

## **Creative transformation of a power plant: The Inota Festival case study in Hungary**

**EMESE PANYIK<sup>1</sup> & TAMARA RÁTZ**

<sup>1</sup>Universidade Católica Portuguesa

Contacting author: epanyik@ucp.pt

**Keywords** | Creative, Transformation, Power, Plant, Inota, Festival

**Objectives** | Creative tourism has recently been applied in industrial contexts, with creative experiences offered in former industrial buildings and factories (Panyik, 2014; Rozentale & Tomsons, 2014; Scherf, 2021). This trend has gained momentum with the decline of manufacturing and various industry branches due to technological advancements from the 1980s onwards worldwide. Examples include metallurgic factories such as the Oliva Creative Factory in São João da Madeira, Portugal and industrial parks such as the 798 Art District in Beijing, the Red Brickyard Cultural and Creative Industry Park in Guangzhou and the Overseas Chinese Town in Shenzhen, China. The old factory complexes have been transformed into cultural districts by linking the creative and cultural industries with Arts.

However, there is a lack of studies exploring the creative transformation of former power plants, likely because the size and volume of these establishments make them a less common case as compared to factories. For this reason, the present study aims at discussing the case of the first Inota Festival in Hungary, organised between 31 Aug - 3 Sep 2023 in a former power plant in Inota village in Hungary. The carbon-based thermal power plant, formerly known as November 7, was established during the Socialist era in 1951 and was permanently closed in 2001. Since then, it has been abandoned and not been used for anything other than a filming location. The abandoned industrial zone with its huge buildings, halls, broken windows, machinery from the last century, bushes growing from the roof and its massive industrial and socialist aesthetics, provide an ideal location and excellent visuals for post-apocalyptic scenes. The power plant's three gigantic cooling towers still dominate the neighborhood's skyline today, and the massive plant complex's future remains uncertain.

During the past two decades, the organisation of the festival was the first initiative to leverage the plant's potential other than filming by offering a new, more inclusive and long-term cultural use for the plant and stimulating community involvement in discussing its future. The festival featured electronic music sets, light installations and light shows, contemporary visual arts and a community conference about opportunities to harness innovation-based cultural and regional values to drive development. A local travel agency (TA) specialised in hiking tours in the region (Túrajó) offered walking tours to show landmarks from the socialist past of the plant as well as the recent filming

locations such as the furnace house where Ryan Gosling walked around in *Blade Runner 2049*, and the command room, where the launch of the rocket in the movie *Lajko – Gypsy in Space* was filmed. The event was supported by the Veszprém-Balaton European Capital of Culture 2023 programme and the patron of the conference was Márta Campanari-Talabér, mayor of Várpalota.

**Methodology** | This is an ongoing qualitative case study research using the resources, analytical techniques and principles of data collection as described by Yin (2014). In-depth, semi-structured key-informant interviews have been conducted with four organisers (Inota Festival organisation, Túrajó TA) combined with an observation session as part of a field trip, in order to gain insights into organisational and creative aspects of the event.

**Main results and contributions** | The main contribution of this research is the example of good practice in creative transformation of former power plants. The study addresses the different challenges that power plants face, as compared to factories, due to their size and specific characteristics. The creative methods, co-creation techniques, forms of collaboration and community involvement will be discussed.

**Limitations** | This is a qualitative and descriptive case study with an organisational point of view that does not reflect the perspective of the local community nor the participants of the festival. Future research could be developed in order to explore community and visitor perceptions and attitudes in relation to the Inota Festival.

**Conclusions** | The present study aims to provide insights into the creative use of former power plants. In particular, it discusses the opportunities and challenges of former power plants' creative transformation from a managerial perspective.

## References

- Panyik, E. (2014). Transformation through the revival of industrial heritage: The Zsolnay quarter, Pécs, Hungary. In L. Marques & G. Richards (Eds.), *Creative districts around the world*. Breda: NHTV.
- Rozentale, I., & Tomsons, T. (2014). A post-socialist transformation: From a factory to a creative quarter. In L. Marques & G. Richards (Eds.), *Creative districts around the world*. Breda: NHTV.
- Scherf, K. (Ed.). (2021). *Creative tourism in smaller communities: Place, culture, and local representation*. University of Calgary Press. <http://hdl.handle.net/1880/113280>
- Yin, K. R. (2014). *Case study research design and methods* (5<sup>a</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.