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Industrial Heritage in the Museums: Case Studies from the Great Northern Coalfield (UK) and Silesia (Poland)

The lecture compares two different European regions profoundly influenced by the coal mining industry. Coal mining regions' heritage consists of both tangible (architecture, machines, art) and intangible elements (customs, language). Although environmentally needed, the decline of the coal mining industry led to catastrophic social consequences in both regions. The lecture reflects on the social implications of the decline of coal mining, the disappearances of traces of the industry in the cities, and the ways of preserving this difficult heritage (especially in the Museums).

The lecture argues that the reflection on preserving industrial heritage should be connected with the awareness of the impact of fossil fuel extraction on climate change. The lecture concludes with remarks about an educational project about industrial heritage, which was realised in the Silesian Museum.

The lecture is based on research and queries conducted both in the UK (Woodhorn Museum, National Coal Mining Museum, Mining Art Gallery in Bishop Auckland) and Silesia (Silesian Museum in Katowice, Guido Coal Mining Museum).

Art historian and cultural studies expert associated with the Institute of Art Sciences at the University of Silesia. Recipient of the Fulbright Slavic Award at the University of Washington in Seattle (2024) and a scholarship at the University of Alberta in Edmonton (Canada). She also completed a research internship at UNICAMP in Campinas (Brazil). She is currently conducting research on mining creativity in the Northumberland and Durham Coalfield areas, focusing on the chosen Industry Museums. In 2014–2019, she was professionally associated with the Silesian Museum in Katowice, where she introduced her own proposals for industrial education for children and youth.

International Summer School of Museology and Heritage 2025

Research and Practices
in a Rapidly Changing World

Koper, 25 August–5 September 2025



unesco

Chair



<https://doi.org/10.26493/978-961-293-501-6.2>