

Institution: Middlesex University		
Unit of Assessment: Uo33		
Title of case study: Inter/transcultural Dialogic Exchange (IDE): making change across political and cultural borders through artistic collaboration		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Middlesex employment:
Christopher Bannerman	Director ResCen Research Centre	01/09/1989 - ongoing
Ola Johansson	Associate Professor	01/09/2012 - 21/6/2019
Alex Kolb	Associate Professor	01/02/2012 - 17/9/2017
Vida Midgelow	Professor	01/10/2012 - ongoing
Steffi Sachsenmaier	Senior Lecturer	01/03/2010 - ongoing
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1 August 2013 – 31 December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Since 2009 Bannerman has co-directed the Intercultural Dialogic Exchange (IDE) research project. an artistic collaboration between mainland China, Taiwan and the UK. Reaching across contested political and cultural borders, IDE brought together over 300 participants, created 45 new dance works, reached over 9,000 audience members, and engaged over 38,000 people online. This intercultural exchange has delivered impacts in mainland China on 3 levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutional – IDE led to changes in the curricula in China’s leading dance academies • Individual – some of the most significant and influential dance artists in China have benefitted from IDE’s intensive creative process and performance projects • The wider arts sector – including the introduction of professional development for writers and producers. 		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>IDE’s innovative research partnership began in 2009 with ResCen Research Centre, Middlesex University and Beijing Dance Academy (BDA) and in 2011, the Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA) joined. IDE reached across contested political and cultural borders, initiating and sustaining the first direct dialogue between BDA and TNUA for over 50 years. This exchange involved developing new understandings and insights, by weaving together perspectives from practice and theory to enable intercultural dialogic exchange in, about and through artistic practices. [3.3] This research has taken place principally through three funded projects (Danscross 2009; ArtsCross 2011-13, 2015, 2019; Shift of Balance 2015-18).</p> <p>A key part of the project included Intensive 3-4-week performance projects in Taipei 2011, Beijing 2012, London 2013, Beijing 2014 and 2019 [3.1], all documented on the ResCen website. These resulted in the creation and performance of 45 new experimental dance works and the curation of an unprecedented exchange and collaboration [3.2] between Anglophone and Sinophone artists, academics and producers. Bannerman acted as co-curator and co-director and led UK academic participants including Middlesex researchers Ola Johansson, Alexandra Kolb, Vida Midgelow, Steffi Sachsenmaier; as well as Martin Welton, Queen Mary University of London, AHRC network award Co-Investigator (2012-14), and Rebecca Loukes, University of Exeter.</p> <p>These public outcomes of IDE’s research stem from exchange through practice and dialogue grounded in a trusted internal space, a necessary prerequisite due to wider regional tensions, and requiring the negotiation of cultural, linguistic and political borders. The formal public projects were complemented by internal discussions, seminars and practice research workshops throughout the period 2011-20.</p>		

The curation of these public and internal spaces offered a methodological approach for extending dialogue across the disciplinary boundaries of artist, academic and producer, allowing more holistic consideration of the art form and its ecology in each partner's context. The sustained exchange and the breadth of the participants, all combined to stimulate activity beyond the usual brief encounters at academic conferences or the remote interpretation of objectified performances. A key research outcome therefore is the curation of sustained spaces [3.5] for dialogic exchange and active engagement between diverse and/or divided community/ies. This exchange has continued across and between the meetings noted above, via public and private spaces. It has enabled developments from the research including arts-sector collaborations, mentoring and support for new initiatives [3.6].

Another achievement from the project was the first dedicated edition of *Choreographic Practices* (2016) [3.4] published in English and Chinese which featured themes that cohered around the following key strands:

- *Translation*: languages, cultures, contexts, modes of expression eg textual-movement, translation zones (Lin, Loukes);
- *Identity/ies*: artistic, cultural and national 'belonging', artists as carriers of culture and meaning-makers (Bannerman, Chen);
- *Embodied knowledges and working languages of practice*: terminologies, behaviours, extralinguistic engagements (Lopez De La Nieta, Wang, Welton, Xu);
- *The way/dào of the producer*: the practices of producing dance, a critical role often overlooked in performance research (Bannerman, Sachsenmaier).

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

3.1 Bannerman, (Ed) (2009-20) 'ArtsCross pages' in *ResCen Website*: documenting all process and performance projects, textual commentaries from the research team, presentations http://rescen.net/ref21_artscross/ or http://rescen.net/ref21_ide/

3.2 Sachsenmaier, S. (2016) 'Productive Misapprehensions: ArtsCross as a Cross Cultural Collaborative Zone of Contestation of Contemporary Dance Practice' in *Collaboration in Performance Practice*, Palgrave

3.3 Kolb, A. (2017) 'Dance and Politics in China: Interculturalism, Hybridity, and the ArtsCross Project' in *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Politics* Eds Kowal, R.J., Siegmund, G., Martin, R.

3.4 Bannerman, C., Chen, Y., Loukes, R., Sachsenmaier, S., Wang, Y., Wang, X., Xu, R. (2016) in 'ArtsCross/Danscross Transcultural Dialogues', Special edition *Choreographic Practices*, vol. 7: 2 Intellect, Bristol also available in a downloadable Chinese version <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/intellect/chor/2016/00000007/00000002> Chinese: https://intellect.stisonbooks.com/media/CHOR-7.2_complete-issue.pdf

3.5 Bannerman, C. (2013) *On Curation: The development of Danscross and walking with Zhuangzi* ResCen website publication <http://rescen.net/artscross/on-curation/> or http://rescen.net/ref21_ide/

3.6 Bannerman, C., Chaudhry, F., Gladstone, E. (2020) *The Producers Toolbox: The Way/Dào of the Producer* ResCen Online Publication http://rescen.net/ref21_ide/

Funding

Xu, Bannerman: *A comparative study of Chinese and Foreign dance creation concepts and techniques* Beijing Municipal Commission of Education (BMCE) 2008-09 £200,000

Bannerman, China Partnership - British Council Partnership Development Grant (PDG) 2010 £2,000

Bannerman, *ArtsCross Special Initiative* Tal Foundation HEIF Award 2011-14 £550,000

Bannerman (PI), Welton (Co-I) *ArtsCross International Network: The cosmopolitan presence in transcultural performance practices* - AHRC International Research Networks Award 2012-14 £38,000

Xu, Bannerman, Wang: *Chinese and international contemporary dance works: 5th Anniversary Performance* Beijing Municipal Commission of Education (BMCE) 2014 £25,500

Bannerman, Jiang: *Shift of Balance* - British Academy International Partnerships and Mobility 2015-18 £29,200

Xu, Bannerman: *Dance Writers and Producers Forum*, China Arts Fund - Developing Capacity 2018-19 £80,000

Xu, Bannerman, Wang: *Danscross/ArtsCross International Creative Practices*, Beijing Municipal Commission of Education (BMCE) 2019 £140,000

Bannerman: Middlesex University, Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries, funds for Beijing ArtsCross documentation (2019) £19,430

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

IDE's projects have enabled dialogic exchange despite increasing tensions along and across the Taiwan Strait, one of the world's most militarised zones [T1/T2]. These projects involving creative process, performance, conferences and forums brought together over 300 participants, created 45 new dance works, reached over 9,000 audience members, and engaged over 38,000 people online. While each partner has experienced changes and developments from this intercultural exchange, to allow detail this document focuses on changes on 3 levels in mainland China: institutional (dance academies); significant and influential dance artists; and the wider arts sector.

Art form and institutional development

IDE's research led to changes in dance training at the Beijing Dance Academy (BDA) China's leading dance institution [T1/T3] and, through influential individual participants, IDE influenced developments in dance more broadly, stimulating changes that are important in China.

The most prominent example combining institutional and individual development is Professor GUO Lei, President, Beijing Dance Academy. His observations of the 2009 and 2011 projects and his participation as a choreographer in the 2013 London ArtsCross resulted in changes to dance training at BDA and to his own widely influential practice as an expert Chinese *minzu* dance practitioner. [T3]

Institutionally, IDE stimulated changes in BDA curricula and pedagogic approaches as the observation of international choreographers at work led BDA to the realisation that dancers today need to respond imaginatively and confidently as part of a creative process. This resulted in the introduction of dance improvisation and creativity classes, open to all students irrespective of their specialist dance form. [T3] BDA graduates are present as staff members in virtually

every professional dance training programme in China (there are over 700) and improvisation courses are now being introduced across China. [T1] Another change came from both the collaborative creative processes and from student participation in IDE seminars. This led the BDA to focus more on engagement and dialogue with students across the curriculum. [T3]

As an ArtsCross choreographer GUO Lei exemplifies the influence of IDE's recurring concern for authenticity, an important issue with wide implications for China, which sparked a reconsideration of personal practices. The documentary *Nuo-Fate* (HU Xiaojiao 2017) [PD5] shows glimpses of the passionate debate in IDE's London seminars (2013) which motivated Guo to explore previously neglected Chinese sources and reconsider his, and the BDA's, Russian-influenced *minzu* (folk/ethnic) dance practices. To extend his 10-minute London work, he first took his performers to rural villages to experience the origins of *minzu* - the shamanistic *Nuo* rituals. He then placed China's indigenous culture and authentic folk opera forms alongside his Academy-focused professional performance practices in a hybrid work, *Nuo-Mask*, at China's National Centre for the Performing Arts (7 Nov 2016). The documentary following the creative process was presented internationally, receiving the Gold Remi Award at WorldFest, Houston International Film Festival [PD5/T3]

Another influential participant, LIU Yan, performed in Beijing 2009 in a wheelchair following a tragic accident rehearsing for the 2008 Beijing Olympics Opening ceremony. She subsequently participated as choreographer (2012) and academic (2013). IDE discussions in London (August 2013) involved Celeste Dandekar, then Artistic Director of the UK's renowned integrated dance company Candoco, changing Liu Yan's view of disability and the arts fundamentally. In China, she extended her Foundation's work to champion the disabled through public, inclusive, integrated arts activities. Liu Yan's substantial public profile in China ensured wide reporting of events including *Angel's Smile* (2019) a photographic exhibition featuring children with muscular dystrophy in Beijing. In 2020 she performed in the Luminous Festival in Beijing, supported by British Council China. She has challenged concepts of beauty and the aesthetics of performance in China, broadening participation in dance, and has changed public awareness and perceptions of disability. [T2/T3]

Individual artist development

Individual artists have benefitted from IDE's intensive creative process and performance projects and the dialogue between artists, academics and producers. Two examples include:

- a) *WANG Yabin*, a nationally acclaimed dancer who performed in Danscross Beijing 2009, was inspired by encountering new choreographic practices in the project and she remained involved in the internal workshops and seminars. This involvement in the ongoing exchange involved IDE mentoring and support, which led to a 2014 collaboration with Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui *Genesis*, at Sadler's Wells; and subsequently Wang's creation of the award-winning *M-Dao* (2016) with English National Ballet. [T1/T3]
- b) *HUA Xiaoyi*, another significant, award-winning Chinese classical dancer was inspired initially by ArtsCross performances, and then participated in internal creative workshops in China, including with Joy Alpeurto Ritter (2017), Akram Khan Company dancer and ArtsCross choreographer (2019). Further IDE mentoring focused Hua's drive for greater creative engagement in dance, leading to a project in which she worked with Akram Khan to create *Yi Ke/Every Moment* (2017), performed in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen. These public presentations by renowned dance artists involving international collaboration were developed alongside, but not within China's formal structures. They are highly influential in China and support the development of experimental, independent artists, inspiring and giving voice to new generations of artists and producers. [T1/T3]

Arts sector development.

- a) IDE dialogues with writers and producers between 2011-2019, led to changes in China Arts Fund practice. IDE's application to the China National Arts Fund was successful

after initial resistance and initiated the first China-wide Professional Development Forums (2018-19) for writers and producers. These featured international presenters and attracted over fifty participants [T1]. It led to the IDE 2019 Producers Forum, an exchange between Chinese and UK producers and artists, including producers from Dance Umbrella, Sadler's Wells, Complicité, Dance4 and independent producer Theresa Beattie. When Covid-19 disrupted producers' plans for collaborative projects, IDE worked with British Council(BC) China to create video resources: *The Producers Toolbox: The Way/Dào of the Producer* presented at the BC China Digital Festival which reached an audience of over 1.3 million. [T2]

- b) Arts Sector development also occurred through the Chinese Dancers Association (CDA) involvement in IDE's outcomes. CDA leaders attended IDE's public conferences and performances in 2009, 2015 and 2019 and then participated in a series of meetings and seminar sessions focused on national and international dance ecologies and the development needs of the Chinese dance sector. These informed the introduction of the CDA's Young Artist Programme, adopting IDE's model of international exchange. Through collaborative workshops in a studio environment, arts-sector capacity in China was developed through a programme which has supported 200 artists since 2014. [T1]

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

Public Domain

1. AHRC (2015) *China: Creative Encounters*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsxC0Vvk7xkk&list=UU4oFqK01f4STG5UJ72JAbdw&index=3

2. China television report October 2014

http://rescen.net/rwht/events/ArtsCross_5th_anniversary_CNC_video.html

3. CBI & MU Report (2016) *Bridges to the Future*

https://www.mdx.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/318923/2016_Bridges-to-the-future_China_english.pdf

4. RCUK China (2016) *Shaping the Future: UK-China Collaborative Research*

http://rescen.net/rwht/events/ArtsCross_RCUK_brochure.html

5. *Nuo-Fate* (2017) HU Xiaojiao's award-winning documentary film about the development in China of *Mask*, an ArtsCross London 2013 work. The film includes footage from London performances and academic-artist seminar sessions, and traces the roots of the dance work *Nuo-Mask* (2016) performed at China's National Centre for the Performing Arts, back to the rituals of rural China <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/H04MENMkqf11eGufN3WXEw>

Testimonials (5 maximum) Mainland China:

- T1 China National Academy of Arts Research, Deputy Director Institute of Dance (retired)
- T2 British Council China Director of Arts
- T3 President Beijing Dance Academy