

Alexandra Croitoru and Stefan Tiron
with guests:
Cristian Cercel, Vasile Pop-Negresteanu,
Olivia Tulbure-Strachina, Sorina Vasilescu
A Fresco for Romania

Michael Baers
Silence After Noise, Version 2

Opening October 30, 18 – 22 h

October 30 – December 19, 2009
Tuesday – Saturday, 12 – 18 h
Heidestrasse 50, 10557 Berlin

Galeria Plan B is happy to present the two projects A Fresco for Romania, showing works of Alexandra Croitoru & Stefan Tiron and their guests and Silence after Noice, Version 2, introducing recent works by American artist Michael Baers. The exhibition opens on Friday, October 30 and will be on view until December 19.

A Fresco for Romania

Twenty years after the Romanian Revolution of 1989, we are searching for the artisans of history writing and their homemade ideological manufacture. Around us there are still many handicrafts and DIY ways to tinker with, write and illustrate grand historical narratives. Is it possible that every National fresco is born out of this kitchen-sink phase? We found out more about those ready to forge the ancient or recent past with their own bare hands. History is made, and it is actually handmade. Like unemployed bards, they are forever waiting the official appointment or approval so they can get accepted into the main corpus of National celebratory knowledge. In the meantime, they are unintended heretics. They are unwittingly breaking the monopoly of canonical history over the past, wrestling over the rights and wrongs of those who own the copyrights over making and unmaking the grand narrative of National manifest destiny.

Preparing for a new and better history lesson, in a classroom setup, we will patiently try to erase the content of contemporary Romanian history schoolbooks using a razor blade, the usual erasing technique of our high school years. Olivia Tulbure-Strachina and Sorina Vasilescu were invited to exhibit their own representations of the history of Romania, ranging from the Pre-Modern age to the Post-Ceausescu era. In the two videos accompanying their works, they talk about their methods, their motivation and their inspiration. Collaborating with Vasile Pop-Negresteanu, we

started the project of a historical fresco of Romanian history from 1989 until the present time. The Romanian public can make suggestions concerning the content on www.frescapentruromania.ro forum, in an attempt to figure out the role of the collective memory in recent history making.

Cristian Cercel's essay tries to outline a comparative history of attitudes and representations of both the Roma and the German 'other' in Romania over the years.

Most of these apocryphal approaches to history makes it easier for us to see many of the poorly disguised dreams and wishes present in all the official sagas. With generosity, our guests introduce us into the constant and invisible mechanism behind old and new hymns, elaborate flags, symbols, coat of arms, icons, '70s foreign affairs memorabilia and history schoolbooks.

Alexandra Croitoru & Stefan Tiron

Silence After Noise, Version 2

I am not ghost writing a dry and measured text for myself, but simply writing as me, the author/artist of the exhibited works.

Since starting to work with the comic (or “sequential pictoriality”) five years ago, I have frequently argued that it occupies a peculiar place between literature and visual art, since my work insists on a blurring or oscillation between reading and looking. But this is to masquerade what it is in fancy dress. It remains first and foremost a comic. While I have frequently used the medium to embark on a disquisition of recondite matters, they have remained primarily that, comics, and part of me insists, perhaps perversely, that my work retain something of this popular form.

Perhaps the present series of works marks a small advance in terms of shedding this perverse streak, since for this exhibit these comics masquerade as painting. But they are not comics about painting masquerading as paintings. From a critic's perspective, that's a good idea, but boring. But to the extent that painting, from the Renaissance onward, has been preoccupied as much by the fixing, shaping, and stabilizing of a particular notion of identity as with elaborating on the nature of perception, Silence After Noise, Version 2 does explore a terrain shared with the history of occidental painting without necessarily looking at all like painting or being structured like painting, they still occupy the same ground as painting. And furthermore, in this series of works I have been trying to find a suitably idiosyncratic way of representing some of Aby Warburg's ideas (specifically his notion of the pathos formula), a scholar who's primary interest was in the renewal of Classical references, from the quattrocento renaissance forward.

Let me explain further. Certainly our understanding of what painting does is filtered through the scrim of perception—optical, temporal, or psychological. Each presupposes a human agent doing

the looking and reflecting on the meaning or composition of that look, or doing the painting and reflecting on the affect or agency of that doing. But what is the unconscious in this process, since the above suggests painting results wholly from the conscious intention to mimic reality, and there is far more to it than that: the notion of “scene” or “tableau” still carry a psychic charge. In the present instance, the works I am writing about investigate those questions, but from eccentric vantages—that of reincarnation, or the LSD experience, or science fiction. And these disparate topics relate to one another in an essentially literary way—through allusion. As I say in one work, people live by stories, but different ones. And one legacy of modernity is that things that are connected are not necessarily contiguous (thanks to mass transportation and communication technologies), which lead to the notion that a story can be the stringing together of non-contiguous experiences, rather than a discreet set of events occurring one after another. That is, anyway, at the heart of it, how we as humans tend to make sense of the arbitrariness of our situation in the world—suturing together disparate occurrences to create the appearance of duration.

Michael Baers

Michael Baers (b. 1968 / US), a Berlin-based artist, has been making comic-like graphic works since 2004. He grew up on the island of Oahu, and lived until 2003 in California, where he received his art education. In 2004 he entered the Whitney ISP in New York. His work has been exhibited internationally, and he is also a frequent contributor to magazines, journals, and print initiatives including *Chto Delat*, *Fucking Good Art*, *Sum*, the *E-Flux Journal*, and others. Baers is a professor at Det Fynske Kunstakademi, Denmark. He was recently included in an exhibition of young Romanian artists in Venice for his collaboration with Alexandra Croitoru and Ștefan Tiron.

Alexandra Croitoru (b. 1975 / RO) is a visual artist based in Bucharest. In 2006 she started collaborating on different projects with Ștefan Tiron. Between 1993 and 1998 she studied at The National Academy of Arts Bucharest and since 1999 she teaches at the Photo-Video department of the same institution.

Ștefan Tiron (b. 1976 / RO) is also known as a paranoia double agent, information dealer, dirty data miner, info broker, shady somatic recipient and damaged cortical data retriever. He is currently producing the *Tschüssi Feng!* radio show.

Cristian Cercel (b.1984 / RO) has a BA in European Studies from the University of Bucharest and a MA in Nationalism Studies from Central European University in Budapest. Currently, he is a PhD student at the University of Durham (UK), doing research on representations of the German minority within post-1989 Romanian society. He has been editor of *Observator Cultural* and is active as a translator for different publishing houses and periodicals.

Vasile Pop-Negreșteanu (b. 1955 / RO) is a visual artist specialized in mural painting. Between 1976 and 1980 he studied at the Nicolae Grigorescu Institute of Arts, Bucharest. Since then he exhibits constantly and he is making murals for, among others, Nicolae Iorga Institute for History, Bucharest (1980), Cotroceni Palace, Bucharest (1982-1989) and for different churches (starting with 1997).

Olivia Tulbure-Strachină (b. 1930 / RO) is a historian, researcher and specialist in handmade facsimileing. She was the main archivist at the National Archives and she contributed establishing 30 different museums around Romania, like The National History Museum and The Military National Museum in Bucharest, The History Museum in Suceava, but also a museum dedicated to her own work in the elementary school of the

village Habic, Mureş. She participated in many exhibitions and contributed to all the editions of the International Congress of Dacology. Since 2007 she is a member of the Romanian Artist's Union.

Sorina Vasilescu (b. 1986 / RO) is a graphic designer and illustrator living in Bucharest. In 2008 she graduates from The Fine Arts Faculty, Timisoara. She is a winner of the 2009 European Cartoon Competition "European Union and Citizenship", organized by the European Commission, The Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security. Currently she is working on the comic "While We Wait" to be published by Hardcomics in 2010.

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