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DER KRITIK
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A HISTORY OF THE SAN DIEGO GROUP

SUBJECT

In my PhD I explore the work of Allan Sekula, Martha Rosler, Fred Lonidier and Phel Steinmetz – known as the San Diego group – during the 1970s when they all studied, and later taught, at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). Through a contextual survey of group's work, I aim to show how they offered a critique and a reinvention of documentary practices in relation to the advent of neoliberalism.

RESEARCH QUESTION

MY WORK QUESTIONS PREVALENT ART-HISTORICAL NARRATIVES CONCERNING THE POST-MODERN ART AS THE CULTURAL LOGIC OF NEOLIBERALISM, ASKING WHY THE WORK OF THE GROUP AND THEIR MODE OF CRITICAL DOCUMENTARY HAS LONG BEEN OVERLOOKED.

As I show, their critique-and-reinvention of the documentary – in releasing it from its dependency on the 'myth of photographic truth', in their expansive use of media, exploration of the archive, notions of performativity, and photomontage – prefigures recent debates and artistic practices.



4. Having fun at B of A and wondering what it's doing in Disneyland.



11. The corporate presence becomes a fascination to them.

APPROACH

- The need for a revised history of the advent of so-called postmodern art and its fraught relation to realist and documentary practices.
- Demonstrating a direct relation between political-economic changes in the 1970s, such as the global economic crisis and changes in labor-process, and the representation of labor in works by the group's members.
- Exploring their performative understanding of the photographic image and their critique of photojournalism, and its relation to more recent artistic practices.

Detail from Fred Lonidier.
The Double Articulation of Disneyland (1974), 72 panels.

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