

# SUPRAINFINIT GALLERY

## APPARATUS 22 -THE TWISTS AND TURNS OF THE SPECULATIVE STILL LIFE: WHAT WOULD CHARLES STERLING SAY?

Curator: Christina Gigliotti

November 16 – December 23, 2017

nomadic location #3: Piata Amzei no. 1, Bucharest, Romania

program: Wednesday – Saturday | 15:00 – 21:00 and by appointment at 00 40 724 331 201

Apparatus 22 presents *The Twists and Turns of the Speculative Still Life: What Would Charles Sterling Say?*, a body of work that focuses on the inter-dimensional qualities of still life painting by manipulating and freeing the very aspects it holds to be true through experimentation of materials and visual as well as written language.

Throughout art history, the genre of still life artworks has been predominantly associated with depictions of everyday material life, with little room for deeper interpretation aside from technique or stylistic characteristics. As opposed to grander narrative works or those focused on the human subject, the still life abstains from illustrating events and embraces life's routine, unexceptional qualities.

The *speculative still life* (coined by Apparatus 22 during their research and experimentation), on the other hand, allows for subjectivity and the opening of interpretation, activated by the viewer and its changing surroundings. Speculative still lifes, imbued with contemporary symbols and disembodied prose, challenge the "finished" or "complete" aspects that traditional still lifes require, asserting them to a point of rupture.

By introducing language, the compositions break apart, and become subject to entirely unique interpretations by those who engage with them. In this regard, meaning arises from the endless speculation of one's imagination, and recognizing the works to be in a constant state of transformation.

### **Figure I. *Twenty-Four Hours***

High above London we looked, knowing we couldn't for very long. In quiet, in intervals, we watched the city move like anxious fingers tapping on a knee. For a moment, a barrier to entry had been broken. Years later, we tried to remember that day. Fragmented images – a splash from a truck tire onto a shoe, office-building lights flickering on at 4am, a well-groomed and empty park accessible to none. Recalling images half-fictitiously, half-uncovered. The door then closed on us and we saw everything at street-level once again.

### **Figure II. *Seven Roses Slightly Withered***

In a dimly lit room, the human imagination reaches further than what reality presents. What one sees, and how one artificially fills in the unknown spaces can spontaneously merge. Shadows, two green blinking eyes. The background becomes a pattern – floral. The information is there, but the mind wanders further. For each who enter, the scene shifts and molds itself accordingly through time, space, individual memories.

### **Figure III. *All-You-Can-Eat***

The most common still life scenes focus on edibles – freshly picked, baked, stacked high on silver trays. Far from theatrical story-telling or informative portrayals of history, still lifes often present objects of the every day, or what Charles Sterling referred to as *rhopography*. In the context of Suprainfinite's temporary space, the long history of the building is illuminated through the still life, highlighting the main reason for visiting patrons over the years – food. The works function also as a critique on abundance and gluttony; poking and prodding at the very references they pay homage to.

### **Figure IV. *This Isn't a Bird***

How does one *unfreeze* a landscape? Eschewing time and event with certainty, the natural world confirms its presence. Archival images stand stagnant. Triggered through language, the images transform, resisting categorization.

*This isn't a bird, this isn't a stone, this isn't a mountain.*

### **Figure V. *Taped and Boarded-up, a Bit Moldy***

Lights off in the backroom of a storage space. A documentation of a documentation becomes a simulation. Re-created with overlapping qualities, but not quite perfect – it can never be the same twice. The archive sits in infinite space, invisibly everywhere.

**Text by Christina Gigliotti**

## APPARATUS 22 - SHORT BIO

Apparatus 22 is a transdisciplinary art collective founded in January 2011 by current members Erika Olea, Maria Farcas, Dragos Olea together with Ioana Nemes (1979 - 2011) in Bucharest, Romania. Beginning with 2015 they are working between Bucharest and Brussels.

They see themselves as a collective of dreamers, researchers, poetic activists and (failed) futurologists interested in exploring the intricate relationships between economy, politics, gender studies, social movements, religion and fashion in order to understand contemporary society. A recent topic of research and reflection in their practice is SUPRAINFINIT universe: a world-making attempt to use hope critically in navigating present and future.

In the Apparatus 22 very diverse works - installations, performances, text based-shapes, reality is mixed with fiction and storytelling and all merge with a critical approach drawing knowledge & experience from design, sociology, literature and economics.

The work of the collective was presented in exhibitions and festivals at La Biennale di Venezia 2013, MUMOK, Vienna (AT), Brukenthal Museum Contemporary Art Gallery, Sibiu (RO), MAK, Vienna (AT), Steirischer Herbst, Graz (AT), Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart (DE), Salonul de Proiecte, Bucharest (RO), Museion, Bolzano (IT), TIME MACHINE BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART, D-0 ARK UNDERGROUND, Konji (BIH), TRAF0 Gallery, Budapest (HU), Futura, Prague (CZ), Ujazdowski Castle – Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw (PL), Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart (DE), Contemporary Art Museum (MNAC), Bucharest (RO), KunstMuseum Linz (AT), Osage Foundation (Hong Kong), Progetto Diogene, Turin (IT), Drodesea Festival, Dro (IT), Young Artists Biennial, Bucharest (RO), Oberwelt, Stuttgart (DE), Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest (RO), Nieuwe Vide, Haarlem (NL), Nest, Den Haag, (NL), Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles (BE), CIAP, Hasselt (BE), Barriera, Turin (IT), De Appel (NL), Kunsthalle Wien (AT)etc.;

Apparatus 22 also works beyond institutions via performances in public spaces, interventions in private spaces and other hybrid forms.