



Empire me

A creative documentary by **Paul Poet**

In co-production with **Navigator Film (Austria)**, **Minotaurus Film (Luxembourg)**

99 min

Don't we sometimes fancy the idea of breaking out of our daily routine in order to start a new life beyond all conventions and constraints? The idea of Utopia, of a better life in an earthly paradise, is a dream mankind has long imagined in many versions – for example, reigning as a king on your own island once in your life. But the rigid principles of a globalised world hardly allow alternatives and visions.

A phenomenon finally puts an end to this: The establishing of counter worlds. In search of an ideal lifestyle, hundreds of do-it-yourself entities build their own little microcosms. Micronations, eco-villages and secessionists are creating an alternative way of living together, with real territories and communities. Over 500 have been invented since the late 90s, some barely bigger than a sheep farm, a sea platform, or a laptop.

Thousands of free spirits thus battle against the new world order. They annex whole regions and districts. They create their own laws, languages, stamps and banknotes. The populations range from 1 to 500,000, and they come from different strata and ideologies. With „Empire Me“, the author Paul Poet, himself veteran of alternative networks and social experiments, encounters six of these counter worlds which represent the movement at its best.

The feature-length film, which also includes a Web project, is staged as a road movie going straight to the heart of foreign social structures; like a glance at and behind the art of self-presentation.

Paul Poet and his team explore more than just the various visions of the counter worlds and their makers. They also look for the common human need that unites them: The yearning for meaning, recognition and community in an increasingly bewildering world order.

And the spectators realise: In the 21st century, dropping out is joining in. The existence of a parallel world today means a life as a potential „I-corporation“, crying for high-class socio-political management, global networking, economic sustainability and decentralised alliances. And above all: The constant outsmarting of established power systems and authorities with whom one stands in permanent war. What at first glance seems colourful, charming and bizarre, turns out to be congenial at a closer look, an eccentric challenge of ordinary people who feel suppressed by the neo-liberal world. With their pragmatic, political Gotham projects they open to the audience and encourage them not to feel like powerless cogs of the post-democracy.

True to the motto: You don't like the world you live in? Go and create your own!

Cinema release in Autumn 2011