

# GALERIAPLAN B

## Miklós Onucsán

"What is normal for the spider, is chaos for the fly."\*

Opening: February 2, 18 - 21 h

February 2 – March 10, 2018

Tuesday – Saturday, 12 - 18 h

Potsdamer Strasse 77 - 87, 10785 Berlin

Galeria Plan B is pleased to announce the solo exhibition of Miklós Onucsán, to open on Friday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2018.

The exhibition of Miklós Onucsán – an *emergent mature generation artist*, as he ironically defines himself – brings together in the (neutral) space of the gallery artworks spanning almost 40 years (the work *Accidental Installation* from 1981 is the starting point of this exhibition). Based on various visual mediums – in the tradition of conceptual art, idea chooses its favourite medium – and gathered in an exhibition as installation, the works on display reflect the core of the artist's practice. Reality as overarching theme and work material is constantly being adjusted by the artist; the artist records the disorder, even the surrounding chaos, which he triggers, then questions and, in some cases, re-orders.

There are many other works along the way, which, if they were connected, would generate a chronicle of reality and a journal of working with its multiple aspects, while the magnitude of this research territory involves both the poetical and the social, the solitary case (caprices) and the expanded phenomenon, which needs to be systematically researched. Onucsán works with matters that intrigue him, irrespective of their importance within the social order. Far from being didactic, he observes and analyses the order of things generating imbalance where there is rule and re-ordering where there is an accident.

To a certain extent, this meta-subject of the balance traverses his entire work – one of the most relevant pieces, not included in the exhibition because of its precarious technical condition, being *The Active Wall*, 1979. This piece of monumental ceramic was part of the artist's diploma work, for graduation in the Ceramic Department of the Arts Institute "Ion Andreescu" in Cluj. The work deals with the poetics of geomantic maps, their structural tension, transferring it into three-dimensionality, where the "activation" of the wall, viewed as organically swelling, is interrupted, turned into "surface", to become, then, a regulated arrangement. The work was meant to decorate an aula of a public institution, a destination it never reached. The artist challenges the material, which grows irregularly, starting from a zero level of the wall, only to set later a new level of perception, a maximum accepted quota, through an authoritarian, organising gesture.

Relevant for Onucsán's approach are the 12 photographs / light-boxes titled *Accidental Installation*, 1981. The photos were taken in the interior of a church during its renovation. They document that found and, in some respects, unintended installation, where the pragmatic needs are temporarily discharging the cult objects of their cultural (spiritual and symbolic) burden, restituting them their simple objective status. Upon entering the church, Onucsán finds the space for ritual in disorder. The act of photographing it, as well as the title of the work, offers a new status to that reality, they re-position it into a new logic, far from that of the religious ritual and closer to that of Installationism.

*Pattern for a Sphere*, 2012. By methodically peeling the sphere (the clementine) and converting 3D into 2D, Onucsán is searching for the rule, for the pattern. The result is contradictory: an infinity of *patterns* rearranged though by displaying them on the invisible axis indicated by the center (belly button) of each sphere (clementine). The work is exemplary for the way Onucsán questions the rule and chance by using the geometry of an accessible object, namely a fruit.

But history itself as an object to be studied is just as efficient in the knowledge process of Onucsan, *The Poster cARTe*, with the stamp “Cancelled, the Miners”, 1990, being a revealing work for the social dynamics. The work was made for the exhibition *cARTe*, that had to take place in Bucharest in 1990, and was intended to be a group exhibition on the theme of the book, dedicated to the Central University Library in Bucharest that burned down during the Revolution in 1989. Onucsan conceived his concrete book as the founding-stone for the new library to be built, and the poster of the exhibition displaying the image of *The Concrete Book*. The exhibition could not open at the scheduled date because of the violent events generated by the miners’ protests in Bucharest. The artist then conceived the stamp “Cancelled, the Miners” and used it to stamp all the posters printed for the exhibition. After the conflict settled, the exhibition was re-scheduled and the stamped area was cut out from the posters displayed in the public space, so that only eight of them remained with the original stamp, all in the artist’s possession. The stamped poster was exhibited as such for the first time at the Smithsonian Institute in New York, in an exhibition on revolutionary posters from Eastern Europe. Caught in the middle of the political events, the artistic event of the exhibition could not have its place any longer, but the clarification made by Onucsan by stamping the posters remained relevant in time for the situation of those years.

Another work about social experiment, in this case from the 1980s (when totalitarianism in Romania was at its peak), is *The Expression of the Human Body*, 1986. The object under this title is a found industrial refute, from a factory that used to produce “artisanal” dolls – a factory where the artist worked during the 80s. The photograph of this object, wearing some graphical interventions of the artist – the inversed shadows, numerical annotations – became a homonymous offset print, accepted at the Biennial of Graphic Arts in Krakow, in 1986. The image was also the central element of a poster for the exhibition with the theme *The Expression of the Human Body*, at the Young Artists Circle in Oradea. The fascination for this motif stands, for the artist, in the natural way in which it illustrates a banal, yet controversial at times, evidence: that we are not similar. Beyond the clarification made by putting together the faults of production (in a programmatic society the human equals the accidental), the clarification is this time made through artistic means: what is unacceptable as found object becomes acceptable once it is translated in a traditional medium – offset. Once converted in this way, it is possible to exhibit it.

The exercise at home (the method of reduction to the absurd):

*Exercise to see the full half*, 2011. The accidental meeting between a meteorite and a jar (in the studio-home) is fine tuned through the layer of tradition: the two elements, positioned in an absurd relationship, are bound by a domestic logic, meticulously executed. The result: an absurd situation that has been stabilized, suited to meditate on it.

The most recent work of Onucsan, an ongoing series of works on paper, is *The Place of the Image has Shifted*, 2018. Based on a logical process elucidated in a text, serial and minimalist, the work is an inventory of all possibilities derived from shifting the place of the image after its disappearance. It is an impossible normalisation, an infinity of solutions, a scientific approach.

In the beginning (and in equal measure at the end), the exhibition is flanked by the work *The Column with an End*, 2011. This snapshot photograph, blown-up to the extent of the wall next to the entrance, records a fleeting moment and turns it into an icon through the very act of photography. A pigeon rests for a few seconds on a concrete pillar – because of the *contre-jour*, the bird seems to be cast in monumental material, installed on top of the obelisk. The low quality of the image, amplified in the exhibition by the expanded, pixelated print, adds to the fusion of the two elements – the column and the creature – in a new situation. The image brings about order (even through manipulation), and when it is titled in response to a famous artwork of Constantin Brancusi, the resulting situation becomes a new, autonomous reality. The whole process leads to revealing the truth. Whatever sits on top of the column, even for a second, defines it. And once defined, a creature has an end. For that moment, the column is finite.

The Pivot: The working method of Onucsan questions the nature of the world, whether he is directly playing – turning things upside down – or he is creating a complex system of analysis, with clear steps leading to the same result. Reality is always different, and the artistic intelligence of Miklós Onucsan always manages to find its shifting point (pivot).

**Miklós Onucsan**, born in 1952 in Gherla, Romania, lives and works in Oradea, Romania. Recent solo exhibitions: *Mo(nu)ments*, Magma contemporary art space, Sfântu Gheorghe, RO (2015); *Unfinished Measurements*, Galeria Plan B Berlin, DE (2011); *Markings of the working area*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (2010); *What I have to do tomorrow, I should have done yesterday*, Galeria Plan B, Berlin, DE (2009). Recent group exhibitions include: *Life – a User’s Manual*, Art Encounters Biennale, Timisoara, RO (2017); *Notes on a Landscape*, Bucharest, RO (2017); *Track Changes*, curated by Plan B at Mendes Wood DM, Sao Paulo, BR (2016); *Expanded Space – Festival of Public Art*, Bucharest, RO (2016); *Art has no Alternative*, Tranzit, Bratislava, SK (2015); *A Breathcrystal*, Project Arts Center, Dublin, IE (2015); Dallas Biennale, multiple venues, Dallas, USA (2014); *Allegory of the Cave Painting*, Extra City Kunsthal, Antwerp, BE (2014); *Intense Proximity – La Triennale 2012*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR (2012); *Barricade of Dreams*, Trafo, Budapest, HU (2011); *Image to be projected until it vanishes*, Museion, Bolzano, IT (2011); *Curated by\_Rene Block*, ENTREPOT, Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna, A (2011); *Romanian Cultural Resolution – Documentary*, The New Gallery of IRCCU, 54th Biennale di Venezia, IT (2011).

\* From The Addams Family film

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