



06. Selection as a process of evaluating industrial heritage

The approach taken by museology and museography to the evaluation of industrial heritage comprises a specific activity denoted by the term selection. This process involves the observation and identification of objective cultural-technical values (cultural, historical, aesthetic and technical values) and the determination of the specific museum value (museality) of an object, building etc., on whose basis the item is identified as a suitable representative of a phenomenon whose preservation (i.e. protection against natural destruction) is deemed desirable for society.

Examples of industrial heritage that may be incorporated into museum collections include:

- a complex of buildings (site) or landscape area,⁶²⁾
- a building,
- a storage facility,
- a transportation route,
- an example of a technology,
- a means of production,
- a technical device,
- a raw material,
- a semi-finished product,
- a product,
- a historical document,
- photographic documentation,
- an audio or video recording,
- or intangible heritage represented by tangible remains (items) or records.

The methodology of the selection process is based on the approach taken by the discipline of museology, which attempts to define and identify the values of all examples of industrial heritage that can be perceived by the human senses, i.e. including intangible heritage, properties and relations among various elements, applying philosophical and methodological approaches and contributing to the formulation of ethical standards.⁶³⁾

Museology applies an interdisciplinary approach which takes into account the perspectives of both social and natural sciences in order to utilize the resources of museums to create an image of the world of the past, thus contributing to a better understanding of the present-day world.⁶⁴⁾ Museology also identifies the values of industrial heritage from the perspective of museums' role in documentation and communication as part of the education process; this includes analyzing the benefits of different forms of documentation for the content of collections, possible forms of presentation, and so on. Currently, especially in Western Europe, the selection process is increasingly incorporating elements of discussion and cooperation with the general (non-expert) public, whose members are able to provide an insight into other criteria (e.g. local specifics, cultural pluralism) when evaluating the value of a particular item.

62) Act no. 122/200 Sb. (Section 2, Subsection 2) states that "A collection item as per Section 1 is a movable object or an immovable object or a set of these items, either naturally occurring or human artefacts."

63) LEHMANNOVÁ, Martina (ed.). *Etické kodexy. Etický kodex ICOM. Etický kodex ICOM pro přírodovědná muzea. Dokument o profesi konzervátora-restaurátora*. Praha 2014. See also STRÁNSKÝ, Z. Z. *Úvod do studia muzeologie*. Brno 1980, pp. 91–92; WAIDACHER, Friedrich. *Průručka všeobecné muzeologie*. Bratislava 1999. Practical considerations are discussed in the methodological materials published by Jiří Žalman.

64) ŽALMAN, Jiří et al. *Průručka muzejníková I. Tvorba, evidence, inventarizace a bezpečnost sbírek v muzeích a galeriích*. Praha – Brno 2002, p. 15.



Hlučín-Darkovičky, Silesian Museum (Slezské zemské muzeum). Authentic installation of part of the weaponry in a room inside an infantry block. A pair of ZB-53 heavy machine guns in an embrasure at the MO-S 19 Alej infantry block, a former Czechoslovak fortification at Hlučín-Darkovičky. Photograph Ondřej Merta, 2018.

07. Creating a museum collection: thesauration

The primary activity of a collecting institution is collection-building, as museums communicate primarily through physical items (collection items). The value of these items lies in the information and meanings that they embody as well as in their relevance for society. Information is a tool for numerous other types of institutions (such as libraries and archives) and organizations, but museums are the only type of institution to focus their activities primarily on the conceptual creation of collections, which are then managed, researched and displayed for the public; it is the public that interprets the items (thus also interpreting their importance and values).¹⁰⁰

Industrial heritage, once it has been extracted from reality and has become a subject of interest for museum practice, is then subjected to a set of techniques which are already codified and supported by legislation; this set of techniques is collectively known as thesauration – i.e. the creation of museum collections as entities. These techniques are interrelated or conditional upon each other: expert collection-building, cataloguing, keeping records and conducting inventories, exhibiting (display), conservation and restoration, and the creation of projects enabling a collection to be integrated into educational and other activities (this may include outputs in electronic form).

Part of thesauration is musealization – a process in which certain elements of reality are extracted (removed) from that reality on the basis of selection (see the preceding chapter) because these elements document (i.e. provide a true, authentic image of) the form and state of human culture within a specific period. In the process of musealization, these selected material elements embodying aspects of human culture are protected against natural destruction and continue to be used by museums in various ways in order to further human cultural development.

The role of the curator¹⁰¹ of a collection of museum objects is to create and update the collection plan, on whose basis the curator manages the collection – keeping records, caring for the items, and utilizing them for educational and scholarly purposes.¹⁰² Thesauration also includes conducting inventories and, if necessary, de-accessioning (permanent removal of items from the collection).

The process of collection-building is codified in Act no. 122/200 Sb., which precisely defines what records of acquired items must be kept both for administrative reasons (managing the collection) and for scholarly reasons (specialist evaluation of the collection). According to the Act, museum documentation is a specific type of activity conducted in the public interest and consisting of the planned and systematic gathering and maintenance of records of the development of the natural world, society or human activities. Museum documentation is carried out by museums using specific museum techniques, and museum collections represent the outcome of this process. The new legislation on museums (Act no. 122/2000 Sb., 7 April 2000) introduced a new system for keeping records of museum collections by creating the Central Register of Collections (Centrální evidence sbírek, CES), which is maintained by the Czech Ministry of Culture.

07.01. Acquisitions

The starting point for the management and care of industrial heritage is the process of acquisition, by which an item is incorporated into a museum collection. The item may be removed (extracted) from its original location or from the site

100) ŠOBÁŇOVÁ, Petra. *Muzejní expozice jako edukační médium*. Olomouc 2014.

101) Besides the position of curator, Czech museums also have the position of “documenter” (“dokumentátor”) of collections and other movable items; the difference between the job roles and responsibilities of the two positions is specified in the museum’s internal employment regulations and job descriptions.

102) ŽALMAN, Jiří et al. *Příručka muzejníková I. Tvorba, evidence, inventarizace a bezpečnost sbírek v muzeích a galeriích*. Praha – Brno 2002, pp. 13–14.



Slup, Technical Museum in Brno (Technické muzeum v Brně), water mill in Slup (national cultural monument). Photograph Ondřej Merta, 2012.

09.01.01.03. Industrial heritage in the form of a technological flow arranged in an authentic setting (building/space)

Museums may present industrial heritage in the form of a technological flow arranged in an authentic setting (building/space). This represents a combination of approaches typical of museums and those that are typical of heritage professionals. The technological flow is arranged using items taken to the museum from various sites, i.e. collection items; these items may lack an authentic connection with the building/space, or they may be connected with it. Visitors evaluate the completeness and attractiveness of the technologies displayed. If items are functioning, the impression and information value of the exhibition are higher than if the exhibition is static (non-functioning).

Example:

- **Slup, Water mill in Slup.** Located in South Moravia, this monument is managed by the Technical Museum in Brno. The Renaissance building of the large mill possesses a unique aesthetic value in its own right. The building has four functioning water wheels. The exhibition presents the history of milling; the main focus is on the mill itself, where visitors can see four complete production units – a standard milling system, a mill for millet, an American-type system and a roller system. These units enable the entire process of milling to be explained. The mill is situated on the Křovice-Jaroslavice mill-stream, which is a cultural monument.¹³⁷⁾

137 See <http://www.technicalmuseum.cz/en/pamatky/water-mill-in-slup/>.

Slup, Technical Museum in Brno (Technické muzeum v Brně), water mill in Slup (national cultural monument). Machinery from various locations is now displayed on this mill floor, forming a logical technical entity. Photograph Eva Rezáčová, 2012.



Slup, Technical Museum in Brno (Technické muzeum v Brně), water mill in Slup (national cultural monument). An exhibition of the history of milling, installed in the residential part of the water mill in Slup. The exhibition communicates its information using a combination of original collection items and other elements (images, text, lighting) to aid interpretation on various levels. Photograph Eva Rezáčová, 2012.