

Navigating the Future of Heritage Conservation: Insights from Session 5 at the IIC Lima Congress

Submitted by adaptive_admin on 30 Sep 2024

Image



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During the 5th session of the IIC Lima Congress, three compelling presentations illuminated the urgent challenges and innovative solutions in heritage preservation, sparking thought-provoking discussions on the impact of climate change on cultural heritage.

Antarctic Heritage Restoration: A 30-Year Commitment

Julian Bickersteth, alongside co-authors Gordon Macdonald and Lizzie Meek, captivated attendees with the Ross Sea Heritage Restoration Programme, a remarkable initiative focused on preserving historic huts from the heroic era of Antarctic exploration (1899-1917). Over the past 30 years, this project has not only safeguarded these iconic structures but also protected around 21,000 artifacts that tell the story of human endeavour in one of the most extreme environments on Earth.

Bickersteth emphasized the program's adaptability in the face of harsh Antarctic conditions. The innovative conservation methodologies developed for this project allow for ongoing maintenance during the brief summer months, when access is feasible. During the Q&A session, lively discussions emerged around the implications of climate change on such fragile environments. This session underscored the importance of long-term vision and community involvement in heritage conservation, demonstrating that the lessons learned here can resonate well beyond the icy shores of Antarctica.

International Collaboration in Cambodian Heritage Conservation

Next, Yang Tch from the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage in Korea presented an inspiring collaboration between Korea and Cambodia aimed at conserving the Angkor stone heritage using non-destructive technology. Over the past five years, this initiative has not only focused on restoring iconic monuments from the reign of King Jayavarman VII but has also broadened the conservation narrative to include a wider array of endangered sites.

Tch highlighted the significant challenges faced by Cambodian conservators, particularly in a region that often lacks sufficient resources. The use of advanced techniques, such as ultrasonic measurements and hyperspectral scanning, showcases a blend of cutting-edge technology and traditional methodologies. This innovative approach makes conservation efforts more effective and sustainable. This collaborative project exemplifies how shared knowledge, and technology can help protect invaluable cultural heritage, offering a hopeful outlook for similar efforts worldwide. The audience was curious to know more about Cambodia training in conservation.

Addressing Climate Change Risks in UK Heritage Sites

Lastly, Dr. Paul Lankester from English Heritage presented a crucial paper on the urgent need for a national climate change risk assessment for heritage sites in the UK. Working alongside co-author Ruth Knight, Lankester emphasized that climate change poses one of the greatest threats to cultural heritage. With over 420 historic sites under their care, the challenge lies in effectively prioritizing resources to mitigate risks.

Lankester detailed the comprehensive mapping of climate hazards affecting these sites, illustrating how projected sea level rise and increased rainfall could impact specific locations, such as Tintagel Castle.

His methodology aligns with IPCC guidelines and encompasses key elements, including hazard identification, exposure assessment, vulnerability analysis, and response measures. Using case studies like Brodsworth Hall and gardens, Lankester highlighted the importance of site-specific assessments in understanding unique vulnerabilities and planning adaptive measures.

The session sparked dynamic discussions about the need for ongoing adaptation strategies. Lankester shared examples of flooding risks at locations like Osborne House, reinforcing the importance of proactive measures in safeguarding cultural heritage against the challenges posed by climate change.



Session 5, Q&A session at UTEC's Auditorium. Photos by Juana Segura and Sarai Landa

A Relevant Topic for Ongoing Dialogue

The presentations collectively revealed a pressing theme: the urgent need for adaptive strategies in response to climate change. The innovative approaches shared by Bickersteth, Tch, and Lankester illustrate the resilience of heritage conservation and the collaborative spirit driving the field forward.

As we reflect on these insights, it's clear that the intersection of climate change and cultural heritage warrants continued dialogue. Engaging in these conversations is essential for ensuring the preservation of our cultural legacies in an increasingly uncertain world. The dedication and passion exhibited by these experts serve as a powerful reminder of our collective responsibility to protect history amidst the challenges of climate change.