Methodologies Mapping of the Community Museum Project's Socially Engaged Art & Design Practices

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Contents

SIU, King Chung co-directs an art collective, the [Community Museum Project](), through which he conducts artistic and curatorial research on visual culture, indigenous design and community heritage in Hong Kong and elsewhere. He pioneers in local socially engaged art & design practices where he explores methodologies and tactics to initiate collaborations among students, teachers, designers, artists, activists and community partners. The approaches have allowed him to experiment and develop viable collaborative strategies and forms for exhibition design, installation display, information and publication design as well as alternative museum practices. Since 2017, his approach has been translated into the first formal BA curriculum on Social Design in Hong Kong.

Title: - Methodologies Mapping of the Community Museum Project's Socially Engaged Art and Design Practices

Descriptor

- The work constitutes a series of methodological analysis (in form of visual mappings) of the author's past and current socially engaged art and design projects, which had attempted to link photography, drawing and visual design with community studies and social activism;

- The visual maps exhibit the methodological explanation of the author's community design processes of various projects, namely, A) *Street as the Museum: Lee Tung Street* (2005, HK), B) *The Museum of Complaints* (2010, South Korea), C) *The Riverside Scene of Local Agriculture*, (2011, HK), and D) the timely documentation of the "complaints" (a street scene in three stages) during the Hong Kong Occupy Movement (2014, HK);

- In creating these projects, the author and his team, the Community Museum Project, employed different approaches of community engagement and participatory design to arrive at the visual outcomes, which had, in turn, become unique visual objects for public engagement and persuasion (see sample artefacts of A), B), C) and D) of the above respectively).

- These approaches, visually expressed as exhibits, illustrated how E. Wenger's (1998) model of Communities of Practice could be applied in real-life activism contexts, both in Hong Kong and Anyang, South Korea;

- This particular 2014-15 Exhibition, organized by the Association of Visual Art of Taiwan, and the Centre for Research and Development of the Academy of Visual Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University, was the first of its kind to survey relevant socially engaged creative practices in Taiwan and Hong Kong since the 2000s. It surveys the different approaches in socially engaged art, participatory design, and social curating currently prevail in the cultural, arts and design circle in the region, (and where the Community Museum Project is considered one of the pioneers.)

What constitutes the research output / body of work ?

Keywords: Community visualisation; Public engagement art; Relational activism; Social curating

Exhibits

• Exhibited items in form of a series of visual maps which illustrate the methodologies of the authors' past community engagement projects, such as the Street as Museum: Lee Tung Street (2005, HK) (see details), The Museum of Complaints (2010, South Korea) (see details), *The Riverside Scene of Local Agriculture*, (2011, HK) (see details), and the timely documentation of "wall of complaints" during the Hong Kong Occupy Movement. (2014) (see details).

Publications

• An article published in German: Siu, King Chung (2017). "Feldnotizen zu urbanen Taktiken für eine kommunale Teilhabe" (Field notes on urban tactics for communal participation), in Krusche, Jürgen (Hg.) (2017). Die ambivalente Stadt: Gegenwart und Zukunft des öffentlichen Raums. Berlin: Jovis. Pp.116-129. ISBN 978-3-86859-467-6 (see article)

• An article published: Siu, King Chung. (2013). "Visualizing the Community: Art and Design Tools for Social Changes" in Northern World Mandate: Cumulus Working Papers Helsinki-Espoo 28/12; Publication Series G. Helsinki: Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. (see article)

Different views inside the exhibition hall of the *Art as Social Interaction: Hong Kong – Taiwan* exhibition (6 Dec 2014 - 4 Jan 2015 in Kaohsiung, Taiwan)

Research questions

1. What and how are the different visual and design means that can engage community stakeholders into co-creating necessary (media) platforms to generate public discourses?

2. By employing different workshop and engagement approaches, how is it possible to collect and visualise views from community stakeholders?

3. What are the possible transformative potentials (political or otherwise) and outcomes of such in-situ community engagement practices?

Various ways of engaging different stakeholders in co-creation workshops and exhibitions for civil persuasion relating to the urban renewal issues in Anyang, Korea, 2010 (left and middle image) and Hong Kong, 2007. (right image)

Research methods and artefacts

In summary, Community Museum Project and the author has developed the following approaches in collecting community data, and experimenting with engagement tools for social change.

- **Cultural Scavenging** – a process of collecting the uncollected (or conceptually discarded) materials or visual spectacles from the public arenas.

- **Photo-stocktaking** – a process of employing "impartial" photo-shooting approaches to collect comprehensive visual records of a particular situation. (see my presentation in M+ Matters event on ARTWORKDOCUMENTATION: Rethinking the Categories of Art and Documentation, Asia Society Hong Kong Center, 25.11.2013. (also see article: http://d3fveiluhe0xc2.cloudfront.net/media/_file/siukingchung.pdf)

A view at the exhibition: This methodologies map is derived from an earlier project, entitled *Street as the Museum: Lee Tung Street,* 2005, HK. The map attempts to explain visually how the Street as Museum project was created and how the series of Lee Tung Street façade images and their subsequent exhibition became a set of engagement tools for raising critical awareness of local urban gentrification and to develop public debates or consensus.

Research methods and artefacts (cont'd)

- **Interviewing** – via method of photo-solicitation to collect stories about relevant stakeholders;

- **Visual Storytelling** – derive different visual means (e.g. map, comics, puppet show, etc.) to present visual and textual/verbal data collected from the community;

- **Giving Forms to Community Assets** – by means of information design and/or exhibition design, create (media) platforms for the stakeholders to interact, showcase and express their views (or assets) about the community.

- **Social Curating** – Facilitation to build relations among community members and beyond in order to develop networks for social transformation. (see my articles: 2008, p.63; 2014. p.98)
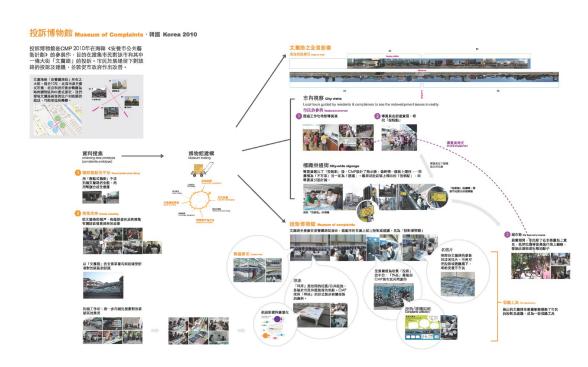

Inspired by a scene (top image) in the 2014 Hong Kong Occupy Movement, an image of a bus was displayed in the exhibition hall to solicit responses or political comments (with post-it notes or handbills) from the audience. This illustrate one of the public engagement approaches that can lead to "Giving Forms to Community Assets" in our method. (*Art as Social Interaction* exhibition at Baptist University Art Gallery; 17 Oct. 2014 – 23 Nov. 2014)

Research methods and written materials (cont'd)

The methods are partially explained in the maps and the articles below:

- Siu, King Chung. (2017). "Feldnotizen zu urbanen Taktiken für eine kommunale Teilhabe" (Field notes on urban tactics for communal participation), in Jürgen Krusche (Hg.) (2017). *Die ambivalente Stadt: Gegenwart und Zukunft des öffentlichen Raums.* Berlin: Jovis. Pp. 116-129. ISBN 978-3-86859-467-6 (see article)

- Community Museum Project. (2015). *Street as Museum: Lee Tung Street* (quintet); *Museum of Complaints*; *Hong Kong Occupy Movement: A Contemporary Archaeology* (on going); this also Includes a critic's review by LU, Pei-yi. "The Museum as a Method: On the Methodology of Hong Kong Community Museum Project". In Wu, Mali & Leung, Mei Ping. (Eds.) (2015). *Art as Social Interaction: Hong Kong / Taiwan Exchange.* Kaoshiung, Taiwan: Association of the Visual Arts. (pp. 260 - 273). (see exhibition review)

Methodologies Map (see details) of the project, entitled, *The Museum of Complaints*, showcased in the 2010 Anyang Public Arts Project, South Korea.

Research methods and related outputs (cont'd)

- Lai, Sally. (2016). "A Conversation with Siu King-Chung about the Community Museum Project". In *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art.* Vol. 15, No. 2, 2016. Pp. 97-107. ([see written interview](#))

- The author's speech published in Art Promotion Office (ed.) (2015). "What Community Museum Project Does? What Have Been Learnt? - Individual Engagement, Social Movement, Self-initiated Projects by Artists/Curators". In *Dialogue! Publicly Engaged Art Practices.* Hong Kong: Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Pp. 201-212. ([see speech](#))

- Siu, King Chung**.** (2013). "Visualizing the Community: Art and Design Tools for Social Changes" in *Northern World Mandate: Cumulus Working Papers Helsinki-Espoo 28/12; Publication Series G.* Helsinki: Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. ([see article](#))

Methodologies map ([see details](#)) of the project, entitled, *Street as Museum: Lee Tung Street as You Have Never Seen Before*, showcased in the A-link Gallery, Hong Kong. 2005.

Research Conclusions

- Riding on the global debates of "relational aesthetics" and the different approaches to socially-engaged-art, the author's team, the Community Museum Project is able to develop different local approaches for tackle issues on, for examples, urban regeneration and community activism;

- These relational approaches in community activism are documented and visualized in form of relational maps, namely, the "Methodologies Mapping" that illustrate the processes of its making;

- These Methodologies Mappings, treated as artwork and displayed in gallery settings, provide an overview of the different social-engagement or participatory design approaches, that have attempted to effect social change in particular urban activist context.

- As an alternative to the regime of written form of communication (advocates by Barbara Maria Stafford, 1996), the author's projects illustrate the possibilities of the visual becoming active tools for civic communication and engagement leading to social change.

- These approaches on "Social Curating" have been explored in the Community Museum Project's programme since the 2007 and in the author's subsequent publications and public lectures.

Dissemination and distribution of outcomes

Year	Deliverables
2013	**Article published:** Siu, King Chung**.** (2013). "Visualizing the Community: Art and Design Tools for Social Changes" in *Northern World Mandate: Cumulus Working Papers Helsinki-Espoo 28/12; Publication Series G.* Helsinki: Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture.
2014	**Talk delivered** at Malay Heritage Centre, Singapore. "Community Museum and Social Art: Forging Communities for All Ages. 14 August, 2014. (see talk synopsis)
	Exhibits disseminated in *Art as Social Interaction: Hong Kong - Taiwan Exchange Exhibition.* 17 Oct - 23 Nov 2014 in Hong Kong (see pamphlet); and 6 Dec 2014 - 4 Jan 2015 in Kaohsiung, Taiwan (see catalogue contents)
2015	**Talk delivered** at Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (Zurich University of the Arts). *Visualizing the Community: Art and Design Tools for Social Changes.* Presented at Public City & Connecting Space Lecture Series, 5 June 2015. (see talk synopsis)
	Speech published: "What Community Museum Project Does? What Have Been Learnt?- Individual Engagement, Social Movement, Self-initiated Projects by Artists/Curators". In Art Promotion Office (ed.) (2015). *Dialogue! Publicly Engaged Art Practices.* Hong Kong: Leisure and Cultural Services Department.
2016	**Exhibits disseminated** (Part of the visual maps) in the Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie (Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw), Poland and exhibited from 19 Feb. – 1 May 2016 in the *Making Use: Life in Postartistic Times* exhibition. Website: http://artmuseum.pl/en/wystawy/robiac-uzytek
2017	**Article published:** Siu, King Chung (2017). "Feldnotizen zu urbanen Taktiken für eine kommunale Teilhabe" (Field notes on urban tactics for communal participation). In Jürgen Krusche (Hg.) (2017). *Die ambivalente Stadt: Gegenwart und Zukunft des öffentlichen Raums.* Berlin: Jovis. Pp. 116-129. ISBN 978-3-86859-467-6

Docent explaining the methods for developing the 2010 project, entitled, *The Museum of Complaints*, showcased in Anyang Public Arts Project Biennale, South Korea; and how it relates to the then occupy movement. The maps in the picture illustrated the methodological processes graphically.

Research field and key works referenced

- Bishop, Claire. (2004). "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics" in October Magazine 110. Fall, pp.51-79.

- Bruinsma, Max & van Zijl, Ida. (Eds.) (2015). Design for the Good Society. Rotterdam: nai010 Publishers.

- Falkeis, Anton & Feireiss, (Eds.) (2015). Public Action-Social Design: Arts as Urban innovation. Basel: Birkhauser.

- Lu, Peiyi. (2013). "Museum as Method: Hong Kong's Community Museum Project's Methodology." In ARTCO, May 2015 Issue, p.p.166-169. (External art critic's review. Chinese)

- Reilstad, Jan. (Ed.) (2009). Neighbourhood Secrets: Art as Urban Processes. Norway: Press Publishing.

- Siu, King Chung. (2008). "Street as Museum as Method: Thoughts on Museum Inclusivity." The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum. Vol.1, No.3.

- Siu, King Chung. (2011). "Visualizing the Community: Tools for Community Building through Exploring Intangible Heritage and Community Building" In Leung, C.A. & Law, T.Y. (2011) Education and Heritage: Historico-cultural Perspectives. Hong Kong Education Publisher. P.p. 54-74. ISBN: 978-988-8079-76-6. (Chinese).

- Siu, King Chung & Kong, Thomas. (2014). "Informal Religious Shrines: Curating Community Assets in Hong Kong and Singapore." The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum. Vol.6, Issue 2.

- Stafford, Barbara Maria. (1996). Good Looking: Essays on the Virtue of Images. Cambridge: MIT Press.

- Stefan, Olga & Gheorghe, Catalin. (Eds.) (2013). Social Curating and Its Public: Curators from Eastern Europe Report on their Practices. On Curating.org.

- Wenger, Etienne. (1998). Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.