

Sorin Campan

Opening June 25, 18 – 20 h

June 25 – July 31, 2021

Tuesday – Saturday, 12 – 18 h

Potsdamer Strasse 77-87, 10785 Berlin

For the original text in Romanian and the German translation, please scroll down.

Galeria Plan B is pleased to announce the second solo exhibition of Sorin Campan with the gallery, opening Friday, June 25.

Dream from the night of 2/3 March 2021

I was preparing Sorin Câmpan's exhibition. It had more works than I expected and they were already displayed in two places, two caves very far away one from the other. They were semi-obscure but reachable places, dimly lit by the daylight penetrating the mountain's cracks and slantingly projecting on the walls. Neatly arranged there, the works have picked up as by imitation the color of the stone, were painted in greys and light earthy shades, and their compositions surprisingly had many characters that seemed to tell together a simple story from the beginning of humankind. All humans were painted the same way, caught in motion, small in relation to the frame of the painting. In the second cave I met Andrei Câmpan, the son of the artist, who came to help me with the exhibition; Andrei tells me he wants to show me something special and we enter a room in the mountain where there is a great carpet on the floor, also grey and old, perfectly hidden in the semi-obscure. The pattern of the carpet looks like a moss that has parasitized its surface; Andrei picks it up and we fix it together on the wall of the cave, then stand back to watch. Over the grown muscle Câmpan senior had painted this time a few objects, all of them small and geometrical, a kind of precious boxes having a surprising, illogical chromatic and dimensional relation one with the other and that persisting watching made them ever more visible on the mass of the carpet. We were watching them, they were getting colored. We stopped focusing, they became hidden again. When they got colored they started slowly to have a yellow outline. But one second of inattention was enough for the yellow to fade back in the cement-like grey of the cave.

Translated from Romanian by Ciprian Şiulea

Sorin Câmpan's works reach an apparent simplicity after performing a series of detours and a nuanced reflection upon the painting instruments; they have to be carefully "read" in order to be understood in their enigmatic composition: under the appearance of simple images – still lives, nocturnal landscapes, streets in Cluj – the mystery is localized and spotted, without being actually translated or explained. As in the metaphysical painting that is particularly appealing to Câmpan, mysterious street corners seem to be captured at the same moment of the day and in the same light. Besides the balanced combination of the obvious and the mysterious which is always surprising, the quality of painting – the extreme simplification of the often extravagant chromatic means and combinations – recommend Câmpan as a remarkable artist. The geometry of his works has an almost hypnotic effect upon the viewer and seems to perfectly fit the chromatic extravagance; the painter achieves images that display an oneiric potential by using minimal technical means. At a close look one gets the feeling of being faced with spaces that are familiar but impossible to be located or identified and the viewer is the one asked to "solve" the mystery. If we could talk about an affluence of artists situated in our close vicinity whose art continues to speak to us, we can definitely count Sorin Câmpan among them. Neither the size, nor the number of his works is what really recommends him, let alone a particular social visibility (Câmpan remains quasi unknown even to people sharing the same field of interest) but the authentic, uninhibited relationship he has established with the medium of painting. We are in fact talking about a relationship which can be recognized but never mimed/faked.

Mihai Pop

Sorin Câmpan, b. 1940, lives and works in Cluj, Romania. Graduated in 1968 from the "Ion Andreescu" Institute of Fine Arts in Cluj. From 1990 to 2001 professor of Drawing and Colour Study at the University of Art and Design in Cluj. From 1968 to 2019 participated in the Annual Salon of the Fine Artists Union (UAP) Cluj. In 1969 participated in the collective exhibition organized by UAP - the national branch - in Turin, then at the Biennale in Bucharest (1970), and the *Comemorativa 1850* in Cluj (1974). Previous solo exhibitions include: Arad (1977), Galeria Mica, Cluj (1971, 1975), "Filo" Gallery, Cluj (1976, 1979), IMF Gallery, Cluj (1978), Linguistic Institute Gallery (1989), Design Hall of the Polytechnic Institute, Cluj (1990), *Time and place*, Galeria Plan B, Cluj (2010). The most recent exhibitions of Sorin Câmpan are: *Campan & Campani - Art in the Family*, Romanian Cultural Institute, Venice (2018), guest artist in Mircea Cantor's exhibition *CHASSEUR D'IMAGES*, Musée de la Chasse et Nature, Paris (2019) and the solo exhibition *La lune et autre chose*, Galerie Hussenot, Paris (2020).

Between June 25 and August 18, 2021, Galeria Plan B is hosting a site-specific installation by **Dan Mihălțianu**, *Liquid Matter Archive* (1993 – ongoing) displayed in the vitrine space next to the entrance of the gallery. The installation includes bottles, distillates, preserves, distilling utensils and various objects, belonging to a long term project, developed in the last three decades in various international artistic contexts. The *Liquid Matter* project looks at "liquidity" from various perspectives: political aspects, financial resources, cultural and environmental implications of the climate change, food and drink culture. The installation will be visible during, as well as outside the gallery opening hours.

For more information, please contact the gallery at contact@plan-b.ro and +49.30.39805236.

Original text in Romanian:

Vis din noaptea de 2 spre 3 martie 2021

Pregăteam expoziția lui Sorin Câmpan. Erau mai multe lucrări decât mă așteptam și erau deja expuse în două locuri, în două peșteri aflate la mare distanță geografică una față de alta. Erau spații semi-obscure, dar accesibile, luminate slab de lumina zilei care pătrundea prin crăpăturile muntelui și se proiecta razant pe pereți. Lucrările, frumos aranjate acolo, căpătaseră parcă prin imitație culoarea pietrei, erau pictate în griuri și pământuri deschise, iar compozițiile lor aveau, în mod surprinzător, multe personaje care păreau că împreună spun o poveste simplă de la începuturile umanității. Toți oamenii erau pictați la fel, surprinși în mișcare, mici în relație cu cadrul tabloului. În a doua peștera m-am întâlnit cu Andrei Câmpan, fiul artistului, care venise să mă ajute cu expoziția; Andrei îmi spune că vrea să-mi arate ceva deosebit și intram într-o încăpere în munte, unde pe jos e un covor mare, tot așa gri și învechit, perfect camuflat în semi-obscuritate. Modelul covorului pare un mușchi care i-a parazitat suprafața; Andrei îl ridică și împreună îl punem pe peretele peșterii, apoi ne îndepărtăm pentru a-l privi. Peste mușchiul crescut bătrânul Câmpan pictase de această dată câteva obiecte, toate mici și geometrice, un fel de cutii prețioase aflate între ele într-un raport cromatic și de mărime surprinzător, fără logică, și pe care actul de a le privi cu insistență le făcea tot și tot mai vizibile din masa covorului. Ne uitam la ele, se colorau. Încetam să ne concentrăm, se camuflau la loc. Când se colorau prindeau încet un contur galben. Dar ajungea o secundă de neatenție pentru ca galbenul să se stingă înapoi în griul de ciment al peșterii.

Lucrările lui Sorin Câmpan ating o aparentă simplitate după o serie de detururi și o reflecție nuanțată asupra instrumentelor picturii; ele trebuie „citite” atent pentru a fi înțelese în alcătuirea lor enigmatică. Geometria lucrărilor sale are un efect aproape hipnotic asupra privitorului și pare să se potrivească perfect cu extravaganța lor cromatică. Deși identificabile la un nivel comun, spațiile pictate de Câmpan rămân incomplet explicabile, procesul de clarificare prin abstractizare la care sunt supuse nu le rezolvă neapărat misterul, iar ordinea și claritatea apar ca procese distincte.

Dacă putem vorbi despre o mână de artiști aflați în imediata noastră apropiere, a căror artă continuă să ne vorbească, cu siguranță că îl putem număra pe Sorin Câmpan printre ei. Nu mărimea sau numărul lucrărilor îl recomandă, cu atât mai puțin o anumită vizibilitate socială (Câmpan rămâne aproape necunoscut chiar și pentru cei din același domeniu), ci relația autentică, neînhibată pe care a stabilit-o cu mediul picturii. Vorbim de fapt despre o relație care poate fi recunoscută, dar niciodată mimată.

Mihai Pop

German translation:

Traum aus der Nacht vom 2. auf den 3. März 2021

Ich war dabei, die Ausstellung von Sorin Câmpan vorzubereiten. Es gab mehr Arbeiten, als ich erwartet hatte, und sie waren bereits an zwei Orten ausgestellt, nämlich in zwei geographisch sehr weit voneinander entfernten Höhlen. Dies waren zwar dämmrige, jedoch zugängliche Räume, schwach erhellt vom Tageslicht, das durch Spalten im Berg hereindrang und auf die Höhlenwände zuckend fiel. Die schön angeordneten Arbeiten hatten wie durch Nachahmung die Farbe des Steins angenommen, sie waren in grauen Farben sowie in hellen Erdfarben gemalt, und die Kompositionen enthielten überraschenderweise viele Figuren, die gemeinsam eine einfache Geschichte von den Anfängen der Menschheit zu erzählen schienen. Alle Menschen waren ähnlich gemalt, in Bewegung eingefangen, klein im Verhältnis zum Gemälde Rahmen. In der zweiten Höhle traf ich Andrei Câmpan, den Sohn des Künstlers, der gekommen war, um mir bei der Gestaltung der Ausstellung zu helfen. Andrei sagt, er möchte mir etwas Besonderes zeigen, und wir betreten einen Raum im Inneren des Berges, wo ein großer Teppich auf dem Boden liegt – grau, abgetreten, perfekt getarnt im Dämmerlicht. Das Muster des Teppichs sieht wie ein Moos aus, das diesen überwachsen hat. Andrei hebt den Teppich auf und zusammen hängen wir ihn an der Höhlenwand auf, dann treten wir einen Schritt zurück, um ihn besser betrachten zu können. Diesmal hatte der alte Câmpan einige Gegenstände über die moosbewachsene Fläche gemalt, alle klein und geometrisch, eine Art Schmuckschatullen, die in einem überraschenden – nicht logischen – Farb- und Größenverhältnis zueinander standen und die sich umso deutlicher von der Masse des Teppichs abhoben, je eindringlicher wir sie betrachteten. Sahen wir sie an, färbten sie sich. Hörten wir auf, uns darauf zu konzentrieren, tarnten sie sich wieder. Wenn sie sich färbten, gewannen sie allmählich einen gelben Umriss. Aber es genügte ein Augenblick der Unaufmerksamkeit, damit das Gelb im Zementgrau der Höhle wieder erlosch.

aus dem Rumänischen von Andrei Anastasescu

Sorin Câmpan's Arbeiten erlangen eine vermeintliche Schlichtheit, nachdem sie eine Reihe von Umwegen und eine nuancierte Reflektion der malerischen Mittel durchlaufen haben. Sie müssen sorgfältig „gelesen“ werden, will man ihre rätselhafte Komposition aufschlüsseln. Unter der Oberfläche einfacher Bilder – Stilleben, Nachtlandschaften, Straßenansichten von Cluj – wird das Geheimnis lokalisiert und ausgemacht, ohne tatsächlich übersetzt oder entschlüsselt zu werden. Wie im Genre der metaphysischen Malerei, die einen besonderen Reiz auf Câmpan ausübt, scheint der Künstler geheimnisvolle Straßenecken zur immer gleichen Tageszeit und im immer gleichen Licht festzuhalten. Neben der ausgewogenen Kombination von Offensichtlichem und Geheimnisvollem ist es die Qualität seiner Malerei – die extreme Vereinfachung der oft ausgefallenen malerischen Mittel und Farbkombinationen – die Câmpan als einen bemerkenswerten Künstler auszeichnet. Die Geometrie seiner Werke hat eine beinahe hypnotische Wirkung und ist augenscheinlich perfekt auf die extravagante Farbgebung abgestimmt. Mit minimalem technischem Aufwand schafft der Maler auf diese Weise Bilder mit einem traumartigen Moment. Bei genauem Hinsehen entsteht der Eindruck, mit Räumen konfrontiert zu sein, die zwar bekannt sind, sich aber nicht verorten oder identifizieren lassen. Die Lösung des Rätsels bleibt letztlich den Betrachtenden überlassen. Insofern es bestimmte Künstler*innen gibt, die in unserem Umfeld aktiv sind und deren Kunst nach wie vor zu uns spricht, können wir Sorin Câmpan

zweifellos dazuzählen. Doch es ist weder die Größe noch die Anzahl seiner Werke, geschweige denn seine soziale Präsenz (Câmpian ist selbst Menschen, die seine Interessen teilen, kaum ein Begriff), die ihn so bemerkenswert machen, sondern vielmehr das authentische, ungehemmte Verhältnis, das er zum Medium der Malerei eingegangen ist. Es handelt sich in der Tat um ein Verhältnis, das anerkannt, aber niemals nachgeahmt/gefaked werden kann.

Mihai Pop