

International Workshop

TRADITIONAL CRAFTS – CARE AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Müstair (Switzerland), 05–11 September 2024

The event, organized by the Foundation pro Monastery of St. John and its partner institutions, is intended to promote networking and the exchange of experience between institutions in Switzerland and abroad who are active in this field, and contribute to the continued existence of vital craft traditions.

Aim and target group

Despite the recognized value of the traditional building trade, training the next generation of artisans is a major challenge. To counteract this shortage of skilled craftspersons, initiatives have been launched and organizations founded that are dedicated to maintaining and passing on craft knowledge. To this end, different methods and approaches are used depending on the region and the craft. The event is aimed at employees of such institutions, at professionals in the field of heritage conservation for whom this knowledge is of professional relevance, as well as to craftspeople who are passionate about passing on their skills and knowledge.

Workshop

The workshop includes a practical and a theoretical part. In the practical part, participants work together on a craft project. In the evenings, there is the opportunity for exchange in small discussion rounds. The event ends with a half-day public congress where the results of the professional exchanges are presented and discussed with those present. Through an excursion organized by UNESCO Biosfera Engiadina Val Müstair, participants will learn about specific regional architectural and cultural landscape characteristics as well as initiatives to preserve them. They will also visit a traditional crafts workshop.

Craft project

The joint craftsmanship activity will explore the topic of fresco painting. The UNESCO World Heritage Site of St. John's Monastery in Müstair is particularly known for its Carolingian and Romanesque wall paintings in the monastery church. These fresco cycles have been intensively researched for decades, and since 2013, an extensive restoration campaign has been underway. As part of this campaign, further insights into painting techniques have been gained. The restorers responsible for the restoration will introduce workshop participants to historical painting techniques and assist them in creating a fresco on prepared plaster surfaces. During this practical activity, they will share their knowledge of painting techniques, pigments, and plaster surfaces. The lime used for the fresco is made from local dolomite stone, giving it special properties that must be considered during processing.

Closing conference

The workshop will conclude with a half-day public conference to be held at the Competence Centre SAVAIR in Müstair. The programme will be designed by the participants on the basis of the ideas and experiences gained during the workshop.

Organising institutions

Pro Kloster St. Johann Foundation - UNESCO World Heritage

The 1250-year-old Convent St. Johann in Müstair stands as a living cultural heritage site and a tangible repository of knowledge, embodying its historical significance through its architectural structure and archaeological findings. Established in 1969, the Pro Kloster St. Johann Foundation plays an active role in preserving the historical built complex. Core activities encompass financing and supervision of conservation, restoration, and maintenance efforts within the monastery. This includes regular assessments of the monuments' conditions, with a particular focus on the preservation of the painted cycles, as well as the initiation and performance of scientific research on heritage-related topics. An additional key aspect lies in the thorough documentation and archiving of all data associated with construction, conservation, and research activities. This meticulous approach is aimed at safeguarding the knowledge and insights gained for future generations. Furthermore, the foundation organizes conferences and expert gatherings to ensure the relevance and quality of interventions while fostering the exchange of expertise.

UNESCO Biosfera Engiadina Val Müstair

The „UNESCO Biosfera Engiadina Val Müstair“ (UBEVM) consists of the Swiss National Park (SNP) as the core zone and the maintenance and development zone located in the municipalities of Val Müstair and Scuol. Val Müstair delegates the implementation of the UBEVM objectives to the regional nature park Biosfera Val Müstair. The basic idea of biosphere reserves is the sustainable interaction of people with nature while at the same time taking into account a balanced economic and social development. This basic idea can be strengthened through projects to promote nature, culture and landscape, cooperation with schools, educational institutions and producers in and outside of the region, as well as national and international cooperation. The vision of sustainable development that already exists in the region is thus supported and actively expanded.

Regional Nature Park Biosfera Val Müstair

The Biosfera Val Müstair has been in operation since 2011. It is a park of national importance and part of the UNESCO Biosfera Engiadina Val Müstair. The Biosfera Val Müstair is responsible for implementing projects within the municipality of Val Müstair. The objectives of the nature park are anchored in the Federal Act on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage and include the preserving and enhancing the quality of nature and landscapes, strengthening a sustainable economy, environmental education, management and research. The preservation and communication of immaterial cultural heritage are part of the programme goals 2020 - 2024.

Verein kalkwerk

The „kalkwerk“ association is committed to promoting and sharing knowledge on the traditional production of lime. In cooperation with other associations, institutions and experts, it actively contributes to the preservation and reuse of lime production sites that are threatened by decay. The association preserves historic lime kilns and is committed to bringing them back to use. In addition, it keeps alive and teaches the traditional craft of lime production and processing, and is dedicated to promoting the increased use of lime in construction and other forms of cultural expression. By means of events, courses and publications, access to the subject of lime should become possible for everyone.

An important field of activity is connecting experts of artisanal trades, architecture, preservation of historical monuments, teaching, research and laypersons in order to support an exchange of knowledge and dialogue. In this way, „kalkwerk“ has established itself as a centre of excellence reaching across regions, where old knowledge is rediscovered and passed on, and innovations for sustainable building are researched.

Competence Center SAVAIR for Medieval Studies, Architectural Culture, and Sustainability

In 2023, the Competence Center SAVAIR was established in Müstair, Switzerland, as an internationally visible platform that integrates theory and practice in the field of heritage conservation. The center promotes extensive exchange across various societal sectors and facilitates the analysis, discussion, development, and dissemination of traditional knowledge as well as knowledge derived from material remnants of the past.

In addition to utilizing historical insights for contemporary applications, the Competence Center aims to contribute to present and future fields such as resilience, sustainability, and innovation by contextualizing historical and scientific knowledge within a broader framework. An open dialogue with various practical fields such as craftsmanship and technology, arts and culture, economy and tourism, as well as nature and landscape conservation, is essential for conveying and integrating research.

Through its close connection with the 1250-year-old Kloster Müstair, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in Val Müstair, and the regional Biosfera Natural Park, the Competence Center provides an ideal framework for interdisciplinary work that positively impacts society.

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PROGRAM

Thursday, 05.09.

Arrival, dinner

Friday, 06.09.

Guided tour of the monastery and its architectural history, introduction to wall painting techniques and raw materials. Evening discussion round.

Saturday, 07.09.

Visit to the restoration site in the church. Explanation and discussion of wall painting techniques with regard to degradation processes and different conservation strategies. Planning of the fresco project. Evening discussion round.

Sunday, 08.09.

Excursion to local artisan workshops and visit to medieval wall painting cycles in the nearby Venosta region (Italy)

Monday, 09.09.

Execution of a wall painting project. Introduction and discussion of ongoing research projects as well as strategies for site management and preservation. Evening discussion round.

Tuesday, 10.09.

Execution of wall painting project. Public conference featuring a panel discussion.

Wednesday, 11.09.

Completion of fresco project and departure.

Costs

A fee of CHF 300 will be charged for participants. This includes board and accommodation in shared rooms. It is possible to apply for a waiver of this contribution with a motivated letter. The organizing committee decides on the granting.

Registration

Registration until 30.06.2024 to info@muestair.ch

Please include a brief description of your background and your motivation (max. one A4).

The number of participants is limited. The organizing committee will consider the diversity of the group and the order in which applications are received when selecting participants.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions:

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Kloster St. Johann Müstair
UNESCO WELTERBE



PROTEZZIUN DA LA PATRIA
ENGIADINA E VALS DAL SÜD
PROTEZIONE DELLA PATRIA
ENGIADINA E VALLI DEL SUD

HEIMATSCHUTZ SEKTION
ENGADIN UND SÜDTÄLER



Organisaziun da las Naziuns unidas
per l'educaziun, scienza e cultura
Biosfera Engiadina Val Müstair
Reservat da Biosfera
Programm Uman e Biosfera



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern EDI
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 Biosfera Val Müstair