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Julia de Cooker
Svalbard – An Arcticficial Life

Text by Julia de Cooker
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Julia de Cooker documents the uncommon society that emerged in the very North of our planet.

Svalbard – An Arcticficial Life presents an uncommon society that emerged in the very North of our planet, in the Svalbard archipelago. Julia de Cooker created this photo project based on a feeling of »strange normality«. Where the polar landscapes give an impressive sense of power, life seems unreal and familiar at the same time. A surprising place where one cannot find a single tree to build a house. In contrast to its hostile environment the modernity of the city surprises.

Svalbard never knew an indigenous population; it is one of the rare places on earth without traditions. So close to the North Pole, a small atypical community lives out of step with the rest of the world, a bubble of 2,300 inhabitants from more than 40 different countries. This population, of which about a quarter changes every year, is almost science fiction. Svalbard is a temporary place for temporary life, a passage: except accidentally, no one is born and no one dies there.

Julia de Cooker (born 1988) is a French/Dutch photographer based in Paris. De Cooker graduated in Visual Communication/ Photography at ECAL (School of Art and Design of Lausanne, Switzerland) in 2012.

<http://www.juliadecooker.com>

»Strangeness appears through different sorts of details. The combination of elements that have nothing to do with each other, or with the natural environment, is gripping. Is the presence of a limousine not surprising in a place where schools hold safety drills in case of a visit by a polar bear, where the priest moves about by helicopter, where houses so close to the North Pole have balconies?

Svalbard, an arcticficial life is the reflection of this "strange normality".« – from the text by Julia de Cooker

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