
Philosophy of Conservation and Praxis of Restoration
Roberto Di Stefano

Preamble and aim. In the 40th anniversary of the 1972 World Convention of Cultural and Environmental Heritage, UNESCO, together with ICOMOS, promotes a debate among all of the experts committed to Conservation and Restoration. A discussion of this kind is essential: over the last decades of the XX Century, a deep and meaningful development in the field of Conservation and Restoration has to be reported, both on the theoretical and the strictly methodological profile. This is to answer to necessities emerged over the time and still emerging in the current cultural panorama as expressions of the globalization results.

Transformations occurred between XX and XXI Centuries and our most recent times seem to urge a verification of the conservation principles within the so-called “heritage paradigm shift”, given the complexity and the speed of the phenomema triggered by the above mentioned transformations.

To Roberto Di Stefano (1926-2005) goes the recognition of having disclosed these scientific reflections and of having carried out and measured the correspondence between theoretical assumptions and restoration interventions within the research and didactical activities, as well as in the praxis. His contribution to this field as ICOMOS International President and Director of the Neapolitan School of Restoration from 1978 to 2000, is extraordinarily pregnant, also and especially as for his activity as scholar at international level. The accuracy employed by Roberto Di Stefano in carrying on the investigation and the study in depth of the development of the conservation of values and the possible risks of questioning its principles – both at national and, even more complex, at international level – crops up to us today with all of its crystal clear topicality.

The recent approval of the Declaration of Faro and the two important anniversaries of 2012, for the 40th of the 1972 Convention, and 2014, for the 50th of the Chart of Venice, represent for the School of Specialization in Architectural and Landscape Heritage of the Federico II University of Naples and ICOMOS Italy, whose promoters are respectively the President and the Director – fruitful occasions for analyzing the thought of Roberto Di Stefano and, consequently, to give birth to a wide debate on the perspectives of the Conservation in the light of the challenges of the global era. Therefore, this allows a meaningful intersection between the recurrences of 2012 and 2014 with the analysis of the contribution by the Neapolitan scholar to the various fields of restoration opening the consideration of a thematic articulation aimed also at defining the lines of projection and orientation of the discipline.

Themes. The International Congress dedicated to Roberto Di Stefano aims at the creation of a table of reflections referred to the various fields of research inquired by him and object of a remarkable journalistic activity.

The Congress will gather contributions by national and international experts and scholars that will be the base of discussion and confrontation on the following thematic issues:

- ☐ Development features of the discipline among theories and history of Restoration
- ☐ Restoration, historiography and history of architecture
- ☐ Restoration and Consolidation
- ☐ Urban restoration and historical towns
- ☐ Conservation and restoration economy
- ☐ The review “Restoration”
- ☐ Didactics and the School of Specialization in “Restoration of Monuments” of Naples

- ☐ Applied activity: monuments restoration cases in Italy and abroad
- ☐ Professional education in the field of Conservation
- ☐ International safeguard and ICOMOS
- ☐ Charts, Declarations and Conventions among principles and praxis

Languages: presentations shall be in Italian, English and French.

Participation: the Congress – that will be held in November 2012 – is open to architects, engineers, art historians, economists, scholars and experts in conservation and restoration.

Call for papers: the deadline for sending abstracts (max 3000 types) is 15th February 2012; the deadline for the report is 14th September 2012.

All of the contributions will be published in the proceedings.

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