"The Visual Politics of Environmental Justice"

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This article examines the visual politics at work in website photographs depicting environmental justice issues in the United States. Based on roughly 580 web-published photos collected from environmental justice organizations, the Environmental Protection Agency, the mainstream media, and traditional environmental organizations in the US, this article examines variations in how the subjects of environmental justice are represented and the potential meaning of these representations for viewers. The article identifies three particular photographic genres that serve as landmarks within the environmental justice visual terrain: the fence-line photo, the portrait, and the protest snapshot. Drawing on the literatures of environmental political theory and black visual culture, I position the photos of contemporary environmental justice within the larger discursive, visual, and political contexts that infuse them with meaning. In interpreting these meanings, I argue that a more inclusive socio-ecological politics requires visual strategies that resist racialized ways of seeing while making visible the injustice of disproportionate environmental impacts on low-income communities and people of color. (Text from author's abstract)

https://read.dukeupress.edu/environmental-humanities/issue/11/1

Websites linked in this text:

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