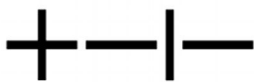


# Allan Sekula. Collective Sisyphus

Fundació Antoni Tàpies | Press dossier



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June 14 – September 25, 2017

## Allan Sekula. Collective Sisyphus

**Opening & conference:** Tuesday June 13, 2017, at 7 p.m. Free entrance.

Conference: *Back to the Drawing Board. Maritime themes and discursive crosscurrents in the notebooks of Allan Sekula*, by Sally Stein.

**Co-curators:** Hilde van Gelder, Anja Isabel Schneider and Carles Guerra. | **Co-organiza:** Fundació Antoni Tàpies, M HKA de Amberes y KULeuven, Universidad de Lovaina | **Con el apoyo de:** Allan Sekula Studio, de TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Calais, el Frac Bretagne Rennes y Galerie Michel Rein de París.

**Admissions:** General entrance: 7.00 €. Students and Senior Citizens (over 65): 5.60 €. Boys and girls up to 16 years old: Free. The unemployed, and Friends of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies: Free admission. Special admission fee for groups over 15 people. Booking in advance is required. For further information and bookings: (t) +34 932 075 862 or reserves@ftapies.com.

Allan Sekula (Erie, 1951 – Los Angeles, 2013) is one of the most important figures in modern photography of the second half of the twentieth century. His work focuses on a critique of the links that photography has always maintained with the economy, work and the politics of representation. From his beginnings in the seventies, Sekula became a reference by incorporating textuality into photography in a way that had been previously denied it by modern art. His book *Photography Against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works, 1973–1983* (1984), a key work of the new photographic

discourse of the late twentieth century, enshrined him as one of the least orthodox historians of the medium.

*Allan Sekula. Collective Sisyphus* will be this artist's first individual exhibition in Spain. The Fundació Antoni Tàpies will show two main areas of his work in which Sekula observes and analyses the impact of maritime economy on the incipient globalisation of the 1990s, as well as the new moral premises imposed by neoliberalism at the beginning of the twenty-first century. And all within a geographical span of extraordinary dimensions. *Fish Story* (1989–95), a classic among works initiating a critique of global capitalism, and *Ship of Fools / The Docker's Museum* (2010–13), the work to which he devoted himself in the last years of his life, put forward a new way of understanding photographic practice. Activism, literature, the economies of access to images and the precarious status of artists led to a new photographic genre that could be described as visual essays, halfway between photography, a museum of trivia and social literature.

The exhibition pays tribute to an artist closely linked to post-Olympic Barcelona, a city that fascinated him as a case study for examining the new forms of injustice imposed by neoliberalism. Influenced by Barcelona's maritime location, Sekula incorporated it in a tale of globalisation together with other cities such as Los Angeles, Athens, Bilbao, Rotterdam, Tokyo and others with a relation to the sea.

This is an exhibition jointly produced between Fundació Antoni Tàpies, M HKA Antwerp and KuLeuven, the University of Leuven, with the generous support of the Allan Sekula Studio, TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection and sensitive lenders to Allan Sekula's legacy, like Musée des Beaux-Arts de Calais, Frac Bretagne Rennes and Galerie Michel Rein Paris .

## **Film: Lottery of the sea**

2006 | 180 minutes, colour, sound | English, Spanish, Galician, with Spanish subtitles | Direction, camera, narration: Allan Sekula | Editing: Elizabeth Hesik.

*Lottery of the Sea* takes its title from Adam Smith, who, in his famous *Wealth of Nations* (1776), compared the life of the sailor to a lottery. Thus Smith introduces the notion of risk by means of an allegory of the dangers of the sea, especially for those who perform the hardest tasks, although also, to a lesser extent, for those who invest in ships and goods.

The film inquires 'is there a relation between the most dreadful and fearful concept in economics – that of risk – and the category of the sublime in aesthetics?' We know

that the sea is a primordial source of the sublime, especially in the eighteenth century.

The film is an unusual diary that ranges from the presumed innocent summer of 2001 to the current 'war on terror,' through a meandering essayistic journey from port to port, shore to shore, and coast to coast.

*What does it mean to be a maritime nation?*

*To govern the waves?*

*Or to harvest the sea?*

An American submarine collides with a Japanese trawler. What does this suggest about the division of labour in the Pacific?

*How do we remember the old emperor? As a general mounted on his horse? Or as a marine biologist looking through his microscope?*

Panama decides whether to increase the width of its canal, over which it now exerts a moderate degree of sovereignty. *How come a diver is better prepared to question this huge swath cutting through the jungle?*

Galicia receives an unwanted gift of crude oil, which provokes subsequent and important questions about the monomania of governments incapable of conceptualising danger in more than one dimension. What can we learn from people's ability to self-organise in the face of disaster and government indifference?

*What can the fishermen of Bueu, smeared in oil, tell us about it?*

Once again, Barcelona returns to its seafront, creating a pseudo-public sphere: in the north, property prices rise, while in the south even greater maritime logistics efficiency is achieved. *What do the invisible port workers of the city have to say about democracy from their self-de-fined position as a 'ghetto'?*

And in the middle of it all we visit blizzards and demonstrations in New York, prehistoric mastodons drifting in Los Angeles, militant percussionists and bewildered construction workers in Lisbon, millionaires or millionaire clones (who can tell them apart?) in Amsterdam and street dogs in Athens, all with the idea of considering in detail an image of the sea, the market and democracy.

Allan Sekula. November 2004

## **Works | Allan Sekula. Collective Sisyphus**

Allan Sekula

*Fish Story*, chapt. 1st, 1989-1995

18 cibachrome prints & 2 text panels.

Collection Fonds régional d'art contemporain Bretagne, Rennes.

Allan Sekula

*Fish Story. Loaves and Fishes*, chapt. 2on, 1989-1995

8 cibachrome prints & 2 text panels | Collection Michel Rein, Paris.

Allan Sekula

*Fish Story. Middle Passage*, chapt. 3th, 1994

22 cibachrome prints & 4 text panels.

Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection, Vienna

Allan Sekula

*Fish Story. Message in a Bottle*, chapt. 5, 1994

7 cibachrome prints & 2 text panels.

Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Collection, Vienna

Allan Sekula

*Deep Six/Passer au Bleu*, 1996-1998

33 photographies cibachromes mat imprimées sur papier marouflé.

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Calais

Allan Sekula

*Ship of Fools*, 1999-2000-2010

Selection of 17 framed chromogenic prints on alu-Dibond

Collection M HKA, Antwerp / Collection Flemish Community

Allan Sekula

*The Docker's Museum*, a selection of objects and photographs.

Collection M HKA, Antwerp / Collection Flemish Community

Allan Sekula

*Lottery of the sea*, 2006

180 minutes, colour, sound.

Direction, camera & narration: Allan Sekula.

Editiong: Elisabeth Hesik

## **Related activities**

### **Back to the Drawing Board**

Lecture by Dr. Sally Stein, the artist's widow, on maritime themes and discursive crosscurrents in the notebooks of Allan Sekula.

Duration: 40 min. (approx.) | Date: Tuesday 13 June 2017, 19.00 h. | Free admission.  
Advanced booking: [activitats@ftapies.com](mailto:activitats@ftapies.com).

### **Allan Sekula. Collective Sisyphus. Round table**

With the participation of: Carles Guerra, co-curator, Fundació Antoni Tàpies; Agustín Ortiz, The Green Parrot; Representative of the Barcelona port dockers union; Anja Isabel Schneider, co-curator, M HKA and Ku Leuven; Cory Scozzari, TBA21; Hilde Van Gelder, co-curator, Ku Leuven; Jeroen Verbeeck, Ku Leuven; Daniela Zyman, TBA21

Duration: 1 h. (approx.) | Date: Wednesday 14 June 2017, 19 h. | Free admission. |  
Advanced booking: [activitats@ftapies.com](mailto:activitats@ftapies.com).

## **Collective Sisyphus. A Cinema season**

### **The Forgotten Space, 2010**

The film follows container cargo aboard ships, barges, trains and trucks, listening to workers, engineers, planners, politicians and those marginalised by the global transport system. As Sekula says: ‘Our film is about globalisation and the sea, the “forgotten space” of our modernity.’

Authors: Allan Sekula and Noël Burch. | Duration: 112 min. | Date: 13 September 2017, 18.00 h. | Venue: Fundació Antoni Tàpies. | Free admission with ticket entrance to the Museum.

### **Tsukiji, 2001**

*Tsukiji* is, in the words of the director, an ‘urban symphony’ dedicated to the largest fish market in the world, and one of the last surviving proletarian spaces in Tokyo.

Author: Allan Sekula. | Duration: 43 min. | Date: Wednesday 20 September 2017, 18.00 h. | Venue: Fundació Antoni Tàpies. | Free admission with entrance ticket to the Museum

### **A Short Film for Laos, 2006–07, and Gala, 2005 (Double bill)**

Special session coinciding with the Festival of *La Mercè 2017*. The films will be introduced by Carles Guerra, co-curator of the exhibition and director of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies. After the screening, a Moritz beer will be offered on the terrace.

Author: Allan Sekula. | Duration: 43 min. (A Short Film for Laos) and 24 min. (Gala). | Date: Friday 22 September 2017, 18.00 h. | Free admission with ticket entrance to the Museum. Activity in collaboration with Moritz.



## Press images

In the press section of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies website you will find the press dossier file and press images of the exhibitions.

The screenshot shows the website interface for Fundació Antoni Tàpies. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu with links: FUNDACIÓ ANTONI TÀPIES, ANTONI TÀPIES, COL·LECCIÓ, PROGRAMACIÓ, PUBLICACIONS, EDUCACIÓ, BIBLIOTECA, and BOTIGA. The main content area is divided into several columns:

- Left Column:** Features a large image titled "Antoni Tàpies. Col·lecció #3" with a date range of "28 abril - 10 juny de 2012". Below it, a section titled "En curs" includes "Antoni Tàpies (1923-2012). Llibre de condol" and "La Montaner i Simon. Una editorial amb història".
- Middle Column:** Contains sections for "Activitats" (listing dates and a club de lectura), "Avis" (warning about the building's closure from April 23 to 27, 2012), "Premsa" (press notes and dossiers), and "En preparació" (program of upcoming exhibitions).
- Right Column:** Includes "Al voltant de l'obra d'Antoni Tàpies" (biography, exhibitions, reading guide, and books), "A.T. Alfabet Tàpies: projecció de vídeo", "Llibreria-botiga" (publications and retrospectives), and "Notícies" (news items like Laurence Rassel's seminar and an upcoming event on April 21).

A white circular highlight is placed over the "Premsa" section, containing the text: "Notes i dossiers de premsa, imatges i vídeos per a premsa, articles publicats als mitjans, reportatges televisius i altres recursos. Continuar →".

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