



Essay Film ♦ Memory Politics ♦ Speculative Futures

WORKING WITH FILM

My practice revolves around the essay film as a space for speculative memory and critical reflection. By blending documentary interviews, literary narration, archival material, and fictionalized scenarios, I explore how history is constructed, remembered, and politically repurposed. The essay film allows me to work beyond linear storytelling, embracing contradiction, juxtaposition, and subjective reflection to reveal the complexities of post-socialist identity, political nostalgia, and the instrumentalization of memory in identity politics. Through this hybrid form, I aim to challenge dominant narratives, disrupt ideological simplifications, and create alternative perspectives on history and the future.

THE EASTGERMAN FUTURISTS

Essayfilm

1-Kanal 4K-Video, 24:47 min

2024



Installationview at Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design Halle (2024)

THE EASTGERMAN FUTURISTS

[Excerpt](#) ♦ [Full Video](#) ♦ [Presskit](#)



The ... Futurists at Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule Halle, 2024



The Eastgerman Futurists is an essay film exploring the post-reunification generation's search for identity and future perspectives in East Germany. The film blends speculative fiction with documentary interviews to expose generational differences and cultural biases. Based on Anna Seghers' sci-fi short story *Sagen vom Unirdischen* (Legends of the Unearthly, 1970), a Sandman figure from the future travels to the present, exploring sites of the former German Democratic Republic. Along the way, she encounters memories, artifacts, and voices of post-reunification children, opening a dialogue between past, present, and future.

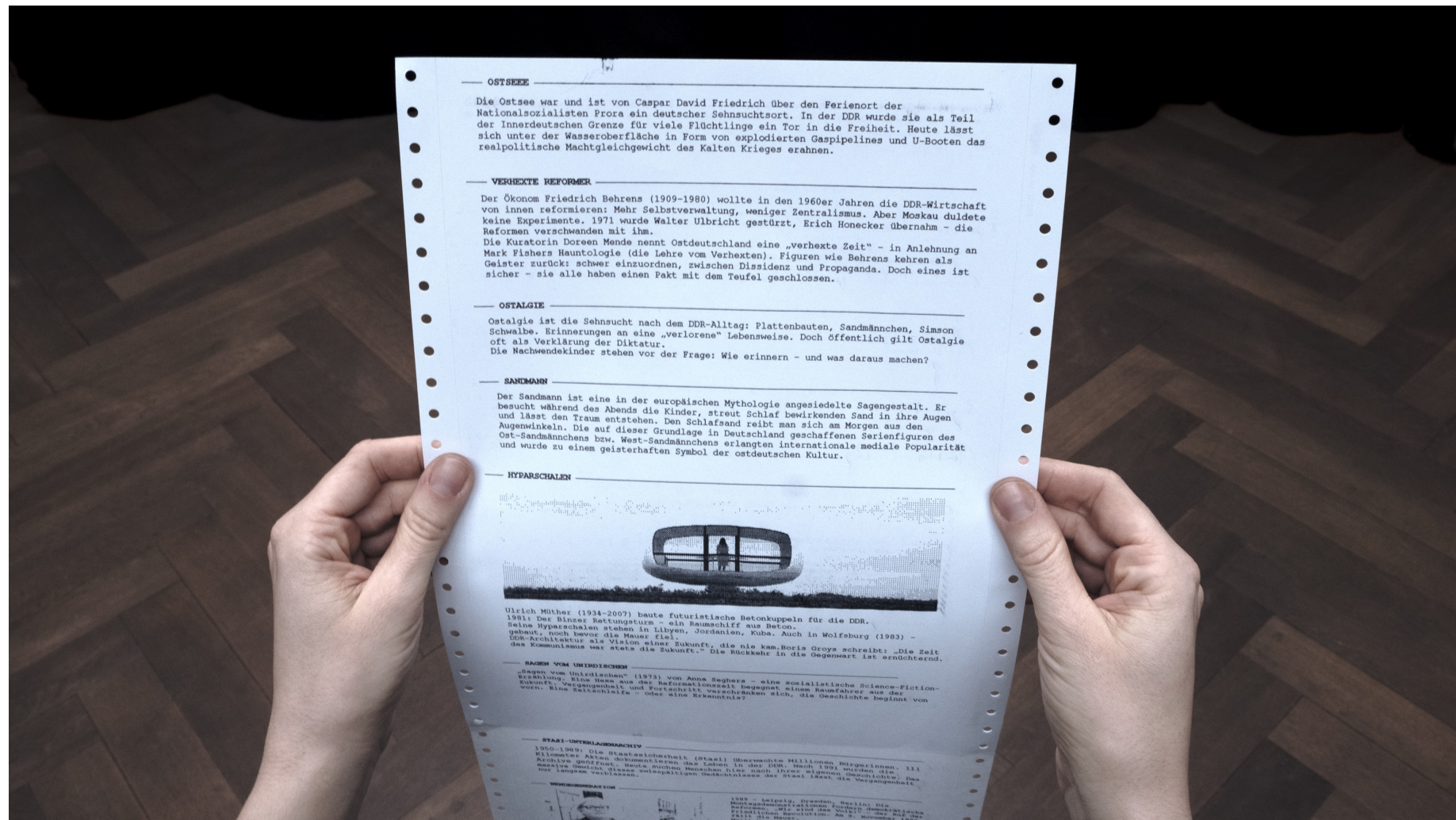
The project was realized with the help of a dedicated film crew and financially supported by Studentenwerk Halle and realized with the assistance of Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design Halle, MCA GmbH, the Stasi Archive in Halle, the Rechenwerk Computer and Technology Museum in Halle, the DEFA Foundation, Werkleitz Gesellschaft e.V. and the municipality of Binz.



Stills from *The East German Futurists*: The Sandman uses a time machine and encounters East Germans of different generations, highlighting the generational gap in post-reunification memory.



Installationview with Infographic at Art Foundation of Saxony-Anhalt, Halle (2024)



The Eastgerman Futurists: Guide
Dot matrix print on historic VEB continuous paper, 297 × 1680 mm, 2025
Printed with a Robotron FX1000 (1989) by the Rechenwerk Museum of Computing and Technology, Halle



Screening of *Werkstatt Zukunft II* (1971) by Joachim Hellwig in Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design, Halle (2024)

As part of the exhibition, the film can be paired with screenings of two rare DEFA-Futurum short films from the 1970s (*Werkstatt Zukunft I & II*), which explore speculative futures from within the GDR. This combination creates a layered dialogue between archival utopias and contemporary reinterpretation.



Installationview at Art Foundation Saxony-Anhalt, Halle (2024)

The Eastgerman Futurists was exhibited at:

- Art Foundation of Saxony-Anhalt (2025)
- Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design (2024).

The film won the jury award of the art prize by Saalesparkasse Art Foundation (2025) and was covered in press by Mitteldeutsche Zeitung (2025) and highlighted by Kreativwirtschaft Sachsen-Anhalt (2025).

SHANGRI-LA / Шангри-Ла
Essayfilm by Seoyeon Ha and Leon Meschede
Full-HD Video, 23:46 min
2023



Installationview *Shangri-La* at Galerie Volkspark, Halle (2023)

SHANGRI-LA

[Excerpt](#) ♦ [Full Film](#) ♦ [Presskit](#)

Shangri-La is a video essay that takes us through Mongolia from an intercultural perspective. The film explores the contrast between tradition and modernity in Mongolia, reflecting on the fact that the filmmakers come from the industrialized countries of Germany and South Korea. By combining their own film material with archive footage and “time images” and through two narrative voices, 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 is created.
(Dr. Jule Reuter, exhibition text for *navigating strangeness* at Gallerie Volkspark, Halle)

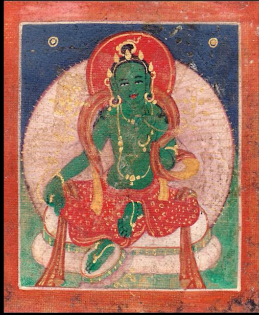
The project was financially supported by the Korean International Cooperation Agency.



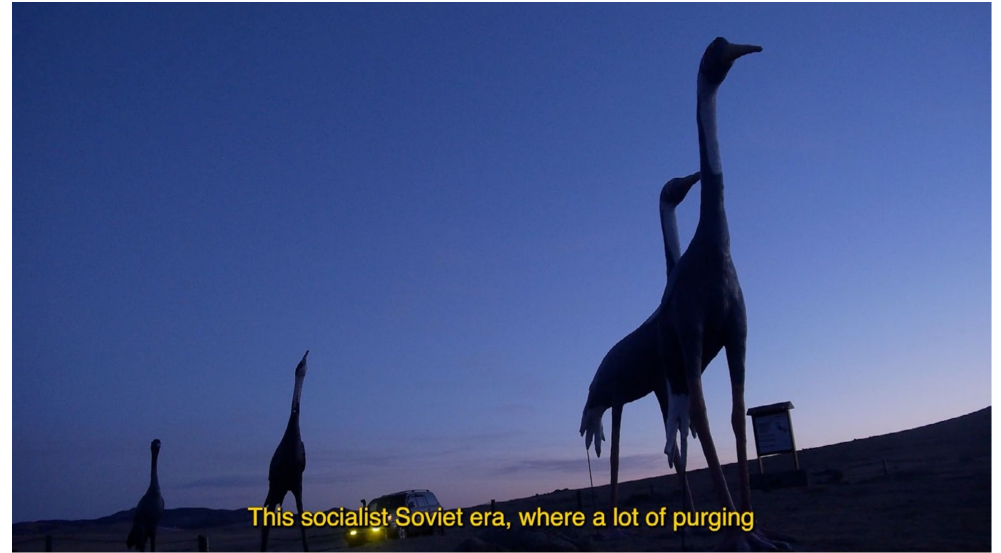
This pair of stills captures the shifting relationship between Mongolia's rural and urban landscapes—one highlighting the environmental challenges threatening traditional nomadic life, the other reflecting a renewed urban interest in ancestral wisdom as a response to ecological crises.



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.



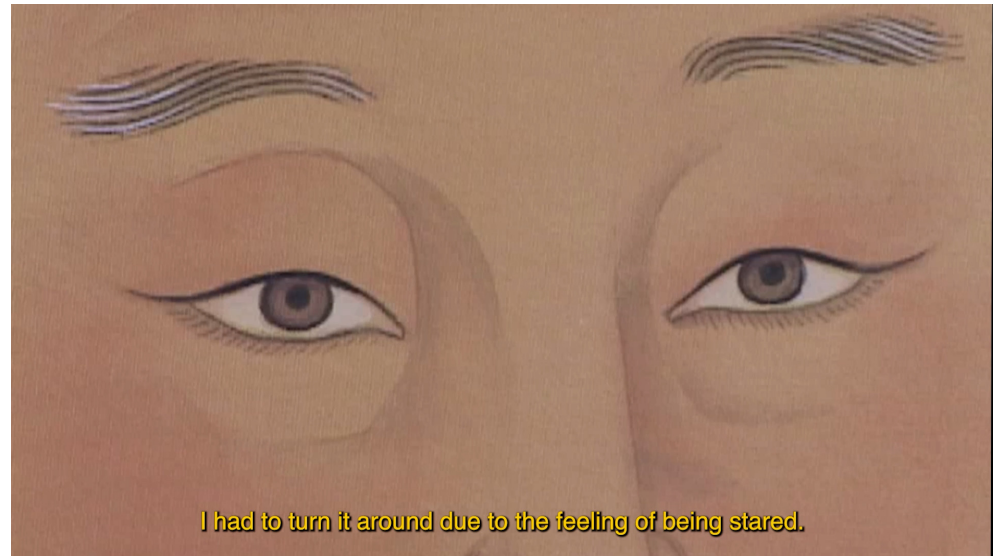
I have dwelled on my reverie, where the intersectional crises of care and climate were no longer feminized.



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.



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).

Shangri-La was covered in press by Nam Ye-jin in News Penguin (2024).



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. During his studies, he received several grants, including the DAAD PROMOS scholarship and project funding from the Korean International Cooperation Agency. In 2025, he became a Fellow at the Professional Media Master Class at Werkleitz Gesellschaft e.V., and received the Jury Award at the Art Prize of Saalesparkasse Foundation for his graduation film.

His films have been exhibited and screened internationally, including at the Art Foundation Saxony-Anhalt (Halle), Galerie KUB (Leipzig), gr_und (Berlin), Lkham Gallery (Ulaanbaatar), and the Ecobuddy Institute (Seoul).

THANK YOU!

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

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