

mAAN Seoul Declaration 2011 on Industrial Heritage in Asia

1. Recognizing, understanding, interpreting and harnessing 'Industry' as 'heritage' is a challenge in Asia.
2. Our industrial past is a complex phenomenon:
 - i) Industry in Asia, unlike many parts of the post industrialised West, is still alive and very much a part of our physical and cultural landscape today. It is under continuous and sometimes rapid change. This time & distance required to view this as 'heritage' is one reason for this.
 - ii) Industrial past is not static & tangible. It is a process connecting sites of production and its transfer & consumption through a complex network.
 - iii) Where the industrial past has been lost or ceased to remain in action, its memory contributes to the sense of identity at various levels (personal, local, regional, national etc).
 - iv) One aspect of this complexity comes from the painful association with industry that many Asian sites carry. The discontents of an exploitative industrial past can alienate us and highlight our differences. At the same time a cultural landscape that industry has created through continuity and exchange presents us an opportunity to seek each other's investment in our past, making it shared and mutual. The sharing may not always be equal, the gratification not always mutual but the difference provides texture & colour to this landscape. It is in the context of this 'unequalness' that we must place our exploration, interpretation and (re)appropriation.
 - v) Industry is inherently 'local' as it is specific to a site, a community and/or exists in the memory of a certain group of people geographically localized to a certain place. However the connections that it establishes through shared technology, investment, and consumption represent its 'global' nature. This simultaneous duality and dynamism is a nature of our industrial past.
 - vi) In Asia we need to see place industrial heritage in the context of the evolving industrial process taking place in period where we have experienced the far reaching effects of post war, post-colonial transitions, unprecedented economic development urbanization condensed into a period a few decades.
3. We seek to expand our understanding of industrial heritage in Asia to include traditional industries that remain living and vital to our culture and not restrict it solely to heritage associated with development paradigms rooted in the industrial revolution in the west. Developing the tacit knowledge of practices, crafts skills and cultural systems necessary for continuance of many production processes is important for this understanding.
4. Industry represents the critical & fragile connection between nature & us. The relationship between industry and ecology is crucial to the discussion on sustainability. Emerging challenges of 'climate change' and lessons from our collective industrial past holds valuable lessons towards our present concern for achieving development with sustainability. This presents the opportunity to expand the traditional boundaries of the subject of heritage studies, by placing it as a discipline that can actively contribute to current urban issues.
5. The understanding of the culture of industry and industry as culture needs to be reflected upon. We need to devote time & space to this discussion. We must, during this engagement, cooperate and collaborate with different disciplines, diverse scholarships and wider community to enrich this complex exploration.

Seoul, 26 August 2011

This declaration is announced in the mAAN Seoul 2011 International Conference on "Our Living Heritage: Industrial Buildings and Sites of Asia" organized by mAAN International and mAAN Korea, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Korea, Seoul Museum of History, ICOMOS Korea, ICOMOS Shared Built Heritage Commission, and TICCIH (International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage), in Seoul, 25-27 August, 2011.