

SHANGRI-LA / Шангри-Ла

An Essayfilm by Seoyeon Ha and Leon Meschede

Full-HD Video, 23:46 min

2023



Synopsis: *SHANGRI-LA*

Excerpt | To watch the full film please contact meschedeleon@gmail.com for a screener link.

Shangri-La is an intercultural essay film that reflects on shifting identities, temporal dissonance, and the unfolding climate crisis in Mongolia — a place where ancient cosmologies confront the pressures of globalization, and where spiritual landscapes offer quiet resistance to ecological collapse.



This pair of stills captures the shifting relationship between Mongolia's rural and urban landscapes—one highlighting the environmental challenges threatening traditional nomadic life, the other reflecting a renewed urban interest in ancestral wisdom as a response to ecological crises.

A multi-perspective view of the country in transformation, of the changing paradigms of time and space, and of the gap between Western and indigenous belief systems.

— Dr. Jule Reuter, exhibition text for *navigating strangeness* at Galerie Volkspark, Halle

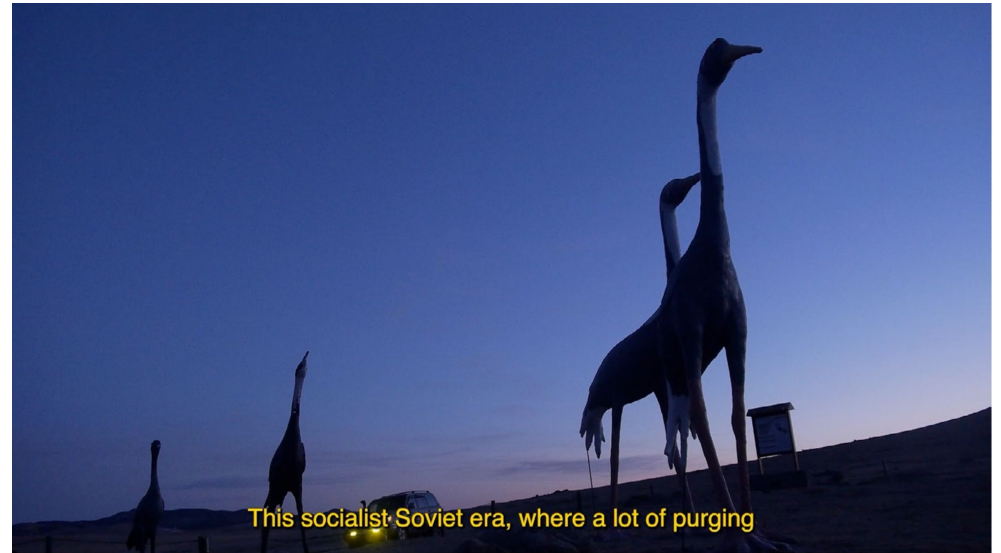
Through personal footage, archival material, and poetic “time images,” *Shangri-La* explores Mongolia's shifting identity between nomadic tradition and modern acceleration. Told as a letter exchange between two outsiders, the film reflects on how cultural perspectives shape perception — and how ancestral knowledge might guide us through a world in ecological crisis.



Stills from *Shangri-La*: Between tradition and modernity, speculative thoughts, and personal encounters, this project reflects on cultural narratives and visions of the future in Mongolia, as well as our own perceptions of identity and the future.



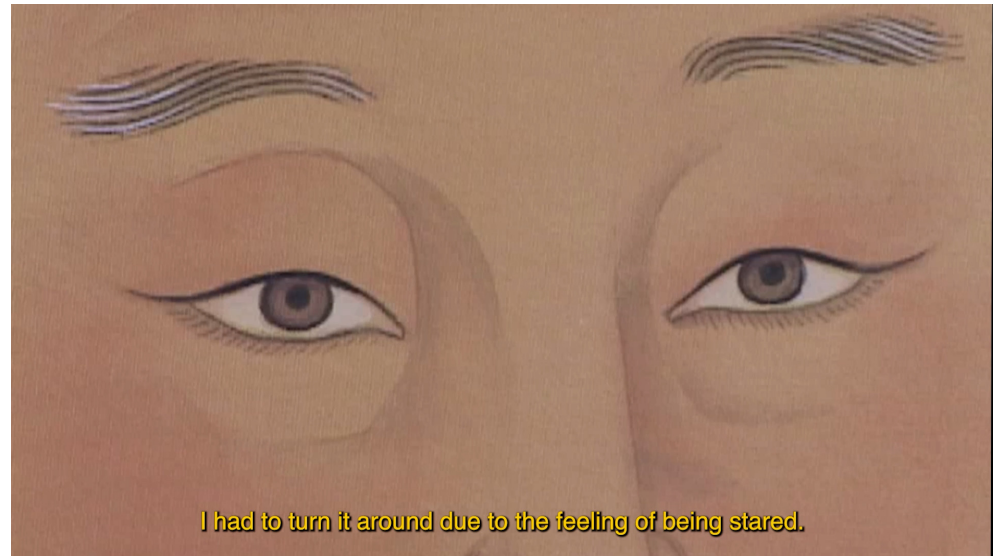
I have dwelled on my reverie, where the intersectional crises of care and climate were no longer feminized.



This socialist Soviet era, where a lot of purging



From there on, we can actually look towards the future.



I had to turn it around due to the feeling of being stared.

Stills from *Shangri-La*: Between tradition and modernity, speculative thoughts, and personal encounters, this project reflects on cultural narratives and visions of the future in Mongolia, as well as our own perceptions of identity and the future. As directors from outside Mongolia, we aimed to ensure that our video essay does not claim to represent the reality of Mongolia, but rather explores how our own backgrounds shape our perceptions of a foreign culture.

Director Statement: *SHANGRI-LA*

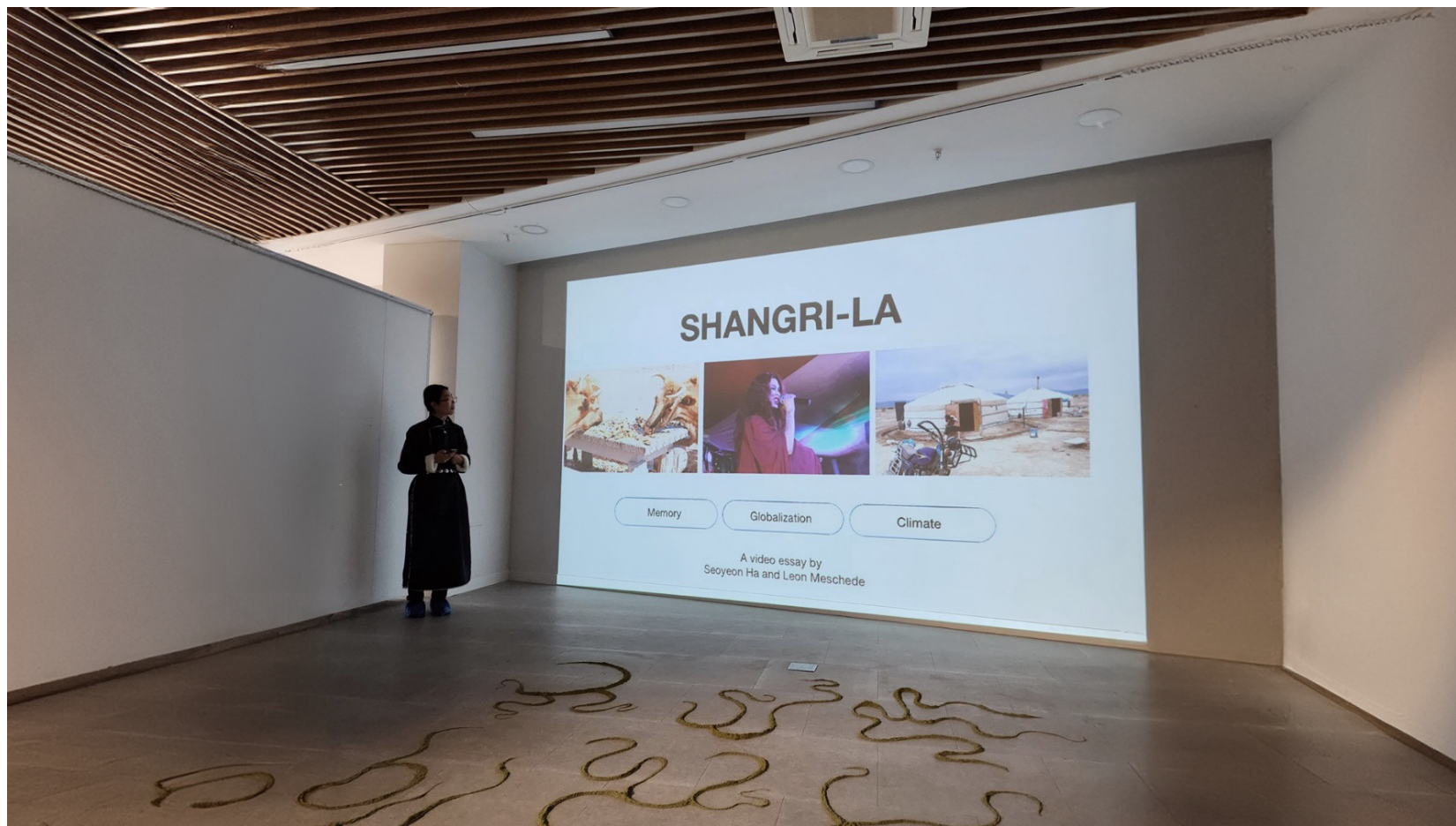
Shangri-La is a cinematic search — a reflection on cultural identity, time, and transformation. As filmmakers from Germany and South Korea, we deliberately avoid the pretense of an objective or definitive portrayal of Mongolia. Instead, we approach it through an essayistic, multi-voiced structure that foregrounds not only the complexities of the place we travel through, but also the lens through which we see it.

Mongolia, in our film, is not a symbol of exoticism or untouched tradition. It is a living landscape where global tensions converge: tradition meets modernity, ecological collapse confronts ancient knowledge, and spiritual worldviews challenge industrial rationality. Between urban acceleration and nomadic temporality, collective memory and personal encounter, a narrative unfolds that is more interested in posing questions than providing answers. What kinds of futures can emerge when indigenous knowledge meets global crisis? What images and stories help us navigate a world in flux?

Framed through a letter correspondence and guided by what we call “time images,” the film weaves a poetic network of thoughts, visuals, and voices. *Shangri-La* is also a reflection on our own positionality — our responsibility as “outsiders” telling stories about a country that is not our own, but whose struggles resonate deeply with our own.

In a time shaped by overlapping global crises, we believe in the power of artistic empathy — not as a solution, but as an invitation to think and act together initiated by a form of poetic activism.

— Seoyeon Ha & Leon Meschede



Screenings with Artist Talks in Lkham Gallery (2023)

Shangri-La Tour: Lkham Gallery in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolei (2023), gallerie_kub in Leipzig, Deutschland (2023), Gong Movie in Daegu, Südkorea (2023), Ecobuddy Institute Seoul, Südkorea (2024), Burg Galerie in Halle, Deutschland (2024), Hertie School of Government (2025), The Nordic House in Reykjavík, Island (2025).

Fact Sheet:

- Length: 23:46 minutes
- Country: Mongolia 2023
- Format: 1080p ProRes, h264 mp4, 30 fps, Stereo, Color
- Language: english and mongolian with english or german subtitles
- Loopable: yes

Supplied by the artist:

- 1 brightsign media player with videofile and a hdmi cable

Covered by exhibitor:

- 4K projector, alternatively a Full-HD projector
- A projection Screen
- 2 speakers



Leon Meschede (*1999, Halle) is a German video artist and essayist working at the intersection of history, technology, and social change. His films explore the legacy of East Germany's post-socialist identity and ecological crises, using the essay film as a tool to examine speculative cultures of remembrance. He studied at Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design Halle and Seoul National University. His projects have received support from the DAAD, Columbia University School of the Arts, and the Korean International Cooperation Agency and won the Jury Award at the Art Prize of Saalesparkasse Foundation in 2025. His films have been exhibited and screened internationally, including Germany, South Korea, and Mongolia.



Seoyeon (*2000, South Korea) is a political enthusiast focusing on climate justice and sustainability. She obtained her BA in Mongolian Studies and International Studies from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in 2024 and is currently pursuing a Master of International Affairs at the Hertie School in Berlin. At the same time, she works in a renewable energy think tank as student assistant while researching feasible and just transition policy. Previously, she worked with the KOICA-NGO Environment and Climate Volunteer Program (2022–2023) in Mongolia, where she organized climate campaigns and seminars. Seoyeon co-directed the video essay *Shangri-La*, which has been screened in Germany, South Korea, and Mongolia.

Press

Nam Ye-jin, *Beyond conflicts, towards coexistence*, News Penguin, Seoul, South Korea (2024)

Team: SHANGRI-LA

Direction, Text, Camera	Seoyeon Ha Leon Meschede	Production Editing Additional Footage	Leon Meschede Zach Conde, Nari Lee, Alexej Myslitskiy
Cast			
Interviewee 1	Nyamdavaa from Baganuur		
Interviewee 2	Amarsaikhan Namsraijav		
Interviewee 3	Nomin Zezegmaa	Music	Unur Ulzii
		Mongolian Translator Graphic Design Advisors	Margadaa Battsog Ramma Choi Nomin Zezegmaa Richard Rothfeld Eunhee Cho, Sarang Lee Sarangerel Ichinkhorloo Dolgorzav Altangerel, Ulzii Jargal, Tuguldur Enkhjargal
Voice Actors		KOICA Coordinators	
Female Narrator	Nomindari Gantur	SNCF Interview Assist	
Male Narrator	Microsoft Azure AI	Special help	

The project was financially supported by



THANK YOU!

Let's stay in touch. For full videos, project texts, or installation inquiries, please reach out:

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