

Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University
Unit of Assessment: D34: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
Title of case study: Asia Triennial Manchester (ATM)
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>This case study discusses the impact of the research that contributed to Asia Triennial Manchester (ATM) in 2008 and 2011. The ATM is the only Asian Arts Festival in Europe with a focus on new work. It attracts established audiences for art as well as those not normally engaged with culture through exhibits in nationally important venues and in locations with low levels of cultural engagement. ATM has established new cultural partnerships and knowledge exchange that has affected gallery programming and curatorial knowledge and ensured demonstrable impact. Over 364,000 people attended events at ATM08 and 11 generating £12m in economic activity across the Northwest. The ATM's directly engaged 1500 artists in the production of 58 entirely new productions.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The Asia Triennial Manchester (ATM08, ATM11): Contemporary Visual Arts and Crafts Festival is a collaboration between MIRIAD and Manchester's Asian Arts Agency, Shisha. Principle investigators are Alnoor Mitha, (former Artistic Director Shisha, current MMU Research Fellow: Asian Cultures: 2012- present) and Professor John Hyatt, (1991-present). ATM 08 and 11 were jointly led by Mitha and Hyatt through an extensive consultation process with Manchester's key museum and gallery curators and contemporary artists from Asia and its international Diaspora. As such, the ATMs explored the lack of international Asian exhibitions, in the context of Manchester's sizable Asian community and the growing economic and cultural boom in Asia [1].</p> <p>The main aim of the ATM is to develop a long-term programme of international exhibitions and residencies by contemporary Asian artists that creates opportunities for western audiences to view high-quality Asian cultural work. ATM makes an intervention into the international art market and helps to promote Manchester as a significant international cultural centre. Every three years the ATM commissions world-class artists, and links public and third sector organizations across multiple venues and new cultural sites. It fosters exchange and collaboration among academics, artists, curators and policymakers.</p> <p>The inaugural ATM08 programme had the theme of 'Protest'. The research embedded in the ATM questioned how issues of protest have engaged Asian artists and how this has emerged in their art. International research trips investigated how this was demonstrated through a wide-ranging study of contemporary practice. Many artists were interviewed and work was selected that developed the character of the international art scene. Underpinning research was applied in nature and focused on the relative impact of Asian practices. ATM was developed to hold a unique form and position within an international field of other similar and dissimilar events. This provided an inclusive curatorial context, which had local and global relevance echoing Manchester's radical political and social history and creating resonances between Manchester and Asia.</p> <p>Through its methodology, ATM08 united a community of galleries across Manchester. This provided a curatorial framework that enabled individual galleries to devise their own distinctive yet interrelated exhibitions and events collaboratively with MIRIAD and ATM. Component outputs took the form of venue-based exhibitions, site-specific new commissions, a series of international artists' residencies, talks, screenings, workshops, outdoor performances, teahouse discussions, symposia, and publicly sited work by artists from Mainland China, Hong Kong, India, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan.</p> <p>An important contribution to the underpinning research was Mitha and Wainwright's, (2008-2011) series of Curatorial Laboratories (2011) that supported museum curators to gather new knowledge</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

on Asian cultures creating a hub for educational activities and public-led discussions. The Open University filmed the discussions and further information was disseminated to partners.

ATM11 built upon the methodological foundations of ATM08 expanding to encompass 18 core partners delivering 35 new visual art exhibitions e.g. Rashid Rana [2]. ATM11 featured craft commissions, 7 x film premieres, including a 40-minute creative documentary film entitled South Asian Whispers (Cornerhouse Cinema 28/04/11) [3] and 4 x commissioned dance performances. This expansion of the ATM partnership encouraged a more comprehensive range of Asian arts from 13 countries and reflected an ongoing commitment to sustain ATM.

“Time and Generation” was the artistic theme for ATM11 and was researched and devised by Mitha and Wainwright. Artists, curators and the wider public were invited to consider how growing patterns of movement have radically altered our global demographics, thus advancing new politics of identity, focused on place, territory, belonging, and community. In preparation for the main festival, a yearlong series of ATM11 trailblazers called “Connecting Cultures” was staged [4].

The ATM11 publication entitled “Triennial City” is jointly produced by MMU and Third Text and will be launched during spring 2014 when ATM14 takes place [5].

Through collaborative research, MIRIAD has built local and international artistic networks, sustaining a dynamic field of inquiry into Asian visual cultures that is relevant to British society and interconnected with wider global fields.

3. References to the research

[1] Mitha, A. (2009) Asia Triennial Manchester 08: The UK’s First Asian Art Triennial 5 April-1 June 2008, Catalogue publication includes essay on research process by Hyatt J. ISBN: 978-0-9545563-9-6.

[2] Mitha, A. and Perks, S. (2011) Rashid Rana Everything is Happens At Once, Catalogue publication, Introduction page 6. ISBN 978-0-9550478-9-3

[3] Mitha, A. (2011) South Asian Whispers, DVD Film produced by Mitha and curated by Kunda, L. featuring archive footage and original work by: Mauro Camal, Saquib Chawdhury, Sarah Gbeleyi, Sarah Sayeed, Jason Singh and Richard Ramchurn. The film retells stories of migration in the South Asian communities of Cheetham Hill, Manchester through three distinctive mediums: spoken word, film, and music

[4] Mitha, A. and Bradley, B. (2011) Connecting Cultures Evaluation report

[5] Mitha, A, Dr. Wainwright, L. and Dr. Kennedy, B. (2013/14) Triennial City Draft Asia Triennial 2011 catalogue

Grants to indicate research quality:

- ATM08, Arts Council England, One year 2008/09, £100k
- ATM08, Zachonis Charitable Trust, One year 2008/09, £10k
- ATM08, Sue Hodgkiss Charitable Foundation, One year 2008/09, £10k
- ATM11, Manchester City Council, One year 2010/11, £10k
- ATM11, Vision and Media, One year 2010/11, £15k
- ATM14, Arts Council England, 2013/14, £100,000

4. Details of the impact

In 2007, the Rusholme Project [A,B] an international artist residency set the tone for the first Asia Triennial in Manchester (ATM08). Artists Rashid Rana (Pakistan) and Subodh Gupta created site-specific work in response to, and in celebration of Manchester’s Rusholme district. The resulting artworks were installed as part of the Manchester International Festival’s *Manchester Firsts* that aims to support the commissioning and production of new Manchester-based artworks.

ATM 08 and accompanying 'Reflections and Revolutions' public events hosted by Hyatt and Wainwright created dialogue, promoted international understanding and added new knowledge to an overly western-centric art-historical canon **[B]**.

54% of audiences were from Manchester and 44% from outside. 43% were from diverse ethnic backgrounds **[B]**. These are higher percentages than those usually achieved by the galleries involved and demonstrate that ATM08 attracted audiences from within the Asian communities.

Evaluation also showed a good age range, particularly ages 16–54 (as expected for a contemporary art program). The education program had a wider age-span attracting audiences from the very young to the very old.

Across the two festivals in 2008, and 2011, ATM produced 58 high quality new commissions (mostly visual art and craft but also including performance and film), exhibited over 380 days, featuring 52 non-UK and 50 UK artists. The ATM's brought emerging and established Asian artists to the UK and directly engaged 1560 artists and associated groups in creating the work, more than half of who were from Black and Minority Ethnicity (BME) communities **[D]**.

An independent economic impact study into ATM11 indicated excellent value for money within the Greater Manchester conurbation it generated in excess of £12m in activity and over £5.9 million in impact. The ratio of cost to economic impact is 1:16 and compares favorably with other major festivals and events in the region **[D]**.

Public and private funding was secured for both ATM08 and ATM11, sourcing new funders for each festival from within the UK (including trusts and foundations) and Asia. In-kind support came from commercial sources including partnership funding from commercial galleries such as The Lisson Gallery (London) and Nature Morte (India).

Over 229,000 attended ATM11 exhibitions and events whilst an estimated 7 million were exposed to new work presented in key public spaces in the city. These audiences included almost 20,000 people who had attended ATM08 and some 53,000 from outside Greater Manchester who came for an ATM11 event. 3.3% came from as far as Japan, Taiwan and USA **[D]**.

Over 80% of audiences rated their overall enjoyment of ATM11 highly. A similar proportion rated the online provision as excellent or good, an increase on the 75% reported for ATM08.

Each collaborating institution received the advantage of working with a large university and the benefits of knowledge exchange are considerable. Participating curators expanded their research expertise and knowledge base. Collaboration led to programming by the participating galleries impossible without the ATM **[D and E]**. One curator from the John Rylands Library reported on the benefits of this approach, "...*the Library has not commissioned an artwork before, or worked so closely with a contemporary artist and hasn't previously been involved in a city-wide festival to this extent*" (Quotation from Public Programmes Manager, John Rylands Library taken from **[D]**)

Both ATMs were critically acclaimed in national and international media and press reviews, **[F]** securing the influential ArtAsiapacific Journal and A-N (Artists Newsletter) (2008) as media partners, Mitha was invited to give a paper at the Sydney Biennial, Australia (2008); and a paper in Istanbul, Turkey. The Rt. Hon Andy Burnham, then Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport in his opening speech at Manchester Art Gallery, 2008 said, "*international exchange is the lifeblood of creativity. This is a real celebration of contemporary Asian art and the power of cultural partnerships and exchange*".

Audience feedback for ATM11 was extremely positive and underlines the cross-cultural appeal and diversity of the event: User feedback includes the following comments "*It was so interesting to look at a different culture I wouldn't usually associate with art*" (ATM website visitor), "*the fact that ATM11 is located in various venues across Manchester...the Cathedral, Craft and Design Centre,*

Impact case study (REF3b)

the Whitworth, Jodrell Bank...makes us visit places we would not normally go to" (Visitor to ATM exhibition at the Chinese Arts Centre), *"It explodes the stereotypes that many Westers have about Asian Art"* (These quotations taken from [D] (many others available)

ATM14

Utilising its considerable network MIRIAD (Mitha / Hyatt / Kennedy) is researching and organising ATM14. It has already received £100,000 from Arts Council England in recognition of the importance of ATM08 and 11. In September 2014, ATM14 will take place in 15 venues across Manchester as well as expanding out to take in new audiences in outlying Bury and Rochdale galleries. The Imperial War Museum North is participating as a hub venue and Manchester's Chinese Art Centre has secured £350,000 private investment from Tang Contemporary, China. The Taiwanese Representative Office has contributed £100,000 for a Taiwanese artists show and a film programme at Cornerhouse. ATM14 will present the largest exhibition of Chinese contemporary art in the UK to date with 20 artists. The curatorial research for this aspect is being conducted in collaboration with Professor Jiehong Jiang of Birmingham Institute of Art and Design. ATM14 has also secured a £50,000 investment from MMU's Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund to support the development of impact initiatives including a UK/Asia Art and Business Forum.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[A] Jackson, A. (2007) Rusholme Project (2) Evaluation Report, reflecting on the "Curry Mile" Oxford Road Cultural Corridor and the international artists residency project leading the way up to the first Asia Triennial in Manchester 2008. Available on request.

[B] Jackson, (2008) A. Asia Triennial Manchester 08 evaluation. Available on request.

[C] Mitha, A. and Bradley, C. (2008) Asia Triennial Manchester 08 – The UK's first Asian art triennial artistic overview report. Available on request.

[D] Cockery, H. (2011) Asia Triennial Manchester 11, Evaluation Report. An assessment of the economic impact, audience reach and reaction to the second festival of contemporary visual arts and crafts by Asian artists. Includes comprehensive audience feedback and full evaluation data. Available on request.

Testimonial available from:

[E] Artistic Director, Cornerhouse & HOME (Manchester-based gallery, cinema and cultural venue) to corroborate impacts on Manchester-based cultural venues.

[F] Media and press reviews ATM08 & ATM11

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2011/oct/05/asia-triennial-manchester-art>

<http://aestheticamagazine.blogspot.com/2011/11/dont-miss-this-rashid-rana-everything.htm>

<http://www.a-n.co.uk/interface/reviews/single/1650581>