

<p><b>Institution:</b> Oxford Brookes University</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 34 - Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> 'Every human being is an artist': Social sculpture practice enables new forms of creative engagement and action within the sustainability agenda</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> Earth Forum, a citizens' practice (2011 on-going) with global grassroots take-up in South Africa and Europe, demonstrates cultural and educational impacts through Sacks' 40-year social sculpture and connective practices enquiry. It incorporates insights from the Exchange Values project, whose 12 venues, since 1996, offered thousands of consumers an arena for exploring 'fairtrade' and their relationship to the global economy. Participatory social sculpture processes with Caribbean farmers inform methodologies and connective aesthetic practices in all later commissions including, University of the Trees and Ort des Treffens. Sacks' internationally recognized pedagogies, commissioned lecture-actions, writing and projects extend Joseph Beuys' social sculpture ideas into a coherent and widely accessible set of understandings and practices.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> The impacts claimed in this case study are underpinned by extensive research, led by Professor Shelley Sacks (Oxford Brookes University, 1997-present), which informs the social sculpture projects relating to her 4 REF2014 outputs: <u>Ort des Treffens</u> [1]; <u>University of the Trees and Earth Forum</u> [2]; <u>Exchange Values on the Table</u> [3], and a 250 page, co-authored book <u>'Die Rote Blume'</u> [4]. This recent book reflects on and disseminates a set of creative strategies and connective practice methodologies evolved through all these projects, which incorporate dialogue processes, explore the relationship of imagination to becoming 'agents of change' and develop Beuys's notion of the 'invisible materials' of social sculpture, accessible to all. Philosophical sources shared with Beuys' (Schiller's 'Aesthetic Education of the Human Being'; Goethe's exploration of 'exact sensory imagination' and 'new organs of perception'; the phenomenology of Heidegger; Husserl and Stein on empathy), converge in approaches to 'experiential knowing' and 'inner technologies' that draw on contemporary scientists, philosophers (David Bohm, David Abram, James Hillman, Rebecca Solnit), and thinkers exploring education for democracy, sustainability and engaged citizenship (Illich, Arendt, Freire, Dewey, Nussbaum). Motivated by E.F. Schumacher's view of the necessity of 'the culture of the inner human being for a sustainable future', Sacks's work, in connecting inner and outer fields of change, explores radical change as a spectrum, in which methods of imaginative agency, capacity building and the connection between aesthetic practices and response-ability, are central.</p> <p><b>Exchange Values</b> [1996 on-going], a social sculpture project enabling producers and consumers to explore their position in the global economy, engages both constituencies in reflective-imaginal dialogue processes. Commissioned for the 'NOW' Festival, Nottingham, 1996, [funded by the Foundation for Sport and the Arts], and redeveloped in 2007 [commission for 'Social Sculpture Today' exhibition, Dornach] and 2011 [Voegele Kulturzentrum, Zurich], Exchange Values actively engaged consumers of all ages: including growers' representatives, academics, teachers, pupils and activists at 12 museum, conference and summit venues. Many organisations and NGOs have supported it: the NGO, Banana Link hosted it at 3 UK venues, with Arts Council of England funding; farmers' organisations [e.g. Windward Islands Banana Development Corporation] enabled 3-months of reflective-imaginal work and dialogue processes between Sacks and 20 farmers in the Caribbean; the UK Presidency Project invited it to be part of their 1998 programme [London] which included Windward Island farmers, NGOs, MPs and Dept. for International Development]; The Body Shop provided technical and scientific support; and the Johannesburg Art Gallery presented it [2002] for the World Summit for Sustainable Development. A handbook for Zurich [2011], was developed to test ways of disseminating methodological insights and practices developed in this and other social sculpture projects by Sacks, and for enabling others to facilitate the dialogue processes 'at the table' for exploring our relationship to the global economy. Its many iterations have provided research opportunities for developing and reflecting on the 'connective aesthetics practices' and 'inner technologies' taken up in subsequent projects. <a href="http://www.exchange-values.org">www.exchange-values.org</a></p> <p><b>Ort des Treffens</b> [2009 ongoing] builds on Exchange Values' insights about imaginative agency in order to explore connections between reflection, active citizenship and integration. Commissioned and funded by the Kulturburo, Hannover, the Gartenregion Project and the Niedersaeschiche Foundation, its 14-person team of artists, activists and volunteers engaged hundreds of citizens in two in-depth processes <i>Selbsttreffens</i> [Encounter with Oneself] and <i>Einandertreffens</i> [Encounter with Others] over a 5-month period. Citizens were invited to</p>

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participate via a project newspaper [15,000 copies]; information cards; NGO meetings; and a website [www.ortdestreffens.de](http://www.ortdestreffens.de) Engagement with the ideas and practices was deepened by the 'ATLAS', a 120-page, philosophical workbook [ISBN 978386783015750] whilst 50 indoor and outdoor listening stations made citizens reflections audible in parks, squares, streets, schools, libraries, stations, highlighting a city as constituted by the inner life of citizens, which needs to be valued, voiced and shared.

**University of the Trees and Ecological Citizenship** [2008 on-going] micro-projects explore connective practices for promoting ecological citizenship. Commissioned micro-projects include: 'Thought Wedges' for Nobel Laureates Climate Symposium [London, 2009]; 'Frame-Talks': 24-hour action for 'Rethinking Progress' [Berne, 2012; Citizens Art Days, Berlin, 2013]; 'Sustainability without the I-Sense is Non-Sense': instrument of consciousness action [Ueberlebenskunst /Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2011]. [www.universityofthetrees.org](http://www.universityofthetrees.org) and [www-social-sculpture.org](http://www-social-sculpture.org)

**Earth Forum** [2011 on-going] was invited, funded and hosted in South Africa by the British Council, COPart, SA Environment Agency to promote creative engagement with climate issues around the COP17 Climate Summit [780 participants in 17 towns in South Africa, May-Dec 2011], and, in Europe by Transition Towns [Hannover]; Ueberlebenskunst Festival; Boell Foundation/Radius of Art conference; Citizens Art Days / Freies Museum [all in Berlin 2011 on-going]; Green Party [Dusseldorf, 2011]; Cultura 21 conference [Hude 2011], Lueneberg University sustainability conference [2012], Kassel, by an alliance of local sustainability initiatives [2011-2013 on-going], and Creative Challenge, UK [2013]. In the EU there have been 960 participants, of whom 73 are trained as facilitators]. [www.earthforuminitiative.org](http://www.earthforuminitiative.org) and [www.universityofthetrees.org](http://www.universityofthetrees.org)

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

1. **Exchange Values: Images of Invisible Lives: 3 project related publications** also include Sacks' texts on the project: Social Sculpture today ISBN978-3-928780-66-7 [2007]; World Summit for Sustainable Development and Johannesburg Art Gallery, Art Council England funded. ISBN 0-620-29499-X [2002]; and Now Festival/New Arts Symposium booklet [1996]. See [www.exchange-values.org](http://www.exchange-values.org)
2. **Earth Forum Handbook** developed by Sacks – English and German. [Key methodologies, rationale and elements of Earth Forum - for all who undertake Earth Forum training]. Translation in 2014 into Croatian, Czech, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, Chinese. [www.earthforuminitiative.org](http://www.earthforuminitiative.org) (See also Citizens Art Days booklets, 2012 and 2013; and Earth Forum chapter in co-authored book by Sacks and Kurt: *Die Rote Blume: Aesthetische Praxis in Zeiten des Wandeln*, OYA, 2013.)
3. **Invited conference presentation and online lecture:** "Sustainability without the 'I' Sense is Non-Sense". Followed by panel discussion with Michelangelo Pistoletto. Heinrich Boell Stiftung: "Radius of Art" international conference, Berlin (2012). Lecture relates to 'connective practice' commissioned by Ueberlebenskunst Festival, Haus der Kulturen der Welt and Bunderskultur Stiftung, Berlin 2011. See Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgdCNrLBQxk>;
4. **Refereed article, now book chapter** [invited] Sacks, S. (2011) - *Social Sculpture and New Organs of Perception: New practices and new pedagogy for a humane and ecologically viable future* (in Lerm-Hayes and Walters (2011) *Beuysian Legacies in Ireland and Beyond: Art Culture and Politics*. LIT Verlag, Berlin. pgs. 80-98) articulates experiences during Sacks's collaboration with Beuys and Free International University (1973 -1986) and its interrogation and development in her research practice and methodologies.
5. **Co-authored book** *Die Rote Blume: Ästhetische Praxis in Zeiten des Wandels* (The Red Flower: Aesthetic Practices in Times of Change) with Dr. Hildegard Kurt. Forward by Prof. Wolfgang Sachs. [German edition, Autumn 2013]; 250 pages. ISBN: 978-3-927369-77-1; English edition, 2014. Publisher: Think OYA, Berlin]. Texts dealing primarily with the theory, evolution and practice of Sacks' social sculpture research, and its relationship to engaged arts practice, activism, sustainability and the phenomenology of transformation.
6. **Project Funding** a. **Exchange Values** (Bonnington Gallery, Nottingham 1996 [£6500]; UK Presidency Project, 1998 [£3500]; Gender, Culture and Globalisation Conference, Warwick University 1999 [£2000]; Peterborough City Art Gallery 2000; Arts Centres in Norwich and Ipswich linked to NGO 'Banana Link' 2000 [£5900]; South African National Gallery 4-8/2000 [£5000]; Johannesburg Art Gallery 5-8/2002 [£3500 plus £2000 Arts Council England and British Council]; International Project Space, Birmingham and Banana Link 2004 [£6500]; Exchange Values on the table: 2007 'Social Sculpture Today'/Ursache Zukunft –Basel 2007 [CHF15,000=£10,100]; Voegele

Kulturzentrum, Zurich 2011 [€4500 =£3770], Publication 2007 [€2000]. Total = +£50,620

b. **Ort des Treffens**, Hanover, Germany: Funding from 2008 to 2011, includes preparatory work, fabrication, running costs, project publications and 2 years follow up visits. [€35,500+ from German foundations –Kulturburo, Gartenregion Projekt and Niedersaechsisches Foundation].

c. **University of the Trees and Ecological Citizenship**: £11,000 -Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World [2006-2012]; £3,000 from Creative Campus Initiative, Oxford [2010]; £1300 from Centre for Sustainability Leadership, Cambridge University for ‘Thought Wedges’, Nobel Laureates Symposium, [2009]; €4000 from Forum Altenberg, Berne for development of Frame-Talks 24-hour action for ‘Rethinking Progress’, [2012], €2000 from Ueberlebenskunst Festival, Berlin [2012]; €4500 from Citizens Art Days, Berlin [2013]; and numerous one day events/lectures internationally on *University of the Trees* principles and practices including Barbican [2010]; Youth Initiative Programme, Sweden [2012]; Boell Stiftung, Berlin €300 + €300 [2011-12]. Total=£24,600

d. **Earth Forum**: introduction and facilitator training in South Africa [£1500 British Council for Sacks’ 1<sup>st</sup> visit]. Remaining 7 month process May-Nov 2011 –funded facilitators and other costs to work with 700 participants including 28 NGOs in 44 towns, cities, villages linked to Climate Fluency Exchange and COP17 Climate Summit process [Est. £8000, British Council, Commonwealth Institute, Idalyeto –SA Environment Agency]; UK (Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World, Nov 2011) [£500]. Switzerland (Forum Altenberg –Berne [£1200]) Germany: Citizens Art Days/Bundeszentral fuer Politische Bildung (Central funds for Political Education), Berlin 2012 [€4000] 2013 [€4500]; Permaculture Convergence 8/2012, Kassel [€1200]; Heinrich Boell Stiftung, Berlin, 1-day programme for 40 scientists and cultural activists [€300] Total= +£12,600

**4. Details of the impact** Social sculpture practice, informed by the research insights of Professor Sacks, has enabled cultural and educational impacts, demonstrated through working with individuals, communities and NGOs in Europe, USA, China, South Africa and India, to address issues within the sustainability agenda. These benefits are achieved through the application of the creative methodologies and connective practice enquiry, which evolved through the projects *Exchange Values*, *University of the Trees*, *Ort des Treffens* and *Earth Forum*. The methodologies not only enable a direct experience of Beuys’ idea ‘that every human being is an artist’ [5], but communicate a complex epistemological process about the nature of imagination, knowledge and creative agency, through a simple, but empowering, participatory practice, useful in the everyday civil society. Since 1996, twelve venues have invited, funded and used *Exchange Values*. Banana Link prioritized working with *Exchange Values*, raising £12,000 [Arts Council England] to present it at three UK venues. Chief Executive, Banana Link, [See 1] says the project contributed to the success of their UK fairtrade strategy, and inspired setting up the Geneva World Banana Forum. *Exchange Values* in schools [8] and its incorporation as a curriculum resource underlines benefits beyond art-world and academia. That thousands of people have, for 16 years, listened to the invisible farmers’ voices and dedicated hours to participating in group processes ‘at the table’ –in which they explore their sense of themselves as ‘producers’ as well as their ‘response-ability’ in the global economy– is another form of testimony. People remark on gaining insights into themselves and society, as well as valuable, new imaginative capacities.

‘What am I doing in the world?’ is the question Hanover citizens were invited to reflect on and discuss through *Ort des Treffens* (April-September 2009), commissioned as part of Hannover’s ‘Gartenregion’ Projekt. Recorded responses were accessible via 50 citywide listening stations. In addition to the hundreds of individual citizens, participating groups included schools, community centres, libraries, citizens ‘integration’ groups, the Blind School, a philosophy group [REFLECT], and sustainability NGOs [Transition Towns; Agenda 21]. The project included several related publications [see Underpinning Research: Ort des Treffens], public fora and a project website. The project is continuing as a Citizens’ Initiative and a revised English version of the ‘ATLAS’ has now become ‘ATLAS of the Poetic Continent: Pathways in Ecological citizenship’ [132 pages, 2013]

*University of the Trees* is a global participatory framework - online and on the ground – prioritizing experiential knowing and re-schooling of the senses. It explores the questions: ‘what is knowledge?’ and ‘how do we know?’ It develops forms and practices accessible to all, irrespective of education and status, exploring how we might live in the world without destroying it and each other. A ‘kit’ and other ‘instruments of consciousness’ connecting inner and outer change, highlight the relationship between imagination and agency, and create arenas for exploring our relationship to the world and meaningful action. Processes such as ‘what is a human being, what is a tree’

have been used with school and young offenders groups [e.g. Haldon Forest, Exeter], whilst 'exploring questions as trajectories' formed part of a Nobel Laureates Climate conference. Such understandings also enrich exchanges with other initiatives, including environmental groups such as Black Environment Network and green health networks engaging with 'nature-deficit disorder'. In 2011 a handbook was drafted for those facilitating engagement at the Exchange Values' table. An updated version incorporates insights from all four projects, in particular Sacks' link between 'aesthetic' practice that overcomes numbness, and our responsibility as an ability-to-respond (UNESCO Summit contribution, Stockholm.1998).

*Earth Forum* is a 'module' of the University of the Trees, developed in a small South African village in 2002, and tested in South Africa, Germany and the UK since 2011. It is a mobile, simple, multi-stakeholder process open to all, highlighting 'capacity building' of a special kind, which people can carry into their work, their NGO practices [2/3/4/6/8/9] and their daily lives [10]. Although designed to bring together groups of stakeholders that have differing ideas of 'progress', 'development' and 'a sustainable future' it can also be used meaningfully with groups of individuals, as in Berlin [6]. Through its connective practices it enables new forms of meeting, listening, creative engagement and action. Since May 2011, when Sacks trained the first small team of Earth Forum 'responsible participants', nearly two thousand people in South Africa, Germany, UK, India and Portugal have participated in Earth Forum's intensive 3-hour process. Of these, 73 requested training to become 'responsible participants'. These facilitators meet regularly to discuss the Earth Fora that they run in many different constituencies –from advocacy groups, the Commons network, Transition Towns, within permaculture and activist training, to festivals and events in city squares – demonstrating that this process is valued and widely used. Its impact in Berlin resulted in further funding from the Bundeszentral fuer Politische Bildung [National Office for Political Education] for another weeklong Earth Forum programme (2013), facilitated by 6 of the original 2012 Earth Forum participants. [6]

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

1. **Corroborative statement author 1:** Banana Link (Chief Executive); World Banana Forum (Executive) [Testimony]
2. **Corroborative statement author 2** Transition Towns-Kassel, German Coordinating Team; Coach [Testimony]
3. **Corroborative statement author 3** - Heinrich Boell Stiftung, Berlin. Head of International Politics. [Testimony]
4. **Corroborative statement author 4**- International Permaculture Design Network – Educator/Trainer [Testimony]
5. **Phillips, P.C.** (2011) *Social Sculpture: The Nexus of Human Action and Ecological Principles* in Moyer, T and Harper, G. (Eds.) (2011) *The New Earthwork*, ISC Press, New Jersey [234-238]
6. **Citizens Art Days–Berlin** (2012): '*Citizens Art Days: Pilot*' [Earth Forum p14-17]. includes citizens Sacks 'trained' in 2012. Also post-project publication: '*Documentation*' (2012)
7. **Greenpeace Magazine** (2012) 'Agenda' [Entry by Dr. Andreas Weber on University of the Trees/Earth Forum. One of 14 international projects showcased, linking art and sustainability p64-65]. See also Weber, A. (2013) '*Enlivenment: Towards a fundamental shift in the concepts of nature, culture and politics*', Heinrich Boell Stiftung, Berlin: p61.
8. **Exchange Values in school education: Corroborative statement author 5** [TIDE:Teachers in Development Education: Arts, Education and Sustainable Development pamphlet, and testimony]. Testimonies from geographers/educators, [who have worked extensively with *Exchange Values*, creating a resource for schools and for 'Making the Connection' teaching programmes, and writing chapters, journal articles and conference presentations].
9. **OYA Magazine** [Sustainability and culture magazine, in German [circulation 10,000+]. Issue 9, July/Aug 2011: '*Soziale Plastik heute*' <http://www.oya-online.de/article/read/446.html>; Issue 9, July/Aug 2011: Immer mehr zu Künstlern werden <http://www.oya-online.de/article/read/426.html>; Issue 17, Nov/Dec 2012: Permakultur im Netz der Netzwerke <http://www.oya-online.de/article/read/857.html>. **Oya Blog** 23/3/2013: thinkOya auf Tour [http://www.oya-online.de/blog/145-thinkoya\\_auf\\_tour/view.html](http://www.oya-online.de/blog/145-thinkoya_auf_tour/view.html)
10. **Weintraub, L.** (2008) '*Avant-Guardians: Textlets in Art and Ecology Values*' [Exchange Values profiled in 'Globalism' section. <http://www.avant-guardians.com/ecocentric.html>.