

Marcel Rusu

Marcel Rusu (b. 1989, Medias, Romania) is a contemporary artist living and working in Romania known for merging traditional and digital media to create hyperreal, socially engaged works that often reflect on architectural space, identity, and the socio-political landscape of Eastern Europe.

Having completed his BFA, MFA, and DA studies at the renowned University of Art and Design in Cluj-Napoca, his artistic language skillfully merges the boundaries between oil painting, photography, and digital image rendering. He begins by digitally constructing or altering his compositions, often employing photography and computer-generated imagery as the foundation for his scenes. These digitally created or manipulated visuals serve as blueprints, which he then translates onto canvas using oil paints.



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, advertisements and social media.

Examining the distinct set of structural characteristics and informational vectors in each platform, the Romanian artist developed his artistic practice to comment on the role of representational painting by using new artistic realities. His visual grammar is shaped by the collision of modernist ambition and Soviet-era architecture, the rise of consumerism following the collapse of Communism, the mundanity of Black Sea holidays, and the psychological weight of political transition.

By manipulating and mixing mediums, Rusu investigates how he could best record reality while simultaneously questioning the presumption that such a record is objective. The result of this investigation is an eerily familiar yet dissonant reality—a visual echo chamber where dream and reality coexist.

In Rusu's striking new series, he expands his aptitude for blurring the distinction between the synthetic and the real by primarily depicting California, unveiling a new body of paintings that transport viewers to sun-soaked Los Angeles, where both global fantasy and personal fiction converge. Rusu presents Los Angeles as a simulacrum: a city he has never visited yet knows intimately through the luminous filters of cinema, video games, and mass media.

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

2024 *Crossing borders*, Brukenthal National Museum, part of Sibiu Contemporary Art Festival, Sibiu, Romania

2024 *Here & Now*, JD Malat Gallery, London, UK

2024 *The Cluj Collective*, JD Malat Gallery, London, UK

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*

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
Fame in the Rearview, 2025
Acrylic and Oil on linen
17 3/8 x 21 1/4 in
44 x 54 cm
(RUS009)



Marcel Rusu
The Youth of Night, 2025
Acrylic and oil on linen
35 3/8 x 41 3/8 in
90 x 105 cm
(RUS008)