## **Dr Marquard Smith**

Coming from an Arts & Humanities background, such statements are standard for Unit 32 *Art* and *Design*: History, Practice and Theory, where I've submitted previously. I offer this as a 'case study' that might be useful (although not always as a successful one) to others in thinking through how to 'legitimize' their practice-as-research within the context of university departments that don't always 'get it'.

The output is an exhibition entitled 'Blood & Bones: Living with Cancer', that I curated at UCLH's Street Gallery on Easton Road (28th February - 24th April 2019). The exhibition (experienced by c 10,000 patients, carers, family members, staff, and clinicians at UCLH) was a collaboration between UCL, UCLH Arts & Heritage, UCLH NHS Foundation Trust's arts programme, UAL, and Wellcome Collection, and made possible by funds (£9,600) from Macmillan Cancer Charity.

## Statement for an output for REF2021

The exhibition was accompanied by extensive public engagement activities:

- an academic conference at UCL with academics, public engagement professionals, patient activists, practitioners, and curators
- exhibition tours
- closed workshops, at UCLH and Wellcome with patients, including young people, living with cancer
- a multi-authored catalogue (60pp) that was distributed to hospitals, cancer networks, and health & wellbeing initiatives internationally

Engaging with issues at the heart of UCLH's mission, and the concerns of its patents, 'Blood & Bones' presented different ways to represent the subjective experience of someone suffering from illness, providing various entry points for viewers to engage the exhibition theme.

- 1. originality was demonstrated in relation to (a) subject matter (allied to but extending the popular use of personal narratives around illness such as blogging, scrapping, and journaling) and (b) curatorial ambition (since the Gallery is open 24/7, and is a 'compromised' space [i.e. not a white cube setting] because of its location in a public environment: a hospital's busy thoroughfare. Thus its audience largely hospital patients, families & friends & carers, along with nurses & porters & clinicians have no choice about seeing it. Given such impact, the exhibition needed to be curated sensitively, with wide consultation, input, and care.
- 2. Significance and impact/significance of impacts: A collaboration with patients, medical practitioners, artists & scholars, engaging and working with patients via innovative cultural approaches to the collection of personal data (the emotional, affective, and everyday responses to treatment), provided a platform for their reflections upon their condition. Often patient led, it also offered insights into how such approaches can inform wider clinical understanding of patient experience. Via the project, we (a) facilitated patients' ability to generate their own cultural responses to their illness, thereby 'giving them a voice' (b) changed the way in which patients' experiences are owned, validated and distributed (c) changed the debate

on health and illness by harnessing 'personal data' as a means of challenging the privileging of expert opinion over patient knowledge and experience.

Legacy: The exhibition will be staged again from 20th April – 28th May 2020 in the Sutton Central Library Gallery Space/The Royal Marsden Hospital (Sutton) as part of the national Wellbeing and Creativity Week, and we are also in discussion with the Royal College of Physicians about re-staging it at The Spine, the RCP's new £35 million northern headquarters in Liverpool.