

5th Conference of the PhD program in History, Criticism,
and Conservation of Cultural Heritage

Respecting the Past, Conserving the Future

Methodologies, Narratives, and Perspectives
for the Restitution of Cultural Heritage

CALL FOR
PAPERS

4-5
December
2025

PADUA
PALAZZO BO
ARCHIVIO ANTICO
AULA NIEVO



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Dipartimento dei Beni Culturali

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The PhD program in History, Criticism, and Conservation of Cultural Heritage at the University of Padua presents the international conference *Respecting the Past, Conserving the Future: Methodologies, Narratives, and Perspectives for the Restitution of Cultural Heritage*, organised by the PhD candidates of the 39th cycle.

This meeting aims to promote discussions and sharing on the theme of *restitution* in its multiple perspectives of study, analysis and understanding of cultural heritage. Starting from disciplinary and interdisciplinary contributions in the fields of archaeology, history of art, music, film, and performance studies, the purpose is to reflect on the preservation of memories and identities, as well as on the respect and protection of human beings and their material and immaterial legacies, as essential tools for the conscious construction of both the present and the future.

As a perspective of connection between the past and the present, restitution is not only an act of observation and scientific study of what has been, but also a process that shapes the present and lays the foundations for tomorrow. Through the analysis and comprehension of cultural heritage and its various contexts, this dialogue unveils its legacies and enriches the multiple layers of interpretation of current issues within a continuous and dynamic narrative. In a historical phase marked by rapid changes, global shifts and movements capable of questioning entire value systems, disciplines related to cultural heritage can still make a difference, both in their autonomy and capacity for inter- and multidisciplinary integration.

Respecting the Past thus becomes a constant exercise requiring different perspectives, tools, and methodologies, aiming to offer a historical and analytical re-interpretation of past expressions.

Conserving the Future is framed as an ongoing and urgent reflection on the future linked to the practices of knowledge and the conservation of cultural heritage. It allows the acquisition of tools necessary for understanding the contemporary world, and enables the construction and expression of collective identities.

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We invite all those interested to submit contributions aligned with the proposed theme. The following are some of the suggested lines of research from which to draw inspiration freely.

Restitution of Memories and Collective Identities

- Analysis of works, contexts, events and personalities of the past, for the reconstruction of historical-cultural processes and the restitution of memories and collective identities.
- Rediscovery and transmission of knowledge and narratives as a bridge between different generations, and of relationships and exchanges between individuals and communities.

Restitution as Creative Expression

- The past as a living model: a dynamic archive for drawing inspiration, reclaiming and rediscovering ideas, values, meanings and forms.
- Copy and reproduction as forms of creative restitution: homages, interpretations, transmissions or subversions of the original.

Restitution of Concealed or Forgotten Heritage

- Reconsideration of what has been voluntarily looted, marginalised or suppressed, with a specific attention to themes, voices and stories erased from the dominant narrative.
- Recovery of hidden or lost heritage due to natural events, historical occurrences or social and cultural changes.

New Restitutions

- Methods, technologies or applied sciences for studying, diagnosing and recovering cultural heritage.
- Preventive actions, along with projects for use and valorisation, aimed at the restitution of cultural heritage to present and future generations.

Participation Guidelines

The call for papers is addressed to PhD students and candidates from both national and international research institutes and universities. The conference will be held in Padua on 4-5 December 2025 at Palazzo Bo, Archivio Storico and Aula Nievo.

Submitted proposals should include a title and an abstract (in Italian or English, up to 350 words), five keywords, and a short biography written in the third person, including the institution of affiliation and the PhD cycle.

Proposals should be sent by **13 June 2025** to the following address: convegnophd2025.dbc@unipd.it.

Each presentation is planned to last a maximum of **15 minutes** to allow time for discussion and questions at the end of each session.

The contributions will be evaluated by the Scientific Committee of the Conference, composed of PhD candidates and professors from the Department of Cultural Heritage of the University of Padua. The results of the selection will be communicated by **31 July 2025**.

Publication of Contributions

The conference proceedings are planned for publication. The texts should be submitted by **30 January 2026**, following the guidelines that will be communicated in due course. All contributions will undergo a peer review process.

Contacts: convegnophd2025.dbc@unipd.it

Organising Committee

Cristina Ambrosioni, Stefano Bianchini, Francesca Chiantore, Simone Evangelista, Chiara Giusti, Micol Masotti, Maddalena Menegardi, Annalaura Pegoraro, Emanuele Principi, Federico Quintarelli, Valeria Razzante, Ziba Sharafi-Roumi, Gioia Toscani De Col, Francesca Toso, Alessandro Vecchia, Yaqi Yan, Silvia Zanta.

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