

Protecting Heritage: Disaster and Risk Management in Conservation

Protecting Heritage: Disaster and Risk Management in Conservation Webinar series

Inspired by the experiences and work undertaken by IIC members and Regional Groups around the world, learn essential strategies in this webinar series to safeguard cultural heritage from natural and man-made threats through proactive disaster risk assessment and recovery planning.

Overview

Disaster and risk management in cultural conservation is essential to protect our heritage from various threats, both natural and man-made. Effective management involves risk assessment, emergency preparedness, and recovery planning to ensure the preservation of cultural assets. By implementing proactive measures and fostering collaboration among conservators, museum professionals, and heritage managers, we can mitigate potential damages and ensure swift recovery. Emphasizing best practices and continuous improvement in disaster and risk management is vital for the enduring protection of our cultural heritage.

These webinars will explore strategies to protect cultural assets from natural and man-made threats, ensuring their preservation for future generations. Experts will discuss case studies and best practices, emphasizing the importance of proactive measures and collaboration. Whether you're a conservator or museum professional, this webinar will provide valuable knowledge to enhance your disaster and risk management capabilities in cultural conservation. Join us to learn how to protect and preserve our shared cultural heritage.

All webinars are FREE and will include a Q&A session at the end. Please register using the links provided below (registration is required for each session separately). The sessions will be recorded and available to IIC members only to view on the IIC Community platform.

Session 1: Understanding disaster risk and response – Collections-based institutions

Wednesday 20 November 2024 from 12pm to 2pm GMT

[REGISTER FOR THIS WEBINAR HERE.](#)

This webinar explores how institutions can assess and mitigate disaster risks. It will cover strategies for disaster preparedness, emergency response, and recovery to protect collections, ensuring long-term preservation and resilience.

Chair: Lisa Swedberg, **President IIC Nordic Group Sweden/Nordiska Konservatorförbundet Sverige (NKF-S)**

Confirmed speakers:

- **Corine Wegner** is the director of the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI), an outreach program dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage in crisis situations in the U.S. and abroad. SCRI's work includes projects in Syria, Iraq, Haiti, Nepal, and around the world.
Cori will speak about how successfully protecting collections from human and naturally caused disasters does not just happen – it requires thoughtful planning, training, and staff capacity building. Cori Wegener, Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative, will speak about understanding risks and hazards, basic disaster planning for collecting institutions, and mounting an emergency response when prevention and mitigation measures fail.
- **Dr. Peter Stone** is the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Property Protection and Peace at Newcastle University in the UK (the only such Chair in the world); Chair of the UK Committee of the Blue Shield; and Vice President of Blue Shield International. He was previously Head of the School of Arts and Cultures and Professor of Heritage Studies at the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies at Newcastle University, UK.
Peter will give an overview of how the humanitarian sector plans to conserve cultural heritage during peacetime and ensure its protection during conflicts and natural disasters. Strategies and best practices for safeguarding cultural assets in various scenarios to preserve heritage for future generations.
- **Takeyuki OKUBO**, graduated from the Faculty of Engineering, Department of Architecture in 1991 and entered in the graduate school of Kyoto University. He became an associate professor of Kyoto University in 2002, and a professor at the Graduate School and College of Science and Engineering, Ritsumeikan University in 2007, and the director at the Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage (R-DMUCH) from 2013 to 2021 fiscal year. He is also a member of ICORP, board member of JP-ICOMOS and ICOMOS International.
Takeyuki speak about the reason why traditional buildings and cities have been able to survive so many disasters in long history, and become heritages at last. I will explain the new and old viewpoint as that design of heritage buildings and historic cities which were sophisticated with traditional, limited materials and technologies in the past is a kind of survival design for mitigation of unavoidable disasters with the case of Japan.

Session 2: Risk Management and Practical Applications in Conservation

Wednesday 27 November from 12pm to 2pm GMT

[REGISTER FOR THIS WEBINAR HERE.](#)

This webinar focuses on identifying, assessing, and managing risks to cultural heritage. It will explore practical tools and strategies that conservation professionals can use to protect collections from potential threats.

Confirmed speakers:

- **José Luiz Pedersoli Jr.** from Brazil has joined ICCROM as Project Manager - Conservation of Collections. Mr Pedersoli expanded his expertise in risk management, preventive conservation and value assessment, having advised institutions from national heritage departments, archives, historic houses and contemporary art museums, in his native Brazil and internationally.
José Luiz Pedersoli Jr. will speak about how cultural heritage is subjected to a variety of risks, from sudden and catastrophic events to gradual and cumulative detrimental processes. Given limited resources, how to prioritize and address these risks to effectively reduce losses and help maximise the benefits of heritage over time? Risk management provides a powerful approach to do so. This presentation will introduce the principles and applications of a dedicated method developed by ICCROM and partners to

manage risks to cultural heritage: The ABC Method.

- **Stephanie de Roemer** FIIC holds a BSc in Conservation and Restoration of Surface Decorations and an MA in Conservation of Historic Objects. Trained in Art History and classical Archaeology and conservation and restoration of surface decorations, and archaeological artefacts, Stephanie worked for the Glasgow Museums as conservator for sculpture and Installation Art prior to her role as conservator of objects for the Cambridge University Museums.

A member of the International Council of Museums – Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC), Stephanie currently serves as vice chair on the Directory Board.

Stephanie will explore how the framework for Sustainable Development can be integrated, applied and implemented through training in the conservation risk assessment methodology as a collaborative practice for museum communities. Emphasis on People and Partnership will highlight the agency of individuals and the potential of conservation as a manifestation of sustainability ambitions in practice.

- **Gretchen Allen** is a Senior Book and Paper Conservator at the National Archives of Ireland. She has previously held conservation roles with Maynooth University and Cambridge University Library. Throughout her career she has been responsible for interventive conservation treatments, preventive collection care work on environmental monitoring and pest management, bespoke enclosure making, exhibitions, outreach, and disaster management. She has been a member of the Irish National Committee of the Blue Shield since 2023.

Gretchen will speak about how trafficking, theft, vandalism, and conflict are issues that have affected art collections of all kinds since time immemorial, and often it is conservators who are asked to pick up the pieces. While most conservators are familiar with the agents of destruction that threaten the work in their care, many are not asked to consider the criminal elements of the art market until they've been affected by it first-hand. This talk will briefly discuss the conservator's role in preparing for, spotting, and mitigating the harm done by crime and conflict.

- **Frederick Thomson** is the Programme Manager for the Network of Regional Hubs at Cultural Emergency Response (CER). The Network of Regional Hubs is CER's effort to decentralise emergency response work to a regional level, working with extraordinary local partners to protect culture during times of crisis. His previous experience includes grant management and programme design at the Arab arts and culture organisation Ettijahat – Independent Culture, consultancy on heritage research and cultural management in the Arab region, and research and analysis at the International Criminal Court, focusing on the destruction of cultural heritage as a war crime.

Session 3: Rebuilding Heritage

Wednesday 4 December 2024 from 12pm to 2.15pm GMT

[REGISTER FOR THIS WEBINAR HERE.](#)

This webinar addresses the challenges and strategies involved in conserving and preserving cultural heritage after disasters or conflicts. It will cover approaches to rebuilding damaged sites, education, and fostering community engagement in the recovery process, ensuring the continuity of cultural identity and historical significance.

Chair: Samantha Hamilton, **President Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM)**

- **Polly Christie** led the Archives & Collections Recovery Project from 2015-2021, overseeing a programme of conservation, digitisation, collection management and collection development work, as well as leading on the Mac(k)cessibility Project. After the Recovery Project, Polly focussed on A&C's engagement

activity, through managing user services, loans, exhibitions and display activities. In June 2022 she was appointed Manager. Please contact Polly if you have any questions relating to her work.

Polly will speak about the Glasgow School of Art's Archives and Collections that, in 2014, were housed in the world famous Charles Rennie Mackintosh building in Garnethill. In May that year, a fire ripped through the west wing of the building, resulting in some fire and water damage, and the displacement of the whole collection. This presentation will discuss the School's approaches to recovering and rebuilding the School's heritage through a programme of collection management, digitisation and conservation.

- **Mohammad Fahim Rahimi** was appointed Curator of the National Museum of Afghanistan in 2007, rising to Chief Curator in 2012. For more than three decades, the continuous state of warfare in Afghanistan has completely destroyed every facet of the country, including the country's rich cultural heritage. Throughout this time, Fahim has been a witness to the whole-scale loss of Afghanistan's music tradition, festivals, theatre, and of course, the country's museum collections, which have been looted and deliberately destroyed. Fahim will speak about how they have learnt from different training programs and what they have implemented in the past years. A few examples will illustrate the projects in the past 10 years and also how they worked locally.

Additional speakers to be confirmed soon.