

Heritage in War and Peace II

Spaces of Conflict, Spaces of Justice: Between Natural Landscapes and Cityscapes *A McGill-Sapienza Seminar* Montréal, November 3-4, 2022

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McGill University's **Faculty of Law** and Peter Guo-hua Fu **School of Architecture** together with Sapienza University's in Rome **Department of Political Sciences**, the **Universities Network for Children in Armed Conflict** and McGill's Research Group on Democracy Space and Technology, **Yan P. Lin Centre** and the Graduate Law Student Association (**GLSA**) are pleased to announce the second edition of their highly acclaimed Seminar to be held this fall in **Montréal (November 3-4, 2022)**.

Conserving the diversity of life and culture on Earth is critical to global human welfare. With world's environmental and cultural heritage increasingly in peril, providing protection to our planet's most important natural resources and habitats, as well as to the urban landscapes, becomes an urgent imperative. The war in Ukraine, on the one hand targeting urban centres, and on the other threatening nuclear catastrophe, is a reminder of the precarity of the heritage's situation in the present-day.

We propose that this year's edition of the Seminar runs under the theme "Spaces of Conflict, Spaces of Justice: Between Natural Landscapes and Cityscapes," inviting the participants to pull down the "walls of perspectives" which the field of heritage studies most often puts up, and bring the different viewpoints on natural heritage and cultural heritage, on landscape and cityscape, and on conflict in peacetime and wartime, including built, as well as environmental sites containing superlative phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

Growing threats and declining protection and management are a worrying blend for both natural and cultural heritage, including those listed as the UNESCO World Heritage sites. This is true both in peacetime and during armed conflicts, with an unprecedented increase of natural sites in the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger.

Pollution, climate change, desertification, natural disasters, invasive species, uncontrolled urbanization and unchecked tourist development are increasingly damaging natural sites, while also affecting cultural heritage - such as buildings, monuments, archaeological sites - and underpinning many living heritage expressions, practices, oral tradition and knowledge systems ("intangible cultural heritage"). Indigenous peoples and local communities living in particularly vulnerable environments, such as small islands, high-altitude zones, desert margins and the circumpolar Arctic, are often disproportionately affected.

Likewise, armed conflicts too often lead to environmental degradation, destruction of natural and cultural heritage, food and water insecurity, loss of livelihoods and biodiversity, with long-lasting effects on the increased vulnerability of the affected populations. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, from 1946 to 2010, conflict was the single most important cause of declines in wildlife population and damage of natural heritage. Urban warfare is today the most widespread and violent type of conflict due to density. Not only causing devastating consequences to civilian population, and critical infrastructures, but also to cultural and natural heritage as we can sadly observe during past and today's conflicts in Syria and Ukraine.

The obligation to respect cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict is recognized as an international custom. International Humanitarian Law also prohibits the use of the natural environment as a weapon or

directing attacks against it, while the International Criminal Court makes it a war crime to cause widespread, long-term, and severe damage to the environment, as well as to cultural heritage. Nevertheless, the level of destruction of heritage in general seems to be increasing.

In the hopes of finding innovative solutions and policy responses for better protection of natural and cultural sites and landscape, both in peacetime and wartime, the suggested areas of focus include, but are not limited to:

- the current challenges surrounding the protection of natural and or cultural heritage, landscape and cityscape, and environmental and built sites;
- the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of natural and cultural heritage;
- heritage as a space of conflict on a local, national, regional or global scale;
- the interaction between culture and nature and the development of the “cultural landscape categories” under the relevant UNESCO Conventions;
- natural heritage, environment and landscape and or cultural heritage, the built environment and cityscape during armed conflicts – International Humanitarian Law;
- violation against natural and cultural heritage and accountability – International Criminal Law;
- the intersections of law, natural heritage and or cultural heritage and new concepts: the exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements in heritage studies;
- climate change and justice: effects on indigenous populations and the cultural loss;
- spaces for cultural and or natural heritage – between conflict and reconciliation;
- pollution as a consequence of cities as home to nearly half of the world’s population;
- the landscape/cityscape approach – international institutions, heritage and peace;
- children, heritage and armed conflict;
- heritage and transitional justice – remembering and forgetting.

Participants should send **150-250 words abstracts** for **papers** or **roundtables** until **July 31, 2022** to Mirosław M. Sadowski and Gianluigi Mastandrea Bonaviri at miroslaw.sadowski@mail.mcgill.ca and gianluigimastandreabonaviri@gmail.com.

Artistic component of the Seminar

The Seminar will have an artistic component as well as a research one in the form of an open competition, aimed at selecting innovative artistic products representing natural and cultural heritage. The selected ones will be exhibited during the Seminar, as well as disseminated on-line, both on general and professional social platforms. The four selected artists will be also involved in a special roundtable during the Seminar, chaired by the Art Director and focused on the importance of art as a strong mean of raising awareness of the need to preserve and protect natural sites and landscapes, as well as cultural heritage sites and cityscapes.

The artists shall feel free to express, through any form of art, the silent cry of the Earth, so rich in natural and cultural heritage, both material and immaterial, tangible and intangible, increasingly under threat. The changes to our ecosystem, together with the destruction of our own roots because of human recklessness, risk to turn the magnificent world we currently live in into only a memory of the past, nothing more than a beautiful dream of the yesteryear. All of humanity has the duty to keep this dream real and alive, protecting and safeguarding natural heritage, landscape, environmental sites and cultural heritage, cityscape and built sites. The artistic creations should follow the slogan: “A story told through sounds, colours, music that animates an audience without borders.”

The artistic creations could include *inter alia*: brief dancing choreography, photographs, shorts videos, sculptures, paintings, prints, films, collages, storytelling, audios, songs, monologues, short acting dialogues and any other artistic tool the artists would like to employ in order to highlight the importance of natural and cultural heritage protection. All use of digital and virtual art in these creations will be much appreciated.

Artists willing to participate should **send their creations** to Sergio Iovino at sergio.iovino1@gmail.com by **July 31, 2022**.