

Critical Conservation Assembly #1

Communities of Practice

3–4 December 2026

Book of abstracts

Alice Heyward: *Companionship as a Mode of Conservation*

Conservation is often misunderstood as the preservation of objects, documents, or stable forms. Yet many cultural practices endure through ongoing processes of transmission, interpretation, collective participation, reinvention and recreation. Across performance traditions and other embodied forms of cultural knowledge, continuity is frequently maintained through communities of practice whose members sustain, renew, and transform shared ways of knowing. This presentation proposes companionship as a mode of conservation. Drawing on choreographer and writer Alice Chauchat's notion of companionship and on my academic research into performance conservation, I explore how conservation might be understood not as the maintenance of fixed identities but as a practice of accompanying. In Chauchat's work, companionship names a relation that remains open to alterity, mutual influence, and change. Rather than seeking fidelity to an original form, companions attend to what exceeds them, sustaining conditions through which practices can continue to unfold. Through examples drawn from contemporary dance and research into the transmission of choreographic knowledge, I examine how performance survives through embodied learning, shared attention, and situated forms of expertise. In these contexts, conservation emerges less as the preservation of a work than as the maintenance of relationships that enable its continual reactivation. What is conserved is not simply an object, score, or repertoire, but a set of conditions through which knowledge can be practised, interpreted, and passed on, existing through transformation. Approaching conservation through companionship shifts emphasis from ownership to custodianship, from reproduction to accompaniment, and from expertise as authority to expertise as participation. It foregrounds care, co-presence, and ethical responsiveness as conservation practices in their own right. By bringing together dance studies, performance conservation, and critical conservation discourse, this presentation argues that companionship offers a relational model for understanding how communities sustain and transmit cultural knowledge across time while remaining open to transformation.

Alice Heyward is a dancer, choreographer, teacher, writer, and researcher based in Berlin and Naarm/Melbourne. For over a decade, she has worked across the independent dance sector as

a performer, maker, educator, editor, translator, and critic, developing an interdisciplinary practice that moves between artistic creation, pedagogy, performance, and research. She is currently completing a Master of Research at the University of Melbourne. Her thesis, *Protecting Existence*, investigates how performance is conserved through practices of transmission, embodiment, and collective learning. Drawing on interviews with artists, performers, conservators, and pedagogues, her research approaches performance conservation as a relational and pedagogical practice, examining questions of performativity, interprète, transmission, and collection. Her current research investigates performance conservation, companionship, and the ways embodied knowledge is sustained through communities of practice.

Ben Davenport: *Flexible Authenticities and Culinary Capital in Diaspora Food Heritage Conservation*

In an increasingly mobile and connected world, the transnational movement of people and ingredients challenges the conservation of culinary traditions and food heritages for those living in diaspora. Drawing on doctoral research with Italian, Polish and Ukrainian communities in the East of England, this presentation shows that participants understood food heritage conservation relationally and as grounded in everyday food practices. For participants, change and adaptations to their foodways were accommodated within perspectives that privilege affective environments and socialities over stable recipes or cooking techniques. Conservation of traditional food practices was performed by communities through flexible understandings of authenticity that allowed for culturally sensitive substitutions and time-saving innovations in the face of post-migration socio-material constraints. The presentation argues for the cultural and emotional importance of particular elements within diaspora food practices and introduces the concept of authenticity pivots to reconcile experiences of stability and change that characterize the preservation of migrant communities' culinary traditions. Adapting Rotarangi and Stephenson's use of the concept of 'resilience pivots' within social-ecological-cultural systems, this framework demonstrates how necessary transformations to recipes were not seen to compromise the conservation of food heritage in cases where the pivotal points of cultural integrity persisted. Finally, participants' responses indicated that while the elements that constituted authentic foodways were often defined through embodied and discursive practices that produced community consensus, certain individuals possessed greater authority in these matters. This was due to their access to culinary capital, a socially embedded resource demonstrated through displays of tacit knowledge and culinary skills. While diaspora foodways often celebrated creativity and innovation, care was given to its preservation and intergenerational transmission through forms of informal custodianship and pedagogy. These often persisted despite strong pressures to assimilate to the receiving country's cultural values.

Ben Davenport is a PhD Candidate and member of the Heritage for Global Challenges Research Centre (HGCRC) at the University of York. Trained as an archaeologist, he has held

a range of academic administration and research management roles, including Coordinator of the Heritage Research Centre at the University of Cambridge, before beginning his PhD in the Department of Archaeology in 2023. Ben's doctoral research examines everyday food practices as cultural heritage, exploring how culinary traditions and food heritages are mobilised by European migrants in negotiating multiple identities and senses of belonging in diaspora. Working with members of Italian, Polish and Ukrainian communities in the East of England, his research foregrounds relational and more-than-representational approaches to food heritage that recognise heritage as lived, embodied and continually negotiated through everyday practices, social relationships, sensory experiences and material engagements with food.

Bhumika Balamatti: *Community-Based Heritage Care through Adaptive Reuse of Colonial Bungalows in South India*

This paper examines how the adaptive reuse of colonial-era bungalows in South India can be understood as a practice of community-based heritage care rather than only as architectural conversion. Building on the study of bungalow reuse in (South India) Bangalore, Goa, and Mysuru, it argues that heritage is sustained not only through formal conservation methods but through everyday acts of maintenance, social use, and shared custodianship. In these settings, courtyards, verandas, kitchens, and dining spaces become active interfaces where local memory, culinary practice, and community participation help extend the life of historic buildings. The paper draws on case studies, field observations, stakeholder interviews, and comparative analysis to investigate how reuse strategies can support both material preservation and social continuity. It examines how local users, business owners, designers, and visitors contribute to the ongoing care of heritage spaces through repeated occupation, material repair, and culturally embedded use. Rather than treating adaptive reuse as a purely commercial intervention, the paper frames it as a relational process in which communities help shape, sustain, and reinterpret heritage value. By focusing on everyday conservation, the paper highlights the significance of informal stewardship, local knowledge, and small-scale interventions in maintaining historic bungalows. It suggests that community-based heritage care offers a more inclusive and resilient model for conservation, especially in rapidly changing urban contexts where heritage survives best when it remains lived-in, shared, and socially meaningful.

Bhumika Balamatti is an architect and researcher whose practice bridges material craft, community-centered building, and digital design, with a strong interest in conservation as a living and relational practice. She completed her Bachelor of Architecture at CEPT University (2020–2025), where her coursework and projects deepened her engagement with computational design, advanced structures, and the architecture of the Global South. Through workshops, a CSEB design residency at the Auroville Earth Institute, and workshops on timbrel vaults with bamboo, she developed hands-on experience with earth-based and vaulted construction techniques, strengthening her interest in vernacular material knowledge and the

care of existing environments. She has also worked on site in Gujarat on the restoration of heritage houses in Vadnagar, which gave her direct exposure to the challenges and possibilities of working with historic fabric. She is currently a research and teaching assistant at the Wadiyar Centre for Architecture in Mysore, where she engages with workshops and explorations on restoration, photogrammetry, and heritage walks.

Cecilia Benedetti: *Materiality, Transformation and Conservation Among the Chané Carvers of Northern Argentina*

This presentation examines Indigenous perspectives and practices concerning the materiality, transformation, and conservation of cultural objects. Historically, the maintenance and preservation of heritage objects—particularly their physical dimension—have been considered the domain of professional experts. This research explores alternative knowledge and practices related to the materiality of Indigenous objects, reflecting on how preservation techniques and procedures shape the meanings and values attributed to heritage. Drawing on an anthropological perspective, it investigates how notions and practices of conservation emerge from the broader social conditions that Indigenous communities face today, including inequality, exclusion, and the need to survive. These questions are examined through the case of wooden mask production among the Chané people of northern Argentina. Chané masks represent one of the most important expressions of Indigenous cultural heritage in Argentina, rooted in the multiethnic region of the Chaco Salteño. Made from yuchán or floss silk tree and painted with colors extracted from stones, herbs, and flowers, these masks are crafted primarily by men and represent a variety of human and animal faces. Formerly used in a ceremonial celebration in which they were intentionally destroyed, these masks have entered an "afterlife" since the early twentieth century as heritage objects and commodities—a transition through which new ideas of temporal continuity have begun to take shape. The presentation addresses four interconnected dimensions. First, it considers how material conservation transforms the objects themselves: as masks are preserved rather than destroyed, meanings once tied to their destruction are gradually reshaped. Second, it examines the knowledge and practices that emerge from their material conservation. Third, it explores the relationships between contemporary heritage objects and their ephemeral past forms. Finally, it reflects on what matters in conservation for the Chané people.

Cecilia Benedetti is a Researcher at the Argentine National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET) and a Professor at the University of Buenos Aires. She holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Buenos Aires. Her research focuses on cultural heritage, museums, cultural diversity, sustainable development and material culture. She has published a book and numerous journal articles and book chapters on these topics. She was a Guest Scholar at the Getty Conservation Institute (2026), a Visiting Professor at

the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (2019) and a Guest Researcher at the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut in Berlin (2016 and 2018), funded by DAAD and CONICET.

Christopher King & Francesca Colussi (Duet talk): *Conservation Labour, Reciprocity & Opacity*

In many parts of the world the professionalisation of time-based media conservation is only a recent development, even where it's now available postgraduate training is financially inaccessible to most workers. In the UK the period with an absence of training led to broad diversity of backgrounds and skills within my department at Tate and its wider networks of care. This mixing of formally trained conservation workers and those who have come through other pathways helped create a situated, reciprocal, critical and practice-based knowledge culture [1]. We draw on this culture to meet the challenges of technical, cultural and contextual diversity present in the global artistic practices we are in dialogue with through our labour (Hui, 2019). This emergent workplace culture, however, faces pressures against which it must maintain its own diversity and political agency. The operation of our institutions' economic and ethical imperatives create material conditions which act to separate mental and material labour. This instantiates a value differential between different kinds of expertise. This division reduces the political agency and flexibility of all workers by lessening their ability to adapt their practices to maintain the difference and potentialities within the plurality of artistic practices at hand. The museum is also the site where the majority of critical and technical conservation labour is initiated or takes place. This labour is a site of study for academic workers who produce and create conservation discourse. This can create competing sites of authority with critique only moving in one direction. A retreat into the local, would endanger our situated labour culture co-constituted by the diverse global networks from which it arose. Models such as Glissant's concept of opacity (Glissant, 1990) may help us sustain diversity of backgrounds whilst changing attitudes to authorship and authority. Informing how we act within our networks in collaboration with artists and culture workers but also how we ask external academic conservation discourse to engage with our situated practices. Recognising the division between people, knowledge, and nature originates in capitalist social relations (Rekret, 2018). Any ethical commitment must first be a commitment to labour equity in conservation practice and importantly, conservation discourse production.

Chris Jan King is an artist and conservator primarily concerned with historic and contemporary electronic audio-visual practice and media art. His blog and online discussion group Video Circuits explores early medium critical synthetic image making practices. He has worked since 2016 as a time-based media art conservator at Tate in the UK where he has contributed to Tate's Software-based Art Preservation project and research into the analysis and conservation of net art. His paper Archaeologies and Organologies: Towards an

alternative history of early synthetic video and image processing practices 1939–1969 is published in the Decembre 2024 issue of Leonardo Journal.

Francesca Colussi is a Time Based Media conservator at Tate Galleries. She holds an MA in Visual Arts from IUAV University (Venice) and moved to London in 2012 to work for Afterall, a research center of University of the Arts London. She subsequently worked as Studio Manager for the artist Mark Lewis, where she deepened her interest in the display and preservation of video art. At Tate she has been focusing in the preparation and delivery of exhibitions and displays, including Steve McQueen in 2020 and Ana Mendieta in 2026 at Tate Modern.

Denise Petzold: *Caring for Music and for Each Other: Singing the Stories of the Buurt Opera Malpertuis*

Situated within a broader research project on participatory and communal forms of caring for classical music, this paper presents an ongoing ethnographic case study of the Buurt Opera Malpertuis (‘Neighborhood Opera Malpertuis’) at Opera Zuid in Maastricht, the Netherlands. This recurring initiative invites residents of the Malpertuis neighbourhood to collaboratively create and perform a music-theatre production based on their memories, experiences, and personal stories. Each production is also developed in dialogue with Opera Zuid’s annual mainstage opera; in the current cycle, this is *L’Étoile* (1877) by Emmanuel Chabrier. By following participants and staff as they discuss, prepare, rehearse, and perform together, I approach the Buurt Opera Malpertuis as a site where new forms of care, conservation, and transmission of performative art are enacted through collaborative practices (rather than viewing it primarily as social outreach or audience engagement). Drawing on Helia Marçal’s notion of ‘caring for the in-between’ (2022) and Emilie Magnin’s understanding of performance as a tool for conservation (2023), the paper argues that participatory opera practices offer alternative modes of conserving classical and operatic music through relational, processual, and socially embedded forms of care. Rather than simply reproducing established aesthetic standards or “producing the same” (Domínguez Rubio, 2020), participants and staff participate in three interconnected caring practices: turning everyday experiences into art through direction (caring for participants), opening up institutional aesthetic routines (caring for the institution), and creating new identities in the in-betweens (caring for each other). The findings challenge dominant aesthetic understandings of classical music and opera by showing how participatory performance practices create forms of care that reach far beyond well-established artistic norms and values. It argues that the involvement of non-professionals reconfigures processes of transmission, concluding that these art forms can only meaningfully endure and evolve through collective engagement, negotiation, and shared meaning-making.

Denise Petzold (she/her) is Assistant Professor of Cultural Heritage and Performance

Art at Maastricht University. She explores how art, music, science, and technology come together in the continuing existence of artistic traditions. Her research specifically focuses on how performance-based artworks evolve over time and how organisations, communities and audiences help to sustain and care for them. In the past, Denise has studied the tension between conserving and innovating classical music, using approaches from contemporary art conservation to address this tension. In her interdisciplinary work, she understands artistic heritage as a dynamic process and aims to trace the interrelations between actors, communities, organisations, objects and material environments to understand how artistic tradition becomes alive. Denise has a background in science and technology studies, contemporary art conservation, and museum and heritage studies.

Ellen Pearlstein: *Developments in the Conservation of Indigenous Collections*

Taking a long and global view toward the conservation of Indigenous collections amassed through theft and cultural assimilation is necessary to understand the Indigenous advocacy, and policies and practices, that have fostered a modicum of change. Conducting research through a conservation lens into terminology including art/artifact/belongings, Indigenous language terms used in conservation, and European museum naming transitions; intangible heritage protected by a materially inclined field; global policies including charters and conventions; traditional care predating museums; and decades of change among conservation professionals, all help explain and support the shift from colonial museum practices to approaches led by and in partnership with Indigenous communities. All this research took place as preparation for the forthcoming publication *Indigenous Collections: Transformations in Stewardship and Conservation Practices* in the Getty Readings series. Over 600 readings by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars in fields including conservation, museum studies, anthropology, and art history were examined, and over 100 were selected and introduced. Critical transformations in stewardship were explored and synthesized. This proposed presentation will summarize important historical moments and findings. It will advocate for pathways to further partnerships by highlighting US advancements in graduate conservation education and successes of pipeline programs leading to increased Indigenous representation in conservation work, and continuing policy changes occurring globally.

Ellen Pearlstein is a founding faculty member and Research Professor Emerita in the graduate UCLA/Getty Conservation Program, where she incorporated Indigenous instruction into the understanding and care of California basketry and featherwork. Her publications include the book *Conservation of Featherwork from Central and South America*, articles about feather regalia, coloration, light aging, Peruvian qeros and their colorants, Indigenous basketry materials, and conservation pedagogy. Her book *Indigenous Collections: Transformations in Stewardship and Conservation Practices* is in press in the Getty Readings

in Conservation series. She is a core contributor to the School for Advanced Research Guidelines for Collaboration. She guest lectures globally. Ellen is the founding director of the Andrew W. Mellon Opportunity for Diversity in Conservation and PI for the NEH Tribal Collections Care grant. She is the winner of an AIC Honorary Membership Award and a Keck Award, and a 2022 recipient of a Rome Prize for the study of collaborative conservation approaches to Americas' collections in European museums.

Haoyi Li: *Towards an interdisciplinary conservation framework through learning from Indigenous Yolŋu communities (Northern Australia)*

This presentation proposes a conservation ontology that is drawn from working with and learning from remote Indigenous communities in Australia. In response to the Assembly themes, the proposed ontology is relational, based on oral and ritual practices that happen everyday, and is ultimately decolonial. This form of everyday cultural conservation that is practiced by Yolŋu communities in North Arnhem Land are not understood by community members as a 'conservation practice', but rather it is governed by ancient rom (law/lore, right way) which allows people to pass on their linguistic and cultural knowledge, involving storytelling, ceremonial singing/wailing and dancing, onto future generations in the right way. These practices have continued for millennia to ensure Yolŋu culture and knowledge remains strong today. In this presentation, I draw on Yolŋu practices of culture conservation from the disciplinary lens of linguistics and anthropology, based on nine months of fieldwork in North Arnhem Land over the past six years of working with community members. I demonstrate the advantages of adopting Indigenous ontologies into conservation as a way to Indigenise and decolonise the discipline, relying on the core tenets: (1) participatory approaches to ensure benefit to the community; (2) prolonged engagement to develop trust and deeper understanding of the Indigenous culture that conservators aim to help preserve; (3) cross-disciplinary collaboration and interdisciplinary training of conservators, to enable a more holistic and diverse understanding of cultures and their conservation methodologies. By drawing on a deeper understanding of Yolŋu language, art and culture as a case study in this presentation, I show how the proposed theoretical framework can be put to practice. This framework provides two-way benefit to the community and the researcher/conservator, by enabling professional development for future community conservators through participatory practices, and allowing the researcher/conservator to gain deeper understanding of Indigenous cultures and how to best conserve them through prolonged engagement with communities. Conservation can thus be positioned as an umbrella framework that allows various academic disciplines to intrinsically shape their research to be beneficial to communities, by adopting cultural conservation goals and methodologies into the traditional research aims of linguistics or anthropology, thereby progressing towards broader academic decolonisation.

Haoyi Li is an anthropological linguist who works with Indigenous communities in remote Australia, recently engaging with the conservation discipline from an interdisciplinary background in art history, linguistics and visual anthropology. Her PhD (Australian National University) investigated Yolŋu languages, ontologies of art and contemporary cultural practices, documenting the trajectory of an outsider's journey of being inducted into the inside-outside knowledge system of Yolŋu society, focusing on topics like storytelling, metaphors, colour terms, aesthetics and multimodality. Haoyi has designed and facilitated workshops for language revitalisation with a focus on creating culturally-appropriate language learning materials, and practiced two-way learning and teaching as a sessional lecturer in Garrthlala Bush Uni, on country in remote northern Australia. Her current role at the Robert Cripps Institute for Cultural Conservation (University of Melbourne) is in the ARC Industry Laureate Fellowship Safe Keeping: Effecting Solutions for Risk to Remote Indigenous Heritage, lead by Professor Robyn Sloggett.

James B. Kuboja: *African Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Wildlife Conservation in Tanzania*

Conservation initiatives in Tanzania and many other African countries are shrouded with conservation models that largely ignore African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKSs). This paper uses both historical and contemporary data to argue that conservation initiatives should significantly engage African perceptions on nature conservation and how they traditionally contain environmental challenges. According to the findings of this paper, even the current conservation approaches like Community based Conservation (CBC) that insist on the African agency in conservation have failed to materialize in Tanzania because of not fully engaging Africans' perspectives in conservation.

James Benedict Kuboja is a lecturer and researcher from the Department of History of the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Tanzania, who holds a PhD in History from the same university. His research areas are environmental history, conservation, and diplomacy. He has extensively researched and published on the relationship between wildlife conservation and community development, especially in the Serengeti National park region.

Jane Henderson: *Opening Provocations*

A moderated conversation responding to the practices, questions, and tensions emerging from the Assembly. Participants are invited to reflect on whose knowledge, skills, and values matter in conservation; what makes a practice “conservation”; and what happens when different understandings of what—and how—to care for cannot be reconciled.

Professor Jane Henderson, MSc FIIC ACR SFHEA FRHistS FSA, a global conservation expert has worked in education and training in Wales for over four decades. A Plowden Medal winner, she was nominated by Icon to serve on the council of the UK National Trust. She supports learners at all levels through principles of collection care, conservation decision-making and practice. Recognised as a radical change-maker and critical thinker, her writing challenges global conservation to engage with equity and social justice. An early advocate for sustainable conservation, she has published widely on pedagogy, decision-making, emotion, the use and misuse of standards, and preventive conservation. A leader in the profession, Jane has served as a Trustee for Icon and IIC and remains a Trustee of Museums Federation Cymru. She sits on the editorial board of the Journal of the Institute for Conservation and the Science Museum Group, has edited special issues for the American Institute for Conservation and Scientific Culture, and has served on the selection panel for the ICOM-CC Preventive Conservation group. She is also an expert reviewer for journals and funding bodies worldwide. Jane is chair of the BSI standard group B/560 concerned with the conservation of Tangible Cultural heritage and is a member of the European and International standards bodies for conservation.

Jiayao Jiang: *Tea Cultivation and Living Cultural Landscape: The Conservation of Jingmai Mountain World Heritage site in China*

The introduction of the cultural landscapes category into the World Heritage framework in 1992 marked a significant shift from the conservation of monuments towards the recognition of dynamic relationships between people, culture, and nature. The Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of Jingmai Mountain in Pu'er, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2023 after more than a decade of preparation, exemplifies this transition. Developed over a millennium by the Blang and Dai ethnic groups, the landscape comprises ancient tea forests, traditional villages, and surrounding forests sustained through understorey tea cultivation, indigenous ecological knowledge, community governance, and spiritual beliefs centred on the Tea Ancestor tradition. Drawing on the World Heritage nomination process and post-inscription conservation practices, this paper examines the challenges of conserving a living cultural landscape where conventional conservation paradigms—centred on the technical stabilisation of material fabric and guided by professional expertise and institutional authority—prove insufficient. Instead, the preservation of Jingmai Mountain depends upon the continual transmission of ecological knowledge, traditional tea cultivation, village regulations, ritual practices, and community stewardship. The paper asks: to what extent has heritage management incorporated the intangible dimensions of this cultural landscape? Through what mechanisms have local communities become genuine participants in conservation? And how can both the cultural landscape and its associated intangible heritage be effectively transmitted to future generations? The paper further explores the tensions that have emerged following World Heritage inscription, as new international governance

frameworks intersect with long-established local systems of landscape management. The rapid expansion of tourism, the commercialisation of tea industry, and increasing external investment have introduced new pressures that threaten the heritage value of the site. Against this backdrop, the paper critically re-examines how these values are negotiated, maintained, and transmitted. The Jingmai Mountain case highlights the importance of everyday care, and invites a reconceptualisation of conservation as a continuous process of negotiating relationships between people, landscape, and the more-than-human world.

Jiayao Jiang is a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge. She holds degrees in Architectural Conservation and History of Architecture, and has contributed to heritage projects across China, Europe, and the Middle East. Jiayao has conducted research at leading institutions, including the Palace Museum in Beijing, the Bibliotheca Hertziana-Max Planck Institute, and the British School at Rome. She is a research fellow at the Huntington Library, the Library of Congress, and Cambridge Digital Humanities. She has also worked with ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) on World Heritage management, contributing to discussions on heritage policy, conservation frameworks, and community engagement. Her academic and professional work bridges research and practice, with a particular interest in how heritage is produced, negotiated, and sustained through communities, institutions, and everyday practices.

Juan A. Chindoy: *Rethinking Conservation through Situated Times and Places*

This presentation reflects on the abstract conception of time that underlies some conservation practices and proposes historicizing this logic through concrete practices rooted in specific places and times. These practices unsettle the structures and relations of domination underpinning capitalism while calling forth ongoing forms of collective care. Drawing on examples of Indigenous youth collectives that emphasize the need for community-based thinking in response to the challenges of the global crisis, the lecture argues that the concept of conservation needs to be reconsidered from a situated perspective, while retaining its critical potential beyond the particular communities from which these practices emerge.

Juan Alejandro Chindoy is an Indigenous Kamëntšá philosopher from the Sibundoy Valley (Putumayo, Colombia). He studied Philosophy and Literature at the University of Caldas and earned a PhD in Philosophy from Southern Illinois University (USA). In 2011, he was a Fulbright scholar. Specializing in comparative philosophy, with an emphasis on Indigenous thought, he is currently a professor in the Department of Philosophy at the National University of Colombia. He is also the author of *A Decolonial Philosophy of Indigenous Colombia: Time, Beauty, and Spirit in Kamëntšá Culture* (2020) and *Pensar desde tierras indígenas* (2026).

Leticia Gomez Franco: *Demystifying: Democratizing: Decolonizing :: Art Conservation*

The Balboa Art Conservation Center (BACC), an unassuming small regional art conservation nonprofit organization (1 of only 11 in the US) in San Diego, California, reinvented itself as a community-serving, human-centered, organization whose work is rooted in the belief that preservation belongs to all peoples—and so should the resources to practice it. BACC is unique in that it is led by diverse conservators, knowledge bearers, and community activists curious and committed to decolonizing art conservation. Unlike museums, preservation is not inherently a colonial practice. Our communities have been practicing cultural preservation since time immemorial. Many of us exist today as living testimony to those acts of cultural self preservation. Conservation that serves colonialism centers on objects, and objects as property. That property is tied to narratives of ownership, monetary value, and institutional validation. Conservation that focuses on cultural preservation, recognizes material belongings as extensions of lived experience, and is capable of something bigger: inclusive conservation practice. This human-centered approach to conservation equally shapes both treatment and programming at BACC. After 45 years of serving the exclusionary status quo, BACC embarked on a path of demystifying, democratizing, and decolonizing art conservation for the greater good. For BACC this process has looked like decentering eurocentrism, reclaiming resources, rematriating to community knowledges, disrupting a false sense of authorship, centering people over objects, and honoring relationships over assets. It looks like moving the work of conservation out of the labs and into neighborhoods, and holding space for the neighborhood inside of the labs. It looks like collaborative leadership, accountability, and dialogue. Above all, it is people-run, and it is rooted in dignity and belonging. Our submission will go over the actualization of our work over the past 5 years through service expansion, diversification of board and staff, and the launching of programs that focus on collections in historically underserved communities, supporting the culture bearers, and the keepers of community and family memory - a direct response to the historical exclusion and underinvestment in communities by the field of art conservation.

Leticia Gomez Franco is the Executive Director of the Balboa Art Conservation Center (BACC), where she leads the organization through a transformative shift grounded in a decolonial liberation framework. With a background in arts administration, cultural representation, and social justice, she has developed a collaborative leadership model rooted in accessibility, representation, dignity, and solidarity over charity. Before joining BACC in 2020, Gomez Franco served as Senior Arts and Culture Funding Manager for the City of San Diego. Previously, she was co-founder and Director of The Front, a binational cultural space in San Ysidro, California, one of the world's busiest border communities. The daughter of immigrants from Tepatlán, Jalisco, Mexico, Gomez Franco was born and raised in Pico-Union/South Central Los Angeles. She holds a B.A. in English and Chicana/o Studies from

the University of California, Berkeley, and an M.A. in Curatorial Theory from San Diego State University. At BACC, her work centers on reclamation and on rethinking conventional models of cultural preservation and leadership. Headquartered on Kumeyaay land, BACC brings together 11 cultural preservation professionals committed to building more accessible, representative, and just approaches to conservation.

Lisa Conte, Christine Frohnert, Adrian Hernandez, Debra F. Laefer & LaStarsha McGarity: *Stewardship, Care, and Communities of Practice at Joe Minter's An African Village in America*

Created over the course of four decades by Birmingham, Alabama artist Joe Minter (b. 1943), *An African Village in America* is a site-specific, living environment at the artist's home in Titusville, adjacent to historic Black cemeteries. Situated within Black Southern yard-work traditions, it transforms domestic outdoor space through assemblages of found matter, artist-made pathways, and spiritual thresholds, where flora, fauna, weather, sound, making, maintenance, movement, and the artist's narration activate the work's material and immaterial life. This paper examines how conservation can support a living cultural environment whose meanings are produced through place, oral transmission, relational encounter, ecological change, and ongoing care. In *An African Village*, reclaimed iron, industrial residue, shells, dolls, and other ordinary materials are not simply components of assemblages; they evoke histories of Birmingham labor, ancestry, childhood, racial violence, faith, civil rights struggle, and survival. Located at the threshold of home, yard, and burial ground, the work is Minter's way of honoring his ancestors, refusing to forget, and offering what he has described as "a gift and food to humanity, to bring on love." Drawing on a 2025–2026 conservation assessment conducted by conservators and engineers from New York University in collaboration with Create Birmingham, this paper explores stewardship beyond object-centered models. Condition evaluation, interviews, guided walkthroughs, informal conversations with neighbors, engagement with cultural partners, photography, video, audio recording, aerial imaging, and laser scanning supporting preliminary 3D modeling established a baseline for tracking change, expanding access, and documenting knowledge. Rather than treating material transformation, ongoing replacement, ecological change, and seasonal cycles only as risks to be managed, the paper considers how these forces participate in the work's evolution while generating urgent questions of care. By examining stewardship frameworks that embrace maintenance, storytelling, documentation, and community participation, we propose conservation as an ongoing process of cultural transmission—one grounded not only in preserving objects, but in sustaining relationships, meanings, ancestral memory, and communities across time.

Lisa Conte is Assistant Professor of Paper Conservation and Co-Chair at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. She holds an M.A. in Art History and an Advanced Certificate in the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works from the Institute, and a B.A. in English and Studio Art from William Smith College. Prior to her faculty appointment, she served as Head of Conservation at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum and held positions at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Scott Gerson Conservation, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Her recent work focuses on the material lives of paper—as artistic medium, documentary record, and circulating artifact across personal, institutional, and bureaucratic contexts. She is currently developing research on the early history of paper conservation in North America, with particular attention to the social and institutional conditions that shaped the field. This work complements her role as co-chair of a subgroup of the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation’s Oral History Project focused on book and paper conservation.

Christine Frohnert is a conservator of contemporary art specializing in time-based media and is a partner at Bek & Frohnert LLC, New York. Her practice engages a wide range of contemporary and often ephemeral materials, with a particular focus on artworks that unfold over time and require documentation, interpretation, reactivation, and translation across technological and cultural contexts. Drawing on time-based media conservation frameworks, she approaches artworks more like score-like entities - defined not solely by material components but by work defining properties, behaviors, and conditions of experience. She co-founded the first Time-Based Media Art Conservation Program in the United States at the Conservation Center, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University in 2018 where she currently serves as a Research Scholar and TBM Program Director. From 2008 to 2012, she chaired the Electronic Media Group of the American Institute for Conservation and initiated the TechFocus conference series. Previously, she was Chief Conservator at Museum Ludwig in Cologne, Germany (2000–2005). Building on her original training as a painting and sculpture conservator, she graduated from the Conservation of Modern Materials and Media program at the Bern University of the Arts, Switzerland, in 2003.

Adrian Hernandez (they/them) is a memory worker and conservator of objects and time-based media. They have treated a variety of objects from prehistoric to contemporary time periods. They received an MS in conservation and MA in art history from the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University in 2026 and hold undergraduate degrees in studio art, art history, anthropology, and electrical engineering. Much of their work and research includes applying social justice frameworks to conservation and the stewardship of ephemera and art associated with memorials, protest, and activism. In their nine years of working in conservation, they have consulted for independent activists and artists who care for their own collections and interned and contracted for more than 15 institutions throughout the United States, recently including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Menil Collection, and National September 11 Memorial & Museum.

Debra F. Laefer holds the title of Full Professor of Urban Informatics at New York University where she is affiliated with the Department of Civil, Urban, and Environmental

Engineering and the Center for Urban Science + Progress. She is a recognized thought leader in Urban Engineering and has pioneered novel remote sensing acquisition, storage, and processing pipelines to enable district-level modeling for topics as divergent as tunneling, flooding, pedestrian wind comfort, and epidemiology. She is the author of nearly 300 peer-reviewed publications and has spoken at venues as disparate as the Brookings Institute, the European Research Council, and DEFCON. Her work has been featured in a wide range of technical and general interest publications including National Geographic and TechCrunch. One current focus of her work is multi-modal, multi-temporal storage of high-dimensional, remote sensing datasets that use hyperspectral imaging as its core structure. This enables the monitoring of complex scenes for detectable and quantifiable change (e.g. excessive moisture retention, salt infiltration, and material loss). Application areas include cave paintings and Roman age bronzes. Another area of active work is applying deep learning models to historic maps to explore changes in urban morphologies.

LaStarsha McGarity is the Co-Director and Conservator of the Tuskegee University Legacy Museum in Tuskegee, Alabama, USA. She earned her B.A. in Art with a minor in Chemistry from Texas Southern University (HBCU) and a M.A. in Art Conservation from Buffalo State. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Preservation Studies at the University of Delaware with a proposed dissertation on culturally contextual conservation, particularly Black material culture.

Marina Herriges & Maria Siqueira: *Caring for Soil, Caring for Heritage: Circular Temporalities and Conservation at the Ecomuseu dos Campos de São José, Brazil*

Conservation has traditionally been understood as the preservation of the past for the future, often through practices centred on material stability, authenticity, and expert authority. Although this approach has been widely critiqued within contemporary heritage literature, many institutional conservation frameworks continue to operate within predominantly Western understandings of heritage and preservation. Alternative perspectives emerging from relational and community-based practices suggest that conservation can be understood not only as the safeguarding of objects, but also as the maintenance of relationships between people, land, memory, and more-than-human worlds. Drawing on the practices of the Ecomuseu dos Campos de São José in São José dos Campos, Brazil, this paper explores how conservation may be reimagined through community-led ecological care and cyclical understandings of time. Grounded in the idea of circular temporality, beginning, middle, and beginning again (Antonio Bispo dos Santos, 2023), local practices such as composting, planting, cultivating, and caring for the soil become forms of heritage conservation in themselves. These practices sustain not only the ecological environment, but also local knowledge, collective responsibility, social relationships, and intergenerational continuity.

Within this framework, heritage is not treated as a static object separated from everyday life, but as a living and evolving process shaped through communal participation and reciprocal care. Conservation therefore becomes a collective practice of sustaining cultural and ecological futures through on-going and sustainable forms of care.

Marina Herriges is a textile and objects conservator and researcher who, since 2013, has worked with international organisations and cultural heritage institutions across Europe, the United Kingdom, and South America, gaining experience in diverse cultural contexts. Marina is currently a doctoral researcher at the School of Education, University of Glasgow, where she explores how conservation can move away from colonial ways of working by valuing local knowledge, shared decision-making, and long-term, ethical relationships. Through ecomuseum practices in Brazil and Scotland, her research highlights place-based approaches, proposing conservation as a shared practice of care and pedagogies that encompasses people, land, materials, and living systems. Marina is a visiting lecturer for the MPhil in Textile Conservation and the Managing Art & Cultural Heritage in Global Markets both at the University of Glasgow. She also holds a position as a researcher at the Institute of Conservation (Icon), where she examines how to support conservation practice by enabling deeper analysis of niche specialisms most vulnerable to skills shortages.

Maria Siqueira is currently a PhD candidate in Social Psychology at Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil), holds a Master's degree in Social History from Universidade Estadual de Londrina (Brazil), and completed a specialist qualification in Urban Environmental Education at Escola Superior Aberta do Brasil. She also earned undergraduate degrees in History from Universidade Estadual de Londrina (Brazil) and Psychology from the Universidade Estadual Paulista. Since 2012, Maria has been an associated researcher at the Centre for Popular Culture Studies (São José dos Campos, Brazil) and works as a consultant in educational and socioenvironmental project management through Quarau Consultoria (Brazil). She is also a member of the Brazilian Association of Ecomuseums and Community Museums and the Vale do Paraíba Landscape Observatory. Since 2015, Maria has served as manager of the Ecomuseu dos Campos de São José in São José dos Campos, Brazil, where she develops community-led initiatives connecting heritage, environmental stewardship, collective memory, and local participation.

Muhammad Tehmash Khan: *Embodied Knowledge and Intergenerational Transmission in Heritage Conservation: Artisanal Practice in Historic City of Lahore, Pakistan*

Recent scholarship in critical heritage studies has questioned object-centred conservation by foregrounding embodied knowledge, relational practices, and intergenerational transmission as central to cultural continuity. This paper contributes to that reorientation through a focused case study of traditional craft practices in Lahore, Pakistan, specifically the *ustad–shagird*

apprenticeship system within the Walled City's architectural conservation and artisanal workshops. Drawing on ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews with master artisans engaged in fresco work, wood carving, and tile restoration, the study examines how conservation knowledge is not codified in formal institutional frameworks but transmitted through repetition, gesture, and lived practice. The findings show that conservation in this context operates as a process of continuous renewal rather than static preservation. Skills are cultivated through prolonged bodily engagement, where techniques such as pigment preparation, surface layering, and motif reconstruction are learned through imitation and correction rather than textual instruction. This mode of transmission preserves not only technical competencies but also ethical orientations toward care, material respect, and collective responsibility. At the same time, these practices are embedded within shifting socio-economic conditions shaped by urban development pressures, heritage tourism, and state-led conservation initiatives, which often privilege standardised methodologies over localised knowledge systems. The paper argues that embodied and intergenerational modes of learning challenge dominant conservation ontologies by redefining authenticity as processual and practice-based rather than material fixity. It further demonstrates how community-based knowledge systems negotiate authority in contexts where professional conservation discourses intersect with vernacular expertise. By situating Lahore's artisanal networks within broader debates on decolonial conservation and communities of practice, the study highlights the need to recognise apprenticeship, storytelling, and tacit skill transmission as legitimate and critical forms of conservation knowledge. This reframing has policy implications, suggesting that sustainable heritage conservation must engage directly with the practitioners who sustain cultural knowledge across generations.

Muhammad Tehmash Khan is a University Archivist and Senior Instructor with expertise in heritage studies, archival practice, and conservation pedagogy. His work focuses on the intersections of material culture, knowledge transmission, and community-based conservation practices in South Asia, with particular emphasis on Pakistan's urban heritage contexts. Drawing on his professional experience in archival management and teaching, he engages critically with how cultural knowledge is preserved, mediated, and transformed across institutional and vernacular settings. His current research examines embodied knowledge and intergenerational transmission within artisanal communities in Lahore, especially within the Walled City, where traditional apprenticeship systems continue to sustain conservation practices outside formal frameworks. He is particularly interested in how craft-based learning, oral traditions, and tacit skills challenge dominant, object-centred approaches to heritage conservation. His work contributes to ongoing debates in critical conservation by foregrounding practice-based knowledge, questions of authority, and the role of community custodianship in shaping heritage futures. Alongside his research, he is actively involved in teaching and mentoring students in archival methods, documentation practices, and heritage interpretation, fostering critical engagement with both historical materials and contemporary conservation challenges.

Njabulo Chipangura: *Museums as Sites of Care and Resistance*

Museums holding collections acquired from colonial contexts are increasingly being challenged to address their historical entanglements with cultural dispossession, epistemic injustice, and unequal systems of representation. Across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, museum collections were assembled through complex networks of dealers, missionaries, colonial administrators, scholars, military expeditions, and private collectors. Much of this collecting took place within the context of colonial expansion, where objects and human remains were removed under conditions of coercion, unequal power relations, or outright violence. In many cases, little attention was paid to documenting the circumstances of acquisition, ownership histories (provenance), or the perspectives and rights of the source communities from whom these cultural materials were taken. This paper examines how contemporary European museums are responding to these challenges through the adoption of critical and socially engaged museologies that seek to democratise curatorial authority and foster more equitable relationships with originating communities. Focusing on Manchester Museum's engagement with African collections acquired during the colonial period, the paper explores curating as a practice of care that extends beyond the preservation of objects to encompass ethical responsibilities towards the communities whose identities, memories, and cultural values remain connected to them. Using the Being Human Festival held at Manchester Museum in November 2024 as a case study, the paper examines how engagement with African diaspora communities created opportunities for dialogue, shared authority, and the recognition of multiple epistemologies and ontologies. I therefore argue that an ethics of care offers a critical framework for challenging colonial legacies embedded within museum collections and practices while fostering more inclusive and socially responsible forms of stewardship. At the same time, the discourse of care should be understood not merely as a curatorial principle but as an ethical practice grounded in recognising and respecting the rights of diaspora and originating communities, including their rights to access, engage with, and contribute to the interpretation of collections held in museums.

Njabulo Chipangura is Assistant Professor of African Anthropology at the National University of Ireland Maynooth, specialising in museum anthropology and critical heritage studies. He joined Maynooth University in 2025 after serving as Curator of Anthropology at Manchester Museum, University of Manchester (2022–2025), having previously worked for over a decade as Curator of Archaeology at the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe. He holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. His research examines the colonial legacies of museums, decolonisation, restitution, and community-centred approaches to heritage. He has published extensively in leading international journals, including *Museum Anthropology*, *Museum International*, *Curator: The Museum Journal*, *Museum Management & Curatorship*, *Museum Worlds*, and *African Arts*. He is the author of *Museums as Agents for Social Change* (Routledge, 2021) and co-author of *Race, Genetics, History: New Practices & New Approaches* (Cambridge University Press, 2025). He is currently completing a monograph for Berghahn and co-

editing a Routledge volume on African museology, both due in 2026. Njabulo serves on the editorial boards of *Museum International* and *Museum and Society*, is a board member of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Collections Committee, and contributes to advisory panels for the International Slavery Museum, Museum Lab in Germany, and the National Museum of Ireland.

Ogechukwu Elizabeth Okpalanozie: *Confronting Conservation Realities at National Museum, Lagos: Bridging Western Conservation and Indigenous Care*

The National Museum, Lagos is one of the major national museums in Nigeria and one of the custodians of Nigeria's cultural heritage. The collections in the museum are mostly ethnographic. The museum was founded in 1957 by Kenneth Crosthwaite Murray, an English Art teacher and archaeologist. As a museum founded during colonial era, it was embedded in Western museology. Western conservation methods were used in preserving the collections in the museum, a practice that persisted up to the post-colonial era. Conservators working in the museum have encountered challenges in using some of the Western conservation methods. The problems include non-availability of conservation materials, high cost of conservation equipment, toxicity of some chemicals and partial effectiveness of some techniques. Recently, the conservators working in the museum took a step to surmount the challenges by introducing indigenous care in the conservation plans of the museum. Indigenous care is a method of conservation used by indigenous communities to preserve their heritage. In practice, the aspects of Western conservation that were sustainable were integrated into the indigenous protocols. Although this method of conservation is still at its infancy in the museum, it is hoped that in the long-term, it will help in overcoming some conservation challenges in the museum. Embracing this approach will foster inclusion, decolonization, shared authority in conservation, collaboration and community engagement. This paper aims to examine the challenges encountered in using Western conservation methods at the National Museum, Lagos, assess the limitations of indigenous care and, analyse the hybrid approach adopted by the museum.

Ogechukwu Elizabeth Okpalanozie is a cultural heritage conservator and an Assistant Director at National Commission for Museums and Monuments, National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria. She studied Heritage and Interpretation (M.A.) at University of Leicester, UK and has a Ph. D. in Microbiology from University of Lagos, Nigeria, with her doctoral research focused on biodeterioration of cultural heritage. With over 20 years of experience in the cultural heritage sector, Ogechukwu has led projects on indigenous care of ethnographic collections, sustainability, oral history, heritage interpretation and capacity-building. She collaborates with local and international colleagues and has attended conferences, workshops and trainings on different areas of cultural heritage. Driven by a deep commitment to

community engagement, her current research interests include decolonization, provenance research, restitution, and digitization.

Orlando Vieira Francisco: *Flags of Other Winds: Thinking About Community Through Artistic Research*

Flags of Other Winds emerges from the artistic research project *From the Top of the Mountains We Can See Invisible Monuments*, developed in collaboration with the Bandim Cooperative of Immigrant Women in Portugal. Conceived as a series of five textile flags, the work investigates environmental and social transformations produced by large-scale infrastructures across different territorial contexts in Europe and South America. Rather than approaching heritage as a fixed category linked to preservation or monumentality, the project focuses on fragile, displaced, and often invisible memories that persist through material traces, migratory experiences, and collaborative processes. The flags are produced from fabric remnants originating from the cooperative's daily sewing activities. These fragments carry different geographies, trajectories, and cultural histories, transforming the textile surface into a field of relational memory and epistemological plurality. The project examines how infrastructural systems — dams, mining operations, oil extraction, territorial occupation policies, and developmentalist projects — generate processes of erasure while simultaneously producing resistant forms of social and environmental memory. In this sense, the flags operate less as national symbols and more as speculative monuments to unstable landscapes, contested territories, and collective experiences that frequently remain absent from institutional heritage narratives. Central to the work is the understanding of the process itself as a visible and meaningful dimension. The frayed seams, layered compositions, reused materials, and unfinished textures reveal not only the materiality of the work, but also the social relations and negotiations embedded within its production. Collaboration here becomes both methodology and form: an expanded practice through which invisible memories may temporarily acquire visibility. Installed in exhibition spaces and activated through presentations and performances in different places, the flags propose alternative forms of monumentality grounded in interdependence rather than permanence. By articulating drawing, textile practices, archival imagery, and infrastructural critique, *Flags of Other Winds* reflects on how artistic practice can mediate relations between territory, memory, and collective imagination in landscapes marked by uncertainty and continuous transformation.

Orlando Vieira Francisco is a visual artist, researcher, and lecturer affiliated with i2ADS - Research Institute in Art, Design and Society. His practice investigates infrastructural critique, territorial transformations, collaborative artistic processes, and environmental memory through installation, drawing, and participatory methodologies across transnational contexts. Since 2023, he has been coordinating the transnational project “From the Top of the Mountains We Can See Invisible Monuments” and he’s a member of the editorial board of HUB – Journal of Research in Art, Design and Society.

Qianqian Pei: *When the Place Is Gone: How Everyday Practice Sustains Cultural Heritage*

This paper examines how cultural heritage survives after its physical environment disappears, sustained through everyday practices of collecting and storytelling. Focusing on Luhan, a coastal village in northern China demolished during recent urbanization, it asks how local memory endures when the place itself is gone. The study draws on fragments I collected from the ruins of Luhan: a Qing Dynasty Mazu statue, late Qing railway bricks stamped “PMR,” and other easily overlooked remnants. It also incorporates archival photographs of the Tianjin Chemical Plant, established during the Japanese occupation in World War II, which employed many Luhan residents and connects the village to larger regional transformations. I explore how these fragments, when placed in dialogue with oral histories and family memories, become sites where cultural knowledge continues to circulate within and beyond the former community. Combining Eco Art History and Microhistory, the paper addresses the environmental and human dimensions of Luhan’s transformation. Eco Art History brings attention to the village’s material and ecological fabric, while microhistory reconstructs the Zhou family’s story, tracing the relationships among objects, photographs, and oral testimony. In this way, the family history illuminates communal practices of reassembling heritage after material loss. I argue that conservation is best understood as an ongoing practice of care. In Luhan, villagers enact such care through sharing memories and preserving family narratives; the research process itself—collecting fragments, reconstructing connections—becomes a complementary act of conservation. Together, these practices complement object-centered models by showing that heritage survives through relationships, transmission, and community participation as much as through physical preservation. By foregrounding these local practices and reflecting on research as care, this paper suggests that research can reconnect fragmented histories and render marginalized cultural knowledge visible.

Qianqian Pei is a second-year M.A. candidate in the History of Art and Archaeology program at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. Her research focuses on artworks of cultural exchange across Eurasia, with a particular emphasis on material culture, and she collaborates extensively with conservators and scientists at the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's conservation center. Her studies at the IFA are supported by a graduate fellowship from the China Scholarship Council.

Roland Alvarez Chavez: *Marica Community Practices of Preserving Knowledge and Memory: Ancestry and Colonial Legacy in Play*

Marica' is a term that in Peru was —and still is— a derogatory expression. The notion of marica or travesti became conceptions to denigrate effeminate and racialized subjects, and which are juxtaposed with Western and new colonizing notions of gay, trans, and queer. However, there are people who self-identify as marica/travesti. In the Andes, the marica community has been affected by the impact of HIV pandemic, violence, the lack of normative protecting frameworks, and the process of non-representation in institutional archives. Nonetheless, they/we have responded politically by demanding political recognition, but most importantly, by maintaining an unwavering involvement and participation in religious and aesthetic activities. How can we make sense of this? This presentation engages with this complex phenomenon by responding the following question: Why and how have marica practices of preserving memory and knowledge responded to institutional erasure? The objective is to understand the spiritual/religious and aesthetics dancing practices of the marica people of central Andes of Peru as embodied memory/knowledge preservation practices. Applying a decolonial feminist approach, it seeks to understand the intersubjective meanings in these practices as 'resistance' to the imposition of the colonial gender binarism and the expropriation of spirituality, but paradoxically at the same time using the colonial legacy codes and ancestral ritual practices and symbolism. These marica individuals and their practices can be understood from the ancestral principle of 'fluid duality', represented by the complementary duality between masculine and feminine forces, and characteristic of pre-colonization cultures in the Andes. By deploying a methodology built on decolonial epistemology that foregrounds collaborative work and the voices of marica people, the proposal aims to co-create with photographs and oral memory, an anti-colonial archive to restore the erased marica presence and knowledges and does not reproduce the logic of institutional violence inherent in 'official' archives and national history.

Roland Alvarez Chavez is a Sociologist, marica activist and PhD candidate for the International Institute of Social Studies – ISS - Erasmus University, The Netherlands. Professional experience in "Public-Private Partnership" multi-level projects, principally directing the planning and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) areas. Expertise in social research, managing qualitative and mixed methods. Currently, working in archive and memory construction research projects in Central Peruvian Andes. His last book “Estampas Maricas de Lima” (2023) was an exercise to (re)construct the queer history of Lima city, using archival research and critical fabulation approach.

Salvador Muñoz-Viñas: *Interlude—Provisional (In)Conclusions*

An interactive interlude inviting the audience into a brief set of questions, responses, and emerging ideas. With the help of the audience, the session will aim at capturing provisional connections, tensions, and (in)conclusions as they take shape.

Salvador Muñoz-Viñas a Professor at the Department of Conservation Studies of the Universitat Politècnica de València, Spain, where he teaches paper conservation and conservation theory. He is also responsible of the Paper Conservation Workshop or the university's Instituto de Restauración del Patrimonio. He holds university degrees in Art History, Fine Arts and Paper Engineering. He has lectured in different centers and universities such as ICCROM, the Sorbonne, the British Museum, the Harvard or the NYU. His works on cultural heritage theory and conservation ethics have been published in English, Spanish, Chinese, French, Korean and other major Western and non-Western languages.

Sandeep Pathe (Storytelling): *Udasin Math, Nagpur: The Story of Conserving a Living Math*

Conservation projects are often documented through structural analyses, technical reports, and completed interventions. Yet, behind every conservation effort lies a story of people, trust, uncertainty, and shared responsibility. This storytelling presentation reflects on the conservation journey of Udasin Math, Nagpur, one of the city's earliest structural conservation projects undertaken through a collaborative approach between conservation architects, structural engineers, traditional craftsmen, and the custodians of the Math. Situated within the historic core of Nagpur, Udasin Math is not merely a heritage structure but a living Math where religious practices, traditions, and everyday activities continue to define the significance of the place. The project began with a structure affected by severe structural distress, weathering, inappropriate repairs, and the pressures of an evolving urban environment. While these technical challenges required detailed documentation and structural intervention, the greater challenge lay in balancing engineering requirements with traditional construction knowledge, ritual continuity, and the expectations of the community associated with the Math. The presentation narrates how conservation gradually evolved from repairing masonry to understanding the living heritage embodied within the site. It highlights the role of traditional craftsmen skilled in lime construction, the memories preserved by local custodians, and the daily practices that continue to sustain the Math. The experience demonstrated that conservation is strengthened not only by drawings, specifications, and scientific methods, but equally by dialogue, patience, shared knowledge, and mutual respect. Rather than presenting conservation as the completion of a project, this story reflects on it as an ongoing relationship between people, place, and practice. Through the experience of Udasin Math, Nagpur, the presentation argues that successful conservation emerges when professional expertise works alongside community knowledge, ensuring that historic places remain structurally resilient, culturally meaningful, and continuously lived.

Sandeep Sanjeev Pathe is a Conservation Architect, designer, and author based in India, and the Founder and Principal Architect of Studio Sakha, a multidisciplinary architecture and heritage conservation practice. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from the Institute of Design Education and Architectural Studies (IDEAS), Nagpur, and a Master's degree in Architectural Conservation from the School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal. Over the past decade, he has led the conservation of numerous heritage sites across India, working with the Archaeological Survey of India and the Archaeology and Tourism Departments of several states, including Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, and Jammu & Kashmir. His work integrates heritage documentation, conservation planning, drone and LiDAR technologies, and community-centred conservation approaches. An active academician, Sandeep has served as a visiting faculty at institutions including Nirma University, Ahmedabad; IPSA, Rajkot; and IDEAS, Nagpur. He has authored research papers and articles on architecture, heritage, and culture and is a regular public speaker on conservation practices. He is a Life Member of INTACH, an Associate Member of the Indian Institute of Architects (IIA), and a member of the Asian Cultural Landscape Association (ACLA). Beyond professional practice, he is a passionate writer whose blogs and publications encourage young architects to engage critically with heritage, design, and cultural identity.

Tara Sharma: *Conservation in a Changing Landscape: Working with Living Heritage in Changthang*

The winds of change are sweeping across the landscape inhabited by the Changpas, a pastoral nomadic community of the Tibetan Plateau in Eastern Ladakh. Over the past decades, increasing numbers of Changpa pastoralists have moved away from herding towards settled livelihoods and other forms of employment. As the nomadic way of life fades, so too are the knowledge systems, skills and cultural practices that have sustained it.

How does one safeguard a culture whose most significant expressions are not always tangible, but embedded in the knowledge and practices of its bearers—knowledge of cosmology and ecology, migration and landscape, fibres and weaving, ritual and material culture?

In 2018, the Jungwa Foundation began working with the nomadic community of Korzok to develop sustainable livelihood models rooted in their intangible heritage. The program focused initially on sheep-wool-based weaving, reconnecting traditional knowledge of wool production, fibre preparation and backstrap loom weaving with contemporary markets. Rather than treating weaving as a static craft tradition, the program sought to sustain it as a living practice by creating conditions in which knowledge could continue to be transmitted, adapted and made economically viable.

The program subsequently expanded through a successful partnership with Korzok Monastery to safeguard Buddhist ritual arts and material culture. Monk-training workshops have focused on the transmission of traditional ritual arts, while a new phase of collaboration

addresses the preventive conservation of the monastery's extensive collection of thangkas, sacred costumes, masks and ritual artefacts through training monks in basic conservation and collection care.

Working simultaneously with lay and monastic communities has enabled a broader, community-based approach to conservation—one that brings together landscape knowledge, cosmology, material culture, ritual practice and livelihoods. Mapping endangered knowledge and documenting cultural practices has gone hand in hand with creating opportunities for their continued use: from the revival of backstrap loom weaving among nomadic women and its connection to contemporary markets, to building local capacity for the care of ritual collections within the monastery.

This experience raises fundamental questions for critical conservation practice. Conservation in Changthang cannot be separated from a landscape undergoing profound social, economic and ecological change. As increasing numbers of pastoral nomads move away from their traditional economy, the challenge is not simply to document what is disappearing, but to ask what forms of intervention can support cultural continuity without freezing culture in an imagined past. It also requires accepting that not everything can, or should, be preserved, and recognising that continuity may depend on allowing new forms of cultural expression, practice and identity to emerge.

The presentation reflects on this evolving practice and proposes conservation as a process of working with living heritage — one that recognises communities as knowledge holders and active custodians, while creating space for culture to adapt and evolve. In this understanding, conservation is not an attempt to arrest change, but a means of sustaining the relationships between people, place, practice and material culture through change.

Tara Sharma is cultural heritage specialist and researcher with over two decades of experience dedicated to preserving the cultural and ecological landscapes of the trans-Himalayan region. Her pioneering work focuses heavily on community-based heritage management, particularly in Ladakh, where she has meticulously documented both tangible monuments and indigenous knowledge systems. In 2018, Sharma founded the Jungwa Foundation, a non-profit organization that partners with pastoral nomadic communities in Eastern Ladakh. Through this initiative, she works to safeguard intangible cultural heritage while fostering sustainable local livelihoods. An authoritative voice in values-based conservation, her scholarly research has been published widely, appearing, among others, from the Getty Conservation Institute. Over her distinguished career, Sharma has also served as an expert consultant for major global and national heritage bodies, including UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, and INTACH.

Victoria Vargas (Storytelling): *Learning with the Desert, Heritage, Affect and Uywaña*

This paper interrogates dominant Western frameworks of heritage and affect by foregrounding Indigenous ontologies of reciprocity and care. Centred on a lived experience in the Atacama Desert and a critical encounter at the Quillagua museum, it employs autoethnography and autotheory to explore *uywaña*, an Aymara principle of mutual upbringing among humans, non-humans, and ancestral beings. Through this lens, heritage emerges not as static objects or linear narratives but as dynamic, relational processes embedded in affective atmospheres and embodied practices. The discussion contrasts hegemonic conservation models with Indigenous approaches that privilege dialogue, coexistence, and interdependence, revealing how acts of care can unsettle colonial epistemologies. By weaving personal narrative with theoretical reflection, the presentation advocates for decolonial methodologies that embrace *sentipensar* (thinking-feeling) as a way to reconfigure museum practices and heritage policies. Ultimately, it proposes heritage as a living, ethical engagement grounded in reciprocity, affect, and the vitality of more-than-human worlds.

Victoria Vargas-Downing is a Chilean independent researcher, curator, and heritage scholar based in Bradford, UK. Her work sits at the intersection of decolonial feminist theory, environmental humanities, and contemporary Latin American art, with a particular focus on indigenous epistemologies, Andean relational thought, and more than-human ontologies. She holds a PhD in Cultural Studies, awarded with Excellence, from the University of Leeds, with a thesis exploring the mutual constitution of art and heritage from decolonial perspectives. Her current research develops decolonial methodologies for thinking with more-than-human ethics and care in the arts, engaging thinkers including Krenak, Bispo dos Santos, and Escobar. Her interdisciplinary work addresses decolonial temporalities and heritage practice, environmental and epistemic justice through Latin American art. Victoria is Lead Curator of Radiación Ocre, Tránsitos con el Sol, a FONDART-funded solo exhibition by Aymara artist Natalia Montoya Lecaros, opening at Galería Gabriela Mistral, Santiago, in July 2026. Her curatorial practice works directly with artists to translate community narrative and ancestral memory into commissioned work, grounded in the same theoretical commitments as her research.

Yumeng Hou: *Capturing the Hand: Rattan Weaving and the Transformations of Digital Transmission*

Rattan weaving, like many traditional craft practices, does not survive in the object alone. Chun Mee Lee Rattan Furniture, run by an elderly couple, may be among the last workshops in Singapore still carrying out the craft from raw material to finished form, and what is most at risk of disappearing with them is not the furniture but the choreography that produces it – movements held in the hand, recoverable only through repetition. Conservation is treated here as a transmission that must be kept moving rather than fixed.

Our digital archiving holds gesture, object, and setting together. Hand gesture is captured both through lightweight markerless tracking and headset-based skeletal recording; the rattan, tools, and furniture are scanned via photogrammetry and laser scanning; and the artisan and

the workshop itself are reconstructed as an immersive scene. None of this, alone, transmits anything. What lets the three speak to one another is an ontology modelling the craft relationally: an object made by a master, for a function; a technique that produces a pattern, employs a tool, and unfolds through movement within a place. From there we are building toward an embodied user experience, where a younger practitioner follows the replayed gesture in mixed reality. We would like to share a working approach to multimodal capture and relational modelling of craft knowledge that others may adapt to their own endangered practices. At the same time, we raise a question: digital capture does not transmit the master's knowledge as it was, but transforms appearance, gesture, voice, and scene into data – an act rather than a faithful copy. What do we gain and lose in that transformation, and can a practice be said to live on once what is conserved is not the practice itself, but an act built from its trace?

Yumeng Hou is an Assistant Professor of Digital Humanities and Computational Archives at the National University of Singapore. Her research lies at the intersection of computation, visualisation, digital curation, and cultural archives. Her work aims to employ advanced computational methods to investigate new modes of documentation, representation, and transmission for embodied cultural heritage and performative traditions. Alongside this, her curatorial practice explores interactive and extended reality platforms as interfaces for emergent and embodied experiences across physical exhibitions and virtual contexts.

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The Critical Conservation project is supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), Research Project Grant No. 10004467, and the Research Department/Institute of Materiality in Art and Culture at the Bern Academy of the Arts (HKB). The Assembly is organized with the support and participation of the Swiss Conservation-Restoration Campus (Swiss CRC).

