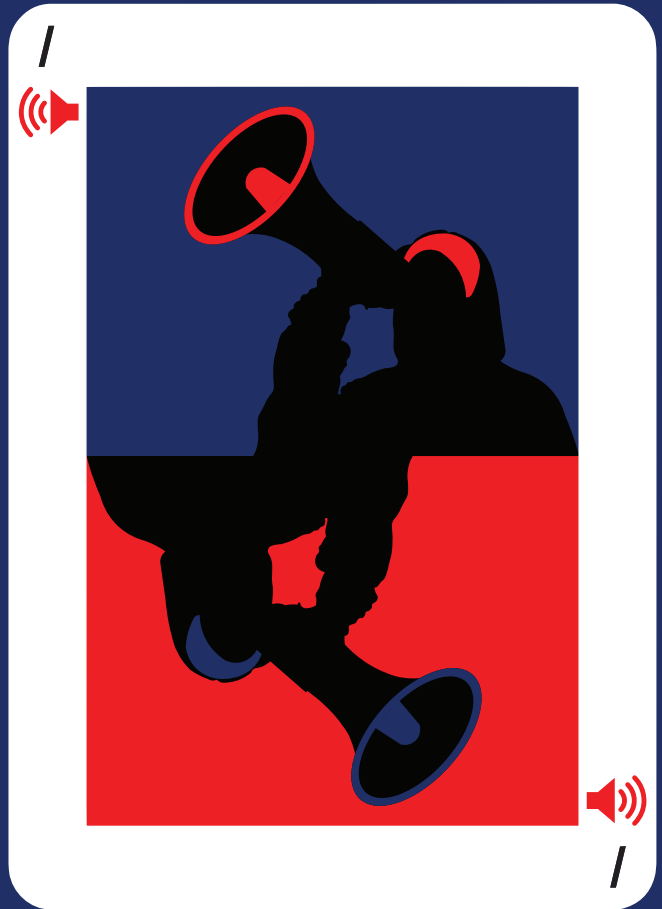




NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND

curated by Charles Moore & Alex Radu

/SAC
@MALMAISON

Justin Baroncea
& Cristian Matei
Ioana & Matei Branea
Nicolae Comănescu
Suzana Dan
Angela Ellsworth
Geo-social Analytics Lab
Vadim Ghirda
Dimitrie Luca Gora
Mihai Iepure Górski
& Katia Pascariu
Ruxandra Gubernat
Dragoş Luman
Agnieszka Polska
Ana Prvački

Tomas Rafa
Oliver Ressler
Ioana Maria Sisea
Federico Solmi
Levan Songulashvili
Jonas Staal
Mircea Suci
Nadya Tolokonnikova
(Pussy Riot)
Trinkova
Codrin Unici
Marco Verhoogt

exhibition & graphic design

Justin Baroncea
Maria Ghement
Alexandra Müller

SAC team
Andreea Chircă
Iulian Cristea
Lidia Dobrea
Anne Lolea
Elena Maxemciuc

17.04 - 25.05
CALEA PLEVNEI 137C
@SAC MALMAISON

CHARLES MOORE

NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND

Beneath the surface of order lies an undercurrent of instability. Civilization is a performance, a fragile construct upheld by shared illusion, habit, and necessity. Yet, just underneath its polished exterior, another world pulses, one of raw instinct, disillusionment, and subversion. Inspired by Dostoyevsky's "Notes from Underground", this exhibition seeks to unravel the tensions between the civilized self and its buried counterpart, between societal constraints and the primal forces they attempt to suppress.

Presented in two parts, mirroring the structure of the book, "Notes from Underground" invites artists to explore the psychological and political landscapes that exist beneath the thin veneer of control. It is a space for rupture, contradiction, and revelation, where art becomes a site of excavation. Through art, we unearth what is hidden, suppressed, or deliberately erased.

The exhibition addresses the structures we call civilization as nothing more than illusions of permanence. Institutions promise stability, yet history is a litany of their inevitable collapse. What happens when these masks slip? When are the comforting fictions of order and progress revealed as fragile and transient? This theme calls for works that embody the aesthetics of ruin, whether that be fractured structures, delicate impermanence, or surfaces bearing the weight of time. It asks artists to explore the duality of pub-

lic and private selves, to create compositions and visual metaphors that veil and unveil, and to capture the precise moment when stability fractures and chaos seeps in.

To exist underground is to exist in opposition. It is both a retreat and a defiant act of rebellion. It is where the exiled and the unseen gather their strength, where dissent festers and flourishes. The underground is not only a physical space but also a psychological and political one, a realm of hidden narratives and unseen forces, but one also filled with internal conflict, paranoia, and isolation. Artists can reconceive the subterranean as a metaphor, whether that be tunnels, labyrinths, or confined spaces that speak to the interior world. In building layers of imagery within their work, secrets revealed only upon closer inspection, or examining the body itself as a vessel of unspoken histories and quiet defiance of the societal norms we have become complacent with.

Civilization is an act of repression, a space where our instincts are inherently at odds with our societal structures. It demands order, refinement, and control, yet beneath its surface, the primal self-lingers, waiting to emerge. Freud argued that these instinctual drives, when denied, erupt in violence. What happens when this tension reaches its breaking point? These artists explore raw, gestural mark-making, rough textures that resist refinement, and the visceral act of creation as both struggle and release, a space that mirrors the contradiction of authoritarian control and individual agency. Hybrid figures blur the boundaries between human and beast, serving as symbols for the erosion of the civilized self, while performance-based

works enact the constant negotiation between constraint and surrender.

Power is at its most insidious when it is invisible. Surveillance, censorship, and propaganda are the tools of a world that seeks control not only over bodies but over memory and truth itself. In questioning the rise of totalitarianism, artists combat the quiet violence of erasure and the distortion of reality through language and media. From monitoring and manipulation to rewriting history altogether, they envision the ways power is employed to maintain its own existence. Text-based works grapple with redaction, omission, and the fragmentation of communication. Digital works mirror the glitches and distortions of propaganda. Who controls the narrative, and who is written out of history? Through their work, artists unearth the mechanisms of control and reclaim the voices that have been suppressed.

“Notes from Underground” disturbs and illuminates as it peels back the layers of illusion that shield us from uncomfortable truths. We must step into the in-between space where identity, power, and instinct collide. Through material, concept, and form, these artists working across all media act as excavators, revealing the fractures beneath our feet and the suppressed voices that echo from below. Let this be an act of unearthing. Let this be an invitation to descend.

ALEX RADU

PRE/TEXT: NOTES ON/FROM UNDERGROUND

Part 1. Notes on context. Confessing an ignorance

I confess, during the past years I've kept thinking-hoping that we, as a society, were striving to evolve in a better direction. At least in certain parts of the world, on certain levels - I wouldn't want to undertake the responsibility (or arrogance) to talk on behalf of others or to assume what the best direction for it would be, but only to confess my own vulnerability. More and more increasingly profound discourses have been emerging and gaining ground all around us – discourses on diversity, equality, on promoting and historically reclaiming them. On necessary recontextualizations that would create a "disclaimer-frame" around the cultural patrimony, works, symbols, monuments and values originating in times that carry their own gray areas (patriarchal, colonialist). Discourses regarding a world in which we learn to embrace in compositions our differences and the diversities that characterize and enrich our society.

It seemed to me that capitalism and neoliberalism had been progressively bound to acknowledge their own limits and obsolescence as systems, making way for the emergence of newer, more equitable and sustainable policies within all our governing fields. I thought we had accepted the fact that we're no longer in need of utopias or single narratives that can engage significant parts within so-

cieties. And all this while still seeing that certain social inequalities keep deepening and lynchings – unfair wars – keep bursting like dormant volcanoes, while still acknowledging the coexistence of conservative whims within modern societies. I simply deemed them an “underground current” of polarization, running counter to the broader, progressive direction.

And still, amid all the frustration, anguish, failure, anxiety of some – well justified –, amid the ignorance/lack of responsibility of political representatives towards social needs, amid an actual system that anchors its projected future-success upon the until-now-success, amid the failure of the educational system, this “underground movement” has grown and developed into a large reactionary wave. A tsunami. Which populist discourses were quick to maneuver. This dynamic isn’t so different from what can happen, from time to time, inside either one of us...

Part 2. Notes on exhibition-making playing on (dis)illusions

We imagine a series of interconnected exhibitions as a subjective and collective exploration about our actual reactions (including the entire range of emotions and thoughts, and their respective externalizations) and what we, as individuals, can do in-front-and-in-the-middle of this increasingly troubling period, when the way in which democracies and (common) values look like is being de/re-constructed/defined. What we, as actors on the art-worlds’ stages (artists, curators etc.), can do with our relative “power of changing the world through art”, without letting it become propaganda.

From within the channels of mass communication that resemble propaganda and manipulation, both a goal and a communication strategy emerge; they are based on the efficient identification and populist exploitation of this “underground movement” of dis(-)illusions, disappointments, frustrations (all, sadly, well-justified in and of themselves). A strategy centered on selling a new illusion – one bought over with (black)lists of enemies.

Unlike propaganda, both art and the (unpredictable) experience of art – although making use of illusion themselves – are catalyzers for self-knowledge, for creating individual and collective knowledge, for seeking the truth beyond a direct, textual message.

Naturally, art can unravel discrepancies between the image of reality and reality itself, allowing unlimited space and liberty for individual interpretation and truth-seeking. Interpreting a work/an image (and, implicitly, an illusion) means, at the same time, intuiting the truth hidden within it.

Besides, visual (contemporary) arts are not just about linguistics, but also about their meaningfulness in understanding about our lives and our anxieties in a Present that becomes, in its fast, unpredictable, incessant evolution, as incomprehensible as a hyperobject - even if we attempted to radiograph this very moment and look into it as into a multifaceted image-installation-exhibition developing (dis-)illusions inside a museum.

But can art (and the exhibition) become an instrument for fighting against manipulation and populist propaganda?

A vaccine?
An antidote?
For whom?

Part 3. Notes on stage. Towards an exhibition design

Irresponsibility, ignorance, greed and lust for power have paved the way for leaders to act and speak like mad-men, while trying to drive us mad as well, like cartoon characters with minds full of (horror) cartoons on a large, political-circus arena resembling a reality show starring uniform(-)ized hordes of national(ist) flags, that break out of the political realm and threaten to overrun our existence, social and personal life. The exhibition and its space can become a dramatic, tense stage - stretched between this arena and our inner lives - peopled with the thoughts, emotions and dreams of all of us who take part in it.

JUSTIN BARONCEA & CRISTIAN MATEI

PUNCT DE VEDERE

2025

3 steps made of spruce beams – 200 × 200 mm

tego platform 20 mm – 600 × 700 mm

tego front panel 20 mm – 1250 × 2160 mm

PLA viewfinder funnel – 280 × 70 × 280 mm

white primer – two cans, 50 ml

red wood paint – one can, 500 ml

Radio Studio – centrifugal – urban point whose production is broadcast to users that are scattered across the territory.

Bell Tower – centripetal – urban point whose production gathers users scattered across the territory.

A transition viewfinder from circle to rectangle that frames the juxtaposition in the landscape of the Radio (container) house and the Bell Tower.

A visual effect with an auditory theme in absentia.

A construction site nearing completion coming into sight behind the ruins of an unfinished construction site; perceptible from three steps and a hole in a TEGO panel.

Silent radio with a silent golden alarm bell (for now). On a red background.

Radio Bell.

JUSTIN BARONCEA

Since 2009, Justin Baroncea has been recycling disparate objects, bits of discarded technology and electrical appliance parts and turning them into seemingly useful UFOs. In 2015 he published a book about rabbits and satellites hanging from the ceiling and in 2021 a book about foam, wires and cardboard speakers and squirrels playing the piano.

CRISTIAN MATEI

Interior designer with a background in sociology, he approaches both interior and exterior spaces with concern for the social and ecological context and focuses on temporary urban interventions and art installations by reusing reclaimed resources and waste materials. The recovery and reintegration of elements resulting from various technological processes and disused structures gives him the opportunity to reinterpret and shape space so as to draw attention to social issues such as the lack of public space adapted to human needs and scale, or the waste of raw materials and the continuous production of waste.

IOANA & MATEI BRANEA

JURNAL

2025

triptych, various techniques:

A. World Problems - 100cm/45cm (collage, ink and pen on paper)

B. Tulip - 21cm/21cm (watercolour on paper)

C. BOOM! - 30cm/201cm (acrylic and ink on paper)

DIARY. "Diary" is a response to the invitation to participate in the Notes From Underground group exhibition by SAC curated by Charles Moore & Alex Radu and represents an intimate dialogue between the diaries of the artists/brothers Ioana and Matei Branea from the hallucinatory period that began with the US elections Nov 2024 and continues today. It is the first collaborative work of the two artists.

The triptych brings together a) a collage drawing in which Matei juxtaposes the caricature sent to Ioana as an invitation to make a work together and two pages extracted from their diaries from November-December 2024, b) a watercolour which is part of a series of recurring works on the theme of the tulip, started by Ioana years ago, after the death of their father, c) a drawing made by Matei in December 2024 with his iconic character (alter-ego) Omulan, as a direct reaction to the post-electoral events in the USA and Romania.

IOANA BRANEA

Ioana Branea graduated from UNArte Bucharest majoring in painting in 2008 and is concerned with fine art, her favourite medium of expression being painting. A complex personality resistant to compromise, she has had sporadic appearances in group exhibitions and struggles with a long-standing artistic block.

MATEI BRANEA

Matei Branea is a multi-talented artist, animator, graphic designer and comic book writer. His style is characterized by dark, brutal humour, sarcasm and erotic (self)irony. His works and films have been exhibited, published or broadcast from Bucharest to Tokyo, New York, London, Paris and Berlin.

NICOLAE COMĂNESCU

CERUL ÎNSTELAT DEASUPRA NOASTRĂ (I & II)

2025

175 × 130 cm
acrilic pe pânză

THE STARRY HEAVENS ABOVE (I & II). This work is conceived as a double-sided symbolic flag, while its title draws inspiration from Kant's famous reflection — "the starry sky above me and the moral law within me".

Visually, the piece is centered on the recurring motif of the weeping eye: found on the front page of România Liberă after the fall of the communist regime following the 1989 revolution, as well as within the symbol of the Eye of God — a triangular emblem found at the entrances of Catholic churches, though more recently associated with masonic symbolism, as seen also on the U.S. dollar bill. It evokes both divine vision and moral judgment, but also the idea of historical memory.

The piece expresses a dual perspective: everything is watched, but everything is also recorded — nothing escapes judgment or meaning. It offers a hopeful vision — that justice, even if delayed, will prevail. A flag for social balance, under which the artist chooses to march.

Rendered in a graphic/abstract form using three colors, "THE STARRY HEAVENS ABOVE (I & II)" takes on the function of a flag or an emblem, echoing a longing for social justice.

NICOLAE COMĂNESCU

Born in 1968 in Pitești, Romania, Nicolae Comănescu graduated in 1998 from the Art Academy in Bucharest, the department of Painting. Together with Dumitru Gorzo, Alina Pențac, Angela Bontaș, Alina Buga, Florin Tudor, Mona Vătămanu founded the avant-garde group Rostopasca (1997-2002). He currently lives and works in Bucharest. Nicolae Comănescu creates in series, among which the important are: Briemerg's Algorithm (2000), Wrong Paintings (2004-2007), Paintings with dust (2007-2011), SAM-BAdy must dye in this CITY (2014), I can see no revolution (2014), Ordeful, mezanplasul și harneala (2015), SCRAP METAL KABOOM ORCHESTRA (2022) and The Grand General Scheme of All Things (2020-ongoing).

SUZANA DAN

I WISH I HAD A WISH

2008

80 × 92 cm

shameless intervention on someone else's painting (oil on canvas)

The painting depicts a quiet genre scene of domestic life, where the mundane routine unfolds in subtle detail. The shameless textual intervention brutally adds a layer of reflection, pointing to the hidden boredom that often resides beneath the surface of our daily lives. It suggests that, despite the apparent calm, there exists a quiet yearning for escape, a secret longing for something more, even as we unconsciously dream of the very routine we may resent.

CHEERS TO UNCERTAINTY

2025

video, 17:37 min

The video artwork explores the theme of fatalism, depicting the implacable and repetitive cycle of events that shape our lives. Through a continuous loop formed by the sequence of days in a year, it emphasizes how we are bound to the inexorable flow of time, where actions and consequences seem predetermined and inescapable. The piece invites reflection on the tension between free will and fate, capturing the haunting persistence of life's circu-

lar patterns.

SUZANA DAN

Suzana Dan lives and works in Bucharest, a city that, as an artist very well defined in the early 2000s, we all love to hate. Her creative activity reaches multiple professional levels from that of artist to that of cultural manager. Interested in the collaborative process and communities from different areas more or less known to the public, she works alongside artists active in various cultural areas. Interested in the creative community and beyond, she explores and collaborates with different spaces from artist-run ones to large museum institutions, which led her to initiate the The White Night of the Art Galleries (NAG Noaptea Albă a Galeriilor) project in 2007, currently the longestrunning event in Romania dedicated to contemporary culture. Since 2016, she has been directly involved in the formation process of the contemporary culture center Rezidența9, of which she became the manager in 2018. She currently coordinates Rezidența9, curates exhibitions, imagines projects with and about people, cooks for friends, paints rarely and carefully curates her social media accounts.

ANGELA ELLSWORTH

IN MEMORY OF OUR SISTERS (JANE I)

2023

23 × 12 × 13"

12,823 black and pewter corsage pins, wood, steel, fabric

Angela Ellsworth's Seer Bonnets are comprised of corsage pins pushed through bonnets resembling those her female ancestors wore. Ellsworth's grandfather was a Mormon prophet, whose numerous wives suffered deeply. The interior of the bonnets Ellsworth creates are filled with sharp, biting pin tips that would inflict extreme pain if worn. These bonnets have become iconic in Ellsworth's oeuvre, making a strong feminist statement of history and memory.

Angela Ellsworth is a multidisciplinary artist working primarily in sculpture, painting, and performance. Ellsworth explores ways in which social ritual, myths, religious tradition, and contemporary experience intersect across cultures, histories, and time periods. Mining mystical and physical realms of knowing, Ellsworth highlights ancestral lineage, homosocial dynamics, and feminist ideologies while simultaneously creating unexpected juxtapositions with materials.

The most recent series of sculptural headpieces are in response to the Supreme Court overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. With tens of thousands of corsage-pins, Ellsworth reimagines a group of self-identified women as fierce comrades in the battle for reproductive justice.

GEO-SOCIAL ANALYTICS LAB

DIGITAL NETWORKS OF CONSPIRACY

2024

Project Team: Bernd Resch Nefta Kanilmaz Roland Holzinger Christian Wasner Charlotte Spencer-Smith Corinna Peil Ricarda Drüeke Thomas Steinmaurer

Visualisations: Christina Zorenböhmer and Shaily Gandhi

Digital media and social exhibit undisputed benefits for social cohesion, which are also desirable in terms of democratic policy. However, they also amplify anti-democratic and anti-constitutional dynamics such as fake news, hate speech, conspiracy narratives, calls for violence and breaches of the constitution are increasingly causing concern. In order to counteract these tendencies and better engage citizens who see themselves as disconnected, marginalised and susceptible to conspiracy narratives in a democratic discourse, it is necessary to explore how these dynamics currently operate in geo-social media.

The project visualises networks of conspiracy to better understand the socio-spatial structures of information spread. It aims to make both political actors and the public aware of a possible need for regulation and design in the communications sector and to adapt educational and civil society measures accordingly.

DIMITRIE LUCA GORA

LOGOPHONY

2024

150 × 54 cm

sticker, fridge door

“Logophony” is a personal and political work. Starting from the figure of Beethoven - the composer who continued to create without being able to hear - the image is re-projected on the domestic refrigerator, a silent but omnipresent object, as a form of resistance. His name, broken into syllables (Be-e-tho-ven), refers to the speech therapy exercises I have practiced, but also to the way sound can be lost, broken, reconstructed.

For me, the work is about the voice that cannot be heard, about words that fragment in search of meaning. It is a portrait of those who must learn to communicate in a world that is not always ready to listen.

DIMITRIE LUCA GORA

An artist born and raised in Bucharest, student and social activist, he graduated in 2023 from the Photo-Video department with the bachelor's thesis “Camera de Logopedie” (“The logopedics room”). He practices various art forms, including photography, video, installation, painting and sculpture, using creativity to support social and artistic causes. His installations are designed by combining everyday objects from his childhood with nostalgic and ironic elements.

MIHAI IEPURE GÓRSKI & KATIA PASCARIU

ASCENSIUNEA POLIȚIEI SPIRITUALE

2024/5

performance, video

THE RISE OF THE SPIRITUAL POLICE. “Acensiunea poliției spirituale” is the perpetual body of dialogue between Mihai and Katia, unfolding across layers, multiple, measuring, traversing like a journey, reading, disputing, negotiations, as it arrives, working in the underground, behind the scene, inside the bowls. The banner-costume is a production by Andrei Dinu.

1.If the entire world were a stage and all the people were actors, then what would actors be? Buffoons! Clowns through which the creator, the creation itself speaks, the beginning of the end blah blah-blah blah blah blah, of today, of yesterday and of tomorrow, up and down, left and right, diagonally, the chosen and approved word that indicates a full stop or a semicolon or a dash. Present arms, forward, march, at ease on the seventh day, and from the top, all the same, I'll defend what I have to so it looks as if I care.

Flag!

I adore!

I defend!

Arms!

Call!

And from the top!

The uniform is blank!

Adorearmsdefendcallblankalertdefendadorearm-
scallblankblankblankblankblankblankblaaaabllab-
laaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa n k

I said what I said!

So help us! B l a b l a l a l a b l a b l A!

2. katia is fighting the voices, actually she is trying to regain her voice, in the language of state violence. For, under pressure, you don't only say what the inquisitor might want, but also what you imagine might please him (Umberto Eco). Mihai traces, draws the limits of a distorted, detoxified territory. How can you touch the state? Can cries born in art still establish the mob's path? Great transfigurations begin with small gestures. The only place left to work in is a ruin.

MIHAI IEPURE GÓRSKI

Mihai Iepure-Górski falls into the category of artists "who are naive enough, if not even foolish enough, to believe in an ideal and work out of conviction. For him, this ideal inherently implies, due to the nature of his work, an almost programmatic professional vulnerability" (Ionuț Cioană - From Noble Dignity to the Deepest Disappointment, Scena9, March 18, 2017). The attitude that Ionuț Cioană (1980–2020) referred to does not come without a set of limitations, shaped by the political and economic realities specific to the time and place in which we live and (strive to) operate. He works in a variety of mediums trying hard

to not fall for their charms, returning often to a production method that involves partnerships with other practitioners from various artistic fields.

KATIA PASCARIU

katia pascariu is an actress, performer, Bucharest native girl, member and sometimes co-founder of associations, groups or even artistic spaces with socio-political stakes, collaborator in multi/inter and trans-disciplinary projects and programs, sometimes hybrid, sometimes international; she plays in Romanian, English, French and Yiddish and sometimes there's no words, she just moves or dances, because she graduated with a BA degree in theatre/ performing studies, but also a master's degree in anthropology at the University of Bucharest; she lives along with her anxieties and hope is as central theme of her drive, keeping in mind the inevitable collapse that is coming, but also the peace that will follow.

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RUXANDRA GUBERNAT

PORTAVOCE

2018

56 min

MEGAPHONE. “Portavoce” traces back the evolution of a Romanian culture of protest, developing in the 2010s, through the voices and opinions of key actors involved in social mobilisation and in the development of a cultural scene favourable to political involvement. Throughout the movie, an emphasis was placed on interviews with activists and affiliates of the alternative scene in Bucharest. Three protest waves – Roşia Montană (2013), Colectiv (2015) and OUG 13 protests (2017) – were reconstructed and critically put in context. The movie offers a dynamic composition of in depth analytical discussions of protest movements, lifestyle elements, archival footage and fast moving imagery of protests.

Ruxandra Gubernat is a documentary filmmaker, visual artist and researcher. She has a PhD in Political Science from Universite Paris Nanterre and is currently a lecturer at FJSC Bucharest. Ruxandra directed *Vis.Viaţă* (Imaginary Youth), an observational documentary about the transformations of three Romanian teenagers growing up in the social media era, taking the decision to leave their country after high school, disappointed in a society that doesn't seem to understand them. She co-directing *Portavoce* (2018), a medium-length collage style documentary about the waves of protests in Romania in the past fifteen

years. She is experimenting with different sub-genres of documentary and currently directing and co-producing the animated documentary *Childless* (in development) and the observational documentary *Love/Porn* (in development). In parallel, she produced the video installation *Not this baby in my belly* - about the traumatic experience of pregnancy loss, followed by a birth during the pandemic - as part of the *One in Three* multimedia exhibition, on pregnancy loss and infertility. Since 2019, she has been a mentor in the *Focus* media education program, an empowerment through cinematic art project, dedicated to children from communities with limited access to culture. In 2023, she co-founded the *Patrupetrei* NGO, where she works on projects that explore marginalisation and under-representation, women's rights, or youth representation.

DRAGOȘ LUMPAN

DRUMUL CRUCII

1992

series of photographs

PASSION. The description from 1992 (as I saw it in 1992): A group of 30 young Bessarabians walked from Chisinau to Bucharest, carrying a cross on their shoulders as a symbol of unity. The cross was installed in University Square in Bucharest on the Day of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania.

The description now: Marian Munteanu also appears in these photos. In 1990 Marian Munteanu was one of the leaders of the student demonstration in University Square. During the miners' riots of June 13-15, 1990 Marian Munteanu was beaten by the miners and spent several days in a coma. Then Marian Munteanu accused Virgil Măgureanu of violently repressing the popular demonstration in University Square. In 2000, the Romanian National Party, led by former SRI chief Virgil Măgureanu, nominated Marian Munteanu as its presidential candidate. After initially accepting, the former student leader withdrew his candidacy. In 2016, when he was nominated as PNL's candidate for the capital's mayoralty, Marian Munteanu declared, "I am not ashamed of my connection with Virgil Măgureanu."

DRAGOȘ LUMPAN

The photos I'm exhibiting here were taken in 1992. In 1992,

I was between two university degrees: I had dropped out of Geology and was preparing for Theology. I was working as a freelance photographer for various newspapers. Because there was an inflation of newspapers and magazines, and because I had other things to do (like going to the seaside) my collaborations with the press were limited to a few months/newspaper. After Theology I began a filmmaking degree; so now - besides being a photographer - I can say that I am also a filmmaker. After the closing of National Geographic Romania I stopped collaborating with other magazines / newspapers; but I remained (almost) a freelancer.

AGNIESZKA POLSKA

ASK THE SIREN

2017

8:30 min

“Ask the Siren” is a short film presenting the historical and cultural connotations of the figure of Mermaid in the context of Eastern European history. In a poetic fashion, film attempts to describe the Syren as a symbol representing Polish identity crisis, rooted in the annihilation of the pagan history during the Christian colonization of the region in the X-th century. The filmic character presents itself as a being not able to be classified in any social or biological category.

AGNIESZKA POLSKA

Agnieszka Polska is a visual artist and a film director who uses computer-generated media to reflect on the individual and their social responsibility in the context of environments driven by the flow of information. She renders the ethical and societal challenges of our time into immersive, meditative films and installations. Her works, often constructed from affective sound and visual stimuli, examine processes of influence and legitimation in the fields of language, consciousness and history.

Polska has presented her works in international venues, including the New Museum and the MoMA in New York, Centre Pompidou and Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Tate Mod-

ern in London, Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC. Her solo exhibitions were organised by Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, Frye Art Museum, Seattle, Nottingham Contemporary, Salzburger Kunstverein, among others. She also took part in the 57th Venice Biennale, 11th Gwangju Biennale, 19th Biennale of Sydney and 13th Istanbul Biennial. In 2018 she was awarded the German Preis der Nationalgalerie.

ANA PRVAČKI

GREETING COMMITTEE

2012

Greeting Committee Social Performance PSAs 1-4: "Lines", "Food", "Spray", Video, color, sound, 3 min (3 parts), loop

directed by Ana Prvački and Shane Valentino with sketch-comedy group The Intecollectuals, and etiquette expert Vartouhi Keshishyan
commissioned by Documenta 13
curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev

Etiquette is often considered frivolous and decorative, bringing up discomforts about class, gender and power. But I think we can rescue the term as it is ultimately a question of morals and ethics, and beyond assumptions of good and bad, right or wrong or changing anyone. It is about doing our best to treat another with dignity. Even the worst faux pas can be an occasion to learn and bond. How we relate to others is an intricate, playful, amusing and at times exasperating concoction of emotions, prejudices, projections and trans generational histories. And it is contagious.

SPINACH EMBROIDERED NAPKIN

2014

A set of linen napkins hand embroidered by the artist's mother, artist Delia Prvacki.

For when you or someone you love has spinach between their teeth use this hand embroidered napkin for convenience and discretion.

ANA PRVAČKI

The practice of artist Ana Prvački draws inspiration from close observation of nature and contemporary culture. Her interdisciplinary approach encompasses video, augmented reality, sculpture, painting and immersive performances.

With her work Prvački strives to stimulate a sense of wonder and awe in the face of the familiar and the routine, employing materials as diverse as magnets, marble and honey to invoke reflection through humor, pleasure and play.

She has presented her work at numerous international venues including Chatsworth House UK, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Gropius Bau, Berlin; de Young Museum, San Francisco; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston; and with a piece commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestra. Group exhibitions include the 13th Gwangju Biennial, Sydney Biennial, Bangkok Arts Biennale, Chicago Architecture Biennial, 14th Istanbul Biennial and dOCUMENTA 13.

TOMAS RAFA

POLISH RAINBOW

2023

documentary film, 90 min

“Polish Rainbow” is a documentary film about the 10-year development of relations between the majority of society and the non-heteronormative part of the population in Poland. It captures the far-right scene in the public space, which gradually transforms into the main political influence in the country. The effort of the LGBT community to equalize same-sex relationships is becoming an active political tool of conservative and far-right parties for the polarization of opinion and culture in society. Dehumanization and the spread of hatred cause traumatic experiences that often end tragically for people from rainbow communities. Against the backdrop of the fight for basic human rights of the LGBTIQ+ community, we get to know Bart Staszewski. As an LGBT activist, Bart travels to Polish cities and towns that have declared themselves “LGBT free” zones in order to change this dehumanizing homophobic campaign.

TOMÁŠ RAFA

Tomáš Rafa (b. 1979, Žilina, Slovakia) — filmmaker, photographer and activist renowned for his work documenting contemporary socio-political phenomena. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Banská Bystrica and the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, he currently runs a video documentary studio at the Faculty of Media Art at the

Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. His audiovisual works explore extreme situations related to nationalism, racism and xenophobia in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. In the spirit of documentary observation, he brings to light and reflects on events and situations that often remain absent from traditional news coverage.

His long-term project *New Nationalism in the Heart of Europe* has been shown in numerous exhibitions, including the 8th Yokohama Triennale (2024), *The New Human* at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm (2015), and *Respect Existence or Expect Resistance* at the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava (2012), as well as in a solo exhibition *New Nationalism* at MoMA PS1 in New York (2017).

He curated the project *Art Covers Politics* at the 7th Berlin Biennale (2012). In 2011, he received the Oskár Čepan Award, Slovakia's most prestigious award for artists, in recognition of his work.

OLIVER RESSLER

OIL SPILL FLAG (ROMANIAN VERSION)

2020/2025

200 × 135 cm

photograph painted on textile flag

The entire chain of petroleum extraction, transport, refinery and burning is an ecological and social catastrophe. Extraction and oil spills devastate marine ecosystems worldwide, and the burning of oil is the main driver of the climate breakdown that threatens to end the majority of life on earth.

The Oil Spill Flag bears witness to how states generate profits through handing out licenses to petroleum corporations for extracting fossil fuels, which at the same time causes the destruction of the local environment. The Romanian version of Oil Spill Flag has a popular Norwegian predecessor.

The Oil Spill Flag displayed on a flagpole in front of Tromsø Kunstforening in Norway in 2020 provoked furious debate. Conservative and rightwing local politicians including the county's governor wanted the flag removed. The oil-smeared Norwegian flag was stolen twice in June 2020—one time by a respected retired Supreme Court attorney who later admitted taking down the flag. There were more than 20 stories in daily Norwegian newspapers and magazines about the Oil Spill Flag, including a front-page article. In addition, it was discussed on various blogs and radio shows.

OLIVER RESSLER

Oliver Ressler is an artist and filmmaker who produces installations, projects in public space, and films on economics, democracy, racism, climate breakdown, forms of resistance and social alternatives. Ressler had comprehensive solo exhibitions at Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb; Neuer Berliner Kunstverein; MNAC – National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest; SALT Galata, Istanbul; Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, Seville; Museo Espacio, Aguascalientes, Mexico and Belvedere 21, Vienna. He has participated in more than 400 group exhibitions, including Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid; Centre Pompidou, Paris and the biennials in Taipei, Lyon, Gyumri, Venice, Athens, Quebec, Jeju, Kyiv, Gothenburg, Istanbul and at Documenta 14, Kassel, 2017.

IOANA MARIA SISEA

STRIPPER

2025

20 × 17 × 16 cm

bronz

Female sexuality has such a clear, publicly accepted currency in Romania that women want to train to develop and deploy it successfully. Jobs such as webcam or escorting support significantly higher wages than normal, with private medical insurance, international travel, luxury goods and, for the most successful women, entry into elite society.

For other women the physical training and beautification originally associated with sex work have been abstracted from their patriarchal, social or transactional purposes and “reclaimed” as intra-female recreational practices driving a new generation of entrepreneurship beyond prostitution.

IOANA MARIA SISEA

Ioana Maria Sisea (b.1988) is a Romanian contemporary artist working with different mediums such as ceramics, drawings, sculpture, and video. Her works define a visceral and grotesque vision on the embodiment of capital in our everyday life structures and its diverse dynamics. Interested in various social and critical theories, Sisea is continuously questioning concepts such as desire, luxury and exclusion in relation to late stage capitalism. Her practice exposes various discourses proposed by the social

media industry, mimicking its mannerisms and using it as her main source of imagery. Sisea's choice to work with ceramics as a medium gives her the ability to create of world of humor, caricature, busting with life and expression. Sisea's works have been presented in solo exhibitions such as The Regional Ceramics Museum of Deruta, It, Artissima Art Fair, Rosenfeld Gallery, London, Kunsthalle Bega, Timișoara, and group exhibitions at the Royal College of Art, London; Museum of Art, Cluj-Napoca; Diehl Gallery, Berlin; Zina Gallery, Cluj-Napoca; Jecza Gallery, Timișoara.

FEDERICO SOLMI

THE MAGNIFICENT MANIPULATOR - DONALD TRUMP

2024

106.5 × 66 × 5 cm

acrylic paint, gold and silver leaf, pen and ink, and mixed media on canvas

Immersed in an atmosphere of infernal colors, Donald Trump disguised as a high military authority smokes a cigar with a fearless attitude while welcoming the public to the exhibition. With a playful and irreverent manner, wearing sunglasses and a dandy suit, Trump takes on the role of impatient guest, protagonist of what seems like a parody of an official reception.

THE NIGHT DRIFTERS

2024

single channel video

4:49 min

audio, soundtrack by KwangHoon Han

The Night Drifters presents a group of influencers, industry tycoons and historical leaders lost at sea. Immersed in a bacchanalian atmosphere of celebration and perdition and starry sky, the protagonists appear both inebriated and exhausted by their impossible attempt to find a place to land

FEDERICO SOLMI

Federico Solmi (Bologna, Italy 1973) lives in New York since 1999. His groundbreaking work was recognized with the award of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship in 2009. Solo museum surveys include *American Circus* at the Haifa Museum of Art in Haifa, Israel, in 2016; *The Grand Masquerade* at the Tarble Art Center in Charleston, Illinois, in 2019; *Joie de Vivre* at the Morris Museum in Morristown, New Jersey, in 2022–23, and *The Great Farce* at the Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, in Chicago, in September 2024. His work was included in the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery's traveling exhibition *The Outwin 2019: American Portraiture*

Today. In 2021, he was featured in the Phillips Collection's centennial exhibition *Seeing Differently*. He has participated in several international biennial exhibitions, including the SITE Santa Fe Biennial in New Mexico in 2010; Venice Biennale in 2011. *Solmi: Ship of Fools* was also the subject of a major exhibition in Venice, Italy at Palazzo Donà Dalle Rose, during the Venice Biennale in 2024. From 2016 to 2019, Solmi was Visiting Professor at Yale University School of Art and Yale School of Drama, New Haven, Connecticut. He was appointed Guest Critic at the Yale University School of Art for 2022.

LEVAN SONGULASHVILI

LIMITES INCOGNITI (KALEIDOSCOPE)

2024

163.83 × 304.8 cm

oil, acrylic on canvas

Kaleidoscope is a meditation on perception, multiplicity, and the fluidity of human experience. Figures from Songulashvili's *Idem et Idem* series morph in scale and form, dissolving the boundaries between individuality and collectivity, identity and anonymity. The composition unfolds across three distinct sections: the lower part, where smaller figures gradually coalesce; the middle, where colossal heads emerge as a threshold; and the upper part, where the scene expands into an undefined, boundless space. Created in New York, the piece subtly mirrors the structure of a metropolis—not through architecture, but through the people who shape its landscape. Their ceaseless movement pulses with the rhythm of time, as figures dissolve and reassemble, evoking patterns of migration, memory, and transformation

LEVIATHAN

2023

182.88 × 152.4 cm

oil, acrylic on canvas

Leviathan explores the tension between power, control, and the fragility of order. Rooted in mythology, philoso-

phy, and political theory, it embodies both an omnipotent force and an unstable entity—simultaneously protective and overwhelming. Drawing from Thomas Hobbes’ vision of the Leviathan as a sovereign authority, the work interrogates governance, surveillance, and the dynamics of collective consciousness. It captures the precarious balance between domination and dissolution, reflecting on the forces that shape human society and its inherent vulnerabilities.

He is a New York-based artist and one of Georgia’s leading contemporary voices. His multidisciplinary practice—encompassing painting, drawing, printmaking, installation, and video art—merges representation and abstraction to explore themes of identity, resilience, and transformation. His work navigates the tension between the individual and the collective, forming an interconnected spiral where historical memory, identity, and the natural world converge. Influenced by thinkers such as José Ortega y Gasset and Joseph Campbell, Songulashvili examines the fluidity of identity, the nature of perception, and the interplay between personal and collective experience. A graduate of the New York Academy of Art (MFA) and the Tbilisi State Academy of Arts (BFA), Songulashvili has received numerous accolades, including Georgia’s Presidential Award, the Prime Minister’s Scholarship, the Global Talent Art Prize, and recognition as a Forbes 30 Under 30 honoree. His works are housed in prestigious collections such as The Brooklyn Museum’s permanent collection and the BREUS Foundation. His exhibitions span renowned institutions, including The Royal Academy of Arts, Saatchi Gallery, and The National Gallery Tbilisi.

JONAS STAAL

PROPAGANDA THEATER

2023

video study

17:48 min

Propaganda is not merely about sending and manipulating a single message, but aims to construct new realities as such. Propagandists are not interested in operating within an existing reality, but they want to create new worlds. And propaganda can as such be understood as a “performance of power”: the performance of infrastructures of mass communication combined with the visual, narrative, performative and theatrical means needed to “stage” a new reality.

Following these principles of propaganda analysis, “Propaganda Theater” showcases a hybrid collection of examples of propaganda’s staging of new realities: from Vladislav Surkov, a dramaturg, that became a central ideologue to script Vladimir Putin’s doctrine of “sovereign democracy,” to the massive theatrical pre-staging of wars by the US military in Fort Irwin. The video shows how artists, filmmakers, game designers, architects, literary writers, theater makers and other cultural workers, form an essential part to make the scripts, stages and mass performance of contemporary propaganda theaters a reality

Jonas Staal is a visual artist whose work deals with the relation between art, democracy, and propaganda. He is the founder of the artistic and political organization “New

World Summit" (2012–ongoing). Together with Florian Malzacher he co-directs the training camp "Training for the Future" (2018–ongoing), and with human rights lawyer Jan Fermon he initiated the collective action lawsuit "Collectivize Facebook" (2020–ongoing). With writer and lawyer Radha D'Souza he founded the "Court for Intergenerational Climate Crimes" (2021–ongoing) and with Laure Prouvost he is co-administrator of the "Obscure Union".

Exhibition-projects include "Museum as Parliament" (with the Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2018–ongoing), "We Demand a Million More Years" (Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, 2022), "Extinction Wars" (with Radha D'Souza, Gwangju Museum of Art, 2023) and "Propaganda Station" (Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, 2024). His projects have been exhibited widely at venues such as the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum in New York, V&A in London, Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, M_HKA in Antwerp, Centre Pompidou-Metz and the Nam June Paik Art Center in Seoul, as well as the 7th Berlin Biennale, the 31st São Paulo Biennale, the 12th Taipei Biennale and the 14th Shanghai Biennale. Staal completed his PhD research on propaganda art at the PhDArts program of Leiden University, the Netherlands.

MIRCEA SUCIU

STUDY FOR 'DISINTEGRATION' 3

2024

188 × 200 cm

oil, acrylic, monotype, linen

Mircea Suciú is recognized for his deeply evocative and complex works that explore themes of anxiety, violence, and oppression. Creating using both art-historical and pop-culture references, Suciú has crafted a distinctive visual language where figuration and abstraction converge. His technique is both innovative and meticulous, involving the transfer of photographic images onto canvas, which he then builds upon with layers of acrylic and oil paints. This approach, which he refers to as “monotype,” allows the artist to achieve a nuanced balance between composition, colour, and texture. Suciú’s art resists conventional ideas of a single, unified image, instead embracing a multilayered and often fragmented representation that mirrors the complexities of modern visual culture.

Growing up under the pressures of a communist regime, he developed a fascination with the role of images as tools for both manipulation and liberation. His work reflects an ongoing investigation into the power dynamics embedded in visual representation and how imagery influences collective perception.

STUDY FOR 'DISINTEGRATION' 1

2024

188 × 200 cm

oil, acrylic, monotype, linen

EMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

2025

42 × 30 cm

oil, acrylic, varnish, wooden plate

EMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

2025

42 × 30 cm

oil, acrylic, varnish, wooden plate

Mircea Suciú was born in 1978 in Baia Mare, Romania and he currently lives and works in Cluj, Romania. Suciú has exhibited extensively on an international scale. He has held solo shows at /SAC Malmaison, the National Museum of Contemporary Art (MNAC) in Bucharest, Mennour Gallery in Paris, Blain|Southern and SLAG Gallery, in New York, and AEROPLASTICS contemporary in Brussels, amongst other international art institutions. His work has also been featured in prestigious biennials and triennials, including the Bruges Triennial, the Gwangju Biennale in South Korea, the 4th Prague Biennale, and the 11th Istanbul Biennial, 16th Vilnius Painting Triennial and the Timișoara Biennial. His participation in group exhibitions spans major institutions across Europe and the U.S., such

as the MARE Museum of Recent Art (Bucharest), Kunstmuseum Bochum, Weserburg Museum (Bremen), Museum Beelden aan Zee (The Hague), Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Espace Louis Vuitton (Paris), Fondation Francès (Senlis), Maison Particulière (Brussels), MODEM Center for Modern and Contemporary Art (Debrecen) and Budapest Hall of Art. Since joining Zeno X Gallery in 2014, Mircea Suciú has continued to evolve his practice, striving for iconicity and a deep emotional resonance in a world saturated by images. His work remains a testament to his enduring interest in the transformative power of art. The artist is currently being represented by Mennour Gallery.

NADYA TOLOKONNIKOVA (PUSSY RIOT)

RAGE CROSS

2024

200 × 200 cm

acrylic paint on canvas

N.T.: Text for this work is derived from the song "RAGE" - released in 2021 when Alexey Navalny returned to Russia and got immediately arrested - refers to a feeling of being a stranger in my own land, an outcast labeled as a heretic, foreign agent, menace to society.

Everyday life of an activist in Russia means endless arrests, police harassment and a very real threat of being thrown to jail for years. But just like those witches burnt many moons ago, we won't simply vanish, and continue to be a threat to a tyrant, a threat to the patriarchy long after our physical death. In this sense, we'll resurrect, and we'll be re-born, as Alexey Navalny is re-born in each one of us who continues to bring about changes, who continues to be the worst nightmare of Putin.

Rage is a powerful emotion. It makes me act. When something terrible happens, I'm free to choose - either I lay low in tears, or I rage and through my rage the better world starts to manifest. Like an alchemist, I transform rage into beauty, rage into art, rage into political action.

CROSS 1937

2024

200 × 200 cm

acrylic paint on canvas

N.T.: Elementele cheie ale acestei lucrări, pe lângă text, sunt scoarța de mesteacăn și crucea creștină. Când eram copil în Siberia anilor '90, obișnuiam să beau suc de mesteacăn cu bunica mea, și era dulce și proaspăt, precum promisiunea unei Rusii noi, frumoase și fără tirani, imperialism și morți inutile. Când aveam 10 ani, tatăl meu mi-a spus că cel mai de preț lucru pe care îl poate face un artist este să înceapă o nouă religie. Acesta a fost scopul meu ca artist încă de atunci, de unde și crucea. Putem să credem în ceva mai mare decât noi înșine fără să fim fanatici sexiști, homofobi, transfobi și susținători ai tiranilor?

1937 este un an negru pentru URSS, este anul Marii epurări a lui Stalin. Astăzi, puțin se referă la Stalin ca la „un manager eficient”, mușamalizând toate crimele sale. Astăzi, copiii din școlile rusești învață că Stalin a fost bun. Putem crește ca umanitate dacă istoria nu ne învață nimic?

RAGE / BECIT

track written by Nadya Tolokonnikova and Chris Greatti

produced by Chris Greatti and Crazy Demxns

video directed & edited by Nadya Tolokonnikova

producer of the shoot: Artem Aleksashin

a rat whispered to me in the subway: "HERETIC"

in the police they stamped "HERETIC" into my passport

"HERETIC" is on my unshaven mug

i love a beautiful knife that leaves no evidence

electrocuting my nerves
i don't trust you today
police baton on my ribs
i'm singing with blood today
in a century we will be resurrected ha
those who annoys you today ha
we're getting stronger and it makes you angry
RAGE RAGE
RAGE RAGE RAGE RAGE
RAGE RAGE RAGE RAGE
how beautiful this world is
i'm a heretic today
my head hurts
i am the third world today
i am a suicide today
i am the third Rome today
i'm a master today
mixing black snow under my feet
fluoxetine annoys me
again i'm under the major's boot until May
Moscow is Mecca, Siberia is Sinai
RAGE RAGE RAGE RAGE
RAGE RAGE RAGE RAGE
in "HAMMER OF WITCHES" there is a dedication, it's dedi-
cated to me
i take the power back, i can be dangerous
flying to you on a broomstick ha
you are faithful to the holy inquisition, dear pope
but a ricochet will let you down
you say that the war is holy
i'm laughing at the stake
i'm going to laugh on the day of my execution cuz i'll learn

about all of or your shady deals
 hey hey hey those who judge me today will go missing
 tomorrow
 i'm laughing at the stake
 don't you dare to be on my way
 triple six on my left hand
 i'm laughing at the stake

MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN

2016

video

4:56 min

written passionately by Ricky Reed, Nadya, Tom Peyton
 music video directed by Jonas Akerlund

What do you want your world to look like?

What do you want it to be?

Do you know that a wall has two sides?

And nobody is free?

Did your mama come from Mexico

Papa come from Palestine

Sneaking all through Syria

Crossing all the border lines

Let other people in

Listen to your women

Stop killing black children

Make America Great Again

Could you imagine a politician

calling a woman a dog?

Do you wanna stay in the kitchen?

Is that where you belong?

How do you picture the perfect leader
Who do you want him to be
Has he promoted the use of torture and killing families
Let other people in
Listen to your women
Stop killing black children
Make America Great Again

NADYA TOLOKONNIKOVA

Nadya Tolokonnikova, artist and founder of the feminist collective Pussy Riot, is being persecuted in Russia for her conceptual performances and her artistic protest against the Putin regime. Her performance Punk Prayer in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, which was named one of the most important works of art of the 21st century by The Guardian, ended for her and her colleagues with imprisonment for 'hooliganism motivated by religious hatred'.

TRINKOVA & VADIM GHIRDA

NO FASHION IN FASCISM

2024

protest textile banner

“No Fashion in Fascism” is a bold and poignant banner that emerged from a powerful protest, embodying the struggles and aspirations for democracy in our contemporary world. This artwork serves as a visual manifesto against the resurgence of authoritarian ideologies and the superficial allure often associated with them.

Through striking imagery and a compelling slogan, the banner critically examines the intersection of fashion and fascism, challenging the notion that aesthetics can coexist with oppression. It calls for a re-evaluation of our values, urging society to reject the seductive nature of totalitarianism and instead embrace the principles of freedom, equality, and justice.

In an era where democracy faces unprecedented challenges, “No Fashion in Fascism” stands as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the enduring fight for a just society. It is a reminder that true style lies in the courage to stand against oppression and to celebrate the diversity that democracy fosters. This artwork not only resonates within the context of protest but also invites viewers to reflect on their role in safeguarding democratic ideals in their daily lives.

The photograph ("A woman holds a banner that reads No fashion in fascism during a protest against Calin Georgescu") is taken by photojournalist Vadim Ghirda on the 5th of December 2024.

TRINKOVA or Beatrice Bejinariu is a fashion designer and self-taught hand embroidery artist based in Bucharest, Romania. Her background consists of an apprenticeship as a fashion designer at Conscious Antwerp, Belgium and another apprenticeship , as a Luneville Embroiderer, at Maison Lesage, Paris.

Since 2019, she has embarked on a captivating embroidery journey, working from her home studio, under the TRINKOVA label. Inspired by fantastic art and surrealism, she delights in crafting magical worlds and characters using the wonderful materials of textile art.

'I feel like finding your creative voice is like finding your home in a labyrinth. It can be tricky and a hard way to find. You sometimes follow a path but you realise that it's not taking you to your home. Actually everytime you try, you get closer to your home. I can say it's just a result of hard-work and non stop effort. Stitch by stitch, piece by piece it starts to have a characteristic face.'says the artist.

VADIM GHIRDA

Vadim Ghirda started by covering the complex social and political turmoil generated by the transition from totalitarian rule to democracy. In Romania, civil unrest, miner riots, widespread high-level corruption, the declaration of independence of Moldova from the Soviet Union and

a secession war in the Trans Dniester region, in Ukraine the protests before the toppling of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, all in the early nineties. In the late nineties, he covered the break up of Yugoslavia, the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia, the conflict in Bosnia, the anti-Milosevic protests in Belgrade, the Kosovo Crisis and the war in Macedonia. Ghirda covered conflicts in the Middle East between 2001 and 2005 in Israel and Iraq. Recently he covered Russia's takeover of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine, the US-led bombing campaign against the Islamic State group in the Syrian town of Kobani. Ghirda works in all formats, one of the latest project is an investigation into the high risk nuclear material smuggling in Moldova, led by AP Washington based reporter Desmond Butler. Ghirda's work received awards like Associated Press Managing Editors Award in 2000, 2001 and 2003, Editor and Publisher Photo Contest First Prize 2001, National Headliner Awards First Prize 2002, Atlanta Photojournalism Seminar First Prize 2007 and 2015, Clarion Prize 2008, US National Press Photographers Association 1st Prize 2013. Vadim Ghirda graduated from the Civil Engineering University of Bucharest in 1995.

CODRIN UNICI

EȘTI DE LA ANTENA?

IERI, MI-AM ÎNTREBAT PĂRINȚII CE SĂ SCRUI PE
PANCARTĂ

2024/5

slideshows

ARE YOU FROM ANTENA? YESTERDAY, I ASKED MY PARENTS WHAT I SHOULD WRITE ON THE BANNER. One of the main themes in my work is human connection and the deep need to connect with each other. This connection can manifest in everything from a similar walk, to shared ways of thinking and emotions. Our emotions are often sculpted by the experiences we have been through, and we are not to blame for them. Negative emotions can be healed through gradual exposure to the stimulus that triggered them, but in a different context that offers a new outcome.

I believe we need a space that encourages dialogue - either between people or between people and art - without judgment about the existence of an emotional bias. Only then can we cure ourselves of that bias and regain the ability to see the shades of gray, not just the extremes of black and white.

Every person who has gone through a process of radicalization has first experienced events that led them to believe that a particular dogma is the only way forward. My

contribution aims to create an environment of empathetic dialog with and between such people.

LIBERTATE

2024/5

series of photographs

„Am fost și am pozat toate protestele Pro-Europa și FREE-DOM. “I went and photographed all the Pro-Europe and Pro-Georgescu protests I could get to. I found the people you may have mocked in the last few months. What for?”

CODRIN UNICI

Codrin Unici is a documentary photographer based in Bucharest, Romania. His ultimate goal is showing that all people are connected. The visual language he uses is surrealist, graphic, and bittersweet. He tries to treat all subjects with empathy and understanding. He strives to never settle for the stereotype and dig deeper to uncover a metaphysical truth.

MARCO VERHOOGT

ELECTORAT

2025

photo selection, print on textile material 110g

ELECTORATE. I watch the electorate on television. It appears as a faceless mass expressed in percentages, or as thousands of voting ballots crammed into bags, or a choir shouting for freedom or country.

On the street, I see people in the only way I can: kind, good, or as individuals whose transgressions I justify, attributing them to having had a difficult life. Here, ideologies—right, left, fascist, socialist—dissolve into visceral realities, into needs, frustrations, and vitality.

“Electorate” becomes a confrontation with public space, with people who challenge me, speak to me, or ask something of me. They assert themselves in my memory, inscribing themselves as fragments of the city and the ideas we share.

ELECTORAT

2025

photography book sketch

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Working with photographic book-making, video and installation, Marco Verhoogt is interested in the tension between a close and intense engagement with the world through photography and an impressionable, outsider’s perspective. It’s the friction between these two that makes his practice come alive. He makes photographs from a gut reaction though later, considers the structural elements that give an image context and make it come alive. Between poetics and documentary he is drawn to the abrasiveness of stories, the intersections where tenderness meets grit: environmental bureaucracy and the natural world, the tenderness and violence of men, the carelessness of history towards individual struggle and society and culture disseminated through the significance of personal objects. His work is about the phenomenon of image making as much as it is about the contents of the photographs themselves. This is particularly prevalent in the projects he does with STOL collective and theLetterNetwork.

