RISING ABOVE
The Kinsey African American Art & History Collection
On Display for the First Time Outside of the United States
Message from the Dean

It is with great pleasure that I share with you the news that in the latest Times Higher Education World University Subject Rankings for Arts and Humanities the University has risen 14 places from 44th in 2015-16 to 30th in the world in 2016-17. This is a fantastic result and is the largest move upward of any Faculty at HKU. We were one of only four Asian universities to have made it into the top 50 this year, which puts us above many other renowned institutions in the United States and Europe.

This has been a momentous year for our Faculty with a number of new initiatives put in place. As a result of the groundbreaking work accomplished by the Gender Task Force I established in 2015, a Committee on Gender Equality and Diversity has been set up to implement the Task Force’s recommendations and further review gender and diversity policies in the Faculty. We secured new professorial positions in Fine Arts, Urban China Studies, Gender Studies, Law and Humanities, and Humanities and Medicine, and will be looking to recruit world-class scholars to fill them. We established the Society of Fellows in the Humanities, an innovative scheme that invests in an internationally selected cohort of outstanding, early-career researchers, and I recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Humanities Center in North Carolina to nominate up to three scholars per year for the Center’s prestigious residential fellowships.

December was particularly meaningful in that it saw the opening of the exhibition “Rising Above: The Kinsey African American Art & History Collection”. The Faculty and the University Museum and Art Gallery worked for over a year to bring this unique and inspiring exhibition to Hong Kong – the first time the Collection has been shown outside of the US. Details of the exhibition can be found on page 14 of this newsletter and I urge you to see it – it makes the challenges and benefits of diversity real and tangible, in a way few collections can.

2017 promises to be an exciting year and your support is needed more than ever to guarantee the Faculty’s continued excellence in our mission to educate the next generation of Hong Kong and global leaders. Please contact us for more information about how you can help.

Professor Derek Collins
Dean of Arts
dcollins@hku.hk

New Staff Appointments

The Faculty was pleased to welcome the following academic and academic-related staff who took up new full-time and fixed-term positions during the period of May 1 to November 30, 2016.

School of Chinese
Dr Nicholas Williams, Assistant Professor

School of English
Dr Hannah Shipman, Post-Doctoral Fellow

School of Humanities
Dr Youngah Do, Assistant Professor (Linguistics)
Dr John Perry, Assistant Professor (Linguistics)

Centre for Applied English Studies
Dr Karen Ngeow, Senior Lecturer

Centre of Buddhist Studies
Ven Dr Sik Hin Tak, Post-Doctoral Fellow

Existing Staff

The following existing members of staff took up new full-time and fixed-term positions during the period of May 1 to November 30, 2016.

School of Chinese
Dr Yang Binbin, Associate Professor

School of Humanities
Professor David Pomfret, Professor (History)
Deborah Waugh, Assistant Lecturer (Music)

Centre for Applied English Studies
Mr Samuel Cole III, Senior Lecturer
Mr Juan Castillo, Lecturer
Mr Colin Tait, Lecturer
Dr Kevin Yung, Lecturer
Mr Julian Chase, Assistant Lecturer
Mr Keith Chau, Assistant Lecturer
Mr Patrick Leung, Assistant Lecturer
Mr Kevin Pat, Assistant Lecturer
Ms Glenda Thomas, Assistant Lecturer
The Faculty of Arts is the first faculty at HKU to take a detailed look at gender inequality and related issues within its walls, and to act to redress the problem.

Less than one-quarter of full professors in Arts are female, a ratio that has remained unchanged for at least two decades. Moreover, no woman who is less than full professor has ever had their tenure extended beyond age 60 unlike their male counterparts. Women academics also leave the University at a faster rate than men, so retention is a major problem.

“There are stunning inequalities and a clear glass ceiling which have to do with hiring, promotion and tenure. But there are also concerns about sexual harassment and climate, and the ability of faculty members to research on gender sexuality, feminism and women’s issues and get the same amount of credit for it,” said Professor Gina Marchetti, who chaired a task force on the matter.

The task force was initiated by the Dean, Professor Derek Collins, in December 2015 and it released detailed recommendations at a forum last June that have been accepted without change. These included having an elected Standing Committee on Gender Equality and Diversity with representation from across the Faculty – elections were held in October and the Committee had its first meeting on November 22. The Committee’s members now also include administrative staff, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate student representatives.

Professor Marchetti, who will stay on as an appointee and special advisor to the Dean, said the task force purposely recommended expanding the brief beyond just gender. “Diversity is a very important issue and one of the things that we want to lead in. If we don’t have a diverse student body, if we don’t have a diverse faculty, we’re not really doing our job as a university and exposing people to a wide variety of perspectives.”

Four sub-committees were set up to look at the key areas of concern: hiring, retention and promotion; sexual harassment and climate in units: leadership, professional development and mentoring; and research, curriculum and academic freedom.

The Dean has also acted with immediate effect to change the composition of several key committees so they include more women and are more diverse, including the promotion and tenure panel, and he has started to oversee every hire to ensure there are sufficient numbers of women in the pool. And he supports looking at whether research on gender, sexuality, women’s issues and diversity could be made a stronger component of the Faculty’s research profile.

Speaking at the Committee’s first meeting, Professor Collins emphasized the impact the Task Force has had on the HKU community. “Although the Gender Task Force was a Faculty initiative, it is clear that many of its recommendations address university-wide structural issues. As evidenced by the commitment made by our President, Professor Peter Mathieson, to the United Nations’ HeforShe initiative, the University is keen to lead the way on gender and diversity and is laying out new policies to tackle these concerns, guided by the excellent work of the Task Force and other organizations, such as the HKU Women’s Studies Research Centre.”

The 10-member task force – which included representatives from each of the Faculty’s schools and units – also tried to raise awareness about gender on the campus as a whole by organising talks on gender in academia and setting up a web page with documents and bibliographies that are accessible to the public.

“It’s been a boy’s club and people find it hard to believe because they feel there are so many amazingly talented women academics in the arts. They think the gender problem is all in STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics], but it’s not,” Professor Marchetti added.

The Faculty’s Committee on Gender Equality and Diversity includes representatives from all four Schools and the Centre for Applied English Studies, as well as staff and student representatives. The Committee can be contacted via email (artsgced@hku.hk) or through its webpage: http://arts.hku.hk/about-us/CGED
When Dr Lisa Lim was appointed the new Head of English, the reactions ranged from hearty congratulations to heartfelt commiserations. But Dr Lim was completely unfazed – she is the kind of person who frames challenges as opportunities. She even cheerfully describes the extra workload as a chance to become more efficient in her busy life, which will continue to include teaching and research, the launch of a new journal Language Ecology in the spring, and family life with a young son.

“I’m very positive about stepping into such a role because of the kind of leadership we have now with [HKU President] Peter Mathieson and the Dean, Derek Collins. They have fresh, innovative, bold thinking of how things can be done,” she said.

“I also feel really excited because the School is already strong, stable, and collegial. I don’t want to rock the boat too much. We have high enrolments and excellent teachers and researchers. But there are a few goals I have been thinking about and that I’ve articulated to the School.”

First is the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. “If we can think of ourselves as a collective, a community, that’s going to enhance what we do.”

Promoting that idea can be done in several ways. She mentioned forums such as reading groups to bring together staff and research postgraduates – which is already happening in her area of linguistics – holding social gatherings, and appointing new staff who can open pathways and build bridges.

Four new appointments are imminent. Three senior staff have recently retired, including Professor Douglas Kerr and Professor Elaine Ho who were each with the School more than 30 years. While their experience will be missed, Dr Lim said this was an invaluable opportunity for the School to reflect on and determine how it wants to grow and shape its profile in literary studies. The School will also house an interdisciplinary open pathways and build bridges.

Her second goal is impact beyond academia and in the community, something that is gaining importance across the university. “We’re in an era of academia where we can’t be disconnected. We have to stay relevant and significant for today’s world. So for example we can talk about the history of English, not just in terms of the developments of old, middle and early modern English, but also the growth of English nowadays, where English speakers in Asia outnumber speakers in so-called traditional native English-speaking countries, and where much interaction takes place online and what that means for the evolution of New Engishes. And we need to convey the significance of all this to our students and to society.”

Her third goal is to invigorate connections with the community. One of her first actions as Head was to launch a School Facebook page. “We’re in this age where you have to be proactive and make your presence felt. It would be foolish not to take advantage of the social media and web platforms out there to showcase what we do.” Dr Lim has also set up a School Enterprise and Impact Committee to cultivate closer ties with School Alumni and the wider community, in particular schools, as well as other organisations such as the Hong Kong International Literary Festival.

Dr Lim is the founder of the LinguisticMinorities.HK website (http://linguisticminorities.hk/), a one-stop resource on the linguistic situations of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. For her work on the website, Dr Lim was awarded the Faculty Knowledge Exchange Award 2014.

Dr Lim writes a fortnightly column, “Language Matters”, for the South China Morning Post’s Sunday Post Magazine. In each column, she takes on a word or phrase used in Hong Kong or the region and explores its origins, and its significance in issues of society, policy, identity and power. http://www.scmp.com/author/lisa-lim

HKU Black Box News

In November 2016, the HKU Black Box was proud to produce the play Livy in the Garden, written and directed by Professor Ellen W Kaplan, Head of Theatre at Smith College, and Distinguished Writer in Residence and Visiting Fellow at Robert Black College. In an exploration of intercultural drama, this original Black Box production showcased the strengths of Hong Kong’s communities, revisiting the histories and village of Tai Mei Tuk. Four remarkable final year Arts students assisted as Black Box Interns: Chow Hei Lok Gladys, Ng Hoi Yee Angel, Audrey O’Young, and Wong Yuen Ting Nicole.

The doors will open again to the HKU community and public for a major new Black Box production in late February 2017: a unique adaptation of the German composer Engelbert Humperdinck’s classic opera, Hansel and Gretel. Staged and reimagined for the Black Box, this unexpected opera will feature a musical ensemble, local and international actor-singers, and extraordinary larger-than-life puppets.

http://www.english.hku.hk/
Europe invented the nation state but in the last century it experienced the ugly side of nationalism, particularly during the First and the Second World Wars. While such nationalist divisions were largely overcome in Western Europe, the continent remained divided until the collapse of communism in 1989. This enabled Europeans to pursue integration even further and do away with the borders of nation states to preserve peace and democracy. But integration may now be having the opposite effect.

This is the starting point of a GRF by Dr Stefan Auer, titled “Borderless Europe and its Discontents: National Sovereignty in Times of Crisis”.

Dr Auer, who was also recently awarded the Jean Monnet Chair in European Studies, considers the three major crises facing the European Union today: the Eurozone crisis which undermines governments’ ability to redress their economic problems; the crisis on the Russia-Ukraine border which undermines people’s confidence in Europe as a peace project; and the migration crisis which threatens freedom of movement as member states try to regain some control over their borders.

For Dr Auer, the source of these conflicts lies in the erosion of democracy at the nation state level.

“My key concern is that no political system can work without there being clearly defined boundaries of its community. The problems in the EU would have been there anyway but they were arguably made more intractable by what I would describe as the sovereignty paradox. Member states no longer have full control over their own destiny but they retain enough of it to prevent the EU from dealing with those problems,” he said.

This scenario was behind the Brexit vote and the rise of far-right national parties in Europe. While Dr Auer is alarmed by the latter, he thinks the Brexit referendum was not necessarily a bad thing because it focused attention on the sovereignty issue. “One of the slogans was taking back control. I think there was something to that.”

He believes it may be time for Europe to be more fastidious about its external borders and to rethink its internal ones. “I am not saying we need divisions like the East-West borders of the Cold War, but some control of internal borders may need to be reinstated along the lines the UK government was proposing before the Brexit referendum. It might make more sense to allow people to move to another country when they have a job there rather than show up without the prospect of any job.”

Given the rapid rise of the far right and disillusionment with the EU, there is an urgent need to push forward these ideas. “What worries me is that if no mainstream parties articulate these concerns, then that leaves space for populists who have much more radical and reprehensible solutions.

“I am not a Euro-sceptic. I’ve been passionate about Europe my whole life,” he added, pointing out that he came from communist Czechoslovakia and was a refugee in the old West Germany in the late 1980s. “But I’m worried about what I consider the utopian element of it pushing towards something that is unachievable. My argument is for some kind of dramatic correction.”
Taiwanese writers had to jump through hoops to practice their craft in much of the 20th century. Although classical Chinese poetry writing was encouraged at the beginning of Japanese colonial rule (1895-1945) as a strategy to win the local gentry’s support, Japanese language education started as early as 1896. By the early 1940s, the Japanese literacy rate in Taiwan had reached approximately 70%. Under wartime mobilization, many stopped writing in Chinese and gave up experimenting in their native Taiwanese; writers were not merely expected to write in Japanese but also to produce pro-Japanese works. When the Nationalists came over from Mainland China in the late 1940s, Taiwanese writers were told to stop using Japanese and to write in Mandarin. And hovering over all these language issues was political censorship.

Dr Lin Pei-yin of the School of Chinese has been looking at both eras to show how popular writing endured despite the restrictions. “I am trying to make the point that no matter what happens in politics, somehow popular narratives, such as love stories or family sagas, continue to be told. The writers of these stories just add the right references to their templates so they can keep writing without offending the colonialists or Nationalists,” she said.

She has pursued this thesis through two projects, one a GRF project started in 2015 on popular Chinese-language literature from Taiwan under Japanese rule, and the other a study of popular romance writing in Cold War Taiwan which she conducted during a Harvard-Yenching Fellowship in 2015-16.

The material for the first project may seem to be thin on the ground given that Chinese publications were banned from April 1937, but Dr Lin said some publications were still tolerated, such as detective stories and romance novels.

“The reality is that the ban was not absolute. Some lightweight popular journals were able to continue publishing, of course with some difficulty because of financial reasons and having to negotiate with censors. But these writers were allowed to entertain themselves as long as they didn’t write anything against the colonisers,” she said.

“Content-wise, they did have to compromise. In the 1940s, towards the end of the colonial era, even in popular love stories female protagonists would decide to go to the frontline to be a nurse, or the man would say he wanted to devote himself to the Japanese empire. It’s as if all of a sudden they had to insert something politically correct.

“But that compromise demonstrates these writers had a certain agency since they found a way to continue writing despite all these restrictions.”

Similar compromises were made by writers in the Cold War years of the 1950s and 1960s who were trying to avoid the wrath of the Nationalist rulers. Native Taiwanese writers who previously wrote in Japanese either had to master Mandarin or stopped writing altogether. Following the February 28 Incident of 1947 in which many local elites were killed by the Nationalists, Taiwan’s early post-war literary scene was dominated by émigré writers who arrived in Taiwan after 1945.

“Many local writers became silent and popular stories were composed by mainlanders. So there’s a very drastic shift in terms of cultural capital. But I argue that the popular imagination, the romance or detective stories, continued regardless. This enables me to compare the Japanese colonisers and the Nationalist government in terms of their ideological control and censorship of writing.
Department of History PhD candidate Dao Zi Huang has been studying Hong Kong’s image in the world under British colonial rule, a project that was much enriched when she was awarded the inaugural Tse Family HKU-Cambridge Hughes Hall Scholarship 2015-16.

The scholarship enabled her to spend a year at Cambridge University where she decided to pursue an MPhil in World History. She had already completed three years of her PhD so the decision was a little surprising, but she had entered HKU directly from the University of Sydney with a Bachelor’s degree and felt the MPhil would give her the grounding needed to complete her dissertation.

“I definitely benefited from having the time to think about the theory and structure of how you present history, without being confronted with the completion of my dissertation,” she said. “I’ve restructured my thesis as a result and my approach to writing has changed so that I write with a lot less hesitation. I’ve gained in confidence.”

Her MPhil concerned the European attempt after the First World War to create a world order under the rhetoric of internationalisation, and China’s place in it. “I was able to think about history in different scales of space and time rather than necessarily following the Western trajectory of a historical understanding of progression, from ancient cultures up to the modern world. It doesn’t have to be categorised in those ways or in spaces like nations or regions, you can also look at the connections between regions or cities and reconfigure how you tell history.”

This has fed into her PhD because she is looking at how Hong Kong was depicted in British imperial cultural history and what that said about the region. “I’m trying to understand how the margins of empire were made to matter at home. Hong Kong was such a significant economic and strategic outpost, but it was largely not as visible in Britain as India or Africa or the settler colonies. But there were very important conversations that played out in Sino-British tensions, and also the imagining of tropical places, disease and Chinese people. So I’m looking at the representations of that,” she said.

Drawing on travel writings, photos, paintings, postcards and other materials from the mid-1800s to the 1940s, she has found that the images of Hong Kong barely change despite the growth and urbanisation of the city and the expanded British presence.

“In a lot of descriptions, there is a timelessness to Hong Kong that exists in the villages and the people, and also the geographical region itself. It’s tied into how the British perceived the tropics as backward and exotic versus the industrial progression of Britain itself.”

Ms Huang was drawn to the topic by her family background. They regularly visited Hong Kong and Guangzhou from Australia when she was growing up. “My parents are both quite artistic and they always talked about the difference of space and development in Hong Kong design versus China. And there was this transition from Sydney to Hong Kong to Guangzhou, to a familiar foreignness in a way. I always wanted to understand Hong Kong a bit more,” she said.

Trading Places

Mr Morton Wan (MPhil, School of Humanities – Music) and Dr Kara Fleming (PhD, School of Humanities – Linguistics) were conferred Li Ka Shing Prizes (2014-2015) at the Graduate School Award Presentation Ceremony on December 16, 2016.

The following full-time PhD candidates are fellowship awardees for 2015-2016:

Lee Shau Kee Postgraduate Fellowship
Mr Kaibin Ouyang (School of Chinese)

Philip KH Wong Foundation Postgraduate Fellowships
Mr Lau Ting Kwong (Centre of Buddhist Studies)

Hong Kong PhD Fellowships
Mr Arthur Thompson (School of Humanities – Linguistics)
Mr Andrew Park (School of Modern Languages and Culture – European Studies)

Mr Gordon Fung Dic-Lun, a PhD candidate in Composition in the Department of Music, was awarded 2nd Prize in the category of “Compositions for Ensemble of Traditional Chinese and Western Instruments” with his piece “Rivière sans Retour” at the International Composition Competition, Leibniz’s Harmonies 2016. The Competition is held in honour of German rationalist philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) under the auspices of the German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China in Berlin. The winners were selected from among 100 entries by an international jury.

Mr Gordon Fung Dic-Lun, a PhD candidate in Composition in the Department of Music, was awarded 2nd Prize in the category of “Compositions for Ensemble of Traditional Chinese and Western Instruments” with his piece “Rivière sans Retour” at the International Composition Competition, Leibniz’s Harmonies 2016. The Competition is held in honour of German rationalist philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) under the auspices of the German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China in Berlin. The winners were selected from among 100 entries by an international jury.

http://www.scholarships.hku.hk/Scholarships/detail/366
A new minor in Buddhist Studies was launched this academic year, following a surge of interest among both local and international undergraduates.

The programme builds on earlier offerings, including an introductory Common Core course that has expanded from 120 enrolments in 2012 to 200 this year.

Ven Sik Hin Hung, the Director of the Centre of Buddhist Studies, said the strong growth reflected students’ desire to understand the world better and their place in it.

“We are very surprised that so many students are interested in this subject,” he said. “It relates to their philosophy of life. Many local students feel that there is something lacking in their lives and they don’t know what to do about it. Before 1997, everything was clear: we are part of Chinese culture. But after that somehow it changed. Chinese history was dropped as a required subject in school. They know they are Hong Kong people, but what are Hong Kong people? Many of them see themselves as being different from mainland Chinese. How should they see themselves in the world? You can say a lot of Hong Kong youngsters are lost in some ways. The courses on Buddhism give them another perspective of how to look at life. They may not become Buddhist, but they get some hints and tips from the philosophy about how to better understand themselves and see the world.”

International students have a similar motivation – they want a framework for reflecting on the world and the difficulties they may face in life – but they also want to learn about Chinese culture and the origins of Buddhism. About 20 to 30 per cent of enrolments are international, quite a high percentage compared with other courses on campus. The students come from societies that may have some exposure to Buddhism, such as India and Vietnam, as well as the West.

The minor qualification requires students to take two compulsory introductory courses on Buddhist teachings and religious studies, and four electives from a choice of 11 offered by the Faculty of Arts and other faculties. These cover such topics as Buddhist psychology and mental cultivation, Chinese Buddhist art, Buddhism and economics, and the Pāli language (the Buddhist equivalent to Latin).

Ven Hin Hung said the courses provided a scholarly perspective on the history and development of Buddhism and varieties of practice. Students also learn about the importance of meditation.

Since the minor in Buddhist Studies is new, students do not have to declare for another two years or so. Looking down the road, Ven Hin Hung does not expect to offer a major in the near future (“it’s nice if they want to be a Buddhist monk, but what else would they do with a major in Buddhist studies?” he said). But the existing Taught and Research Postgraduate programmes are doing well.

“We are very lucky to be able to launch this minor and to have good guidance from the Dean to make sure we are in line with offering an academic programme,” he added.

The Centre of Buddhist Studies promoted their new minor at HKU Information Day 2016

Faculty of Arts Students Named Global Winner and Regional Winners by the Undergraduate Awards 2016

Ms Tai Ming Wai Amy, an English Studies and Music double major who graduated from the University of Hong Kong with First Class Honours in 2016, has been named Global Winner in the category of Art History, Music, Film and Theatre by the Undergraduate Awards 2016. Ms Tang Siu Hang Winnie, a History and Chinese History and Culture double major, was named Regional Winner, Asia, in the History category, and Ms Eva Ng, a General Linguistics major, was named Regional Winner, Asia, in the Languages and Linguistics category in the 2016 Awards.

Two further Arts students had their papers “highly commended” in the 2016 Awards. Mr Li Ka Chi, a Music major, and Mr Chan Wai Chi William, an English Studies and Translation double major.

The Undergraduate Awards, first established in 2009, aim to celebrate and support the world’s brightest and most innovative undergraduate students by recognizing their best coursework and projects. This year’s awardees were selected from among 5,514 submissions from students in 244 institutions across 40 countries. (http://www.undergraduateawards.com/)
A request from the University of Tokyo (U Tokyo) to the Faculty to co-organise a summer exchange in Hong Kong for its students has blossomed into an experiential learning opportunity for HKU students, too, and deepened the Faculty’s engagement with the community.

The HKU-U Tokyo Joint Summer Programme brings together students from different disciplines to focus on a specific theme relating to Japanese business in Hong Kong. In 2016 their theme was the production, distribution and consumption of food – a topic of particular relevance because Japan exports more agricultural and marine products to Hong Kong than to any other territory or country in the world (although many of these products are re-exported rather than consumed locally).

The HKU and U Tokyo students lived together at Shun Hing College during the two-week course in August and spent their days visiting and meeting with senior figures of such companies as Japan Airlines, Yakult, Nissan Infiniti, city’super, Ajisen Ramen, and Nippon Wealth Bank.

They learned how seafood brought to market at 5am in Japan is ready for consumption in Hong Kong restaurants by 5pm the same day, how Yakult has become so ubiquitous in Hong Kong that some people are unaware of its Japanese origins, and how Ajisen Ramen is a bigger phenomenon in China and Hong Kong than in Japan.

“They talked to people dealing with localisation and globalisation at the same time,” said Dr Yoshiko Nakano of the Department of Japanese Studies in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, who co-organised the programme with Professor Shigeto Sonoda of U Tokyo. “It’s good for both Japanese and HKU students that they are exposed to that sort of adaptability while they are young.”

The students were required to produce group presentations on Japanese business in Hong Kong and the topics were wide ranging. One group looked at the gender differences in customers at Yoshinoya restaurants, which specialise in beef rice bowls and are popular with working-class men in Japan, but appeal to families and university students in Hong Kong.

Another group looked at how to boost Hong Kong tourism to provincial Japan by improving WiFi and photo opportunities because Hong Kong tourists like to post frequent photos of their travels on social media.

Other presentations looked at the variety of ways Japanese soy sauces are used in Hong Kong restaurants, the use of the name “Hokkaido” on products here, and the reasons why Japanese ramen appeal to Hong Kong people.

This was the third time HKU and U Tokyo have organised a summer exchange and the intake included students from disciplines as diverse as aerospace engineering, biomedical sciences and Japanese Studies. The main requirement was that participants were proficient in Japanese and English. HKU students had the option of doing extra written work so they could earn six credits for the course.

“The Japanese Consul-General also met with the students and took questions from them. It is a very rare opportunity for university students to get the chance to do this and to meet with business leaders,” Dr Nakano said. “The Faculty is benefiting, too, because this is a good way to interact with the business community and communicate with students from different disciplines.”

The HKU-U Tokyo Joint Summer Programme 2016 was supported by the Shun Hing College Endowment Fund. The Programme will be held for the fourth time from August 1 to 12, 2017.

Students Explore the Japanese Presence in Hong Kong

HKU Team Competing in Televised Cultural Debate Competition

An HKU team captained by Arts undergraduate student Mr Chong Shing Hei are among the finalists in the cultural debate competition, “The World Listens to Me”. The team, which also includes Mr Huang Guanyu and Mr Lim Kam Ho, both undergraduate students from the Faculty of Business and Economics, are competing against 17 other university teams from Hong Kong, Mainland China, Macau and Taiwan in the final stage of the competition in Beijing. The team is coached by Mr Hayson Liu from the School of Chinese.

Over two hundred institutions and 1,100 students took part in the preliminary rounds of the competition, which is co-organized by China Central Television (CCTV) and Taiwan’s CTi TV. The programme will be broadcast on CCTV 4 and CTi TV from November 2016 to February 2017 and is expected to reach millions of viewers in 198 countries.

http://www.japanese.hku.hk/
Lessons from a Year Abroad

The University of Hong Kong has a goal to offer every undergraduate the opportunity for a meaningful experience both in Mainland China and overseas by 2022 (and half of all students by 2019). In the Faculty of Arts, many students and graduates have already undertaken exchanges to broaden their horizons. Two of them recount their sometimes challenging but ultimately rewarding years abroad. Both students are inaugural recipients of the prestigious Run Run Shaw Scholarships established in memory of the late Dr the Honourable Run Run Shaw.

Life in Beijing

Gertrude Wong Man-fong spent the final year of her BA in Chinese Studies at Peking University in 2015-16, studying courses that were not available to her here such as archaeology and kunqu opera. While the content was exciting, the teaching methods were unlike anything she had encountered before.

Peking U lets the general public attend lectures, so she found herself having to reserve her seat hours in advance by placing a sticker on the chair – even in halls that held 300 people. There were also few tutorials and the large class sizes meant questions to the professors were not welcome.

Living conditions were also different. Her dorm room came with a wooden palette but no mattress and was located on the sixth floor without a lift. Her biggest recurrent expenditure was face masks to cope with Beijing’s pollution.

But the experience had definite upsides. Ms Wong enjoyed the courses and life in Beijing. Peking U paired her with a study partner who showed her around the city and helped her with her Putonghua, and Taylor, a mentor from HKU, welcomed her into his family. Most importantly, she saw first-hand the advancement of China and what that could mean for Hong Kong.

"Hong Kong is no longer the window to China. The rise of China is a good chance for Hong Kong people to ask themselves how we can improve. We shouldn’t be negative, we should think of the possibilities of all this," she said.

Out in the wild

Jieun Choi had a dramatically different experience at the University of Melbourne where she also spent a year. She is nearing the end of her BA in Fine Arts with a minor in Journalism, and was attracted by the diverse art, culture and ethnic make-up of Melbourne.

The academic side of the exchange gave her the opportunity to study things she might not otherwise. Fine arts classes were held in a museum in front of the works being discussed. She also took creative writing courses and discovered a love of writing.

But it was the time spent outside the classroom that was the most fulfilling.

“I grew up in Seoul and then came to Hong Kong. I had never been comfortable outside the city and in nature, but then we took a two-week camping trip to a place with no phone signal or Internet connection. We slept in tents in the rain and later drove through a bush fire. We were the only ones in this massive place. That trip really marked my time in Australia. I discovered I enjoyed mountains, hiking, being outside.

“I think an exchange is not only about academic opportunities but also the experience of being in a different place, with people from different places. It’s about the experience as a whole,” she said.

Run Run Shaw Scholarships 2016/2017

In recognition of the generous support from the Shaw Foundation, the Faculty has set up a scholarship fund in memory of the late Dr the Honourable Run Run Shaw. The aim of the fund is to provide long-term financial support for Arts student exchange and enrichment purposes.

These prestigious Scholarships are awarded to non-final year BA students who are participating in a full-year Faculty- or University-level exchange programme. The 2016-2017 scholars are:

Ms Chan Fong Chit – Durham University
Mr Ho Fei Wan – University of Manchester
Ms Leung Yuk Ling Yoyo – University of Leeds
Ms Yau Lai On Chelsea – University of Kent
Ms Yuen Shui Ying – University of Edinburgh

The Faculty believes that the study abroad experience should be an integral part of our students’ time at university and we are grateful to the Shaw Foundation for their support in achieving this goal.

http://arts.hku.hk/teaching-and-learning/student-exchange-programmes
Poet Sarah Howe wears a small jade bracelet on a string around her neck, a baby gift and now a symbol of her art. Born to an English father and a Chinese mother who was abandoned at birth, she has published a collection of poetry, *Loop of Jade*, that explores the question of identity that has always loomed over her. It was the first debut collection to win the prestigious TS Eliot Prize for Poetry in the UK.

“Part of the urgency that prompted this book was that I felt my connection to my Chineseness was very tenuous,” she said. “This book speaks to the sheer difficulty of recovering, literally, my family’s past because of my mum having been abandoned when she was a baby. But also of recovering my connection to some idea of Chinese culture.”

She finds what she calls a “tentative answer” to her quest through poems such as “Crossing from Guangdong”. “The final image is of the Star Ferry crossing the sea between Hong Kong Island side and Kowloon side. So this notion that home is not a location, or not being on either side, but the fact of that endless crossing and the process of the journey,” she said.

The journey and the Hong Kong connection have been explored in other projects, too, including one with HKU. She was commissioned by Dr Marco Wan in the Faculty of Law to produce a poem for an academic journal he was editing and came up with an “erasure” poem about the Basic Law called “Two Systems”, in which words of the document were erased to reveal new meaning. The poem took on a further dimension because it was written in the summer of 2014, shortly before the Umbrella Movement.

More recently, she was inspired by revelations this summer that Edward Snowden stayed with asylum seekers in a tiny flat during his time in Hong Kong. “That just utterly fascinated me. In some ways it reminded me of the Odyssey, the notion that he was travelling across the world and was given succour by these people who had almost nothing themselves, and yet offered him unquestioning hospitality.”

She has written a poem about his stay, one of the random assortment of writings (another topic is theoretical physics) that she is producing while she waits for her next collection to take form – “something that snags in the mind and just won’t let me go.” Much like Hong Kong itself.

“My story is a Hong Kong story,” she said, even though she has resided in the UK since age seven. “I really think that the Hong Kong identity is a hybrid thing. I feel that coming from both English and Chinese heritage, Hong Kong explains who I am and why I exist.”

Ms Howe also recently enjoyed a one-year fellowship at Radcliffe College at Harvard and has been discussing *Loop of Jade* at literary festivals, such as the Hong Kong International Literary Festival in November, which brought her to the Faculty as a speaker in the Second Century Lecture Series.

---

**Funded KE Impact Projects 2016-2017**

**German with Fun - Language and Cultural Project for Secondary School Students**
Dr Chong Li (German Programme)

**Hong Kong Keywords: Reproducing Hong Kong Cultures**
Professor Stephen Chu (Hong Kong Studies)

**Big Language Data for Beginners: HKU CorpusMate**
Dr Peter Crosthwaite (Centre for Applied English Studies)

**Automated Content Feedback and English Essay Writing**
Dr Cynthia Lee (Centre for Applied English Studies)

**LinguisticMinorities.HK: Bigger Picture, Broader Issues**
Dr Lisa Lim (School of English)

**Resources for Interpreting – Developing a Mobile App Version**
Dr Eva Ng (School of Chinese)

**Mind HK: Developing a Web-based Information Resource on Mental Health in Hong Kong**
Dr Olga Zayts (School of English) and Mr Joseph Poon (School of Chinese)

---

The imagined world of acclaimed author Yan Geling is so vivid that her characters move her to tears – even long after she has written their story. Whether she is proofreading a translation of her work or watching a story adapted to film, she inevitably gets caught up afresh in the tales of her imagination.

“My personality is such that I easily get carried away. You know, I read my last novel Little Aunt Crane translated into English and I cried, I couldn’t stop, I felt whoa, that’s a powerful book.

“The first time I watch a movie of my stories, I am totally like any other audience member. I am surprised, even if it is a script that I revised many times,” she said during a recent visit to HKU as Writer-in-Residence in the School of Chinese.

The themes of her works lend themselves to strong reaction. For example, Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl, a film by Joan Chen based on a story by Yan and for which she co-wrote the screenplay, is about a young woman who is sent to Tibet with the promise she can return home in six months, but is left there and abused. The Banquet Bug is a novel about corruption in modern China. Little Aunt Crane is a love story that starts with mass suicides in Manchuria in August 1945.

Ms Yan’s own background overlaps with dramatic times in recent Chinese history. She served with the People’s Liberation Army during the Cultural Revolution, starting at age 12 as a dancer and later becoming a journalist in the Sino-Vietnamese border conflict. She attained a rank equivalent to Lieutenant Colonel. In 1989 she left China to pursue graduate studies in the US and now resides in Berlin.

While she could draw inspiration from her own experiences, she mostly lets her characters come to her and tell her their stories.

“We are interacting with each other, me as the author and the characters. The best moments are when they surprise me. That’s the high point of a writer’s life,” she said, citing Xiu Xiu’s request to have the male protagonist shoot her as the biggest surprise of all. “It was the only logical outcome.”

In contrast to that high is the low of being asked to outline her stories before she starts writing, as studios are fond of doing. “This is very difficult because all that is behind me is emotion, something mysterious. If I have to do a map or chart of what I will write, I will never follow it anyway,” she said.

Ms Yan gave a version of that advice during a workshop she led for HKU students. Though she was only able to scratch the surface of the craft of writing, she implored them “to let your imagination fly, you have to make believe.”

Ms Yan also judged a competition of student-written stories and said she was glad to finally come to HKU, having drawn inspiration from Eileen Chang and other writers who studied here. “From early on I read lots of her stories. I think this is a university for writers. Well, here I am.”


Under the Scheme, academics and writers of international renown are invited each year to visit the School for a two-month residency, engaging in a variety of outreach activities, including public lectures, workshops and seminars, as well as serving as Adjudicator for the Hong Kong University Modern Chinese Literature Award Competition.

The Departments of Music and Architecture have entered into an unusual collaboration to explore their mutual interest in sound and space, through a two-year project called Sounding Architecture.

The project had its seeds in classroom collaborations – each department was doing work that touched on the other discipline and so sought their advice – but has quickly evolved to be a platform for knowledge exchange and, it is hoped, research. It is funded by HKU’s Interdisciplinary Knowledge Exchange Project Scheme.

“Sound and space have been a topic of study for quite a while in music, but this project is more focused in that it comes specifically from architecture. I can’t think of many collaborations like this,” said Dr José Vicente Neglia, Assistant Professor of Music.

The connections between the two departments began to form in 2015 when music students were asked to construct instruments for an Asia Society concert that drew on the sculptural designs of Harry Partch. It was decided they needed design and construction advice, and contact was made with a former student of Associate Professor of Architecture Thomas Tsang. This soon developed into direct contact between the two departments.

Mr Tsang subsequently asked music staff to lead a workshop on sound for his students, a topic he felt was often neglected in architecture.

“Architects design space and let engineers test the acoustics. They have been focused on looking but not listening. These are fundamentals we have forgotten,” he said.

Music Assistant Lecturer, Dr Deborah Waugh, elaborated on their involvement. “When musicians walk through spaces, we always hear the space and we react to that space. If architects can do the same, it would be fantastic,” she said. “We have been trying to raise their sound awareness through the vehicle of music, by having them make musical instruments and see how they sound in different spaces. The same principles about sound that they learn through this can be applied to an office or a library or an outdoor space.”

Both departments gradually saw the potential of further collaboration and in September they launched their KE project at a symposium called “Towards a Manifesto: Sounding Architecture”.

They will be organising workshops and talks leading up to an installation, exhibition and performance, which will all be open to the public. External collaborators are also involved, including the Hong Kong New Music Ensemble and the arts organisation Spring Workshop. American composers Ken Ueno and Eli Marshall have also visited and worked with students in both departments on developing instruments and sounds, helping the project to gain momentum.

Dr Waugh said it was exciting to approach their field in a new way and to give students in both disciplines the chance to stretch outside their comfort zones.

“Generally these days students play mass-produced instruments. To have the opportunity to use heavy-duty machines like industrial saws to create musical instruments, and then perform on these instruments, gives students enormous freedom,” she said. “Essentially this project is bringing together many different people interested in exploring all the issues surrounding sound and space.”

The Art of Guqin, Chinese Calligraphy & Painting

The Faculty joined the Department of Music and the Music Library, the University of Hong Kong Libraries, to host an evening with award-winning musician and calligrapher Mr Sou Si-tai on October 27, 2016. Mr Sou is the Chairman of the Deyin Qin Society of Hong Kong and performs frequently in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Japan, Europe and the United States. The playing of the guqin bears a strong similarity to the brushwork and technique of traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting. The lecture invited a comparison between these artistic expressions and featured live performances by Mr Sou of qin compositions.

http://www.music.hku.hk/events/others/sounding_architecture.html
One of the world’s best collections of African American art and history is making its first appearance outside the US at HKU, in a collaborative exhibition involving the Faculty and the University Museum and Art Gallery (UMAG).

The Kinsey African American Art and History Collection includes more than 120 pieces of art, artefacts, official records and first editions revealing the experiences and achievements of African Americans since 1595.

The Kinsey Collection is the first privately owned collection to have been displayed at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History and is now on long-term display at Epcot, Walt Disney World, in Florida. It has been seen by more than six million people in 24 US cities and arrived at HKU on December 9 under the title “Rising Above”. It will stay here until February 26.

“We’re very much interested in showing the long history of African Americans and how civil participation and community building existed in parallel to slavery. And how this beauty and culture grew out of that — that’s the ‘rising above’,” said UMAG director and Honorary Associate Professor of Fine Arts, Dr Florian Knothe.

A striking example is a book by the first African American poet, Phillis Wheatley, Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral, published in 1773. Wheatley was a slave and a first edition of her book will be exhibited alongside shackles used in the transport of slaves. (A first edition of 12 Years a Slave, written in 1853 by Solomon Northup and the subject of a recent film, will also be on display.)

Dr Tim Gruenewald, Director of the American Studies Programme, calls the shackles a “low light” of the exhibition. “They symbolise what slavery means through material history. It is dehumanisation, while poetry is one of the noblest products of human endeavour.”

Dr Knothe added: “The Kinseys were attracted to Hong Kong and HKU both as a stepping stone to Mainland China – there are plans to take the collection there later – and as a chance to advance their educational mission. The University will not disappoint.

The exhibition is being used as a jumping-off point for academic and community activities. Dr Gruenewald has created a special course around the exhibition and recruited experts from the US to come and give talks to students. These scholars will also contribute to a book of essays in which they take an object from the exhibition and write about its significance – for example, one essay will use a copy of segregation laws to explore the protest of segregation in blues music. The book will be published in addition to a museum catalogue and suitable for undergraduate teaching.

Free public lectures are planned at UMAG for most Thursday evenings in February and March 2017. In addition to Dr Knothe and Dr Gruenewald, speakers include Dr Kendall Johnson and Dr Selina Lai-Henderson from the HKU American Studies Programme, as well as scholars from the Universities of Wisconsin-Madison and Massachusetts Amherst, Northwestern University, and DePaul University. There will also be a concert of blues music in the museum on February 22 and a concert by the Hong Kong Philharmonic featuring African American composers on February 24.

Students have been recruited to help translate materials, lead guided visits, post messages on social media, and generally communicate to local audiences about the exhibition and African American history.

“When we heard that we could host this exhibition, nothing better could have happened,” Dr Gruenewald said. “The historic, cultural and intellectual contributions of African Americans have not been fully appreciated by most people, especially outside the US. This is a perfect opportunity to communicate about that using experiential learning and knowledge exchange.”

Officiating guests at the exhibition opening on December 8 included, (from left) Mr Bernard W Kinsey, Mrs Shirley Pooler Kinsey and Mr Khalil Kinsey, US Consul General Mr Kurt W Tong, Professor Derek Collins, HKU Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global) Professor W John Kao, and Dr Knothe

The exhibition, “Rising Above: The Kinsey African American Art and History Collection”, is organized in collaboration with KBK Enterprises, Inc. and the Bernard and Shirley Kinsey Foundation for Arts & Education. Goldman Sachs is a Silver Sponsor and American Airlines is the exhibition’s Official Airline. Supporting organizations include the Consulate General of the United States of America in Hong Kong and Macau, the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Lan Kwai Fong Group, and the Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, and with special thanks to Caripelago Trading Limited.
New Behind the Scenes Lecture Series

The Department of Fine Arts invited Mr Larry Keith, Director of Collections (interim) at the National Gallery in London, and Ms Marie Louise Sauerberg, who for many years worked in the Conservation Department of Westminster Abbey, to deliver the inaugural lectures in a new series of talks aimed at increasing public awareness of how art needs to be protected, maintained and made accessible for the future.

Mr Keith, who is also the Gallery’s Head of Conservation and Keeper, gave an overview of the rich history of conservation at the Gallery and what happens behind the scenes when conservators are charged with the preservation, study and restoration of some of the world’s best-loved masterpieces at a talk held in Rayson Huang Theatre on October 11, 2016. Ms Sauerberg spoke of her conservation work at Westminster Abbey at an event held at the Asia Society Hong Kong Center on October 14, 2016.

The Behind the Scenes Lecture Series, initiated by the University of Hong Kong’s Department of Fine Arts, aims to bring high-profile speakers from the international art world to highlight the work of professionals who help to keep art accessible for audiences now and in the future. The 2016 Lectures were generously supported by Qatar Airways and AXA ART.

finding future’s way

The Faculty hosted an innovative soundscape installation and exhibition by University Artists Anne Hayes and Glenn Davidson in the Ground Floor Gallery of Run Run Shaw Tower on the Centennial Campus from November 10 to December 9, 2016. The exhibition, finding future’s way, was both a homage to the hardworking bee and used the insect as a lens through which to think about how we interact with one another and our relationships to our environment. The ambitious installation was the result of a strong collaborative process and dialogue with researchers in the Department of Fine Arts, the Department of Mechanical Engineering, the Department of Architecture, and the School of Biological Sciences.

The University Artists Scheme is hosted by the Faculty of Arts and is supported by Dr Alice Lam.

Hyeonseo Lee: the Girl with Seven Names

The Faculty hosted a talk by the North Korean defector and human-rights activist Hyeonseo Lee as part of the Hong Kong International Literary Festival 2016. Ms Lee, who now lives in South Korea and spends much of her time campaigning for North Korean human rights and refugee issues, escaped from North Korea and later guided her family to freedom through China and Laos. Her bestselling memoir published in English in July 2015, The Girl With Seven Names, is a narrative of her journey of escape as well as the resolve she found to rebuild her life in China and South Korea. She shared her fascinating story with a packed auditorium in Wang Gungwu Theatre on November 6, 2016.
Dr Yang Yuanzheng, Assistant Professor in the Department of Music, has been awarded the 2016 Rulan Chao Pian Prize by the Association for Chinese Music Research for his article, “Jindou: A Musical Form Found in Southern Song Lyric Songs”. The article, which Dr Yang wrote as part of an ongoing GRF project, was published in T’oung Pao in 2015. The Rulan Chao Pian Prize recognizes the best article on Chinese music, broadly defined, published in an English-language scholarly journal or edited volume within a calendar year.

A paper by Dr Peter Crosthwaite, Assistant Professor in the Centre for Applied English Studies, “Assessing EAP course effectiveness by learner corpus analysis”, received the best paper award at the ICAME37 conference held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in May 2016. Established in 1977, is an international organization of linguists and information scientists working with English machine-readable texts.

The Faculty of Arts held its 196th Congregation on Saturday, December 3, 2016. 59 Research Postgraduate, 220 Taught Postgraduate and 465 Undergraduate Arts’ students had their degrees conferred during the Congregation’s three separate sessions in the Grand Hall of Lee Shau Kee Lecture Centre.

The Faculty was delighted to welcome back three of its distinguished alumni to speak at the Congregation. Mr Cheng Yan-chee, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer and Executive Director of the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority, was the Guest of Honour for the postgraduate session. Mrs Christine Ip, Chief Executive Officer for Greater China for United Overseas Bank Limited, and Ms Connie Lam, Executive Director of the Hong Kong Arts Centre, were Guests of Honour for the two undergraduate sessions.

The Faculty’s Prize Presentation for Non-Final Year Awardees was held on November 25, 2016, in Loke Yew Hall.

Recent Publications by Members of the Arts Faculty

Introduction to Healthcare for Chinese-speaking Interpreters and Translators, John Benjamins Publishing Company
By Eva Ng (co-authored with Ineke Crezee)

Situated Listening: The Sound of Absorption in Classical Cinema, Oxford University Press
By Giorgio Biancorosso

Self-realization through Confucian Learning: A Contemporary Reconstruction of Xunzi’s Ethics, SUNY Press
By Siufu Tang

Global Trade in the Nineteenth Century: The House of Houqua and the Canton System, Cambridge University Press
By John D Wong

2017 Programme with Christie’s Education Hong Kong

Following the successful launch of our five-day seminar programme, “Contemporary Asian Art: An Insider’s View”, with Christie’s Education Hong Kong, we are pleased to announce that this groundbreaking programme will be offered again in 2017 – from May 15 to 19.

First offered in 2016, this unique programme is designed with a hands-on approach and combines art seminars with site visits to artists’ studios and galleries, as well as conversations with art professionals and patrons. The art history portion of the programme is conceived and delivered by the world-class faculty in the Department of Fine Arts, while the market-related portion is developed by Christie’s Education.

For programme details, fees and scholarship opportunities, please visit: http://arts.hku.hk/events/christiesprogram

196th Congregation

The Faculty of Arts held its 196th Congregation on Saturday, December 3, 2016. 59 Research Postgraduate, 220 Taught Postgraduate and 465 Undergraduate Arts’ students had their degrees conferred during the Congregation’s three separate sessions in the Grand Hall of Lee Shau Kee Lecture Centre.

The Faculty was delighted to welcome back three of its distinguished alumni to speak at the Congregation. Mr Cheng Yan-chee, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer and Executive Director of the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority, was the Guest of Honour for the postgraduate session. Mrs Christine Ip, Chief Executive Officer for Greater China for United Overseas Bank Limited, and Ms Connie Lam, Executive Director of the Hong Kong Arts Centre, were Guests of Honour for the two undergraduate sessions.

The Faculty’s Prize Presentation for Non-Final Year Awardees was held on November 25, 2016, in Loke Yew Hall.