

Handle with care/inclusivity

Adaptation of cultural heritage



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To *Handle with Care* in times of conflict, requires connectivity and creativity. The track Handle with Care/Inclusivity connects the fields of Inclusive Design, Design for Health and Well-being, and Cultural Heritage. This calls for creativity and a strong common starting point.

'Care' is a broad term with overlapping and diverging definitions used in different fields (Mol, Moser, and Pols, 2010). Finding its origin in nursing theory, its study soon expanded towards sociology, anthropology, geography, philosophy, history, and conservation. Design sciences and heritage studies are challenged to merge and discuss insights gained in these fields into solutions that are inclusive, empathic, and attending to individuals', communities', objects', and buildings' particularities. The papers presented in two parallel tracks "Handle with Care" and "Handle with Care for Heritage and Conservation" cover a broad range of present and future challenges related to care in design and care for cultural heritage.

'Care in design' can be approached as bi- or even omnidirectional interactions with attention for reciprocity, between living beings -human and non-human- and technology, including objects, interiors and buildings. Both design as an outcome and design as a process are addressed in this respect. Design research with a focus on care aims at practice and policy in order to integrate implicit and explicit care into people's everyday life and create future proof environments. This is reflected in a broad variety of contributions related to design of and for technology, products, services, interiors, and buildings with focuses shifting from designed outcomes to design processes.

The section **Design for/as Communication** unravels the mutual connection between design and communication. Digital tools and design toolkits can enhance communication on sensitive topics. At the same time communication can be designed as a way of care.

Design for Diverse Users raise awareness for the diversity in people we design for and the challenges they face. Several authors stress the importance of gender related issues in design. Others draw attention to specific groups such as refugees, homeless people, or students. All strive to make

design processes and outcomes more inclusive through an enhanced understanding of end-users' experiences, needs, and sensitivities.

The **Care(ful) spaces** sections discuss the role of the built environment, from urban, architectural, and interior perspectives. The papers combine insight into the impact of space and how it can be adapted, with theoretical and methodological reflections.

The section **Co-creating care(ful) design** focuses on a variety of design processes. By engaging end-users, often children, in the design process, authors aim to give voice to often unheard groups, empower them, and support (self-)acceptance.

Design(ers) & Learning unites papers on design education with a plea to educate designers about how to approach their daily design practice. Rethinking interactions between people, and between people and objects come to the fore.

The **Design & Theory** section sheds a light on how strong theoretical frameworks can open new perspectives on design outcomes and processes. The presented papers show how such frameworks add value to many of the topic mentioned in other sections.

Last but not least, the section **Design Ethos** foreground the importance of ethics in design. It draws attention to the responsibility of designers to work in a social, societal, and cultural respectful way. Only by doing so a caring design practice can be achieved.

'Care for Heritage and Conservation' is one of the most meaningful aspect of life that needs an approach 'Handle with Care'. Due to increasing pace of change, cultural heritage field in the past decade have invested on responding to conflicts, disasters and sustainability. The motto "management of change" and policies following it were drafted in a reactive way specific to each challenge. In due course, overarching concepts already fell short of fulfilling their mandate, in the face of pandemic, climate change, migration and wars. The heritage field is very much responsive to its context. A good reading of international policies will reflect the chang-

ing spirit of its time, moving from monuments protection on the losses of individual masterpieces to urban conservation following widespread destruction created by the world wars. The current global challenges, indispensable from the national boundaries, are forcing all fields of natural and cultural heritage to transform and adapt (Boccardi, 2015).

The section on **'Care for Heritage and Conservation'** aims to tackle the problem from an integrated point of view, acknowledging the fact that our natural environment, built environment and cultural inspirations and practices are forced to adapt to current and future global challenges. The key issue is how can heritage be the guiding resource in this transformation. Different research papers in this section, have addressed how creativity and scientific research can offer possible strategies on adaptation, learning from our heritage.

Inclusive Approaches to Intangible Cultural Heritage section explored envisioning design strategies for intangible cultural heritage activation; media art productions to create a bond between traditional arts and the younger generations; communication design tools and heritage contemporary enhancement as a resource for social changes, fostering diversity and inclusion.

Sustaining Traditional Crafts and Techniques section focused on material aspects of various cultural heritage ob-

jects, such as the affordances of design-led mediation towards sustaining an ancestral cycle of linen making; culture towards circularity; a design-led visual ethnography of traditional embroidery motifs.

Adaptation of the Built Environment section on one hand explored ways and which climate change and green infrastructure and on the hand how adaptive reuse can be instrumental.

The section on **Participation and Role of Communities** explored various ways of participation such as digital solutions for visitor participation in museums; looking participation at times of war; and role of communities in disasters.

The overview of papers in the sub-tracks 'Care in design' and 'Care for Heritage and Conservation' show how the two cover overarching topics and face similar challenges regardless of the different starting points and focusses. Whether we care for present or past buildings or objects, taking an inclusive approach is essential to realize societally relevant outcomes and processes.

This stance is not only reflected in the presented papers but also forms the common thread through the posters, workshops, and conversation groups that substantiate the 'Handle with Care/Inclusivity' track. A huge "thank you" to all contributors is well placed here.

References

Boccardi, Giovanni. (2015). From Mitigation to Adaptation: A New Heritage Paradigm for the Anthropocene. *Perceptions of Sustainability in Heritage Studies*, edited by Marie-Theres Albert, Berlin, München, Boston: De Gruyter, pp. 87-98. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110415278-008>

Mol, A., Moser, I., & Pols, J. (Eds.). (2010). *Care in practice: on tinkering in clinics, homes and farms* (1. Aufl). Transcript-Verl.