WARWICK COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS FOR COVENTRY CITY OF CULTURE 2021
2019-2020
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK 
AND COVENTRY CITY OF CULTURE

At the University of Warwick, we are proud to be helping to build one of the most socially inclusive, culturally vibrant and economically successful regions in the UK.

With City of Culture less than a year away, our research is helping to deliver long term transformative impact for Coventry.

Our research focus for Coventry 2021 is centred on:
• Stimulating and promoting research excellence
• Defining new sector leading models for evaluating cultural impact and value
• Working with partners to build thriving local neighbourhoods
• Connecting people and places through our work to enhance and accentuate the cultural importance of our city and its residents.

We hope that this guide will help you identify research projects that you would like to interact with, and act as a catalyst for further collaborative research.

These projects are taking place across 2019-2020. For details on the 26 projects conducted over 2017-18 and 2018-19, please visit our webpage.
FOLESHILL SCREENINGS PROJECT

Engaging with vulnerable and isolated communities through film and archive television lies at the heart of this unique research project. The project unites researchers, filmmakers and archivists to create community-centred cultural engagement through film and television. This will play a key role in generating and sustaining community resilience, as well as improving individual and social well-being. This project is designed to support the relaunch of the Foleshill Community Centre and the establishment of their Social Supermarket by engaging new users with the area’s cultural history through archive film. The project also extends the outreach work by the Midlands Public Film Archive, the Media Archive for Central England into Foleshill and the surrounding area.

Kat Pearson (CDA PhD Candidate, Film and Television Studies, Warwick) and Dr Lopamudra Patnaik Saxena (Research Fellow, Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry)

HEAR OUR STORIES: HOW ‘STRENGTH’ AND ‘RESOURCEFULNESS’ SHAPE AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES OF AGEING, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Since the post-war period, Coventry has been home to an established African-Caribbean community. This community is ageing rapidly. However, there is a limited understanding about how African-Caribbean women experience the effects of old age.

Through a series of workshops with a group of older African-Caribbean women, the project will draw on participants’ life stories to explore the interplay of ‘strength’ and ‘resourcefulness.’ Participants will examine how these concepts shape their experiences of ageing, health and well-being in Coventry.

Dr Ravi Thiara (Department of Sociology, Warwick) and Dr Geraldine Brown (Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry)
How do we communicate and interpret refugee stories? A new research project is experimenting with the use of immersive technologies to develop methods of communicating and understanding the stories and experiences of refugees living in Coventry.

In partnership with Ludic Rooms, the research team will invite participants to co-create immersive story responses on the theme of journeys and arrivals. This will facilitate reflection on the challenges people face in integrating into UK society. The research seeks to develop a powerful tool for social action campaigns, involving both host and refugee communities.

Professor Vicki Squire, (Politics and International Studies, Warwick) and Dr Daniel Mikelli (Media Production, Coventry)

“SNAKE PARK”: THE COLLABORATIVE TRANSFORMATION OF URBAN GREEN SPACE

Situated in north Coventry, the area of Foleshill has long suffered a marked lack of green spaces. The exception to this is ‘Snake Park’, one of the suburb’s few green expanses. However, the park is largely disused and dilapidated. There is a clear gulf between the park’s intended purpose and its current state of neglect and disrepair.

In this project, researchers will support the local community to transform and revive the area, creating a safe, welcoming and enjoyable green space for all. The project will also foster a culture of care for the urban environment, for example, through storytelling amongst local residents. The newly-created bonds between participants will be reflected in the establishment of a collective memory archive.

Dr Leon Sealey-Huggins (Department of Sociology, Warwick), Dr Sergio Ruiz Cayuela (Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry), Tulika Gadakari (Faculty Research Centre for Arts, Memory and Communities, Coventry)
**TOWARDS A FOOD-RESILIENT COVENTRY**

In this unique project, University of Warwick students, Foleshill residents and a community farm will partake in a creative culinary experience. Participants will be invited to share and develop culturally diverse and specific food preparation skills, on the site of a local, organic farm. This will culminate in a collectively-prepared, seasonal meal to be eaten together.

By connecting Foleshill residents with local students and a food growing site, the project will offer access to green spaces and foster a sense of community with both academics and students. Foleshill residents will be able to learn about health, nutrition and environmental sustainability - key elements of City of Culture’s ethos, and crucial to the creation of a food resilient city.

The project will be documented through a short film in which participants will discuss how the project has benefitted their well-being, sense of community, knowledge and cookery skills.

**Dr Alastair Smith (Global Sustainable Development, Warwick), Dr Leon Sealey-Huggins (Department of Sociology, Warwick), Dr Luke Owen (Coventry), Dr Lopa Saxena (Coventry)**

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**URBAN VILLAGE: ROMA ALLOTMENT PROJECT**

‘Urban Village’ aims to bring together the Roma and non-Roma people to co-create a short documentary film, images and digital scrapbook exhibition that focuses on the experiences, identity and voices of the Roma people in Coventry told by those people.

The project consists of facilitated workshops with a local Coventry film maker and the Roma people to create their own voice and digital content for the film and associated exhibition. Digital technologies are changing the way that people receive, engage with and consume materials and information. Through the facilitated workshops the Roma people will engage with these digital mediums expressing their identity and experiences on an allotment project that is run by a local Roma charity.

Once completed the film and exhibition will be presented and shared at an event for Roma people, stakeholders and the wider community to foster closer links and challenge common stereotypes.

**Dr Heidi Ashton (Centre for Cultural and Media Policy Studies, Warwick) and Rosa Kostic Cisneros (Coventry)**
WORLDWIDE WINDOW

This project explores the theme of Coventry as a networked screen and interface. It will investigate how site-specific networked projection can connect communities. It will utilise current technological capacities to reshape understandings and experiences of time, space/place, and sociality through projected live portals.

Dr Richard Wallace (Film and Television Studies, Warwick), Dr Adrian Palka (SMPA, Coventry) and Dr Glenn Noble (SMPA, Coventry)

COVENTRY 2021: CITY OF BREASTFEEDING

The UK has one of the world’s lowest breastfeeding rates. A contributory factor to this is the stigma and pressure that some women experience from families, social networks and the wider public. This can influence their decision not to breastfeed at all, limit the amount they breastfeed, or to breastfeed in secret.

This project will highlight an aspect of everyday life that is sometimes hidden or out of sight. Researchers will interview women in Coventry to explore breastfeeding stigma, and attempt to understand the support available and the barriers they face.

Researchers will create videos of women discussing issues around breastfeeding, with their voices and images seen and heard in the lead up to and during City of Culture. The project is designed to reduce the stigma, anxiety and embarrassment many women feel around breastfeeding.

To find out more, contact Dr Joanne Fisher (Warwick Medical School)
MAKING ALIEN-LAND A HOME-LAND: A VISUAL DOCUMENTATION OF CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN COVENTRY

Illuminating the rich, and often hidden, stories of Coventry’s Chinese communities lies at the heart of this project. The project investigates the lives and sense of belonging of Chinese communities in Coventry - exploring the stories behind the people. This includes areas such as settlement and home building, as well as the invaluable contribution such communities make to a rich and culturally diverse city.

Working with multiple local organisations, the project will bring together community members, volunteers and local artists to create an exhibition using food as a shared cultural artefact. It focuses on the invisible connections of people and places, as well as the ever-shifting but comforting meanings of ‘home.’

To find out more, contact Dr Kailing Xie (Politics and International Studies, Warwick)

QUEER AND COLOURED: IMMIGRANT LGBT COMMUNITIES OF COLOUR IN THE UK

How do queer people of colour relate to the city of Coventry? This project attempts to recover the history, politics and practices of a community that has existed as a subculture since the 1970s.

Through multi-sited archival and oral interviews, the project aims to reconstruct how the queer community of colour have experienced Coventry, often in the face of intense homophobia, Islamophobia, and racism.

To find out more, contact Dr Somak Biswas (Department of History, Warwick)
Coventry is a city of peace and reconciliation. We have been a leader in twinning since the Second World War and today, Coventry is twinned with 26 cities, although the level of exchange activity with each of them varies dramatically. This project explores Coventry’s history of twinning and asks: “What has driven this movement in Coventry? What kind of exchanges are now going on? What is the value of school exchanges for the children of Coventry?”

The project celebrates Coventry’s history of twinning. It also encourages further activity, in particular by supporting online and face-to-face links between a school in Coventry and one in a twinned city.

To find out more, contact Dr Michael Hammond (Centre for Education Studies, Warwick)

SEEING THROUGH OTHER EYES: COVENTRY AND THE TWINNED TOWN AND CITIES MOVEMENT

How can creative participation and cultural engagement engender social change? This project is an exciting collaboration between creative practitioners and academics keen to ignite social change through creative arts and culture.

The project will involve community ambassadors and artists working with academic researchers to develop workshops with Sunni-Muslim home-schooling families in Balsall Heath, Birmingham and Foleshill, Coventry. The research and creative outputs from the project will be showcased at public exhibitions, with a programme of events in both Birmingham and Coventry.

To find out more, contact Dr Cath Lambert (Department of Sociology, Warwick)

WEAVING NEW STORIES AND METHODS OF CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT WITH SUNNI-MUSLIM HOME-SCHOOLING FAMILIES
“I DON’T WANT YOUR HOPE, I WANT YOUR ACTION”: EXPLORING YOUTH ECO-CITIZENSHIP THROUGH VERBATIM THEATRE AND DIGITAL ETHNOGRAPHY

This collaboration with Coventry’s Climate Action Network (CAN) invites youth participants to explore local and global questions of environmental and ecological degradation using verbatim theatre, ethnography and digital media. This project will create an interdisciplinary conversation about the nature of interconnecting global crises.

Diverse stories of youth eco-citizenship will be disseminated through participatory workshops and performances - to inform, educate and inspire. Researchers will position Coventry’s youth as active co-researchers, with collaborative creations profiled across different locations throughout the city.

To find out more, contact Dr Rachel Turner King (Centre for Education Studies)
The majority of the projects featured in this guide have received some or all of their funding from one or more of the following sources:

- **The University of Warwick’s Global Research Priorities (GRPs) of Connecting Cultures, Food and Sustainable Cities**
  Our GRPs respond to complex global problems that can only be tackled through collaborative research excellence. The GRPs unite academics from different disciplines to address some of humanity’s most pressing issues.

- **The University of Warwick and Coventry University City of Culture Open Calls**
  These calls are funded by Coventry University and the Sustainable Cities, Food and Connecting Cultures GRPs at the University of Warwick. The first Open Call was launched in summer 2017, where 13 collaborative projects were funded across both institutions. The 2018 call funded a further 13 projects and built on the work done by initiatives including the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value, the City of Culture Partnership, and Coventry City Council’s Cultural strategy. These awards invited applications for either the continuation or completion of small-scale work, or for groundwork for larger projects.

- **The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)**
  The AHRC is part of UK Research and Innovation, a new funding body that works with universities, research organisations, charities, businesses and government to support a strong UK research environment. The AHRC funds research in the arts and humanities - including post-graduate training.

- **The University of Warwick Public Engagement Fund**
  This fund acts as a contribution/pilot fund to support larger projects and is exclusively for the support of Public Engagement with Research.