

ULAANBAATAR PUBLIC ART WEEK & Conference

NOMADIC DEMOCRACY ?

27 September - 3 October, 2019

Organization: Land Art Mongolia, MNG 360°
МНГ БАЙГАЛИЙН УРЛАГ МОНГОЛ ТВВ

Venue conference: Khaan Bank congress center
Seoul Street, Ulaanbaatar

Hotel: UB INN Hotel
Chingeltei district, 5th khoroo
Sambu street 35/4, Ulaanbaatar
+976-7736-6666
<http://www.ubinnhotel.com>

venue for exhibition: MN17 Art Gallery
5th khoroo, Chingeltei district, Ulaanbaatar

Venues for public art intervention: to be announced

Dates of Ulaanbaatar Public Art Week: 27 September – 3 October 2019

Moderator of the conference: Maurizio Bortolotti

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The ULAANBAATAR PUBLIC ART WEEK consists of a series of get-together activities:

- public art interventions at different places throughout the city of Ulaanbaatar,
- an international conference,
- exhibition openings and video screenings.
- It will be accompanied by a gallery night tour.

(Text by Maurizio – ca 2 pages – will be changed and rewritten)

ULAANBAATAR Public ART WEEK 27 Sept – 3 Oct, 2019

Nomadic Democracy?

Concept by Maurizio Bortolotti

Keywords:

- Nomadism ./ Migration.
- The concept of Land that originates from nomadism.
- An alternative flexible concept of democracy feeding the Mongolian art.

Migration is one of the major worldwide issues today, which challenges the economical capitalistic strategies and generates a critical point for the Western model of democracy. Looking at this issue from the point of view of the global economy, it seems to incite a reinstallation of borders, especially in and around Europe and the United States. Migration has taken a negative meaning because it is seen as a phenomenon that produces a lot of economic and social instability. Ideally, due to migration we have to re-negotiate our view of democracy and its influence on our lives. While looking at it from a central Asian perspective, Mongolia can offer a different model to deal with this issue. The cultural and social roots of Mongolia are based on nomadism. This can suggest an alternative way to look at the issue of migration, because nomadism can suggest a different mental approach, emphasizing the possibility of exploring the "roots connected to land and humankind".

Mongolia is a democracy located in the geographical sphere of central Asia, as a result of its history. On this account, Paula Sabloff in 2002 quoted: "Clearly Genghis Khan has become a major symbol of Mongolian independence." On the contrary, Genghis Khan is more than a symbol of sovereignty, supported by recent research which suggests that his ideas on governance forms an integral part of Mongolian political culture"

1.

According to Sabloff, a nomadic perspective of migration can offer an alternative social model to govern our everyday life. She reiterates: "the democratic political culture is not an import. Rather, it is built on the Mongolians' nomadic culture of independence as well as their knowledge of Genghis Khan's government, which comes from their written and oral history."

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Ideally, the nomadic perspective of life and governance can be inferred as a new social model that is an alternative and flexible solution for the challenges faced by democracies worldwide in today's world. For example, the concept of land coming from nomadism can inspire a different idea of democratic governance based on the tolerance, respect, human scale values and mobility. Although half of the Mongolian population occupies this land living in yurts, the citizens of the capital Ulaanbaatar still live with a clear understanding of the phenomenon of nomadism. The impact of this social model based on nomadism has created in Mongolia a fresh approach to art as well. Mongolian artists have developed over time an inherent ability of working together in a collaborative spirit, looking at their own nomadic roots, evoking the myth of the Sky and the Land still being immersed in it. The Biennial Land Art Mongolia was inspired by all this since its first edition.

In his recent book *Down to Earth* (2017), Bruno Latour quoted: "If nature has become territory, it makes a little sense to talk about an 'ecological crisis', 'environmental problems', or a 'biosphere' to be rediscovered, spared, or protected." (pg. 8) And more ahead it connects explicitly migration with the climate changes: "Migrations, explosion of inequality, and new Climate Regime: these are the same threat." [...] "The climate crisis is forcing people they do not welcome to cross their frontiers;" (pg.9-10) (...) how can we reweave edges, envelopes, protections; how can we find new footing while simultaneously taking into account the end of globalization, the scope of migration, and also the limits placed on the sovereignty of nation - states that are henceforth confronted by climate change?" (pg.11) . On this account, the keen analysis of Latour sets up a basic link between two fundamental issues of the contemporary world: migration and climate change. These two topics can find a new understanding if we look at them from the angle of the nomadic culture. because it can offer an interesting and contemporary model which will be at the center of the Ulaanbaatar Public Art Week 2019 and the next LAM360 Biennial going to happen in 2020. This biennial has been initiated based on the concept of Land Art, because Mongolia has a vast territory covered by steppe with a powerful presence of nature, most of which is not contaminated by human settlements. For this reason, the huge natural environment of Mongolia is the adequate location and a potential natural lab with a strong tradition of nomadic life, proving to be an alternative solution towards dealing with these two key issues prevalent in today's volatile world.

In his book, Latour states that migration is a phenomenon linked to the climate changes. Therefore, in this conference and in the Biennial of the next year we would like to propose nomadism as a cultural model (of course not as political or social model, and this means not as "a political or social solution" of the problems because this is not the goal of an Art Biennial). For instance, the concept of "Land" and "distance" can be different in the nomadic perspective as it has been pointed out recently.³ Ideally, as a cultural model nomadism can suggest a different mental approach to these issues, taking the fact into consideration that human beings, as inhabitants of our planet as nomads who live in our planet moving around with a "nomadic" attitude. Instead, to separate between citizens, living in a state with clearly borders and "invaders", driven by poverty, war and hunger to break through .

1/2. P. Sabloff (USA), "Genghis Khan and Modern Mongolian Identity: The Democracy Connection" *The Mongolian Journal of International Affairs*, #8-9 , 2002.

3. "Distance and Speed. Rethinking the Imaginative Potential of Space and Velocity in Inner Asia" Caroline Humphrey & Gregory Delaplace Conference held at the Musée du Quai Branly (Paris), 7th and 8th of March, 2019.

Program: 27 Sept – 3 Oct 2019 (all dates and venues t.b.c.)

Thursday, 26 Sept

Arrival of the international guests

7 pm Dinner (by invitation only)

Friday, 27 Sept.

11 am Arrival of international guests
City tour for guests
6 pm opening of the main Art Week exhibition at MN17 Gallery
(opposite of the UB Inn Hotel) and warm-up-celebration

Saturday, 28 Sept.

10–10.30 Opening event of the Art Week at the Khaan Conference Hall
Registration for the Conference
11 am Official welcome words
11.30-12.30 Performances / music / multimedia presentation
12.30-1.30pm Lunch
2 - 5 pm Introduction to the Conference and 1st panel:
The Nomadic Land. Nomadism, Land and Democracy
discussion
6 - 10 pm Gallery night UB

Sunday, 29 Sept.

10 am - 5 pm Conference
10 - 10.30 Registration
11 - 12.30 pm 2nd panel:
Can Art rework the Environment?
12.30-1.30pm Lunch
2 - 4.30 pm 3rd panel:
Moving the Borders. Migration and its Discontents
4.30 - 5 pm Discussion (moderated)
5 pm Closing words
7 – 9.30 pm Dinner reception (by invitation only)

Monday, 30 Sept.

12-5 pm Street Art Workshops
10 am -7 pm excursion to the countryside
(by registration only / limited seats in the bus)

Tuesday, 1 Oct

12-5 pm Street Art Workshops
2 - 4 pm Artists Presentations | Artists Talks

Wednesday, 2 Oct.

12-5 pm Street Art Workshops

Thursday, 3 Oct.

12-5 pm Street Art Workshops
*** Closing ceremony and dinner

International Speakers :

Apinan Poshyananda | Director Bangkok Biennale Thailand
Patrick Flores | Chief Curator Singapore Biennial, University of the Philippines, Manila
Su Dan | Deputy Director Tsinghua University Art Museum, Beijing China
Yongwoo Lee | Director Himalaya Museum, Shanghai

Marco Scotini | FM Art Center, Milan
Anastasia Blokhina | Director Riga Biennial, Latvia
Andrea De Felip | Italian Ambassador in Mongolia Ulaanbaatar
Traian Laurentiu Hristea | Ambassador of the European Union in Ulaanbaatar

Mongolian speakers and Mongolian VIP participants:

Bumochir Dulam | Anthropologist University Ulaanbaatar
Oyuntegsh Norovtseren | Director Statehood Museum Ulaanbaatar
Tumurbaatar Badarch | Director UMA (Union of Mongolian artists)
Tsetsegbaatar Chuluunbaatar UNESCO Mongolia
Odgerel Odonchimeg | Director Art Council Mongolia
Sarantuya Byambajav | National Mongolian Modern Art Gallery
Amarsaikhan Sainbuyan | Major of the City of Ulaanbaatar
D. Uranchimeg | Director Fine Art University, Ulaanbaatar
*** | Director of the Zorig Foundation, Ulaanbaatar

International artists (public art interventions):

Guiseppe Stampone | Italy
Armin Linke | Italy / Germany

Mongolian artists (public art interventions):

Conference Program: NOMADIC DEMOCRACY?

The conference it will be held at the Khan Bank building on Sep 28-29, 2019 and it will be divided in three sessions:

1. The Nomadic Land. Nomadism, Land and Democracy.

(Saturday, Sep 28, 2 -5 pm).

Keynote speaker: Bumochir Dulam
Speaker: Andrea De Felip
Speaker: Traian Laurentiu Hristea
Speaker: Odgerel Odonchimeg

2. Can Art Rework the Environment?

(Sunday, Sep. 29, 11 pm – 12.30 pm)

Keynote speaker: Yongwoo Lee
Speaker: Su Dan
Speaker: Apinan Poshyananda
Speaker: Patrick Flores

3. Moving the borders. Migration and its Discontents.

(Sunday, Sep 29, 2 -4.30 pm)

Keynote Speaker: Anastasia
Speaker: Marco Scotini
Speaker: Bose Krishnamachari

Sessions' s blurbs.

1. The Nomadic Land. Nomadism, Land and Democracy.

Mongolia can offer a different model to deal with this issue. Indeed, the cultural and social roots of this country are Nomadism, and this can suggest us another way to look at the issue of Migration because Nomadism can propose a different mental approach. It affects the possibility to explore the "roots connected to land and humankind". Because Mongolia is a democracy located in the geographical sphere of central Asia, as a result from its history. Almost 20 years ago, in 2002, Paula Sabloff wrote: "Clearly Genghis Khan has become a major symbol of Mongolian independence." However, he is more than a symbol of sovereignty, for recent research suggests that his ideas on governance form the core of Mongolian citizens' political culture" 1. Is it correct today, after 17 years from the Sabloff's statement, talking again about Nomadic Democracy? What is the specificity of Nomadic roots in the political and social identity of contemporary Mongolia?

2. Can Art rework the Environment?

Bruno Latour in his recent book *Down to Earth* (2017), writes: "If Nature has become territory, it makes a little sense to talk about an 'ecological crisis', 'environmental problems', or a 'biosphere' to be rediscovered, spared, or protected." Signs of an ecological Crisis and Climate change are visible everywhere in the contemporary world. According to Latour this is more direct because we are completely embraced by it. His assessment is a clear invitation to rethink completely the relation with our environment which affects so

deeply our life. We need new strategies to deal with this issue because at risk is our future of dwelling on Earth. Can art show how to rethink our relationship with the Environment? Does it offer new models to live not in opposition but as part of it?

3. Moving the borders. Migration and its Discontents.

One of the major worldwide issues today is Migration, which challenges the economical capitalist strategies and generates a critical point for the Western model of Democracy. Looking at this issue from the point of view of the global economy, it seems to incite a reinstalling of borders, especially in and around Europe and the US. Migration has taken a negative meaning because it is seen as producing a lot of economical and social instability. So, due to Migration we have to renegotiate our view of Democracy and its influence on our life. Migration represents an involution or a chance for the contemporary society and our idea of Democracy?

Land Art Mongolia (acronym LAM360°) is an Ulaanbaatar-based independent, non-profit organization with the purpose of raising awareness about sustainability, nomadic culture, ecological decentralization and democracy by means of contemporary art. It is the main objective to promote public dialogue on cultural and social policy, environmental issues with a special attention to young people and groups exposed to the risk of marginalization, such as nomads, ethnic minorities and non-commercial cultural organizations. At the same time, LAM 360° aims to promote Mongolian art internationally and to support Mongolian artists of early and middle careers through international exchanges.

Team of Land Art Mongolia:

Dolgor Ser-Od, CEO LAM
Marc Schmitz, artistic & executive director LAM
Maurizio Bortolotti, chief curator 6th Biennial LAM 2020, conference moderator
Uli Seitz, production director
Solongo Tseekhuu, curator
Darkhijav Jadamba, assistant curator
Eya Ganbat, hospitality
Azgerel Tsambaa, translator
Otgon S. accountant

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Khaan Bank Ulaanbaatar
UB Inn Hotel

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