

C Centrul de
Fotografie
Contemporană
FC

CAMERA·PLUS

Biennial of contemporary photography and moving image
May 18-30, 2016 - Iasi, Romania

Galeria „Theodor Pallady”
7-9 Lăpuşneanu st.

Opening: May 20, 18:00

Exhibition

NOMADIC ARCHIVES

Artists: **Dan Acostioaei, Tudor Bratu** (RO/NL),
Alexandra Croitoru, Tatiana Fiodorova (MD)

Curator: **Cristian Nae**

May 20 – May 30, 2016

“Theodor Pallady” Gallery

NOMADIC ARCHIVES

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20 - 30 May 2016

Opening: May 20, 2016, 6 pm

In the framework of the Biennial of Contemporary Photography and Moving Image CAMERA PLUS, organized by the Centre of Contemporary Photography, Iași, the exhibition “Nomadic archives”, curated by **Cristian Nae**, presents artworks of four contemporary artists (**Dan Acostioaei, Tudor Bratu, Alexandra Croitoru and Tatiana Fiodorova**) which use the media of photography and video, as well as the photobook in a critical manner, questioning the ontological, methodological and formal character of documentary practices. The exhibition can be visited between May 20 - 30 during 11 – 17 h. For more information about the Biennial, the program can be found at the following adress: www.c-f-c.ro/cameraplus/

As an instrument for the production of subjectivity, the travel diary has had significant transformative effects in modern times. Situated between document and literary narration, between confession, testimony and imaginary construction, together with other ego-documents such as the photographic archive and the family photo album, it contributed to the fictionalization of history, producing new cultural geographies and new social imaginaries. Employing the disruptive potential of these discursive formations, and subsequently thematising the current condition of the artistic photobook as specific, non-spectacular form of visual presentation and knowledge production, the exhibition makes way for polyphonic and performative means to reconsider the notion of archive. The nomadic character of the archive designates both its inner instability and the displacements operated in various fields of knowledge that tend to map and, thus, to symbolically structure the social space. The curatorial selection aims to point out divergent relational trajectories and embedded politics of memory, while being critical to the notion of structure and the modernist epistemology of the document, recurrent in the last decade in relation to the economy and politics of locality. The exhibited artworks instantiate blind spots and produce frictions between image and text, between narration and visibility, between personal and collective memory and between aesthetics and politics that test the limits of the visible and the sayable in the unstable framework of the current discourse of globalisation.



Tudor Bratu, *The Dissidents' Travel Guide*, Artists' Publication, Ed. 700, 180 pages, Duo Tone and Full Color, 2011-2014

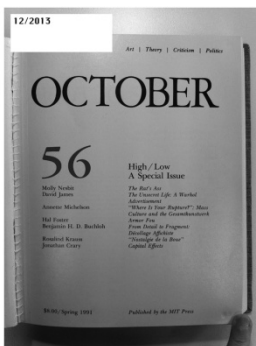
Tudor Bratu's project *The Dissidents' Travel Guide*, consisting of photography, essays, installation, artist's publication, and video, mimics the travel guide logic by briefly showcasing real life situations in an impartial way, while proposing the core of dissidence to be reached only through the experience of proximity, i.e. through a conscious documentary approach. It functions as a fragmented and fragmentary rendering of the contemporary nature of the traditional documentary form, while engaging a study of the post-ism identity in dealing with a globalized non-ethics, which is proposed to govern social spheres worldwide. It also approaches the relation between politics of representation and the representation of politics through a reflection upon visual strategies of reporting and recording. Emotion, curiosity, shock and beauty are carefully evacuated from these images.

The result of three years of research, the artists' publication *The Dissidents' Travel Guide* includes photography, essays, transcripts of documentary videos, and the series *Commissioned Drawings*. The material has been gathered, found, made or commissioned during different travels, most notably in Romania (2010-2012) and China (2011).

Văcărești video work takes into account blind spots of the process of urban planning in Bucharest and its post-socialist remains. *Văcărești Lake* is an artificial lake located in the middle of a residential area of Bucharest, built by the dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, but never finished. At the time of filming, it was inhabited by 39 people: men, women, and underage children, who due to a lack of a proper social welfare system in Romania, took refuge in improvised shelters in the space of the former lake, which over the years had turned into a swamp. The video follows one permanent inhabitant of the lake taking the artist on a guided tour while shedding light on his personal story.

The video work *Straja*, also a part of the same project, follows a similar artistic methodology. *Straja*, which literally means *the guardian*, was a farmer's village of 900 people, along Nicolae Ceausescu's most infamous Gulag, the Danube - Black

Sea Canal. It existed until 1988. One night that year, the villagers were forced out of their houses, while bulldozers dug holes and buried the entire village. The operation took less than three days to complete, leaving behind only the cemetery which still exists today. The video presents the stories of former inhabitants of Straja, as they relate the happenings of 1988 and their lives afterwards. Until today the illegally obtained land has not been returned to their rightful owners, a situation which is symptomatic of Romania's refusal to cope with its Communist legacy and past.



Alexandra Croitoru, *Paris: A Photobook*, 3 volumes, 26,5x20cm each, single copies, 2016

Alexandra Croitoru's *Paris: A Photobook* must be considered on the one hand, in relation to the tradition of *photobook* publications, and on the other hand as a meditation upon the function of photography within and outside the current artistic field, and, on a more personal level, in her own artistic practice. Expectancies related to the kind of publication announced by the title of this project (established since 1950's by books such as *The Americans*, *Paris Mortel* or *New York* made by Robert Frank, Johan van der Keuken or William Klein) are deliberately deceived. The artwork is using the methodology of conceptual photography books realized in the '60s and '70s by artists such as Ed Ruscha or John Baldessari. The volumes are comprised of the chronological, unselective presentation of all photographs taken during a three-month residency in Paris in 2013-2014. These photographs, which were neither realized nor subsequently processed with a view of being published, are mostly recording books read at Kandinsky Library of Pompidou Museum as a part of her PhD research. Among them one can find images taken as notes for remembering the situations, places or objects, touristic snapshots or images that record moments of her personal life. Besides its qualities as a journal, the project highlights Alexandra Croitoru's own trajectory from using photography as an artistic object to its employment as a mere recording device. According to the artist, "this passage from aesthetic production to the production of knowledge speaks both about the text-centered contemporary culture, as well as about the profound transformation of artistic labour in recent times. Last, but not least, the project critically discusses the

fetishization of historical photobooks which, lately, are increasingly re-photographed and reproduced so that the form and experience of reading the book as an object will be enhanced detrimental to the information that may be extracted from the content itself."



Tatiana Fiodorova, *Fabrica Steaua Roșie*, Photobook, 64 pages, color; few pages printed on photo paper, 2013 - 2014

Tatiana Fiodorova's photobook *Steaua Rosie* (Red Star) recalls and questions the social condition of the Soviet Moldavian textile factory *Steaua Roșie*, where the artist's mother used to work for more than 25 years. The Factory was the flagship of the Moldovan light industry in the Soviet era. In Soviet times, the factory had eighteen departments, 240 brigades and 3,855 workers. It was closed in 1999 due to its huge debts and was declared bankrupt by the Economic Court – a situation similar to many other processes of de-industrialization during post-communist era. Through the personal story of her mother, the artist reinterprets and analyses the role of women and labour in the Soviet and post-Soviet context. In Fiodorova's project, clothes become the pretext for an analysis of social space and an investigation of the relations between body politics, gender politics and the conditions of labour. In the book, photographs of clothes produced during that period are exhibited in barren landscapes, in an uncanny fashion-like presentation. The absence of any human figure from these images allegorizes an almost forgotten recent past and the invisible body politics related to them. The photographed items become material fragments that embody different social promises and incorporate both a significant amount of invisible labour and a certain social semiotics.

The video work *European Clothing*, which complements the photographic project, highlights in a documentary manner, through the eyes of an unseen observer, the everyday life in post-soviet Moldavia, searching with factographic accuracy for the persistence of these items as details amidst the urban flow. The irony of the title alludes both to the projections associated to Western neo-colonial discourse and to the often exoticizing manner in which the Soviet space appears as a politically charged representation.



Tatiana Fiodorova,
*Bessarabia and its
Inhabitants*, Photobook,
black and white, inkjet, 64
photo pages; 12
photographs made by Lefter
Vasilii, black and white, 9 x
14 cm, 2016

The project *Bessarabia and its Inhabitants* continues **Tatiana Fiodorova's** research into the Bessarabian-Soviet past via the photo archive created by Vasilii Lefter, the artist's father. The book is based on archival materials and images of the villagers through which Fiodorova analyses, in an artistic way, the role of the peasants in the Soviet and post-Soviet context. The peasants are shown in the background of nature from their infancy to adulthood. On the one hand this cycle is repeated – on the other hand, sometimes there are failures, errors and losses. The unstable character of this archive stems from the represented subject – today, a historically charged fiction. Fiodorova records the traces of the slow process by means of which social reality turns into collective memory. In the context of the present day, the traditional concept of the peasant is blurred now; the majority of those who were peasants have become city dwellers or migrant workers. In both cases, the village is profoundly redefined through its symbolic displacement. According to the latest report by the Centre for State Information Resources, 50 villages in Moldova have effectively disappeared, left with fewer than 40 inhabitants. Villages in Moldova are dying in this way due to lack of employment and migration to urban areas and abroad.

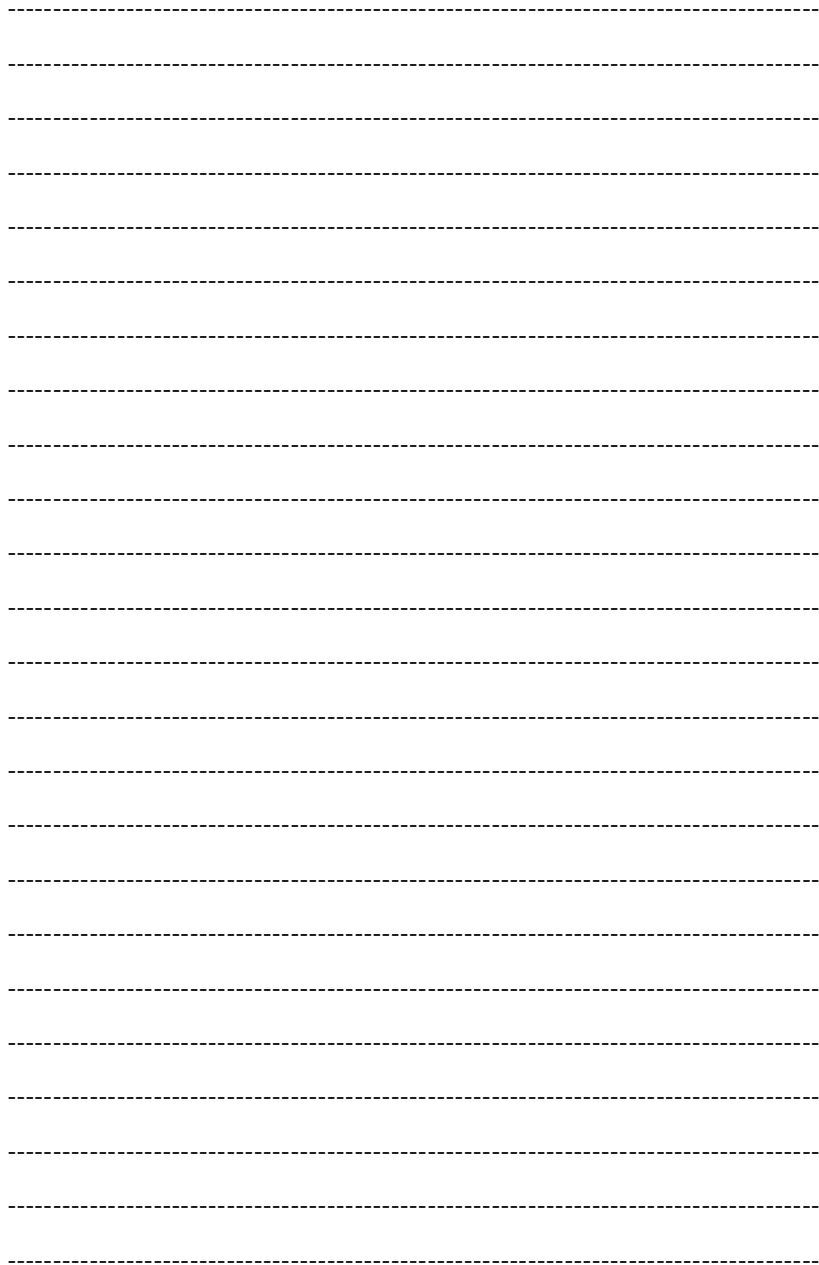
Artist's biographies:

Dan ACOSTIOAEI (b. 1974) is teaching at George Enescu University of Arts, Iasi. He holds a PhD in Visual Arts from George Enescu University of Arts, Iasi. His works focus on the identity models of Romanian transition and on the ideological borders between the economic sphere and the conditions of artistic production in Eastern Europe. His artistic projects have been presented in exhibitions such as "In Times of Hope and Unrest", National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest (2015), "Laughter and Forgetting", Bucharest Art Week Festival, Bucharest; "Few Were Happy with their Condition: Video and Photography in Romania, Motorenhal, Dresden; "Between Democracies 1989-2014 - Remembering, narrating and reimagining the past in Eastern & Central Europe and South Africa", Constitution Hill, Johannesburg; MPRA The School of Kyiv, Kiev Biennale, "One Sixth of the Earth - Ecologies of Image", MUSAC, Leon, "Transitland: videoart in Central and Eastern Europe 1989-2009", Reina Sofia, Madrid, "Illuminations", Level 2 Gallery, Tate Modern, London.

Tudor BRATU (b. 1977) is an artist and curator based in Bucharest, Romania and Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He graduated both philosophy and art history from the University of Amsterdam. He also graduated photography from Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. Between 2014 and 2015 he was an artistic director at Chongqing Artists-in-Residence, Chongqing, China. He benefited from art residencies in Graz, Antwerp, Kishinev and Beijing, as well as at Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Amsterdam. His artworks, focused especially on the aesthetics, practice and politics of the documentary, have been presented in solo shows at Joey Ramone Gallery, Rotterdam, Lokaal 01, Antwerp, Blue Episode, Utrecht and PSWAR, Amsterdam, as well as in group shows organized by institutions such as: Club Electroputere, Bucharest, Salonul de Proiecte, MNAC Bucharest, Piano Etudes, Sao Paulo, Chongqing AiR, Chongqing, KunstHal 52, Den Helder, Berlin, KunstHal 52, Today Art Museum, Beijing, IMMA Irish Museum for Modern Art, Dublin, FOAM, Photography Museum Amsterdam and Bucharest Biennial, Bucharest.

Alexandra CROITORU (b. 1975) is a visual artist based in Bucharest, Romania. Since 1999 she has been teaching at the Photo-Video department of the National University of Arts, Bucharest. She holds a PhD from UNArte Bucharest. Since 2011 she has been a co-curator at Salonul de proiecte Bucharest. Her critical art projects have been presented in exhibitions organized by institutions such as Kunsthalle Winterthur, MNAC Bucharest, tranzit.ro/Bucharest, Club Electroputere Craiova, MUMOK Vienna, Zacheta National Gallery of Art Warsaw, Stedhalle Zurich, Casino Luxembourg, Kunstlerhaus Bethanien Berlin, Salon of the Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade, Kunsthallen Nikolaj Copenhagen, Centre for Contemporary Art Plovdiv, Kunsthalle project space Vienna, Brukenthal Museum Sibiu, Le Musée d'Art Moderne, Saint-Etienne, Kunsthalle Athena, Bienala de la Haifa, "Timișoara Art Encounters biennial", Timișoara, Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź and Galeria Plan B Cluj.

Tatiana FIODOROVA (b. 1976) lives and works in Kishinev, The Republic of Moldavia. She works mainly with installation, performance, public art, video art and artist books. Her artworks were exhibited at the Delhi Festival of Photography; the parallel program of the Moscow Contemporary Art Biennial (2015); Salonul de proiecte at Viennafair (2013); Berlin Biennial (2012); Moscow Contemporary Art Biennial (2011); Periferic 8 Biennial for Contemporary Art, Iasi (2008); National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest; freiraum Q21 International; MuseumsQuartier from Vienna; Kalmar Art Museum; MOCAK Krakow, Neues Museum Weimar; Docks en Seine in Paris; Museum of Ethnography and Natural History Kishinev and in galleries such as Karlín Studios, Prague; Zacheta Project Room, Warsaw; Anzenberger Gallery, Vienna; Constitution Hill, Johannesburg; Galeria Arsenal din Białystok; “Mystetskyi Arsenal” Museum Complex from Kiev; Center for Research of Politics and Culture, Kiev; «ЦЭХ», Minsk; Welch School Galleries din Atlanta (USA); Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow; Short Cuts Gallery, Namur; WG KUNST din Amsterdam; M'ARS Center for Contemporary Art in Moscow; National Center for Contemporary Art NCCA, Moscow; Donau University, Krems; Galeria Emil Filla from Ústí nad Labem; Galeria Zpatiu, Kishinev, etc.



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