

The Museum of Modern Art

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PROJECTS: BERNHARD AND HILLA BECHER, the latest in The Museum of Modern Art's series of exhibitions examining the work of younger artists, will be on view from December 12 through January 22, 1976. The Bechers have been working in Europe since 1957 photographing industrial structures such as gas holders, silos, water and cooling towers, and blast furnaces. In their work, groups of structures based on the same principle are compared through photographs to show the variety of possible functional solutions.

The current exhibition, directed by Cora Rosevear, Assistant Curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, presents the first series completed by the Bechers in America, photographs of 40 coal tipples taken in 1974 and 1975. Each structure is presented in a perspective and frontal view.

Coal tipples are used in an area of about five hundred square miles in eastern Pennsylvania, north of Harrisburg and south of Scranton, where anthracite is mined. The coal tipples are situated above underground mine entrances that lead either vertically or diagonally to the coal deposits. The tipples have two functions: lifting the coal cars out of the mines and tipping the cars to dump their loads into a storage "pocket" or directly onto the ground below. The shape of the tipple is determined by the angle and the depth of the underground coal deposit and by the slope and condition of the surface on which it is built.

The demand for anthracite was greatest between 1850 and 1900, and it was gradually replaced by soft coal and oil as a fuel. The oil embargo of 1974 and the continuing energy crisis have led to the opening of abandoned mines and the start of many new ones.

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