



CONCRETE LANDSCAPES

"One of the essential characteristics of the bunker is that it is one of the rare modern monolithic architectures".

Paul Virilio, Bunker Archeology

CONCRETE LANDSCAPES is a series of images of Asier Gogortza, created to transform old bunkers in photographic cameras.



There are thousands and thousands of concrete bunkers scattered throughout the European geography. Those are some of the most important fortified lines built before and during the Second World War.





Bunker in the Landes. Atlantik Wall.



The same bunker, from other point of view. Atlantik Wall.



Bunker with church camouflage. Atlantik Wall.



Observation Tower. Atlantik Wall.



Fire control bunker in Fecamp. Atlantik Wall.



Bunkers in the sand. Atlantik Wall.



Bunker in Urkiaga, Basque Country. P Line.



Bunker in top of a mountain. P Line.



Entrance of a bunker excavate in the rock. P Line.



Bunker in the mountain. P Line.



Bunker in Larche, France. Maginot Line.



Bunker in Larche, France. Maginot Line.



Bunker in Italy. Vallo Alpino.



Bunker in Italy. Vallo Alpino.

"Anachronistic in normal periods,
in peacetime the bunker appears as a survival machine,
as a shipwrecked submarine on the beach.
It speaks to us of other elements, of terrific atmospheric pressure,
of an unusual world in which science and technology have developed
the possibility of final disintegration".

Paul Virilio, Bunker Archeology

After more than 60 years, these obsolete bunkers have been gradually assimilated back into the landscape.







But still they remain, half hidden betwixt the valleys and peaks, vigilant,
silent witnesses to a dramatic moment in contemporary history.









"Defensive architecture is therefore instrumental,
existing less in itself than with a view to "doing" something:
waiting, watching, then acting or, rather, reacting".

Paul Virilio, Bunker Archeology

The bunker is a war construction designed to look, watch and shoot.



From the small windows one can capture a specific part of the landscape, honing the visual angle into a target range.





"The embrasure anticipates a relationship between
the bunker and the limits of the firing range;
the firing slit, like the squint of the eyelid,
reduces the visual field to a strict minimum,
to the target".

Paul Virilio, Bunker Archeology







Behind the special location of these settlements,
which create a complex spider web spanning across the territory,
there is an implicit desire to **take over the landscape.**



Adapting these assumptions to photographic thinking,
this project aims to reuse the bunkers with an artistic purpose;
to steal their military connotations and transform them into **landscape observatories**
from where the target is "fired upon".



The photographer has used the pinhole technique to convert bunkers into large concrete cameras and take pictures of the concrete landscape that were and are target of the bunkers.





Thus, the photographer intends to carry out both intellectual and aesthetic reappropriation of the landscape, which is, in short, the essence of all landscape photography.



CONCRETE LANDSCAPES

by Asier Gogortza





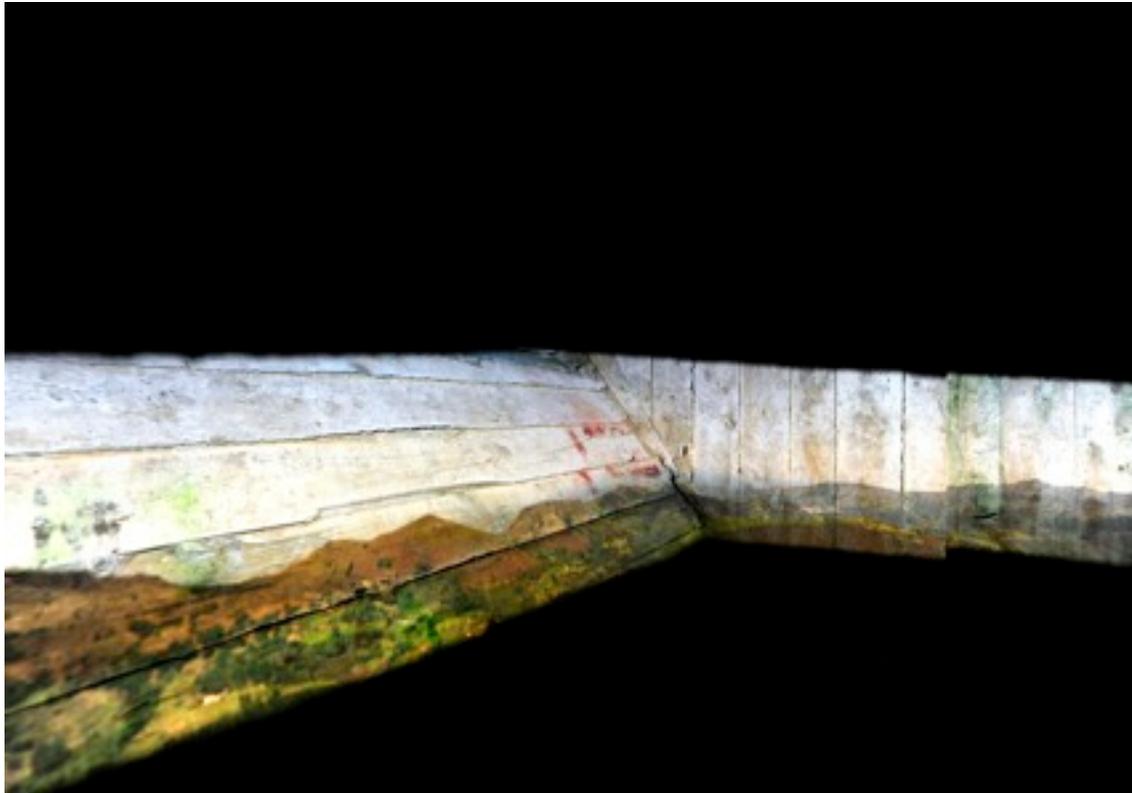




































EXHIBITION IN ROME

Organized by A.C.E. and UPTER Basque Department (www.euskara.it)
and Ars-Imago

April of 2011







BIOGRAPHY AND OTHER PROJECTS

Asier Gogortza



Asier Gogortza

Photographer and journalist. Co-founder of Ertz (www.ertza.net) art platform from the Basque Country and **Mamori Art Lab**, association that organizes art workshops in Brazilian Amazon. In collaboration with Xabier Erkizia, in 2001 published Atekaleun, pinhole photography book, a technique used in most of his photographic and video works.

Some of his works can be accessed at the following sites:

www.naufrags.com

www.flickr.com/photos/gogortza



THE PINHOLE TREE

The family calls it the big chestnut tree.
Nobody knows how old it is. The grandfather assures that it could be '500 or 600'.
Since it fell down in 1982, its trunk is staring at the farm from the ground.

When the tree was still standing, it is said that there was room for 13 big men inside
and 7 people holding their hands were needed to surround it.

Each generation from the Soro farm tells stories about this giant tree. All the family pictures have been always taken beside it.
The Big chestnut has seen several marriages, baptism ceremonies, and many other celebrations.
It appears in every family picture as a part of the family.

It is on the ground now, but it won't disappear without leaving a trace.
With its last breath, it wanted to give a gaze back to the Soro family.

There are certain things that are easier to understand once you are certain age.
The grandpa' got it immediately: ' we always used to take pictures of it; now, it is the one that is taking pictures of us'.





THE PINHOLE BOAT

During a photography workshop with the community of Mamori Lake (Brazilian Amazon) they built a camera using a typical canoa from the Amazon jungle.

Using big photographic papers, they took and develop some pictures from Mamori Lake with the floating camera.
These are some of the results:



THE BLACK BOXES

As the black boxes of the airplanes, these cameras recorded the last moments before the crash. Their function is to preserve the memory.

In the first case the building used as pinhole camera is the old factory of tobacco called Tabakalera (Donostia/San Sebastian), because in 2011 is going to become a Contemporary Art Center.

Transforming a room of the factory in a giant pinhole camera, the building (and maybe also the photographer) wanted to stop the time and tattooing on the walls the railroads, the old train station and the landscape over the city that are part of the memory of Tabakalera.

In the second case, the camera is a room of a house in Sao Paulo (Brazil), that is going to convert in an office building.



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