

Utopia and reality (industrial culture - digitalisation)

Industrial culture refers to the cultural aspects associated with industrial development. This includes not only the material artefacts such as factories, machines and work equipment, but also the social, artistic and cultural expressions that emerged from the industrial revolution. Industrial culture can also include the recognition and preservation of industrial monuments and sites. The industrial age began in the 18th century with the Industrial Revolution. It was characterised by the transition from agrarian and artisanal economic systems to industrial and mechanised production methods. This led to a dramatic change in society, economy and culture. The industrial development has shaped various value patterns in society. These include efficiency, rationality, work ethic, belief in progress and also challenges such as social inequality, imperialism and environmental impact. These values influence not only economic decisions, but also cultural norms and social structures.

The industrial society has evolved over time. Traditional industries have been transformed by technologies such as automation and digitalisation. This has led to a shift from an industrial to a service society which brought with it new challenges in the world of work and social structures. Digital culture refers to the impact of digitalisation on society and the way people communicate, work and consume information. This includes aspects such as the dissemination of internet, social media, artificial intelligence and other digital technologies. Digital culture influences not only the economy and the sciences, but also education, politics and social interactions.

The development from analogue industrial culture to digitalisation is a fascinating transformation that is also visible in various aspects of materiality and immateriality. In analogue industrial culture, physical materials played a central role. Products were made from solid substances and manufacturing processes were centred on the processing of material resources, such as wood, metal and other raw materials. Physical processes, mechanical systems and production methods characterised the industrial landscape. Factories had a large machine park based on mechanical principles. Materiality played a central role. The analogue world is associated with the notion of continuity, physical presence and immediate interaction. Analogue technologies use continuous signals and the effects are often immediately visible.



With the advent of digitalisation, a radical change took place in which information and data gained in importance. Industries began to replace analogue processes with digital technologies. This led to a shift from material products to immaterial services and software solutions. Materiality was transformed by digitalisation, as data gained importance as intangible resources. Digitalisation shifted the focus from physical materials to immaterial concepts such as data, software and digital services. Cloud computing, artificial intelligence and software applications.

The digital world is characterised by discrete data points, networking and algorithmic processing. Digital technologies enable flexibility, virtuality and automated processes. The transition from analogue industrial culture to digitalisation has not only brought about technological changes, but has also had a profound impact on business models, social interactions and the way we consume information. This development has blurred the boundaries between materiality and immateriality and created a networked, digital world.

The photo collages are assembled fragments of a bygone and partly still functioning industrial culture. The fascination of the machine myth has become nostalgia and a discontinued model of an era. Coal, steam, iron and steel, smoking factory chimneys have disappeared from our everyday lives; they have been replaced by computers, microchips and smartphones. The function of these micro technical devices is no longer visually or technically comprehensible. The spirit of optimism and fascination of the industrial age has fallen silent. The photo collages are a staging of the 'good old days', a time when the foundations of our modern world were laid. The industrial age is a cultural asset and history. The value patterns of industry and culture have become industrial culture; the purely functional, materialistic aspect has been expanded to include a spiritual and sensual aspect. The works photo collages reflect a past industrial society and bring it into the present. Understanding the past helps us to think about our future.

In the works photo collages, machine fragments are combined with each other in transparent layers using photographic techniques. By combining different machine parts, a new machine is created that only appears to function in the image. This irrational virtual reality created by superimposing machine fragments is illusionary. It is an imaginary machine structure that is in conflict with reality. This created structure irritates rational thinking or else excites and exhilarates our imagination. The machines created have no functional properties and are useless. They are therefore imaginary creations. The photographic image compiled by means of photo collages combines temporally and spatially disparate industrial situations. This artificial combination of different levels of action and new colour accents creates new image content. The arranged photo-image transcends between utopia and reality.

