

EPoCH 2026 + T4EU Sustainable Heritage Conference

Heritage future(s) / future heritage(s): on the threshold of change

18 – 20 March 2026

EPoCH is an annual scientific conference organized by the **Heritage & Conservation-Restoration Focus Area** of the **Centre for Science and Technology of the Arts (CITAR)** at **Universidade Católica Portuguesa**. In 2026, EPoCH is organized in connection with the **Transform4Europe (T4EU)** alliance and is part of the broader framework of the **T4EU Sustainable Heritage Conference**. This connection reinforces the conference's commitment to fostering dialogue across European universities and disciplines, aligning heritage research and conservation-restoration practices with the alliance's shared mission of sustainability, innovation, and societal engagement.

The conference serves as a forum for discussions on future directions in heritage and conservation-restoration research, fostering collaborative dialogues that explore emerging perspectives and a diverse array of practices, theories, and approaches.

The **2026 edition** of EPoCH, titled *heritage future(s) / future heritage(s): on the threshold of change*, proposes two interrelated notions as its conceptual core. Within the fields of conservation-restoration and heritage studies, these notions invite critical reflection on the evolving landscapes of heritage practice and theory, and on how we might imagine new configurations of ethics, responsibility, and care in times of transformation.

The formulation **heritage future(s)** suggests a forward-looking perspective: how do current heritage practices shape—or constrain—possible futures? This invites reflection on the values, ethical frameworks, and operative concepts that underpin conservation-restoration today. What are we preserving, and for whom? To what extent does the desire to safeguard the past risk inscribing a singular vision of the future, excluding other temporalities, epistemologies, or communities? As the climate crisis, digital technologies, and shifting sociopolitical contexts accelerate change, how might conservation practices adapt without becoming complicit in the very dynamics of erasure they seek to resist?

Conversely, **future heritage(s)** invites us to imagine what will come to be seen as worthy of preservation. Which materials, memories, and media will future generations inherit—and how will they reinterpret or repurpose them? This opens a crucial space to question the canon of heritage itself, challenging the hierarchies and silences that have historically defined what is deemed “preservable.” How can conservation-restoration evolve to accommodate heritages still in formation, fluid, or at risk of being overlooked? Future heritages may rely increasingly on immaterial, ephemeral, communal, or even virtual dimensions—calling for modes of conservation that move beyond traditional frameworks of material care.

The subtitle, **on the threshold of change**, underscores a sense of urgency, liminality, and possibility that defines our current historical moment. It positions conservation-restoration not merely as a reactive or preservative act, but as a generative practice deeply entangled with cultural, political, ecological, and technological transformation. Standing on this threshold, practitioners and scholars alike are invited to reimagine their roles: not only as stewards of the past but as co-authors of evolving narratives of heritage, attuned to plural temporalities and emergent forms of life.

In doing so, EPoCH 2026 encourages a collective reckoning with change—not as disruption, but as a condition of possibility.

EPoCH 2026 welcomes contributions

that critically and creatively engage with these themes across diverse contexts, methodologies, and disciplines.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

- Challenging heritage: borders, margins, and new epistemologies.
- Challenging conservation-restoration: new paths, tools, and concepts; a deontology of the immaterial.
- Heritage in its multiple relations with climate change.
- Over-tourism in heritage sites and new approaches to tourism, including niche, sustainable, green, and creative tourism.
- Sustainable solutions for heritage preservation and artistic practices: new materials, technologies, and analytics. Nature-based, community knowledge, and participatory strategies as bases for innovative solutions.
- Technologies for digitalization, modeling, and impact mitigation. Data Science and AI—potential uses in heritage protection and creation.

Keynote Speakers

- **Cornelius Holtorf** (School of Cultural Sciences, Linnaeus University)
- **Paulo Lourenço** (Department of Civil Engineering, University of Minho)

Important Dates

- **Call for abstracts:** 3–30 November 2025

- **Communication of acceptance to authors: 16 December 2025**