



NEW RELEASE

Gregor Sailer The Polar Silk Road

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How the unpredictability of the Arctic confronts the expansion of the economic exploitation of Arctic regions

Temperatures up to 55 degree Celsius below zero, military restriction zones, extensive research, and the unpredictability of the Arctic made this project with the analog view camera an enormous challenge. The Polar Silk Road deals with the economic exploitation of the Arctic regions and the territorial claims of the respective neighboring states. The associated consequences are geopolitical tensions as well as the expansion of military structures and research stations, which Sailer highlights in his project.

From the essay by **Peter Schweitzer**:

»In recent years, the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, a global transport infrastructure development program, has highlighted Beijing's ambition of becoming one — or even the — imperial power of the 21st century. While this initiative is primarily directed at the inland areas of Eurasia and at parts of Africa, the notion of the Polar Silk Road — first proposed by the Chinese government in 2018 — largely refers to shipping lanes through the Arctic Ocean. Today, these lanes include the so-called Northern Sea Route north along the Russian coast (previously known as the Northeast Passage) and the Northwest Passage north of North America. If sea ice loss continues at current rates, a Transpolar Sea Route across the center of the Arctic Ocean might become possible before midcentury.«

From the essay by **Walter Moser**:

» Although he does not refer to it directly, Gregor Sailer's project *The Polar Silk Road*, created between 2017 and 2021, picks up on this tradition of historical Arctic photographs. The parallels

are fascinating: Sailer's photographs also oscillate between factual documentation and aesthetic design, while at the same time addressing the centuries-old power-political aspirations in the Arctic — here, however, under the contemporary omen of global warming, which is melting the polar ice caps and rekindling the race for what is now.«

Gregor Sailer (b. 1980 in Schwaz, Tyrol) works as a freelance photographer. He has exhibited and published internationally, his work can be found in the Fotomuseum Winterthur, the Österreichische Staatsgalerie, the Belvedere Vienna, the Kunsthalle Vienna, the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, the Collection Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris, the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, and many others. Following *The Potemkin Village* and *Closed Cities*, *The Polar Silk Road* is Gregor Sailer's third publication with Kehrer Verlag.

Exhibition

Lumen Museum of Mountain Photography, Bruneck, Italy
28.08.–17.10.2021 and 27.11.2021–24.04.2022

Book Presentation 02.10.2021

Further venues to be confirmed

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