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FROM URBAN VOID TO CULTURAL EMERGENCE: NIHILISM IN POST-INDUSTRIAL SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION

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This study examines post-industrial art clusters as spatial phenomena grounded in negation, temporality and architectural incompleteness. Unlike economic interpretations of creative clusters as regeneration tools, the research interprets them through the concept of architectural nihilism and temporary autonomy. Based on the case of Shvil HaMeretz in Tel Aviv, the study analyses how abandoned industrial space transforms into a cultural environment through informal artistic occupation. It is found that spatial instability, material decay and lack of institutionalization function not as deficiencies but as structural conditions for alternative cultural production.

Key words: art cluster, post-industrial space, architectural nihilism, temporary autonomous zone, urban transformation, industrial design.

INTRODUCTION

Post-industrial urban territories increasingly become sites of informal artistic appropriation. In dominant urban discourse, art clusters are framed as instruments of regeneration and creative economy development. However, such interpretations often reduce them to economic mechanisms, neglecting their ontological and spatial dimensions.

Abandoned industrial structures represent spaces of interruption – zones detached from productive logic. Their transformation through artistic occupation creates environments characterized by incompleteness, instability and self-organization. These processes require interpretation beyond functionalist or investment-driven models.

This research proposes to examine art clusters as manifestations of architectural negation and spatial nihilism, where the void becomes a generative condition for cultural emergence

PURPOSE

The aim of the study is to analyze post-industrial art clusters as temporary autonomous formations grounded in architectural indeterminacy. The objectives include identifying spatial characteristics of informal art clusters; interpreting the role of material decay and incompleteness in cultural production; assessing the relationship between autonomy and urban development pressures. The study



focuses on the case of Shvil HaMeretz in Tel Aviv as a representative example of bottom-up transformation within a marginalized industrial zone.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Contemporary research commonly links art clusters to economic revitalization and creative industries, interpreting them as drivers of competitiveness and urban growth [1]. While such approaches explain their integration into cultural policy and redevelopment strategies, they insufficiently address the spatial ontology of post-industrial cultural formations.

The case of Shvil HaMeretz demonstrates an alternative trajectory. Located within a former industrial area, the cluster emerged through gradual artistic occupation without centralized planning. Its spatial structure preserves exposed concrete, fragmented interiors, improvised partitions and visible traces of decay. Such material conditions correspond to interpretations of industrial ruins as active cultural resources rather than passive remnants of decline [2]. The ruinous environment generates sensory richness and spatial ambiguity, enabling forms of engagement that differ fundamentally from institutional cultural venues.

These elements produce a condition of architectural suspension – neither fully abandoned nor institutionally stabilized. This suspended state aligns with Massimo Cacciari's concept of architectural nihilism, in which architecture operates through negation of fixed function, permanence and symbolic closure [3]. In Shvil HaMeretz, former industrial utility is not replaced by a stable program; instead, the space remains indeterminate, allowing cultural practices to emerge within a framework of incompleteness.

Material deterioration plays an active role in shaping the environment. Rough textures, unfinished surfaces and flexible layouts enable experimental artistic practices and hybrid uses. Production, exhibition and social interaction occur within the same spatial continuum, without rigid zoning. In this sense, material decay functions as a generative condition rather than a deficit [2].

Organizationally, the cluster functions through horizontal self-regulation and informal agreements. Such autonomy corresponds to Hakim Bey's notion of the Temporary Autonomous Zone, understood as a spatial formation that temporarily escapes formal structures of control and dissolves once institutional visibility intensifies [4]. The autonomy of Shvil HaMeretz fosters creative experimentation but simultaneously produces structural vulnerability.

As visibility increases, the symbolic value of the area attracts development interest. The accumulation of cultural capital often precedes processes of commercialization and displacement, a dynamic described in studies of the "artistic dividend" and art-led gentrification [5]. Consequently, cultural presence paradoxically accelerates the conditions that threaten its persistence. At the same time, the informal and improvised nature of Shvil HaMeretz fosters a form of spatial experimentation that is rarely achievable in conventional institutional contexts. Artists and collectives actively negotiate the material and social environment, producing adaptive configurations that respond to both structural constraints and opportunities. These emergent practices reveal the productive potential of incompleteness, where gaps, ruptures, and temporal contingencies become



generative rather than limiting. In this sense, the cluster embodies a form of situated creativity, in which the architectural void is inseparable from the production of cultural meaning. Thus, the examined cluster operates within a cycle of emergence, stabilization and potential erasure. Its temporality is not incidental but constitutive. The value of such spaces lies in intensity rather than permanence.

CONCLUSIONS

Post-industrial art clusters should be interpreted not only as regeneration tools but as architectural-philosophical formations emerging from spatial negation.

The analysis of Shvil HaMeretz shows that incompleteness, instability and autonomy function as productive conditions enabling alternative cultural practices. Temporariness constitutes a structural characteristic rather than a weakness.

Understanding art clusters as processual and transitional formations allows a more nuanced interpretation of contemporary urban transformation, where void becomes a catalyst for cultural emergence.

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ШКОЛЯР С.

ВІД МІСЬКОЇ ПОРОЖНЕЧІ ДО КУЛЬТУРНОГО ПОВСТАННЯ: НІГІЛІЗМ У ПОСТІНДУСТРІАЛЬНІЙ ПРОСТОРОВІЙ ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЇ

Дослідження розглядає постіндустріальні арт-кластери як просторові феномени, що ґрунтуються на запереченні, темпоральності та архітектурній незавершеності. На відміну від економічних інтерпретацій креативних кластерів як інструментів ревіталізації, у роботі вони осмислюються через концепцію архітектурного нігілізму та тимчасової автономії. На основі кейсу Shvil HaMeretz у Тель-Авіві проаналізовано, яким чином занедбаний індустріальний простір трансформується в культурне середовище через неформальне мистецьке освоєння. Встановлено, що просторова нестабільність, матеріальна деградація та відсутність інституціоналізації функціонують не як недоліки, а як структурні умови альтернативного культурного виробництва.

Ключові слова: арт-кластер/мистецький кластер, постіндустріальний простір, архітектурний нігілізм, тимчасова автономна зона, міська трансформація, індустріальний дизайн.