

Institution: Queen Mary University of London		
Unit of Assessment: 28 History		
Title of case study: Exhibiting Renaissance Lisbon as a Global City		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2004-2017		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Professor Kate Lowe	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor of Renaissance History and Culture	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2004-Present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015-2018		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>The impact of Professor Lowe's research has been brought about by the curation and presentation in 2017 of a major international exhibition at Portugal's national museum, as well as a premier regional museum, revealing new and never before seen historical materials, and thus changing public comprehension of Lisbon's Renaissance history. Beneficiaries of Lowe's research impact were the museum staff, professional designers, and national and international visitors, as evidenced by considerable public attendance and media commentary. The significance of Lowe's collaboration with these Portuguese museums was to transform the presentation and understanding of Lisbon's history as a global city in the Renaissance, to reveal previously unseen and very rare historical materials, and to inspire public debate and understanding.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Lowe is a highly regarded interdisciplinary historian of Renaissance Europe, notably of fifteenth and sixteenth-century Italy and Portugal. Her two main historiographical interventions since 2000 have been in the reconsideration of the Renaissance through the study of cross-cultural Italian-Portuguese interactions and in leading the field in the history of black Africans in Europe. Both interests produced the research that underpins this impact case study. It rests on the discovery, analysis and consequent exhibition of a painting of sixteenth-century Lisbon, which had been unknown until Lowe's research expertise enabled her to identify it and then make it the basis of an international research project and book.</p> <p>Lowe's investigation of contacts between Italy and Portugal, as the two most important imperial Renaissance states, enabled her production of the edited volume, <i>Cultural Links Between Portugal and Italy in the Renaissance</i>, published by OUP in 2000 [3.1]. This book was the first to explore Italian-Portuguese ties and to do so from broad methodological perspectives (combining art history, history, language and literature) with an emphasis on international exchange. Lowe's editorship and her own research allowed for a reassessment of the Italian Renaissance and its influence on Portugal, especially in material and visual culture. In her next project, Lowe extended the originality of her work by opening up the little studied history of sub-Saharan Africans in Portugal, becoming a leading scholar in this area. Lowe's research complicated previous interpretations of Renaissance Europe as ethnically homogenous and contributed to the understanding of the history of slave trading by elaborating upon Portugal's involvement in it. Her 2005 co-edited book, <i>Black Africans in Renaissance Europe</i>, published by CUP, placed the Mediterranean and its connection with the west coast of Africa into these literatures [3.2, 3.3]. Lowe's work specifically considered social and visual stereotypes of black Africans and how they related to constructions of European whiteness. The book was a Choice Outstanding Academic Title in 2006.</p> <p>While Lowe was continuing her research on the presence of sub-Saharan Africans in Renaissance Italy (funded by a British Academy Small Research Grant, 2008-09 and a Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship, 2010-11) she discovered a sixteenth-century painting in two panels of a late Renaissance street which had been housed in Kelmescott Manor. Although the painting was understood to have been part of the collection of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, it had otherwise not been identified or exhibited. Lowe's knowledge allowed her to situate the painting in Renaissance Iberia and probably Lisbon given its depiction of black Africans (who accounted</p>		

for ten per cent of Lisbon's population in the early sixteenth century). She asked her collaborator, art historian Annemarie Jordan Gschwend, to assist her in placing the painting, which she did as an illustration of the *Rua Nova dos Mercadores*, the most vibrant commercial street at the heart of Renaissance Lisbon and the centre of the sixteenth-century global Portuguese Empire. This find was a rare breakthrough in the history of Lisbon and Portugal with ramifications for understanding the Renaissance and the effects of global changes on European cities and their peoples. This is because the history of these subjects had previously been obscured by scarcity of evidence, especially material and visual sources, due to the devastation caused by the 1755 Portuguese earthquake, especially upon Lisbon. This fact heightened the extraordinary significance of the painting, as the only known view of a street that no longer exists at the core of the world's first global imperial Renaissance city. As an item of material and visual culture, the painting of the *Rua Nova dos Mercadores* was thus unrivalled.

With the assistance of another British Academy Small Research Grant in 2010-11, Lowe carried out research in archives, churches, art collections and public squares in Lisbon to locate the documentary context for the street portrayed in the painting. She then cooperated with Gschwend to lead a group of seven, international, interdisciplinary scholars to make the Kelmscott painting the basis of a reconsideration of Lisbon as a Renaissance city at the centre of the Portuguese Empire. The result was *The Global City: On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon*, edited by Gschwend and Lowe and published in 2015 [3.4]. Sponsored by the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon, and other private Portuguese patrons, this book comprises 15 scholarly chapters and 250 colour images of materials and objects, many never seen in public before. It was a ground-breaking piece of research, not simply because of its collection and display of original evidence, but also because of the historiographical intent of its editors. Gschwend and Lowe produced novel interpretations by reversing the conventional historical perspective upon Renaissance Lisbon and Portugal. Their book does not look outwards from the entrepôt in the age of exploration and expansion but inwards to make the case, inspired by the Kelmscott painting, that Lisbon was a city created by global connections and influences and was the centre of artistic and cultural hybridity.

Gschwend and Lowe outline this approach and argument in their joint introduction to *The Global City* and thereafter Lowe makes her specific contributions in three other chapters. The first considers how Lisbon was viewed from without, based mainly on sixteenth-century Italian sources. The second explores the city's 'global population' and especially the representation of African children, men and women in the Kelmscott painting. The third appraises the presence of west African luxury goods in Lisbon's markets, underlining the commercial exchange between the metropole and the merchants of the African coast. While other works have charted the rise of Lisbon as an imperial city, none have done so with the new emphasis placed on representations of it or with full appreciation of its internationality or connections with Africa. Moreover, no other book in English has revealed as much about Lisbon's past as a Renaissance city and none has used the Kelmscott painting to recreate and reinterpret it. Indeed, until the publication of *The Global City*, Lisbon had not featured comparably with other cities in the history of the Renaissance, partly due to hiatus in academic enquiry created by the 40-year dictatorship of Salazar, but also because of the lack of scholars proficient in Portuguese, and as a result of the dominance of Spain over Portugal in the study of art history.

The Global City was thus a highly original piece of interdisciplinary research inspired by a rare source, which its editors revealed. They used it to pursue a new research agenda to reinterpret Lisbon's global past. Both the source and the research expertise went on to inform the approach that Lowe and her collaborator Gschwend took when asked to use their findings, their research and their book as the bases of a major exhibition at Portugal's national museum in Lisbon, which they curated.

3. References to the research

[3.1] Lowe, K. J. (Ed.). (2000). *Cultural links between Portugal and Italy in the Renaissance* (p. 329). Oxford University Press.

[3.2] Lowe, K. (2005). The Black African presence in Renaissance Europe. *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, 1-17. In Earle, T. F., & Lowe, K. J. P. (Eds). *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*. Cambridge University Press.

[3.3] Lowe, K. (2007). 'Representing' Africa: Ambassadors and princes from Christian Africa to Renaissance Italy and Portugal, 1402–1608. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 17, 101-128. doi.org/10.1017/S0080440107000552

[3.4] Gschwend, A. J., & Lowe, K. J. P. (Eds). (2015). *The Global City: On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon*. Paul Holberton publishing. doi.org/10.1086/691883

Evidence of the quality of the research

[EQR.3.2] Love, K. [PI]. (2010-11). Research Fellowship. [RF/3/RFG/2009/0192]. *Leverhulme Trust*. GBP33,261.00

[EQR.3.3] Lowe, [PI]. (2008-9). Visible Lives: Sub-Saharan Africans. [SG-50228]. *Academy*. GBP6,343.20.

[EQR.3.4] The *Global City: On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon* won two international prizes, one in the US and the other in Portugal. In 2016, it was given an Honorable Mention by the Eleanor Tufts award for the best English-language book on Spanish or Portuguese art history, alluding to its 'transformative scholarly contributions'. In 2017, it won the Prémio Almirante Teixeira da Mota, from the Academia de Marinha (The Naval Academy) in Lisbon, a prize is awarded for an outstanding contribution in Portuguese maritime history.

[EQR.3.4] Lowe, [PI]. (2012-13). SG: Rua Nova dos Mercadores in the 16th century Lisbon. [SG11208]. *British Academy*. GBP3037.40.

4. Details of the impact

Lowe has had long-term impact in the areas of creativity, culture and society, and on understanding, learning and participation. In 2017, as a result of the development of her research expertise in the history of Renaissance Lisbon and her experience of working with prestigious museums with international reputations, Lowe was able to use her research in a major exhibition at one of Portugal's national museums and at a highly regarded regional museum. Her impact is explained here in the commission of her research expertise to curate the exhibition, the originality of the exhibition itself, its effect on public interest and debate, and the legacy it has had for understanding Lisbon's Renaissance history in the present and future.

Collaboration with museum, enhanced cultural interpretation, including a museum exhibition in Lisbon

It was on reading *The Global City* [3.4] that António Filipe Pimentel, the Director of Portugal's principal national museum – the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga (MNAA) in Lisbon – invited Gschwend and Lowe to adapt their book into an exhibition and to act as its curators. Pimentel's request was straightforward: he asked two international scholars to convert their research published as *The Global City* into 'a physical, emotional, and intellectual experience, taking into account the narrative quality of the original book' [5.1]. This was a prestigious invitation. The MNAA is an esteemed institution, which holds one of the largest art collections in the world, with over 40,000 items of varied forms and diverse international origins. It habitually curates exhibitions internally - sometimes with external scholars - but very rarely does it commission an exhibition and entrust curation in the way that it did with Lowe and Gschwend. Pimentel did so because he recognised their academic reputations and the importance and originality of their book for the history of Lisbon and Portugal [5.1].

Lowe and Gschwend played primary, prominent roles in the preparation and formation of the MNAA's exhibition based on their book. As in the production of similar exhibitions at any major international museum, a team was at work, but everything started with Lowe and Gschwend's research and curatorial knowledge. Pimentel has attested to Lowe's interventions in the Museum's internal debates about the exhibition, her attention to the best use of its exhibition spaces and her involvement in the exhibition's executive plan [5.1]. Lowe and Gschwend prepared the loan list and advised the Museum's staff and the external design company (Ferrand, Bicker and Associates, Lisbon) on how best to display the materials from underlying principles,

such as the relationship between written information and visual exhibits, to specific displays [5.1, 5.2]. They were also involved in the selection of accompanying images on LCD screens, composed wall mountings and wrote labels for all display materials. The exhibition's six sections reflect Gschwend and Lowe's schema and relate directly to the research content of their book and their discovery of the Kelmscott paintings of the Rua Nova ('Lisbon City Views: historical background,' 'Novelties,' 'From Africa,' 'Shopping in Rua Nova,' 'Animals from other worlds' and 'Simão de Melo's House').

Lowe and Gschwend's curatorial responsibilities extended to the creation of the exhibition's catalogue. This role is not unusual for curators, but in this case it was notable for the connection between their research and the contents of the catalogue, including the selection of its contributors. While they drew on the primary research that they had carried out for their 2015 book, they extended their analysis to enrich the range of objects on display in the bilingual Portuguese/English catalogue published in 2017 [5.3]. Lowe wrote two new essays in conjunction with Gschwend, the first entitled 'Picturing global Lisbon' and the second 'Renaissance Lisbon's global sites.' She also produced two further essays, 'Foreigners in global Lisbon' (which was based on an essay in the 2015 book), and a new piece titled 'From Frunando to Fernando: West Africans and language in Renaissance Lisbon.' Lowe also authored short essays on 'Spoons from West Africa in Renaissance Lisbon' and 'Textiles from West Africa in Renaissance Lisbon,' as well as further catalogue entries. The exhibition catalogue's initial 1,000 print run quickly sold out and was followed by a reprint.

The result of Lowe and Gschwend's collaboration with the MNAA was a major public exhibition – The Global City. Lisbon in the Renaissance – which ran from 23 February to 9 April 2017. It brought together 249 diverse pieces of art from various countries and from 77 collections (64 of which were from national institutions and private collections, with the remainder from international collections, principally at the British Museum, Leiden University Libraries, the Museo Nacional del Prado, the Museo Nazionale Preistorico Etnografico 'Luigi Pgorini', and the Pitt Rivers Museum). Not only was the inclusion of 249 exhibits remarkably high for any exhibition but many had never been on public display, including the central exhibit, the Kelmscott painting of the Rua Nova dos Mercadores. In his introduction to the exhibition catalogue, Portugal's Minister of Culture, Luis Filipe Castro Mendes, described The Global City. Lisbon in the Renaissance as 'certainly one of the most fascinating exhibitions' ever held at the MNAA and commended its ability to enrich 'the cultural interest of Lisbon' [5.4].

Informed public understanding of Renaissance Lisbon through MNAA Lisbon exhibition

Visitor figures for the seven-week exhibition exceeded 1,000 per day and reached a total of 41,434. On the opening night, 3,000 visitors attempted to enter the exhibition and had to be dispersed across the first week. In comparative terms, these numbers were very high and by their measure the Museum's Director judged the exhibition an 'enormous success' [5.1]. Visitor book testimonies indicate that Lowe and Gschwend's curatorial influence had significant influence on their thinking and learning. Visitors were drawn to, and affected by, the exhibition's novel presentation of Renaissance Lisbon as a multicultural and multi-ethnic global city. One visitor described it as 'a stunning experience, showing the astounding importance of Lisbon in the 16th century.' The exhibition also prompted visitors to ponder the consequences of modern globalization. A Portuguese visitor was moved to think about 'our tolerance, culture and world view,' while another from London thought the 'amazing exhibition [brought] Lisbon's past to life,' and hoped that today's global cities would continue to 'open [their] borders to travelers and merchants and new residents' [5.5].

The exhibition received widespread coverage in print, on television and across web media. Dozens of articles were printed in the Portuguese national press and news stories featured on Portugal's national broadcaster, RTP1, and the international Portuguese channel, SIC. In the weekly newspaper, Expresso (circulation: 108,000), the historian Diogo Ramada Curto recognized the curators' intent to use the exhibition to arouse public interest 'in a critical vision of history and heritage.' In the weekly Portuguese news magazine Visão (circulation: 77,000), Claudia Santos also responded to Gschwend and Lowe's purpose by writing that the major

discoveries unveiled by the exhibition transformed perceptions of ‘multicultural Lisbon’ and revealed ‘a past that also makes one think of the present’ [5.6]. Further attention was drawn to the exhibition when doubts were raised about the authenticity of the Kelmscott paintings by a small group of Portuguese scholars, resulting in a public debate on held in March 2017 at Lisbon’s Palácio da Mitra, which received press coverage. Ultimately the provenance of the Kelmscott paintings remained intact [5.7].

Lowe and Gschwend’s contribution to wider understanding of Lisbon extended also to the inclusion of their research in the BBC’s landmark 2018 series *Civilisations*, where Renaissance Lisbon and its back African population featured in episode six. Furthermore, in the series’s accompanying book, *Civilisations: First Contact/The Cult of Progress*, written by David Olusoga and published in 2018, the Kelmscott painting and Lowe and Gschwend’s research feature in his portrayal of Lisbon [5.9].

Collaboration with MNAA led to curatorial role in a second museum exhibition in Porto

Testament to the significance and popularity of the MNAA exhibition was the subsequent transfer of key parts to the Museu Nacional de Soares dos Reis in Porto, a noted regional museum, for further display from May to August 2017. In this exhibition, as at the MNAA, Lowe and Gschwend used the discovery of the Kelmscott painting (a rare find) of lost Renaissance past, reinterpreting Portuguese history for academic and non-academic audiences. Once again, they made newly assembled pieces of historical material accessible to the public, to inspire a novel, broad popular understanding of historic Lisbon (and by extension, Portugal) as a centre of international exchanges demonstrating hybridity in artistic, commercial and cultural endeavours, as well as in social diversity.

In the same year, the Portuguese government – which had been made aware of the MNAA’s Lisbon and Porto exhibition in its two-year preparation – made a submission to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention for recognition of Lisbon under the title ‘Historical Lisbon, Global City’ [5.8]. The submission and the exhibition were notable in their shared depiction of Lisbon’s past as a Renaissance entrepôt of extraordinary historical importance to inform contemporary understanding and the city’s future.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5.1] [Testimonial] Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon

[5.2] Ferrand, Bicker and Associates. (2017). The Global City – Lisbon in the Renaissance. FBA. <https://www.fba.pt/portfolio/projects/the+global+city++lisbon+in+the+renaissance-344>

[5.3] [Exhibition Catalogue] Gschwend, A. J., & Lowe, K. J. P. (Eds.). (2017). A Cidade Global: Lisboa no Renascimento / The Global City: Lisbon in the Renaissance. Lisbon, Portugal.

[5.4] [Exhibition Catalogue] Mendes, L. F. C. (2017). Introduction. In A. J. Gschwend & K. J. P. Lowe (Eds.), A Cidade Global: Lisboa no Renascimento / The Global City: Lisbon in the Renaissance . Lisbon, Portugal.

[5.5] [Feedback] Exhibition visitors’ book: extracts.

[5.6] [Press] Dossier of Portuguese national press articles about the exhibition.

[5.7] [Debate] Town hall, Palácio da Mitra, 29 March 2017.

[5.8] Historical Lisbon, Global City. UNESCO [Portuguese submission to UNESCO, 31 January 2017]. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6208/>

[5.9] Olusoga, D. (2018). *Civilisations: First Contact/The Cult of Progress*. Profile Books. From Olusoga, D. (Writer). Leese, I. (Director). (5 Apr 2018). First Contact (Series 1, Episode 6) [TV series episode]. In D. Blakeway and M. Jackson [Executive Producers], BBC *Civilisations*. Nutopia.