

Events

TALES 2025

Tangible Aspects and Legacy Enhancement through Storytelling

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The International Symposium *TALES Tangible Aspects and Legacy Enhancement through Storytelling*, held on 16 and 17 December 2025 at the Department of Architecture and Design of the Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria, contributes to the contemporary debate on Cultural Heritage as a significant occasion for interdisciplinary exchange. It focuses on the role of storytelling in processes of knowledge production, interpretation, valorization, and transmission. In this context, storytelling is conceived as an interpretative device. It is used to investigate the relationship between the tangible and intangible dimensions of heritage, highlighting its potential in terms of accessibility, participation, and the shared construction of meaning.

The initiative was promoted within the framework of the PRIN 2022 PNRR research project on *Byzantine Cultural Routes*. The project is coordinated by the Reggio Calabria unit, led by Marinella Arena, and involves the Palermo and Catania units, respectively coordinated by Edoardo Dotto and Francesco Maggio. It represents both the concluding phase of the project and an open space for dialogue with scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds. The conference intertwines the presentation of

research outcomes –including operational tools and digital applications developed within the *TALES* framework– with a broader international discussion on storytelling practices applied to cultural heritage.

The study days opened on the afternoon of 16 December with the inauguration of the *TALES Exhibition*, followed by institutional greetings and the presentation of the PRIN project results by Marinella Arena, Edoardo Dotto and Francesco Maggio. The *APP Routes platform*, developed within the research, was also introduced.

The exhibition, dedicated to works produced within the Infographics

Course, Bachelor's Degree in Design, represented one of the most significant moments of the initiative. The projects demonstrated how drawing and visual representation can assume a narrative function, translating complex content into accessible and shareable visual forms.

The presentation of the *APP Routes* platform, curated by the company Living Camera, further highlighted the potential of digital tools in creating interactive experiences of heritage. It stands as a relevant applied outcome of the research.

To outline a coherent framework of the multiple forms of storytelling

Fig. 1. Banner of the event.



applied to heritage, the scientific program was structured into five thematic sessions: *Speaking Architecture: from the Silence of Stone to the Voice of Heritage*; *Crossing Imaginaries: Heritage Across Borders*; *The Field of Possibilities: Media, Languages and Technologies for Narrating Heritage*; *Intermediate Spaces: Engaging Communities in Preservation and Regeneration*; and *Narrative and Memory: Storytelling as a Tool for Conservation*.

During the first day, the sessions *Speaking Architecture* and *Crossing Imaginaries* were addressed. In the first session, coordinated among others by Elena Ippoliti and Roberta Spallone, the contributions explored the transition from the material dimension of architectural artefacts to their narrative interpretation. They highlighted the role of representation –both analog and digital– in making the layered values of places legible.

The session *Crossing Imaginaries: Heritage Across Borders* expanded the perspective in an intercultural direction. It interpreted heritage as a space of relationships between different contexts. In this framework, storytelling emerges as a tool capable of constructing transnational narratives and conveying the complexity of cultural identities.

The second day opened with institutional greetings from UID President Ornella Zerlenga. This was followed by the keynote lecture by Livio De Luca, Research Director at the CNRS in

Marseille, focusing on integrated digital systems for heritage knowledge.

His contribution emphasized the need for convergence between data, models, and storytelling in the construction of shared informational environments. It outlined a methodological framework in which technological and narrative dimensions are increasingly intertwined. The session *The Field of Possibilities: Media, Languages and Technologies for Narrating Heritage* offered a broad overview of the potential of digital tools. These ranged from immersive environments to user platforms, contributing to the redefinition of modes of access to and experience of heritage. In this way, they expand its communicative and participatory possibilities.

The subsequent session, *Intermediate Spaces: Engaging Communities in Preservation and Regeneration*, coordinated by Rossella Salerno and Sonia Mollica, addressed storytelling as an operational practice in urban regeneration and community engagement. The contributions highlighted the value of collaborative storytelling as a tool for the shared construction of heritage. It fosters inclusive dynamics and strengthens the sense of belonging to places.

The final session, *Narrative and Memory: Storytelling as a Tool for Conservation*, brought attention back to the role of storytelling in conservation processes. It emphasized how narratives –historical, graphic, and visual–

contribute to transmitting and reinterpreting complex cultural values, while integrating material and immaterial aspects.

The conference concluded with a roundtable that brought together scholars from diverse disciplinary and geographical backgrounds. This moment confirmed the international scope of the initiative and its role as a platform for dialogue and the development of research networks.

The conference proceedings, published in open access on the PVBILICA Sharing Knowledge platform, include 55 contributions selected through a double-blind peer-review process. Approximately thirty of these were presented in oral sessions. The volume offers an expanded overview of the research developed in response to the call, extending the discussion beyond the conference itself. Overall, *TALES 2025* stands out for the coherence between its theoretical framework and program structure, as well as for its ability to effectively integrate research, teaching, and innovation. The centrality of storytelling practices and the prominence of the visual dimension –well exemplified by the exhibition– contribute to defining storytelling not only as a communicative tool, but also as an analytical and design-oriented one. Heritage thus emerges as a dynamic and shared process, open to new modes of representation and interpretation in the contemporary context.

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