

Personal Statement
ENTREPRENEUR 4.0 AWARD 2014

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Home

At home, your own four walls, a secure refuge that offers peace, protection, and warmth. But what if one does not have this kind of home? Because one cannot afford it, because one is looking for maximal independence, because one is a traveler without a permanent home...

In a world of constant acceleration, the permanent residence falls by the wayside. A necessary effect of globalization as well as the increasing flexibility of the labor market is being at home everywhere and nowhere. Living somewhere does not necessarily mean staying somewhere. Everyone must find their niche—their own little place in life or a spot on the outskirts of society. In a strange way the role of the social forerunner tends to fall to those with the status of social outsiders; the future of living coincides with the architecture of poverty.

My project deals with people who have dropped out and who have fallen by the wayside. It remains unclear whether they have freely chosen the path of being set apart from their social surroundings or whether it was forced upon them. Over the course of my wanderings through urban places and non-places, I have often found dwellings that have both touched and inspired me. They point to a life that is far removed from that of the average citizen. These places mean adventure and independence but also a descent down the social ladder and neglect. What do these sites and the things left behind say about their temporary inhabitants? Are they teenagers who enliven forgotten niches, in order to use them as a space for experimentation and as gathering place? Are they people who chose to drop out of society, who wanted to avoid the pressures and responsibilities of being settled? Or are they involuntary nomads, who had no other options than trying to find the few things left behind in the garbage of the throw-away society? The substantial difference between these various scenarios plays no role in my approach. However, it is revealed in numerous details, when individual sites are compared in the photographs.

Stefan Hähnel, 2013