

Marius Bercea

Marius Bercea is a painter from Cluj, Romania. He finds his subject matter in the clash of aesthetics within the urban environment, an interest stemming from the shift he witnessed as Romania transitioned from Communism into a free market economy. Bercea broadened his focus onto the convergence of ideologies the world over, reflecting these surreal situations through studies of architecture and topography together with an application of bold colour.

Bercea has been described as one of the strongest colourists of his generation. He applies colour with force: a flash of orange or a scrape of ochre butts against an energetic mix of vibrating vivid greens; a lick of sumptuous brown is delicately laced with a dappling of white. He embraces the dynamic between impact and restraint that is necessary to make a painting resonate. Fast-paced strokes are offset with steady washes and the consistency of his paint is varied; thin translucent areas are complemented by thick opaque mark making. At times buttery and fully suspended, at others sand-paper dry, his grounds are as interesting to examine close up as from a distance.

The artist's 'Transylfornia' paintings are born out of his travels from his hometown of Cluj, through the rural landscape of California and into Los Angeles. A series of psychological and sensorially-rich encounters that weave through time, space and memory. With a pastiche of iconic motifs recognisable from both Romanian and American cultures, canvases depict landscapes of colour and concrete which oscillate between suggestions of utopia and dystopia. The topographical regions of Transylvania and California merge; the city of Cluj and its surrounding Carpathian mountains converge with sun-soaked environments, from the lonely Mojave desert to Hollywood's hills and bright lights.

While socio-political references clearly influence Bercea's practice, the artist presents himself as an emotional observer of the effects of the consumerist phenomenon. Often verging on the surreal, Bercea combines sublime visions of the natural world with the jarring electric lights and sprawling architecture of urban developments. Vibrant landscapes slip in and out of immediate focus as urban life is conveyed in a wash of dynamism and transience - fluctuating between the utopian and dystopian, between flux and stasis - thus blurring the boundaries between reality and imagination.

Marius Bercea received his MA from the University of Art and Design, in Cluj-Napoca in 2005, and currently works within Cluj's Fabrica De Pensule (Paintbrush Factory), a multidisciplinary space with studios and exhibition galleries. In 2003 Marius Bercea was given an award by the Institute Supérieur d'Architecture Saint-Luc, Belgium.

Marius Bercea's recent solo exhibitions include: *Full Rotation of the Moon*, Muzeul de Artă Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca, RO (2017); *(On) Relatively Calm Disputes*, François Ghebaly, Los Angeles, US (2016); *Hypernova*, Blain|Southern London, UK (2014); *Concrete Gardens*, François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles, US (2012); *Remains of Tomorrow*, Blain|Southern, London, UK (2011); *Time will Tell*, Chungking Project, Los Angeles, US (2009); *If Through the Copper Woods You Pass*, Eleven Fine

Art Gallery, London, UK (2009) and *Yellow Side of Glamour/Melted Guidelines are passé*, Contemporary Gallery of Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu, RO (2008).

Group exhibitions include: *The Wanderers: Contemporary Painting from Cluj*, Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York, US (2017); *SEE Art Gates: States of Reality*, 17th Art Biennial, Pancevo, BG (2016); *The Mapmaker's Dream*, Haines Gallery, San Francisco, US (2015); *Objects of desire*, Sabot Gallery, Cluj, RO (2015); *Young Collectors 2*, Elgiz Museum of Contemporary Art, Istanbul, TR (2015); *Love: The First of the 7 Virtues*, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art (HVCCA), Peekskill, US (2015); *Defaced*, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder, US (2014); *Between Worlds*, Galerie ISA, Mumbai, IN (2014); *This Side of Paradise*, S2, London, UK (2014); *Hotspot Cluj – New Romanian Art*, Arken Museum of Modern Art, DK (2013); *Nightfall*, Modern Centre for Modern and Contemporary Arts, Debrechen, HU (2012); Galerie Ruldofinum (2013); *Referencing History*, Green Gallery, Dubai, AE (2012); *European Travellers*, Mucsarnok Kunsthalle, Budapest, RO (2012); *European Travellers*, Mucsarnok Kunsthalle, Budapest, RO (2012); *Selektionseffekte*, Blain|Southern Berlin, DE (2011); *Palets*, Barbara Thumm Gallery, Berlin, DE (2011); *After the Fall*, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Peekskill, New York, US (2010); *No New Thing Under the Sun*, Royal Academy, London, UK (2010); *Mircea Pinte Collection*, Museum of Art, Cluj-Napoca, RO (2010) and *Prague Biennale 4*, Prague, CZ (2009).

Bercea's work is in several public and private collections, including the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Peekskill and the ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, Skowej.