

PANEL 1

CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES IN INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE SITES

CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES IN INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE SITES

The exhibition "Cultural and Creative Activities in Industrial Heritage Sites" is a partial output of the NAKI III program project entitled "Active Rescue of Immovable Industrial Heritage through Reuse" (2023 – 2027). The project is funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic. The project involves both researchers from the Department of Architecture of the Faculty of Civil Engineering at the Czech Technical University in Prague, as well as doctoral students from the Industrial Heritage program.

In its first phase, the project focused on the mapping of cultural and creative sector activities in the Czech Republic implemented in abandoned industrial buildings. Thanks to an inventory of 354 highly diverse projects, we analysed selected aspects, confirming that the placement of new cultural and creative functions in abandoned buildings represents one of the most significant opportunities for the conservation of industrial heritage, which can thus not only escape needless destruction, but can deliver significant benefit to society.

Concept: Lenka Popelová, Tomáš Šenberger

Textual narrative: Tomáš Šenberger, Lenka Popelová, Pavla Pražáková

Visuals: Pavla Pražáková

Collaboration on narrative and visuals: Jan Pustějovský, Karel Hájek, Nikolay Brankov

Graphics for panels: Alexej Pražák

English translation: Lucie Návrátová

Collaboration: Klára Ciesarová, Hana Bořková, Tomáš Čunderlik, Dominik Jansa, Martina Jarošová, Vít Jurica, Tomáš Jurica, Jan Kuták, Martin Lapšanský, Tomáš Med, Asthar Najla, Tomáš Ploc, Jakub Strejc, Viktorie Sýkorová, David Šťastný, Martin Štibor

The exhibition was funded by the Programme for the Support of Applied Research in the Area of National and Cultural Identity for 2023–2027 (NAKI III) administered by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic as part of the project entitled "Active Rescue of Immovable Industrial Heritage through Reuse" (DH23P03OVV025).

We would like to thank all contributing individuals and institutions who provided information and photographs.

www.prumyslovededictvi.cz

PANEL 2

EXPERIENCE FROM ABROAD _ THE WEST

For approaching fifty years, abandoned industrial sites in Europe have offered an attractive environment, framed by a specific industrial atmosphere, which is particularly well-suited as environs for the implementation of alternative, cultural, and creative programmes.

STRAAT Amsterdam

The STRAAT street art and graffiti museum resides in an 8,000 m² listed warehouse in the former NDSM wharf facility.

Source: straatmuseum.com/en

Newport Street Gallery, London

The foundation of Damien Hirst's private London gallery, the Newport Street Gallery, was a trio of listed industrial buildings formerly serving as theatre workshops for the production of sets and the painting of theatre stages. In 2015, the architectural studio Caruso St. John harmoniously completed the buildings in its current form.

Source: archiweb.cz

Arena Vienna, Vienna

Arena Vienna was established in late 1976 on the site of the former St. Marx slaughterhouse thanks to the subcultural activist group "Arenauts", who occupied the abandoned but in so many ways attractive industrial complex. Today, almost 40 years later, the Arena is "the Austria's largest alternative cultural and communication centre", a platform for cultural and social activities.

Source: arena.wien

Linz Tobacco Factory, Linz

Cigarette production at the famous functionalist factory designed by Peter Behrens & Alexander Popp began in 1935 and ended in 2009 due to the global anti-smoking campaign. Today, the former industrial complex presents itself as the "heart of a transformed urban district," with a mission focused on creativity, social development, employment, and education. The renovations of the individual buildings—newly housing schools, creative studios, startups, shops, and exhibition spaces—reflect this character.

Source: tabakfabrik-linz.at

PANEL 3

EXPERIENCE FROM ABROAD _ THE EAST

After 1990, the countries of the former "Eastern Bloc" took inspiration from the Western European trend of preserving and reusing abandoned industrial buildings and sites. Although each location is unique in its own way, cultural and creative programmes remain the main themes of their reuse.

Spinnerei, Leipzig

The largest cotton mill in continental Europe, built between 1884–1907, is now a cultural and creative complex covering approx. 6 hectares, consisting of twenty separate and predominantly brick multi-storey buildings. This truly unique space is now home to one hundred art studios for architects, designers, jewellers, and fashion designers, fourteen galleries, numerous workshops, an art supply store, as well as a

theatre, an international dance and choreography centre, and many other cultural institutions.

Source: <https://www.spinnerei.de/>

Fabryka Sztuki, Łódź

Two warehouses for finished and unfinished fabrics from the former Scheibler and Grohman textile factory in Łódź have become the foundation of a multidisciplinary arts centre: Art Factory. The renovated multi-storey buildings serve both artists and the businesses of collaborating partner organizations. The buildings are connected by a glass extension and house exhibition halls, a multifunctional hall, offices and studio space (Art_Inkubator), and a café.

Source: <http://www.fabrykaszuki.org/>

Mlynica, Bratislava

The slag mill building, which was part of the former Bratislava aerated concrete plant dating from 1964, remained in operation until 1992. Following a radical renovation in 2017 (by the GutGut architectural studio), the mill building is now vertically divided into three functional units. The central hall space, running through the entire building, is designed for hosting cultural events and corporate presentations. Three upper floors house office and studio spaces, with unique lofts on the uppermost.

Source: www.archiweb.cz

Kraftwerk Mitte, Dresden

The former coal heating plant and power station was built in 1895 and decommissioned in 1994. In 2016, a complete renovation was completed, preserving all existing buildings and the appearance of the former Mitte cogeneration unit. The site was opened as Kraftwerk Mitte, a vibrant hub of culture, art, and creativity in the heart of Dresden, focused primarily on operetta, music, and theatre performances. In addition to the State Operetta, the Young Generation Theatre, the University of Music and the conservatory, the complex also houses the Dresden Energy Museum and offers many other cultural and culinary experiences.

Source: <https://www.kraftwerk-mitte-dresden.de/>

PANEL 4

CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The latest global trends emphasize economic development based on creativity, innovation, a highly skilled workforce, and entrepreneurship.

How do we define cultural and creative industries for our research?

Cultural industries focus on the production and distribution of cultural content of high cultural value and is often associated with traditional art forms and cultural heritage.

Creative industries also encompass areas of production and distribution of creative content linked to modern technologies, design, and innovative approaches.

In general terms, for our research we have classified the cultural and creative industries to include the following spheres: performing arts, music, visual arts, arts & crafts, design, fashion, architecture, advertising, software, the gaming industry, film and audiovisual production, television, radio, and new media, IT services, books and print,

as well as the creative use of cultural heritage. Based on our initial results, we added education and research, as well as gastronomy and sports as accompanying activities. Since we have expanded the functions under observation beyond the scope of the CCI, herein the umbrella term ACTIVITIES is used.

PANEL 5 **INDUSTRIAL SITES**

The distinct advantage of industrial sites is in their specific interior spaces, which are rarely found in other building types.

How do we define industrial sites in our research?

We perceive the industrial sites primarily as unique architecture with an industrial aesthetic, which often includes brick walls, exposed metal structures, and reinforced concrete frames. Industrial buildings represent a historically and qualitatively defined group of industrial heritage structures, primarily constructed for manufacturing, storage, and transportation, predominantly in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. For our research, we also included smaller buildings of urban infrastructure, the use of which waned as a result of technological changes, and which in recent years have been increasingly utilised by the cultural and creative sector.

PANEL 6 **ACTIVITIES**

Cultural and creative industries are structured by their activities and the space requirements of those activities.

Presentation — stages, exhibitions, collections, education & research

Presentation is considered an activity involving the presentation of artistic performances and works of art, including education and specific research, as well as diverse collections, libraries, and/or archives (cultural industries). Specific presentation activities also include making heritage-listed industrial buildings accessible to the public.

Production — offices, studios, workshops & gastronomy

Production is considered an activity in which tangible and intangible, as well as commercially viable outputs are created through the imagination of their creators (creative industries).

PANEL 7 **COLLECTIONS/MUSEUMS**

Museums, libraries, archives, and accessible cultural monuments

The city collaborated with museums in Cheb and Karlovy Vary, as well as with the Sudeten German Museum in Munich to create a Czech-German museum. The project also involved the local residents displaced after the war.

(archiweb.cz)

Automoto Museum, Lučany

The metallurgic production hall with drawing mills of the former Ludwig Breit glassworks has been converted into a gallery and exhibition space for cars and motorcycles.

Source: studio ACHIDEE 2023

Plesná Museum, Plesná near Cheb

During a three-year conversion, the building of the former Johann Lehrmann & Sons textile factory, later the Tosta national enterprise, was transformed into a modern community centre with a museum mapping the Czech-German history of the region. The project sought to strike a balance between the scale of the complex and the surrounding housing development, emphasising the preservation of the original urban footprint and the identity of the site. The remains of the lowest floors of the buildings in the central part of the complex have become part of the public space, reminiscent of archaeological monuments.

Source: Atelier Stoeck

Hedva Czech Brocade Exhibition, Rýmařov

The former textile factory of Adolf and Franz Schiel has been owned since 2014 by HEDVA ČESKÝ BROKÁT, a company specializing in the weaving of historical brocades. In collaboration with its employees, a unique museum was created here featuring an exhibition on the history of linen production, weaving, and the textile industry.

Source: Raketoplán Architectural Studio, 2017

PANEL 8 STAGES

Theatre in all its contemporary forms: drama, opera, dance, musicals, alternative theatre, concerts, and contemporary circus

“We preserved the structural simplicity of the heat exchanger, thereby maintaining its unique character. ... We’re a space that will capture your heart, never letting go.”
(vymenik1.cz)

Výměník1, České Budějovice

Half of the housing estate’s heat exchange station has taken on an entirely new dimension thanks to a professionally executed cultural and creative programme since 2019.

Source: Výměník1, České Budějovice.

Industra, Brno

A gallery, theatre, café, and educational space—all residing in the compressor hall of the former Zbrojovka factory. Industra is an open creative space for sharing a wide array of activities, showcasing projects from Czech and international creators in contemporary art and theatre since 2013.

Source: Industra, Brno.

Švestková dráha (Plum Track)

A wide array of cultural and social activities, including the May Day steam train rides and the December St. Nicholas rides, as well as the annual Švestková dráha Music Festival (Švestka FEST) accompany the current operation of the reactivated regional railway section from Čížkovice to Obrnice since 2018.

Source: Švestková dráha (Plum Track).

PANEL 9

EXHIBITIONS

Gallery of fine arts, exhibition spaces, spaces for artist residencies and education

“In addition to the core building materials of all preserved structures, we were also able to recycle original objects from technical facilities. Thus, old lockers were transformed into unique display cases for installations, and former grilles became aesthetically striking decorations...”

(futureum.cz)

Egon Schiele Art Centre, Český Krumlov

Thanks to a private initiative, a unique gallery and artist residency has been housed in a former Renaissance brewery since 1993.

Source: Egon Schiele Art Centre.

Futureum at DOV, Ostrava

The adaptation of buildings that once served as a wagon tippler station and a black-coal grinding mill from the 1950s has created a dynamic and open space for a cultural and educational centre, combining exhibitions with a tour of technologies of a previous era (since 2022).

Source: Futureum.

EPo1 Centre for Contemporary Art, Trutnov

Built in 1912, the former power and later heating plant at Poříčí 1 was converted into a specialized gallery that thanks to the building's extraordinary size focuses primarily on oversized works of art. Other works by domestic and international artists are also on display since 2018.

PANEL 10

OFFICES

Advertising agencies, design and architectural studios, software and digital game production, publishing industry, co-working spaces

“Our space isn't just another uniform co-working space. We've been living and working here together for years, and we'd love to have you join us for lunch...”

(vault42.cz)

mar.s architects Studio, Prague

This architectural studio located among the spaces of the former Holešovice cable factory harnesses the site's industrial atmosphere.

Source: mar.s architects, 2021

Vault 42, Olomouc

A former bastion of the Baroque fortifications, converted into a military bakery in 1811, now includes a co-working space designed for freelancers and other dynamic professionals seeking an inspired and modernly equipped place to work.

Source: Raketoplán Architectural Studio, 2017

Foyer/Vnitroblock, Prague

A unique post-industrial space was created within a residential block in Prague-Holešovice. The enclosed hall is connected to a former alley lined with warehouses and workshops, now home to creative activities. The Foyer co-working space is fully equipped, featuring 16 workstations and a meeting room.

Source: mar.s architects, since 2023

PANEL 11

WORKSHOPS/STUDIOS

Fashion designers, visual arts, arts & crafts, film, television, music, radio

“Once you’ve reserved the time-slot and equipment you need, you can head to the workshop. Trams 1, 2, and 6 stop at the Dolní Vítkovice Hlubina stop.” (fajnadilna.cz)

Fajná dílna, Ostrava

The first public workshop and craft incubator in a former compressor room of the Hlubina mine in Ostrava (opened 2018).

Kovozoo, Staré Město u Uherského Hradiště

The site of a sugar refinery dating back to 1867 has been since 2012 now home to the Recycling and Ecological Centre. The former locomotive shed is used as a “maternity ward” for the creation of animals from scrap metal. In addition to the zoo, with more than 400 animals on display, the complex also houses a blacksmith museum and a vintage car museum.

Kabelovna Studios, Prague

Built in 1908, Block D of the former Holešovice electrical cable and wire factory was converted into a recording studio. The inspiring environment of the original industrial hall also provides space for other artists — fashion designers, painters, and designers, as well as manufacturers of printed clothing.

Source: B² architecture/Barbara Bencová 2022

PANEL 12
EDUCATION/SCIENCE

Schools, spaces for educational institutions, courses, workshops, and specific research

“Be where the future is born.”
(techtower.cz)

House of Dance Art, Prague

Since 2021, the House of Dance Art, home to the Dance Centre Prague conservatory, has been located in part of the Neo-Renaissance brewery of the Prague brewers.

TechTower, Pilsen

Conversion of the former Světovar brewery into a state-of-the-art technology park. Spanning 9,300 m², it offers spaces for innovative projects, shared offices, workshops, conference rooms, a SeedUp Space for meetings, gallery, and a test water tank for the development of robots and drones... The conversion was sponsored by the city of Pilsen and financed through multiple sources, including EU funds. Designed by Obermeyer Helika, opened in 2023.

Planeta Hlinsko, Hlinsko

Thanks to the proactive approach of the town of Hlinsko, the former administrative building of the ETA company is from 2023 the headquarters of a vocational school and also a unique educational centre. On the 3rd and 4th floors of the building, it introduces visitors of all ages to the Earth's geosphere through interactive display, focusing on topics such as the lithosphere and hydrosphere. The centre offers educational programmes to schools and also serves as a venue for the University of the Third Age.

PANEL 13
GASTRONOMY

Cafés, bistros, restaurants

“Bar78, serves hot meals, and provides catering services for the local theatre as well as for workshops, conferences, discussions, lectures, exhibitions, happenings, and private and corporate events...” (bublina.bar)

DOK Nordbeans, Liberec

A coffee roastery, bakery, and a café with a restaurant in a former railway depot dating from 1859.

Source: ANUK Architects, 2020

Bar78 by Bublina/Jatka78, Prague

A bar and bistro in the entrance area of the two-aisled Halls 7 and 8 on the site of a former slaughterhouse from the late 19th century is an integral part of the multifunctional Jatka 78 space, which includes a theatre hall, small stage, training hall, rehearsal space, and gallery. Interior adaptation and unification of the foyer's style: Hynek Dřízal, 2014.

Kovárna Café, Čeladná

A former blacksmith's shop from the turn of the last century has been converted into a bistro and café. The architects' own studio is located in the building's extension.

Source: RMBA-architekti, 2016, 2018.

PANEL 14

FUNCTIONAL OVERLAP

Sports arenas, gyms, cycling, skateparks, fitness centres, climbing walls

While sports are not traditionally considered among the cultural and creative industries, they are often present in connection with the researched activities. Industrial spaces are alternately used by cultural, sports, and educational institutions, either side by side or in a complementary relationship. Local communities are also commonly connected with sports, and the relationship between sports and gastronomy has become quite common.

Plechárna, Prague

The Plechárna community, cultural, and leisure centre was created by converting a former boiler house on the outskirts of the Černý Most housing estate, thanks to the local community and with the support of the city council. Today, Plechárna offers the only public indoor skatepark, and after the removal of obstacles, a flexible space for hosting cultural events. The centre also features attractive outdoor areas. Skatepark since 2010, community centre since 2013.

Fénix Sports Arena, Havířov

The exclusive 1960s train station building in Havířov was saved from demolition thanks to pressure from both experts and the public. In addition to the building, the public gained a sports hall through its adaptation. Due to its impressive space, the hall can also be used to host social events, concerts, theatre performances, lectures, and exhibitions.

Source: Daniel Labuzík, Kohl Architekti, 2022.

Ski and Bike Centre Radotín, Radotín

Built in 1910, the sawtooth-roofed hall of the former Vindyš factory was transformed into a retail space, workshops for bicycle assembly and repair, and a sports and cultural centre with a restaurant.

Source: VLLNNA – Petr Šindelář + Martin Duba Architects, 2019.

PANEL 15

TYOPOLOGY

The basic types of industrial buildings differ in their capacity to accommodate new functions — and as such in their adaptability.

Multi-purpose buildings are versatile, well-adaptable structures, implemented in two main forms: multi-storey buildings and single-storey halls. Their adaptation is often limited by their size, which may exceed the needs of intended activities.

Nová Perla is a versatile multi-storey building that was a former textile factory for linen and cotton in the town Krásná Lípa, which was renovated by private sponsors. It is now used as an art studio with an exhibition space, printmaking workshop, café, and a residence.

Single-purpose buildings are specialized and more difficult to adapt, having been constructed for a single type of production, either as manufacturing facilities themselves or as their structural enclosures, as well as specific railway-related buildings.

The former wastewater treatment plant in Prague-Bubeneč, built at the beginning of the 20th century, now serves, thanks to its preserved technological equipment, as a museum and social and cultural centre for hosting various events and exhibitions.

Combined buildings integrate both specialized and more broadly universal parts within a single architectural unit. These are predominantly food processing facilities such as breweries and malt houses, but also glassworks and ceramics factories. Their distinctive features and attractive, variably-sized spaces allow them to accommodate a wide range of new function.

The listed **brewery and malt house in Lobeč**, which a private initiator restored to its original architectural form, is now a multi-function facility with a brewing exhibition and is also used for a number of other activities: beer brewing, restaurant, and organizing social events.

PANEL 16 **INDUSTRIAL SECTORS**

From which industrial sectors are industrial buildings most frequently adapted for cultural and creative industries? From the 354 examples we mapped:

Food industry: 79x

Transport structures: 63x

Textile industry: 46x

Energy sector: 35x

Machinery manufacturing: 25x

Mining: 20x

Metallurgical industry: 20x

Manufacturing industry: 15x

Urban infrastructure: 11x

Warehouses: 11x

Wood processing: 7x

Paper industry: 6x

Electrical engineering industry: 5x

Construction industry: 5x

Chemical industry: 5x

PANEL 17

ABANDONED INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

With the loss of their original function, industrial buildings are often abandoned or used for unsuitable substitute purposes.

*“Water was leaking through the roof... vegetation running rampant inside...”
Former foundry on the Tatra Kopřivnice site” (muzeumtatra.cz)*

Economic and political changes in recent decades have shaped and redefined how modern industry works, what it focuses on, and what we as a society expect from it. In the West, the conversion of industrial buildings and sites has been taking place since the 1960s, and in our region since the 1990s.

PANEL 18

SYNERGIES

I’m seeking a space for my activities... and at the same time, I’m offering the use of a vacant building.

Cultural and creative industries seek out highly diverse spaces for their activities, which are available only within a limited range of common building typologies. Industrial buildings – both versatile and combined—meet these requirements in many respects. A new programme also helps protect the industrial building, and thus a part of industrial heritage, from uncompromising demolition.

PANEL 19

REUSE/ADAPTATION

Assessing the adaptability of an industrial building in relation to the newly introduced function is the foundation of a successful conversion.

For the purposes of this research, *conversion* is understood as the preservation of the former industrial building’s structural substance through the introduction of a new function. The degree of the necessity of the intervention into the original building depends on its adaptability as well as the type of new programme. Versatile, multi-purpose buildings, and multi-storey structures and halls are the most adaptable, and comprise approx. 40% of the mapped examples. Owing to their unusual spaces, single-purpose buildings, such as boiler rooms, heat exchange stations, etc. (18%), and combined production buildings, such as breweries, etc. (17%), are also particularly suitable for adaptation. Among transportation structures, railway stations account for approximately 8%.

PANEL 20

LOCATION

A successful conversion is also influenced by the location of the industrial building. In general, there are three basic types of locations: city centre, the outskirts, and the countryside. Although there is an abundance of abandoned industrial buildings outside settlements, there are few potential users of creative and cultural activities. Within settlements, regardless of size, the situation is more favourable, as confirmed by the significant number of examples.

Cog Railway Line Museum, Kořenov

The structural remains of a former train depot from 1903 were created when the roof collapsed in 1987. A complete renovation took place as part of the project “The Cog Railway Line – A Unique Living Cultural Heritage of the Jizera Mountains and the Krkonoše Mountains” (Architectural Studio ALEJ, 2016). Set in a romantic natural environment, the depot is now used seasonally as the Cog Railway Line Museum and as a base for an association that operates historic rail vehicles.

Satran’s Mill, Nová Ves near Mělník

The original hydro-powered roller mill, with a documented construction history spanning from the Middle Ages to the Industrial Era, was sensitively adapted in accordance with heritage conservation principles. Its current use includes educational and cultural programmes, community events, demonstrations of traditional crafts, and a regional museum. The mill has thus gained new social relevance and become an integral part of the community’s identity.

Underground Klub Eden, Broumov

Since 2015, this club with its unique atmosphere has resided in the former dyeing and bleaching plant of the Nowotny Bros company, founded in 1809. Legends of the music scene have performed here, and the club also hosts exhibitions and discussions with various interesting people. The authentic, minimally modified interior is decorated with original sculptural objects by Petr Vaněk and David Szalay, created from materials found at local scrap yards.

Provoz Community Centre, Ostrava

After ten years in Hlubina, the alternative community centre Provoz moved in 2020 to the city centre, into a villa built as part of the Zett chocolate and confectionery factory. By combining several rooms, a multi-purpose space was created: a club adapted for concerts, literary readings, film screenings, or workshops, as well as a studio with a gallery. The renovations also include a section of the riverfront along the Ostravice River.

PLATO / City Gallery of Contemporary Art, Ostrava

The premises of the former and historically protected municipal slaughterhouse from the turn of the 19th–20th centuries have been dramatically converted into a fine arts gallery with education centre. The entrance hall houses a café and bistro. The publicly funded gallery opened in May 2022, and the first exhibition took place in September 2022. The project by Robert Konieczny’s KWK Promes Studio has received numerous architectural awards.

PANEL 21

SMALL / LARGE

The necessary size of an industrial building adapted for cultural and creative industries depends on an array of factors. The most essential include the required scope of the new program, the accessibility of an industrial building, and sufficient investment funds for the conversion. For many of the monitored activities, often initiated by individuals or communities, smaller buildings are easier to access and use effectively.

“We want the gallery to also serve as a public community space – a multi-functional venue for lectures, workshops, and screenings.”
(ASA Manifesto)

Tatra Trucks Museum, Kopřivnice

“The Old Foundry”, a 5,000 m² hall-style building, was built in 1911 and expanded in 1934. The museum’s exhibition is based on Jiří Hlach’s collection of Tatra trucks, supplemented by exhibits from the original Tatra Technical Museum and items from private collections. Today, the museum is an important cultural institution in Kopřivnice and a major tourist attraction in the Moravian-Silesian region.

Source: Construction/Architecture: ARTIS s.r.o., Kamil Mrva Architects Studio, 2020, exhibition design: Art Consultancy, 2021

400 ASA Gallery, Prague

The small building of the Prague-Smíchov transformer station, a tiny “temple” of electrification built in 1925, is now used as a photography gallery with a café and bookshop. The content for the private gallery was provided by the prominent photographers’ association 400 ASA. This architecturally superb conversion annually houses as many as six exhibitions by domestic and international photographers, featuring either members of 400 ASA or their guests.

Source: Patrik Hoffmann’s Studio, 2021

PANEL 22 INTERVENTION

The degree of intervention in an industrial building during its adaptation for cultural and creative activities is not in and of itself a measure of the project’s success. Often, minimal or almost no intervention can better reflect the overall atmosphere. Community-oriented projects tend to adapt a space only slightly to the activities taking place there.

“We welcome donations of all kinds of items (tools, café supplies, furniture, pillows, blankets...). If you have unused items at home... We’re happy to breathe new life into them.”

solojihlava.cz

Cooperative Grain Storage Facility, Silo Community Centre, Jihlava

In a historic grain storage facility dating from 1937, featuring a unique lamella roof structure and authentically preserved remnants of machinery, a community space was gradually created entirely without intervention and oriented primarily toward the exterior and the large garden. Thanks to the efforts of the Silo Jihlava association, this cultural monument escaped demolition, although operations are currently suspended due to the construction of the neighbouring Central Transportation Terminal, and thus a move to another location is being considered.

Museum Kampa, Jan & Meda Mládek Foundation, Prague

A modern art gallery with visitor facilities was created by the conversion of the site of the former Sova's, later Odkolek's mill on Prague's Kampa Island. Despite the sensitive adaptation, the interventions in the original industrial building sparked considerable professional and public debate.

Source: Helena Bukovanská (A8000), 2001

Exteriors: glass sculpture and balcony (Marián Karel + Michal Motyčka)

PANEL 23

MULTIFUNCTIONALITY

How many activities can be carried out in a single industrial building? This certainly depends on its size and internal layout, but most importantly on the operational economics of the entire project. Many cultural activities often bring no financial profit and are therefore supplemented by other activities. Having multiple activities in a single building stabilizes the economic prospects of the project – profitable activities offset the loss-making.

*“A platform for art, work, and creativity. Want to combine them?”
(telegraph.cz)*

Telegraph, Olomouc

A former galvanic cell factory from the early 20th century was converted into the multifunctional Telegraph space. The three original floors now house exhibition spaces for a gallery of modern and contemporary art, a co-working centre including separate offices, and a café with a lecture hall. The newly added top floor features two rental apartments.

Source: Architectural studio Ječmen/2022

PANEL 24

PUBLIC SPACE

Industrial buildings and their immediate surroundings, in connection with their new use for cultural activities, are opening up to the public. These newly created public spaces, often requiring further extensive modification, form natural hubs of civic activity that enrich everyday life in settlements and contribute to the development of civil society. They also raise public interest in the fate of industrial heritage.

*“On the last day of summer holiday, Attic Collective will transform our ALTA garden into a unique dream house... Let's build it together using what we find in the garden.”
(altart.cz)*

Studio ALTA, Prague-Libeň

The original ALTA dance studio, founded to serve dancers without a home venue, is now a multicultural centre residing in the long-abandoned Panský Brewery in the district of Libeň. This cultural landmark is now home to dance- and theatre-related creative activities, extending into the revitalized public spaces of the surrounding area and connecting with the renovated neighbouring Velký mlýn (since 2023).

Brillovka, Rožnov pod Radhoštěm

Following years of disrepair, the late 19th century corner building of the former Brill knitting mill from was repurposed for small shops and municipal services, as well as to support local culture in the form of a gallery and a multipurpose hall. The conversion also included thoughtful redesign of the courtyard and the area surrounding the building, which has significantly revitalized the surrounding public spaces in this attractive part of town.

Source: janca architect, 2018.

PANEL 25

DURATION OF USE

For the success of activities introduced into industrial sites and buildings, the duration of their use is ultimately not a decisive factor. Permanent activities, however, are significantly more common. Temporary use is a relatively successful way to make immediate use of a vacant industrial building, either for a one-off event or for a period until a decision is made regarding the building's future, whether positive (conservation) or negative.

“The project did not permanently transform the site or the building, nor was that its goal.”

(continuo.cz)

Site-specific project AGORA, České Budějovice

Part of the freight station depot in České Budějovice became the performance space for a week-long site-specific project. A 120-metre-long platform covered by a wooden structure, reminiscent of a Greek Agora, along with passenger cars, was utilized by Divadlo Continuo2 in collaboration with Czech Railways and ČD Cargo to organize a project themed “What Kind of World Do We Live In?” (28 July – 4 August 2022).

KUPÉ, Opava

The original railway water tower building with a boiler room, built at Opava's East Station in 1892, has been converted into an exhibition gallery featuring a permanent exhibition of works by sculptor Kurt Gebauer. Neglected for decades, this cultural monument is now open to the public. In addition to exhibition spaces and a terraced café, it is also used as a multi-functional hall for hosting various social events.

Source: CASUA Studio, Technico Opava, 2016.

PANEL 26

INITIATORS

An initiator is essential in the launch, progress, and outcome of the entire adaptation process. The initiator influences the formulation of the reuse program, selects the abandoned building, chooses the form of adaptation and degree of intervention, and ultimately seeks the resources and funding schemes for both the actual adaptation and its subsequent operations. Most initiators come from the private sector, with very few projects initiated by public authorities.

“...we thank all the volunteers, friends, and acquaintances who helped us clean the tower, organize events, and maintain the surroundings of this technical monument...”
zauhlovačka.cz

Coal Loading and Water Tower (Zauhlovačka), Vratislavice nad Nisou

A unique reinforced concrete structure from 1918, it served the power plant of a neighbouring textile factory. Since 2015, the protected monument has been leased by the AvantgArt association, which established a cultural and arts centre, connecting art, entertainment, and community gatherings, including the Dílna craft workshops. After years of entirely volunteer-driven and spontaneous activities by the association, the lease was terminated by the owner in 2025.

Source: AvantgArt 2015–2025.

Winternitz Automatic Mills / Gočár Gallery, Pardubice

After operations ceased, the impressive building designed by architect Josef Gočár was purchased by a private initiator who intended to repurpose the industrial structure for cultural use. Only later did the Pardubice Region take the initiative, and in 2018 it acquired the building to house the regional gallery. The protected monument was repaired, but due to a relatively radical intervention, its interiors lost their spatial and structural authenticity.

Source: TRANSAT, Petr Všeťka, 2023.

PANEL 27 COMMUNITIES

Communities are one of the important initiators of adaptations of industrial buildings and sites for cultural and creative activities. A certain type of connection can be seen between abandoned industrial buildings and local civic communities. Their relationship is clearly bidirectional – the community seeks a suitable space, or an abandoned building fosters community formation.

“ZET9 rehearsal rooms and studios are open spaces serving to support the development of cultural and creative souls active in Brno.”
(altart.cz)

ZET9, Brno-Líšeň

The administrative building of the former Brno Zbrojovka, which has ceased to serve its original purpose and is scheduled for demolition sometime after 2026, has been converted by the current owner for independent creative industries. Under favourable pricing terms, the ZET9 project provides spaces for collaborating Brno artists, thereby helping to revitalize Brno’s cultural scene and fostering cooperation among creative professions (since 2023).

Výměník, Karlovy Vary

After the partial vacating of the housing estate boiler house and the later heat exchange station (výměník) in Karlovy Vary-Tuhnice, a civic initiative of enthusiasts from several local associations took the lead and created Výměník, today a vibrant educational, creative, cultural, and community centre that has the ability to connect people across generations, fields, and social backgrounds (since 2022).

PANEL 28

INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION

When adapting industrial buildings for cultural and creative activities, the primary goal is not the conservation of heritage-listed buildings or industrial heritage. However, this can be an unintended positive effect that ultimately contributes to a certain level of conservation. By being used and maintained—even with minimal funds—the building is naturally protected against further decay.

“Exhibitions are held in the original railway station hall. Amid the sound of passing trains, countless events take place here throughout the year.”
(industryopen.cz)

Moving Station, Pilsen

The Art Nouveau building of the Pilsen train station located in the former Imperial Suburb was converted for cultural use as part of the Pilsen–European Capital of Culture 2015 programme. The listed building is currently used as a theatre with a multi-functional “black box” auditorium and a small stage functioning as a social space with a café. The original railway platform is also used as a performance space.

“Artistic occupation” 2000, adaptation 2015.

Red Tower of Death, Ostrov

The seven-storey former uranium ore sorting plant, now known as the Red Tower of Death, was declared a national cultural monument as one of the symbols of the persecution of political prisoners and, as part of the Erzgebirge/Krušnohoří Mining Region, was also listed as the UNESCO World Heritage. An exhibition commemorating the theme of political prisoners is installed in this authentic industrial space. Exhibition: Studio COSMO 2022.

Brewery, Kostelec nad Černými Lesy

The mid-19th-century brewery was carefully restored by the Dej Bůh štěstí society as an architectural and technological exhibit, including a preserved horse-powered mill and restored beer manufacturing. The complex was declared a cultural monument at the initiative of the owners. Today, the brewery serves as the National Museum of Brewing, a social and cultural centre featuring a restaurant and an extensive exhibition on Czech brewing and is a frequently mentioned tourist destination in the region. Restoration since 2001, National Museum of Brewing since 2023