

**subREAL, Dataflow:
a retrospective game of chance, 2012**

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Biography

subREAL
(Călin Dan, Josif Király)

With a background in art history (Călin Dan) and architecture (Josif Király), subREAL achieved international reputation through a multi-media approach to the theme of photo archives. The project “The Art History Archive”, with its spin offs “Serving Art” and “Interviewing the Cities” are dealing with the ways technical photo reproductions are transforming our perception not only of art, but also of the human and social environments where artistic discourses are produced.

The “Art History Archive” series was launched during a one-year residency at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (1995-1996). 18 crates with photographic material abandoned by UAP (the Fine Art Union) after the disbandment of the Arta magazine – which had controlled the public image of local art between 1953 and 1989 – were turned there into a dynamic sculpture by covering the walls and ceiling of the space of their studio with b/w reproductions of various dimensions. This headfirst introduction was followed by a series of events which had artistic press photography as their conceptual core. The “Serving Art” series (1997-1999) was next, in which a number of negatives of reproduction photos were deconstructed in installations that recovered the aura around the art object, by following themes such as: the interaction between culture and politics; photography as a bridge between the public and private spheres; the ambiguous innocence of the photographic camera; social involvement versus social convention, etc.

In “Interviewing the Cities”, initiated in Vienna in 1999, “the servants of art”, marginal characters who carried out the ritual of presenting the art work, were replaced by the artists themselves. The re-enactment of the images from the archive had a double purpose: to represent the artistic communities from various cities, and to articulate a subjective diary of the encounters with people and places. The project is made of three series of staged photographs: portraits produced in collaboration with the members of the local artistic scenes; interviews with public space monuments; urban perspectives using the trompe l’oeil technique in order to underline the artificiality of urbanism and its good collaboration with the tourism industry.

subREAL is the first truly international group that originated in Romania after 1989. Belonging to a generation of transition, the members of the group took the first steps in establishing a dialogue with western art, helping to transform the closed culture from which they were coming into an open one. They participated in major international events: 1996 Manifesta 1, Rotterdam (NL), 1998 the Berlin Biennale, Berlin (DE), 1999 the Venice Biennale, Romanian Pavilion, Venice (IT). They exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago (1995), Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (1996), the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia (1996), Akademie Schloss Solitude (1998), etc.

subREAL has contributed to most exhibitions dedicated to contemporary art in Central and Eastern Europe between 1997 and 2003: 1997 “Bukarest nach ’89. Kunst in Rumänien heute”, Lud-

wig Forum für Internationale Kunst, Aachen (DE); 1999 “After The Wall”, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (SE); 2000 “L’Autre moitié de l’Europe”, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris (FR); 2000 “Arteast Collection”, Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana (SI); 2002 “In Search of Balkania”, Neue Galerie, Graz (AT); 2003 “Blood and Honey”, Sammlung Essl – Kunst der Gegenwart, Vienna (AT). This brings out in bold relief the part played by the artistic duo in the re-configuration of the international contemporary art world after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

A comprehensive retrospective of subREAL is on view at the National Museum of Contemporary Art (MNAC) Bucharest (RO)(www.mnac.ro).