

## HAF 06 The Grassland of Narangerel



**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** China

**GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME:** Documentary | HD | English, Mandarin, Mongolian | 90 mins

**DIRECTOR:**

YING Weiwei

**PRODUCER:**

ZHOU Hongbo

**HAF GOALS:**

Funds

**BUDGET:**

US\$ 500,000

**DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY**

2015 *My Grassland*

2009 *Gai Jiaotian* (TV documentary)

2005 *Old Ladies*

2002 *The Passerby*

2001 *The Box*

## ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

Hulunbuir Grassland was a natural and peaceful land for Narangerel's family before the establishment of a Mirabilite plant several years ago. What can they do to confront this sudden change?

## SYNOPSIS

One day in 2013, Narantsogt, a Mongolian lawyer living in Shanghai, received a call from his friend Hai Fengshan in Hulunbuir, Inner Mongolia about a lawsuit against the endangering of the grassland of the nomad Narangerel by a Mirabilite plant.

Narangerel is the best shepherd in this area, with 40 years of experience. He married three times. Having lived with his current wife for more than 10 years, he has always been committed to giving her a happy life. Usually, he herds sheep for other people elsewhere to make a living for the yurt inherited from ancestors.

In spring, he migrates with over 3,000 sheep of his boss. He will leave the yurt where he spent much of his life, moving to his boss's caravan. The traditional nomadic life of Mongolian is changing.

Festival obo, in the summer, is the biggest event of the year, and a happy day for Narangerel and his wife, who rarely kill sheep for celebration.

On the prairie, however, Narangerel resolutely tells his problem to Narantsogt, as an astonishing amount of white Mirabilite piles up on these desolate lands, with no grass left and flying dust everywhere.

Narangerel lost his dignity and sank into a miserable life due to the destroyed grassland. Nevertheless, in the course of evidence collection, the lawyer finds the case more difficult than he had imagined, with a complicated network of power behind it.

The court day comes. Narangerel, the simple nomad, appears as a plaintiff for the first time.

Lawyers and herdsmen are waiting for the court's decision. Narangerel is expecting to return to his grassland, raising cows and sheep and spending his remaining life with his wife. Will his wish come true?

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I am a Mongolian, having lived in Han areas before stepping into my ancestor's land, the Hulunbuir grassland, several years ago. I was astonished at the magnificent, vast and desolate prairie, and became addicted to the ancient tradition and simple folk. However, I gradually realize the ecology of Hulunbuir Grassland is deteriorating, overwhelmed by coal extraction, mining, and the building of chemical plants. Environmental protection is a worldwide

proposition, and the grassland is among the scarce resources on earth. Xi Murong, a Mongolian poet from Taiwan, believes “the grassland is the lung of the earth... Grasslands belong to all mankind!”

At present, the number of yurts on the prairies is also diminishing, replaced by settlement. Mongolian culture and traditional life are affected by ecological deterioration and influx of a modern economy. How can we develop grassland? How do we choose between economic efficiency and environmental protection? Can the Mongolian grasslands where people have lived for generations, bear the joys and sorrows of future generations? How do they face the disappearing culture? I also concern about where Mongolia's future will be.

So, I chose the Narangerel’s story, trying to find the answers. The *Grassland of Narangerel* shows the Mongolian attachment and love for the prairie, and their confusion and loss around gradually disappearing traditional culture and ways of life, with continuously fading nomadic civilization today, through the story of the nomad Narangerel fighting against the Mirabilite plant to protect the prairie and his rights. This is not just a story of one Mongolian, it is a reflection on the future fate of the Mongolian people and a microcosm of China's social fission.

## **DIRECTOR**

### **ING Weiwei**

Ying Weiwei’s documentary creation began in 1999. Over the years, she has made many realistic films and historical documentaries, including *The Box* (2001), *The Passerby* (2002), *Old Ladies* (2005); *Fu Lei* (TV documentary, 2007), *Lin Qiaozhi* (TV documentary, 2009), *Gai Jiaotian* (TV documentary, 2009), and *My Grassland* (2015). *The Box* was nominated for the 51<sup>st</sup> Berlin International Film Festival, Visions du Réel - International Film Festival Nyon, the 35<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong International Film Festival, the 2001 Jeonju International Film Festival, the 14<sup>th</sup> Singapore International Film Festival and the Women's Film Festival in Seoul. *The Passerby* (2002) was screened in the 2002 Pingyao International Photography Festival. *Fu Lei* won the Top Ten Documentary at the China Annual Documentary International Selection 2007; *Lin Qiaozhi* won First Prize at the Shanghai Radio and Television Awards and was a finalist for International Literal Feature Documentary - Golden Panda Award in the Sichuan TV Festival. *Gai Jiaotian* won Special Recognition for Documentary, in the 6<sup>th</sup> China International Documentary Selection (Taishan China - New Fuyuan Cup), Top Ten Works of China Annual TV Feature Documentary (2008-2009), and was selected to compete for the IWFF International Women's Film Festival in Germany.

## **PRODUCER**

### **ZHOU Hongbo**

Born in 1971, he received Bachelor of Directing from the Beijing Film Academy. His projects include: *A Fish Who Wants To Fly* (short, 1999), selected at Busan Asian Short Film Festival and Cinéfondation, Cannes; *The Drumming Girl* (documentary, 2002-2003), won

Outstanding Award at the Asian Television Awards; *Lotus Ferry* (documentary, 2006), selected at Amsterdam Film Festival, French FIPA Film Festival, Shanghai International Film Festival, Best Director Award at Chinese Documentary Film Festival; *The Mirage* (feature, 2009), selected at Vesoul Film Festival; *Wild Strawberries* (documentary, 2009); *A Journey of Love* (2011), won Silver Award at PromaxBDA Asia Awards; *White Bullet* (documentary, 2012-2013), *Winter Cicadas* (feature, 2013), selected at Cannes Film Festival and Vancouver Film Festival.

## **PRODUCTION COMPANY**

### **Yunqiang Pictures**

Yunqiang Pictures was registered in 2016. We dedicate to make art films and documentaries.