International Conference

CULTURAL HERITAGE. SCENARIOS 2015

Ca’ Foscari University, Venice
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November 26-28, 2015

Call for Papers
1. Rationale and background

Today, cultural heritage manifests itself, in real life as well as in the imagination of individuals, communities and groups, and mankind, with an overwhelming force. The International Conference "Cultural heritage. Scenarios 2015" focuses on this idea. The Conference is part of a series of initiatives launched in recent years, often in cooperation with other entities, by the Centre for Studies on Human Rights at Ca' Foscari, the Management Laboratory of Arts and Culture (also at Ca' Foscari), Venice’s “Scuole Grandi” (Great Venetian Historic Schools), the Venice Foundation for Research on Peace, and the City of Venice’s Europe Direct. These initiatives, developed also thanks to the collaboration with local authorities, engaged in directing the citizens’ attention to the tangible and (especially) intangible cultural heritage. The Conference however sets itself apart from previous initiatives for its non-linear, multi-thematic nature. Cultural heritage issues are indeed at the heart of current international and national debates; nevertheless, a broad, far-reaching investigation on their developments is paramount: Scenarios 2015, but without thematic or disciplinary constraints. The proposed structure of the Conference does not set rigid boundaries between different subjects and aims to encourage a rich and articulate debate among disciplines (law, economics, anthropology, philosophy / aesthetics, history, arts ...)

Venice is the ideal place for this Conference. The city is not only the container of an amazing, historic tangible heritage, but also a laboratory of living practices that, in recent years, are experiencing an important process of self-awareness due to their role as to heritage communities. The scientific community is offering an interesting contribution to this process.

In the first two sessions, the Conference will focus on fundamental scientific issues, while in the other two sessions the attention will extend to different actions available to all parties involved – individuals, groups and communities, institutions, entrepreneurs – and to the concrete possibilities available to them in order to identify, experiment, and develop new collective and participatory forms of interaction.

The first session will cover the dramatic profiles reserved to cultural heritage in modern conflicts. Within globalization’s lack of order, the destruction of cultural heritage assumes a renewed significance, programmatic and symbolic at the same time, of destruction of identity and memory of “others.” This urges us to investigate again issues that seemed, too simplistically, already resolved (such as the protection of cultural heritage during armed conflicts, appropriation vs. restitution, outbreaks of intolerant identities).

Conversely, we are at the heart, sometimes unwittingly, of the development of participatory and identification processes that require further investigation of the nature and extent of patrimonialization phenomena. This challenge is also fueled by new legal instruments coming into effect, both at the global (UNESCO) and regional level (Council of Europe’s Faro and Florence Conventions).

The second session will focus on the development of a heritage community aspect of patrimonialization. Moreover, it seems clear that the right to cultural heritage is establishing itself as a basic human right, but what is the link between the individual and collective dimensions of this right? Which changes are being introduced in the classic framework of protecting minorities’ rights? And also, could the process of patrimonialization decidedly contribute to the thorny debate on the common good? How is the heritage’s common good created, and how does it evolve?

These first theoretical discussions intersect with more concrete issues regarding the choices and practices of dedicated institutions and of multiple social, cultural and economic communities. These will be the specific topics of the last two sessions. The museum entity emerges under three different perspectives: the relationship between museums and landscapes, between museums and emerging heritage communities at the national and international level, and between museums and institutions (sub-national, national, and international). Among the latter, the International Treaty bodies are increasingly playing a role thanks to their ability to interpret norms and to create networks among stakeholders.

The proposed analysis also presents a specifically Venetian (and Veneto) aspect, raising the question, in particular, of the possible future role of the Arciconfraternite delle Scuole Grandi (Confraternities of the Great Venetian Schools).
The final topic will address the issue of protection, transmission, and sustainable valorization of cultural identity and particular knowledge specific to an area or community. Knowledge, practices, business and social institutions that take root and create unique connections and regional plans will survive and develop if there will be a continual renewal of conditions shaping their vitality and their ability to add value. Again, Venice becomes a significant case of the role that traditional products and artistic craftsmanship still play in the city, such as, for example, those related to the lagoon environment. Can these skills and practices, in the near future, play the paradigmatic role invoked in the last session of the Conference? Which forms of governance and management, in between individuality and collective, private and public, can ensure vitality and new developments to these forms of knowledge? How can research and innovation transform traditional skills while strengthening links across generations? The answers to these questions will be decisive for the future of the city.

2. Research lines

The International Conference will take place on November 26-27-28, 2015, at Ca’ Foscari University, Venice. The Conference proposal includes five working sessions starting on Thursday morning (November 26, 2015), with the institutions, associations and other entities welcome, followed by a general opening address. The working sessions will follow on Thursday (November 26, 2015), in the afternoon, and will continue on Friday morning / Friday afternoon (November 27, 2015) and on Saturday morning (November 28, 2015). These will be macro-sessions, split here and there into smaller sessions.

The Scientific Committee has outlined four lines of research, corresponding to the working sessions, in relation to which the interested scholars can present a paper.

CULTURAL HERITAGE BLAZES
Globalization and its antagonist actors: between targeted devastations, forms of appropriation and re-appropriation, restitution, new identity clashes and claims, memories and confrontation (power politics on cultural heritage?).

CULTURAL HERITAGE INSPIRES
Participatory experience as an essential component to build identities open to dialogue, and ready to make room for others. What is the relationship between heritage communities and processes of patrimonialization? What about commons? The right to cultural heritage and to the protection of cultural diversity as a human right; a clarification of its social function. Minorities and identity.

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMPACTS
Museums as holders of heritage responsibility on contemporary landscapes? The relations of bodies sharing this responsibility with international institutions and with elective communities, respectively. The Venetian Historical Schools as compounds of both religious traditions and civic commitment to social solidarity entrusted to beauty.

CULTURAL HERITAGE EITHER FINDS HEARTS AND HANDS’ CARE OR DIES
Traditional knowledge, productive knowledge and expertise, traditional craftsmanship and artisanship with a focus on the water cycle. The question of sustainability. The legal protection of traditional knowledge. Artisans’ expertise not as mere practices aiming at reproducing “objects”, but as “language” capable to express itself through actual creation: namely, a paradigm of the care and creativity required from individuals and communities for them to shape, with their present, also their the future?
3. Deadlines for submitting abstracts and papers

The deadline for submitting abstracts (in Italian, English, and in French) is **August 15, 2015**. Together with the abstract, the candidate must email a brief curriculum vitae to: **scenari2015@gmail.com**. The Scientific Committee will announce the outcome of the selection on **September 15, 2015** with an e-mail communication. Those who will be selected and contacted by the Scientific Committee may produce a power point presentation to be showed at the Conference. The Scientific Committee reserves the right to publish online the material received from the participants selected as panelists. The papers will be published in a final inclusive book. Each paper should consist of a text, in English, of max 45,000 characters – spaces included -, and must be emailed by **July 30, 2016**.