

The Light of Recent Events

Mircea Suci (b. 1978) confronts recent histories in a subjective way, as a continuum of socio-political and psychological themes.

His works propose iconic, strong, dramatic images, decomposed and later restored images, through his own technique, using photography as the first frame of the image and, finally, painting as a way to systematize it emotionally.

In "The Light of Recent Events", Mircea doubles the personal filter of reading / mirroring the world and exposes himself as a performer under an exhausting light, which brings to the surface a process of cleansing and abandonment.

Alex Radu

/SAC

LIBRIS | We know books

"Acting is reacting"

Mulholland Drive,
David Lynch

I cannot change the world; I can only mirror the way I perceive reality, social or political events, obviously distorted by my own subjectivity.

The series presented at /SAC under the title "The Light of Recent Events" do not question certain events, but rather how I am affected by them. This umbrella title allows for multiple interpretations, some different than the ones I propose. This ambiguity creates a universal dimension of the way in which I wish my work to be perceived. "Recent" does not mean today. It is not recent events that are my subject. Light is my subject.

A revealing light, which unveils / explores interiority. Forever present in my work, the light I use is harsh and it creates a radical contrast. It depicts anxiety, solitude, it appeals to baroque drama and it provokes introspection, a deep trip.

For me, art is dramatic. The artistic process is performative and therapeutic. It is a way of living, of living together. All the images I bring forth are direct and honest, they do not hide behind special effects for the sake of aesthetics. I want a direct confrontation with fear, with the fear that humanity carries.

The way I work is (probably) already known. I have developed a personal technique which allows me to transfer the photographic image onto various surfaces. The black and white image is printed on an acetate surface

and is then transferred onto the chosen surface by using acrylic paint. The image thus transferred through this process of "monotype" is imperfect. It is then restored by using different techniques which make up a delicate process I've called underpainting. I start off with an already well-known technique – overpainting – which comes with a somewhat limited history but a celebrated legacy, having been adopted by Arnulf Rainer, Sigmar Polke and Robert Rauschenberg, to name a few of my favorite artists.

My intention is to overcome this process. I use A4-sized acetate surfaces to decompose and recompose images. These can be left with a grid that I sometimes keep and which fractures the image granting it a sort of architectural monumentality.

I must stress that this is not a photographic technique; it is graphic, unique in its way of production. I want to create a relationship between painting and photography, one wherein the image is improved, enriched, perfected. I want to create a powerful, dramatic, iconic image, wherein the qualities of the photograph are enhanced by the structure and the color of paint. Color has symbolic meaning for me and it becomes complementary to the subject studied. The images I create are not the classic pictorial type.

With the "All the Lost Battles" series I return to a classical theme, one probably approached by most artists of all times: "vanitas".

The series "Self portrait (washed up)", "Fall" and "Study for Failure" extend an older theme, "the constant feeling of guilt". It is an extremely personal topic, which discusses the states of anxiety, alienation and obsession that I experience.

The washing ritual in the "Self portrait (washed up)" series denotes giving up, cleansing, changing. The gesture reflects a feeling of inadequacy to reality, to one's own person, and it reflects the way in which the absurd reality causes anxieties and generates schizoid states. Even if the way I work does not come close to the classical expressionist gesture, the state is one of an expressionist nature.

In the "Fall" and "Study for Failure" series, the lack of balance and the inability to control a position or to adopt a natural position illustrate the state of confusion and uncertainty. Physical gravity dominates the rational and becomes a total burden.

The images from these three series mentioned above archive a gesture of mine, a performative gesture, in which the body reflects a state generated by exteriority.

With the "All the Lost Battles" series I return to a classical theme, one probably approached by most artists of all times: "vanitas". Every intense and conflicting moment produces casualties. It is a set of

images that reflects or contemplates finitude, serving at the same time as reminder for all the small deaths we always suffer. The presence of this series within this exhibition could probably be seen as redundant or explicit. Not for me. For me it is more of a complement to the intense states that I want in the exhibition.

I work in series as I need to exhaust a subject. I archive not merely the performative act, but also the ways in which the image can be approached. A repetition is never the same. There are different variations. This may seem a didactic approach, yet, for me, this is the way to understand the subject and to elucidate certain states.

Mircea Suci

LBRIS

We know
books



LBRIS

We know
books



LBRIS

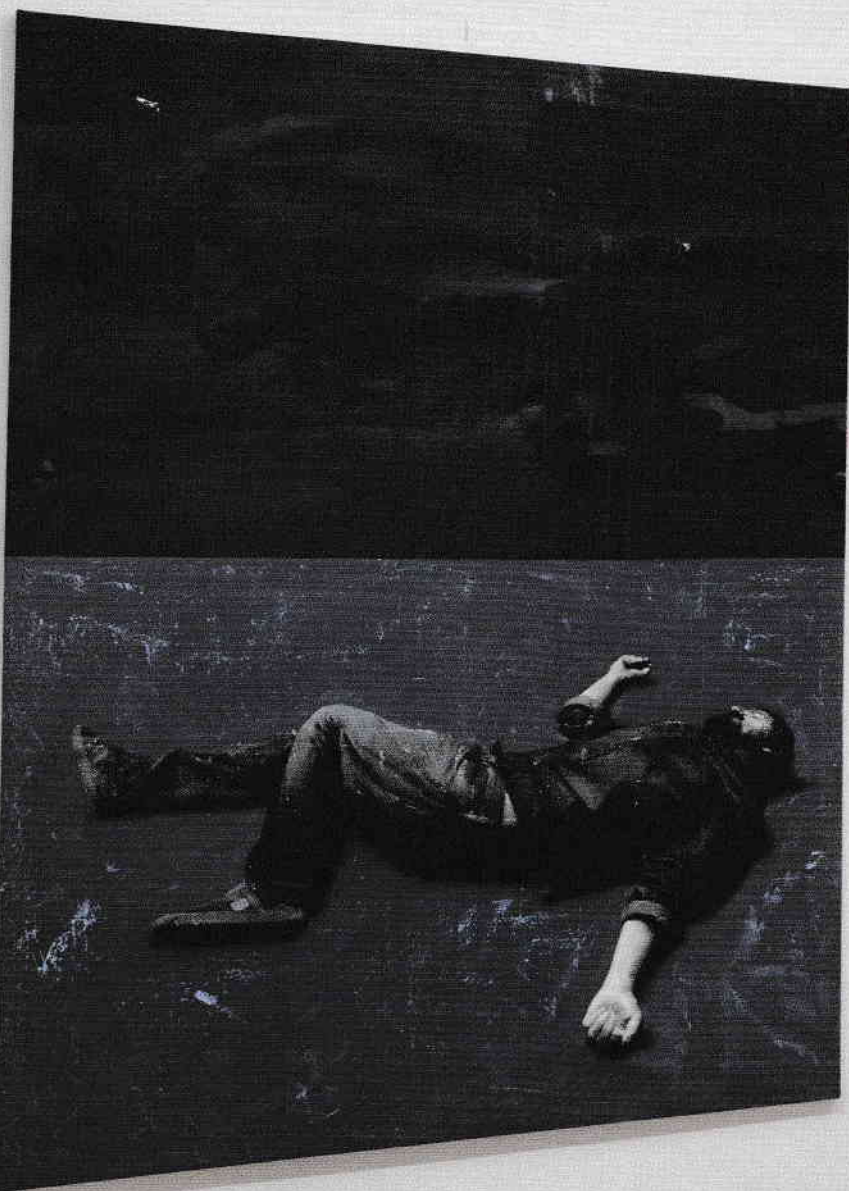
We know
books



Fall 1 / 176 x 123 cm
oil / acrylic / monotype / linen
2020

LBRIS

We know
books



Silviu Pădurariu: Mircea, I'm glad to finally meet you in person, especially since I've been following your progress carefully, I mean the exhibitions at Slag, New York, "The Fall" in 2009 and "A Matter of Life and Death" in 2010, and those at Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp (BE): "Ship of fools" in 2016 and "Hotel Empathy" in 2019. We are here in Bucharest, where you have not exhibited for years and where you are returning with a personal exhibition, "The light of recent events", organized by /SAC. I am curious about the technical process, the ideas and the whole approach behind your method in general and in particular regarding about this exhibition. Before reaching these topics, I suggest we start from the recent context described by your relationship with Zeno X Gallery. When did this relationship begin, how does it work and what implications did it have in your development?

Mircea Suci: I met Frank Demaegd in 2013 when he was invited to Cluj by the contemporary art space Spațiu Intact, to present the talks with Michaël Borremans and Luc Tuymans. He already knew about my work at that point. I think it's important to mention that I've been familiar with the Belgian art scene since college. My brother emigrated to Belgium 20 years ago and I visited him regularly all this time. He used to live near the SMAK Museum of Contemporary Art in Ghent. I visited the museum many times and it was an experience that guided me as an artist.

I did my first personal shows in Belgium, during and after college. For one year I studied in Palermo, but the scholarship I received was insufficient, so I had to earn some "pocket money". My brother introduced me to an artist

who offered to exhibit me in his bar. It wasn't the only place where I showed my works. That's how I got to know a lot about Belgian artists and the important galleries there. Frank had been following me for some time. I had collaborations with several venues in Belgium, the first was Mie Lefevre, a small space near Ghent, after which I showed my works in Brussels, at Aeroplastics, and later I started collaborating with Zeno X Gallery. I met Frank Demaegd during Michaël Borremans' visit to Cluj. That's when I told Frank that I liked his gallery very much. For me, at that time, two galleries were very cool, galleries that I knew and followed online, Zeno X and David Zwirner from New York. The two are, in a way, partners, because they share a large number of artists. After two beers, I mustered up the courage and told Frank that I knew he wasn't scouting for artists and that I wanted to let him know that I really appreciated his gallery's activity. He laughed and became curious to visit my studio. Finally, Luc Tuymans visited me and I had a very cool discussion with him about my work and about my favorite art and artists. Frank told me that he is always hesitant when choosing an artist and that he is present in Cluj not only for the speech he came for, but also to see me personally, to get to know me better. Basically, he gave me credit, he introduced me to the gallery. I started collaborating and exhibiting with Zeno X in 2014.

What I find very pleasant is that when you work with a gallery with a great history in the art world, you meet very good and well-known artists. As an outsider, you get the impression that they are unapproachable, that you can't talk to them directly. In fact, they are really down to