

Project Title : Capitalizing on Hong Kong's Position in the Art World: An Innovative Platform for Objects Based Science and Arts Learning with a World Class Collaborative Incubator for Future Educational Teaching Resources

Leading University : The University of Hong Kong

Participating UGC-funded University(ies) : Hong Kong Baptist University

Project Leader(s) : Professor Quentin PARKER, Associate Dean (Global), Faculty of Science, The University of Hong Kong

Hong Kong is rightly regarded as the world centre of the Chinese antiques trade with over 896 Million Euros (~\$7.8 Billion HKD) traded to Europe in 2015 alone (see: trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/html/113387.htm). Much of this trade is problematic and many items distributed globally via Hong Kong are often of uncertain provenance or have been acquired via other non-standard routes. Chinese cultural heritage is being compromised while the historical and archaeological contexts of the items traded are often unknown or highly uncertain. Many people are unaware of the cultural significance of the traded objects nor the artistic, historical, contextual and financial importance of this topic.

This proposal will bring a fresh, holistic and innovative educational, art-making and scientific approach to these issues. This will be via an educational program that sheds powerful aesthetic and scientific light on the magnificent cultural richness of real Chinese art, artifacts and antiquities residing in and passing through Hong Kong. This innovative teaching and learning initiative will cover: i) Chinese art, culture and history; ii) the reproduction/copying of Chinese artifacts and ritual items in ancient times; iii) modern issues of copying; iv) difficulties of verification and use of modern scientific testing; and v) the cultural, ethical and philosophical impact of this issue to China and the world.

The intention is to create an engaging educational experience, initially under the HKU Common Core Curriculum, with the strong potential to extend to majors at HKU, HKBU and elsewhere that speaks to the cultural soul of China. This will be through sound scientific principles and cutting-edge technology applied with both intellectual rigour and scholarship.

The program theme is innovation but the project addresses all strategic scheme areas:

- (i) Innovation (key theme) is through juxtapositioning of art and science in a Sino-focused educational program of deep but currently unappreciated cultural significance.
- (ii) Enhancement of student experience is via an artistic and broad cultural appeal to students of all backgrounds that incorporates the scientific process from the outset for an issue that has been ignored and poorly understood.
- (iii) Internationalisation/Mainland engagement comes from our world-class institutional links via the HKU museum. These include the Getty Conservation Institute and World Monument Fund that can offer input on teaching intangible and built heritage. There are also opportunities for experiential learning and internships at any number of museums and art galleries in Mainland China (e.g. Tongji University Shanghai, Zhejiang University Hangzhou) and globally that offers students diverse artistic, archaeological, scientific and laboratory experiences.
- (iv) Language enhancement comes from intensive language immersion from our partners in both English and Chinese (Putonghua).