

OpenArch WP 3 Conference “Dialogue with the visitor”

To tell the right story the right way.

Archeon, 22-26 April 2013

The open arch project started in 2011 with 11 partners and 5 work packages
Archeon the Netherlands and Vinimatium from Belgrade are partners in the wp 3

The fifth OpenArch conference in Archeon, from 22-26 of April, was a success, the targets were achieved. The 11 partners in the EU-funded project attended lectures, participated in workshops and held meetings on the Dialogue with the Visitor, dealing with issues that are universal for Archaeological Open Air Museums (AOAM) throughout Europe and even the world. The conference also gave opportunities to meet professionals and like-minded individuals from diverse disciplines and organisations.

The programme was put together by Archeon in order to allow the participants a broad view of the Dialogue with the Visitor – a Work Package within the OpenArch project, coordinated by Archeon. Within this Work Package, the Story of the Site (the stories told in the AOAM) and the Visitor’s Experience (how the visitor experiences both these stories and his visit as a whole) have both been given a fair amount of attention already. This conference was intended to show to the partners in the project what the possibilities are, in order to foster further international dialogues in the coming years.

Day one: Lectures and workshops

Wim van der Weiden, Chairman of the European Museum Academy, <http://www.europeanmuseumacademy.eu> started the conference with a lecture on Reaching the Unreachable – how to appeal to a broad audience that may not even know about the existence of AOAM. After this plenary lecture, the participants split up to attend lectures on museum theatre in world-famous museums such as the Rijksmuseum and Van Gogh museum. Award-winning web designer talked about their projects and asked the question: “Do you really need a website to begin with?”

The first day saw lectures from game designers, who promoted the use of playfulness to promote education and learning. Using modern communication tools such as the ubiquitous smartphone, the visitor’s experience can be enhanced – though never replaced! A workshop on storytelling challenged the participants to go out and make a story with only a handful of tools.

The closing lecture by Janneke Kuysters, former director of the Efteling and Bataviawerf, was introduced by Bas Eenhoorn, mayor of Alphen a/d Rijn. Kuysters challenged her listeners to look at the way the AOAM measure their success and how to use this in the Dialogue with Stakeholders, such as local municipalities.

Day two: Working with Food

Another aspect of the OpenArch project is the Dialogue with Skills, which focuses on the use of historical skills and how to improve them. On the second day, there were several workshops and demonstrations of historical cooking and food preparation. In the afternoon, there were lectures both on these techniques and principles of historical cooking, as well as several archaeologists who spoke on (international) projects and their experiences in dealing with the challenges in presenting these projects to the public. To close the day off, the results of the day’s cooking were tasted by the participants, before heading off to sample the latest exhibitions in the Dutch museum of Antiquities (RMO) in Leiden.



Culture Programme

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The third and last day

The theme for this last day was storytelling. Workshops to practise different theatre techniques were coupled with lectures on education and entertainment. The message was clear: to tell a story, most of all you need to know who you are telling it to. The bi-annual meeting of all the partners in the OpenArch project closed off a very successful conference which had something for everyone. OpenArch is now at full steam and the cooperation between partners is improving with each step. These conference confirm that, but also show the added value of meeting professionals on a national and international level. The contacts made during this conference promise to develop into new activities and additional projects in future.

Jack Veldman, director of Archeon

