



Press Release

Hanoi, 23th April 2019

Restorative Cleaning of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Imperial City of Huế

Kärcher contributes to the preservation of cultural sites in Vietnam

As part of its cultural sponsoring, the German company Kärcher cleans the southern main gateway of the former imperial city of Huế in March 2019. The Handover Ceremony of the Cleaning Project will take place in the morning of 26th April at the presence of German Ambassador Christian Berger and representatives of the Thua-Thien-Hue Province.

Over decades, the tropical climate, with plenty of rain and high humidity, has led to the original colour of the brickwork and the grey limestone being covered in dark organic vegetation. This damages the façade's surface in the long term. Kärcher cleaning experts remove these deposits from Noon Gate, which was erected in 1804 and is the largest of the four main gates that frame the imperial city. Huế was built by Emperor Gia Long based on the model of the Forbidden City in Beijing, and it has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1993.

Cleaning challenges

Their country's cultural heritage is of special importance to the people of Vietnam. Thus, a particularly careful and gentle approach is important for the cleaning work, which contributes sustainably to the monument's preservation. A natural ageing process and increasing patina is part of the valuable features of monuments and historical buildings. "Cleaning does not deprive this monument of its original character, but contributes to ensuring that future generations will also be able to see and experience its beauty," says Thorsten Möwes, cleaning expert at Kärcher, who is responsible for performing the work on site.

Gentle steam cleaning

To clean the monument, the experts use a gentle steam setting at a surface pressure of 0.5 to 1 bar and a temperature of up to 100 °C. Four hot water, high-pressure cleaners generate the steam that removes algae, mosses, fungi, lichens, and bacteria. This way, absolutely no chemicals are needed. This type of cleaning also delays the growth of new biogenic vegetation, as the steam's high temperature destroys the deeper-seated spores. "Hot steam cleaning is the most effective, harmless and best method for looking after and preserving the mineral building substance, especially in the tropical Huế. The cleaning of the Noon Gate was a convincing start," says Andrea Teufel, restorer of the Society for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage (CPCE) in Huế.

Background information:

The Imperial City of Huế

Huế was the capital of Vietnam during the Nguyễn dynasty, which lasted from 1804 to 1945. Most of the buildings were badly damaged during the Vietnam War. The South Gate is one of the best-preserved buildings and was reserved for exclusive use by the Emperor. Today it is the entrance gate for visitors.

Alfred Kärcher SE & Co. KG

Kärcher is a leading supplier of cleaning technology worldwide. The family-owned company employs more than 13,000 people in more than 110 companies, across 70 countries. More than 50,000 service points in all countries ensure reliable supply for customers throughout the world. With 2.525 billion euros in 2018, Kärcher achieved the highest turnover in the company's history. The product range includes: high-pressure cleaners, vacuum cleaners and steam cleaners, window cleaners, sweepers and scrubbers, car washes, drinking water and waste water treatment systems, dry ice blasting machines, cleaning agents, garden and household pumps, irrigation systems and drinking water dispensers.

Cultural Sponsorship at Kärcher

As part of its cultural sponsorship programme, the cleaning equipment manufacturer Kärcher has cleaned more than 140 monuments worldwide since 1980. These include the colonnades of St. Peter's Square in Rome, the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, the over 3,300-year-old Colossi of Memnon in Luxor, Upper Egypt and the Mount Rushmore National Memorial, as well as Aachen Cathedral and the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-Kirche in Berlin. The cleaning is always performed in close cooperation with monument conservators, restorers and art historians.

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