



CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2024

“Heritage and Sustainability”

“Place of Heritage in Interdisciplinarity” (Study Circle 1), Nordic Summer University

Winter Session: **21–23 March, 2024**; Location: **Gothenburg University (Sweden)**

Invitation

The Nordic Summer University (NSU), a network of researchers and practitioners across Nordic and Baltic countries, invites you to participate in the study session “Heritage and Sustainability” on 21–23 March, 2024 in Gothenburg (Sweden).

The symposium will happen in collaboration with the Network on Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development (CULTSUS) and the Department of Sociology and Work Science at the University of Gothenburg.

Theme of the Session

During this workshop **we aim at broadening the critical approach to heritage work by exploring heritage practices in the face of growing urge to sustainable development**. We focus, but do not limit our discussion by the environmental challenges and related implications for the heritage work.

We approach sustainability as consisting of three dimensions: social, economic, and environmental, and try to map the relations between different stakeholders, practices, and resources at the intersection of these different dimensions. We argue that they are inseparable and create intersections where heritage work can be challenged.

Should transformation of a disturbed cultural heritage be reversed and how, or if it should become a point when, as Seekamp and Jo (2020) argue they could be preserved to demonstrate “a tangible and sacred memory of the associated socio-ecological vulnerabilities embedded within specific geographical locales”, and become a matter of “curated decay” (DeSilvey, 2017)? How do we account for values of sustainability in relation to the historical and cultural values of heritage?

To align this more theoretical reasoning with goals of sustainability we need clear tools of valuation, procedures and practices that could lead us from the programmatic statements to actions (Nocca 2017). Besides seeing sustainability as conservation or transformation as goals, we should see it as a process in which the central questions are who and how is invited to sustainability work, and what are the possibilities for participation for all stakeholders.

As we aim at bridging the theoretical approaches and practices of heritage work in relation to sustainability challenges, we also address the following ESG goals:

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

We address this goal by discussing resources needed for sustainable heritage work, critically evaluating mainstream practices of preservation and heritage work, where e.g. building preservation is an integral part. Sustaining heritage and using traditional crafts and tools are one way to make cities more sustainable by preserving low housing costs in quality living standards.

- How to achieve a balance of different sustainability goals in heritage work – economic, social, and ecological?
- What are available conservational and mundane practices, resources and tools that can make heritage practice possible in the context of growing threats to heritage from climate change, armed conflicts, and economic crises?
- What are the cases of “curated decay” or transformational approach to heritage that give us new practices and tools of preservation?

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

We address this goal by discussing economic resources and their role in heritage practice, questions of overexploitation of heritage for tourism purposes, and possible role of digital tools to reduce impact of heritage tourism on climate change without reducing the access to cultural heritage.

- What are digital tools that help us to transform memory work into digital format and thus preserve and maintain endangered heritage?
- What is the connection between digital practices and different approaches to heritage (preservation vs curated decay)?
- How do stakeholders engage in heritage work beyond direct economic profit-seeking?

We encourage students from different cycles of education (bachelor, master, and PhD), early career researchers and practitioners from heritage institutions, non-governmental organisations, small entrepreneurs working with heritage objects, and other practitioners to join us for the event.

Format of the event

The event will be focused on the process of peer-review and, as we call it, reversed peer-review. This means that we will be learning how to evaluate each other's works and receive critical feedback without connection to one's status or reputation. We will have two and a half days of in-depth discussions with both coming participants and invited speakers. [The preliminary programme.](#)

To apply

Please fill out the application in **the google form by 15 January, 2024**:
<https://forms.gle/qKN5jBuCtjApzXHZ6>.

Please, indicate your interest in travel or / and accommodation support in the submission form. We can grant it to a limited number of participants from the Nordic and Baltic regions who will be applying with a paper. The Winter Symposium 2024 is funded by the NordPlus Programme. Sustainable traveling is encouraged.

For any questions contact coordinators of the study circle — alina.kalachova@nsuweb.org and elena.bogdanova@gu.se.

Accepted participants will be notified by 20 January 2024, including all the relevant details regarding the registration.

Participation fee

Nordic Summer University is a membership based non-profit organisation operating on the principles of freedom of academic research, networking and folkbildning. With paying a participation fee, you will be able to participate in democratic decision-making about future study circles of Nordic Summer University, organisational functioning and its content throughout the whole year. Additionally, we provide ECTS credits for participation. Participation fee for this session:

- for students, freelancers, and out of occupation — 35 euro;
- for people associated with institutions or companies — 50 euro.

Academic credits

We provide a certificate of participation: 1 ECTS point for taking part in the Session and 1 additional point for contributing with a paper (extended abstract of the topic of approximately 3 pages). All of the papers will be comprised in the book of abstracts and published on the page of the Study Circle.

About Study Circle 1: “Place of Heritage in Interdisciplinarity”

Study Circle 1 focuses on interdisciplinary discussion of contemporary understandings of heritage and its practices in different cultural, organisational and social contexts.

This Circle provides opportunities for discussions around democratic heritage discourse by investigating how top-down and bottom-up practices differ in scope of interpretation, representation and participation; because we believe that certain heritage practices are exclusionary and dominant and we would like to explore more inclusive and ways of addressing heritage. We assume that it can bring heritage practices and ordinary citizens closer, enrich understanding of care as an inclusive field, and establish better communication between experts, practitioners and different users of heritage.

About NSU

Nordic Summer University (NSU) is a Swedish non-profit organisation. Since 1950, NSU has been an independent academic institution, which organises winter and summer symposia that draw international participants across disciplines in the Nordic and Baltic regions. Particular attention has been paid to cross-disciplinary areas not yet targeted by larger research institutions. The practice of NSU addresses two fundamental premises of a knowledge-based welfare state: production of knowledge based on academic freedom and democratic practice of self-governance.

References

DeSilvey, C. 2017. “Curated decay: Heritage beyond saving”, U of Minnesota Press.

Nocca, Francesca. 2017. "The Role of Cultural Heritage in Sustainable Development: Multidimensional Indicators as Decision-Making Tool" *Sustainability* 9, no. 10: 1882. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su9101882>

Seekamp, E. and E. Jo (2020). "Resilience and transformation of heritage sites to accommodate for loss and learning in a changing climate." *Climatic Change* 162(1): 41-55.