

## Routes of Industrial Heritage: On the Animation of Sedentary Objects

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### Abstract

In this article, the recent proliferation of cultural heritage routes and networks will be analyzed as an attempt to animate and revitalize idle artefacts and landscapes. With a specific focus on the sedentary, immobile sites of former industrial production, it will be claimed that the route is an appropriate and understandable way of dealing with industrial sites that have lost their stable place in a sequence of productions. If the operational production site is understood as a place of where, above all, function and efficiency guide the systematic interaction between labour, raw material and technology, then the absence of this order is what makes an abandoned factory seem so isolated and out of place. It becomes disconnected from the web of production of which it was part and from which it gained its meaning and stability. In this regard, it makes sense to think of industrial heritage routes as an effort to bring the isolated site back into place. Following Barbara Kirshenblatt Gimblett, we have come to think of cultural heritage as an opportunity that is granted to artifacts, lifestyles and places of a 'second life'. Industrial heritage routes occasion such a reanimation of former industrial sites according to the principles cultural tourism, place production, professional networking and best practice learning. As a mode of operation, the route has some potential advantages over the bounded, site-specific approach. It extends the historic context of the site in question beyond the isolated, geographical location. Orchestrating sites in a wider heritage network is a way of emphasizing a notion of culture that stresses interaction, movement and encounters with that which lies beyond the local. It may also grant heritage professionals an opportunity to work in closer relation to what goes on elsewhere.

**Keywords:** Industrial heritage, route, networks, Route Industriekultur, site, ERIH

## Introduction

In his analysis of industrial ruins, the cultural geographer Tim Edensor (2005a: 66) describes ruination in terms of a disintegration of the organized sequences of production and the breaking up of the ordered relations between things, people and machines which characterize the industrial space. In the ruin, he claims,

these sequences of productive action reliant on the organisation of time, space and materiality are now absent. For abandoned factories suddenly lose their position in the networks which render their meaning and function stable, as the complex infrastructure which surrounds the operation of an industrial site comes apart.

Edensor (2005b: 313) also describes industrial plants as ‘exemplary spaces in which things are subject to order’, adding that at the moment an industrial site is closed down it is ‘dropped from these stabilizing networks’. The sudden absence of regimes of ordering means that the production site that used to belong to a greater production network becomes detached and loses its ‘epistemological and practical security’ (ibid.). If we follow this line of reasoning, this would imply that a deserted and run-down factory detached from a functional production network will soon be considered as matter out of place. This article will address the issue of how these sites are granted a position in networks of a different kind, namely in the routes designed for cultural tourism which seek to re-establish historical links between dispersed sites which were once part of the industrial infrastructure.



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The profound structural change and economic decline in many industrial regions across Europe in the second half of the twentieth century has introduced the complicated issue of how to deal with the large-scale remains from decades of industrial production. A common understanding of these industrial sites suggests that they are so fundamental to the rhythm of quotidian life that they often go unnoticed. The overwhelming familiarity of industrial buildings may hinder our appreciation of them and once production halts, these sites regularly fall into neglect and disrepair. However, with rapid deindustrialization a desire to keep some of the most important industrial landmarks as an expression of cultural identity and local history is likely to occur. In this way, technology, artefacts, traditions and buildings dropped from a functional order are reanimated in the exhibitionary realm and given a 'second life as heritage' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). One might say that upon being preserved for posterity, these industrial remains enter *new* networks of order and stability where they are once again granted a degree of epistemological security as cultural heritage rather than as production utilities.

In recent years, various heritage routes have featured as a means of tracing the cross-fertilization of cultures throughout history and as a way of mapping the extensive circulation of people, technology and goods. A route is typically made up of individual sites that are connected into a wider network either on a local, regional, national or even European scale. The routes represent ideas of social interaction and cultural exchange and may also make individual sites part of a larger cultural property context. A characteristic feature of cultural heritage is to occasion a movement of artifacts from 'local descent' to 'translocal consent heritage' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006: 170). A cultural heritage route can aid this movement because it moves beyond the view of heritage management as a predominantly local concern to being something that is addressed as a shared responsibility with repercussions beyond the local community.

In the first part of this article, I will outline the genealogy of some recent cultural heritage routes before I go on to explain the proliferation of the route as a mode of assemblage within industrial heritage more specifically. Industrial heritage routes will be explored with reference to the German *Route Industriekultur* in the Ruhr area, which has inspired similar initiatives in other regions and on a European transnational level. Furthermore, I will point to some of the characteristic features of the *Route Industriekultur* that recur in similar projects in different contexts. The main purpose of this article is to explore if and how these attempts to route historical monuments across geographical distances might affect the notion of cultural heritage as site-specific. Secondly, I will explain how these recent trends correspond to general shifts within the cultural heritage sector. I claim that industrial heritage routes are significant because they offer a way to include the local as a part of a translocal heritage discourse and practice, and that as such they offer a strategy of 'Europeanizing' cultural heritage and move it beyond mere national priorities and interpretations. If cultural heritage is traditionally perceived

as ‘sedentary rather than mobile’ and concerning ‘objects that are connected umbilically to a geographical location’ (Gibson & Pendlebury 2009: 5) – then the process of routing extends the notion of heritage beyond the specific geographical location and offers a strategy for – and representation of – cross-cultural interaction within contemporary heritage management. Following Sharon Macdonald’s (2009) understanding of cultural heritage as an optimal means of assembling and sustaining the local, but also of incorporating global elements in its capacity to move across and reconstitute specific situations, the cultural heritage route is a device that demonstrates the capacity of global forms to de- and recontextualize. A cultural heritage route does not sever the connection of an artifact to a specific geographical location, but it may facilitate the movement from one cultural property context to another, turning the local landmark into a token of a translocal and shared cultural heritage.

### **The Development of Cultural Heritage Routes Since the 1980s**

The attempt to systematically connect cultural heritage sites into larger tourist itineraries and routes is a fairly recent undertaking that gained prominence only in the late 1980s with UNESCO’s *The Silk Roads Project*, which emphasized the long history of trade and cultural exchange between the East and the West and stressed the significance of intercultural dialogue in the present as well. Another important initiative from the same period was the ten-year project *Iron Roads* in Africa, launched in 1991, which sought to trace the common heritage of ironworking across the continent. Referring to these projects, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006: 171) claims that the process of orchestrating heritage around a route or road was a way for UNESCO to use travel and trade as a positive historical reference point for globalization and models of cultural dialogue and exchange.

It is in this capacity that cultural heritage routes have recently been employed on a European level as well. During the last two decades, cultural heritage routes have been promoted as an important means to foster and improve upon existing pan-European dialogues. The genealogy of cultural heritage routes in this context reaches back to the initiatives of the Council of Europe (CoE) in 1987, when a program aiming to illustrate how cultural diversity in Europe was in fact also a shared heritage was launched. This was the same year as the *Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Route* was established as the first cultural route within the CoE program. Later additions covering several European countries included *The European Textile Network*, the *Hansa League* and routes dedicated to parks and gardens as well as one commemorating the Jewish heritage. In 1998, a resolution that identified the reasoning behind CoE’s involvement in the routing of cultural heritage was adopted by the Committee of Ministers. The resolution states that routes ‘lend themselves to long-term European co-operation programs in the fields of research,

heritage enhancement, culture and the arts, cultural educational youth exchanges, cultural tourism in Europe and sustainable cultural development' (Council of Europe 1998). Here, the cultural heritage routes are primarily employed for the purpose of mobilization – whether mobilization of individuals, organizations, institutions or other structures in Europe (Council of Europe 1998). The CoE also identifies industrial areas as a prioritized field because these are often located outside the hubs that have traditionally benefited from tourism.

Along similar lines, policies concerning cultural routes have also been developed within the framework of the European Union. Cultural heritage routes figure prominently in a recent call from the European Commission (European Commission 2011) aimed at supporting and promoting cross-border tourism products and facilitating the exchange of information and best practice in this field. Here too, destinations off the 'beaten track' were regarded as the prime beneficiaries of the initiatives. In these and similar calls designed to animate a specific cross-cultural response on behalf of heritage institutions, the interaction, the exchange and the network are placed at the center of attention.

Why would routes, itineraries, networks and exchanges figure as particularly favourable modes of presentation? In explaining why actors respond to certain calls in the way they do, Greg Urban (2001: 179) claims that imperatives works as 'models of how to respond to the [imperatives that] are contained in prior discourse'. The attempt to promote the exchange of information and best practices within a cross-cultural heritage, as in the case of the call from the European Commission, would certainly privilege the responses that manage to give form to these specific requirements. And a cultural heritage route potentially does this, by giving priority to notions of mobility, change and cultural exchange within a discourse where the notion of cultural permanence and the idea of a bounded site has been part of the orthodoxy.

The cultural heritage route may represent an appropriate response to what David Lowenthal (2009: 19) has called the 'perpetual state of emergency' within the cultural heritage sector that tries to be responsive to the desires of governments and at the same time retain its own internal authority and meaning (Gibson & Pendlebury 2009: 11). The needs for reflexive reforms of one's own heritage institution and the external call to represent an increasingly diverse public and a nomadic and heterogeneous material culture work together here. The cultural heritage discourse of recent years suggests changes in the scale, scope and ambition (Fairclough 2008) of the sector and it seems less confined to a site-specific monument protection. Larger entities of heritage and heritage ensembles are included, as are entire cities. The temporal scope now also includes the archaeologies of the more recent past and the ambitions of cultural heritage are frequently addressed in terms of inventing ecologically and socially sustainable modes of caring for the past. Ensuring active re-use is believed to be the best way for a historic site to remain or become integrated in a community.

Recent developments in the international heritage discourse and particularly ICOMOS' *Charter on Cultural Routes* (International Council on Monuments and Sites 2008) also reflect a more comprehensive approach to cultural heritage in which the wider context is acknowledged and entire landscapes are considered in addition to only the isolated site or the single monument. In the preamble of this charter, ICOMOS (op.cit.:1) states that the cultural route is a way to allow the wider cultural context of any given artifact to resound in the presentation of a heritage entity. The preamble reads as follows:

As a result of the development of the sciences of conservation of cultural heritage, the new concept of Cultural Routes shows the evolution of ideas with respect to the vision of cultural properties, as well as the growing importance of values related to their setting and territorial scale, and reveals the macrostructure of heritage on different levels.

Like cultural heritage in general, heritage routes are a new mode of cultural production, produced in the present for the present (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 150) and one that attempts to rethink how artifacts, buildings and landscapes are assembled as heritage. The heritage route is described as a mode of presentation that is apt for representing the rich diversity of contributions to cultural heritage and ICOMOS claims that the more extensive notion of cultural heritage requires new approaches to describe and protect 'significant relationships associated with its natural, cultural and historical setting' (International Council on Monuments and Sites 2008: 1).

The route renders legible connections between dispersed locations and is in this sense an appropriate didactic device. However, we may also think of the route as an interpretive device because it informs our understanding of place with reference to forces external to the place. The context of the particular place is extended quite significantly and the place is rendered as part of a larger whole. By emphasizing – for instance – movement, networks, patterns of trade, and labour migration, the route is also a device that informs a notion of culture as change and exchange rather than a static entity with stable borders. In this sense, the route reflects the project of rethinking cultural identity in line with what Stuart Hall (1996: 4) calls 'not the return to roots but coming to terms with our routes'. The potential of the route in this rhetorical sense is to reconcile the project of identity construction with a more heterogeneous notion of cultural heritage.

The reason for this reconciliation effort is the realization that heritage production is often conceived as a territorialization of landscape, a procedure which radically alters the social character of a landscape and turns it into an archaeological zone, a historical place or a monument site (Breglia 2006: 33). The process is well-known; a heritage site is governed by legal designations, zoning regulations, modes of conduct, archaeological mappings as well as the markers of site specificity, whether the entrance gate, the ticket booth, information boards or signs of inscription categorizing the specific site as part of an officially sanctioned heritage canon.

Our understanding of the heritage place thus requires these external entry points around the specific site itself to demarcate the boundaries of the archaeological, historical zone. But these boundaries also reminds us of just how intimately the concept of cultural heritage is tied to the discourse of ownership, inheritance, competition for land use and the struggle for urban space (Samuel 2008). Cultural heritage routes do not deconstruct the place and its boundaries, but they supply us with a supplementary instruction for interpretation, rendering the whole as greater than the sum of its parts. The organization of cultural heritage in routes has importance beyond supplying tourists with possible itineraries. They also provide means of conveying a broader and more exhaustive account of cultural change where it is simply too extensive to be contained by any single site or monument. This certainly applies to the many imprints of industrialization which are in places so numerous, omnipotent and extensive that one may even talk of ‘total industrial landscapes’ (Hartmut & Mazzoni 2005: 16).

### **Routing the Artefacts of Industrial Production**

Within the management of industrial heritage, the cultural heritage routes offer a way of working around the challenge of presenting dispersed entities which collectively constituted a network of production. If we consider the profound cultural change that industrialization gave rise to, it is difficult to imagine how a single architectural landmark can convey the comprehensiveness of this transition. The artefacts of industrialization are not always easy to single out and isolate in places where the entire landscape bears the imprint of industrial production. In an archaeological survey of ‘the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution’, Ironbridge Gorge in the UK, Kate Clark (2005: 99) notes that the first casualty of the undertaking ‘was the idea of the bounded archaeological site’. She goes on to claim that ‘[t]here were no sites in the Gorge, instead, this was a complex landscape in which it was impossible to isolate individual sites. There were hundreds of buildings from cottages to villas, and from backyard brew-houses to major industrial complexes’ (ibid). The same untidiness applies to many other industrial landscapes as well. Infrastructure, workers’ housing settlements, waterways, underground mines and spoil tips are all part of the complex landscape of industry where many elements are complementary and make less sense in isolation.

Industrial production plants often appear as disorderly in a temporal sense. During their functional phase, building stocks were frequently extended or dismantled to accommodate new production requirements and changing production quotas. The difficult task of industrial heritage is to maintain a degree of permanence also within the more recent industrial complexes that were often built to allow for flexibility and to respond to sudden fluctuations in the global market situation. It may seem paradoxical that industrial heritage wants to make permanent what was originally meant to be flexible. Any factory must accommodate new production pro-

cesses, new technology as well as rapid changes in demand and supply. This often results in a complex assemblage of different styles, building materials and production regimes. Buildings are continually removed, extended or altered. According to Föhl and Höhmann (2010: 20), the industry ‘cannibalises’ its production sites.

Another challenge of representing the complexity of industrial heritage concerns the relations of one single site to the greater production network. A production site may, following Edensor (2005a: 66), be understood as ‘the stabilisation of relations between the things, people and machines’ depending on ‘relations with other spaces which precede and follow them in the sequence of production, and also implicitly with more distant parts of the wider network into which the factory is installed’. This holds true for most production sites which are usually only one element in a complex line of production. When a site is cut off from the larger sequence of production and the connections which rendered it functional, the result is what Edensor (2005a: 63) calls a ‘phantom network’ that evokes merely a ‘shadow of order’.

### ***Route Industriekultur***

The attempt to tell a more representative story of how these production networks were originally ordered, or how distant sites were part of the same sequence of production, is what a route of industrial heritage might contribute to by presenting and making accessible a larger ensemble of sites. One of the important precursors in this regard was the German *Route Industriekultur* in the Ruhr area. This particular attempt to route industrial heritage in the Ruhr has acted as a model of successful industrial heritage in Europe in recent years. According to a Belgian industrial heritage specialist, Patrick Viaene (2005), the approach in Ruhr has provided a long-term inspiration and works as an ideal in regions affected by industrial decline. It has influenced policies in other former industrial regions, such as the Spanish Asturias, the Flemish regions in Belgium, Nord in France, Alsace, Lorraine, Polish Silesia as well as in parts of Greece. This list is likely to grow due to the fact that Ruhr is frequently cited as a reference point for many urban planners, architects and conservationists engaged in large-scale regeneration of industrial areas.





Route Industriekultur © Torgeir Rinke Bangstad

The *Route Industriekultur* brings together a variety of quite extensive sites tied to the thematic focus on industrial culture and structural change in the region. The route was established to sustain and communicate the results of a large urban planning scheme called *Internationale Bauausstellung Emscher Park* (IBA Emscher Park), which took place in the Northern parts of the Ruhr area in the period 1989-1999. It is the impact of the regeneration efforts in this period that has resulted in the renown of the Ruhr as a mainstay of sustainable models for industrial heritage planning. IBA Emscher Park was not solely committed to industrial heritage, but industrial heritage was an integral part of the approach towards landscape recovery and urban planning in the old industrial region. The regeneration efforts furthermore included park planning, cleaning up polluted rivers, improving infrastructure, modernizing residential quarters and changing the public image of the post-industrial landscape through extensive investments in landscape art and green recreational areas.

The *Route Industriekultur* was established in 1999 and commissioned by the regional association *Regionalverband Ruhr*. This organization has members from 53 Ruhr cities and it has historically been important in the urban planning of the region. The route introduces visitors to the 52 sites and 25 key locations of industrial heritage, the latter are the so-called anchor points that include *Zeche Zollverein* and *Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord*, both prominent architectural highlights of the regional industrial heritage. The route also singles out important workers' housing settlements, the so-called 'Arbeitersiedlungen' some of which were renovated during the course of the IBA Emscher Park-project. As for the means of connection, the cycling and walking trails are also emphasized in the route maps – as are the different points that offer a panoramic overview of the industrial landscape. Some of these points are located on top of giant slag heaps and are part of the manufactured landscapes produced through decades of intensive coal mining, which have now been creatively integrated in the IBA Emscher Park-project.

This particular route vividly chronicles just how profoundly the industrial activity has changed every aspect of the region from the landscape to modes of living, cultural landmarks, urban infrastructure, migration patterns as well as the social structure of a region. The circular route is 400 kilometres long and presents several impressive landmarks of more than 150 years of industrial history in the region. Even though all of the sites engage with the historical identity of the Ruhr area as a region of coal and steel industries, the sites assembled in the route are frequently referred to as locations of the future to undermine simple notions of industrial nostalgia. These sites do not simply memorialize the past, but have in effect also acted as laboratories for how to engage with the preservation and adaptive reuse of giant structures. One of the outcomes of this learning process is a creative approach witnessed, for instance, in how industrial wastelands are 'dignified' (Raines 2011: 198) through art projects and how uncontrolled weed growth is allowed to recolonize even preserved industrial buildings, as can be witnessed in

the industrial nature of the coking plant *Kokerei Hansa* outside Dortmund. Some orthodoxies of the bounded site-specific preservation were challenged by the IBA Emscher Park, which instead took the vast industrial landscape into consideration, and

recognized that conservation of heritage should not be limited to the obvious individual buildings or pieces of machinery, but in reality the entire landscape was steeped in industrial heritage, and that other traces should be called out and treated in some way (Raines 2011: 195).

Due to the extensive and holistic approach of IBA Emscher Park, it seems only natural that the results are communicated through the *Route Industriekultur* as an overarching device for guiding the public through the creatively regenerated industrial landscape.



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Similar regional routes are now being planned or have already been established all over Europe. The French-Belgian route *Itinéraire de la Culture Industrielle* traces the common industrial heritage of Wallonia and Nord-Pas-de-Calais and functions as a way to re-appropriate the post-industrial landscapes of the region. In the Polish region of Silesia, a route has been established to reflect its past as a region of heavy industries, and this project is modelled on the German *Route Industriekultur*. Furthermore, similar industrial heritage routes are initiated in the EUREGIO Saar-Lor-Lux, connecting the German Saar, the French Lorraine and Luxembourg together with reference to a shared industrial heritage that transcends political borders. Even in more peripheral locations, routes are developed on the model of German *Route Industriekultur*. One example of this is a Norwegian

route called *Tourism in the Cradle of Industry*, which introduces the hydro-powered chemical industries from Tyssedal/Odda to Rjukan and Notodden. This route was designed with the ambition of being represented as a regional route in the European-wide equivalent of the *Route Industriekultur* called the *European Route of Industrial Heritage* (ERIH). The latter is also based on the German precursor and shares some of its basic features such as the thematic routes, the anchor points and the recognizable signage and site descriptions that provide information about some 850 industrial heritage sites in 32 European countries. At this level of abstraction, however, the route is conceived of primarily as a virtual information portal, but it may nevertheless 'provide a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience between different interested parties, and serves as a source of information for the public' (Lindström 2006). ERIH recognizes that some of the approaches that have been tried and tested in the Ruhr region in terms of large-scale recovery of industrial areas can also be applied in other European regions and that the lessons from Ruhr may prove valuable in a wider European context as well (ibid).

### **The Network Form**

One question is why the route has come to win such approval within the interpretation of industrial heritage and the re-appropriation of industrial landscapes. For one thing, it seems important to maintain that the effects and challenges of de-industrialization require joint efforts on a regional, national and even a European level. Secondly, the industrial heritage route provides a credible metaphor for the co-operation between several heritage institutions and this strategy is more likely to generate funding from local, regional, national and European sources. A route in this sense rests on a more extensive notion of cultural heritage and reflects what ICOMOS refers to as a new ethics of conservation, calling for common efforts beyond national borders (International Council on Monuments and Sites 2008: 1). This point is stressed in the context of ERIH as well, where the planners claim that the traditional inward focus of industrial history has prevented a full recognition of the transnational dimensions of industrialization (European Route of Industrial Heritage 2001: 11). The ambitions to route industrial heritage by stimulating closer institutional co-operation and by establishing a transnational information system, reflects the widespread appeal of the network as *modus operandi*. ERIH wants to bring together partners with common thematic priorities and initiatives including several EU member countries may also be eligible of EU funding. The ERIH project also exemplifies what form a network approach might assume in the heritage sector. It works on a public level via a multi-linguistic web portal that guides visitors online, offline and on-site. It also works as a way for the heritage sector to reflect upon their work in relation to what goes on elsewhere. Rather than a traditional linear route, ERIH resembles the network form, which is consid-

ered to be increasingly important in any international institutional context. This particular appeal of the network form in a professional context is explained by Annelise Riles (2000: 186) as follows:

We might think of network aesthetics as aesthetic activation, then – as a matter of how graphics, layout and form of all kinds capture the imagination and guide analysis. The interrelationship of aesthetics and informational content, and in particular the power of design to transmit information across national and cultural differences to effectuate action, is a classic modernist theme.

Some forms have proven more powerful than others to the extent to which they manage to ‘speed the efficient functioning of communication’ or succeed in cutting across ‘differences of culture, nationality or ideology’ (ibid). I claim that cultural heritage routes are powerful forms, and have become widespread within the internationalized framework of heritage institutions because they are appropriate, legible and credible forms that respond to cultural and political imperatives in a certain way. A route in this regard is a form that facilitates, represents and awaits movement either in the sense that it encourages tourists to ‘move on’ or encourages professionals to engage with extended networks of specialized knowledge. Industrial heritage routes have also come to serve as a way to highlight the interconnectedness of European industrialization and employ this as a positive reference point for a common European heritage and as an organizing principle for the contemporary initiatives of cultural dialogue, knowledge transfer and best practice learning.

With this in mind, one might say that a cultural heritage route constitutes a recognizable form that is part of the framework of expectations and potential strategies even in more remote locations. Even if some institutions may choose to remain disengaged from the attempts of routing heritage, it constitutes one part of an array of potential strategies. Even the approaches that are eventually ruled out are part of the negotiation process that informs the final result. Sharon Macdonald (2008: 186) claims that what in the end is realized locally as a materialized cultural heritage project is unique even when it is simultaneously widespread. This is so because what happens locally ‘does so in multiple interactions with various elsewheres – embodied in people, practices and technologies (e.g. visitors, exhibition, advisory committees, books read and visits made by history workers, legislation and funding opportunities)’ (ibid). According to Assman and Conrad (2010) the globalization of memory policies has created framework of mutual attention, circulation and comparison and this new framework is also reflected in the cultural heritage route both as representation and as practice.

## Summary

In this article, I have attempted to analyze a specific device of heritage production, namely the cultural heritage route, which is frequently emulated and has become a mainstay of strategies of cutting the umbilical connection between artifact

and a bounded geographical location. The cultural heritage route has proved to be an appropriate means of giving form to extended notion of place that recognizes that external circulatory regimes also take part in the process of forming the local situation. As such, it makes for an apt mode of heritage representation as the professional conservationists have to accommodate or invent forms of responding to changing political frameworks, the new ambitions and new scales of the heritage enterprise, and to employ these forms to reflect on their own practice in relation to similar undertakings elsewhere. While the challenges regarding the maintenance, interpretation and presentation of artifacts, buildings and landscapes as important heritage may seem like something which requires a response according to local needs and local, historical sensibilities only, this is hardly ever the case. Once a site is acknowledged as potentially important heritage with resonance beyond the local community, a myriad of external partners, specialists, tried and tested approaches, professionals with international experience, networks, etc., are available to be mobilized in the attempts of creating and legitimizing cultural heritage locally.

This is particularly apparent within industrial heritage, where the remains of the era of mass industrialization are increasingly framed in terms of a shared heritage and as a common responsibility. Industrial heritage routes are significant in part because they offer a way to make the local part of a translocal heritage discourse and practice. Within the network initiative of the ERIH, this discursive framing of a trans-national, challenging industrial legacy requiring cross-border co-operation is evident. The form of the route was employed at an early stage in the Ruhr area, and it is by now considered to be relevant in other regional contexts and on a wider European scale as well. The route allows the recontextualization of existing sites and hence does not interfere with existing priorities of the conservation practice. Rather, as I have shown in this article, it allows for ruins, buildings and even entire landscapes to be reanimated and signify cultural interaction and transnational connections instead of standstill, isolation and decline. The proliferation of industrial heritage routes all over Europe should be considered as an attempt to reconstitute in the exhibitionary realm a more vivid idea of the complex production networks in the era of mass industrialization. Industrial heritage routes constitute a form of assemblage activity in these 'phantom networks' (Edensor 2005a: 63) of former production systems, a way to mobilize the most heavy, sedentary objects conceivable and to grant them a second chance to represent interaction rather than inertia. The most internationally renowned forerunners in post-industrial recovery are the *Route Industriekultur* and the regional planning scheme of the IBA Emscher Park. These projects were farsighted and have contributed to improving the image of industrial heritage on a more general level. What succeeded in these projects was the reinvention of conservation as regeneration and the rethinking of a memorialization of the past as workshops for the future. Industrial ruins were not written off as non-places but dignified as places in the process

of becoming. The apparent plasticity of the form of the route fits this ambitious task – it is not linear like traditional routes and it is not preordained or unidirectional. It allows a more remote industrial heritage site to be part of a family of already canonized cultural heritage and grants it a place within a network where the even the most static, sedentary and solid artifacts are reanimated as places of movement.

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