TANGIBLE - INTANGIBLE HERITAGE(S): AN INTERPLAY OF DESIGN, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

• Paper / Proposal Title:

Heritage for All: Rethinking the Relation of Built Heritage and Society in an Inclusive Conservation Approach

• Author(s) Name:

Negin Eisazadeh
Ann Heylighen
Claudine Houbart

• University or Company Affiliation:

University of Liège
KU Leuven

• Presentation Method. I would like to:

present in person (with/without a written paper)

• Abstract (300 words):

Built heritage is an integral part of contemporary historic cities and closely interwoven with people’s daily lives. Although people define, identify and designate specific architecture and urban spaces as heritage, these sites communicate both the story of their past and the approach and intentions of the present, which together can shape people’s life today and even in the future. While acknowledging that the values
perceived from heritage will vary based on the knowledge, abilities, and skills of diverse observers, today’s approach in the conservation of built heritage can impact on and potentially enrich the heritage values. The meeting of heritage places and people is vital for the continued existence of built heritage as it can lead to raising awareness of heritage and its values. In order to facilitate this meeting, in line with the integrated conservation of heritage and the inclusive approach adopted in the European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century, we investigate the implementation of an inclusive approach in conservation of built heritage. This approach aims to improve built heritage’s relation with society by limiting the disabling situations which disrupt one’s ability to engage with heritage and its values. This more open and potentially active presence of built heritage in its social context can strengthen the link between heritage and society and between individuals in society. To this end, we are conducting an extensive research which uses a bottom-up approach by attending to the experience and insights of disabled people in selected heritage sites to identify the existing limitations and potentials. These can inform a more inclusive conservation practice that seeks to balance protecting values with providing more enabling situations for engagement with heritage and its values. The subsequent interventions and modifications can add an extra layer to heritage, conveying today’s social conscious approach to future generations.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Negin Eisazadeh is an engineer-architect (University of Tehran, 2006) and architectural historian (University of Shahid Beheshti, 2010) and has an advanced master in Conservation of Monuments and Sites from the Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation. (KU Leuven, 2015). In the heritage field, Negin has collaborated professionally as an expert in research projects in conservation of cultural heritage and has undertaken an internship at the UNESCO office in Uzbekistan, working with a team on the Management Plan for the Historic Centre of Bukhara. Negin is currently conducting her PhD research titled “An Inclusive Approach to Built Heritage Values” at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Liège under the supervision of prof. Claudine Houbart (University of Liège) and prof. Ann Heylighen (KU Leuven). This research project is an in-depth study on the relation between disability and the historic built environment and its values and seeks to take fundamental steps in making built heritage reachable, accessible, understandable and usable for as many people as possible.

Ann Heylighen is research professor at KU Leuven (University of Leuven) in the Department of Architecture, where she teaches courses on design theory, professional ethics and inclusive design, and co-chairs Research[x]Design, a multidisciplinary research group at the interface of design research and social sciences/humanities. She studied architecture/engineering at KU Leuven and ETH Zürich, and conducted research at KU Leuven, Harvard University and UC Berkeley. Her current work looks into how space is
experienced, how space is designed, and the relationship between both. She is a fellow of the Design Research Society and received several grants, amongst which two ERC grants for her work on architectural design and disability.

Claudine Houbart studied Architecture (ULiège, 1996), Art History (ULB, 2000), and Conservation of Monuments and Sites (KU Leuven, Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation, 2002). She obtained a PhD in Engineering Science (KU Leuven) in 2015, with a thesis entitled “Raymond M. Lemaire and the Conservation of the Ancient City: Historical and Critical Approach of his Belgian Projects in an International Perspective”. Since 2003, she is teaching history of architecture and conservation history and theory at the Faculty of Architecture in the University of Liège. She is a founding member of the inter-faculty research unit AAP (Art, Archéologie, Patrimoine) and the research group DIVA (Documentation, Interpretation, Valorization of Architecture, Design and Heritage). Besides her research on conservation history, in the wake of her PhD, she focuses on conservation and restoration theories and concepts in order to question current policies and practices at the regional and international levels. As a Belgian delegate in the “Theory and Philosophy” international scientific committee of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and a member of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies, she is closely involved in international debates about new heritage issues and challenges.