

(Bülow and Eastop, 2013)? One outcome of such questions is the concept of “authorised cultural heritage” (Smith, 2007), which highlights dominant views in order to encourage exploration of alternative views. The conventional approach to conservation is bound up with ideas of inheritance and custodianship for future generations. Smith has argued passionately that cultural heritage is “the intangible process of negotiating cultural identity, value, and meaning in and for the present” (Smith, 2007, pp. 169-170).

Conclusion

When conservation interventions are made, decisions have to be made about what is important and, thus, what features should be prioritized in an intervention. A conservation intervention arises from a desire to conserve an object, with conservation understood as investigation, preservation and presentation. The decision to conserve will lead to a social process and discussion about what is to be conserved and how.

As the conservation intervention proceeds, it may change in response to the results of materials’ investigation and differences in opinion. At these times conservation principles and practices may need to be questioned, tried out and elaborated in a social process of consultation (Eastop, 2011, p. 427).

This results in a circular process of material and social change over time, providing vivid examples of Gamini Wijesuriya’s core argument at the SCD Seminar that “conservation is a *process* not a fixed project”.

Notes

1. The second edition of the *Routledge Handbook of Museum Ethics* contains two chapters on conservation: Eastop, 2011 and Brooks, 2011.
2. Or, to use the term employed by Caroline Castellanos at the SCD Seminar, “to make policy operational”.

References

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