



BARE HOUSE. PORI-ROTTERDAM-ULAANBAATAR

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New international publication looks into questions of built environment and architecture through contemporary art

Bare House is an exhibition exchange, a publication and an artist-in-residence project; an intensive, focused experiment in the sharing of contemporary experience about dwelling and existence, a project which holds up a mirror to the architecture and urbanism of today and tomorrow. Mongolia and the city of Ulaanbaatar –where pastoral nomadism and Soviet city planning are being eroded by chaotic ger districts and staggering tower-blocks – function as reference points in the project, along with the post-industrial cities of Rotterdam in the Netherlands and Pori in Finland.

The *Bare house* project emerged from another exhibition exchange project, *Mongolia: Perception and Utopia*, realized between 2005 and 2008, also in Mongolia and Finland. While the first project focused on the merging of experiencing the 'real' Mongolia with the 'ideal' images both Mongolians and Westerners held about it, the current project focuses on the built environment, and especially on the tensions created by the recent urbanisation processes in Mongolia. The artists and architects featured in the project come from Finland, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, Canada and Mongolia. Most of the works were created during artist residencies in Mongolia, the Netherlands and Finland between 2008 and 2010. The exhibition took place at Pori Art Museum, Original Gallery, and The Old Cotton Mill in Pori, spreading out on both sides of the Kokemäki River, from museum and gallery spaces into old industrial environments and other outdoor locations. Besides describing ways of inhabitation, the exhibition also commented on different spaces of display.

In this publication, the works of the participating artists and architects are presented, through visual documentations and texts, a DVD publication is included with video material, or excerpts thereof, from several of the pieces. The works are ordered, not alphabetically according to their authors, but in an overlapping and looping thematic way. Four essays follow this presentation of works. The first two of these, by Uranchimeg Tsultem and Saara Hacklin, discuss selected works in the exhibition. Uranchimeg Tsultem references them to the contemporary Mongolian art scene and Mongolian history and traditions, while Hacklin's text explores the ideas of appropriation, mimesis and re-enactment as methods of contemporary art through the works of Christian Mayer, Oula Salokannel & Annu Wilenius and T. Enkhbold. In the third essay, Taina Rajanti writes 'against utopias' and presents the ways we can better deal with being in this world. In the final essay, Annu Wilenius summarises some of the ideas she has gathered through the years in this project, about how and what it could be that we might learn from (urbanising) nomads: an oxymoronic ambience of chaos and grace.

The *Bare house* -project has continued in 2011 with two exhibitions at the Zanabazar Fine Arts Museum in Mongolia. A publication based on these will come out in spring 2012. Both the *Bare house* and *Mongolia: perception and utopia* -projects are part of Annu Wilenius' doctoral dissertation for Aalto University, Department of Art and Media, Pori.

Orders: Pori Art Museum at www.poriartmuseum.fi/fin/kauppa/ & Aalto University at books.aalto.fi

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