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From production spaces to exhibition spaces: The metamorphosis of contemporary industrial architecture in Southern Spain and Portugal

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Abstract

The obsolescence of industrial architecture due to the exhaustion of its productive activity has for decades been leading to the creation of spaces of opportunity for new uses, resulting in a wide variety of renovations, from the most conservative to the most avant-garde ones.

The metamorphosis of production spaces has given rise to different types of uses, among which the most recurrent one is probably the combination of cultural spaces with other uses. We often find cultural-multipurpose buildings that house a museum whose collections have nothing to do with the industry that gave rise to their construction or where, on the contrary, the old machinery is kept in its place as part of an industrial museum.

After an exhaustive search for sources and in-depth fieldwork carried out in both southern Spain and Portugal, it became clear that there was a lack of studies on industrial museums providing an overview focused on this geographical area.

In this context, this research has enabled us to carry out an initial quantitative analysis of these industrial museums, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, an estimate of how the metamorphosis from production architectures to exhibition architectures has taken place.

Keywords: Industrial Architecture, Industrial Museums, Reuse, Spain, Portugal