

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Overview Statement

University: The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 38

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 8

(1) Context - context for the individual case study(ies)

The unit's home department includes four artists and four art historians. They all have been actively involved in curatorship, creating exhibitions of art ranging from traditional Chinese to contemporary and even theatre productions. These activities, as either artists or curators, have taken place in institutions around the world. Promoting ideas to the general public has therefore been an important part of the activities of the faculty of the unit's home department and it was a natural extension of these activities to think of art in terms of social engagement. The department chairperson, professor Vigneron, has played an active role in the activities of a Hong Kong artist collective, called Rooftop Institute, which has been involved in the creation of socially engaged art events since 2015. The tactics employed by this collective are based on ideas explored by professor Vigneron in his academic research. Rooftop Institute has run successful programmes (several with multi-million Hong Kong dollars grants from government and public institutions; they will be described in the following Impact Case Study) with many participants in Hong Kong and the rest of Asia. Several other projects are in the making.

(2) Approach to impact - the unit's approach to impact during the assessment period for impact

Although socially-engaged art has only recently been the subject of research and teaching at the Fine Arts Department (in addition to professor Vigneron's writings, two PhD students are researching this topic, while a credit-based internship in socially engaged art institutions has been offered to undergraduate students for the first time in 2019), the unit's mission in the promotion of art to society as an educational tool has always played a central role in its activities. Professor Ho Siu Kee, for instance, is teaching courses in 3D creation using recycled wood and has applied for funding to create workshops with secondary schools. He is thus fulfilling an important task in the promotion of the role of art for environmental education. Since the creation of Rooftop Institute in 2015, some of the faculty of the unit's home department have applied for funding to a variety of institutions fostering strategies of social engagement.

(3) Strategy and plans - strategy and plans for supporting impact

As for socially engaged art, for the time being, the unit's home department has only encouraged individual research of its faculty to develop in this direction. With the success of Rooftop Institute however, where many alumni of the unit's home department participate in social engagement activities, it has been decided to create a more cohesive strategies in funding applications. This has already started with the successful application of grants from CUHK. To plan and document more efficiently the impact of these programmes and proposals, the unit has obtained the following funding to do the appropriate research:

- Thanks to the Faculty Sub-allocation of Project Impact Enhancement Fund of CUHK, the two original founders of Rooftop Institute have been hired to undertake a detailed research on impact. This funding is also helping create additional programmes, some of them have already been submitted to various funding institutions (like the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charity) while others are being defined collectively with the faculty of the unit's home department and the members and collaborators of Rooftop Institute.

- The unit's home department also obtained funding from the Impact Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme of CUHK to hire a postdoctoral fellow and undertake research on socially engaged art practices in the region. This research will be used to define tactics of social engagement and provide advice for other units of assessment at CUHK on how to develop their own impact cases. This Impact Postdoctoral Fellow, doctor Mai Corlin, has already done extensive research on socially engaged art projects in Mainland China and will bring her expertise to the understanding of social strategies in art making and art education in the Greater Bay Area. This research will help enrich the future impact cases of other units at CUHK.

In the coming years, more competitive external grants will be applied for in the future and the faculty of the unit's home department is developing new research proposals to apply for these grants.

(4) Relationship to case studies - the relationship between the unit's approach to impact and the submitted case studies

As mentioned previously, the entire unit's home department faculty has been active in organising exhibitions and public events as artists and curators. It has however been difficult to define a common strategy in view of the widely different fields of research of its faculty. In art history, the historians of the unit's home department cover topics such as ancient Buddhist and Taoist art, pre-modern Chinese painting and calligraphy, contemporary Chinese art and art theory. In art making, some practice Chinese painting and calligraphy, while others are engaged in various kinds of contemporary artistic practices. But the diversity of these interests also guarantee that the unit is active in a multitude of different fields, thus ensuring that society at large is aware of its activities and the quality of its research strategies. While some faculty members of the unit's home department are giving many public lectures in various institutions in the region and internationally, others are also actively contributing to the information about international art on a much larger scale: professor Tam Wai Ping, for instance, while being an artist creating art works globally, is the general manager of the "Art Map" media group, including magazines and publications such as *Art Map*, *AM Post* and *Art Plus* that are available in Hong Kong and Taiwan as well as in Singapore and some other Asian countries. Professor Tam Wai Ping is also supporting a non-profit art exhibition space on Hong Kong island. Moreover, each faculty member is actively engaged in consultancies for museums as well as private and public art galleries in Hong Kong and the region. Although not all these activities are related specifically to the submitted case study, they reveal a desire for social engagement shared by the entire unit that will be fostered and encouraged further in the future (this strategy will extend to the hiring strategy of the unit's home department in the coming years).