

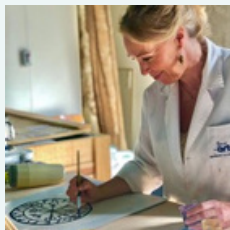
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# PLEA IN DEFENSE OF FORMAL TRAINING AND THE PROFESSION OF CONSERVATOR AND RESTORER OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE CONSERVATOR-RESTORER

ESSAY

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As Director of the UNESCO Chair Forum University and Cultural Heritage at the Universitat Politècnica de València and as a professor, conservator and restorer of cultural property for more than thirty-five years, I feel deeply committed to the defense and promotion of a profession that, despite its enormous relevance, remains unknown and underestimated: that of conservator and restorer of cultural property. This work, so essential for the preservation of our historical, artistic and cultural heritage, requires rigorous and specialized training to ensure the integrity of the assets and their faithful transmission to future generations.

Cultural assets are not mere objects; they are living testimonies of our collective memory, identity and development as a civilization. To protect them properly requires knowledge that goes far beyond an aesthetic sensibility. However, the work of conservator-restorers, although highly specialized, lacks the visibility it deserves. It is a profession that takes place mostly behind the scenes and is often mistaken for simple manual activities, when in fact it involves a combination of scientific, historical and artistic knowledge, in addition to facing significant ethical dilemmas. The lack of social and educational recognition, coupled with cases of professional intrusion and the dissemination of examples of failed restorations, perpetuate the misconception that this task can be improvised by amateurs.

Formal training in conservation-restoration is a discipline that combines, among others, artistic techniques, chemistry, art history and advanced technologies, all guided by a deep ethical commitment. Each intervention requires an accurate diagnosis, absolute respect for the authenticity of the work and the use of methodologies that comply with international principles established in key documents such as the Venice Charter, the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of World Heritage and other instruments that guide our practice.

From my experience, I would like to highlight the importance of training institutions such as the Department of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage of the Universitat Politècnica de València, an international benchmark that has trained generations of professionals who today work in museums, workshops and conservation projects around the world. In just two months, this department led an exemplary initiative in the wake of the devastating effects of the DANA that affected Valencia. A team of students, supervised by professors and experts, worked tirelessly on the recovery of domestic and heritage objects, applying specialized techniques to stabilize sensitive materials, eliminate fungus, prevent future deterioration and develop a first aid guide to recover precious objects. This effort not only highlights academic excellence, but also the social commitment inherent to this profession.





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Defending the official training and profession of conservator-restorer is, in essence, defending our memory, identity and culture. It is a task that transcends academia and becomes a living bridge between the past and the future, an act of responsibility towards future generations. I invite society, institutions and those responsible for cultural property to recognize the value of this profession and to rely exclusively on qualified professionals for the preservation of our heritage, which is, ultimately, the legacy we leave to the world.

