School: Bath School of Art & Design

Researcher: Dr Benjamin Parry

Project Title: *Rethinking Waste and the Logics of Disposability: Compound 13 Lab*

UOA: 32: Art and Design

300-Word Statement

Rethinking Waste and the Logics of Disposability [AH/S005897/1] is an GCRF/AHRC funded interdisciplinary research project about waste, work, education and survival within Dharavi, Mumbai's largest informal settlement. At the centre of the project is Compound 13 Lab; an experimental learning and make space situated in Dharavi's 13th Compound where 80% of Mumbai's hard waste is recycled where up to 300,000 rag-pickers supply over 40,000 people employed in grassroots recycling micro-enterprises, working in risky and unsanitary conditions.

Working in collaboration with community partner ACORN Foundation, *Rethinking Waste* builds on interdisciplinary work undertaken as part of Parry's PhD (2012-15), and the GCRF/AHRC follow-on for impact and engagement project *Resources of Hope: giving voice to underprivileged communities in India* [2016-2018, AH/P00637X/1]. These projects explored the politics of media representation and roles played by participatory arts and media practices in giving voice to communities experiencing marginalization, deprivation and exclusion.

Rethinking Waste supports discrete outputs within a programme of work between 2016-2020. The Lab offers disadvantaged young people (18-25) living in informal settlements access to current technologies in digital film and media, 3D design and digital fabrication. Using principles of creative and participatory pedagogy, the team has co-designed an ecological living curriculum, for and with young people growing up without access to formal education. An artist/designer residency programme generates live-projects and learning exchange mechanisms that support a creative learning. The lab also enables a platform for the expertise, knowledge and voices of those working in the informal waste management industry and their young people to be listened to. The combined outputs contained in this portfolio, taken together, represent an ongoing body of globally significant research that sheds light on the impact technologies of the digital city are having on the everyday lives of the urban poor.