

FREEDOM OF EXPRE

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IMPORTANT SCRIBBLES
/ DAN PERJOVSCHI

Session TO → HERE

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INTRO & BIOGRAPHY

These pages are a result of my increasing interest in exploring the contemporary art scene in Romania. I will mainly concentrate on introducing the artist Dan Perjovschi, while trying to place him in the international political, historical and art historical contexts.

Dan Perjovschi is an important contemporary Romanian artist. He is also a respected social commentator, a beloved political satirist "Perjo" for *22 Magazine*, and a designer of book jackets for prominent Romanian intellectuals.¹ His drawings are usually a combination of image and text and they function in the interaction of their parts, situated somewhere between intellectual doodles and political newspaper cartoons. Born in 1961 in Sibiu, he studied painting at the George Enescu University of Art in Iași and began his artistic career under Ceaușescu's rule, in the 80s, in Oradea. In 1988 he made a drawing installation in his own apartment where he covered absolutely everything, furniture, walls and TV set, in paper and drew on them "in frustration with the lack of possibilities and censorship artists faced."²

Together with his wife, Lia Perjovschi, also an artist, they would stage performances in their flat for a small audience, sometimes just for each other, or for two friends. Not even knowing that in the West these kinds of actions were considered part of artistic practice and that there was a term designating them, the two artists lost many of the films documenting them, and only few photographs of these performances remain today. The lack of information and extent of censorship also in arts education prevented them from learning about important precursors in the art field (such as Tristan Tzara or DADA) until after the revolution, a lack which he still remembers with regret today.³

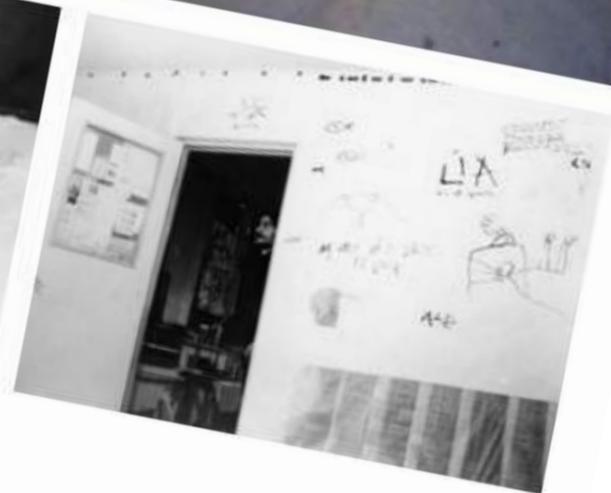
After the Romanian revolution in December 1989, the two artists moved to Bucharest, aiming to support the redevelopment of cultural life and enjoy the freedoms they and their fellow citizens had recently earned. In 1991, in his first participation at a censorship-free art festival in Timișoara, Perjovschi chose to lock himself inside a janitor's room at the art museum for three days and draw on its walls until they turned black, in a sort of shame: "How could I face my generation when we did nothing against dictatorship? We shut up and played our little game."⁴ His act was also one of undermining the

1 Stiles. *Remembrance, resistance, reconstruction.*

2 Kenins: *The Way We Are.*

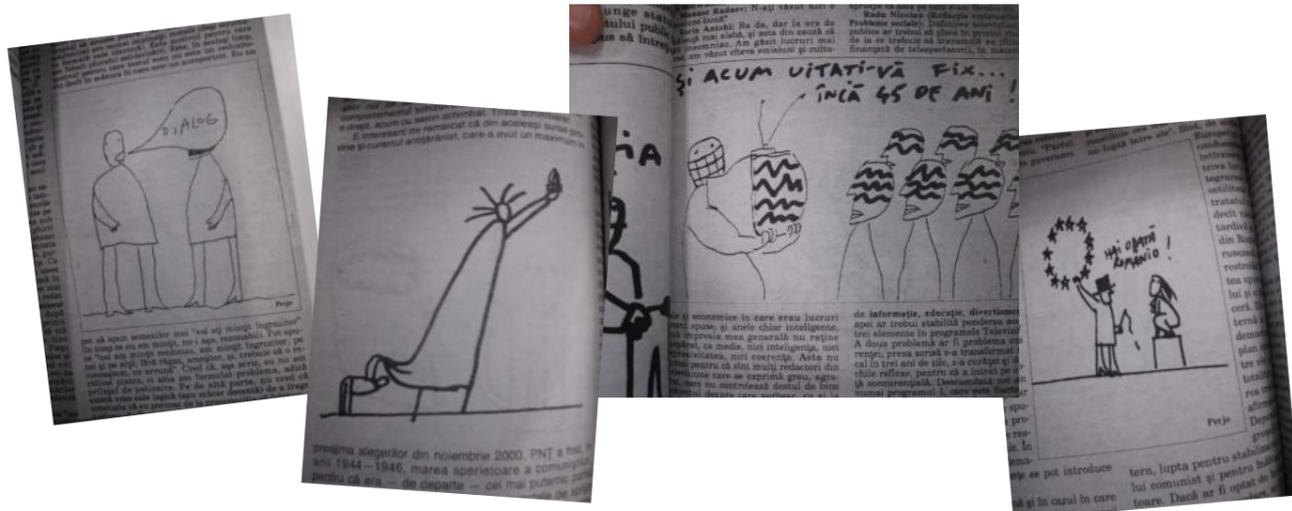
3 Gosu, Armand Interview with Dan Perjovschi in *22 Magazine.*

4 Marcoci, p. 152.





rEST, Venice Biennial, 1999



22 Magazine (1993, 2002, 1993, 1994)



Dan Perjovschi drawing at the MoMA, 2007

elitism of the higher art institution and marked the beginning of a kind of artistic activism he and his wife would continue to practice.

Dan also joined Lia Perjovschi's project, the Contemporary Art Archive (CAA), an extensive collection of information and material, and an arena for events and international exchange which later transformed into the Centre for Art Analysis. They opened their studio to exhibitions, meetings, debates, lectures and presentations, conferences and art coaching, and invited several foreign speakers to hold talks there in order to support the creation of a platform for debate regarding contemporary art in Romania. In the artist's words, "the studio was used as a site for debate. We believed that sharing information was more radical than any other form of artmaking."⁵

Dan Perjovschi gained international prominence after his participation as the Romanian representative at the 1999 Venice Biennial. His work there, entitled rEST, consisted of a series of drawings made directly on the floor, which gradually got erased by the visitors' steps. He was invited to hold a solo exhibition at the MoMA in New York in 2007, where he drew on the front wall of the main entrance.

One important aspect of Perjovschi's activity after 1990 is his participation in the 22 Magazine. 22 is a weekly magazine edited by the Group for Social Dialogue, a group of former dissidents, writers, political analysts and cultural historians.⁶ 22 - named after December 22nd, the day the revolution toppled the dictatorship - was the most prominent intellectual magazine in the early 90s in Romania, and is still one of the few independent publications, most press being owned by media conglomerates. Drawing political cartoons for 22 has clearly influenced his artistic practice by means of infusing his drawings with irony and a preoccupation for simple, quick and direct communication. In fact, when asked about purchasing his art, he often simply directs people towards buying 22, clipping his drawings out and framing⁷, and many of his exhibitions often include a free 8-page newspaper displaying his drawings, so he does not differentiate between his political cartoons featured in newspapers and his drawings on display in artistic institutions.

In his artistic practice today, Perjovschi makes large-scale drawing installations on walls, windows, floors or façades. In fact any surface, of any colour or hue, whether curving, straight or crumbling, is open to his practice, "that might

⁶ Marcoci, p. 159.

⁷ Gosu, Armand Interview with Dan Perjovschi in 22 Magazine.

ordinarily be dismissed as scribbling were it not for its sly satire and biting commentaries”.⁸ His drawings comment on social, political, and cultural conditions from local and national to global topics. He describes his creative process in the following way: according to his own confession, if he finds himself in a city, he buys the local newspapers, the morning daily, and, as we would normally do, he browses them. This urges him to form his opinion, to draw, in this way questions and doubts, the bitterness and irony of the reader are formulated and, after all, the free view blossoms out.⁹ Andrew Gardner points out that in characterizing Perjovschi’s work ‘cartoon’ should be considered both noun and verb, both result and performance. The performative aspect is an important part of his work. The artist’s drawings derive from jottings made in his notebooks. He then transfers these images to the exhibiting surface in a process of improvisation or what he calls ‘moments of pure jazz’¹⁰, but he adapts the content for local audiences, and reacts to the architectural context and surroundings. The notebooks are witnesses of his creative process and the only objects left after his exhibitions, since Perjovschi stresses the ephemeral nature of the wall drawings. They should be erased and disappear just as the news sources which they were inspired by, leaving room for tomorrow’s news.

8 Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming*, p. 322.

9 Tordai, *Lia Perjovschi Knowledge Museum & Dan Perjovschi Other stories*.

10 Friedrich, *The Line that Speaks: Dan Perjovschi’s “Naked Drawings”*, p.14.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

“Before the Revolution, there was no history for us: it was just suspended time. My obsession with collecting and archiving is a desire to make history. It is a response to the lack and distortion of history.”¹¹

Lia Perjovschi

The Romanian Revolution began as a people’s revolt in Timișoara in 1989; after the dictator was overthrown, Ion Iliescu (Ceausescu’s former right hand man who had fallen out of favor) and other second-rank communists seized power and created an organization called the National Salvation Front. Initially meant to be organizing the free legislative elections in 1990, it eventually ran in the elections and won with over 70% of the votes. Iliescu was acknowledged as the leader of the NSF and then became the de-facto president of Romania. Many intellectuals claim that the revolution was in fact not aimed at a full regime change from the communist dictatorship but merely a change of leadership in the context of a revised communism. It is still controversial how exactly the uprising erupted, whom it was initiated by, and for what purposes. Nobody has been officially accused for the over 1100 people shot and 3000 people wounded during the revolt. It is widely believed that Iliescu in effect organized a coup d’état with the help of high ranking Army Officials and eventually managed to manipulate the public rage and direct it towards the

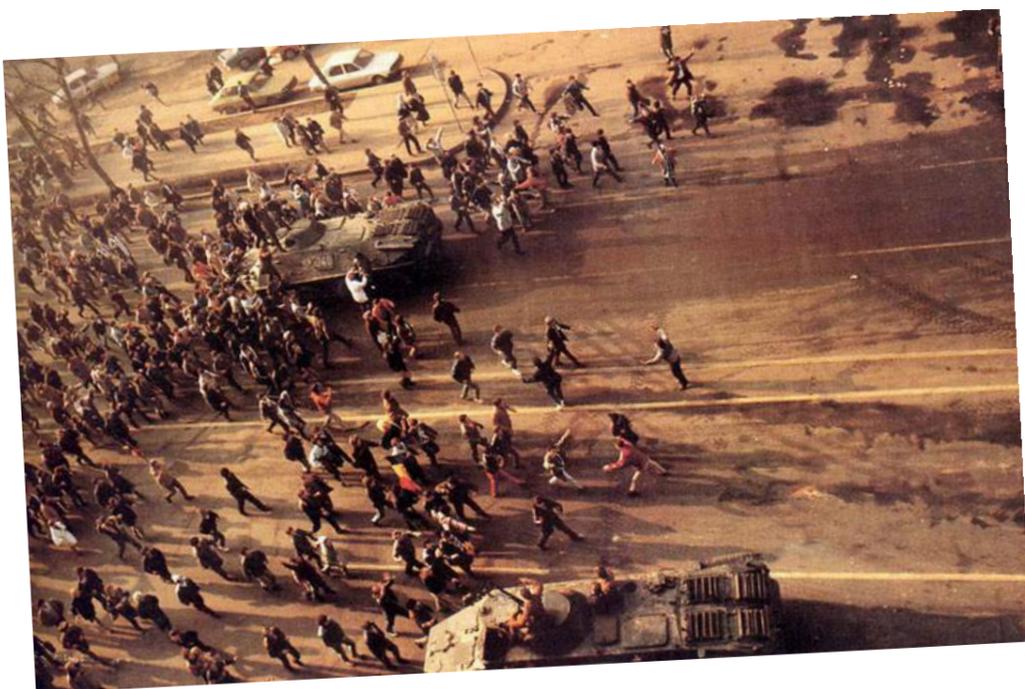
11 LP in dialogue with Stiles, *Passages 1992-2007*, p. 177.



Revolutionaries on national television



The Ceausescus at the makeshift trial



oppressive Ceausescu regime to become the new political leader.¹²

An interesting aspect which is inherent to discussing the context of Perjovschi's drawings is that of the interrupted history. Due to the extremely repressive regime before 1989 there was little access to information. Basically, artists had hardly any way of finding out what developments were happening in the art world globally and what their contemporaries in other countries were doing, unless their work was deemed propaganda-appropriate, which usually meant socialist realism. The term 'interrupted history' was coined by Zdenka Badinovac, a Slovenian, director of the Moderna Gallery in Ljubljana. She established that what the countries of the Eastern Bloc have in common is the lack of a modern art system with a common historical narrative. Badovinac organized an exhibition presenting artists' archives relating directly to this absence of historicization in Eastern European art¹³.

The art history of the interval 1950s-90s of several Eastern European countries is only being written after the fall of the Iron Curtain (and, to that, quite slowly) because the lack of institutional support remains a constant issue.

It is important to note that this time lapse between Western and Eastern European art history is mostly due to difficulty in access to information and the impossibility of open dissemination of knowledge with respect to art practices which were not supported by the regime. Disseminating knowledge was, however, not always blocked by repression but was also, sometimes, by the maliciousness of other artists. Lia Perjovschi, Dan Perjovschi's partner, also an artist, mentions in an interview how many older artists in Romania who had been able to travel in the 70s knew more, but apparently considered that their power was also based in having the knowledge that others did not, so they did not share much with their students as educators. Whether they were silent due to maliciousness or fear is debatable.

It also needs to be mentioned that, while open dissemination of knowledge was impossible, there were always subversive ways of access. Perjovschi mentions how in Oradea (which is in the North-West of Romania), being around a group of Hungarian artists who had contacts with Hungary, there was slightly more information with respect to what was happening in the art world outside Romania. After 1989 the Perjovschis started filling in the

¹² Apostol, *Archive fever and the East*.

¹³ Spieker and Petrešin-Bachelez interview with Zdenka Badovinac, *Creating Context...*

gaps retroactively for all the years they could not inform themselves about Western art. They traveled extensively and visited many museums and exhibitions, and jokingly report how they ruined their backs carrying exhibition catalogs back home.

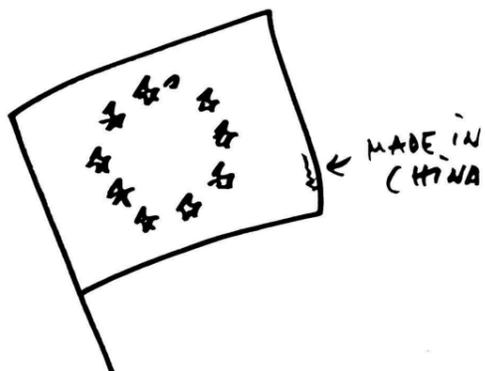
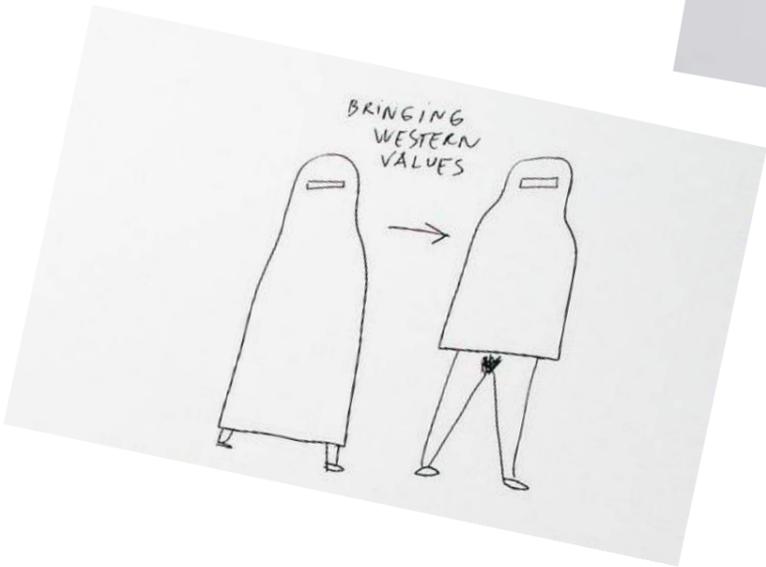
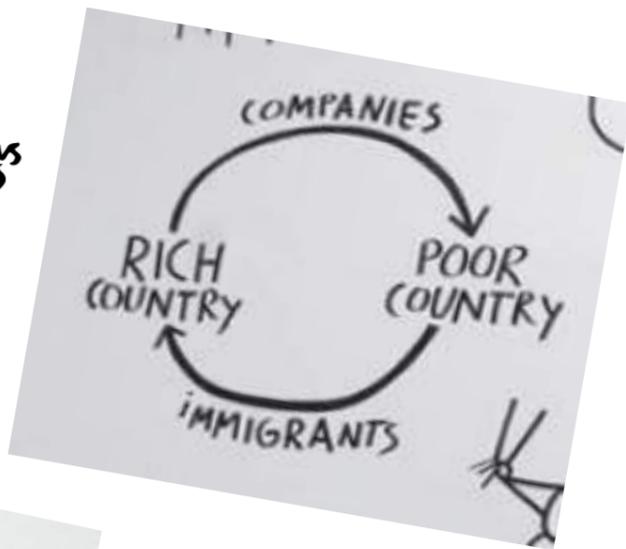
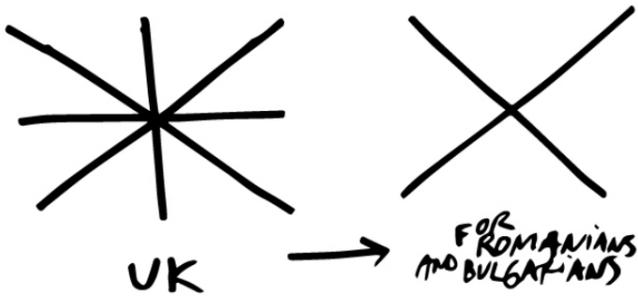
The idea of interrupted history of art should not be taken ad litteram. The lack of or only minimally existing historical narrative of and institutional support for contemporary art in Romania does not mean this art was absent. Today, due to the explosion of access to information this gap is of course gone (though art institutions still need to catch up on that), but even during the the 70s and 80s in Romania, when artists were experimenting in private spaces and had hardly any access to information of what was going on outside their homes and borders, similar practices emerged to those happening in the West, from performance to video art and installation - some notable artists being Ion Grigorescu, Paul Neagu and Geta Bratescu.

Kristine Stiles stated with respect to experimental art in Romania, that although it had not been taught at the art academies at all, information was transmitted across the generations orally, and the exchange of ideas was dangerous, because it was being observed by the Securitate, the Romanian Secret Police. "Every generation was somehow forced to reinvent its experimental art. This created difficulties in reaching a certain density, weight or historical magnitude."¹⁴

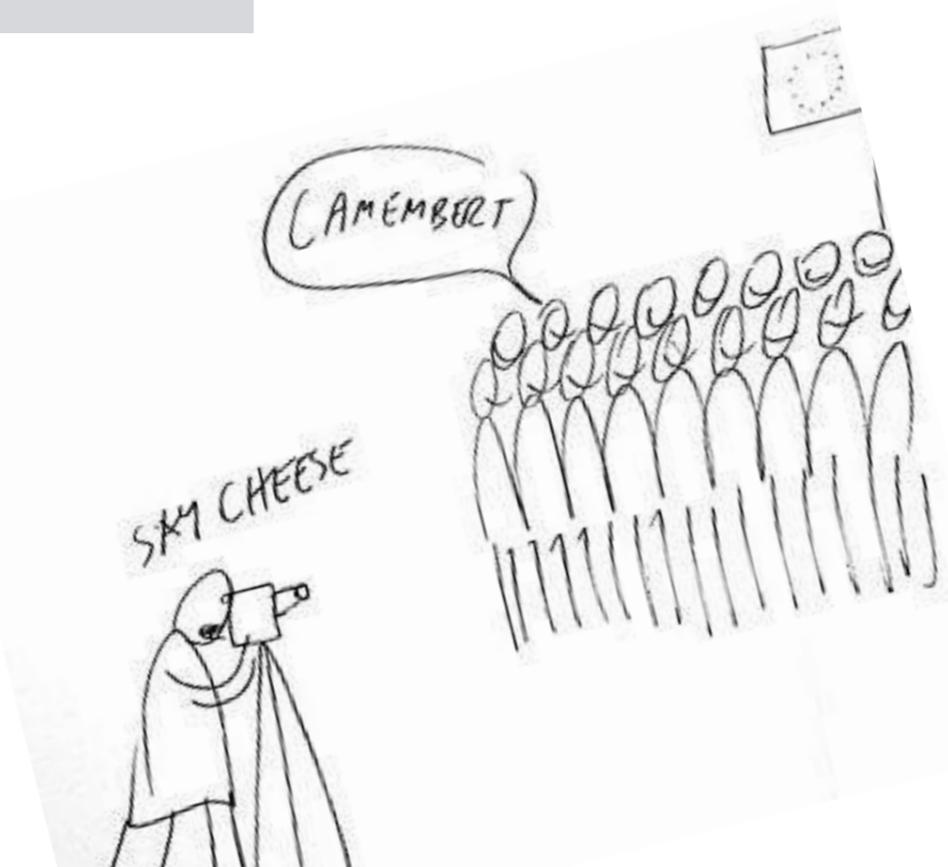
The work of Lia Perjovschi is also important in describing the context of Dan Perjovschi's works. She established CAA (Contemporary Art Archive) to recuperate the lack of information on contemporary art and culture in Romania. Dan Perjovschi has been assisting her in this project, and, on more occasions, their work has been exhibited together (in 2010 at the Espai d rt contemporani de Castell in Spain, in 2011 in Sfantu Gheorghe in Romania). The CAA/CAA is preoccupied with questions like what is the role of art, the artist, the critic, the curator, or of art institutions today, and it attempts to explore tools necessary to understand art, rather than analyze the context of art.

The CAA has been active since 1985 in Lia and Dan Perjovschi home in Oradea, in the frame of the experimental studio at Art Academy Bucharest, in the Perjovschis' artist studio in Bucharest, in national and international museums, galleries, non-profit or artist-run spaces and in the mass media.

¹⁴ Apostol, Corina and Amy Bryzgel.



LIBERTÉ,
EGALITÉ,
EXPULSE



POLITICAL CONTEXT

"I use humour as my main tactic. I use it to describe reality and its political, social and cultural divisions. I think I can offer people simple and sharp intellectual comments in a time of information bulimia."¹⁷

Dan Perjovschi

Perjovschi's works often comment on the global economic and military superpowers' actions and on EU discourse, from the US military interventions in the Middle East in the past decades, to China and to the fear of immigration within Europe, and, more generally, the invisible political and cultural borders between the older, Western European members of the EU and their newer, Eastern European counterparts. Some examples are the US bringing Western values (those values being ironically indicated as objectifying the female body), the EU as fortress, and the expulsion of Romanian gypsies from France.

Other areas his drawings comment on are the oppression of women, the fight against international terrorism (considered synonymous today to Islamic terrorism), and the construction of Muslim minorities within EU-borders as the Other, in opposition to Europeans. A general topic of the artist's concern is that of hidden hierarchies, whether in the art world, within social groups or among political powers.

He also addresses questions of equality among member states, and points out that, de facto, Germany and France are perceived as the decision-making powers of the Union. The EU seems to have developed the ability to officially support cultural diversity and difference while actually incorporating more states into a "well balanced system of subordination."¹⁸ Historically, the development of the European Union is a gradual attempt of Western Europe to emerge as a power independent of the US and Russia, and escape dependence from US military and economic control (First, the European Coal and Steel Community, the basis for what was to become the EU, was established by France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux). In order to fully emerge as a new superpower the EU needs to establish independent currency and an independent strong army. The setting up of a European internal market, with liberalized markets in goods, services, capital and labor, as well as the introduction of the euro as a common currency in 2002 are actions intending to supersede the power of the dollar on the world market in the future. A number of strategic military units have already been created (the

17 The Fifth Floor.

18 Babias, p. 109.

Eurocorps, the EUFOR/EUROMARFOR, the German-Dutch corps and the German-Polish-Danish Corps¹⁹) but things are further complicated by Eastern European member states (Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria) having also joined NATO²⁰ - which is primarily controlled by the US (drawing of 'Eastern Europe' shaking hands with both NATO and EU). Structural factors of decision making within the European Council and Council of Ministers and the smaller states' resistance towards the centralization of political power within the EU are also preventing the Union from "speaking with one voice"²¹.

Marius Babias, curator and art historian living in Berlin, considers the groundbreaking artistic works of recent years to be the ones dealing with questions of identity politics. Perjovschi's simple style and ironic humour is very effective at pinpointing the political struggles for power on the world map today and the idiosyncrasies and contradictions in their discourse. The artist himself is pessimistic regarding the effect art can have on the political world: "At the time [Communist Romania] I realized art had no political effect. Now I know it for sure."²² A similar bleak view regarding the power of artists to effect political change was held by Kurt Vonnegut, who told an interviewer in 2003: "During the Vietnam War, every respectable artist in this country [the USA] was against the war. It was like a laser beam. We were all aimed in the same direction. The power of this weapon turns out to be that of a custard pie dropped from a stepladder six feet high."²³

Regardless of this view, just as Vonnegut remained a dissident his entire life, Perjovschi also continues his activism. As a matter of fact, Perjovschi's activism and his artistic practice often coincide. He often makes drawings which are spread via social media and used by people at protests in Romania or abroad. In Bucharest, starting with September 1st, 2013, thousands of people protested against a Canadian gold mining corporation planning on exploiting gold and silver from the Apuseni Mountains, from Rosia Montana, in Transylvania, by simply removing four mountains and leaving a lake of cyanide. Although Perjovschi was not in Bucharest at the time, he posted drawings on Facebook, several of which were printed or simply re-drawn and used by people in the protests.²⁴

The use of social media is something Perjovschi

19 Babias, p. 114.

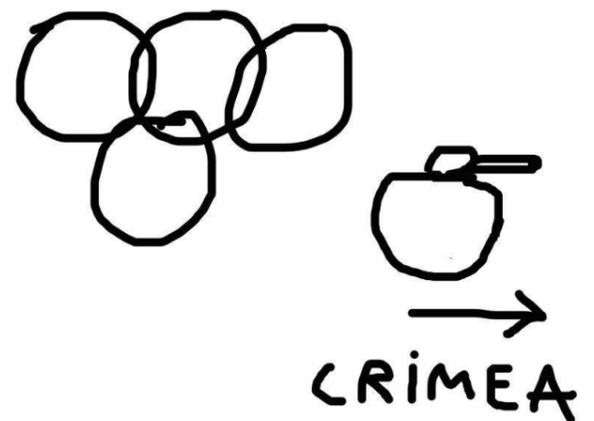
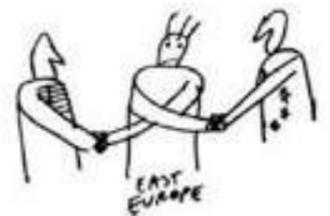
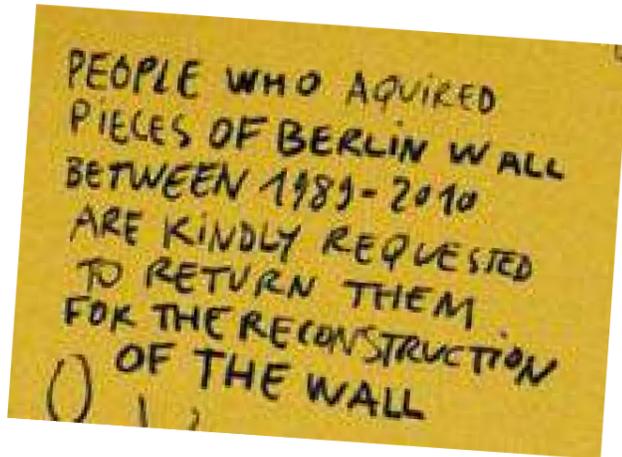
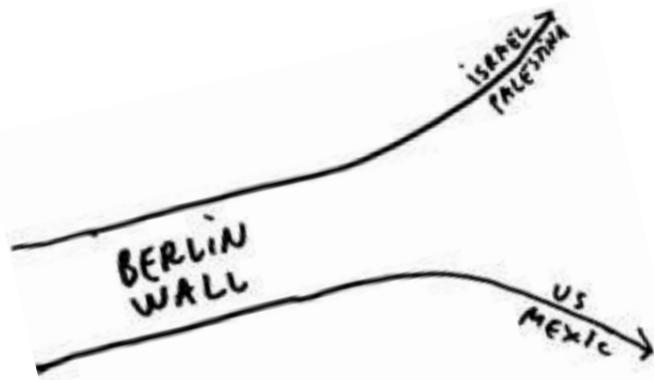
20 Babias, p. 116.

21 Babias, p.117.

22 Vincent Van Gogh Biennial Award.

23 Hoppe. *Vonnegut at 80*.

24 Ghiu, Daria. *Dan Perjovschi: My drawings not only sum up a situation, but work as logos*.



appreciates for its speed and power of connecting people with similar goals. In another interview he mentions how a decade or two ago he would have needed an entire week of telephone calls to collect several thousands of signatures whereas with social media today that can happen within hours. He also discusses his drawings being used by protesters as a form of exhibition:

“now with Facebook I feel like I’m in Gezi Park in Istanbul or in Piata Unirii in Cluj. Yes, now I can feel myself in the middle of the events: when I receive so many messages and images from others, I become a sort of data channel of a mass of information, passing it on to other people. When students occupied the amphitheatre of the Cluj University, they downloaded my drawings from Occupy University and displayed them on the walls round about the amphitheatre. That was the best exhibition I’ve ever had in Romania! I felt honoured. These days I feel the same when young people go to protests against Rosia Montana Gold Corporation and attach a print with a drawing I made to their t-shirts saying EI AUr NOI ciaNUra [literally meaning: They—gold, we—cyanide. Using capital letters for EI AU—NOI NU, he wants to stress another meaning: THEY HAVE—WE DON’T]. For a long time I’ve felt that art between gallery and museum walls has had something artificial about it. In the street, everything seems real. I’m excited when people identify themselves with my drawings. Those from Stuttgart 21 movement asked me to draw, protesters from Rio did... Macao Milano asked me to intervene in their squat, OccupyGesi Istanbul student movement and now Salvati Rosia Montana (Save Rosia Montana).”²⁵

25 Ghiu, Daria. Dan Perjovschi: My drawings not only sum up a situation, but work as logos.



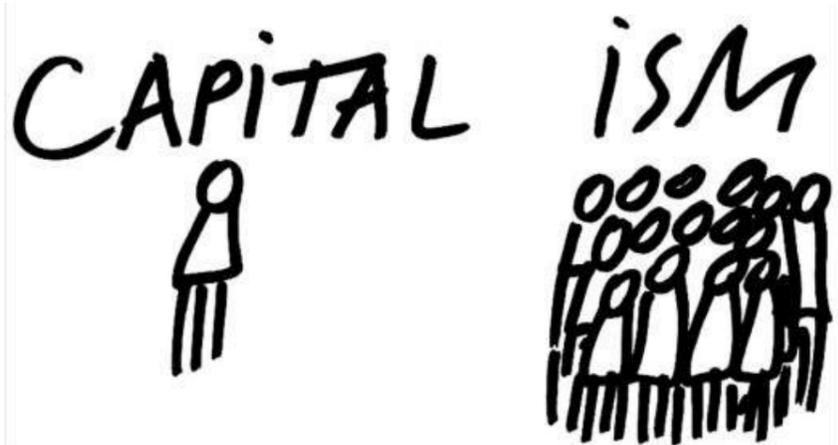
EI AUR!
NOI CIA NURĂ!



ROSIA
BEFORE AFTER EXPLOITATION

SAVE
ROȘIA

ARTIST OR CARTOONIST/ EASTERN EUROPEAN OR INTERNATIONAL?



"In the early 1990s I was Central European. In the mid-1990s people called me Eastern European. At the end of the millennium I was considered south-east European. Today people call me an artist from the Balkans. And throughout this whole period I lived in Bucharest."²⁶

The awareness of borders is always present for Dan Perjovschi. Having grown up with a restricted freedom of movement and speech, the ability to freely cross borders is one he does not take for granted. He is also very much aware of the invisible borders which are still present in the mentalities surrounding him, and points them out in his drawings.

The case of his use of English language is an interesting one to note. He motivates using English in most exhibitions because, as today's *lingua franca*, it is the language which can reach and communicate to most people. When he first asked native speakers to correct his English in the US in the 90s, he was told to leave the mistakes in his sketches, because they made the drawings funnier²⁷. He jokingly points out how the same would have never happened with French. Several spelling mistakes find their way into what Otto Berchem warmly terms "Perjovschi English".

They seem to accentuate the crossing of borders which is an integral element of globalization, while also endowing the text with an aura of directness because of their obvious, unedited nature, resembling the ease with which some people come up with jokes in conversation. Perjovschi's exhibited drawings are far from being spontaneous acts though, they are the result of hard work, endless attempts to find "the perfect form and the sharpest way of making a drawing statement"²⁸. Their scribbled execution is preceded by a very minute process of selection and positioning.

Being constantly labeled a post-Communist Eastern European artist is not something Perjovschi is very content with. "I have spent the last five years [statement made in 2007] drawing things concerning the foreign countries I have worked in. Why can't they see that it's them I'm talking about – their jobs, their deficits and their future not mine."²⁹ The artist is interested in what is happening politically on a global level, "in Romania, but also in France, in Mexico, and in Fiji"³⁰.

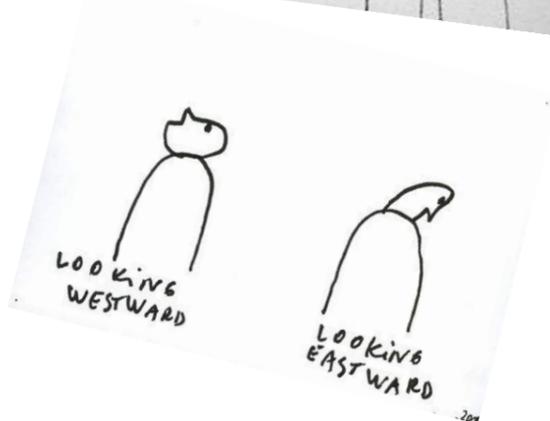
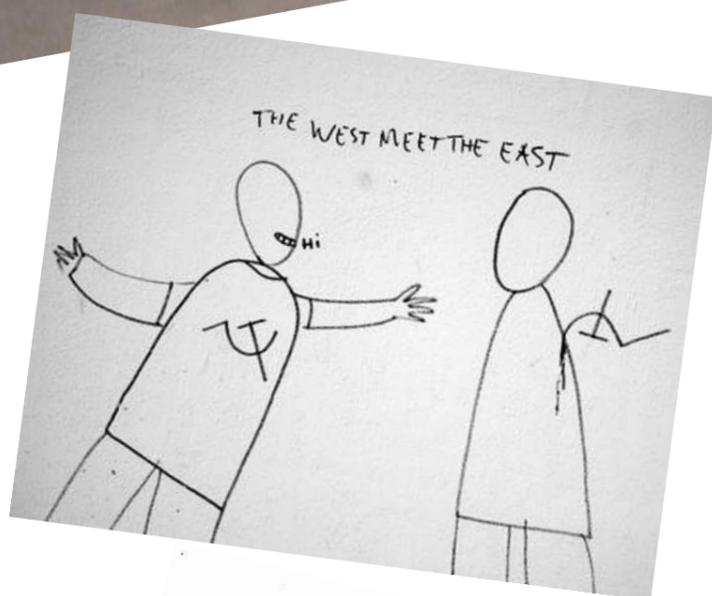
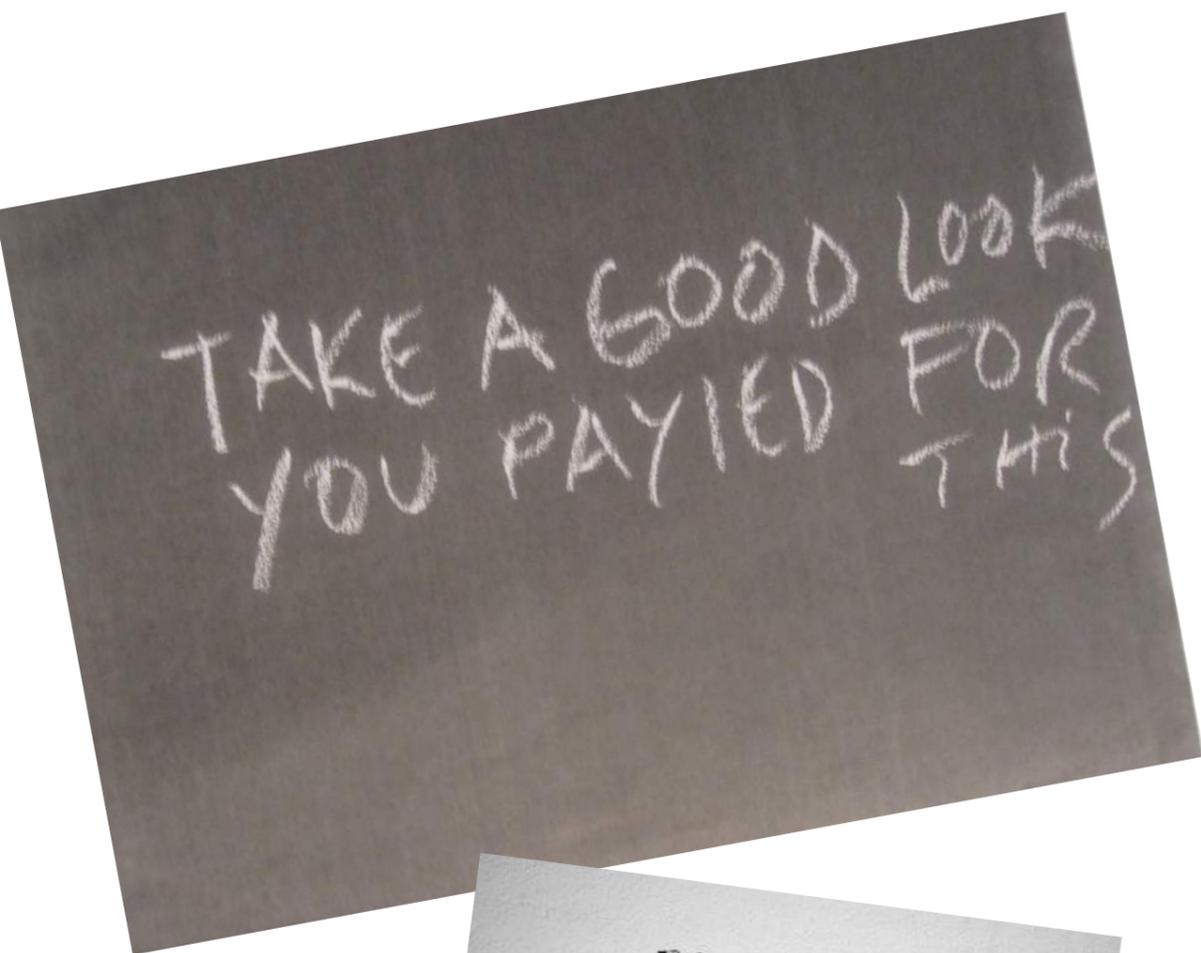
26 Lorch, *Writing on the Wall*.

27 Dan Perjovschi: *Recession*, p. 120.

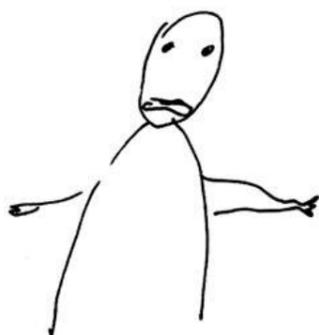
28 *Invisible Borders*, p. 14.

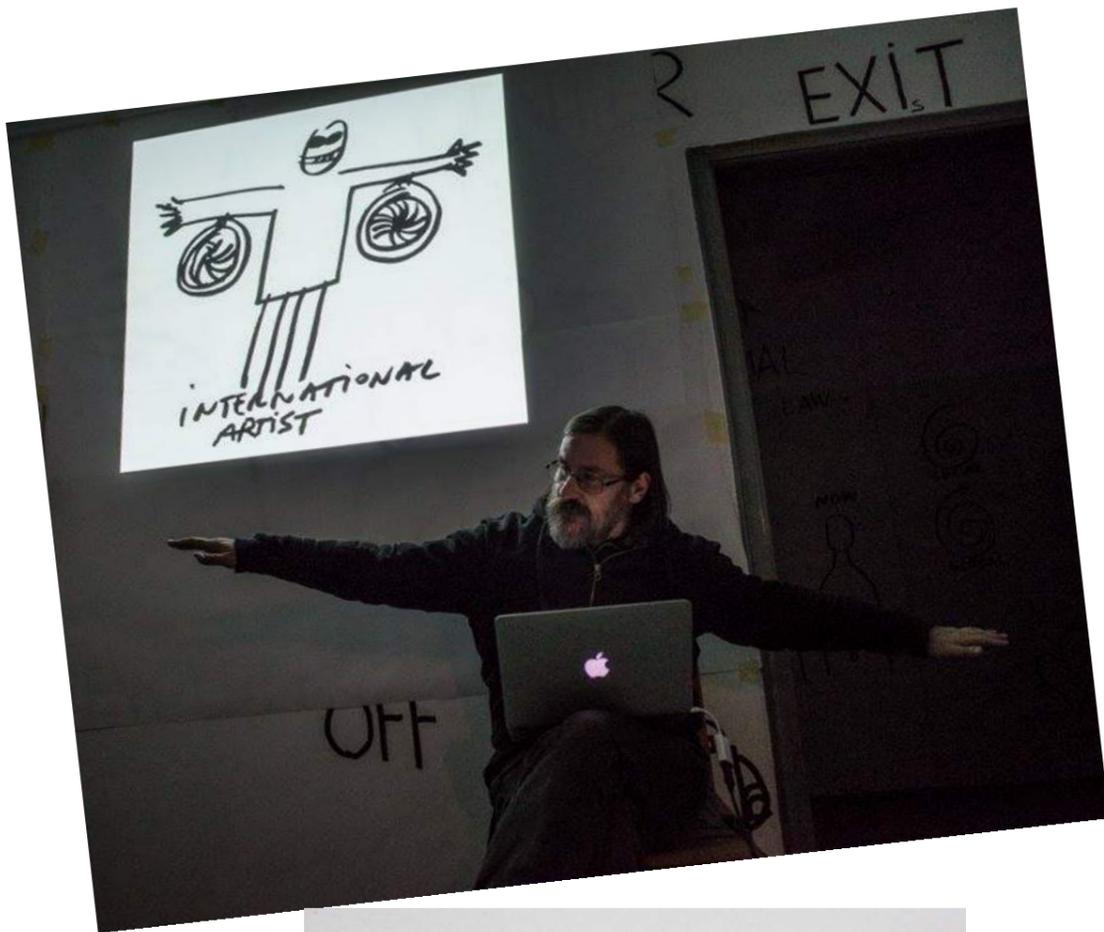
29 Nuages Magellan, p. 67.

30 Constantin, Carmen Interview with Dan

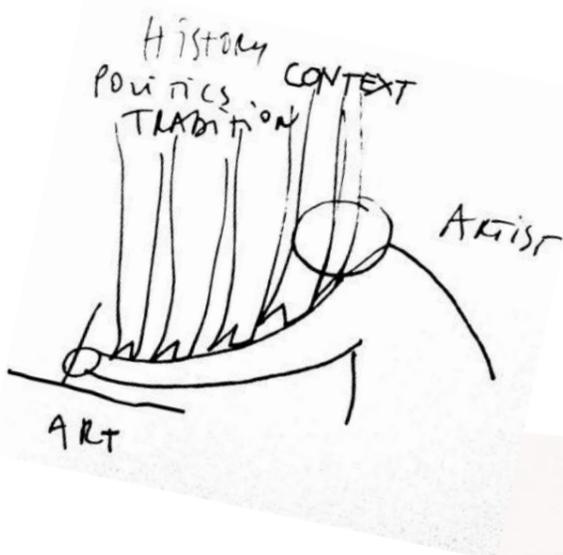


I AM NOT EXOTIC
I AM EXHAUSTED





I AM A
POSTMODERN
EXCOMMUNIST



He feels in a similar way about being labeled a cartoonist, or a museum artist, both of which he dislikes at times. When asked what he finds so bad about these labels, he responds: "About being a cartoonist: the way people say it as if you were some kind of curiosity. About being a museum artist: the way people say it as if you were some kind of celebrity. In my case people are just lazy: if it looks like a cartoon, they say cartoon. What I do is an intellectual cartoon. An indoor graffiti. A drawing."³¹ One way of escaping these labels is by drawing in strange, in-between spaces, in lobbies, on staircases or facades, or posting on social media. Perjovschi mentions at one point how in Romania he is considered more of a cartoonist, and certainly his recognition as an artist was established by the Western world.

PERJOVSCHI WITHIN THE TRADITION OF CONCEPTUAL ART

Several characteristics of Dan Perjovschi's work place it within the tradition of conceptual art. The term implies works in which the idea, planning and production process are the most important aspects of the work.³² Skills of craftsmanship are not really necessary, as they are not for Perjovschi's drawings. As Attila Tordai notes, rather disdainfully, "neither the writing [...] nor the simple, small stick figure-like drawings demand high-level artistic studies"³³. Actually, Perjovschi declares ironically that he was lucky enough to study at a bad art academy, so it was not difficult for him to forget what they taught and find his own critical stance, and it only took him 10 years³⁴.

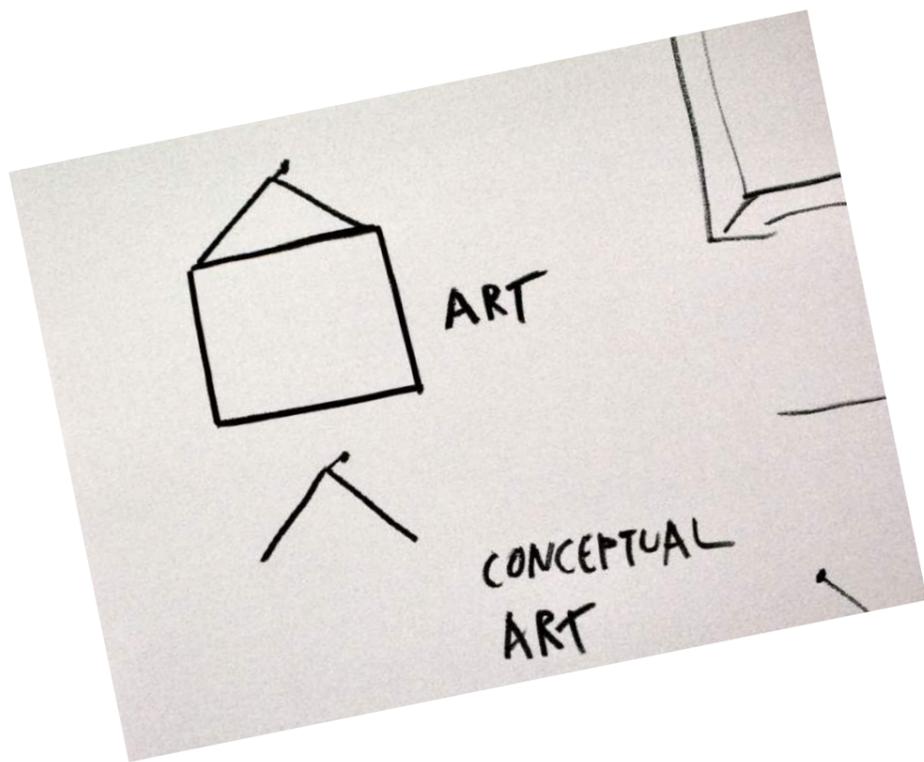
Conceptual art revolved around the 'dematerialization' of the art object, as Lucie Lippard accentuated in her essay, reducing a work of art to the mere idea, and problematizing the status of art as commodity and the functioning of the art market. Laurence Weiner is known to have said "Anyone making a reproduction of my art is making art just as valid as art as if I had made it" and Jan Dibbetz, Perjovschi.

31 Dan Perjovschi: *Recession*, p. 120.

32 Sol LeWitt.

33 Tordai, pp. 23.

34 Pintilie, *Drawing for freedom*.



a Dutch artist, stated emphatically: "sell my work? To sell isn't part of the art. Maybe there are people idiotic enough to buy what they could make themselves"³⁵. Perjovschi himself creates very few marketable objects, his work is rarely in object form, sketchbooks which remain with the exhibiting institutions and accidental or residual things such as some scribbles on a piece of newspaper, but, essentially, his work remains uncollectible. "My practice always subverted the market. It's a transitory event that makes me very focused and charged. I make ephemeral works with permanent markers."³⁶ He has constantly refused to have his work appear on coffee cups, beer placers or umbrellas: "I choose to stay in the exhibition space, not go to the museum shop,"³⁷ "I am very active in projects, but minimal as merchandise."³⁸ And his partner, Lia Perjovschi, succinctly explains that they don't necessarily have to produce objects in order to make art, that creating connections, relationships, or communication is enough.³⁹

Historically, Lippard herself admitted the utopian nature of the anti-market stance and the failure of conceptual art to sever its ties to the art market. "It seemed, in 1969... that no one, not even a public greedy for novelty, would actually pay money, or much of it, for a xerox sheet referring to an event past or never directly perceived, a group of photographs documenting an ephemeral situation or condition, a project for work never to be completed, words spoken but not recorded; it seemed that these artists would therefore be forcibly freed from the tyranny of a commodity status and market-orientation. Three years later, the major conceptualists are selling work for substantial sums here and in Europe."⁴⁰

Thoroughly aware of being part of the art market, Dan Perjovschi mentions in an interview with Heike Eipeldauer how after two of his exhibitions he had to literally force the organizers to paint over his works, or he sometimes got into the situation of having to sign loan contracts for his drawings.⁴¹ The idea of vanishing is structurally integrated in his works, and being aware that even immaterial items or drawings directly on walls can be removed and bought or sold (as is the case for example with Banksy), ensuring an end or erasure to his work is a part of his artistic process. He is not radically opposed to all material remnants of his works though, having his sketchbooks usually remain with the institution where he exhibits.

Lippard also pointed out that novelty was the

35 Lippard.

36 Marcoci, p. 161.

37 Calen.

38 Calen.

39 Vladareanu.

40 Lippard.

41 Walls & Floor (Without The Ceiling), p. 87.

fuel for the conventional art market and conceptual artists found different ways of adapting to this. Perjovschi's drawings are directly linked the nature of mass media and world news, where speed and change are part of to their system of functioning. He elaborated a creative practice by means of which the mediation of content and its directness have come to the front. His preoccupation with communicating something clearly, quickly and directly fits within the increasing focus on information & communication systems in art practices after the 1950s.

Preoccupation with the aesthetics of his drawings is a minor part of his creation process. His choices are often purely functional. The only information available about preoccupation with the materials he uses is the following: "For white and grey walls I work with big Edding markers and for deep black I use Molotow markers. For glass I use Posca. For a room I need about 5-7 markers, the same for windows. When I draw on black walls I use normal school chalk."⁴²

Camiel van Winkel also clearly pointed out the mythical dimension of the dematerialization of the art object. He stressed the fact that, in reality, the handiwork involved in artistic practice never disappeared, and the material was never transcended. Conceptual art remained a field where aesthetics is of high importance, it is just an aesthetics which is subservient to the ideas/statements/concepts of the artist. According to van Winkel, conceptual artists, rather than eliminate the handiwork, started to design it, to subject it to a set of explicit prescriptions and rules, to draw up instructions. Perjovschi differs in this respect, in that he explicitly refuses that anybody else create the drawing installations for him. He does not hire assistants or send instructions but insists on traveling to each exhibition himself, an aspect more connected to his memories of confinement and censorship than to traditional ideas of authorship:

"My art comes together with my physical presence and reinforces the right to travel I earned in 1989"⁴³.

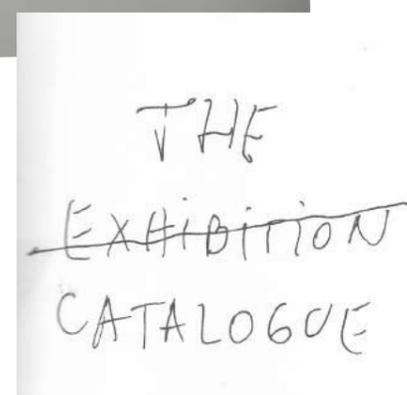
"I promised myself that I would never say no to any proposal [...] in order not to hierarchize, I would treat Tate Modern the same way as I treat Tartu Art Museum, this became part of my artistic concept. I go everywhere they ask me to. And every time I pass the border, the dictator turns in his grave. Maybe you think I'm naive or a fool, but I always imagine that. And this is how I charge myself with energy."⁴⁴

An aspect of contemporary art pointed out by van Winkel is its discursive nature, the fact that it has integrated the critical discourse of art into its

modes of production.⁴⁵ Several of Perjovschi's drawings are self-referential with respect to artistic practice. His critical stance extends to all contexts he finds himself in, from Romanian to European or world citizen, and from traveler to tourist and to art practitioner.

I would argue that the formal, scribbled nature of Perjovschi's drawings as well as his choice of placing it directly on walls or windows is, in addition to avoiding commodification, a mark of simplicity, of deciding to not overcomplicate his artistic practice, in order to be allow himself and his audience to focus more on the contexts surrounding it. The artists I admire, like Dan and Lia Perjovschi, treat the form their art takes as secondary to an awareness of the political, historical and artistic context within which it arises. Whether such art has an impact outside the art world, and particularly, a political impact, remains open.

⁴⁵ Van Winkel, p. 277.



⁴² Kenins, *The way we are*.

⁴³ Pintilie, *Drawing for Freedom*.

⁴⁴ Calen.

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