Turner prize winner's tribute to Sussex professor

Turner prize winner Jeremy Deller has paid tribute to the University of Sussex tutor who inspired him during his studies.

Art historian and curator Professor David Alan Mellor supervised Deller when he studied for an MA in British art history and critical theory in 1992. Speaking after receiving the £25,000 prize at a glittering ceremony at London’s Tate Britain on 6 December, Deller said: “David was the reason I came to Sussex. I heard a lecture he gave. I like the way he looks at culture and connects disparate subjects. We share a lot of interests, particularly sub-cultures.”

Deller, 38, wrote his MA thesis on Teddy Boy culture under the supervision of David, whose research interests include aspects of 20th-century art, photography and film in the context of broader cultural history.

Deller won the Turner judges’ vote with a film, Texas Memory Bucket, a journey through the American state that is home to George W. Bush, more than a year before his re-election. It features, among other subjects, the President’s favourite burger-bar waitress and a cast of three million bats.

His work encompasses cultural history, art, politics, film, photography and music – an interdisciplinary, contemporary approach that David believes sums up the Sussex experience of study and research. He said: “I was very moved and delighted to see Jeremy win. He has a natural modesty and a commitment to humane representations. The important thing about his work is the humanity in it. I like to think that at Sussex he developed his interest in community and in showing it in all its diversity.”

Deller is best known for his “living history” project, The Battle of Orgreave, a collaborative re-enactment of the infamous 1984 miners’ strike clash, using 800 extras to play the parts of miners and police, filmed by Hollywood director Mike Figgis. It took three years to realise and produced a film, a book and a recording. Other projects have included Acid Brass, a concert of 1980s Acid House anthems played by a brass band, which resulted in a CD.

Future work may even involve collaboration with Sussex, which is home to the Mass-Observation Archive, a rich source of social history, based on diaries and letters written by ordinary people that span the past 70 years. David believes the archive is a valuable source of artistic inspiration, while Deller said: “The Mass-Observation Archive certainly involves a lot of the things that interest me, so you never know ...”

Deller’s works, as well as those of the other shortlisted artists, feature in an exhibition at Tate Britain in London. Previous winners of the Turner prize, now in its 20th year, include Damien Hirst, Gilbert and George and last year’s recipient, Grayson Perry.

Iraqi exile’s £1m thank you to support Sussex students

Students taking up places at Sussex are to benefit from a share of a £1 million scholarship donation by a former Iraqi refugee.

Naim Dangoor, an Iraqi Jewish businessman, escaped anti-Semitic persecution when the Ba’ath Party (later headed by Saddam Hussein) came to power in Iraq in the 1960s. He fled to England, where he had studied engineering decades earlier, and built his property empire in exile.

Now he wants to thank the country that gave him refuge by setting up a scholarship scheme for talented students from England and Wales.

The 1,000 Dangoor scholarships of £1,000 each will be available to students starting their courses in 2005 at the 1994 Group of leading research universities, which includes Sussex. There will be between 40 and 80 scholarships available at each of the 16 universities.

Professor Alasdair Smith, Sussex Vice-Chancellor and Chair of the 1994 Group, said: “This truly generous donation will be of enormous help to talented students contemplating a university education.”

Above: Naim Dangoor (right) with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills at a reception to launch a £1 million scholarship scheme.

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Update on financial position

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, reported to all staff on 25 November that savings of £4m in planned spending need to be achieved if Sussex is to continue to develop and deliver high-quality teaching and research.

By the end of this month, heads of all academic and non-academic units will have met the Vice-Chancellor and senior colleagues to identify the scope for savings. No specific new savings have yet been agreed.

On the strength of these meetings, the Vice-Chancellor is reporting to Council today (Friday 17 December) that the scale of savings required should be achievable, albeit not easily realised.

He said: "I am confident that the University will be able to tackle this challenge if we approach it collectively and in a positive spirit."

He will confirm to Council that a programme of voluntary redundancies will be required. A voluntary severance scheme will be published in January.

Further analysis of University costs has been undertaken by Finance and Planning Divisions. These show that, compared to similar universities, our spend on academic staff is below average, while our spend on administrative and support staff is above average. It also shows that non-academic staff costs, both centrally and in the schools, have risen by £3.6m or some 30% in the last three years.

The Vice-Chancellor was clear that this can be tackled only by changing some of the work that is done, not by doing the same things with less.

The next steps in the new year will be the creation of a Spending Review group led by the Vice-Chancellor, including the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellors, and supported by Finance, Planning and Communications.

That group will take forward further rounds of discussions with heads of all academic and non-academic units to identify how the savings can be achieved, while protecting the quality of research and teaching and the activities that support them. The group will meet weekly, and more often if needed.

The group will report to Finance and General Purposes Committee in February on progress, including specific proposals for savings.

Latest information and up-to-date questions and answers on the University’s financial position are available at www.sussex.ac.uk/finance/position.

Strengthening financial control and planning

While much attention focuses on the need to reduce planned spending, action is also taking place on improving financial control and planning at Sussex.

A special group on finance chaired by Consuelo Brooke, the Treasurer of the University, made recommendations to Council, the University’s governing body, in September and is making a further report this month in light of the current financial position of the University.

The aim overall is to ensure there are more robust and transparent arrangements for financial control and planning. This should help senior managers and Council in planning ahead, and should help all budget holders throughout the University to manage their budgets better year by year.

The way in which budgets are allocated to academic and non-academic units – the Resource Allocation Model – is being reviewed, to ensure that it delivers funds across the University in the most effective way.

The responsibility for financial forecasting – making sure that income projections are realistic and expenditure forecasts are reasonable – will move from Planning to Finance Division.

In addition, responsibility for financial monitoring and reporting will be more clearly vested in the Finance Division. Improving the way in which managers are helped to monitor and manage within their budgets is key, but it will take a little time to put new systems in place.

The new Deputy Director of Finance, Ian Child said: “One of my key tasks is to improve the way in which

Sue Blaise

Senior Press Officer

Bad news makes good copy, as they say in journalism, so it was of little surprise that both the local and the national press made front-page stories out of financial troubles.

The fear of job cuts was the main focus of the Argus (3 December), while the Vice-Chancellor gave an interview to the drivetime programme of BBC Southern Counties Radio (3 December). We were also on the front of the THES (9 December), although it was a relief to see that we were not alone. The report was a round-up of all the money troubles hitting all universities – with the blame largely placed on underfunding.

We were also on another front page on an entirely different matter. A report by our maths people Dr John Haigh and Professor Charles Goodie, arguing the National Lottery was not as random as claimed, appeared in the Observer (12 December) and Times online (13 December).

Professor Shami Saggar’s influential report on ethnic minorities and the labour market also caused a stir, with a large piece in the Independent (11 December) and an interview on BBC Radio 4’s ‘Westminster Hour’ (28 November).

In response to topical news items of the day, BBC Southern Counties Radio called upon several of our experts. Dr Anastasia Nesvetaikova talked about the disastrous Ukrainian presidential elections (25 November). Dr Tim Bale reviewed the Queen’s speech at the opening of Parliament (23 November) and Lizzie Thynne gave her views on the rise of the documentary film (19 November).

Elsewhere on the airwaves, Professor David Osmond-Smith described the work of Dallapiccola for BBC Radio 3 (20 November), Tom Burke at Unisex talked about World Aids Day for Bright FM (1 December) and Professor Peter Townsend did several interviews with European radio stations after being shortlisted for the Descartes Prize.

All articles are also featured on the internet at www.sussex.ac.uk/press_office/bulletin

Neil Gershon steps down as Registrar & Secretary

Neil Gershon, Registrar & Secretary, will be taking early retirement from his post on 31 December.

The move follows changes to the role of Registrar & Secretary; the Director of Finance will in future report direct to the Vice-Chancellor, as part of the new arrangements to improve financial control and planning at Sussex.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alasdair Smith, paid tribute to the huge contribution that Neil has made to the University for his five years at Sussex: "Neil has helped senior management move forward with new ideas. He held the central role in the creation of the new school administrative structure and was a key figure in the development of the Medical School."

Interim arrangements for oversight of the work of the administration are being established, in discussion with senior members of the administration. The Vice-Chancellor and senior colleagues will be looking at what the appropriate central administrative structures should be for the longer term, before the post of Registrar & Secretary is advertised.
Young mathematicians get Sussex masterclass

Celebrity scientist Dr Jonathan Hare joined 60 young mathematicians on campus this month for a ceremony to mark the completion of eight testing weeks of masterclasses.

Drawn from more than 40 local schools, the talented 13- and 14-year-olds had spent their Saturday mornings throughout the autumn term grappling with tricky but enjoyable tasks. Each session featured a different visiting speaker and a fresh range of mathematically based activities. The aim was to have fun, be challenged and learn something new every week.

Jonathan, from the BBC's 'Rough Science' programme, demonstrated how maths and science interact, with a clip from the series about measuring the size of a lunar crater using a home-made telescope. He stressed that this was one piece of practical physics where maths was essential, in order to do the calculation.

"As a scientist I see maths, along with graphs and diagrams, as one of the languages of science," enthused Jonathan, who gained his DPhil from Sussex and is a Visiting Research Fellow in the Physics and Astronomy department. "It helps us determine how reliable things like information, machines, puzzles and money are. It's the bedrock on which clear thinking is built."

Sussex maths masterclasses are supported by the Royal Institution of Great Britain and organised by the local branch of the Mathematical Association including Charles Goldie, Professor of Statistics at Sussex. "This group is exceptionally sharp and responsive," he commented, "and receiving their completion certificates from a famous young scientist made the day more memorable for them."

Making light work of Euro award

An international European team led by Sussex scientists was shortlisted for a prestigious international award.

Professor Peter Townsend and his colleagues in engineering were among the final eight selected for this year's Descartes Prize, for their project to improve the efficiency of detecting light at very low intensities. One of their objectives is to open up the use of a sensitive new luminescence route to detect cancerous tissue at an early stage.

Peter said their work their work had vastly improved the detectors in biological luminescence: "We have reached values which would not have been expected for nearly another 50 years in terms of progress and gradual developments over the last 70 years."

This allows detection of the differences in the colours of luminescence, which can distinguish between healthy tissue and cancerous tissue. Luminescence is immediately valuable for accessible surfaces such as for skin cancer.

Variations of the method, with pulsed luminescence, allow diagnosis of breast cancer. Peter said the key relevance to diagnosis is that there are no harmful X-rays and no distortions between plates during mammography, yet the method enables the study of dense breast tissue in young women. "Our new and very sensitive diagnosis route can offer effective early sensing at a stage when treatments are very successful."

The winners of this year's Descartes Prize, open to European scientists, were teams from Finland and Sweden.

A walk on the wild side

It may not feel like it, but Christmas is almost upon us! Certainly campus bears little resemblance to the snow-covered scenes of the traditional Victorian Christmas cards, with their folk memories of annual 'frost fairs' on the frozen Thames. The unseasonably mild weather is having obvious effects on some campus inhabitants, ranging from plants to birds.

The mown grass on campus is still dotted in places by daisies, 'day's eye', which the standard British Flora magisterially pronounces, "flowers from March to October". Our previous answer to the question, "Where did daisies grow before there were lawns?" (Bulletin 21 February 2003) has recently been given added credence by Frans Vera's argument that large grazing mammals were much more significant in the pre-agricultural landscape than we had hitherto believed. Certainly, if you want to see genuine wild daisies go and look at the pony-grazed streamside lawns of the New Forest.

Almost any piece of waste ground on campus still conceals unusual numbers of the little white flowers of the tiny but intriguingly named Shepherd's-purse. This insignificant plant is known throughout Europe by similar names, which refer to the heart-shaped seed cases that resemble the pouches once worn at the waist.

Rather more seasonably, most campus trees have now lost their leaves. They rarely look better than when silhouetted against a winter dawn or dusk. This provides an excellent opportunity to learn their distinctive shapes, from the densely twigged domes of Elms outside Bramber House to the open crowns of the Ashes around Engineering II.

Our ancestors would have been deeply concerned by the mild weather this December, heeding the superstition that "a green Christmas makes a fat churchyard". Many of the male Blackbirds on campus, however, have started singing unusually early, forgetting that "When the blackbird sings before Christmas she will cry before Candlemas".

The latter Christian festival (2 February) took over from the Celtic celebration Imbolc marking the middle of winter, halfway between Samhain (Summer's End, now Hallowe'en) and Beltane (May Day). It was the point at which provident farmers would have used only half of the winter feed stored for their livestock.

Intriguingly, Candlemas is also roughly the time by which Grey Squirrels will have used up about half of the food, mainly Beech mast, they have been storing all autumn. They do not hibernate, although if the weather becomes colder they will spend more time snug in their winter 'drey's'. These nests, which tend to be closer to the trunks than the breeding ones, are now very obvious in all those bare trees.

We have just learned that Simon Barnes' How to be a Bad Bird Watcher is set to top the season's chart of new titles. We are tempted to suggest that you start saving for next Christmas' little anthology of natural history jottings from a certain university campus!
Small ads

Available: Babysitter/child minder (Brazilian wife of Sussex lecturer, ex-au pair), for afternoons and weekends, in B&H. T 678574, E kps@sussex.ac.uk.

To let: 3-bed furnished house + patio garden in Kempston. Available 1 Feb. £1,100 pcm + bills. E k.m.navidi@ids.ac.uk, T 600059.

For sale: Solomon Malamute snowboard boots, UK 10, wom 5 days: £50. Drake Asis MX snowboard bindings, large (suit above boots), wom 5 days: £70. T 541841.


To let: Large room in newly refurbished Have seafront flat. Staff or PG. £300 pcm. T Anna on 07786 850041.


Arts events

PERFORMANCE

Until Tue 4 Jan

Various times Pinocchio

This adaptation of the classic children’s adventure story combines all the razzmatazz of the circus with a huge range of daring stunts as well as songs and dance. Garden Arts Centre.

EXHIBITION

Until Tue 4 Jan

Same Sky: Ular Ular Pants on Fire

Children’s art from six local schools, inspired by the themes of the Christmas show, Pinocchio, Garden Arts Centre.

Car parking

Responsibility for day-to-day management of car-parking, including event and visitor parking has moved from Transport Management to the Security Section. All future requests for event or visitor parking should be made via email or in writing to security@sussex.ac.uk. Day-to-day responsibility for enforcement of parking charges has also passed to the Security Section.

The Transport Manager, Linda Newman, remains responsible for transport strategy, including enforcement policy and review. Linda will be receiving regular reports from Security so that she can continue to monitor and review the University’s transport policies. She will also continue to be responsible for the administration of the parking payment systems and other aspects of the Travel Plan.

News in brief

Man charged with rapes

Police this week charged a 38-year-old Hastings man with two rapes, one of which took place at Sussex. Paul Collings is accused of raping a 21-year-old woman at Sussex on 8 October 1989 and an 18-year-old at the University of Kent near Canterbury on 2 December 1988. Mr Collings was arrested in a joint operation between Sussex and Kent Police on Tuesday (14 December) and appeared before Sevenoaks magistrates’ court on Wednesday (15 December).

Vacation room bookings

The central Room Bookings Office now controls bookings of teaching rooms during the Christmas and Easter vacations. Use the online form (at www.sussex.ac.uk/USIS/roomrequest/) to book any teaching rooms you may require during these periods. Conference Services, which previously handled room bookings throughout all vacations, will now do this during the summer vacation only.

Open Language Courses

The Sussex Language Institute has a range of courses starting in January. Take your pick from Arabic, Chinese, Classical French, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Latin and Spanish. See www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/opencourses for details. It may be possible to join ongoing classes; ask the Open Course Co-ordinator by emailing opencourses@sussex.ac.uk.

Conway moves to DfID

A former Sussex vice-chancellor has been appointed the first chief scientific advisor to the Department for International Development (DfID). Professor Gordon Conway, who steps down this month after seven years as president of the Rockefeller Foundation, will take up the part-time position next month. He has also been appointed to a part-time position as professor of international development at London’s Imperial College. Professor Conway was vice-chancellor of Sussex from 1992 to 1998.

Lady Fulton dies

Lady Fulton, wife of the founding vice-chancellor of Sussex, died on 4 December. Her son, Professor Oliver Fulton, had been on campus last month for a reception to mark 40 years of the Library building, and was able to tell her about his visit. “She was delighted to hear news from the University, of which she had so many happy memories,” said Professor Fulton. His father John, who died in 1986, was vice-chancellor from 1981–87.

New year, new freedom

From 1 January anyone in the world will be able to make a written request for information held by the University and will be entitled to an answer within 20 working days under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI).

And they might ask you! How would you deal with a request for information about a tendering process or a colleague’s salary? Would you know how to respond?

How you handle the request depends on the nature of the request and your role in the University. The University Records and Information Manager and a network of FOI Co-ordinators are available to offer guidance to any member of staff who is unsure about FOI.

The Records and Information Manager can be contacted by emailing foi@sussex.ac.uk and a list of FOI Co-ordinators is available at www.sussex.ac.uk/records/FOIcoordinators.

Further information about the Freedom of Information Act and FOI procedures is available at www.sussex.ac.uk/foi.

Over the past few months there have been a series of briefings and seminars for managers and other members of staff to raise awareness of FOI. For presentations and further training events, see www.sussex.ac.uk/records/FOItraining.

Postgraduate Open Day

The annual Postgraduate Open Day next month provides an ideal opportunity for potential students to meet academic staff and current students. There will also be a series of workshops exploring funding sources, postgraduate loans and employment opportunities.

External organisations who will be present include American Express (whose collaborative scheme with Sussex provides opportunities both to study and gain work experience), the Roffey Park Institute and the University of Brighton.

The Open Day is free to attend and there is no need to book. It takes place on Wednesday 12 January in the Bramber House conference centre between 12 noon and 2pm.

The Bulletin is written and produced by Alison Field and Benedict Brook, with contributions from Jaquie Bealing, Maggie Clune and Rob Read. We welcome any news, story ideas, letters or small ads from the staff and students of the University. The next issue will be out on 7 January 2005, with a copy deadline of 1pm on 23 December 2004. Please contact the Press & Communications Office in Sussex House, ext. 8888 or email bulletin@sussex.ac.uk. Merry Christmas to all our readers.
Welcome to the last Sussex IP newsletter of 2004. In this edition we look at new antibody opportunities, report on a successful seminar for local companies and the launch of a new science initiative for the Sussex area.

Creating a new science experience for students
Science is fascinating, enjoyable, and can lead to a great career. This is the message to be delivered by the University and its partners under a pilot project that will offer a broader range of Science Experiences to students than is possible in the classroom.

Backed by the Learning and Skills Council for Sussex, this exciting project is based upon a concept originally developed by Deputy Vice Chancellor Tony Moore. In addition to the University of Sussex, the project involves The College of Richard Collyer and businesses in the Horsham area, with the intention to include other colleges at a later date.

Tony Moore, with support from the Regional Development Office, is developing the project outline along with the above-mentioned partners, and hopes to see a pilot activity in May 2005 with a full programme launched in September 2005.

"This new project is an excellent opportunity to open up the world of science to potential gifted students to encourage them to progress into a career with a scientific focus. It is a large win for the businesses engaged as there is concern to establish a wider talent pipeline into the science arena" explains Sharon Phillips, Regional Development Manager.

The project aims to create a 'Pathway' for enthusiastic science students who, from the age of 14/15 yrs (year 10) right through to postgraduate status, will be offered a range of Science Experiences during the academic year with the project partners.

These Science Experiences will include Science Open Days at the University, talks and demonstrations by leading scientists and engineers, and industry activities with partner businesses.

BASF Printing Systems Ltd, BOC Edwards, Electrowatt-Ekono, and Novartis Research are just some of the organisations keen to play an active role in this project.

Bringing antibodies in from the cold
The University has entered into two exciting new agreements with Abcam Ltd.

A distributorship agreement ensures that where our research is developing antibodies that may be of widespread value we have access to an extensive supply and distribution network.

In addition, a new product development collaboration agreement will allow University staff to submit suggestions for new targets to Abcam. If considered commercially viable, Abcam will attempt to produce antibodies to these targets and if successful the University will benefit from both free supplies of the antibody and royalty income from Abcam's sales of the antibody.

Abcam was founded in 1998 to supply a global resource for scientists to find and purchase high quality research antibodies. The company has grown rapidly to 56 employees in the UK and US, and now has customers in over 70 countries. Abcam's sales are growing at 18% per quarter and annualised turnover is expected to pass £11 million this quarter.

Vicki McCulloch (vicki.mcculloch@abcam.com) who manages Abcam's relationship with the University, particularly the Centre for Genome Damage and Stability says: "The success of Abcam comes from the speed with which we can bring high quality cutting-edge products to market, so that scientists' research is not impeded by the lack of, or inability to find, a particular reagent. This speeds up the pace of research into important diseases such as cancer and coronary heart disease".

Staff who think they may have antibodies in their freezers that other researchers want but perhaps are unaware of should contact Sussex IP.

Staff who would like antibodies for their research that are not currently available and that would be of interest to a large number of researchers, should also contact Sussex IP (H.Kaptein@sussex.ac.uk or J.Walsh@sussex.ac.uk) so that we can discuss with Abcam the scope for producing them.
Key to patent success

The number of patents granted to businesses and individuals in the South East in 2003 was 799, up from 611 in 2002.

Organisations in the region also registered 4,983 trademarks, an increase of more than 80%, protecting the identities of their businesses and products.

To support this growth, the Patent Office has recently launched the What is the Key Campaign to help South East organisations profit from the intellectual property (IP) that they own such as patents, trade marks and design registrations. The organisation is encouraging businesses in the region to register at the website for more information on how to use their assets strategically and to receive details of special seminars in their area.

Director of Trade Marks and Design at the Patent Office, Robin Webb says: "It is becoming increasingly important that businesses realise how to use their intellectual property to increase profits and expand their operations. The most business savvy organisations are capitalising on these assets to strike up new deals and collaborate with new partners. The days of ignoring your IP or what your competitors are doing with their IP are gone."

For more information about the What is the Key free events around the UK and to register for more information, please visit http://www.the-key.biz/ or contact Sussex IP on x3000.

Protect and survive

Intellectual Property is becoming an increasingly important topic, not only for multinational companies, but also for small and medium sized businesses nationwide.

In a seminar jointly hosted by the Regional Development Office and Worthing Business Circle, staff from Sussex IP highlighted the issues small businesses face when dealing with intellectual property rights (IPR), such as copyright, trade marks and patents.

This well attended event, held in the new Conference Centre in Bramber House, attracted businessmen and woman from companies across the region. They heard Mark Clark and Julia Fallon explain the benefits of successful IP management and how best to avoid the pitfalls.

Mark explained the due diligence process, which includes ensuring the owner of the IPR has been correctly identified, the importance of confidentiality agreements and how researching the IPR activity of your competitor can lead to gaining a competitive advantage. He used Sussex IP’s experience in licensing and company formation to illustrate the problems and solutions in deals based on the transfer of IP.

Julia presented a series of case studies of well-known companies and explained how their management of IP, both successful and unsuccessful, had affected their business.

The seminar closed with a Q & A session and a stimulating discussion, giving delegates the opportunity to ask questions directly related to their business.

Maggie Taylor from Hunter’s Recruitment and Lisa Weller from the Sussex Innovation Centre at the IP seminar for small businesses presented by Sussex IP.

As this will be the last newsletter of 2004 we would like to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this newsletter, but no responsibility is accepted for errors and omissions.