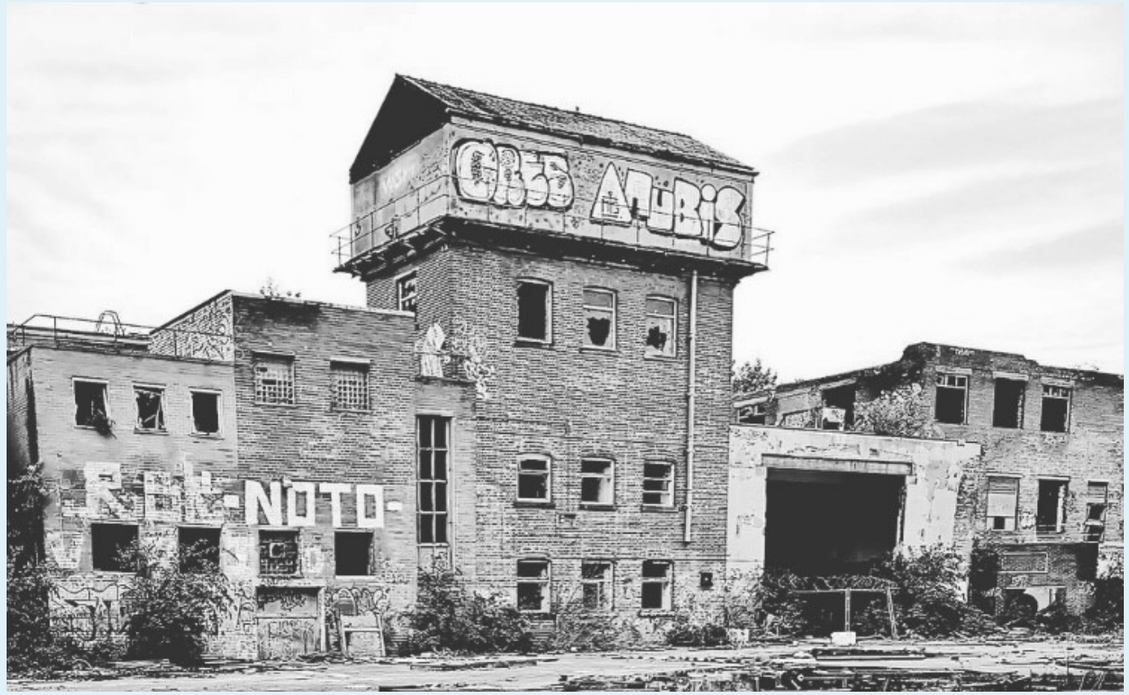
Reece Garcia

Researcher
Faculty of Business and Law

Steely Determination? Constructions of Masculinity in a Deindustrialised Steelworker Community

Historically, steelworkers in Sheffield embodied masculinity in their craft and enjoyed skilled work, a job-for-life and power through trade union membership. Past research undertaken in this community found relatively homogenous views, with masculinity traditionally tied up in notions of breadwinning and an occupational identity that forged Sheffield's title as 'Steel City'.

Today, former steelworkers and their sons face a labour market characterised by low-paid, unskilled and precarious work, often in so-called feminised sectors. The increasing number of young men turning to illicit activities, being treated for mental health conditions and Sheffield's vote to 'Leave' in the EU referendum (the only one of Northern England's biggest five cities to do so) after some forty years of perceived neglect raise questions regarding whether masculinity is in crisis here. The photograph is of an old mill saved from conversion to apartments by former steelworkers (aged 60-75) in this sample, who continue their fight.



Images of Research | Shortlisted Entry

Michael Jones

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Science and Engineering

The UAV Revolution

With the world becoming more conscious of its environmental responsibilities, the concept of an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) revolution provides new opportunities. Packaging services such as consumer delivery, agricultural processes, communication and much more, neatly within an ultra-mobile airborne vehicle, capable of fulfilling roles once handled solely by fossil fuel burning counterparts.

In simplistic terms, unleashing this potential requires UAVs to be allowed to think for themselves however, ‘unmanned’ is currently not ‘pilotless’. Both where and how a UAV is flown and controlled is heavily restricted, with the level of truly autonomous flight presently required by the revolution, currently forbidden.

My PhD research seeks to develop new approaches towards UAV autonomy, so a UAV may plan and accomplish a complex set of tasks, either independently or cooperating together with other UAVs. The ability to demonstrate such autonomy safely holds the key to unlocking future regulation and the age of revolution.

Images of Research | Shortlisted Entry

Barbara Shepherd

Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Re-designing PPE for Clinical Use During the Pandemic

This research aimed to evaluate the perceived acceptability of a re-designed sustainable PPE protective apron in an acute healthcare setting during the COVID-19 pandemic. A local NHS Trust contacted the academic and technical services team at the Manchester Fashion Institute, who were tasked to investigate and offer research-based answers to the redesign of the plastic PPE outer apron to meet the needs of NHS clinicians at the height of the pandemic. Redesign options and prototypes were explored, and a sustainable raw material was sourced to produce a new base material for the existing apron to be manufactured locally in Manchester. Surveys were carried out to capture clinical staff views on the garment suitability and on the sense of psychological safety associated with the re-designed apron compared to its predecessor. This work was completed virtually in a 12-week timeframe as a direct result of the COVID-19 restrictions.

Images of Research | Shortlisted Entry

Alice Thickett

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Collaged Hybrids Under Analysis

Genetic engineering is of growing prevalence in the lives of humans. It is therefore important for artists to contribute to discussions about science that ultimately affects human life and the care we receive.

Some scientists are using genetic engineering to breed animals with human organs for organ donation. Which leads us to question, if animals are born from artificial genetic engineering, are they natural and are they ethical? I enter the debate around animal human hybrids as an artist researcher; learning about genetic engineering through visiting labs, speaking with scientists and using genetic engineering processes and ethical discussions to inform the artwork.

The art practice of collage is analogous to genetic engineering. The scissors mimicking the editing of genes, the sorting of images mimicking taxonomy and the hybridity of the images themselves. This leads me to ask – how can collage be used as a tool for critical reflection?

Entries

Carlos Bedson

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Science and Engineering

Snow Hope

Climate change is threatening the existence of mountain hares. No more so than in the Peak District, England, where a small population of this arctic-adapted mammal struggles to persist at the southern tip of its range. Across Europe mountain hares are forecast to move northwards and to higher elevations.

Predictive models show in the Peak District these animals are already atop the hills; there is nowhere higher, nowhere colder, for them to retreat to. Rising temperatures are less tolerable for an animal which bears a fluffy winter coat. Absent snow cover, amidst the peaty vegetation, the mountain hares' white camouflage betrays them to predators. This mountain hare appears to long for frost and cold. A forlorn snow hope. Perhaps there's no hope.

Debora Belami

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Science and Engineering

A Breath of Fresh Air

The generation and use of electricity accounts for 78% of the UK's carbon emissions. In 2019, legislation was passed, committing the UK to achieving 100% net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. There are many ways to achieve this goal but hydrogen as an energy carrier will be an important player.

My picture depicts the view of an electrochemical cell that one day will mitigate carbon emissions in cities all over the UK. When powered by a renewable energy source, this cell becomes environmentally friendly. Within this cell, a range of chemical reactions are driven by electricity.

One of these reactions, known as the oxygen evolution reaction is critical for the production of hydrogen.

My PhD focuses on preparing nanomaterials that can withstand the highly corrosive voltages that occur during the oxygen evolution reaction. The aim is to produce low-cost, active and stable materials that can produce hydrogen from electrochemical reactions.

Images of Research | Entry

Sarah Collins

Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Upcycling MCFC Football Shirts to Reduce Paediatric Distress in Hospital

This research evaluates the potential value and benefits of upcycling MCFC football shirts into hospital gowns for children under-going a surgical procedure in The Royal Manchester Children's Hospital.

The research involved online focus groups and workshops between designers and manufacturers, as well as medical practitioners and the parents of the vulnerable patients, as the final product was developed.

Academics from Psychology, Nursing and the Manchester Fashion Institute (alongside second year Fashion Design Technology students at MFI) and the MFI technical services team worked with NHS clinicians and parents of patients and the manufacturing teams at HMP Prison Industries to investigate both the functional requirements for the new design and to determine how the redesigned surgical gown increased the sense of psychological and physical comfort for the vulnerable patients, compared to the current hospital gown.

All communications were undertaken online due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Su Corcoran

Researcher
Faculty of Education

Rethinking Researcher Positionality in Times of Pandemic

My image was taken in Conwy, North Wales, as part of my involvement in the Massive and Microscopic collective auto-ethnography project that aimed to understand the relationships between self and other, or between humans and the planet, in a world affected by COVID-19. (Markham, Harris and Luka 2020).

As a researcher focused on inclusive education and social justice globally, who travels to a number of countries to collaborate with local community-based organisations focused on street-connectedness, forced displacement, and out-of-school learners, I had to adapt to being a remote facilitator rather than a hands-on researcher involved directly in data generation. 2020 provided an opportunity to reflect upon my positionality, the climate crisis, and the ways in which a hands-off approach promotes the local autonomy and indigenous voices that should always be at the centre of humanitarian and international development research, shaping the research models we conduct in the future.

Mohammad Darabseh

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Science and Engineering

Impact of Vaping and Smoking on Cardiac Fitness

Cigarette smoking is a risk factor for respiratory disorders and cardiovascular diseases. Electronic cigarette use (vaping) is considered a healthier alternative to cigarette smoking and may help in smoking cessation. However, the effects of vaping are as yet not clear, and particularly the long-term effects of vaping are largely unknown. Some reports suggest that vaping maybe as harmful for e.g. respiratory function, as cigarette smoking.

However, the effects of vaping on cardiac fitness is unknown. This study will investigate the effects of vaping on cardiac fitness by means of is the maximum rate of oxygen consumption (VO2 max).

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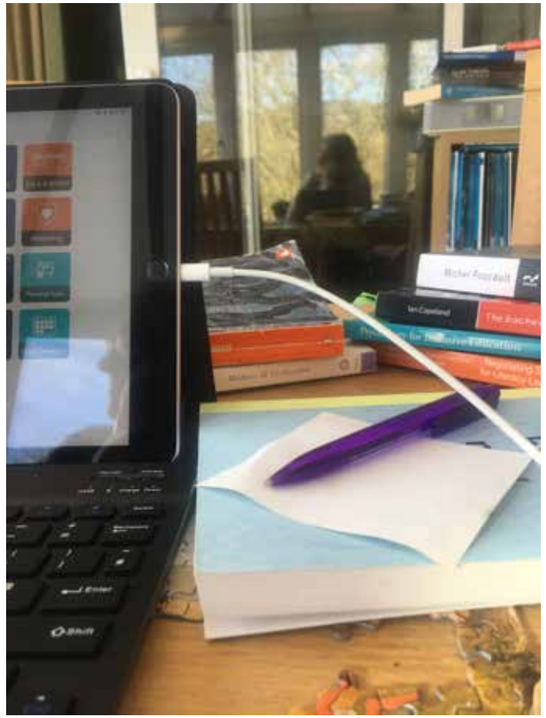
Jane Dickson

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Education

Reflecting

This image is a self-representation of me as a researcher. Reflecting, thinking, postulating. Gazing out into the word beyond the window. My mind wandering in a labyrinth of possibilities. But also back to a time as a teacher outside the mainstream when the stories told by excluded students ignited a passion to understand the disproportionate exclusion of vulnerable pupils from schools. This now becomes a double reflection as my research focuses on the perceptions of two excluded students with identified special educational needs of their experiences in mainstream classrooms. Their experiences raise questions of relationships of power and the impact of exclusionary practices within schools.



Images of Research | Entry

Constanzo Frau

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care

The Power of Attunement

Body and mind: Always considered two distinct entities but that is not it at all. Our brain is formed by 80-100 billion neurons that are interconnected to generate a neuronal symphony and enable us all to learn by experience. The autonomic nervous system connects the central nervous system with the internal organ and different body systems.

Babies regulate all vital functions in the relationship with their mother. Thanks to this connection, the brain and body can find the harmony that allows them to develop in a healthy way.

My PhD research aims to study the effect of mother-infant bonding on autonomic nervous system functioning. To do this, I will assess mothers during pregnancy and when the child is 17 months. I will observe their interaction and measure the physiological indices during a series of separation and reunion that elicit stress in both mother and infant.

Matthieu Grao

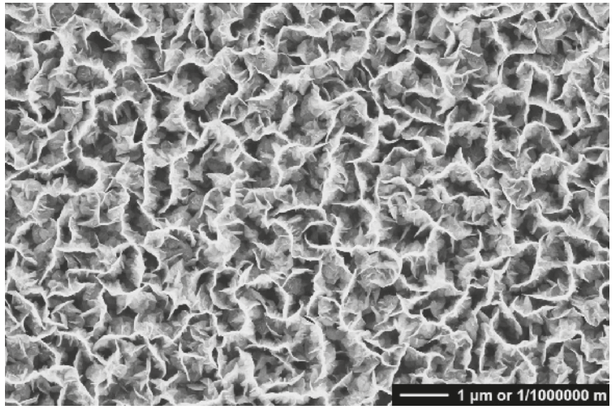
Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Science and Engineering

Graphene Canyons

Graphene was first discovered in 2004 by Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov in Manchester. This novel material immediately took the world by storm with its amazing properties.

It is more conductive than copper, harder than diamond, tougher than steel and yet more elastic than rubber. This one-size-fits-all material naturally found its place in many fields such as sensor, electronics, energy, membranes and biomedical. These “Graphene canyons” were produced by the Advance Material and Surface Engineering department, using a state-of-the-art deposition technique known as Plasma Enhanced Chemical Vapour Deposition (PECVD). This synthesis method can be used to produce graphene at an industrial scale.

PECVD uses a high-density plasma to decompose methane into carbon atoms and form graphene layers at the surface of a substrate. This “canyon-type” of graphene has the potential to be used in fuel cells, field emitters, lithium-ion batteries and super-capacitors due to its large surface area.



Images of Research | Entry

Olivia Greenhalgh

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care

Presenting Evidence-based Cryotherapy Protocols in a Virtual World

Despite a global pandemic, two abstracts (poster and a rapid 5 presentation) were presented at the virtual Physiotherapy UK conference in November 2020, with the aid of digital technology.

The avatar-based virtual world contained a programme of 300+ presenters, keynote speakers, focused symposia, networking, platform and rapid 5 sessions and poster presentations.

The sessions were attended in real time and recorded for further accessibility. This virtual world allowed us to disseminate the important findings of our study. Currently, there are no defined optimal cryotherapy protocols for the management of acute soft tissue injuries and a lack of standardisation amongst compressive-cryotherapy treatments used in clinical and sports settings.

These abstracts shared clinical implications of different cryotherapy protocols, some of which used Swellaway, a novel cooling, heating and compression device.

This PhD research degree is part of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Central Lancashire and Swellaway.

Walaa Haj-Ali

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

The Balconies of Damascus: Does Architecture Begin with User Needs?

Looking at residential architecture in Damascus, balconies are a characteristic feature of multi-story apartment buildings. As an outdoor private space, the balcony has accommodated diverse purposes and evolved in design in response to climatic characteristics, social and cultural needs. However, the missing role of the architecture responding to the historical, political, economic and social features of the society in Damascus has been replaced with occupants being the main contributor to their spatial organization. Many residents opt for adapting their personal balcony to one's own needs or desires since they have the freedom to personalize the design of the balconies.

I took this photo in Damascus during my fieldwork for social housing in Syria. While the original housing design was identical, balconies have been varying in use. Every resident has adapted his own space to his needs, whether to extend the space, or add the add window awnings to add some shading or using the balcony as a space to dry clothes. This common practice made me question the role of the local architecture in producing the current model of Damascus' dwellings and their response to the daily life practices of the residents.

Anita Hashmi
Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Science and Engineering

Conservation Genetics Under COVID

We have all had to adapt to life under COVID, both personally and professionally. However, while our world paused and cities stood still, the ongoing global conservation crises persisted.

Despite some wildlife victories in 2020, such as Kenya reporting 0 rhinoceros deaths from poaching for the first time in 20 years, we still live in a world where some of our most beloved species face extinction.

This image demonstrates an adaptation made to my own data collection protocol, to enable safe sample collection under COVID restrictions. While this research into genetic diversity and opioid metabolism in white and black rhinoceros is only a small step towards the conservation of these endangered species, it is vital that research and conservation objectives continue to be met, even during the COVID crisis. When emerging into a post-COVID world, we must not forget the species that live among, us in our recovery.

Images of Research | Entry

Laura Hrastelj
Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care

Hearing Children Who are Non-Speaking

Children with complex communication needs may be unable to speak due to a range of diagnoses including autism, cerebral palsy, and Down's syndrome. Modern technology allows children who are non-speaking to communicate through Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices. Unfortunately, these children still face difficulties in expressing themselves and are rarely asked their opinion on any aspect of their lives.

I designed the 'AACtion Heroes' approach as part of my PhD. 'AACtion Heroes' is a school-based project which supports children who use AAC technologies to express their ideas through co-creating a personal storybook. 'AACtion Heroes' can be used as a means of including children who are non-speaking in participatory research. Perhaps more importantly, it can be used in schools so that asking children their views can become a routine, rather than remarkable endeavour.

Lauren Kinch
Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care

Reflecting Children's Therapeutic Engagement with Their Imaginary Companions

Children and their creations of imaginary companions have been a controversial discussion over the last few decades, with different cultures and societies placing positive and negative beliefs on children who engage with them. Even today, older children engage with imaginary companions secretively due to fear of negative social response.

More recently, imaginary companions have been identified as a typical part of childhood development were children gain skills in communication and language, sociability and identity. Children can create imaginary companions to represent a friend they can identify with or overcome hardships they feel no one else can understand.

This novel research project looks to identify potential therapeutic uses of imaginary companions and how they can be used to aid children with their mental health and wellbeing. Supporting children to reflect their feelings through their own imaginary companions could build resilience in their developing mental health and empower them for their futures.

Ray Lucas
Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Sanja Matsuri

This photograph shows a neighbourhood association's Mikoshi (portable shrine) being carried around Asakusa, Tokyo in May 2019. My research looks at the architectural nature of these festivals, capturing the different roles of bearers, leaders, supporters and spectators.

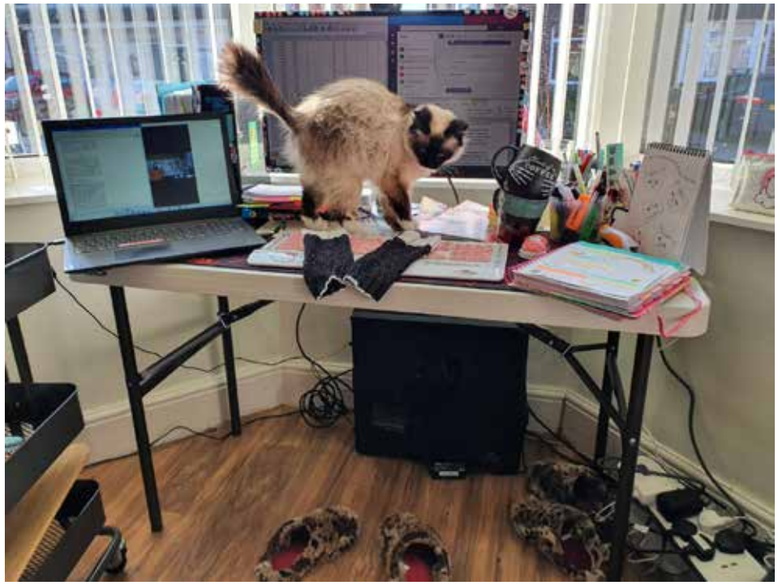
Salma Miyan

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Science and Engineering

Lockdown 3.0: Working from Home

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic I have been working from home, working on my PhD in healthcare science, focusing on the links between vitamin deficiency and chronic, fatigue related disorders.

The challenge with working from home has been to find a suitable workspace, stay motivated and engaged with my work; but primarily, navigating working with four cats who have no respect for personal space!



Images of Research | Entry

Amy Mizrahi

Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

An exploration of surrealism and painting for articulating marginalised identities.

Surrealism is an art movement that sought to redefine the human experience through a juxtaposition of bizarre, irrational and uncommon imagery. Male artists dominated the movement and used the female form as prop, similar to their distorted depictions of mental illness. Many believe that Surrealism concluded in 1966 however I believe that the legacies of surrealism possess a strong agency for marginalised artists today.

Along with a history of seeking to uncover the unknown, surrealism's ability to create a language of anonymity with its dreamlike imagery, along with its expressive characteristics, means it has the potential to empower marginalised voices. As both an artist and a researcher, I will use paint to explore the hybrid processes of my own marginalised identity, and the potential for an evolved and inclusive Surrealist movement. My research will not only pioneer diversity within surrealism, but within fine art painting.

Elen Parry
Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Science and Engineering

Medical Devices: Would You Make Your Own?

3D printers can make anything, but should they be used to make medical devices?

Traditional methods of making customised medical devices can be time consuming and expensive. 3D printing allows us to quickly make customised devices including prosthetics and orthotics, and as we have recently seen, face shields and even ventilator components!

Low cost desktop 3D printing has the potential to make medical devices more accessible and inclusive than ever before, but first its limitations must be addressed. More people are making their own devices, however, the safety of them is largely unknown. My research involves investigating fused filament fabrication, a type of 3D printing technology, to see whether it can consistently produce safe and effective medical devices. For 3D printing to have the widest possible impact, I am pushing the technology to its limits with the goal of meeting medical device regulations.

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Michael Pinchbeck
Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

A Seventh Man – Performance Inspired by 1975 Berger and Mohr Book

In 2020, Michael Pinchbeck made a devised performance inspired by A Seventh Man, the 1975 book about migration by John Berger and Jean Mohr. Using verbatim interviews and photography the performance is part slideshow, part documentary, part adaptation, and explores the book to mark its 45th anniversary. The narrative follows workers leaving home, crossing borders and facing questions about the work they do and taking medical tests. Three performers read directly from Berger's book as if both narrating and acting out its portraits of a generation of young men who travel across a continent in search of a better life. The piece follows a three act structure – Departure, Work, Return – and is shown in a mobile research centre – S.H.E.D – to an audience of seven people at a time. Supported by Arts Council England, the project is commissioned by Lincoln Performing Arts Centre, New Perspectives and Nottingham Playhouse.

Liz Rivers
Researcher
Faculty of Business and Law

‘Capturing’ Emotionally Saturated (HR) Work Through the Camera Lens

Human Resource (HR) practitioners’ work is assumed procedural, objective, strategic, and therefore unemotional, yet this study found their work emotionally saturated. HR practitioners struggle with the tensions of being required to appear unemotional while experiencing deep emotions.

This photograph encapsulates such tensions. It is a drawing one of my participants made, photographed, and brought to her research interview showing how it feels to work as an HR practitioner. She captioned it ‘is there an emotion called ‘aaagghh!’ as she could not find the words to describe her emotions; the tensions experienced in HR work. Using photographs enabled participants to share stories of their working lives and communicate intense emotional experiences they might otherwise conceal.

This photograph also represents the researcher’s work as similarly emotionally saturated: an often neglected point. I found it important to observe, acknowledge, and interpret the emotions of participants and researcher for a deeper understanding of emotion.

Images of Research | Entry

Agnieszka Skowron
Researcher
Faculty of Science and Engineering

The Big Blue

An air.

A layer that keeps us alive. The constant murmur of molecules. The Big Blue that flirts with infinity.

Fascinating to explore. An atmosphere. Usually busy, crosscut by white trails, filled with burned fuel, and disturbed by noise. But not recently. Aviation – the only polluter whose emissions are deposited directly into the upper troposphere – experienced an unprecedented mass grounding during the peak of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. These fewer flights will not save the climate, though. Indeed, the carbon dioxide emissions turned down, but they are still there, and they keep building up, just at a slower pace. What the climate needs is categorical, long-lasting action, and the post-pandemic industrial recovery as green as possible.

The visible is gone, at least: fewer vapour trails up there.

The sky of 2020 – clear and silent. It might not last long. So, raise your head. And enjoy!

Kenneth Sweeney
Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

From ‘Doing’ to ‘Being’: Revitalising Higher Education (HE)

Look at the water.

At peace.

Still and restful, completely comfortable in existence.

Sound like a dream reserved only for the inanimate?

The modern world creates many opportunities for success through actions and triumphs. Yet, the consistent requirement to ‘do’ things has a cost. What about the endless thinking, planning, evaluating, stressing and second-guessing that is commonplace with virtually every decision, from the scared to the mundane?

Perhaps this is clearest when considering the experience of the contemporary HE student? Paying bills, securing essentials, studying, and finding ways to keep in touch with others and stay grounded in current times.

What if there was a way to find a place to stop endlessly ‘doing’ and instead simply ‘be’?

What if this concept was embedded and shared as part of your university experience, setting up a lifetime retreat?

Look at the water.

At peace.

Still and restful, completely comfortable in existence.

Interested?

Images of Research | Entry

William Titley
Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Whistle Down the Wind

My social art practice involves working closely with members of the community in the place where I have lived all my life in Colne, East Lancashire.

I began this project by asking people what they could remember about an old film called ‘Whistle Down the Wind’, which was filmed on and around a local landmark called Pendle Hill. Working intuitively allowed for people’s responses to impact on the direction of the project, which involved me filming my interactions and chance encounters.

I walked and talked with individuals in favourite places, which led to an atmospheric community day out on Pendle Hill, and somehow ended up – months later – in an allotment shed discussing issues of homelessness with local families and an original star from the 1961 movie.

The film, while blurring the boundary between art and life, reveals the potential of an ethical aesthetic when working with people and place.

Chloe Turnbull
Postgraduate Researcher
Faculty of Education

Exploring Autonomy and Agency in the Early Years

Children in the early years find themselves immersed in a classroom arranged by their teachers in the construction of reality of the outside world. The classroom generally consists of miniature kitchens and child-sized tools for children to learn expected behaviours and social 'norms'. My doctoral research explored how children might find space within these organised environments to become autonomous individuals with agency, as well as how I – as their teacher and researcher – might work within the constraints to support their independence by following their lead in their learning. By implementing open-ended tools such as crates and tubes, as well as real-life objects like the utensils found in the image, I hoped for teaching to become less about planning and more about 'in-the-moment' happenings where children are involved in purposeful interactions in play which is of importance to them, allowing space for children to 'author the self' and figure their identity.

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Thank you to all of this year's finalists for coming along to the event on 24 March 2021 to tell us a bit more about your research, and to all who entered this year's competition.

Images of Research
mmu.ac.uk/research/research-study/events/images/

Images of Research 2021 entries video
youtube.com/watch?v=Pl3BdAInk78

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