

# Flash Art

Focus Romania: a survey of contemporary art in Romania

No. 251, 2006



IRINA BOTEA

*Ploiesti, Romania, 1970. Lives in Chicago and Bucharest.*

Irina Botea seeks to develop new relationships with the past as a way of releasing tension accumulated through the experience of this past. One of her artistic practices involves the recontextualization of architectures commissioned by the Communist regime, as in *Casa Poporului* (2003) or *Out of The Bear* (2005). A number of her works are collaborative, involving the re-enactments of events. In these pieces the participants and the viewer become critical to the creation of the work, as in *Auditions For A Revolution, Re-enactment*.

**Represented by:** Galeria H'art, Bucharest; Galeria Posibila, Bucharest; Hilger Contemporary, Vienna.

**Image:** *Auditions For A Revolution, Re-enactment, 2006.* 16mm film, 24 mins. Courtesy Harun Farocki.



STEFAN CONSTANTINESCU

*Bucharest, 1968. Lives in Stockholm.*

Stefan Constantinescu first gained attention in Vilnius and Bucharest with his project *Archive of Pain*, dealing with the confessions of Romanian political prisoners from 1945-65. He received international recognition in 2003 with his film *Dacia 1300, My Generation*, a project that used the Dacia 1300 car to present a semi-autobiographical perspective of Ceausescu's regime and the years after it (1968-2000). This work was followed by *The Passage* (2005), a film that tells the fate of three Chilean political refugees who, in the wake of the political events of 1973, sought asylum in Romania and later in Sweden. His most recent work, *Ophelia's Death*, is part of a memento mori series.

**No gallery representation.**

**Image:** *The Passage, 2005.* Video, 62 mins.



ALEXANDRA CROITORU

*Bucharest, 1975. Lives in Bucharest.*

Misplaced in a context with different parameters than her own (like in *Solutions For Building A Common Future*, 2005), Alexandra Croitoru has decided to win the battle in her own bloodless but nonetheless cruel way. She uses humor, sometimes with cynicism, sometimes with a more pronounced desire for fabulousness, but all the time with elegance and a worrying intelligence. Most of the time, she is an observer of forms for altering the aesthetic order of things. Her world is a shivering one, perhaps because of her desire to leave a glorious battle before the decisive victory. (*Cosmin Costinas*)

**Represented by:** Galeria Plan b, Cluj, Romania.

**Image:** *Immigrant, 2006.* Mixed media, 10 x 13 cm. Courtesy Uqbar-Gesellschaft für Repräsentationsforschung e.V., Berlin.



CALIN DAN

*Arad, Romania, 1955. Lives in Amsterdam and Bucharest.*

In his long-term project "Emotional Architecture," Calin Dan focuses on the use, experience, meaning and emotional value of urban environments. Through his observations of the city, his explorations of neighborhoods, his contacts with its dwellers and visitors, and through his research of traditions, Calin Dan develops an almost psychoanalytical vision. His work is an original blend of personal observations, folklore, historical facts and architectural analysis.

**No gallery representation.**

**Images:** *Sample City, 2003.* Video, 12 mins. Production still.



DUO VAN DER MIXT

*Mihai Pop (Cluj, 1974); Cristian Rusu (Cluj, 1972). Live in Cluj, Romania.*

Recycling the values of the past is a common demagogic practice of governments that cannot ensure a safe future for their citizens. After the fall of Communism, extreme nationalism in spectacular forms was often reactivated. The signs of extreme nationalist discourse are particularly seen in the public space, still perceived by people as a territory reserved to authority. We document events and artifacts of this spectacular time and place. Recorded separately, these subjects can seem bizarre, yet as part of an archive they speak to the context that generated them, becoming documents of recent history. (*Mihai Pop, Cristian Rusu*)

**No gallery representation.**

**Image:** *From the archive "The Very Best of Red, Yellow and Blue," 2002-04.* Photograph, dimensions variable.



ADRIAN GHENIE

*Baia Mare, Romania, 1977. Lives in Cluj, Romania.*

Political history is one of my major sources of inspiration and, in particular, the recent history of the last decades. If someone were to ask me, what do you paint? My answer would be very simple: what I see around me. I see Eastern Europe like an ideological Pompeii where ashen people still walk. I try to investigate, with both irony and humor, the reality around me. This Eastern European reality is not just about 'now,' it's something mixed, it's about 'then' and 'now.' Iconic figures and ideologies still echo in our collective memory, confusing us today as they did in the 'good old days.' (*Adrian Ghenie*)

**Represented by:** Galeria Plan b, Cluj; Chung King Project, Los Angeles.

**Image:** *Ironic History, 2006.* Oil on canvas, 43 x 67 cm.