

2020 March - Documentation Strategies in (Archaeological) Open-Air Museums



What's an open-air museum?

What is it for?

How can it be preserved?

Open-air museums are the faithful reconstruction of medieval villages.

Starting from the discovery of (pre)history archaeological sites and architectural sources, experts and professionals are able to recreate the environment of the houses starting from the same foundations and using the same techniques of construction and materials as in the origin.

Open-air museums don't handle just the architectural aspect, but also the dwellings and the whole village comes back to life through the representation and staging of the ancient crafts and daily habits that characterized the evolution of the local people in the medieval period.



[EXARC](#) is the International Association of Archaeological Open-Air Museums and Experimental Archaeology and since many years has been engaged in the reconstruction and maintenance of this cultural heritage.

In 2008, EXARC defined what an archaeological open-air museum is. This definition has become widely accepted, the phrase commonly used:

An archaeological open-air museum is a non-profit permanent institution with outdoor true to scale architectural reconstructions primarily based on archaeological sources. It holds collections of intangible heritage resources and provides an interpretation of how people lived and acted in the past; this is accomplished according to sound scientific methods for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment of its visitors.

EXARC is an affiliated organization of **ICOM**, the International Council Of Museums.

It's main goal is to transmit the knowledge of how life used to be in the past, of the traditions and crafts that characterize the evolution of a people in a specific historical period.

To tell this wonderful story, EXARC faithfully recreates the same environment by transporting the visitor hundreds of years back into time.

Using empirical, sensorial and visual methodologies, these museums explain what the world was like before our times and what we can learn from the past.

According to EXARC, this wealth of knowledge risks to be lost.

First of all because it is required the application of digital technique of preservation in order to pass on and use this cultural heritage for future research and dissemination.

On this regard, we must be concerned that many open-air museums do not have appropriate technical skills to perform this activity and are likely to disappear.

Secondly, the only way to preserve a specific type of knowledge is by teaching to future generations the art of ancient crafts and craftsmanship and this is something that it is not really assumed.

On the basis of these reflections, EXARC, in collaboration with [Museumsdorf Düppel \(DE\)](#), organized the **international**

conference of next March and for this occasion launched a **call for papers** to trigger a debate about **experiences and example of documentation in other open- air museums both on the (re) construction, up-keep and decay of houses as well as on craft activities.**

The conference will take full days of **26 & 27 March**, including an afternoon program and dinner on the 27th.

On Wednesday **25th there will be an optional excursion to the Stadtmuseum Berlin.**

Click **here** for the program and full information about the conference