



The Renaissance Society

at The University of Chicago
5811 South Ellis Avenue
4th floor
Chicago, IL 60637

Museum Hours
Tuesday - Friday: 10 am - 5 pm
Saturday, Sunday: 12 - 5 pm
Closed Mondays
<http://www.renaissancesociety.org>

Seductiveness of the Interval

Stefan Constantinescu
Andrea Faciu
Ciprian Mureșan
studioBASAR
Alina Șerban, curator

May 2 – June 27, 2010

Opening Reception: May 2, 4:00–7:00 pm

Featuring a talk with the artists and curator from 5:00 to 6:00 pm in Kent Hall room 120

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Phone: (773)702-8670

In 2006, Romanian President Traian Basescu organized the Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania. Conducted 17 years after the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu's regime, the commission's goal remains unclear.

Was it prompted by the pursuit of justice? Was it simply a matter of historical record? Or was it to acknowledge a painful chapter in the nation's history, which in turn would serve as the basis for healing à la South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission? In any case, the report calls into question the perspective and time frame needed to construct a national narrative in the wake of revolutionary change as Romania transitioned from a communist dictatorship to a democracy. Making up for all that was left unknown and unexpressed is a task for the last generation of artists and intellectuals bearing an imprint, however faint, of life under Ceausescu's regime. Such is the case with the artists—Ștefan Constantinescu (b. 1968), Adrea Faciu (b. 1977), and Ciprian Mureșan (b. 1977)—participating in *Seductiveness of the Interval*.

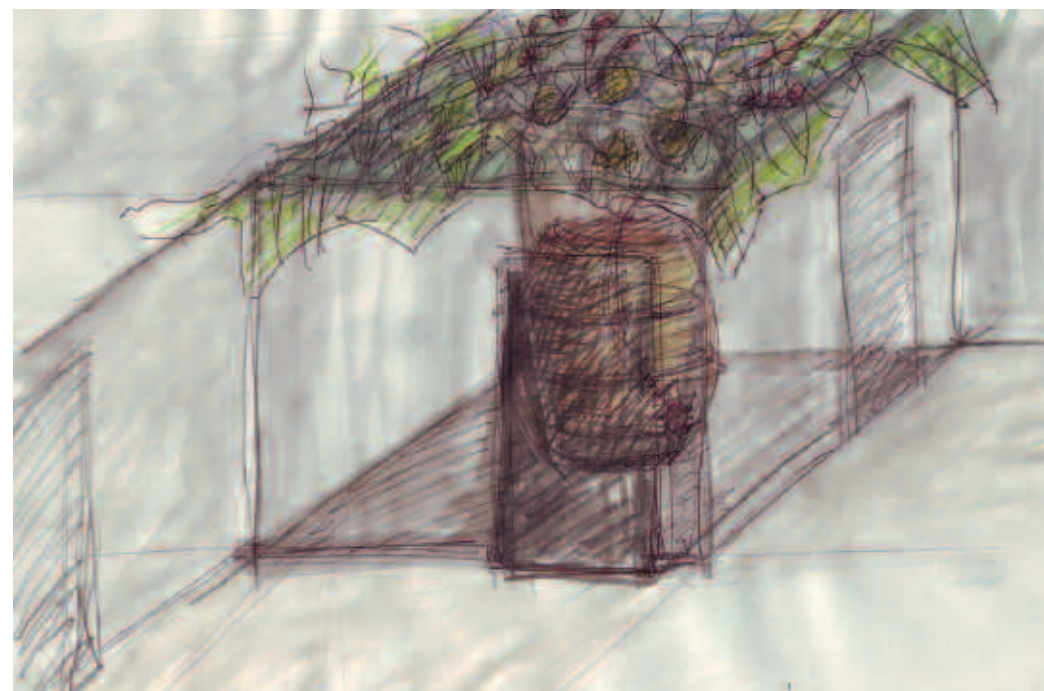
Curated by Alina Șerban, and initially shown in the Romanian pavilion of the 2009 Venice Biennale, *Seductiveness* is a group exhibition conceived in terms of theater, where the works are installed in an architectural structure amounting to a stage set. Designed by studioBASAR (Alex Axinte and Cristi Borcan), this structure will be reconstructed in its entirety in The Society's gallery.

Seductiveness is less directly concerned with Romania's communist past than it is with how that past inflects considerations of current sociopolitical affairs. Whether it is a story of exile and displacement as in Constantinescu's video *Passenger*, a first person account of a small group of Chilean political refugees who, after fleeing one dictator (Pinochet), are given asylum by another (Ceausescu); or Mureșan's video, *Dog Luv*, whose screenplay, by Saviana Stanescu, is a cross between George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and reports of torture at Abu Ghraib; or Faciu's *EXUBERANTIA Suspended*, which uses a garden as metaphor for the fleetingness and frailty of life, these works are reflections on moral progress from the perspective of a generation of artists with vivid memories of life under a highly repressive political regime.

Over and above the works' shared sociopolitical backdrop, studioBASAR's elegant structure literally and poetically unifies them, eliciting an existential resonance between the works. The rooms housing the works are separated by open areas, or intervals, interspersed throughout the structure. Set within an overarching structure, the experience is one in which the viewer becomes an actor aware of themself in the role as viewer. In this theater of self-reflexivity, the works become parts of a much grander narrative that for want of a better term goes by the name "the human condition." However relative the terms are from one country to the next, hope and despair nonetheless remain universal. In the era of globalization, grave acts of inhumanity and courageous acts of humanity know no national borders. Our perception of the rate at which the human condition could be said to improve not only depends on the headline events but on whether or not there are indeed roses to stop and smell.



Stefan Constantinescu, *Troleibuzul 92*, 2009, film still
Courtesy of the artist



Adrea Faciu, *EXUBERANTIA suspended*, 2009, mixed media installation
(irrigation system, plants, audio system), variable dimensions
Drawings and preparatory sketches
Sound installation in collaboration with Guillaume Blondeau
Courtesy of the artist

Related Events

OPENING RECEPTION

Sunday, May 2, 4:00 to 7:00 pm

Featuring a talk with the artists and curator from 5:00 to 6:00 pm in Kent Hall room 120

STAGED-READING

Tuesday, May 4, 8:00 pm

A Couple of Poor Polish-Speaking Romanians
(2006)

Written by Dorota Maslowska
Performed by Trap Door Theater

"A Polish soap-opera actor, slumming it, takes too many drugs at a party and runs off, in a costume of destitution and blackened teeth, with a pregnant young mother." That is only the wind up. The pitch is a humorous and scathing critique of social class and national identity twenty years in the wake of communism. The success of Maslowska's (b. 1983) first novel *White and Red* (2002) is largely acknowledged as heralding a new generation of Polish writers. After two decades of outstanding premieres of avant-garde theater, Trap Door has established an international reputation in addition to becoming one of Chicago's premiere ensembles. This is *A Couple of Poor Polish-Speaking Romanians'* last staging before Trap Door takes it on the road, with the first stop being Romania. Co-sponsored with University Theater, this event will take place in FXK Theater, Reynolds Club, 3rd floor, 5706 S. University Ave. FREE

CONCERT

Saturday, May 22, 8:00 pm

David Moss, vocalist

Hyperglyphyx, solo voice, objects and electronics

Simply put, Moss is legendary. He is considered one of the most innovative singers and percussionists in contemporary music. In 2005 he was soloist in the opening concerts of both the Venice Biennale and the Queenstand Biennial Music Festival. This event is co-sponsored with the University of Chicago's Department of Germanic Languages and Literature as part of the conference *Praxes of Theory*. This concert will take place in Bond Chapel, 1050 East 59th Street (directly east of Cobb Hall). FREE

CONCERT

Monday, May 24, 8:00 pm

Six

Jacques Demierre, Piano
Isabelle Duthoit, Clarinet and Voice
Charlotte Hug, Viola
Urs Leimgruber, Saxophone
Thomas Lehn, Analog Synthesizer
Dorothea Schurch, Voice and Musical Saw

Six is a magic number. Headed by Leimgruber and Demierre, *Six* is the musical equivalent of the Justice League, which is to say a group of improvisers each with her own superpower. This concert will take place in Fulton Recital Hall, which is on the 4th floor of Goodspeed Hall, 1010 E. 59th St., (Goodspeed is on the interior of the University's main quadrangle in the far Southwest corner). FREE

This event is co-sponsored by The Consulate General of Switzerland in Chicago and The Swiss Benevolent Society of Chicago.

READING

Sunday, June 6, 2:00 pm

Saviana Stanescu

Playwright, poet, screenwriter, teacher, journalist, curator, Stanescu does it all. Her work is often characterized by a black humor and a sense of the absurd that is distinctly Eastern European. She wrote the screenplay for *Dog Luv* which is featured in the exhibition. She has won numerous awards and her plays have been widely presented internationally and in the US. Recent New York productions include: *Aliens with Extraordinary Skills*, *Waxing West*, and *Yokasta'S Redux* (co-authored with Richard Schechner). She teaches at New York University. This event will take place in Swift Hall room 106, 1025 East 58th Street (on the Main Quadrangle of the University, directly east of Cobb Hall). FREE

The Seductiveness of the Interval is co-organized with the Romanian Cultural Institute.

Additional exhibition support has been received from The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Trust for Mutual Understanding, Helen Zell, Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, Richard and Mary L. Gray, Dean Valentine and Amy Adelson, Jeff Aeder and Jennifer Levine, and Barbara and Aaron Levine.

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The Renaissance Society would like to thank Chuck Thurow and Elizabeth Postell for their generous assistance in producing *EXUBERANTIA suspended*, and Mirek Construction Inc. for fabricating the pavilion.



Ciprian Mureșan, *Auto-da-Fé*, 2008, 3 channel slide projection, 154 slides
Courtesy of Andreiana Mihail Gallery, Bucharest, and Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles

[that slide]
studioBASAR, 2008

Essay by Hanna Walker. Layout by the JNL Graphic Design, Chicago.