

The Steps, the Words and the Usual

Artist: Matei Bejenaru
Curator: Anca Verona Mihuleț
February 12th – March 20th 2016

Dear friends,

We are delighted to invite you Friday, the 12th of February, 6 PM, to the opening of Matei Bejenaru's exhibition, *The Steps, the Words and the Usual*, curated by Anca Mihuleț.

Physics and neurophysiology teaches us that in order to come closer to the real structure of nature, we need the clarity of the sight; the eye is conceived as part of the brain, a valid transmitter of the visual information. The vision, whether we perceive it in a simple manner, part of the procesuality of sight, whether we perceive it in an expanded field, as a capacity to go beyond the physical limitation and to penetrate a non-linear space, has an essential role in the thinking and knowledge processes.

The transmission and the explanation of the visual information are pieces of a complex mechanism that incorporates a system formed of images, static and in motion, sounds, the recovery of memory and the conditionality of the surrounding environment. Paul Virilio, in the chapter "The Morphological Irruption" from the book *Lost Dimension*, meditates upon the constitution of the image, realising unexpected connections between light, transparency, speed and the formation of visual perceptions. For Virilio, the profoundness of time is replaced by the profoundness of the field described by the sensitive space; in his demonstration, the thinker equalizes light and space per se. It is a courageous statement, but in the same time argumentatively strong, in the context in which, no matter what stratum he approached (physical, media, moral, of observer or of accomplice) he always returns to the almost unsuspected coherence of light.

In the last years, Matei Bejenaru has documented the evolution of a series of institutions that were about to close, to disappear or to be reconfigured, surprising the sublime moment in which objects and mechanisms that were once functional or producing possibility had been covered in plastic while waiting for their future history. Facing the determinism of regional histories, Matei Bejenaru fortifies the understanding towards places subjected to the regime of change, slow or accelerated. At the crossing between different critical spaces, the triumphal light from the Negev Desert meets the light that goes off from the Natural History Museum in Iași; this point of intersection between visual representation, critical space and light represents the formation point of the abstract image.

In the exhibition *The Steps, the Words and the Usual*, Bejenaru reunites several of the working methods he reiterated in the last years – the thinking march, accompanied by film shooting, photo-documentation and audio recording, together with appointing tasks – this time, he has provoked the literary critic Doris Mironescu to write a poem about the abstraction of the image and the usage of light. The moment he started the thinking march, the artist gave himself the task to discover a way of abstracting the frames he sees and records – a vision and memory exercise that materializes in the studio, when the recourse to light and technology redimensions the real.

The steps become words, the words are being transformed into interfaces, and the usual is being surrounded by suspense and progresses into hyper-space.

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Matei Bejenaru (1963) is a visual artist who lives and works in Iași, where he teaches photography and video art at the “George Enescu” University of Arts. In his projects, through photography, video, performance and inter-media installations, he analyzes how the ways of economic production, technological knowledge, mentalities and lifestyles have changed in the last two decades in the post-communist countries. The Romanian workers’ immigration towards the West was analyzed in his artistic projects Travel Guide and Maersk Dubai, selected for various international exhibitions, like the ones in Tate Modern, Level 2 Gallery in London in 2007, The Taipei Biennial in 2008.

His choral music experimental project, started in 2010, Songs for a Better Future, was presented at The Drawing Room and Tate Modern in London, Western Front la Vancouver, Kuenstlerhaus Buchsenhausen Innsbruck, Laakteater Haga. The most recent episode of this project, Ode of the Matter, was exhibited at The National Museum of Contemporary Museum in Bucharest and at the Art Encounters Biennial in Timișoara.