

ANNUAL REPORT



CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL HERITAGE ACTIVITIES

2025



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SUMMARY

In 2025, CIE continued to develop as an international, programme-based heritage organisation, working at the intersection of heritage justice, community memory, digital methods, education, environmental change and public dialogue. The year was marked by the continued development of our signature HeritageLab and the Heritage Universe, the growth of community-based Co-Labs, the publication of Future Stories in the Global Heritage Industry (Routledge 2025), the expansion of EduHub, and the consolidation of Dhakira Institute for Heritage Justice as a conceptual and organisational framework for future programming.

HeritageLab and the Heritage Universe continued to provide the central digital and methodological infrastructure for community-based heritage storytelling and Co-Lab development.

Co-Labs moved forward, including Where My Street Remains, Istanbul: City at the Crossroads, Kerala Valluvanad Lab, Karnataka Bagalkot Observatory and Gaza-related heritage documentation initiatives.

Heritage EduHub developed its first body of open-access heritage education resources and participated in international cultural policy dialogue at MONDIACULT 2025.

Dhakira Institute for Heritage Justice developed its conceptual framework and programme pillars, preparing the ground for future courses, public discussions and collaborative initiatives.

CIE's public profile was strengthened through talks, screenings, publications, podcasts and international partnerships.

Heritage Futures developed further as CIE's experimental and creative space, with artists and creative practice placed at the forefront of heritage creation.

Heritage Ecologies Journeys is a thematic line merging the longstanding Global Ocean Heritage and Environmental Heritage Programmes, connecting vibrant network of heritage, memory, landscapes, ecology and local-global environmental change.

CIE's relationship with UNESCO has been strengthened through the renewal of its accreditation under the 2001 Convention for a further five-year period, supporting continued work on ocean heritage, HeritageLab and community-based maritime cultural landscapes.



Delma Island UAE, Photo Centre for International Heritage Activities

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS

2025 was a year of focus on CIE's local and global impact for heritage communities and networks. Across our programmes, we continued to ask how heritage can support more just, inclusive and imaginative futures.

Our work is grounded in the belief that heritage is not only about preserving the past. It is also about who has the right to remember, who can tell the story of a place, and how communities can use memory, landscape, objects and digital tools to reclaim their own narratives.

During the year, CIE strengthened its cooperative and co-creative way of working. HeritageLab and the Heritage Universe continued to develop as shared spaces where communities, researchers, artists, students and heritage professionals can work together.

EduHub expanded our educational mission, while the Dhakira Institute for Heritage Justice provided a stronger conceptual framework for work on contested memory, heritage justice and public dialogue.

The projects described in this report show the breadth of CIE's work: from Gaza, Palestine and Istanbul to Kerala and Karnataka in India, the Gulf, Mozambique, Zanzibar and transoceanic maritime networks. They also show a common commitment: to support communities in documenting, interpreting and sharing heritage that is often vulnerable, contested or overlooked.

We are grateful for all the collaborations with organisations and communities, primarily in Asia and Africa, and find much joy in supporting the many young scholars and burgeoning professionals who work with us across many disciplines.

We hope you will explore our different projects and themes on our website, and we are always open to your thoughts.

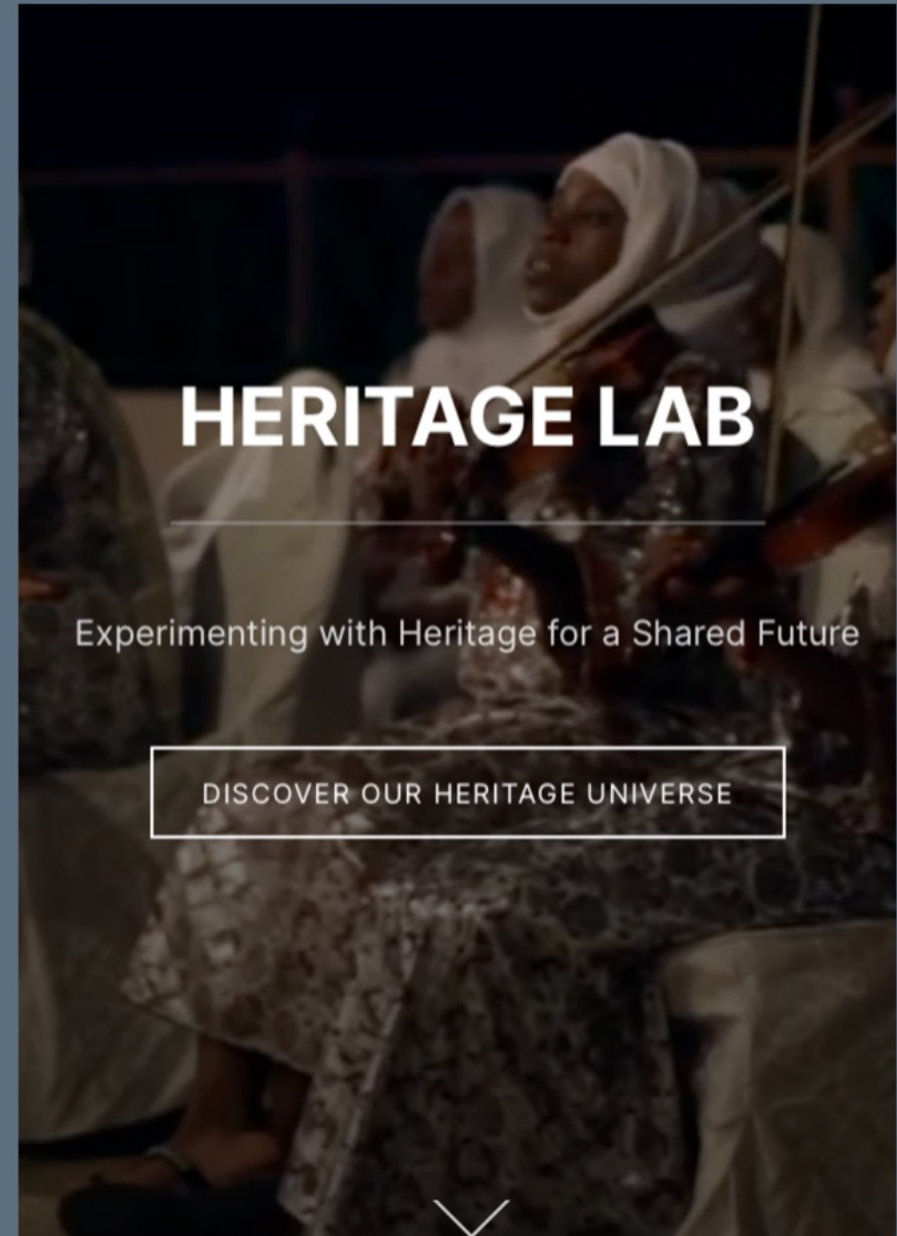


Image CIE HeritageLab website

ABOUT CIE

CIE – Centre for International Heritage Activities is a non-profit organisation based in The Netherlands. For more than twenty years, CIE has worked internationally to connect people, communities and ideas in reimagining cultural heritage, especially in contexts shaped by colonial legacies, conflict, inequality and contested histories.

CIE works with a core team of heritage professionals and a wider network of practitioners, researchers, artists and partner organisations. Together, they bring expertise, lived experience and regional knowledge to projects across diverse geographies and themes.

Grounded in heritage justice, CIE understands heritage and memory as resources for empowerment, inclusion, dialogue and meaningful social change.

Through education, research, storytelling and collaborative practice, CIE addresses past and ongoing injustices linked to colonialism, exclusion and unequal access to heritage, working with communities to create space for multiple voices and shared learning.

OUR CORE WORK

CIE's work is organised around five interconnected programme clusters. Together, they support communities, practitioners, researchers, artists and partner organisations in documenting, interpreting, sharing and reimagining heritage.

I. Dhakira – Institute for Heritage Justice forms the ethical and conceptual foundation of CIE's work. It addresses contested memory, silenced histories, heritage rights and the relationship between heritage, justice and social transformation.



Image CIE HeritageLab website

II. HeritageLab & Universe provides digital and methodological infrastructure through which communities, researchers, artists and partners can document, connect and present layered heritage narratives.

III. Heritage Ecology Journeys connects heritage to landscapes, oceans, routes, environmental change and local-global relations, showing how heritage is lived through land, water, climate, memory and movement.

IV. Heritage Futures functions as an experimental and creative space where artists, filmmakers, designers, researchers and communities test new public forms of heritage practice, digital presentation and imagination.

V. Heritage EduHub translates CIE's insights, methods and collaborations into accessible learning resources, training formats and public knowledge.

Together, these programme lines form a supportive ecosystem that helps advance CIE's broader goals of heritage justice, inclusion and meaningful social change.

DHAKIRA- INSTITUTE FOR HERITAGE JUSTICE

Dhakira emerged from the recognition that heritage and memory play a powerful role in how societies understand the past, negotiate identity and imagine possible futures.

In a world increasingly marked by polarisation, inequality, competing historical narratives and renewed forms of nationalism, there is an urgent need to engage with heritage in ways that are critical, inclusive and socially meaningful.

The Institute provides the ethical and conceptual framework for CIE's wider work. Acting as an internal think tank, it helps define the principles, questions and critical perspectives that guide CIE's other clusters, programmes and activities. It keeps CIE's work aligned with its broader aims: advancing heritage justice, supporting inclusive dialogue, strengthening community-based practice and using heritage as a space for learning, reflection and transformation.

In 2025, CIE further developed the conceptual and organisational foundations for its work on heritage justice, memory and dealing with the past. This work formed the basis for Dhakira – Institute for Heritage Justice, a programme line that connects critical scholarship with practical heritage work, public dialogue, education and community-based methods.

Dhakira is structured around four interconnected pillars: Heritage Justice; Heritage and Contemporary Interpretation; Dealing with the Past; and Heritage and Environment. Together, these pillars address decolonisation, contested narratives, digital and non-digital storytelling, truth and memory, dialogue, environmental change and the relationship between cultural and natural heritage.

This groundwork enables CIE to develop courses, public conversations, podcasts, consultancy formats and collaborative initiatives that place heritage at the centre of social, cultural and environmental transformation.



*National Museum Kabul, Afghanistan
Photo Centre for International Heritage Activities*

DHAKIRA 2025 ACTIVITIES

Re-emerging Pasts

A research and publication trajectory on histories, memories and heritage narratives that have been marginalised, suppressed, neglected or are returning to public debate. In 2025, the research group produced its first publication: *Future Stories in the Global Heritage Industry*, published by Routledge and edited by Alia Yunis, Robert Parthesius and Niccolò Acram Cappalletto. The volume examines how communities in the Global South experience, negotiate and reinterpret the global heritage industry, especially in relation to UNESCO World Heritage designation and dominant heritage narratives.

Right to Remember

A research and seminar programme on cultural memory, contested heritage, silenced histories and the right to remember. Developed in 2025, the programme will launch its first public seminar in April 2026.

Where My Street Remains

An interactive media project that reconstructs Gaza, Palestine through voice notes, personal photographs and evolving maps shared between friends. The project asks how people remember home when not only houses, but entire geographies, are destroyed or rendered unrecognisable. It offers an emotionally defiant response to the erasure of Gaza's urban cultural heritage, foregrounding memory, place and survival. In 2025, a pilot installation of *Where My Street Remains* received development support through Immerse\Interact, a joint scheme of the Creative Industries Fund NL and the Netherlands Film Fund. (see also *Heritage Futures*)

Militarisation of the Landscape

A project in development on militarised and conflict-shaped landscapes, memory, environmental legacies and public interpretation. It examines how landscapes marked by military infrastructures, conflict histories and security regimes can be documented, interpreted and discussed as part of heritage justice work. A grant application will be submitted in 2026.

HERITAGE LAB AND UNIVERSE

HeritageLab is CIE's signature digital and methodological environment for documenting, analysing and presenting layered heritage. It challenges exclusionary heritage narratives by creating space for communities to tell their own stories, connect with others and explore heritage beyond official designations, geographical boundaries and traditional categories.

The Heritage Universe connects the outputs of Co-Labs, special projects and community narratives through themes, places, objects, routes, practices and memories. It allows users to explore heritage as an entangled field of relationships rather than as isolated sites or national narratives.

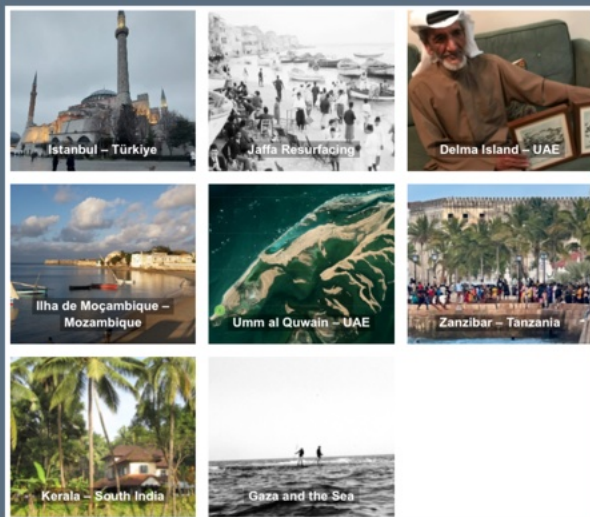
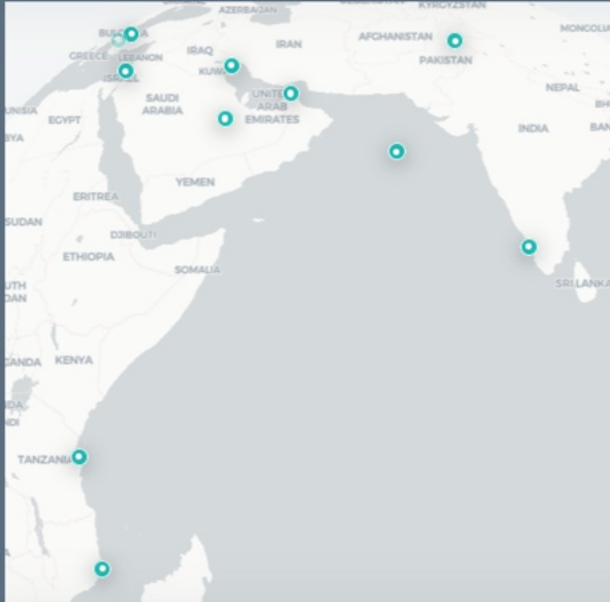
In 2025, HeritageLab continued to develop as an interactive space for grass-roots online museums dedicated to preserving collective memory and community narratives, while connecting communities across oceans and routes through shared tangible and intangible heritage.

COMMUNITY CO-LABS

Founded in 2014, HeritageLab's Co-Labs give communities basic digital tools to tell their own stories and to connect with other communities reclaiming erased, vulnerable or contested heritage. Each Co-Lab is responsible for its own map, design and content, including decisions about access and community contributions.

The Co-Labs and the Heritage Universe have been developed, designed and maintained collectively by Alia Yunis, Robert Parthesius, Felix Harmond Beck, Devaki Vadakepat Menon, Dev Kalavadiya, Hassan Hammadi, Sarah Al Yayah and other collaborators.

The following Co-Labs were active in 2025:



Images from the CIE and HeritageLab website

City at the Crossroads (Istanbul, Türkiye)

City at the Crossroads explores Istanbul as a lived city shaped by trade, tourism, memory and everyday urban experience. Developed by Nurcan Yalman and her students, the Co-Lab documents stories hidden in the city's streets before physical spaces and memories are transformed by urbanisation and tourism.

Status: In production | active

Producer(s): Nurcan Yalman

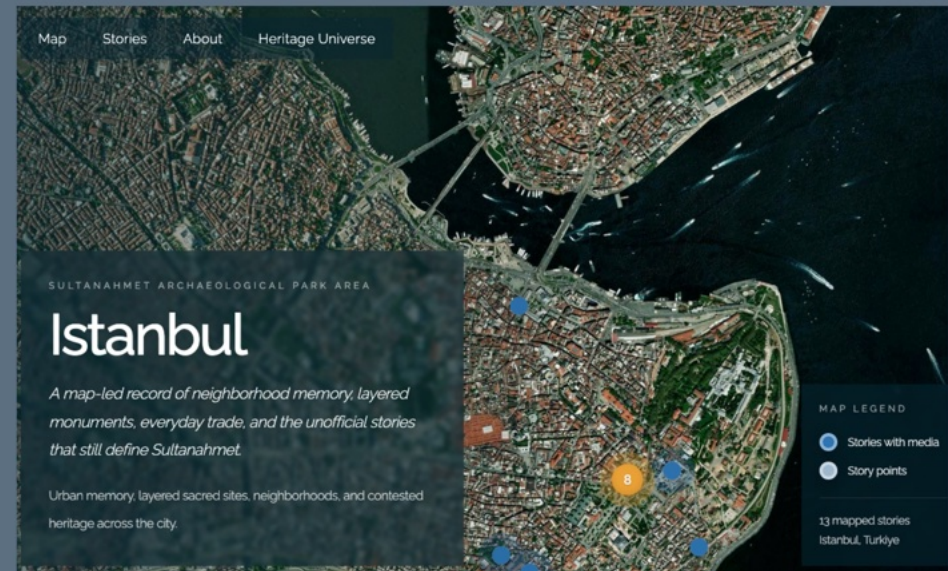
Milestones 2025: Collection of oral histories continued.

Future steps: Hosting an event in Istanbul to further engage the community.



2022 MAPPED

The Inevitable Change Of The Cankurtaran District



Kadirga Sports Club: As a Community Identity & Memory Keeper



The Valluvanad Lab (Kerala, India)

The Valluvanad Lab is a collaborative multimedia documentation project on caste-based artistry, craftsmanship and rural knowledge systems in the Valluvanad region of Kerala. It functions as a living archive of generational heritage and gives visibility to artisans, families and practitioners whose tangible and intangible heritage remains under represented.

Status: In production | active

Producer(s): Devaki Vadakepat Menon

Milestones 2025: Field research, including photographic documentation, videography and oral histories continued.

Future steps: Curate and populate the Co-Lab with the collected material



Images from the CIE HeritageLab

The Bagalkot Observatory (Karnataka, India)

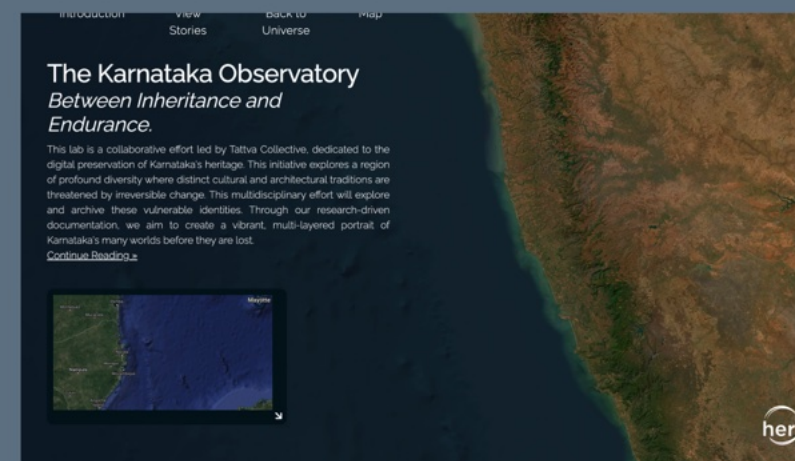
The Bagalkot Observatory documents vulnerable identities and built heritage in Old Bagalkot, where rising waters linked to the Upper Krishna Project threaten physical heritage and community continuity. The pilot focuses on Huddar Mane, a 300-year-old vernacular structure that reflects sustainable building knowledge and cultural identity.

Status: In production | active

Producer(s): Pranav Rao

Milestones 2025: All materials for Co-Lab collected and curated

Future steps: Build the Co-Lab



Images from the CIE HeritageLab

Umm Al Quwain: Mother of Two Powers (United Arab Emirates)

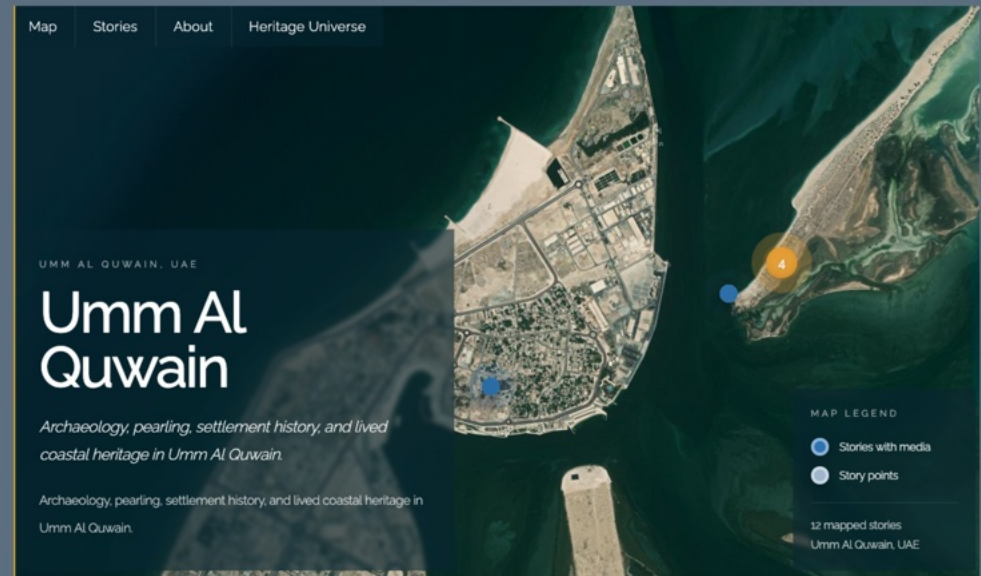
This Lab examines how naming and mapping have been used to claim and define the landscape of Umm Al Quwain, especially around Khor Al Beida. Drawing on archival materials, newspapers, interviews and archaeological surveys, it situates the Emirate within histories of prehistoric settlement, the Trucial States and wider Gulf and Indian Ocean connections.

Status: Active

Producer(s): Noora Jabir / Nurcan Yalman (archaeology)
Milestones 2025: Interviews amongst the recently relocated South Asian community were conducted and formed the content for a small exhibition at NYUAD.
Future steps: Design and structure the Co Lab



Images from the CIE HeritageLab





Island of Mozambique: Community Life at a UNESCO Site

This Co-Lab adds community perspectives to the dominant colonial narrative of the Island of Mozambique World Heritage Site. Through oral histories, it contrasts local collective memory, Indigenous Macuti culture and everyday adaptation with UNESCO-authorised narratives focused on Portuguese presence, maritime trade routes and architecture.

Status: Active | first stage completed

Producer(s): Veronica Pereira

Future steps: A new local team is carrying on with the collecting of stories and intangible heritage.



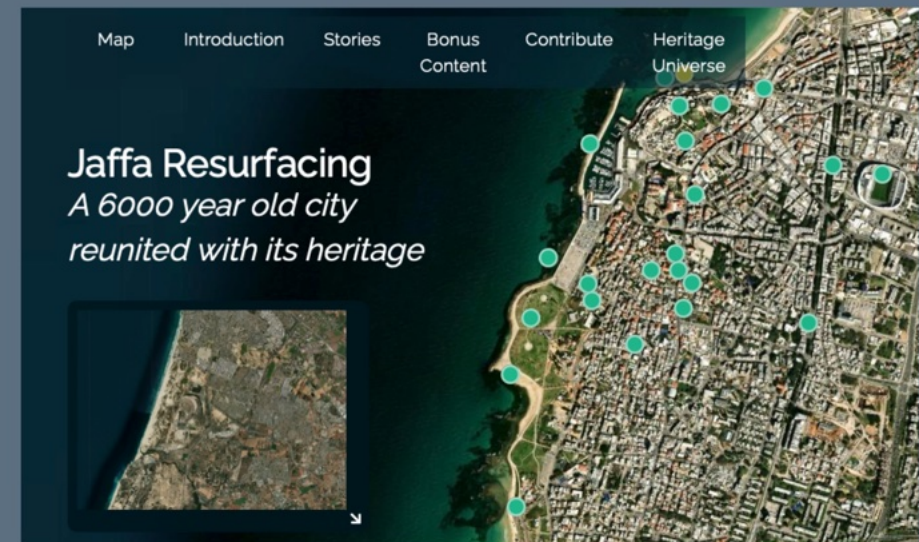


Jaffa Resurfacing: Bringing Back Erased History

Jaffa Resurfacing explores the heritage of Jaffa as Palestine's cultural and trade capital before 1948. Through archival photographs, newspapers, oral histories and diaspora testimonies, it highlights Jaffa's cultural life, agricultural innovation, resistance movement and cosmopolitan history.

Status: Active | completed

Producer(s): Ummaya Abu Hanna / Sarah Yahya



Tel Ruqeish (Gaza, Palestine)

Tel Ruqeish is a coastal Iron Age archaeological site that reveals several layers of Gaza's often overlooked heritage and, since 2023, has also served as a camp for displaced people. The Co-Lab, led by Georgia Andreou with a Palestinian archaeological team, tells the story of the site across several historical periods through film, photographs, maps, oral histories and object documentation. (see also related project in MUCH programme / Global Ocean Heritage)

Status: In production | active | requires funding

Producer(s): Georgia Andreou and Palestinian archaeological team

Milestones 2025: Collection of some materials and interviews.

Future steps: Many of the people involved in this lab were evacuated from Gaza this year, and now that they have adjusted as best as possible, they will move forward with curating the materials and designing the Co Lab,



Where My Street Remains (Gaza, Palestine)

Within HeritageLab, *Where My Street Remains* explores how digital tools can document, reconstruct and share endangered urban heritage. The interactive media project uses voice notes, personal photographs and evolving maps to reconstruct Gaza as remembered by those who live there. As an augmented reality installation and film, it combines mapping, testimony and visual storytelling to preserve memories of places that have been transformed, damaged or erased. (see also clusters heritage justice and heritage futures)

Status: In production | active | partially funded

Project curator: Asem Al Jerjawi

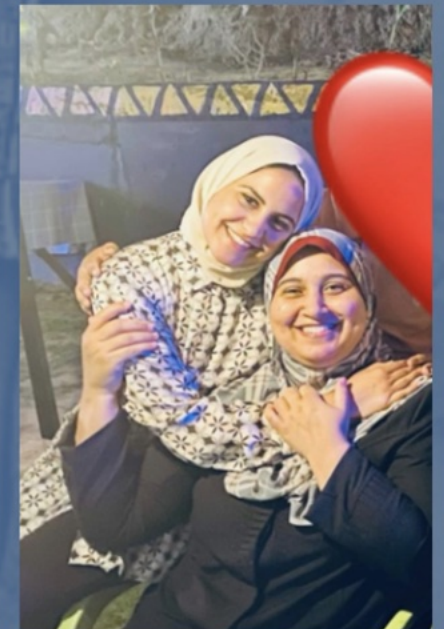
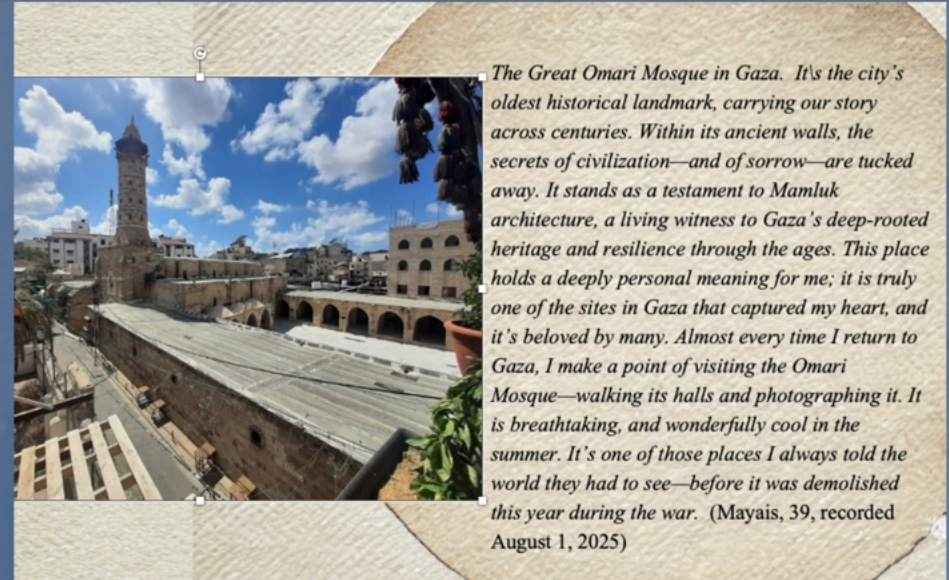
Creative directors: Sarah Al Yahya, Alia ElKattan

Producer(s): Alia Yunis / Zlatan Filipovic

Milestones 2025: evacuation Asem Al Jerjawi out of Gaza and received funding for pilot.

Funding: CIE development fund, Creative Industries Fund NL & Netherlands Film Fund.

Future steps: IDFA Amsterdam/Search for further funding



HERITAGE ECOLOGY JOURNEYS

Heritage Ecology Journeys is CIE's programme line for heritage, memory, landscapes and environmental change. It connects local places and stories with wider regional and global processes, showing how communities experience heritage through land, water, trees, routes, climate, everyday practice and belonging.

This cluster brings together work on living landscapes, ecological memory, maritime and water-related heritage, transoceanic routes and community-based environmental storytelling.

It links cultural and natural heritage without reducing heritage to environment alone. Instead, it focuses on the lived relationships between people, places, memory, landscape and change.

Heritage Ecology Journeys acts as a bridge between Dhakira – Institute, HeritageLab, Heritage Futures and EduHub. It provides a framework for projects where cultural memory, environmental change, place-based heritage and digital presentation come together.



Scene Golden Harvest

Current Thematic Programmes

Heritage, Memory and Landscapes

Heritage, Memory and Landscapes connects cultural memory, ecological change and place-based heritage. It approaches landscapes not as static scenery, but as lived environments shaped by routes, labour, migration, conflict, care, climate change and everyday practice.

Global Ocean Heritage

This programme explores ocean heritage as a transnational and multi-layered field shaped by movement, exchange, memory and environmental change. It focuses on maritime and underwater cultural heritage (MUCH), including shipwrecks, port cities, coastal communities, migration routes, intangible traditions and ocean-based identities. It highlights oceans as spaces of connection, knowledge and heritage futures.



Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania, Photo CIE Centrer

Heritage, Memory and Landscapes

The Golden Harvest is a feature film about a 6,000-year-old love story in which the filmmaker Alia Yunis tries to understand the profound, often troubled, relationship between ancient olive trees and the people of Mediterranean, including her own father.



Filming Golden Harvest

It is a complicated romance, sometimes funny, sometimes tragic, set in a region that includes some of the poorest and most conflicted areas of Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Filmed in Spain (biggest producer), Italy (biggest bottler), Greece (biggest per capital consumption), and Palest

Status: Active | ongoing screenings worldwide
Producer(s): Alia Yunis / Jaime Estrada Torres

- In 2025, the film continued to be screened internationally.
- EcoGalamares, Sintra (June 2025),
- O Gabinete de Madam Thao, Lisbon (June 2025),
- Fruitopia Summer Labocine, online (July 2025),
- Smith College, USA (October 2025)

TreeRouted (Global Installation)

TreeRouted explores trees as living archives of heritage. Through personal videos recorded around the world, the project links family memory, migration, trade routes, diaspora, conflict, care, environmental change and everyday life. Users can explore stories by tree type, such as mango or olive, and by themes such as love, war or climate change.

Status: In production | active | requires further funding

Producer(s): Alia Yunis / Matthew Tan

Milestones 2025: The filming of tree stories continues to grow as our network grows.

Future steps: Editing of the stories we have collected in the past two years, targeting specific trees in communities in which we have active Co-Labs

“Tree” is one of the first words we learn in any language. That is because trees carry the story of our own roots.





Global Ocean Heritage

MUCH Better: From Best to Better Practice in Maritime and Underwater Cultural Heritage .

This programme explores how maritime and underwater cultural heritage management can move from dominant models of “best practice” toward more situated, regional and locally meaningful forms of “better practice”. The project focuses on approaches that are locally grounded, practically achievable and aligned with international heritage principles, while recognising the knowledge, capacities and priorities of local teams and communities. It builds on CIE’s long-standing MUCH programme and supports the development of case studies; practitioner networks and recommendations linked to the UNESCO 2001 Convention and wider heritage frameworks.

Status: In development | active | programme phase 2026–2027

Producer(s): Robert Parthesius / Georgia Andreou / MUCH

Better working group



Ilha de Moçambique , photo CIE Centre

Documenting Gaza's Maritime Archaeology (see also Tell Ruqeish's Co-Lab)

Gaza's coastline holds a remarkable and fragile record of human history. A series of underwater and nearshore archaeological sites tell stories of centuries of trade, migration, and cultural exchange.

As Gaza enters reconstruction, urgent debris management may itself become a threat to heritage. Large quantities of war rubble are expected to be moved into the sea, risking the burial of coastal and underwater archaeological sites. Similar dumping in 2007, 2014 and 2021, has already damaged or covered heritage after earlier conflicts. Without rapid documentation, many sites may disappear permanently beneath reconstruction debris.

While the locations of many of these sites are known, only three—Tell Ruqeish, Tell Qatif, and Tell Ridan—have been comprehensively surveyed. Georgia Andreou, a maritime archaeologist has worked for several years with archaeologists in Gaza and, between 2022 and 2023, trained twenty Palestinian archaeology students from the Islamic

University of Gaza in rapid coastal heritage documentation using open-source tools, as well as coastal, maritime and aerial survey techniques.

Supported by specialists in GIS, databases, visual media and underwater documentation, this team is prepared to lead documentation when conditions allow. Since most submerged heritage lies in shallow waters, it can be recorded safely and accessibly using snorkelling, mapping and 3D photogrammetry.

Status: In production | active | requires funding

Producer(s): Georgia Andreou and Gaza archaeology team



Tel Ruqesh excavation site, 2022.

Photo by journalist Rushdie Al Sarraj, killed in October 2023



View of the Harbor of Sūrat (Gujarāt), anonymous, c. 1670 - Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

Historic Shipping Networks Database

When European maritime expansion in the Indian Ocean accelerated in the seventeenth century, it reshaped global economic, political and social relations. Ships were not merely vehicles of trade and mobility; they were instruments of colonial power. They enabled the movement of goods, people, soldiers, knowledge and violence, and became central to expanding European dominance across Asian waters.

Based on thirty years of research, Dutch Ships in Asian Waters is a searchable database of VOC ship movements between 1595 and 1687. It contains more than 56,000 records on voyages, dates, ship types, ports, cargo and maritime trade activities. By tracing these movements, the database provides a vital resource for studying maritime history, colonial infrastructure and how oceanic networks supported European imperial power in the Indian Ocean and beyond.

Status: Active | ongoing entries in database | Chinese translation of Robert Parthesius' publication 'Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters' Palgrave Publishers in preparation
Producer(s): Robert Parthesius, Menno Leenstra

Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Cultural Heritage and Conflict — Maritime / Ocean Heritage Section

In 2025, CIE continued its editorial contribution to the Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Cultural Heritage and Conflict through a dedicated section on maritime, ocean and contested heritage.

Edited by Robert Parthesius, Georgia Andreou and Niccolò Acram Cappalletto, the section brings together contributions on maritime and underwater cultural heritage, contested ownership, coastal communities, migration, decolonisation, environmental change, port cities, shipwrecks and difficult colonial maritime connections.

It strengthens CIE's role in international debate on Global Ocean Heritage / MUCH, heritage justice and more locally grounded approaches to maritime heritage.

Status: Published 2025

Section editors: Robert Parthesius, Georgia Andreou and Niccolò Acram Cappalletto

Publisher: Palgrave

HERITAGE FUTURES

Heritage Futures is CIE's experimental, creative and future-oriented thematic line. It functions as a space for testing new forms of heritage practice, public engagement and digital presentation. Within this cluster, artists, filmmakers, designers, storytellers, researchers and community partners are placed at the forefront of heritage creation.

Heritage is approached not only as something to be preserved, but as something that can be imagined, performed, reinterpreted and made visible through creative practice.

This Cluster also functions as a testing ground for the development of digital platforms such as HeritageLab and the Heritage Universe. These platforms are designed to serve heritage communities by giving them accessible tools to document, connect and present their own narratives.

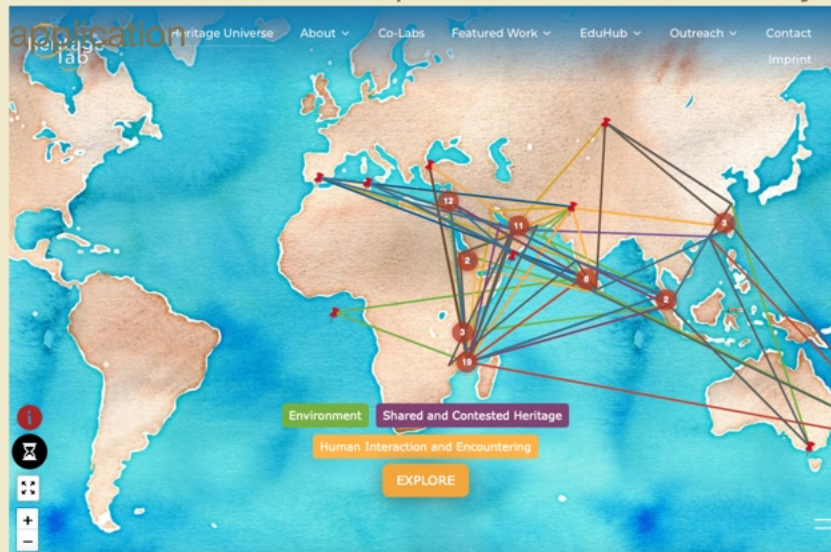
2025 ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS:

Heritage Universe Application

Heritage is not a hard science that can be completely defined by a singular authorized interpretation around a practice or object. It exists within and among communities, shaped by memory, values, present realities, and future aspirations.

Encompassing our various projects, Heritage Universe explores how heritage and memory overlap and differ between communities and spaces.

In 2024-2025 a pilot of the Heritage Universe is tested for further development into an user friendly application



Manifest:IO “What is Heritage in Art”

In February 2025, CIE founder Robert Parthesius and program head Alia Yunis delivered the keynote address at the third edition of Manifest:IO in Berlin, discussing the role of heritage and the arts, particularly as we move into electronic and AI art. CIE was also one of the co-sponsors of the two-day event which brought together heritage-driven artists from around the world.



Where My Street Remains

Where My Street Remains is an interactive media project reconstructing Gaza through voice notes, personal photographs and evolving maps. Developed as an augmented reality installation and film, it documents places that have been physically transformed or destroyed but remain vivid in the memories of those who live there. The project responds to the erasure of Gaza's urban cultural heritage through memory, mapping and personal testimony. In 2025, the pilot received development funding through Immerse\Interact, the innovation scheme of the Creative Industries Fund NL and the Netherlands Film Fund.



Digital Heritage Futures Hybrid -Webinar

This webinar, organised in partnership with Felix Beck and the University of Applied Sciences, Münster School of Design, brought together international experts and practitioners to explore how digital technologies are reshaping the understanding, preservation and communication of cultural heritage.

Hosted within the CIE – Centre for International Heritage Activities network, the event connected perspectives from academia, museums and creative practice, highlighting digital heritage as a space for collaboration, experimentation and public engagement.



EDUHUB AND OUTREACH

The EduHub and Outreach provides pedagogical tools and educational resources for those working in heritage documentation, community narratives, material culture, and museology. The programme supports capacity-building and knowledge exchange across diverse communities, sectors, and contexts.

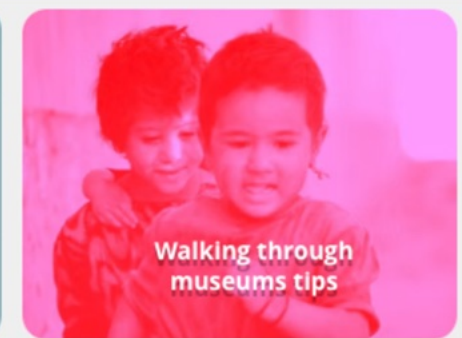
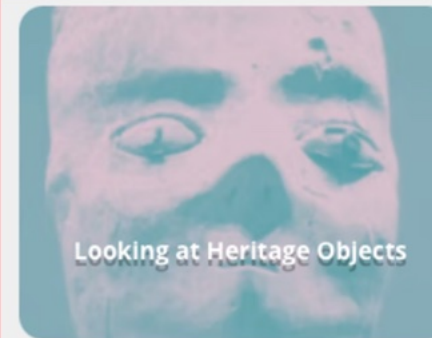
Founded in 2024, EduHub is CIE's open-access educational initiative for heritage studies, museum practice, community narratives and material culture. It is based on the principle that heritage knowledge should be freely accessible and written in a clear, engaging language that welcomes beginners while remaining useful to advanced students and heritage professionals.

2025 ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS:

EduHub Online Heritage Library

In 2025, EduHub developed a collection of educational articles addressing foundational and contemporary themes in heritage studies and museology. Topics included how to look at heritage artefacts, museum walkthroughs, contested heritage, colonial statues, heritage loss, authenticity, heritage crisis management and official and unofficial narratives.

Under the editorial leadership of Alia Soliman, EduHub also launched a call for contributions from heritage and museum educators, PhD students, researchers, journalists and heritage professionals. The aim is to build a living resource that responds to emerging debates in heritage studies, including digitisation, restitution, repatriation and heritage erasure.



Examples of EduHub online essays

Public Seminars and Hybrid Webinars

Book Launch: (Re)emerging Pasts

In February 2025, CIE celebrated the release of Future Stories in the Global Heritage Industry (Routledge 2025) with an online panel with the authors and editors in a four-year long CIE project. Written by an interdisciplinary group of emerging scholars and heritage professionals connected to these sites through their own heritage, this volume considers how a community can engage with a site's globalized importance while retaining its own sense of history.





PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

CIE's work in 2025 was shaped by a broad and growing network of collaborators, including researchers, artists, students, heritage professionals, community partners, universities, cultural organisations and digital specialists. Across Co-Labs, EduHub, the Institute for Heritage Justice and HeritageLab, these partnerships supported shared research, creative experimentation, learning, digital development and public engagement. They also strengthened CIE's ability to connect local knowledge with international heritage debates and to advance collaborative approaches to heritage justice, memory and practice.

Relationship with UNESCO

CIE's relationship with UNESCO remained a central part of its international profile and programme development in 2025. CIE is a foundation in official relations with UNESCO, and these official relations were renewed until 2029 following an internal evaluation of the cooperation between UNESCO and CIE. The renewal letter also specifically recognises our continued support for UNESCO's work, particularly in promoting the ratification and facilitating the implementation of the 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

Alongside this official relationship, CIE is also an NGO accredited to the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. In that capacity, CIE has contributed to the promotion, interpretation and implementation of the Convention through research, training, capacity building, seminars, publications and community-based maritime heritage work.

In 2025, CIE's accreditation under the UNESCO 2001 Convention was renewed for a further five-year period. This renewal recognises CIE's continued contribution to underwater cultural heritage, maritime cultural landscapes and international cooperation. It also provides a basis for strengthening CIE's current work on Global Ocean Heritage, MUCH, MUCH Better and the HeritageLab Ocean / MUCH platform.

CIE's UNESCO-related work is closely connected to its broader approach to heritage justice and local agency. Through HeritageLab and the MUCH programme, CIE links the protection of underwater cultural heritage with wider questions of community memory, maritime cultural landscapes, coastal heritage, education, climate change and sustainable heritage practice. This approach supports a more integrated understanding of the UNESCO 2001 Convention in relation to other UNESCO frameworks and local heritage priorities.

The renewal report for 2021–2024 highlighted CIE's work on HeritageLab methodology in the Gulf and Western Indian Ocean, training and education initiatives, workshops and conferences, ocean heritage activities connected to COP 28 and One Ocean–One Heritage, experimental maritime archaeology and the Dutch shipping database. These activities provide the foundation for CIE's next phase of UNESCO-related work in 2025–2030.

CIE is a co-founder of the network of NGOs accredited to the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage and served as a member of its coordinating working group until 2025. In that capacity, CIE also participated in June 2025 in the 10th Meeting of States Parties to the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage and heritage community.

contributed to the accompanying scientific conference on Climate Change and Underwater Cultural Heritage. CIE also helped organise the NGO Coordination Meeting, supporting cooperation and advocacy among accredited NGOs and the wider maritime and underwater cultural

MONDIACULT 2025

CIE was represented at MONDIACULT 2025 in Barcelona by Head of Education Outreach Alia Soliman. Sarah Al Yayah also represented CIE in the Youth Forum. Their participation positioned CIE within global cultural policy debates around cultural rights, digital technologies, the economy of culture, climate change and heritage protection in crisis. A key takeaway for CIE was the importance of recognising micro-cultures and context-specific approaches in heritage work.

EU–Kuwait Culture Forum

Date: 19 May 2025

Location: Amricani Cultural Centre, Kuwait

CIE representative: Robert Parthesius

Partners / organisers: European Union Delegation to the State of Kuwait; National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Kuwait

In May 2025, CIE contributed to the EU–Kuwait Culture Forum, organised in celebration of Kuwait as the Arab Capital of Culture and Media for 2025. The forum took place at the American Cultural Centre and formed part of Europe Month activities in Kuwait.

Robert Parthesius participated in the first session, “European and Kuwaiti efforts to preserve and promote cultural heritage,” with a contribution on European efforts to preserve and promote cultural heritage. The session brought together speakers from CIE, CEFREPA, Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, addressing heritage preservation, research-creation, archaeology, maritime connections and linguistic heritage.

The forum also included a forward-looking session on promoting EU–Kuwait cultural contacts and exchanges, with contributions from NCCAL, ALIPH Foundation, the Tareq Rajab Museum, the Louvre Museum and European cultural policy experts. Discussion themes included museum collaboration, cultural diplomacy, digitisation, cultural capitals, strategic partnerships and the future of EU–Kuwait cultural relations.

For CIE, participation in the forum strengthened its role in EU–Gulf cultural cooperation and provided a platform to connect its work on heritage justice, maritime and oceanic heritage, HeritageLab, museum development and international partnerships with wider debates on cultural heritage in Kuwait and the Gulf region

Outputs 2025:

Forum participation; presentation contribution; EU–Kuwait cultural networking; strengthened visibility for CIE’s work in the Gulf.

Follow-up:

Potential further collaboration with EU Delegations, NCCAL, Kuwaiti heritage institutions, museums and regional cultural partners.

EU-BACA Museum Development Collaboration, Bahrain

Lead: Robert Parthesius

Partners: EU Outreach Facility for the GCC; Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities; EU Delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman

In 2025, CIE contributed to the EU-BACA Collaboration in Museum Development, a strategic assignment supporting the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities in the renewal of Bahrain's museum sector. The project focused primarily on the Bahrain National Museum and, secondarily, on the Qal'at al-Bahrain Site Museum, with the aim of developing a shared vision and practical roadmap for institutional renewal.

The assignment combined preparatory research, a structured Quick Scan self-assessment, an in-country field mission to Bahrain from 21–24 July 2025, staff interviews, site observations and follow-up consultation with European museum professionals. The resulting final report, *Modernising the Gulf's First Modern Museum*, was delivered in September 2025.

It sets out a phased roadmap for strengthening collections management, storage, conservation, digitisation, exhibitions, public engagement, staffing, governance and international partnerships. The report identifies both the strengths and constraints of Bahrain's museum sector. It highlights BACA's significant collections, dedicated staff, strong national narratives and long tradition of international cooperation, while also noting challenges around ageing infrastructure, under-used digital collection systems, storage conditions, conservation capacity, visitor engagement and staff resources.

A key outcome was a proposed four-stage roadmap for museum renewal: framework and advisory development; pilot implementation and capacity building; masterplan development; and long-term implementation. The roadmap proposes co-curated exhibitions, digitisation pilots, staff exchanges, collections-management improvements, conservation training and a strengthened network of European institutional partners.

For CIE, the EU–BACA collaboration demonstrates its role as an international heritage organisation able to connect strategic advice, museum practice, capacity sharing and long-term institutional cooperation. It also links directly to CIE's wider work on heritage education, digital heritage, collections management and sustainable museum development.

Outputs 2025:

Final report, vision document and roadmap; Quick Scan methodology; field mission; stakeholder consultations; proposed advisory group; list of potential European museum, university and heritage partners.

Follow-up:

Potential support for an EU–BACA Heritage Partners Forum, pilot projects, staff training, digitisation work, co-curated exhibitions and a longer-term museum masterplan.



JOINT INITIATIVE FOR
CULTURAL HERITAGE ENHANCEMENT

Bahrain National Museum

Qal'at Al-Bahrain Site Ancient
Harbour and Capital of Dilmun

EU-BACA COLLABORATION IN MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT

*Modernising the Gulf's First Modern
Museum*

Final report Vision Document Road Map
Dr. Robert Parthesius
September 2025

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

ICIE is represented in various advisory bodies and involved in various organisational committees. In 2025 the highlights were:

Manazir: Swiss Platform for the Study of Visual Arts, Architecture and Heritage in the MENA Region

CIE was represented on the International Advisory Board of Manazir, the Swiss platform for the study of visual arts, architecture, and heritage in the Middle East and North Africa, and on the editorial board of the open-access Manazir Journal. This involvement reflects CIE's active engagement in international scholarly networks focused on heritage, visual culture, and knowledge exchange across the MENA region.

UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage

CIE was represented as an accredited advisor to the Scientific and Technical Advisory Board of the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage. This role reflects CIE's continued involvement in international expert networks dedicated to the protection, research, and responsible management of underwater cultural heritage.

Scientific Committee: Human-Computer Interaction International (HCII), Culture and Computing

CIE was represented on the Scientific Committee of Human-Computer Interaction International (HCII), including the Culture and Computing track. This track addresses the role of digital tools in the study, presentation, and interpretation of culture and heritage. This involvement reflects CIE's interest in the growing connection between heritage practice, digital innovation, and public engagement.

TALKS

January 25, 2025 (Online)

**Modern Sudan Collective – Second
Conference of Modern Conversations
“Palestine is not a checkpoint for
Palestinian film as a record of landscapes,
architecture and collective memory”**

In this conference paper, Alia Yunis examines Palestinian film as a record of place, architecture, landscape and collective memory. Rather than approaching Palestine only through the image of checkpoints and restriction, the paper considers cinema as an archive of lived environments, urban spaces, loss, continuity and cultural imagination. Presented as part of the Modern Sudan Collective’s Second Conference of Modern Conversations, the contribution connects film, heritage and memory in relation to Palestine’s built and natural landscapes.

February 2025 (Berlin)

Manifest:IO “What is Heritage in Art”

In February 2025, CIE founder Robert Parthesius and program head Alia Yunis delivered the keynote address at the third edition of Manifest:IO in Berlin, discussing the role of heritage and the arts, particularly as we move into electronic and AI art. CIE was also one of the co-sponsors of the two-day event which brought together heritage-driven artists from around the world.

February 2025 (Abu Dhabi)

Book Launch: (Re)emerging Pasts

In February 2025, CIE celebrated the release of Future Stories in the Global Heritage Industry (Routledge 2025) with an online panel with the authors and editors in a four-year long CIE project. Written by an interdisciplinary group of emerging scholars and heritage professionals connected to these sites through their own heritage, this volume considers how a community can engage with a site’s globalized importance while retaining its own sense of history.



25 April – 3 May 2025 (Dubai)

AA Visiting School – Climate Cartographies Glitch Course “Delma Island and Saadiyat Island as HeritageLabs

In April 2025, CIE Director of Programs Alia Yunis contributed to Climate Cartographies: Glitch, organised by the AA Visiting School Dubai and supported by Alserkal Arts Foundation. The programme explored the intersection of climate change, heritage, cartography and sound, using the idea of the “glitch” as a way to examine undefined, in-between and contested spaces. Yunis took part in the public session “Islands of Heritage”, which examined how heritage spaces are shaped by environmental conditions, geopolitical landscapes and methods of mapping. The course also engaged with questions of borders, mobility and environmental change through fieldwork and spatial-sonic practice.

19 May 2025

Managing the Past, Home and Abroad Heritage Preservation and Promotion in Europe and Beyond

At the EU–Kuwait Cultural Forum, organised in celebration of Kuwait's designation as Arab Capital of Culture, Robert Parthesius delivered the paper “Managing the Past, Home and Abroad.”

The paper reflected on changing approaches to heritage management, from safeguarding monuments and collections to addressing memory, identity, shared responsibility and public engagement.

It also considered how cultural exchange can support more inclusive and sustainable heritage practices between Europe, Kuwait and the wider region.



11 June, 2025 (Dakar)

Heritage & Migration Conference

“Datelines: The Journey of the Date Palm from Arabia to South Asia and Africa and Back Again”

In this paper Alia Yunis explores the deep cultural and historical journey of the date palm—from its role as an ancient “superfood” and trade currency, through its entanglement with colonial-era agricultural practices and migrant labor, to its modern implications for heritage, water rights, food sovereignty, and sustainable land-use across Southwest Asia, South Asia, and both northern and southern Africa.

17 November 2025 (Online and Münster)

Digital Heritage Futures CIE Webinar

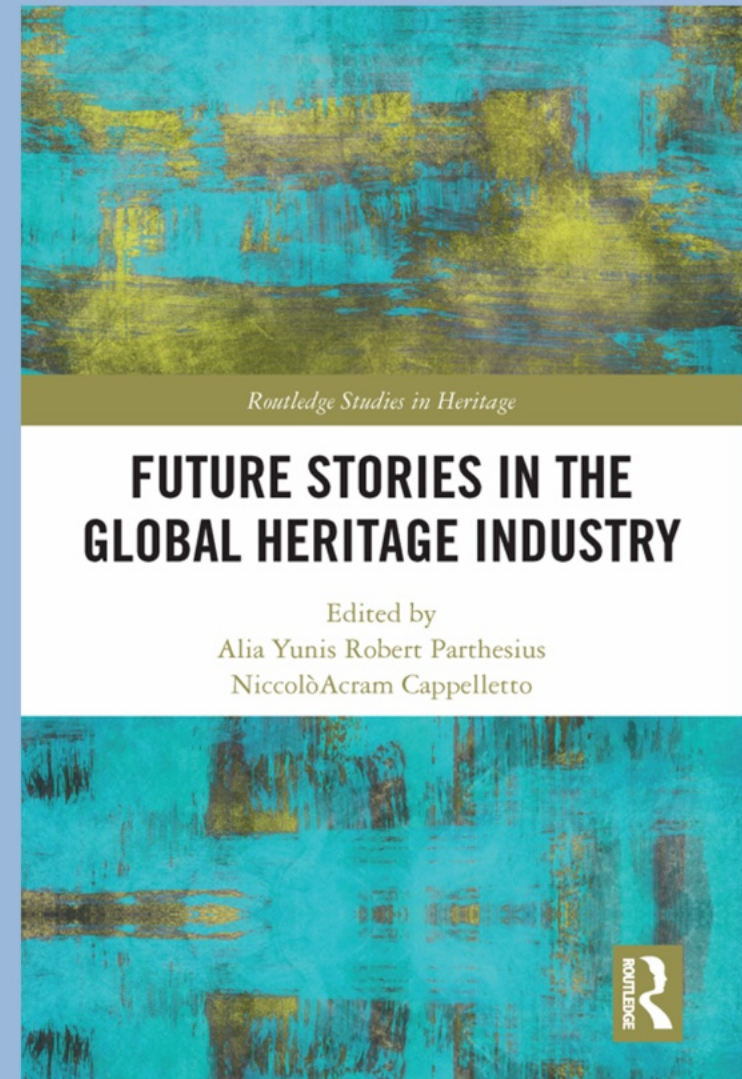
This webinar brings together international experts and practitioners exploring how digital technologies are reshaping our understanding, preservation, and communication of cultural heritage. Hosted within the network of the CIE – Centre for International Heritage Activities, the event connects perspectives from academia, museums, and creative practice.



PUBLICATIONS

Future Stories in the Global Heritage Industry

Published by Routledge, *Future Stories in the Global Heritage Industry* is edited by Alia Yunis, Robert Parthesius and Niccolò Acram Cappelletto. The volume explores what happens to the heritage and memory of communities when local places become part of global heritage systems, especially through UNESCO World Heritage designation. Written by emerging scholars and heritage professionals, it brings together case studies from Romania, the UAE/India, Eritrea, China, Mozambique, Tanzania and Malaysia. Through oral histories, ethnographic methods, film, interviews and archival research, the book examines how communities negotiate global recognition, tourism, nation-building and dominant heritage narratives while seeking to retain their own histories, memories and futures.



A Conversation Among My Homeland's Trees

A Conversation Among My Homeland's Trees is an imaginative essay by Alia Yunis, published in The Markaz Review on 7 March 2025. Through the voices of trees from Palestine and the wider region, the essay reflects on war, occupation, resistance, memory, survival and belonging. It presents landscape and nature as silent witnesses to human history, violence and endurance.

Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Cultural Heritage and Conflict — Maritime / Ocean Heritage Section

Published online by Palgrave/Springer in 2025, this section was edited by Robert Parthesius, Georgia Andreou and Niccolò Acram Cappalletto. It brings together contributions on maritime and underwater cultural heritage, contested ownership, coastal communities, migration, decolonisation, environmental change, port cities, shipwrecks and colonial maritime connections.

podcasts

Afikra: three-part podcast series on film and media in the Gulf.

Alia Yunis contributed a three-part podcast series for Afikra on film and media in the Gulf. The series explored cinema, storytelling and cultural production across the region, reflecting on how film and media shape public memory, identity and contemporary cultural debate.

<https://explore.afikra.com/podcast/kawalis/r/recfKVWRZgDTtn9OO>

FH Münster podcast Kopfhörer: “Apfelkuchen als Kulturgut?”

Felix Beck in the FH Münster podcast Kopfhörer in an episode titled “Apfelkuchen als Kulturgut?” The conversation explored everyday cultural heritage through familiar objects, practices and memories.

<https://www.fh-muenster.de/legacy/Kopfhoerer-podcast.php?episode=204>

Grants and Funding

The CIE Fund for Exceptional Voices

In 2025, CIE began developing the CIE Fund for Exceptional Voices, a support mechanism for writers, journalists, artists, filmmakers, photographers, poets and cultural practitioners who document heritage, memory and lived experience under difficult, fragile or dangerous circumstances. The fund is based on the conviction that cultural heritage is not only preserved through monuments, archives and institutions, but also through people who record stories, bear witness and keep memory alive. In situations of conflict, displacement, censorship, environmental crisis or social erasure, these voices often become essential custodians of heritage. Through journalism, writing, oral history, photography, film, social media and artistic practice, they help communities maintain a vital link to the past while making visible the realities of the present.

The CIE Fund for Exceptional Voices is intended to protect and support individuals within CIE's trusted network whose work contributes to the preservation of memory and heritage. It reflects CIE's broader commitment to heritage justice, the right to remember and the safeguarding of vulnerable narratives.

Voice in Focus 2025: Asem Al Jerjawi

The first Voice in Focus for 2025 is Asem Al Jerjawi, a young writer and journalist from Gaza, Palestine. Through his writing and reporting, Asem has documented life under forced displacement, destruction and imposed starvation, preserving personal and collective

In 2025, CIE supported the development of a focused fundraising effort to help Asem continue his education and professional development. He was accepted to several MA programmes and chose University College Dublin, which waived his tuition fees. Additional support is needed to cover living expenses and enable him to take up this opportunity in Ireland.

The focus on Asem connects directly to CIE's work on heritage justice, Gaza-related heritage documentation and the wider principle that communities must be able to tell their own stories. His work reminds us that, in times of violence and displacement, testimony is not only information. It is memory, heritage and resistance against erasure.



Hussein al-Jerjawi uses empty UNRWA flour bags as canvases for his artwork depicting everyday life in Gaza [Courtesy of Hussein al-Jerjawi]

Grants

Creative Industries Fund NL and the Netherlands Film Fund

Consultancies

EU Outreach Facility for the GCC; Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities; EU Delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman

Arab Gulf States Institute , “Datelines,” feature film on the heritage of the date palm.

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead -2026 and beyond- CIE will focus on strengthening HeritageLab as a sustainable platform for communities to share alternative heritage stories, many of which are under threat of being lost.

Priorities include technical and content coordination, sustainable funding, reusable digital components, ethical standards, public-facing formats and a renewed corporate design that reflects CIE's current scope and maturity.

CIE will also continue to develop the Heritage Universe as a shared infrastructure for Co-Labs, digital storytelling, educational resources and transnational heritage connections. This includes ethical digitisation, community ownership, curated story paths, toolkits for digital fieldwork and recurring public programme formats.

THE TEAM 2025

Statutory Board in The Netherlands:

Chair of the Board and Director (directeur-
bestuurder)

Robert Parthesius

Members of the Board:

Charles van Schelle,

Albert Van Nunen Karioen,

Miranda Vos

Advisory Board:

Claire Louise Okatch

Louise Contant

Niccolò Acram Cappelletto

Rooksana Omar

Rosemarie Buikema

Sibongile Masuku

Board of Directors:

- General Director: Robert Parthesius
- Deputy Director: Biljana Volchevska
- Programme Director: Alia Yunis
- Head of Education and Outreach (Heritage EduHub): Alia Soliman
- (Co)Heads of Heritage Futures: Felix Beck, Zlatan Filipovic

Team members 2025:

Alia ElKattan
Asem Al Jerjawi
Ava Abtahi
Batuhan Keskin
Begüm Yiğit
Dev Kalavadiya
Devaki (Andy) Vadakepat Menon
Georgi Andreou
Hassan Hamdani
Léa Lydie De Bruycker
Matthew Tan
Nazlı Melike Yılmaz
Niccolò Acram Cappelletto
Nurcan Yalman
Sarah Al Yahya
Talal Al-Muhanna
Umayya Abu-Hanna

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2025

Statement of Income and Expenditure

Item	2025 (€)
Project and service income	25,447
Restricted donations – CIE Fund for Exceptional Voices	3,125
Interest income	20
Reimbursement of previously paid personnel costs	3,727
Total income	32,319

Expenditure

Item	2025 (€)
Travel and project expenses	3,963
Communications and internet	816
Governance and organisational expenses	536
Office and administrative expenses	33
Bank charges	245
Total expenditure	5,594

Positive result for 2025	26,724
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Balance Sheet as of 31 December 2025

Item	2025 (€)
Receivables	15,308
Cash and cash equivalents	13,853
Total assets	29,161

Reserves and Liabilities

Item	2025 (€)
General reserve at the beginning of the year	2,437
Addition to the general reserve	23,599
Restricted reserve – CIE Fund for Exceptional Voices	3,125
Current liabilities	0
Total reserves and liabilities	29,161

Notes

- Cash and cash equivalents comprise the balances held in bank and payment accounts as at 31 December 2025.
- Receivables relate to work already completed for which payment was received or is expected after the balance-sheet date.
- Donations received in 2025 are restricted to the CIE Fund for Exceptional Voices and are not available for the Foundation's general activities.
- Of the positive result for 2025, €3,125 has been allocated to the restricted CIE Fund for Exceptional Voices. The remaining €23,599 has been added to the general reserve.
- This financial statement has been prepared from the available accounting records and rounded for presentation in the annual report.

