



## **WORDSFORPICTURES**

**WORDSFORPICTURES** by Lingnan artist in residence, Jayne Dyer, transforms one of the university's most frequented spaces into a site where members of the Lingnan community are gently and playfully invited to think about their taken-for-granted attitudes towards books and the institutional cultures in which they are embedded. Installed over a period of weeks, and accompanied by 'art alerts' challenging students and staff to locate its various artistic interventions, **WORDSFORPICTURES** is a constantly evolving, yet ultimately ephemeral work designed specifically to prompt reflection on the nature of creativity and the value - aesthetic, social, political and critical - of experimental artistic practices.

As Hong Kong's only Liberal Arts University, Lingnan has for more than a decade seen its task as fostering creativity in Hong Kong's students. The Visual Studies' Artist-in-Residence Programme aims to encourage students' creativity by enabling them to interact intensely with emerging and established artists from Hong Kong and elsewhere.

In **WORDSFORPICTURES** students were able to observe the artist's transformation of more than one hundred books into striking black sculptures in her Lingnan studio. As importantly, students became artistic collaborators as they helped install these and other elements of the artist's intervention in the library. The sense of shared purpose and engagement that emerged as a result of this process has had a decisive impact on students' attitudes. Released from the novice's fear of actually producing (especially 'bad') art, and motivated by the artist's guidance and inclusive dialogue about her practice, students have experienced, first hand and through doing, the transformative and enabling power of art. Designed as it was with the Liberal Arts mission of Lingnan in mind, **WORDSFORPICTURES** teaches creativity through a highly conceptual collaborative practice.

Mette Hjort  
Director, Visual Studies Programme

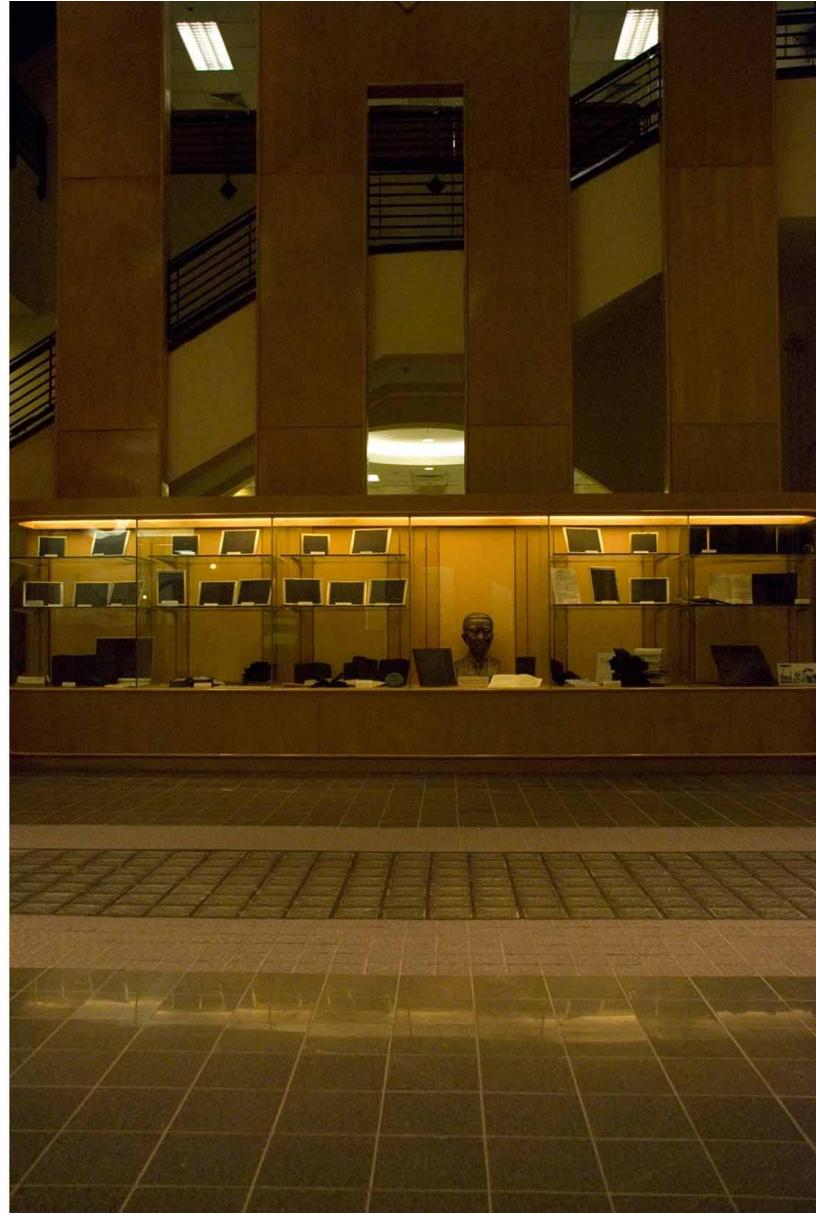
## **WORDSFORPICTURES**

The concept of displaying unreadable text in the Library intrigued me for several reasons. Books have a duality: information comes from both the content and the format. When the content has been hidden and the format destroyed, you must then rethink the very nature of a book. Also intriguing is the idea of a library housing text that could not be read and text that has been shredded as it calls attention to the Library's mission to make text accessible and preserve it for the future.

Libraries have many 'black' books: we all face a similar problem when we're confronted with a book in a language that we cannot penetrate or in a location that we cannot access. The works become real or virtual ciphers, hiding their meaning within the blackness of their characters or tantalising us with only a citation in a bibliography. And besides the 'black' books, libraries are getting an increasing number of invisible ones. The meaning carried by the format and physicality of the book, the visual guidelines provided by the sight of a thirty-volume set on a reference shelf have vanished in the digital world. An entire shelf is now reduced to a mouse click, an entire library is now concealed behind the white blank of a search box.

Readers see a book as an object that contains words, information and inspiration, ideas and stories. I find myself looking behind the blackness of Jayne Dyer's books for the meaning they must contain, have to contain, or why else would they be a book? I have enjoyed this exhibit and hope you have too, and that Lingnan's students were stimulated by it to question what a book is, what text and words mean to them, and what access and absence mean to their lives.

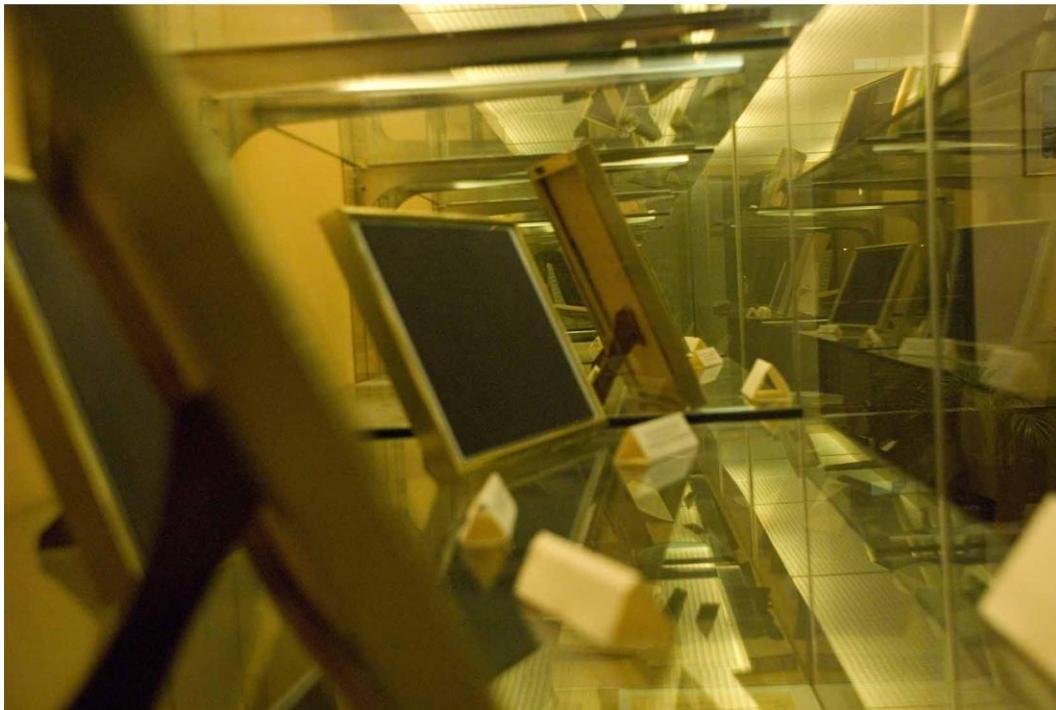
Frederick Nesta  
University Librarian



Lingnan University Library Entrance, *right view*



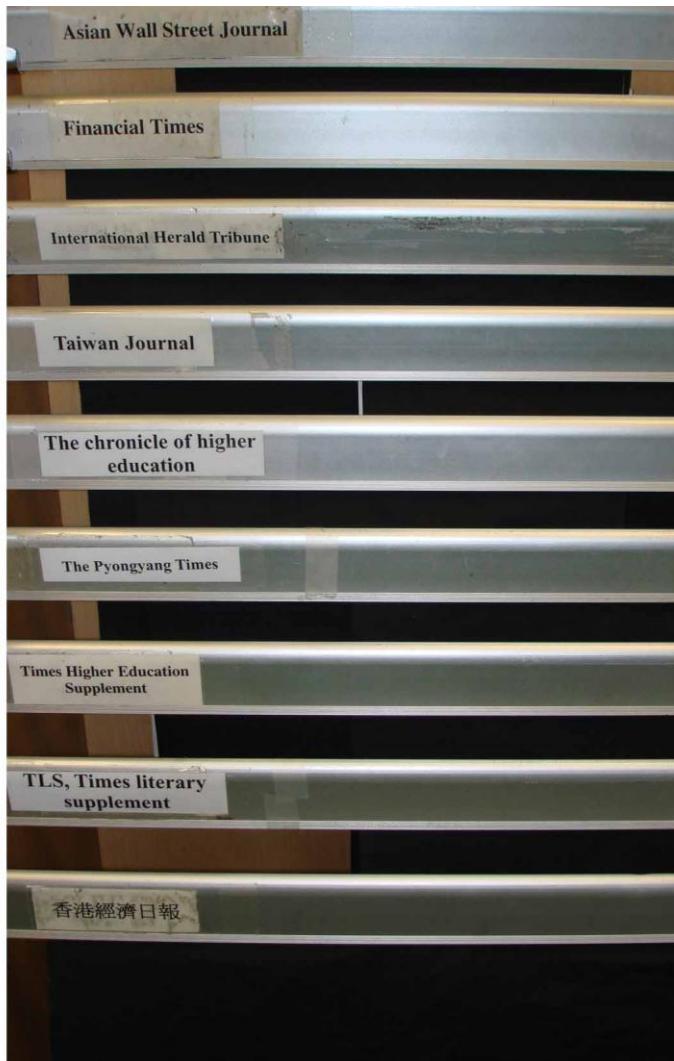
Foyer Display Case  
*Lingnan University history & achievements*



Foyer Display Case, *detail*



Serials Collection, *newspapers*



Serials Collection, selected newspaper titles



Information Commons, *book spines reversed*



Information Commons, *book spines reversed*



English Collection



English Collection, *detail*



Chinese Collection



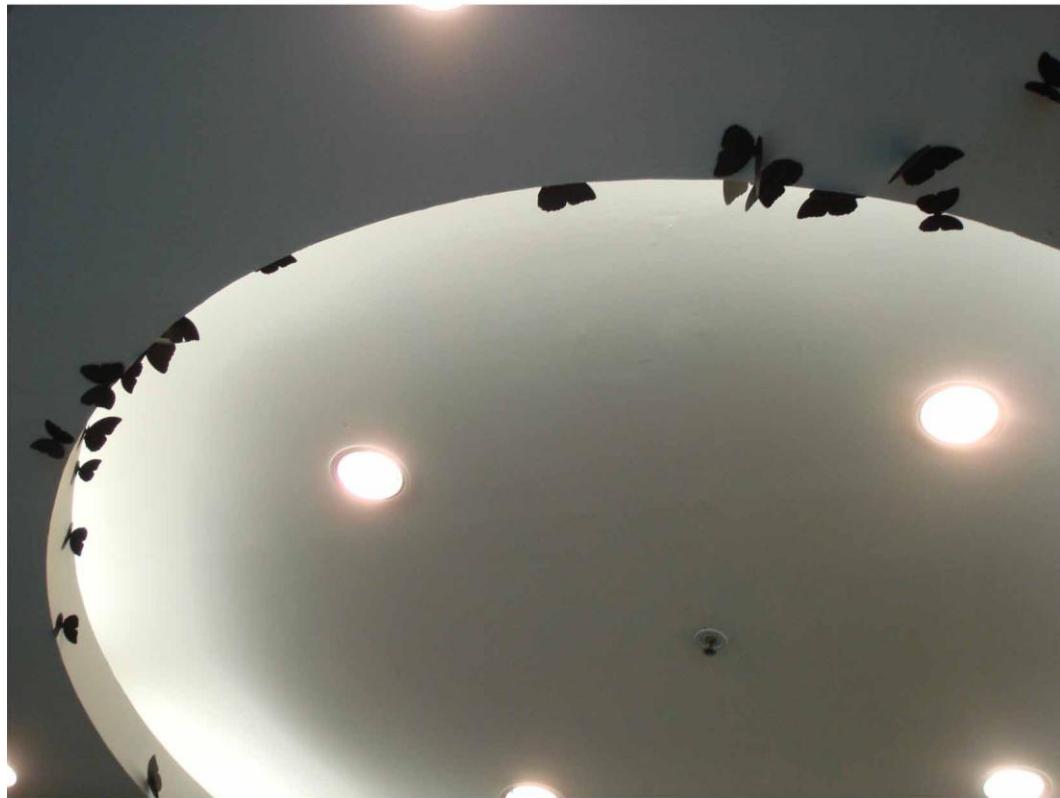
Staff Publications Display Case



Reading Room, *detail*

Information Commons, left view





Information Commons, *ceiling*



Information Commons, *right view*



Information Commons, *detail*

