TRAVEL

Higher Ground

Carl De Keyzer imagines a possible future in a world of sea-level rises

Carl De Keyzer

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Borrowing its name from an American Christian sect he came across when travelling in the states, referring to people being invited into the mountains to survive the end of the world after a flood, **Carl De Keyzer's** *Higher Ground* is a fictional imagining of a possible future of sea-level rises.

It is the second instalment of a two-book project on climate change with nature becoming a potential danger. *Higher Ground* is a sequel to his other fiction-based book *Moments Before the Flood*, for which he traveled the entire European coastline to document the yet-unharmed historic European coastal landscape before the arrival of the flood.

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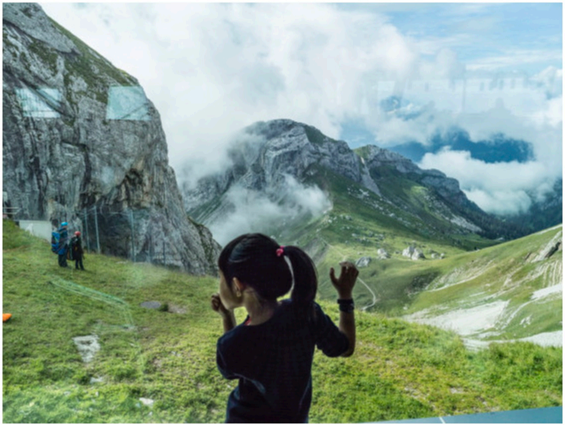

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"In *Higher Ground* I imagine a new Europe after the flood. Europeans migrate to the mountains of Europe and create a new mixed society," he says of the project, which also broaches the subject of migration. Every day for six months, the photographer made around six cable car trips going as far as 4000m.

> "In Higher Ground, I imagine a new Europe after the flood. "
>
> - Carl De Keyzer

“What you see in the images are people near remote hotels, closed ski stations, half melted glaciers, … It’s what is left behind after the winter tourist season. Summer was ideal to work with this ‘fiction’ idea. In winter too many tourists in colorful suits and ski’s populate these areas. It didn’t work.”

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The book presents De Keyzer's photographs alongside the fictional text of writer Philippe Claudel. "He perfectly describes the emotions and possible thoughts of people who have to abandon their homes and move to unknown higher territory," says De Keyzer. "He speaks of drama also, things that I couldn't photograph. A lot of inevitable shortcomings and gaps because of the limitation of fiction documentary photography – without staging – were filled with his writings."

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Carl De Keyzer's Korean Grand Tour
Carl De Keyzer
UNTIL APR 2

Here, we present an excerpt of *Ararat*, the fictional text penned by Philippe Claudel.

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"When I was a child, I was used to be frightened that the mountains would collapse and fall down on me. I was constantly asking the adults around me whether they really were secured properly, whether I was in any danger.

"When I was a child, I was used to be frightened that the mountains would collapse and fall down on me."

- Ararat, Philippe Claudel

Together with a guy I met at the beginning, who was in the same cable car that brought us up here, we rebelled. We reckoned that what had happened to us was unfair. We tried to escape by every means possible. We discovered some pickaxes in an equipment store, crowbars, tools like that. We started to attack the rock face. It was very solid. Exhausting. We took it in turns. We were worn out, but we didn't stop. We managed to dig a tunnel one metre in diameter and ten metres deep. It took us – I don't know, we didn't even bother to count – one year, perhaps two, how could we tell? In the end we gave up. What was the point? I don't know what became of the fellow. I don't come across him anymore. I never knew his name. A guy like me.

ARTS & CULTURE
Carl de Keyzer's Trinity
Carl De Keyzer

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I think that all the people who are here are vaguely aware that nothing exists anymore. At the beginning, I tried to talk about it. No sound came out of my mouth. Nor from the mouth of any of the others either, and yet I could see them trying to pronounce them. The sounds die immediately, they dissolve in the atmosphere. Or else I've become deaf. I really don't know. We are dumbfounded. Before, I was a writer. I wrote novels and plays. There are no books here. Nothing. There's nothing to read, other than the advertising hoardings, always the same ones, and various notices, here and there. That's all. We go round in circles. I miss reading more than writing. Well actually, I'm not sure.

> "I think that all the people who are here are vaguely aware that nothing exists anymore"
>
> - Ararat, Philippe Claudel

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What I really do miss is talking to someone. I'm unable to speak. And it's the same for the others. The moment we open our mouths, when we try to utter sounds or words, nothing happens. The words subside, like water, liquid gas, mist. Nothing substantial. You'll have noticed there's no noise. It's the same with the birds. No chirping. No singing. Even their wings are silent. Are you able to read me? I've always had lousy writing. Give me back this little scrap of paper when you've finished, please: I've very little left." – *Translated from the French by Euan Cameron.*

NEWSROOM
God Inc.
Carl De Keyzer

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Both *Higher Ground* and *Moments Before The Flood* are available **here**.

Higher Ground and Moments Before the Flood will be exhibited next in Antwerp, opening in October 2018. More info ***here****.*

Follow Carl De Keyzer on Instagram at **@carldekeyzer**

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Cuba La Lucha

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