



## IUAES-WCAA 2021

### Heritage(s)

#### **Global interconnections in a possible world**

The IUAES/WCAA 2021 conference, to be held in the state of Yucatan, Mexico, focuses on heritage(s). The field of heritage is a one where social, cultural, religious, ecological and political topics are articulated in complex, productive and even conflicting manners at different levels that connect local, regional, national and global issues. The different types of heritage (tangible, natural, bio-cultural, intangible, industrial and post-industrial, among others) - linked to the concepts of culture, identity and nature - are social constructions whose understanding and problematization require interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches in order to confront the knowledge and views of the sciences that have been devoted to this topic.

We live now in the Anthropocene, an era characterized by particular types of relationships between human beings and their environment that have caused alarming cumulative and irreversible impacts: accelerated loss of biodiversity, global warming, and productive changes. Likewise, we must take into account cultural changes such as extinction of indigenous languages and a disregard for practices and knowledges that are relevant to cultural diversity. In this scenario, the different types of heritage come to life as particular and multiple forms of value assignment in the face of threats from global capitalism. Here, we are not only talking about institutionally recognized heritage, but also about the one which groups and communities themselves recognize as essential for the organization of their social and economic life.

It is thus relevant to think about heritage and its capacity to articulate the past, present and future, in the midst of processes of social change and its imbrications with the market, tourism and the reframing of cultural elements, which hold negotiated and strategically defined contents. In these processes, traditions do not remain static, but rather are an expression of the various forms of resistance, survival strategies and continuously contested identities.

It is of utmost importance to reflect on the tensions and frictions of the patrimonialization processes. We will address questions such as the following: Who is behind heritage making processes and to what ends? What are the repercussions of that which is defined or not as "heritage", by a given group or in the name of humanity? How does local "heritage", whatever its definition, relate to the nation-state and to the globalized world? How does the asymmetrical exercise of power underlie these processes? How is local heritage, built from the meanings assigned by indigenous and non-indigenous groups, - and influenced by constructions of gender, ethnicity, social class, economic activity, environment or origin - related to "the heritage" proclaimed by hegemonic groups? Who



determines what should be preserved, what should be discarded or what should be recovered and revitalized? What is the heritage we are building on for the future?

In this context, understanding the interrelationships between environment, culture, food, human health, well-being and living environments is a priority for the development of new routes that are capable of meeting the universal challenges of contemporary social and environmental degradation, including SarsCov2 pandemic effects. The IUAES Yucatan 2021 Conference offers a forum to reflect and debate on these and other issues, with colleagues from various countries around the world and to share different approaches and life experiences.