Soundtecture

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In collaboration with
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Summary of the Impact

This project critically examines the liminal space where art, architecture and music overlap. This project is interdisciplinary in nature and builds on scholarship and creative work from across the humanities and architecture, in particular, from the fields of design, architecture, musicology, composition, performance, and sound studies. The project draws inspiration from a broad and disparate body of research, and aims to cultivate a new protocol for collaboration in matters of architectural design, musical performance, and the ecology of sound. Hence, the practice-based nature of the underpinning research.
Summary of the Impact:

- Soundscape studies pioneer R. Murray Schafer’s statement, “the modern architect is designing for the deaf,” highlights a key issue in modern architecture: the tendency to focus on artifacts rather than integrated living systems.

- If the architecture field is ocular-centric by nature, how do we begin to “witness” sound? How do we develop an aural understanding of a multivalent sound ecology where an integrated area consisting of lighting, speakers, motorized slider, security fences, and historical military buildings is in place?
Summary of the Impact:

HKACT! Act 10 Daedalus Drones develops a unique genre integrating artistic and conceptual references to unmanned aerial vehicles, drone technology systems, camouflage architecture, and an irregular network of passages. Driven by the theme of Daedalus, the Greek mythical architect of Minotaur’s Labyrinth on Crete, this performance/installation presents a multi-centered experience that navigates the boundaries of the artisanal and artistic concepts of “Daedalus,” respectively. Guided by smell and sound, the visitor’s senses will be activated through acts of meandering, listening, walking, ascending.

Underpinning Research:
Production funding support toward research and development by New Vision Art Festival and Osage Art Foundation

1. Create greater collaboration regarding research in sound and architecture between the faculty in the Departments of Architecture and Music at HKU and other universities in the endeavour of building Sounding Architecture into a genre

2. HKU students will benefit from the experience of working with composers, artists, architects, and professional musicians in the creation and performance of new works

3. Further enhance a sense of community and engagement within the public and disciplinary community and the general public at large through art, architecture, and music by organizing a symposium, workshops, publications, installations, new compositions, and/or performances
Underpinning Research:
Public Performance

Asia Society Hong Kong Center
21/27/28-11-2021

“Two artists have inspired one another by continually pushing the boundaries of their mediums. Now, with the help of 120 drones and dozens of musicians, they are producing a multisensory show that takes their work to yet another level. scroll Multidisciplinary Japanese-American musician Ken Ueno and Malaysian-born, US-educated architect Thomas Tsang each embarked on artistic journeys to discover their own styles of creative expression.”

By Morning Studio Editors
November 24, 2021
South China Morning Post
Link
https://multimedia.scmp.com/infographics/article/3156033/scroll-drones-drones/

Underpinning Research:
Received two times HKU Interdisciplinary Knowledge Exchange Funding. To further enhance a sense of community and engagement within the public and disciplinary community and the general public at large through art, architecture, and music by organizing a symposium, workshops, publications, installations, new compositions, and/or performances

HKU INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE FUNDING
Awarded for Sounding Architecture: Intensity as Density, a project with the Department of Music; Regional Funding: 175,000 HKD. 2019-2021

HKU INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE FUNDING
Awarded for Sounding Architecture, a project with Department of Music, Funding: 200,000 HKD. 2016-2018
**Underpinning Research:**

*Sounding Architecture Manifest*

In response to the urgent need to document and make accessible on between architecture, sculpture, and music, conceiving of sounds as architectural materials.

- Sounding Architecture Manifest
  Independent journal Newspaper distributed at:
  - UABB Shenzhen 15-12-2017 - 17-03-2018
  - Sounding Architecture in Concert performance at Loke Yew Hall, HKU 26-04-2018
  - 16th International Architectural Exhibition at the Venice Biennale, 25-05-2018
  - Collection at the Asia Art Archive

- Advisor to Sounding Architecture Manifest includes renowned artists such as Natalie Diaz (2021 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry and 2018 MacArthur Fellow), and Du Yun (2017 Pulitzer Prize in Music), and Ken Ueno (Jerry and Evelyn Hemmings Chambers Distinguished Professor Chair in Music at UC Berkeley).

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**Underpinning Research:**

To blur the boundaries between audience/performers, participants/observers, music/architecture students, and provided a new dimension to both performance and drawing for the students. It also explored sound and space in the historic Loke Yew Hall with the musicians performing in different parts of the hall.

**Video**

**DRAWING ATTENTION (2021)**

Loke Yew Hall, HKU
29-04-2021
Underpinning Research:
Year 1 Studio

IN DIALOGUE with BEETHOVEN:
CROSSROADS (2021)
Performance Installation
McAulay Studio,
Hong Kong Arts Centre
23-06-2021

Presented by the Goethe-Institut Hong Kong, the concert was originally scheduled for 2020 to celebrate Beethoven’s 250th birthday, however, was postponed to June 2021 due to the pandemic. Held in the intimate McAulay Studio at the Hong Kong Arts Centre, the concert featured a string quartet and an 1830s square piano from HKU Music Department’s historic keyboard collection. The extraordinary documents shed light on Beethoven's creative process. Four excerpts from Beethoven’s works were performed with an informative post-performance discussion with the audience. They were particularly struck by the sound of the square piano and the intimate setting of the concert. Both the Italian Cultural Institute and HKU MUSE have expressed interest in presenting the concert in the future.

Underpinning Research:
Collaborative teaching with HKU Department of Music and international collaboration with composers from Cornell University and UC Berkeley

SOUNDING ARCHITECTURE
ARCH 2071 Architectural Design 1:
Sounding Architecture, is the first collaborative teaching development between the Department of Architecture and the Department of Music at the University of Hong Kong (HKU), introduced in Fall 2016. Composed of 67 students and 6 tutors, at the start of their studies, the Year 2 students of the Bachelor of Arts (Architectural Studies) (BAAS), received a year of basic training in the foundation courses. They were able to experiment with sound, shape and materials with no specific goals, except to construct a sound instrument and develop a set of drawings that informs both construction and performance depending on their individual suitability and finding.

Video
HKU EE Bulletin 2017
Reference
Impact Achieved:
Impact experience of working with composers, artists, architects, and professional musicians in the creation and performance of new works.

Sounding Architecture in Concert
Lehe Yew Hall, HKU
25-4-2018

Program included the world premiers of HKU PG composer Chan Sze-rok’s Ghost Chase (2018) and Indonesian composer M. Arhun Aryadi’s Dimension (2018), which were both commissioned and performed by the HKU Gamelan. The Hong Kong premiere of Ken Ueno’s composition only the breaths of favorite poems herein for ten vocalists with megaphones and a 20-channel audio installation (2017) was performed by the HKU Percussion Ensemble alongside Thomas Tsang’s installation entitled Sounding Architecture: A Room with 33 Doors. Other works included the Hong Kong premiere of Pulitzer prize winner Ou Yunn’s How are you doing, the future that has never left (2017) for video projection utilising Tsang’s drawings qua graphic notation exploring new possibilities of transcribing oral traditions, as well as John Cage’s Rythm performed by musicians from HKNME.

Impact Achieved:
Opportunity for public audiences to witness performers working with professional musicians and composers, enhancing their skills and knowledge in a professional performance and curatorial preparation for exhibition setting.

Beneficiaries
Create an awareness of sound and space in our historic urban environment
Develop descriptive and conceptual tools for assessing the city’s historical architecture and advising authorities from the perspective of the relationship of building conservations to sound ecology
Demonstrate the artistic and social potential of Hong Kong’s historic architectural sites
Sensitize the audience to the mutual implication of sound and the built environment
Deepen awareness about the mutually binding relationship between sound and architecture among both professionals and the general public
Further develop a platform for sound and architecture specialists to engage in collaborative projects.
Underpinning Research:
Opportunity for public audiences to witness performers working with professional musicians and composers, enhancing their skills and knowledge in a professional performance and curatorial preparation for exhibition setting.

SOUNDTECTURE: DENSITY AS INTENSITY (2021)
Exhibition Installation Performance
HKU Architecture Gallery, PMQ
05-07-2021 --- 26-07-2021

Innovativeness of the engagement approach

- We believe that by continuing to engage with a wide range of collaborators and audience members (from West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, Osage Art Foundation, PMQ, Hong Kong New Music Ensemble, UC Berkeley to freelance musicians, artists, designers, academics, students, and the general public), we continue to have a substantial impact in helping define and shape the relationship between architecture and music. Staging our projects in different venues and using a diverse range of musical instruments and site-specific installations also helps promote an awareness of sound and its relationship to the built environment.

- Over the last five years, our work has gained momentum both in Hong Kong and overseas. Bringing together a wide spectrum of artists, professionals, academics, students, and the general public through a roundtable, workshops, public talks, exhibitions, installations, performances, and edited online materials has seen our project reach significantly more people than anticipated when our collaboration first began. We are currently planning further collaborations with cultural institutes and presenters that will further both our scope of work and outreach.

Engagement:

External partners
The following individuals have recognized the significant impact of this project and offered considerable support over the last two years:

Ken Ueno
Professor in Music
UC, Berkeley

William Lane
Artistic Director
Hong Kong New Music Ensemble

Kung Chi Shing
Artistic Associate
West Kowloon Cultural District Authority

Agnes Lin
Director and Founder
Osage Art Foundation

Daniel Chua,
Chair Professor and Chair
Department of Music, HKU

Stefano Fossati
Director, Italian Cultural Institute

Shelley Ng, Pianist
Hong Kong New Music Ensemble

Karen Yu
Co-founder and Co-artistic Director
The Up:Strike Project

Alice Meng
Executive Director of Asia Society Hong Kong
Impact Achieved
Building new audience towards art and technology staged an innovative performance

Reinventing Shenzhen's identity and urban villages at the 2017 Bi-City Bienalle

4 Symposium:
Towards a Manifesto:
Sounding Architecture (2018)
Bagan Huayng, HRC, 22 Sept 2016

Speakers included:
Gong Biaorong
Daxin Mingyan
Jenish Dandekar
William Lane
El Kentena
Kingston Ng
Nadine Speed
Thomas Tsang
Ken Leong
Deborah Waugh
Future:
To develop and deliver to inform policy-making, and provide evidence-based advice to leaders.

- Thomas Tsang invited to serve as Expert Adviser of Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme, Home Affair Bureau. (2021-)
- To advice funding support for large-scale and cross-year arts and cultural initiative and activities to support under arts technology.
- "In the Policy Address delivered in 2020, the Chief Executive stated that the Government would actively promote and support the development of arts technology (arts tech). We hope that the organic integration of arts and technology can multiply benefits for both fields, which will in turn enhance Hong Kong’s standing in the international arts arena, facilitate cultural exchange and strengthen our role as an international cultural metropolis."
- Advisory Board Member, Jockey Club Augmented Reality in Arts Education Project (2021-2023)
- Invited to speak at the 25th conference of the Association of Asia Pacific Performing Arts Centres (AAPAPAC) on the conference theme is Future Forward, under the panel "Interdisciplinary Thought Leadership and Performance" - Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, Singapore – October 2022

Maximum no. of slides:

20

(including the title slide)