

NEWS

WALKER ART CENTER TO PRESENT INFLUENTIAL PHOTOGRAPHER AND WRITER ALLAN SEKULA'S SEMINAL WORK *FISH STORY*

**Forthcoming presentation marks first time the work will be shown in its entirety in the
U.S. in more than two decades**

On View August 24, 2023 – January 21, 2024

MINNEAPOLIS, April 20, 2023—On August 24, 2023, the Walker Art Center will open *Allan Sekula: Fish Story*, Sekula's groundbreaking nine-chapter image-based research project exploring the profound impact of the globalized shipping trade and its relationship to romantic notions of the sea. Regarded as one of the most influential photographers and thinkers of his generation, Allan Sekula (1951–2013) is known for blending documentary-style photography with essays to create poignant narratives that speak to and critique global social, economic, and political structures. Conceived as both an exhibition and a book, *Fish Story* is considered one of the most important conceptual photography projects of the 20th century and features 105 photographs, slide projections, and accompanying texts developed over the course of many years. The Walker's presentation of *Fish Story* marks the first time that the work will be presented in the U.S. in its entirety since its institutional debut tour in 1999. An evocative reflection on capitalism, labor, international politics, climate change, and our connections to water, *Fish Story* remains as relevant today as when Sekula first created it. The presentation will remain on view at the Walker through January 21, 2024.

To create *Fish Story*, Sekula spent seven years documenting harbors and port cities around the world. Beginning his journey at the Port of San Pedro in his native Los Angeles, Sekula traveled as far as South Korea, Scotland, and Poland, photographing the workers and communities as well as the built and natural environments that support global shipping. He spent weeks, at times months, in these coastal towns and cities, living and working alongside tradespeople, whose stories and experiences were little discussed and often invisible. Each of the nine chapters in *Fish Story* relates to a different aspect of maritime commerce and emphasizes the dynamics of class and labor within the profit-focused structures of globalized trade. At the same time, the project explores the mystery and aura of the sea, merging documentary style research with the aesthetics of fine art.

“Allan Sekula’s seminal work remains as vital as ever in its encapsulation of the effects of globalized trade and shipping on individuals, communities, and the natural world, which have only become heightened in recent years. His work feels incredibly prescient and poetic within our contemporary contexts,” said William Hernández Luege, Curatorial Assistant of Visual Arts at the Walker. “The Walker acquired *Fish Story* in 2013 as part of our mission to support and amplify groundbreaking artistic approaches and what they can mean to our communities. We are looking forward to sharing this incredible work with our audiences and to fostering new conversations about Sekula’s work and the many topical themes and ideas with which it engages.”

The presentation of *Fish Story* will also include a reading room featuring a selection of Sekula’s published works and inviting lounge seating, to encourage further connection with his work and understanding of his practice. The Walker is currently engaging with a wide range of schools throughout Minneapolis to support the use of the reading room by classes and students in the area. The exhibition will also be accompanied by a robust series of programs and lectures.

ABOUT ALLAN SEKULA

Allan Sekula was born in 1951 in Erie, Pennsylvania and later moved with his family to San Pedro, California in the early 1960s. He studied biology at the University of California, San Diego, and in 1974 received his MFA from the same institution. Sekula’s photography actively engages ideas around labor, capitalism, and Marxist theory, and poses pointed, nuanced critiques about social reality. Stylistically, he is known for his work with photography and its relationship to documentation—as a pictorial form, method of recording, narrative device, and medium of social engagement. Sekula was also an esteemed teacher, serving as a member of the faculty of the California Institute of the Arts from 1985 until the end of his life. Interested in photography’s potential to relay social and political narratives, Sekula took on several long-term documentary endeavors during his career and published many essays and books on the subject throughout his lifetime.

ABOUT THE WALKER ART CENTER

The Walker Art Center is a renowned multidisciplinary arts institution that presents, collects, and supports the creation of groundbreaking work across the visual and performing arts, moving image, and design. Guided by the belief that art has the power to bring joy and solace and the ability to unite people through dialogue and shared experiences, the Walker engages communities through a dynamic array of exhibitions, performances, events, and initiatives. Its multiacre campus includes 65,000 sq. ft. of exhibition space, the state-of-the-art McGuire Theater and Walker Cinema, and ample green space that connects with the adjoining Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. The Garden, a partnership with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board, is one of the first urban sculpture parks of its kind in the United States and home to the beloved Twin Cities landmark *Spoonbridge and Cherry* by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. Recognized for its ambitious program and growing collection of more than 15,500 works, the Walker embraces emerging art forms and amplifies the work of artists from

the Twin Cities and from across the country and the globe. Its broad spectrum of offerings makes it a lively and welcoming hub for artistic expression, creative innovation, and community connection.

Visit walkerart.org for more information about upcoming presentations, programs, and opportunities to experience the art of our time.

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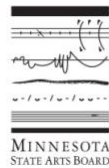
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