

Narrating images / Imagining stories

Artists: Adorjáni Márta, Flaviu Cacoveanu, Norbert Costin, Oana Hodade, Lucian Indrei, Nita Mocanu, Adela Muntean, Esra Oezen

Curator: Diana Marincu

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DOMINO

The Paintbrush Factory, ground floor

A new contemporary art space, supported and hosted by the Plan B Foundation

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The exhibition titled *Narrating images / Imagining stories* proposes an assembly of sentences, images and histories which follow the distinct visual regimes through which reality is perceived, represented and “altered”. Juxtaposing the artistic photograph-image, the “found” and appropriated image, the tactile image, the image as object, the documentary film or the fiction film in the exhibition forms a subjective collage of contemporary visual language, an abrasive surface which retains only certain pieces of data, while others are erased. The condition of the photographic and filmic image, which presupposes concealment and revelation, synthesizes the perpetual problem of communication – what is it that’s being left out when a story is told? What is it that can’t be seen, when something is exhibited?

Through a lay-out sprinkled with clues which increase tension and stimulate a subjective rearranging of images presented, this exhibition analyzes the distances and tangents between text and photography or film, drawing upon a visually fluid structure. The final point incites a direct experience within the viewer, through the doubt which takes root in the accuracy with which the human eye perceives what has been shown thus far in the exhibition. The two forms of knowledge – the word and the image – are often invoked simultaneously in order to propose a reciprocal translation which stabilizes the sense of reality, even as it risks falsifying it.

In the story that Michelangelo Antonioni’s movie *Blow Up* is based on, Julio Cortázar describes the relation between the onlooker and the camera lens: “Among the many ways of combating oblivion and nothingness, one of the best is taking photos [...]. Michel knew that the photographer always operated like a permutation of his own personal manner of seeing the world, all the more since his camera rendered him insidious [...]. I think I know how to look, if it’s something I know, and also that every looking oozes with mendacity, because it’s that which expels us furthest outside ourselves, without the least guarantee... In any case, if the likely inaccuracy can be seen before-hand, it becomes possible again to look; perhaps it suffices to choose between looking and the reality looked at, to strip things of all their unnecessary clothing.”

Articulating the difference between the regarded object and the viewing modality, a difference which defines the visual studies’ area of research, opens the discussion towards social and cultural codes upon which the interpretation of the image is constructed. And if “the event is not what happens, but that which can be narrated” (Allen Feldman), the fascination of the image corresponds inevitably to the fascination of the narration. Also, *the narrative turn* has highlighted the relevance which narration has, in varied cultural fields, representing an essential constitutive process for the narrative model we use as reference and through which we position ourselves in the world. Beginning in the 1980s, these cultural narrations, coupled with the fascination for imagery and the unprecedented visual democratization, have formed a constellation which connects the chaotic points of reality, rethinking subjectivity and minor histories by placing the accent on *how we see*, not only on *what we see*.

In the exhibition *Narrating images / Imagining narrations*, artists intersect their voices and discourses, opening a discussion about the image’s ability to tell a story, about the impossibility for a story to completely encompass an image, about the transformation of text into image and about returning the image to the void from which it was extracted.

The work *A korai évek – André Kertész* (2013), created by **Adorjáni Márta**, reproduces the eponymous book published in 2005 in Budapest, containing a selections of photographs kept in the contact copy archive of the Hungarian photographer, reproduced in original size. Márta copied this

book in its entirety, after which she cut out not only the text, but also parts of the images, a process which resulted in a series of empty spaces which offer a new rhythm to the book. Based on these cut-outs, the artist then made a series of photograms which came about as a consequence of extracting the essential information from the images, and of recomposing the relationship between the positive and the negative. The distinct visual language with which both the printed text and the images work with is stratified and discussed here through the differences which appear between the document and its copy, between history and reality.

Flaviu Cacoveanu has gathered over the last two years, in the memory of his mobile phone, a visual journal containing ideas and images which he utilizes in his artistic practice. This *artist-run-phone* “autonomous space”, as Flaviu calls it, is given material consistency in the book ABCDEFORVER (published in a limited edition in 2016), and acquires a physical form which corresponds to the photographs, videos, sketches, texts, conversations and screen-shots in the phone archive. For this exhibition, the book will be presented as an object, but also deconstructed in a form which invites the public to mentally retrace its structure and to create new associations between the pages of the tome.

Norbert Costin uses *The Dress* (2013) to address the subject of a photograph’s material nature, the regarded object’s position on the edge of a frontier – a mental frontier between interior and exterior, between the private and public spaces. The dress, photographed against a Cluj landscape background, could be an abandoned object, a substitute for a missing object, or a mirror image of the photographer. The subtle symbolism of masculine and feminine roles which we assume is carefully integrated within the use of silk screen print on silk paper to reproduce the original photograph.

Oana Hodade turns to text, sound and photography to create an installation in which time and space become elastic, to the point of nullification. Drawing upon a photographic archive, discovered with Dan Burzo at the flea market, Oana approaches these images through varied strategies, from identifying herself with the characters, to objective, archival research, without finding an inception or an end-point.

Lucian Indrei directs his attention towards the infinite aesthetic possibilities which an image contains in its depths, beyond composition, colors or subject. Hidden within the image are a multitude of layers which can be enlarged until a simple squared centimeter becomes autonomous and detached from the initial ensemble. Throughout the exhibition, the final episode prepared by Lucian has the role to seed doubt within perception, discussing the potential for manipulation, alteration and disruption of visual accuracy.

Nita Mocanu’s recent videos are centered around the recent preoccupation the artist has acquired towards the body, space and perception. In the video *Erasing the purpose of dreams* (2016), Nita reflects upon the network of connections which are created between image, dream, intention and reality. In a broader sense, this network also defines the separation between objective reality and mental projections or images thereof.

Adela Muntean creates a “monument of cinematography” using reels of film found at the Cluj Film Repository, abandoned in the 1990s. These celluloid reels were recovered for the installation *The memory reel* (2015), and were tied together in a great spiral in which their initial function is lost, as they become museum pieces, and access to the original image becomes impossible. Adela’s reflections on the relationship between the nostalgia for classic cinema and the digital age extend to her artistic practice centered on net-art and video, where the *anarchival impulse* (as Hal Foster calls it) is based on the human need to process and interpret the traces left behind by an archive, not only its contents.

Esra Oezen is interested in the way in which we regard something, moving the accent from the subject of the image to the chosen collage and to what goes on behind the photo or film camera. In the video *Das Dokument einer Aufführung [Documenting a performance]* (2016) we see the artists photographing something we can only assume is the view of a forest. Faced with this familiar landscape, lurks the possibility of something hidden, under the rhythm of the flash which pierces the silence, and under the layers which interpose themselves between the viewer of the video and the photographed image – the body of the artist, the photo camera, reality itself.