



Past - Present - Future



TESTING INVESTMENT-FREE MEASURES FOR IMPROVED EXTERIOR APPEARANCE OF INDUSTRIAL QUARTERS

Face-lifting the industrial quarter
“Porubsky” in the city of Leoben

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PP3, city of Leoben



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0. Abstract

Industrial Culture comes to life through stories told by people, buildings and landscapes. The importance of stories in and for cities has grown steadily in Europe over the past two decades. Changing the exterior appearance of (old-) industrial regions and cities is a promising way of telling such stories. Worldwide a number of successful initiatives have already succeeded in achieving image transformation and involving citizens in their industrial cultural environment. A focus group of the region “Styrian Iron Route” has worked on this topic in the frame of a design thinking process and developed a catalogue of feasible ideas and inventions. Out of this catalogue one measure “Verhüllungen - Einblicke” was implemented in the industrial quarter of Porubsky/Leitendorf in the city of Leoben in the frame of the industry cultural event.



1. Project Context

The Central Europe Project InduCult2.0 (www.inducult.eu) addresses Central European regions mono-focused on industrial production. Through InduCult2.0 typical regions utilise the tangible and intangible cultural assets of their industrial past, present and future in a synergetic way for positioning their regions as attractive places for working, living and recreation. Together with local stakeholders, they rediscover and develop the positive elements of industrial communities. Specifically, the partnership intends to:

- promote and establish the idea of Industrial Culture in Central Europe;
- strengthen the distinct culture of industrial regions and utilise it as location factor;
- empower industrial regions by re-activating their pioneer spirit.

Involved are eight representative regions from Germany, Austria, Belgium, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia and Poland. They are supported by two scientific partners from Germany and Austria.

Each of the regions has prepared an “argumentation paper” on their specific industrial culture and its benefits. This provides the basic frame for developing and implementing actions in the field of Industrial Culture and therefor for promotion of a Central-European (respectively European) Industrial Culture.

Actions are to be developed by the regions in three fields (work packages): Actions on ...

... cultural measures for fostering regional identity (T2)

... cultural initiatives influencing industrial labour market and company commitment (T3)

... cultural measures promoting creativity and pioneer spirit (T4).

Apart from concepts for creating pioneer and culture space in old-industrial sites and thus reviving old-industrial places, the other major activity in work package T4 is the improvement of interaction between producing industry and creative communities. Improving the exterior appearance of industrial quarters by means of creativity is one approach to achieve this goal.

2. Introduction

Industrial Culture (IC) is a young member of the European culture family. Its roots can be found in many European regions, which 200 years ago were not only cradles of industrialisation, but have been up to now sites of industrial production. A typical representative is the region “Styrian Iron Route” and the adjoining Mur-Mürz-valley. Over the centuries the hegemony of industrial production and mining has created a specific cultural climate, which - apart from visible monuments and artefacts - can be experienced in specific values, traditions, skills and a distinctive way of living. Nowadays the region is one the most important industrial regions in Austria, with the city of Leoben and the Styrian Iron route - with the global steel player voestalpine, the mining university and the

brehtaking site “ore mine Erzberg” (where according to the legend, ore has been extracted for more than 1300 years) - in its centre.

Industrial Culture comes to life through stories told by people, buildings and landscapes. The importance of stories in and for cities has grown steadily in Europe over the past two decades. A city thus becomes what it is, characterized by stories, legends, novels, films, paintings, architecture, etc.

The story’s narrative has the power to define what "exists" and what does not. The narrative is not just a representation of the urban, but an idea of it. An idea of what is urban and how city can work. Stories are derived both from the history of a place and from its name. All these stories influence the planning of building types and the mobility of the city. Stories are also used in branding and marketing for cities. And: Stories are best transferred when induced by the means of art. When art in the urban space is able to change patterns of movement by passers-by, it becomes clear what significance art can have for our cities in urban as well as rural areas.

Art has the ability to create identity by interacting with a wide public. Leading creative artists in Austria view "art in public space" as a contemporary form of dealing with current social questions. It tackles socio-political issues and explores the relationship between the people who inhabit or pass through a region and their surroundings. A regular, direct contact with citizens through dialogue and / or citizen participation events promotes a positive dialogue culture and at the same time touches the creative potential of inhabitants. Communities, when invited by the city to co-create, have proven to invent numerous ideas and concepts to actively shape the immediate environment. Art in the public space may be used as an integral part of the development of future perspectives of citizens.

3. Objective

The goal was to accentuate industrial buildings being part of the appearance of the city of Leoben and therefore reframing its negative visual image.

A historical factory site that citizens call ‘ugly’ should be transformed into a meaningful canvas for the observer’s eye to enjoy. Art and industrial culture should build a new visual identity of an old-industrial site in the Leoben and add a new value through art work. The art work and the combination of old and new should create a feeling of transformation and form a metaphor for the transformation of an industrial brownfield to a new industry.

4. Applied Approach

In order to give the art performance a strong meaning and connection to industrial culture and identification, an artist was chosen who is closely connected to industry. An artist with a sad personal background - he is a former industrial worker and after a working accident

got paralysed. He then made a retraining to become an industrial designer. Nowadays, he is performing under the pseudonym “Kaname”.

For the art work he chose photographs of raw material in the surrounding area of the industrial brownfield. He edited the photographs with photoshop and created an art work to be displayed at the outside walls of Porubsky Halle - an old industrial factory site in Leoben.

5. Results

The outdoor exhibition on the walls of Porubsky Halle was installed in Sept. 2018. The large-scale pictures of space and planets are used as a metaphor and shall express that, by looking behind the old walls of the factory site, a new world can be explored. It shall stimulate the observer to think beyond the reasonable and think further. The performance was part of the industrial culture festival (T2.4.3) and was also promoted in the programme folder.









6. Evaluation

This action can be seen as a first trial to improve the appearance of industrial quarters in the region. The installation has raised interest among the citizens of Leoben and people have started to talk about the site, which was the intention of this pilot. The art work can

be seen as a symbol of transformation and can hopefully create a joint vision for further similar actions in the region.

On a transnational level PP3 exchanged knowledge via the workgroup 4, here especially with the Polish partner (PP9), who conducted a similar activity. As a general result, the activity proves that small funding and interventions can alter the perception of old industrial spaces, creating new visions and opportunities for their re-utilisation.

7. Outlook and sustainability

The outdoor installation will continue until at the end of project lifetime. Focus group members and especially the economic association “AreaM” will be informed about the results. It will be tried to form a co-operation with involved focus group members and property owners in order to jointly work on the development and improvement of the appearance of other industrial brownfields.

One important investor has already bought a big area in on the industrial brownfield and further developments will be discussed. The city of Leoben and the association of the Styrian Iron Route will try to bring in the IC aspect in the development process.