

Eva Leitolf

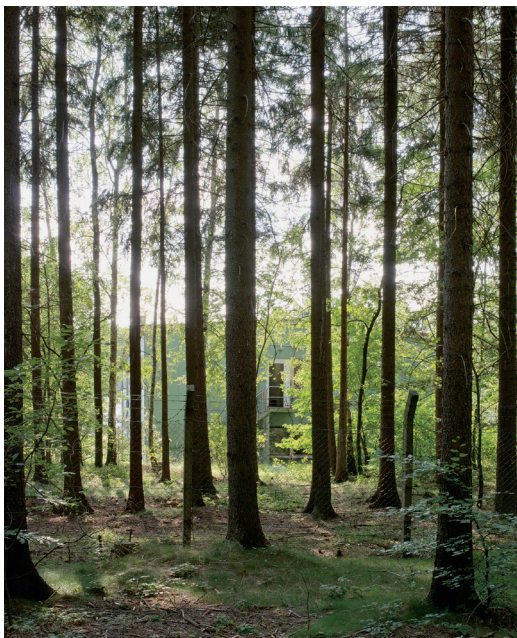
Postcards from Europe 10/14

work from the ongoing archive

Opening: October 17, 2014, 6 to 9 p.m.
Exhibition: October 18 to November 30, 2014



Part of the 6th European
Month of Photography Berlin.



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© Eva Leitolf, PfE 1150-DE-080911. Ehemaliger Luftabwehrstützpunkt, Seeligstädter Wald, Deutschland 2014 / Abandoned Anti-Aircraft Base, Seeligstädter Wald, Germany 2014. VG Bild-Kunst Bonn, 2014

The exhibition *Eva Leitolf: Postcards from Europe 10/14: Work from the ongoing archive* opens on Friday 17 October 2014 at Kehrer Berlin Gallery. It is part of the 6th European Month of Photography Berlin.

Since 2006, Eva Leitolf (b. 1966) has been documenting places where the phenomenon of migration manifests itself in specific conflicts at the individual level. As well as drawing attention to particular incidents and broader structural issues, the photographs and texts in her ongoing “Postcards from Europe” series place photography at the heart of the discourse on the role of the media in the construction of society.

A discussion evening with the artist entitled “No Signs Of Crime” will be held in the gallery on **31 October at 7 p.m.** Prof. Bernd Stiegler of the University of Konstanz will discuss with Eva Leitolf the possibilities and limits of representation in text and image.

Eva Leitoľ started her “Postcards from Europe” project in 2006, assembling photographs and texts touching on examples of conflict in the context of global migration. Leitoľ’s interest in the way migrants and refugees are treated within the European Union and at its external borders – in Spain and its North African exclaves, southern Italy, Hungary, the Channel ports of Dover and Calais, as well as Germany and Austria – represents a radical departure from the style of reporting we have become accustomed to. Leitoľ’s photographs show scenes where incidents of exclusion, xenophobia and violence have occurred – but empty of people and sometimes without any sign of human civilisation at all. Each of these “eventless” photographs is accompanied by a dry, detached text describing the events to which it refers. Only in the course of reading does it become apparent why the place was worth photographing at all.

Eva Leitoľ’s artistic method thus subverts the idea that the medium of photography is universally comprehensible without any prior knowledge, which has existed since the origins of the medium. She challenges both the objectivity attributed to the medium and the belief that photography transports reliable information requiring no further knowledge about the context in which it was created. Furthermore, her approach questions the widely accepted rules and formalisations of media reporting on the concrete and currently omnipresent subject of the fate of refugees. Leitoľ resolutely avoids the shock effect of portrayal of violence and instead pursues a photography that studiously ignores the media’s rulebook. Leitoľ’s photographs acquire their significance precisely through their avoidance of moral pathos and instrumentalisation.

Exhaustive research goes into the texts accompanying the photographs, for which Leitoľ draws on a wide range of sources: news reports and police files, discussions with migrants, victims, representatives of aid organisations and local people. The texts are formulated as pithy objective descriptions and serve – like the photographs – not to provoke shock and scandal at suffering and inhumanity in the context of war, flight and asylum, but to relate behaviours, structures and processes as cause and condition of the conflict in question.

Eva Leitoľ studied at GH Essen and California Institute of the Arts. She has received prestigious awards and stipends, including a year at Villa Massimo in Rome. Her works – including the “German Images – Looking for Evidence” series (1992 to 2008), “Rostock Ritz” (2004) and “Postcards from Europe” (since 2006) – have been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Germany and abroad.

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