

**Joint Master in European
Cultural Governance**

*Maximizing the Cultural Heritage
Value Chain in Cultural Tourism
by Means of Storytelling*

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2025



Co-funded by
the European Union

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Abstract

The cultural heritage related ecosystems and the industry driven by it, particularly cultural tourism, have experienced significant growth in recent years. As market preferences shift from the consumption of physical objects to experiential value, cultural heritage plays an increasingly vital role in shaping meaningful experiences. However, the use of cultural heritage for economic purposes presents several challenges, including cultural diversity and inclusion, ethical considerations in commercialization, and environmental sustainability. This study explores these complexities and aims to answer the research question: "**How can we create effective storytelling in the recognition and promotion of cultural heritage?**" By analyzing both challenges and opportunities in cultural narratives, this research identifies **relatable cross-sectional storytelling** as a highly effective approach to simultaneously promote heritage preservation and local economic development.

How can culture be an active driver of the social connection, sustainability, and economic development of the region? This has been always a common question around cultural value chain in the world. Therefore, this thesis sought to find a framework to answer this question by developing and organizing the storytelling approach for cultural sector – focusing on cultural tourism. This thesis aims to explore how to create inclusive and valuable storytelling that benefits all three key stakeholders: cultural heritage holders/practitioners, visitors/learners, and the environment.

The author argues that adopting a **cross-sectional perspective** on various tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets across different regions can serve as an effective model. In the valorization of cultural heritage, **relevancy** is a crucial factor – ensuring that people can relate to and connect with the stories being told.

Through multiple case studies, this research will examine the fundamental aspects of storytelling by addressing questions such as:

- **How can local cultural heritage be made relevant to diverse audiences?**
- **What constitutes a concept that provides value to both cultural practitioners and beneficiaries?**
- **How can cultural heritage be an active contributor to sustainable actions?**

Key Words

Cultural Heritage Value Chain, Cultural Tourism, Storytelling, Relevance, Cross-sectoral
Collaboration, Sustainability

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List of Abbreviations

- UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization
- MAMAC: Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Nice, France)
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

Introduction

Cultural heritage has increasingly become a key driver of social connection, sustainability, and regional development, particularly through the expanding field of cultural tourism. This high-potential sector – **the cultural heritage value chain** – can be understood as an ecosystem encompassing the following functions: recognition, preservation and safeguarding, engagement and use, research and development/education, governance and policy-making, and management for cultural heritage (see the Definition of Cultural Heritage Value Chain chapter). However, promoting this value chain and leveraging it as an asset for cultural tourism presents significant challenges, including ensuring cultural inclusivity, maintaining environmental sensitivity, and responding to evolving audience expectations.

This thesis proposes **relatable storytelling** as a strategic approach to enhance the cultural heritage value chain by addressing these issues. The author's perspective is informed by personal observations during site visits in Europe as a tourist from Japan. In one castle, for instance, an engaging and accessible narrative explained the evolution of royal dress and the symbolic meaning of ceiling colors, which were linked to authority shaped by global textile trade. In contrast, another site offered only a chronological list of royal family names – a presentation that lacked context and emotional connection for visitors unfamiliar with the region's history. These contrasting experiences highlighted how storytelling can powerfully convey unique cultural values in an **emotionally resonant and relatable way**.

This paper cannot be entirely comprehensive in its scope, nor can it cover all of the complex arguments that underpin cultural value chain. What it does do, however, is to propose a structured framework of effective storytelling for maximizing cultural heritage value chain for tourism, to provide something of a stimulus for debate, inspiration and to act as a springboard

for further discussion and research. The text provides a synthesis of storytelling approach both in theory and practice.

By analyzing some theories and concrete storytelling techniques applied across diverse regions and platforms – such as guided tours, exhibitions, community events, and digital media – this study investigates how narratives can promote more inclusive, sustainable, and engaging cultural tourism. As a methodology, a comparative case study approach is employed, focusing on examples from Europe and Japan.

Research Question

By addressing the central research question – “How can we create effective storytelling in the recognition and promotion of cultural heritage?” – this research explores how a storytelling approach can respond to the emerging needs, challenges and opportunities for the cultural heritage value chain and the tourism market.

This discussion will also inform you of the following sub-research questions:

- How can local cultural heritage be made relevant to diverse audiences?
- What constitutes a concept that provides value to both cultural practitioners and beneficiaries?
- How can cultural heritage actively contribute to sustainable action?

Definition of Cultural Heritage Value Chain

The concept of the cultural heritage value chain refers to the dynamic and interlinked stages through which cultural heritage is created, preserved, interpreted, and experienced by different stakeholders over time. Similar to value chains in economic or innovation contexts, the cultural heritage value chain highlights the interconnected contributions of individuals, institutions, and narratives to heritage meaning-making and sustainability¹².

In this thesis, the value chain is understood not as a linear process, but as a relational ecosystem that spans:

- **Recognition** (e.g. acts for protection and acknowledgment of heritage assets broader than any economic asset for society as a whole)
- **Creation** (e.g., traditional crafts, artworks, built heritage)
- **Preservation and Curation** (e.g., museums, archives, local memory)
- **Interpretation** (e.g., educational programs, curatorial narratives)
- **Engagement** (e.g., visitors, tourists, community members)
- **Reinvestment** (e.g., economic benefits, social empowerment, cultural continuity)

Each stage is mediated by decisions – conscious or unconscious – that influence how heritage is represented, interpreted, and ultimately valued. Rather than being a purely economic or managerial model, this value chain incorporates social, emotional, and symbolic dimensions of value that are often overlooked in more traditional frameworks.

¹ Dümcke, Cornelia, and Mikhail Gnedovsky. *The Social and Economic Value of Cultural Heritage: Literature Review*. EENC Paper, 2013.

² Throsby, David. *Economics and Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

The model used in this thesis places particular emphasis on interpretation and engagement as critical junctures where storytelling becomes a powerful mediator. It is in these phases that the meaning of heritage is co-created between professionals and the public, allowing for emotional resonance, reflexivity, and inclusivity.

The reason this model is especially relevant today lies in the growing need to foster **inclusive, sustainable, and emotionally engaging** heritage practices. As cultural institutions increasingly shift from functioning as authoritative voices to acting as facilitators of participation and co-creation, understanding the full lifecycle of cultural value – from preservation and interpretation to engagement and reinvestment – has become essential for ensuring both the relevance and resilience of cultural heritage in contemporary society. This is also where the storytelling approach can shine, as narrative elements are embedded throughout each stage of this cultural heritage value chain.

Definition of Storytelling in the Context of Cultural Tourism

In the context of cultural heritage value chain and tourism, storytelling refers to the intentional design and delivery of narratives that enhance the visitor's understanding and emotional engagement with a place, its history, people, and values. Unlike general communication or interpretation, storytelling in tourism is characterized by its **affective, structured, and often person-centered format**.

It may take many forms, including:

- Guided tours where interpreters use personal anecdotes, legends, or dramatized histories

- Narrative placemaking, where spatial design and signage offer sequential storytelling across a site
- Audio guides and podcasts that embed narrative arcs
- Interactive exhibitions that present community voices and memories
- Performative or immersive experiences, such as living history or theatrical reenactments

In these formats, storytelling becomes a **mediator between the physical site or heritages and the intangible meaning attributed to it**. For example, a traditional building may become more than just a structure when framed through stories of migration, local craftsmanship, or social resilience.

In tourism studies, storytelling is increasingly recognized not just as an educational tool, but as a means of shaping place identity and emotional resonance. According to Chronis, stories allow visitors to **feel “inside” the destination**, creating a sense of belonging and continuity³. Furthermore, narratives provide coherence and memorability, essential in an environment saturated with visual stimuli and time-limited visits⁴.

Crucially, storytelling also functions as a **tool of selective framing** – highlighting certain interpretations over others. As such, it carries the ethical responsibility of inclusive representation, particularly in multicultural or contested heritage contexts. Well-designed stories can elevate marginalized voices and foster cultural understanding, while poorly curated ones may reinforce stereotypes or sanitize histories.

³ Athinodoros Chronis, “Tourists as Story-Builders: Narrative Construction at a Heritage Museum,” *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 29, no. 5 (2012): 444–459.

⁴ Scott McCabe and Elizabeth Foster, “The Role and Function of Narrative in Tourist Interaction,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 4, no. 3 (2006): 194–215.

In this thesis, storytelling is understood not as fiction, but as a strategic, participatory, and interpretive act that constructs cultural value. It connects the heritage object or tradition to the individual visitor's lived reality, enabling both cognitive engagement and emotional attachment⁵.

Significance

The cross-sectional storytelling approach explored in this thesis serves as a significant model for fostering a deeper and more personal understanding of different cultures. By inclusively and ethically embracing all cultural narratives – including those of minority groups – this model provides a flexible yet grounded framework for addressing key challenges in the cultural heritage ecosystem, while balancing both heritage safeguarding and economic sustainability.

For example, this thesis focuses on the multidimensional effects of the following case practices. In Takaoka, Japan, the collaborative storytelling developed between traditional craft artisans and contemporary designers has led to shared authorship and hybrid cultural event production, enhancing regional distinctiveness while contributing to sustainable tourism, craft preservation and long-term local revitalization⁶. Likewise, in museum contexts such as MAMAC, curatorial strategies increasingly adopt interdisciplinary storytelling approaches that incorporate anthropological, ecological, and social dimensions to situate art and heritage within

⁵ Jillian M. Rickly-Boyd, "The Tourist Narrative," *Tourist Studies* 9, no. 3 (2009): 259–280.

⁶ Kunimoto, Kotaro. Interview by the author. Takaoka, May 2025.

broader contexts of place and identity⁷. These strategies reflect an ongoing shift toward inclusive, reflective practices that extend beyond disciplinary boundaries.

As cultural tourism research has shown, narrative-based engagement enhances both visitor satisfaction and destination loyalty by facilitating emotional and cognitive connections⁸. Stories do not simply inform; they invite visitors into participatory meaning-making processes that turn heritage from static display into dynamic experience⁹.

Without considering such a cross-sectional storytelling approach, many local cultures – currently existing in fragmented forms – face the risk of decline due to demographic shifts, losing opportunities for public recognition, potentially resulting in the lack of proper management and preservation.

The findings and recommendations presented in this study, based on real-world examples, are expected to provide valuable insights for stakeholders involved in **sustainable cultural tourism, regional revitalization, and cultural preservation**, including museums, businesses, and local organizations.

More specifically, potential applications of this research include following cases for example:

- The development of tourism packages that attract visitors while minimizing costs and environmental impact for local communities and tourism companies.

⁷ Interview with H el ene Guenin, former director of MAMAC, conducted in June 2025

⁸ McIntosh, Alison J. "Tourists' Appreciation of Maori Culture in New Zealand." *Tourism Management* 25, no. 1 (2004): 1–15.

⁹ Chronis, Athinodoros. "Tourists as Story-Builders: Narrative Construction at a Heritage Museum." *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 29, no. 5 (2012): 444–459.

- The creation of engaging thematic content for publishing companies and museums that focus on specific cultural narratives.

Ultimately, this thesis aims to provide a **conceptual foundation for storytelling** that can be applied across a wide spectrum – from small local actions to broader policy-making initiatives – contributing to the sustainable utilization and appreciation of cultural heritage.

Methodology

To appropriately assess the importance of storytelling approach in sustainable cultural tourism practices, along with desk research, this thesis adopts comparative studies through qualitative expert interviews in the cultural field.

The research is grounded in two complementary sources of data:

- ① **Conceptual Foundations** – As a basic context behind narratives, this study examines academic literature related to cultural heritage management, cultural tourism and its marketing, and storytelling approach to understand the cognitive and social mechanisms behind storytelling.
 - This theoretical groundwork helps clarify how people perceive, define, and assign value to cultural narratives in tourism.
 - It also serves as a foundation for integrating storytelling into tourism and other business applications.
- ② **Practical Case Studies** – The study analyzes tourism packages, museum displays and exhibitions, and digital platforms to investigate how storytelling principles are currently being applied in practice.

- It examines how theoretical concepts are translated into real-world applications tailored to each culture/heritage.
- Case studies include:
 - **Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi (Takaoka, Japan)**
 - **Glasgow Museums (Glasgow, Scotland)**
 - **Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Nice, France)**

The three selected case studies were chosen for their diverse and insightful practices in cross-sectoral storytelling. Each offers a unique angle on how narrative strategies can contribute to sustainable cultural tourism. Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi represents a local initiative that engages designers, artisans, and local residents in a collaborative storytelling process with strong regional identity and tourism impact. The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MAMAC), on the other hand, plays a vital role in the heritage value chain as an institution that situates contemporary art within broader ecological and sociocultural narratives. Finally, Glasgow Museums provide a clearly defined case of storytelling integration, particularly through the role of professional storytellers and their narrative development strategies. Interviewing these professionals enabled this study to gain a more precise understanding of how stories are designed and adapted for different heritage and audience contexts.

All interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format to allow for flexibility while maintaining a consistent thematic focus. This format was selected to ensure depth and adaptability – enabling interviewees to elaborate on context-specific examples, while also guiding the conversation along predefined themes relevant to the research questions. Interviews with Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi and Glasgow Museums professionals were conducted via online meetings, while the exchange with MAMAC director H el ene Guenin was carried out

through written correspondence. The interviews were conducted in English or Japanese (with translation when necessary) and subsequently transcribed for analysis. A thematic coding approach was used to distill core insights from the transcripts, identifying patterns in narrative design, institutional collaboration, and audience engagement.

This qualitative interview method was particularly suited to this study’s exploratory aims. It allowed for a nuanced collection of first-hand perspectives that cannot be fully captured through desk research alone. By engaging with key cultural practitioners directly involved in cross-sectoral storytelling, the study was able to link theoretical frameworks to concrete field practices. The interview guide and coding scheme are included in the *Annex* for transparency and replicability.

Table 1: Expert Interview List

#	Country	Organization	Role	Name of Experts
1	Japan	Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi	Executive Committee Chair of the event & Representative of a lacquerware wholesaler "Shikki Kunimoto"	Kotaro Kunimoto
2	Scotland	Glasgow Museums	Learning & Access Curator for Schools at Glasgow Museums	Anna Lehr
3	France	Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art	Former director of the MAMAC (2016-2025)	Hélène Guenin

The final outcome of this study is to learn from these case interviews and to propose a business-oriented storytelling concept that enhances cultural diversity, environmental sustainability, and technological innovation, while generating economic value for the cultural heritage sector.

1. Theoretical Background of Cultural Heritage Value Chain in Tourism

1.1 History and Development of Cultural Heritage Value Chain

The recognition that pricing and monetary value could serve as tools to promote culture – and elevate it as a driver of economic and social development – began to emerge between the 1960s and 1970s, particularly in European policy discourse and cultural economics¹⁰. Until then, the economic utilization of cultural heritage had not been clearly defined, primarily because its value was difficult to measure using conventional economic models. In recent years, however, cultural heritage has become a significant economic asset at local, regional, and national levels, particularly in the tourism sector.

Following this shift, various KPI models have been developed, including:

- ① Contingent Valuation Method (CVM)
 - A survey-based economic technique for valuing non-market resources, especially environmental amenities and cultural goods, by asking respondents their willingness to pay (WTP) for specific conservation actions¹¹.
- ② Economic Impact Analysis

¹⁰ David Throsby, *Economics and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); UNESCO, *Culture: A Driver and an Enabler of Sustainable Development* (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2013).

¹¹ Stein T. Navrud and Richard Ready, *Valuing Cultural Heritage: Applying Environmental Valuation Techniques to Historic Buildings, Monuments and Artifacts* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2002), 45.

- Measures the flows of spending and employment generated by cultural activities, providing a monetary estimate of their contribution to local and regional economies¹².
- ③ Social Return on Investment (SROI)
 - A framework for measuring a broader concept of value, aiming to reduce inequality and environmental degradation and improve well-being by incorporating social, environmental, and economic costs and benefits¹³.
- ④ Cultural Indicators and Well-being Metrics
 - Measures access, participation, and engagement in cultural life, contributing to the understanding of how culture affects social cohesion, education outcomes, and personal well-being¹⁴.

One of the developing industries representing a measurable cultural heritage value chain is **cultural tourism**. Despite concerns about climate change, rising fuel costs, and global terrorism, more and more people continue to travel. Its importance has been consistently recognized by global organizations such as UNESCO and the WTO. Although the definition of cultural tourism remains broad and somewhat vague, Richards suggests that cultural tourism covers not only consumption of cultural products from the past but also contemporary culture or the “way of life” of a people or region. Therefore, cultural tourism can be seen as including both “**heritage tourism**” (related to artefacts of the past) and “**arts tourism**” (related to

¹² John Snowball, *Measuring the Value of Culture: Methods and Examples in Cultural Economics* (Springer, 2008), 83.

¹³ Jed Emerson, Red Nicholls, Jed Emerson, and Ben Goodspeed, *Social Return on Investment: Exploring Aspects of Value Creation in the Nonprofit Sector* (New York: The Roberts Foundation, 2012), 110.

¹⁴ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Measuring Cultural Participation and Access* (Montreal: UNESCO, 2013), 27.

contemporary cultural production)¹⁵. However, this inclusive definition has faced some critics. McKercher and du Cros argue that cultural tourism should be defined more narrowly – limited to those visitors whose primary motivation is cultural engagement, as opposed to casual or incidental exposure during leisure travel¹⁶. Smith also warns that if the term “cultural tourism” becomes too elastic, it may lose analytical clarity and practical usefulness in both academic and policy contexts¹⁷. These counterarguments highlight the ongoing debate about how cultural tourism should be defined and operationalized. Nevertheless, this thesis focuses on the broad-reaching potential of storytelling as a tool to maximize the cultural heritage value chain through narrative-driven engagement. Rather than limiting the scope of cultural tourism to narrowly defined visitor motivations or passive consumption, it embraces a wider interpretation of cultural tourism – one that includes **emotional, participatory, and place-based storytelling practices** across diverse sectors and audiences.

Valerie Smith argues that a multidisciplinary approach to cultural tourism is necessary to understand the complexity of the phenomenon. This means that fields such as history, geography, sociology, economics, anthropology, and urban studies are increasingly involved in tourism studies¹⁸. Within this framework, this paper aims to focus on the storytelling approach as a perspective in cultural tourism study and practice to maximize the heritage value chain.

¹⁵ Greg Richards, *Cultural Attractions and European Tourism* (Wallingford: CABI Publishing, 2001), 7.

¹⁶ Bob McKercher and Hilary du Cros, *Cultural Tourism: The Partnership Between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 5–7.

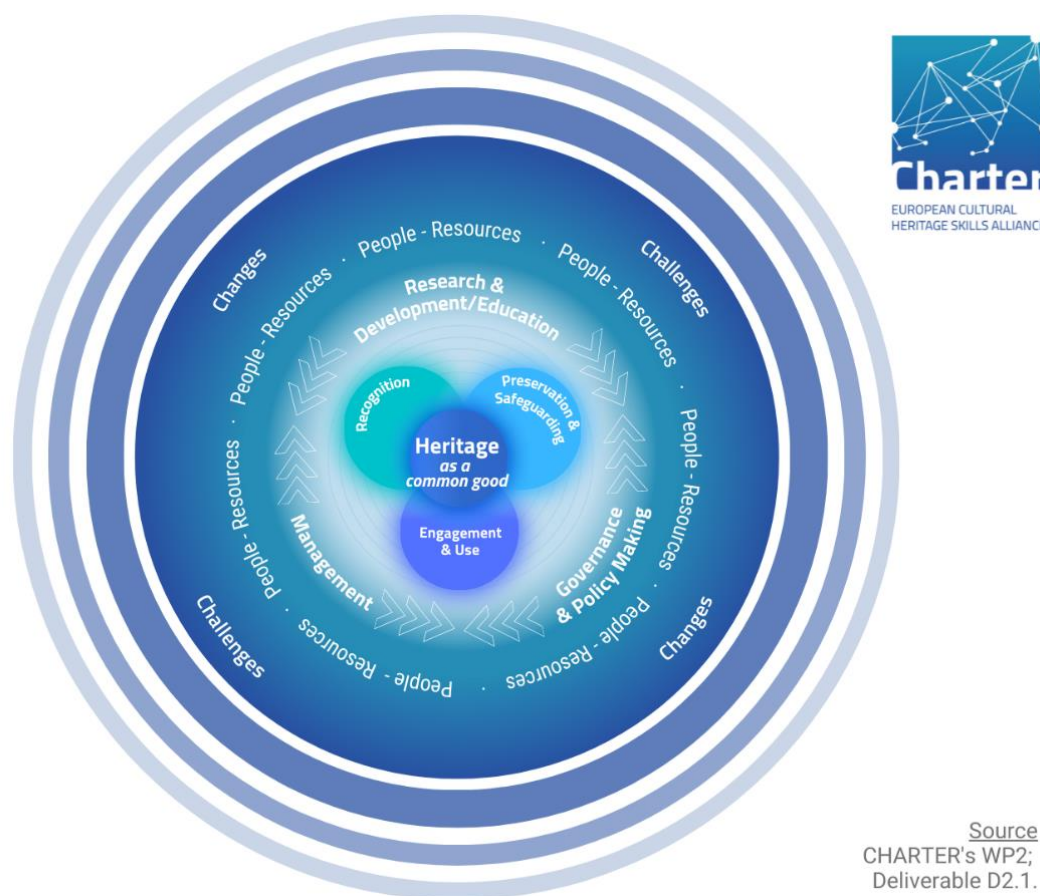
¹⁷ Melanie Smith, *Issues in Cultural Tourism Studies*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2009), 18.

¹⁸ Valerie L. Smith, “Multidisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Tourism,” *Journal of Tourism Studies* 15, no. 2 (2004): 23.

1.2 Functions of Cultural Heritage in Tourism

The CHARTER (European Cultural Heritage Skills Alliance) project provides a range of resources to highlight the value of cultural heritage and to strengthen the sector's resilience and responsiveness to current and future challenges. Their model on the report "*Towards a new integrated cultural heritage model*" has developed a conceptual framework that emphasizes the importance of storytelling in heritage use.

Figure 1: Core functions in the cultural heritage sector on CHARTER report¹⁹



¹⁹ CHARTER – European Cultural Heritage Skills Alliance, *Towards a New Integrated Cultural Heritage Model* (Barcelona: CHARTER, 2022), <https://charter-alliance.eu/resources/>

It defines six following core functions in the cultural heritage sector:

- ① **Recognition:** This function involves activities related to identifying, interpreting, and advocating for cultural heritage. It includes processes of narration, identification, and official acts that lead to the protection and acknowledgment of heritage assets.
- ② **Preservation and Safeguarding:** Focused on ensuring the long-term survival and care of heritage, this function covers a range of activities from maintenance and preventive conservation to restoration efforts. It also encompasses safeguarding intangible heritage elements to maintain cultural continuity.
- ③ **Engagement and Use:** This function pertains to making heritage accessible and engaging for the public. It includes activities that facilitate understanding, consultation, and utilization of heritage, thereby enhancing its value as a resource for various stakeholders.
- ④ **Research & Development/Education:** Encompassing all activities necessary for acquiring knowledge and skills in the heritage field, this function highlights the importance of continuous research and educational initiatives. It supports informed decision-making and the development of best practices within the sector.
- ⑤ **Governance and Policy Making:** This function relates to the decision-making processes at various governmental levels that shape heritage policies. It includes the creation and implementation of legal norms and participative governance mechanisms that define and regulate heritage activities.
- ⑥ **Management:** Focusing on the operational aspects, this function involves strategic planning, organizational development, and the day-to-day management necessary for the effective functioning of heritage institutions and projects.

This framework helps to evaluate existing storytelling cases and to create new scenarios to promote the valorization of cultural heritages.

1.3 Challenges and Opportunities of Cultural Heritage in Tourism

Having outlined the key functions of cultural heritage within tourism – including recognition, preservation, engagement, and management – it is crucial to address the challenges and opportunities that arise when these functions are implemented in real-world tourism contexts. These dynamics define the complexity and potential of the cultural heritage value chain today.

Within the realm of cultural sector, challenges and opportunities are deeply intertwined across various dimensions. Because heritage resources are finite with these complexities, there has emerged a parallel need to develop strategic marketing plans to ensure cultural and heritage sustainability²⁰.

Below are several key challenges and corresponding opportunities currently facing the cultural heritage value chain:

- ① **Cultural Diversity:** Defining a singular culture is inherently complex, as cultures are often fluid, overlapping, and context-dependent.
- **Opportunities:** Promote minority cultures and ensure inclusive representation
- **Challenges:** Integrating multiple cultural perspectives, including “dark heritage”

²⁰ Deepak Chhabra, *Sustainable Marketing of Cultural and Heritage Tourism*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2010).

- ② **Commodification of Heritage:** Economic use of heritage through tourism raises concerns about cultural authenticity and dignity.
 - Opportunities: Revenue generation and broader outreach
 - Challenges: Maintaining cultural integrity and balancing diverse stakeholder views

- ③ **Environmental Conservation: Economic activities leveraging cultural heritage must also** address the protection of surrounding environments.
 - Opportunities: Promote eco-tourism and responsible travel
 - Challenges: Preventing environmental degradation and over-tourism

- ④ **Shifting Values and Needs:** Business and marketing strategies involving cultural heritage must adapt to changing market demands, such as shift from material consumption to experiential consumption and growing interest in sustainability.
 - Opportunities: Appeal to conscious consumers
 - Challenges: Adapting heritage offers to new values and behaviors

- ⑤ **Application and impact of Advanced Technologies:** The preservation and utilization of cultural heritage increasingly rely on digitalization and other emerging technologies, which are key to strengthen cross-fertilization of tourists experiences through enhanced storytelling and mutual benefit between visitors driven patterns of cultural experience.
 - Opportunities: Enhanced storytelling, accessibility, and virtual experiences
 - Challenges: Ensuring digital literacy, equity, and ethical data usage

To further explore these dynamics more specifically within the tourism sector, it is essential to narrow the focus to cultural tourism itself. As a key component of the broader cultural heritage value chain, cultural tourism presents its own set of complex, sector-specific challenges that extend beyond general heritage management concerns. In the field of cultural and heritage tourism, Chhabra, in *Sustainable Marketing of Cultural and Heritage Tourism*, identifies nine critical issues in contemporary heritage tourism²¹:

- ① **Marrying cultural heritage management with tourism:** The issue lies in establishing a cordial and mutually beneficial relationships between the ideologies pursued by CHM (cultural heritage management) and the commercial goals of tourism.
- ② **Revenue sources and the user fee debate:** Budgetary constraints in the heritage tourism sector have dovetailed into the problem t balance between accommodating the different needs of visitors and maintaining the authentic experience of the site. In this context, Fyall and Garrod (1998) argue a concern that contemporary heritage tourism will be “gradually disinherit future generations from their own past”.
- ③ **Interpretation issues:** Heritage tourism relies in enormity on interpretive material to engage its audience in terms of involvement and deliver its key messages. **Decisions with regards to “what story should be told?” and “how it should be told”** (Hede, 2007) are the keys. Another focus of interpretation should be a balance of education with entertainment (Light 1996). This balance is reflected in the current trend of **‘Edutainment’** – Timothy and Wall (1997) suggest that this concept helps draw

²¹ Deepak Chhabra, *Sustainable Marketing of Cultural and Heritage Tourism*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2010)

leisure visitors, enhance appeal of the heritage site, and maximize economic numerations.

- ④ **Congestion management:** A holistic and integrated framework is needed to embrace the demand, destination, and site level perspectives. Congestion in heritage tourism is not solely physical, but also **perceptual crowding** should also be addressed for better visitor experience and engagement.
- ⑤ **Heritage politics:** Definition of heritages often face political challenges. Certain pasts are ignored and certain cultures are marginalized.
- ⑥ **Globalization effects:** Heritage continues to be re-evaluated and selected and the world citizens of today possess dual heritage: global and local. Naisbitt and Aburdene (1990) state that people will strive to preserve their national and local identities in the face of the threat posed by global homogenization.
- ⑦ **Use of technology:** New technologies have enhanced visitor experience while at the same time offered alternative prospects for a better use of heritage resources through marketing research.
- ⑧ **Tension between commodification and conservation:** Commodification of the heritages can be considered as a threat to the conservation of the assets. Chhabra (2010) argues that the conservation of the heritage means that of the past – forming nostalgia. Lowenthal states that nostalgia reaffirms identities bruised by recent globalization and diaspora. However, the over-selling of the past can be detrimental and has far-reaching effects on the human mind in terms of progress into the future.
- ⑨ **Partnerships and stakeholder management:** Most of the existing collaborations and partnerships in heritage tourism are driven by economic goals based on the

revenue. It is also important for the holistic heritage promotion to involve local community as the stakeholders.

Timothy also identifies several constraints to the latent demand of heritage such as inaccessibility (either physical or market such as work and family obligations and low income levels), lack of educational knowledge, disabilities (creating intrinsic, environmental, and communication barriers), and psychological barriers (such as a popular notion that historic sites are boring, lack of interest or desire)²².

In such cases, especially for the psychological barrier, cross-sectional storytelling approach would be an effective solution in cultural marketing – to make a relatable narrative which attracts people to be involved in the local history.

1.4 Market Needs and Trends in Cultural Tourism

Building on the sector-specific challenges discussed in the previous section, it is also necessary to examine how evolving market needs and consumer behaviors are reshaping the field of cultural tourism. Beyond the challenges and potentials of heritage promotion, literature indicates that consumer preferences in tourism have evolved significantly.

Robinson et al. argue that the industry is shifting from standardized package holidays to more **personalized experiences** driven by diverse individual motivations²³. Tourism can be categorized into various subfields, including exploration and adventure tourism, cultural tourism, volunteer tourism, nature-based tourism, ecotourism, educational tourism, and science

²² Dallen J. Timothy and Geoffrey Wall, "Tourism and Built Heritage: Critical Issues," *Estudios y Perspectivas en Turismo* 6, no. 3 (1997): 193–208.

²³ Peter Robinson, Michael Lück, and Stephen Smith, *Tourism*, 2nd ed. (Wallingford: CABI International, 2020).

tourism. These broad trends and typologies form the foundational framework for storytelling in tourism.

Peter Robinson, co-author of *Tourism*, further examines the transformation of consumer behavior and the shift toward experience creation through “**prosumption**” – a concept that combines consumption and production²⁴. Literature suggests that the future of tourism will increasingly rely on co-creation and prosumption²⁵, where travelers actively engage with hosts, local communities, and digital platforms to shape their own experiences. Tourists now rely not only on official sources, such as visitor centers, but also on user-generated content from online review sites when planning trips. Many travelers share their insights, photographs, and recommendations, effectively contributing to the ongoing narrative of the location. Furthermore, while experiencing a destination, the visitors can also contribute to the exchange of their “production” through the communication with locals and other visitors.

The concept of the “**third space**” also illustrates this trend. Originally introduced by Ray Oldenburg in the 1980s, the third place refers to informal public gathering spaces such as cafes, libraries, and museums²⁶. In a rapidly urbanizing society, where routines are often confined to home and work, third places offer essential spaces for social connection and psychological well-being. Similarly, cultural heritage sites today can be seen as third spaces – no longer venues for one-way promotion, but arenas for mutual interaction, learning, and cultural exchange.

²⁴ Eva M. Jernsand, Marcus Persson, and Erik Lundberg, *Tourism, Knowledge and Learning*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2022), <https://www.perlego.com/book/3732339>.

²⁵ Joseph Pine and James Gilmore, *The Experience Economy* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2011); George Ritzer et al., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Sociology* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

²⁶ Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community* (New York: Marlowe & Company, 1989).

This shift from a traditional production–consumption model to one centered on co-creation and prosumption signals a fundamental change in the role of tourists. Rather than passive consumers, visitors now act as marketers, curators, and storytellers, continuously shaping and reshaping the perception of destinations for a global audience²⁷. In this sense, we need to note that tourist communities also have become integral contributors to the storytelling process of cultural heritage and tourism.

In addition to this mutually oriented value chain, it is important to consider basic types of consumer demand in cultural tourism. Johnson and Thomas (*Heritage, Tourism and Society*) identify four key dimensions of market demand²⁸:

- ① Current or use demand – The actual number of tourists visiting the heritage site at the present time.
- ② Option demand – The potential future demand from visitors who want to keep the option of visiting open, even if they do not plan to visit immediately. (Value of the idea that the site remains available for a possible future visit)
- ③ Existence demand – The value placed on the mere existence of the heritage site, regardless of whether the individual will ever visit it.
- ④ Bequeath demand – The desire to preserve cultural heritage for future generations, emphasizing intergenerational equity — the idea that what is inherited from ancestors should be passed on.

²⁷ Peter Robinson, Michael Lück, and Stephen Smith, *Tourism*, 2nd ed. (Wallingford: CABI International, 2020).

²⁸ P. Johnson and B. Thomas, "Heritage as Business," in *Heritage, Tourism and Society*, ed. D. T. Herbert (London: Mansell, 1995), 170–90.

A cross-sectoral storytelling approach, involving diverse perspectives and stakeholders, may help address these multiple forms of demand by preserving traditions while narrating them in ways that remain relevant and compelling to both present and future audiences.

2. Storytelling for Cultural Heritage Value Chain

2.1 How Storytelling Approach Contributes in Cultural Tourism

As the tourism landscape continues to evolve toward co-creation and more diverse forms of cultural engagement, it becomes increasingly important to explore how storytelling can be actively used not only as a marketing tool, but also as a means of social connection and cultural preservation. In this context, the following section discusses the potential and mechanisms of storytelling in cultural tourism.

Considering the challenges of heritage promotion and evolving consumer trends in tourism, how can storytelling be effectively utilized to address both aspects? A key component of this process is understanding **the deeper connections between people and heritage**. Visitors are drawn to specific cultural sites and destinations for various reasons, each shaped by distinct personal, communal, or societal narratives.

In cultural heritage tourism, considering **how the community wishes to shape its own story and how that story can be understood by visitors** is crucial. This dual process of interpretation and valorization of cultural heritage can vary depending on context, particularly the individual identity of the audience and the narratives embedded in the heritage. This is why storytelling plays a central role in cultural tourism. Research suggests that while individuals may strongly identify with a particular social group, their memories and narratives are often multifaceted and sometimes conflicting²⁹. These competing memories exist on different levels –

²⁹ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2004); Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971); Lewis A. Coser, *Memories of*

some dominant and widely shared, others minority perspectives or entirely personal. According to Hanna et al., heritage serves as a form of social memory, reinforcing identification through concepts of ownership, yet not necessarily through commodification³⁰. This intrinsic function of heritage dictates which aspects of the past should be preserved and remembered, encapsulating both the challenges and opportunities in heritage promotion.

One compelling example of storytelling's role in cultural tourism can be seen in the use of community-driven heritage tours in Indigenous territories such as the Māori cultural experiences in New Zealand. These tours are designed and led by Māori guides who share not only historical facts but also personal stories, traditions, and spiritual connections to the land. By doing so, they promote cultural diversity by preserving minority narratives often marginalized in mainstream tourism, resist commodification by emphasizing authentic lived experiences, and foster environmental conservation by teaching visitors about sustainable practices rooted in Indigenous knowledge³¹. These storytelling approaches meet evolving tourist demands for personalized, participatory experiences and encourage prosumption, where visitors actively engage with guides and communities, contributing their reflections and learning. The shared narratives create an occasion for meaningful cultural exchange, reinforcing social memory and identity while generating economic opportunities without sacrificing cultural dignity or environmental sustainability. This approach exemplifies how storytelling can

Social Theory: Essays in Honor of Robert K. Merton (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1992).

³⁰ Patricia Hanna, Jared Manasek, and Sofia E. Perez, *Heritage and Social Memory: Circulation and Contestation in Global Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2015).

³¹ Smith, L. (2012). *Decolonizing Indigenous Heritage: Indigenous Storytelling and Sustainable Tourism*. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 7(2), 111-126.

transform cultural tourism into a platform for respectful dialogue, mutual understanding, and sustainable development.

Figure 2: Image from Kapiti Island Day Tour ³²



2.2 Narratives Resonate Emotionally with Tourists

To create emotionally resonant and effective narratives in cultural tourism, it is essential to understand the psychological factors that drive tourist engagement. Effective storytelling in cultural tourism relies not only on historical accuracy or visual appeal but also on its **emotional resonance** with visitors. Psychological research suggests that narratives that align with an individual's self-concept, values, or aspirations are more likely to elicit strong emotional responses and engagement. According to Green and Brock (2000), transportation theory posits

³² Viator, "Kapiti Island Day Tour," Viator, accessed June 22, 2025, https://www.viator.com/tours/Wellington/Kapiti-Island-Day-Tour/d399-17098P2?m=28353&supag=118063152419&supsc=dsa-694098304204&supai=498810881443&supdv=c&supnt=g&suplp=9118453&supli=9117703&supti=dsa-694098304204&tsem=true&supci=dsa-694098304204&supap1=&supap2=&gclid=Cj0KCQjw_r6hBhDdARIsAMIDhV_CVTI2nLSwp385GsZfHMNBvqWZ3rUfTdr8IS5pd_CAaqXUUxWlljAaAiALEALw_wcB&mcid=55942&svI=affiliate&sv_campaign_id=536337&awin_plat_id=12572&awc=12572_1750608051_233f9d66a3d5bc80d2c12225956ce704&aid=awinAUSDEEPLINK_536337.

that audiences become **mentally and emotionally “transported” into a story when it is coherent, vivid, and personally relevant**, which enhances both enjoyment and persuasion.

From a cognitive perspective, storytelling activates multiple regions of the brain, including those responsible for sensory processing and emotional memory. This multi-sensory engagement makes stories easier to remember and more likely to influence attitudes and behaviors³³. For example, when tourists hear a compelling story about a historical figure or a local legend, they are more likely to feel connected to the site and to share their experience with others. However, merely recounting a historical event or local legend may not be sufficient to capture tourists' interest. What makes a story truly impactful is its **relatability** – when visitors can see parts of themselves, their values, or emotions reflected in the narrative, they are more likely to feel a genuine connection to the site and to engage more deeply with the experience³⁴. Research in narrative psychology emphasizes that people respond most strongly to stories that reflect their own social identities or emotional experiences³⁵. Thus, effective storytelling in tourism should not only inform but also resonate with the personal or shared values of its audience.

Effective storytelling strategy in tourism also requires thoughtful **audience targeting**. Different types of visitors – families, solo travelers, history buffs, or digital nomads – respond to different narrative elements. Personalization and relevance are key. Stories that align with visitors' values, interests, or identities tend to have a greater emotional impact. For instance,

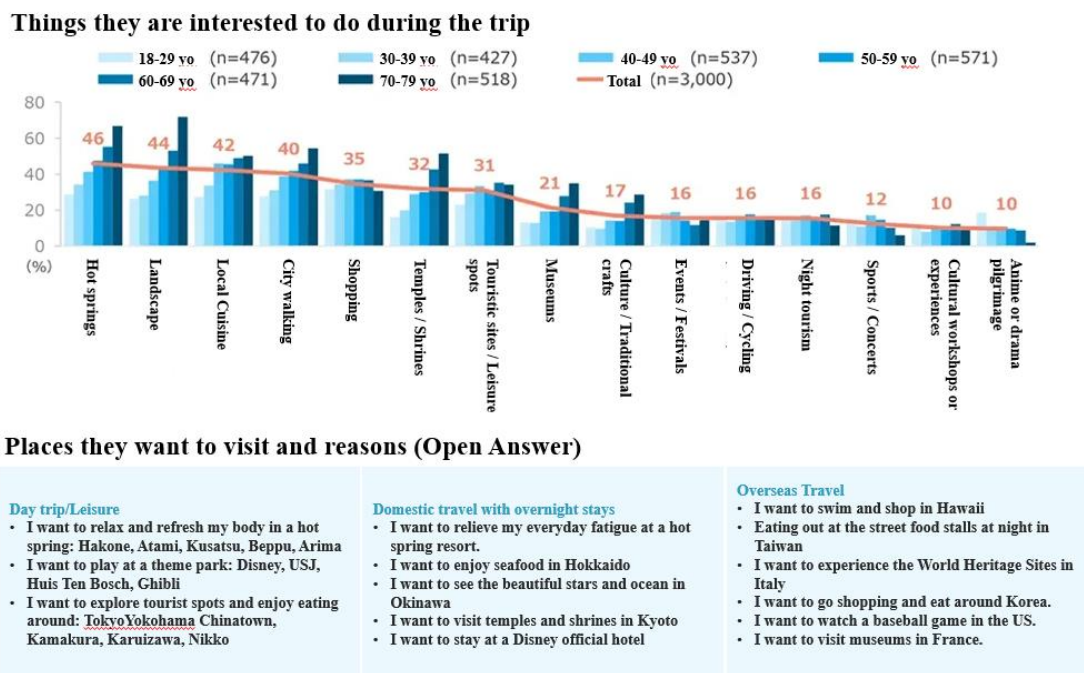
³³ Zak, P. J. (2014). *Why your brain loves good storytelling*. Harvard Business Review.

³⁴ Cohen, E. H. (2011). Educational dark tourism at an in populo site: The Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(1), 193–209.

³⁵ Escalas, J. E. (2004). Narrative processing: Building consumer connections to brands. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 14(1–2), 168–180.

younger travelers may respond to stories centered around creatives (animes, dramas, movies, etc), while others may be drawn to natural, nostalgic or historical themes. For example, a study conducted in Japan in 2024 shows that younger tourists are more interested in anime or drama-related pilgrimages, whereas older generations tend to prefer visiting museums or engaging in cultural discoveries.

Figure 3: Different motivation of travel in Japan by age groups (Quantitative Study Data) ³⁶



These steps of visitor understanding provide a practical framework for cultural institutions, local DMOs (Destination Management Organizations), and tourism agencies to design **impactful narratives that resonate with their target audiences**. When developed with proper targeting and strategic planning, the storytelling approach can effectively address various challenges within the cultural heritage value chain and tourism industry – such as aligning

³⁶ Cross Marketing Inc., *Survey on the “Kokoro” (Mind and Emotions) of the Japanese 2024*, last modified February 27, 2024, <https://www.cross-m.co.jp/report/20250227kokoro>.

tourism development with local cultural values, managing appropriate visitor numbers, and creating eco-friendly tourism strategies that respond to evolving consumer needs.

Thus, storytelling becomes a key instrument in fostering community-driven, sustainable tourism grounded in cultural heritage.

2.3 Designing Impactful Storytelling in Tourism

Now that we have explored why and how storytelling can be an effective approach in cultural tourism, we move on to the design phase of narrative development. To create compelling and impactful storytelling, Kaufman proposes a structured process that emphasizes integrated planning and community engagement within tourism marketing strategies. This approach includes the following steps³⁷:

- ① **Gather Information:** Conduct research on the cultural and historical significance of the site.
- ② **Identify Community Values:** Engage with local communities to understand their perspectives and ensure inclusivity.
- ③ **Create a Vision:** Develop a descriptive narrative that aligns with the community's aspirations and enhances the visitor experience. **This can be the core step to create narratives.** The descriptive “story” about future development and quality of life in the community further strengthens the foundation and guides tourism marketing decisions including resource allocation.

³⁷ Jonathan Kaufman, *City Branding and Promotion: The Strategic Approach to Tourism Marketing* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

- ④ **Identify Concerns and Opportunities:** Assess potential challenges and areas for improvement.
- ⑤ **Develop a Mission:** Define the overarching purpose of the storytelling approach.
- ⑥ **Develop Goals:** Establish clear, measurable objectives for heritage promotion.
- ⑦ **Develop Objectives:** Outline specific actions needed to achieve the goals.
- ⑧ **Develop Actions:** Implement storytelling strategies in tourism marketing and heritage interpretation.
- ⑨ **Evaluate Progress:** Assess the effectiveness of the storytelling approach.
- ⑩ **Update and Modify the Plan:** Continuously refine narratives based on visitor feedback and evolving community needs.

These steps can be used as a framework for the cultural sectors, local DMOs, or tourism agencies to create an effective narrative that attracts their target audience **in a way that they desire**. This is the key to make locally driven sustainable tourism through cultural heritages.

In addition to the concrete steps, Kaufman (2018) also highlights the importance of following tools for sustainable tourism development:

- Educating potential visitors about responsible tourism practices.
- Targeting desirable markets to ensure appropriate audience engagement.
- Publicizing alternative sites to reduce over-tourism at fragile locations.
- Implementing seasonal restrictions to manage visitor flow.

- Limiting access to environmentally sensitive areas.

In addition, from the sustainable perspective, aligning storytelling with sustainable development goals (SDGs) ensures that cultural heritage tourism contributes to long-term ecological and social well-being. Saarinen (2020) emphasizes several key considerations for sustainable tourism development:

- Critical observation of current tourism scholarship – Reassessing traditional tourism models for sustainability.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) – Ensuring representation of diverse voices in heritage narratives.
- Degrowth Tourism – Encouraging ethical consumption, production, and distribution of tourism experiences.
- Governance, Planning, and Mobilization for Justice – Integrating policy frameworks that support cultural heritage preservation while fostering economic and social equity.

By integrating these principles, storytelling in heritage tourism can serve not only as a tool for cultural promotion but also as a means to ensure sustainability, inclusivity, and meaningful visitor engagement.

3. Introduction of the Comparative Case

Now this chapter shifts the focus from theoretical frameworks to practical applications. It focuses on how storytelling is practiced in various cultural activities, such as museums and local events, that contribute to cultural or heritage tourism. It explores how narratives can serve as a powerful driver in enhancing the cultural heritage value chain.

The case incorporates three perspectives based on interviews with cultural actors in Japan and Europe through interview:

- ① **Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi (Japan)** ³⁸ – insights from the organizer of a local cultural event
 - Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi is an annual craft event held in Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture, Japan. Takaoka is historically renowned for its traditional craftsmanship, particularly metal casting (Takaoka copperware), lacquerware, and woodworking, with over 400 years of artisan heritage. Recognized as one of Japan’s leading craft towns, Takaoka has been designated a Japan Heritage site for its living craft culture.
 - The Ichibamachi (“market town”) event was launched in 2011 with the aim of revitalizing the local community and promoting traditional crafts through creative and interactive approaches. It is co-organized by local artisans, businesses, city officials, designers, and young creators, emphasizing community participation and narrative-based cultural tourism.

³⁸ 高岡クラフト市場街実行委員会, 「高岡クラフト市場街 – まちと工芸の今をつなぐ」 (高岡市: 高岡クラフト市場街実行委員会, 2022), <https://ichibamachi.jp/about/>; Toyama Prefectural Tourism Association, *Crafts of Takaoka: Tradition and Innovation in Metalwork* (Toyama: Toyama Prefecture, 2021), <https://foreign.info-toyama.com/en/spot/41013/>.

Figure 4: Photos taken by author at Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi 2023



- ② **Glasgow Museums (Scotland)**³⁹ – inputs from a storyteller working as a learning & access curator for schools at Glasgow Museums
- Glasgow Museums is the collective name for the group of museums operated by Glasgow Life, a charity that manages cultural and leisure services on behalf of Glasgow City Council. It encompasses some of the most prominent institutions in Scotland, including Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, the Riverside Museum, and the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA). These museums hold diverse collections ranging from fine art and design to natural history, transport, and social heritage. As one of the most significant civic museum services in Europe, Glasgow Museums has played a vital role in democratizing access to culture, emphasizing community engagement, education, and inclusive interpretation.

³⁹ Glasgow Life, *Glasgow Museums: A Guide to the City's Collections* (Glasgow: Glasgow Life, 2019); Glasgow Museums, "About Us," accessed June 21, 2025, <https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/about-us>; Iain J. M. Robertson, *Glasgow Museums – Social History, Public Engagement and the Civic Ideal* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

2024 **Figure 5:** Photos taken by author at Kelvingrove Museum (one of the Glasgow Museums) in



③ **Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (France)**⁴⁰ – insights from the former director

- The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art is a type of institution dedicated to collecting, preserving, and exhibiting artworks from the late 19th century to the present day. These museums play a critical role in shaping public understanding of modernity, artistic experimentation, and contemporary cultural discourse. They often serve as platforms for emerging and established artists alike, presenting diverse media including painting, sculpture, installation, video, and performance art. The museum's role extends beyond preservation to include public engagement, education, and critical reflection on global and local cultural movements.

⁴⁰ Bruce Altshuler, *Collecting the New: Museums and Contemporary Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Andrew McClellan, *The Art Museum from Boullée to Bilbao* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012).

Figure 6: Photo of MAMAC⁴¹



Interviews were aimed to receive insights related to the issues and opportunities of the cultural heritage value chain introduced in the chapter 1, and to understand their different forms of storytelling practices. The paper will use these inputs to develop a storytelling framework which can be replicable for the future cultural heritage value chain strategies.

⁴¹ Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Tourism. "MAMAC." *Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Official Tourism Website*. Accessed July 25, 2025. <https://provence-alpes-cotedazur.com/en/things-to-do/culture-and-heritage/museums/mamac/>.

4. Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi (Japan)

4.1 Overview

Japan's 2025 domestic travel data shows a growing interest in wellness-oriented, slow travel – such as onsen visits and rural stays – over traditional multiple-site sightseeing tours. This trend highlights a clear preference for immersive cultural experiences rather than volume-based tourism.

One event that perfectly aligns with this shift is Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi, which offers hands-on experiences of traditional culture in collaboration with local artisans. The name Ichibamachi – meaning "market town" in Japanese – serves as the central narrative of the event. The name embodies the hope that it will become “a space where people and things interact, giving rise to new values and connections”⁴² – a vision that aligns with the concept of a “third space” introduced in Chapter 1. Held over three to four days each year, the event transforms the area into a lively craft market that showcases a wide variety of local artisan products and traditions. It is organized by local cultural practitioners, including designers, creators, university professors, and traditional craftspeople.

As Kunimoto, the event’s executive committee chair and fourth-generation head of the long-established lacquerware wholesaler Shikki Kunimoto, puts it: “Takaoka's most important tourism resource is its people. It is the encounters with artisans and their stories that make this place a chosen destination.” This statement captures the essence of Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi, a community-driven event born from and sustained by personal connections.

⁴² Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi, “People Who Support Culture: Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi,” *Takaoka City Cultural Creation*, accessed June 30, 2025, <https://bunkasouzou-takaoka.jp/active-person/takaokacraftichibamachi/>.

4.2 Social Inclusion and Local Long-term Vision

Based on Kaufman's framework for tourism strategy narratives introduced in chapter 2, the strength of the Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi initiative lies in its **solid vision and community values based on its locally driven origins**. This local foundation naturally fosters inclusivity and sustained engagement among stakeholders, who share a common mission and community vision to revitalize regional crafts.

The cultural ecosystem in Takaoka is not sustained solely by designers and craftspeople. According to Kunimoto, the success of regional events depends heavily on the support of local residents. What distinguishes this locally driven event is not only the pursuit of community consent, but the proactive steps taken with **a long-term vision for the future of the city**. Kunimoto and committee members actively participate in neighborhood gatherings and community activities such as weeding, using these informal settings to foster dialogue and deepen trust with residents, ultimately encouraging their involvement in the event.

A representative example of this collaboration is the use of traditional private homes – whether by borrowing lived-in spaces or utilizing vacant houses. In the central event area, the Yamamachi-suji Traditional Building Preservation District in Takaoka City, rapid aging is a serious concern. In many cases, the elderly residents' children have moved to metropolitan areas such as Tokyo, resulting in the old population and contributing to the region's vacant housing problem. According to the Takaoka City Lifestyle Plan 2018–2027, the number of vacant houses in the city's core area, including Yamamachi-suji, increased by approximately 34.6% between

2008 and 2013, and by 25% between 2018 and 2023⁴³. Although the rate of growth has slowed, the issue remains significant today. Ideally, to stimulate local revitalization, such traditional houses could be converted into tenant-run shops. However, many property owners, not being in financial distress, prefer to leave their houses untouched. As a pragmatic first step, the event organizers try to negotiate temporary use of these spaces during the event period. This approach not only encourages community participation by allowing residents to contribute in a manageable way, but also supports the revitalization of the historic district amid its aging population. Kunimoto remarked, “Focusing solely on craftsmanship is not enough. I want **food, scenery, and other elements to also serve as drivers of the town’s overall narrative.**” It serves as a dual-purpose initiative, addressing **social and cultural sustainability** simultaneously.

In addition, inclusion at Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi extends beyond the local population. As will be explored in the following section on *Diversity*, the event has broadened its reach by fostering **cross-sector collaboration between traditional artisans and people from different industries**. As a result, the event has attracted attention from across Toyama Prefecture, Japan, and even internationally. The event's inclusive nature and its ability to facilitate meaningful connections have even led to some organizers relocating to Takaoka from other areas, further enriching the local community.

⁴³ Takaoka City, *Takaoka City Lifestyle Plan 2018–2027* (Takaoka City, 2018), pp. II-34–II-35.

4.3 Diversity Enriching Craft Value Chain

Kunimoto noted that, traditionally, local craftsmen in Takaoka had worked in isolation, with limited interaction across industries. Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi introduced a cross-sectoral perspective – driven by committee team mainly organized by designers – significantly enriching the storytelling around local culture and crafts.

A particularly illustrative example is the atelier tours. Previously, these ateliers were closed spaces where craftsmen worked in silence. Through the event, however, they opened their doors to visitors. As will be discussed in the next section, this initiative promotes person-to-person storytelling, fostering connections between locals and tourists alike.

However, in this section, the focus is on the diversity of perspectives that these interactions have introduced. Exposure to external viewpoints and feedback has allowed artisans to discover new aspects of their own work. This process has not only fostered self-affirmation but has also led to richer internal branding and new product development. This shift has transformed Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi into a kind of annual presentation event, themed around "Ichibamachi for 365 days."

In this way, the event's diversity lies not only in introducing traditional culture to outsiders but also in **enabling local artisans to rediscover their own value**. This reciprocal learning ecosystem is a hallmark of the initiative.

4.4 Targeting and Relatability

According to Kunimoto, audience targeting is often a changing topic every year in the committee's discussions. Nevertheless, he emphasized that "the most important thing is for locals to know about it." His statement, "If the industry is not loved by the local people, it won't

thrive," was particularly striking. He believes that the key to sustainable growth is to first instill pride among the local community, who can then spread the word to the others.

At the same time, future strategies aim to increase inbound tourism for the event's further growth in financial aspect, by appealing to international visitors, who often find Japan's traditional culture and its contextual explanations especially compelling. Tourists on special trips abroad are more likely to purchase high-end crafts, creating different needs from domestic visitors. Meeting these diverse demands is crucial to revitalizing local industry.

Regarding relatability, Kunimoto emphasized the importance of making Takaoka a **"place to return to"** through this event. Given the culturally specific nature of traditional Japanese crafts, it is not always easy for visitors from different backgrounds to connect the craft itself with them. However, the strength of Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi lies in its ability to foster personal-level connections between people.

For example, during the atelier tours, conversations with artisans often transform Takaoka from a destination into a place visitors want to revisit, and its residents into a kind of extended family. Kunimoto highlights that the real appeal lies not in scripted explanations, but in **the artisans' authentic voices and their own way of storytelling**. These genuine interactions are what resonate most deeply with visitors.

In addition to daytime tours, the event also features "Craftsman Bars" in the evenings, where guests can drink and socialize with artisans. These settings allow participants to connect with artisans on a personal level, revealing new sides of their personalities. Through such interactions, visitors form personal and lasting relationships, creating **a unique sense of connection and relatability**.

Over the years, a vibrant community has formed around the event, including people who have attended annually for over a decade, those who are strongly attracted by the event that they became involved in the organization of the event, and regular gatherings held in Tokyo.

Overall, the initiative is like a tree that first strengthens its roots in the local community before extending its branches to warmly embrace the world.

4.5 Impact on Local Revitalization

The impact of the event has already been significant, particularly in how it has been recognized for its inclusive approach rooted in community engagement. Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi is a collaborative initiative between local government, academia, and private sectors. In the field of education, for example, the University of Toyama has implemented a credit-recognition system for students who participate in the event. Student involvement and contributions to the event are notably high, making it an effective initiative that **engages the younger generation in regional revitalization** as well.

Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi has received national acclaim for its innovative, community-driven approach to cultural renewal. In 2022, it was awarded the Furusato Event Grand Prize (Prime Minister's Award) by the Japan Center for Regional Development, in recognition of its outstanding contribution to regional engagement and cultural promotion. That same year, it also received a Good Design Award, acknowledging the event's creative framework in connecting people, local heritage, and craftsmanship. These honors underscore the event's broader role beyond tourism – as a model for sustainable, locally rooted cultural development.

Kunimoto attributes part of the event's recognition to its consistent written documentation. Each year, the organizing committee compiles a 40-page activity report,

primarily visual, which details the event’s activities and outcomes. This form of comprehensive documentation is uncommon for community-based events and has played a key role in strengthening external understanding of the initiative, contributing to the successful award applications. Kunimoto also highlights that the strong communication design capacity of the committee – many of whom are designers – is a vital strength. **The collaboration between traditional artisans and designers skilled in communication has amplified the appeal of the region and helped the event gain broader recognition.**

Figure 7: Activity Report of Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi 2024⁴⁴



4.6 Future Direction

As part of the committee’s annual operations, an event survey is submitted to the City of Takaoka each year. While the majority of responses offer positive feedback regarding the overall mission and atmosphere of the event, issues related to transportation remain an area for

⁴⁴ Kikura Print, “市場街 13年目の DAY&NIGHT。2024年9月に開催された富山県高岡市街地で開催するクラフトとアートの祭典『市場街 2024』の魅力を紹介する冊子です,” Facebook, June 9, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/KikuraPrint/posts/1267144284937417/>.

future improvement. Comments have highlighted the limited availability of parking as well as concerns regarding bus access. In response, the organizers have begun consultations with both private transportation providers and municipal authorities.

At the same time, Kunimoto proposes addressing this issue not merely as a logistical problem, but as an opportunity to enhance the visitor experience by promoting slower, more immersive modes of travel. Potential solutions include rental bicycles, electric scooters, and the development of pedestrian-friendly event routes that encourage exploration of the town on foot. This approach reflects the event’s local-driven philosophy, **turning a challenge into a chance to deepen engagement** with the community’s unique atmosphere.

Kunimoto also emphasizes to continue conveying the charm of the local area **in authentic terms** – avoiding exaggeration and instead using everyday language, including dialects, to express the voices of the local craftsmen.

Looking to the future, one of the event’s greatest strengths lies in its ability to introduce new perspectives and initiatives through new connections forged each year – as per the message on its name “Ichibamachi”. As discussed in the previous chapter, exchanges with people from other industries and regions have contributed to the event’s diversification and enrichment. The continuous growth of **“relational populations” (kankeijinkō)** – individuals who develop ongoing ties to the area without permanently relocating – holds promising potential for further innovation and community development.

5. Glasgow Museums (Scotland)

5.1 Overview

Recent discourse in cultural tourism and education emphasizes the importance of storytelling as a tool for connecting audiences to cultural heritages. In an era of increasingly diverse classrooms and evolving museum strategies, curators and educators have begun embracing narrative practices that go beyond information transmission. This paper draws on an in-depth interview with Anna Lehr, a Learning and Access Curator for Schools at Glasgow Museums, who is also an active professional storyteller. The discussion explores how storytelling is used to foster engagement, inclusivity, and relatability within museum settings and beyond, offering rich insights into the development and delivery of narrative-based educational programs for children and adults, locals and tourists.

Lehr's work exemplifies a sustainable, inclusive, and context-aware model for cultural storytelling in museums. Her adaptive and emotionally resonant narratives bridge the gap between objects and audiences, creating educational experiences rooted in everyday relevance and ethical responsibility. As cultural institutions globally seek to foster deeper community ties and relevance, the practices outlined in this interview provide a compelling roadmap for integrating storytelling as both pedagogical strategy and heritage preservation tool.

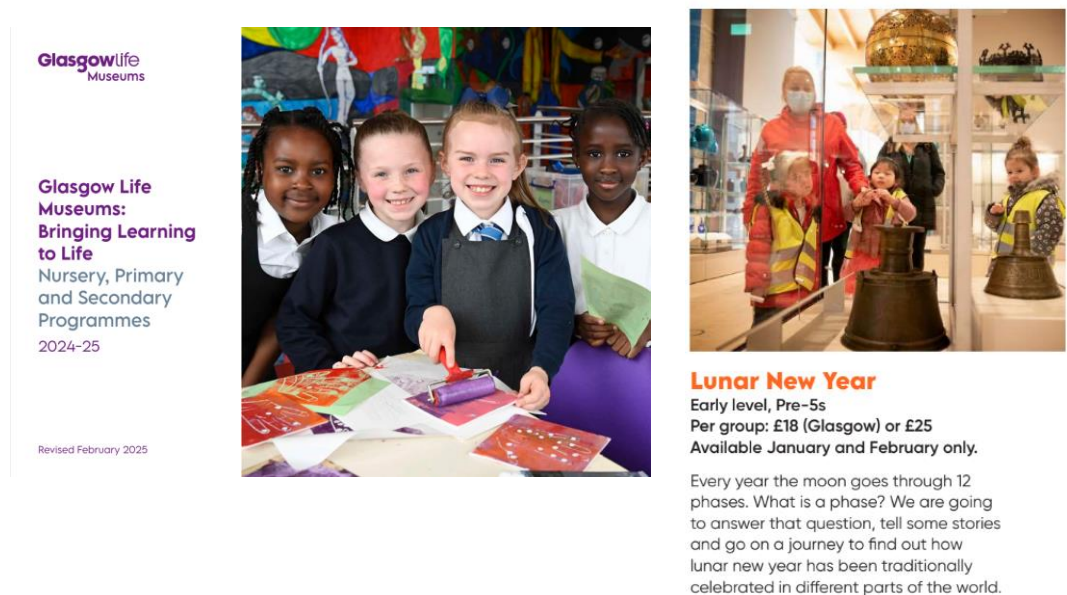
5.2 Community-Centered Adaptive Storytelling

At the heart of Lehr's work is a strong commitment to localized, audience-sensitive programming. Her primary role at Glasgow Museums involves developing and delivering school workshops for children aged 3 to 17 across various venues and themes – ranging from Ancient Egypt to shipbuilding. She serves as a bridge between teachers and museums, designing

content that speaks directly to the lived experiences of her audience. Additionally, as a freelance storyteller, Lehr brings narrative interpretation to other cultural institutions, using oral storytelling to animate collections and deepen visitor engagement.

A key strength of Lehr’s approach lies in her **adaptive storytelling techniques**. Stories are developed after careful analysis of the topic, context, and intended audience. For instance, in a collaboration with the Palace of Holyroodhouse, she created a historically grounded Halloween story involving ghost legends and witch trials⁴⁵. Similarly, for Glasgow Museums' Lunar New Year programming, stories were selected to reflect East Asian traditions relevant to Glasgow’s diverse demographic. These examples demonstrate her iterative process: topic first, then research, followed by creative development – ensuring narrative accuracy and audience resonance.

Figure 8: Glasgow Life Museums: Bringing Learning to Life Nursery, Primary and Secondary Programmes 2024-25⁴⁶



Glasgow Life Museums

Glasgow Life Museums: Bringing Learning to Life
Nursery, Primary and Secondary Programmes
2024-25
Revised February 2025

Lunar New Year
Early level, Pre-5s
Per group: £18 (Glasgow) or £25
Available January and February only.

Every year the moon goes through 12 phases. What is a phase? We are going to answer that question, tell some stories and go on a journey to find out how lunar new year has been traditionally celebrated in different parts of the world.

⁴⁵ Palace of Holyroodhouse (Royal Collection Trust). Historical documentation and program brief, accessed June 2025.

⁴⁶ *Glasgow Museums: Bringing Learning to Life – Nursery, Primary and Secondary Programmes 2024–25*, Glasgow Life (2024)

A unique hallmark of Lehr’s storytelling is its **emotional intentionality**. She crafts narratives that surprise, provoke, and connect on a human level. One notable example is a new story she plans to present at a midsummer storytelling night⁴⁷ – involving two ghosts revisiting their lost loved ones. Combining humor and heartbreak, the story is structured to defy expectations and linger in the audience’s memory. This strategy mirrors her broader philosophy: good stories are those where “you don’t see what’s coming next.” By leveraging the emotional power of narrative, Lehr transforms storytelling into a relational and reflective experience.

5.3 Diversity in Audiences and Relatability

Lehr emphasizes the importance of creating narratives that feel accessible, especially to young children. Drawing on insights from authors like Margaret Wise Brown⁴⁸ and educators like Maria Montessori⁴⁹, she explains that “only adults find the ordinary boring.” Children, on the other hand, connect deeply with everyday experiences – such as family traditions, celebrations, and simple routines. When tackling complex topics like religion, she shifts focus from abstract doctrinal elements to relatable day-to-day practices (e.g., going to mosque, receiving sweets during Eid). This approach creates **an inclusive entry point into heritage without overwhelming learners with complexity**.

While Lehr’s formal role targets school-age learners, her freelance storytelling extends to adult audiences as well. She frequently adapts content for adults by enriching it with layered

⁴⁷ Scottish Storytelling Centre. “Open Mic Nights.” <https://www.scottishstorytellingcentre.com>

⁴⁸ Margaret Wise Brown. *Goodnight Moon*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947).

⁴⁹ Maria Montessori. *The Absorbent Mind*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967).

vocabulary, longer narrative arcs, and emotionally nuanced content. For example, in retelling the story of the Frog Prince, she rewrote the ending to promote themes of consent and agency, challenging conventional gender norms. Her narrative adjustments often reflect contemporary social values and invite critical thinking, making her work relevant across demographics.

5.4 Efficient Digital Use

Additionally, storytelling in Glasgow museums embraces digital augmentation. Rather than relying solely on traditional wall labels or extended interpretive panels, Glasgow Museums – including prominent venues such as the Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum – have adopted the Smartify app⁵⁰ as a core interpretive tool. This platform enables visitors to scan QR codes beside artworks and access layered digital content, sourced directly from Glasgow Museums Collections Online. Through Smartify, users are offered a personalized experience: they can explore the historical and cultural background of individual objects, listen to expert-led audio tours, and curate their own digital gallery collections. This approach not only enriches on-site engagement but also facilitates **deeper connections and story-building between audiences and artworks**, aligning with global trends in participatory and technology-assisted museum experiences.

In Lehr’s workshops, tools like the “Book Creator” app⁵¹ enable self-led exploration, especially beneficial for ESL learners. Students can record or draw responses to prompts related to museum exhibits – a form of interactive, personalized storytelling that enhances engagement

⁵⁰ Smartify, “Explore Glasgow Museums,” *Smartify App*, accessed June 30, 2025, <https://smartify.org/partners/glasgow-museums> .

⁵¹ Book Creator. “Digital Storytelling in Museums.” <https://bookcreator.com>

and inclusion. While not traditional storytelling, this expands narrative engagement to self-guided educational visits with the efficient digital implementation.

Figure 9: Image of Smartify App⁵²



5.5 Challenges and Future Direction

Despite the positive outcomes, Lehr acknowledges challenges in content selection, especially when dealing with religious or sacred narratives. Her approach is marked by cultural humility – avoiding appropriation or misrepresentation by steering clear of sacred Indigenous stories or religious themes she does not fully understand. Within the museum context, she also prioritizes staff comfort and training, recognizing the need to protect frontline educators from difficult interpretive responsibilities when discussing unfamiliar faiths with diverse student groups.

⁵² Glasgow Life, “Enhance Your Visit to Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum with Smartify,” *Glasgow Life*, accessed July 25, 2025, <https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/venues/kelvingrove-art-gallery-and-museum/enhance-your-visit-to-kelvingrove-art-gallery-and-museum-with-smartify>.

6. Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (France)

6.1 Overview

This chapter explores how MAMAC Nice, under the directorship of H el ene Guenin (2016–2025), developed a storytelling strategy grounded in its collection and local context. It examines how the museum utilized its existing "DNA" – the historical and artistic specificity of the post-war avant-garde in Nice – to construct meaningful narratives that connect past and present. The report also analyses MAMAC's efforts in youth engagement, community inclusion, and ecological awareness through exhibitions and institutional practices, offering a model for museums working at the intersection of place, people, and planet.

The role of MAMAC (Mus e d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain) in Nice is remarkably multifaceted, shifting with the seasons and the demographics of its visitors. This dynamic character is deeply rooted in the museum's own history of cultural intersections, as well as the seasonal rhythms of Nice – a city renowned for its tourism and cosmopolitan atmosphere. During the winter months, approximately 60–70% of the museum's audience is composed of local residents, whereas in summer, around 70% of visitors are international, largely from Italy, Sweden, the United States, Germany, and beyond⁵³. Accordingly, MAMAC serves as both a community hub for cultural engagement among locals and a prominent attraction for global tourists. This dual identity is not superficial but intrinsic to the museum's institutional DNA, which is shaped by the post-war avant-garde legacy of the region and its continuous dialogue with both local heritage and global art movements. In the following

⁵³ Interview with H el ene Guenin, former director of MAMAC, conducted in June 2025

sections, this thesis explores how MAMAC constructs narratives that reflect and reinforce its plural roles – **connecting past and present, residents and travelers, permanence and flux.**

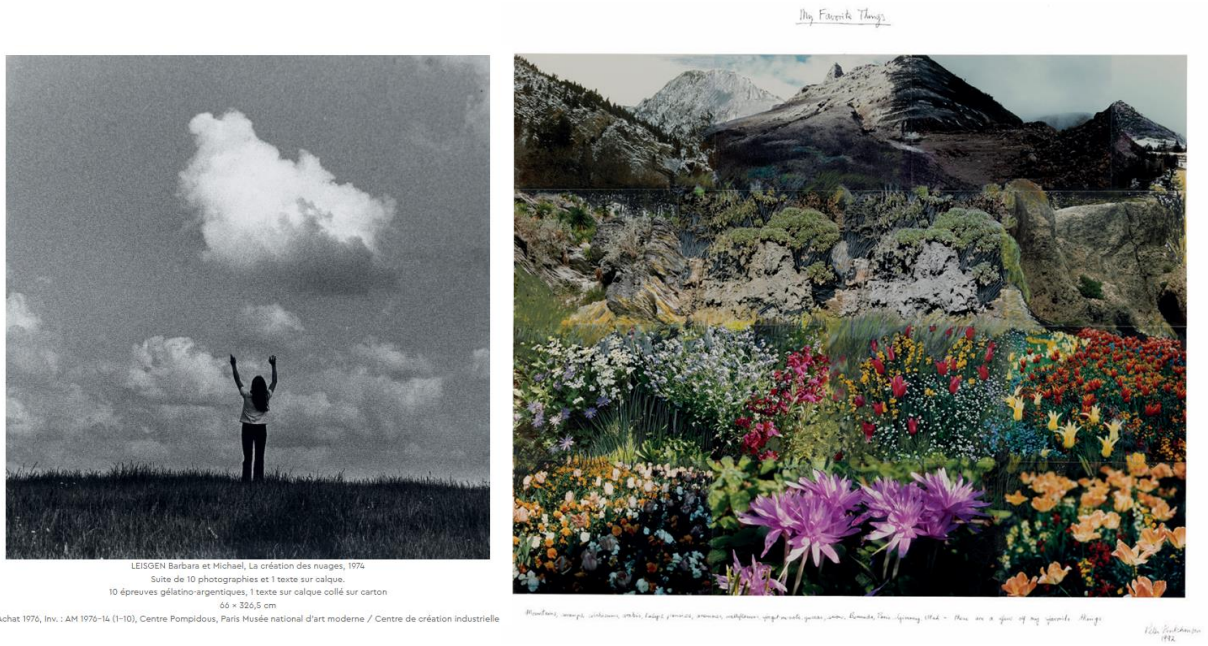
6.2 Cross-Sectoral Narratives Rooted in Institutional DNA

MAMAC's core collection – anchored by figures such as Yves Klein and Niki de Saint Phalle – embodies Nice's vibrant avant-garde period from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. These artists and its artworks have established connections with the POP art scene, Arte povera, etc and the locals. Guenin consistently built exhibitions drawing from this heritage, reinforcing the museum's unique identity to investigate the period, movements, or building bridges with the youngest generations, showing a continuity of research, practices, involvement.

Example projects include:

- She-Bam Pow POP Wizz! The Amazons of Pop (Oct 3, 2020 – Mar 28, 2021): The exhibition reframed Pop Art by showcasing European and North American women artists, including Niki de Saint Phalle, thus expanding the movement's narrative beyond its typical male-centered interpretation.
- Cosmogonies (2018): This project positioned Yves Klein as a precursor to ecological art, engaging multiple generations of artists to explore climate concerns and the relevance of Klein's legacy today.

Figure 10: Images from the exhibition journal of *Cosmogonies*⁵⁴



In addition, Guenin’s curatorship emphasized interdisciplinary approaches –integrating anthropological, historical, and environmental perspectives – to situate art within broader social and geographic contexts as seen in the *Overview* section. Exhibitions like *About Nice. 1947–1977* exemplified this strategy by connecting local artistic heritage with urban history and regional identity.

Both exhibitions are deeply rooted in the museum’s own collection while simultaneously engaging with universal themes and issues – women’s perspective on arts and climate challenges. These exhibitions exemplify how MAMAC leveraged its own collection to create

⁵⁴ MAMAC Nice, *Cosmogonies: According to the Elements*, exhibition journal, June 2018. https://www.mamac-nice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2018_EN_Cosmogonies_JOURNAL.pdf

narratives that are historically grounded yet dynamically connected to contemporary issues that resonate to diverse audiences including international visitors and younger generations.

6.3 Diverse, Youth-focused engagement

As previously discussed, MAMAC operates in a context marked by strong seasonal shifts in its visitor base. This fluctuation – where a majority of visitors are local in the winter and predominantly international in the summer – means the museum cannot adopt a uniform engagement strategy. Instead, it must respond to a wide range of audience expectations and cultural backgrounds across the year.

Despite this context, the museum has also implemented targeted strategies to diversify and renew its audience, particularly among younger and local groups. MAMAC established strong partnerships with local universities and youth communities to foster deeper involvement in the museum's activities and exhibitions. In parallel, it developed a range of family-oriented programming designed to make contemporary art more accessible and relevant across generations. These initiatives have contributed to a long-term and sustained increase in the presence of younger audiences, cultivating what can be seen as a generational investment in cultural literacy and engagement.

To better understand and respond to its evolving audience, MAMAC also employs ongoing evaluative mechanisms. The museum collects geographical data from visitors and regularly conducts surveys to gather insights into public expectations, behaviours, and backgrounds. This data-driven approach has enabled MAMAC to adapt its educational and curatorial offerings in response to actual visitor needs, rather than assumptions, reinforcing the inclusivity and relevance of its programming.

In sum, the museum's audience engagement strategy is both adaptive and intentional – addressing the **fluctuating seasonal demographics of Nice** and committed to developing **long-term cultural relationships with the local population**, especially youth and families.

6.4 Social Inclusion and Marginalized Communities

Beyond its public-facing exhibitions, MAMAC exemplifies how storytelling in museum settings can serve as a platform for social inclusion, particularly among marginalized communities. The museum has actively collaborated with NGOs and local organizations to design accessible, context-sensitive programming, including:

- Partnerships with prisons, hospitals, women's shelters, mental health and disability associations.
- Co-developed educational kits, sign-language tours, and multilingual materials.
- Gender equity in programming, featuring women artists from diverse backgrounds in solo and group exhibitions.
- Pilot outreach program using a *mobile museum* to bring art to remote mountain villages within Nice Métropole, helping reduce cultural access disparities.

One particularly notable initiative is MAMAC's ongoing collaboration with the prison system. This annual partnership aims to foster social reintegration by facilitating personal reflection and expression through art. The program recognizes the potential of museums to serve not only as spaces of aesthetic experience but also as **instruments of civic engagement and personal development**.

For example, the project *Passage à l'acte* launched in 2024, demonstrates the transformative role of narrative and storytelling in cultural institutions. Developed in

collaboration with local correctional authorities, this initiative invited incarcerated individuals to participate in MAMAC’s cultural programming by producing original audio podcasts.

Participants each selected an artwork from the museum’s permanent collection and recorded a brief narrative reflecting on their personal interpretations, emotional responses, and life experiences in relation to the piece. This program achieved several interrelated goals such as:

- Empowerment of silenced voices through self-authored narratives;
- Cognitive engagement with art as a reflective and interpretive medium;
- Cultural inclusion through participatory access to public heritage.

These projects align with broader academic frameworks that describe heritage interpretation as a socially constructed, dialogic process shaped by individual memory, identity, and lived experience. Rather than operating as an elitist institution reserved for those already fluent in cultural codes, MAMAC actively repositions itself as an inclusive civic space. Through programs such as this, the museum extends its relevance to underrepresented and decentered communities, offering them not only access to culture, but also authorship within it.

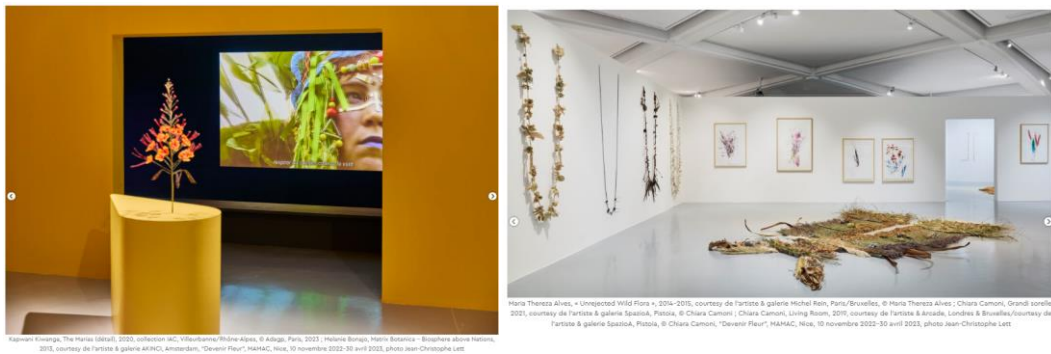
6.5 Sustainability: Ecological Narrative and Practice

As seen in the section 6.2, environmental consciousness has also been one of the highlighted themes in MAMAC, woven both into exhibitions and institutional operations:

- Annual ecological-themed exhibitions such as *Becoming Flower* (Nov 2022–Apr 2023), *Marine Models*, and *Remember Nature*
- Introduction of low-impact exhibition production models, reflecting a daily commitment to reducing MAMAC’s carbon footprint – though internal, these efforts aligned with the museum’s narrative framing.

One notable example of MAMAC's recent programming that blends ecological reflection with artistic innovation is the exhibition *Becoming Flower (Devenir Fleur)*, held from November 2022 to April 2023. The exhibition reimagined the flower not merely as a decorative motif, but as a resilient ecological actor and a metaphor for new modes of coexistence. The exhibition's thematic core emphasized the flower's regenerative power, its connection to cycles of life and death, and its symbolism across different cultures – also representing the rich cross-sectoral approach of MAMAC discussed in the section 6.2. The artworks invited viewers to question the conceptions of nature as a resource, and to consider vegetal life not as passive background, but as an active co-participant in shared ecological systems.

Figure 11: Images from the exhibition journal of *Cosmogonies*



Becoming Flower was also notable for its socially inclusive programming. The museum organized sign-language tours, sensory workshops, and educational events targeting youth and underserved communities. It also extended its outreach through creative writing projects, participatory dance performances, and partnerships with regional schools and colleges.

By combining ecological consciousness with cultural access, these projects serve as compelling approach of how contemporary museums can operate as sites of **both**

environmental imagination and civic dialogue. It also illustrates the potential of visual storytelling to foster multispecies empathy and inclusive, future-oriented cultural practice.

6.6 Measuring Impact and Future Orientation

MAMAC has employed multiple metrics to assess its institutional impact:

- Visitor demographics and seasonality (local during winter; international in summer).
- Press/media coverage and exhibition reviews.
- Increasing partnerships and outreach requests from schools, NGOs, and artists.

These outcomes signaled a stronger alignment between the museum's mission and its external perception, reinforcing its identity as a socially and environmentally engaged cultural institution.

In addition, following H el ene Guenin's departure from her directorial role at MAMAC, it is appropriate to broaden the focus beyond the future of a single institution to consider the wider museum ecosystem in Nice, particularly given her continued involvement across various local cultural initiatives.

Observations conducted during fieldwork in Nice indicate that its municipal museums do not function as isolated entities, but rather operate as a coordinated cultural network. This integrated approach is evident in both thematic and operational coherence, especially during city-wide cultural events. A prominent example of this collaborative infrastructure is the Nice Biennale of Arts, a recurring initiative that acts simultaneously as a curatorial platform and a cultural policy instrument. Through the Biennale, key institutions – including MAMAC, the Matisse Museum, Mus e de la Photographie Charles N gre, and Villa Mass na – are united

under a shared thematic framework, while maintaining the flexibility to express their institutional identities through diverse interpretations.

This collaborative framework was further amplified during the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), held in Nice from June 9 to 13, 2025, which was embedded within the larger Biennale des Arts et de l’Océan, under the thematic banner of “The Year of the Sea” (September 2024 – September 2025). Each museum staged ocean-related exhibitions tailored to their disciplinary strengths. For example, the Musée de la Photographie Charles Nègre hosted the exhibition *Laurent Ballesta – Mers et Mystères*, featuring a wide array of maritime photography that engaged audiences and sparked curiosity about the mysteries of the ocean.

Figure 12: Exhibition view of *Laurent Ballesta – Mers et Mystères*⁵⁵



This model of Biennale coordination offers several strategic benefits such as:

- **Cultural coherence:** Each museum contributes a disciplinary voice within a shared curatorial frame.
- **Audience redistribution:** Visitors are guided across multiple venues, supporting lesser-known sites – especially during the highly visited occasions such as international events or high season of tourism.

⁵⁵ Laurent Ballesta, *Mers et Mystères*, exhibition view, Musée de la Photographie Charles Nègre, Nice, France, February 2025. Photograph by the author.

Figure 13: Poster of Nice Biennale 2025⁵⁶



Such initiatives demonstrate strong potential for **optimizing both tourism and visitor distribution through consistent storytelling**, while allowing each museum to express its **unique institutional identity**. The Biennale format thus functions not only as a curatorial framework, but also as a strategic model for place-based collaboration. Similar potential can be observed in initiatives such as *Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi* in Japan and the community-oriented programming of *Glasgow Museums*, where cross-sectoral cooperation and locally grounded narratives support both cultural sustainability and regional revitalization. These models point to a wider applicability across diverse regions and institutions, underscoring the role of coordinated storytelling in maximizing collective impact.

⁵⁶ "Biennale des Arts et de l'Océan," *Explore Nice Côte d'Azur*, accessed June 30, 2025, <https://www.explorenicecotedazur.com/en/info/biennale-des-arts-et-de-l-ocean-en>.

7. Development of the Framework and Future Evolution

Informed by the cross-case analysis of Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi, Glasgow Museums, and MAMAC, this chapter proposes a conceptual storytelling framework to enhance the cultural heritage value chain in tourism. Building upon Kaufman's 10-step narrative development model, Johnson and Thomas's four types of cultural demand, and the CHARTER model's six functional roles, this framework is grounded in the need for sustainable, community-driven, and emotionally resonant heritage promotion.

7.1 Cross-Analysis of Theoretical Concepts and Practical Applications

This thesis has highlighted how storytelling functions as a powerful mechanism within the cultural heritage value chain, specifically in tourism. By mapping the theoretical foundations of cultural storytelling (*Chapter 2*) against real-world applications (*Chapters 4 – 6*), we can now propose a synthesis that connects academic insights with actionable strategies.

The theoretical models introduced earlier – particularly Kaufman's integrated planning framework, the CHARTER model's six functional domains, and the principles of Social Return on Investment (SROI) – provide analytical lenses for understanding how cultural narratives are constructed, delivered, and measured. The practical case studies validate these models while offering new elements that refine them further.

For instance, all three cases – Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi, Glasgow Museums, and MAMAC – demonstrate how storytelling supports both **cultural expression and strategic development**. Notably, these institutions emphasize:

- Community-based narratives that promote intergenerational transmission and long-term relationships beyond one-shot tourism, transcending differences in age, background, and place of origin (Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi)
- Emotionally engaging, educational storytelling tailored to diverse age groups and cultural backgrounds, and enriched by inclusive perspectives such as gender, language, and identity (Glasgow Museums)
- Institutional strategies that actively integrate ecological consciousness, social inclusion, and collaborations with marginalized communities into the storytelling framework, while leveraging the unique historical and touristic identity of the city of Nice (MAMAC)

7.2 Core Components of the Framework

The case studies demonstrate that impactful storytelling is not a one-size-fits-all solution but emerges from the intersection of five key dimensions:

① Community Roots and Shared Vision

- All three cases reveal the necessity of deeply grounded narratives reflecting local values and long-term visions.
- Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi's initiative is based on the pride of local craftsmanship and is co-created by residents, students, and artisans.
- Glasgow Museums design their programs in alignment with school curricula and community feedback.
- MAMAC's programming is rooted in the avant-garde DNA of Nice's post-war art history.

② **Cross-Sectoral Collaboration**

- Collaboration across disciplines and institutions strengthens diversity and innovation.
- Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi connects artisans with designers, students, and architects.
- Glasgow Museums integrate performance arts and education.
- MAMAC connects modern art with ecological, political, and feminist narratives.

③ **Targeting and Relatability**

- All cases prioritize crafting stories that align with audience values.
- In Takaoka, interpersonal connections transform crafts into lasting memories and develop wider “relational populations” (kankeijinkō).
- Glasgow Museums tailor stories for different age groups, creating relevance through everyday experiences.
- MAMAC understands different visitors demographics and tries to address them with diverse topics and perspectives.

④ **Inclusion and Participation**

- Engagement with local or underrepresented groups is essential.
- Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi invites local elders and new residents alike to co-create the event.

- MAMAC's outreach programs with prisons, hospitals, and women's shelters exemplify institutional responsibility.

⑤ **Environmental and Social Sustainability**

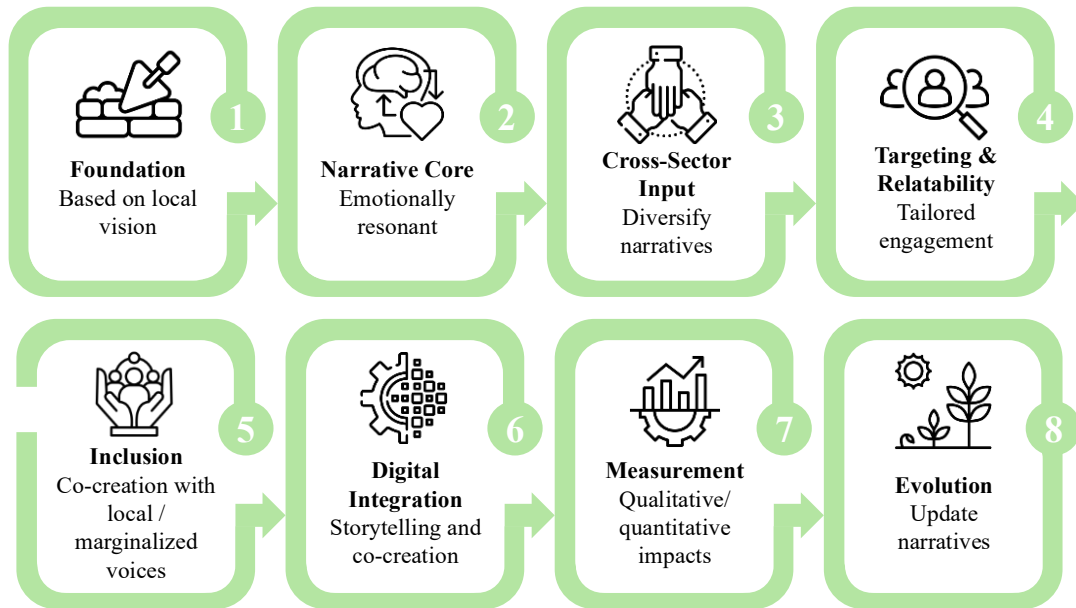
- Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi promotes social sustainability by reusing old houses for city's long term revitalization and proceed toward slow tourism through walkable event design.
- MAMAC's eco-focused exhibitions and reduced carbon practices illustrate institutional leadership.

7.3 Proposed Framework: Relatable Storytelling Model for Cultural Heritage

Value Chain

Based on the components identified in the case studies discussed in the previous sections, and grounded in the theoretical frameworks reviewed earlier, this thesis proposes the following model as a strategic framework for implementing effective and inclusive storytelling in the cultural heritage value chain.

Figure 14: Framework chart of the effective storytelling for cultural tourism



① **Foundation:** Establish local vision and heritage values with community input

【Related Theory】

- Addresses Chhabra’s (2010) identified challenge of aligning heritage management with tourism development, while counteracting commodification and global homogenization through authentic local narratives.
- Corresponds to Kaufman’s (2018) early planning phases: *Gather Information*, *Identify Community Values*, and *Create a Vision*. These elements naturally lead to the articulation of coherent missions, goals, and objectives.

【Case Practices】

- Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi’s bottom-up initiative based on local pride and intergenerational vision.

- ② **Narrative Core:** Create emotionally resonant narrative rooted in place, culture, and people

【Related Theory】

- Reflects Green and Brock's (2000) narrative transportation theory, which highlights the power of emotionally engaging stories to create identification and immersion.

【Case Practices】

- Glasgow Museums' use of tailored storytelling that adapts to visitor age, background, and purpose of visit (e.g., education, reflection, entertainment)

- ③ **Cross-Sector Input:** Collaborate across institutions, disciplines, and generations to diversify narratives

【Related Theory】

- Reinforces Chhabra's (2010) emphasis on partnership-based development in heritage tourism.
- Responds to the challenge of shifting values and consumer needs by enabling multidimensional viewpoints in narrative design.

【Case Practices】

- Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi's collaboration between artisans and external designers, merging local tradition with communication strategy.
- Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi's *kankeijinko* ecosystem fostering long-term community connections through repeated interaction.

- Glasgow and Nice museums' cross-institutional collaborations (e.g., educational programs, Biennales)

④ **Targeting & Relatability:** Define key audiences and develop tailored engagement strategies

【Related Theory】

- Essential in early stages of Kaufman's model (Identify Community Values, Develop Goals).
- Addresses budget constraints in heritage management by enabling focused allocation of limited resources to engaged audiences.

【Case Practices】

- Glasgow's segmentation strategies based on school groups, ESL learners, and family needs.
- MAMAC's use of audience research (visitor geography, seasonal data) to shape program direction.

⑤ **Inclusion:** Ensure accessibility and representation through co-creation with local or marginalized voices

【Related Theory】

- Chhabra (2010) emphasizes the political and ethical challenges of heritage representation.

- Hanna et al. (2015) conceptualize heritage as a form of social memory that shapes and is shaped by collective identity, stressing the importance of ownership and inclusion in narrative formation.
- Kaufman (2018) encourages early and active involvement of diverse stakeholders in the tourism planning process, aligning with the goals of equity and accessibility.

【Case Practices】

- MAMAC's long-term collaborations with prisons, hospitals, women's shelters, and mental health organizations for inclusive educational outreach.
- Glasgow Museums' practices such as sign language tours, multilingual materials, and targeted programming for children and ESL learners.

⑥ **Digital Integration:** Use digital tools for storytelling and co-creation effectively

【Related Theory】

- Links to the rise of *prosumption* (Ritzer et al., 2012) in tourism and heritage value chains.
- Supports Kaufman's call for adaptive planning (Step 10: Update and Modify Plan).

【Case Practices】

- Glasgow Museums's Smartify integration and Book Creator kits for school programs.
- MAMAC's use of podcasts, digital archives, and virtual educational content.

- Takaoka Craft ichibamachi's online storytelling through craft documentation and digital mapping.

⑦ **Measurement:** Evaluate qualitative/quantitative impacts: awareness, participation, visitor profile and use it for both recognition from the others and future endeavors

【Related Theory】

- Draws from the Social Return on Investment (SROI) model (Nicholls et al., 2012), which captures social, cultural, and economic value beyond monetary gain.

【Case Practices】

- Takaoka Craft ichibamachi's annual event reports, visitor interviews, and feedback loops.

⑧ **Evolution:** Update narratives based on feedback and emerging values

【Related Theory】

- Reflects the adaptive planning principles in Kaufman's Step 10.

【Case Practices】

- MAMAC's rotating programming, including annual exhibitions on contemporary issues such as climate and gender.
- Takaoka's event renewal each year with new insights from its evolving community

7.4 Future Evolution of the Model

Building on the comparative findings presented in the earlier chapters, the proposed storytelling framework holds substantial potential for further development and international adaptation. As the cultural heritage value chain becomes more interconnected with broader environmental, social, and economic systems, the storytelling model introduced in this thesis must also evolve accordingly.

One key area of evolution lies in **technological integration**. Emerging tools such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and artificial intelligence (AI) enable cultural institutions to tell stories that are immersive, accessible, and personalized. For instance, interactive apps can allow visitors to access layered narratives depending on their age, language, or prior knowledge, further enhancing the inclusivity and adaptability of the value chain.

Another avenue is the deepening of **environmental narratives**. As seen in the MAMAC and Glasgow Museums cases, ecological themes are increasingly central to museum programming. Storytelling that integrates ecological sensitivity – whether through sustainable material use, climate-oriented exhibitions, or the involvement of environmental actors – can create a shared value system that transcends cultural tourism and contributes to long-term climate goals.

Finally, the model's applicability can be enhanced by embedding it into **education systems**. By incorporating narrative-based heritage modules into school curricula, communities can develop intergenerational storytelling cultures, ensuring both continuity and innovation. This evolution encourages a more participatory model in which cultural heritage is co-owned and continuously renewed by local communities, not only preserved by institutions. It also develops new perspectives and possibilities to drive new forms of heritage tourism practices.

7.5 Assessment and Analysis Compared to the International Direction

When assessed in relation to international trends, the proposed storytelling framework aligns with several global movements in cultural heritage policy and practice. For instance, the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)⁵⁷ and the Faro Convention (Council of Europe, 2005)⁵⁸ emphasize community-based approaches and participatory governance – both of which underpin this study’s narrative model.

In Asia, local revitalization efforts such as Japan’s “Machizukuri” policy⁵⁹ and community-led tourism development in Korea⁶⁰ and Taiwan⁶¹ similarly reflect the model’s emphasis on rootedness and local pride. These efforts, like Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi, show that decentralized, community-driven initiatives can scale sustainably when supported by relational networks, rather than top-down directives.

⁵⁷ UNESCO, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 2003, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>.

⁵⁸ Council of Europe, *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention)*, 2005, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention>.

⁵⁹ Nobuko Kawashima, “Pop Culture and Local Identity: Japanese Machizukuri and Revitalization,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 20, no. 1 (2014): 1–15.

⁶⁰ Bae-Gyoon Park, “Community-based Tourism in South Korea,” *Tourism Management* 35 (2013): 34–43.

⁶¹ Pei-Hsuan Hsieh, “Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Tourism in Taiwan,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 24, no. 3 (2019): 213–226.

In the European context, frameworks such as the EU’s New European Bauhaus⁶² and the Horizon Europe program⁶³ increasingly link culture to sustainability, inclusion, and innovation – principles which are embedded in this model.

Museums such as MAMAC and Glasgow Museums have already begun to operate within such paradigms, using storytelling as a tool for public education, environmental reflection, and social participation. As seen in these examples, the storytelling approach can be further enhanced through **cross-sectoral collaborations**. Such collaborations not only connect heritage professionals with educators, designers, urban planners, and digital technologists, but also create new ecosystems for innovation. By fostering dialogue between sectors, storytelling can transcend conventional formats and become more inclusive, accessible, and responsive to diverse audiences.

One promising future direction of this approach lies in **hybridizing locally led storytelling initiatives with broader international frameworks**. This combination can enrich narrative authenticity while opening opportunities for global dialogue and mutual learning. For instance, Japanese community-led events like Takaoka Craft Ichibamachi, which are rooted in traditional knowledge and place-based values, could benefit from strategic partnerships with international cultural funding schemes such as Horizon Europe. While Horizon Europe is primarily targeted at EU and associated countries, it also encourages third-country collaboration

⁶² European Commission, “New European Bauhaus,” accessed June 30, 2025, https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en.

⁶³ European Commission, “Horizon Europe: The EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme,” accessed June 30, 2025, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en.

under certain frameworks. Through carefully designed partnerships, such programs could amplify the visibility and recognition of local narratives on the global stage.

Moreover, **international cooperation** of this kind would not only support financial sustainability but could also enhance intercultural understanding. By bringing together local artisans, curators, researchers, and educators from different countries, a new form of collaborative storytelling could emerge – one that respects and highlights local specificity while fostering comparative reflection across cultural contexts. This model could also encourage ethical co-curation, allowing narratives to evolve dynamically through transnational exchange rather than being shaped by top-down institutional frameworks.

As cultural tourism becomes increasingly globalized, the integration of international perspectives into local storytelling offers a valuable strategy for both preservation and innovation. It helps communities avoid the risk of stagnation or insularity, instead promoting adaptive, forward-looking heritage practices. Ultimately, the cross-sectoral and transnational approach to storytelling can reinforce the **resilience of the cultural heritage value chain** – strengthening its role not only as a memory keeper, but also as **a driver of sustainable development, intercultural dialogue, and community regeneration.**

Conclusion

This thesis has explored how storytelling can maximize the cultural heritage value chain by enhancing tourism, strengthening local identity, and fostering social and environmental sustainability. Through a theoretical foundation and empirical case studies in Japan, France, and Scotland, a relational and emotionally resonant model of storytelling has been proposed. The framework centers on community participation, cross-sectoral collaboration, and narrative authenticity.

Sub research questions included:

- How can local cultural heritage be made relevant to diverse audiences?
- What constitutes a concept that provides value to both cultural practitioners and beneficiaries?
- How can cultural heritage actively contribute to sustainable action?

Key findings include:

- Storytelling improves both the accessibility and appeal of cultural heritage.
- Personal and emotional resonance enhances memory retention and engagement.
- Locally rooted narratives support regional revitalization and proper interpretation of heritages for tourism.
- Environmental and social narratives increase long-term sustainability.

Importantly, storytelling should not be viewed merely as a tool of cultural marketing, but as **a means of co-creating identity and meaning**. When deployed thoughtfully, it helps transform cultural sites from static spaces into dynamic places of connection, dialogue, and future imagination. This is why research on storytelling holds significant potential in enhancing the cultural heritage value chain within tourism – through emotionally resonant narratives that engage both broad and targeted audiences. Depending on how narratives are directed, storytelling can contribute to the revalorization of forgotten heritage, the revitalization of local communities, and the advancement of sustainable tourism practices.

Future applications of this work may involve deeper integration with digital technologies, collaborations with educational institutions, and ensure policy alignment with global frameworks such as UNESCO. Ultimately, the goal is to cultivate cultural ecosystems where stories are not only told, but also lived, shared, and continuously reimaged by the communities from which they originate.

This research contributes to an emerging interdisciplinary field that views cultural heritage not merely as a relic of the past, but as a catalyst that helps shape a more sustainable future for tourism, by speaking to people’s hearts. One of the greatest strengths of cultural tourism lies in its ability to engage **all five senses**, offering visitors the chance to experience stories not just intellectually, but physically and emotionally. More broadly, this study highlights the potential of narrative to integrate disparate goals within cultural tourism: **local empowerment, economic regeneration, heritage safeguarding, and sustainable planning**. While limited in geographic scope, the comparative case study approach reveals replicable strategies and design principles that can inform tourism development globally.

Future research may expand on this foundation by exploring how digital media and immersive technologies (e.g., AR, VR, and audio storytelling) can further enhance emotional

connection and accessibility. Equally, policy-level interventions such as funding for narrative capacity-building or inclusive storytelling training programs may hold transformative potential. Ultimately, the goal is not only to preserve heritage, but to activate it – inviting communities and visitors alike to **live, share, and continually reimagine the stories embedded in place.**

Thoughtfully crafted storytelling – **tailored to the spirit of a place and the background of its audience** – has the potential to illuminate the future of cultural tourism. It is with this belief and hope that this thesis is concluded.

Word count (main text only): 13,686 words

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Note: This thesis was linguistically proofread and technically reviewed using AI tools including Grammarly and OpenAI's ChatGPT-4 to ensure clarity, consistency, and academic rigor in language and terminology.

Annex

Expert Interview Flow

Interview for Thesis titled:

**Maximizing cultural heritage
value chain in cultural tourism
by means of storytelling**

Thank you very much for your cooperation on my thesis!
Your insights will be highly appreciated on this journey.

Research Question on the thesis:

- How can local cultural heritage be made relevant to diverse audiences?
- What constitutes a concept that provides value to both cultural practitioners and beneficiaries?
- How can cultural heritage be an active contributor to climate actions?

Interview Questions:

Overview:

1. Could you briefly describe your role and responsibilities?
2. How do you incorporate storytelling techniques into your exhibitions or event planning? (Could you give a concrete example of an exhibition or event where storytelling played a particularly central or decisive role?)
3. In what ways do you elaborate on narratives or diversify perspectives on a given event / exhibition topic? For example, through cross-sectoral or interdisciplinary collaborations?
4. What kind of strategies do you use to convey local history and culture to visitors and tourists?
5. Do you use digital tools or social media platforms to enhance storytelling? If so, how?

Target Audience:

6. Do you have a specific target audience? How was this audience identified or defined?
7. How do you ensure that your stories or concepts are relatable to your audience?

Inclusion:

8. How do you engage local communities (including minority or underrepresented groups) in your activities or narratives?
9. How do you promote sustainability through your work with cultural heritage?

Impact:

10. How do you measure the impact of your work, and how do you make use of the results?
11. What concrete outcomes have you observed from using storytelling? (For example: tourism promotion, local branding, visitor engagement, increased awareness, revenue, or educational effects.)
12. Do you have any tips or insights on storytelling in cultural events or exhibitions? Also, are there any aspects you hope to strengthen or any regions or sectors you would like to collaborate with in the future?

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the many people who have supported me throughout this academic journey:

To my fellow first-generation EUCULTURE classmates – I truly appreciate this occasion to meet my courageous, kind, curious, and inspiring colleagues from all over the world.

To my master's friends who shared beautiful moments of trips, cooking and brunch – your presence has been so special to me.

To my friends in Japan, who stayed close in spirit despite the distance (or without distance, for those who traveled across Europe with me!) – your friendship and presence have always meant everything. Thank you so much.

To my former bosses and colleagues, who inspired and encouraged me, and sent me off with kind words – I will forever be grateful for having you in my first company.

To the many wonderful people I had the privilege of reconnecting with during this time in Europe – those with whom fate brought our paths together once again.

And to the brave and inspiring friends I met in cities across Europe – your presence brought joy, strength, and new insights.

Above all, I am endlessly thankful to my family – who gave me the name *Haruka* (遥), meaning "boundless", so I could explore the world freely and without limits.

To my grandparents and relatives who always embraced my curiosity and interests.

To my beloved mother, who despite missing each other, has always supported my freedom and adventures with unwavering love.

And to my father in heaven, who once told me, "Let's continue to find fun and joy in many places together." May you be enjoying this wonderful journey with me.

Thank you all for guiding me with your love and your way of living.

I love you deeply.

I hope this thesis can contribute a story that touches someone's heart in the future, just as I was deeply moved by the stories I encountered throughout this journey.