

Revisiting the Venice Charter: Critical Perspectives and Contemporary Challenges

As ICOMOS celebrates the 60th Anniversary of the Venice Charter, it will also launch its new Triennial Scientific Plan, "Disaster and Conflict Resilient Heritage: Preparedness, Response and Recovery" at the Annual General Assembly in Ouro Preto, Brazil.

The Venice Charter remains a founding historic document for ICOMOS, rooted in a specific context and shaped by the heritage concepts of its time. Sixty years later, practice and doctrine have evolved, new cultural conventions have been established and the scientific work and capacity of ICOMOS have fundamentally changed. At the same time, the world is facing a major challenge posed by climate change, disasters, and conflicts, fueling major displacements of communities and challenging all of our structures. The primary focus of the Symposium will be a critical discussion on the Venice Charter considering the current state of discourse surrounding heritage and a cross-cutting approach between more recent conventions and the pragmatic needs of practice today.

The Symposium endeavors to comprehensively reassess the Venice Charter in a contemporary context, with a focus on five key sub-themes. It aims to explore the charter's historical context, emphasizing its Eurocentric origins and diverse regional responses, advocating for a critical rereading that considers how heritage concepts and practice have evolved since 1964. Additionally, the symposium seeks to foster a cross-cutting approach between the Venice Charter and other international conventions, such as the Hague Convention of 1954, the World Heritage Convention of 1972, and the Nara Document on Authenticity of 1994, the Intangible Heritage Convention of 2003, and the Faro Convention of 2005. It emphasizes the importance of reinterpreting the charter through diverse epistemologies, acknowledging cultural diversity, and considering contributions from the Global South. The discussions will critically examine the state of heritage discourse, evaluating the charter's relevance to contemporary practice, including those posed by modern heritage, the rise of the metropolises, social inequities, disasters and environmental impact.

The discussion of the Venice Charter aligns seamlessly with the overarching theme of the ICOMOS Triennial Scientific Plan, "Disaster and Conflict Resilient Heritage: Preparedness, Response, and Recovery" that highlights the imperative to address contemporary challenges facing heritage, particularly in the context of disasters and conflicts. By critically revisiting the Venice Charter, we aim to bridge the historical document with present-day issues, emphasizing the need to adapt heritage conservation practices to the demands of the 21st century.

The selection of Ouro Preto as the venue for the Symposium holds strategic significance due to its historical character as a city shaped by the XVIII-century Brazilian gold rush. Being the first city in Brazil to be designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Ouro Preto embodies a rich heritage that aligns with the overarching theme of the event. Furthermore, its proximity to a site profoundly affected by one of Brazil's most significant environmental disasters offers a tangible and poignant backdrop for discussions on heritage resilience. This context reinforces

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the symposium's objective to critically examine the Venice Charter and review its relevance in the contemporary discourse on heritage, authenticity, and resilience.

Proposed Sub-Themes for the Symposium

1. Historical Context and Heritage Concepts

An exploration of the historical context and conceptual foundations that shaped the Venice Charter, emphasizing its Eurocentric origins and the need for a critical rereading.

2. A Cross-Cutting Approach Between Conventions

A discussion linking the Venice Charter with other international documents, notably the Hague Convention of 1954, the World Heritage Convention of 1972, the Nara Document on Authenticity of 1994, the Intangible Heritage Convention of 2003, and the Faro Convention of 2005¹, exploring intersections and shared principles to address contemporary challenges.

3. Universalism and diversity: Rereading the Doctrinal Documents from Diverse Perspectives

A discussion on the importance of the Venice Charter (and other related doctrinal documents) through diverse epistemologies and perspectives, acknowledging the cultural diversity of heritage and exploring contributions from the Global South.

4. Contemporary Challenges in Heritage Discourse

A critical examination of the state of the art in heritage discussions, considering the evolving perspectives and challenges that have emerged since the inception of the Venice Charter. Examining the relevance of the Venice Charter in the current context, with a focus on challenges posed by the Western divide between nature and culture, the growing importance of metropolises, social inequities, the environmental impact of human activities, disasters and conflicts, among others.

5. Disaster and Conflict Resilient Heritage

Cultural heritage is increasingly vulnerable to disasters and conflicts and subject to rapid destruction, as evidenced by the recent fires, floods, earthquakes and escalating armed conflicts in different parts of the world. At the General Assembly 2023 in Sydney, ICOMOS Advisory Committee approved the theme of *“Disaster and Conflict Resilient Heritage - Preparedness, Response and Recovery”* as the theme for the Triennial Scientific Plan 2024-2027. In keeping with the spirit of open, innovative, constructive intergenerational dialogue, and the strategic focus, this sub-theme will address the suitability of the Venice Charter with the theme of disaster and conflict-resilient heritage, emphasizing its broader implications for heritage discourse, development models, and resilience strategies.

By integrating these sub-themes into the Symposium, we aim to foster a comprehensive dialogue that not only critically reinterprets the Venice Charter but also explores its intersections with broader heritage discussions and contemporary challenges including the climate emergency, conflicts and natural disasters.

¹ Council of Europe's Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society

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Call for Abstracts

The Symposium invites scholars, researchers, heritage professionals, and policymakers to contribute to this critical examination. Contributions, including research papers, case studies, and reflections, are sought to align with the Symposium's objectives.

The Scientific Symposium Committee welcomes the submission of abstracts for the ICOMOS 2024 Annual General Assembly and Scientific Symposium (ICOMOS AGA2024) to be held at the Convention Centre, Ouro Preto, Brazil from 10 – 17 November 2024. The Scientific Symposium offers a major research, information sharing, training and capacity-building opportunity for delegates, who will be able to present and attend papers, seminars, workshops, site visits and other sessions.

Submit your abstract for a session, paper or poster through the AGA2024 Abstract Submission Portal: [Click on 'Submit your paper' to submit your abstract](#)

The call for abstracts will close on 15 June 2024.

Key Dates

- 4 March 2024: Abstract online submission site opens
- 15 June 2024: Deadline to submit an abstract to system
- 30 June 2024: Authors notified of abstract submission outcome
- 30 Aug 2024: Author registration deadline*

* Presenters and session organizers MUST register for the AGA2024 by the above date to confirm attendance. Presenters/session organizers who have not registered by this date will have their abstracts removed from the Scientific Symposium Program.

Abstract Guidelines

1. Participants are welcome to submit abstracts in English, French, or Spanish. Portuguese abstracts accompanied by English, French or Spanish translation will be accepted.
2. Participants are welcome to submit **more than one co-authored paper and/or poster abstracts, and session proposals.**
3. Participants may only submit one individual paper abstract and/or one individual poster abstract.
4. The AGA2024 Scientific Committee Co-chairs reserve the right to reclassify submitted abstracts into the most appropriate theme or program.
5. Abstracts must be submitted via the online abstract submission site.
6. **Abstracts will be reviewed as submitted by the abstract deadline of 15 June 2024.**

Presenter Agreement

All presenters agree to the following conditions when submitting an abstract:

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1. Agree that if the abstract is accepted, ICOMOS has permission to publish the abstract in printed and/or electronic formats.
2. Agree to have their papers published in printed and/or electronic formats, and their presentation broadcasted online and through the platforms used by ICOMOS.
3. Intend to register for and attend the AGA2024 Scientific Symposium and pay the appropriate registration fee by **30 Aug 2024**.

Failure to register by 30 Aug 2024 will result in the following:

- **The proposal being withdrawn from the AGA2024 Scientific Symposium.**
- The submitter will not be allowed to present their abstract at the meeting.
- The abstract will not be citable as being part of the ICOMOS AGA2024 Scientific Symposium Proceedings.