3.5.2 Cultural use of non-cultural spaces

by Juan Ruesga Navarro

Public spaces (squares, streets, etc.) and some buildings were designed for other uses, but cultural activities and projects can be taken place in certain circumstances and if buildings are correctly adapted. The same occurs with certain ruins of archaeological value (ancient thermal baths, amphitheatres, etc.), and with very important building remains or derelict buildings, as old factories.

1. A general introduction

Public spaces (squares, streets, etc.) and some buildings were designed for other uses, but cultural activities and projects can be taken place in certain circumstances and if buildings are correctly adapted. The same also occurs with certain ruins of archaeological value (ancient thermal baths, amphitheatres, etc.), and with very important building remains or derelict buildings, as old factories. This chapter reviews the main concepts of the city, which is understood as a great stage of urban festivals, and if cities are still used as such.

Some examples of using squares as the main place of the concept of urban stage are shown in detail, as well as how the use of performances have structured in the course of the years squares and buildings in which there are many windows, balconies, etc., to see them.

Also, how audience and performances’ requirements can be met through more or less complex technical supports is also analysed. The main problems are always visibility and sometimes acoustics. Finally, some cases of very singular buildings/spaces with a strong scenographic content are provided, and the Spanish Square in Seville is analysed in detail.

One of the most attractive spaces for cultural uses are the ruins of some buildings from the classical age. The use of the Amphitheatre in Italic as a great stage for dancing is analysed in a full section, as well as the way in which the beauty of ruins contributes to the success of performances carried out there.

Finally, the restoration of industrial buildings for cultural uses is analysed in the final section as it is today a very important issue.

2. City as stage

When other big cities aim at reviving the tradition of the city itself as a festive place, a place for performances, many of our cities keep such essences through their urban festivals par excellence, such as the processions of the Holy Week in Seville, the Corpus Christi in Granada, or the Carnival in Cadiz.
Such urban festivals, which are more and more booming, recover the real essence of meeting-place of cities. The festive calendar undoubtedly contains new or revived events which take place in the urban space, and cities keep their characteristic of meeting-place in such festival dimension.

We should know that the city with its streets, squares, and public buildings is a huge place for performances. We cannot think about reviving the sense of festivals of the cities from the ancient world, but remembering such function is essential. For instance, the city itself was considered as a huge place of celebrations in ancient Rome. The *subitarii gradus* (provisional stage places for festivals) were sometimes and in certain places built. When Pompey built his huge theatre (55 BC), which was provided with all comforts, gardens, and auxiliary buildings making possible to stay there the whole day and enjoying the vegetation and performances, the meeting-place was fixed, the scene defined, and the audience organised as a perfect representation of the society of those times.

In a city as Granada, where there are many singular spaces within the city and buildings which are little cities themselves (such as The Alhambra), it is not surprising that the city and the entertainment industry go hand in hand. Arrayanes Courtyard, Charles V Palace, Generalife Gardens, etc., are some of them.

In my opinion, a very interesting place is the Pasiegas Square, with the steps of the cathedral as an organiser of the space for artists and audiences.

Pasiegas Square and façade of the Cathedral - Granada

In this sense, it is a canonical space, as other European examples. Max Reinhardt, the incredible director of staging, was looking for a work to be represented in the open air in Salzburg. He finally chose “Jedermann”, a work by the poet and playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal which is an auto sacramental based on an ancient legend.

The work is about how God decides that Death visits Jedermann, a rich man, and communicates him during a feast with his lover and friends that he is going to die in an hour. He is abandoned by everyone and everything, even by
his own money, which has the appearance of a man-currency. Only a skinny woman —representing his few good acts—, together with his sister Faith, guide a poor and alone Jedermann in his last journey.


In August 1920, in the steps in front of the Cathedral of Salzburg, the performance was first represented with the participation of Richard Strauss (the composer), the said Max Reinhardt, Alfred Roller (the stage designer), and Franz Schalk (the orchestra conductor). Given its huge success, the performance is represented every year, except during the short break of the Nazi regime. Since then, the main figures of performing arts of Austria have taken part both in the artistic and technical teams and on stage. The main characters have been played by the best and most famous performers, such as Klaus María Brandauer, Maximillian Schell, Curd Jürgens, Senta Berger, etc. The performance has been renewed in the course of the years, but it is faithful to the original idea of Reinhardt and to the unconditional affection of the audience.

The today Festival of Salzburg is based on this success, which is continuous each year, without forgetting the music of Mozart, obviously. I think it is a very representative case to think about. First, there were performances in the open air, in the stalls of a cathedral, as the best medieval performances. Then, there were stage buildings, theatres, concert halls, and of course many places and buildings of the city which were used as a huge stage to have a broad, varied, and simultaneous offer. There are other cases as Avignon, Edimburg, etc. which have associated the performing arts with the name of the city forever, thus responding today to such model of city-stage.

The performance in front of the stalls of the cathedral of Salzburg includes another quality in those mentioned above, which is related to the main popular festivals: seemingly, it is always the same, but it is different. Changes
are continuous, but without being separated from the understanding and enjoyment of the audience, an audience which is accomplice of the performance, knows the text, compares the way of representing the characters by the various actors and actresses, etc. Lighting and sound are continuously improved for a better legibility of the performance. In a few words, the audience has appropriated the show.

Undoubtedly, the rehearsals and efforts of Manuel de Falla and all his wonderful collaborators and partners for using the spaces of Granada for his staging of “Life is a dream” and others, and also the flamenco festival itself aimed at looking for the popular performance, that is, the happy fact of turning a performance into a popular festival in which the city is the best stage and citizens the best audience. Today we doubt if theatres can have links with current society. Do not doubt it. The festival dimension using the city as a stage is one of the best lines of developing performing arts as well as of complicity with the society we are living in.

3. Squares as performance places

The medieval performance

From the fall of the Roman Empire to the beginning of the 16th century, the classical tradition of Greek and Roman theatre buildings was broken, and dramatic arts again emerged from festivals and rites of worship. Medieval performances are represented inside churches, cathedrals, squares, and open spaces.

We can therefore study the great religious performances, generally known as Passions, representing biblical passages and the life of Jesus Christ.

One of the best known and studied performance is the Lucerne Passion.

The documentation available corresponds to the play performed in 1583 and took place in one of the main squares of Lucerne, a Swedish city, where there is an important building known as the House of the Sun. The square, the main buildings and the central fountain exist today, so we can study the scale and installations in detail. Also, the windows of the buildings around the square were used as boxes. Plays were performed in two parts, with a very detailed set, pieces of stage machinery and extras. Most actors worked in touring companies and performed other works in inns and squares of the city after finishing their main religious performance.

The arrival of dignitaries and royal members also took place in urban spaces. We focus on the Triumph of Archduchess Isabella in the Ommegang Festival in Brussels on 31st May 1615.

There are a series of panels by Denys van Alsloot (ca. 1570-1626), a Flemish painter specialized in painting architecture and landscapes, which can be found both in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and Prado Museum in Madrid.
Lucerne passion

The profusion of adorned cars can be seen in these pictures: the first car has banners, the archduchess is in the second car, and then there are many cars with civil bodies or representing various religious passages. The public around the retinue can be seen in the background: they are on their feet and in windows or balconies adorned with branches.

Medieval jousts and tournaments, together with exhibitions of men’s skills, are also part of the tradition of the important events and festivals to be held in urban squares and main places.

We have chosen a total of three very important cases which are also held in several Italian cities today, so we can see today’s infrastructures for such ancient festivals: El Palio in Siena, El torneo in Sulmona, and Il Corso al saracino in Arezzo.
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Siena. El Palio.

Sulmona. Abruzzos. Italy.

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In all cases cities have been architecturally adapted to events, as well as the spectators are located in windows and stalls. The main extras and artists wear colourful clothes more or less faithful to the originals. The spaces to be used by horses have been covered with sand, and in some of them, such as the square in Sulmona, a lot of sand was used, thus modifying the slope of the square to reach the level of the fountain. The strength of these events and their influence lead to the fact that they are very visited and broadcasted. The Palio horse race in Siena exceptionally maintains the effort and risk of riders, so the race is a unique show.

**Squares as stages of a city**

In this section, we focus on some important examples to think about the capacity of certain urban spaces in which their space quality and the beauty of buildings are together, thereby being privileged stages.

Saint Mark’s square in Venice represents the city and its history. Various buildings of different periods and styles, such as the Saint Mark’s Basilica, the reconstructed Campanile, and the Napoleonic wing of the square, form a unique whole. The image included on the next page is a painting of Saint Mark’s square in the 18th century.

As can be seen, provisional constructions are placed in the central space which remind us the small shops in Rialto bridge, although an oval divided into four arms is defined in this case, thus giving a new space to the interior of the square. A design street market at the heart of the Saint Mark’s square: a complete design challenge.

When Pope John Paul II visited Vienna in 1983, the ceremonial podium to be placed in the Heroes’ Square (Heldenplatz), in front of the Imperial Palace (Hofburg), was designed by the Viennese architect Hans Hollein, who was at the height of his career (he received the Pritzker Prize in 1985).
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Pope John Paul II in Vienna, 1983. Designed by Hans Hollein

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The Heroes’ Square has always been a very important place in Vienna. Austria was there annexed to Hitler’s Reich in 1983.

Hollein’s design perfectly included the scenographic effect of the façade of the palace, thus solving the change of slope required for the visibility by including the equestrian statue of the Prince Eugene on the huge podium. The difficulty of including a screen in the design was solved by including it in a cloud-shaped framework, thus balancing the composition.

A place that reflects unanimity is the Spanish Square in Rome, with the huge view of the steps which take to Trinitá dei Monti Church, and the Church itself, with the obelisk, a very photogenic place, as thousands of tourists and directors from Hollywood show.
Romans decorate it in many ways and in different moments, mainly with all type of floral ornaments, as did Bernini because of the visit of the Dauphin of France to Rome. Lately, the steps placed for a fashion show are shown, with a technical infrastructure of lighting and some beautiful pinacles. All the staging was designed by the important Roman architect Paolo Portoghesi.

Finally, we comment on the scenographic building per excellence in Seville: the Spanish Square designed by the architect Aníbal González as the main building and square for celebrations during the Ibero-American Exhibition in 1929.

Spanish Square in Seville. A scenographic building.

In my opinion, this building is an appropriate synthesis of architectural and space elements (and even the work in general), thus implicating much more than its original condition and becoming a masterpiece of the architecture. Its design was so successful that it became the iconographic motif of the Exhibition from the beginning, as can be seen in guides, posters, and other graphic elements.

The inaugural ceremony of the exhibition took place in the central space-square, with great magnificence due to its huge dimensions. The public was placed around it at the several levels.
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Inaugural ceremony of the Ibero-American Exhibition in 1929. The building is used as stalls. The square is the stage.

Poster of the Ibero-American Exhibition in 1929. The building is the message.
The success of its image and the popularity among Sevillian and foreign people is shown in the photomontage below on the occasion of the European participation of Sevilla FC. In such photomontage, the playing field is surrounded by the Spanish Square as stalls.

Presentation of the mascot in the Spanish Square in Seville.

Recently, many films, such as Lawrence of Arabia and Star Wars, have shown this singular stage. In the latter, a digital fantasy turns the square into a far-off planet. Also, photographers use it as a privileged set for weddings and other personal events. Public and private institutions, and the public in general, choose it as a leisure place and for many competitions. There is not another building mostly represented in the main gate of the Seville Fair.

Finally, I provide a summary of the urban show carried out in the Spanish Square in Seville in 1989, three years before the opening of the Expo 92, to present the mascot of the exhibition.

The proposal was to create an emotional bridge between the collective memory of the Exhibition of 1929 and a new project which was unknown by the public and located outside the city: The Expo 92. The Spanish Square was the place. For this purpose, a multidisciplinary team was responsible for the organisation under the executive production of Jesús Cantero. Juan Ruesga was responsible for the stage design and artistic management. Joan Font and Els Comediants, the dramatic interventions. And a huge technical deployment with elements used for the first time, such as synchronized fountains with solenoid valves and high-power and high-definition projectors. A great artistic challenge which was completely successful. A total of 100,000 people went that night to the Spanish Square. The Expo 92 became a city project.
4. The ruins: the Amphitheatre in Italica, a stage for dancing

The place

For years, at the beginning of the summer, the International Dance Festival was held in the ruins of the Amphitheatre in Italica. The captivating dance and the romantic charm of the monument complex resulted in unforgettable soirées. After a long time, there is no doubt that part of the Festival’s success and its massive influx was based on the magic of the ruin’s environment, and particularly the charm of the Amphitheatre itself.

Italica’s spectators were excited by the ambiguous form, by the architecture to be again nature where the curved stone and clay are mixed, resulting in new forms of great expressive power. That is the same feeling of romantic travellers who found the remains of a big Roman city next to clay hills covered by olive trees. A feeling on which the romantic movement is based and is part of the attractiveness of decadent aspects.

From the arrival at the monument complex, visitors were transported to a singular and attractive environment recalling other visits, maybe in childhood, or producing the interest in visiting the archaeological complex more in detail on another occasion. The audience did not go there only to watch the performance, but to enjoy Italica, so it is understandable that many spectators stayed having a drink and listening to music at the end of the performance. All this was increased in the Amphitheatre. The attractiveness of ruins was linked to its condition of entertainment place, that place where remain all creative impulses developed from centuries, as well as all the energy, all the lived feelings, and the echoes of the roars of the audience in wild animals and water shows.
Such feeling was undoubtedly experienced in the solitude of a hot night and felt in the environment of the Amphitheatre. The contrast between the ruins and metal, wooden structures was a new way of linking the telluric to the ephemeral, thus creating the feeling of unique occasion which was at the heart of all performing arts.

At the beginning, festivals included theatre, symphonic music, and dance in their programmings. Then, while various organisation models of stage spaces and of the relation between show/spectator were used, festivals were little by little specialised in dance, thus connecting with their origin and formal proposal of being an entertainment place, as the audience felt, achieving a perfect symbiosis. All romantic feelings became more noticeable with a dance show.

Dance, the first form of arts and simple effect of the need of showing feelings, became an image of a collective emotion. The circle, the enveloping shape as the purest way of expressing the mystique synthesis of the dancing wheel, is showed in Italica through the stalls around us, and dancers and spectators were in the same sphere due to the transparency of the stage.
It is again the balance between enthusiasm and convention, fiction and spirit of game, direct contact, and the requirements of the dramatic relation. It is the same balance presented as the same solution to the problem of the stage architecture, which is an essential part for preparing spectators’ mood before and during the performance. The identification achieved between the monument space and the artistic creation was expressed by the weird perfection in the Amphitheatre, where dance and nights met at Italica.

**The formal process**

Some cultural activities were carried out in the Amphitheatre in Italica, and metal stalls were built, of a rectangular layout and at a great height, which solved the placing of spectators. Placing a huge metal structure maybe changed the singular shape of the ruins of the Amphitheatre, breaking with the magic of the place. The first festivals continued to use such implementation but concerns about improving the relation between the Amphitheatre and the provisional stage installation soon arose at the heart of the Luis Cernuda Foundation.

As a result, the assignment to create a provisional concert hall with better stage features was accepted for the first time. The first idea for designing the concert hall was the own singularity of the complex, the Amphitheatre in Italica, because festivals were there held to enjoy its archaeological, historical, artistic, and landscape values.

Since the first designs, still experimentally, we were aware of having a special project. Due to the strong determinants of the previous experiences (standard and prefabricated stalls, etc.), the aim was to find a balance between the ruins and the new implementation. For this purpose, the pit for wild animals was covered with sand and rectangular low-rise stalls were placed in the four sides of the square because most performances included in the programming were adapted to the central shape. Afterwards, and due to the evolution of the activities, one of the stalls became the stage.

Given the different results, there was a new proposal for the next festival based on the following criteria:

- The audience should enjoy the performances and archaeological, historical, artistic, and landscape values of the Amphitheatre, as well as the whole complex of Italica.
- The architectural composition of the Amphitheatre should not be changed by interventions, but be a reference of it, being entranced by the shape of the building.
- The set of installations should completely follow the principles of the current theatre building. It was a good occasion to consider the space where the theatre activity took place not only as a historical monument or a modern building, but a space to be changed which preserves the history by adapting or modifying it according to the demands of that moment.

So, we use the ellipse of the Amphitheatre as an ideal generational line, as the support line of the concert hall, to obtain a formal synthesis between them. The final form adapted is a solution to the closest approximation of the shape of the classic amphitheatre and the contemporary concert hall to achieve two goals: highlighting the Amphitheatre as an organisation guideline and using the Amphitheatre as architecture of the concert hall. This effect was increased by lighting the stalls and pits of the Amphitheatre, which have the value of “room light”, instead of the concert hall.

The maximal height of the provisional stalls was based on that of the Amphitheatre, thus extending slopes and vision. Stalls are placed in various levels. The stage is made up of a main platform and a superstructure to place hangings and spotlights. All such elements provide a formal solution and a reasonable comfort for spectators. The main find was that the background of the stage was the own broken stalls in the opposite site of the amphitheatre, creating a permanent and visual extension between spectators and the Amphitheatre, achieving the enveloping
concept that we wanted.

Afterwards, characteristics of the contemporary concert hall were developed, thus facilitating spectators to be in front of the stage and improving the visibility in all seats, as well as the space of each seat. The capacity is slowly reduced up to 1,000 seats, but there was greater homogeneity of vision and acoustics in all of them. Such homogeneity is nowadays accepted as one of the characteristics of contemporary halls and demanded by the audience as an essential rule of behaviour.

The final shape

As previously mentioned, the following installations of provisional concert halls in Italica were developed until having a final shape meeting the larger number of requirements and being adapted to the archaeological site and stage’s needs for dancing, as well as to spectators’ demands.

The last installation carried out in 1992 is succinctly described below. The project is divided into two huge sections: stalls and the stage.

Stalls

Stalls were built at different levels, with a huge central zone and other two on the sides. The slope of stalls was calculated for all spectators to have an appropriate visibility. Each seat was of 90 cm long by 55 cm wide, thus resulting in a capacity of 1,000 spectators which was optimal in all senses (visibility, acoustics, entries and exits, etc.). Four main accesses were available with the form of stairs which accessed to a central corridor where the audience was distributed when accessing and leaving. Two additional accesses were also available in the front part of the stalls, next to the stage. Under the central stalls, in its back area, a covered pass was included to connect all the accesses with the complex, which are in turn connected with the main access of the public. Stalls were built with a metallic material, lined with plywood boards in the thicknesses which are suitable for their function, with the finish painted in light grey colour so all the metallic elements were not visible, except the elements of the handrail and the brackets under the slope in the main pits. Portable scissor seats were put on such platforms: they were connected with each other and at a distance of 5 cm to guarantee the good use of armrests. To increase the comfort degree of spectators, plastic shades cushions in light colours were also included. Also, there was a platform in the upper side of stalls for control tables, followspots and possible cameras.

The stage

The stage was made up of a main platform and a superstructure for hangings and spotlights. The total dimensions of the main platform were 27.00 metres length by 12.00 metres wide. The free stage opening was 18 metres, so left wings were 4.30 m. The height was 1.20 with a horizontal board. A maximal reverse slope of 2% was accepted to improve the visibility. The stage was a wooden platform supported by metal elements with rubber gaskets and a regular finish on which a plywood or anti-humidity agglomerated board was placed, which had the adequate thickness to completely regulate the surface area of the stage, and a dance carpet was placed without any irregularities. The superstructure was supported by four towers placed in the angles of the platform. There was a structure on such towers of the same size as the game area of the stage, provided with engines allowing it going up and down. From the frontal side of the ceiling structure, a series of braces or elements in inverted cantilever, with a height of 1 metre and a half to hang spotlights. The free height between the platform and the ceiling structure was 7.5 m. (maximum height). On these girders, a cover to protect from sun and rain was placed: it was of aluminium or galvanised sheet, and the internal side was black. All the metallic elements of this superstructure and those visible elements of the stage which were painted in dark grey and black. A side wall of 4 metres height was
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built on the platform of the stage, separating the latter from the complex, thus avoiding seeing some parts. The internal and external parts were painted in black. A series of stage houses were made up of several boards of 5 metres height whose position could be modified with hinges and were fixed to the platform. All the hidden sides of these elements were also painted in black, and the visible sides in dark grey. Two auxiliary platforms were placed against the platform of the stage and at the same height for the sound elements. The access to the stage is through a cramp to facilitate the access of the material located in its back and through two stairs situated in both sides. On the side of the stage, which is opposite of the cramp, there were some receptacles closed in at least three sides and covered by galvanised sheet of the same characteristics of the stage to protect electric elements and other stage devices from rain and sun. An independent structure was located between the stage and stalls, which had the function of the orchestra pit. It was finished as the parterre of the audience. All the stage was divided from the audience by a wooden wall where there were a series of dressing rooms, four on each side. Such dressing rooms were covered and had wooden floors, an insulated false ceiling, electric lighting and accessories for the make-up. There was a door big enough to access to this part of the stage and to put the stage elements on it. Prefabricated units with toilets and showers were placed to be used by performers and technicians. Also, a prefabricated office unit was installed.

Protection measures

The need to design the most acceptable solutions to the characteristics of the monument was always considered in all this process, in relation to both formal characteristics and guarantees of preservation during the activities and in the processes of assembly and dismantling the structures to be installed. Mandatory rules on provisional installations and constructions were developed: such rules were related to the environment, walls, and surfaces of the Amphitheatre. The most important rules were those stipulating the prohibition of supporting structures against walls and paving, fastening fixing elements, being continuously brushed and painting it or even dirtying it. Consequently, any kind of installation must be at a minimal distance of 15 cm and protected with wood, and the surfaces were protected in all cases during the processes of loading and unloading the structures. Those areas of the Amphitheatre and Italica in general which were not open to visitors during the performances were delimited with unmistakable signs and barriers. Also, the rules included in the current Reglamento General de Policía de Espetáculos Públicos y Actividades Recreativas [General Police Regulation on Public Shows and Recreational Activities] on installations were also accomplished.

Final reflection. The installation of a provisional concert hall in the Amphitheatre of Italica achieved a balance between the place and installations, as well as between the dance programming and the audience. However, the failure of being developed by the programming of the Maestranza Theatre has implied a loss of identity of the Festival. The place, that is, the Amphitheatre, was an essential part of the Festival in Italica, as Verona, Nimes, Ravenna, Orange, Caracalla, Syracuse, etc., without forgetting Mérida and Avignon, among others. The singular stage is the complex, the performance and the place, the festive and unique occasion providing spectators with a feeling of being the main character, an essential part of the creative activity.
5. Industrial architecture reused

Architecture, expression of the development

Today cities aim at competing, independently of nations and states and at unbelievable levels. Cities are considered as economic units, and it is very significant that some town councils are the greatest firms due to the number of employees of their reference territory.

As it is previously said, the future has an urban shape. Half of people live today in urban zones, and the amount is increasing. Big, small, and medium cities are preparing for such competition. Consequently, there is a strong demand of singular architecture, of new monuments including new infrastructures in cities, and new points of interest and reference. Museums, institutions headquarters, huge libraries, theatres, concert halls, and conference centres have become one of the expressions of the so-called “city marketing”.

Planning actions, together with new buildings and new places show the aim to change and improve, related in many cases to huge events and influencing the emergence of tourism in cities, for example fairs and congresses, as well as new museums and stage and musical concert halls.

It is worth remembering the effort of many Spanish cities to be included in the circuit of big stages, either with opera houses, concert halls or conference centres, provided with stages suitable for huge opera and musical events and all type of profitability obtained.

They are sometimes important performances and sometimes not so important, sometimes new buildings and other times restorations of important buildings, but the mission of such architectural performances is always to provide new realities.

Can architects reproach society for trusting the transformation of singular buildings? How not considering the symbolic value and iconic meaning of architecture after the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York, 11th September 2001?

The potential of the industrial architecture as transformation

The architecture has a huge capacity for adapting to new uses, and one of the most important options is the adaptation of industrial buildings to new social uses because of both their inherent capacity and the representative and heritage value they provide by being the industrial architecture linked to significant episodes of the history of cities.

One of the reference models is the restructuring of the Tobacco Factory in Seville, one of the big civil buildings in Spain from the 18th century, into the headquarter of the University of Seville in the mid of the last century.
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University of Seville, the old Tobacco Factory.

The examples are repeated all over our country. The Tobacco Factory in Cadiz turned into the Conference Centre.

Conference centre in Cadiz. The old Tobacco Factory.
El Matadero in Madrid was turned into a first-order cultural complex, and the CaixaForum have generally been placed in old industrial facilities and now in the new project in the Atarazanas.

Cultural Complex. Old Matadero - Madrid

In some cases, the obsolete industrial facilities do not just correspond to a natural transformation of cities, but to deep changes, such as the estuary of Bilbao and the placing of the new centre of music, performing arts, and congresses of the capital of Biscay in the Euskalduna old shipyards.

CaixaForum - Madrid
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Euskalduna Palace - Bilbao. Old shipyard.

Or the case of Avilés that, after the crisis of furnaces, there is a new profile of activity with the construction of the Oscar Niemeyer Cultural Centre and the Municipal and Cultural Factory in the old factory of Confecciones Camino.

Oscar Niemeyer Cultural Centre - Avilés
Or the singular case due to its exceptional architecture of Lingotto de Torino, the most important factory of Fiat, turned into a cultural, leisure and congress complex designed by the architect Giácomo Matté Trucco in 1915 and opened in 1926.

Cultural Factory. Old Factory of Confecciones Camino - Avilés

Today it includes: the FIAT management Centre, 8 Gallery Shopping Centre, Offices, The Milano Fair, Giovani Agnelli Concert Hall, Pinacoteca Agnelli , the Congress entre, Le Meridien Lingottoand Art+Tech Lingotto Hotels, Pathé cinema, a panoramic restaurant, University Dental Clinic, Cursos de Ingenieria del Automóvil del Politécnico de Torino [Vehicle engineering courses of the Polytechnic of Torino], the historical track surface restored, La Bolla heliport, and a glass structure for meetings with the capacity of 16 people.

A paradigmatic example of relationship between the industrial architecture and performing arts is particularly constituted by the premises at Cartoucherie de Vincennes, in the past aimed at manufacturing gunpowder and armament; they are located inside the Bois de Vincennes in Paris.

In 1970, Ariane Mouschkine and her Théâtre du Soleil were in one of the premises at Cartoucherie, as well as the Théâtre de l'Aquarium by Jacques Nichet.

Also, Théâtre du Soleil, Théâtre de l'Aquarium, Théâtre de la Tempête, Théâtre de l'Épée de Bois, Théâtre du Chaudron, Atelier de Paris de Carolyn Carlson, Atelier de recherche des traditions de l'acteur, Atelier de recherche et de réalisation théâtrale perform there today.

In recent years, the premises of the spinning factory from the forties have been adapted to new cultural uses in Seville: Hytasa, with the Salvador Távora Theatre; Los Ulen; and the headquarter of Maestranza Films, in an incipient process of transforming the old premises.
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I would like to finish with a series of images of an old steelwork in the outskirts of Duisburg, which has been turned into a cultural and leisure park keeping all the factory facilities by wish of the inhabitants who are proud of their industrial past. Part of the activities of the prestigious Ruhrtriennal is developed there, having other facilities and spaces in Bochum and other cities of the Rhur area, and started in 2002 under the management of Gerard Mortier, changing the artistic management each three years.
From the nineties, there is an ambitious strategy in this region to replace the traditional industrial image by another one related to arts and culture. Such strategy is based on the intense public-private collaboration articulated by organisations made up of more than 250 firms which are committed to the revitalisation of the region.

References


