

PRESS KIT

THE HUMAN SHELTER

A documentary film by Boris Benjamin Bertram



Foto: creative alliance

The Human Shelter is the opening film and has its world premiere at Copenhagen Architecture Festival on the 2nd of May 2018.

Director Boris Bertram will be present in Grand Theatre at 9.30pm on the 2nd of May for the opening. The press is welcome by appointment. The film will be shown four times during the festival.

Press screening: Wednesday April 25th at 9.30am, Grand Teatret in Copenhagen.

Duration: 56 mins

Trailer: available now

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Photos etc. can be sent by request.

CREATIVE ALLIANCE



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INTRODUCTION

"Poetically humans dwell on this Earth." (Hölderlin)

How do we construct homes in today's worldwide hotspots which are facing the challenges of climate change, globalization and migration? How do people create shelters and feel at home with others and in their bodies?

Boris Benjamin Bertram's film **The Human Shelter**, explores different people's ways of creating their homes around the globe. In a refugee camp outside Mosul, in a shanty town on the lagoon in Lagos, or in six square metres in the megacity of Tokyo... The exploring director also visits the Sami reindeer herders in the arctic circle, and NASA's futuristic Mars habitat in Hawaii, USA. It's a poetic expedition around four continents. An existential film about how we construct and articulate stories about our homes.

The Human Shelter comprises seven chapters. Every chapter has a shelter with a human story and a poetic performance. Every one of these representations pushes the audience to think about what 'home' means to them. To you...

As Boris Bertram writes in his director's motivation:

"Each location and scene in the film is intended to surprise the audience eye. In the making of the film, I have met human beings living on next to nothing, but insisting on living poetically in a world which is constantly changing. That is inspiring!"

The film's method is, in many ways, inspired by my mentor Jørgen Leth and his kind of film poetry. The thing about travelling out into the world bringing an almost naïve openness and curiosity towards what he calls 'the presence of coincidence.' The cinematic compass is controlled by desire and curiosity. That's how the film has become what it is."

(read the full statement from Boris Benjamin Bertram on page 3)

SYNOPSIS

The documentary **The Human Shelter** is an anthropological and poetic journey, which investigates how we, as human beings, create our homes. In a sentient and playful way, the film explores our idea of the concept of 'home'.

During the film we travel to some of the world's extremities concerning climate change, growing megacities and conflict zones. Those exact places where we, as humans, are challenged in the world right now. Here, the film glimpses at people's ability to live and express themselves poetically when creating a home. No matter if you live in a lagoon settlement in Lagos, in a refugee camp in Iraq or in six square metres dwelling in Tokyo.

During more than two years, director and explorer Boris Benjamin Bertram travels across four continents and films in nine different countries. Throughout the journey he asks questions like: When does a refugee camp shelter in Iraq become a home? What can a Sami reindeer herder teach the modern human about the concept of time? Why can the smell of a glacier in spring make us feel at home in our bodies? And, What would a home on Mars look like in the future?

PRODUCTION NOTES

During the last four years I have travelled the world's conflict zones with war photographer Jan Grarup. We have filmed people fleeing from war and nature disasters in Iraq, Kurdistan and the Central African Republic. People in motion and without homes. It was here I started filming for **The Human Shelter**. 'Shelter' is the first concept we have of a home. The shelter. A place where we, as human beings, are supposed to feel safe. During extreme circumstances the body itself is the first kind of shelter we lean on. A human, a refugee or a homeless person, lying on the bare ground, using their body to shelter from the environment. It was throughout these journeys where the idea about making a film and investigating how we create a home in the world appeared.

I have been working with three of the best film photographers in Denmark: Henrik Bohn Ipsen, Adam Philp and Lars Reinholt. Our common vision was to create an extraordinary cinematic piece. A global work portraying the world right here right now. In addition, the photographers Jan Grarup and Sofie Amalie Klougart have contributed with their unique style of still images.

The film contributors consist of a wide range of personalities, *new thinkers*, all of whom have their own personal story to tell about the concept of 'home':

- Sean Anderson, curator at MOMA, New York
- Elle Marja Eira, Sami nomad and artist from Finnmark
- Kim Bindsted, professor at HI SEAS Mars Habitat, a NASA financed research project
- Amira, a 13-year-old poet from Iraq, from the UNCHR refugee camp in Kurdistan
- Johan Karlsson, designer of refugee shelters from Better Shelter
- Yuri, a female art photographer from Tokyo
- Andri Snær Magnason, Icelandic writer
- Godfrey Kato, environmental activist from Uganda.

DIRECTOR'S MOTIVATION

By Boris Benjamin Bertram

"From the beginning I was encouraged to make an experimental and curious film. A strong, visual presentation of how we, as humans, construct homes in the present world. Places where humans experience the greatest challenges related to climate change, urbanization, humanitarian catastrophes, migration and globalization. How do people create their home here? In a refugee camp a few kilometres outside Mosul... in a vast shanty town on the lagoon in Lagos... with the Sami reindeer herders in the arctic circle. Or in just six square metres in Tokyo, or near a melting glacier in Iceland... in the NASA Mar Habitat project. It was important to me, to create a film that was a journey across all

four continents. A journey into a new landscape. An existential film on how we, as human beings, construct and tell the story about our home. In other words, a different story than the one we see on the news, for example about the refugee camps.

The film's method is in many ways inspired by my mentor Jørgen Leth and his poetic approach to filmmaking. The idea of travelling out into the world, bringing an almost naïve openness and curiosity towards what he calls 'the presence of coincidence.' Here, the cinematic compass works by desire and curiosity. That's how the film has become what it is. Every location and scene in the film is supposed to surprise the audience. Every chapter has a shelter and a human description of 'home' as the central story. Here we have made room for the contributors to express their feelings and thoughts on their home and their belonging to it.

Recently I found a Martin Heidegger quote, which I find captivates the essence of the film: *"Poetically humans dwell on this Earth."*

I have filmed on four continents and met people who have next to nothing, but still insist on living poetically and personally. They are innovative and live with dignity. That is an important recognition, which I want to express!

We travelled in the footsteps of the refugees who were fleeing Mosul after the Islamic occupation that lasted more than two years, on their way trying to find a new shelter and a new home. We have been on expedition to the vast lagoon settlements in Lagos, a place called "The Venice of Africa", where we had to smuggle in our equipment and film with armed guards. It's predicted that by 2050 every third human could be living in a slum area. Therefore new, innovative solutions are important for these areas. Makoko in Lagos, is a living example of a more organic urbanization. The large terraces on stilts create a community and a common area for kids and adults.

We filmed in the arctic circle in Finmark, despite it being so cold that our sound cables froze and broke. And funnily enough, it was precisely here that I found a feeling of belonging, I felt at home. By experiencing our Scandinavian origins. A landscape totally untouched and so quiet that I could hear my own heart beat. A feeling of coming home, in a landscape where "time doesn't go... time arrives."

I want the film to show the fundamental human values, values that count like: community, family, nature and our common home - the Earth.

SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

Director Boris Benjamin Bertram (1971)

Boris Benjamin Bertram is a filmmaker, director, producer and partner in Good Company Pictures. Educated at the National Film School of Denmark as a documentary director in 2005. He is the creator of award-winning, international documentaries, sold to more than 25 countries and furthermore he has made a variety of documentaries for the National Danish Television DR1 and TV2. On top of that he has a graduate degree in social psychology and communication.

As a director he has a global outlook and a keen interest on international politics, conflict resolutions, humanitarianism and art. With the film DIPLOMACY (2008) he followed Kofi Annan as Secretary-General on the UN peacekeeping mission in the Darfur crisis. TANKOGRAD (2010), the environmental and dance film, about a former secret nuclear city in Siberia. With his latest award-winning film THE WAR CAMPAIGN (2013) he focused on the media campaign which sold the illegal war against Iraq to

the international community. His upcoming film, THE WAR PHOTOGRAPHER (2018) portrays the Danish photographer Jan Grarup.

His films have won many prizes at esteemed ceremonies, such as:

The Moscow Film Festival, Camden International Film Festival, Chelyabinsk Film Festival, MCA Awards,

TV-Gold award for best Danish documentary, special showings at Stanford University and Museum of Natural History in New York. Boris Bertram was supported by Kunstrådet in 2011 and 2015.

Producer Malene Blenkov (1967)

Malene Blenkov started her career in the advertising industry for Saatchi & Saatchi, where she has produced award-winning commercials. With a great interest in the longer stories, she founded the television, documentary and film company 'Produktionsselskabet.' In 2003 Blenkov continued as producer in the company Blenkov and Schønnemann, and in 2014 she teamed up with the directors Per Fly, Ole Christian Madsen, Lone Scherfig and Dagur Kári in the creative production company Creative Alliance, where she is now CEO and producer.

As a producer Blenkov has worked with both national and international films and television shows, and her work crosses the boundaries between different genres, platforms and collaborators. Among other things Blenkov has created the emotional and award winning BRIDGEEND (Jeppe Rønne, 2015) and besides being the producer on the DR TV-show called BANKEROT (2015). In the documentary genre, Blenkov is behind NOMA MY PERFEKT STORM (Pierre Deschamps, 2015) and SORT SOL – 422 DAGE I DYBET (Wadt Thomasen, 2004). Lately Blenkov produced the political thriller by Per Fly called DOBBELTSPIL (2018) and right now she is working on Lone Scherfig's UNTITLED PROJECT (2018) which is being filmed as we speak.

ABOUT CREATIVE ALLIANCE

Creative Alliance is Danish independent production company based in Copenhagen, founded in 2013 on an innovative artist-led business model.

The company was born out of a desire to develop original, upscale stories in a creative community, one in which filmmakers can share and discuss each other's projects, gain individual strength and create artistically strong features and television for both Scandinavian and international audiences.

Creative Alliance includes directors Dagur Kári, Lone Scherfig, Ole Christian Madsen and Per Fly. And Nikolaj Michelsen (Head of Finance), Jacob Jørgensen (Partner), Karen Kristensen (Producer) and Malene Blenkov (CEO and Producer). Between them they have created a varied body of cinematic and televised work that has been enjoyed by large audiences worldwide and garlanded with internationally recognized awards.

With a vast shared experience spanning several decades of success with both the domestic and international film markets, press and audiences, Creative Alliance is uniquely placed to build on the extraordinary export success of the Nordic dramatic storytelling tradition, in a new way that focuses on fostering innovation led by mutual critical support of projects, and ultimately, the freedom to develop ideas to fruition in a supportive environment of accomplished filmmakers.

ABOUT COPENHAGEN ARCHITECTURE FESTIVAL (CAFx)

For the fifth time the CAFx festival explores how architecture affects our lives and world around us - and how our lives and world affect the architecture. The festival's aim is to expand the idea of what architecture is and can do: to present architecture as something more than just bricks, space, or structure, but as a sensual, corporeal, social, political and human element that influences every aspect of our lives. The festival explores how and where architecture makes these differences.

Since the first festival in 2014, it has been the ambition to communicate and share architecture with a wide audience by being unpretentious, curious and bringing a new perspective to the table. We want to create new encounters between subjects, people, and ideas in the city's space. The intention is for architecture to act as a character in the dialogue through the audience's personal experiences of the spaces. Architecture is thus for everyone - not just for architects.

Through a public program of film screenings, exhibitions, lectures, debates, city walks, bicycle tours, workshops, conferences and more, CAFx seeks to showcase the wide breadth of the architecture field and show how architecture can enhance or diminish qualities in everyday life on local, national and global scales.

This years opening film is **The Human Shelter**.

www.copenhagenarchitecturefestival.com

THE FILM IS SURPORTED BY

The film is funded by IKEA.