



# GENERAL STATE OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

VENICE – PADUA  
25 – 27 OCTOBER 2018

Recovery of industrial heritage has become one of the strategic boosts for cultural relaunch of cities and territories and for new urban regeneration programmes, showing how innovation driven practices have led to an accurate development of cultural heritage within industrial civilisation and to give them back to the public as a part of collective culture. Many recent projects and works increase perception on new challenges faced by industrial heritage agents. Nowadays, the unimpeachable defence of historic memory and value systems in local communities is not enough. The wide variety and complexity of industrial heritage, together with its worldwide diffusion, but also and especially with fast cultural, economic and social changes taking place all over the world, require adopting innovative and diversified conservation, reuse and development strategies and policies

The Italian Association for Industrial Archaeological Heritage (AIPAI), after 20 years promoting knowledge, conservation and development of industrial heritage, enters a new approach and study phase within the sector and, celebrating the European Year of Cultural Heritage, promotes an initiative focused on reflection and debate: the first General State of Industrial Heritage, which will take place at Venice and Padua on 25-27 October 2018.

## **Segreteria Organizzativa**

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The congress aims to discuss the unprecedented challenges, but also new and stimulating spaces for creativity and planning born to protect and communicate industrial civilisation heritage within sustainable development processes, able to mobilise all resources and subjects from a certain area.

Abstracts for papers or panels must be submitted before **15 June 2018**, following guidelines available at [www.dissgea.unipd.it/convegno-aipai-2018-stati-generalidel-patrimonio-industriale](http://www.dissgea.unipd.it/convegno-aipai-2018-stati-generalidel-patrimonio-industriale) and including the **subtheme** of choice from the following list:

**1. Production fields and landscapes (coordinators: Renato Covino, Giovanni Luigi Fontana, Massimo Preite)**

For the last decade, landscape –understood as the stratification of anthropic experiences in relation to territory – has become a key topic in cultural heritage policies. Such framework includes also industrial heritage. Context built around a factory (employee houses, railways, sanitation systems, freight and waste products storage, road network) has become a relevant factor in heritage emergencies assessment, while considering also its relation with more ancient heritage. There are clear differences between small and medium-sized enterprises, disseminated throughout the territory, and grand industrial installations which take up wide areas, defining their balances. Large productive units (steelmaking, mechanics, electricity, shipbuilding and chemical industry) radically transform cities and suburban areas and, in some instances, build these urban areas around factories on former farmland. Small and medium-sized enterprises (milling, food, paper, glass, construction materials, fashion and footwear industries) and their networks establish more balanced relations with landscape and previously emerging realities. This becomes noticeable both when companies are still active and when they cease

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operating and demolition or reuse need to be planned. The discussion topic will therefore be how these two realities shape landscapes and define their balances, presenting positive restoration examples, determining factors, key players, available resources, etc. Also, the analysis will focus on current critical cases – of heritage emergencies destruction and misrestoration – and the processes they trigger within the territory and landscape.

## **2. Work history and culture (Andrea Caracausi, Riccardo Cella)**

Work history plays a main role within industrial heritage management and development. Work has not just been an integral part of sites and structures, because of the activities carried out inside them from their construction and during their entire period of operation, it has also permeated workers' social and community life inside and outside their workplace. Besides, recent restoration projects of industrial buildings and the subsequent restructuring towards new ways of culture and creativity economy have led, especially in areas suffering deindustrialisation, radical career changes and the origin of new professions and workplaces. Therefore, analysing an industrial site requires a multidisciplinary approach that considers elements such as technology and work relations, social structure and all other activities taking place in a certain site. Work experiences, conditions and organisation are nowadays merely visible in a material dimension, but play a vital part in the history of a site from an intangible perspective: attention to material artifacts produced by a company, to oral tradition enriched in time, and to archive documents allow us to give a new life to the immaterial heritage still present in several industrial and deindustrialised areas. Studying these transformation in work contexts from the workers' point of view offers a framework for understanding the effects these buildings on population and lifestyles, on social practices, customs

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and mentalities. A similar approach may promote informed choices in policies regarding new uses of such structures.

The session aims to remark the importance of the relation between industrial archaeology and work history in long-term analysis - starting from the proto-industrial era -, tackling matters such as work management, new professions and workplaces, gender gap, relationships, social life (canteen and afterwork time), private life (working-class houses and neighbourhoods) and memories (work narrative and ideology).

### **3. The industrial city (Giovanni Luigi Fontana, Franco Mancuso, Guido Zucconi)**

The industrial city question is often addressed from a historic and urbanistic point of view. Nowadays, and in order to grasp its meaning, we need to adopt several perspectives: analysing especially the case of those cities which, during the 19th century, changed profoundly and suddenly their role and urban distribution, due to the settlement within or around them of factories and infrastructure based on new technologies usage and large shares of working force. But also considering proto-industrial cities, where manufacture preceded the nineteenth-century revolution: where are they located, which production are they specialised in, and how their tradition relates to the following industrial development.

On the other side, we find industrial cities abruptly (and unexpectedly) created ex novo where energy, raw materials, infrastructures and working force are available; leading to urban, social and production models experimentation. We need to understand the reasons of this kind of industrial cities disseminating around the world; who are the main entrepreneurs that promote them; the living and working conditions within them; and their effects on architectural and urban models for

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social housing. All this assessing their current situation and development projects aswell.

In the light of increasing obsolescence in production and infrastructure areas within urban centres, and their progressive abandon state, we must consider potential cases where restoration actions , or even real state development, have caused changes in their role or identity and whether these actions have been successful among citizens.

Finally, as a part of collective remembrance, we may analyse if and how industrial cities have been able to preserve their identity and their industrial recent past (in architecture, life style, culture and social character), but also the traces of labouring and business presence – as a result of local policies.

#### **4. Industrial construction: technological innovation and materials, techniques and procedures experimentation (Edoardo Currà, Augusto Vitale)**

During 19th and 20th centuries, industrial construction has constituted a breeding ground for exerimenting with new materials, techniques and building processes. Several motivations underpin this recurring building models, more influenced by technological progress than contemporary civil construction. On one hand, the specific requests for investment and production, as the research for large spans, conclusion times or materials optimization. On the other hand, we have to bear in mind that designers were able to work more easily - an essentially modern matter, often dismissed from civil construction.

Regarding this matter we can identify relevant cases of industrial complexes, or single warehouses, worthy members of construction and technique history (specially

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of iron, reinforced concrete or glass); but also designers or companies who made the use of innovative materials and approaches a meaningful part of their working experience. This session may as well include original considerations of the current state of industrial buildings and architectural conservation and renewal projects.

It is in fact due to cost and timing requirements in construction plans, thickness of materials, and project choices, that often these buildings show a particular fragility. Therefore, conservation works face significant challenges, that curators need to tackle.

#### **5. Tools and structures for knowledge and development (Giorgetta Bonfiglio, Renato Covino, Carolina Lussana, Antonio Monte)**

For almost half a century, attention has been focused specially on exploratory courses of industrial heritage. Following other countries footsteps, efforts have been channelled to create archive data sheets with different criteria, according to the specific goal – from functional restoration of a monument, to the diverse techniques, and the research on elements featuring buildings, tools, production cycles, industrial areas or plants. The purpose was to promote conservation, restoration, renewal and development of the property. Archive works have been sponsored by local and national authorities, universities and research institutes. Nowadays, there is still no archive data sheet by the Central Institute for Cataloging and Documentation (ICCD), nor a census that would allow an assessment on existing heritage. As archives and catalogues are essential tools for knowledge, some Italian regions (Basilicata, Apulia, Umbria) have introduced regulations with the aim of implementing, managing and promote exploratory courses for heritage conservation and development. The questions we may tackle are essentially three: In what measure have these courses promoted safeguard and conservation? How

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have regulations contributed to sensitise community, academia and operators? How have the courses guided projects and mobilised resources, promoting development? It is also important to describe how censuses have been promoted and which elements have allowed to establish permanent structures and legislative procedures.

A related, but independent theme is that of archive collections. In order to open up new horizons for preserving this fragile and essential heritage within new initiatives aiming increased knowledge and smart reuse of industrial heritage in whole, both a theoretical balance and a report of practical experiences are needed – with reference to company archives preservation and development and to records provided to historiographical research.

## **6. Industry and communication (Angelo Desole)**

As essential elements of business communication, photography, cinema and visual arts related to industry are still today among the main sources to retrace the complex and often contradictory history of industrial development in Italy. Starting from the 1911 Expo in Turin, where first real business advertisement catalogues were published, up to the Great War and war propaganda; then to fascist modernisation with the great sanitary works and the “wheat battle”, both narrated through avant-gardist language; followed by the reconstruction and economic boom, often seen from the neorealist perspective; we get to 1968 and the subsequent relocation of industry within collective conscience. Finally we find the unsettled matter of great dismantlements, the end of industry and the crisis within almost whole production sectors.

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Photography, cinema, graphic design and visual arts have narrated all these trend phases and developments, creating the collective imagination about industry and defining its role within society.

### **7. Community groups: scenarios and experiences (Jacopo Ibello)**

The role of associations and volunteers has been crucial in industrial heritage development and its acknowledgement as a part of cultural heritage. Volunteer citizen organisations have often anticipated institutions in understanding the importance of protecting industrial heritage, tangible and intangible, encouraging the latter to commit in restoration. Still now, that industrial heritage has for long been accepted as worthy of protection from the institutions, economic issues that involve both public and private sectors urge citizens to intervene in order to save monuments at risk. Associations have become no just “activist” organisations, but also potential instruments for temporary or permanent management in museums or abandoned spaces, to the point that local authorities have created specific regulations to collaborate with them. We aim to remark the relevant role of community groups as a sustainable management model for development, beyond their original intended goal.

### **8. Heritage storytelling (Cristina Natoli, Manuel Ramello)**

In the last years, international paths for cultural heritage development and, therefore, also industrial heritage have been deeply renovated, implementing techniques based on innovative technologies and on narrative as a mean for making use of cultural heritage. Storytelling is a knowledge transmission method often adopted in heterogeneous contexts, as in museums where narrative becomes an apprehension resource, leading to self-identification and therefore social

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cement. This technique contributes to meaning interpretation and attribution through memory recreation and evocation. Thanks to narrative spaces (such as archives and company museums) the cultural heritage concept appears not just as an object of preservation but also as a source of essential collective knowledge, capable of increasing identity and belonging sense.

### **9. Conservation, restoration and renewal (Rossella Maspoli, Claudio Menichelli)**

Sustainable development of widespread heritage, as an alternative to land consumption has become a relevant strategy. At its core we find the reactivation of built areas, from a temporary and spontaneous use to organised restoration plans, between local resilience and urban regeneration, in parallel to museum and industrial park creation, and to mere conservation projects. A multicriteria, analysis-based approach is essential to site maintenance while changing its use, in accordance with its interpretation. Physical permanence is related to historic, cultural and socioeconomic dynamics which define the likelihood of keeping up processes such as environment sanitation, landscape redefinition, improvement of anti-seismic structures, partial restoration, energetic efficiency, biocompatible materials use, performance comfort after refunctionalisation. Post-industrial restoration has favoured a progressive transition from empty spaces to knowledge, services, free time and creative industries. This matter includes those projects that may be considered as good practice guidelines for environmental sustainability, material heritage conservation, and historicizing industrial heritage.

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## 10. Industrial heritage in urban and local regeneration (Cristina Natoli, Manuel Ramello)

Once their original function is lost, industrial buildings and areas become a strategic factor for retracing a city reinterpretation that responds to new spaces and functions demand, specially through understanding their identity and culture value as a drive towards quality and competitiveness for sustainable development.

If conceived, planned and managed from a comprehensive point of view at a local and regional scale, transformation of these areas can favour overall regeneration that may provide citizens with a space suitable for individual and collective development, increasing social cohesion and competitive capacity at regional, national and international level. Thanks to their configuration, major part of industrial buildings show high flexibility, allowing them to be adapted – even temporarily and through slight changes – to the most diverse uses. Their reemployment requires regulations that may establish a satisfactory compromise between preserving their identity and the physical transformation change calls for. Besides, combining smart technologies and heritage sites may create new and relevant scenarios for both using and preserving spaces, sites and cities, activating new development paths able to both improve the user experience and promote artistic production.

From a global view on the most recent industrial heritage development project, we observe a clear trend towards broadening heritage preservation areas, from the single building, to the site, the cultural trail, the trail network, the industrial park, and the landscape.

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## **11. Dismantling issues (Edoardo Currà, Augusto Vitale)**

The most recent series of dismantlements, which is taking place in the last years due to economic crisis and technologic revolutions, is causing a factory disaster and the resulting loss of buildings and parts of industrial landscape, along with knowledge, memories and social bonds. This motivates, with renewed urgency, a firm mobilisation, an emergency plan for heritage at risk and the foundation of an observatory for dismantling processes and their related phenomena. On such matters both the public and the scientific community must commit to oppose dismantling and call for a protective action towards the unique heritage enclosed in documents, machines and buildings, which have often survived over the years through wars, business and technological transformations, and crisis.

When dismantling has been followed by an identity regaining processes, new project related scenarios emerge, requiring new guidelines for industrial conversion plans that implement solid background knowledge and a historic assessment of the former industrial sites issues and transformations.

Which fate has industrial heritage conservation undergone? Has it been fully or partially erased from our cities? Or have there been actions to preserve documents, voices and bonds with the surrounding society? In these cases, which role has the sociopolitical fabric played? In which measure has the latter been transformed?

## **12. Industrial cultural tourism: accesibility and local development (Massimo Bottini, Rossella Maspoli)**

Cultural heritage involved in knowledge and tourism experiences in both tangible and intangible. The European Parliament decision for the European Year of

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Cultural Heritage (2018), which follows the support received during the European Industrial Heritage Year (2015), aims to promote sustainable development strategies that exploit the potential, improve the identity sense and revamp cultural tourism.

The industrial legacy elements concern tourism as capitalisation, transformation and regeneration agents – among multifunctional use, museum creation and new districts for creative and innovative industry – or as on hold or dismatted areas, appealing for industrial safaris.

Within the diverse conditions and hybridisation processes, we find a variety of industrial and post-industrial tourism types, from corporate branding and company archives, to site development and spectacularisation, memory and testimony collection, product and technology museums, and landscape, infrastructure and company town conservation.

Improving accessibility in quantitative, qualitative, physical (design for all) and cultural terms (including young people, vulnerable communities, recent immigrants, unschooled population...) is key for embracing a wider target and encouraging active participation.

In this context we find experiential tourism, which is open to experimenting with material culture – in terms of uniqueness, authenticity and involvement – and is defined through tours, showroom-factory and workshop events, discovery trails on local know-how and roots (as the *Made in...* phenomenon) among tradition and innovation in handicraftship and in manufacture.

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Development both in regional connections and marketing, and in online and offline networks and tours among industrial hubs and areas have been essential, as for example the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH).

Finally, a competition between territories would increase tourism and help preserve industrial heritage, as a result of rising investments in technology and design for digitisation, platform building and sign systems for accessibility.

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