

Curatorial Portfolio

Simina Neagu

October 2016



Exercises in Style

June 23 – August 15, 2016

Suprainfinit Gallery, Bucharest

Artists: Vanessa Billy, Ben Burgis & Ksenia Pedan, Luke Burton, Adam Cruces & Louisa Gagliardi, Adrian Dan, Lauren Keeley, Jan Kiefer, Ian Law, Erin Jane Nelson, Eugen Roșca

In 1947, towards the middle of the year, Raymond Queneau, of about 44 years old, publishes “Exercises in Style”. 99 vignettes are included in the volume, recounting the same story – a minor argument in an overcrowded Parisian bus involving a slightly eccentric young man, followed by some sound sartorial advice offered in front of the Gare Saint-Lazare to the same character. All a simple backdrop for an exhaustive range of rhetorical devices, word games and experiments with language. Modestly, Queneau describes his work as naïve, craftsmanlike and amusing. Precisely 69 years later, a group of artists are invited to choose a ‘style’ and respond with an artwork. The 12 artists email back and forth, receive a copy of the book and ultimately select different entries without major overlaps. All an exercise in the relevance (or irrelevance) of bringing together the visual and the verbal. ‘Tactile’, ‘Metaphorical’ or ‘Spectral’, the exhibition translates, reacts or rejects the written word.



Ben Burgis & Ksenia Pedan, *Abject Cafe*, 2016
Image credit: Catalin Georgescu

Installation view
Image credit: Catalin Georgescu





Installation view
Image credit: Catalin Georgescu

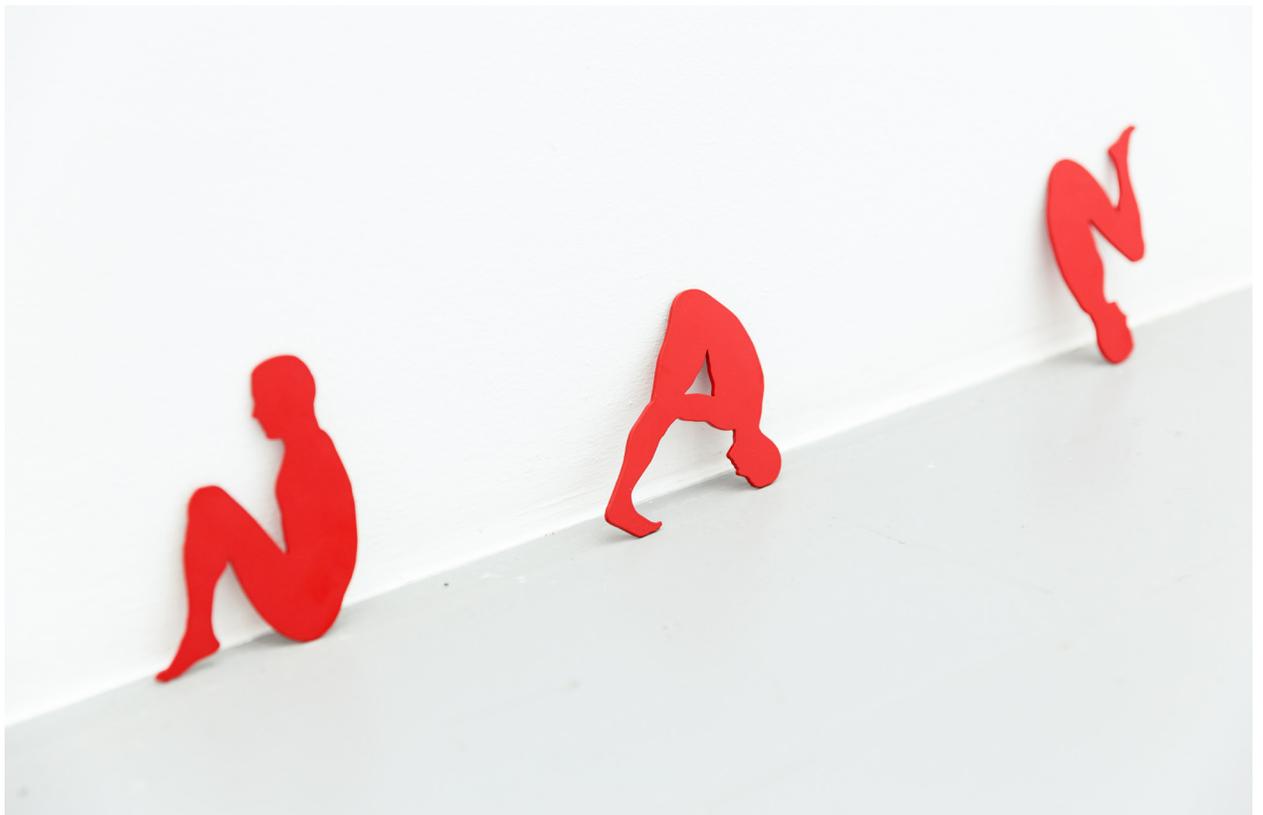
Installation view
Image credit: Catalin Georgescu





Installation view
Image credit: Catalin Georgescu

Jan Kiefer, installation view
Image credit: Catalin Georgescu





Unstill Objects & Lost Materials

28 July 2016, 8 pm

Gallery S O, London

Artists: Luke Burton, Tiziana La Melia and Tamara Henderson, Stephanie Mann, Bernhard Schobinger.

Co-curated with Valentina Bin

Starting from the commitment of Gallery S O to explore the role of the contemporary object in the field of art, design and craft, the screening will focus on the strategies of representation and presentation of objects within the framework of moving image as a plastic medium. From reflecting the curious eye of the maker, to seemingly 'touch' the filmic realm, the selected works suggest and activate uncommon dynamics between static forms, their supposed role or function and the 'spectator' gaze. The objects in the videos can be randomly found or carefully selected, fetishized or assembled, worn, caressed or displayed in alternative still lives according to an undisclosed classification system and a silent, surreptitious and sometimes magical language.



Tiziana la Melia and Tamara Henderson, *3 Pockets di O Getti*, 2013



Stephanie Mann, *Still Life on Face*, 2012



Screening of John Smith's 'Slow Glass',

Vitraria Glass+A Museum, Venice,

21 January 2015

Artists: John Smith

Co-curated with Valentina Bin

Physical presence is crucial to any discourse about glass, as it is for sculpture in general. At the same time, glass is quite particular from a sculptural point of view: it lets you 'see through' it and is made through a process that avoids direct physical manipulation. Drawing on these specificities, the screening programme tries to set aside the contingency of the glass object and concentrate on its virtual and filmic depiction. The series of events will also examine how this can open up a wider discourse touching upon themes like the plastic quality of cinema, the narrative of sculpture and the friction between image and material. The screenings will be focused on video art, but not limited to it, exploring the ways in which glass has been adopted as a metaphor and aesthetic statement rather than a mere material using the filmic medium. We wish to take a step back and examine the art and craft of glassmaking at a distance by presenting various standpoints, from artists' videos to cinema and advertising, gazing at the material through the filter of film. The screening was followed by a discussion with professor Valentina Re.

Days of Labour, Nights of Leisure

(Part of curated by 2012_Art or Life. Effects of Aesthetics and Biopolitics)

20 September - 3 November 2012

Knoll Galerie, Vienna

7 February - 30 March 2013

Knoll Galerie, Budapest

Artists

Anca Benera&Arnold Estefan (RO), Olga Chernysheva (RU), Berry Patten (UK), Antje Peters (DE)

How could we envision a break in the endless succession of work and leisure that constitutes our everyday life? Are we able to identify the 'lines of flight' imbedded in the seemingly impenetrable cycle of daily existence? And ultimately, can we truly escape the "atrophy of experience" induced by modernity, as Walter Benjamin suggested? Perhaps contemporary artistic practice could provide an antidote to our impoverished experience of everydayness, by disrupting the flow of work-leisure and the established regimes of visibility. Simultaneously a space of platitude and profundity, authenticity and inauthenticity, everyday life incorporates potentiality, spontaneity and play, which art can help flesh out from this double dimension of the ordinary. With Michel de Certeau, we can identify the crucial importance of ludic and subversive modes of appropriation which can foster not necessarily a completely new order, but rather new ways of living and using the given. Playful appropriation is also the tactic adopted by most of the artists in the exhibition, as a means of mirroring and suspending daily experience. Art thus acts as a distorting mirror, de-familiarizing our own bodies and practices, becoming a space of reflection, a terrain where new modes of articulation are tested and verified. Whereas other artists choose to use the platform of art as a zone where the latent conflicts and confusions inherent in everyday life are explored. Ingrained inconsistencies are brought to light in an attempt to resolve them. What emerges is a praxis or more accurately put, a re-articulation of the ordinary, not the common equations of "art=life" or "art+life", but rather an art of life.



Berry Patten, *Pure Sure*, 2012

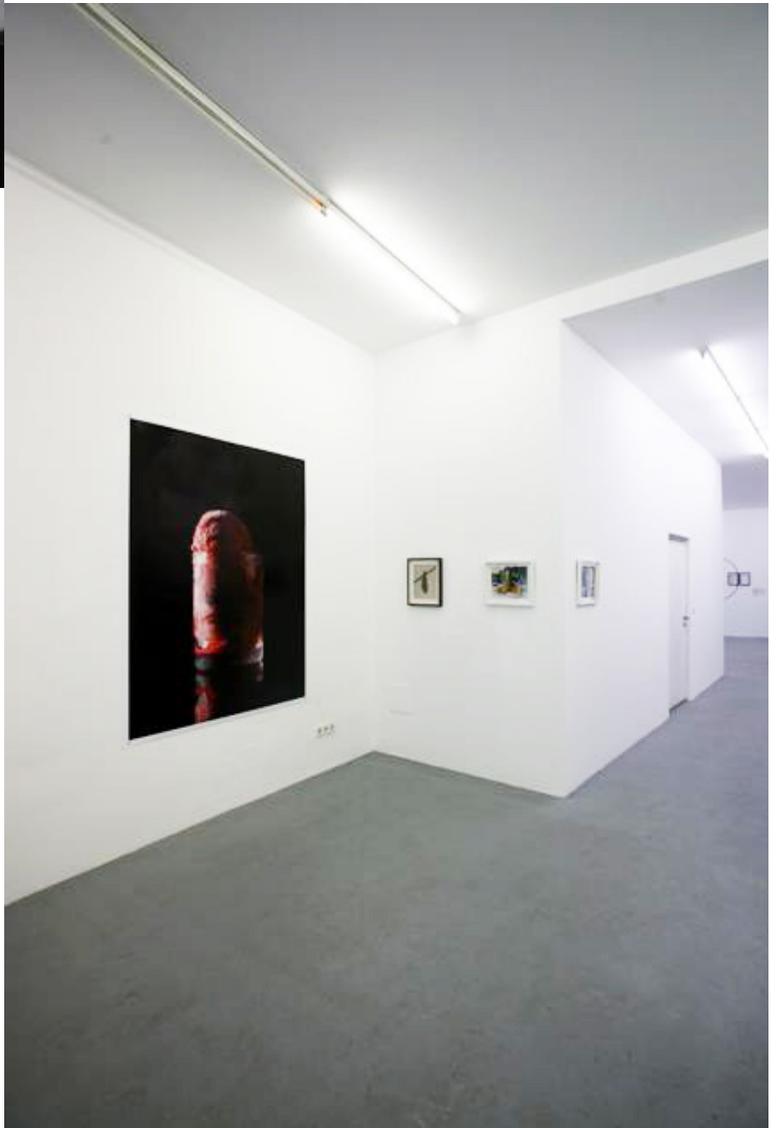
Antje Peters, *01/05 (VI. The Breakfast)*, 2008





Antje Peters, installation view.

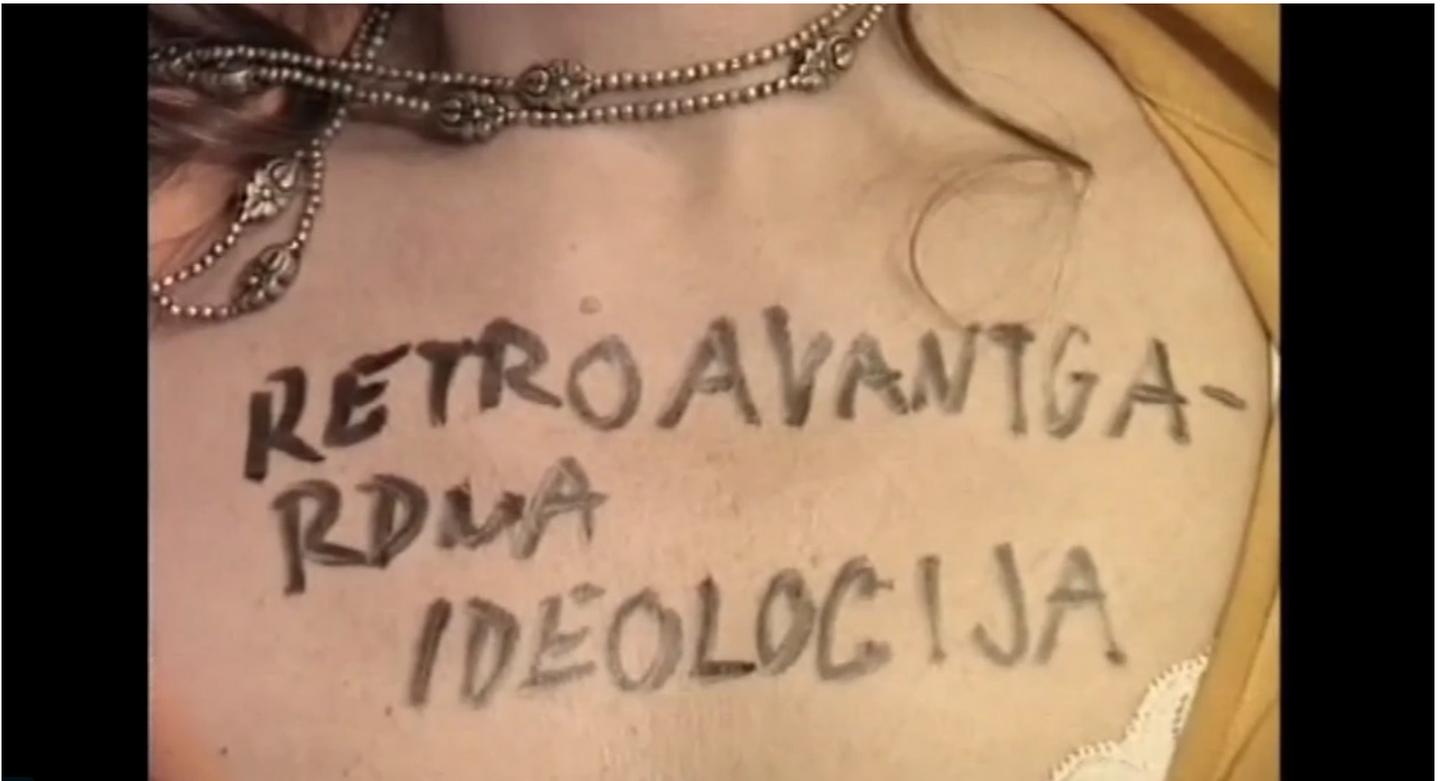
Antje Peters, installation view.





Anca Benera & Arnold Estefan, *Fictio Legis*, 2012.





1:1

October 2011

Centre for Visual Introspection, Bucharest

Artists: Marina Gržinić/Aina Šmid, Peter Weibel

Co-curated with AAA+

Theoretical reflection and critical practice both meet in the works of Austrian Peter Weibel and Slovenian duo Marina Gržinić/Aina Šmid, coupled with an investigation of the video medium through its own means. One could trace a line of historical development between their practices, but despite the obvious similarities, their positions radically diverge on the problem of (re)writing history. Or, to paraphrase the title of Peter Weibel's 1992 exhibition, it's a question of "identity and difference". The term "retro-avant-garde", coined by Weibel in the '90s (but initially employed by the Slovenian collective Neue Slowenische Kunst in 1983), tries to describe the art production of the former socialist states. Whereas for Gržinić/Šmid, Weibel's attempt at culturally delineating the so-called "former East" points out an important issue: who is entitled to write history in post-socialism? By placing their works in a dialogue, we will further observe if these issues are resolved or, rather, intensified.





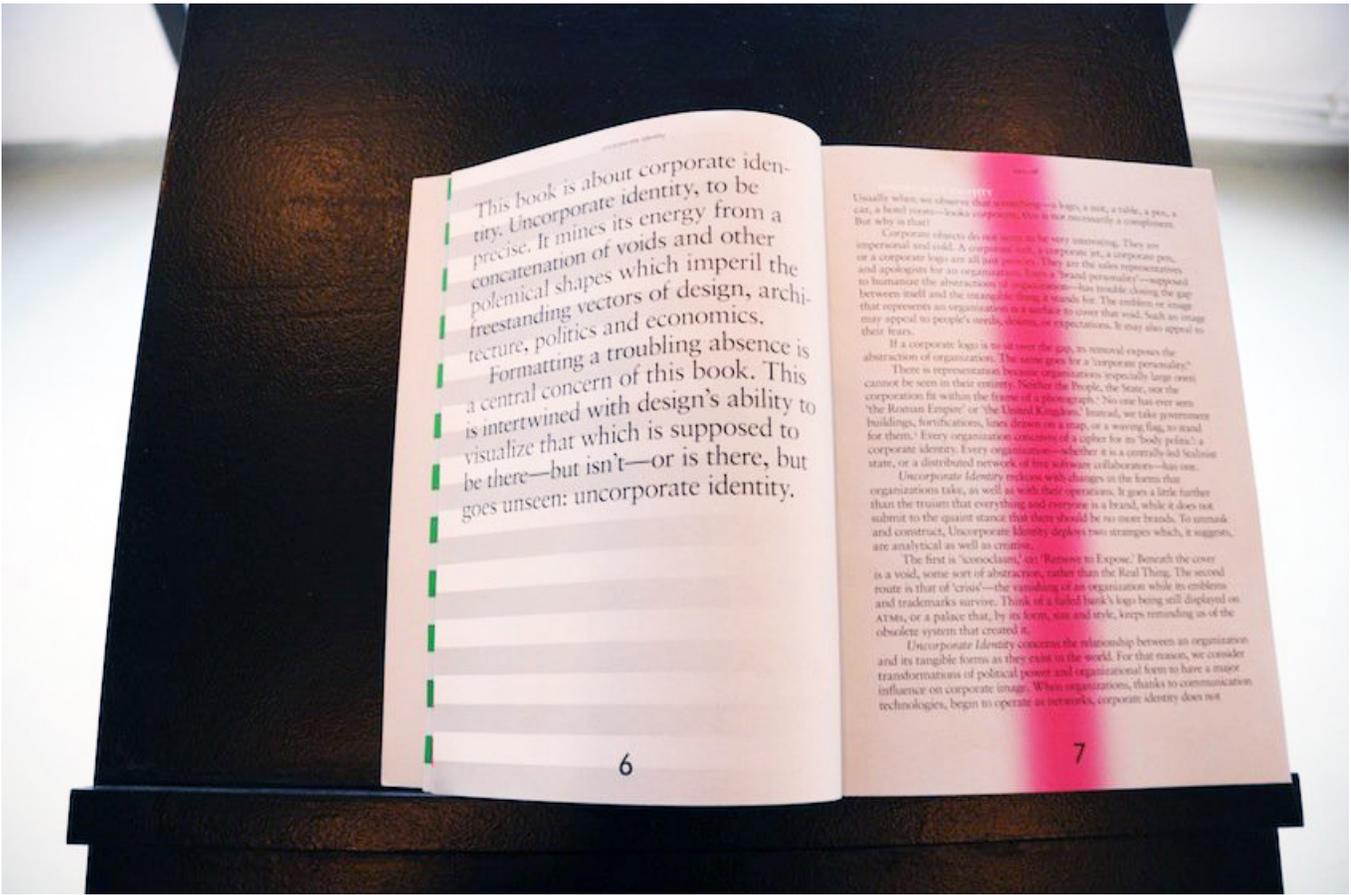
Just Do It

March 10 - May 22, 2011

Pavilion Unicredit, Bucharest

Artists: Freee (UK), Center for Tactical Magic (US), Foundland (NL),
Metahaven (NL), Bureau of Melodramatic Research (RO)

The city presents itself as a semiotic jungle, laden with logos that guide your path through the use of “soft power”. No longer compelled to act according to set values, the citizen-cum-consumer is persuaded to assert its own identity by consumption. But how can logos or symbols exert such influence and most importantly, are we to accept this influence as wholly positive? In order to answer these questions and analyze the mechanisms through which corporate organizations and the prevalent phenomenon of branding shape the social imaginary, artists and researchers choose different strategies of appropriation or resistance. From Metahaven’s analysis of visual identity to Freee’s critique of advertising, this exhibition tries to act as a toolkit for operating in a neo-liberal environment. What are the attitudes one might take towards this „distribution of the sensible” or validation of certain ways of seeing, acting or feeling, to quote Rancière? Far from being a visual manifestation of anti-corporate activism, the presented works fluctuate between protest and over-identification, engaging the viewer in a variety of discourses.



Metahaven, *Uncorporate Identity*, 2010.

Foundland, installation view.





Bureau of Melodramatic Research, installation view.

Free, installation view.



Simina Neagu (b. 1988, Bucharest, Romania) works as a curator, researcher and writer in London and Bucharest. She graduated with an MA in Aesthetics & Art Theory at Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, Kingston University London and worked as commissioned writer for institutions such as Gothenburg Museum of Art, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle or The Project Biennial of Contemporary Art, D-0 ARK Underground. Her fiction will be published in 3AM Magazine and she's currently working on an artist publication, a collection of bad art reviews in the form of quotes, transcripts and reproductions of previously published material, co-edited by Aleksandra Mir and The Kitchen NY.

Curatorial projects

February 2016 – August 2016 Associate Curator, *Exercises in Style*, Suprainfinit, Bucharest

July 2016 Co-Curator, *Unstill Objects* Screening, Gallery S O, London

November 2014 – February 2015 Co-curator, *Slow Glass*, *John Smith* Screening Vitraria Glass+A Museum, Venice

April 2012 - March 2013 Curator, *Days of Labour*, *Nights of Leisure*, Knoll Galerie, Vienna and Budapest

July 2011 – March 2012 Co-Curator, *Educracy*, Centre for Visual Introspection/subRahova, Bucharest

October 2011 Co-Curator, *1:1*, Peter Wibel - Marina Gržinić/Aina Šmid Screening, Centre for Visual Introspection, Bucharest

January - May 2011 Curator, *Just Do It*, Pavilion Unicredit, Bucharest

Selected Publications/Printed Matter

'Review: Ioana Nemeş | Eastside Projects', *springerin*, Arab Summer, German, 3/2014

'Les jeux sont faits: Romanian Contemporary Art at the Crossroads', *A Few Grams of Red, Yellow, Blue. New Romanian Art*, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, English/Polish, 2014

'The Parallax View: Ştefan Constantinescu's Practice Between Fiction and Reality', *Ştefan Constantinescu*, Gothenburg Museum of Art, English/Swedish, 2013

'Sceaux Gardens', *Berry Patten*, Zabłudowicz Collection, 2013

'The 1958 Moscow Exhibition or Khrushchev in Disneyland', *Project Biennial of Contemporary Art, D-0 ARK Underground catalogue*, English/Bosnian, 2013

'Days of Labour, Nights of Leisure', *Kunst oder Leben, curated by_2012*, English/German, 2012

'Just Do It. Biopolitical Branding'. Publication edited by PAVILION – journal for politics and culture, English/Romanian, 2011.