Conservation Sparks Change on Waste Management Outlook

CONSERVATION OF FRESCOES

IN THE SHEKHAWATI REGION, INDIA

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The Shekhawati Project is an international association created by conservation experts based in Paris, France. In collaboration with an Indian NGO, its goal is the preservation of the architectural and pictorial heritage of the Shekhawati Region of Rajasthan. These exceptional Haveli are covered with frescoes and murals on both interior and exterior walls, creating an extraordinary open-air art gallery - a witness to the splendor of an era. This unique heritage is threatened by over half a century of neglect.

The Project is founded in the belief that the conservation of this heritage is an important part of the rehabilitation of the entire region. The pressing issues of waste management and flooding are surprisingly linked to the protection of the frescos. For example, trash builds up and damages the foundations of these historical palaces.

The Project advocates for economic change through development of sustainable tourism, in close cooperation with local entrepreneurs, to preserve traditional skills and promote adapted reuse of the buildings for the local community. Working with regional contacts to lobby local governments to implement protective measures for the monuments. The project aims to include town infrastructure and city services, which could directly improve the condition of the buildings and their frescoes.

The Project organizes interdisciplinary conservation workshops with students and graduates in architecture and conservation, from India, Europe and Australia. Conservation treatments take place on the frescos in the center of the Shekhawati towns, allowing the local citizen to share the ongoing transformation. Integrating different professional backgrounds and approaches, our workshops combine the know-how of local craftsmen with modern conservation techniques.

Since 2017, the Project has been successfully using the workshops to showcase the best practice and act as an incentive for Haveli owners to conserve and rehabilitate their properties. Our program aims to promote international exchange for young and experienced professionals implementing protocols to adapt effective methodologies and up-to-date materials for conservation in a harsh environment with an extreme climate and high pollution.

“Surprising and unexpected” are the terms that perfectly describe this challenge!

Authors:

Cécile Charpentier: Founder, French-American Private Practice Conservator, painting Expert, graduate of the École du Louvre, Paris (Museology). Master in Cultural Conservation, University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne. Cécile is an admirer of Indian art. She is based in Paris and heads many major restoration sites world-wide.

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Giovanna Carravieri: Co-founder Private Practice Conservator, specialized in Italian frescoes. Giovanna is based in San Francisco, USA, graduate of the School of Cremone, Italy. Giovanna studied Art History at the University of La Sapienza in Rome and at the University of Paris IV-Sorbonne. In San Francisco, she founded “Kalos Art Conservation”. She has worked as a Conservator for numerous sites in Rome, Florence, Vatican City and Paris.

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Sabine Cotte: Co-founder French-Australian private conservator. Sabine holds conservation degrees from Institut National du Patrimoine (Paris), ICCROM (Rome) and a PhD from University of Melbourne, Australia. She has led several workshops in the Himalayan region for UNESCO, ICCROM and private NGOs, focusing on training local people in conservation and in disaster recovery. She is an Honorary Fellow of the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, a casual lecturer in the Masters of Cultural Materials Conservation and a tutor in the Masters of Curatorship, University of Melbourne.

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Harpreet Tanday: Co-founder Indian-Italian Private Practice Conservator, based in Melbourne where she co-founded “Delta Conservation”. Master specializing in wall paintings, stone, stucco and architectural surfaces conservation. She graduated from SUPSI (Scuola Universitaria della Svizzera Italiana) in Switzerland after a Bachelor degree from Italy (Conservation department in "G.B. Cignaroli, Verona). She has worked as a conservator on several projects, which included wall paintings and historical buildings in Italy, Switzerland, India and Australia.