

A photograph of an industrial building with a mix of weathered corrugated metal and bright blue panels. The building is situated on a concrete area with some overgrown green plants at its base. A concrete curb is visible in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**Remnants of
Industrialization**
Simon Žlahtič and
Janez Klenovšek



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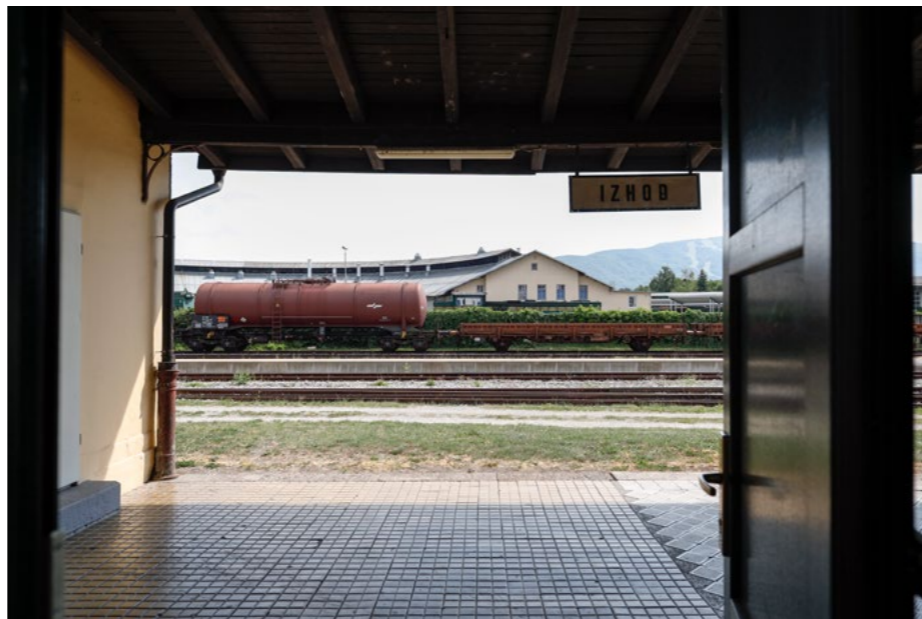
Gray cities, smog, and concrete. Sounds of machines and rugged working conditions. A desolated landscape and high levels of dust particles in the air, and an almost dead river. This is undoubtedly a long shadow of industrial chimneys left behind by industrialization that we often forget to mention. Yet, despite these forgotten facts, in recent decades, after the collapse of heavy industry in the developed world, we are increasingly aware of the broader picture it has left behind. It has penetrated all the pores of our society and thus everyday life. Now, the industrial heritage is

experiencing a renaissance; it has become not only an acceptable element of urban landscapes but a desirable substrate for the revitalization and gentrification that follows it in previously degraded city areas.

The more we move away from the painful memories of mass layoffs in recent decades and the social hardships they have caused, the more we are aware of a complex intertwining of social interactions and economic effects. Industrialization built a new, modern world that was filled with a highly positive attitude toward the future. Unlike previous eras, it brought about the economic independence of the individual, especially women. Roads from villages to towns were built leading to schools and hospitals, and residential complexes and high-rises were constructed near them.

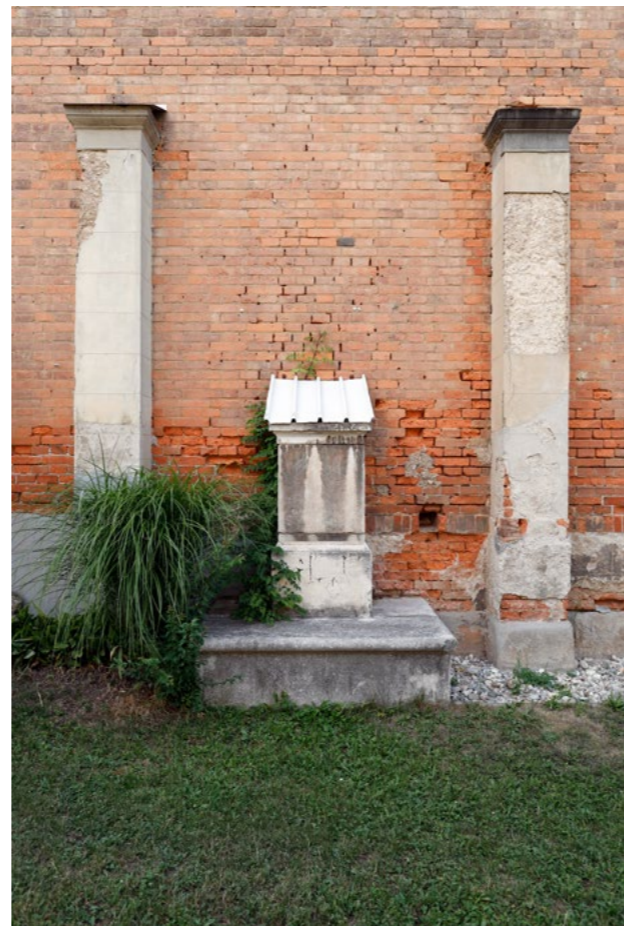
Changes have become part of everyday life without really being aware of them. Despite the neglect of industrial heritage in Maribor in the past decades, especially in the architectural sense, the buildings have survived in a more or less truncated form, with their original content or new purpose. With this photo essay, we did not want to enter the field of documentary architectural photography, which presents objects in the best possible light, let alone step on the path of finding original architectural forms that would serve to typify, archive, and catalog industrial heritage. However, they show distinct segments. Railway as a carrier of industrialization, residential architecture, care for workforce and education, social life and production complexes.

We prioritized recording the current situation and searching for transient views, as the complexes are fragmented in terms of ownership and are subject to constant interventions. Thus, a kind of chameleons that constantly change color according to the ownership structure and adapt to current needs were captured in the photographic lens. Whether it is buildings with a residential function or a production purpose, from each of them, despite the alterations, we can feel the spirit of the time of different periods, often simultaneously, which gives them a special note that reflects the complex interweaving of narratives. Triptychs are, therefore, all the more narrative as they emphasize the character of the elements that can be observed in a particular location. Invaluable confessional value belongs not only to us. We are obliged to preserve it for future generations.









Railway

6-7

With the construction of the railway, the industrialization of Maribor and the story of the industrial city began. With the connection of the Carinthian line at Studenci and the Hungarian line at Pragersko, Maribor became an important railway hub. The railway station in Studenci is the only one left of the two primary train stations in the city. Unfortunately, the central train station did not survive past World War II.

Southern Railway Workshops

8-9

The strategically located Southern Railway Workshops in Studenci, halfway between Vienna and Trieste, also significantly impacted Maribor. By 1890 they employed 1200 workers. Graz unsuccessfully applied for the establishment of the workshops. As a result, the educated workforce came from the Czech and other Austrian lands to Maribor.

TVT Boris Kidrič

10-11

The history dates all the way back to 1863 when the Southern Railway Workshops were founded. After World War II, in addition to rail vehicles, furnaces were also made here. Some parts of the famous Tito's Blue Train were manufactured in Studenci. The last owner, Siemens, closed the company in 2009. Many smaller businesses and retail chains are now occupying the area, and the once production space has been transformed into a place of consumption.

Railway Colony

12-13

The arrival of the Southern Railway Workshops triggered construction activity, which is reflected in the construction of a workers' colony, school, kindergarten, and other infrastructure, kindergarten being the first such institution on Slovenian grounds. This infrastructure represents the rounded whole of the first industrial complex in the city, marked by the characteristic brick facades of the early industrial areas.









Vurnik's Colony

16–17

Due to the city's growing population, the housing shortage for workers became a topical issue in the 1920s. According to the plans of the architect Ivan Vurnik, a modern workers' settlement of single-storey houses with associated gardens and green areas was built. A decade later, in 1938, the church of Sv. Rešnje telo/ Corpus Christi was constructed according to the design of Herbert Drogenik.

Social Life

18–19

Workers' social life also flourished in the area of the railway colony. The bowling alley of the Lokomotiva club is located between the railway tracks and the old school building. The recently renovated bowling alley is the site of a broader bowling community. On the bowling alley table, we can see a lit candle in memory of the deceased comrade.

MTT Studenci

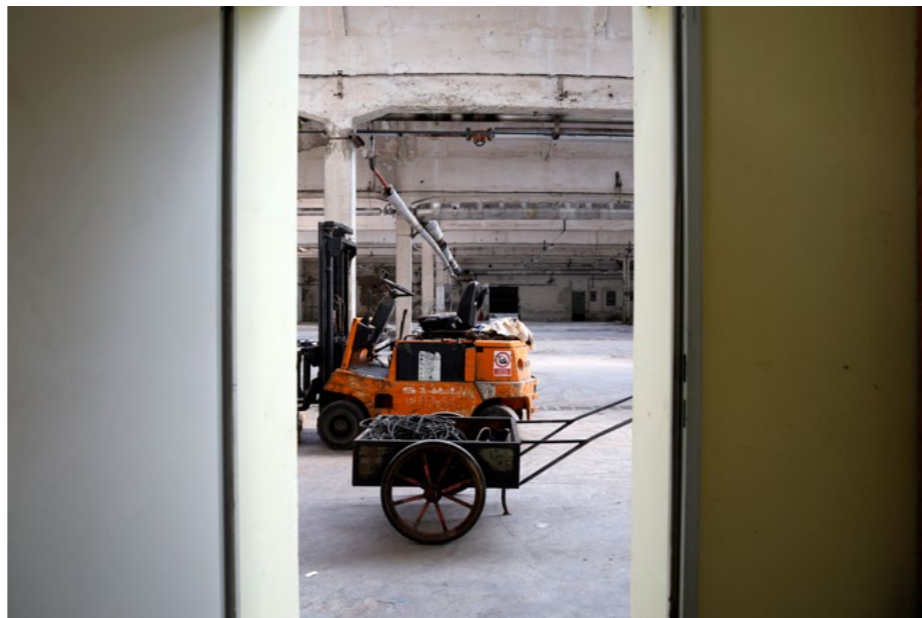
20–21

Between the two world wars, electrification accelerated industrialization with the construction of the first HPP in Slovenia in Fala in 1918. The textile industry developed into the flagship industry, which earned Maribor the title of Yugoslav Manchester. Unlike the Southern Railway Workshops, it mainly employed women.

MTT Halls

22–23

After the company went bankrupt in 2014, the last factory machines found their new home. Most of them were sold to Pakistan, a smaller portion to European countries. After almost a hundred years of work, some have found a home in museums, while others are still weaving.









MTT Views Inside

26–27

Vacant offices, warehouses, and production halls bear witness to different times. Many offices still hold original equipment, and omitted vehicles and sewing machines can be found in the halls. The fabric testing laboratory is still fully equipped. All movable assets are for sale. What's left will end up in the dump yard.

MTT New Life

28–29

The workers are gone, the machines are buzzing elsewhere. But life arises wherever there is water and light. Many of the halls hold at least a collection of molds and algae, if not a miniature botanical garden.

MTT Yards

30–31

The yard of the factory was once organized and tidy. The factory had several green areas, including the park where the factory owner Josip Hutter erected a statue of *Predica/Spinster Lady* in 1937. It was created by Ivan Sojč, who dressed *Predica* in a Slovenian national costume. Today, the parking lot of a trading company is located on the park site, and *Predica* has found her new home in the National Liberation Museum Maribor.

Metalna

32–33

The beginnings of the company date back to 1920, when the company Splošna stavbena družba Maribor Tezno/General Building Association Maribor Tezno was formed from the construction workshop of HPP Fala. It dealt with iron constructions. After nationalization in 1946, it merged with other plants in the city, and the company Metalna was formed. The company built bridges, power lines, high-rise buildings, railways, mining facilities, pipelines, tanks, and crane structures and parts to construct hydroelectric power plants. A significant market was the non-aligned countries. In addition, Metalna's workers contributed to building the Aswan Dam. After the bankruptcy, a few departments managed to survive to a lesser extent and are still operating today.





TAM Boiler Room

36–37

Since the boiler room was not in use, it most likely represents the last building of the TAM factory complex, which is still in a relatively original condition. The once rounded area of the factory is now scattered among various owners. With individual renovations, the unified image of the industrial complex is slowly being lost. But what remains unchanged and hidden from view are these so-called tunnels. In the interwar period, part of the production was moved underground in fear of airstrikes. Under the factory, 8512 square meters of workshops were created in the greatest secrecy. Due to the high groundwater level, employees, prisoners of war, and forced laborers worked under challenging conditions, often knee-deep in water.

TAM

38–39

TAM also shut down in the mid-1990s. However, individual segments of the past giant, such as the foundry and Marbus, are still in operation. On 21 June 1988, with the march of the morning shift of 3500 workers from Tezno to the center of Maribor, the cracks of Maribor's industry and the Yugoslav regime began to show. In the afternoon, another 400 Primat workers joined the strike. They demanded higher wages. The next day, MTT workers and representatives of Metalna also joined. Thus, 6000 workers have already gathered. Finally, on the third day, a crowd of 7000 workers gathered to block the squares, the train station, and all major intersections. Although they did not achieve their purpose, they showed the immense power of Maribor's workforce.

Maribor – From a Rural Town to an Industrial Center

The industrialization has shaped the city's image since the mid 19th century. It has contributed to the population growth, the economy, and the space it occupies. The process took place in three stages, the first from the middle of the century until World War I, the second between the two wars during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and the last after World War II during the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/SFRJ.

After the introduction of manufacturing in the 18th century, Maribor experienced its greatest

prosperity with the advent of the railway. The Austrian Southern Railway route connected Vienna, the capital of the monarchy, and the port city of Trieste in 1846. As a result, it enabled the distribution of goods from remote places and sealed the fate of the artisan-oriented and provincially sleepy city. At the same time, it allowed the more enterprising population to industrialize production and export goods to other parts of the monarchy. The strategically located Austrian Southern Railway workshops in Maribor's Studenci, halfway between Vienna and Trieste, were also signifi-

cantly impacted. They initiated construction, which is reflected in the construction of a workers' colony, school, kindergarten, and other infrastructure. They represent the rounded whole of the first industrial complex in the city, marked by the characteristic brick facades of the early industrial sites. By 1890 they employed 1200 workers.

Between the two world wars, more precisely in 1918, industrialization was accelerated by electrification with the HPP/hydroelectric power plant construction in Fala, the first in Slovenia. As a result, the textile industry became the flagship industry, which earned Maribor the nickname Yugoslav Manchester. Unlike the Southern Railway workshops, it mainly employed women. By 1938, 27 plants in the city employed 6293

workers, representing 35.7% of all workers in the textile industry in Slovenia.

During World War II, the occupier laid the foundations of the post-war industry, the metal industry. An aircraft parts factory, the predecessor of TAM/Factory of automobiles Maribor, was built in the Tezno district forest area for the needs of the German war industry. The alumina and aluminium factory in Kidričevo was also opened after the war, forming a complete production process together with the construction of the Mariborski otok/island HPP. The large amounts of electricity needed to produce aluminium would ensure the production of raw materials that would be processed into finished products in the aircraft parts factory.

The latter projects were completed after World War II, and the aircraft parts factory was transformed into TAM, which became the flagship of the Maribor economy over the years. In 1946, the process of nationalization started, and many smaller and private plants merged into larger companies, and other Maribor giants were created, such as Mariborska livarna Maribor/Casthouse Maribor, Metalna/metal factory, Jeklotehna/Steelwork... As early as 1947, the capacities of Maribor industry were restored to pre-war capacities. At that time, the planned economy drained most of the reservoir to less developed areas of Yugoslavia, thus helping other republics to raise living standards and industrialization. Among other things, this is why in 1965 Maribor region was below the average of Yugoslavia and Slovenia with used and obsolete machines. At that time, foreign capital

entered Yugoslavia, most of which was oriented to construction of Nova Gorica and Titovo Velenje/Tito's Velenje. Lack was patched by employing more workers than was economically viable, so after 1991, when Maribor's industry entered other markets, it was forced to lay off en masse. As a result, the extinction of industrial giants and the sale of the previous social property began.

Taken from the article by Andreja Slavec: *Development of industry in Maribor with special stress on development factors*, 1991. *Dela*, (8), 53–64, <https://doi.org/10.4312/dela.8.53-64>.



Biographies

Simon Žlahtič, self-employed in culture, finished his art history studies at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. He participates in professional conferences and symposia, such as the TEH 85 conference in Pula, organized by Trans Europe Halls (2017) and Participatory Governance in Culture: Exploring Practices, Theories and Policies. DO IT TOGETHER in Rijeka under the auspices of UNESCO and the Kultura nova Foundation (2017). For the GuestRoomMaribor, he contributed interesting field lectures for various artists called Interest Safari/Interesni safari (2017–2020). He also held art history lectures at The Slovenian Third Age University (2017–2020) and the cycle in Gallery K18 (2018–2020). He has also prepared and led tours of

youth exhibitions in collaboration with Bunker (2017). He lectured on sustainability in architecture as part of the *Bee the future* project (2019). He contributed to a special issue of *OUTSIDER* magazine on sustainable architecture (2020). He edited and wrote articles and contributions for *Culture.si* (2019–2020). As part of the Lent Festival (2016–2018), he participated as the street theatre executive producer. As an executive producer, he also collaborated with the theatre group ZIZ (2017, 2020). He has recently collaborated with the GRM residency platform/GuestRoomMaribor (2017–2021) as a producer and curator and jury member to select guest residents (2017–2018). He curated Matija Bobičić's exhibition *Paths and Collisions* at the Rigo Gallery in Novigrad, Croatia, for which he assembled and prepared a catalog (2017). He participated in the international stop-motion animation festival StopTrik (2017–2018). As part of the festival, he prepared the exhibition *Cinema and Maribor/Kino in Maribor* (2018). He worked as a cultural producer and curator at the Pekarna Mag-

dalenske mreže (2017–2018). He participated in a curator-artist residency exchange, where he was a guest at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Graz (2018). He contributes texts for the catalog of resident artists GuestRoomMaribor (2018, 2020 [in progress]). He participated in creating the animated film by Miloš Tomić under the auspices of Film Factory (2019–2020).

Janez Klenovšek (1987, Maribor) is a photographer you can meet at the Glas Podzemlja Association and most often at various events around the city, where he takes care of their public image behind the lens. He attended the secondary design and photography school in Ljubljana. For one year, he gained additional experience as an assistant to photographer Damjan Švarc and then continued his photography career as a freelancer. He has photographed for SNG Maribor, Maribor Theatre Festival, newspaper Večer, KIBLA, Museum of Architecture and Design in Ljubljana, Centre for Creativity Ma-

ribor, Fotopub in Novo Mesto, Galerie Lisa Kandlhofer in Vienna, Planter's Club in Vienna, Maribor Art Gallery, Association Hiša, Mayo Milenovic Workman, FAK/ Festival of Alternative Culture, Udarnik cinema, First Secondary school Maribor, III. secondary school Maribor, GT22, Drugajanje Festival for the Bunker Institute, Sonček Association, DOKUDOC Festival, ZIZ, KMŠ, Salon of Applied Arts, Pekarna Magdalenske mreže, MKC Maribor, StopTrik Festival, Huda Kava, Štuk, Gustaf Pekarna Hall, Jazz ,ma mlade Festival, Mladinin Oder – Lent Festival, Media Nox Gallery and Narodni dom Maribor. So far, he has held 11 solo exhibitions (GT22, III. secondary school Maribor, Isabella, Huda Kava, EKTC Maribor, Vetrinjski dvor, Šentilj Gallery, Glas Podzemlja Studio, MC Pekarna, Čajek teahouse, Narodni dom Maribor) and 10 group exhibitions (GT22, Vetrinjski dvor, Hladilnica Pekarna Gallery, Hostel Pekarna, Media Nox Gallery, FDV Gallery, Jazz 'ma mlade).

Impressum

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