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Final report on Communication and Dissemination

WP6 – Communication, dissemination, exploitation, and sustainability

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Contents

List of Tables	4
Executive Summary	5
1 Introduction	6
1.1 Overview of Task 6.4 organisation and objectives	6
1.2 Purpose of the document	7
1.3 Relation to the overall project objectives and D&E Plan	8
1.4 Key achievements during the project's lifespan	9
1.5 Highlights of outreach and impact	10
2 Communication activities	11
2.1 Website development and updates	11
2.2 Social media presence	12
2.2.1 LinkedIn for Professional Engagement	12
2.2.2 Twitter/X event amplification	14
2.2.3 Instagram	14
2.3 Strategic Amplification via the <i>Journal of Cultural Heritage Crime</i> (JCHC-ACP)	15
2.3.1 Facebook Amplification	15
2.3.2 Instagram Amplification	16
2.3.3 YouTube Dissemination	17
2.4 Visual materials (video, infographics, brochures, etc.)	18
3 Public engagement activities	22
3.1 Exhibition	22
3.2 Documentary	25
3.3 Animated Short Films produced by <i>Art Crime Project</i> (ACP)	27
3.4 Other activities	28
4 Dissemination activities	29
4.1 Scientific publications	29
4.2 Conference presentations and posters	30
4.3 Other contributions (workshops, webinars, and collaborations with sister projects)	33



5	Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	34
6	Challenges and lessons learned	36
6.1	Barriers Encountered.....	36
6.2	Mitigation and Key Lessons Learned	36
7	Future plans.....	38
7.1	Planned Activities for Post-Project Period	38
7.2	Long-Term Sustainability of Communication and Dissemination Efforts	39
	Annex 1 – RITHMS organised events 2022-2025	41
	Annex 2 – Attended conferences/events with RITHMS communication/dissemination 2022-2025	43
	Annex 3 – Scientific Publications 2022-2025	49
	Annex 4 – Printed Communication Material	51

List of Tables

Table 1.	LinkedIn performance data	12
Table 2.	LinkedIn audience overview	13
Table 3.	JCHC Facebook outreach amplification 2025.....	16
Table 4.	JCHC Instagram outreach amplification 2025	16
Table 5.	KPIs achievement	34



Executive Summary

This deliverable provides a comprehensive assessment of the Communication and Dissemination (C&D) activities for the RITHMS project, analysing the strategies implemented, impacts generated, and key lessons learned over its 36-month duration. The report details how a multi-channel approach was employed to deliver key messages, disseminate results, and engage a diverse range of stakeholders, from Law Enforcement agencies (LEAs) and policymakers to the academic community and civil society.

RITHMS' C&D strategy proved highly effective in achieving its core objectives, particularly in engaging its professional and academic target audiences. The project successfully cultivated a robust international network of specialists by strategically leveraging the LinkedIn platform, which grew into an engaged community of over 1,200 followers, representing a 400% increase. This digital success was reinforced by a strong portfolio of peer-reviewed scientific publications and a consistent, strategic presence at key conferences, workshops, and operational meetings with LEAs, solidifying the project's credibility and fostering a collaborative environment with end-users.

The project also excelled in creating high-impact public engagement initiatives that serve as lasting legacy assets. The *Arte Ritrovata* exhibition in Venice attracted over 11,757 visitors, while the documentary *Threads of Heritage* was successfully premiered at international film festivals, translating complex research themes into compelling public narratives.

A cornerstone of the project's outreach was Art Crime Project APS (ACP) strategic partnership with the *Journal of Cultural Heritage Crime* (JCHC), which acted as a powerful force multiplier. Through a dedicated section featuring **35 articles** and amplification across its high-reach social media channels (e.g., 21,000 followers on Facebook), the JCHC provided a structured platform for public valorisation, ensuring the project's results reached a broad and engaged specialist and public audience. This collaboration stands as a key lesson in leveraging established partner platforms to maximise impact and create a lasting institutional memory for the project.



1 Introduction

1.1 Overview of Task 6.4 organisation and objectives

Within Work Package 6 (WP6), Tasks 6.2 and 6.4 were especially designed to integrate the strategic objectives of Exploitation with the operational management of C&D activities. The overall leadership of WP6 was originally assumed by StAG, which was also in charge of the Exploitation Strategy definition (Task 6.2); the Italian Institute of Technology (IIT), instead, coordinated C&D activities (Task 6.4), with the participation and support of the Consortium. After StAG's termination, in February 2025, IIT took over WP6 leadership, while the new partner Evenflow (EVF) became responsible for the Exploitation and the relative deliverables. Task 6.4 extended across the entire duration of the project, from M1 to M36, thereby ensuring continuous support for RITHMS objectives. In line with the G.A. and the *Communication and Exploitation (C&E) Plan* drafted the first year (D6.3), its goals combined both long-term vision and immediate operational needs, after defining the strategies, objectives, and tools for external communication. Essential to the task was the need to ensure visibility for results and an effective dissemination of the outputs to end-users. In connection with Task 6.3 led by EI, IIT sought to cultivate a strong network of stakeholders, engaging key actors while also identifying new partners and opportunities for funding—whether public or private—that could facilitate the further development and implementation of the RITHMS Platform. Equally important was the objective of raising awareness among broader publics and strengthening societal engagement, thereby involving civil society in the preservation and protection of cultural heritage and reinforcing the societal relevance of the project.

The organisational framework adopted in Task 6.4 provided a balance between operational execution and strategic oversight, ensuring that all communication and dissemination activities were coordinated and aligned with the overarching goals of RITHMS. The Coordinator carefully diversified the actions undertaken, combining traditional academic and professional formats such as conferences, workshops, webinars, and scientific publications with more accessible initiatives including demonstration events for the end-users, brochure and audiovisual content for a wider public, a rich website, and newsletters.

Reflecting the cross-sectoral nature of the project, Task 6.4 targeted a wide and heterogeneous audience. Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs)—including police and border authorities as well as EU and international police agencies (like Europol, Interpol, and the FBI)—were the main target audience, given their potential role as end users. At the same time, the proactively engaged the policymakers, ranging from the European Commission's



Directorate General to other European Institutions (like the Council of Europe), professional bodies and associations (like ECCO and Europa Nostra) and national organisations (like the respective Ministries of Culture). The research and academic community, spanning disciplines such as security, AI, machine learning, law, data science, and cultural heritage, represented a further key interlocutor. Finally, civil society was explicitly addressed, with a view to raising public awareness and reinforcing the broader cultural value of heritage protection.

To operationalise these objectives, a preliminary *Dissemination and Exploitation (D&E) Plan* was delivered at M6 (D6.3), which established a coherent strategy for C&D activities and defined specific targets through a set of structured actions. Among the most significant were the collective identification and selection of results and activities to be disseminated, the systematic mapping and engagement of stakeholders, and the formulation of tailored messages to address the specific interests of different audiences. The plan also foresaw the creation of a dedicated Communication and Dissemination Toolkit to ensure a consistent and recognisable project identity. This toolkit, submitted as part of D6.3, included the RITHMS visual identity—comprising the logo, colour palette, and templates—together with the project website, social media accounts, and standardised dissemination materials such as flyers, banners, and presentations.

1.2 Purpose of the document

This deliverable represents the final report of Task 6.4, serving as a comprehensive assessment of the communication and dissemination activities conducted throughout the RITHMS project. Its primary aim is to analyse the objectives achieved and the impacts generated, based on both qualitative and quantitative Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) established in the initial *Dissemination & Exploitation Plan*.

The report provides a structured presentation of all communication and dissemination efforts, considering the diverse strategies and channels employed. To achieve this, a robust methodology has been adopted, comprising:

- **KPI monitoring:** Comparing actual outcomes against pre-defined quantitative and qualitative targets, including metrics such as audience engagement, event participation, publication downloads and social media interactions;
- **Channel-based analysis:** Distinguishing between online and offline channels, the evaluation measures reach, engagement, and effectiveness for each type of medium;



- **Audience segmentation:** Analysing the effectiveness of communication towards different stakeholder groups, including professional communities, policymakers, end-users, and the general public.

By applying this methodology, the report delivers a comprehensive overview of the strategies implemented, the outcomes achieved, and the lessons learned, providing a solid basis for future exploitation and dissemination of RITHMS results.

Annexes complete the report:

- **Annex 1** provides the list of events organised by the RITHMS partners;
- **Annex 2** provides the list of events attended by the RITHMS partners with entailed communication/dissemination activities of the project's concept and outputs;
- **Annex 3** provides the list of scientific publications produced in the project's lifespan;
- **Annex 4** provides a copy of the main communication material produced in the project's lifespan.

1.3 Relation to the overall project objectives and D&E Plan

From the outset, communication and dissemination were conceived as integral components of the RITHMS project, embedded already in the proposal phase as key drivers for impact. Given the relevance and cross-sectoral nature of the themes addressed—spanning from cultural heritage to security and digital innovation—Task 6.4 activities were designed not only to inform but also to create awareness, stimulate dialogue, and foster cultural values.

The initial D&E Plan provided the framework for these efforts, setting clear objectives, defining audiences, and outlining a multi-channel strategy. Throughout the project, the Coordinator has consistently aligned Task 6.4 activities with the overarching project goals, ensuring visibility, credibility, and engagement across both professional and public domains. Communication and dissemination activities have therefore gone beyond the mere transmission of results: they have functioned as a platform for scientific dissemination, public sensitisation, and stakeholder interaction. In doing so, communication has acted as a multiplier of project impact, complementing exploitation actions and supporting the long-term sustainability of RITHMS outcomes.

The specific objectives pursued, in line with the original D&E Plan, were to:

- maintain ongoing communication on project activities, targeting both internal and external stakeholders;



- disseminate results and findings beyond the Consortium, to relevant professional communities and the wider cultural heritage ecosystem;
- actively engage beneficiaries and encourage interaction, particularly through social media;
- ensure consistent acknowledgement of EU funding across all outputs;
- promote project results at a broader level to support their uptake and reuse.

To meet these objectives, RITHMS adopted a dual strategy:

- Offline communication through brochures, leaflets, factsheets, press releases, academic publications, and participation in conferences, workshops, and public events;
- Online communication via the project website, social media channels (LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube), open-access publications and articles, and tailored audiovisual products.

Activities were also differentiated according to reach: long-distance actions employed digital and multimedia tools to secure wide and continuous visibility, while short-distance actions relied on face-to-face interaction—lectures, demonstrations, and workshops—organised in collaboration with both academic and non-academic institutions such as museums and schools.

To ensure coherence, the Coordinator complied with the developed *Communication & Dissemination Toolkit* (Annex of D6.3) providing partners with a shared visual identity, guidelines, and templates to guarantee professional standards, brand consistency, and compliance with EU communication rules.

In this way, the C&D strategy has supported the project in achieving its broader objectives: increasing awareness of illicit trafficking of cultural goods, fostering stakeholder engagement for the adoption of RITHMS solutions, and contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage through knowledge dissemination and public engagement.

1.4 Key achievements during the project's lifespan

During the three years of implementation, communication and dissemination activities achieved several strategic results. RITHMS succeeded in consolidating a coherent project identity across multiple platforms, ensuring that its messages reached diverse audiences with consistency and clarity. The website and social media channels became not only tools of visibility but also spaces of interaction, allowing stakeholders to access resources, engage in dialogue, and follow the project's evolution. Audiovisual materials proved an effective



medium to translate complex issues into accessible narratives, thereby broadening the resonance of the project's objectives. At the same time, sustained participation in scientific and policy-related fora positioned RITHMS within ongoing debates on cultural heritage protection and technological innovation. Collectively, these activities reinforced the project's relevance, strengthened its international visibility, and enhanced the circulation of its results across both academic and professional communities.

1.5 Highlights of outreach and impact

The outreach strategy of RITHMS demonstrated significant impact both in quantitative terms—measured through the visibility and uptake of project outputs—and in qualitative terms, by influencing discourses within professional and societal domains. The steady demand for publications and materials, evidenced by high download counts on the project website, indicates that dissemination efforts succeeded in stimulating interest beyond the Consortium, particularly among stakeholders directly involved in cultural heritage protection. Crucially, communication activities also contributed to the consolidation of a growing and highly engaged international network, particularly on professional platforms. Interest from the research community and policy makers was particularly strong, suggesting that RITHMS has established itself as a credible reference point in these fields. This engagement is not only a sign of recognition of the project's scientific and societal relevance, but also a driver of potential future implementation and exploitation. By aligning communication channels with specific audiences, the project was able to stimulate knowledge exchange, foster transnational collaboration, and create the conditions for a sustainable legacy that extends beyond the project's formal conclusion.



2 Communication activities

2.1 Website development and updates



The RITHMS website (rithms.eu) was established as the central platform for communication, dissemination, and stakeholder engagement. It was strategically developed to serve a diverse range of audiences, including researchers, LEAs, cultural heritage professionals, and the general public, providing comprehensive information on the project's vision, partners, and activities. Key sections include “*Cultural Heritage Crimes*,” offering educational factsheets¹; “*RITHMS Technologies*,”² detailing the project's innovative solutions like Social Network Analysis (SNA); and a dedicated “*Results*”³ section providing open access to all deliverables, publications, articles, and newsletters, and other relevant materials, including a page dedicated to the documentary *Threads of Heritage*. Since its launch in late 2022, the website has shown a clear trajectory of growth and consolidation. After an initial period of sporadic traffic, a steady increase

began in mid-2023, with peaks of 180 visits per month in late 2024 and early 2025. More significantly, the quality of user engagement improved dramatically over time. The average session duration grew from just a couple of minutes to a peak of **more than eight and a half minutes in May 2025**. This shift indicates that the website successfully evolved from a static information source to a dynamic resource hub for a qualified audience.

Looking at traffic sources, most users arrived through direct entry, showing a strong base of returning or loyal visitors. Search engines provided an additional and stable flow, with a significant contribution especially in spring 2024, while social networks had a more variable

¹ <https://rithms.eu/about/fact-sheets>

² <https://rithms.eu/about/technologies>

³ <https://rithms.eu/results>



role. Some campaign periods were particularly effective, such as April 2024 and February 2025, when the number of visits from social channels spiked and reinforced overall visibility.

This high level of engagement is directly linked to the continuous addition of substantive content, particularly in the “Results” section. The number of downloads of publications and other materials grew steadily, reaching a peak of **more than 60 downloads in a single month** in November 2024. This tangible interest demonstrates that websites functioned effectively as a point of reference for accessing project’s concrete outputs, serving a core community of stakeholders who actively sought out in-depth information.



2.2 Social media presence

2.2.1 LinkedIn for Professional Engagement

Throughout the project lifecycle, **LinkedIn**⁴ proved to be the most effective channel for professional communication and network building. The page was expertly managed to cultivate a specialised international community, which now stands as one of the project’s most valuable assets. The page generated approximately **85,000 impressions and over 2,500 reactions** with engagement levels consistently above benchmarks for similar research projects., with engagement distributed across posts covering project milestones, events, and thematic highlights.

Table 1. LinkedIn performance data

Performance Metric	Key Findings & Data
Follower Growth	The community grew from ~300 to over 1,200 followers , a 400% increase. Growth accelerated in the second half of the project as concrete results and demonstrators were shared.
Audience Composition	A significant portion of new followers came from outside the consortium's direct network, including cultural heritage professionals, policymakers, and researchers from related fields.

⁴ <https://www.linkedin.com/company/rithms-eu/>

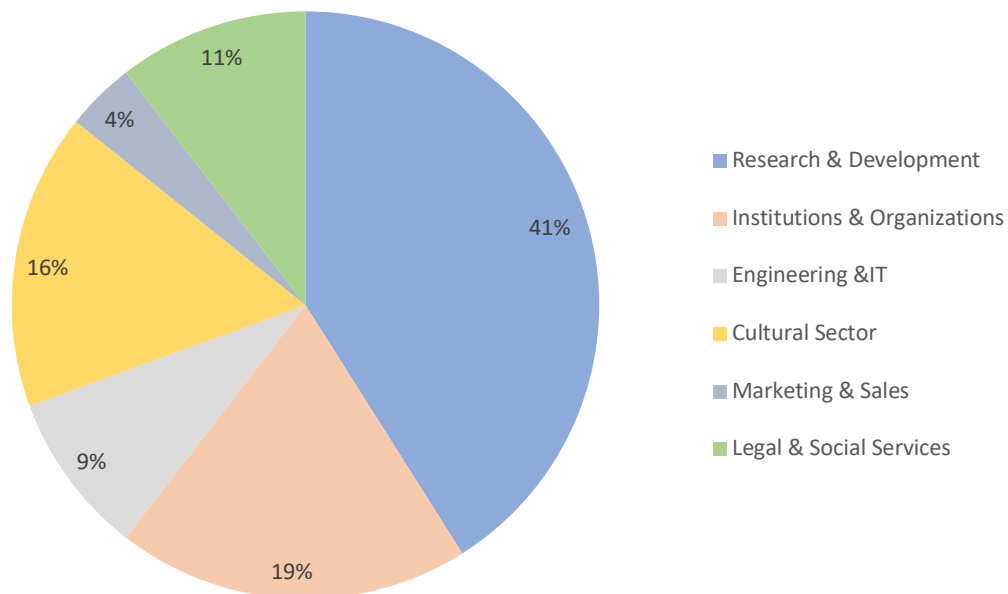


Performance Metric	Key Findings & Data
Visibility & Reach	Posts consistently achieved 1,500 to 7,000 impressions each, with peaks corresponding to major international events. The page generated a total of approximately 85,000 impressions.
Engagement Levels	The page garnered over 2,500 reactions and several hundred comments and shares. Posts averaged 60-80 interactions, with top performers exceeding 200, placing RITHMS above typical benchmarks for research projects.
Content Performance	Posts with visuals (photos, infographics, videos) consistently outperformed text-only updates, generating 40-50% more impressions and significantly higher interaction rates.

The follower base grew from around 300 to over 1,200 by the end of M36, a 400% increase. This growth was qualitative as well as quantitative, attracting a significant share of cultural heritage professionals, policymakers, and researchers from outside the consortium's direct network. This confirms that the content strategy, which accelerated when project results and demonstrators were shared, resonated strongly and positioned RITHMS as a credible authority in this field. The platform was central to achieving WP6 objectives by maximising visibility, engaging stakeholders, and consolidating a community critical for the long-term sustainability of the project's outcomes.

Table 2. LinkedIn audience overview

Region/Country Group	Share of Total Audience (%)	Key Countries/Regions (Share %)
European Audience	~82%	Italy (>40%)
		France (~9%)
		United Kingdom (7%)
		Spain (6%)
		Greece (5%)
		Belgium (5%)
		Netherlands (4%)
International (Non-EU) Audience	~18%	United States (~6%)
		Other Regions (~12%)(Asia, North Africa, Middle East, Latin America)



2.2.2 Twitter/X event amplification

The project maintained a presence on **X (formerly Twitter, @RITHMS_EU)** to provide real-time updates during key project moments. The account grew to **122 followers** and was most effective when used in synergy with institutional partners, with individual posts reaching between 200 and 300 impressions and generating around 30 interactions during peak events. However, its overall reach was modest, and it was identified as the channel with the lowest overall performance, serving a secondary role in the communication strategy.

2.2.3 Instagram

The project's own **Instagram** account (**@rithms_eu**) was used to share visually compelling content related to public events, capturing the attention of a diverse audience, encouraging participation and dialogue. However, it achieved limited audience growth, reaching **233 followers** by the project's end. This indicates that its primary audience was composed of project partners and directly involved stakeholders rather than the general public. The channel's main strategic value came from its use in cross-posting with high-end institutional partners, including museums and cultural organisations.



2.3 Strategic Amplification via the *Journal of Cultural Heritage Crime* (JCHC-ACP)

An impactful component of the project's public and specialist outreach was the strategic partnership with the *Journal of Cultural Heritage Crime* (JCHC), media-partner of IIT affiliated partner *Art Crime Project APS* (ACP), which served as a powerful "force multiplier" for dissemination and public outreach. This collaboration went beyond simple media coverage to become a structured instrument for scientific dissemination, institutional communication, and public valorisation.

The JCHC's contribution was multifaceted. In addition to its direct coverage of the project, the journal consistently published a high number of other news reports, in-depth articles, and materials that addressed key topics central to the project's mission. This broader editorial context was enriched by numerous articles from JCHC journalists, who, with the support of ACP, provided high-quality analysis on subjects like the illicit art market, provenance research, and the recovery of stolen goods, thereby creating a rich and informed backdrop for RITHMS' activities.

This foundational coverage was complemented by the publication of **35 articles** specifically about RITHMS, housed in a dedicated, easily accessible section on the JCHC website. This created a comprehensive and lasting editorial archive that documented the project's entire lifecycle, from its initial objectives and technical progress to its results and recommendations. The articles translated complex technical language into clear narratives, contextualized RITHMS' research within broader international debates, and highlighted the multidisciplinary expertise of the consortium partners.

2.3.1 Facebook Amplification

The JCHC's Facebook page, with **over 21,000 followers**, provided consistent and high visibility coverage of RITHMS activities. Posts regularly achieved significant reach, with top-performing content surpassing 1,700 views and generating strong engagement, particularly for live events. This strategy effectively reached a diverse audience, predominantly in the 35-54 age range, and stimulated genuine interest, as demonstrated by the consistent number of link clicks for further information.



Table 3. JCHC Facebook outreach amplification 2025

Date	Theme/Post	Views	Total Interactions	Link Clicks
19 Feb 2025	<i>Threads of Heritage</i> documentary promo	1,729	36	16
12 Mar 2025	<i>Threads of Heritage</i> screening Florence Film Festival	1,079	31	9
7 Jul 2025	Villa Giulia Screening announcement	1,651	43	16
11 Jul 2025	Villa Giulia Screening reminder	387	3	10
28 Aug 2025	<i>Threads of Heritage</i> screening RAM Film Festival	1,479	19	2
2 Sep 2025	RITHMS Final Event in Venice	1,004	12	4
18 Sep 2025	Video <i>The Concert</i> (A. Garilli, RITHMS)	510	20	11

2.3.2 Instagram Amplification

The JCHC's activity on Instagram was even more intensive and incisive. Content related to RITHMS consistently achieved high reach and engagement, with posts regularly **surpassing 5,000 views** and reaching a peak of **over 8,500 views**. Organic interactions were significantly higher than on other platforms, with some posts exceeding 300 likes and 20 saves, reflecting a strong capacity to stimulate active public engagement. This success was amplified by strategic cross-posting with the official RITHMS account and institutional partners like the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia.

Table 4. JCHC Instagram outreach amplification 2025

Date	Theme/Post	Views	Total Interactions	Link Clicks
18 Feb 2025	<i>Threads of Heritage</i> documentary launch	6,485	87 (78 ❤️, 2 💬, 7 📌)	3,145
27 Feb 2025	Etruscan Battle (cross-post with Museo Villa Giulia)	6,408	369 (346 ❤️, 2 💬, 21 📌)	3,720
10 Mar 2025	<i>Threads of Heritage</i> screening	5,663	71 (70 ❤️, 1 📌)	3,450



7 Jul 2025	Villa Giulia screening event launch	8,596	77 (74 ❤️, 3 🍷)	2,663
10 Jul 2025	Villa Giulia screening event program	5,837	49 (47 ❤️, 2 🍷)	1,808
23 Sep 2025	New Short Film <i>Il Cratere</i> (Reel)	340	14 (11 ❤️, 1 🍷, 2 🍷)	-

2.3.3 YouTube Dissemination

RITHMS adopted a highly efficient and strategic approach to its audiovisual dissemination by leveraging the existing YouTube channel of the JCHC. This decision allowed the project to bypass the slow process of building a new audience and instead place its content directly before a large, pre-existing community of specialists and engaged public members.

The platform was used to deploy a multi-layered video content strategy:

- **Documentary Promotion:** The two trailers for the flagship documentary, *Threads of Heritage*, successfully generated initial interest, accumulating over 800 views and reaching a receptive, thematically aligned audience.
- **Artistic Storytelling:** The channel also served as the venue for the targeted online premiere of the short 'animated film' *The Concert*⁵, produced by ACP and directed by Alessandro Garilli. This release was highly successful, garnering 265 views and achieving a perfect 100% positive feedback score from viewers, demonstrating strong engagement with this artistic and narrative-driven content.
- **Building Anticipation:** To promote another key artistic output, the short film *The Crater* (similarly produced by ACP and directed by Garilli), a trailer was launched on the platform. While the full film's online release was strategically withheld to accommodate its circulation in high-end film festivals, the trailer successfully introduced the project to the JCHC audience, securing 78 views.
- **Scientific Archiving:** Beyond promotional and artistic content, the channel has been established as a **permanent digital archive for the project's scientific dissemination**. **Recordings of RITHMS conferences**⁶ have been published on the platform, ensuring

⁵ <https://www.artcrimeproject.org/2025/09/19/the-concert-di-alessandro-garilli/>

⁶ 1. RITHMS Kickoff Meeting, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSHa2vfFKqI>

2. RITHMS Conference Trafficking in Cultural Property: a Criminological Perspective, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCOsJjTRlpg>

3. RITHMS Final Event, URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmHoQ_153Qc&t=1633s



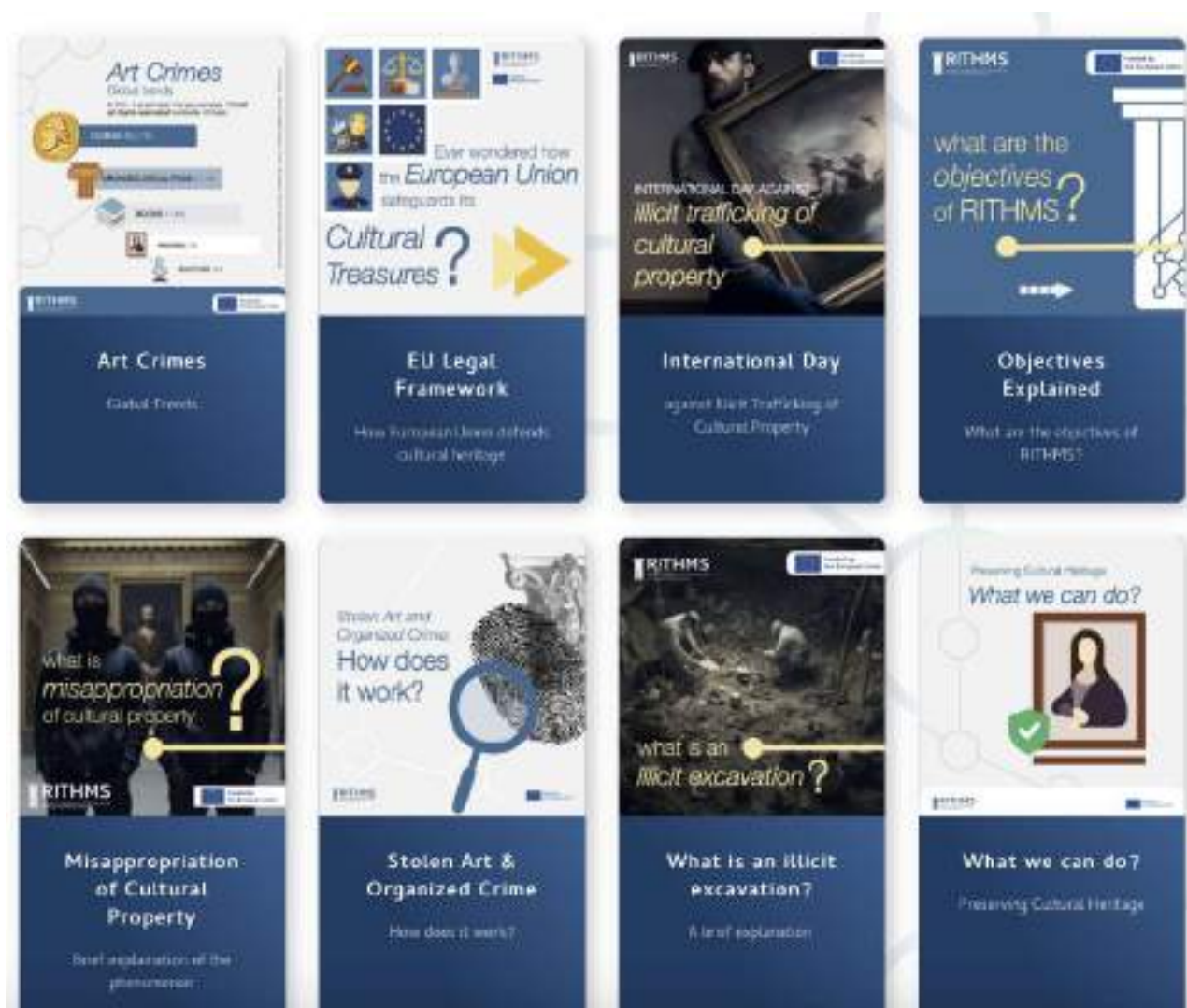
that the valuable discussions and knowledge shared during these events will be preserved and remain accessible to researchers, students, and professionals indefinitely.

2.4 Visual materials (video, infographics, brochures, etc.)

The visual dimension of the RITHMS project has played a central role in its communication and dissemination strategy, serving both informative and awareness-raising purposes. From the outset, significant attention has been dedicated to maintaining a coherent and recognisable visual identity across all materials. This included strict adherence to the project's graphic guidelines, ensuring consistent application of the logo, the EU disclaimer, and other visual elements not only on the website but also on all digital and social media channels, thereby guaranteeing maximum visibility of the EU funding.

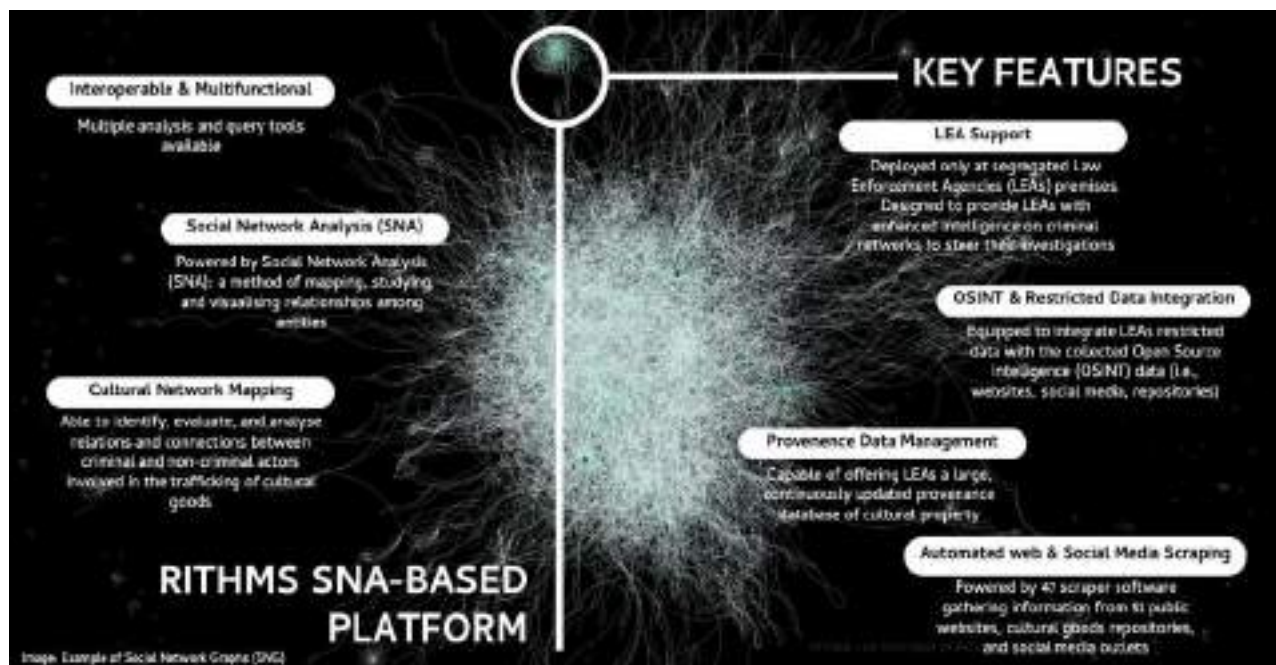
Visual materials were particularly crucial in conveying complex themes related to illicit trafficking of cultural heritage. Communicating issues connected to art and heritage through images required a careful balance between clarity and sensitivity, given the inherent restrictions on the use of culturally significant artefacts. Legal, security, and ownership constraints often limited the availability of reference images. To mitigate these limitations, all visual content created for dissemination purposes— including materials for the exhibition, the public events and the documentary *Threads of Heritage*—was reviewed and validated by the competent authorities, particularly law enforcement agencies (LEAs) involved in the project. In several cases, images underwent additional scientific and criminological review to ensure accuracy and veracity of the information presented.

Where access to rights-free images was limited, innovative visual solutions were employed. Graphic design and artificial intelligence-generated imagery were used to illustrate key aspects of the phenomena addressed by the project, allowing the team to effectively communicate complex issues without infringing on legal or ethical restrictions. These solutions ensured that the project's visual materials remained informative, engaging, and fully aligned with the project's objectives.



Beyond digital outputs, the graphic line was carefully maintained in the preparation of printed materials for events, including programs, brochures, and information sheets. All these assets were designed to be visually clear, consistent with the themes outlined in the *Communication and Dissemination Plan* and aligned with the project's key messages.

As the project progressed and additional photographic material from reporting activities became available, the visual identity of RITHMS was further strengthened. This evolution culminated in a second iteration of the project brochure, which incorporated both graphic and photographic elements and expanded content to provide detailed information on project achievements and results. This continuous refinement of visual materials has contributed significantly to the recognisability, credibility, and overall impact of the project's dissemination efforts.







3 Public engagement activities

3.1 Exhibition

The exhibition ***Arte Ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna. Cultural Heritage Recovered by the Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit*** was hosted at the Museo di Palazzo Grimani in Venice from 19 December 2023 to 25 February 2024. Conceived as both a cultural and scientific initiative, the exhibition sought to shed light on the threats posed to cultural heritage, such as theft, illicit trafficking, forgery, and illegal export, while simultaneously highlighting the decisive role of institutions in safeguarding, recovering, and restitution of cultural assets. Beyond providing an opportunity to admire extraordinary works of art and archaeological artefacts, the event invited visitors to explore the investigative, scientific, and legal processes underpinning their recovery.

The primary objective of the exhibition was to raise awareness among a broad audience regarding the fragility of cultural patrimony and the complexity of its protection. Instead of presenting the works in isolation, the curatorial strategy constructed a narrative of resilience, showing how objects once endangered or lost were restored to the public domain. The exhibition also emphasised the advanced methodologies employed in identifying forgeries, tracing provenance, and securing the authenticity of artworks. In this sense, the initiative combined educational, cultural, and research dimensions, merging aesthetic experience with historical and forensic analysis.



Implemented within the framework of RITHMS, *Arte Ritrovata* represented a tangible outcome of the project's dissemination activities, translating its scientific achievements into an accessible format for citizens, professionals, and policymakers. By narrating concrete



cases of recovery, the exhibition not only illustrated the real-world relevance of RITHMS but



also underscored the importance of international cooperation in the protection of cultural heritage.

The event served as a catalyst for building a broader network of collaboration at the territorial level, involving museums, superintendencies, universities, research centres, and law



enforcement bodies. This network, established during the preparation and implementation of the exhibition, represents one of its most significant legacies. The initiative was **promoted by the Italian Institute of Technology – Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology**, in collaboration with the **Regional Secretariat for Veneto of the Italian Ministry of Culture**, the **Regional Directorate of Museums Veneto**, the



Superintendency of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the Municipality of Venice and Lagoon.



A decisive **contribution was made by the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Venice Unit**, which provided access to the results of investigations and recoveries conducted in the region. This synergy between cultural institutions, law enforcement, and scientific research offers an exemplary model of integrated action, promoting the circulation of expertise and best practices and fostering a more coordinated approach to safeguarding heritage.

The exhibition itinerary was structured around seven emblematic case studies of recovery. Among them were the wooden reliefs by Jacopo Sansovino, stolen from the Basilica of San Marco after the 1966 flood and only recently retrieved; the analysis of a suspected forgery of Antonio Ligabue's *Tiger with Snake*; the seizure and restitution of Giandomenico Tiepolo's *Holy Family*; the international recovery of Jasper Geerards' *Still Life* traced to a German auction; and the restitution of funerary monuments from the ancient site of Altino. Further cases included the seizure of a sixth-century BC Attic amphora during Operation Pandora VII and the confiscation of a private collection of 226 artefacts of dubious provenance. Each narrative was presented not only through the display of objects, but also through



documentary materials, contextual interpretation, and explanations of the scientific techniques employed in their recovery.

The results of the initiative confirmed its strong public impact. Between 19 December 2023

and 25 February 2024, the exhibition **attracted 11,757 visitors**. In addition, dedicated extra content was made available through QR codes on the exhibition panels and subsequently published on the project website. These materials, which deepened the scientific and contextual information of the cases presented, were accessed by 103 visitors in Italian and 332 in English—an indicator of the significant international interest generated by the exhibition and of the relevance of the themes addressed.

Ultimately, *Arte Ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna* stands as a milestone in the dissemination of the RITHMS project. By bringing together institutions, law enforcement, and research within a single narrative, it offered both an

intellectual and civic experience, positioning Venice as a significant case study at the European level for integrated approaches to cultural heritage protection.

3.2 Documentary

The documentary *Threads of Heritage* represents one of RITHMS' principal achievements in its communication activities. While originally conceived to promote the project, its primary aim was educational, providing the general public with a comprehensive, cross-cutting overview of the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage. As both an artistic and scientific output, the documentary holds enduring value, remaining accessible and relevant even beyond the conclusion of the project.





Through compelling storytelling, the film highlights the global networks that facilitate trafficking—from clandestine excavations to the international art market—and illustrates the societal and cultural consequences of these activities. It showcases the collaboration of **RITHMS partners**, including the **Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage**, the **Spanish National Police’s Brigada de Patrimonio Histórico**, the **European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen)**, and the **Italian Institute of Technology (IIT)**, as well as innovative tools developed within the project, such as AI-powered software and Social Network Analysis, to support law enforcement in combating illicit trafficking.

Threads of Heritage was publicly showcased to maximize outreach and engagement. Its world premiere at the Archaeofilm Festival in Florence in March 2025 was highly acclaimed by audiences, followed by screenings in Rome, which featured dedicated evenings with expert talks and guided visits, and a public showing in Genoa at Palazzo Ducale as part of the summer *Circuito Cinema* program. Across the Rome and Genoa events, more than 300 tickets were issued. Additional screenings are planned, including presentations at the Festival of Rovereto (RAM 2025) at the end of September and a scheduled showing in Brussels (DG HOME). These events strengthened dialogue with both general and professional audiences, raising awareness of cultural heritage protection and demonstrating the potential of RITHMS as a multidisciplinary digital platform.

Importantly, the documentary marked a paradigm shift in the communication of scientific research, illustrating how complex topics—such as Social Network Analysis applied to heritage crime—can be conveyed in an engaging and accessible manner. By reaching not only specialists but also the wider public, *Threads of Heritage* positioned RITHMS at the forefront of both research and innovative science communication. Importantly, the documentary marked a paradigm shift in the communication of scientific research: it demonstrates how complex topics, such as Social Network Analysis applied to heritage crime, can be conveyed in a highly engaging and accessible manner, reaching not only specialists but also the wider public. In doing so, it positions RITHMS at the forefront of both research and innovative science communication.



3.3 Short Animated Films produced by Art Crime Project (ACP)

To further enrich the project's audiovisual portfolio and explore new narrative forms of public engagement, RITHMS produced two animated short films directed by Alessandro Garilli. these films are not just dissemination materials are set to become catalysts for international cultural diplomacy.

- **The Concert:** this short film is inspired by the infamous 1990 theft of Johannes Vermeer's masterpiece, "The Concert," from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. The film uses the powerful metaphor of silence to convey the profound cultural loss caused by art crime. It imagines a world where the painting's characters, deprived of their music, leave an entire community in silence, making the intangible void left by such crimes tangible and emotionally resonant for the audience. To bring this powerful message full circle and transform it into an act of restorative justice, negotiations are currently underway to have the short film permanently showcased at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, in the very space where the stolen painting is missing. Furthermore, IIT is actively working to organize a dedicated event at the museum focused on illicit trafficking, which would serve as the US premiere for the film.
- **The Crater:** this short film tells the story of the Shelby White Euphronios Krater, a masterpiece of ancient Greek pottery that was looted from an Etruscan tomb in Cerveteri in 1971 and later repatriated from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET) in New York. The film adopts an innovative narrative approach by giving a voice to the krater itself, transforming the inanimate object into a living storyteller that recounts its own history of creation, theft, and eventual return. *The Crater* is currently being circulated in national and international film festivals, a strategy that aims to secure artistic recognition before its wider public release. In a similar vein to *The Concert*, discussions will be initiated with the MET to explore opportunities for collaboration, including a potential screening and an event dedicated to the themes of looting and repatriation, bringing the krater's story back to one of the key institutions in its modern history.

These two short films serve as powerful, accessible tools for awareness, using artistic animation to narrate specific cases of art crime and connect with audiences on an emotional level, complementing the broader investigative focus of *Threads of Heritage*.



3.4 Other activities

The project extended its reach through targeted educational initiatives. IIT led dedicated classes within the Master's Programme in *Art and Cultural Heritage Management* at **Treccani Accademia**. Developed in collaboration with ACP and the JCHC, these sessions provided future professionals with a comprehensive overview of cultural crime, combining academic knowledge with practical expertise through the analysis of real-world case studies.

The classes provided a comprehensive overview of the multiple dimensions of cultural crime. Through in-depth presentations and case-based discussions, participants explored the dynamics of art theft, clandestine excavations, and the challenges posed by the digital art market. Attention was also given to the preservation of antiquities in conflict zones and to the growing need for public awareness and institutional action against crimes that undermine cultural heritage.

This training opportunity highlighted the importance of combining academic knowledge with practical expertise. By examining real-world cases and investigative approaches, the session encouraged future professionals in the art and cultural heritage sector to reflect critically on the mechanisms of illicit trafficking and to consider the role they can play in prevention and advocacy.

As a practical extension of the class, students engaged in a project work centred on the analysis of selected case studies. This exercise allowed them to deepen their understanding of the methodologies applied in detecting, investigating and countering illicit practices. By focusing on specific examples, participants were able to connect theoretical frameworks with concrete situations, developing critical perspectives that will prove valuable in their future professional paths.

The session thus exemplified the fruitful interaction between research, education and professional practice. By addressing both theoretical and operational aspects of cultural crime, and by involving students in a concrete project of dissemination, it created a platform for awareness, innovation and cooperation in the protection of cultural heritage.



4 Dissemination activities

4.1 Scientific publications

Scientific production has represented one of the key dimensions of the RITHMS project, contributing both to the advancement of knowledge in the field of cultural heritage crime and to the validation of the technological and methodological tools developed within the consortium. Over the course of the project, **seven articles** were published in peer-reviewed journals, covering a wide range of disciplinary perspectives—from criminology and law to data science, artificial intelligence, and network analysis (**Annex 3**). This body of work reflects the interdisciplinary character of RITHMS and highlights the significant progress achieved in understanding and addressing the illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

On the legal and criminological front, the University of A Coruña (UDC) has contributed with analyses that shed light on the conceptual and regulatory dimensions of cultural property crime. One study, *Exploring Overlaps of Cultural Property Crime with Organised Crime in EU Policy Documents*, examined how EU policy documents have framed this issue, pointing out conceptual weaknesses that risk undermining enforcement efforts. This publication has garnered significant interest, registering over **2,420 accesses** since its publication. Another article addressed the ethical and legal risks associated with the use of AI and algorithmic tools in combating cultural property trafficking, emphasising the importance of aligning technological innovation with fundamental rights.

RITHMS publications in the technological domain also achieved remarkable results. BEIA published the paper *Developing a Call Detail Record Generator for Cultural Heritage Preservation and Theft Mitigation: Applications and Implications*, describing the developed tool with clear applications for law enforcement, which has been downloaded **315 times**. IIT published *Overcoming data siloes in cultural heritage crime research*, a paper that has been accessed **1,413 times** and has begun to be cited by other researchers. Additional research from IIT, *A novel NLP-driven approach for enriching artefact descriptions*, explored the use of natural language processing (NLP) to enhance cultural heritage datasets; this work has been accessed **773 times** and has received a high Altmetric ranking, placing it in the 87th percentile of tracked articles of a similar age in its journal.

A further study, *War, art, and sanctions*, applied network science to geopolitical issues, analysing databases of sanctioned Russian individuals and art collectors. This highly relevant



paper has been accessed **1,889 times**, received 2 citations, and achieved an Altmetric score in the 79th percentile of similarly aged articles, indicating significant online discussion and attention.

Taken together, the metrics for these publications demonstrate a clear and significant impact. With a combined total of over **6,800 accesses and downloads** across just five of the publications, it is evident that the project's research has reached a substantial audience and is actively being read. While citation counts are still emerging—as is typical for recent publications—the high Altmetric scores and early citations for several papers confirm that RITHMS' scientific output is not only being read but is also contributing to and stimulating academic and public discourse in the field. This strong performance validates the relevance of the research and confirms the success of the project's scientific dissemination strategy.

4.2 Conference presentations and posters

RITHMS adopted a strategic, multi-dimensional approach to raising awareness, advancing knowledge, and fostering cross-sectoral collaboration in the protection of cultural heritage and the mitigation of illicit trafficking. Participation in, and organisation of, international events constituted a central pillar of the project's dissemination and engagement strategy, enabling the consortium to interact with policymakers, LEAs, cultural institutions, and academic researchers across Europe.

The project leveraged conferences, workshops, and poster presentations to communicate the complexity and urgency of cultural heritage crime. These engagements facilitated the dissemination of methodological innovations, empirical findings, and operational insights, while stimulating discussion on the vulnerabilities of the art market, the intersections of cultural property trafficking with organised crime, and the implications for policy and practice.

Two events organised directly by RITHMS were particularly significant in establishing its leadership role:

- The international conference ***Trafficking in Cultural Property: a Criminological Perspective*** in A Coruña convened scholars and law enforcement practitioners to examine patterns of illicit trafficking, cross-border enforcement challenges, and best practices for operational interventions. The event fostered a crucial dialogue between academic research and frontline policing, providing a criminologically informed basis for policy recommendations at both national and EU levels, while attracting a broad



audience of participants and facilitating knowledge exchange between multiple stakeholders.

- The ***Beyond Restoration: The Role of Restorers and Conservators in Supporting Law Enforcement in Combatting Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods*** workshop in Brussels addressed the critical but often underappreciated role of conservators and restorers. Through a format that included panel discussions, hands-on workshops, and policy-focused dialogues, the event explored the ethical and operational dimensions of their work, identifying strategies to mitigate inadvertent involvement in trafficking networks and to actively support law enforcement. The event also produced concrete recommendations that were subsequently considered for implementation in practical guidance for professional training and collaboration frameworks.

In addition to these RITHMS-organised events, the consortium actively engaged in numerous high-profile international conferences, often presenting both oral and poster contributions. At the **European Association of Archaeologists Annual Meeting** in Rome (2024) and the **CEPOL Research & Science Conference** (2024/2025), the project showcased its Social Network Analysis (SNA)-based platform, demonstrating its capabilities in tracing criminal networks and analysing relational patterns within illicit trafficking operations. Poster presentations—including *Art Crime Does Not Pay* (ICCWS, 2024), *RITHMS Project: How Digital Technology Can Help Protect Cultural Heritage from Illicit Trafficking* (EAA, 2024), and *RITHMS Digital Platform: How Social Network Analysis Can Be Leveraged to Fight High-Risk Criminal Networks Trafficking in Cultural Goods* (CEPOL, 2024/2025)—complemented these sessions by synthesizing complex research into accessible visual formats that facilitated direct interaction with diverse audiences.

Crucially, engagement with LEAs was structured as a process of **co-creation**, not just one-way dissemination, to ensure the platform's operational relevance. The project's participation in events such as the **Hackathon and Tool Testing Meeting organised by Europol's Core Group on Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods** provided a unique context for operational testing. These sessions enabled LEAs to interact directly with the platform, provide hands-on feedback, and contribute to its iterative refinement. This two-way dialogue was critical for ensuring the tool was aligned with the practical needs of investigators and increasing its potential for real-world adoption and impact.



The project's dissemination strategy culminated in a series of high-profile events that combined expert dialogue with public outreach, effectively bridging the gap between research, policy, and civil society.

- **Rome - An Expert Dialogue at the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia:** On July 11, 2025, an exclusive, invitation-only event was held at the prestigious Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome. The evening was designed to foster high-level dialogue and began with a panel discussion featuring a curated group of experts, institutional representatives, and law enforcement officers actively working to combat art crime. This roundtable provided a forum for in-depth discussion on the challenges and innovations in the field, directly aligning the themes of the *Threads of Heritage* documentary with the experiences of frontline practitioners. Following the screening, guests were given special guided tours of the museum, with a focus on recovered artifacts. This powerful curatorial choice created a tangible link between the film's narrative and the real-world success of preservation efforts, reinforcing the value and impact of the work being done.
- **Genoa - Public Engagement at Palazzo Ducale:** To reach a broader public audience, a free screening was held in Genoa on July 14, 2025, in the Cortile Maggiore of Palazzo Ducale as part of the Circuito Cinema Genova summer programme. The event was introduced by a public conversation between Arianna Traviglia, Director of the Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology at IIT, and Giacomo Montanari, Genoa's Councillor for Culture, moderated by art critic and journalist Linda Kaiser. This dialogue successfully positioned the project's research within a civic context, connecting its European-level objectives with local cultural policy and public interest, and demonstrating a strong model for engaging civil society.
- **Venice - The RITHMS Final Public Conference:** The project's three-year journey culminated in the Final Public Event on September 12, 2025, held in the historic Sala San Domenico at the Scuola Grande di San Marco in Venice. This capstone event was structured to celebrate the project's achievements while setting the stage for future action. The day featured three thematic roundtables with leading experts and institutions, designed to foster high-level dialogue on critical issues: European policies for heritage protection, the complex legal and ethical challenges in the field, and the latest digital innovations for law enforcement. Complementing the discussions were exclusive screenings of the project's audiovisual outputs—the short films *The Crater*



and *The Concert*, and the documentary *Threads of Heritage*—providing creative and compelling perspectives on art crime. The event also included a guided tour of the Museum and Library of Medicine, enriching the experience for all attendees. This final gathering successfully brought together a wide range of stakeholders to consolidate the project's network, disseminate its results, and build momentum for the continued effort to safeguard cultural heritage worldwide.

4.3 Other contributions (workshops, webinars, and collaborations with sister projects)

Although they do not fall in the category of standard communication/dissemination events, it is worth noting that RITHMS Consortium organised two **Training workshops** for the LEAs within (07-08/04/2025, Rome) and beyond (20/06/2025, Munich) the Consortium. **Deliverable D6.10** provides a full report on these activities.

Additionally, RITHMS partners IIT and HföD, in collaboration with the EMERITUS project, co-organised a **webinar** (28/10/2024) focused on the crucial topic of training activities for law enforcement authorities addressing environmental and cultural crimes.

More information on the webinar and other stakeholder engagement activities carried out in collaboration with RITHMS sister projects are detailed in **Deliverable D6.6**.



5 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The following table provides a direct comparison between the quantitative targets established in the project proposal (specifically under KPI O4.4) and the actual results achieved over the project's 36-month duration, as detailed in the final report and supporting analytics.

Table 5. KPIs achievement

KPI Category	Metric	Target (from Proposal KPI O4.4)	Achieved Result	Analysis
Social Media	Facebook Followers	3,000 followers	Not Applicable (Strategy Shift)	The project did not develop a proprietary Facebook page. Instead, it adopted a more effective strategy of disseminating content through its media partner, JCHC, which has a highly relevant audience of 21,000 followers . This strategic shift allowed the project to far exceed its intended reach without the need to build a new community from scratch.
	Twitter/LinkedIn Followers	500 followers	Twitter (X): 122 followers LinkedIn: 1,200+ followers	The combined target was not met on Twitter, which confirmed its role as a secondary, low-impact channel. However, the project massively over-performed on LinkedIn , more than doubling the target. This underscores LinkedIn's success as the central hub for professional engagement and network building.
	Website Visits	5,000 visits		Monthly traffic peaked at over 180 visits, with over 600 pageviews in a single month. More importantly, the quality of engagement (average session duration >8.5 minutes, >60 downloads/month) demonstrates the site's success as a high-value resource hub, moving beyond simple traffic metrics.



KPI Category	Metric	Target (from Proposal KPI O4.4)	Achieved Result	Analysis
Audiovisual Content	YouTube Videos	6 short videos (3 min) produced for the JCHC YouTube channel	Total assets produced: - 1 short animated film (<i>The Concert</i> , ~3 min) - 1 medium-length animated film (<i>The Crater</i> , 15 min) - 2 documentary trailers (<i>Threads of Heritage</i>) - 3 filmed public conferences	Target Significantly Exceeded. The initial target envisioned six short videos of approximately 3 minutes each. The project instead prioritized quality and depth, producing the 15-minute animated film <i>The Crater</i> , whose runtime alone is equivalent to five short videos. This, combined with the production of <i>The Concert</i> , two documentary trailers, and the archiving of three full-length public conferences on the partner YouTube channel, means the project has far surpassed the expected results in terms of both total runtime and the artistic and scientific complexity of the content delivered.
	YouTube Views	1,000 views	1,150+ views (807 for trailers + 265 for <i>The Concert</i> + 78 for <i>The Crater</i> trailer)	The project exceeded its target for viewership , demonstrating that the content was engaging and that the strategy of using a partner channel was effective in reaching a qualified and interested audience.

In summary, the analysis shows that while the project did not meet every quantitative target precisely as written in the proposal, it successfully adapted its strategy to maximize impact. It significantly **over-performed on the channels most critical for professional engagement (LinkedIn) and achieved its viewership goals for video content**. The underperformance on building a broad public following on its own social channels was effectively mitigated by a successful partnership strategy, ultimately allowing the project to reach a larger and more relevant audience than it would have otherwise.



6. Challenges and lessons learned

The implementation of the RITHMS C&D strategy, while highly successful in its core objectives, encountered several challenges that provided valuable lessons for the consortium and for future research initiatives operating in similar complex domains.

6.1 Barriers Encountered

- **Strategic Imbalance in Audience Engagement:** A primary challenge was the difficulty in building a large, engaged following from the public on the project's owned social media channels (Instagram and X). Despite a clear content strategy, organic growth was slow, indicating a significant disconnect between the resources required to build a public community from scratch and the impact achieved. This created a "two-speed" communication strategy, with a highly effective, high-engagement approach for professional audiences and a low-impact, low-reach approach for the general audience.
- **Operational Constraints in a High-Security Domain:** The project's subject matter— involving active law enforcement investigations and culturally sensitive artifacts— imposed significant operational barriers. All visual content and many project details required careful review and validation by the competent authorities, particularly the LEAs involved. This necessary security and validation process created longer lead times for content production and limited the spontaneity of communication, a key element for success on many social platforms.
- **The Evolving Digital Landscape:** The project's duration coincided with major transformations in the social media landscape, most notably the rebranding of Twitter to X. This instability, which included changes to features, algorithms, and the platform's overall public perception, reduced its reliability and utility as a primary dissemination tool, confirming its secondary role in the strategy.

6.2 Mitigation and Key Lessons Learned

The project successfully navigated these challenges, and the experience yielded several key strategic lessons:

1. **Power of Partner Amplification for Public Outreach:** The project successfully mitigated its limited public reach by shifting its focus to strategic amplification through partners. The collaboration with the *Journal of Cultural Heritage Crime* (JCHC) proved to be a highly effective and resource-efficient model for reaching a large, pre-existing,



and relevant audience. This highlights a critical lesson: for specialised research projects, "borrowing" the credibility and reach of established media partners often yields a far greater return on investment than attempting to build a broad public following from the ground up.

2. **Strategic Value of a Concentrated Professional Hub:** The overwhelming success of the LinkedIn page compared to other owned channels demonstrates the value of concentrating digital community-building efforts on a single, high-performing professional platform. By focusing resources on LinkedIn, the project created a vibrant and sustainable network of specialists, proving that for a project of this nature, the quality and relevance of the audience are far more important than the quantity of channels maintained.
3. **Lasting Impact of High-Quality "Legacy" Assets:** The project's most successful public engagement came not from daily social media activity, but from its **high-impact, legacy-building assets like the *Arte Ritrovata* exhibition, the *Threads of Heritage* documentary, and the two short films**. These initiatives, which required significant upfront investment, continue to generate value, reach, and awareness long after their initial launch. This underscores the lesson that for public awareness, investing in a few high-quality, enduring "tentpole" events and products can be more impactful than maintaining a low-engagement daily presence.
4. **The Critical Importance of a Co-Creation Approach with End-Users:** The project's success in developing a relevant and useful technological platform was directly tied to its strategy of co-creation with LEAs. By involving end-users directly in the development and testing process through hands-on workshops and hackathons, the project ensured that the final tools were aligned with real-world operational needs. This iterative feedback loop is a critical lesson for bridging the gap between academic research and practical application.
5. **Need for Agility and Proactive Planning:** The challenges related to content sensitivity, and underperforming channels highlight the need for an agile C&D strategy. Future projects should build in formal review points to assess channel performance and be prepared to reallocate resources away from platforms that are not delivering results. Similarly, the lesson from working in a high-security domain is the need to plan for longer content validation cycles from the outset and to proactively develop alternative visual communication strategies (such as graphic design or animation) to navigate legal and security constraints.



7 Future plans

To ensure a sustainable legacy that extends far beyond the 36-month funding period, the RITHMS consortium has developed a multi-pronged strategy focused on the preservation of key assets, the continued engagement of its professional community, and the long-term exploitation of its core technological and collaborative frameworks.

7.1 Planned Activities for Post-Project Period

The immediate post-project activities are designed to secure the accessibility and maximize the impact of the project's most valuable outputs.

- **Digital Asset Preservation and Knowledge Archiving:** The primary goal is to ensure the long-term accessibility of the project's key assets. The RITHMS website (rithms.eu) will be maintained as a **permanent digital archive**, housing all public deliverables, scientific publications, and audiovisual materials for future reference by researchers, LEAs, and the public. This will be complemented by the dedicated RITHMS section on the *JCHC* website, which will remain a permanent, publicly accessible editorial archive, serving as the institutional memory of the project.
- **Maximising the Impact of Audiovisual Assets:** A robust distribution and educational plan for the project's audiovisual content will be pursued:
 - **Educational Outreach with the Documentary: *Threads of Heritage*** will be positioned as a key educational tool. A plan will be implemented to secure its place on a permanent public streaming platform and to develop an accompanying **educational package**, including a discussion guide. This package will be actively promoted to university departments of archaeology, art history, and criminology, as well as to law enforcement training academies, to facilitate its use in formal curricula.
 - **Cultural Diplomacy and Institutional Collaboration with Short Films:** The animated short films, *The Concert* and *The Crater*, will be leveraged as tools for international cultural diplomacy.
 - For *The Concert*, which tells the story of the Vermeer painting stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, negotiations are underway to have the film **permanently showcased at the museum** in the empty frame where the masterpiece is missing. IIT is also working to organise a dedicated event on illicit trafficking at the museum to serve as the film's US premiere.



- For ***The Crater***, which recounts the looting and repatriation of the Euphronios Krater, discussions are being initiated with the **Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET)** in New York. The goal is to explore collaborative opportunities, such as a screening and an event focused on looting and repatriation, bringing the krater's story back to a key institution in its modern history.

7.2 Long-Term Sustainability of Communication and Dissemination Efforts

The long-term strategy focuses on nurturing the community and institutional frameworks created by the project.

- **Sustaining the Professional Network on LinkedIn:** The most valuable communication asset created by the project is the engaged professional network on LinkedIn. To prevent this community from becoming dormant, a transition plan will be implemented to evolve the page from a project-specific channel into a broader, thematic hub for professionals interested in art crime, technology, and investigation. Management could be transferred to a key partner, such as IIT or the Art Crime Project, to ensure continued moderation and content, preserving the network as a platform for knowledge exchange and future collaboration.
- **Ensuring the Longevity of RITHMS Collaborative Framework:** As highlighted during the project's Final Event, one of the key priorities following the conclusion of RITHMS is to build on the strong cooperation established with law enforcement authorities throughout the project. The coordinator and consortium are committed to maintaining this collaborative network to ensure the continuity of feedback and the ongoing testing and refinement of the RITHMS Platform. Expanding the pool of interested LEAs across Europe will be essential to maximising the platform's operational value and sustainability. In this context, the development of a **European Charter for Cooperation** would represent a crucial next step, providing a formal framework to facilitate long-term engagement, knowledge sharing, and interoperability among police forces. From a social perspective, the project's impact will continue beyond its lifetime through the **dissemination of research outcomes** and the **promotion of the audiovisual materials** produced under RITHMS, which have been widely appreciated for their capacity to raise public awareness about cultural heritage crime and illicit trafficking.

These ongoing activities will help sustain the project's visibility, reinforce its impact, and foster a stronger societal commitment to protecting cultural heritage.



Annex 1 - RITHMS organised events 2022-2025

Event		Date	Place	Organising Partner	Participation	Scope
1	1 st Public Conference	14/10/22	Venice (IT)	IIT	50 in-person 115 online	COMM
2	1 st Research Workshop	31/01/23-02/02/23	Munich (DE)	HföD	35 in-person	INTERNAL
3	2 nd Research Workshop	09-10/05/23	Sofia (BG)	ESICEE	30 in-person	INTERNAL
4	3 rd Research Workshop	14-15/09/23	Venice (IT)	IIT	25 in-person	INTERNAL
5	4 th Research Workshop	02-04/10/23	Sofia (BG)	ESICEE	10 in-person	INTERNAL
6	Exhibition (<i>Arte ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna</i>)	19/12/23-25/02/24	Venice (IT)	IIT + TPC + Italian MiC	11,757 visitors	COMM
7	5 th Research Workshop	11-12/01/24	Antibes (FR)	StAG	17 in-person	INTERNAL
8	2 nd Public Conference (<i>Trafficking in cultural property: a criminological perspective</i>)	30/04/24	A Coruña (ES)	UDC	45 in-person 110 online	DISSEM STAKEHLD
9	Advancement Board Meeting	13/09/24	Venice (IT)	IIT	12 in-person	INTERNAL



10	Webinar <i>(Training Law Enforcement Authorities to Combat Emerging Crimes)</i>	28/10/24	online	HföD + IIT + EMERITUS project	NA	COMM STAKEHLD
11	International Workshop	04/12/24	Brussels (BE)	IIT	45 in-person	DISSEM STAKEHLD
12	LEAs Training Workshop	07-08/04/25	Rome (IT)	IIT	26 in-person	INTERNAL
13	LEAs beyond the Consortium Training Workshop	20/06/25	Munich (DE)	HföD	18 in-person 10 online	STAKEHLD
14	3rd Public Conference	12/09/25	Venice (IT)	IIT	42 in-person	DISSEM STAKEHLD



Annex 2 - Attended conferences/events with RITHMS communication/dissemination 2022-2025

Event		Date	Place	Partner	Scope
1	International Legal Scholars Academy	27/10/22	Wilmington, Delaware (US)	UDC	COMM
2	Conference <i>GoTech World 2022</i>	03-04/11/22	Bucharest (RO)	BEIA	COMM
3	International Conference <i>Aplicaciones de la inteligencia artificial en la justicia penal</i>	10/11/22	A Coruña (ES)	UDC	DISSEM
4	CERIS - FCT Workshop <i>Europol's new role in Horizon Europe</i>	14/03/23	Brussels (BE)	IIT	COMM STAKEHLD
5	CAA 2023 Conference (session organised)	03-06/04/23	Amsterdam (NL)	IIT	COMM DISSEM
6	VIII Processulus: encuentro de jóvenes investigadores en Derecho procesal	13/04/23	Seville (ES)	UDC	DISSEM
7	Hannover Messe 2023	17-21/04/23	Hannover (DE)	BEIA	COMM
8	World Border Security Congress 2023	25-27/04/23	Skopje (MK)	RINI + BiH	COMM STAKEHLD
9	19 th International Scientific eLearning and Software for Education	27-28/04/23	Bucharest (RO)	BEIA	COMM
10	International Conference <i>New Challenges for the Criminal Investigation of Organized Crime</i>	11/05/23	Porto (P)	UDC	INTERNAL
11	Croatian National Information Day on Horizon EU Program	24/05/23	Zagreb (HR)	RINI	COMM STAKEHLD
12	CrimART project Closing Conference	30/05/23	Krakow (PL)	MGPI	COMM STAKEHLD
13	CIMEC Meeting	14/06/23	online	BEIA	COMM



					STAKEHLD
14	CERIS - Projects to Policy Seminar (PPS) 2023	14-15/06/23	Brussels (BE)	IIT	COMM STAKEHLD
15	International Conference <i>The Nicosia Convention: A Criminal Justice Response to Offences Relating to Cultural Property</i>	15-16/06/23	Riga (LV)	IIT	COMM STAKEHLD
16	Interministerial Course of Protection of CH	27-28/06/23	Madrid (ES)	SP	COMM
17	Curso de Verano <i>Seguridad Y Protección Del Patrimonio Cultural. Buscando Sinergias En El Mercado Del Arte</i>	29-30/06/23	Madrid (ES)	IIT	COMM DISSEM
18	EUROC Workshop <i>White-collar and organisation crime: new ideas, directions and perspectives</i>	06-07/07/23	Manchester (UK)	UDC	COMM DISSEM
19	Workshop <i>CL3 Horizon Europe calls</i> (Xunta de Galicia)	12/07/23	Santiago (ES)	UDC	COMM STAKEHLD
20	IEEE CSR Conference 2023	01/08/23	Venice (IT)	ESICEE	DISSEM
21	EAA 2023 Conference (session organised)	30/08/23-02/09/23	Belfast (UK)	IIT	DISSEM STAKEHLD
22	23rd Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology	06/09/23	Florence (IT)	UDC	DISSEM
23	Simposio Inteligencia Artificial y Derecho Penal	20/09/23	Toledo (ES)	UDC	DISSEM
24	VI Congreso XoveTIC <i>Impulsando el talento científico</i>	05-06/10/23	A Coruña (ES)	UDC	COMM STAKEHLD
25	EU CULTNET 2023 (organised by SP extra Rithms)	24-26/10/23	Madrid (ES)	IIT	DISSEM STAKEHLD
26	Conference <i>GoTech World 2023</i>	08-09/11/23	Bucharest (RO)	BEIA	COMM
27	International Conference <i>Desafíos de la justicia penal en la era digital</i>	19/11/23	Vigo (ES)	UDC	DISSEM
28	CERIS – FCT/INFRA Annual Event 2023	14-15/12/23	Brussels (BE)	IIT	COMM



					STAKEHLD
29	EUROPOL Core Group ITCG 2 nd General Assembly	31/01/24-01/02/24	online	IIT	DISSEM STAKEHLD
30	EU Commission - DG HOME Event <i>Dialogue with the Art Market</i>	07/02/24	Brussels (BE)	IIT	COMM STAKEHLD
31	CERIS – FCT Workshop <i>Illicit drugs: challenges and opportunities for introducing innovative and science-based approaches</i>	21/02/24	Brussels (BE)	EI	COMM STAKEHLD
32	EU CULTNET 2024	20-21/03/24	Brussels (BE)	IIT	COMM STAKEHLD
33	CAA 2024 Conference (roundtable organised)	08-12/04/24	Auckland (AU)	IIT	COMM DISSEM
34	Seminario <i>Información, datos e inteligencia artificial en los procesos y en los procedimientos de la era digital</i>	25/04/24	Seville (ES)	UDC	COMM DISSEM
35	UNESCO International Conference <i>Cultural Heritage and Peace</i>	13-15/05/24	The Hague (NL)	IIT	STAKEHLD
36	ESICEE 20 th Anniversary Conference (organised extra RITHMS)	22/05/24	Sofia (BG)	IIT	DISSEM
37	EUROPOL Core Group ITCG Workshop	23/05/24	online	IIT	DISSEM STAKEHLD
38	Law & Society Association Conference 2024	06-09/06/24	Denver, Colorado (US)	UDC	COMM DISSEM
39	TRACE project Final Event	11-12/06/24	Wien (A)	IIT	DISSEM STAKEHLD
40	ARCA Annual Interdisciplinary Art Crime Conference 2024	21-23/06/24	Amelia (IT)	IIT	DISSEM STAKEHLD
41	EAA 2024 Conference (session organised)	29-31/08/24	Roma (IT)	IIT	DISSEM



42	24th Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology	13/09/24	Bucharest (RO)	UDC	DISSEM
43	CERIS - FCT Annual Event 2024	24-25/09/24	Brussels (BE)	EI	COMM STAKEHLD
44	Workshop <i>Open Science and Open Data in European Criminological Research</i>	25/09/24	Cologne (DE)	UDC	COMM DISSEM
45	NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence Event	26/09/24	Vicenza (IT)	IIT	STAKEHLD
46	International Conference <i>Preventing Art Crimes through Regulation and Self-Regulation</i>	30/09/24	Milano (IT)	IIT	COMM STAKEHLD
47	EMERITUS project 2 nd Showcase Event	11/10/24	Athens (GR)	EI	COMM STAKEHLD
48	Romanian Security Fair 2024	16-18/10/24	Bucharest (RO)	BEIA	COMM STAKEHLD
49	Bucharest Cybersecurity Conference 2024	29-31/10/24	Bucharest (RO)	BEIA	DISSEM
50	Conference <i>GoTech World 2024</i>	12-13/11/24	Bucharest (RO)	BEIA	COMM
51	American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting <i>Criminological Research and Education Matters: People, Policy, and Practice in Tumultuous Times</i>	15/11/24	San Francisco, California (US)	UDC	COMM DISSEM
52	EUROPOL Core Group ITCG 3 rd Plenary Meeting	20/11/24	online	IIT	COMM STAKEHLD
53	CERIS – Workshop <i>Innovation against trafficking of cultural goods</i>	05/12/24	Brussels (BE)	IIT	COMM STAKEHLD
54	Forum on Ukrainian Cultural Heritage	10/12/24	online	IIT	COMM STAKEHLD
55	2 nd Congreso Internacional <i>Expolio y Tráfico Ilícito de Bienes Arqueológicos</i>	12-14/12/24	Zaragoza (ES)	IIT + SP	COMM STAKEHLD
56	CS2 Italy Conference	15/01/25	Trento (IT)	IIT	DISSEM



57	AHK Community – New Year’s Reception 2025	06/02/25	Bucharest (RO)	BEIA	COMM
58	International Archaeofilm Festival di Firenze - <i>Threads of Heritage</i> screening	09/03/25	Florence (IT)	IIT	COMM
59	CEPOL Research & Science Conference 2024/2025 <i>Tackling the world of High-Risk Criminal Networks (HRCN)</i>	25-27/03/25	Ostia (IT)	UDC + IIT	DISSEM STAKEHLD
60	PoliFest 2025	03-05/04/25	Bucharest (RO)	BEIA	COMM
61	European Police Congress	20-21/05/25	Berlin (DE)	HföD + CPT	COMM STAKEHLD
62	MONDIACULT 2025 Conference Webinar Series Session V <i>Artificial Intelligence and UNESCO Conventions for the protection of Cultural Property in Emergencies</i>	27/05/25	online	UDC	DISSEM
63	nZEB Days 2025	20-31/05/25	Alba Iulia (RO)	BEIA	COMM DISSEM
64	EUROPOL Core Group ITCG Hackathon & Tools Testing	10-12/06/25	The Hague (NL)	IIT + ESICEE	COMM STAKEHLD
65	IEEE International Conference on Blockchain, Smart Healthcare and Emerging Technologies 2025	19-20/06/25	Bucharest (RO)	BEIA	COMM DISSEM
66	International Conference <i>Cultural Heritage, Property Issues, and Best Practice</i>	19-21/06/25	Würzburg (DE)	IIT	DISSEM STAKEHLD
67	Inauguration Romanian Competence Centre CHIPS – RO-SMARTSYS	25/06/25	Bucharest (RO)	BEIA	COMM
68	EXPO APA 2025	23-25/06/25	Bucharest (RO)	BEIA	COMM
69	DG HOME - Security Research Event 2025	24-25/06/25	Warsaw (PL)	IIT + ESICEE	COMM STAKEHLD
70	EMERITUS project Final Event	01-02/07/25	Torino (TO)	IIT	COMM STAKEHLD



71	Special event at Museo Nazionale Etrusco Villa Giulia, Rome – <i>Threads of Heritage</i> screening	12/07/25	Rome (IT)	IIT	COMM
72	Special event at Palazzo Ducale, Genova – <i>Threads of Heritage</i> screening	14/07/25	Genova (IT)	IIT	COMM
73	CYBERSEA 2025 Convention	18-19/07/25	Constanța (RO)	BEIA	COMM
74	25th Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology (EuroCrim)	04-05/09/25	Athens (GR)	UDC	DISSEM
75	EU CrimACon 2025 <i>Adapting analytical methods to the changing DNA of crime</i>	16-17/09/25	The Hague (NL)	IIT	COMM STAKEHLD
76	RAM Festival Rovereto - Rassegna Internazionale del Cinema Archeologico di Rovereto – <i>Threads of Heritage</i> screening	26/09/25	Rovereto (IT)	IIT	COMM
77	Special screening of <i>Threads of Heritage</i> at Museo Nazionale Etrusco Villa Giulia, Rome	27/09/25	Rome (IT)	IIT	COMM



Annex 3 – Scientific Publications 2022–2025

	Output	Type	URL
1	De Bernardin, M., Giovanelli, R., Leeson, M., and Traviglia, A., <i>RITHMS Project: How Digital Technology Can Help Protect Cultural Heritage from Illicit Trafficking</i> . European Archaeologist Association Annual Event, Rome 2024.	POSTER	https://rithms.eu/images/publications/IIT_EAA_RITHMS%20Poster.pdf
2	De Bernardin, M., Leeson, M., Giovanelli, R., Ferro, S., and Traviglia, A., <i>RITHMS Digital Platform. How Social Network Analysis Can Be Leveraged to Fight High-Risk Criminal Networks Trafficking in Cultural Goods</i> . CEPOL Research and Science Conference 2024/2025.	POSTER	https://rithms.eu/images/publications/IIT_CEPOL%202025_Poster.pdf
3	Faraldo Cabana, P., <i>Exploring overlaps of cultural property crime with organised crime in EU policy documents</i> , European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research (ISSN 0928-1371, e-ISSN 1572-9869), 2024.	PAPER	https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-024-09595-9
4	Faraldo Cabana, P., <i>Exploring the EU Perspective on the Organised Nature of the Trafficking in Cultural Goods</i> , European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin – CEPOL.	PAPER	forthcoming
5	Ferro, S., Giovanelli, R., Leeson, M., De Bernardin, M., and Traviglia, A., <i>A novel NLP-driven approach for enriching artefact descriptions, provenance, and entities in cultural heritage</i> . Neural Computing & Application 37, 2025.	PAPER	https://doi.org/10.1007/s00521-025-11449-2
6	Fuentes Loureiro, M.A./ Faraldo Cabana, P., <i>How organised is the trafficking of cultural goods? Spain as case study.</i>	PAPER	forthcoming
7	García Adán, A., Fuentes Loureiro, M.A., <i>Ethical and Legal Risks of Algorithmic and AI Tools Developed to Fight Against Trafficking in</i>	PAPER	https://xovetic.citic.udc.es/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/XoveTIC_2023_proceedings.pdf



	<i>Cultural Property in the RITHMS Project</i> , en AA.VV., Proceedings XoveTIC 2023. Impulsando el talento científico. Servizo de Publicacións, A Coruña, 2023.		
8	Giovanelli, R., Leeson, M., De Bernardin, M., Ferro, S., and Traviglia, A., <i>Social Network Analysis on the Proveana Database: Insights on the Circulation of Nazi-Looted Cultural Goods during and after WWII</i> , Social Network Analysis and Mining,	PAPER	<i>forthcoming</i>
9	Leeson, M., Giovanelli, R., De Bernardin, M., and Traviglia, A., <i>War, Art, and Sanctions: Social Network Analysis on the NACP's Databases of Sanctioned Russian Individuals and Art Collectors</i> , International Journal of Digital Humanities, 2024.	PAPER	https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42803-024-00089-y
10	Leeson, M., Giovanelli, R., Ferro, S., De Bernardin, M., and Traviglia, A., <i>Overcoming Data Siloes in Cultural Heritage Crime Research: A Consolidated OSINT-Derived Dataset on Art, Antiquities, and the Trade in Cultural Goods</i> . Archival Science 25, 2025.	PAPER	https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-025-09485-x
11	Leeson, M., De Bernardin, M., Giovanelli, R., Ferro, S., and Traviglia, A., <i>RITHMS Digital Platform: Social Network Analysis for Intelligence-Led Policing of Cultural Heritage Crime</i> . In Emiline Smith and Summer Austin (eds) <i>Researching a Rigged Game: Open-Source Data & the Trade in Cultural Heritage</i> . Cham, Springer.	PAPER	<i>forthcoming</i>
12	Salonen, J., Guarino, A., <i>Art Crime Does not pay: Multiplexed Social Network Analysis in Cultural Heritage Trafficking Forensics</i> , Proceedings of the 19th International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security, ICCWS 2024, pp. 617-620.	PAPER	https://doi.org/10.34190/iccws.19.1.2066
13	Salonen, J., Guarino, A., <i>Art Crime Does not pay</i> . 19th International Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security, ICCWS 2024.	POSTER	https://rithms.eu/images/publications/VTT-STAG_ICCWS24_Poster.pdf



14	Vatasoiu, R., Vulpe, A., Florescu, R., Sachian, M.A, Suciu, G., <i>Developing a Call Detail Record Generator for Cultural Heritage Preservation and Theft Mitigation: Applications and Implications</i> , ARES '24: Proceedings of the 19th International Conference on Availability, Reliability and Security, 2024, n. 138, pp. 1 – 5.	PAPER	https://doi.org/10.1145/3664476.3669915
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Annex 4 – Printed Communication Material

1. RITHMS Press release, Brochure ENG, Brochure ARAB
2. *Threads of Heritage* Press release, Poster, Information sheet
3. *The Concert* information sheet
4. *The Crater* information sheet
5. *Newsletter* N.1, N.2, N.3, N.4, N.5
6. *Arte ritrovata* Exhibition Brochure



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An abstract graphic design featuring a dark background on the left and a solid blue background on the right. A white line starts from a white circle in the top left, extends horizontally, then vertically down, and finally horizontally left. On the blue background, there are several light blue geometric shapes: a circle in the top right, a vertical line, and several overlapping circles of different sizes. The text 'WHY RITHMS?' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

WHY RITHMS?

Misappropriation of cultural heritage represents both an economic issue and a cultural wound that cannot be repaired. The illicit trafficking of cultural goods is not a new kind of crime; nevertheless, recent decades have seen a worrying increase in its impact and reach, particularly in conflict and disaster zones.

What was once a phenomenon with mostly local roots has become a lucrative source of income for wider criminal networks, involving both white-collar and traditional criminals, who can now take advantage of online outlets and social media to expand their market. In fact, the lack of regulations, the inconsistency of different national laws, and the uncertainty of object traceability have facilitated a concerning surge in illicit transactions.

In response to this issue, RITHMS Project was conceived to develop a digital platform capable of supporting the investigations of Law Enforcement Agencies in the fight against the illicit trade of cultural property.

OBJECTIVES

UNDERSTAND THE CRIMINAL PHENOMENON OF CULTURAL HERITAGE TRAFFICKING

Promote cross-sectoral research bringing together all relevant fields (art market, criminology, legal studies, forensic science, etc.) to broaden the understanding of the criminal phenomenon against cultural property and grasp its connections with other kinds of organised crime.

PROVIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WITH NEW TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS

RITHMS will provide an operational, technological tool to enhance the investigative capabilities of Law Enforcement Agencies: a digital platform based on SNA methodology, developed and validated according to the users' needs and requirements.

OPERATIONALISE THE COLLECTED KNOWLEDGE AND THE DEVELOPED TECHNOLOGIES

Trigger all the necessary steps to make RITHMS SNA Platform effective, ensure its implementation, longevity, and exploitation after the Project's end, and foster the validity of RITHMS intelligence results as evidence in court.

PROMOTE COOPERATION TO TACKLE ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN CULTURAL GOODS

Foster collaboration between the different actors involved in countering this type of crime. Given its organised and mobile nature, addressing the phenomenon from different angles and complementary fronts is necessary to tackle it efficiently. RITHMS will increase cross-national cooperation and activate synergies bringing together diverse expertise and research domains.

OBJECTIVES





Interoperable & Multifunctional

Multiple analysis and query tools
available

Social Network Analysis (SNA)

Powered by Social Network Analysis
(SNA): a method of mapping, studying,
and visualising relationships among
entities

Cultural Network Mapping

Able to identify, evaluate, and analyse
relations and connections between
criminal and non-criminal actors
involved in the trafficking of cultural
goods

RITHMS SNA-BASED PLATFORM

Image: Example of Social Network Graphs (SNG)



KEY FEATURES

LEA Support

Deployed only at segregated Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) premises.

Designed to provide LEAs with enhanced intelligence on criminal networks to steer their investigations

OSINT & Restricted Data Integration

Equipped to integrate LEAs restricted data with the collected Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) data (i.e., websites, social media, repositories)

Provenance Data Management

Capable of offering LEAs a large, continuously updated provenance database of cultural property

Automated web & Social Media Scraping

Powered by 47 scraper software gathering information from 51 public websites, cultural goods repositories, and social media outlets

LOOTED OBJECT

with SUSPICIOUS PROVENANCE

- Officers check out antiquities on **auction/sale** (art fair, gallery, auction house).
- Officers identify an archaeological object with incomplete provenance, no import/export documentation, only accompanied by an expert declaration of authenticity.
- Officers input acquired data into the Platform and start running multiple scrapers.

RITHMS highlights the networks of:

- **Auction house/seller's connections**
(previous sellers, buyers, conferrers, usual experts):
e.g., the expert authenticating the item stands out as the authenticator of several items recently seized as looted; a usual seller stands out for previous indictments for illicit importation.
- **Previous movements of the item**
(previous sellers, buyers, collectors, auctions, art galleries):
e.g., a missing link to a suspicious collector emerges.

- Officers enhance their investigation following the new leads.





ART THEFT

- A painting is stolen from a **museum** at night.
- CCTV footage reveals two individuals, and one of them is identified based on records of previous criminal activities.
- Officers upload the name and selected data from previous investigations to the Platform.

RITHMS highlights the network of multiple criminal connections revolving around the identified thief.

- Interrogations and traditional investigative procedures lead to the arrest of the intermediary who facilitated the fencing of the painting; the name is then uploaded.

RITHMS highlights the network of relations connecting the two individuals, suggesting:

- **Additional persons of interest** to interrogate
- **Potential routes** for the stolen painting

- Officers enhance their investigation following the new leads.

COMMUNICATION & DISSEMINATION MAIN RESULTS

RITHMS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

- *Kick-off Conference*
Venice, October 2022
- *Trafficking in Cultural Property. A
Criminological Perspective*
A Coruña, April 2024
- *Beyond Restoration*
Bruxelles, December 2024
- *Final Conference*
Venice, September 2025

EXHIBITION

Arte Ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna
Venice, December 2023 - February 2024

DOCUMENTARY

*Threads of Heritage. Down the Rabbit Hole of
Art Crime (2025)*
Produced by the Centre for Cultural Heritage
Technology (Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia) & No
Panic Agency, Directed by Brian Parodi
*Awarded the second place at the International
Archaeological Film Festival in Florence, 2025*

CONTACTS



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info@rithms.eu



[RITHMS_EU](#)

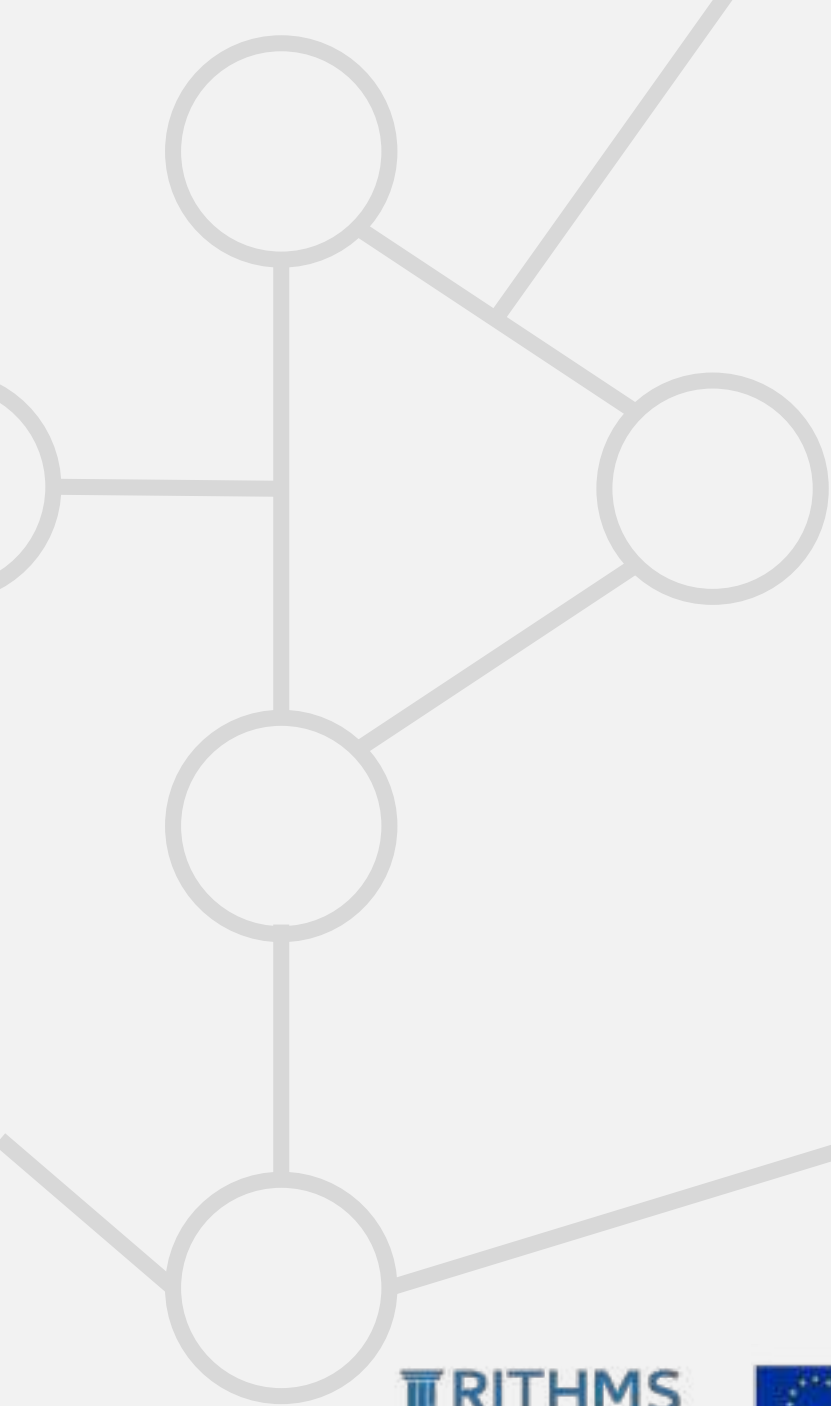


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منصة بحثية وتحليلية تساهم في حماية التراث ومكافحة
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*(Research, Intelligence and Technology
for Heritage and Market Security)*



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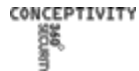
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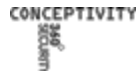
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ما الدافع وراء المشروع؟

يمثل اختلاس التراث الثقافي قضيةً اقتصاديةً وجرحًا ثقافيًا يصعب علاجه. وعلى الرغم من أنّ الاتجار غير المشروع بالسلع الثقافية ليس ظاهرةً جديدة، فقد شهدت العقود الأخيرة تصاعدًا مقلقًا في تأثيره واتّساع نطاقه خاصةً مناطق في الصراعات والكوارث الطبيعية

لقد تحوّلت هذه الظاهرة، التي كانت في السابق ذات جذور محلية، إلى مصدر دخل مربح لشبكات إجرامية دولية واسعة النطاق، تضمّ مجرمين تقليديين وآخرين ذوي مكانة اجتماعية أو مناصب رفيعة، مستفيدين من المنصّات الرقمية، بما في ذلك وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، لتوسيع أسواقهم.

وغالبًا ما يصعب تحديد مصدر الموروث الثقافي المسروق، مما يعقّد عمليات التحري والتحقيق، ويُضعف الجهود المبذولة لمكافحة هذا النوع من الجرائم. وتزيد خطورة الوضع مع غياب القوانين الموحّدة وتباين التشريعات الوطنية، مما يخلق فجوات قانونية يستغلّها المجرمون.

واستجابةً لهذه التحديات، أنشئ مشروع رقمية تدعم إجراءات التحقيق التي تنفّذها **INTERPOL** بالقانون، وتدعم جهود مكافحة الاتجار غير المشروع بالممتلكات الثقافية التي تُشكّل تراثًا عالميًا فريدًا. بهدف تطوير منصّة

OBJECTIVES

UNDERSTAND THE CRIMINAL PHENOMENON OF CULTURAL HERITAGE TRAFFICKING

Promote cross-sectoral research bringing together all relevant fields (art market, criminology, legal studies, forensic science, etc.) to broaden the understanding of the criminal phenomenon against cultural property and grasp its connections with other kinds of organised crime.

PROVIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WITH NEW TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS

RITHMS will provide an operational, technological tool to enhance the investigative capabilities of Law Enforcement Agencies: a digital platform based on SNA methodology, developed and validated according to the users' needs and requirements.

OPERATIONALISE THE COLLECTED KNOWLEDGE AND THE DEVELOPED TECHNOLOGIES

Trigger all the necessary steps to make RITHMS SNA Platform effective, ensure its implementation, longevity, and exploitation after the Project's end, and foster the validity of RITHMS intelligence results as evidence in court.

PROMOTE COOPERATION TO TACKLE ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN CULTURAL GOODS

Foster collaboration between the different actors involved in countering this type of crime. Given its organised and mobile nature, addressing the phenomenon from different angles and complementary fronts is necessary to tackle it efficiently. RITHMS will increase cross-national cooperation and activate synergies bringing together diverse expertise and research domains.

الأهداف



الأهداف

توضيح مفهوم الجريمة التي تستهدف التراث الثقافي

تشجيع البحث المشترك بين القطاعات من خلال دمج مجالات متعدّدة مثل سوق الفن، علم الجريمة، الدراسات القانونية، وعلوم الأدلة الجنائية، بهدف توسيع فهم الجريمة التي تستهدف الممتلكات الثقافية، وكشف علاقتها بأشكال أخرى من الجريمة المنظمة .

تزويد جهات إنفاذ القانون بأدوات تكنولوجية جديدة

سيوفّر مشروع RITHMS أداة تكنولوجيّة عمليّة لدعم قدرات جهات إنفاذ القانون في مجالات التحقيق ، من خلال منصّة رقميّة تعتمد على تحليل الشبكات الاجتماعيّة (SNA) ، تم تطويرها والتحقّق من فاعليّتها بناءً على احتياجات المستخدمين ومتطلّباتهم .



تطبيق المعارف المكتسبة والتقنيات المستحدثة

اتخاذ جميع الخطوات اللازمة لتطبيق منصّة RITHMS المعتمدة على تحليل الشبكات الاجتماعية (SNA) ، وضمان تفعيلها، واستمراريتها، والاستفادة منها بعد انتهاء المشروع، وتعزيز موثوقية نتائجها كمصدر معتمد للأدلة أمام القضاء.

تنمية التعاون للتصدي للاتجار غير المشروع بالململكات الثقافية

العمل على تعزيز التعاون بين مختلف الجهات التي تساهم في التصدي لهذا النوع من الجرائم. ونظرًا لطبيعتها المعقّدة وسرعة انتشارها، فالأمر المهم هو التعامل معها من زوايا متعددة لضمان استجابة فعّالة. يهدف مشروع RITHMS إلى دعم هذا التعاون على المستوى الدولي، وجمع الخبرات والمعارف المتنوعة لمواجهة كافة التحديات المرتبطة بها.

الأهداف





Interoperable & Multifunctional

Multiple analysis and query tools
available

Social Network Analysis (SNA)

(Powered by Social Network Analysis (SNA): a
method of mapping, studying, and visualising
relationships among entities)

Cultural Network Mapping

Able to identify, evaluate, and analyse
relations and connections between criminal
and non-criminal actors involved in the
trafficking of cultural goods

RITHMS SNA-BASED PLATFORM



KEY FEATURES

LEA Support

Deployed only at segregated Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) premises. Designed to provide LEAs with enhanced intelligence on criminal networks to steer their investigations

OSINT & Restricted Data Integration

Equipped to integrate LEAs restricted data with the collected Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) data (i.e., websites, social media, repositories)

Provenance Data Management

Capable of offering LEAs a large, continuously updated provenance database of cultural property

Automated web & Social Media Scraping

Powered by 47 scraper software gathering information from 51 public websites, cultural goods repositories, and social media outlets

متنوعة وقابلة للتكامل مع أنظمة أخرى

توفر أدوات متعددة للتحليل والاستعلام

تحليل الشبكات الاجتماعية (SNA)

يعتمد على تحليل الشبكات الاجتماعية: طريقة لدراسة، وتصوّر العلاقات بين مختلف الجهات

تصميم خرائط العلاقات في مجال التراث الثقافي

يُستخدم لتحديد وتحليل العلاقات بين أشخاص متورطين وغير متورطين في جرائم تتعلق بالاتجار بالممتلكات الثقافية.

منصة RITHMS المبنية على تحليل
الشبكات الاجتماعية (SNA)

الميزات الرئيسية

دعم جهات إنفاذ القانون

يُخصَّص نشره لاستخدام جهات إنفاذ القانون داخل مقارّها المغلقة وتم تصميمه خصيصًا لتزويد هذه الجهات بمعلومات استخباراتية متقدمة حول الشبكات الإجرامية، بهدف دعم مسارات التحقيق وتوجيهها بفعالية

تكامل البيانات المفتوحة والمقيّدة

صُمِّم لتمكين دمج بيانات جهات إنفاذ القانون المقيّدة مع البيانات الاستخباراتية مفتوحة المصدر (OSNINT) مثل مواقع الإنترنت، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، والمستودعات الرقمية

نظام لإدارة بيانات التسلسل التاريخي للملكية

يُسهّل على جهات إنفاذ القانون الوصول إلى قاعدة بيانات مُحدّثة وشاملة حول تسلسل ملكية الممتلكات الثقافية

جمع بيانات من الإنترنت ووسائل التواصل الاجتماعي

يعمل بواسطة 47 برنامج (Scrapers) تقوم بجمع المعلومات من 51 موقعًا عامًا، ومستودعات لممتلكات ثقافية، ومنصات التواصل الاجتماعي

LOOTED OBJECT

with SUSPICIOUS PROVENANCE

- Officers check out antiquities on **auction/sale** (art fair, gallery, auction house).
- Officers identify an archaeological object with incomplete provenance, no import/export documentation, only accompanied by an expert declaration of authenticity.
- Officers input acquired data into the Platform and start running multiple scrapers.

RITHMS highlights the networks of:

- **Auction house/seller's connections**
(previous sellers, buyers, conferrers, usual experts):
e.g., the expert authenticating the item stands out as the authenticator of several items recently seized as looted; a usual seller stands out for previous indictments for illicit importation.
- **Previous movements of the item**
(previous sellers, buyers, collectors, auctions, art galleries):
e.g., a missing link to a suspicious collector emerges.
- Officers enhance their investigation following the new leads.

قطعة أثرية مسروقة

ذو مصدر مشبوه

- يفحص الضباط القطع الأثرية المعروضة في المزادات أو صالات البيع .
- يكتشف الضباط قطعة أثرية مشكوك في مصدرها ، دون وثائق استيراد/تصدير، ولا يرافقها سوى شهادة خبير تؤكد أصالتها .
- يُدخل الضباط البيانات إلى المنصة، ثم يستخدمون أدوات مخصصة لجمع المعلومات من المواقع الإلكترونية (Scrapers) .

• يسلّط RITHMS الضوء على:

دار المزادات أو الجهات المتصلة بالبائع

(البائعون والمشترون السابقون، المتبرعون، الخبراء)

على سبيل المثال، تبين أن الخبير الذي صدّق على قطعة أثرية ما، سبق له التصديق أيضًا على عدّة قطع أخرى تم ضبطها مؤخرًا كممتلكات منهوبة. او كان قد تبين له ان أحد البائعين المعروفين سبق أن وُجّهت إليه تهم بالاستيراد غير القانوني

• التحركات السابقة للقطعة

(البائعون والمشترون السابقون، هواة جمع الآثار والتحف، المزادات، صالات العرض الفنية)
على سبيل المثال، قد تكشف التحقيقات عن حلقة مفقودة تؤدي إلى الاشتباه بأحد هواة جمع الآثار والتحف

يواصل الضباط تحقيقاتهم استنادًا إلى هذه المؤشرات الجديدة

ART THEFT

- A painting is stolen from a **museum** at night.
- CCTV footage reveals two individuals, and one of them is identified based on records of previous criminal activities.
- Officers upload the name and selected data from previous investigations to the Platform.

RITHMS highlights the network of multiple criminal connections revolving around the identified thief.

- Interrogations and traditional investigative procedures lead to the arrest of the intermediary who facilitated the fencing of the painting; the name is then uploaded.

RITHMS highlights the network of relations connecting the two individuals, suggesting:

- **Additional persons of interest** to interrogate
 - **Potential routes** for the stolen painting
- Officers enhance their investigation following the new leads.

سرقة عمل فني

- تُسرق لوحة فنية من أحد المتاحف خلال الليل .
- تكشف من خلال كاميرات المراقبة عن وجود شخصين ويتم التعرف على أحدهما بسبب تورطه في جرائم مماثلة سابقة .
- يقوم الضباط بتحميل اسم المشتبه به وبعض البيانات من تحقيقات سابقة إلى المنصة .

يكشف نظام RITHMS عن شبكة من الأشخاص المتورطين في أنشطة إجرامية، مرتبطة بالشخص الذي تم التعرف عليه.

- تؤدي الاستجابات والإجراءات التقليدية إلى القبض على الوسيط الذي ساعد في بيع اللوحة المسروقة، ويوثق اسمه على المنصة .

يكشف نظام RITHMS عن شبكة العلاقات التي تربط بين الشخصين،

- ويقترح ما يلي :
أشخاص إضافيون يُحتمل أن يكون لهم صلة ويجب استجوابهم
مسارات محتملة لنقل اللوحة المسروقة

يواصل الضباط تحقيقاتهم استنادًا إلى هذه المؤشرات الجديدة

COMMUNICATION & DISSEMINATION MAIN RESULTS

RITHMS NATIONAL CONFERENCES

- *Kick-off Conference*
Venice, October 2022
- *Trafficking in Cultural Property. A Criminological Perspective*
A Coruña, April 2024
- *Beyond Restoration*
Bruxelles, December 2024
- *Final Conference*
Venice, September 2025

EXHIBITION

Arte Ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna
Venice, December 2023 - February 2024

DOCUMENTARY

Threads of Heritage. Down the Rabbit Hole of Art Crime (2025)

Produced by the Centre for Cultural Heritage
Technology (Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia) & No Panic
Agency, Directed by Brian Parodi
*Awarded the second place at the International
Archaeological Film Festival in Florence, 2025*

أبرز نتائج التواصل والنشر

المؤتمر الافتتاحي

البندقية، أكتوبر 2022

الاتجار بالممتلكات الثقافية: منظور علم الجريمة

لاكورونيا، أبريل 2024

ما بعد الترميم

بروكسل، ديسمبر 2024

المؤتمر الختامي

البندقية، سبتمبر 2025

المؤتمرات الدولية
لمشروع RITHMS

Arte Ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna

البندقية، ديسمبر 2023 – فبراير 2024

معرض

خيوط التراث: في جحر جرائم الفن (2025)

Threads of Heritage. Down the Rabbit Hole of Art

Crime (2025)

إنتاج: مركز تكنولوجيا التراث الثقافي (المعهد الإيطالي للتكنولوجيا)

وشركة No Panic

إخراج: بريان بارودي

حاز على المركز الثاني في مهرجان فلورنسا الدولي للأفلام الأثرية، 2025

فيلم وثائقي

جهات الاتصال

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BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

The illicit trafficking of cultural property is a transnational crime that impacts the so-called countries of “origin” (rich in cultural heritage), “transit”, and “destination” (principal marketplaces). The illicit trade in cultural goods is flourishing due to various factors, including the high demand in the art market, the relative ease of crossing certain borders, advancements in transportation systems and technology, and political instability in some countries.

Over the past decades, there has been an alarming increase in the illicit trafficking of cultural objects, especially from countries affected by armed conflict or social turmoil. Looted antiquities have become profitable assets, rivalling – to some degree – drugs, arms, and counterfeit goods. In order to combat this phenomenon, the international community has adopted several agreements: the **1970 UNESCO Convention** on the "Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property" and the **1995 UNIDROIT Convention** on "Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects" feature among the earliest and most relevant.

On the other hand, one of the most recent and impactful resolutions was adopted by the **United Nations Security Council in 2015**. The document calls upon countries to implement necessary measures to prevent looted/stolen cultural goods from Iraq and Syria to enter commercial circuits. Additionally, it acknowledges the global role of Interpol in addressing this illicit market, particularly through raising awareness among member states.

The resolution also highlights the importance of information exchange between law enforcement agencies, art and antique dealers, and collectors, as essential in tackling this issue.

In this context, **Interpol Database of Stolen Works of Art** and its **ID-Art mobile application** represent a crucial tool available to police forces and the public worldwide. Users can gather information on declared stolen artworks, recovered, yet still unclaimed cultural objects, and on those originating from conflict-affected countries.

In the fight against theft and trafficking of works of art, Interpol cooperates with several international organisations, including the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**, the **International Council of Museums (ICOM)**, the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**, and the **World Customs Organization (WCO)**. This collaborative effort enables a coordinated approach in addressing the challenges related to the illicit trade of cultural goods and promotes information sharing among these global entities.

Indeed, it is notable that the fight against international illicit trafficking of cultural goods engages various actors, including governmental and non-governmental organisations, policymakers, and, most importantly, national and border police authorities. Accordingly, in recent years, there has been an increase in collaborative efforts, and cooperation relationships among these entities have been strengthened.

Furthermore, the law enforcement agencies of several countries have equipped themselves with advanced tools, such databases and technologies, to enhance their effectiveness in combating this phenomenon and facilitate the prosecution of cases involving theft and illicit appropriation of cultural property. Regrettably, inadequate awareness among governments and the public often creates fertile ground for criminals, as they perceive such illicit trafficking as a high-profit, low-risk activity.

That emphasises the importance of raising awareness, implementing preventive measures, and fostering international alliance to deter and counteract the illegal trade of cultural goods.

According to the statistics published by Interpol in the "Assessment of Crime Against Cultural Property 2021" (2022), Europe is still massively impacted by this phenomenon. However, in recent years, the overall trend has been showing an increase in the recovery of stolen property, often facilitated by newly-established international cooperation among law enforcement agencies.

The illicit trafficking of cultural property is also a recurring topic of the recommendations issued from meetings of the **Interpol Expert Group (IEG) on Stolen Works of Art**, with the participation of UNESCO. In 2006, for the first time, the IEG on Stolen Works of Art specifically highlighted the matter of illicit online sales of cultural items. It also acknowledged the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies in responding to the increasing phenomenon. As a solution, the IEG proposed that Interpol, UNESCO, and ICOM collaborate in creating and distributing to their respective member countries a shared list of fundamental actions to combat the growing illicit trade of cultural objects on the Internet.

As a result, the list of **"Basic Actions Concerning Cultural Objects Offered for Sale on the Internet"** was developed, thus marking the initial step towards a new approach in contrasting illicit trafficking, which recognises the responsibility of online platforms in the illegal sale of cultural property. The IEG on Stolen Works of Art recommended that the INTERPOL General Secretariat collects and regularly shares information from member countries regarding agreements made with Internet platforms, to have strong impact on the online sales of cultural property.

These agreements would involve restrictions on the sale of cultural property in accordance with national legislation, the implementation of self-monitoring mechanisms by Internet platforms, and the promotion of public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of protecting cultural heritage. Additionally, the recommendation encouraged Internet platforms, auction houses, and art dealers to grant law enforcement agencies unrestricted access to conventional and online catalogues. By fostering collaboration between various stakeholders, these measures aim to create a virtuous counter-network combating the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

RITHMS PLATFORM AND THE SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Against this background, RITHMS project aims to enhance the operational capabilities of law enforcement agencies in tackling the growing challenges posed by the organised, multi-criminal, and transnational nature of illicit trafficking in cultural goods. This will be achieved through research, technological innovation, and targeted outreach and training initiatives. RITHMS Consortium acknowledges the need for a multifaceted, interdisciplinary, and collaborative approach, considering the manifold essence of this crime and its interconnections with other criminal sectors. By adopting this line of work, RITHMS aims to strengthen the global response to the illicit trade of cultural goods and its associated criminal activities.

The project strives to develop a replicable strategy that effectively addresses the challenges associated with the illicit trade of stolen and looted cultural objects. These challenges primarily revolve around the fragmentation of intelligence information and the need to investigate the mechanisms underlying the phenomenon, including its links to different kinds of organised crime.

RITHMS aims to build and validate a prototype intelligence digital resource specifically designed for investigating illicit trafficking in cultural goods. The **innovative RITHMS digital platform** will stand out for interoperability and multifunctionality, enabling the identification, evaluation, and analysis of relationships between criminal and non-criminal actors. By outlining the networks engaged in the illicit trade of cultural property and their potential evolution, the platform will enhance the accessibility and accuracy of information available to law enforcement agencies. This advanced tool will empower authorities in their efforts to combat the illegal trade and better understand the dynamics guiding such criminal groups.

At its core, RITHMS platform will be based on **Social Network Analysis (SNA)**. SNA methodology allows for the mapping and analysis of social connections between individuals and groups of individuals by leveraging graph theory. In literature, SNA is defined as a structural approach in the field of social sciences based on the study of the interactions among social actors. The relationships considered for SNA are usually those linking individual human beings. Still, they may also involve other entities, such as objects, animals, or places, when they carry important meaning to the underlying social networks.

SNA is a valuable tool in criminal investigation, particularly in the fight against organised crime. SNA enables the identification and understanding of social networks and the connections among members of criminal organisations, shedding light on the dynamics and operations of these groups. It allows for identifying potential lines of inquiry and uncovering key actors or network vulnerabilities.

A **Social Network Graph (SNG)** will be the visual representation of the SNA conducted by RITHMS platform in accordance with the users' inputs and queries. Within a SNG, the entities under scrutiny feature as nodes, while the connections between nodes, which represent the relationships between entities, are depicted as lines or edges. These relationships are commonly referred to as ties or links. By displaying these entities and their relationships visually, a SNG provides a clear depiction of the (criminal) network under investigation.

RITHMS SNA platform will incorporate a comprehensive set of data collection modules to enhance the width and depth of information available to the end users. Automation will play a key role in gathering and correlating data from various sources.

That will encompass existing open-source datasets, mobile traffic data, satellite imagery analysis reports (connected to the *Copernicus* program), and a database powered by custom-developed crawler software designed to collect objects being auctioned or sold online. By connecting and integrating these diverse data sources, RITHMS SNA platform will provide a more comprehensive understanding of cultural goods trafficking networks and dependable intelligence for the investigative work of law enforcement agencies.

ESSENTIAL REFERENCES

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PRODUCTION ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI TECNOLOGIA & NO PANIC AGENCY

THREADS OF HERITAGE

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE
OF ART CRIME

PRODUCTION MANAGER
FABIO BELTOTTO

DIRECTED BY
BRIAN PARODI

SCIENTIFIC COORDINATORS: **ARIANNA TRAVIGLIA, MICHELA DE BERNARDIN** • ORIGINAL MUSIC BY: **FRANCESCO BACCI LOWTOPIC**
SOUND EDIT, MIX AND SOUND DESIGN: **GABRIELE PALLANCA** • DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY: **SIMONE PUTZU, STEFANO PULCINI**

TRITHMS
DIGITAL STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES



Funded by
the European Union



ISTITUTO ITALIANO
DI TECNOLOGIA

no panic

plu·ra·le
video

DOCUMENTARY FILMED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF FRAUDPROTECT (EU-IMPROVISE), FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION. VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED ARE, HOWEVER, THOSE OF THE AUTHORS ONLY AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION OR THE COMMISSION. NEITHER THE EUROPEAN UNION NOR THE GRANTING AUTHORITY CAN BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM.

THREADS OF HERITAGE

Down the Rabbit Hole of Art Crime

Produced by Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia
(Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology) & No Panic Agency

Directed by Brian Parodi

Production Manager Fabio Beltotto

Creative Producer Valentina Logli

Screenplay Fabio Beltotto, Michela De Bernardin

Duration 45'

Voice over Massimo Veracini

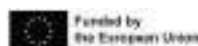
Original music by Francesco Bacci

Media Partner The Journal of Cultural Heritage Crime

The documentary ***Threads of Heritage*** offers an unprecedented look at the **illicit trafficking of cultural heritage**—a crisis that threatens historical treasures worldwide. Through compelling storytelling and firsthand accounts, the film explores the irreversible damage caused by **clandestine excavations** and the **illegal art market**, exposing the intricate network of interests that often involves traffickers, auction houses, and major international museums.

A journey through **Rome, Cerveteri** and **Madrid** takes the audience to the heart of this phenomenon, from looted archaeological sites to museum storage facilities inaccessible to the public, where hundreds of artefacts await reassignment. For the first time, these objects become the protagonists of a narrative that restores their intrinsic historical and cultural value.

With the support of experts and industry professionals, the documentary features the testimonies of **Vincenzo Bellelli**, Director of the Cerveteri Archaeological Park; **Luana Toniolo**, Director of the National Etruscan Museum of Villa Giulia; and **Arianna Traviglia**, Director of the Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology (Italian Institute of Technology). Crucial contributions also come from law enforcement agencies dedicated to protecting cultural heritage: the **Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage** and the **Brigada de Patrimonio Histórico** of the Spanish National Police take the audience into the core of their operations, conducted in collaboration with other European police forces, to combat a black market worth millions of euros.



Former archaeological officials **Maurizio Pellegrini** and **Daniela Rizzo**, along with former judge **Giuglielmo Muntoni** reconstruct some of the most emblematic legal cases linked to the illicit trafficking of cultural goods. These include cases involving **Giacomo Medici** and **Robert Emanuel Hecht**, both renowned international art dealers, as well as **Marion True**, former curator of antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum. Former Italian Minister of Culture **Francesco Rutelli** shifts the focus to restitutions, highlighting the diplomatic tools used to facilitate the return of looted artworks to their countries of origin and emphasising the key role of international cooperation.

A particularly innovative aspect of the documentary is its exploration of emerging technologies applied to the fight against illicit trafficking. From outer space to the depths of the web, **Alessandra Ussorio**, Capability Development Coordinator at the **European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen)**, explains how satellite imagery analysis aids in monitoring archaeological sites. Meanwhile, the **Carabinieri TPC** introduce the groundbreaking **SWOADS software**, an AI-powered tool that accelerates the identification of illicit goods on e-commerce platforms and in online catalogues of galleries and auction houses.

The documentary concludes with a focus on **RITHMS**, a software system currently under development as part of the **Research, Intelligence, and Technology for Heritage and Market Security** project, coordinated by the **Italian Institute of Technology**. This cutting-edge digital platform integrates data from various sources and uses **Social Network Analysis** to detect and visualise potential criminal networks involved in cultural heritage trafficking. With RITHMS, law enforcement agencies will have a powerful tool to map and analyse links between individuals, artefacts, and suspicious transactions, enhancing their ability to combat and prevent this global issue.

The documentary was produced within the framework of the European project **RITHMS**, funded by the **Horizon Europe** program (Grant Agreement No. 101073932). Threads of Heritage aims to increase public and institutional consciousness about the importance of safeguarding cultural assets from looting and exploitation as part of a broader strategy to raise awareness about cultural heritage protection.

The screenplay, written by **Fabio Beltotto** and **Michela De Bernardin**, presents a detailed and critical exploration of illicit cultural heritage trafficking, offering a fresh perspective. Under the direction of **Brian Parodi**, this narrative is transformed into a visually compelling experience that informs and deeply moves the audience.

Contacts

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COMUNICATO STAMPA

L'Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia presenta *Threads of Heritage – Down the Rabbit Hole of Art Crime*, il documentario che svela le trame del traffico illecito di beni culturali e il ruolo delle nuove tecnologie nel contrastare questo fenomeno

*La pellicola realizzata nell'ambito del progetto europeo RITHMS, finanziato dal programma **Horizon Europe**, svela meccanismi e protagonisti del mercato illecito d'arte, un fenomeno che mette a rischio il patrimonio culturale mondiale.*

Link alle immagini: <https://multimedia.iit.it/asset-bank/images/assetbox/504502f1-1cf2-41b5-9b08-6bab6c3a1c0c/assetbox.html>

Link al trailer del documentario: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UD-5vITLnAI&t=3s>

Roma/Genova, 09 luglio 2025 – Svelare il volto nascosto del traffico illecito di beni culturali, fenomeno che mette a rischio il patrimonio mondiale. È questo l'obiettivo del documentario **Threads of Heritage – Down the Rabbit Hole of Art Crime**, prodotto dal Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology, il centro dell'Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia a Venezia, in collaborazione con **No Panic Agency**, per la regia di **Brian Parodi**. Il film nasce nell'ambito del progetto europeo RITHMS, finanziato dal programma **Horizon Europe** e coordinato dall'Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia, per raccontare le trame oscure che intrecciano scavi clandestini, collezionismo privato e mercati internazionali illeciti e il **ruolo delle nuove tecnologie** nel contrastare questi fenomeni.

L'anteprima su invito si terrà l'**11 luglio 2025** presso il **Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia** a **Roma**, luogo che negli anni è diventato simbolo di riscatto per molti reperti rientrati grazie a complesse operazioni internazionali. L'evento si aprirà con un **panel introduttivo** che vedrà la partecipazione di esperti, rappresentanti delle istituzioni e forze dell'ordine impegnate nella lotta contro il traffico illecito. Al termine della proiezione, il museo offrirà **visite guidate** dedicate a reperti che raccontano concretamente il valore del recupero e della tutela del patrimonio culturale.

Una seconda proiezione aperta al pubblico gratuitamente si terrà a **Genova lunedì 14 luglio** alle ore 21.00 presso il **Cortile Maggiore di Palazzo Ducale** nell'ambito della rassegna estiva del Circuito Cinema Genova. A introdurre il documentario un confronto tra Arianna Traviglia, Direttrice del Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology – IIT e Giacomo Montanari, Assessore alla Cultura del Comune di Genova, moderato da Linda Kaiser, critica, storica dell'arte e giornalista.

Organizzato da

Media Partner

Girato tra **Roma, Cerveteri e Madrid**, il documentario accompagna lo spettatore nei luoghi simbolo di questo fenomeno: siti archeologici violati, depositi museali inaccessibili al pubblico e sedi istituzionali dove si lotta per la tutela del patrimonio. Attraverso le testimonianze dirette di esperti, forze dell'ordine ed ex funzionari, il racconto ricostruisce casi giudiziari emblematici e rivela i meccanismi di un mercato illecito che vale milioni di euro.

Threads of Heritage si arricchisce con le voci di **Vincenzo Bellelli**, Direttore del Parco Archeologico di Cerveteri e Tarquinia, **Luana Toniolo**, Direttrice del Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, **Arianna Traviglia**, Direttrice del Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology dell'Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia, e dell'ex Ministro dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali **Francesco Rutelli**. Il documentario vede inoltre la partecipazione delle forze dell'ordine impegnate sul fronte del contrasto: il **Comando Carabinieri per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale** (TPC) e la **Brigada de Patrimonio Histórico** della Polizia Nazionale spagnola. Gli ex funzionari archeologi **Maurizio Pellegrini** e **Daniela Rizzo**, insieme all'ex giudice **Guglielmo Muntoni**, ricostruiscono vicende legate a noti mercanti d'arte internazionali come Giacomo Medici e Robert Emanuel Hecht, e alla curatrice Marion True del Getty Museum.

Elemento particolarmente innovativo del film è l'approfondimento sulle tecnologie emergenti: dall'analisi satellitare per il monitoraggio dei siti archeologici, raccontata da **Alessandra Ussorio** (SatCen – EU Satellite Centre), al software SWOADS dei Carabinieri TPC, capace di identificare beni illeciti online grazie all'intelligenza artificiale. Fino a **RITHMS**, la piattaforma sviluppata dall'Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia all'interno dell'omonimo progetto che integra dati e utilizza la Social Network Analysis per mappare reti criminali coinvolte nel traffico illecito.

"Threads of Heritage non è solo una denuncia del traffico illecito, ma una dichiarazione d'intenti: proteggere il patrimonio culturale è una responsabilità collettiva, che richiede consapevolezza, ricerca scientifica e collaborazione internazionale. In quest'ottica, RITHMS rappresenta un'importante opportunità per mettere a fattor comune competenze multidisciplinari all'interno di una piattaforma digitale pensata per supportare concretamente le forze di polizia, rafforzando l'efficacia delle indagini e della prevenzione contro questo fenomeno."
– **Arianna Traviglia**, Direttrice Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology – IIT

"Il fenomeno del traffico illecito dei beni culturali è una minaccia grave e insidiosa che non solo distrugge la nostra memoria collettiva, ma alimenta anche reti criminali internazionali. Il Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia custodisce alcuni tesori recuperati dopo complesse operazioni investigative e diplomatiche che hanno consentito di riportare nel nostro Paese oggetti straordinari. Ma è una vittoria incompleta poiché spesso non è più possibile ricostruirne il contesto di provenienza. Per questo siamo orgogliosi di aver preso parte a questo progetto scientifico e di divulgazione che raggiunge degli obiettivi essenziali: l'importanza dell'impegno condiviso fra le istituzioni per contrastare efficacemente questo fenomeno e la consapevolezza dei cittadini per favorire il rispetto e la valorizzazione del nostro patrimonio culturale".

–**Luana Toniolo**, Direttrice del Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia

Organizzato da

Media Partner

Threads of Heritage è uno strumento di sensibilizzazione e conoscenza che invita il pubblico a riflettere sul valore universale del patrimonio culturale e sulla necessità di difenderlo anche attraverso lo sviluppo di nuove tecnologie.

RITHMS – Research, Intelligence and Technology for Heritage and Market Security è un progetto coordinato dall'Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia, nato nel 2022 e finanziato dall'Unione Europea. RITHMS, grazie all'aiuto delle tecnologie più innovative, ha l'obiettivo di potenziare la capacità operativa delle forze di polizia e delle autorità doganali e di frontiera nell'affrontare il traffico illecito di beni culturali. Il consorzio si compone anche di quattro autorità di polizia, due agenzie di frontiera, una scuola di polizia, aziende ed istituti di ricerca esperti nell'ambito dei beni culturali e delle tecnologie riguardanti i sistemi integrati di telecomunicazione e dei protocolli di sicurezza informatici

Per approfondimenti: www.rithms.eu

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Media Partner

The Journal of Cultural Heritage Crime

redazione@journalchc.com

Organizzato da

Media Partner





Una produzione
ART CRIME PROJECT

The Concert

Scritto e diretto da
ALESANDRO GARILLI

REGIA ALESSANDRO GARILLI

SOGGETTO E SCENEGGIATURA ALESSANDRO GARILLI

PRODUZIONE ART CRIME PROJECT

PRODUTTORE ESECUTIVO ALESSANDRO GARILLI

FOTOGRAFIA DAMIANO POLI

ANIMAZIONE ED EFFETTI VISIVI DAMIANO POLI

SOUND DESIGN FEDERICO TRUZZI

MONTAGGIO ALESSANDRO GARILLI

MUSICHE ORIGINALI ELISABETTA GARILLI

Art narrates Art Crime

A dark, atmospheric scene featuring a mannequin in a yellow and black outfit, possibly a crime scene or a staged performance. The mannequin is positioned in the center-right of the frame, facing left. It wears a yellow top with black trim and a black skirt. Its head is tilted back, and it appears to be holding a small object near its face. The background is dark and indistinct, with some light-colored shapes that could be furniture or architectural elements. The overall mood is mysterious and unsettling.

The Concert, scritto e diretto da Alessandro Garilli (vincitore dell'International Video Competition for Cultural Heritage Crime Project), è stato prodotto dall'associazione Art Crime Project, all'interno del progetto europeo RITHMS (Research, Intelligence and Technology for Heritage and Market Security) che mira a contrastare il commercio illecito di beni culturali.

SINOSI

Spesso veniamo rapiti dalla musica, ma se fosse la musica ad esser rapita? Il protagonista di questo cortometraggio d'arte animata è un famoso quadro di Vermeer, ovvero *Concerto a tre*, rubato all'Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum di Boston (nel 1990) e mai più ritrovato.

Da quel giorno i protagonisti del dipinto hanno perso i loro suoni e l'intera comunità non ha più udito quella "musica".

REGISTA | SCENEGGIATORE

Alessandro Garilli, dopo la laurea con lode in Architettura, ha seguito la vocazione alla regia e alla scrittura cinematografica, ricevendo molteplici riconoscimenti nazionali ed internazionali (fra cui la selezione della Kodak per l'European Film Academy di Parigi).

Ha scritto e diretto il cortometraggio *Io sono Rosa Parks* (prodotto da Angelika Vision) vincitore del bando MigrArti Cinema 2018 e vincitore del premio "Miglior messaggio G2" nella sezione MigrArti alla 75ma Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica di Venezia.

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PRODUZIONE

Fondata il 15 novembre 2020, l'Associazione Culturale APS "Art Crime Project" persegue l'obiettivo di promuovere la cultura e garantire la salvaguardia del patrimonio storico, artistico e ambientale. Come entità di promozione sociale, ci dedichiamo al sostegno dell'educazione, della ricerca e della divulgazione in ambito culturale e artistico. Ci impegniamo inoltre attivamente nella lotta contro la criminalità che minaccia il patrimonio culturale.

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Il nostro impegno si estende a vari ambiti: educazione e formazione professionale, valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale, ricerca scientifica, organizzazione di eventi culturali e artistici, promozione della legalità e dei diritti umani, sviluppo di progetti educativi nelle scuole. Inoltre, ci impegniamo nella costruzione di relazioni e reti comunitarie internazionali, partecipando a partenariati internazionali e progetti finanziati dalla commissione europea.

Supportiamo e sosteniamo lo sviluppo della testata giornalistica *The Journal of Cultural Heritage Crime* dedicata all'informazione per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale.

CONTATTI

info@artcrimeproject.org

Una produzione
ART CRIME PROJECT

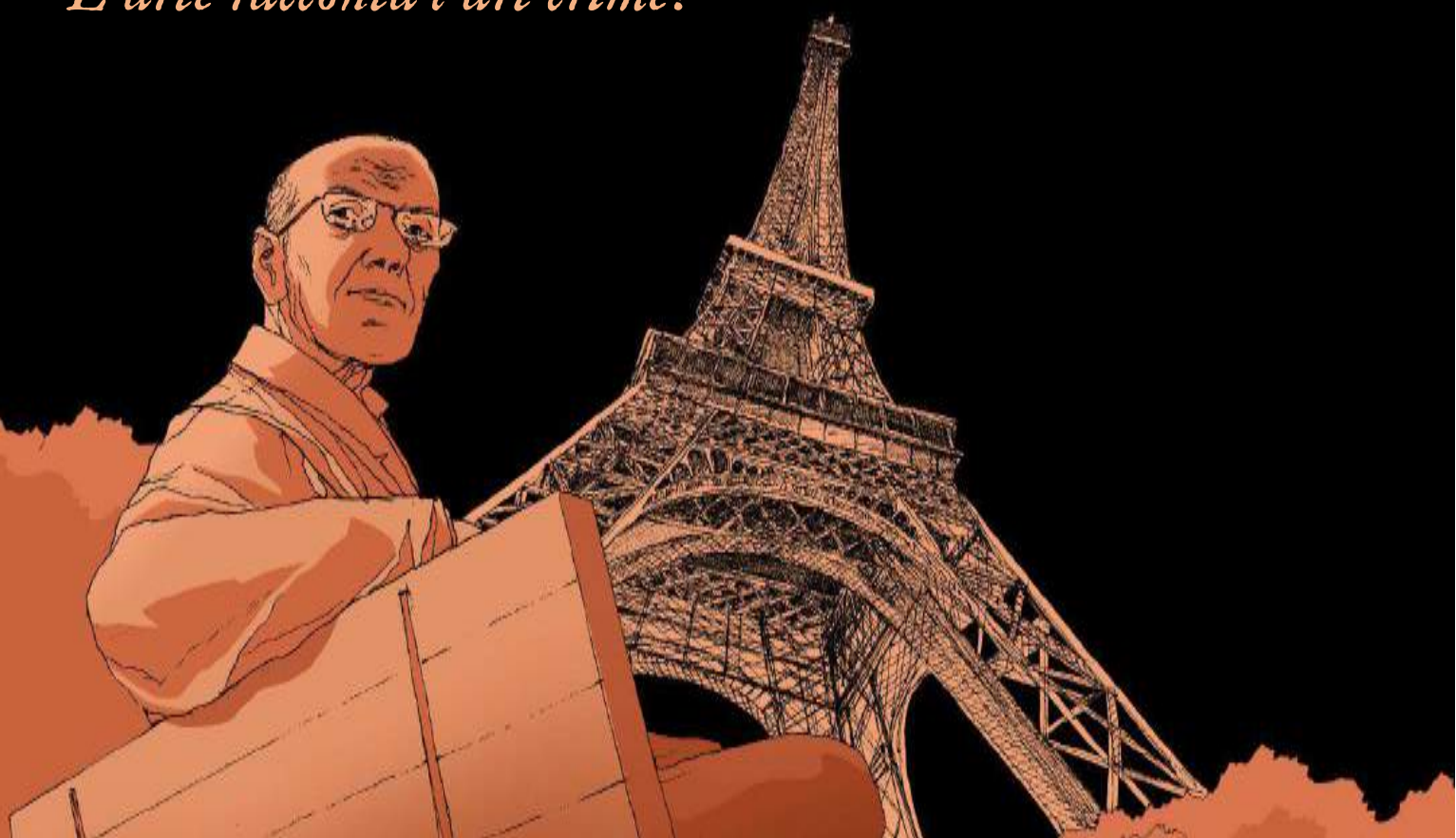
IL CRATERE



Scritto e diretto da
ALESSANDRO GARILLI

REGIA	ALESSANDRO GARILLI
SOGGETTO E SCENEGGIATURA	ALESSANDRO GARILLI
PRODUZIONE	ART CRIME PROJECT
PRODUTTORE ESECUTIVO	ALESSANDRO GARILLI
FOTOGRAFIA	DAMIANO POLI
VOCE NARRANTE	PAOLO ROSSINI
ILLUSTRAZIONI	FEDERICO PENCO E MICHELE PENCO
ANIMAZIONE ED EFFETTI VISIVI	DAMIANO POLI
SOUND DESIGN E ARRANGIAMENTI	FEDERICO TRUZZI
MONTAGGIO	ALESSANDRO GARILLI
CONSULENZA SCIENTIFICA	MAURIZIO PELLEGRINI E DANIELA RIZZO
MUSICHE ORIGINALI	ELISABETTA GARILLI E GIANLUCA GOZZI

L'arte racconta l'art crime!



Il Cratere, scritto e diretto da Alessandro Garilli (vincitore dell'International Video Competition for Cultural Heritage Crime Project), è stato prodotto dall'associazione Art Crime Project, all'interno del progetto europeo RITHMS (Research, Intelligence and Technology for Heritage and Market Security) che mira a contrastare il commercio illecito di beni culturali.

SINOSI

Il protagonista di questo *cortometraggio d'arte animata* è un *cratere*, ovvero un antico vaso, dipinto da Eufronio più di 2000 anni fa. Tale opera svela la storia del suo rapimento e la successiva diaspora, durata più di 10.000 giorni: un viaggio al di là dell'Atlantico, attraverso una sofisticata rete di trafficanti d'arte, collezionisti e direttori di musei che ci conducono dritti nel mondo dell'*art crime*.

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Contatti:

info@artcrimeproject.org



ARTE RITROVATA

Ritorni in laguna



Cultural Heritage recovered by the Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit

Museo di Palazzo Grimani

19.12.2023 - 25.02.2024



Organismo registrato per il Veneto
Dolce e Gustoso Museo Veneto
Squadre unità archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio
per il Comune di Venezia e Lazzara



ISTITUTO ITALIANO
DI TECNOLOGIA
CENTRO PER CULTURAL
HERITAGE TECHNOLOGY



Arte Ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna

Museo di Palazzo Grimani

19 December 2023 - 25 February 2024



**MINISTERO
DELLA
CULTURA**

*Segretariato regionale per il Veneto
Direzione regionale Musei Veneto
Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle
arti e paesaggio per il Comune di
Venezia e Laguna*



**ISTITUTO ITALIANO
DI TECNOLOGIA
CENTER FOR CULTURAL
HERITAGE TECHNOLOGY**

Thank you to the Arma dei Carabinieri

Organizing Institutions

Ministry of Culture

This exhibition features over 15 works spanning from archaeological to historical-artistic fields, offering a unique opportunity to explore the phenomenon of falsification within the cultural heritage sector. This initiative is grounded on at least two interpretations, both of immediate relevance.

The first perspective is aimed at giving due recognition to the efforts of the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (TPC) in tackling the illicit removal of cultural assets. Recent news events have highlighted the significance of these functions, especially in addressing the alarming phenomenon of the depletion of the national heritage, a cause to which the General Command of the Carabinieri has always shown great dedication. It is worth noting that Italy was the world's first country to establish a dedicated police force to combat crimes related to cultural heritage.

The second viewpoint intends, instead, to underline the joint venture of the Ministry of Culture's territorial branches in its organisation. They collaborated at various levels to ensure the effectiveness and visibility of the exhibition.

Notably, the Direzione regionale Musei Veneto played a key role by managing state cultural sites in the Veneto Region and providing logistical support. They worked alongside the Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per il Comune di Venezia e Laguna, providing the artworks to put on display, previously recovered by the Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit.

The Segretariato regionale per il Veneto coordinated and facilitated the necessary administrative procedures for all participating bodies.

Marta Mazza

*Segretario Regionale del Ministero della
Cultura per il Veneto*

Daniele Ferrara

Direttore Regionale Musei Veneto

Fabrizio Magani

*Soprintendente Archeologia belle arti e
paesaggio per il Comune di Venezia e
Laguna*

Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage – Carabinieri Venice Unit

In the 1960s, Italy entrusted the care of its cultural heritage to the General Directorate of Antiquities and Fine Arts of the Ministry of Education. However, that period, marked by significant economic recovery, was characterised by the intensification of clandestine exports of stolen or illicitly excavated cultural artefacts to enrich museums and private collections around the world. Recognising the alarming phenomenon and the consequent perceptible risk of dispersion of the national cultural heritage, the Dicastery requested and obtained from the General Command of the Carabinieri the establishment of a group of officers primarily responsible for the protection of paleontological, archaeological, artistic, and national historical heritage. On May 3, 1969, the Artistic Heritage Protection Unit started its activities. In 1971, it was subsequently elevated to the status of Command of a Carabinieri Division. Thus, Italy became the first nation in the world to establish a dedicated police department for combating this specific criminal sector. This move preceded by one year the recommendation contained in the UNESCO Convention which was signed in Paris on November 14, 1970. In this convention, Member States were encouraged to adopt appropriate measures to prevent the acquisition of illicitly exported goods and promote the recovery of stolen ones. It also urged the establishment of

services staffed with specially trained personnel tasked with ensuring the respect and protection of art goods.

The activity of the Carabinieri TPC is characterised by its specific and unique *modus operandi*, often referred to as the ‘Italian model’. In this approach, investigative actions are conducted in coordination with the Judiciary, maintaining constant communication with the Ministry of Culture, the primary entity responsible for the protection and valorisation of cultural heritage. Therefore, the Carabinieri TPC Command was pleased to accept the proposal of an exhibition by the Segretariato regionale per il Veneto, aimed to valorise both the recovered cultural goods and the investigative activities carried out by the Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit that enriched the collections of the Direzione regionale Musei Veneto and that of the Museum of St. Mark’s Basilica over the recent years.

The artworks on display at the Museo di Palazzo Grimani in Venice show just a few examples of the activities conducted by the Venice Unit, which has been dedicated to safeguarding cultural heritage since 1995.

Emanuele Meleleo

*Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit
Commander*

Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology (Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia)

The *Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology* (CCHT) of the Italian Institute of Technology (IIT) was founded in 2019 with the aim of promoting the development of new technologies for the analysis, conservation, and protection of cultural heritage. The research infrastructure is highly multi- and interdisciplinary: the Centre boasts a rich range of skills and experiences, from computational sciences to material sciences and the humanities. The integration of these fields allows us to carry out innovative and cutting-edge research. A distinctive feature of the Centre is the ability to dedicate itself to previously unexplored areas, with the goal of both implementing and improving existing technologies and creating innovative and effective tools capable of addressing problems inherent to cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible.

The Centre primarily focuses on the application of digitalisation, artificial intelligence, and satellite image analysis, as well as molecular sciences and nanotechnologies for cultural heritage.

Through a series of dedicated projects, including those funded by the European Commission, among which is the **HERITHMS** project (GA 101073932) conducted in partnership with the Carabinieri TPC, the Centre is at the forefront of research aimed at combating

crimes against cultural property. In addition to developing innovative methodologies for the automatic analysis of remote sensing data to identify clandestine archaeological excavations and buried ancient structures, a second investigative line aims to use artificial intelligence to create advanced IT tools for identifying illicitly traded objects in the art market.

In conjunction with the diagnostic studies focused on characterising and protecting ancient materials, another research line aims to develop standardised analysis technologies for identifying forgeries, especially concerning coins, paintings, and glass artworks.

It fits perfectly within the Centre's mission to collaborate actively in the concept and design of the *Arte Ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna* exhibition, which showcases recovered cultural goods and highlights the scientific and investigative work behind these recoveries.

Arianna Travaglia
CCHT Coordinator

ARTE RITROVATA

Ritorni in laguna

Therefore, most holy father, it must not be among the last thoughts of your holiness to take care that what little remains of this ancient mother of Italian glory and greatness [...] is not eradicated and ruined by the evil and ignorant: because unfortunately up until now, injuries have been done to those souls who, with their blood, gave birth to so much glory in the world.

Raffaello Sanzio, *Letter to Pope Leo X*, Rome 1519

Raffaello Sanzio's heartfelt words to Pope Leo X evoke the image of an architectural and artistic heritage, specifically that of ancient Rome, which had been impoverished over the centuries and had reached a precarious state of conservation at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The artist implores the pontiff to become its guardian, to prevent the ongoing devastation caused by barbarians and, subsequently, by those who exploit ancient buildings as material quarries. The awareness of the essential need to protect

our artistic heritage, a concept rooted in the Renaissance, transcends time and now reaches us.

The history of humanity is punctuated by instances of vandalism perpetrated against works of art and architecture – stolen from their integrity, context, or function – often reduced to fragments.

Not only is the physicality of these works affected, but so too are their meaning and identity.

Today, the illicit trafficking of cultural goods, a phenomenon driven by the pursuit of profit, significantly contributes to this mutilation. When stolen works of art or archaeological finds are placed on the market, stripped of any connection to their provenance, heritage loses its vital essence and becomes *nothing more than skeletal remains*, to borrow another prophetic expression from Raphael in the same letter.

This heritage belongs to all of us. It is the bond that unites us with past generations and guides us toward the future. It reflects our collective identity and shared history, and as such, it is the subject of protective actions by various state institutions.

The exhibition, titled *Arte Ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna*, allows us to explore various episodes related to the recovery and restitution of cultural heritage. It highlights the commendable collaboration between the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage and various bodies of the Ministry of Culture. These organisations work diligently to identify, safeguard, and enhance works of art removed from national heritage, in this case with a special focus on the metropolitan area of Venice.

Organised by the Segretariato regionale per il Veneto of the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the Direzione regionale Musei Veneto, the Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per il Comune di Venezia e Laguna, and the Italian Institute of Technology, this exhibition illustrates various case studies related to art crimes. These cases range from forgery to illicit export and from clandestine excavation to fraud.

The exhibition highlights the significant efforts in recovery, restitution, and protection made by the Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit over the past few years. It also serves as an opportunity to understand the protection procedures implemented by the bodies of the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the Unit, including the enhancement of the recovered cultural goods within their original contexts or state-owned museums.

Arte Ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna is a journey that underlines the dangers to cultural heritage, but, above all, the perseverance and dedication of those who tirelessly work to protect it, ensuring that it continues to inspire and enrich future generations.



Jacopo Sansovino, 1486-1570

Wooden inlays, mid-16th century

St. Mark's Basilica, Venice

Wood, 117 x 155 cm

In the heart of Venice, the magnificent complex of St. Mark's Basilica concealed, until the second half of the twentieth century, a treasure within a treasure. The presbytery was, in fact, adorned with splendid wooden panels – the inlays that you can admire in the video. These panels were the result of the extraordinary creative genius of Jacopo Sansovino, who, at the time, served as the *proto* (chief architect) for St. Mark's Basilica. The intricate inlay work was executed by the skilled hands of the craftsmen Antonio de' Grandi and Nicolò Zorzi.

These originally consisted of eight panels with a fir bottom and a walnut frame, measuring approximately 117 x 155 cm. They were inlaid with strips of various woods, including oak, cypress, maple, ebony, plane tree, alder, beech, pear, rosewood, and apple tree. Each piece is a masterwork, attesting to the artist's extraordinary craftsmanship that weaves precious woods into timeless images, telling stories of virtue and spirituality. These inlays, inserted into the wooden back screens of the presbytery, featured depictions of the

seven Virtues, symbols of faith in God and good governance, flanked by the two patron saints of Venice, San Teodoro and San Marco. The *Justice* inlay, originally set on the back of the 'Dogal Throne', was removed by Napoleon's troops in 1797. Since 1852, it has been on display in the Museo Correr collection.

In the 1950s, the presbytery of St. Mark's Basilica underwent a reorganisation aimed at making the area where sacred rites were carried out more visible to the faithful, anticipating liturgical norms that would later be defined by the Second Vatican Council. The wooden panels were then removed and stored for a long time in warehouses from where they were eventually removed by an unknown hand.

It is probable that the theft of the inlays occurred when, following the flood that hit Venice in 1966, the city found itself in a state of vulnerability that put the protection of the entire artistic heritage at risk: the precious wooden panels were stolen, and they were lost in the shadows.

In the 1970s, the inlays depicting *Faith* and *Fortitude* were found by the director of the Museo Diocesano, who rearranged them there.

Of the remaining inlays, the trace was officially lost until recently, when the Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit became aware of a publication dedicated to the pieces, commissioned by a Roman antiquarian. Two inlays – the *Divine Hope* and *San Teodoro* – were apparently available for sale at the same dealer's shop. The support of the Soprintendenza A.B.A.P. per il Comune di Venezia e Laguna and the Prosecutor's Office of the St. Mark's Basilica boosted the Carabinieri's investigations eventually leading to the recovery of the two precious works. The story un-ravelled further when the Carabinieri identified two other inlays – *Prudence* and *Temperance* – jealously guarded in a Tuscan villa.

By tracing the artworks' sales and the economic transactions, the Carabinieri discovered that the six inlays had been sold at auction in Florence, at a villa called 'L'Imperialino', back in 1969. The auction catalogues from the period revealed a well-orchestrated deception: the pieces, in fact, had been attributed to minor authors, rather than to the well-known Jacopo Sansovino. The ruse had thus effectively hindered the traceability of the stolen goods.

However, the commitment and perseverance of the Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit have borne fruit. Six inlays, an integral part of a unique artistic heritage, have been reunited in the Museum of St. Mark's Basilica since 2014. Their story, though, is not over yet, as the investigations continue into the two missing artworks: *San Marco* and *Charity*, which remain lost to this day.





Copy by unknown forger
Tiger with Snake

Oil on canvas, 70 x 50 cm

[Antonio Ligabue, 1899-1965

Tiger with Snake, 1953

Oil on *faesite* board, 80 x 66 cm

‘Antonio Ligabue’ Archive Foundation, Parma]



Canvas from the contemporary era, recognised as a forgery, and subject to confiscation following criminal proceedings. Entrusted in July 2023 to the Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology of the Italian Institute of Technology for study and research activities, the work underwent initial non-invasive diagnostic investigations which converged in suggesting the industrial nature of both the canvas and the pictorial material, compatible with commercial oil paints in tubes, widely used by artists in the twentieth century. The back is occupied by a ‘declaration of authenticity’ placed in handwritten form directly on the canvas and bearing the forged signature of Sergio Negri, the greatest connoisseur, authenticator, and cataloguer of Ligabue's work. This feature, combined with the evident stylistic discrepancies detectable by visual analysis, excludes the possibility that we are dealing with a duplicate made by the author on a different support, with respect to the well-known oil on *faesite* board, or a copy not intended for the market: the piece therefore can clearly be identified as a ‘fake’.



Giandomenico Tiepolo, 1727-1804

Holy Family, ca. 1770-1780

Oil on canvas, 38 x 45 cm



Artwork recovered during a search conducted following fraudulent bankruptcy; subject to *compulsory acquisition* by the Ministry of Culture in 2022, it has been assigned to the permanent collection of the Giorgio Franchetti Gallery at Ca' D'Oro, a state museum in Venice.

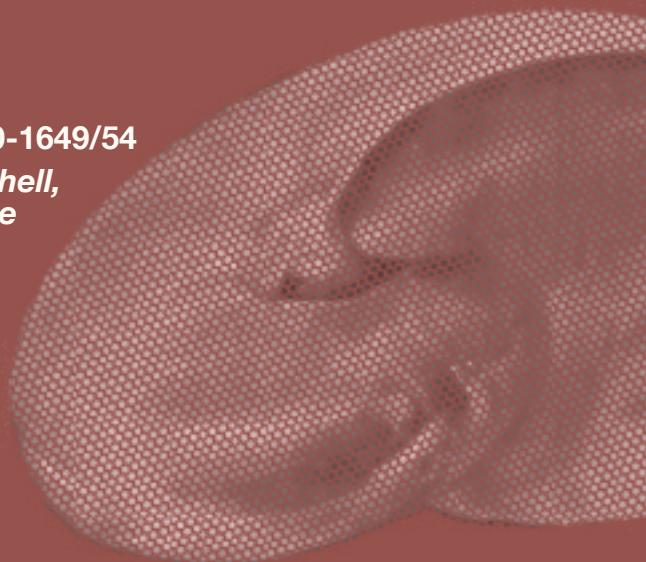
In the precious painting depicting the Holy Family, Giandomenico Tiepolo captures the viewer's attention with an exchange of graceful gestures between the Child and the Mother while Saint Joseph appears half-hidden in the background. The modulations of light give prominence to the figures in the foreground, helping to create an atmosphere of domestic serenity. Due to its extremely high pictorial quality and notable historical and artistic interest, the canvas was recognised as worthy of protection and special attention by the State, attesting to Giandomenico Tiepolo's mastery and his ability to infuse spirituality into sacred images. The Ministerial Committee has indeed deemed the painting to be *one of the most successful examples of the successful and prolific production by the Venetian painter intended for private devotion*.



Jasper Geerards, ca. 1620-1649/54

***Still Life with a Nautilus Shell,
Lemons, Ham, and Chalice***

Oil on panel, 59 x 74 cm



Work created by Flemish painter Jasper Geerards, as indicated by the monogram *JG fecit*, clearly visible at the bottom left corner of the table partially covered by a velvet drape. Originally from Antwerp and likely living in Amsterdam between 1620 and 1654, Geerards is renowned as one of the greatest representatives of the *still life* genre during the ‘Golden Age’ of Dutch painting. He specialised in compositions that featured not only natural elements but also metal ornaments, table objects, and drapery. In this artwork, the artist showcases an abundance of earthly and man-made products: lemons, bunches of grapes, a leg of ham, and a glass of white wine, all accompanied by an extraordinary *nautilus* shell, which reflects beautifully on a pewter plate.

In 2023, after its seizure by the Carabinieri TPC, this valuable *still life* became a part of the permanent collection at the Museo di Palazzo Grimani. It will remain on display in this room, seamlessly integrating with the majestic decoration of the ‘umbrella ceiling’. This acquisition also allows us to enrich the collecting history of the Grimani family, evoking the presence of *still lives* in the dispersed collection of Cardinal Vincenzo, Viceroy of Naples, who lived during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.



Displayed virtually, the finds reproduced here as **3D models** were created with **LiDAR** scanners and represent portions of funerary monuments from the ancient Roman city of *Altinum*. They have been involved in two different incidents: a clandestine excavation and a mysterious theft.

Funerary Bloc with Carved Lions

1st century CE

Aurisina limestone, 49 x 41 x 30 cm

A small square stone, without inscription, is flanked by two crouching lions. Representations of lions were frequent in Etruscan-Roman funerary contexts and could also serve an apotropaic function. The upper part of the memorial stone shows the remains of a lead element, which was used to attach another stone element, perhaps bearing the inscription and portrait of the deceased, or an urn.



Funerary Aedicula with Portrait of a Couple

1st century CE

Aurisina limestone, 85 x 73 x 18 cm



This small stone *aedicula* bears the high-relief portrait of a couple, exceptionally depicted in full figure. The people to whom the monument belonged must have come from a high social class, as can be deduced from the artistic style of the shrine and the clothing of the couple. The woman is dressed in a tunic and a *palla* (a typical rectangular cloak used in the early imperial age) and combed in the fashion of the first half of the first century, with wavy hair separated by a central parting and curls tucked behind the ears. The male figure wears a *toga* with the long cloak exclusively worn by citizens. The *aedicula* probably constituted only a portion of a larger funerary monument.



‘Leagros Group’ (attributed to)
Attic ‘Black-figure’ Amphora

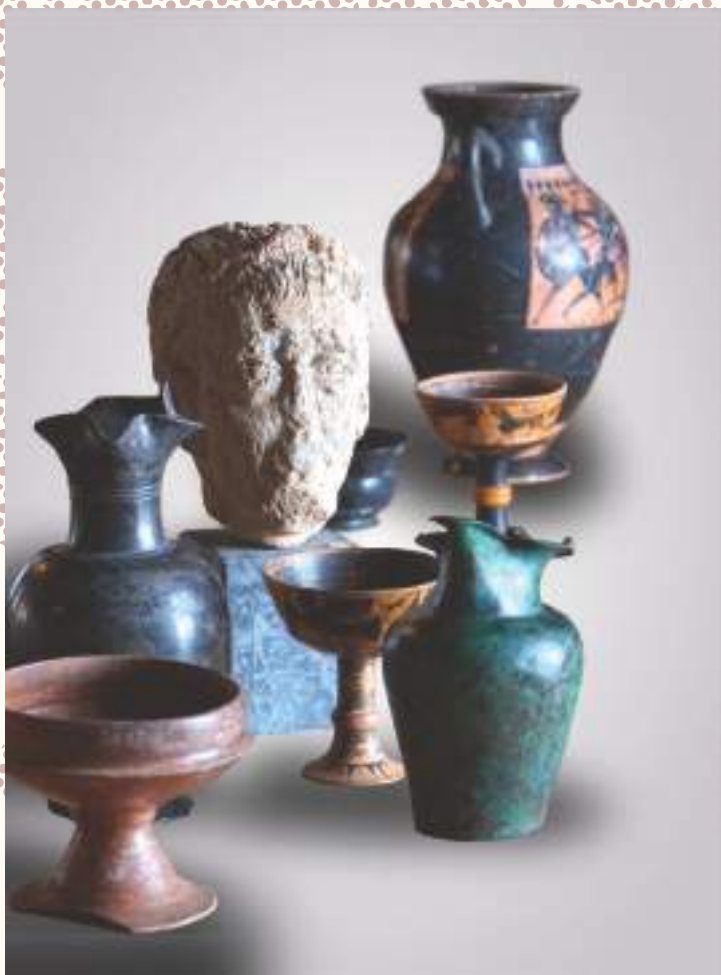
Last quarter 6th century BCE

Pottery, h. 36,70 cm



Belonging to the pottery production of Athens, this amphora has been attributed to the workshop of artists called ‘Leagros Group’, and it can be dated chronologically to the period between 525 and 500 BCE. The activity of this group of craftsmen represents one of the last successful phases of the ‘black-figure’ technique before the predominance of the ‘red-figure’ one. The painted decoration was produced with a highly diluted mixture of water and clay enriched with iron oxides, applied to the vessel before firing. The details were subsequently drawn with fine incisions. It was during the firing process that the ‘varnish’ assumed the typical brilliant black colour from which it gets its name.

Of remarkable quality is the depiction on the main side, which portrays Apollo *Citharoedus* standing between two Muses. On the opposite side, however, apparent firing defects make the figure of a hoplite standing with helmet, spear, and round shield, flanked by two Scythian archers, less appreciable. A distinctive feature of the vase is the alphabetical symbol (Σ) engraved onto the exterior bottom after firing: a rare detail likely related to the vase's commercial phase, perhaps to be interpreted as the mark of the merchant or shipowner who transported the amphora.



Archaeological Finds of Different Origins, from a Private Collection

On display in the centre of the room is a small fraction of the pieces belonging to an archaeological collection that was assembled in the last decades of the previous century. The collection comprises a rich assortment of ceramic classes and bronze artefacts associated with burial items from ancient Etruscan necropolises dating from the ninth to the fifth century BCE, Italian materials from the sixth to the third century BCE, and glassware artefacts from the Roman Imperial era. All the items in this collection were acquired by a Venetian family who believed them to be authentic and kept and valued them as such. In 2022, in close collaboration with the latest owner, the collection underwent a thorough examination by the Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per il Comune di Venezia e Laguna. The collection was found to lack any documentation that would legitimise owner-

ship, and as a result, it was confiscated by the Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit and ultimately handed over to the State. The analyses carried out by the archaeological officials revealed the presence of numerous counterfeit pieces within the collection. Therefore, the display cases exhibit both authentic and forged objects, selected based on consistent typologies and disposed to highlight the differences between genuine and fake items, often recognisable even to an untrained eye.

Finds on display

Genuine Artefacts

Pontic black-figure chalice
(last third 6th c. BCE)

Buccaro scoop
(end 7th - half 6th c. BCE)

Tuff male head
(3rd c. BCE)

Attic red-figure cup
(first half 5th c. BCE)

Bronze lamp
(end 1st c. BCE - early 1st c. CE)

Buccaro jug
(second half 6th c. BCE)

Green glass balsamary
(1st c. CE)

Fake Artefacts

Pontic black-figure chalice

Buccaro scoop

Etrusco-corinthian jug

Attic black-figure cup

Attic black-figure amphora

Black-glazed *unguentarium*

Green glass bottle



The Recovery of Archaeological Items

For years, the Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit has been actively engaged in protecting our precious cultural heritage, particularly through the recovery of stolen archaeological artefacts or those resulting from unauthorised research or unexpectedly found and left unreported. Through constant checks at commercial establishments, including online sales platforms, and thanks to the reports from officials of the territorial Superintendencies and private citizens, the Carabinieri, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture offices, work to identify and counteract illicit activities involving archaeological assets.

These criminal acts against the national cultural heritage, which were already partially addressed in the *Code of the Cultural and Landscape Heritage* (Legislative Decree n. 42/2004), have recently been included in Book II, Title VIII bis of the Italian Penal Code (Law n. 22/2022) in accordance with the provisions of the *Nicosia Convention* promoted by the Council of Europe in 2017 and ratified by Italy in 2022.

The illicit trafficking of archaeological goods constitutes a crime that makes it difficult, if not impossible, to retroactively establish their place of discovery and historical context. According to the current legislation in Italy since 1909 (Law n. 364/1909, confirmed by the so-called 'Bottai Law', n. 1089/1939), anything found in the national subsoil belongs to the State; consequently, all artefacts found within the country

borders or of probable Italian origin are presumed to be the property of the State.

Anyone wishing to claim ownership must provide proper documentation, demonstrating that the items were awarded to them by the State as a reward upon a chance discovery, as a compensation or by a judicial authority's ruling; or that they were already on the market before 1909.

A lack of provenance documentation paves the way for transactions and exchanges that can be deemed illegal and challenged, even if they are traced and occur in broad daylight; the very availability of these assets on the market is irregular.

Regrettably, it is not uncommon that such lightly conducted and undocumented transactions lead – over time – to the formation of full collections, which often remain unknown, but sometimes, as in the present example on display, can be recognised, recovered, and returned to the collective heritage.

The Identification of Archaeological Forgeries

First and foremost, it's important to note that the crime of 'art forgery' (Article 518-*quaterdecies* of the Italian Penal Code) doesn't just pertain to modern and contemporary artworks, such as sculptures, paintings, or other artistic products. It also encompasses reproductions or newly created items that draw from artworks of historical or archaeological interest.

The falsification of archaeological artefacts is a particularly serious phenomenon, not only because it introduces goods into the market that are not worth the declared amounts, thereby contaminating economic transactions and giving the illusion of an abundant supply of legitimate archaeological items, but also because these counterfeit objects distort the narrative and our understanding of the past itself.

So, how can one recognise archaeological fakes?

There are various clues and characteristics to consider when identifying archaeological forgeries. As with modern and contemporary art, direct observation is crucial for detecting stylistic inconsistencies or misplaced, incoherent subjects reproduced by skilled forgers.

Depending on the type of artefact, you may notice the following indicators: raw and

deep incisions, particularly in the rendering of eyes and fine facial and limb details; an incoherent association between the shape of the vessel and the type of decoration; the presence of paint flaking and abrasions with sharp edges, distinct from the weathering and wear effects over time; the presence of concretions that appear superficially applied (often found in less decorated areas of the vessel, as opposed to natural salt deposits emerging from the ceramic body or hard-to-remove earth concretions resulting from centuries-long burial); the absence of lathe marks or indications of artisanal production and firing (such as lime particles known as *calcinelli* or anomalies in the colouring of the ceramic body and/or the painted coating); on artificially-aged glasses, the presence of a patina lacking natural iridescence, produced with bone gelatinum and easily removable, or the absence of natural bubbles in the glass body.

Similarly, excessive lightness of pottery and bronze items can be indicative of modern production, hence forgery, or of extensive manipulation and reconstruction based on authentic parts.

As with paintings, non-invasive or micro-invasive diagnostic investigations, such as infrared spectroscopy, Raman spectroscopy, or X-ray fluorescence spectrometry, can identify chemical elements or compounds that can confirm or refute an item's ancient origin. Until the last decade, thermoluminescence analysis was widely used on ceramic samples to provide a reasonably accurate dating of the last firing of the artefact. However, as it can be easily altered and falsified by subjecting modern

pieces to radiation using modern equipment, this technique is no longer considered reliable as the sole method for authenticating ceramic or brick production today.

The deception perpetrated against private collectors who purchase fake archaeological artefacts on the art market also affects society as a whole: counterfeit items make the fight against the illicit trade of cultural heritage even more challenging.





Arte Ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna

Thank you to the Direzione regionale Musei Veneto, Museo di Palazzo Grimani, Museo Nazionale e Area Archeologica di Altino, Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' D'Oro, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Adria, Procuratoria di San Marco, and the Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per il Comune di Venezia e Laguna for the photographic campaign authorisation and for the photographic material granted.



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NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2024 | ISSUE #1

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the [RITHMS](#) Project community! We are pleased to introduce the first issue of our Newsletter, targeted to all those involved or interested in tackling the illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

With funding from the [European Union's Horizon Europe Work Program](#), the three-year Project RITHMS (Research, Intelligence, and Technology for Heritage Market Security) aims to build and validate a prototype intelligence IT resource for investigating illicit trafficking in cultural goods.

RITHMS will develop, test, and roll out a digital solution based on Social Network Analysis and Artificial Intelligence as well as practical operational procedures, in compliance with ethical and legislative data-protection standards, to make the Art Market and civil society more secure.

RITHMS is being delivered by a multi-disciplinary consortium of 19 partners representing 11 countries. Our project outputs will be primarily validated by European Law Enforcement Agencies.

In the first year and a half of the project, RITHMS focused on laying the groundwork for our innovative platform. This included comprehensive



background research, stakeholder engagement, and assessing the initial legal, security, and technical requirements for the development of the RITHMS digital platform.

Currently, in the middle of the second phase, the Consortium's activity is dedicated to constructing the core of our innovative technological system and expanding the community of stakeholders and testers.

The final and crucial phase will involve the actual deployment of the platform and its testing in real-world scenarios to ensure the practical effectiveness and usability of our solution.

We are excited to have embarked on this journey and invite you to join us in our efforts to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

Thank you for your interest and support.

Warm regards,

Arianna Traviglia

[Center for Cultural Heritage Technology -
Istituto Italiano Tecnologia](#)

RITHMS Project Coordinator



RITHMS conference
in A Coruna

Sister projects
in focus



WHAT IS RITHMS

RITHMS project's main endeavour is to develop a ground-breaking digital tool to tackle the illicit trade of cultural goods. The RITHMS platform is designed to be an innovative, interoperable, and multifunctional system capable of identifying, evaluating, and analysing the relations between criminal and non-criminal actors. By highlighting the networks involved in the illicit trade of cultural property and their potential evolution, the platform will enhance the reach and accuracy of the information available to Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs).

At its core, the RITHMS platform is based on Social Network Analysis (SNA), which is a method of mapping and analysing social connections between entities, by network and graph theory. SNA methodology will help understand how

actors (both individuals and groups) are connected and how cultural objects flow through these connections.

Thanks to a combination of research, technological development, and training programs providing LEAs with the knowledge and skills required to operate the platform, the RITHMS project aims to define a global strategy to effectively counter the cultural and financial challenges posed by the trafficking of looted and stolen cultural goods. By doing so, the project intends to ensure a tangible positive impact on European citizens and society.

⇒ RITHMS in a nutshell

⇒ RITHMS Consortium

THE OBJECTIVES

Understand the criminal phenomenon of cultural heritage trafficking

Promote cross-sectoral research bringing together all relevant fields (art market, criminology, legal studies, forensic science, etc.) to broaden the understanding of the criminal phenomenon against cultural property and grasp its connections with other kinds of organised crime.

Provide Law Enforcement Agencies with new technological tools

RITHMS will provide an operational, technological tool to enhance the investigative capabilities of Law Enforcement Agencies: a digital platform based on SNA methodology, developed and validated according to the users' needs and requirements.

Operationalise the collected knowledge and the developed technologies

Trigger all the necessary steps to make RITHMS SNA Platform effective, ensure its implementation, longevity, and exploitation after the Project's end, and foster the validity of RITHMS intelligence results as evidence in court.

Promote cooperation to tackle illicit trafficking in cultural goods

Foster collaboration between the different actors involved in countering this type of crime. Given its organised and mobile nature, addressing the phenomenon from different angles and complementary fronts is necessary to tackle it efficiently.

RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

RITHMS Progress: the Operative Internal Workshops

RITHMS Kick-Off Meeting and RITHMS First Public Conference took place in Venice, in the wonderful halls of the Ateneo Veneto on October 12-14, 2022.

After that, RITHMS Partners have been meeting up for several operative workshops, each pivotal in advancing the diverse lines of development of the project.

Munich Meeting - Overall Requirements

The first workshop took place in Munich and laid the groundwork by discussing the overarching requirements of the project. Hosted at the Bayern School of Police, this gathering set the stage for subsequent discussions on legal, security, and technical aspects.

Sofia Meeting - Technical Requirements

In Sofia, the focus shifted to technical requirements, with partners convening to delve into the intricacies of the platform development. The European Software Institute - Center Eastern Europe (ESI CEE) hosted the fruitful and multifaceted discussion for defining parameters for data management, access systems, and use case structures.

Venice Meeting - Organized Crime

The Venice meeting delved into the nexus between organized crime and cultural heritage. Held by the Coordinator, at the Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology of IIT, discussions centered on understanding the implications of criminal activities on cultural treasures.

Second Sofia Meeting - Technical Development

Another session in Sofia honed in on technical development, refining the architecture and strategies for the RITHMS digital platform's advancement. Gathered at Sofia Tech Park, the partners collaborated in laying the foundations for integrating data collected from different sources and their processing through the platform.

Antibes Meeting - Exploitation Strategy

The Antibes meeting was dedicated to devising the next steps of the exploitation strategy, crucial for maximizing the impact of RITHMS. Participants strategized on leveraging project outcomes to combat illicit trafficking effectively.

Each workshop has been instrumental in fostering collaboration, sharing practices and hands-on knowledge, and charting the course forward in the project's advancement.





tural Heritage and the Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia - Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology, both members of the RITHMS Consortium.



- ⇒ RITHMS News
- ⇒ RITHMS Results

RITHMS co-participated in the exhibition "Arte Ritrovata. Ritorni in Laguna"

The exhibition was hosted from December 19, 2023, to February 25, 2024, at the Museum of Palazzo Grimani, Venice (Italy).

It was organized by the Segretariato Regionale per il Veneto of the Italian Ministry of Culture together with the Direzione Regionale Musei Veneto, in partnership with the Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio per il Comune di Venezia e Laguna, and in collaboration with the Arma dei Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cul-

The exhibition offered an opportunity to explore various episodes related to the recovery and restitution of cultural heritage, highlighting the commendable collaboration between the Carabinieri TPC and the various bodies of the Italian Ministry of Culture operating in the metropolitan area of Venice. The showcase illustrated various types of offenses – from forgery to illicit export, clandestine excavations to fraud – emphasizing the work of recovery, restitution, and protection carried out by the Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit.

It also represented a chance to understand the protective procedures implemented by the Italian Ministry of Culture in synergy with the Carabinieri TPC Venice Unit, leading up to the enhancement of the recovered assets. The exhibition displayed archaeological artifacts from various eras and origins, as well as modern paintings. Original pieces were accompanied by a series of forgeries, presented in a setup that encouraged visitors to engage in comparison and curious scrutiny, inviting them to observe the artworks while empathizing with the professional figures who facilitated their recovery.

RITHMS at CULTNET Annual Meeting

In October 2023, RITHMS project had the great opportunity for attending as guest **CULTNET** meeting in Madrid. An Informal Network of Law Enforcement Authorities and Experts Competent in the field of cultural goods, CULTNET was hosted during, hosted during the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, brought together industry experts and institutions devoted to preserving our cultural heritage. Notable members of **CULTNET** include the European Commission, Europol, and INTERPOL.



The primary focus of this year's meeting was addressing the challenges of crimes against cultural heritage in Spain, with a special emphasis on fostering collaboration among various institutions engaged in this important endeavor. A significant spotlight was also placed on the protection of cultural heritage in conflict zones, particularly focusing on the cultural heritage of Ukraine.

Law enforcement agencies from across Europe gathered to share their experiences in combating the illicit trafficking of cultural treasures and art-related crimes. Three key RITHMS partners took center stage:

The Brigade of Cultural Heritage of the Spanish National Police, chair and organizer of this year's CULTNET meeting, shed light on the "Leona" operation, revealing the case of clandestine excavations and the illicit sale of Iberian artifacts.

The Carabinieri of the Italian Cultural Heritage Protection Unit showcased the "Artemis" operation.

The Dutch Police led the discussion on the future development of the CULTNET network.

RITHMS Coordinator, the Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology (Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia) and, presented the project's goals and current activities, highlighting how RITHMS can evolve into a vital tool for law enforcement agencies in the ongoing fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

RITHMS was also pleased to continue the fruitful discussion in Bruxelles, at the CULTNET meeting, organized by the Belgian Federal Police last March.

RITHMS at the International Conference on the Nicosia Convention - Riga, Latvia

At the International Conference on the Nicosia Convention in Riga, organised by the Council of Europe, Dr Arianna Traviglia (CCHT-IIT), RITHMS Project's Coordinator, delivered an inspiring speech on the power of technology in safeguarding cultural heritage and combating looting and illicit trafficking.



Sharing the stage with RITHMS' Coordinator, Mr Maurizio Pellegrini and Ms Daniela Rizzo, former officers of the Italian Ministry of Culture and renowned experts in judicial cases addressing looting activities at archaeological sites.

As members of the Art Crime Project Association, RITHMS Consortium's Affiliated Entity, they are also involved in the project.

Furthermore, the conference provided a valuable opportunity to meet Ms Monica Redondo Alvarez and Dr Oscar Alarcon Jimenez, Programme Managers of the Nicosia Convention and esteemed Advisory Board Members of RITHMS project.

UPCOMING EVENT

Trafficking in Cultural Property: a Criminological Perspective

On April 30, the RITHMS Consortium is organizing the international conference "Trafficking in Cultural Property: a Criminological Perspective", that aims at providing participants with an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon.

The conference will assess the state of the art and the gaps in the common understanding of the problem to develop adequate measures to improve EU policy and law enforcement practices for the protection of cultural heritage.



The program and more information here

SISTER PROJECT IN FOCUS

PERIVALLON: ONE OF OUR SISTER PROJECTS

Among its communication and dissemination activities, RITHMS project is also carefully developing a network that integrates various projects with shared objectives, especially supporting Law Enforcement Agencies in combating different types of illicit trafficking. PERIVALLON project is one of them

PERIVALLON Project aims to provide an improved and comprehensive intelligence picture of organised environmental crime and develop effective and efficient tools and solutions for detecting and preventing such types of criminal activities and for assessing their environmental impact based on geospatial intelligence, remote sensing, scanning, online monitoring, analysis, correlation, risk assessment, and predictive analytics technologies, by leveraging the latest advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the fields of computer vision and multimodal analytics. As a result, enhanced investigation processes and methodologies will be derived through the capabilities provided by the developed tools and solutions, and the insights obtained through the proposed Environmental Crime Observatory.

PERIVALLON is on [LinkedIn](#) and [X/Twitter](#) and its project objectives include:



- Provide a rich suite of advanced AI-based geospatial intelligence and remote sensing solutions to improve the detection and investigation capabilities of European Police, Border Guard, National, and Regional Authorities to tackle organised environmental crime in a more efficient and effective way.
- Develop improved AI-based extraction, analysis, and correlation technologies to identify illegal environmental crime activities by detecting irregularities in (online) data generated across the processing, shipment, and trafficking ecosystem for waste management and refrigerant trading.
- Develop a trustworthy, transparent, and easy-to-use environmental crime monitoring platform that collects court-proof crime evidence and provides decision support by fusing heterogeneous data for identifying patterns, assessing the likelihood of criminal activities, and forecasting trends.

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NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2024 | ISSUE #2

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the second edition of the [RITHMS](#) Project's Newsletter, where we highlight significant events, share valuable updates, and explore important conversations happening in our community.

In this issue, we bring you insights from our recent [RITHMS Conference in A Coruña](#), focusing on "Good Practices of European Police Forces in Combating Cultural Property Trafficking." Additionally, we explore our partner UDC's participation in the Law and Society Conference 2024



in Denver, Colorado, as well as a recap from [RITHMS' involvement in ARCA's 13th Annual](#)

[Interdisciplinary Art Crime Conference](#) and our featured presence at the [European Association of Archaeologists \(EAA\) Annual Meeting in Rome](#).

We are also pleased to introduce our sister project, [EMERITUS](#), and share a feature interview with a member of our LEA team, providing an in-depth look at LEAs use of technology in combating cultural property trafficking.

Sincerely yours,
The RITHMS Dissemination team

INSIGHTS FROM THE RITHMS CONFERENCE IN A CORUÑA

The international conference "**Trafficking in Cultural Property: A Criminological Perspective**" hosted and organized by RITHMS partner the Universidade da Coruña, brought together experts from across Europe to discuss challenges and solutions in fighting the illicit trade of cultural objects.

Among the sessions, one dedicated to identifying best practices offered valuable insights from



keynote speaker John Kerr, from the University of Law, UK, and representatives from the police forces of the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, and Romania, all partners or collaborators of the RITHMS Project. (p.2)



Special Interview with
Mr. Tobias Mattes,
member of RITHMS
Security Advisory
Board (p.4)



Sister project
in focus EMERITUS
(p.6)

INSIGHTS FROM THE RITHMS CONFERENCE IN A CORUÑA



Why do criminals find the art market so appealing?

Criminals exploit the art market as a form of currency for other illicit activities. John Kerr, from the University of Law UK, opened the session by explaining this phenomenon. He highlighted the significant roles played by criminal groups, insiders at museums and cultural sites, and dealers in the art market. Comparing various policing strategies across different countries, Kerr underscored the importance of cooperation and information sharing to effectively address the issue.

Richard Bronswijk, head of the Art Crime Unit of the Dutch police, focused on significant cases involving cultural property. He expanded, in particular, on the case of the 'Ndrangheta mafia boss Raffaele Imperiali, who tried to use stolen Van Gogh paintings for negotiating reduced sentences. Bronswijk also drew attention to the dis-



parity in resource allocation between drug trafficking and cultural property crimes, advocating for increased investigative capacity and European Union support to strengthen efforts in this field.

Spain's approach involves a combination of specialized databases and regular inspections of art galleries and auction houses. Silvia Valencia, lead of the operational team of the Spanish Brigade for Historical Heritage, emphasized the importance of collaboration between various administrations, police forces, and the art market. She illustrated how Spain uses databases like Dulcinea and INTERPOL PSYCHE to track and recover stolen artworks, showcasing the effectiveness of these tools in preventing crimes against cultural heritage.

The criminal network related to illicit trafficking of cultural property is highly complex. Mar. Luca Migliaccio from the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage provided a detailed overview of this special corps' structure. He explained how the Carabinieri operate on multiple levels to combat illicit trafficking, working closely with other countries to recover stolen cultural property and bring perpetrators to justice. Migliaccio's insights into the roles of thieves, counterfeiters, and "cleaners" who provide false attributions and provenance certificates were particularly revealing.



Romania's unique position as both a source and transit country for trafficked cultural property was highlighted by Chief Commissioner Paula Mita of the Romanian police. She described efforts to protect and recover cultural heritage, emphasizing the importance of video surveillance and the accountability of local authorities. Mita stressed once more the crucial role of international and interdisciplinary cooperation in effectively combating cultural property trafficking.

NEWS

UDC at Law & Society Conference 2024

This June, RITHMS took part in the [Law and Society Conference 2024 \(LSA\)](#) in Denver, Colorado.

RITHMS member, Dr. Patricia Faraldo Cabana, from the Universidade da Coruña, delivered an insightful presentation on “Web Scraping as a Tool for Criminal Intelligence Tackling Organized Crime Against Cultural Heritage: Technical and Legal Challenges.”



In her talk, Dr. Faraldo Cabana discussed how EU Law Enforcement Agencies are leveraging web scraping to gather data from social media and other online sources in their fight against organized crime, including the trafficking of cultural goods. By analysing large datasets, these tools help uncover connections within complex criminal networks.

AI-based [social network analysis](#) tools can identify individuals previously unknown to law enforcement and provide significant insights into criminal dynamics. Dr. Faraldo Cabana highlighted the importance of understanding the EU legal framework to avoid violating fundamental rights and ensure the admissibility of the collected data as evidence in court.

RITHMS at ARCA's Annual Interdisciplinary Art Crime Conference

In June, RITHMS participated also in the 13th edition of ARCA's [Annual Interdisciplinary Art Crime Conference](#), hosted in the historic city of Amelia. Organized by the Association for Research into Crimes against Art (ARCA), this annual conference brings together experts, researchers, and professionals willing to share novelties and practical updates concerning the broad field of art crime.

In this context, Michela De Bernardin from the Center for Cultural Heritage Technology-IIT delivered the presentation titled “Fighting Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Goods: RITHMS SNA-based Platform as an Innovative Tool to Dismantle Criminal Networks” and provided an overview of the recent technological development of the project, especially focusing on the data collection phase and the first applications of the Social Network Analysis (SNA) methodology to selected databases.

Dr De Bernardin explained how RITHMS exploits SNA to analyse relational patterns and human behaviour facilitating the identification and the subsequent dismantling of the criminal networks involved in trafficking cultural goods.



The recently concluded data collection phase represents a significant milestone for RITHMS, consolidating a wealth of information from diverse sources. Preliminary results, currently in publication, underscore the potential of the RITHMS platform to provide detailed and operationally valuable insights into criminal networks.

The conference also featured the participation of three other RITHMS partners, that is, representatives from the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (TPC), the Spanish Brigade for Historical Heritage and the National Police of the Netherlands.

RITHMS at EAA 2024 in Rome

RITHMS was prominently featured at the [European Association of Archaeologists \(EAA\) Annual Meeting](#), which took place in Rome this past August. During the event, the session titled "Tracing & Protecting: Facing the Shadows of Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Goods" was dedicated to addressing the urgent and complex challenges posed by the illicit trade of cultural heritage.



This session was a collaborative effort of the RITHMS and DECOPE Projects, and the University of Oslo's Museum of Cultural History, focusing on fostering cross-disciplinary alliances to combat cultural heritage crimes. A special high-



light of the session was the presentation by Dr Michela De Bernardin on behalf of RITHMS Coordinator (CCHT-IIT), who showcased the cutting-edge capabilities of the RITHMS platform, focusing on how Social Network Analysis (SNA) is being employed to identify and disrupt criminal networks involved in the trafficking of cultural goods.

RITHMS is building the world's largest knowledge graph to aid Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) in their fight against this global crime. By leveraging open-source data from various digital channels, the platform provides valuable intelligence that enhances the ability of LEAs to trace and protect cultural heritage.



RITHMS News



RITHMS Results



SPECIAL INTERVIEW



In Issue #2, the RITHMS team is pleased to feature a Special Interview with Mr. Tobias Mattes, RITHMS Project Security Officer. Mr. Mattes is also involved in the PERIVALLON Project,

RITHMS' sister project that was introduced in our [First Newsletter](#).

What are your roles and contributions within the RITHMS project?

First, I have to mention, that basically I am a practitioner: my regular duty is Head of the Criminal Police Department in Amberg (Bavarian Police). On the sideline, I participate in different research activities as part of the research unit of our Police University. In RITHMS project, as a scientific researcher, I take part in different work packages. Additionally, I was a member of RITHMS Security Advisory Board (SAB) and now, since July, I am the Project Security Officer (PSO).

During the last years, I participated in several research projects in the field of security research; knowledge from those as well as experience from daily police work in the field of art crime, in the development of IT solutions for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) and in police investigation processes (investigation cycle) are the core parts of my contribution to this project, mainly in the testing and validation during the pilot execution phase.

As member of the SAB I was involved in different task relating to security of sensitive information (like propose of information classification, de-classification, etc. and other timely measures for preventing the misuse of sensitive information).

The role of the PSO is to guarantee that the rules on the handling of EU classified information and applicable security procedures are respected.

What value does HfoeD gain from participating in the RITHMS Project?

The HfoeD is Bavaria's Police University. On the one hand, it is very beneficial for us to learn more about the phenomenon of art crime, especially as basis for terror financing. Knowledge from the RITHMS Project will directly find the way into the training of our students, the future middle management of the Bavarian Police.

On the other hand, we strive to learn as much as possible about new technologies and approaches, such as using SNA to process big data in criminal investigations, evaluating their suitability for everyday use and potential application to other criminal phenomena. This way, we aim to acquire new knowledge that will make us, as an LEA, more efficient in our daily crime-fighting operations.

What benefits and technical outcomes do you expect for LEA partners as a result of their participation in RITHMS?

Investigations in the area of art crime and dealing with cultural heritage are characterized by the need of dealing with big data. A lot of different data from different data sources must be prepared in an assessable, searchable, and, above all, understandable way for the police in front of the screen. The RITHMS platform will enable exactly that. Due to the usage of SNA techniques new relevant knowledge for investigators will be created.

In addition to technical innovation, detailed knowledge of the criminal phenomenon of art crime and terror financing by dealing with cultural heritage is of essential interest for all LEA.

How RITHMS solutions are expected to improve the work of LEAs in their operations?

First of all, it must be underlined, that during the project lifetime a TRL6 will be developed, this means the RITHMS platform will be a prototype demonstrated in an operational environment. The 'finetuning' of the platform, like customization etc. will be done after the project – the prototype will be able to be used by the consortium partners for their tests with their data sources.

As all LEA Consortium members, I look forward to the RITHMS platform being further developed, after the Project's lifetime, to a powerful tool that enables us to do our job more efficiently and much faster than nowadays.

PERIVALLON project is one of our RITHMS sibling projects. What is your experience with PERIVALLON and how its expected solutions would differ from RITHMS?

Both projects are intended to support LEAs in context-related processing of large amounts of data from various data sources in order to enable investigators to identify suspects as quickly as possible in the respective crime phenomenon and to be able to carry out criminal proceedings quickly and efficiently.

Compared to the RITHMS SNA platform, the PERIVALLON platform offers broader and di-

verse operational scenarios addressing criminal situations online, offline, and – physically – on land and water by using other technologies and approaches such as AI-based geospatial intelligence, remote sensing, and scanning tools: it features an intelligence decision support system including a risk assessment tool and online monitoring and analysis tools.

For you, what is the unique value of these projects?

The development of tools that are contextually oriented towards the real needs of end users from LEA organizations and, on the other hand, the implementation of the latest technologies in the operational environment.

Criminals are often one step ahead when it comes to technical innovations: using solutions like RITHMS and PERIVALLION makes it a battle on equal terms.

SISTER PROJECT IN FOCUS

EMERITUS: ONE OF OUR SISTER PROJECTS

Among its communication and dissemination activities, RITHMS project is also carefully developing a network that integrates various projects with shared objectives, especially supporting Law Enforcement Agencies in combating different types of illicit trafficking. EMERITUS project is one of them.

Environmental crimes such as the discharge of substances into the air, water and soil as well as the shipping and trafficking of waste and hazardous materials have enormous impacts on the climate, human health and the environment. However, these crimes are still considered highly profitable for criminals since most feature relatively low risks of detection and penalties for the perpetrators, given the complexity of preventing criminal wrongdoings and delivering distinct proofs to law courts to punish the authors.



EMERITUS aims to lay the foundations of a new generation of technological tools orchestrated via a single-entry point platform at the service of Law Enforcement Authorities (LEA) and Border Guards (BG) to improve detection and proof collection capabilities against waste-related environmental crimes. To do so, EMERITUS will create and implement a protocol for effective environmental crime investigation, Mainly combining innovative monitoring and analysis technologies with a complementary training programme to foster LEAs and BGs' intelligence and investigation capabilities at both the national level and cross-border levels.

The ambition of **EMERITUS** is to explore and demonstrate how these technologies and specialised training could improve the efficiency of environmental crime detection and intelligent risk profiling to optimise resources, reduce the risk for operators and provide a deterrent for offenders.

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NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025 | ISSUE #3

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Welcome back to the [RITHMS](#) project updates.

Since our latest Newsletter, partners have made significant progress in the technical development. A first prototype of the RITHMS SNA-based Platform has been installed in Rome at the premises of the Carabinieri for the Protection of



Cultural Heritage, where initial technical tests have been successfully conducted. Additionally, these past few months have been marked by several key communication and dissemination events.

Sincerely yours,
The RITHMS Dissemination team

INSIGHTS FROM *BEYOND RESTORATION* EVENT – BRUSSELS

The key role of conservators and restorers in tackling illicit trafficking of cultural goods

As part of the RITHMS project's ongoing efforts to understand and combat illicit trafficking in cultural goods, the *Beyond Restoration* event, held in Brussels on December 4th, 2024, spotlighted an often overlooked yet essential group of professionals: **conservators and restorers**.

While their primary mission is to preserve cultural heritage, they also play a crucial role in preventing the circulation of illicit artefacts. However, they may sometimes find themselves



— whether knowingly or unknowingly — entangled in the dynamics of illicit trade. (p.2)



Threads of Heritage
(p.2)



EMERITUS and RITHMS
Joint Webinar (p.4)

INSIGHTS FROM *BEYOND RESTORATION* EVENT – BRUSSELS



The event provided a platform to explore both the risks and responsibilities faced by these professionals. It delved into how restorers might inadvertently contribute to the legitimisation of looted or forged artworks, while also highlighting how their expertise in authentication and provenance analysis positions them as valuable allies in the fight against illicit trafficking.



Expert panel discussions explored these issues, with a morning session dedicated to the role of conservators and an afternoon session focusing on current and potential collaboration between LEAs and heritage professionals. A hands-on

workshop and interactive discussions further highlighted the need for ethical guidelines, targeted training, and stronger cooperation between conservators, cultural institutions, and LEAs.

A key takeaway from the event was the necessity for structured support, including clear policies and accreditation mechanisms at the European level, to help conservator-restorers navigate legal and ethical challenges. Strengthening their role in identifying suspicious artefacts and improving cooperation with investigative authorities were identified as critical steps toward safeguarding cultural heritage from criminal networks.



The discussions also revealed diverging views within the profession. While some conservator-restorers feel that verifying provenance is beyond their role, others advocate for greater responsibility and institutional backing. This underscores the importance of developing shared standards and fostering awareness to ensure conservator-restorers can contribute effectively to the fight against illicit trafficking.

THREADS OF HERITAGE



Within the framework of RITHMS, with the technical support of No Panic Agency and the collaboration of several partners of the Consortium, the Italian Institute of Technology has also produced the documentary *Threads of Heritage. Down the Rabbit Hole of Art Crime*.



The movie offers an unprecedented look at the **illicit trafficking of cultural heritage** — a critical phenomenon that threatens historical treasures worldwide. Through compelling storytelling and firsthand accounts, the film explores the irreversible damage caused by **clandestine excavations** and the **illicit art market**, exposing the intricate network of interests that often involves traffickers, auction houses, and major international museums.

A journey through **Rome, Cerveteri** and **Madrid** takes the audience to the heart of these crimes, from looted archaeological sites to museum storage facilities inaccessible to the public, where hundreds of artefacts await reassignment. For the first time, these objects take centre stage in a narrative that restores their intrinsic historical and cultural value.

With the support of experts and industry professionals, the documentary features **Vincenzo**



Bellelli, Director of the Cerveteri Archaeological Park; **Luana Toniolo**, Director of the National Etruscan Museum of Villa Giulia; and **Arianna Traviglia**, Director of the Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology (Italian Institute of Technology). Crucial contributions also come from law enforcement agencies dedicated to protecting cultural heritage: the **Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage** and the **Brigada de Patrimonio Histórico** of the Spanish National Police take the audience into the core of their operations, conducted in collaboration with other European police forces, to combat an illicit market worth millions of euros.

The documentary was selected for the International Archaeofilm Festival, held in March in Florence, Italy, where it achieved an impressive second place out of 88 entries: an outstanding accomplishment for this opera prima.



[RITHMS News](#)



[Watch the trailer](#)

Environmental and Cultural Heritage offences EMERITUS & RITHMS Joint webinar

On October 28th, the RITHMS project co-organized a [webinar](#) in collaboration with the Sister Project [EMERITUS](#). The event focused on addressing the increasing necessity of equipping law enforcement with advanced skills to combat niche and emerging criminal practices like environmental and cultural heritage crime.



During the webinar, the speakers discussed the main challenges in addressing such niche crimes. The first issue to face is the

fact that specific expertise in areas like ecology, biology, archaeology and art history, often missing in traditional LEA skillsets, are instead relevant to developing effective strategies against those crimes. Limited funding and low prioritisation of these crimes compound this problem, making it hard for LEAs to obtain essential resources and training. Cross-border collaboration is key, yet difficult to implement due to varying jurisdictional rules, data-sharing restrictions, and procedural differences. LEAs struggle with both the legal and logistical aspects of collaboration across borders. Additionally, LEAs often lack fa-

miliarity with the technological and legal tools necessary for investigating niche crimes. Training needs assessments show gaps in areas like data analysis, ecosystem assessment, and legal processes, which are crucial for combating environmental and cultural crimes.

RITHMS at CEPOL Research & Science Conference 2024/2025

On March 26-27th, both RITHMS Coordinator, Dr Arianna Traviglia (CCHT-IIT), and Prof. Patricia Faraldo Cabana (UDC) successfully attended CEPOL [international conference](#) as an opportunity to present the project's advancement and illustrate first-hand results stemming from criminological research carried out within RITHMS.



Congratulations to Patricia and her Team whose paper, exploring the organised nature of cultural heritage crime, won the prestigious CEPOL Research & Science Conference Award!

PAST EVENTS

- ⇒ RITHMS at the Conference on Computational Social Science (CS2Italy 2025)
- ⇒ RITHMS at Archaeological Film Festival in Florence with "Threads of Heritage"

UPCOMING EVENTS

RITHMS has now entered its final semester, marking a crucial phase in the project. As we move forward, we are preparing to launch a series of activities to assist law enforcement agencies in effectively using the RITHMS platform.

These initiatives will focus on providing tailored training sessions, starting with an introductory Training Workshop in Rome, on April 7-8, dedicated to the partner LEAs of the Consortium, which will be followed by another Training Workshop for the LEAs beyond the Consortium to be held in Munich in June.

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NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2025 | ISSUE #4

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 4th Newsletter of the **RITHMS** Project. Since April, the RITHMS Consortium has been deeply involved in the final stages of development, with numerous key activities shaping these past few months.

On April 7-8, we held the first training session with the police forces of the Consortium, offering a first approach to the RITHMS Platform.



In May, we launched the pilot phase involving the Carabinieri, the Dutch Police, and the Spanish Police, with the kind collaboration of the Romanian Police.

The pilots will continue through July. This phase is critical for further refining the Platform and tailoring it to meet the specific needs of end users. Stay tuned as we move closer to delivering an advanced and customised solution to support Law Enforcement in addressing the illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

RITHMS AT THE SECURITY RESEARCH EVENT 2025 IN WARSAW

On 24–25 June 2025, the **RITHMS Project** was showcased at the Security Research Event (SRE) 2025, hosted in Warsaw, by the Coordinator's team from the **Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology (CCHT – Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia)** with the support of the **European Software Institute (ESI)**.



RITHMS AT THE SECURITY RESEARCH EVENT 2025 IN WARSAW



Throughout the two-day conference the project team engaged with researchers, policy-makers, and operational practitioners from across Europe, providing live, case-based demonstrations of the RITHMS platform and discussing its potential to counter the illicit trafficking of cultural goods. These interactive sessions enabled participants to evaluate the platform's functionalities directly against operational needs and to offer valuable feedback for future development.

The programme also featured a public screening of the documentary "Threads of Heritage. Down the Rabbit Hole of Art Crime," produced within the framework of RITHMS. The film attracted considerable interest among attendees and stimulated a wider conversation on the strategic



importance of protecting cultural heritage within the European security agenda.

See below for further screening occasions (p. 4)



NEWS

RITHMS at Europol – Core Group on Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods

From **10 to 12 June 2025**, the RITHMS Project, represented by CCHT and ESI, participated in the Hackathon and Tool Testing Meeting organised by Europol's Core Group on Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods.

Over the course of the three-day event, the team delivered four rounds of in-depth demonstrations of the RITHMS Platform to European LEA officers, including project partners from the Carabinieri TPC, Dutch Police, and Spanish National Police, as well as Europol ICT personnel.



The meeting provided a valuable opportunity to showcase the platform's functionalities in an operational context and to collect constructive, hands-on feedback from end users. The insights gathered will directly support the ongoing development of the platform, ensuring its alignment with the needs and priorities of those combating cultural heritage crime.

Introductory Training Workshop for Law Enforcement Agencies

On June 20, in the fascinating venue of Schloss Fürstenried (Munich), the RITHMS Project held the Introductory Training Workshop on the RITHMS Platform, dedicated to Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs).

The event was kindly introduced by two exceptional keynote speakers **Mr. Klein**, from the **Bavarian State Criminal Police Office** and **Mrs. Shlageder**, from the **Bavaria Ministry of Science and Arts**.



The workshop was designed to provide participants with a comprehensive introduction to the RITHMS platform's features and functionalities, combining a theoretical overview with practical applications and operational scenarios demonstrated step by step.

This initiative represents a collaborative effort to equip LEAs with advanced tools to support them in addressing the complex challenge of illicit trafficking of cultural goods more effectively.

We look forward to further engaging with the European LEAs as the RITHMS project progresses to its final months.

Conference Cultural Heritage, Property Issues and Best Practice

On 21 June 2025 in Würzburg, Germany, CCHT researcher Riccardo Giovanelli presented the RITHMS Platform at the international conference organised by the Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg under the hospices of the Deutscher Archäologen-Verband.



The talk highlighted the Platform's potential to support intelligence-led policing in the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural goods.

THREADS OF HERITAGE



THREADS OF HERITAGE

Down the Rabbit Hole of Art Crime

WARSAW

24 JUNE 2025, 9:00 PM

AUDITORIUM, EXPO XXI

ROME

11 JULY 2025, 9:00 PM

NATIONAL ETRUSCAN MUSEUM OF VILLA GIULIA

GENOA

14 JULY 2025, 9:00 PM

PALAZZO DUCALE



This summer, join us for the screening of *Threads of Heritage*, a compelling documentary exploring the hidden world of cultural heritage trafficking and the international efforts to combat it.

- **Warsaw – 24 June 2025, 9:00 PM** | Auditorium, Expo XXI
- **Rome – 11 July 2025, 9:00 PM** | National Etruscan Museum of Villa Giulia
- **Genoa – 14 July 2025, 9:00 PM** | Palazzo Ducale

Open to institutions, professionals, and the general audience.



⇒ [More information](#)

⇒ [Watch the trailer](#)

RESULTS



A new article by the RITHMS team presents a major milestone: the development of 30 tailored web scrapers to collect and consolidate data from on-line repositories of stolen, missing, protected and unprovenanced cultural goods.

This open-source intelligence dataset is the largest of its kind outside law enforcement, offering real-world applications for provenance research and heritage crime investigations.

Take a look at the operational scenarios in which the RITHMS Platform can be deployed.



⇒ **READ MORE**

UPCOMING EVENTS

STAY TUNED FOR INFO ABOUT RITHMS FINAL EVENT UPCOMING IN SEPTEMBER

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NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2025 | ISSUE #5

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 5th Newsletter of the **RITHMS** Project. July was a particularly dynamic month for the Consortium, marked by important steps in the testing of the Platform. Partners focused on refining its functionalities and integrating additional scrapers, ensuring the system becomes ever more effective and user oriented.

NEWS

On July 8, the Dutch Police successfully carried out Pilot 1, hosted at the Carabinieri headquarters, where the prototype had been specially configured for the occasion. Later in the month, on July 31, the installation of the prototype at the Spanish Police headquarters in Madrid enabled the first exploratory Pilot to be conducted on site. These activities not only represent concrete progress but also reflect the strong collaboration among partners, moving us closer to a solution truly shaped around the needs of Law Enforcement.



RITHMS News

DOCUMENTARY SCREENINGS – THREADS OF HERITAGE



The summer screenings of Threads of Heritage – Down the Rabbit Hole of Art Crime were met with great success in Rome and Genoa.

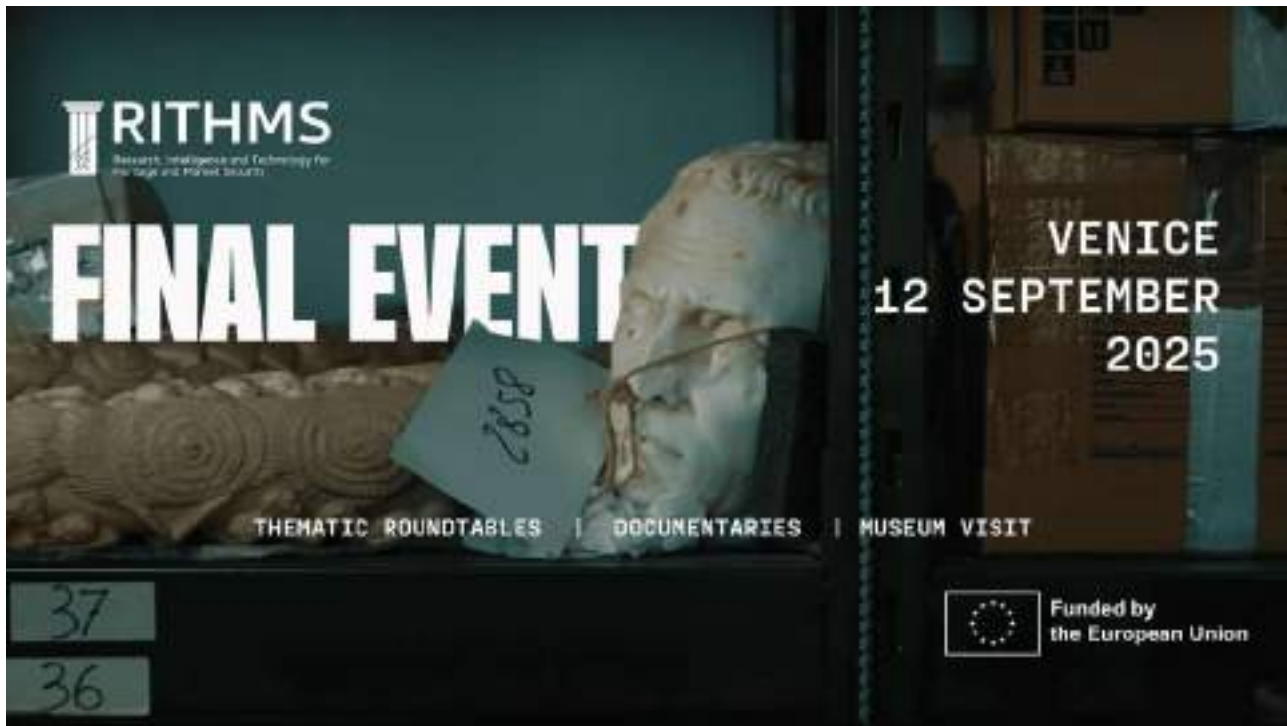
Directed by Brian Parodi and produced by the Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology (IIT) in collaboration with No Panic Agency, the documentary explores the hidden mechanisms behind illicit trafficking of cultural heritage – from looted sites to the art market through illicit networks – and the innovative technologies to counter them.

The first screening, held on 11 July at the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome, featured an expert panel and a guided tour of the museum highlighting the most relevant recovered artefacts.

The second, hosted on 14 July in Genoa's Palazzo Ducale as part of the Circuito Cinema Genova programme, included an open public discussion with Arianna Traviglia (CCHT-IIT) and Giacomo Montanari (City of Genoa), moderated by journalist Linda Kaiser.

More on the screenings: [Read the full article](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



September will mark the concluding month of the RITHMS Project, and the Consortium warmly invites all interested stakeholders to join the **Final Event on 12 September in Venice**. On this occasion, the highlights of the project will be presented, together with the premiere of the short movies produced by the affiliated partner Art Crime Project – APS, directed by Alessandro Garilli. To reserve your place, please register at the following link: [Eventbrite Registration](#).

Film Festival – RAM 2025, Rovereto



Threads of Heritage has been officially selected for the **2025 edition of RAM – Rovereto Archeologia Memorie**, taking place from 24 to 28 September.

Organised by the Fondazione Museo Civico di Rovereto since 1990, RAM brings together archaeology, cultural memory initiatives, and the moving image through film screenings, talks, exhibitions, and guided tours.

Each year, the festival features 50–60 international entries including documentaries, docu-fiction, and animated shorts that explore archaeo-

logical research and cultural heritage – both tangible and intangible.

For further information: www.ramfilmfestival.it

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