

Case studies

With the emergence of the concept of ‘outstanding universal value’, which was coined in the 1972 UNESCO *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, the classic European concepts of integrity and authenticity are challenged by the prism of cultural diversity:

All judgements about values attributed to cultural properties as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. It is thus not possible to base judgements of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong (UNESCO, 2016).

This compels us to question a vision that focuses exclusively on the conservation of the original and historic materials of the object, as stated above. Without a revision of this approach, ‘old world’ Europe will be unable to engage with new forms of cultural heritage which demand different points of reference and different methods from those that have been developed for historic monuments and works of art of the past. For many contemporary artworks, the concept takes precedence over material components and conservators have yet to develop new approaches to take this reality into account. But among our new heritages, industrial heritage also presents numerous, previously unknown problems. We will try briefly to demonstrate this through two examples:

- The *Les Machines de l’île* in Nantes, or how to revitalize obsolete port facilities while maintaining a respect for the ‘spirit of place’.
- The flour mill at Aumale, or how and why to preserve a humble component of nineteenth century industrial heritage which is protected as a historical monument.

In some cases the preservation and development of industrial heritage raise serious issues concerning urban policy, requiring programmes whose implementation needs several decades and considerable investment. This will be shown later on with the example of the vast industrial brownfield site on the Île de Nantes. However, in other more modest cases, the choices of presentation and the cultural use of industrial equipment that has become obsolete are similarly complex and not straightforward.

This can be observed in the case of the small Lambotte mill in Aumale,¹ which ceased activity in 1972 and was classified as a historical monument in 2004. This remarkable complex consists of an intact assembly of technical equipment and generally dates from the end of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth century. It was maintained in a very good state of conservation by its current owner, an heir of the Lambotte family which had used the mill for