

Ground Sea

Claiming a Right to Be Reborn

Book seminar



Allan Sekula. *Centrale nucléaire et usine d'aluminium de Gravelines* (triptyque encadré). *Nuclear power station and aluminum factory, Gravelines* (framed triptych). 51.9 × 200 cm. Part of *Deep Six / Passer au bleu* (1996 - 1998). 1er volet: *Les droits de l'homme*. Part 1: *The Rights of Man*. © the Allan Sekula Studio

25 May 2022

h 11:00 - 12:30

Politecnico di Milano, building 29, ground floor meeting room

Presenter

Hilde Van Gelder (KU Leuven)

Discussants

Anna Casaglia (Università degli Studi di Trento)

Christa-Maria Lerm Hayes (University of Amsterdam)

Moderator

Nicoletta Grillo (Politecnico di Milano)

The seminar will depart from contemporary art historian Hilde Van Gelder's book "Ground Sea. Photography and the Right to Be Reborn" (Leuven University Press, 2021), which unfolds a vivid account of repeated trips to Calais and Dover between 2017 and 2020. Using a selection of photographs realized by Bruno Serralongue for his Calais series (2006-) as well as her own photo-fictional field research, Hilde Van Gelder zooms in on the border landscape of the Northern French coast. This so contested maritime zone lends itself to a microcosmic analysis of all our contemporary global challenges: migration, climate change, human rights, and neoliberal surveillance technology. In their terrible convergence they risk crushing us like a villainous, ecocidal wave. But it is also conceivable that a fertile ground wave will eventually grow, generating in its wake a real rebirth. A critical reflection on the indifference of a divided European Union regarding the substantial number of people on the move who find themselves stranded near, or drown in the English Channel. A reflection that allows to imagine a world within which every living entity cherishes a fundamental right to be reborn.

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