

Data sheet of the exhibition

Transmongolian

Alvaro Laiz

Cultural Association ONTHEMOVE

Transmongolian
Alvaro Laiz

Curated by
Arianna Rinaldo

Exhibition produced by
Cultural Association ONTHEMOVE
for the international festival
of photography
Cortona On The Move 2014

Printed by
Bottega Antonio Manta
Digigraphie By Epson

**CORT
ONAO
N THE
MOVE**
fotografia in viaggio

bam
bottega antonio manta

The Secret History of the Mongols, considered to be the oldest Mongolian language literary work, is the single significant native account of Mongolia's rise to power around the 12th century AD. The work paints a clear portrait of the journey taken by a young Temujin before transforming into the great ruler of Asia, Genghis Khan. Blended with fictional and historical accounts, the epic poetry and narrative, recounts how the warrior was able to organize more than thirty tribes battling for control, and how, once in power, with the objective to augment his population and face the Chinese army commanded by Song dynasty, he declared homosexuality illegal under death penalty. The weight of tradition and the years under Soviet control, a time in which homosexuals were sent to gulag, has an effect on gays, lesbians, and transsexuals, who continue to be repressed, rejected, and victimized. Condemned to a life of secrecy, many of them find themselves turning to prostitution, others lead a life of solitude. The younger wrestle to flee the Mongolian borders, to countries such as the Philippines or Japan, where their condition is much more tolerable and dreams of a sex change are attainable, but above all, to an identity which in their native land, has been denied way too long.

[CORTONA ON THE MOVE – photography in travel, Scalpendi Edition 2014]

Data sheet

Title	Transmongolian
Photographer	Alvaro Laiz
Number of photographs	21 images
Type	color
Size print	cm [40 x 60]; cm [86 x 130] (see details in print list attached)
Size frames	cm [48 x 68]; cm [94 x 138] (see details in frame list attached)
Linear development	21 meters, minimum required linear space.
Set up	<p>Photos are printed on Platine Rag 310 paper, assembled on Dibond on artisan light brown wood frames (4 cm).</p> <p>Panels: intro, bio (text in appendix) and title, must be printed at the expense of the hosting organization.</p>
Set up mode	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
Shipping crates	3
Transport and insurance	Transport and nail to nail insurance, at the expense of the hosting institution.

Photos

	Title	Size print e frame (height x base) cm	
1		40 x 60 48 x 68	
2		<p>"Since I was very young I knew I wanted to dress like a girl. I felt I was a girl, but I was told I had to behave like a boy... and by that time I couldn't understand why." Nyamka, 20 years old who lives in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in his rented room. Gays, lesbians and transexuals are socially suppressed, rejected and underprivileged in modern Mongolia. Forced to look for help between those of the same condition, some of them become prostitutes, others live a life of loneliness and concealment.</p>	40 x 60 48 x 68
3		<p>Gambush, with her personal make-up artist, in a prostibule where she works every night.</p>	40 x 60 48 x 68

4



Naaram, close friend of Gambush spent most of his youth in Russia where he became alcoholic. Now, back in Mongolia with no work and almost no family but his sister and his adoptive son, he has to deal with an uncertain future.

40 x 60

48 x 68

5



40 x 60

48 x 68

6



"No one can blame me for living my life; if they want to kill me for that, I'm ready, but I won't live in fear anymore." Otgoonbataar, one of the more famous and respected homosexual rights activist in Mongolia.

40 x 60

48 x 68

7



Naaram, dressed with the traditional dress of a Mongolian queen.

86 x 130

94 x 138

8



40 x 60

48 x 68

9



Chinzorig, 23 years old,
dressed with the traditional
dress of a Mongolian queen.

86 x 130
94 x 138

10



Nurbul, professional dancer
prepares himself for a
private show in a gay party
in Ulaanbaatar.

40 x 60
48 x 68

11



Gambush, 67 years old,
dressed with the traditional
dress of a Mongolian queen.

86 x 130
94 x 138

12



Naaram with her adoptive
son. "I took care of him
since he was a baby, but, as
it is not possible for gay
people to adopt my sister
and her husband are legally
his adoptive parents".

40 x 60
48 x 68

13



Gambush, 67 years old. Ex-
prostitute and lap-dance
teacher in UlaanBaatar
night clubs.

40 x 60
48 x 68

14



Margaash dressed with the traditional dress of a Mongolian queen.

86 x 130
94 x 138

15



40 x 60
48 x 68

16



Nyamka removes his make up and changes clothes in a taxi after her show in an underground party as her alter ego "Vanity". Men who dress like girls in public may suffer harassment or physical violence. The youngest fight to leave Mongolia, to countries as the Philippines or Japan, where their condition is easier and they could also complete a change of sex; and most importantly, a social recognition impossible to achieve in their own country.

40 x 60
48 x 68

17



86 x 130
94 x 138

18



Gambush carefully watches her pupil dancing in a prostibule in Ulaanbataar.

40 x 60
48 x 68

19



The weight of tradition and the years under Soviet control, a time in which homosexuals were sent to gulag, is hard on gays, lesbians, and transsexuals, who continue to be repressed, rejected, and victimized.

40 x 60
48 x 68

20



Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have warned about LGBT situation in Mongolia "despite homosexual behaviour is not specifically considered as a crime under mongolian law, considers illegal giving or receiving sexual pleasure through immoral practices."

40 x 60
48 x 68

They have also documented reports of public assaults and labor harassment due to their sexual orientation.

21



Nyamka dressed with the traditional dress of a Mongolian queen.

86 x 130
94 x 138

APPENDIX A - Text

INTRO/BIO

ALVARO LAIZ

TRANSMONGOLIAN

The Secret History of the Mongols, considered to be the oldest Mongolian language literary work, is the single significant native account of Mongolia's rise to power around the 12th century AD. Providing a clear narration of the vicissitudes that brought a disperse land of nomads to become the greatest reign in Asia, the work paints a clear portrait of the journey taken by a young Temujin before transforming into the great ruler of Asia, Genghis Khan.

Blended with fictional and historical accounts, the epic poetry and narrative, recounts how the warrior was able to organize more than thirty tribes battling for control, and how, once in power, with the objective to augment his population and face the Chinese army commanded by the Song dynasty, he declared homosexuality illegal under death penalty. It is curious to recall that transexuality has a certain root inside the Mongol tradition. Shamans had a special status inside the nomad population. They would connect the spiritual world to the human world. Today, more than eight hundred years later, Mongolia is a sovereign country with the lowest population rate in the world, lower than two inhabitants per square kilometre and being a homosexual, continues to be taboo.

The weight of tradition and the years under Soviet control, a time in which homosexuals were sent to gulags, has an effect on gays, lesbians, and transsexuals, who continue to be repressed, rejected, and victimized. Condemned to a life of secrecy, many of them find themselves turning to prostitution, others lead a life of solitude. The younger wrestle to flee the Mongolian borders, to countries such as the Philippines or Japan, where their condition is much more tolerable and dreams of a sex change are attainable, but above all, to an identity which in their native land, has been denied way too long.

APPENDIX B – Press review

cnnedition.com, April 8th 2014

EDITOR: INTERNATIONAL | U.S. | MEXICO | ASIAN
 TV: CNN | CNN en Español
 Set edition preference

CNN
 Search

Home Video World U.S. Africa Asia Europe Latin America Middle East Business World Sport Entertainment Tech Travel

iReport

Part of complete coverage on
 CNN Style

STYLE

The secret lives of transgender Mongolians

SHARE THIS
 f t g+ in
 Recommend 3.3k

Print
 Email
 More sharing

« Previous Next »



In Mongolia, gay, lesbian and bisexual people endure violence, discrimination and social repression, which leads many of them to dream of life away from its borders. The community draws from a variety of social classes and professions – teachers, social workers, tour guides – but what they all have in common is a life of solitude and constant concealment of their true identity. Being revealed as transgender can cost a person their job, and lead their family to sever all ties with them.

Spanish photographer Alvaro Laiz spent three and a half months documenting the lives of male to female transgender people in Ulaanbaatar, intrigued by how they saw themselves in the larger fabric of society. "I decided to travel to Mongolia because it's located in the junction in between three different worlds – Russia, Europe and China, while still retaining its own identity," says Laiz. "The country is facing sudden changes after opening their borders to Western investment, but on the other hand, their nomadic and communal heritage still remains. It is this duality in their contemporary time that fascinated me," he explains.

Interview by Milana Vessalimovic



Info:

Veronica Nicolardi

Director

veronica@cortonaonthemove.com

+39 3285531750