Curated session individual abstracts form

NOTE:

1. The following abstracts are part of the proposed **Heritage and Transnationalism Stream**, 'sponsored' by the ACHS's *Heritage and Transnationalism Network* (HTN)
2. Given the number of abrstracts, we are proposing to divide the session into 2 parts.
3. Please copy both Ali Mozaffari and David Harvey in related correspondences (thank you!).

Session name:

*Heritage-Border Relations: Negotiating Theory and Practice (**Part II**)*

Session proposer(s):

David C. Harvey (David.Harvey@cas.au.dk) and Ali Mozaffari (heritageinwestasia@gmail.com)

Session Description (Abstract):

Centring on the theme of heritage connecting people with the past, present and future, the papers in this curated session explore the relations between heritage and borders in theory and practice. Examining how both heritage and borders are constituted through processual and relational dynamics, the session responds to the challenges of defining and managing their (co-)constitution while reflecting on key conceptual and disciplinary boundaries. Focusing on the phenomenon of transnationality, the session explores its effects on heritage and bordering processes on the one hand, and its repercussions for the policy and practice of 'transnational heritage' broadly conceived, on the other. The panel thus interrogates the theoretical, disciplinary, and practical boundaries of the field, and examines the implications of heritage-border relations for broader themes, such as cultural statecraft, cultural diplomacy, and geopolitics in a multipolar world. The session brings together papers that develop conceptual and case-study-based material to enable a critical, comparative, and interdisciplinary conversation.

Within this frame, the session addresses four distinct types of questions:

- **Ontological:** Investigating the heritage ontologies invoked within 'transnational heritage' in both theory and practice.
- **Geopolitical:** Analysing how heritage categorisations (such as those of UNESCO) are instrumentalised within geopolitical projects.
- **Scalar:** Exploring how the relationality of transnational heritage operates across local, national, and continental scales.
- **Administrative:** Examining how specific sites manage the organisational complexity of transnational institutional governance.

Presenter 5

Name:

Yujie Zhu

Organisation:

Australian National University

Position:

Associate Professor, Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies

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Biography (max 50 words):

Yujie Zhu is Associate Professor at the Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies, Australian National University. An anthropologist trained at Heidelberg University, he researches heritage, memory, and cultural politics in China and East Asia. He is author of *China's Heritage through History* (2024) and former Vice President of ACHS.

Summary abstract (minimum 100 words and maximum 150 words):

This paper addresses the tension between transnational cultural practices and heritage governance frameworks that remain structured by nation-state logics. While UNESCO conventions increasingly acknowledge mobility and circulation, heritage recognition continues to rely on territorialised and classificatory regimes that struggle to accommodate culturally entangled forms of continuity. The paper advances *dialogical reproduction* as a theoretical framework for rethinking heritage beyond possessive and nationally bounded models. Integrating a transcultural perspective with debates on transnational heritage governance, it conceptualises heritage as a relational process sustained through acts of performance, repetition, and reinterpretation rather than preservation alone. Drawing on the longue durée case of the Orchid Pavilion Gathering in China, the paper demonstrates how cultural continuity is produced through dialogical practices that travel across borders, media, and historical moments. It contributes to ACHS debates by offering a future-oriented framework for understanding heritage as relational, iterative, and transnational.

Presenter 6

Name:

Shumei Huang

Organisation:

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Position:

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Biography (max 50 words):

Shu-Mei Huang is Professor in the Graduate Institute of Building and Planning at National Taiwan University. Her research intersects heritage studies, Indigenous studies, and memory studies, with sustained collaborative work on Indigenous heritage (re)making in Taiwan. Her publications appear in journals including *International Journal of Heritage Studies* and *International Journal of Cultural Policy.*

Summary abstract (minimum 100 words and maximum 150 words):

UNESCO's state-centric model, conceived as a hopeful pillar of the post-World War II international order, is increasingly challenged by transnationalism and Indigenous resistance to settler-colonial states. While heritage has often functioned as a colonial instrument within UNESCO frameworks, Indigenous communities and trans-Indigenous dialogues — especially across Asia-Pacific islands in terraqueous/oceanic contexts — have reclaimed heritage as a pathway to decolonization, enabling mutual understanding and contestation that transcends continental worldviews, even as efforts to militarize island chains and oceans intensify. This presentation explores how Indigenous epistemologies of heritage foreground healing, forward-looking commemorative practices, and relational futures rather than comparative hierarchies. It frames the resulting epistemological incommensurability with nation-based knowledge systems as a productive acknowledgement of difference. Attuning UNESCO's norms to these relational, trans-Indigenous perspectives could rework its assumptions and sustain its relevance in the 21st century.

Presenter 7

Name:

Julia Ciolek

Organisation:

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Position:

Postgraduate

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Biography (max 50 words):

Julia Ciołek is a PhD candidate in Department of Archaeology and Heritage at Aarhus University. Her research engages with the Białowieża Forest approached through interdisciplinary scope of critical heritage studies to analyze both conceptual and material aspects of the nature–culture intersections and their influence on heritage politics.

Summary abstract (minimum 100 words and maximum 150 words):

The Białowieża Forest on the Polish–Belarusian border, designated a transboundary UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014, has become a focal point of intersecting crises: geopolitical instability, humanitarian emergency, and environmental mismanagement. This paper traces a shift in transboundary heritage from a project meant to "blur borders", grounded in the conviction that "nature does not acknowledge borders", toward a framework that reinforces border features. In this reconfiguration, the Forest is rendered an "eco-frontier" with a utilitarian role as a "green shield". Since the 2021 border crisis and 2022 Russia–Ukraine escalation, discourse has moved further with Poland's 2024 "East Shield" programme (barriers, surveillance, combat engineering), backed by NATO/EU logics and contested over landmines, "Green East Shield" proposals, and "natural" deterrence. The paper returns to sustainable futures under militarisation and environmental precarity.

Presenter 8

Name:

Noa Evers

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Position:

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Biography (max 50 words):

Noa Evers is a PhD student in the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies at Aarhus University. Her research explores postcolonial dynamics in the cultural heritage projects of the Arctic Council, with a particular focus on the colonial history between Denmark and Greenland and its implications for Arctic governance.

Summary abstract (minimum 100 words and maximum 150 words):

Indigenous peoples in the Arctic understand cultural heritage not merely as sites, objects, or ceremonies but as intangible ways of viewing and organising the world, negotiated and reshaped through transnational governance. As an intergovernmental organisation connecting the Arctic states, the Arctic Council mediates policy frameworks that define and govern cultural heritage across borders. Focusing on the Arctic Council's Gender Equality in the Arctic project (2013–2025), with Greenland as a primary case study, this paper treats Kalaallit (Greenlandic Inuit) social organisation, including gender relations, as living cultural heritage. Drawing on postcolonial feminist theory and the coloniality of gender, and using critical and political discourse analysis with grounded coding, it analyses how the Council's Pan-Arctic Report on Gender Equality in the Arctic reproduces Western cultural heritage discourses, and how Indigenous epistemologies challenge what counts as cultural heritage.