

PRESS RELEASE

CENTRE  
RÉGIONAL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE  
NORD - PAS-DE-CALAIS

5  
DECEMBER  
2015 . . .  
14  
FEBRUARY  
2016

# CRP/ JORGE RIBALTA RENAISSANCE

SCÈNES  
DE LA RECONVERSION INDUSTRIELLE  
DANS LE BASSIN MINIER  
DU NORD - PAS-DE-CALAIS

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**PARIS**art

**Exhibition at the  
 CRP/ Nord – Pas-de-Calais**

5 December 2015 . . . 14 February 2016

**Visit of press**

Saturday, December 5, 2015 / 11.30  
 in the presence of the artist

**Opening**

Saturday, December 5, 2015 / 12.00

Panel discussion with the artist and  
**Hilde Van Gelder**, editor, professor at the  
 KU Leuven, director of the Lieven Gevaert  
 Research Centre for Photography, Art  
 and Visual Culture and  
**Jacques Lemièrre**, professor in Sociology  
 and Anthropology at the CLERSE UMR  
 CNRS 8019, Université de Lille (Sciences  
 et technologies) / 14.30 pm

**Opening days**

Tuesday . . . Friday  
 13.00 . . . 17.00  
 Saturday / Sunday  
 14.00 . . . 18.00  
 Closed: 24, 25, 31 December and  
 the 1st January 2016

# RENAISSANCE

## SCÈNES DE LA RECONVERSION INDUSTRIELLE DANS LE BASSIN MINIER DU NORD – PAS-DE-CALAIS

The CRP is pleased to present the first solo exhibition in France by Spanish artist Jorge Ribalta with the project *Renaissance. Scènes de la reconversion industrielle dans le bassin minier du Nord – Pas-de-Calais* [Renaissance. Scenes of Industrial Conversion in the Nord – Pas-de-Calais Mining Region], created during his residency in the region in the spring of 2014.

Following Ribalta's series *Sierra Minera*—created in 2010 in Murcia, Spain, exploring the La Unión mining region, which has been remade into a centre of flamenco culture—the *Renaissance* project takes the form of a tour of the industrial monuments of Nord – Pas-de-Calais. This project is based on photographic observation of a number of sites in the region, making up significant documentation of the “renaissance” of these industrial landscapes, which are becoming monuments, museums or theme parks.

The series takes its title from the following quote from a book on Louvre-Lens: “The museum is the figurehead of a mining region in the midst of a renaissance” (Hugues Demeude, *Louvre-Lens: L'Esprit du lieu*, 2013).

The Nord – Pas-de-Calais mining region, bordering on Belgium, is part of northern Europe's historical centre of heavy industry, which extends as far as the Ruhr area in Germany. With the end of coal mining in the 1980s, the Lille region developed a new centre of economic activity relating to the communication and culture industries, taking advantage of its strategic location midway between Paris, London and Brussels. After deindustrialisation and the 1984 opening of the Lewarde Mining Museum—the first institution of its kind in France—the region took part in industrial heritage campaigns modelled on the Ruhr industrial region. Various historical sites in coal-mining areas in this region and in Belgium were classified as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO in 2012. The most recent step in this transition from industry to an economy of culture and leisure was in December 2012, with the opening of a branch of the Louvre on a former mining site in Lens.

*Renaissance* is organised around eight groups (or scenes) of a varying numbers of photographs each: From Charles V to Louis XIV; A Small History of Photography; Borinage; Monuments; Lewarde Mining Museum; Becoming heritage, from below and from above; New/Old Economy; Leisure.

They interconnect both geographically and conceptually, each linked to a specific site. For example, the first three scenes are presented as historical “excavations” or “memory scenes”. They shed light on the Nord – Pas-de-Calais mining region’s place in European history up to the rise of the modern capitalist nation-state system in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Faithful to the documentary method and understanding that photography produces meaning through serial arrangements, these eight scenes in the exhibition are not presented in a linear way, but are interlinked on many levels, creating sets, constellations. By comparing the images with each other and with text, this presentation makes it possible to grasp the richness of their social complexity, and produces a “public photographic space” that is based on vernacular and non-artistic uses of photography.

For ten years, my work has been based on a desire to reinvent the documentary idea, by bringing historical density to that very idea, which is inseparable from the representation of work and the working classes. Documentary discourse can also contribute to an institutional critique right inside the art system through self-reflexivity, that is to say through the documentary observation of artistic working conditions. (Jorge Ribalta on his project “*Renaissance*”)

All of the images in *Renaissance* were shot in March, April and May 2014.

## Jorge Ribalta

Jorge Ribalta is an artist, researcher, editor and independent curator. Born in Barcelona (Spain), in 1963. Lives and works in Barcelona.

Has made solo shows at, among others, galleries Zabriskie (New York and Paris), Casa sin Fin (Madrid) and angels barcelona (Barcelona). His recent solo exhibition *Monument Machine* has been presented in 2015 at Museo Guerrero (Granada) and Fundación Helga de Alvear (Cáceres) and will be on view at the Württembergischer Kunstverein (WKV), Stuttgart, in February 2016. Has participated in many group shows like *New Photography 10* (MOMA, New York, 1994), *Fragments* (MACBA, Barcelona, 1996), *Sets and Situations* (MOMA, New York, 2000), *Playgrounds* (Museum Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2014) and the recent *The Beast is the Sovereign* (MACBA and WKV, Barcelona and Stuttgart, 2015).

Curator of exhibitions (selection): *Universal Archive. The condition of the document and the modern photographic utopia* (MACBA, Barcelona, 2008), *A Hard, Merciless Light. The Worker-Photography Movement, 1926-1939* (Museum Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2011), and *Not Yet. On the Reinvention of Documentary and the Critique of Modernism* (Museum Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2015).

Editor of the books (selection): *Public Photographic Spaces. Propaganda Exhibitions from Pressa to Family of Man, 1928-1955* (MACBA, 2009), *The Worker Photography Movement, 1926-1939. Essays and Documents* (Museum Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2011) and *Not Yet. On the Reinvention of Documentary and the Critique of Modernism. Essays and Documents, 1972-1991* (Museum Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2015).

Has been Head of Public Programs at MACBA between 1999 and 2009.

### Selected bibliography:

Jorge Ribalta, *Laocoonte salvaje*, Periférica, Cáceres, 2012.

John Roberts, 'Photography, landscape and the social production of space', in *Philosophy of Photography*, vol. 1, no 2, 2010, p. 135–56.

Stephanie Schwartz, 'Between Labour and Intellect: Jorge Ribalta's Anonymous Work', in *Philosophy of Photography*, vol. 3, no 2, 2013, p. 358–73.

Jorge Ribalta, *Scrambling*, Museo Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, 2015.

*Monumento máquina. Jorge Ribalta*, Centro José Guerrero, Grenada and Fundación Helga de Alvear, Cáceres, 2015.

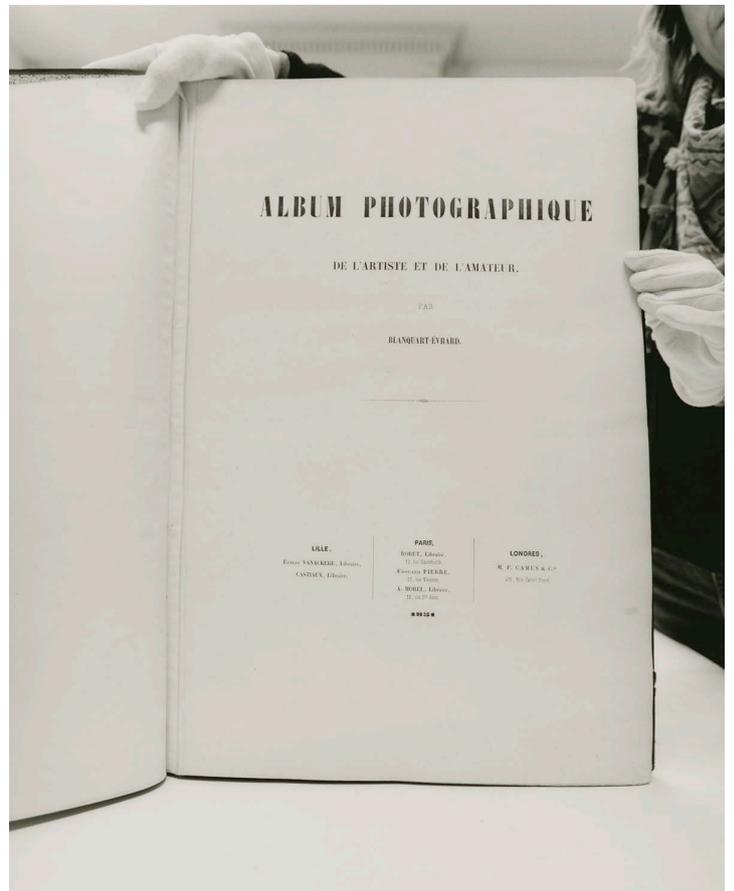
All the reproduced works :

Jorge Ribalta, *Renaissance. Scènes de la reconversion industrielle dans le bassin minier du Nord – Pas-de-Calais*, 2014, gelatin silver prints.  
 Courtesy of the artist, © Jorge Ribalta.

→  
 Portrait of Anton Fugger, banker of Charles Quint, by Hans Maler, c. 1529,  
 The Gallery of Time, Louvre-Lens.

↘  
 Inventory, Labor-union House of the Minors,  
 Lens.

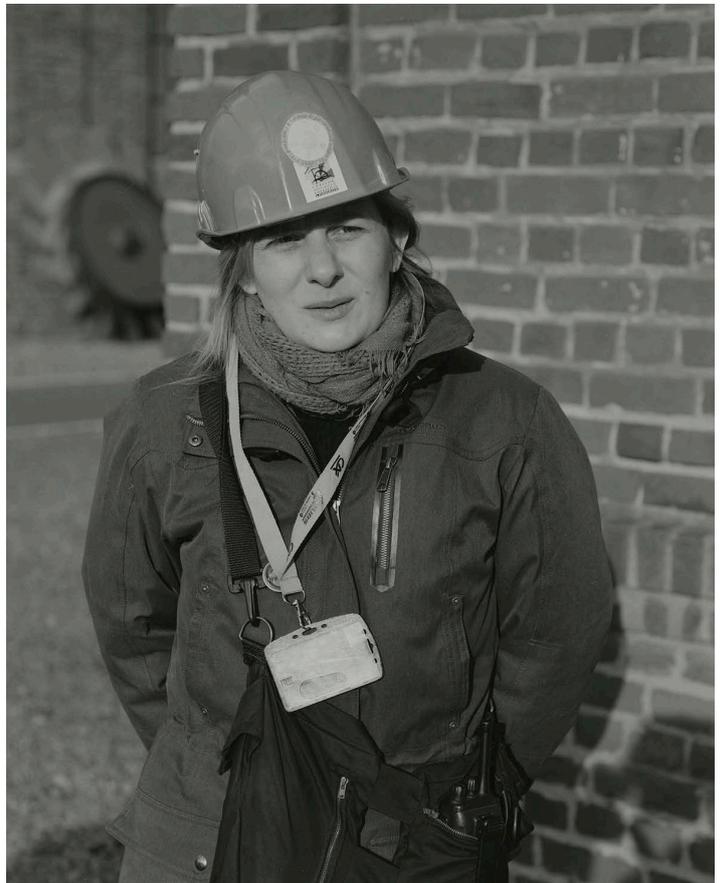
↘  
 The first album of Blanquart-Evrard,  
*Album de l'artiste et de l'amateur*, 1851,  
 of the old collection of the Industrial Museum,  
 now in the collection of Natural History  
 Museum, Lille.



→ Pit of Arenberg, Wallers.

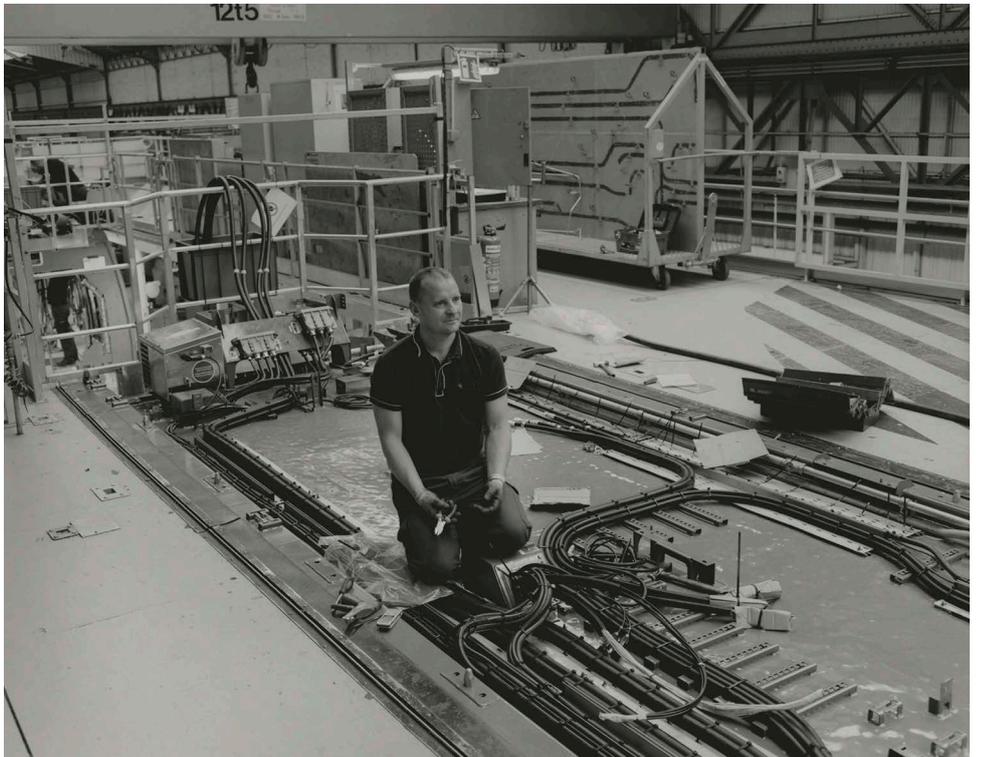
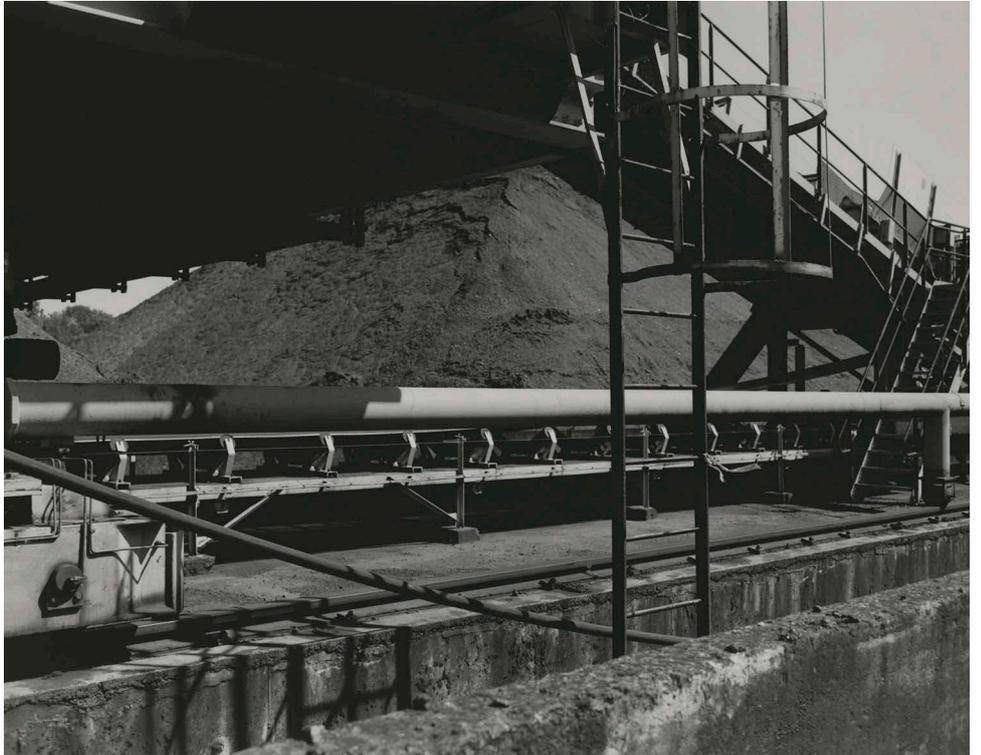
↘ Grand-Hornu, Hornu.

↘ Anna Hembise, guide, mediator,  
Mining Historic Center, Lewarde.



→  
Coal, Thermal Power Plant of Bouchain.

↘  
Training, manufactures Bombardier Transport  
SAS, Crespin.



→  
Loisinord, Noeux-les-Mines.

↘  
Science Park, University of Valenciennes,  
Aulnoy-les-Valenciennes.

