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Global Consortium for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage

Annual Meeting
October 27-29, 2021
University of Pretoria



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The Global Consortium for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (GCPCH) is a network of universities, museums and research institutes premised on the understanding that the preservation of cultural heritage is one of the grand challenges of the twenty-first century. By creating a space for conversation, knowledge exchange, and project incubation, members from across disciplines, geographies, and socio-political contexts engage in a collaborative strategy to strengthen education and training, research, and advocacy for cultural heritage, broadly conceived. The Consortium maximizes the collective opportunity to make a global impact in the preservation of cultural heritage. GCPCH does not seek to replicate the outstanding work of formal agencies and NGO's dedicated to this work across a multitude of specialized disciplines and practices; on the contrary – the network functions as a global amplifier for regional or national efforts, and a pathway by which diverse expertise can connect and spark innovation.

The network is coordinated by a steering committee, and new members are welcome to its monthly online meetings at any time. The annual GCPCH meetings are hosted once a year, on a rotating basis, with the intention of spotlighting cultural leadership in different countries or regions, while also acknowledging broader global contexts.

Cultural heritage is not static: it is constantly in flux, revised and created on a daily basis as humans represent their world and experiences through making across time and space. As such, art in any form is a uniquely powerful tool in capturing the spirit of a time, it expresses human aspirations, it empowers civic expression, archives and comments on events surrounding the creator and it speaks to a brighter future. Cultural heritage however does not belong only to professional makers, nor does it live only in galleries and museums. Rather, creative expression lives within and around us all and makes visible histories, belief systems, values, traditions, and lifestyles. Artists in search of new creative forms of all kinds have sought inspiration from cultural heritage. Whether incorporating ancient motifs in a new building design, writing a new poem about a heritage site, or riffing off a fairy tale to plot a new play, cultural heritage fuels creativity, and in so doing, there is a certain preservation of the past for the present...and the future.

University of Pretoria is honored to host this Fourth Annual Meeting of the Global Consortium for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage in October 2021. As the first meeting on African soil, UP hopes to inject some of its unique perspectives into the global conversation.

The onset of COVID-19 upset our plans for a meeting in Pretoria in October 2020, but the steering committee saw this as an ideal opportunity to start with some meaningful projects this year and use a 2021 meeting as the culmination and feedback session for these projects.

For us it is important to narrow the discussion to some specific topics and try to emerge from the meeting with some definite resolutions and action plans.

Format of the 2021 meeting

At present, GCPCH organizers are planning a hybrid format that combines an **in-person convening with a live broadcast and recorded sessions** to extend the reach of the conference to people who would otherwise not have the opportunity to attend.

The organising committee plans to draw from local artist communities and give voices that are usually not heard the opportunity to participate and provide their insights.

The projects currently identified are

- Project 1** AcCESS - Academic Conservation Education Sharing Site
- Project 2** Connecting artifacts in the Northern Hemisphere with their communities in the Southern Hemisphere
- Project 3** An investigation on the impact of COVID-19 on Heritage Training and Student outcomes in Africa
- Project 4** A peer-reviewed literature repository for expert knowledge
- Project 5** Survey on conservation related topics in PhD theses
- Project 6** Survey on impact of COVID-19 protocols on traditional and cultural practices of communities
- Project 7** Update the 2016 white paper with what has happened since, including the current COVID-19 situation.
- Project 8** Video based communications
- Project 9** Masters dissertation topic survey
- Project 10** Tangible vs. Intangible

The output for most of these projects will be published research, but it is envisaged that the learnings may reach further, especially where communities are involved.

Global Consortium Steering Committee

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