

Cristian Rusu

Space Itself

Opening: June 19, 18-21h

June 19 – July 25, 2009

Tuesday - Saturday, 11-18h

Heidestrasse 50 . 10557 Berlin

Galeria Plan B is happy to present the first solo exhibition in Germany of the Romanian artist Cristian Rusu (born 1972 in Cluj, Romania).

It starts with the slightest imbalance, a faint tremor traversing the building, a gust of wind and languid ripples on the surface of water, the echo of distant voices in dispute. The shapes are slightly askew, angles are imperfect, edifices seem to revise their relation to gravity and utopia, nature is not exactly where it should be – either too close or too far away from non-nature. Cristian Rusu's project exfoliates our projections of space, it interrogates the perceptual layers of spatial inscription and the cultural constructs they correspond to. As the scale of the project methodically expands (via studies of vastness and its emotional correlates, episodes of geometric alpine perfection, views of 'figure' or 'ground' that are more interested in blind spots than in what is made visible), the works articulate a reflection on the positions, rapports and attitudes that define, in opposition, landscape and architecture, anxiety and the phenomenology of our 'elsewhere', the chaos of the object and the clarity of interpretation. The diffuse thematic focus of the exhibition collects the obstacles and transparencies that compose our immediate horizon, something like a spatial membrane separating gesture and purpose, while reverberating with both. A skin that resonates with both our acts of possession and symbolic investment, and, on the other side, with the drone of revolutions, with the pulsations of whatever ideology describes our collective destination. Everything vibrates, and the tension the works register, minor impulses or vertiginous oscillation, 'shakes' both figure and ground.

For Cristian Rusu, nature is neither located at the fringes of the shrinking city, nor is it interspersed with failed utopian urbanism. Nature is not construed as site of allegorical damnation or as

ecological safe haven, but as numbing isolation, a cut through the social tissue and territory of ethical disengagement. Architecture sculpts nature (a point brilliantly made by the work 'Pavillon Tyrol') and reclaims the ruin: in the animation presented at Plan B, the edifice-cum-monument is built only to show that it, the edifice, is not a ruin, and to do so in an ideological loop. Architecture is both power and entropy, it is spatial conflict.

The triangular relationship that Cristian Rusu's project traces between nature, architecture and subjectivity rewrites a constant preoccupation in the artist's practice, an investigation of the contemporary condition of the sublime. While the experiences that test the limits of our imagination, that contradict or crush reason and could instill overwhelming terror abound, we lack Kant's 'safe place', the situation of security from where the spectacle of the thunderstorm, be it natural or political, is surpassed by the sudden intensification of our moral engagement, by a feeling of infinite superiority to that which threatens to destroy us.

The exhibition reads like an elaborate understatement of this notion.

The story of its 'protagonist', the subjectivity of the sublime experience, is told in 'Calle della morte', where the camera focalizes on a Venetian street sign, filmed until hands start trembling from the effort of prolonged stillness and the frame loses its sharpness. This echoes in works only indirectly concerned with space and its histories: they orchestrate the sense of something missing, a withdrawn presence or a consummated process, while meticulously setting the scene for an impending epiphany. The sense of being between ages and paradigms, of a disconnection or an insufficiency, of an incomplete definition of history, of turning to the next page at an unbearably slow pace.

The exhibition is curated by Mihnea Mircan, Romanian curator based in Bucharest.

For further information please contact the gallery at +49.172.3210711 or contact@plan-b.ro.

With the support of the Romanian Cultural Institute in Berlin.