

Marius Bercea

Time Can Space

3 March — 14 April 2018

Private View:
Friday 2 March, 6-9pm

Blain|Southern Berlin
Potsdamer Straße 77-87
(Mercator Höfe)
10785 Berlin

Time Can Space is Marius Bercea's (b.1979, Cluj, Romania) first exhibition at Blain|Southern Berlin, in which he presents new work and demonstrates recent changes in his approach to painting.



Marius Bercea, *Pluralizing Rhythm*, 2016
Courtesy the artist and Blain|Southern
Photo: Peter Mallet

Within his interior and landscape paintings, largely influenced by the architecture and nature of California, Bercea portrays a sensorial reality through a hybrid of both real and imagined hidden places. Evidenced in the subject, aspect and scale of his new work, which range from large panoramas to small square details, Bercea has moved from the narrative-orientated travelogue of his earlier 'Transylfornia' works and his view of California is now more deeply entrenched.

With a behind-the-scenes perspective, he paints from the position of a curtain twitching resident. Seemingly private moments are caught through a window or across a back garden, from a view point that wouldn't be out of place in a Hitchcock film. But this is voyeurism two steps removed. Painting every work from his studio back in Cluj, Bercea plays with the distance between California and Transylvania, and the blurring effect of memory recall. By doing so he projects a liminal state between two realities and mindsets. He uses swimming pools as a recurring motif but rather than being clichéd icons of a Californian dream they are a representation of several states: below, between and above the water.

Bercea's scenes are often sparsely populated but where individual characters do feature they now take centre stage. Bercea's emphasis here is on raising questions about these solitary players, their intentions and motives. In *Mosaic of Certitudes*, a lone artist sits by his easel, trying to pick up radio signals from foreign lands via a makeshift aerial on a rooftop garden, dwarfed by pot plants and inexplicably surrounded by airborne watermelons. Here and elsewhere throughout the exhibition, characters come to the fore, all the time vying for attention with flora and fauna that dominate the compositions.

In works such as *Earth Gender* and *Pluralizing Rhythm*, invasive foliage is encroaching rapidly on the built environment: growing through latticed fences, filling swimming pools and monopolising the frame as if in challenge to the human subjects. Bercea's plants exist in both their artificial and natural habitats, either dominating manmade space or submitting to it, further representing multiple modes of being. This gregarious plant life enlivens the senses, including even smell and touch through the implied bouquet of a blossoming flower or tactile spikes of a cactus.

Bercea's interest in design is evident, especially the influence of specific Viennese architects such as Adolf Loos, Otto Wagner and Rudolf Schindler that he traces from his hometown around the globe. His expanding collection of vintage design books, architecture journals, pamphlets and magazines provide additional reference points as he distils his memories and impressions from afar. In a new series of small

details painted onto wood, approximately 15cm square, Bercea explores up-close the design features and architectural motifs that he finds in these publications. This also allows a conversation between small scale works and the large panoramas, which reveal expanded views of the same subjects. Spanning the far end of the gallery is a four-panel interior scene, Bercea's largest painting to-date. *Physics for the Liminal Training* is an imagined scene inspired by theatre set design. This complex composition features optical tricks and curious objects coded with meaning, including a smaller painting that can be found hanging elsewhere in the exhibition.

To accompany the exhibition, Blain|Southern has published a new book that surveys the last four years of Bercea's career. The book features texts by Andrew Beradini and Heinz-Norbert Jocks, published in both English and German, alongside colour plates of paintings from 2014-18.

Exhibition design developed in partnership with Attila Kim.

Notes to Editors

About the artist

Marius Bercea (b.1979) is a painter from Cluj-Napoca, Romania. He initially found 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.

His work is in several public and private collections, including the Olbricht Collection, Berlin, DE, the Zabłudowicz Collection, UK and the ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, DK. He was the subject of a major solo exhibition at the Muzeul de Artă Cluj-Napoca in 2017 and has participated in groups shows at The Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK, Arken Museum of Modern Art, DK and the Prague Biennale, amongst many others.

About Blain|Southern

Blain|Southern is a contemporary art gallery based in London and Berlin. The gallery represents an expanding roster of international artists and is the exclusive representative of the estates of Lynn Chadwick and Avigdor Arikha.

Recent exhibitions include Michael Joo, Avigdor Arikha, Rachel Howard, James White, Sislej Xhafa, Jake & Dinos Chapman and Michael Simpson.

The gallery has also launched a series of exhibitions in London collectively titled *Lodger*, conceived by the writer, curator, and Contributing Editor for frieze magazine, Tom Morton. Running concurrent to the exhibitions in the central space, *Lodger* expands Blain|Southern's programme into new territories, often spotlighting a younger generation of artists. To date artists have included Alex Dordoy, Sophie Jung and Brian Griffiths.

Gallery information

Blain Southern	Tuesday to Saturday: 11am - 6pm
Potsdamer Straße 77-87	+49 (0)30 6449 31510
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For further information on the exhibition, please contact Julia Niebuhr at Blain|Southern Berlin or Laura Callendar at Blain|Southern London

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