

<p>Institution: UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS LONDON</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 34</p>
<p>Title of case study: Art as an agent for change in the work of Professor Lucy Orta</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Professor Lucy Orta's work, is developed in creative partnership with Jorge Orta, as <i>Lucy + Jorge Orta</i>, and tackles global issues that affect all our lives. Their collaboration sets out to utilize art as an agent for awareness and change, with public dissemination aimed at triggering new thinking and action on issues related to sustainability. Their work has led to an enhanced public understanding of these issues and its impact is evidenced by high level commissions; partnerships with prestigious institutions; media coverage; audience figures; and public engagement activities.</p> <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Orta joined the University of the Arts London (UAL) in 2001 as the inaugural Rootstein Hopkins Chair of Fashion and became Professor of Art and the Environment in 2007. Orta's research explores concerns including biodiversity, environmental conditions, climate change and exchange among peoples. The research underpinning this case study relates to a portion of Orta's overall output – <i>OrtaWater</i>, <i>Antarctica</i> and <i>Amazonia</i> all undertaken at UAL. This body of work addresses universal concerns of community, shelter, migration and sustainable development. It moves beyond tackling these issues solely in artistic terms, to creating active engagement and suggesting solutions by modelling fresh approaches to these social and environmental dilemmas.</p> <p>The body of work <i>OrtaWater</i>, beginning as <i>Drink Water</i> at the Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa at the 51st Venice Biennale (2005), focuses on the general scarcity of water and issues surrounding the privatisation and corporate control that affects access to clean water. Particularly significant is the development of low-cost purification and distribution devices, to provide a wider understanding of currently available technologies. Fully functioning purification machines and bottling stations are incorporated into the artworks to enable water pumped directly from canals to be rendered drinkable by the public. In 2010 the work developed into <i>Clouds</i>, which focuses on the recycling of plastic water bottles to realise sculptures, which draw attention to the commodification of this natural resource and the consequences of plastic as a serious pollutant.</p> <p>The body of work <i>Antarctica</i> developed from an expedition to Antarctica in 2007, highlights Antarctica's special status as the only unclaimed landmass on earth, characterising it as a place of welcome for those fleeing conflict or environmental catastrophes. <i>Antarctic Village – No Borders</i>, a temporary encampment of over 50 dome-shaped dwellings reflect the qualities of nomadic shelters and temporary campsites and symbolise the plight of those struggling to gain freedom of movement. The dwellings are made from sections of world flags, together with extensions of clothes and gloves representing the multiplicity and diversity of humanity. For <i>Antarctic Village Métisse Flag</i>, the flags of different nations coexist and borders merge to demonstrate the idea of belonging to a larger common identity. The series then developed into, <i>Antarctica World Passport</i> (2008 – ongoing) that proposes an addition to Article 13 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Art. 13:3 '<i>Every human being has the right to move freely and cross frontiers to their chosen territory. Individuals should not be deemed of an inferior status to that of capital, trade, telecommunication and pollution, all of which have no boundaries.</i>'</p> <p><i>Amazonia</i> was a solo exhibition commissioned by the National History Museum to coincide with the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010. It included drawing, sound, photography, sculpture and video that brought together scientific, aesthetic and cultural paradigms, to offer insights into the huge diversity of living organisms and the space they occupy in the planet's evolution. Research was conducted in the Natural History Museum and on a field expedition to the Peruvian Amazon (organised by Cape Farewell). The artworks created a multi-sensory experience, to focus attention on the thousands of species that depend on the eco-equilibrium of the Amazon. The natural world</p>

was explored, both for its beauty and its imperilled state, presenting a narrative about the loss of exotic species, and highlighting the rainforest's role as a vital resource underpinning the health and wellbeing of humanity.

3. References to the research

1. Orta, Lucy + Jorge (2005) *OrtaWater* [Artefact]. First showing of the series at Venice: Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, 51st Venice Biennale (2005), 8 June – 3 October 2005. In 2007 the project was recognised when the Orta's received the Green Leaf Award for artistic excellence with an environmental message, presented by the United Nations Environment Programme in partnership with the Natural World Museum at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway. UAL on request.
2. Orta, Lucy + Jorge (2010) *Amazonia* [Exhibition]. London: Natural History Museum. 37 commissioned artefacts (photographs, sculptures, murals, diptych video and drawings). 6 October – 12 December 2010. Listed in REF2.
3. Orta, Lucy + Jorge (2008) *Antarctica* [Artefact]. Milan: Hangar Bicocca. Artefacts including *Antarctica Village No Borders*, *Life Line-Survival Kits*, *Drop Parachutes* and *World Passport*, *Antarctica Mobile Delivery Bureau*. 3 April–8 June 2008 Listed in REF2.
4. Orta, Lucy + Jorge (2013) *Cloud:Meteoros* [Artefact]. London: Barlow Shed, St Pancras International Train Station. 18th April–15th October 2013 Listed in REF2.

4. Details of the impact

Described as '*social sculptures for a world in a constant state of flux*' (The Guardian, 2009), the outcomes from the research are specifically intended to raise awareness of issues in relation to biodiversity, environmental conditions, climate change and basic human rights. Reach and significance of impact is evidenced by visitor numbers to the many public displays of the work, prominent commissions, and active participation by the public in activities especially designed to engender engagement with the issues. A further indicator of the significance is given by the institutions with which partnerships have been formed, many of whom are at the forefront of efforts to increase public understanding with regard to sustainability issues.

A work positioned in a prominent public space in St Pancras International Station, London is the site-specific installation *Clouds:Meteoros*. Related to *OrtaWater*, which deals with the general scarcity of water and issues around the privatisation and corporate control that affect access to clean water – *Clouds* focuses on the plastic bottle with its multiple ecological, economic and social meanings. *Clouds:Meteoros*, two monumental suspended cloud sculptures with seated figures, was the winning sculpture for the 'Terrace Wires' international competition and replaced the Olympic Rings in St Pancras Station in London (2013). Over the six-month period, more than 24 million visitors saw *Clouds:Meteoros* (source: CEO HS1 Ltd. owners of St Pancras International), and the sculpture was said to be '*putting the rest of the station's art in the shade*' and bringing '*the gothic structure back to life*' (The Guardian, April 2013). Orta presented on *Clouds:Meteoros* in her talk *Clouds: a way to transport water* at the TEDxWWF in Abu Dhabi (May 2013). Her invitation to speak at this platform for '*world-leading environmental thinkers and doers*' was in recognition of her work on how art can help to create a sustainable future for our planet.

The Ortas' recent exhibition at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, which opened in July 2013, again took water as its central theme, as did the artwork *OrtaWater Fluvial Unit*. This work, addressing themes of water and sustainable development was commissioned for the Austrian Pavilion International Expo, Zaragoza, Spain, and attracted approximately 700,000 visitors from June to September 2008 (source: exhibition organiser). Three large-scale interventions (*OrtaWater Purification Factory*, *Antarctica World Passport Delivery Village* and *Nexus Architecture*) were shown at the 9th Shanghai Biennale (October 2012–March 2013) which attracted approximately 200,000 visitors (source: exhibition organiser). Here *OrtaWater Purification Factory* drew water from Shanghai's Huangpu river. It was then purified in a large 'factory-like' installation and snaked around the museum for visitors to partake in the experience of drinking clean water sourced from the polluted river.

Antarctica World Passport is an example of the use of tools designed to actively engage the public in the issues communicated by the artwork. Since 2008, members of the public have been invited to visit installations of *Antarctica World Passport Bureau* and commit to becoming 'citizens' of a no-borders community, with the aim of stimulating exchange and creating awareness of their responsibilities as part of the world community. 'Citizens' are issued with passports and commit to combating all acts of barbarity, fighting against intimidation and poverty, supporting social progress, protecting the environment and endangered species, safeguarding human dignity, and defending the inalienable rights to liberty, justice and peace in the world. Since 2009, information on these 'citizens' has been carefully collated and stored on an MIT-designed database and in July 2013 this information was uploaded to a new digital social platform.

For the Southbank Centre's *Festival of the World* in London (May – September 2012) a new iteration of the *Antarctica World Passport Bureau* was commissioned. It took the form of a room-sized installation designed to attract and encourage reflection on Antarctica's position as the last 'free' landmass on our planet and on its vulnerability to the dangers presented by climate change. For the festival, forty-four, 4 x 6 metre *Antarctic Mëtisse Flags* flew from the roof of the Royal Festival Hall, during the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and London Olympic Games. Around 25,000 people visited the *Antarctica World Passport Bureau* and nearly 5,600 individuals signed up to the ideals of a no-border community and were issued with 'passports'. Footfall on the Southbank Centre site during the *Festival of the World* was approximately 7.8 million people (source: exhibition curator) and the flags featured on the Southbank Centre's interactive homepage for the event and in the trailer for the festival. The *Festival of the World* aimed to celebration the importance of art to various communities around the world. The Ortas were selected to participate as their '*work blends visual art, global awareness and community specify. In particular their Antarctica series was an obvious thematic fit, addressing issues of freedom of movement, geographical relationships, and social responsibility. In the context of the Festival, an important aspect of the Ortas' work was its ability to raise awareness and elicit the active participation of visitors, making them more conscious of their position in the world.*' (*Antarctica World Passport Bureau* Curator, Hayward Gallery).

Amazonia was commissioned by National History Museum's Contemporary Art programme and formed a 'key element' of the NHM's contribution to the United Nations' International Year of Biodiversity. NHM was at the heart of this major campaign and the Ortas '*created an exhibition that took the visitor on a mental journey and urged them to become better stewards of nature.*' The recorded audience figure was 41,302, an average of 607 per day (source: *Amazonia* curator). As well as an installation of sculpture filling the Jerwood Galley exhibition space, an entire wall was devoted to a photographic record of plant species and graphic data recording a research plot that was protected as part of the project. Associated with this work was the ongoing public engagement project, *Perpetual Amazonia 10,000 plots = 10,000 posters*, in which the public could take away a *Perpetual Amazonia* poster in exchange for a financial contribution towards the preservation of the metre-square plot it represented. More than 8000 posters were acquired, with the proceeds funding further research in the Amazon. A new venture for NHM was the engagement of volunteers to be present through the exhibition period. A total of just over 50 volunteers who had backgrounds in science communication, arts, science, and in particular biodiversity studies, interacted with visitors enhancing the interpretation and public dissemination of the artists' ideas. The Ecologist (October 2010) said that the exhibition '*... uses artwork to suggest and inspire creative solutions to an impending environmental catastrophe*' and of *Perpetual Amazonia* that it '*makes us consider how much we value the natural world in monetary terms, in a way that mirrors the trend in green politics to focus on the financial impact of environmental degradation and climate change. We want the lovely poster of flowers on our wall at home, but are we prepared to pay to ensure the flowers still exist in the future?*'

Cape Farewell supported the work for *Amazonia* by bringing together artists and scientists on an expedition to the Peruvian Rainforest, and have placed the Ortas within their wider arts programme, with the aim of engaging the public's imagination on the subject of climate change. In 2009 *Antarctic Village–No Borders* was exhibited as part of the group exhibition *GSK Contemporary–Earth: Art of a Changing World* at the Royal Academy of Arts, London (co-curated by Cape Farewell). The work was included at the centre of the show alongside other exhibits that elucidated

'the role of the artist in the cycle of human and cultural evolution – as communicator, reflector and interpreter of key issues of the day.' The pieces *Windows on the World* and *Vitrine* are also included in Cape Farewell's international touring exhibition *U-n-f-o-l-d*, which has been shown in 8 venues, most recently to CAFA, Beijing. Work from *Amazonia* was exhibited alongside that of four other artists in Cape Farewell's *Carbon 12* exhibition at the Espace Fondation, EDF, Paris (May–September 2012).

The significance of the work was further evidenced by Orta's invitation to give an address for the symposium *Rising to the Climate Challenge: Artists and Scientists Imagine Tomorrow's World* in 2010. The event was a partnership between the Royal Society and Tate for the 350th Anniversary of the Royal Society, bringing together scientists and artists to imagine the social and psychological impacts of climate change. In 2008 Orta was invited to become a Member of the European Cultural Parliament and gave a presentation in Liverpool for the 2008 Culture, Media and Democracy session, where she discussed the *Antarctica* project and distributed passports to the members. In 2008, the musician and campaigner Bono was presented with *Window on the World–Antarctica* when he was honoured by the 9th World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates with the Peace Summit Award. In 2012 Orta participated in a round table discussion *Art for a Change of Perspective?* as part of "Art and Ecology: a question of taste or science?" at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, organised by COAL (Coalition pour l'Art et le Développement Durable). A select number of international organisations, cultural institutions, NGOs, associations, corporations and foundations as well as scientists and artists discussed global initiatives and strategies to initiate an artistic approach to sustainable development.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Enhanced public understanding in relation to sustainability issues via:

High level commissions and partnerships (including audience figures):

1. Statement from Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London *'Their artwork was not only inspirational and informative for those who saw it, but will also have a lasting legacy through the online Antarctica community of 'citizens' – all of the people who signed up for passports from all previous installations around the world – that the Ortas will be developing in the coming years.'* UAL on request.
2. Southbank Centre's Festival of the World website including *Antarctic Métisse Flags* <http://world.southbankcentre.co.uk/>
3. Information in relation to work with Cape Farewell can be found at <http://www.capefarewell.com/art/carbon-12.html> and <http://www.capefarewell.com/art/unfold.html>
4. Press release from the Royal Academy of Arts in relation to *GSK Contemporary: Earth Art of a Changing World*. <http://static.royalacademy.org.uk/files/press-release-gsk-contemporary-earth-at-the-royal-academy-3-dec-2009-31-jan-2010-497.pdf>

Public engagement and media coverage:

5. Statement from the former Curator Contemporary Art, National History Museum. UAL on request.
6. Information in relation to *Rising to the Climate Challenge: Artists and Scientists Imagine Tomorrow's World* (2010) can be found at <http://royalsociety.org/events/2010/age-stupid>
7. Letter of invitation from WWF International to Professor Orta to speak at TEDxWWF event 21/3/13 in Abu Dhabi. *'Your collaborative work with Jorge Orta in tackling the ecological and social factors through art is truly impressive.'* UAL on request.
8. NHM press release at <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/press-office/press-releases/2010/amazonia83627.html>
9. *Amazonia* reviews at http://www.theecologist.org/green_green_living/out_and_about/630952/art_for_the_amazon_natural_history_museum_uses_art_to_tackle_ecocrisis.html and <http://www.treehugger.com/culture/celebrating-biodiversity-in-an-explosion-of-colour-at-the-natural-history-museums-amazonia-show.html>