Contested World Orders (Bamberg, 1-2 Dec 22)

Bamberg, Dec 1–02, 2022
Deadline: Apr 24, 2022

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Crises and conflicts have triggered debates and reflections on the values and meaning of cultural heritage with various impacts at the local and international levels. At the international level, organisations such as UNESCO and its affiliated bodies ICOMOS and ICOM emerged in the context of conflicts that caused damage to cultural heritage throughout the 20th century.

Meanwhile, the protection against loss, change, dangers, and risks dominates perspectives on heritage. Especially the management of dangers and risks to World Heritage sites became an important area under UNESCO guidance since the adoption of the World Heritage Convention in 1972 (e.g. List of World Heritage in Danger). Yet, the effects of crises and conflicts have not only been an external incentive for the foundation of various heritage initiatives under UNESCO but it also shaped the management of and perspectives on heritage protection and preservation globally.

Nevertheless, UNESCO has promoted heritage programmes with the goal to enhance the role of culture (in singular) towards shaping a better and more peaceful world and not only to protect against destruction. From today's perspective, UNESCO's agenda to build a technocratic, science-based society free of destructive ideologies seems to be a utopian vision in a post-war world. War and the predominance of non-democratic political regimes globally are not a matter of the past but of the ongoing state of affairs. Precisely in the context of war and conflict, world orders, power structures, and dominant narratives are being contested and re-negotiated, thus questioning the legitimacy and efficacy of global key players.

Until now, debates concerning heritage protection and preservation during conflict and in the post-conflict context focused predominantly on issues such as reconstruction, as a means to achieving reconciliation, recovery, dealing with traumatic pasts, and identity politics. In the light of the increasing complexities and different nature and scale of conflicts and wars starting with the 20th century, this conference asks how wars and crises impact(ed) the practices and discourses on heritage globally in the past as well as in the present. Furthermore, it questions to what extent cultural heritage affairs became a source of conflict and whether alternative narratives for dealing with heritage protection and preservation are being silenced under the pressure of globally standardized methods. Starting from UNESCO as a formative organisation of international discourse, this call encourages contributions that question how narratives, practices, and strategies are established at the international level and beyond that process crises, conflicts, and wars in the field of cultural heritage. The conference calls for contributions that rather challenge the idea that there is a uniform/dominant/normative vision to dealing with heritage for example in the processes of recovery and reconstruction, as essential practices established at the international level in

the post-conflict context. Instead, we hope these can reveal the multiplicity of heritage(s) discourse(s) and practices that shape the understanding and practice of heritage preservation internationally during conflict and its aftermath.

However, this call encourages to explore perspectives that challenge the understanding of heritage beyond wars, dangers, and conflicts.

Contributions from various disciplines, such as: heritage studies, conservation studies, anthropology, political sciences, art, archeology and architectural studies, historical studies, urban studies, digital humanities, are encouraged on topics that critically discuss the following:

• Critical role of UNESCO in building a secular, technocratic and diverse global heritage discourse in a (religious, ethnic, political) conflict-charged context from a longue durée perspective
• What kind of crises and conflicts have an impact on the international discourse on heritage? Which don't and are maybe even ignored? To what extent does the emergent discourse mirror the outcome of the conflict?
• What impact did social upheavals such as the independence of colonies, the end of the Cold War, recent conflicts in the Middle East have on international ideas of heritage and what role did international organizations played in mediating heritage preservation in the context of global political transformations?
• What happens to heritage in times of crises and conflicts? Who destroys heritage and who preserves it for what motivations? What impact does this have on international debates about heritage and claiming responsibility?
• What effects do fear of loss and identity crises have on notions of heritage?
• What role play ethics, heritage activism, human-rights discourses, ideas of healing, recovery, reconstruction, and reconciliation in the conceptualization of international and transnational heritage?
• What kind of heritage practices are established to overcome trauma and destruction?
• The impact of the anthropological and digital shift on dealing with heritage preservation (e.g critical approaches to increasing role of digital reconstructions due to war damages as alternative to failing human responsibility)
• Are there alternative heritage concepts not dependable on wars and conflicts? Or is this a naïve wish?

We invite proposals for a 20-minute presentation in English to be sent in one text document to conflict.kdwt@uni-bamberg.de including:
• Title and abstract of 300-350 words maximum (no references)
• The name of the author with current affiliation, contact details and a short biographical note (maximum 200 words).

Deadline for submission 24th of April 2022, acceptance notification 10th of May 2022
Conference dates 01.12.2022-02.12.2022

Reference:

CFP: Contested World Orders (Bamberg, 1-2 Dec 22). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 7, 2022 (accessed Nov 9, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/36092>.