

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Overview Statement

University: Lingnan University

Unit of Assessment (UoA): 38 - Visual Arts, Design, Creative Media, other Creative Arts and Creative Writing

Total number of eligible staff of the university in the UoA: 4

(1) Context

The Department of Visual Studies (VS) at Lingnan University produces research with significant impact on the cultural life, creative institutions and residents of Hong Kong. The amount of research impact over the assessment period is extraordinary for a department with only four full-time faculty members. Beneficiaries of VS faculty's research include members of the creative community and media industries, charitable foundations, government organizations, medical practitioners, individuals suffering from mental and physical disabilities, and the public. The Department's impact is enhanced by its grant-funded Centre for Cinema Studies (CCS), which organizes cultural events that frequently bring filmmakers into dialogue with the public.

The Department is active in organizing art exhibitions, workshops and talks for the public in four venues at Lingnan University: 1) the Leung Fong Oi Wan Art Gallery; 2) the Fong Sum Wood Library; 3) the colloquially-named "Art Wall", a dedicated space for exhibitions by local professional artists, curated by VS students under faculty supervision; and 4) Fu Tei Bookshop.

(2) Approach to impact

The VS Department is committed to fostering institutional collaborations with stakeholders in the creative, governmental and therapeutic communities through the following strategies:

- **Public engagement projects:** faculty and faculty-directed student groups have been instrumental in the curation of over a dozen programmes with community partners. For instance, Prof. Michelle Huang supervised 85 students to assist in research and public programmes for the special exhibition sponsored by HSBC, *Made in Hong Kong: Our City, Our Studies* (2015) at the Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM), which attracted over 115,000 visitors.
- **Community heritage projects:** Prof. Sophia Law collaborated with local artists and community partners to preserve and disseminate local heritage in ways that maximize public engagement through *Touching the Earth - Environmental Art Workshop at Lai Chi Wo* (2015-2016), which organized a series of art workshops involving 120 students of all ages and won a 2018 Knowledge Transfer excellence award at Lingnan.
- **Public engagement activities through CCS:** Via screenings, talks and meet-the-filmmaker events, we reach outside academia, making our work accessible to larger audiences, with a focus on local film culture and the regional film industry. A highlight is the omnibus film *Lingnan Film 5.0* (2018), coordinated by Prof. Emilie Yeh and directed by renowned filmmakers Mary Stephen, Poon Hang Sang, Adam Wong, Mo Lai and Johnnie To. These five short films focus on daily struggles in Hong Kong: identity, upward mobility, class struggle, and marriage crisis.
- **Using expertise in visual arts and media on judging panels:** most of our faculty members serve as experts for award juries, ranging from local student art competitions and region-wide competitions administered by the HKSAR government, to major international media festivals, including the Asian Television Awards (Singapore), the Golden Horse Film Awards (Taiwan), the Hong Kong Film Awards, and the Hong Kong Independent Short Film and Video Awards.
- **Participation in consultancies:** VS faculty members utilize their research expertise on advising or collaborating with government agencies (e.g. British Council, Hong Kong Arts Development

Council, Hong Kong Film Archive, Taiwan Film Institute), creative institutions (e.g. Asia Art Archive committee for Researching Hong Kong Art History), educational organizations (e.g. Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications) and medical/therapeutic organizations (e.g. Hong Kong Arts with the Disabled Association).

- **Media appearances:** most department faculty have appeared as experts in local, regional, and international media, with Prof. Law appearing at least eighteen times over the assessment period in venues such as Radio TV Hong Kong, Television Broadcast Ltd., *South China Morning Post*, *Apple Daily*, *Quartz*, *Supermedia*, Tencent TV (v.qq.com) and *Mingpao Weekly*. Prof. Huang's expertise in her teaching and research on collecting Chinese art was referenced in such media as HKTDC portal (3 March 2015) and *Financial Times* in the UK (31 May 2018).
- **Public lectures:** our faculty have spoken to hundreds of people through numerous public lectures on topics of art, cultural heritage, and cinema in local and overseas institutions, international conferences, and art fairs. For instance, Prof. Michelle Huang was the only Hong Kong scholar invited to speak at the *Chinese Painting since 1900* conference (2016) at the University of Oxford and the academic programme of Ink Asia Hong Kong 2017.
- **Seminars on art therapy:** Prof. Law has conducted many seminars to educate or provide therapy for members of the public with physical and mental ailments (e.g. *Colors of Dementia*, 2013) as well as training medical professionals, social workers, educators and police officers in identifying the symptoms of abuse or various ailments that might be treated with art therapy (e.g. *The Invisible Pain of Child Victims of Family Violence*, 2018).

(3) Strategy and plans

The VS Department aims to maximize its research impact by encouraging a wide range of partnerships, community events, public seminars and training workshops. It multiplies its social impact by incorporating a service-learning research scheme into courses, so student participation can magnify the impact of individual faculty projects. Going forward, we will engage in several activities and adopt the following strategies to foster research impact:

- building on institutional partnerships in Hong Kong and abroad to emphasize public-facing aspects of our research.
- utilizing private, government and Lingnan University funds to support engagement projects.
- encouraging a community-based approach (through service-learning schemes and internships) to maximize visibility with members of the public that might not otherwise encounter university research or creative activities (e.g. publically-situated community art projects, presentations on art to government and medical workers, art therapy for individuals with disabilities).

(4) Relationship to case studies

Our case study involves a multi-faceted approach to improving the lives of child victims of family violence. This research reflects many of the Department's impact strategies as follows:

- building on institutional partnerships (e.g. the Social Welfare Department and Family and Child Protection Services Units in Hong Kong) and forging close collaboration with key stakeholders interested in reducing the impact of family violence on children.
- raising over HK\$2.5 million from private foundations and government grants to support programmes to disseminate art therapy research to relevant professionals and the public.
- bringing seminars and workshops to schools, town halls, community centers, medical centers and government offices to reach the broadest possible set of potential beneficiaries.