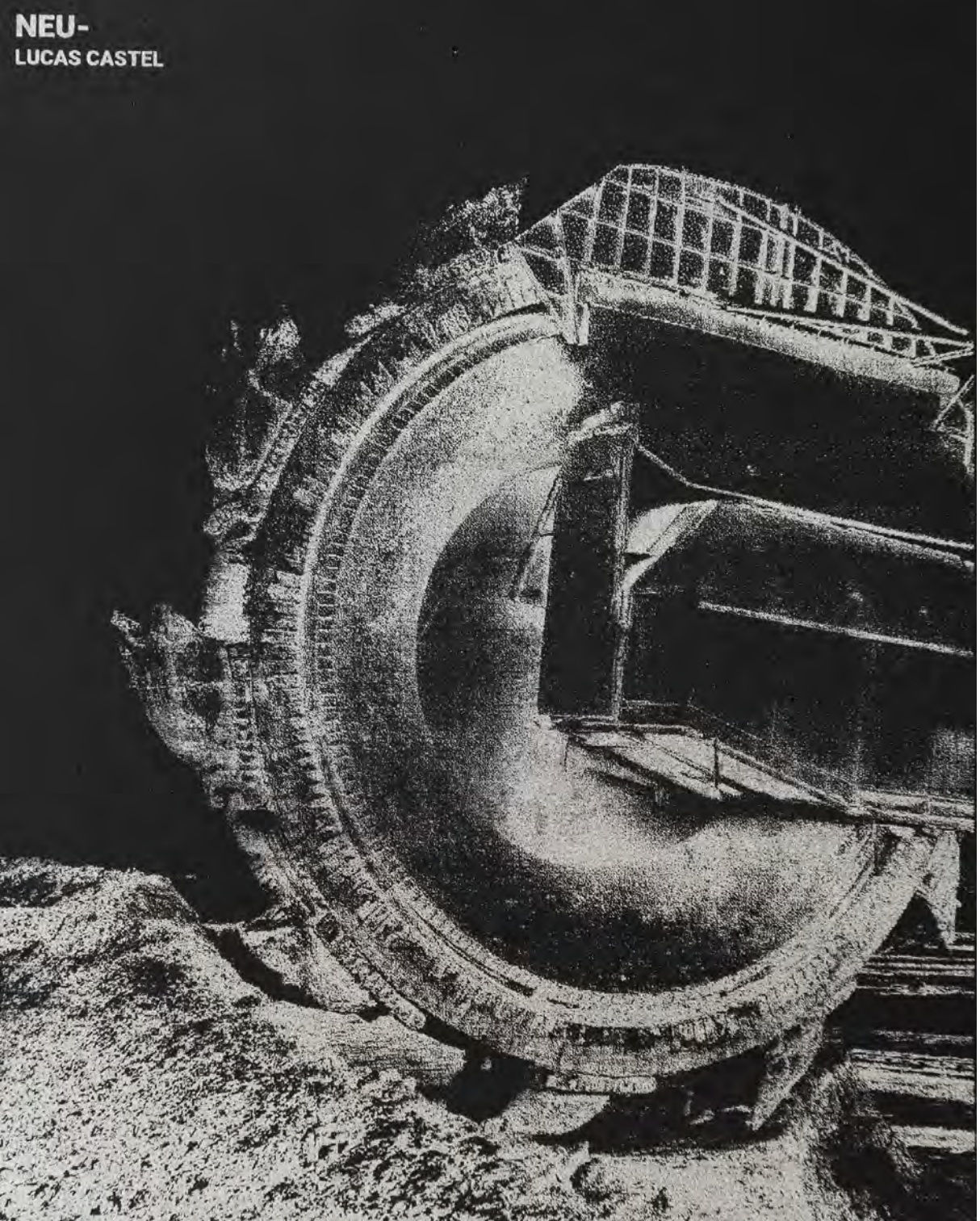
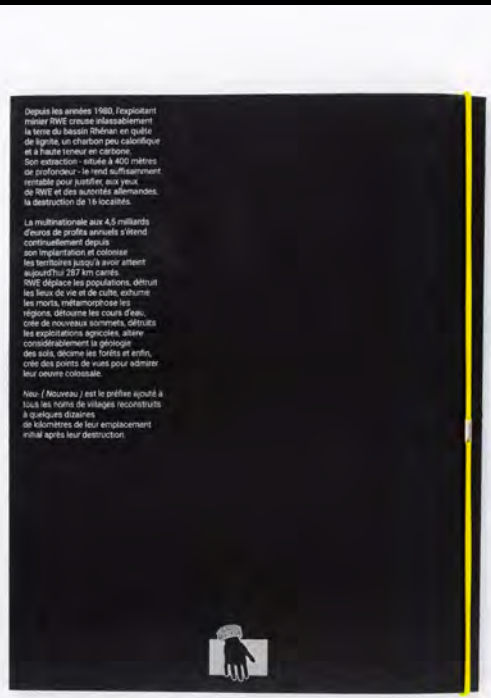
NEU-

LUCAS CASTEL



NEU-

PUBLISHED BY EDITIONS LA CAB


Depuis les années 1980, l'exploitant minier RWE creuse vilassablement la terre du bassin Rhénan en quête de lignite, un charbon peu calorifique et à haute teneur en carbone. Son extraction - située à 400 mètres de profondeur - le rend suffisamment rentable pour justifier, aux yeux de RWE et des autorités allemandes, la destruction de 16 localités.

La multinationale aux 4,6 milliards d'euros de profits annuels s'étend continuellement depuis son implantation et colonise les territoires jusqu'à avoir atteint aujourd'hui 287 km carrés. RWE déplace les populations, détruit les lieux de vie et de culte, exhume les morts, métamorphose les régions, détourne les cours d'eau, crée de nouveaux sommets, détruits les exploitations agricoles, altère considérablement la géologie des sols, décime les forêts et enfin, crée des points de vues pour admirer leur oeuvre colossale.

Neu- (Nouveau) est le préfixe ajouté à tous les noms de villages reconstruits à quelques dizaines de kilomètres de leur emplacement initial après leur destruction.









NEU-

Since the 1980s, mining company RWE has been tirelessly digging in the Rhine basin in search of lignite, a low calorific, high-carbon coal. Its extraction - at a depth of 400 metres - makes it profitable enough to justify, in the eyes of RWE and the German authorities, the destruction of 16 localities.

The multinational, with annual profits of 5.7 billion euros, has been expanding steadily ever since it first set up shop, colonising territories that have now grown to 287 square kilometres. RWE displaces people, destroys places of life and worship, exhumes the dead, transforms regions, diverts watercourses, creates new peaks, destroys farms, considerably alters the geology of the soil and decimates forests. Finally they also created sightseeing points from which you can admire their colossal work.

Neu- (New) is the prefix added to all the names of villages rebuilt a few dozen kilometres from their original location after their destruction.

Context and approach

Lucas Castel began documenting this region in 2015 when he undertook a documentary project on the Ende Gelände civil disobedience movement. This series of photographs was first exhibited in Belgium and then in Germany following an invitation to take part in the Nature Future exhibition project. Following these exhibitions, in 2022 Lucas decided to revisit German mining extractivism, but this time focusing on villages that had been rebuilt identically after being destroyed to make way for open-cast mines. This second chapter considers how the upheaval affecting this region manifests itself beyond the gaping holes left by RWE.

By focusing on their surroundings, this project draws mainly on the power of what lies beyond the frame, leaving a constant threat hanging in the air, in an attempt to convey the violence suffered by this region and its inhabitants. Neu- shows us the intellectual and moral collapse linked to the disorder produced by RWE - the population displacements it causes, the systematic destruction of local history, and the alteration of the landscape driven by a disconcerting cynicism.

In 2025, this project was the subject of a photographic book published by Editions La Cab.






Immerather Markt -neu-

















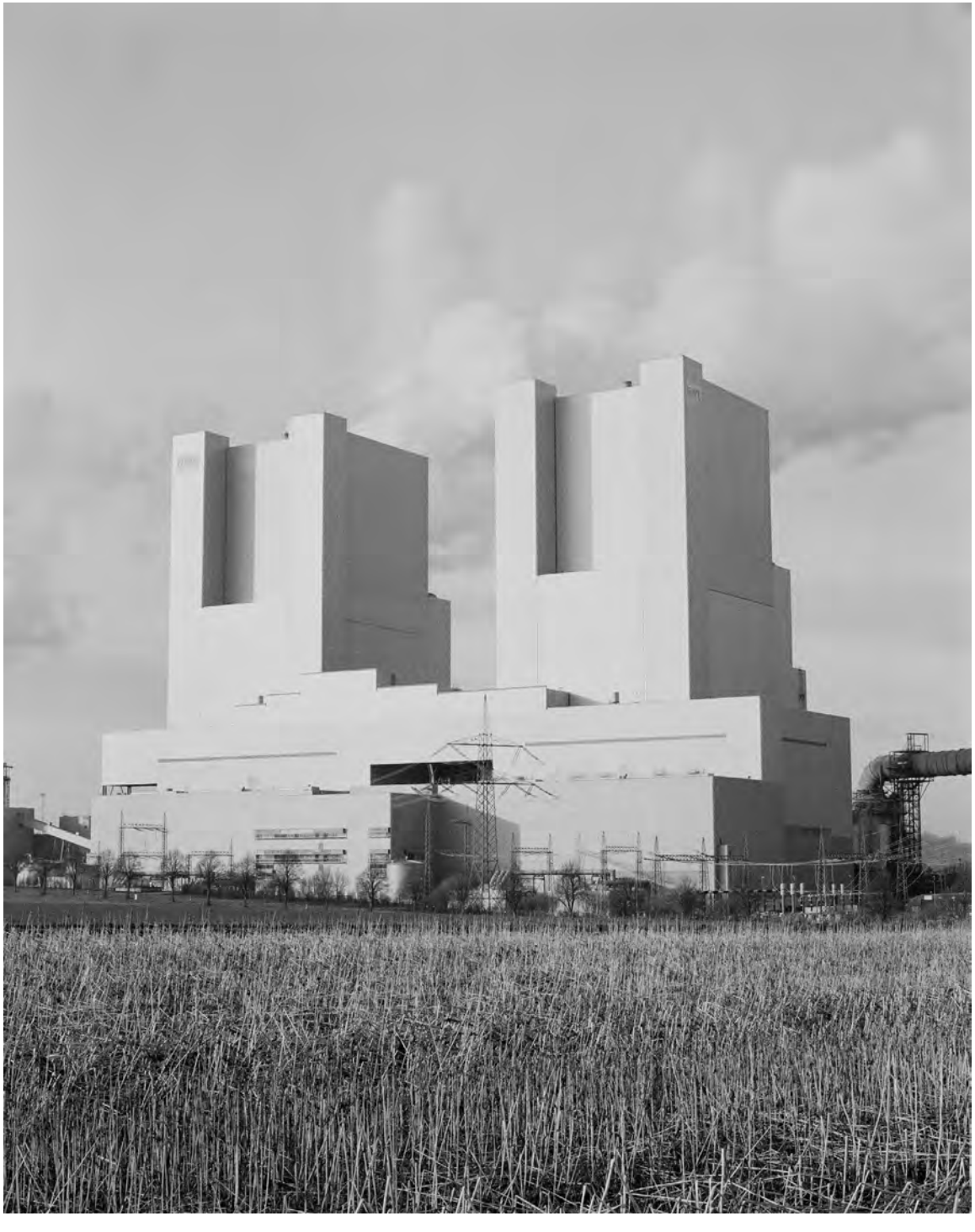

HIER ERSCHLIESST RWE POWER IN ZUSAMMENARBEIT MIT DER STADT ERKELENZ DEN UMSIEDLUNGSSTANDORT FÜR KEYENBERG, KUCKUM, UNTERWESTRICH, OBERWESTRICH UND BERVERATH.
RWE
RWE Power AG
Stüttgenweg 2
50935 Köln
Stadt Erkelenz
Johannismarkt 17
41812 Erkelenz
ERKELENZ
Westricher Str. (neu)
Holzweilerstr. (neu)
Keyenberger Markt (neu)
VIEBROCKHAUS






15
13







A “Bagger 288” excavator on the edge of Lutzerath village.
RWE owns more than fifteen Bagger 288s, enabling them to dig the earth sideways. It can travel on caterpillar tracks, and is the largest excavator in the world.



A model paying tribute to the 12th-century St Lambertus church in Immerath, which was destroyed by RWE in 2016.



The church of Neu-Immerath, inaugurated in 2018 following the demolition of the original church in Immerath.
The last remains of this village were razed to the ground in 2022. The first references to Immerath date back to the 12th century.



The former cemetery of the village of Keyenberg, whose dead were exhumed and moved to the new cemetery at Neu-keyenberg.



The Garzweiler Mine.

Its lignite extraction sites operate day and night, causing light and noise pollution in the region.



A steel sculpture named Indemann, decorated with light, paying homage to the workers of the Inden mine.

This structure is both a symbol and a tourist attraction, offering a panoramic view of the mining site from the top.



“Yellow cross”, the symbol of the citizens’ movement opposing the mine expansion.

This symbol refers to the yellow crosses painted on empty houses before they were demolished.



Motorway 61, cut by the expansion of the mine in 2005.
Although a replacement of this section was planned for 2035,
Due to the new agreements concerning the Garzweiler mine expansion, it was cancelled in 2022.



A new church situated in Neu-Morschenich.



Pavillion in the rebuilt village of Neu-Borschemich.



The border of the Hambach mine.



Villages under construction.

“This is where RWE, in collaboration with the town of Erkelenz, is developing the relocation site for Keyenberg, Kuckum, Unterwestich and Berverath.”



Garzweiler mine.



Sightseeing point set up by RWE showing the 400 metre depths of the 109 square kilometre Hambach mine.



The now known “Neu-Borschemick”.
This is the new pavilion built in 2006 following the destruction of the former village of Borschemick.
The first written records of the village’s existence date back to 1239.



Conveyor pipes for lignite destined for the Neurath thermal power stations.



Neurath thermal power plant.

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Dusseldorf – Schloss Benrath
20.04 – 27.08.2023

