

Lena Quelvennec

Art and social action in natureculture, the case of the ZAD of Notre-Dame-des-Landes

In this presentation, I would like to explore the fine boundary between art and social action, when it becomes difficult to know which one influences the other. When working on Oliver Ressler's video essay *Everything's coming together, while everything's falling apart: the ZAD* (2018) about the ZAD of Notre-Dame-des-Landes in western France, a specific aspect of the commons ideal and the protest actions of this site questioned me. Indeed, Ressler's artwork depicts among many other things, an event that happened in October 2016 called "le serment des bâtons" (the oath of the sticks). This action gathered hundreds of peoples walking together with a stick in their hand. They planted those along one of the symbolic road of the zone and promised to come back and take them again if the ZAD is threaten. The result of this action looks like a contemporary artwork, a potential land art piece, a monument in memory of a previous action, without any artists claiming it. But maybe art doesn't need to be claimed? I would rather see this action as possible new human-non-human assemblages, where art, natureculture (Haraway, 2016) and all the living beings occupying the site seem to gather together and produce a form of mutual engagement, sadly fought by the institutional power.

In 2018, Lena Quelvennec graduated from Lund University with a Master's degree in Visual Culture. Her research focuses on visualities between human beings and extreme environments, peripheral space, political occupations and the relationship between art and activism in the context of environmental struggles. She previously obtained a Master's in Visual Arts in 2013 at the HEAD, Geneva, researching digital documents and art.