



Emerging skills for heritage conservation

# PROCEEDINGS 2024



## Young Professionals Forum

Emerging skills for heritage conservation

*Cultural Accessibility: Principles and Methodologies for Cultural Heritage*

September 24 – 27, 2024

Fifth edition

Edited by CCR, Fondazione Centro per la Conservazione e il Restauro dei Beni Culturali “La Venaria Reale”

Stefania De Blasi - *Curator*

Lorenza Ghionna, Valentina Valcarengi - *Editing*

## Partner

ICCROM, ICOM Italia, ICOMOS Italia, IIC, Fondazione Santagata.

## Supported by

Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, Fondazione Magnetto, Associazione Amici della Reggia e del Centro di Restauro “La Venaria Reale”.

## Scholarships

The **Fondazione Magnetto** offered **4 scholarships** to cover the participation in the **entire Workshop and Forum** in Venaria Reale, Italy (24-27 September 2024). Interested candidates applied for the **Call for Training**, submitting their CV and relevant project work on cultural accessibility.

Associazione Amici della Reggia e del Centro di Restauro “La Venaria Reale” promoted scholarships addressed to graduates or university students of the Degree Course in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage of the University of Turin and the Conservation and Restoration Center “La Venaria Reale” (CCR).

## Jury members

**Sara Abram** - CCR, Secretary General

**Silvia Sabato** - CCR, Head of Strategic and International development

**Stefania De Blasi** - CCR, Head of Documentation and Communication

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**Valentina Valcarengi** - Organization and communication

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**Denise Crepaldi** - Tutor and Technical support

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**Mohammed AlBalawi** - Royal Commission for AlUla, Rawi Leadership Team

**Cristina Araimo** - CAMERA - Centro Italiano per la Fotografia, Educational activities

**Sofia Bilotta** - ICOM Accessibility Group

**Maria Elena Colombo** - Museo Egizio, Head of the Department of Interpretation, Accessibility and Sharing

**Stefania De Blasi** - CCR, Head of communication and documentation area

**Enrico Dolza** - Turin Institute for Deaf, Director and University of Turin, Professor

**Alessia Fassone** - Museo Egizio, Curator

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**Maria Teresa Jaquinta** - ICOMOS Italia, Secretary General

**Valerie Magar** - ICCROM, Unit Manager, Programmes

**Joanna Norman** - Victoria & Albert Research Institute and National Art Gallery, Director

**Silvia Sabato** - CCR, Head of Strategic and International development

**Sarah Stannage** - IIC, Executive Director

## Special guests

**Rehana Schwinninger** - Ladak, Head of Interactive technologies, Digital for Culture and Education, DG CONNECT, European Commission

**Luca Mercuri**, Head of Department III - Fruition and Communication of Cultural Heritage, MIC, Italian Ministry of Culture

**Matteo Bagnasco** - Culture Goal Manager, Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation

## Special thank

Museo Egizio, Turin

CAMERA - Centro Italiano per la Fotografia, Turin

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## Acknowledgement

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**Andrea Castangia** - CCR, IT Services

**Elena Biondi** - CCR, Project development and fundraising

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Venaria Reale, February 2025

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## Institutional Introduction

I am particularly glad to open this edition, the fifth edition of our Young Professionals Forum. I am Sara Abram, Secretary General of the Centro Conservazione e Restauro “La Venaria Reale” Foundation. It is a pleasure today to dedicate this international discussion to **the theme of cultural accessibility** on this day in particular, as our Centre inaugurates newly renovated public spaces, made possible with the support of the Italian Ministry of Culture and funding from the *European Union – NextGenerationEU*.

Thanks to this project, we have worked on our Library, a cultural treasure on conservation made up with over 35,000 volumes, books, and journals; then our Archives, including our historic Pinin Brambilla Barcilon Archive (restorer of Leonardo Da Vinci’s “The Last Supper”); and then today we are opening our new Visitor Center (named “Haven of the Arts”) a place open to our Foundation in order to show to the public and to the museum visitors our work and the significance of the values that we are bringing on.

All of these spaces are now **increasingly accessible and inclusive** - physically, digitally, and from an educational and cultural perspective above all.

Today, during the Forum, we will work together to explore and address many important questions, fostering a shared dialogue on this topic while enhancing the skills of everyone involved.

During the event we will try to answer some questions:

What exactly does cultural accessibility mean?

How can professionals make heritage and cultural sites more accessible, while also educating the public about the importance of preservation?

Can we truly break down barriers, bridge gaps, and address inequalities that limit access to and participation in cultural heritage?

Thanks to all the people of our Foundation involved in this event and in particular to the young professionals who participated in this hybrid edition both online and in person.

**Sara Abram**

*Secretary General, CCR*



## Institutional Remarks

Thanks to all of you for being here and supporting us from all over the world as part of our community. Through the Young Professionals Forum, we have had the chance to grow our network of young people and partners globally. Over these five editions, many young professionals worked with our Foundation, and helped - bringing fresh ideas, enthusiasm, and skills - to expand our challenges of preserving and promoting cultural heritage.

A special greeting to the young participants of the in-person workshop that started on Tuesday, who come from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Malta, Pakistan, South Africa and Italy and who will soon present the results of their work. I wish everyone good luck and I would like to thank the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation and Fondazione Magnetto for their ongoing support.

**Alfonso Frugis**  
*President, CCR*



**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FORUM**  
**EMERGING SKILLS FOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION**

*Cultural Accessibility: Principles and Methodologies for Cultural Heritage*

24 - 27 SEPTEMBER, 2024

**FIFTH EDITION**

# STRUCTURE

The 2024 edition of the Young Professionals Forum programme will delve into **best practices concerning universal accessibility to culture, its content, and its spaces**. The main objective is to raise awareness and explore the diverse landscape of cultural accessibility, with a particular focus on libraries, archives, archaeological sites, museums, and educational initiatives for their conservation.

Numerous obstacles, such as architectural, physical, cognitive, sensory, and cultural barriers, restrict participation in cultural life. The Forum seeks to reflect, with a lively, open and intercultural perspective on the solutions adopted by various cultural institutions to remove these barriers and **make cultural heritage accessible to all**.



## THE PROGRAM INCLUDES:



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The **Four-day Young Professionals Workshop at CCR** in Venaria Reale, Italy, from 24 to 27 September 2024.

The workshop is designed to provide participants with a foundational understanding of universal accessibility tools for cultural sites through interactive activities, site visits to the main cultural organisations involved in accessibility projects in Turin, and hands-on experiences with case studies.

The workshop was concluded with the development of an International Thesaurus of Cultural Heritage with Universal Accessibility.

This process has begun by addressing the complex terminology related to conservation.



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**The Young Professionals Forum took place on 27 September 2024, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.** CET, both in-person at CCR in Venaria Reale, and online on Zoom platform, open to all.

Partner organisations, important international and Italian cultural institutions such as libraries, archives, archaeological sites and museums approached the topic from a political perspective: they described the state of the art and show concrete applications of the principles of universal accessibility.

Following this, workshop participants presented the outcomes of the activities conducted on the International Thesaurus of Cultural Heritage with Universal Accessibility.



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**Expert Meetings:** a real Q&A session, dedicated to dialogue and discussion. Workshop and/or Forum participants could, in fact, conduct interviews with senior professionals, including national and international experts who participated in the Forum. They could present their perspectives on the topics and seek advice.

These meetings took place in person on September 27 at the conclusion of the Forum and online, starting from September 29, 2024.





## Facts & figures



**41** Candidates for the Call for Training



Candidates come from **20** countries

Italy  
India  
Egypt  
Cuba  
Australia

South Africa  
Syria  
France  
Malta  
Pakistan

Perù  
Portugal  
Indonesia  
Sudan  
Iran

Tunisia  
UAE  
Yemen  
Argentina  
Kenya



# ACCESSIBILITY of an unconventional cultural site: conservation education for all

Stefania De Blasi, Head of Communication and Documentation Area, CCR

I am very pleased to have the honour of presenting the CCR's project on accessibility, as the voice of the different teams of the project.

In 2023, when the Ministry of Culture's call for projects for the universal accessibility of museums, archives and libraries under the Next Generation EU programme came out, it seemed to us that the time had finally come to give shape to the project that we had been dreaming of for some time.

It was the time to carry out a small revolution: **to make the Centre**

**available to all, and this is the first goal of our project.**

Then, we want to achieve other important goals:

- to strengthen the vocation of the CCR as a hub for the humanities in conservation

- to co-design activities with museums and institutions.

Involving young, autistic and other neurodivergent people, in the creation and management of content

In order to open CCR to the public and narrate our history we can use an important tool that is our archive.

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Ph: The Haven of the arts - CCR



The CCR mission in fact is also to promote conservation history and transmit today's conservation culture to future generations.

For instance, to pass on a heritage and a legacy that **Pinin Brambilla Barcilon** has given us with the arrival of her professional archive in our library. Pinin Brambilla was one of Italy's most important female art restorers, known for her restoration of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* and founding the CCR Laboratories.

The role of my department and of the humanists, art historians mainly, at the Centre is to support other teams. We connect the Centre to the world outside, made up of conservation organisations, institutions and also non-specialists.

So we try to open the window to the conservation world, which is technical and complex, trying to find a key to reach everyone without minimizing complexity and meaning.

These were the premises that led us to consider a new way of presenting the Centre, with the opportunity to explore and prepare new ways of welcoming and telling stories.

With the project **“Humanities in Conservation”**, we face the challenge to transform the Centre, which is a hybrid and unconventional place, rather closed and reserved due to the sensitivity of the restoration work, but at the same time very open and inviting due to the presence of over 100 of young and dynamic students.

The Centre is a place of high concentration and experimentation in the field of science, but it is also a service to the public through the presence of the library and archives and educational services.

Here, the idea of making all these souls a place for everyone, where everything that is done can be explained to everyone: from **those**





**who are far away** and can find us on the web with many new digital services, to **those who have physical and cognitive limitations or needs**, and they want to make the experience of studying the culture of restoration and access to the Centre's library and laboratories. Without forgetting **those who come from different cultures and speak different languages**, as the projects of recent years have shown and tested us.

The project has carried out many activities that have truly involved all sectors and I am particularly proud that, for once, in a world of scientists and technicians, the vision of humanists has brought everyone together. We started with our training, because none of us was aware of the different needs and questions that we had to answer if we wanted to

be truly inclusive and accessible, so thanks to Enrico Dolza, *Turin Institute for the Deaf* Director, the *Paideia Association*, the *Associazione italiana Ciechi*, the Professor Enrico Bisenzi and the *Lyme Agency* we developed different ways to train all the staff.

We have realised that **accessibility means creating an environment that is welcoming and avoids distance and discomfort for anyone**, especially those with different cultural backgrounds and levels of culture.

We have designed the environment being conscious of health, well-being, and the needs that we all have: to relieve the stress and anxiety that can affect first of all us, we have created **new areas outside in our patio**, with lots of benches to encourage contact, breathing in the air and



Ph: Library, CCR. Entrance



Ph: Library, CCR. Video magnifier

chatting in the sun, and a **soft, quiet area**, in the rooms adjacent to library, away from the noise of the labs, to gather ideas and calm down.

We have created **tactile pathways** and specific services for people with reduced mobility, for the blind persons and deaf ones.

We have equipped our library with **new signage and an interactive map** at the entrance to better guide our users' independent use, as well as a **new, more open and visible location for our librarian**, Antonella Mastropietro, ready to support and welcome everyone with the appropriate tools.

The library now has new tools that can help with reading and comprehension, such as the **video magnifier**, and the space has increased its reception capacity with the addition of 40 new seats, and the quality of the environment has been improved with **modular, natural, light-shielded study stations**.

We have also given space to technological experimentation in the partnership with the company

Codebò, a historic lift manufacturer, which has created a **magic mirror**, not yet on the market, inside the lift that can guide the user through voice and video in sign language in the case of a breakdown or emergency. We have updated the signage across the Centre to be more accessible, using a **new font**, the *Atkinson hyper-legible*, which is clear and accessible and strongly recommended for dyslexia and cognitive impairment. And with the font, we **redesigned the CCR's logo**, smoothing out the shapes and softening the colours to make it less intrusive and more welcoming.

Finally, the **website**, showcases the Centre's digital presence, was simplified, and clarified, but with the important new feature of being able to explore our archives.

I would like to conclude with a brief note on the operation that has committed us to a truly unprecedented experience, perhaps in the whole Italian panorama.

The archive of the 20 years of the Centre, the archive of the restorer Pinin Brambilla Barcilon and other



archives and all the materials that will be added over time, have a place where they can be digitally consulted, organised and critically ordered from a distance, thanks to a new platform designed for us by the Promemoria Group, which will have an interface accessible on our new website in a form that is in line with the whole project.













To achieve the goal of making the scientific content of our archives truly accessible, we relied on the basic rules of *Easy-to-Read writing*: use simple, familiar words, avoid difficult words and explain it, use everyday examples, use the same word for the same thing, avoid metaphors and foreign words,

minimize abbreviations and initials. The vocabulary of conservation is specialised and in order to comply with the rules of accessibility we have worked intensively on **a glossary of terms to make fewer common terms clear and understandable.**

The glossary was the subject of the workshop we held with the *Young Professionals Forum, Emerging skills for heritage conservation - Cultural Accessibility: Principles and Methodologies for Cultural Heritage* winners. We presented them the most common restoration terms, shared into categories of words: general conservation terms and those related to the different professions involved in the conservation process, terms related to the material and technical

Archivio Digitale

Fondo di appartenenza ▼
Oggetto

 <p><a href="#">48-AL-2011_Venaria, Reggia, P. Piffetti, Specchiera, inv. 1448-L (proprietà Museo Civico d'Arte Antica di Torino-</a></p>	 <p><a href="#">36-AL-2012_Venaria, Reggia, Tabernacolo cappella S. Uberto</a></p>	 <p><a href="#">22-mc08b-TE-2012_Moncalieri, Castello, P. D. Olivero, Scena pastorale (sovrapporta), inv. 252</a></p>	 <p><a href="#">22-mc08a-TE-2012_Moncalieri, Castello, P. D. Olivero, Scena pastorale (sovrapporta), inv. 249</a></p>
 <p><a href="#">22-mc03-TE-2012_Moncalieri, Castello, F. Petiti, Paesaggio, inv. 529 S.M.</a></p>	 <p><a href="#">23-TE-2012_Venaria Reale, Reggia, G. Duprà (attr.), Ritratto di Carlo Emanuele III, inv. R 2502 (proprietà Castello</a></p>	 <p><a href="#">22-mc02-TE-2012_Moncalieri, Castello, P. Sassi, Pianura del Monferrato, inv. SM 235</a></p>	 <p><a href="#">05-TE-2012_Padova, Musei Civici - Museo d'arte medievale e moderna, J. Robusti (Tintoretto),</a></p>
 <p><a href="#">3-AL-2012_Venaria, Reggia, Console, inv. R 2406 (proprietà del Castello di Racconigi)</a></p>	 <p><a href="#">47-CR-2011_Venaria Reale, Reggia di Venaria, Bucintoro, inv. 0872/L (proprietà Museo Civico d'Arte Antica di Torino-</a></p>	 <p><a href="#">38mc01-03-AL-2011_Agliè, Castello ducale, Panche e sgabelli</a></p>	 <p><a href="#">38mc04-AL-2011_Agliè, Castello ducale, 6 console</a></p>

description of works of art, and those related to conservation, restoration and analysis operations.

We have tried to make them easily understandable, without losing their meaning, and to keep the information complete.

The glossary is now available in **Italian** and **English** and **Arabic** and can be used as a basis for further translations. With the glossary at hand, it was possible to work on the front end of the Centre's archive, which now has a facilitated description of a sample of about **1200 restoration records** and constitutes a model for those who wish to work in this direction.

Uniformity was the other guiding criterion that allowed the same things to be called the same way without creating ambiguity of meaning and maintaining the accuracy of the description of the elements.

These are just a few words to describe a titanic work carried out in less than two years by a few capable and competent people, assisted by truly efficient and exceptional consultants, as well as the properties of the works of arts which activities were recorded in the archive, who supported and shared the initiative of publishing the restoration files on the web (from the Collection of *Quirinale Palace* to *Musei Reali* in Turin, from *Fondo Italiano per l'Ambiente* to the *Fondazione Ordine Mauriziano*, to *Consorzio delle Residenze Reali Sabaude*, 60 institutions more or less). The project was further developed **to make the world of conservation accessible to not only a digital but also a physical audience.**

The laboratories and the entire structure of the Centre now have free access to all visitors to the *Reggia*

*di Venaria* Unesco site through the ***Haven of the arts***.

The CCR Visitors' Centre, a space designed and realised with the director and screenwriter Carlo Zoratti and a team of ten creative people, including designers, artists and writers, was created as an innovative, creative and accessible place of storytelling to introduce visitors from museum to the CCR, giving them an immersive experience of what goes on every day in the conservation and scientific laboratories.

**The *Haven of the arts* is the new Visitor Centre** of the Centro Conservazione Restauro "La Venaria Reale", inaugurated as a part of a broad universal accessibility project. This new space was designed with an inclusive and innovative approach, and serves as **an storytelling space** for the daily activities of the restoration centre.

The structure is divided into three thematic walls: the **Wall of Facts**, which provides data and information about the laboratories and restored works; the **Wall of Things**, allowing visitors to explore the materials and tools used in restoration through a tactile experience; and the **Wall of Stories**, featuring curious objects and anecdotes related to the work of the CCR, made accessible through technologies such as headphones, QR codes, and an app, including for the visually and hearing impaired.

The project is part of the **Humanities in Conservation** project, which aims to make cultural heritage accessible to a wider audience by overcoming physical, cognitive, and cultural barriers. With innovative tools and technologies, CCR offers an inclusive experience, making its resources, such as the library and archives, available to all visitors,





Ph: Heaven of the arts, CCR. Entrance



regardless of their abilities. The *Haven of the arts* thus fits into a contemporary vision of conservation, promoting interaction between the public and cultural heritage while supporting the commitment to accessible and shared culture.

**Inclusivity and active public participation are at the heart of this initiative**, which aims to educate people about the conservation of cultural heritage, fostering global awareness and a collective commitment to the preservation of historical assets.

The project is part of the broader strategic framework of the CCR, which also responds to the challenges of the UN 2030 Agenda. The YPF Proceedings present the **first accessible Glossary of conservation terms** drawn up from the experience of digitising the Centre's archive and the Pinin Brambilla Barcilon Archive, for which

1200 accessible pages describing restoration work were drawn up. The Glossary was then revised, enriched and translated into Italian, English and Arabic with the team of young professionals who won the *Young Professionals Forum* grant and participate at the *Accessible Writing for Conservation and Restoration Workshop* with the coordination of Silvia Sabato, Responsible for the project and under the direction of Stefania De Blasi with the support of tutors Edi Guerzoni, Valentina Valcarengi, Niccolò Acram Cappelletto, Sofia Ceseri, Denise Crepaldi and Mohammad Al Hariri.

To the winners the most grateful acknowledgement for having worked enthusiastically and proactively to improve the debate.

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Ph: WALL OF STORIES - Detail -Heaven of the arts, CCR

# ACCESSIBLE WRITING for Conservation and Restoration: a participatory and comprehensive Workshop

*Edi Guerzoni, PhD Student Cultural Heritage, University of Turin*

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The opportunity to lead the class workshop at the *Young Professionals Forum (YPF) 2024* was a significant milestone in my PhD journey.

My doctoral program in *Cultural Heritage and Art Historical, Audiovisual, and Media Production* has been enriched by a vital collaboration with the CCR.

My dissertation focuses on **the archive of Pinin Brambilla**

**Barcilon**, one of the most influential women restorers in Italy and internationally during the second half of the 20th century. As part of the CCR's accessibility initiatives, the digitization and public dissemination of this archival fund have been pivotal.

**This ambitious project aimed to make the archive accessible to a wide audience**, presenting



Ph: Digitisation of the Pinin Brambilla Barcilon Archive

a unique challenge: transforming complex historical sources into clear, engaging texts and metadata suitable for those without specialized knowledge or for individuals with cognitive or physical disabilities.

The **YPF workshop** provided a crucial platform for testing and refining the best practices developed during this project. The theoretical foundation of the initiative is rooted in the concept of **conservation as a matter of**



**public interest, given that cultural heritage belongs to everyone.**

Our goal was to bridge the gap between technical knowledge in art conservation and public accessibility, ensuring that information about the field becomes more inclusive and widely understood.

The *Workshop on Cultural Accessibility: Principles and Methodologies for Cultural Heritage* was designed as an innovative program combining lessons and activities focused on accessible writing in the fields of conservation and restoration. A key objective was to develop a comprehensive, **accessible glossary covering essential terminology used in conservation and restoration.**

This glossary was intended as a practical communication tool for professionals in the field, aiming to enhance the understanding of key concepts through active participation and collaborative efforts among attendees.

The project unfolded through a participatory workshop structure, beginning with a theoretical session led by **Dr. Enrico Dolza**, a Professor of Special Pedagogy and Didactics and Director of the *Turin Institute for Deaf*. Dr. Dolza's session examined cultural accessibility through the framework of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

This approach emphasized a shift from the medical model of disability to the social model, promoting principles of self-determination, accessibility, and equal participation. Key theoretical concepts, such as *Universal Design for Learning* and its principle of *Multiple Means of Representation*, were explored to highlight how content can be



Ph: A moment during the visit to the Museo Egizio in Turin

presented in diverse, accessible formats. Practical examples, including accessibility initiatives at the *Museo Egizio* of Turin, underscored **the need for inclusive communication while preserving content integrity.**

Following the introductory session, two visits were organized to the *Museo Egizio* of Turin and *CAMERA – Centro Italiano per la Fotografia*.

These visits allowed participants **to analyze significant accessibility projects in real-world museum settings.**

Participants applied the principles of accessible communication during these visits, focusing on transforming dense, technical texts into formats that non-specialist audiences could easily understand. Emphasis was placed on practical techniques such as maintaining consistent terminology, avoiding jargon, and using relatable examples.

The third day of the workshop, which I led, was dedicated to a **full-day laboratory session.** Before the exercise, we had the opportunity to visit the *Reggia di Venaria Reale* and its collections, observing them through the lens of accessibility and the history of conservation.

After the visit, participants collaboratively analyzed the glossary and engaged in practical exercises to develop accessible texts in the field of conservation. **The workshop emphasized the importance of transforming technical language into accessible formats,** with the *Easy to Read* method serving as a guiding framework. Participants

learned how to simplify complex terms while ensuring accuracy and clarity.

This collaborative effort highlighted **the broader social and political dimensions of accessibility,** reinforcing the principle that cultural heritage belongs to everyone and that fostering inclusion requires a commitment to universal design principles. An **essential component** of the session involved small-group exercises, where participants worked with **technical abstracts from artworks restored** at the CCR.

These dense, specialized texts were rewritten into more accessible formats, reflecting the principles discussed. The activity demonstrated the transformative potential of accessibility in cultural spaces, enabling equal participation and breaking down barriers.

The workshop achieved two primary objectives: fostering a collective understanding of the need for accessible communication in conservation and identifying the diverse audiences it aims to serve.

By working collaboratively on the glossary and sentence construction, participants developed a **more conscious and effective approach** to communication in the conservation and restoration of cultural heritage. This process not only validated the importance of accessibility but also underscored its role in creating inclusive experiences that benefit everyone.





Ph: A moment during Enrico Dolza's lesson



Ph: Practical Workshop with Edi Guerzoni

# ACCESIBILE WRITING

## for Conservation and Restoration

September 24 - 27, 2024, La Venaria Reale, Italy

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The YPF Accessibility Workshop is an innovative project aimed at providing a participatory lesson on accessible writing.

Our primary objective is to develop a comprehensive glossary covering key terms used in the field of art conservation and restoration.

After an introductory lesson on September 24 with accessible writing expert, **Professor Enrico Dolza**, and two **visits to the most accessibility-friendly museums in Turin** on September 25, an entire day will be dedicated to exchanges between young students and professionals in the field.

The day of September 26 will feature a **participatory workshop** during which techniques of accessible writing will be applied to the field of conservation and restoration.

The goal is to make information and knowledge in the field of cultural heritage conservation more accessible to a wider audience. The success of the project will be measured not only through the creation of a *Thesaurus* of accessible terms but also through the positive effect it will have on the understanding and dissemination of key concepts in the conservation and restoration sector.

The workshop has **two main objectives**:

- Understanding together the reasons that drive us to communicate conservation in an accessible way and identifying the target audiences.
- Addressing the basics of accessible writing in the specific field of conservation and restoration.

Starting from a glossary of sector-specific terms translated into accessible language, we will work together with international participants on the elaboration of terms in different languages.

### Examples:

“

#### Lacuna:

Missing parts.

In paintings: small areas without colour.

In statues: small lack of material.

In textiles: small lack of fabric.

“

#### Stucco:

A white layer of plaster and glue.



Ph: First day of the YPForum 2024

When	What	Where	Who
24 SEPTEMBER	Introduction to Accessible writing Discussion of key terms in the field of conservation and art restoration	Centro Conservazione Restauro "La Venaria Reale" (CCR)	<b>Enrico Dolza,</b> Turin Institute for Deaf, <i>Director</i> and University of Turin, <i>Professor</i>
25 SEPTEMBER	Visiting museum examples of accessibility in Turin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Museo Egizio, Turin</li> <li>CAMERA Centro Italiano per la Fotografia</li> </ul>	<b>Alessia Fassone,</b> Museo Egizio, Turin, <i>Curator</i> <b>Cristina Araimo,</b> CAMERA Centro Italiano per la Fotografia, <i>Educational activities</i>
26 SEPTEMBER	Practical Workshop Purpose: having tools for creating accessible texts for disseminating conservation and restoration informations for all	Centro Conservazione Restauro "La Venaria Reale" (CCR)	<b>Stefania De Blasi,</b> CCR, <i>Head of communication and documentation area</i> <b>Edi Guerzoni,</b> University of Turin, <i>PhD Student Cultural Heritage</i>
27 SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YPF Final Event</li> <li>CCR All Inclusive</li> </ul>	Centro Conservazione Restauro "La Venaria Reale" (CCR)	<b>Experts,</b> <b>YPF participants and staff</b>



1



2



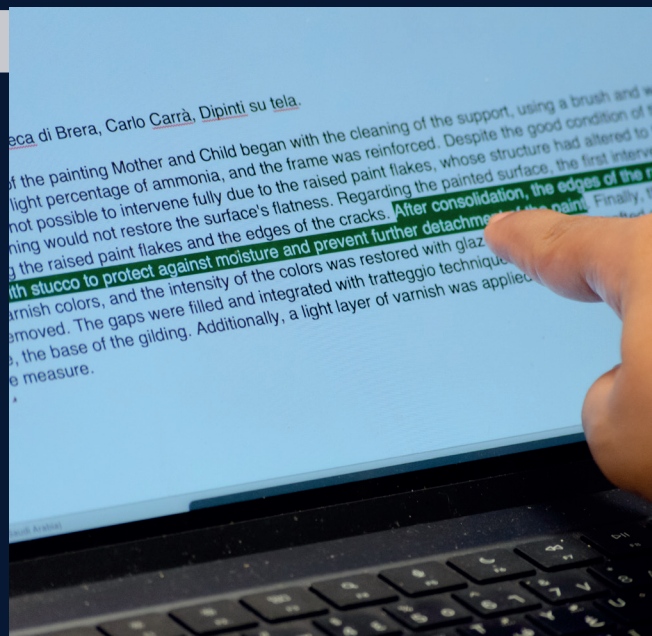
3



4



5



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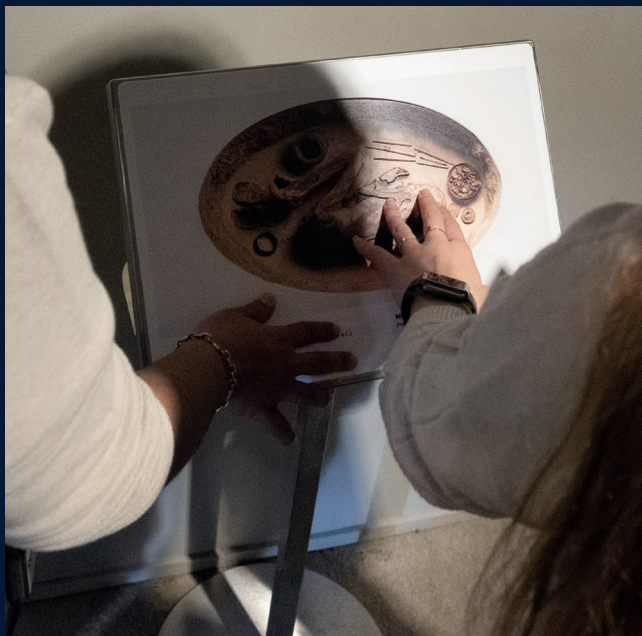




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## IN PHOTOGRAPHY

1. Enrico Dolza,  
Turin Institute for Deaf, *Director*  
and University of Turin, *Professor*

2. Visit to the CCR Restoration Laboratories  
with Edi Guerzoni, *PhD Student Cultural  
Heritage, University of Turin*

3. Some moments during classes

4. Visit to the Venaria Reale Royal Palace

5. A moment during the third day's Practical  
Workshop

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6. Edi Guerzoni,  
*PhD Student Cultural Heritage, University  
of Turin*

7. Visit to the Museo Egizio, Turin, with  
Alessia Fassone, *Curator*

8. A sample of accessibility - Museo Egizio,  
Turin

9. Some moments during classes

10. Visit to CAMERA - Centro Italiano per  
la Fotografia, Turin, with Cristina Araimo,  
*Educational activities*

11. Stefania De Blasi,  
*CCR's Head of communication and  
documentation area*

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12. Group photo



# FINAL EVENT

## YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FORUM



# PROGRAMME

September 24, 2024

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2:00 p.m. **Institutional greetings**

2:10 p.m. **Theme framing from a policy perspective**

Rehana Schwinninger-Ladak, Head of Interactive technologies, Digital for Culture and Education, DG CONNECT, European Commission and Luca Mercuri, Head of Department III - Fruition and Communication of Cultural Heritage, MIC, Italian Ministry of Culture.

2:30 p.m. **The state of the art**

*Innovative Approaches to Accessibility and Inclusion in Cultural Sites*

Valerie Magar, Unit Manager - Programmes, ICCROM, International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property.

*Leading the Change: Museums Driving Universal Access and Inclusion*

Sofia Bilotta, ICOM Accessibility Group, International Council of Museums.

*Safeguarding Heritage: Enhancing Accessibility Through the Evolution of the Venice Charter (1964-2024)*

Maria Teresa Jaquinta, ICOMOS Italia, Secretary General, International Council of Monuments and Sites.

*Digital accessibility: challenges and opportunities*

Sarah Stannage, IIC, Executive Director, International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.

*Cultural heritage: a profession between past and future*

Sara Ingoglia, Fondazione Santagata for Economics of Culture, Communication and PR Officer.

3:10 p.m. **Applications of universal accessibility principles**

*Transforming physical and digital access to the V&A's collections, library and archives:*

*the David Bowie Archive as case study*

Joanna Norman, Director, Victoria and Albert Research Institute and National Art Library, United Kingdom.

*Multimodality and Listening: Accessibility at the Museo Egizio*

Maria Elena Colombo, Head of the Department of Interpretation, Accessibility, and Sharing & Alessia Fassone, Curator, Museo Egizio, Italy.

*Safeguarding Sites and Sharing Stories: The Rawis and Rangers of AlUla*  
Mohammed AlBalawi, Rawi Leadership Team, Royal Commission for AlUla, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

## *Accessibility of an Unconventional Cultural Site: Conservation Education for All*

Stefania De Blasi, Head of communication and documentation area, Centro Conservazione Restauro La Venaria Reale, Italy.

### 4:00 p.m. **Workshop Outcomes**

The Young Professionals and the International Thesaurus of Cultural Heritage with Universal Accessibility

### 4:30 p.m. **Conclusions**

*Final Event*



## **THE VIDEO**

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**YOUTH PROFESSIONAL FORUM 2024**

CENTRO CONSERVAZIONE RESTAURO LA VENARIA REALE

EMERGING SKILLS FOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION

**CULTURAL ACCESSIBILITY: PRINCIPLES AND METHODOLOGIES FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Final Event**

**SEPTEMBER 27, 2024**  
**2 p.m. - 4 p.m.**

In collaboration with: ICCROM, ICOM, IIC, etc.

Supported by: Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, etc.





Ph: Some moments during the YPF Final Event

# Mentors



Mohammed AlBalaw



Sofia Bilotta



Maria Elena Colombo



Stefania De Blasi



Alessia Fassone



Maria Teresa Jaquinta



Sara Ingolgia



Valerie Magar



Joanna Norman



Sarah Stannage





# Experts



Sara Abram



Sofia Bilotta



Stefania De Blasi



Enrico Dolza



Maria Teresa Jaquinta



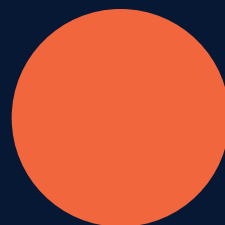
Sara Ingoglia



Valerie Magar



Silvia Sabato





**Sara Abram,**  
**Secretary General, CCR**



Art historian, she studied at the University of Turin and the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa.

She has participated in research projects on the history of restoration and on museums and archives of the twentieth century. Since 2006 she has been working at the Foundation Conservation Centre Restoration “La Venaria Reale”, where she has been involved in the field of preservation of contemporary works of art, paper and photography and ceramics, glass and metals. She has taken care of the acquisition of archival funds related to the history of contemporary art (Fondo Galleria Martano) and the history of restoration (Pinin Brambilla Archive). Former director of the Organization and Development area, she coordinated the Centre’s multi-annual strategic plan on the three axes dedicated to Internationalization, Innovation and Culture. She has been Secretary-General since 2020.

**Mohammed AlBalawi,**  
**Rawi Leadership Team, Royal Commission for AlUla,**  
**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**



With five years of experience as an Rawi (story teller), I have honed my skills through extensive training across the globe, including in the US, France, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and the UK. Storytelling, a passion deeply rooted in my culture and passed down by

my ancestors, is at the heart of my work. My expertise also spans interpreting and tour guiding in the tourism sector, with a focus on heritage site operations and leading Quality stream within the team. I’m passionate about cultural exchange and have had the privilege of working with diverse stakeholders internationally. Alongside learning French, I continually expand my knowledge of heritage sites and public speaking through advanced training and presentations.

**Sofia Billotta,**  
**ICOM Accessibility Group, International Council of Museums**



Head of Public Engagement and Training - MAXXI Foundation Art historian and museologist, holds a European master's degree in history of architecture from the Roma Tre University, is currently conducting a PhD at the University of Torvergata. Expert in museum education and accessibility and pedagogy of cultural heritage, she has curated projects for several museums and participated as a researcher in projects for the Sapienza University and the Lazio Region on regional museum systems. She has worked at MAXXI since 2004, first in the Education Office, where she was responsible from 2014 to 2018, currently heading the Training Office and the Public Engagement Office, which implements projects on accessibility and interculture in a participatory way. From the academic year 2016/17 he is a lecturer in Didactics of the Museum and the Territory at the School of Specialization in Historical Artistic Assets of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy of Sapienza, University of Rome.

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**Maria Elena Colombo,**  
**Head of the Department of Interpretation, Accessibility, and Sharing, Museo Egizio, Italy**



Graduated in Conservation of Heritage, she has a Master's degree in Museology, Museography and Management of Cultural Heritage. She has been involved for a decade in digital communication. She worked as Digital Media Curator and press office for the Diocesan Museum of Milan from 2011 to 2015, collaborated with the house museum Bagatti Valsecchi and the MAN in Cividale. She has taught multimedia for cultural heritage at the Brera Academy; he teaches courses in the Master's degree in Museology, Museography and Cultural Management and at the Graduate School of Archaeology at the Catholic University of Milan on the subject of museology and communication, with a focus on digital. Author of the book Museums and digital culture. Since 2022 head of the department interpretation, accessibility, sharing of the Museo Egizio in Turin.

**Stefania De Blasi,**  
**Head of Communication and Documentation Area, CCR**



Stefania De Blasi is an art historian, specialized in the history of decorative arts and PhD in Restoration History and Art Criticism. She has collaborated on national research and cataloging projects with the University of Turin, the Soprintendenze piemontesi and Italian museums. Since 2006 she has worked at the Conservation and Restoration Centre “La Venaria Reale” (CCR) where he coordinated as a reference art historian the restoration sectors of Wooden Furniture, Textile Products and numerous national and international projects on Museum Residences. Today she is responsible for the Communication and Documentation Area and manages the CCR library and archives. She has curated numerous exhibitions, conferences and publications and is the contact person for curatorial projects and valorization of the assets of the Mauritian Order Foundation, in particular for the Palazzina di Caccia di Stupinigi. She is a specialist lecturer for the CCR’s preventive conservation programmes. She has taught and written about the history of restoration, museology, art market, connoisseurship and history of decorative arts.

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**Enrico Dolza,**  
**Director, Institute for the Deaf , Turin**



Enrico Dolza is the director of the Institute for the Deaf in Turin and holds a PhD in Special Pedagogy at the University of Turin, where he is currently a professor at the Department of Philosophy and Education Sciences.

His research interests include deaf education, European disability policies, cultural and museum accessibility and sign language linguistics, with a special focus on the risks of multiple and intersectional discrimination for under-represented target groups.



**Alessia Fassone,**  
**Curator, Museo Egizio, Italy**



Graduated in Egyptology and specialized in Archaeology at the University of Turin, she worked in numerous archaeological excavations and participated in the activities of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Alexandria. As an expert of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he took part in the project “Grand Museo Egizio - Giza”, at the Museo Egizio in Cairo in 2004. She also devoted herself to the dissemination of information on Egyptology, through teaching and writing texts, cultural tourism and museum education. Before becoming curator for the Foundation for the Museum and the Egyptian Antiquities, he collaborated with the Archaeological Superintendence of Piedmont in the registration of collections kept in warehouses.

**Maria Teresa Jaquinta,**  
**Secretary General, International Council of Monuments and Sites, ICOMOS Italia**



Maria Teresa Jaquinta, an architect by profession, has held leading roles in various international organizations. Currently, she serves as the Secretary General of the Italian Committee and Vice President of the International Scientific Committee for Education and Training in Conservation at ICOMOS. Additionally, she is a member of other committees focused on architectural heritage conservation and risk preparedness. She has been registered with the Professional Order of Architects, Designers, Landscape Architects, and Conservators (CNAPPC) since 1997. Throughout her career at ICCROM, from 1987 to 2021, she held management roles and supervised numerous projects. These include the NAMEC program (1992-2001) and the coordination of initiatives in the Mediterranean, such as the study for the restitution of the Axum Stele and the preparation of the architectural competition for the New Museo Egizio in Giza. From 2004 to 2021, she has also been responsible for ICCROM's external relations with member states, focusing on the host country, Italy. In 2021 and 2023, she successfully managed two Italian cases for inclusion in the Register of Memory of the World of UNESCO—specifically, the Banco di Napoli Foundation and the State Archive of Naples. Since 2023, she has been the

director at UNIDROIT for the International Program on Law and Development. She actively engages in conferences and courses at Italian and international universities.

**Sara Ingoglia,**  
**Communication and PR Officer, Fondazione Santagata**  
**for Economics of Culture**



Sara is a young professional with an interdisciplinary background between Economics and Culture. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics and Management of Cultural Heritage from Ca' Foscari University, and a Master's degree in Cultural Economics and

Entrepreneurship from the Erasmus University of Rotterdam. With a passion for art and a keen interest in communication and digital innovation, Sara aspires to contribute to the development and growth of the cultural sector. Her professional experiences in communication, including a position at the Council of Culture of the Municipality of Milan, have provided her with significant skills in institutional contexts. Currently, Sara serves as the Communication Officer at Fondazione Santagata, where she is responsible for promoting ongoing projects and activities, as well as managing the foundation's external relations.

**Valerie Magar,**  
**Unit Manager Programmes, ICCROM**



Valerie Magar holds a BA in conservation of movable heritage (Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía, Mexico) and a PhD in archaeology (Université de Paris I, Sorbonne, France), who has specialized in the conservation of archaeological

heritage, particularly mural paintings and rock art, as well as in history and theory of conservation.

She has worked in Mexico, at the Coordinación Nacional de Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural (CNCPC) of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH). She was national Coordinator of INAH between 2013 and 2016. Between 2004 and 2010, she worked at ICCROM as a conservation specialists, and she returned to ICCROM in 2018, where is manager of the Programmes Unit. She is a member if ICOM, ICOMOS and the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) She has published on different issues in archaeological

conservation, heritage management, and history and theory of conservation. She has participated as an editor for several journals in the past, and is currently the editor of *Conversaciones...*, co-published by INAH and ICCROM.

**Joanna Norman,**

**Director, Victoria and Albert Research Institute and National Art Library, United Kingdom**



Joanna Norman is Director of the V&A Research Institute, National Art Library (NAL) and Archives at the Victoria and Albert Museum. She is responsible for leading the V&A's research projects and affiliations, university partnerships and the collections and services of the library and archives. Her curatorial projects and publications include *Baroque* (V&A, 2009), *Treasures from Budapest* (Royal Academy of Arts, 2010), *Europe 1600–1815 Galleries* (V&A, 2015), the *Scottish Design Galleries at V&A Dundee* (2018), *Between Two Worlds: Francis Williams and Vanley Burke* (V&A, 2023) as well as the V&A / BBC4 collaboration *Handmade in Britain* (2011–2). She is currently leading the coordination of a new AHRC-funded programme of Early Career Fellowships within cultural and heritage organisations, co-chairs the Independent Research Organisation consortium, and is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

Photo Credit © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

**Silvia Sabato,**

**Head of Strategic and International Development, CCR**



Economist with experience in strategic and financial planning, development and management of public institutions, consortia and foundations with public participation. Strong skills in planning, management of complex projects, fundraising and international development for territories, companies and cultural institutions. Since 2009 she is responsible for strategic and international development, fund raising, marketing, project development at the CCR and the Young Professionals Forum; Regional marketing manager of the cultural and tourist circuit of the Royal Residences at the Consortium of Royal Residences of Savoy, Reggia di Venaria from 2018 to 2020; Head of Corporate Promotion at Ceipiemonte S.c.p.a, Regional Agency for International Development, from 2008 to 2017; Head of the



Documentation and International Trade Office at the Chamber of Commerce of Turin from 1994 to 2008. Long experience in relations with multilateral organisations such as the UN System (UNDP, UNESCO, ILO), the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the African Development Bank. Lecturer for the MABIC of the Politecnico di Milano, for the Faculty of Economics of the University of Turin, for the Italian Ministry of Labour and for a project UN-ILO, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia for local entrepreneurs on techniques to participate in international competitions.

**Sarah Stannage,**  
**Executive Director, IIC**



As a Clore Fellow and Fellow of Royal Society of Arts, Sarah often draws on her professional experience and track record for co-production and community-led work. Sarah first trained as a Conservator-Restorer at Lincoln University qualifying in 2004 and has degrees in Environmental

Decision Making, Policy and Ethics as well as Strategic Management and Finance. Having spent several years in Peterborough, UK with Opportunity Peterborough (an Urban Regeneration Company) and as Head of Heritage responsible for museums, collections and an archaeological wetland site at Flag Fen, Sarah played an early and instrumental role in supporting the conservation of the internationally significant Bronze Age discoveries at Must Farm in the UK. She has guest lectured at the University of Leicester Museum Studies department and contributed as an engagement advisor for a major five-year interdisciplinary research project, Understanding Everyday Participation, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Sarah has over 15 years of experience in museums and heritage regeneration including as a sustainability champion and working at Chief Executive level in the charity and environmental sectors.

Current Role: in 2018 Sarah was appointed as the first Executive Director of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. In this role Sarah is focusing on the strategic development of the Institute, in its mission to bring together conservators and cultural heritage specialists around the world educating, enabling and recognising excellence.



## Feedback from the Expert Meetings



*She gave thoughtful answers to my questions. I feel that her answer to my question about convincing South African heritage institutions to implement more accessibility features in the face of budget cuts was especially insightful - for one thing, it starts with integrating accessibility thinking into the culture of an organization, right from the start of a project. Her reframing of this issue from a place of financial scarcity to one of culture changes was so helpful”.*

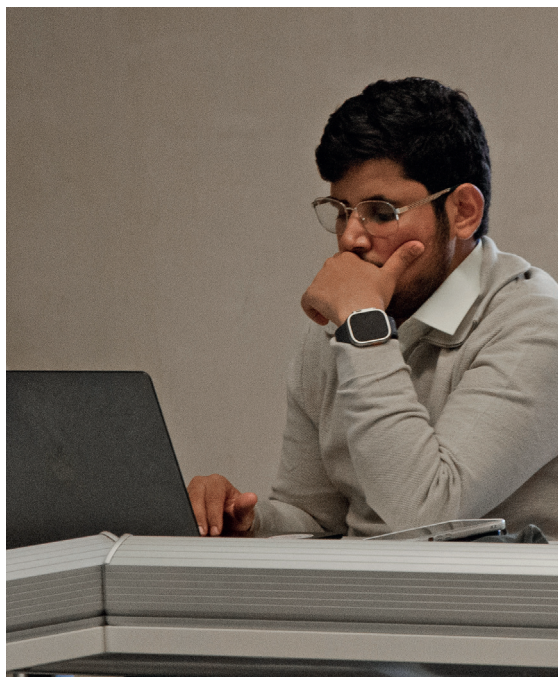
**Lauren Fonto, South Africa**

*“The meeting lasted half an hour and was very fruitful. The expert was very helpful and professional. It was a very interesting and useful moment of exchange and discussion. Thank you for the seriousness with which you structured the activity”.*

**Elena Tesser, Italy**

*“The interview was very useful for me, and effective, after this interview I organized my thoughts and took experience”.*

**Maria Alsaleh, Syria**



*“We talked about how to engage with disabled communities based on his work and I got some excellent pointers. We also talked about my research and the discussion lasted 20 minutes. I thought it was helpful and it was good to talk to someone about enhancing accessibility while reaching out to disabled groups and he was able to provide advice on how to go about it”.*

**Emily Slater, Malta**

# CONCLUSION

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This workshop gave us the opportunity to make a deep dive in to accessible projects, thanks also to visits at the Museo Egizio and Camera, in Turin. The fact that we were coming from different countries from all over the world allowed us to share our experiences and our thoughts on the topic of the forum. We learnt how important it is to make cultural heritage understandable, what professionals may take for granted: for example, the title and the author of an artwork and give importance to the chronological order of historical facts.

Moreover, how important it is to provide access to different kinds of languages. We had the possibility to discuss together some methodologies and best practices of accessibility in museums and special institutions such as the CCR, who have made their own spaces accessible as well such as the Quiet Space in the Library or the Tactile Map and Tactile Floors. We appreciate learning about the methodologies of accessible writing in the field of conservation and restoration.

It was challenging to construct (and deconstruct) the Glossary of Conservation and Restoration for making the communication of conservation more accessible. We discussed the importance of Universal Design in this specific domain of conservation. Access to cultural life is a right and is therefore not negotiable: for this reason we should normalize the accessibility of cultural heritage. We should look at accessibility as a political and social issue and make it our responsibility. Since cultural heritage is a matter of public domain we need to make conservation easier to understand for everybody. In the spirit of inclusion it is important to involve disabled people in the design of accessible projects for cultural heritage. The two museums we visited were excellent examples for what every museum should do: making a museum visit in just one way, which is the accessible way. There is not “them” and “us” but just “we”. It is important to design accessible places in order to promote participation without discrimination because no participation is discrimination. We feel that accessibility is universal, and this experience validated that accessibility must be universal.





# PROTAGONISTS OF THE 2024 EDITION



# Protagonists



Clelia Calarco



Denise Crepaldi



Emily Slater



Hira Ovais



Lauren Fonto



Mohammad Alhariri



Mohammed AlBalawi



Niccolò Acram  
Cappelletto



Sofia Ceseri



Virginia Di Bari



Layal M Alqadi

We asked participants and tutors to answer the following question:

**“In what way did the path you experienced this year in Venaria affect your aspirations/dreams and/or professional activities?”.**

Below their replies.

### **Clelia Calarco, Italy**

**P**articipating in the Young Professional Forum at the Centro di Restauro in Venaria Reale this year profoundly influenced my aspirations and professional activities in the realm of cultural accessibility.

Engaging with experts and peers dedicated to enhancing the accessibility of cultural heritage opened my eyes to the importance of inclusion in the preservation and restoration of our shared history.

The discussions emphasized that cultural heritage should not only be preserved and restored but also made accessible to all communities, regardless of background or ability.

Above all it is necessary to make the documentation easily understandable.

My participation in the Forum of Young Professionals in Venaria not only enriched my understanding of the principles of restoration, but also fuelled my desire to make any kind of information not only accessible but understandable.

Immersing myself in a stimulating environment, with the other participants, I had the opportunity to explore principles and methodologies that promote inclusivity in cultural heritage.

This experience proved enriching not only for my personal growth but also for the work context I am currently in. I gained new skills and inspiration that motivated me. Additionally, I realized the importance of engaging different communities and people for creating inclusive spaces that celebrate diversity. This awareness has strengthened my determination to establish myself in this sector, actively contributing to initiatives that make culture accessible and meaningful for everyone.

### **Denise Crepaldi, Italy**

**T**he experience I had in Venaria as a tutor for the Young Professional Forum 2024 team was very interesting for me. I had the chance to coordinate a stimulating workgroup, enriched by the diverse nationalities of the participants and their different educational backgrounds. This diversity made the exchange particularly dynamic and constructive.

Furthermore, from a professional perspective, as someone who works on-call as a guide in a couple of museums in Turin and its province, it was truly a unique opportunity to engage with other young cultural heritage professionals on a crucial topic for the life of museums: cultural accessibility. Discussing how to make museums truly inclusive spaces, open to and for everyone, was profoundly formative for me.

I take home a precious memory of these days and a phrase that will continue to guide me in my work: *“The museum is for everyone and belongs to everyone”*.



## **Emily Slater, Malta**

**E**ver since I started to study archaeology, history, and cultural heritage, I fell in love with it. Learning about the past and presenting it in a way that is accessible to all became my passion. However, through learning about disability, theory, society, disability advocacy and activism, I found that there was a gap in creating accessible cultural spaces, such as museums and archaeological sites to disabled people, particularly to autistic people. As an autistic woman, I thought about the possible connection between these two fields. Therefore, my master's research was based on this gap. I applied to come to the Young Professionals Forum to explore more about this topic and I was thrilled to find other likeminded people through this. As for future aspirations, one day, I would like to work in heritage and disability sectors, in the hopes of being a consultant to make heritage more accessible, by collaborating with disabled people to create more access for them. I hope to apply what I learnt in Venaria so that I can continue what I worked on in my research, expanding further in Malta. Right now, I am continuing with my activism in Malta for autistic people. Moreover, I am working with a ministry of the Maltese government for disability and disability rights. I am truly grateful for the opportunity the Young Professionals Forum has given me.

## **Hira Ovais, Pakistan**

**P**articipating in the Young Professional Forum on Cultural Accessibility in Venaria was a profoundly transformative experience that significantly shaped my professional aspirations and approach to cultural heritage. The forum provided a deep understanding of the principles and methodologies necessary for making cultural heritage accessible to all, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity in heritage management. Engaging with a diverse group of professionals from various cultural and professional backgrounds fostered a collaborative learning environment, allowing us to share ideas, exchange perspectives, and learn from each other's experiences.

Through dynamic discussions and hands-on workshops, I gained exposure to innovative tools and strategies designed to enhance cultural accessibility. Site visits to renowned institutions such as Museo Egizio and CAMERA demonstrated practical applications of these principles. The museums showcased remarkable innovations, including tactile displays for visually impaired visitors, interactive digital guides, and inclusive curation techniques that accommodate a broad spectrum of audiences. These real-world examples provided me with actionable insights into how accessibility can be embedded into heritage practices.

This experience not only broadened my technical knowledge but also deepened my commitment to integrating accessibility into my professional work. It inspired me to create heritage initiatives that celebrate diversity, ensuring equitable access to cultural treasures for present and future generations.

## **Lauren Fonto, South Africa**

**M**y experience in Venaria has given me a strong start in incorporating accessibility thinking into my heritage conservation/restoration practice right from the beginning of my career. I especially found the concepts of “universal design for learning” and “design for all” helpful in broadening my knowledge of ways to make cultural heritage accessible for all. Careful consideration of how particular environments can be disabling for people is something that needs to be a part of the work all of us do as young heritage professionals, no matter our particular niche. The expert meeting I had with Sofia Bilotta from the Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo (MAXXI) challenged me to reframe accessibility initiatives in heritage institutions as something that needs to start as being part of an entire institution’s mindset, rather than an issue of funding availability. Lastly, I feel that the workshop on accessible writing for conservation/restoration, including a glossary of conservation terms, will be of great help in writing about my future thesis and projects for audiences outside of conservation/restoration and outside the heritage sector as well. I also hope to use what I’ve learned about accessible writing as additional skills I can use alongside those I already have in the area of academic writing.

## **Mohammad Alhariri, Syria**

**T**his year’s experiences in YPF 24 CULTURAL ACCESSIBILITY has inspired me to continue my career in heritage conservation, where I can actively contribute in creating environments that welcome all. This journey has firmed my belief that cultural heritage should be a shared experience, transcending barriers and having a deeper connection to our past.

It showed me the power of digital technologies in making cultural heritage more accessible and how to connect people from all over the world and to preserve our cultural heritage for future generations. I hope to contribute in developing creative digital tools and platforms that can make cultural heritage more accessible and engaging.

It also opened my eyes to the lack of accessibility to the amount of cultural knowledge has also made me aware of the significant barriers that prevent many people from experiencing this heritage personally, This realization has inspired me to pursue a career in heritage educating, where I can develop innovative ways to make cultural heritage accessible to diverse audiences, including people with disabilities, language barriers, and limited mobility, that we can solve by designing buildings and sites that are accessible to all, we can foster a more equitable and inclusive society.

## **Mohammed AlBalawi, Saudi Arabia**

**T**his year's experience in Venaria Reale profoundly shaped my aspirations and professional outlook. At the CCR in Venaria Reale, we participated in insightful sessions and workshops that explored accessibility in heritage conservation. We delved into how heritage sites can be transformed to ensure accessibility for everyone, emphasizing that accessibility is not just a feature but a fundamental right. The program underscored the importance of granting universal access to knowledge about cultural heritage worldwide. Additionally, visits to remarkable sites, including CAMERA - Centro Italiano per la Fotografia and the Museo Egizio in Turin, showcased inspiring applications of accessibility in action. Sharing ideas with participants from diverse backgrounds enriched my perspective and reinforced my commitment to creating inclusive heritage experiences. This journey motivated me to envision projects that merge accessibility with innovative storytelling to connect communities with their cultural heritage. Venaria Reale reaffirmed my passion for ensuring heritage serves as a bridge that unites people of all abilities and cultures.

## **Niccolò Acram Cappelletto, Italy**

**T**his year's Young Professional Forum edition impacted my training as an aspiring heritage professional with its focus on accessibility. It inspired me to consider new approaches to the field that are not commonly studied in this depth. For me, the most enriching part of the Forum consists in the ability to build close relationships in a very short time with other inspiring (aspiring or already established) professionals, whether participants, mentors, or special guests. This year's focus also represented an opportunity to dive deep into topics that I do not normally deal with in my practice. This aspect has provided me with new ways of reflecting on the role of heritage and cultural institutions in everyday life. In this regard, the visits to the Venaria Royal Palace, the Museo Egizio, and Camera were fundamental activities to understand examples of excellence in a field that is still hard to see well represented. Finally, I cherish the relationships with the participants and other tutors, which gave me more confidence in pursuing my aspirations of starting a PhD in this field. Witnessing the diverse range of experiences from around the world inspires me greatly and gives me hope to always find new goals and obtain the right skills in the field of cultural heritage.



## **Sofia Ceseri, Italy**

**M**y name is Sofia Ceseri and I'm a second-year Phd student at the University of Trieste. I had the opportunity to participate at the Young Professionals Forum in 2023. It was with great pleasure that I accepted the invitation to participate again this year, as a tutor, to help and support the great work done by the participants of this edition. From the very beginning I found the topic of Cultural Accessibility extremely interesting. In my life experience I have been faced many times with the importance of living in a place accessible to all. According to me, YPF24 participants built an outstanding team, because we all had the chance to look at the topic in many different ways thanks to their in-depth knowledge and life experiences. I think that all of us now have clear in mind what Accessibility means. This workshop made me think again on what I want and can do in my PhD journey and in everyday life. The research world can provide me the tools to deal with this theme to a wide audience, not only to experts in my field but even starting with children at school, that is something I really hope to realize, linking my study with the one of cultural accessibility.

## **Virginia Di Bari , Italy**

**T**his year's experience at the Young Professional Forum was truly inspiring and enriching, offering valuable insights into my aspirations and professional goals. It was a unique opportunity to explore topics of shared interest, both as a citizen and a professional, in a welcoming and dynamic environment.

Collaborating with talented and passionate young professionals, whose energy and expertise were truly motivating, was a highlight. The constructive yet relaxed atmosphere created a space for effective collaboration. This success was not only thanks to the participants but also to the thoughtful vision and efforts of the organizing team. Expanding these teams with diverse international perspectives and goal-oriented approaches made the experience even more impactful—an approach I am eager to integrate into my own work. The sessions were expertly designed, and the museum visits provided thought-provoking reflections. The balanced pace, effective time management, and attention to focus patterns ensured full engagement and productivity. A mix of individual and group activities underscored the importance of truly listening—not just to feedback and ideas, but to the unique perspectives and needs of each person. This reminded me to bring that same level of awareness into my own work. As John Dewey said, “education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life, but is life itself.” This idea perfectly captures the essence of what I experienced in Venaria: an opportunity to grow both personally and professionally, in a space where learning felt alive and deeply connected to everyday life.

In short, this experience was an ideal blend of intellectual growth and personal fulfillment. It reignited my determination to pursue my goals while emphasizing the importance of community and shared learning. The importance of building connections between different realities, such as

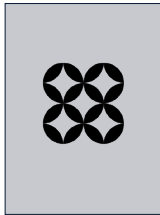
universities, private organizations, and public institutions. Observing ongoing projects and engaging with works in progress added another layer of practical learning that I will carry forward. Finally, it reinforced the value of lifelong learning. Staying curious, building networks, and embracing new and diverse experiences are essential for growth. It reminded me to keep exploring my field with enthusiasm while maintaining an active interest in broader social and cultural issues alongside my professional expertise.



Ph: group photo



## Facts & figures



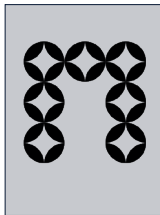
**4**  
**Tutors from:**  
Italy  
Syria



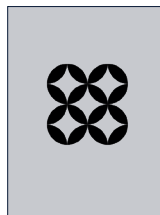
**Venaria Reale,  
Italy**



**From 24 to 27  
September 2024**



**7**  
**Participants from:**  
Italy  
Malta  
South Africa  
Pakistan  
Saudi Arabia



**4**  
**Scholarships' winners from:**  
Italy  
Malta  
South Africa

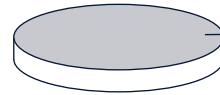




# Evaluation and satisfaction

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**How do you evaluate the experience you have lived and why?**



100%  
positive

**T**he experience I had at the CCR through YPF24 was more than positive, because it was a rich and educational path in every respect, also thanks to the exchange with other people and experts from various fields”.

**T**he experience was extremely positive and enriching in many respects. It was a unique opportunity to learn more about topics of common interest, in a context of open and stimulating discussion. I had the pleasure of coming into contact with young experts who shared a great passion for the topics discussed. The atmosphere of exchange was constructive and relaxed, facilitating genuine collaboration. This was the result not only of the scholars but also of the organisation’s ability and vision. The talks were always well thought out and relevant, offering interesting insights for thought. The museum visits were of great value, precisely because of the thematic slant that was proposed. In addition, I really appreciated the opportunity to speak in front of an audience, as the climate of mutual esteem that was created made it possible to respect the pace of all of us and face each other’s insecurities together, creating greater self-confidence. It was therefore an enriching and rewarding experience, both intellectually and personally.”

**I** found it very helpful to get a background lecture on the changes in views of disability over the years and on universal design for education. The site visits then enforced what I’d learnt in the classroom, and helped me to evaluate the accessibility features at both museums. Visiting CCR’s own laboratories and accessibility features helped to provide the context for the lectures on the conservation glossary and the online archive project with its abstracts in accessible writing. It was a privilege to visit the Reggia Venaria Reale, both as a “tourist” and for the purpose of looking at accessibility features. I also enjoyed the food we had, and found my accommodation comfortable. I liked being able to look out the window at

the Capella di Sant'Uberto as well".

**“I**rate the experience extremely positively. I had the opportunity to learn, grow and connect with fantastic people with varied points of view. Every moment was rich in learning and allowed me to broaden my perspectives, personally but especially professionally.

The workshop allowed me to put myself on the line, even on things I work with every day but which do not always allow me to confront different points of view. So thank you!!!”.

**“O**verall, the experience was excellent and one that I would treasure forever. Everyone I encountered was very helpful, kind and obviously passionate about their work and sharing it with others. As a participant, I learnt so much and will definitely take what I learnt in Venaria and apply it to future projects. I met so many lovely people, some of whom I’m still in contact with now. As for the programme itself, it was well organised and they created a space for discussion and engaging with the material they presented. I liked the hands-on approach as well, such as the site visits to the Museo Egizio and CAMERA in Turin where we had the opportunity to actually see the inclusive measures implemented in cultural spaces. I also liked the activity in class where we had to translate terms in conservation in an accessible format, which I particularly enjoyed”.

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**“I**participated in the forum as a tutor and it was really exciting for me. It was a proposal that I immediately accepted and I thank my tutor and the PhD college for allowing me to participate. Both the participants and we learnt so much on the topic of accessibility of cultural heritage (and beyond) and shared invaluable personal experiences. All this allows us more and more to open our eyes to the world and consider all those aspects that we do not know, but above all, to live in a society where we can be active and cooperative citizens for the good of all. I am sure that not only for me, but for everyone, the baggage we have created over these days will help to improve us in our professions and in our everyday lives. We now have more tools and new ideas to put into practice”.

**“T**he overall experience during the workshop was fabulous... the workshop has intended to provide new exposure to cultural domains which was very well taken by the organizers!”



Article by Lauren Fonto for the newsletter of the *South African Museums Association*.

## Young Professionals Forum in Turin, Italy, 24-27 September

Lauren Fonto,  
Collections Management Intern,  
Western Cape Government

From 24-27 September, I attended the *Young Professionals Forum on Emerging Skills for Heritage Conservation*, hosted by the Centro Conservazione e Restauro La Venaria Reale in Turin, Italy. The theme was “Cultural Accessibility: Principles and Methodologies for Cultural Heritage”.

The YPF “[...] delve[d] into best practices concerning universal accessibility to culture, its content, and its spaces, in alignment with the UN Convention and the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The primary objective of this new edition is to raise awareness and explore the diverse landscape of cultural accessibility, with a particular focus on libraries, archives, archaeological sites, museums, and educational initiatives for their conservation.”

### LECTURE ON DISABILITY PARADIGMS AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

We received an informative lecture by Professor Enrico Dolza. He teaches at the University of Turin and is the director the Turin Institute for the Deaf. He explained how ideas about disability have changed over

the years, which included the Italian context.

Part of the positive changes over the years include the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. In Article 30, the Declaration states that people with disabilities have the right to cultural life.

We discussed the importance of Universal Design in the specific domain of conservation.

Access to cultural life is a right, and the accessibility of cultural heritage should be normalized. We should look at accessibility as a political and social issue and make it our responsibility. Since cultural heritage is a matter of public domain, we need to make conservation easier to understand for everybody. In the spirit of inclusion, it is important to involve disabled people in the design of accessible projects for cultural heritage.

### SITE VISITS

This workshop gave us the opportunity to view accessible projects, thanks to visits at the Museo Egizio and CAMERA Museum<sup>1</sup>, in Turin.

One of the accessibility features at



the **Museo Egizio** is a selection of objects that may be touched. The Museo Egizio signed an agreement with the Ministry of Culture that it would select tactile objects from those that were in a state of good preservation. People who have permission to touch the objects get a badge which states such permission.

An example of one of the tactile objects is a stone statue of the Princess Redji, with a symbol in an orange rectangle showing that this object is part of the selection of tactile objects.

A second example of accessibility features is the touch panels and tactile map. The collection of human remains at the museum is behind glass, as well as many objects.

This makes museum exhibits less accessible to visually impaired and blind people, and so various exhibits are “redrawn” using resin outlines on touch panels, and a QR code for an audio guide is included as well.

There was also a tactile map near one of the touch panels, where the building plan is outlined in resin.

The map key also has Braille explanations, and a key for the symbolic language used in the museum to communicate with a wider range of people. The map also has a QR code to access the audio guide.

Thirdly, the Museo Egizio also has a quiet space, which is a room reserved for those who need a brief period of silence and calm before continuing with their museum visit. There is a bed and a bathroom inside this room. Examples of use include a person with autism using the room during a meltdown, or a person with

diabetes injecting insulin.

The **CAMERA Museum** is another museum which has implemented audio guides for its exhibits. An example is the panel describing a photograph by Margaret Bourke White, who took pictures of people protesting apartheid-era police brutality.

Audio is accessed via selecting a smartphone’s NFC symbol, which then allows the phone to scan the NFC tag (similar to a QR code). There is also Braille at the top of the panel. Like the Museo Egizio, there are resin outlines on the panel to give an idea of what the exhibit looks like. Small dots represent shadow areas and clouds.

We discussed these various methodologies and best practices of accessibility in museums and institutions such as the **CCR**, who have made their own spaces more accessible through a quiet space in the library or the tactile map and tactile floor pathways.

The two museums we visited were excellent examples of what every museum should do: making a museum visit accessible for everyone.

## MAKING A GLOSSARY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE TERMS

The project that came out of the YPF was a **Glossary of Cultural Heritage Conservation**.

CCR has released an online heritage conservation archive featuring various projects it has done over the years. Alongside the abstract in scientific language, there is an abstract in facilitated language.

The aim is not to give less information, but to make information more accessible for a wider range of people (including heritage professionals who are not conservators).

With the glossary project, we found that there were some differences in the terms we use in our different countries. For example, the term “curative conservation” doesn’t seem to be common in South Africa. (At least, I did not come across this term while studying in Pretoria.)

The terms were divided into broad categories, namely “General Terms”, “Analysis and Monitoring”, “Artwork Materials”, “Conservation Conditions of Artworks” and “Restoration<sup>2</sup> Actions”.

## ACCESSIBLE WRITING WORKSHOP

We appreciated learning about accessible writing in the field of conservation.

We learnt how important it is to make cultural heritage understandable, especially information which professionals may take for granted: for example, the title and the author of an artwork, and giving importance the chronological order of historical facts.

Given the Italian names of the artists and titles, the correct artist and title names were not always immediately obvious.

It was challenging **to construct the glossary of conservation and restoration for making the communication of conservation more accessible.** We worked in groups to rewrite conservation abstracts in a more accessible way.

## CONCLUSION

It is important to design accessible places in order to promote participation without discrimination, because no participation is discrimination.

The experience of participating in the YPF validated that **accessibility must be universal.**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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dei Siti Comitato Nazionale Italiano (ICOMOS Italy), International Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC), and Fondazione Santagata. The forum was supported by Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, Fondazione Magnetto, and Amici della Reggia e del Centro di Restauro La Venaria Reale. In particular, I would like to thank Fondazione Magnetto for making available the funding that supported my scholarship. Without such generous support, I would not have been able to participate in the forum.

<sup>1</sup> Full name: CAMERA – Centro Italiano per la Fotografia.

<sup>2</sup> Restoration is still a widely used term in many European contexts, but CCR uses both the standard of minimal intervention and restoration depending on the requirements of the project





*In collaboration with*



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