

TOOLKIT

field booklet



Research

*Filming/documenting to conduct
research*

Documenting living heritage and craftsmanship through film

Documenting a heritage practice (and therefore different types of craftsmanship) is in itself a **safeguarding measure***. It contributes to the heritage's viability, as information is recorded and preserved for future actions. Nevertheless, there can be different motivations as to why you want to film and document a practice.

Start by asking why you want to film or document a practice: what goal would it have? Answering this question will help you to define the safeguarding approach/measure associated, and hence the documentation method that can serve this goal.

You can use this film as a means to:

- **to raise awareness and promote** heritage in the wider community
- **to educate** school children so they can have a deeper understanding of this craft or cultural heritage
- **to transmit knowledge** to someone who could continue its active practice
- **to conduct research** on different aspects of living heritage, including comparative international perspectives
- **to identify and inventory** the heritage where you first identify its basic aspects, when you have not yet decided what the film is for

Each of these goals as to why you want to film, require different approaches to how you will be filming and documenting a practice.

The different functions of documenting intangible heritage

The toolbox 'Focus Craftership: filming living heritage' uses the term 'function' to address **the actual goal a filming project has**. For example, you might film know-how and skills of a heritage practice as tutorials to ensure transfer, or you might film a recruiting trailer to promote it.

The different functions require different filming methods as they have different goals. **It is therefore necessary to first establish what the end goal of the video is** before you start filming.

- Identification and Inventorying
- Presentation
- Communication
 - Awareness raising
 - Education
- Transmission
- Research

Participatie is key

It is important to note that even though filming methods are different, **participation is an overarching principle** to be applied in each case. As a professional heritage worker, or if you're not a practitioner yourself, be sure to involve heritage practitioners and communities in all project steps, assure timely planning, fair accessibility and restitution of knowledge.

Before starting any activity related to safeguarding living heritage, make sure you have **the free, prior and informed consent of the practitioners involved**. This is an important ethical principle put forward by the UNESCO 2003 Convention with regard to safeguarding living heritage.

* See lexicon at the back of this field booklet.



WHAT IS THIS FUNCTION FOR?

Intangible heritage research through filming or audiovisual documentation covers a wide range of types of research approaches and methodologies.

Every research initiative will, therefore, need to be directed by **clear research questions**.

For example, the research question can:

- address understanding a specific technique of a craft or its use of materials
- set out to analyse and interpret different aspects of a specific craft (from historical data, to the way it evolves through time and space)
- ...

Or it could focus on **dimensions that are of interest to safeguarding living heritage in general**, such as researching:

- social relationships within a group of practitioners
- modes of transmission
- ways of drawing up inventories
- participative methods employed in different safeguarding measures
- rights of communities
- ...

What is of utmost importance in any filming for research or a research documentary is the involvement of communities, groups and individuals in each of these processes, whilst also finding appropriate ways of informing and returning the acquired and newly produced knowledge for the benefit of all stakeholders.

HOW TO: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

For the purposes of researching living heritage by means of audiovisual documentation, you can consider applying '**participant observation**' as a type of qualitative research method which includes observation, participation, discussions, semi-structured interviews and self-reflections.

Being **a combination of different research methods**, addressing both the subject(s) as well as the researcher's reflections and interpretations, it will make the most of your research project!

Note

Over time, various paradigms and approaches in anthropology and heritage studies have developed. Today, both audiovisual anthropology and heritage studies highlight **the need to actively include communities in research processes, as well as to unambiguously state the researcher's position**.



FILMMAKER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the **Focus Craftership experience, where a professional videographer closely collaborated with heritage professionals and practitioners.**

Such an intensive, collaborative filming process implies **many working hours** and **a solid budget**.

But of course, if you are not in such an ideal situation, considering the time and/or budget available, you can adjust the recommendations to your own context and possibilities.

PREPRODUCTION

Define the research question and the craftership

- Use the research question as the starting point for building up the filming trajectory.
- If possible, make use of already established networks of practitioners to explore the research question.

Find and map the crafters(hip)

- Contact the heritage community to introduce the research question and the intention of doing the research by audiovisual means.
- Invite all interested to participate in a production meeting, explore together how the research question could be transformed into interesting filming segments.

Plan the filming

- Make a production schedule with the filming segments and see if you can combine filming segments in order to save time and budget.
- Translate the specific actions into shot lists.
- Use the shot lists to make rough time schedules.
- Communicate the shot lists and rough time schedules with the practitioners for validation.
- Contact everyone involved some days before the filming moments to see if everything can proceed as discussed.

PRODUCTION

Before filming

- Make a filming schedule and follow it as strictly as possible, but leave a margin for unexpected situations.
- Discuss how the practitioners will work exactly and if there are repeated actions, in order to set up the filming material adequately.
- Contact everyone involved some days before the actual shooting to confirm if everything can proceed as discussed.
- Start early enough and leave a margin in your schedule for unexpected situations.

During filming

- First, film an introduction to the research question.
- Use the shot lists and rough time schedules to complete all the planned filming moments.
- If learning events with the participants are organised as well as the planned filming to stimulate interaction with the research, then film these and invite the participants to short spontaneous interview sessions.
- Record self-reflection on the research process after each of the learning events and planned filming. Focus more on consistency than on the form of these self-reflection moments.
- Film a conclusion to the research question based on the input of the passed filming process.

POSTPRODUCTION

Editing

- Make rough edits of each film segment on a separate timeline, isolate all usable shots.
- Combine this with the interviews and self-reflection footage on a 'master timeline'.
- Build up the edit by adding, cutting and trimming shots.

Consulting and finalising

- Export a preview file of the finished edit and consult with all parties involved to collect feedback before finishing the video.
- Keep notes on the edit in the previously created spreadsheet.
- Process the comments and finish the video by finalising the sound and images.



TIP! New to filming? Take a look at our **'step-by-step guide for filming'** to **get started** by scanning the QR-code!





The making of giants

giant culture in focus

INSPIRING
EXAMPLE



Freya Vancraeynest, heritage professional at **Histories**, chose to put forward giant culture as an inspiring practical example. The organisation has already worked extensively with the heritage community revolving around giant culture in Flanders in the past.

Together with several giant societies from all over Flanders, it went beyond the national borders to audiovisually document the research on giant building.



© Histories vzw

Context

Together with various heritage communities, Freya Vancraeynest, the Histories heritage professional, researched **how the process of making giants has evolved and what various ways there are to build giants today**.

This was done on the basis of **5 main 'making topics'**:

1. Head
2. Framework/undercarriage
3. Restoration/reuse
4. Support (community and storytelling)
5. Character (clothing and accessories)

For each topic, Histories **collaborated each time with a different (giant) society** that was in the process of making a new giant, **in a different province each time**.

They also went to **Spain** to learn about building techniques.

Approach

In this casestudy, the documentation process and the research were **initiated from an already well-established network**. **The entire research process was documented** by an external, professional filmmaker.

Not only did the process involve filming how giants are built, but also letting the builders and experience experts speak for themselves.

At several '**learning network moments**', during the production period, the communities involved were invited to share their experiences and learn from each other.

At these, time was taken **to interview participants** and they were invited **to share their thoughts on the film, the process and its development**. These were also the moments when Histories' accompanying **heritage professionals reflected on the process themselves**.

Histories captures this trajectory on film, resulting in the **research film**. As such, the film also constitutes **a new way of sharing knowledge around the question "How are giants made?"**.

The curious viewer, as well as the experienced builder, learns about new perspectives, construction techniques and communities.

This **open sharing of knowledge** is the beginning of a valuable new chapter in the Flemish giants story.





© Femke den Hollander



Experiences

"Participants and spectators find each other in the process of making giants. That is important for the sustainable safeguarding of this special tradition, and creates new impulses in the ongoing guidance process with Giants in Flanders npo."

- Frea Vancraeynest
(heritage professional at Histories npo)

"During a visit to Spain, the Catalan way of making the substructure of a giant was illustrated to practitioners from Flanders. This meant travelling with a lot of material and working with a translator, which was challenging."

- Alexander Kerkhof
(filmmaker for the project Focus Craftership)

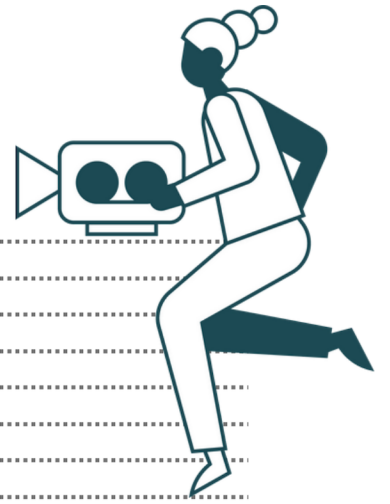


Watch the research film 'The making of Giants' here!

Results

Besides the research film, the results of the research will also provide interesting **additions to Histories' giant database and the broader work on giant culture 'Around the skirts of the giant'**, which is running in cooperation with Giants in Flanders npo.

Histories will also compile the insights gained about the making process in a **research report**.



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FILMING LIVING HERITAGE

The Toolbox Filming Living Heritage is a guide to filming and safeguarding craftsmanship and intangible heritage. It was developed in the Focus Craftership project.

It provides a basic methodology for audiovisual documentation of living heritage, craftsmanship, skills and know-how.

This toolbox is aimed at **heritage workers and cultural mediators** as initial users. We hope to see this toolbox and its content being used by **practitioners** and **videographers** interested in filming living heritage as well.

To check out the Toolbox Filming Living Heritage, visit www.filminglivingheritage.org, or scan the QR-code:



lexicon

intangible cultural heritage

Intangible (cultural) heritage are customs, knowledge and practices of today that people have inherited and would like to pass on for the future.

safeguarding

Safeguarding means (helping) to ensure a sustainable future for intangible heritage.

safeguarding measures

Safeguarding, or heritage care, can be addressed through various actions, e.g. by documenting the practice well, archival care, research, communication, ... but above all, safeguarding living heritage always depends on passing on practices, skills and knowledge to new people. In each of these actions, the initiative or involvement of the heritage community is paramount.

intangible heritage practice

An intangible heritage practice includes practising, performing the practice (uses, skills, techniques,...) itself, but also ensuring that that practice has a future (safeguarding).

heritage community

The intangible heritage community is formed by the people and organisations involved in intangible heritage and eager to (want to) pass it on and give it a future. They do so by practising or supporting the heritage: they may be practitioners, attendees, spectators, audiences, volunteers, heritage organisations, and so on.

intangible heritage professional

A heritage professional, or an intangible heritage worker, is someone who is employed to undertake intangible heritage work at a cultural heritage organisation.

contact

If you have any questions about the toolbox or pilot projects, please get in touch via the contact form at <https://www.toolboxfocusvakmanschap.be/en/contact?lang=en>.

We are happy to listen to your comments and questions.