

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Roehampton		
Unit of Assessment: 33B - Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies: Drama		
Title of case study: Doing Time: Bringing Diasporic Taiwanese Performance Art onto the Global Stage		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: July 2007 – November 2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Adrian Heathfield	Professor of Performance and Visual Culture	July 2007 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: May 2017–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Professor Adrian Heathfield's curation of <i>Doing Time</i>, the Taiwan Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale, attended by 101,805 international spectators, has had a significant impact on museum-based global curatorial practice with performance archives. Specifically, Heathfield's research has informed public understanding of Tehching Hsieh's oeuvre, performance art histories and their personal and cultural resonances. It has enhanced the artist's standing, interpretation and value within art professional, museum and art market contexts. Heathfield's research has also extended the global influence of diasporic Taiwanese artistic practices, the advancement of cultural exchange, and the cultural diversification of art world understandings of performance art histories, whilst increasing the Taipei Fine Arts Museum's (TFAM) global renown, curatorial practice and pavilion commissioning.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Heathfield was appointed Professor of Performance and Visual Culture in 2007. At this time, he began research on the under-discussed Taiwanese-American artist Tehching Hsieh, resulting in his 2009 monograph (R1) on and with the artist, expanded in a Chinese translation (2012) and reprinted in paperback (2015). This volume made a significant contribution to performance art history, recovering and repositioning Hsieh's work in relation to histories of conceptual and body art, and marking its development of 'durational aesthetics', a term coined by Heathfield, and now taken up broadly in art discourse. Heathfield's widely disseminated scholarship on contemporary and historical live art, exemplified in his 2012 anthology co-edited with Amelia Jones (R2), has influentially returned to questions of eventhood and documentation, performativity and archives, performance re-dos and art historical narration. Consequent insights were essential to the conception and realisation of Heathfield's curatorial strategies in the exhibition and their impact upon distinct beneficiaries: diverse art professionals, institutions, and broader art publics.</p> <p>Moreover, practices of public engagement and knowledge exchange in the four-year AHRC funded <i>Performance Matters</i> creative research project (R3) mounted serial examinations of the cultural value of performance, its increasing assimilation within art institutions, and questioned its popular perception and historicisation: discursive terrains in which <i>Doing Time</i> then directly and practically intervened. A 2014 European Commission award (R4) held over three years enabled Heathfield to extend his discursive work into a singular practical study of immaterial art making processes, their presentation and status within museums. Two specific curations – <i>Afterlives</i> at Museum of Modern Art, New York, and <i>Ghost Telephone</i> at Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney – advanced consideration of the performativity of archival materials, and the handling, protocols, and problematics of durational performance in museums. Preliminary research for <i>Doing Time</i> (R5) was conducted through <i>Curating the Ephemeral</i> (R4). Textual outputs from this project (R6) examined performance's resistances to institutional containment and informed Heathfield's curatorial tactics around the life of archival materials.</p> <p>Conducted over two years in the USA, Italy and Taiwan, exhibition research involved intensive collaboration with the artist, unearthing new facts around early aesthetic experiments in Taipei. The resultant creation and showing of a site-specific redo for film of a lost performance</p>		

profoundly altered the history of Hsieh's oeuvre. By re-situating the beginnings of Hsieh's aesthetics in Taiwan, the curation questioned the cultural belonging of the work, impacting the region's artistic heritage. Heathfield wrote and co-directed a documentary film on Hsieh's outdoor work stressing its resonance with issues of migrant life, homelessness, and their policing. The first combined exhibition of two major performance-installations mounted a highly affective discourse on the nature of bare existence, its relation to systems of power, to time and to nature. Extending public debate, Heathfield convened two livestreamed web-archived talks: dynamic reflections on the exhibition that engaged leading figures from urban studies, anthropology, philosophy, performance theory and the visual arts.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

R1 Heathfield, A., Hsieh, T. (2009) *Out of Now: The Lifeworks of Tehching Hsieh*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press and Live Art Development Agency. Hardback: ISBN 9780262012553. Chinese translation with Art & Collection Group (2012): ISBN 9789860309829. Paperback Second Edition, 2015: ISBN 9780262528214. Submitted to REF2014.

R2 Heathfield, A., Jones, A. (eds.) (2012) *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History*. Chicago: Intellect Books and the University of Chicago Press. ISBN 9781841504896. Submitted to REF2014.

R3 Heathfield, A., Butt, G., Keidan, L. (Co-directors and co-curators) *Performance Matters*, four-year creative research project with numerous performance, discursive and public engagement outputs, 2009-13. Archived in a box set of 40 DVDs located in 15 library special collections and museums globally. Assessed output and Impact Case Study in REF2014. Funded by AHRC Research Grant (Goldsmiths with University of Roehampton and LADA), 2009, £349,665 and AHRC Follow-on Funding (University of Roehampton with Goldsmiths & LADA for *Crossovers: A Performance Matters DVD Series*), 2013, £95,356. www.thisisperformancematters.org Final report published on ResearchFish.

R4 Heathfield, A., *Curating the Ephemeral*, three-year research project with numerous curatorial and publication outputs, funded by European Commission Research Executive Agency, Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowship (held at Columbia University, New York & University of Roehampton), 2014-16, €392,423. Final Report published on European Commission CORDIS.

R5 Heathfield, A. (2017) *Doing Time*, Taiwan Pavilion, 57th Venice Biennale, 13th May – 23rd November. Curated exhibition of works by Tehching Hsieh organised by Taipei Fine Arts Museum. Supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of Culture, Republic of China (Taiwan); and the Department of Cultural Affairs of Taipei City Government. <http://www.taiwaninvenice.org/2017/>. Listed in REF2.

R6 Heathfield, A. (2017) 'Being with Emergence', an interview by Branislava Kubrović in Wee, C. (ed.) *Perform, Experience, Re-Live*. London: Tate Publishing. ISBN 9781849764940. Available on request.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Heathfield's singular curatorial practice-research on a sustained high-profile exhibition for Taiwan in a world-leading art biennale has produced tangible impacts of global scope for distinct beneficiaries. Detailed knowledge of Hsieh's oeuvre (**R1**) and of late twentieth-century art practices (**R2**), in combination with Heathfield's sophisticated understanding of the politics of curatorial practice (**R3**, **R4**, **R6**) resulted in his curatorship of *Doing Time* (**IMP1**) and dynamically facilitated its impacts. National pavilion curations are prestigious positions, selected in this case by a committee of renowned Taiwanese cultural figures. The exhibition (**R5**) was the outcome of intensive collaborations with the artist and 26 TFAM staff on the principles, content and form of the curation.

Heathfield's decisions to re-stage Hsieh's previously unseen early works, alongside the unprecedented presentation of two major performance-installations (**R5**) deepened public understanding of the artist's oeuvre, of performance histories and their cultural resonances. Exceeding all previous attendance for a Taiwan Pavilion, the exhibition reached a global audience of 101,805 visitors from 98 countries across 6 continents. An unusually large visitor survey (**IMP2**),

securing qualitative responses from 4% of attendees, evidences the transformation of public perceptions of the artist, performance art and its cultural and personal value. Of 4,149 respondents: 91.1% reported enhanced understanding of Hsieh's works; 84.2% asserted a changed or deepened understanding of performance art; and 89.2% felt the artworks' importance in their own experience of life and time (**IMP3**). Changes to spectators' cultural perceptions are a frequently repeated content in hundreds of visitor comments: for instance, noting the exhibition '*Has changed my perspective of time and freedom forever*', or has '*exposed to me... that art is life and life is art*' (**IMP4**).

Catalogue distribution to 4,953 attendees (**IMP2**), press interviews by Heathfield, alongside engagement events before and after the exhibition in Taipei, Hong Kong, Venice, Nottingham, Bilbao, Copenhagen, Singapore, Porto, and London, extended public, professional and critical reception with over 830 attendees (**IMP5**). Subsequent amplifications of public impact continued through widespread distribution of Heathfield's exhibited film (**IMP5**).

Broad press coverage included rating in the top ten Biennale exhibitions in *Frieze Critics Guide*, *The New York Times*, Royal Academy of Arts, MutualArt, *Culture Trip* and *Tatler Hong Kong*. Positive reviews were received in 37 art and general press outlets, with *The New York Times* noting that, '*The Biennale's two-year cycle takes on new weight in the Taiwanese pavilion... Hsieh's focus is not the endurance or the deprivation that is so evident in his images but instead the use of time as a medium.*' Leading online culture magazine, *Hyperallergic* designated *Doing Time*, '*One of the most energizing and provocative contributions to the 2017 Venice Biennale*'. *Culture Trip* called the exhibition, '*impressive... utterly astounding*', whilst *The Guardian* noted this was, '*[Hsieh's] most extensive retrospective yet... his most fascinating and thought-provoking works*' (**IMP6**).

Doing Time's impact upon cultural understandings of Hsieh's oeuvre, his standing and value within art history and consequently within art professional, museum and art market arenas has transformed his career. Hsieh notes Heathfield's '*writing, framing and curating... at Venice has presented my work to a much bigger public*', generating considerable popular discourse. The '*successful show*', Hsieh states, '*has made the greatest impact on the reception of my work in the art world*' and has caused '*the collection of my work by individual collectors and art institutions [to] grow*' (**IMP7**).

As the first non-Taiwanese pavilion curator (**IMP1**), Heathfield's work with an émigré artist and his curation's emphasis on grounding, belonging and itinerancy contributed to art world appreciation of Taiwanese diasporic culture and artistic practices (**IMP1, IMP7**). The assertion of the value of a neglected but key figure in its art history was strategically significant for the Taiwanese government. The presence and speech of the Minister of Culture at the opening ceremony evidence the research's contributions to the advancement of cultural exchange, to diversity in the art world and popular art historical perception (**IMP8**).

Doing Time's high-quality curation enhanced TFAM's regional and global renown. With regard to pavilion commissions, the Museum's Director noted how Heathfield, '*established a successful model through this inaugural international partnership*'. By curating '*a cosmopolitan context*', Heathfield, '*initiated a mechanism for the Taiwan Pavilion to talk to the international community and promote interaction and involvement between artistic communities in Taiwan*'. The exhibition substantially furthered the Museum's aim of '*building*' international renown for '*Taiwanese contemporary art history*' (**IMP1**). Asian Contemporary Art recognised Heathfield and the museum's collaboration with the 2017 award for 'Best Curatorial Team of the Year'. The jury statement recognised the exhibition's sophisticated narration of Hsieh's artistic journey: '*this... exhibition was not built around the artwork as with conventional exhibitions, but instead used a variety of literature and objects that marked the progress of Hsieh's forty years of creation*' (**IMP9**).

Heathfield's '*radical and ground breaking*' curation has influenced international exhibition strategies in relation to performance art practices, '*particularly how he brought Tehching Hsieh's unrealised work to life and turned an archive into a living body of work*'. This research has made

a significant contribution to professional discourse on the museum display of performance, whilst enacting 'a cultural diversification of the global figures in performance history', as evidenced in the testimony of a leading European museum director (**IMP10**).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

IMP1 Testimonial from the Director Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan dated 26 February 2020, detailing the impact of the exhibition on the museum's selection, commissioning and curatorial practices, alongside reflection on the exhibition's national and global reception.

IMP2 *Doing Time* exhibition attendance and print distribution statistics, May 2017 to November 2017.

IMP3 *Doing Time* exhibition visitor questionnaire responses, May 2017 to November 2017.

IMP4 *Doing Time* exhibition selected written visitor comments, May 2017 to November 2017.

IMP5 Metrics report for public engagement events related to *Doing Time* 2016-19, including online viewings and subsequent exhibitions of *Outside Again*.

IMP6 Press pack for *Doing Time* containing 49 reviews from local, national and international print and online media outlets. Highlighted Reviews of *Doing Time*, *The New York Times*, 16 May 2017; review of *Doing Time*, *Hyperallergic*, May 2017; review of *Doing Time*, *Culture Trip*, 8 June 2017; review of *Doing Time*, *The Guardian*, 24 October 2017.

IMP7 Testimonial from Tehching Hsieh dated 8 October 2020, reflecting on the impact of the exhibition on his career, art historical, public and art world reception and standing. Available on request.

IMP8 Press release dated 11 May 2017 detailing the visit of the Taiwanese Minister of Culture to *Doing Time*, illustrating the strategic significance of the exhibition for Taiwanese cultural outreach and the understanding of the nation's art traditions and contemporary practices. Available at: https://www.moc.gov.tw/en/information_196_75238.html.

IMP9 Translation of webpage (dated 21 February 2018) announcing that Heathfield and the curatorial team at Taipei Fine Arts Museum were awarded 'The Best Curatorial Team of the Year'. Original webpage available at: <http://www.cansart.com.tw:8000/mag/?tw-n-d-4474.html>

IMP10 Testimonial from the Director of Gropius Bau, Berlin dated 4 March 2021, reflecting on the influence of the exhibition on curatorial practices with performance and its archives. Available on request.