

Urban Futures - Cultural Pasts

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Urban Futures - Cultural Pasts Sustainable Cities, Cultures & Crafts

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INTRODUCTION

Urban Futures - Cultural Pasts

Sustainable Cities, Cultures & Crafts

Every region of the world has its particular cultural, social and artistic heritage. In urban centres this is at its most pronounced, with the places we live in being the result history – a history of artistic visions, social and cultural forces, planning initiatives, and engineering projects. As UNESCO points out, in thinking about the future of any given place, we are obliged to build on its past and its present. A city and its cultural life then, are living questions – past, present and future.

This means that when discussing the history and future of specific sites we must think broadly. We have to understand the local and the global context in we live: the transnational forces of globalization, the growing importance of culture and tourism, the worldwide trends of heritage and consumerism, the universal concern for sustainability etc. In this regard too, a city, a region or a site are all complex entities – questions of specific responses to global issues. The host city of this event, Barcelona, and by extension the whole region of Catalonia, is a perfect example of this and in addressing the questions and issues typical of the Catalonia region, the conference from which these proceedings come, sought debates relevant to Barcelona but also cities the world over.

Across the Mediterranean issues of sustainable futures are paramount. In Europe more widely, the gentrification of traditional neighborhoods is endemic. In North America and Australasia the respect for Indigenous cultures and crafts is urgently needed. In Africa and Asia, how to sustainably design for growth in existing contexts is a pressing problem. In Latin America and the Middle-East, development that avoids the homogenizing forces of globalization is vital. In these contexts the papers included in this publication will all explore how such interchangeable global issues are key to our pasts, but also to our sustainable futures.

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FLOATING NAUTICAL HERITAGE FOR TERRITORIAL ENHANCEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The research concerning the European state of the art on Floating Nautical Heritage¹ shows that historic vessels are too often less appreciated by the community and therefore insufficiently recognised as Cultural Heritage.²

The same investigation fortunately shows that the different European realities are not completely silent but are attempting - according to their own cultural sensibilities and cultural background - to generate and encourage interest in Floating Nautical Heritage.

France³ and England,⁴ for example, include a tradition that has never been lost and state support for the preservation of the nautical-naval heritage that is continuing, established and organised, while Italy and Spain - although focused on the issue - have a less consolidated situation and are still in the process of being affirmed.⁵

The two latter establish their activities to promote and disseminate maritime culture through Sea Museums on one side and associations on the other. The former are concerned with public heritage while the latter with private heritage.

All over Europe, a number of associations are taking on the task of developing the Floating Nautical Heritage, including almost all types of historic sailing vessels from classic and vintage sailing, across motor yachts to Latin sails and traditional 'wood ships'.

For sailing boats, moreover, the CIM⁶ is active in the Mediterranean, which, in addition to organising category sailing regattas, is an important factor for aggregation and dissemination.

The associations are supported by institutional boards such as the sea museums, which should not be considered as punctual or isolated realities because they can build on each other's strengths and form a proactive network through the AMMM,⁷ whose mission is exactly that of promoting, disseminating and safeguarding the culture of the sea and maritime heritage in the Mediterranean region.

SOME GOOD MUSEUM PRACTICES

Looking only at the comparison between Italy and Cataluña, we note that in both cases there are organisations dedicated to private collections and Sea Museums working on public heritage such as the Museu Maritim de Barcelona, the Galata Museo del Mare in Genoa and the Museo della Marineria in Cesenatico.

Three museum realities with a synergetic and collaborative approach that have been able to share a common vision focused on the concepts of eco-museum and seascape community.

These realities can embrace research in Design for Cultural Heritage in general and for Floating Nautical Heritage in particular, since the Maritime Museum in Cesenatico already has a section of traditional public and private sailing vessels moored in the canal port of Cesenatico, the Genoese Galata has an Open-Air Museum and the O-banchina while the Museu Maritim de Barcelona - which has its historical seat in the Cantieri Navali Reali (Royal Shipyards) - is extending beyond the confines of its walls with a series of activities such as the refitting of the schooner Sant'Eulàia.



Figure 1. Museo della Marineria in Cesenatico: Porto Canale and the traditional Trabaccolo (Courtesy of: Museo della Marineria in Cesenatico).



Figure 2. Schooner Santa Eulalia of the Museu Maritim de Barcelona (Courtesy of: Museu Maritim de Barcelona).



*Figure 3. Historic boats at the Galata Museo del Mare, Genova
(Courtesy of: Galata Museo del Mare).*

The latter, launched in 1918, has been revitalised with the objective of making it usable as a tourist transport and at the same time as museum of itself.

Three realities and as many good practices exemplifying a much wider scenario that - with the right tools and approach - can take on a primary role in the cultural promotion of the nautical heritage and in territorial enhancement.

INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND DESIGN APPROACH

Interdisciplinarity, design and anthropological vision are the core elements to define an integrated and congruent strategy useful for the valorisation of the Nautical Heritage and the strengthening of the role of Maritime Museums as territorial and social connectivity.

The role of design

Design, as a discipline, reveals its ability to support territorial identity and culture by being a process, service and product innovator, anticipating new scenarios for the use, sharing and dissemination of Cultural Heritage.⁸

By interpreting, extending and declining to maritime culture the scientific thinking that recognises Design as a driving force for revitalisation in the cultural sector, DAD's⁹ Naval and Nautical Design research group has for several years been promoting research actions dedicated to the Historical Nautical Heritage.¹⁰

By sharing Fulvio Irace's thought that «there can be no conservation that is not also a valorisation of the asset», historical boats preserved in museums, moored at harbour docks or sailing the seas become 'products' around which a Design Thinking process can and must be activated.



Figure 4. The Design Thinking approach
(credits: M.C. Morozzo, A. Bertirotti, L. Inga).

From the initial empathic investigative and cognitive phase, we seek to arrive at design solutions applicable to the 'museum - heritage - territory' system with a holistic vision that is not limited to the mere enjoyment of the Cultural Heritage, but also focuses on the connective function of museums and the territorial spin-offs that this can produce in tourism as well as in the community of residents. Hybrid solutions approached with a phygital view useful to integrate and to reinterpret the physical fruition and the inhabitation of knowledge places also thanks to the digital interface through which it's possible to anticipate the experience, favour and implement the experience and, finally, to extend the experience.

This confirms what Irace says: «Today, the first access to the museum takes place on the web and digital portals open unprecedented possibilities to remote visitors of the global society».

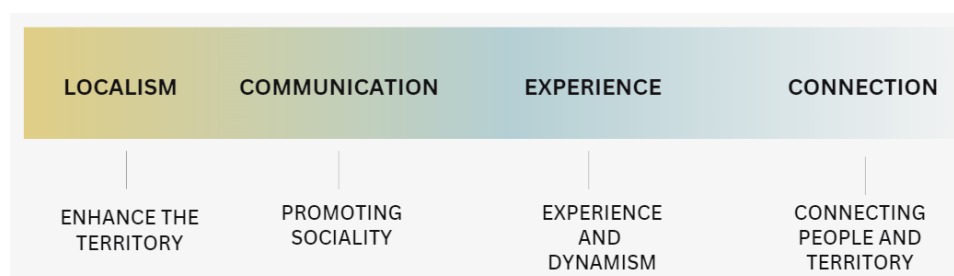


Figure 5. Museums could be able to connect and share a common vision of seascape community
(credits: M.C. Morozzo, A. Bertirotti, L. Inga).

This statement anticipates a viable valorisation scenario even for that tangible and intangible nautical heritage consisting of boats whose physical characteristics and natural ambition to sail for as long as possible constitute obvious obstacles to any traditional form of conservation and invite a re-interpretation in a delocalising and de-temporalizing approach to the use of the asset. Accordingly, Celaschi sees this approach as one of the contemporary ways of engaging with the 'designed' process of valorisation¹¹ and as a strength rather than a limitation of both the artefact and the design process itself.

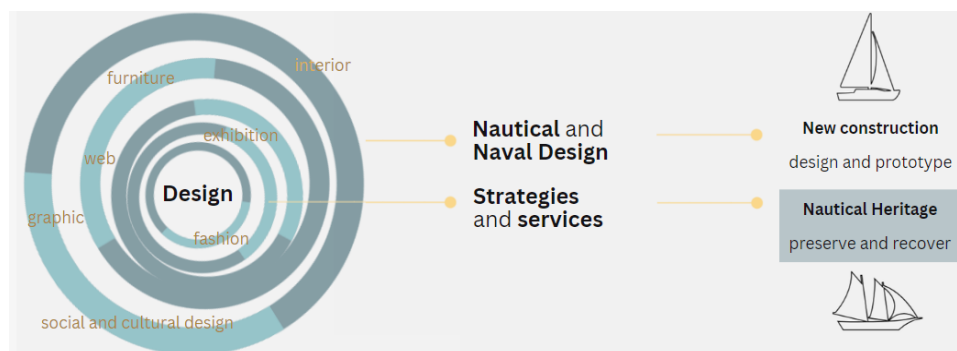


Figure 6. Historical boats are 'products' around which a Design Thinking process can be initiated (credits: M.C. Morozzo, A. Bertirotti, L. Inga).

The anthropological approach as added value

The essential attribute of human life is the exercise of reflection, through which we seek the overall meaning of our actions.

The way we orient ourselves and act in the real world, our behavioural styles, together with the mental and attitudinal patterns we adopt, are often the result of automatisms that do not, as such, demand the presence of self-awareness.

Our behaviour, like our mental life, is mostly the result of routines, and if there are no stimuli, or problems, capable of bringing to the surface the motivations for these automatisms, it is hard to reflect on things that are habitually considered obvious. For the transition from automatism to awareness to occur, it is therefore necessary to activate a reflexive attitude, which allows us to adjust our perspective, and thus to modify some of our behaviour.

This leads us to a better understanding that reflexivity is the mother of pragmatism, i.e. of that practical thinking that we can articulate, with Stefania Contesini,¹² in its four basic expressions: a) critical-argumentative thinking; b) creative-generative thinking; c) emotional-relational thinking; d) ethical-evaluative thinking. Within these four specificities of reflective thinking, in the case of this project proposal, the creative-generative thinking plays a crucial role.

In this anthropological context, the 'knowledge of what was' generates the 'understanding of where we are now'. Here imagination can become a real project and not a fantasy. Imagination carries the energetic charge of two necessary anthropological attitudes, hope and courage, which are the driving forces of creative-generative thinking.

Both hope and courage are manifest in the creative-generative imagination, which is a powerful competence, thanks to which knowledge and skills, virtues and attitudes are activated. All the elements that respond to deficient situations of the present that is considered and experienced as problematic, with the attempt to draw another reality, positively connoted and allowing a better accomplishment of our personal identity.

Different human cognitive styles have always used the imagination to answer the question: 'What could happen if?' It is precisely this question that makes the authors of the paper propose an imaginary and imaginative vision of museum-going. In the following paragraphs, the authors' reference to the imagination associated with the use of digital technologies to engage the user in the museum experience and create innovative hybrid modes of use will be more clearly revealed.

Our imagination is a particular ability of our cognition and thus also of reflective thought. It can be directed as much toward the past as toward the future: we can imagine what has happened - when we are faced with an object or a circumstance - just as we can imagine what might happen if we were in front of situations and objects that are not yet part of our everyday life.

And everything we imagine causes us emotion, inevitably.

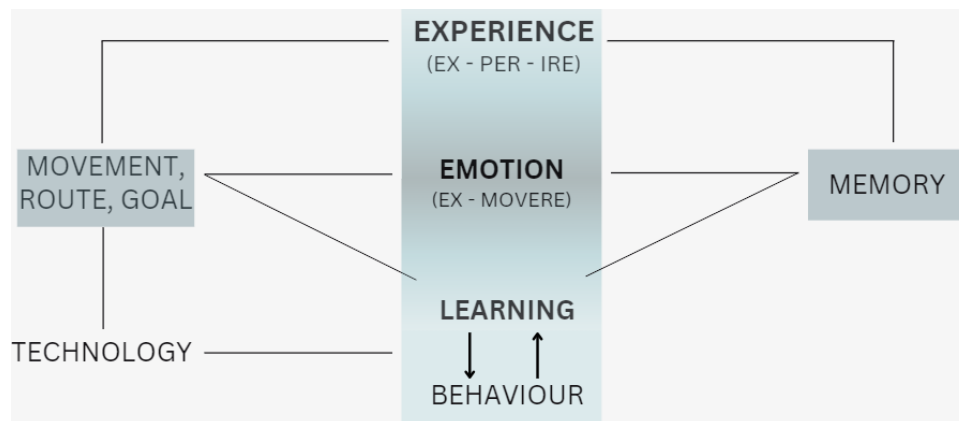


Figure 7. Psychoanthropology links experience to memory, building a knowledge based on history (credits: M.C. Morozzo, A. Bertirotti, L. Inga).

EMOTIONS IN THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

In the 1990s, interest in the social and relational nature of the individual was consolidated; the importance of engaging, motivating and empowering human beings in any existential situation was realised.

In the main, it becomes important to be able to involve others, to make them participate in desirable events, inspiring confidence and thus enthusiasm: all the elements captivating individuals and groups, lead them thus to learn more about other people or present, past or future realities. Everybody with an attitude of listening and reflecting. Human beings constantly need vitality, thanks to which one gives meaning to the past that one still appreciates as important in the present, and in the light of which one plans the future.

Nowadays, emotions, their management and their presence within cultural events are considered essential to ensure the authentic success of a cultural production. This is why new training and research activities have developed, focusing on the management of emotions and the construction of development models that allow the appreciation of different events based on them. Today we know, with greater awareness, that the concept of experiential quality comprehends emotions, feelings, passions, desires, intuitions and motivations that turn into reflection, towards oneself and what one is experiencing.

As Martha Nussbaum reminds us, «Emotions are intelligent reactions to the perception of value».¹³

In essence, «the mode of feeling that accompanies the experience of an emotion is firmly anchored on very definite beliefs and judgments that form its very foundation and basis, so that any particular emotion as a whole can be evaluated as true or false, and even as rational or irrational, depending on how we judge the belief on which it is based. Since the feeling is based on evaluation, both it and the emotion in its whole can be modified if there is some change in the opinion».¹⁴

In our instance, the emotional experience we can have within a museum tour allows us to think semantically and critically based on an affective connotation as well. Our thoughts almost always lead us towards everything that has moved us and provoked an additional affective tension in us, precisely because we can experience meaningful relationships with others and with things.

Aristotle, in the *Rhetoric*, offers us, as always, further opportunities for reflection: «Feelings are not blind animal forces, but constituent elements of the personality endowed with intelligence and

discernment, closely related to convictions of a specific nature and therefore sensitive to cognitive changes».¹⁵

For these reasons, every form of evaluation is therefore a constitutive part of emotion.

DESIGN THINKING AND ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

The interdisciplinary vision outlined leads to a strategic planning thought for the evaluation of the Nautical Heritage that aims to move beyond the anachronism of objects that, however admirable in terms of design and luxury, diverges from a concept of navigation understood as a way of moving through space and time, enjoying the environmental context that we are blessed to be able to appreciate, and adventuring into the unexplored one of virtuality.

Innovative intervention can bring back to the museum environment the possibility of directly experiencing vessels and contribute to spreading the value of an experience that until now has been the prerogative of the few. Knowing how to reconcile innovation with tradition represents the possibility, for those sectors anchored to a deep-rooted history, to be motivated by a passion and a far-reaching vision that does not focus solely on the economic factor or immediate gratification, also because history teaches us that, in almost all cases, the fruits will be reaped by those who will follow.

For this to be achieved, what skills are needed? And what are the intersections between a traditional sector and an evolving society?

A digital culture such as the one we are used to juggling is not yet fully accessible in a museum context and even less so if associated with nautical heritage. It is therefore desirable that interactive environments are set up in such a way that we can access, in a simplified and strategic manner, content with a unique character, which would otherwise be difficult to access: the on-board experience on a historical schooner or on an iconic modern-day yacht is today only possible by physically entering the vessel.

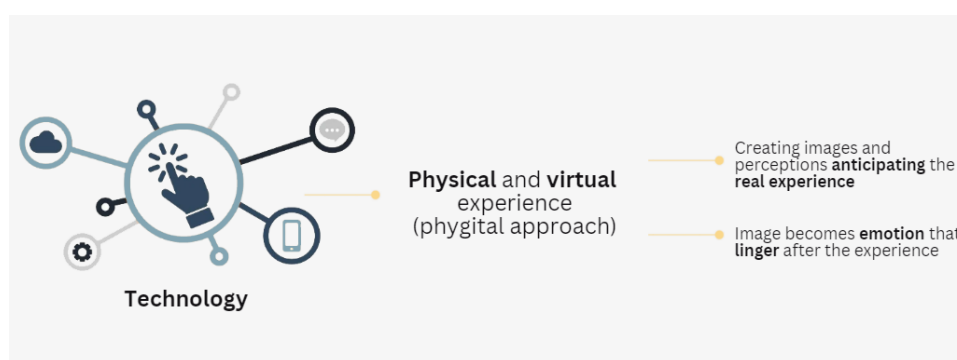


Figure 8. The phygital approach links physical and digital experience (credits: M.C. Morozzo, A. Bertirotti, L. Inga).

This characteristic of user-friendliness represents a limitation for two reasons: on the one hand, the fragmentation of the heritage, which cannot be standardised nor geographically concentrated; on the other hand, the difficulty of reaching and the accessibility. Therefore, the presence of a small number of museums and the limited capillarity of a widespread culture which, in the absence of any integration between museum heritage and digital technologies, makes diffusion scarce, and the use of technology is limited to dissemination on social networks or the web.

Thanks to the versatility of digital technologies, it is possible to imagine a multi-sectoral and scalar museum context: to get to know and experience, even virtually, the treasure that is local nautical heritage on different levels, consistent with the interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral nature of nautical production, its evolution and development.

According to Vitalba Morelli,¹⁶ vice-president of Tuo Museo, the widespread notion in Italy of a museum is that of a ‘place of preservation’, where one goes to visit, learn something and come back home. In foreign countries, especially in the United States, the museum is instead a place where one lives an experience, thanks also to the use of technologies that surround the user in a natural way.

The dissemination of a heritage such as the nautical one, needs broader reflection, capable of extending its contents to the public to create a network of knowledge and multiple possibilities of use, accessibility and dissemination. This would become, for the society, an opportunity to build an active and critical citizenship, through the familiarisation with an educational experience that would enable a link to be made between culture, heritage and territorial identity, not only through an abstract world but thanks to a concrete and applied approach.

As admitted by Lampis,¹⁷ the museum plays a social role because it represents the reference for the cultural development of the community, acting in a relevant way both inside and outside the museum itself, although maybe in an intangible but paradoxically more sharable dimension.

Being enabled to unify the Floating Nautical Heritage of yesterday, today and tomorrow in an eternal and virtual tangible dimension, could become the key to the acknowledgement and dissemination of a strongly identifiable and universally recognisable maritime culture.

CONCLUSIONS

The project strategies proposed aim to influence the user in such a way as to encourage awareness of one's own cultural background by initiating a community pathway, within which the past of one's fellow citizens becomes part of the awareness that will facilitate the maintenance of one's own cultural identity.

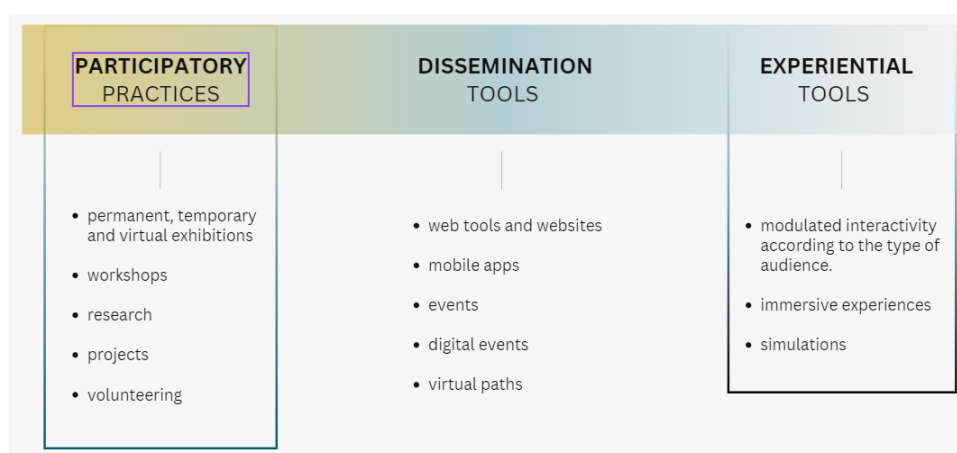


Figure 9. The project strategies and tools for a phygital approach
(credits: M.C. Morozzo, A. Bertirotti, L. Inga).

People, especially the new generations, immersed in a social and technological way where they feel ‘connected but isolated’, need and demand to be able to travel into the inner life of the other, to taste their emotions and human teachings.

Therefore, the essay suggests a possible path for the museum visit to become an opportunity to experience and develop one's emotional skills to gain new awareness and knowledge. Since knowledge is an expression of an emotional attachment, it is possible to think of the continuous formation of a cognitive style that leads the individual to experience the past through his or her present. A present that is constituted, precisely and synergistically, by cognition and emotion. A present that recognises in museum places that social and territorial network in which it recognises itself and to which it belongs... and thus is necessarily driven to experience it and make it live.¹⁸

NOTES

- ¹ Maria Carola Morozzo della Rocca. *Per un Portale del Nautica Heritage. Ricerca, azioni e proiezioni*. (Genova: GUP Genova University Press, 2018), 38-41.
- ² Maria Carola Morozzo della Rocca. *Per un Portale del Nautica Heritage. Ricerca, azioni e proiezioni*. (Genova: GUP Genova University Press, 2018).
- ³ BIP Label Bateau d'Internet Patrimonial, accessed July 20, 2024, <https://www.patrimoine-maritime-fluvial.org/navires-du-patrimoine/demande-de-labellisation/>.
- ⁴ NHHSHIP UK National Historic Ship UK, accessed July 20, 2024, <https://www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/>.
- ⁵ Maria Carola Morozzo della Rocca. *Per un Portale del Nautica Heritage. Ricerca, azioni e proiezioni*. (Genova: GUP Genova University Press, 2018), 51-58.
- ⁶ CIM Comitato Internazionale del Mediterraneo, accessed July 20, 2024, <https://www.cim-classicyachts.org/it>.
- ⁷ AMMM Association of Mediterranean Maritime Museums, accessed July 20, 2024, <https://www.ammm-info.net/index.php/it/>.
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- ⁹ Architecture and Design Department, University of Genoa.
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- ¹² Stefania Contesini. *Allenare il pensiero pratico. Le competenze filosofiche per le persone e le organizzazioni*. (Milano: Mimesi Editore, 2023).
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- ¹⁸ The paper is the result of the common reflection of the authors, but the following are to be attributed: 'Introduction' and 'The Role of Design' are to be ascribed to M.C. Morozzo della Rocca, 'The Anthropological Approach as an Added Value' and 'Emotions in the Museum Experience' are to be ascribed to A. Bertirotti, 'Design Thinking and Enhancement Strategies' and 'Conclusion' are to be ascribed to L. Inga. This publication was realised thanks to PRA 2022 'DESIGN FOR THE TERRITORY' funding from the DAD - Architecture and Design Department of the Polytechnic School of the University of Genoa.

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