

Marcel Rusu

Marcel Rusu (b. 1989, Medias, Romania) is a contemporary artist living and working in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Having completed his D.A., M.F.A., and B.F.A. studies at the renowned University of Art and Design in Cluj-Napoca, Rusu depicts human figures situated in interior and exterior architectural environments, with a mixture of traditional and digital techniques.

Rusu's body of work is hyperreal, merging the boundaries between oil painting, photography, and digital image rendering, commenting on the nature of the objective medium of recording reality. The cold tones and contrasting, negative colour palettes

resonate with not only the unique artistic process but also the motifs of his work, linking the human, and the environment to the socio-political condition engraved in his cultural background. His subject matter is deeply spatial and architectural, where the environment is omnipresent, in which the human figure is immersed. The environmental context informs the subjects of the works, which are usually taken from the socio-political circumstances typical of an Eastern European nation.

Rusu describes the unique condition of Romania, and perhaps of all the other Eastern European countries, as the 'daimon of history' that is born out of the incongruous coexistence of modernism and Soviet architecture. His painting depicts scenes ranging from personal mundane moments such as vacations at the Black Sea to collective memories like the emergence of the consumer society in the late 1990s following the drastic political and economic shifts, as well as recent events such as the war in Ukraine. Beneath the calm, serene facade of the ocean, the intimate room, nature, and the everlasting architecture are the inherent incongruences that give birth to a new hybrid reality that is heterotopic in a Foucauldian sense. Contrasts and conflicts are inherent in his binomial compositions of interior and exterior, local



and global, night and day, which all contribute to the grander socio-political context embedded in Rusu's body of work.

At the beginning of his artistic career, oscillating between abstractionism and figuration, Rusu started exploring the surface and materiality as a medium in itself, entering into direct and mechanical competition with photography through painting. He was intrigued by how image is perceived in a world overflowing with images, in press, advertisements and social media. Examining the distinct set of structural characteristics and informational vectors in each platform which are often manipulative and precisely encoded, the Romanian artist develops his artistic practice commenting on the role of representational painting in new artistic realities.

Based on the symbolic use of oil painting techniques with new, technological mediums rendering the final image, Rusu employs diverse materials and processes, from oil and acrylic paint, airbrush, and cutter-plotter to digital manipulation software. Playing with a variety of techniques and artistic processes in the Western art paradigm, from airbrush to photorealist style, Rusu creates images unique to Eastern Europe, challenging the boundaries of the medium.

The Cluj-Napoca-based artist has exhibited in numerous museums, galleries, and independent art spaces including The Museum of Art Cluj-Napoca; Palazzo Rici Museum, Macerata; Sector 1 Gallery, Bucharest; CF Hill Gallery, Stockholm; Galateca Gallery, Bucharest; Richter Fine Art Gallery, Rome; Boccanera Gallery, Trento; Rosenfeld Gallery, London. His artworks are part of private collections in France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, The Netherlands, Romania, Sweden, the U.S., the U.A.E. and the U.K.

Marcel Rusu CV

b. 1989 - Romania

Lives and works in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Education

2013-2020 Doctor of Arts, Universitatea de Artă și Design, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

2011-2013 Master of Arts, Universitatea de Artă și Design, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

2008-2011 Bachelor of Arts, Universitatea de Artă și Design, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2023 *A Hard Rain is Gonna Fall*, The H Gallery, Bucharest, Romania

2023 *Unpredictable Horizon*, Adrian Sutton Gallery V-space, London, United Kingdom

2018 *Personal Metonymies*, Sector 1 Gallery, Bucharest, Romania

2015 *No Man on the Moon*, Visual Kontakt Gallery, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

2013 *Expo Maraton Contest*, Casa Matei Gallery, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Selected Group Exhibitions

2023 *Alive in Sight only for a Second*, Sector 1 Gallery, Bucharest, Romania

2022 *Engrame*, Cosmic House Gallery, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

2021 *Mirror, Mirror? Contemporary Selfhood in Romanian Art*, CFHill Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden

2020 *Neo-Manifest Romantic*, The Museum of Art, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

2019 *Restart*, The Museum of Art, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

- 2019 *Bluebird*, Sector 1 Gallery, Bucharest, Romania
- 2018 *SOTTOBOSCO*, The Museum of Art, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- 2017 *The Exquisite Corpse Drinks the New Wine*, Sector 1 Gallery, Bucharest, Romania
- 2017 *Haiku. Poems by emerging Romanian Artists*, Boccanera Gallery, Trento, Italy
- 2016 *The Cutting Edge III*, The Art Museum, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
- 2016 *Throwing Balls in the Air - Academiae | Youth Art Biennale 2016*, Fortezza, Alto Adige, Italy
- 2016 *Group Exhibition*, Accademia di Belle Arti Perugia 1573, Perugia, Italy
- 2015 *Black and White Biennial, The 4th Edition*, The Art Museum from Satu Mare, Romania
- 2015 *Group Exhibition*, Accademia di Belle Arti Macerata, Italy
- 2015 *Around Drawing*, Rosenfeld Porcini Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2014 *Latin Love. Pittura tra Bari e Cluj-Napoca*, Fortino S. Antonio, Bari, Italy
- 2014 *Latin Love. Pittura tra Bari e Cluj-Napoca*, Casa Matei Gallery. Cluj- Napoca, Romania
- 2013 *Universitatea de Artă și Design - Master's Degree Group Exhibition*, Expo Transilvania, Cluj- Napoca, Romania
- 2012 *Group Exhibition*, Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Nancy, France
- 2011 *Universitatea de Artă și Design - Bachelor's Degree Group Exhibition*, Expo Transilvania, Cluj- Napoca, Romania
- 2010 *Group Exhibition*, Sibiu City Hall's Gallery, Sibiu, Romania
- 2010 *Group Exhibition*, Palazzo Ricci, Macerata, Italy
- 2010 *Group Exhibition*, Mirionima Gallery, Macerata, Italy

Residencies & Collaborations

- 2011 *Work Residence at Intact Cultural Space from Paintbrush Factory*, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

JD Malat Gallery
30 Davies St, Mayfair,
London W1K 4NB
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2007 *Decoration for Faust* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, directed by Silviu Purcarete,
Radu Stanca National Theatre, Sibiu, Romania

Selected Art Fairs

2019 *Volta, Art Basel*, Sector 1 Gallery, Basel, Switzerland

2018 *Contemporary Istanbul 2018*, Sector 1 Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey

Awards

2016 Second Prize, FRASE GOT TALENT. POST INTERNET PRIZE, 2016 edition

Selected Works



Marcel Rusu
The Fountain of Youth, 2024
Acrylic and oil on linen
57 1/8 x 65 in
145 x 165 cm



Marcel Rusu
The Curtain, 2018
Oil on wood
9 7/8 x 7 1/2 in
25 x 19 cm