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portfolio

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**Cradle Vacaresti [working title]**  
2016. Performances filmed in Delta Vacaresti, Bucharest (Romania)

## “Delta Văcărești”: on the tyranny of naming things \*

Across the overpass, six bulky condos top a mount of withered grass. The grey sky stood against the towers’ freshly painted windowsills, in hues of blue, orange, yellow and green. At the back of the parking lot, a narrow dirt path led to the top of the rim. I shrugged in front of the gaping hole.

I scanned the horizon in a slow sweeping motion as if recording it. A man in rags was making his way up the giant bowl. Along the dirt path that circles the sloped concrete, joggers and walkers satisfied their need for conquering heights in their secret spot above the city. Further away from the condos panoptic views stood a man, bare-butt, over a small blue towel. As I stopped, he turned his chest towards me for a brief moment. He appeared uninterested by lurkers—or journalists. His eyes barely defying me, stared back at the great expanse in front of him.

Some twenty-five years ago this place was a mass grave to hundreds of houses and a cathedral that formed part of Văcărești. The village, originally in the south-eastern outskirts of Bucharest were it got its name from cow herders, became part of the regime’s plan to modernise the city. Earmarked for a citywide water retaining system, the village of Văcărești was wiped out in 1988, order of decree no.143. Yet problematic miscalculations led the project to failure. The resulting level difference between Lake Văcărești and the Dâmbovița River it was supposed to accommodate in case of flooding was not sufficient. As a last resort, they would have had to pump water straight from the river into the lake. The unreliable and uselessly expensive communicating vessels led to another expensive endeavour: the construction of a canal connecting Lake Mihăilești to Văcărești about ten miles apart.

Yet with the 1989 Revolution all construction stopped and the project was abandoned. The so-called “Lake Văcărești” over the eponymous town remains one of the city’s largest open scars, legacy of the Ceausescu regime.

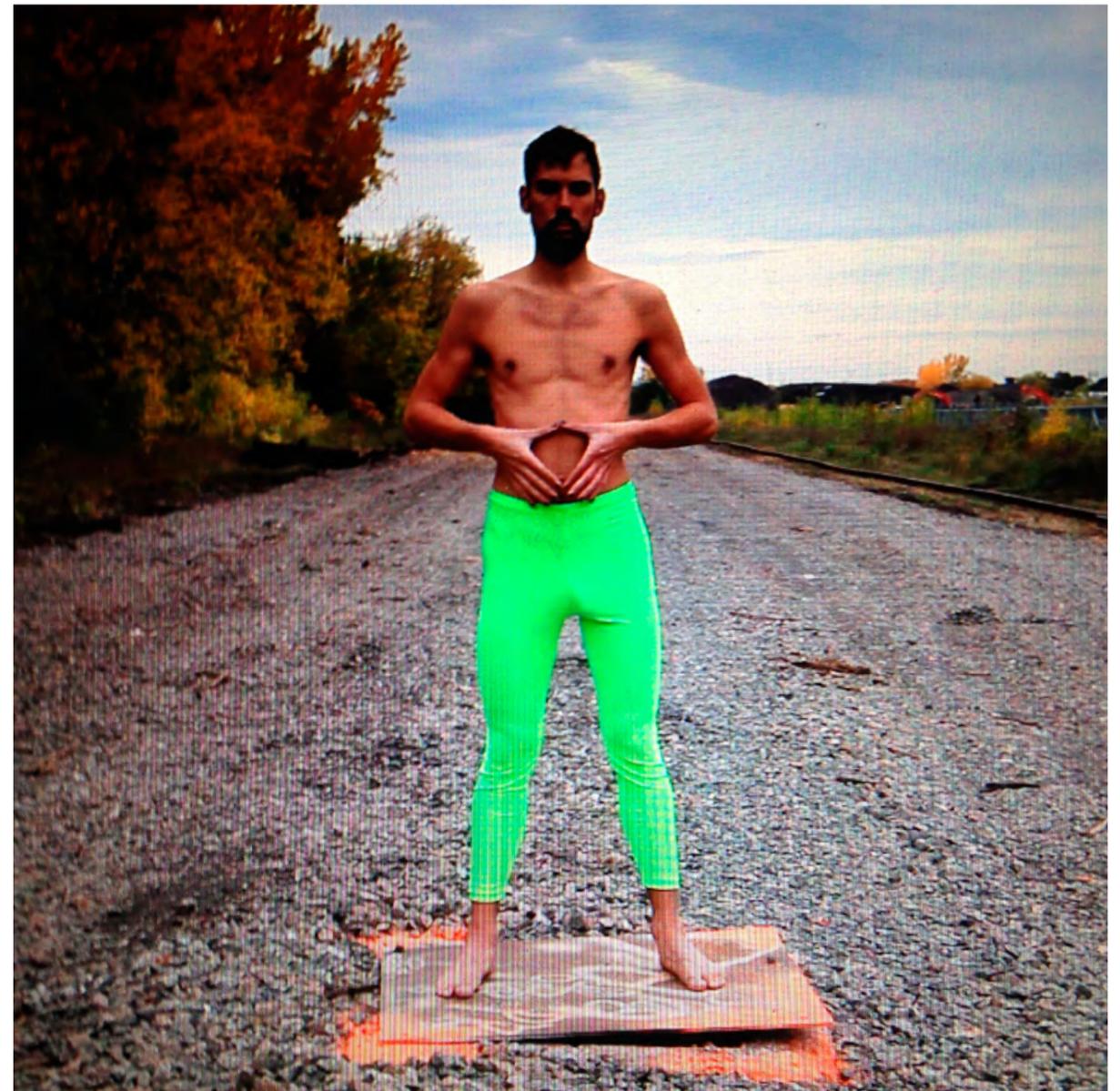
Today Văcărești is a giant swamp ringed by an elliptical concrete edge sloped like an amphitheatre. With no traces left of past rural life, it appears more like a meteorite had landed thousands of years ago. Or a 21st-century Pompeii Stadium with hundreds of thousands ghost spectators sat around the cracking bowl watching the forgotten show of hundreds of displaced bodies and souls. A year after concrete was poured, water gushed out from the ground and rainwater flowed down the banks: the land soon became a tropical-like haven. Today, the lavish nature that swarmed back up has raised the value of nearby glistening towering properties, ‘with lake views.’

With two square kilometre of urban flora in the city’s Sector 4, it’s pure ruin porn. Wide-angle drone footage online provide an immersive cinematic experience, duping the untrained eye into seeing images of the Danube pouring into the Black Sea between Romania and Moldavia. From the Black Forest to the Black Sea, the Danube carries with her all the leftovers of Europe, its excretions, its rejects of dead bodies and unwanted debris at the Delta. Here the Văcărești Delta carries the vestiges of a regime’s failed lofty endeavours. Coined the “Delta between blocks” by National Geographic, it is rarely a place for tourists, even though contingency options were considered.

While some urban myths circulated plans for a theme park, the official narrative has it that a Lebanese-Aus-

tralian investor was given a 49-year lease. The bowl would have received investment for the development of an all-in-one package of luxury residences, a golf course, a hippodrome, hotels and clubs. With lease royalties left unpaid year after year he had been living on borrowed time while water kept filtering through, blissfully unaware of investment cycles. Smart guy I thought for buying all this amount of land disputes and contract rights, promoting such a wonderful masquerade under his distant gaze half a world away: with new settlers taking possession of the wild land. [...]

*\* Extract from the upcoming book No East No West, a collaborative writing and photographic project by Alejandro Sajgalik, Justinien Tribillon and Richard John Seymour, to be published by dpr-barcelona.*



**Queering Infrastructural Space [working title]**  
2016. Self-portraits and Single-channel video performances in Montreal



**zuma\_cuts.mov**

2016. Single-channel video performance. (Color, stereo sound), 6:06min.

[Available online]: <https://vimeo.com/162836656>



**Occupy Fabrica**

2013. Installation and performance (varied office stationery, two time-lapse cameras, power cables). 140 x 100 cm. Fabrica's atrium, Treviso (Italy)





**DRONE: Speculative Fictions in the Age of the Drone**

2014. Risograph-printed artist book. 24 x 17 cm, 104 pages. Edition of 250 copies.  
Publishers: Fabrica, Treviso (Italy)



**DRONE**

2014. Video (B&W, sound), 1:10min. Sarah Riazati (Direction).  
Alejandro Sajgalik (Screenwriting, Voice-over). Jhon William Castaño Montoya (Music).



**Fray Foam Home** (as artistic coordinator for Andrés Jaque Architects)  
2010. Installation (aluminium wire, tape, variety of plastic items  
from wholesale, fluorocarbon fishing line). 8 x 2.5 x 0.5 meters.  
Venice Architecture Biennale, Italian Pavilion, Venice (Italy).

