

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Case Study

University: [The Education University of Hong Kong |

Unit of Assessment (UoA): [38 Visual arts, design, creative media, other creative arts and creative writing) |

Title of case study: [Exploring cultural translation through visual art |

(1) Summary of the impact

[Prof Laurence WOOD and Dr Zoran POPOSKI's research created significant international cultural impact with direct dissemination to audiences of at least 750,000. They created and exhibited original artworks and those of other artists exploring and emanating from considering elements of our world and lives being transformed by the global re-location of people, and new personal and collective cultures that result. Cultural impacts include: public presentation of new creative and curated content through scheduled programmes at significant international venues; enrichment of audience experience and discourse; and creating high-profile exhibition opportunities for international artists. The highly regarded status and reach of the venues and events where their work was selected for public presentation confirm the work's standing in the field and endorse quality and relevance for contemporary audiences.]

(2) Underpinning research

[Dr Poposki and Prof Wood conduct practice-based research, and since 2012 their collaborative work has centred on the 'Translation(s)' project (2013-present), comprising curated artists' videos, (TI, TII & TIII) including their own, and related artworks [See **R2-R5, R7**]. In TI (Translation(s)) the artists expressed the impact that living and working in different cultures has upon them, exploring the process of negotiating complex cultural interplays [**R2, R4**]. TII (Translating the City) explored urban space and place, mapping, public space performance, spatialized identities, cultural memory and translation, and the city as a space of negotiation and interchange [**R3, R4**]. TIII (Bodies in Transit) explored the traversing of borders and questions of our underlying common humanity in the contemporary contexts of migration, immigration, refugees, collectives and individuals confronting difference or similarity [**R5**]. Wood's mural painting at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Shenzhen 2018 celebrated the role of design and the value of 'cultural trade' in the process of cultural transfer [**R6**]. Poposki's 'Immigrant Series' (2016-17), included in the Translation(s) exhibition Osage Hong Kong 2018, featured major figures in modern European cultural and intellectual history who have themselves been immigrants, including political philosopher Arendt, child writer Anne Frank, painters Gorky and Chagall, composers Bartok and Chopin, psychoanalyst Freud, and structuralist anthropologist Levy-Strauss [**R7**]. Their research includes individual experimentation with video and painting techniques. Wood's video 'Papa' 2017 (TIII) layers dark raging river scenes, some filmed in infra-red to create an omnipresent raft-like shadow struggling to remain unscathed, referencing the River Styx transit point between realms of the living and dead, Gericault's Raft of the Medusa, and contemporary media coverage of crowded rafts trying to cross the Mediterranean. Poposki's works on paper were turned into video glitch/gifs, framed by quotes from Arendt's writings on immigrant/refugee identity, with the subject matter of the piece being echoed in the process of creation of the video, the hand-drawn works on paper transformed by data bending, code erasure, and data moshing techniques to produce a hybrid. Dr Poposki presented conference papers on works from Translation(s), (2014-2016) in the USA, Hong Kong, and UK. [**R1**].

(3) References to the research

[R1] Poposki, Z., & Todorova, M. (2014, September). Translating Space: Hong Kong Atlas. Paper presented at 5th Global Conference Space and Place: Exploring Critical Issues, Oxford, UK.

[R2] Wood, L., & Poposki, Z. (2013). Translation(s): International curated video project and original video work; Not Festival 2013 Copenhagen, Denmark, Art Stays Festival of Contemporary Art Ptuj, Slovenia, 3D Gallery Trento Venice, Italy, Chazou Gallery Kamloops BC, Canada. (EdUHK Rank B).

[R3] Poposki, Z., & Wood, L. (2015). Translation(s) II: Translating the City. International curated video project and original video work; ArtBasel Hong Kong, ArtStays international art festival, Ptuj, Slovenia and Videotage, Hong Kong. (EdUHK Rank A)

[R4] Poposki, Z., & Wood, L. J., (2016). Translation(s) I/II 2013-2015 International curated video projects and original video works: Translating the City. 1) Zoran Poposki - Hong Kong Atlas, 2013 and 2) Laurence Wood – Revolution, 2015. Videotage Booth, Art Basel, H.K. (EdUHK rank B)

[R5] Poposki, Z., & Wood L.J., (2018); Translation(s) III, Bodies In Transit, International curated video project and original video works 1) Laurence Wood-‘PAPA’, 2018 and 2) Zoran Poposki-‘These Immigrants’ 2017; Art Stays international art festival, Ptuj, Slovenia and at Centre For Chinese Contemporary Art, Manchester, UK. (EdUHK ranking B)

[R6] Wood, L.J., (2018); Bodies In Transit, Possibilities of Design wall painting; International Design Week, Museum of Contemporary Art and Planning (MOCAP) Shenzhen, China. (EdUHK ranking B)

[R7] Wood, L.J., & Poposki, Z (2018); Translating New Territories, Osage Gallery, Hong Kong. (EdUHK ranking B)

The research was partially funded by Professor Wood’s EdUHK Professorial ‘start-up’ grant (2015) of HK\$400, 000 & EdUHK Knowledge Transfer grant (2016) of \$HK150, 000

Note: links to a shared drive containing image files of particular works, exhibitions, events and promotional materials and a description of EdUHK’s non-traditional research output external peer review and ranking mechanism are available if required.

(4) Details of the impact

[The significance of Poposki and Wood’s research is evidenced by achieving dissemination through institutions/events with excellent international reputations, public presence and field importance, attracting substantial audiences. Their works also gain wider reach through well-established internet and social media channels, including their own professional websites and one dedicated to Translating New Territories [Section 5, C1]. They have provided original and topical content for international events/institutions and their audiences, contributing to and enhancing their direct impact and consequent intangibles such as public discourse on pertinent themes and socio-economic benefits derived from civic cultural assets. Examples of this include their participation in three bi-annual Art Stays Festivals in Ptuj, Slovenia, between 2013-2017, a festival considered the central visual art event in the region since 2003[C2-3] and the Art Basel Hong Kong 2016, Videotage Crowdfunded Booth, Acentered: Reterritorised Network of European and Chinese Moving Image. The latter featured video art works from Videotage’s Media Art Collection (VMAC) and from artists in Spain, Switzerland, Germany, UK, and Hong Kong, including works by Poposki and Wood [C4]. Videos from the Translations project were subsequently selected by Videotage and added to the VMAC online repository, a unique media art archive enabling online visitors to engage with social currents shaping contemporary art and cultural production in Hong Kong. The Chair of Videotage notes in his testimonial: “*These works represent an international transfer of knowledge and transformation in the field of artistic research*”[C5]. They achieved the *impact of enriching the cultural experiences for audiences*, by providing them with a variety of new creative artworks and multiple ways to engage with the content of them at different venues and events utilizing multi-faceted exhibition formats, informative talks, interpretive texts, catalogues, postcards, posters and online access. For example at

the Osage exhibition in 2018 videos screened in dedicated individual spaces were also consolidated in a novel separate simultaneous projection supported by explanatory text on light tablets adjacent to individual ‘cinema’ seats [C6-8]. The audience experienced random combinations of the videos, creating an immersive ‘remix’ of the works. Wood’s ‘Bodies in Transit’ wall painting at MOCAP, Shenzhen, was completed during the opening day so audiences could speak with him, view design sheets and observe the painting’s completion. The review in the Shenzhen daily newspaper noted, in reference to the painting; *“Dramatic changes in society and personal lives may progressively shape people’s different mindsets and attitudes towards work, creation and life”* [C9-12]. The curated TI, TII & TIII video projects also achieved impact by providing 20 other artists with international screening and new audience contact opportunities, stimulating them to create new works, prompting some to extend their practice into new areas, as commercial TV producer Dyson made photo artworks, and writer poet Hindley made a video. Participating artist Ayers noted in his testimonial: *“The ability to publicly review the three pieces created a very substantial aesthetic and social experience that continues to act as a propulsive stage for our current work and a continuing marker for further artistic growth”* [C22]. Further detailed evidence of impact is as follows:

- **Osage Gallery Exhibition, Hong Kong, 2018:** Promoted via Osage website and social media posters and direct mass email to their international database, and via Hong Kong’s ‘timeable.com’. The opening curators’ & artists’ talk was attended by 30 visitors. The gallery recorded 100 overall visitors, and 514 online poster hits.

- **Shenzhen Design Week, MOCAP, Shenzhen, 2018.** The prestigious Museum of Contemporary Art and Urban Planning and Shenzhen Design Week are part of the master plan for Shenzhen’s Cultural District and China’s creative industries international profile. It attracts leading international companies and individuals, thousands of public visitors and mass online presence. Wood conducted a public forum “Possibilities of Design” (with Chinese translation) about his painting attended by about 50 visitors. The SZDW secretariat stated about 150,000 people visited Shenzhen Design Week exhibitions at MOCAP in 2018. The Art Rising design company confirmed that online publicity posters for Wood’s mural painting scored 65,000 hits during April 2018 [C9-12, C13]. Its impact on public discourse is evidenced by media coverage, including a review in Shenzhen Daily newspaper (30,000 circulation).

The painting’s impact on cultural experiences is further evidenced by the response of representatives of the Shenzhen Government’s Culture and Promotion Department who, after viewing it, invited Wood to submit proposals for further public arts projects in Shenzhen. Wood will complete two projects in 2019, for SZDW and the city’s Urbanism Festival [C9-12]. Impact on cultural experiences is also evidenced by Wood’s work, ‘New Flat Painting, Hong Kong 2013’ being one of 30 finalists’ works selected from over 5000 paintings submitted by over 2000 artists for the Artelaguna Art Prize 2014, a leading international art competition held in Venice (Italy) by Italian Cultural Association MoCA (Modern Contemporary Art). The international jury includes museum and foundation directors, curators and art critics. Wood’s work was reproduced on p59 of the large format printed hard-back catalogue (500 copies circulated). Audiences of circa 3000 visited the opening event and a further 2000 during the exhibition period [C14-16].

Impact on public discourse has been achieved through extensive media coverage, reaching total audiences of around 756,000. This includes an interview with Poposki on his Translations related works with Aesthetica magazine (readership 311,000) [C17-21]. Wood’s solo exhibition “Choice Emblems” at Lacey Contemporary, London, 2016, was reviewed by critic Catherine Sedgewick on ‘The Upcoming’ as *“Visually enticing and thought-provoking, Choice Emblems is a compelling, engaging exhibition”* and in other UK press [C17-21], and themes related to Translations appeared in his interview with Aesthetica online. [C17-21]

(5) **Sources to corroborate the impact** (*note: further testimonials and data are being gathered*)

- [C1] Webpage: Translating New Territories
<http://translatingnewterritories.com/en/home/>
- [C2-3] Art Stays Festivals, Ptuj, Slovenia;
[C2] <http://www.artstays.si/art-stays-export-translations/>
[C3] <https://www.espoarte.net/arte/art-stays-15th-festival-of-contemporary-art-natur-all/>
- [C4] Art Basel Videotage Booth 2016
<http://videotage.org.hk/web/subpage.php?mid=28&year=2015&page=5>
- [C5] Testimonial from Dr. Isaac Leung, Chairman of Videotage
- [C6-8] Translating New Territories, Osage Gallery, 2018
[C6] <http://timable.com/en/event/1642717>
[C7] <https://www.facebook.com/events/1065608543577797/>
[C8] <https://www.instagram.com/p/BiifkvZB3D2/?taken-by=osagegallery>
- [C9-12] Shenzhen Design Week, MOCAPE (2018), media coverage and project invitation (2019) Shenzhen, 2018
[C9] http://www.eyeshenzhen.com/content/2018-04/23/content_18943196.htm
[C10] Website Design
[C11] Shenzhen Daily. (Circulation 30,000, English Language)
http://www.szdaily.com/content/2018-04/23/content_21003747.htm
[C12] Wood Shenzhen project invitations, 2019
- [C13] Art Rising proposal
- [C14-16] Artelaguna Art Prize, Venice Italy 2014. Wood's work on p59 of catalogue;
[C14] Catalogue
[C15] <https://foursquare.com/artelagunaprize>
[C16] <https://www.artelagunaprize.com/archive/2013-2014/finalist-exhibition>
- [C17] Poposki, Aesthetica magazine interview (readership 311,000);
<http://www.aestheticamagazine.com/meta-textual-influence/>
- [C18] Wood, Exhibition Reviews
<https://www.theupcoming.co.uk/2016/08/26/laurence-wood-choice-emblems-at-lacey-contemporary-gallery-exhibition-review>
- [C19-20] St Helens Reporter, UK (Circulation 70,000) (Readership 80,000+)
[C19] <https://www.sthelensreporter.co.uk/news/artist-s-journey-for-rainford-to-royal-approval-1-8087784> (Circulation 70,000)
[C20] <https://www.kcwtoday.co.uk/2016/07/lacey-contemporary-gallery-exhibits-new-art-works-laurence-wood/> (Readership 80,000+)
- [C21] Aesthetica magazine, interview with Wood (readership 311,000)
<http://www.aestheticamagazine.com/colour-as-symbol/>
- [C22] Testimonial from Translation(s) artist Mr Damon Ayers |