

A. Description of activities 2010–2012

1. Background

Heritage and the academy: The ‘Heritage Industry’ is an expanding global phenomenon that reworks the past in the present for the future. In this way, it serves ideological (identity formation, nationalism), commercial (tourism, antiquity markets, looting), social (family histories, community and ethnic identities) and aesthetic (art and architecture) forces in society. More importantly it engages an expanding group of professionals that manage and present the tangible heritage in museums, at monuments, in historical environments and, increasingly, the intangible heritage in performing arts, literature, film and on the web. Alongside this development, which has taken place during the last 25–30 years, parallel fields of critical research in disciplines intersecting with the heritage industry have expanded. Yet the professional orientation of practice based research and the critical perspectives from within the humanities have not been substantially integrated. The University of Gothenburg (GU), with its dual emphases in both this directions, offers a unique opportunity to lead the field of heritage studies in northern Europe. Through its integrated programs of teaching and field research (e.g. the Department of Conservation, ‘Museion’ at the School of Global Studies, and the Heritage Line in the Department of Historical Studies, and later the Faculty of Arts) it has offered a platform for the scrutiny of ‘heritagising’ processes within a strong research environment. GU is thus among the first universities to respond to the increasing ‘heritagisation’ of culture from within an integrated field of practice and theory. This was the background to the present research priority.

Organisation and aims: The present organisation is based on the collaboration of four faculties and as such is the broadest project within the suite of University of Gothenburg ‘priority projects’. The challenge the organisation set was to integrate research on cultural heritage within the four nominated faculties, with the aim of developing an innovative cross-disciplinary research environment with an international focus. The proposed method was to create a platform for dialogue through the ‘Heritage Seminar’. Since its subsequent founding, the Heritage Seminar has been managed by a working group of four people, one from each faculty, lately supported by a secretary, with the four Deans serving as a Steering Committee responsible for budget and strategic decisions. With these aims, and with this structure, the organisation sought to develop cultural heritage studies at GU ‘from a profile area to an area of strength’ as stated in the original proposal.

Results in brief: The Heritage Seminar has initiated an interdisciplinary research environment between the four faculties. Of greatest significance, the project has succeeded in establishing an integrated research seminar, a national and international research network, and an inaugural international conference as the founding event of the International Association of Critical Heritage Studies. An adjunct to the international emphasis of the ‘research aims’ is an increasingly strategic focus on fields of practice within the west Swedish region, including their relevance within a global context. This broad range of endeavours has established a solid foundation for the future expansion of activities. We describe the activities following from this strategy below. They are organized according to year and main activities.

2. Chronology of activities

2010 Planning and networking: To establish networks and inspire new research perspectives, a ‘start up conference’ was held in May with one hundred participants. The participants included individuals from GU, alongside other Swedish nationals and international participants. The keynote speakers were a prominent international artist, Indian filmmaker Amar Kanwar, who talked about “poetic evidence”, the arts and heritage issues from an Indian perspective, and the internationally renowned heritage researcher Prof. Gregory J. Ashworth, of the University of Groningen.

A – The Heritage Seminar; Activities 2010-12

To inspire a bottom-up process of local heritage project initiation, a series of workshops were held during the fall, which concerned curating, archiving, and globalization. They were aimed at formulating inspiring local research projects that could apply for 'start up' money from the 500.000 SEK, which was designated for that purpose. To date, (early 2012) two projects have successfully applied for research funding from national research councils.

To stimulate an international research environment we decided to announce four two-year post-doctoral researcher positions, to invite a visiting professor, and to plan an international conference concerning critical heritage. During the fall four post-doctoral researchers were recruited out of 75 applicants. The high number of applicants demonstrates the international interest in cultural heritage research.

In collaboration with our visiting professor, Laurajane Smith, from the Australian National University, a proposal for the formation of 'The International Association of Critical Heritage Studies' was launched. It was decided that an inaugural conference was to take place in Gothenburg in June 2012. This project offered GU a substantial opportunity to develop an international profile as a centre of importance for the field of Cultural Heritage Studies.

2011 Integration and identification of future research strands: Over the course of the spring four post-doctoral researchers took up their positions and created the Critical Heritage Text Seminar. It is aimed at developing a forum for cross-disciplinary collaboration between researchers and draws on material from the fields of anthropology, history, archaeology, material culture studies, memory studies, museology, cultural studies and architecture. The seminar also hosted visits from guest professors Valdimar Hafstein (Háskóli Íslands), Laurajane Smith (ANU) and Michael Rowlands (UCL), all of whom offered inspiration and extended international research linkages from their own professional networks.

A national network for heritage researchers was launched, with the Heritage Seminar as its co-founder. The others participants include the University of Linköping and the National Historical Museum, Stockholm. Riksbankens Jubileumsfond provided a small grant for the network. A number of workshops/symposia were carried out in the fall to identify new research strands in collaboration with our visiting professors. Those new emerging strands will be elaborated in the B-section, as they form the cornerstones of our future research strategies.

2012 International conference and research strands: Two projects, which were provided with support by the Heritage Seminar in 2011, received external funding commencing in 2012. A number of workshops and seminars, in tandem with negotiations with regional museums and their administrations, have started to provide an organisational framework for the future strands. The main event of the year is the Inaugural Conference of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS) in June (<http://www.science.gu.se/heritageconference2012>). To organize the international conference, the post-doctoral researchers have been engaged in session reviewing and planning. So far forty sessions, ten panel discussion and three workshops are scheduled.

Further planes for 2012 include two new visiting professors, Marie Louise Stig Sørensen from Cambridge and Michael Shanks from Stanford University. In addition, in terms of regional engagement, we have planned meetings with Heritage West, and in May the Vice Chancellor plan to visit the Tanum Rock Art Research Archive to sign an agreement about collaboration between the Heritage Seminar and Heritage West.

3. Conclusions

The research parameters: How well have we achieved the goals set out by GU in their guidelines (A-E)?

A. High quality research has expanded according to a simple bibliometric analysis for GU. For the period up to January 1, 2009, 279 titles (33 peer reviewed articles and 43 peer reviewed conference papers) were

found using the key word *kulturarv* (cultural heritage). In the two years since then the number has doubled to 535 (56 peer reviewed articles and 44 peer reviewed conference papers).

B and C: here we fully live up to the aims.

D and E: here we will soon meet the aims, as we are now engaging the region/museums.

Added value: How many activities would have been carried out irrespective of the Heritage Seminar? Although GU engaged in both teaching and research projects that fell within the broadest definition of heritage studies prior to this initiative, there was no cohesive vision for how these discrete interests might practically intersect across disciplinary boundaries. Since its inception, the Heritage Seminar has instituted a program of activities, which is centred on the integration of grounded practice with critical and theoretical perspectives, a fusion that situates both professional and intellectual interests in cultural heritage within a wider social context. These activities are conducted both across disciplines and across faculties and provide an estimated 80% of added value to the University when compared with activities prior to the start of the initiative. The core of this program is the inter-departmental seminar series run by the four post-doctoral researchers, the rich schedule of prominent visiting professors, and the instigating of what promises to be a pioneering international conference.

Organisation and aims: A collective leadership committee was formed to oversee the formation phase of the initiative, with a member drawn from each of the four faculties involved. This structure has worked well in the initial phase, particularly while the emphasis has been on the development of interdepartmental, and therefore cross-disciplinary, co-operation. However, we have come to the conclusion that as the foundational phase is nearing completion, this structure will, in the long term, become too burdensome and inflexible. We therefore recommend a new structure be instituted, based on a more traditional leadership model. This will include: a director; a board with members recruited from the four faculties; and a research committee with participation from international researchers to maintain an international outlook.

During this foundational phase, we have also undertaken an audit of research currently being carried out at GU among scholars working in related fields. From this audit we have identified four strands of research that may serve as a starting point for a second funding period. These suggested themes are firmly grounded in high quality studies that are extant within GU, and provide exciting potential for innovative cross-disciplinary relationships into the future. Through this empirical inquiry, we have also identified potential for intellectual and professional engagement with the wider region of west Sweden.

Local impact: Our bottom-up initiatives have generated some measurable effects. It is clear, for example, that the impact of visiting professors is far-reaching, with seminars offered by them attracting a large audience of both students and staff. These initiatives are a first step in the creation of an integrated interdisciplinary relationship between departments in the four faculties and are ready to develop further, with a bridge between teaching and research the next step. An initiative such as a PhD or graduate school would provide just such a step

Unsolved problems. It is fair to admit that although we have had several initiatives to engage with artistic practice and research, it has turned out to be difficult though important to bridge the gap between artists and critical researchers. We have therefore taken measures in the form of special writing grants and seminars to help out, and, as a pilot study, engaged with Professor Michael Shanks from Stanford University, who has a long experience in this field.

In summary: The Heritage Seminar has succeeded in achieving the major goals expected of us by GU. However, in order to realize the full potential of the Heritage Seminar, we suggest a new organisation with more grounded and specified research strands, and a PhD school. It is with these aims in mind that long-term financing is required.

B. Continuation of the Heritage Seminar.

Some preconditions. Having explored and developed the international research potential during the first two years we are now ready to expand the Heritage Seminar's activities. This proposal rests on the following premises:

- a) A need to ground international theory in local practice. Such integration should be linked to areas of strength at GU and in the region that are unique. To accommodate this we have formulated four new research strands.
- b) A new organisation suited to this end, which includes the formation of a new institution 'The Heritage Academy' to take care of collaboration between the academy/GU and the region/Heritage West.
- c) A better integration between teaching and research, to take advantage of the upcoming research potential in the four faculties. It demands the formation of a PhD school.
- d) A continuation of the successful initiatives of the Heritage Seminar based on international post-doctoral research and visiting professors, and a continuation of bottom-up seminars to stimulate research projects and external funding.

To accommodate and monitor these goals in accordance with GU's aims (research assessment guidelines A-F), we propose to produce an annual report based on agreed standards. In addition, we propose two assessments: an internal assessment after one or two years to oversee the new organisation, and an international research assessment after four years, as a platform for decisions about the future of the Heritage Seminar.

In terms of research, our proposal means, *firstly*, that we will be able to critically theorize different kinds of heritage practices (conservation, museum practices, management of sites, artistic practice, international cooperation and development, tourism etc.). *Secondly* that we will be able to take part in international discussions regarding heritage issues based on solid empirical research that situates the heritage discourse in a global context based on local case studies.

a) **Research strategies: from strands to clusters.**

The Heritage Seminar will focus on four tentative strands that we have identified as having a potential to become strong research clusters, since they combine already on going research activities.

Globalized heritage in a decolonial setting: In the globalised world, heritage is becoming increasingly important both as a tool for development and for the establishment of a common national identity as well as means to resist colonial reason. However, heritage concepts, tools and practices also contain colonial or northern hegemonical ideologies, which need to be challenged and decolonised. This theoretical work will not, however, only be of importance in former colonies, but has the potential to make a unique contribution and impulse to the development of the Heritage Academy and the Heritage Region West Sweden through the influence of postcolonial, global, and critical perspectives on local and global heritage practices.

Heritage Region West Sweden: Heritage research is an activity, which partly takes place on site. It is disseminated in academic journals, but also through museums and public sites in a process where specialists and non-specialists, citizens and visitors may take part. Thus, to flourish, it presupposes a structured development of the university's collaborative capacity for dialogue with society, and in our case – with the Västra Götaland region and its museums and heritage sites. West Sweden has some unique heritage assets – the *World Heritage Site in Tanum* and, linked to it, the *Swedish Rock Art Research Archive* (www.shfa.se), but also a whole range of well managed museums within the *Västarvet / Heritage West* framework. The Museum of World Cultures is another unique institution.

B – The Heritage Seminar; Continuation

Research projects are already under way with the Museum of World Culture and in the context of the World Heritage Site in Tanum. In addition, *maritime heritage* has a strong presence, and it has been the subject of research collaboration with the Heritage Seminar. To accommodate more dynamic initiatives between GU and the west Swedish heritage region, we propose the formation of a Heritage Academy to be described under b).

Archives, memory and the production of heritage: Archives have come to the forefront of research, including critical heritage studies, in recent years (e.g. the EU financed project on European Archives, and postcolonial research on their formation). Here several discourses meet – museum archives with a long history of the formation of museum collections have been revitalized through studies of the social and ideological context that created them. In addition, digitizing has democratized the use of archives, creating new interesting relations with the public, which is only starting to emerge. At this new interface critical research is needed.

GU is a world leader in rock art research and documentation, including its global comparative project on World Heritage Rock Art Sites and local heritage. Innovative research is also being undertaken on the colonial setting of the archives in the Museum of World Culture. These projects have the potential to integrate the different strands of the Heritage Seminar, including artistic practice and its role in public dissemination.

Artistic practice and research: identifying a heritage poetic: A heritage poetic, as expressed in the works of Michael Shanks, exists and is of critical interest. However, the autonomy of artistic practice should also be recognized. It is an interpretation and a re-enactment of a past of another kind. The genres artefacts and interpretations proper of the past take on a new life through the artistic practices themselves, which may open up new doors to understanding and interpretation of past and present histories.

b) Organisation

We suggest a new management structure in which leadership is delegated to a Director (professor), supported by a qualified assistant, and a board composed of the most relevant and distinguished scholars from all over the university representing concerned disciplines, including Conservation, History and Archaeology, Fine arts, and Global Studies, but preferably also other disciplines especially in the social sciences and humanities. In addition, we suggest the creation of a research committee with local and international researchers represented, in order to stimulate the development of high quality research projects.

The Heritage Academy outlined below should be connected to the Heritage Seminar, as should the PhD school, which will also require academic leadership.

The Heritage Academy is intended to be a joint initiative between the Heritage Region West (VGR) and the Heritage Seminar, which will create a dynamic meeting place between the two. Its main function will be to formulate new platforms for research and education, to explore new perspectives and new fields of activity, and to assist with fundraising for joint research projects. A board with representatives from both the University of Gothenburg and the region will assist a director and a secretary. The Heritage Academy will be linked to the Heritage Seminar, but organisational details are yet to be formulated.

c) Integrating teaching and research: the PhD school

If the goal is to raise heritage research at GU to an international level we must be able to produce high quality PhD students. Already we are witnessing an increasing number of talented undergraduate students with specialisations in the field of heritage, but with few possibilities of pursuing their interests at a PhD level. We therefore propose the formation of a graduate school/PhD school with a leader that is responsible for creating a stimulating research environment through close collaboration with the Heritage

B – The Heritage Seminar; Continuation

Seminar. By integrating the PhD school with the Heritage Seminar the students will benefit from being part of an interdisciplinary and international research environment.

Conclusion

Through its unique ability to integrate deep, grounded, practice-based research with cutting edge critical perspectives, GU is now in a position to establish a reputation as a leader in the field of Heritage Studies. This dual-focused research emphasis, promoted through the cross-disciplinary Heritage Seminar, has opened the way for Heritage Studies GU to develop as a field of excellence with an international reputation. The expansion of the Heritage Seminar, in accordance with our proposal, is directed towards this outcome. In achieving the goals for the priority projects (points A-E) within a 5-7 year period, we will create a complete academic environment by integrating teaching and research (the PhD school), and by integrating research and public dissemination with the region/Heritage West. To accommodate these goals we propose a new organisation and the formation of a new Heritage Academy. In economic terms, the addition of the PhD school doubles the present budget, but more accurate economic analyses need to be carried out.

In conclusion, we are confident in claiming that GU now has a solid reputation in the field of Heritage Studies. We also believe that an expansion of the Heritage Seminar has the potential to create a unique Cultural Heritage research hub within Scandinavia, with the potential to become internationally outstanding after 5–7 years.