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## The Twilight of the Society

*“Mankind cannot stand too much reality”*. T.S. Eliot wrote this in his Four Quartets. To face a reality like the outskirts of Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia, is not easy. Surrounded by green hills and large prairies, where horses gallop freely, the only unquestionable masters of this land, a small gorge, leading to the core of the Mongolian capital city is the theater of a horrifying scenario, degrading, for all mankind. Here, the lowest level of the consumption society fights everyday for surviving. A pyramid of waste is the only source of living for this people: the reclamation of plastic materials, metal, glass, is the only possible source of revenue. In a Mongolia sacked and robbed of its natural resources by the super powers China and Russia; in a Mongolia corrupted and stuck between the frenzy for progress and the research for its identity, there are persons who are serving their sentence without any crime, who are paying the price of social inequality. To move away, to distance, to filter reality to change its look, to cover it, to make it up, to hide it, not to recognize it for what it is: a useless attempt to protect oneself, to preserve the feelings, the sensations that would be hurt and torn in front of such a scenario. Thus, hidden behind a dirty and scratched glass, that transforms and makes the live in front unreal, I approached a world that is the symbol of the twilight of any form of society. If a population allows that some persons are forced to ferret about in the waste and garbage, the well ness we are aiming at is a mere illusion that does not elevate mankind but leads it to self-destruction. This work has the purpose to denounce and tell about what happens in this part of the Mongolian land, crushed between blind and careless consumerism and the mute and self-possessed despair of these persons.



The slums in the outskirts of Ulaan Baatar. In this urban population density is concentrated up the whole country.





Along the streets of the suburbs is easy to find collection centers where men and children work: the materials collected at landfills are separated and sealed in large plastic bags in order to be sold.





A man fills the bags with bottles of vodka that will be carried into small factories for recycling. The suffering and poverty are a new way of recycling.





**There is no program of recovery and protection for these people. The Mongolian Government does not care about this part of population who lives below the poverty threshold.**





The social inequality is a problem that nowadays Mongolia is unable to solve. The economic dependence from China and the lack of reasonable political solution does not promote the development of the poorer classes.





**The waste of the society of consumer goods is the only resource for people who have no other chance of life.  
In this landfill in the extreme outskirts of Ulaan Baatar they fight daily for survival.**





For children who live on this hill of garbage, any waste can become a game: sticks, ropes, cardboard boxes, are an attempt to escape from this state of misery.





The skin of the carcass of a goat becomes a mask to hide: a new face to get rid of a difficult reality to accept.





Entire families survive only thanks to what they can recover from the garbage.  
An enclosure hides the misery that is being lived in this place.





A woman collecting in plastic bags all that has managed to recover from storage, shapeless misery of this world where she is forced to live.





**The new capitalist system and the end of Russian domination, did not deliver to Mongolia any form of social protection. The gap between the wealthy classes and the poor ones has increased producing an extreme poverty situation from which it is not easy to get out.**





A truck of waste, after downloading the organic material, leaving the landfill. The children and the guys living here cling to the van as they are leaving this place permanently.





Under a leaden sky belonging to the indifferent Mongolia, a guy, from his scruffy shelter wave goodbye as pointing out his belonging to a marginalized society. Society abandoned to its own destiny.





Seeing the reality through a glass, in an attempt to filter out the most dramatic and raw aspects. The reality is transformed into an unreal and symbolic image that embodies itself in the sunset of a universal society that can not protect its own children.





Two children playing with the skull of an animal just unloaded from a van.





To delve into the trash is not just looking for material for resale, but also, most of all, means search for something to eat.  
With her metal hook, this woman is opening the plastic bags for searching food.





**The death of many livestock, due to the Dzud, the harsh mongolian winter, forces many nomad families to move in town to find a new way of subsistence. The lack of a good work for all, leads these families to look for a refuge in the suburban slums and to seek food and work in landfills.**





A girl, in this desert of poverty, is walking with her bag to look for material to be collected.





As if they could look ahead in a rearview mirror, these children seem to seek a different future, wherever they can find it.



The heart's desire to look inside a new world keeps this kid hold on the running car.  
Leaveing the landfill is like abandon these men to own destiny without giving them any escape.