

## CREATIVE ARTS

**‘The creative and media industries in the UK generate revenues of around £112.5 billion and employ more than 1.3 million people, which is 5% of the total employed workforce. Exports contribute around £10.3 billion to the balance of trade, and the industries account for over 5% of GDP. The value of the creative industries to UK gross domestic product is, therefore, greater than the contribution of any of the UK’s manufacturing industry. In the year 1997-98, output grew by 16%, compared to under 6% for the economy as a whole.’**

(UK Trade and Investment: Export Information. Figures compiled from details supplied by the Department for Media, Culture and Sport, 2003)

The importance of the creative arts to the social health of the nation has long been accepted. As, during the last ten years, the creative industries moved from the fringes to the heart of the UK economy, it became apparent that the importance of their contribution to the economic health of the nation is also vital. The nurturing and celebration of creative talent became a central tenet of the political agenda, and the urgency of supporting research into and through the creative arts has become correspondingly clear. In terms both of creation and reception, it has become an urgent matter to facilitate the basic conditions for the development of a creative economy, which can address itself both to global and to local needs.

Five areas of potential collaboration for research studentships within the field of Creative Arts in the South West have been identified:

- **Writing for live and mediatized performance**
- **The digital and the virtual**
- **Place, space and identity**
- **Arts and Cultural histories: curation, archiving and interpretation**
- **Practice, Cognition, Innovation**

### ***Regional relevance***

All of these research areas are of relevance to the region and reflect strengths within SW HEIs and creative industries. Partnerships already exist between academic institutions and a broad range of cultural providers within the South West. These include major institutions such as the BBC, English Heritage, and the NHS, regional bodies such as Culture South West, and a large number of arts, film and literary festivals; theatres and theatre companies; arts centres; museums and galleries; municipal authorities; visual arts organizations; dance agencies; video and digital media production companies. By working in partnership with institutions and businesses, this Creative Arts collaborative field will enhance the strength and importance of the creative industries to the economy of the South West and strengthen postgraduate research collaborations across universities.

Within the areas identified above, the Theme panel intends to interpret the term ‘creative arts’ in the broadest sense. A wide variety of disciplines contribute to these areas and we wish to encourage innovative as well as more established disciplinary collaborations.

The South West Regional Development Agency summarises its strategic priorities as being to develop projects that improve the perceptions of the region, including those which increase cultural and sporting activity and to undertake strategic environmental projects that develop the South West as a sustainable region. Further details are at:

<http://download.southwestrda.org.uk/file.asp?File=res/general/05-09-16%20ActionplanWITHcover.pdf> - see in particular the Priority Sectors.

The following websites might also be of interest:

[http://www.culture.gov.uk/creative\\_industries/discussionforum.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/creative_industries/discussionforum.htm)

<http://www.creativeclusters.com/>