

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 his compositions, often employing photography and computer-generated imagery as the foundation for his scenes. These manipulated visuals serve as blueprints that he then translates onto his canvases with oil painting and acrylic airbrushing.

At the beginning of his artistic career and oscillating between abstraction and figuration, Rusu started exploring surfaces and materiality, entering into direct and mechanical competition with photography through painting. 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. Intrigued by how imagery is perceived in a world overflowing with visual content and through his manipulation and mixing of media, Rusu investigated how he could best record reality whilst questioning the presumption that such a record is objective, accurate, or even “reality”.

Rusu grows his aptitude for blurring the distinction between the synthetic and the authentic by depicting Los Angeles in his latest series *Mirage City* (2025). These pieces transport viewers to the sun-soaked city where both global fantasy and personal fiction converge. Rusu presents the city as a simulacrum: a place he has never visited but that has been filtered to him through the alluring worlds of cinema, music, video games, and mass media. Rusu creates eerily familiar yet distant realms — a visual echo chamber where dream and experience coexist.

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

2025 *Mirage City*, JD Malat Gallery, London, UK

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

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

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

2025 *Unfolding Natures*, AnnArt Gallery, Bucharest, Romania

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



Marcel Rusu
Self Portrait on a daily light,
2025,
Acrylic and oil on linen
65 x 57 1/8 in
165 x 145 cm