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"The Archive and the Lake: Labor, Toxicity, and the Making of Cosmopolitical Commons in Rome, Italy"

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Located in the Prenestino neighborhood of Rome, Italy, the former chemical-textile plant Ex-SNIA Viscosa has been a site of labor exploitation, toxicity, and struggle since the 1920s. Comprising postindustrial ruins, an urban lake, and myriad species, the area has been reclaimed by activists engaged in a project of governance from below. This essay begins by exploring how the entwinement of fascist biopolitics and the chemical industry that occurred at the Ex-SNIA from the 1920s to the 1950s affected human and nonhuman bodies. Building on insights from feminist science studies and histories of industrial hazards, the author examines how memories of toxic labor, environmental transformation, and workers' resistance have been reactivated in the ongoing project of reclaiming the Ex-SNIA and keeping it off-limits from urban speculation. Drawing on archival research, interviews with activists, and sustained attention to the human and nonhuman entities that make up the area, the essay argues that the intimacy with past contestations of labor toxicity is key in the production of the Ex-SNIA as a commons. What has been emerging in Rome, is a *cosmopolitical commons* that points to the transformation of dominant regimes of property and governance, while also challenging approaches to the commons that rely on the distinction between active human collectives and malleable resources. (Text from author's abstract)

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