



CRISIS CABIN

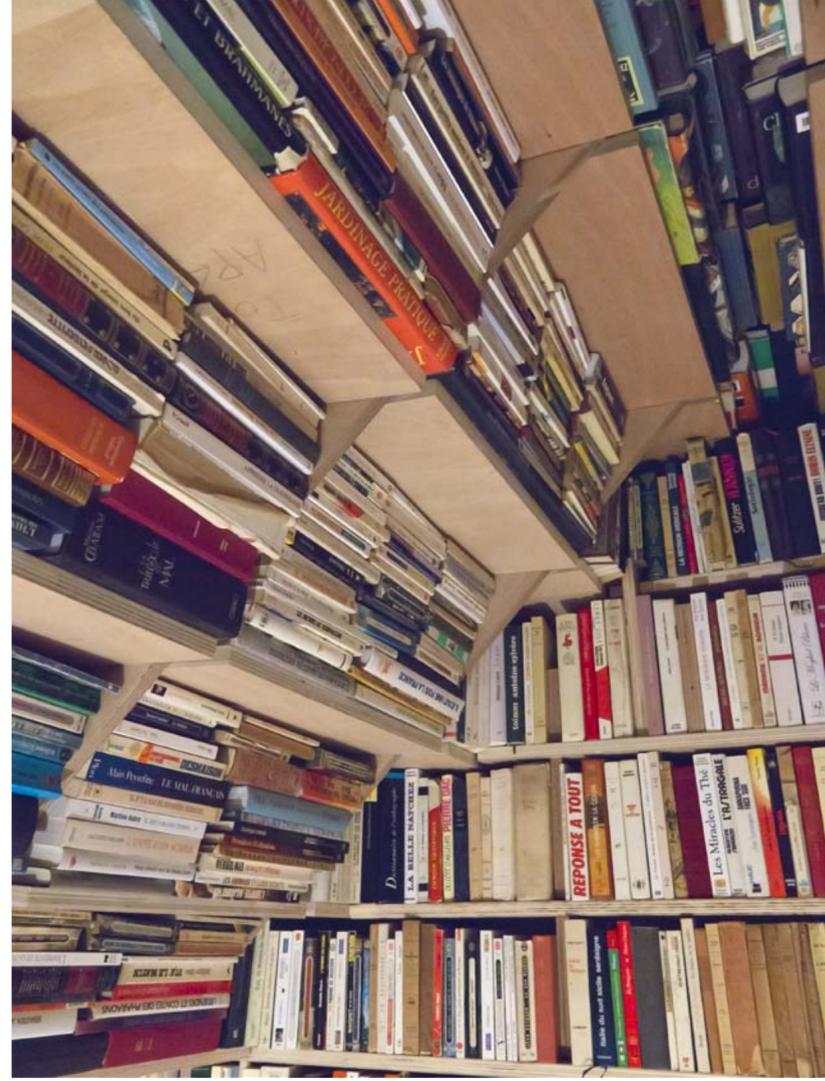
Markus Hansen's 'crisis cabin' is reminiscent of the Black Forest log cabins. No nails, screws or glue are used in its assembly as every piece slots together to facilitate its mobility. Its exterior is covered with feathers to protect against the rain. The entire structure is made of 22mm plywood and has a system of shelves on the inside that slot into the rest of the structure and hold it together. The books that fill the shelves insulate against the cold and are the source of reinvention and regeneration. The feather cover reminds us of the unavoidability of a dialogue with nature for our survival whilst the lining of books serves as a resource of the past for the future.











Crisis Cabin

By Jason Stoneking

I came across the Crisis Cabin during a time of crisis in my own life. I was trying to write but not knowing what to say. Trying to live but not knowing how to go about it. Perhaps I didn't even see my state as a crisis until I arrived at Markus Hansen's studio one morning to help him assemble this piece. It seemed simple at first, a system of wooden planks that interlock and are then covered over by layers of feathers. The materials, of course, recall the forest. They are the supplies we are given by nature and to attach them to one another is an almost basic employment of human ingenuity. Then I found out how we would insulate our little building. Books. Old books, new books, found books, any books. Suddenly I started to connect, to ask myself what type of crisis was being addressed, to wonder if there was something in this cabin that would help to resolve my own lurking demons. This was no longer a simple exercise in construction.

Markus's work regularly discusses the environment that surrounds him and questions the role he plays in that environment. But this piece hints at the construction of his internal environment as well. The feathers suggest the soft lightness with which Markus chooses to cover his own personal exterior. The easy going laughter, the gentle grins, the ever-approachable demeanor. Beneath them, we find a thin but solid layer of rigid structure. The German childhood, the mind for design, the pure reverence for all that is efficient, strong and useful. Now we are left to ponder at what goes on within the confines of that structure. What fears and hopes, what private investigations are protected by the layers of someone's architecture? What is Markus Hansen's definition of crisis? One finds it peaceful to imagine what might enter such a place yet harrowing to imagine what might leave.

The cabin itself is at once lush and savage, primitive and complex. It is prepared to respond to a wide array of demands and challenges. The outside reminds us that we can assemble found objects to protect ourselves from the elements. The inside then asks us if we can do the same for our minds: insulate them against crisis by building constructions out of found wisdom, random bits of intellectual property strung together to inform our thoughts, emotions and art. Can we draw enough inspiration? Enough information to extrapolate a form of survival from these found texts? Markus's piece seems to suggest that it's possible, and in so doing it asks each one of us to look deeply into the mirror. 'Why can't I do more with less?' one might ask. What tools are present here that I myself cannot access?

Nobody is free from this inquisition. We all share the same access to these materials. Feathers and books are both infinitely replenishable resources. Feathers are constantly jettisoned and replaced within nature as books and ideas are constantly discarded and replaced by culture and civilization. The true 'gatherer' is equipped to survive in both the primitive and the sophisticated environments. He is able to replenish himself and to protect himself with what is cast off by both the land and the culture that surround him. As I thought of all this, on a rainy street corner in Bratislava, I was liberated from a long-standing mental block. I returned home feeling creative, inspired, free to gather what was needed for my survival from any environment in which I found myself. I came to the conclusion that Markus Hansen has built a cabin that is suitable for my crisis, and indeed our crisis, as well as for his own.



Crisis cabin
Markus Hansen, 2009-2012
Books, feathers and wood
With the collaboration of Linus Gruszewski,
Leslie McAllister, Bruno Scotti and Jason Stoneking
Courtesy of Markus Hansen and Nadine Gandy Gallery, Bratislava

