Industrial Landscapes

MEDIA LAB, JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
The Jadavpur University Media Lab has undertaken a major visual archiving project on the closed National Instruments Limited (NIL) factory in Kolkata. This is the first chapter in the Lab’s exploration of the city’s industrial ruins. The intention is to explore the relationship between abandoned industrial landscapes, the experience of an urban space in transition and the practice of everyday archiving.

The Lab commissioned ten young filmmakers to shoot for six months on the NIL campus. An archive of about 65 hours of video and 20,000 stills has been created. This is a common pool from which filmmakers and artists are creating blogs, experimental shorts, documentaries, etc.

The factory has been taken over by Jadavpur University, and will soon turn into a new campus. It wears the look of a place teeming with activity, abandoned in haste. Machines, furniture, personal effects, files, telephone sets, workers’ overalls, lie in a vast graveyard of what was a once-remarkable site of industry and innovation. Elegant pieces of half-finished products lie scattered on desks and floors. All of this has been captured in detail. Alongside, testimonies of former workers have been recorded.