

# The role of University museums in the formation of new cultural layers: the case of Golden Horn, Istanbul

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## Abstract

*Museums play an important role in the conservation of cultural landscapes, their integration with the city and presentation to publicity. In this respect, the study focuses on university museums in the vicinity of Golden Horn, which is a historic-industrial region. This region has been transforming into a cultural and educational area through activities related with the foundation of universities and museums. Silahtarağa Power Plant and Cibali Tobacco Factories were renovated to be used as Bilgi University and Kadir Has University, they are two different examples that show us the importance of the university museums for creating a new cultural layer and social environment in Golden Horn. Contrary to the other cultural institutions, university museums play the vital role of integrating local community and new cultural layers of the region by providing educational landscapes.*

'Cultural landscape' is one of the newest terms of the 20th century that has various definitions because of interdisciplinary studies. UNESCO defines cultural landscape as "combined works of nature and of man". Cultural landscapes "are illustrative of the evaluation of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of physical constraints and opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal" (Cultural Landscapes). According to ANTROP (2005), cultural landscape is a result of the reorganization process of spatial structure and usage of area in order to satisfy the changing social demands of community. This term can be summarized as intervention of human and culture with nature and their harmony of coexistence (ÖZSULE 2005).

Since cultural landscapes are related with physical, social and cultural components, they usually progress in line with the changing structure of societies. As an example, industrial landscapes that are generally located in rural areas covered by expanding cities because of changing city life, have assumed new functions and created new landscapes besides them. In this study, we will focus on industrial landscapes that affect the creation of a new environment and socio-cultural life.

We can say that there are three kinds of landscapes in industrial areas; before the foundation of industrial plant, after the foundation of industrial plant and post-industrial landscape. While wide, empty lands preserve their natural landscapes before the industrial revolution, foundation of industrial plants have changed both the ecologic and socio-cultural environments. These sites transformed into a centre of attraction for cities. The new built environment, social opportunities and transportation network create a new cultural landscape. However, when industrial sites lose their function, they are faced with the threat of becoming inert areas.

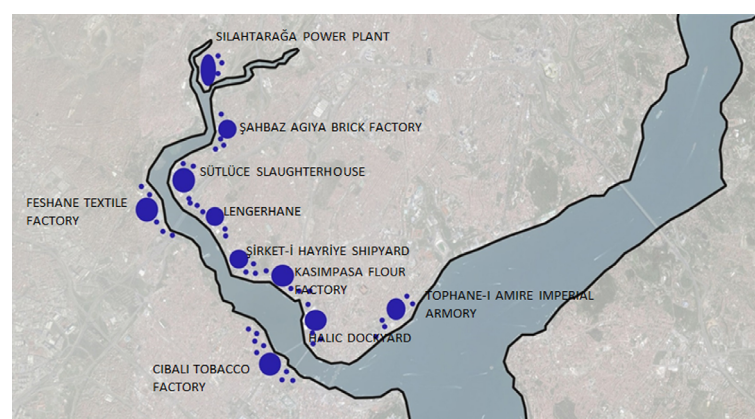
That is why the problem emerges related with the ways of protecting the industrial cultural landscapes. UNESCO has determined some principles to protect these areas; local community of the region should explain their opinion about the region, communication should be provided between stakeholders and the participating model of management should be carried out (UNESCO 2009, 35; 36). The Council of European states that the cultural and historical importance of sites should be announced to communities in different ways and controlled usage should be provided (MADRAN & ÖZGÖNÜL 2005, 37). Awareness of society, its demands on site is particularly important. In this respect, museums as a tool of communication play an valuable role in announcing the cultural landscapes to communities. They have potential to provide controlled usage of cultural landscapes, create awareness of society, articulate cultural landscapes to urban life and provide new cultural layers for industrial areas.

Together with the development of modern museology, the object-based approach has been changed. New museology includes a conversion process of people's living spaces and their activities into a kind of museum. Not just objects, but also every kind of intangible or tangible formations that arise from the human-nature-culture interactions are a part of musealization (KANDEMİR 2013, 137). While symbols, technologies and objects are tangible evidence of underlying norms and values, the intangible heritage should be regarded as the larger framework within which tangible heritage takes on shape and significance (BOUCHENAKI 2003). Cultural landscapes as a part of cultural heritage include both of tangible and intangible components. While landscape is a tangible formation itself, processes and practises that took place on landscape constitutes the intangible trait of the cultural landscape. That is why the association of cultural landscapes and museums offers the potential to diversify the presentation medium of intangible and tangible values and increase the interaction and communication between community and cultural heritage.

In addition to museums, the structure of the university that is composed of educational and cultural components raises awareness of cultural landscapes through educational activities. Especially university museums located in historical regions can help raise awareness by spatial experiences on historical structure, not just for university students but also for the local community. University museums as a part of university landscapes diversify the communication medium while bringing different social groups together, intersecting informal learning and academic studies and establishing a link between science and society. If these areas, consisting of universities, museums and their educational landscape, are founded on a historic landscape, they create new cultural layers that provide sustainability of the region.

This study focuses on the İstanbul-Golden Horn region with its industrial cultural landscape components, the transformation of the region via university museums, new cultural layers on Golden Horn, and the reflection of landscape components on the museums' collection and programmes. Golden Horn is a creek that is formed by indentation of Bosphorus into the European continent. Golden Horn has an important role in the establishment and formation of industrial areas because it is a sheltered harbour with an advantageous geographical position and topography.

The region was one of the most important trade harbours throughout history because of its geographical features. In the Ottoman period, 17th century, Golden Horn coastal landscape was shaped by Muslim, Greek and Armenian settlements and described as a promenade area with its trees, pools, fountains and rose gardens until the period of industrialization. The Industrial Revolution had been a major turning point for the landscape of the region. After the 18th century, Golden Horn transformed into an industrial landscape area with factories, small workplaces, stores and additional units. By the 19th century, the palaces and houses that were lined along the coast of the Golden Horn were replaced by shipyards, flourmills and anchor manufacturers (KOKSAL 1996) (Figure 1).

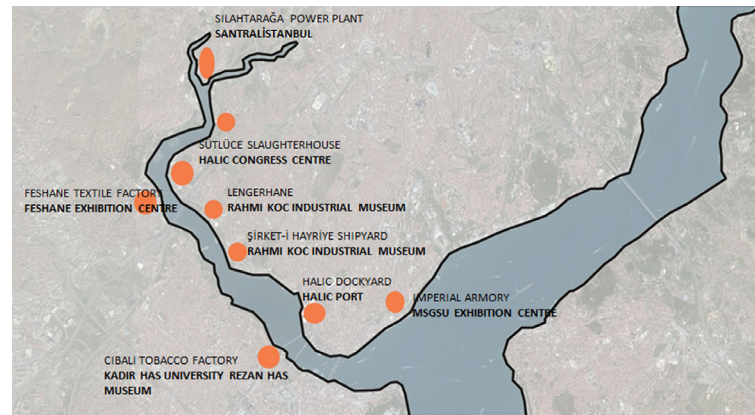


**Fig. 1**  
**Industrial landscape of Golden**  
**Horn at the beginning of 20th**  
**century**  
(N. Özdemir's own collection, 2016)

The industrialization period of the Golden Horn is proven by the Prost Plan that was prepared by the French urbanist Henry Prost in 1936. The plan aimed to preserve the picturesque silhouette of the city. Prost suggested creating open areas around the monumental structures of the city and designing the new arteries in a way to open perspective axes towards monuments, as in Haussmann's Paris (BILSEL 2011, 112). The fabric of the city's historic core was completely transformed; residential and commercial areas were removed from the Golden Horn, and the coastal strip was occupied by industrial buildings. After 1950, concentration of trade in the region and rapid growth of the population increased the slums in empty areas behind the coastal strip.

"The 1980s marked another turning point in the transformation of the Golden Horn into a heritage industry. Starting with the Golden Horn Waterfront Revitalization Project in 1986, several interventions have taken place to cleanup this very valuable area to provide a global city image. These include the reclamation and the beautification of the shores of the Golden Horn and the clearance of industries..." (GUNAY 2014, 102). At the beginning of 21st century, "the Golden Horn Cultural Valley Project has played an important role in the transformation of industrial heritage into sources of social and economic development. It had different dimensions including the processes of conservation of historical waterfront neighborhoods, transformation, and re-functioning of historic industrial facilities, and utilization of cultural amenities and landscape design" (GUNAY 2014, 102). After the 2000s, this process has continued through foundation of private universities with their educational and cultural existence in Golden Horn, such as Bilgi University and Kadir Has University. Universities accelerated the transformation of Golden Horn with their diversified facilities and user profile.

Golden Horn is an urban space having the feature of a natural harbor, then it was converted to a trade harbor and industrial area, and finally re-functioned as a cultural valley (ERDEN 2009, 10). During this process, most of the industrial buildings had been re-functioned as cultural centres, museums or universities (Figure 2).



**Fig. 2**  
**Re-functioning industrial buildings**  
**in Golden Horn**  
(N. Ozdemir's own collection, 2016)

Tophane-i Amire was used as a cannon-casting plant since the 15th century, it was transferred into Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University in 1993 to be used as an exhibition, culture and art center. The first textile factory of Turkey was established in the 19th century to produce fez for the Ottoman army. The Feshane Textile Factory was rearranged in 1998 for exhibitions, fairs and concert functions. Sütluce Slaughterhouse was built in 1923 for the purpose of cutting and distributing meat. It was converted into the Haliç Congress Centre in 2006 to be used for congresses, meetings, fairs, exhibitions and film premieres. Lengerhane and Şirket-i Hayriye Shipyard, built in 19th century, were renovated to be used as Rahmi Koç Industrial Museum, in two phases in 1994 and 2001 (KOKSAL 2007). "The Golden Horn Dockyards, which were the oldest dockyards still operating, were recently closed to be transformed into a marina of entertainment and tourism" (GUNAY 2014, 103).

Apart from these cultural institutions, the main transformation has been realized through the foundation of Kadir Has University and Bilgi University in the 2000s. These universities constituted the educational landscape of the Golden Horn as a part of cultural valley. They aim to be an educational institute, not just for university students, but also for local community. In this process, university museums play an important role in the Golden Horn in terms of bringing about new cultural and educational layers. As a case study, Silahtarağa Power Plant and Cibali Tobacco Factory have different physical properties and landscapes, yet they draw attention to the industrial landscape of the Golden Horn with the transformations that they caused in the northern and southern shores. In this context, Energy Museum of İstanbul Bilgi University and the Rezan Has Museum of Kadir Has University will be evaluated with their transformative roles in the Golden Horn region and their effects on cultural landscape.

### **From Cibali Tobacco Factory to Kadir Has University**

During the transformation process of the Golden Horn, Cibali Tobacco Factory was re-functioned as Kadir Has University, established by the Kadir Has Foundation. The factory was founded in 1884 and began to produce cigarettes in 1900. It was operated by the French government until 1925, and then transferred to the Turkish government. Its large production building housed both tobacco processing and cigarette production that produced the first local cigar in 1946 and the first filtered cigarette in 1959. The facility consists of several buildings that were connected by passages and courtyards. Cibali Tobacco and Cigarette Factory are significant in terms of reflecting the period's construction and construction techniques. The size of the spaces and the neoclassical architectural style are interesting examples of the era, separated from the classical period building art (ALPER 2008).

"The Cibali Tobacco Factory was, in fact, a small town with local police and civil servants, hospitals, a day care centre, grocery stores, schools, a fire department, sport facilities, trade unions, and restaurants." (Tobacco Factory website) This important institution changed the neighbourhood socially and economically. It continued to function until 1995 and then it was closed because of outdated technology. The building was purchased by Kadir Has Foundation and has been renovated to be an institution of higher learning between 1998 and 2002. Finally, the university started to offer education services officially in 2002 (ALPER 2008). The university project had been shaped to provide public benefit and to contribute to the cultural and historical sustainability of the Golden Horn by conservation of the site. Moreover, the central location and transportation facilities of the Cibali Tobacco Factory had been effective in determining the new function of the building (BUDAN 2008, 73). "The distinguishing feature of this project is being the first in the context of re-functioning an old industrial building as a university; unlike the others, it has created a refreshing effect in environment visibly" (ERDEN 2009, 8-9).

### Rezan Has Museum of Kadir Has University

During the conversion process of Cibali Tobacco Factory, Byzantine cistern and the ruins of Turkish bath, which took place in the building basement and used as a tobacco warehouse, have been converted into a museum (History). Temporary exhibitions of high-quality art and historical artifacts constantly come and go, and thus the interest of the visitors is kept alive and the extensive collection of the museum is exhibited during extended periods. Past exhibitions have included works of painting, ceramics, jewelry, and photography. In addition to the collection, historic remains constitute the main attraction of the museum, and the majority of visitors come to experience the challenging atmosphere of the museum (Figure 3). The Theatre Department students prepare performance tasks in this area. However, the museum does not present anything belonging to the period of Cibali Tobacco Factory. Even though it was used as an industrial building for a long time, it's difficult to understand its previous function while visiting the museum.



Fig. 3

Historic remains constitute the  
main attraction of Rezan Has  
Museum

(N. Ozdemir's own collection, 2016)

It can be said that the cooperation between the university and the museum for preparing collections and events is inadequate. Only a few symposiums and panel discussions related with the subject of exhibitions have been organized and contributed to academic studies. That is why the museum facilities cannot reach wide communities. The museum, located in an improvable part of the city, has an important mission to integrate the university with the public, but it needs to interact with the university.

Not only the museum itself, but also the courtyards between the education buildings, have been utilized as exhibition areas. Education units and art galleries are nested in the university building (Figure 4). For example, in one of the courtyards, photographs, which show the Cibali Tobacco Factory, are being exhibited, and the other one is hosting personal effects and photographs belonging to Koç family. As a result, visitors have a chance to discover the whole university building. Moreover, students have the chance to experience this artful atmosphere during their education.





Fig. 4

Courtyards between education buildings are used as an art gallery  
(N. Ozdemir's own collection, 2016)

### **İstanbul Bilgi University (Santralistanbul)**

Another case is the Bilgi University founded in 1996. The university is aimed at social sensitivity and natural interaction with its environment and has set its campuses in disadvantaged regions of the city in order to offer various educational opportunities to the local residents. The University chose the Silahtarağa Power Plant, which was a brownfield area since 1980 and surrounded by slums in the vicinity, for its 3rd campus (OKANDAN 2016, 43).

"The Silahtarağa Power Plant is both the first power plant in the urban scale in the Ottoman Empire and the first thermal power plant that operated with coal" (AKSOY, ACIKBAS & AKMAN 2009, 11). The Silahtarağa Power Plant was developed and expanded in the course of forty years starting from 1910 until 1950s and supplied electricity for İstanbul. The Silahtarağa area was selected as the site of the power plant because of being a sheltered landscape as a harbor, its convenience to sea transportation, and the fertility of the surrounding soil. The power plant is one of the first examples of the entire modern industrial facilities in İstanbul with its structure including social facilities such as the cafeteria, lounge, residences, assembly hall, clubhouses, a sanitary bath for the workers and even a small football field (AKSOY, ACIKBAS & AKMAN 2009, 21).

After having completed its mission in 1983, the plant was taken under protection as an industrial heritage. In 2002, the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality adopted the idea to assign new cultural functions to the area. In 2004, İstanbul Bilgi University undertook the task of conserving the facility as an educational, cultural area and museum. After conservation was completed in 2007, the five main buildings of the plant were converted into a contemporary art exhibition space, a museum of energy, and a public library. The workers residence has been renovated to be used as a boutique hotel and working space. As per initial planning, the production area of the plant was converted into educational units and museum and residential areas converted into social fields. Existing structures were preserved without changing, only essential interventions were made. The new campus of İstanbul Bilgi University is called 'Santralistanbul,' which reflects the name of power plant as 'santral'. "The primary objective underlying the conversion of the Silahtarağa Power Plant into Santralistanbul is to make most of the productive energy resources, namely information, culture, education and art, prevalent in the world of the 21st century with an approach analogous to the transformative role that the electricity has played at the beginning of the 20th century" (AKSOY, ACIKBAS & AKMAN 2009, 11).

The university would like to create a socio-cultural transformation, by means of connecting with the local community. When the Bilgi University took over the industrial site, it also took over the history and memories of place. Therefore, not only the physical space, but also the spirit of place should be discussed. Santralistanbul aims to serve as a center that satisfies the cultural and educational needs of all segments of society with cultural programs, information, documentation and archival resources, and science and art-oriented excursions and educational programs that are open to the utilization and participation of the public at large via its museums (AKSOY, ACIKBAS & AKMAN 2009, 53). That is why museums undertake the most important mission of the campus, namely, to realize all these aims and to preserve the memories of the place.

### Santralistanbul Energy Museum

Santralistanbul embodies a cultural focus point by including museums that were converted from engine and boiler houses. A destroyed boiler room was reconstructed with a new approach to be Contemporary Art Museum and the engine houses were converted into the Energy Museum. The museum of energy is established in the electrical production units where the turbines and control room were located in the Silahtarağa Power Plant. It is describing the modernization process of the Ottoman Empire with turbine-generators, which reflects the advanced technology of the period. The aim of museum is to show the visitors how electricity was generated during the early 20th century. "The chance to closely observe the turbine-generator groups and the control room that were conserved without deformation provides substantial information about the operational logic of the formerly used technological systems and production processes of the plant" (AKSOY, ACIKBAS & AKMAN 2009, 52) (Figure 5).



Fig. 5

Turbine-generator groups in  
Energy Museum, Santralistanbul  
(N. Ozdemir's own collection, 2016)

Apart from the machines as an exhibition object, the building itself is also exhibition material. For this reason, the building is encircled with bridges, which provides circulation, in order to ensure that the visitors can perceive its industrial aesthetic and broad volume. While the museum is a space to exhibit machines and to hosts various events, the industrial landscape as a whole can be considered as an open-air museum.

The Energy Museum has a contemporary approach that uses multimedia presentation techniques and interactive methods in 'energy play area' to catch the attention of visitors (Figure 6). Visitors can produce electricity, build magnetic sculptures, and touch thousands of volts (Energy Museum). The museum also organizes various education programmes that provide an entertaining learning environment through experiences for children and youth. Along with the education programmes related to the theme of energy, museum educators give information about the history of the Silahtarağa Power Plant. The institution provides some education programmes for adults who have not enough financial income for education, and hosts seminars, national and international panels via a cinema / conference room. It plays a converter role in the campus and interacts with the environment by the help of education programmes for the public and schools.



Fig. 6

Interactive 'energy play area'  
(N. Ozdemir's own collection, 2016)

### Discussion and comparison of university museums

When we research the effects of these university museums on their neighbourhood to integrate with the cultural landscape, three components provided by the museums come to mind: integration of the university and local community; increasing awareness for cultural values, and protecting the spirit of the place.

The re-functioning of a settlement contains some risks such as integration problems of old and new. Transformation of the Cibali Tobacco Factory and the Silahtarağa Power Plant to universities caused some adaptation problems and increased social tension between the local community and the universities. "...most of the visitors are outsiders and the accessibility of the community is limited to participating in cultural activities in their neighborhoods" (GUNAY 2014, 105). According to the interviews with local community members carried out by the students (ENVIRONS 2015) of Bilgi University, the local community thinks that the university refreshed its close environment, but the campus is introverted because of the garden walls and iron bars surrounding it. They perceived it as a kind of gated community in which they could not participate. But education programs and various activities that Santralistanbul Energy Museum organized for adults and children aim to integrate the local community and university. In consequence of these constructive efforts, a part of the community has embraced the new educational and cultural area and begun to use the landscape of the university.

However, Rezan Has Museum generally organizes academic programs rather than educational activities for the local people. That is why the local people could not integrate with the educational landscape of the university. In a thesis study, the impact of Kadir Has University on the environment is evaluated (ÇETIN 2005). It is seen that most of the people did not participate in the activities organized by the university despite being informed about them. On the other hand, they expect the university to open more social spaces, to organize training for the community, to promote the region and to become more integrated with the public. As an extraverted face of the university, Rezan Has Museum has potential to put into practice these demands of the locals. It can organize educational and cultural activities for the community to provide interaction.

Another problem observed in Rezan Has Museum and Santralistanbul Energy Museum, is about integration of universities and museums. Although the museums were founded within the university, they are working as independent museums. Lack of interaction between the universities and museums influenced the communication between the university and community negatively. They need to organize common events to provide interaction between the universities and community. The museum plays an important role in the elimination of the gap between the university and the public.

Educational activities could be considered a tool to improve the awareness related with the protection of cultural landscape values for the local community and other citizens. Contrary to other museums, university museums have the potential to diversify educational mediums by integrating interdisciplinary studies. However, it seems that, these kinds of activities in Santralistanbul Energy Museum and Rezan Has Museum are insufficient. Because a part of the local community states that they do not have information about the history of the industrial landscape while the other part who is aware of the historical and cultural value of the buildings states that the community should be trained to discover the importance of the region (ENVIRONS 2015; CETIN 2005). In cases where the historical value of the building is unknown, the museum should organize activities to provide information about the history and architecture of the building.



In addition to their cultural landscape value, these post-industrial landscapes also have memorial value. Interviews with the previous users of the site indicate that they approve of the transformation of the plant since it provides them with a memorial place. But the museums need more effective exhibitions to reflect the previous functions. "The solution is more to do with the conservation of the 'industrial landscape' through the preservation of the 'spirit of place', as ICOMOS (2008) states.... The adaptation and reuse that respect the historical identity of industrial heritage is an appropriate and a cost-effective way of ensuring the survival of industrial heritage; on the other hand, the use of original patterns and the utilization of new uses by creating links to their own history may contribute to the sustainability of the industrial heritage of the Golden Horn" (GUNAY 2014, 106). While Energy Museum displays the previous function of the building via industrial machines, Rezan Has Museum does not exhibit anything belonging to the Tobacco Factory. The museum mostly reflects the spirit of Byzantine Cistern. It is important to convey information about the unique environment of the industrial structures such as sound, noise and smell in the museums. It is clear that the industrial process can only be understood by the machines used in the industrial structures (KOKSAL 2012, 21). Another missing point for both museums is the lack of objects and documents belonging to the socio-cultural life in factories. That's why visitors could not receive any information about the memories of the place and their cultural value to the city. Creation of new landscapes by cultural institutions have affected the whole Golden Horn landscape and introduced a cultural basin. However, there is a difference between industrial plants, which have a wide landscape and monolithic structure. Each of them affects their environment in different ways. As an example, Santralistanbul has a wide campus area, that is why, some facilities such as museum workshops and student activities occur on campus without influencing the close environment. Conversely, Kadir Has University has monolithic structure, so students and visitors need extra places for social facilities. That is why the close environment of the university has transformed into a recreation area, cafeteria, restaurant and similar socializing spaces. The local community indicates that craftsmen have moved into this region and new socializing places have opened after the foundation of the Kadir Has University.

Although Santralistanbul has a wide campus area consisting of Golden Horn creek, flora, fauna and topography that had an important place in the social life of the factory, during the conversion process architects mostly focused on restoration of the buildings and open areas in the vicinity. Nevertheless, the relation between buildings, transportation lines, stages and the creek that have an important place in the landscape was ignored. However, the region needs public places such as parks, concert and picnic places, as the locals indicate in their interviews. In addition to public spaces, these regions have potential to exhibit social life of the factory, if they are well organized and integrated with the energy museum.

### Conclusion

During its history, the Golden Horn has hosted various cultures and has many historic and cultural layers. However, because of unplanned growth of the city with regional solutions, Golden Horn has lost its characteristic features. Later on, re-organization of the industrial landscape as cultural and educational centres has begun to change the atmosphere of Golden Horn in different way. The character of the Golden Horn changed to a 'culture basin' via cultural institutions, but the main transition was realized after the foundation of the universities and their museums. While congress centres, fairs and museums allow periodic utilization in certain times, university museums provide long term and intense utilization. Because of various activities supported by the universities, the density of users and the long-term utilization, they have important roles in the transformation process of the region.

Re-functioning projects causes some changes in the neighborhood. During the industrial period, the nearby environment of the plant was covered with worker's houses and supporting units. But when the function of the region is changed, the landscape is reshaped according to the demands of students and visitors. Cafeterias, student's dormitories, recreational areas etc. But the most important point is to provide integration of the university with the local community. In this process, university museums have an important mission as a tool between the university and community. They have supported the transformation of the region through providing new uses for the region and decreasing the social tension between the university and locals.

Comparison of Rezan Has Museum and Santralistanbul Energy Museum shows us the importance of activities devoted to local people and the negative effects of physical and mental borders. Some proposals can be developed to increase the converter role of the university museums in the region and enhance the relationship between the public and university to support transformation of the cultural landscape.

- Museum programs can be diversified with the aim of promoting participation of the local community in order to provide their adaptation to a new repurposed area.
- Activities for children, local community or university students can take place not just in museum building but also in wide landscape areas to build awareness of cultural landscape.
- Exhibition areas can be expanded to the whole landscape; natural landscape components also have a value for display.
- Some excursion programs can be organized to discover other industrial heritage areas via planning routes.
- Faculties of the university can use industrial landscape area/objects actively in their lectures to increase awareness of industrial heritage.

If Industrial cultural landscapes are supported with museums and universities, they could avoid being idle, and they could create a new educational cultural landscape. But they should be discussed on a broader scale. During the conversion process, the demands of the local community and relation between the community and university museums should be taken into consideration and be planned in detail. Not just buildings but also the whole landscape should be embodied in a museum concept. Sociologic and technologic trails in industrial landscape, usage of topography, transportation systems and recreation areas should be used to provide publicity and integrate with the surrounding environment. Otherwise, only few aspects of the heritage would be represented to the community and wide-ranging aspects of the area would be ignored.

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