Industrial Heritage Conservation and Climate Change
Proposal for a Roundtable Session

Past efforts to conserve and interpret industrial heritage have rarely acknowledged the role of industry causing damaging environmental change. But today’s obvious worldwide climate change inevitably impacts our thinking about conservation. This is why we propose a Roundtable session to encourage people to take a fresh look at environmental impacts of industrial heritage.

Already in the 1970s narratives of industrial history as a succession of triumphs began to be questioned. Today, Andreas Malm even sees steam engines as beginning of global warming. A new direction was taken, when Greta Thunberg stressed the importance of a scientific understanding of climate change. This will have a long-term effect on sciences, including conservation. Out of the communities of history of technology and of industrial history, answers are required to questions of a younger generation. New narratives will help us to work together to preserve industrial heritage.

Session outcome
It is intended that this session will generate a list of ideas, encourage collaborative research relationships and develop topics for the next TICCIH conference 2024.

Groups may discuss
- Narratives about industrial heritage and environmental change
- Old buildings and structures as environmentally positive embodied energy
- New ways of preserving heritage with climate neutral techniques
- Possible relevance of the term “Anthropocene” to industrial heritage and cultural landscapes
- Using heritage conservation knowledge for social sustainability in climate friendly projects.

Proposed session format with a total of two hours:
10 minutes – Session chair – brief introduction to the topic, themes and session format
10 minutes – two presentations from invited speakers to provide starting ideas for discussion
10 minutes for questions
50 minutes – participants divide into groups to brainstorm ideas
30 minutes – participants come back together – each group presents ideas they have generated
10 minutes – Summing up – Where can we go from here?

Speakers (suggested and confirmed):
- Alison Wain (co-organizer, Keynote). Confirmed
- Peter Kitay (Canada) or Marie Grima (France). Suggested but not yet asked.

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2 Andreas Malm, Fossil Capital, Verso 2016.
4 Michael Farrenkopf, et al., Glückauf! Ruhrgebiet. Der Steinkohlebergbau nach 1945, Bochum 2009
5 Peter Kitay, Industrial Heritage Conservation as Resistance. Environmental History and Post-Industrial Landscapes, Ottawa 2014
Lead organizer and chair
Dr. Roman Hillmann is architecture and building historian, published books, organized conferences and co-worked in preservation projects. He works at German Mining-Museum to implement the “Heritage Conservation Center Ruhr” in Bochum.

Co-organizer
Dr. Alison Wain is a researcher in industrial and engineering heritage and a materials conservator. She founded the Big Stuff international conference series on the conservation of large technology and teaches Cultural Heritage and Conservation at the University of Canberra in Australia.