

Research Assessment Exercise 2020

Impact Overview Statement

University: Hong Kong Baptist University

Unit of Assessment: 38 visual arts, design, creative media, other creative arts and creative writing

Total Number of Eligible University Staff in the UoA: 16

(1) Context

In Hong Kong the government has made concerted efforts to transform the city into a creative metropolis¹ and included a number of new policies and initiatives to strengthen the art and culture sector. For example, the government has substantially invested in the building of West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD). Furthermore, as promulgated in its 2015 policy address, the government strives to provide creative spaces for Hong Kong artists and arts groups². Along with the addition of new art and cultural spaces, a number of important arts and cultural venues have been closed for renovation to allow for the development of first-class cultural infrastructure for the future.³ The Hong Kong Museum of Art (HKMA) closed in August 2015 for 3 years to facilitate its extensive expansion and renovation.⁴ In May 2016, the Hong Kong Arts Centre (HKAC), was partially closed for a 2-year renovation.⁵ Several new cultural institutions are still yet to be built (e.g., the M+ Museum and the East Kowloon Cultural Centre), therefore, there is a noticeable lack of venues to meet the cultural needs of the Hong Kong public. The UoA works to deliver cultural and educational impact within this context and on extending this into East Asia through and with key strategic organisations and partners.

(2) Approach to Impact

The shortage of relevant visual arts venues and limited access to arts education in secondary schools is a challenge for the arts and culture sector and provides the impetus for the UoA's approach to impact. In 2013, the Academy of Visual Arts established the Centre for Research and Development in Visual Arts (CRDVA) to supplement and strengthen the visual arts sector in Hong Kong and East Asia. The core mission of CRDVA is to increase public interest and engagement in the visual arts beyond the academic community both within and outside the gallery and museum sector, and engage with the critical need for the long-term development of art audiences in Hong Kong and the East Asia region.

Working in collaboration and partnership with the Hong Kong's Arts Development Council (HKADC) and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), the UoA works to address the deficiency in the city's cultural infrastructure through leveraging new funding for commissioning public artworks⁶ and enhancing art education in secondary schools and through developing new opportunities for Hong Kong artists and arts organisations to showcase their work internationally; such as at the Gwangju Biennale in South Korea, and Hong Kong House in Echigo-Tsumari, Japan.⁷ The UoA works to strengthen international ties between Hong Kong artists and

¹ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (2007). *Policy Address 2007-08*. Retrieved from <https://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/07-08/eng/p57.html>

² Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (2015). *Policy Address 2015*. Retrieved from <https://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2015/eng/p198.html>

³ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (2014). *Policy Address 2014*. Retrieved from <https://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2014/eng/p182.html>

⁴ Information Services Department (2015). "Museum of Art to close in August for major renovation work," *Press Release*. Retrieved from <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201506/26/P201506260395.htm>

⁵ Information Services Department (2018). "HK a thriving cultural hub," *Press Release*. Retrieved from https://www.news.gov.hk/eng/2018/09/20180929/20180929_181741_372.html

⁶ Legco (2013). "Item for finance committee," *Discussion Paper*. Retrieved from <https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/fc/papers/f13-23e.pdf>

⁷ Hong Kong Arts Development Council (2018). "Chairman's message," *Annual Report 2017-18*. Retrieved from http://www.hkadc.org.hk/wp-content/uploads/ResourceCentre_ADCPublications/AnnualReport/2017-18/AnnualReport_2017-18_part2.pdf

organisations in China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, and enhance the long-term development of visual arts in the East Asia region.

(3) Strategy and plans

The unit focuses on the deployment of strategies that address the weakened cultural infrastructure in Hong Kong and East Asia by both supporting artists to develop new research outside of the gallery and museum sector, and innovating arts education projects in schools and communities in order to build users, beneficiaries and new audiences which increase over time. Working in collaboration with key government departments and arts organisations internationally has been a strategic focus for strengthening and extending the long-term impact of the unit's research.

The HKBU research office and the CRDVA are the key university and UoA structures which develop strategies and distribute funds to support the unit's impact. The key mechanisms deployed focus on leveraging funding through the University, Research Grants Council (RGC), Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC), Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and charitable donations. To maximise engagement and reach, the UoA focuses on developing strategic partnerships with external institutions and organisations, and aligning our research with prominent international biennials and festivals. The CRDVA team includes an Impact Evaluation Officer, a Project Officer and a team of two researchers who engage with the support and evaluation of impact and the gathering of impact data. Developing new ways to forge connections between visual arts and society and enhancing public art and social engagement in the visual arts are the key strategic priorities Cultural impact is achieved through; 1) utilising new and alternative public venues in order to reach new audiences; 2) developing new modes of artistic practice which engage wider audiences through socially engaged practices which intersect with the daily life of the public; and 3) engaging and building young audiences for the arts by enriching arts education.

Since 2014, the UoA has utilised nearly HK\$35 million of funding which has supported the development of research and impact through a wide spectrum of related public art and art education projects including international conferences and an extensive programme of exhibitions, publications, artist residencies, workshops, and research presentations and reports.

(4) Relationship to case studies.

Engaging New Audiences for Art beyond the Gallery and Museum Sector in Hong Kong and East Asia

Given the deficit of visual arts venues, researchers have created major works inside public spaces, government infrastructure (transport systems and drainage facilities) shops and grocery stores, prominent cultural and historical sites and existing biennales and festivals. Although the practice of presenting visual arts in non-traditional venues has been well established in Europe and North America, it is new and innovative in East Asia and the UoA has helped substantially to bring the visual arts to extended audiences and new beneficiaries in Hong Kong and East Asia.

Understanding Self and Society through Photography: Influencing Visual Arts Pedagogical Practices and Education Policy in Hong Kong

Educational impact is brought about through extensive partnerships between artists and secondary schools to develop new approaches to teaching and learning and provide innovative ways for students and audiences to gain a deeper understanding of society and self. Through Our Eyes (TOE) Photography Education Programme challenged and enhanced the secondary schools' visual arts curriculum. The development of these creative pedagogies and their dissemination through public exhibition have brought about changes in how teachers and artists work together to benefit secondary school students in Hong Kong and engage them in art and culture.