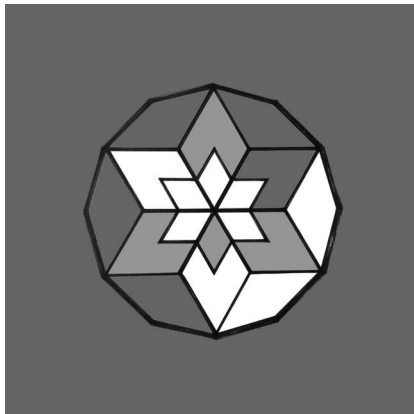


Irina Gheorghe works primarily with performance, in combination with installation, photography, sound, film and drawing. Her work addresses themes such as absence, displacement and disappearance while reflecting on the relationship between ephemeral artistic media and entities or spaces inaccessible to observation.

Solo and duo exhibitions include *The Time of the Gaze* at Cabinet 44, Atelierele Malmaison, Bucharest (2024) - with Silvia Costin, ... *the obtrusive presence of an absence...* at Broadside, Glasgow (2023) - with Neil Clements, *Principles of Space Detection* at NCAD Gallery Dublin (2023), *Things Which Are Not Here, of Which We Cannot Say* at Ivan Gallery, Bucharest (2022), *Methods for the Study of What Is Not There* at Künstlerhaus Bremen (2021), *Betraying the Senses, or How to Speak of What Is Not There* at Project Arts Centre, Dublin (2020) and *All the Things Which Are Not Here* at Swimming Pool, Sofia (2019). Solo performances include, among others, *A Guided Tour through the Distant Future* at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (2024), *Backgarden Trilogy* at the Goethe-Institut Dublin and Bucharest (2023/2024), *Preliminary Remarks on the Study of What Is Not There* at the Grazer Kunstverein (2021) and *Changing Room* Berlin (2019), *Foreign Language for Beginners* at the Glasgow International (2018).

Selected group shows include *Only Ghosts Move Forward* at Suprainfinit Gallery (2025), *Geister* at Pavilioanele Expoflora, Bucharest (2024), *Heartbeat 22* at the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest (2022), *The Cipher of the Vast Planetary Rumour* at Salonul de Proiecte, Bucharest (2022), *Secret Language* at Ivan Gallery Bucharest (2021), *Surveillées* at Solstice Arts Centre, Navan (2019), *The Landis Museum* at CCA Derry (2018), *The Heart Is Deceitful above All Things* at HOME Manchester (2015) and *Parasite and Mimicry* at CAC Vilnius (2014).



Irina Gheorghe also works as part of The Bureau of Melodramatic Research (BMR), a project co-founded with artist Alina Popa (1982-2019) to investigate how passions shape contemporary society, as well as our affective relationship to an unhuman universe.

BMR performances include *The Perfect Heel* at Scânteia+ Bucharest (2025) and Kunstverein am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz Berlin (2023), *Petrol* (2022/2016) at the Goethe-Institut Bucharest, *Cry-Baby* (2022/2010) at Suprainfinit Gallery Bucharest, *Lessons on Anything* at TRAF0 Gallery, Budapest (2017), *The Game of Giving and Asking for Reasons* at MNAC Bucharest (2016), *Above the Weather* at MNAC Bucharest (2016) and *Protect Your Heart at Work* at Times Museum Guangzhou (2016).

Selected Bureau solo shows include *The Perfect Heel* at Punta Gallery Sofia (2025), *High Heel Communism* at the Kunstverein am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz Berlin (2023), *Heartbeat Detection Systems* at Suprainfinit Gallery Bucharest and *The Internal Fire* at the Goethe-Institut Bucharest (2022), *Alien Passions* at Skolska 28 Prague (2014) and *The Bureau of Melodramatic Research: Official Launch* at Galeria Posibila, Bucharest (2009).

Selected group shows include, among others, *Unleashing the Sins of Sculpture* at Scânteia+ Bucharest (2025), *Becoming My Extinction* at Suprainfinit Gallery Bucharest (2019), *The Return of Memory* at HOME Manchester (2017), *From Bandung to Berlin* at Savvy Contemporary Berlin (2016), *Feminism is Politics* at Pratt Manhattan Gallery New York (2016), *South by Southeast* at Times Museum Guangzhou, *To the Reader* at bak Utrecht (2013), *Good Girls* at the National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest (2013).



## SCORES FOR A FUTURE GREEN (2025)

installation

5 framed mixed media works on paper, wall paint, wallpaper

Suprainfinit Gallery

Combinatul Fondului Plastic, Bucharest, RO

The series of small format works on paper explores parks and gardens as spaces emblematic of human relationships to nature. Equally natural and artificial, wild and domesticated, these places reflect both the attempt to control the natural world and the way and it unavoidably resists such jurisdiction.

The works are part of a larger project that follows the hues of a hypothetical “future green”, beyond the shades of ecological discourse’s viridiscient hopes. By contrast, this “future green” is closer to what Vin Nardizzi calls “greener”: the tint of a potential ecological catastrophe. Inspired by the palette of Dublin city’s green spaces, the colour range that gives the project its tone suggests a less harmonious bond to the natural world. Situated somewhere between cadmium and emerald green, both poisonous pigments, the cold green spectrum becomes a background for imagining not only what a park or garden is but also what it might be, what it might have been, or what it might become when attempted control reaches its limits.

Real locations, documented through black and white photography, are integrated into wider abstract environments through drawing, painting, collage and superimposed layers of paper. The photographic images are decomposed, reassembled and complemented by notations of rhythm and movement. The conflicting topographies of concrete urban sites and abstract symbolic structures suggest invisible actions, inviting speculation on things that have happened and are no longer accessible, things that are secretly happening, or things that are yet to happen. In this scenario, a green space is no longer the spot of leisurely pastime and can instead be thought of as the aftermath of destruction, when grass grows back and covers all the traces of previous occurrences, or a prelude to violent future events, plotted in the shades of lush vegetation.



SCORES FOR A FUTURE GREEN (2025)

installation  
Suprainfinit Gallery  
Bucharest



A GUIDED TOUR THROUGH THE DISTANT FUTURE (2024)  
performance  
Irish Museum of Modern Art IMMA, Dublin

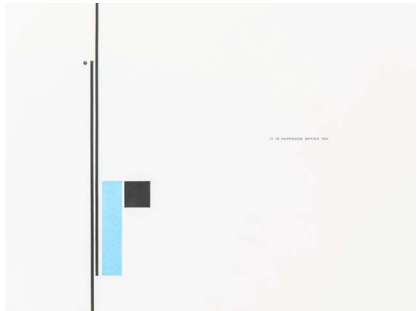
Developments in mathematics and astronomy were foundational for how formal gardens were conceived in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The formal garden at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, reconstructed on the basis of John Evelyn's 'ideal' classical layout from 1664, bears the traces of the intersection between ideas of gardening and a scientific perspective of an orderly universe, one which trusts human knowledge to provide reliable facts about a law-abiding world. Through movement, sound and a series of colourful geometrical objects, the performance will displace the symmetrical structures of carefully tended vegetation onto unexpected cosmic routes. The stability of circular shrubs is disturbed by hypothetical cosmic objects, the balance of triangular trees is affected by imaginary devices and the straight walking paths veer to trajectories beyond everyday experience.



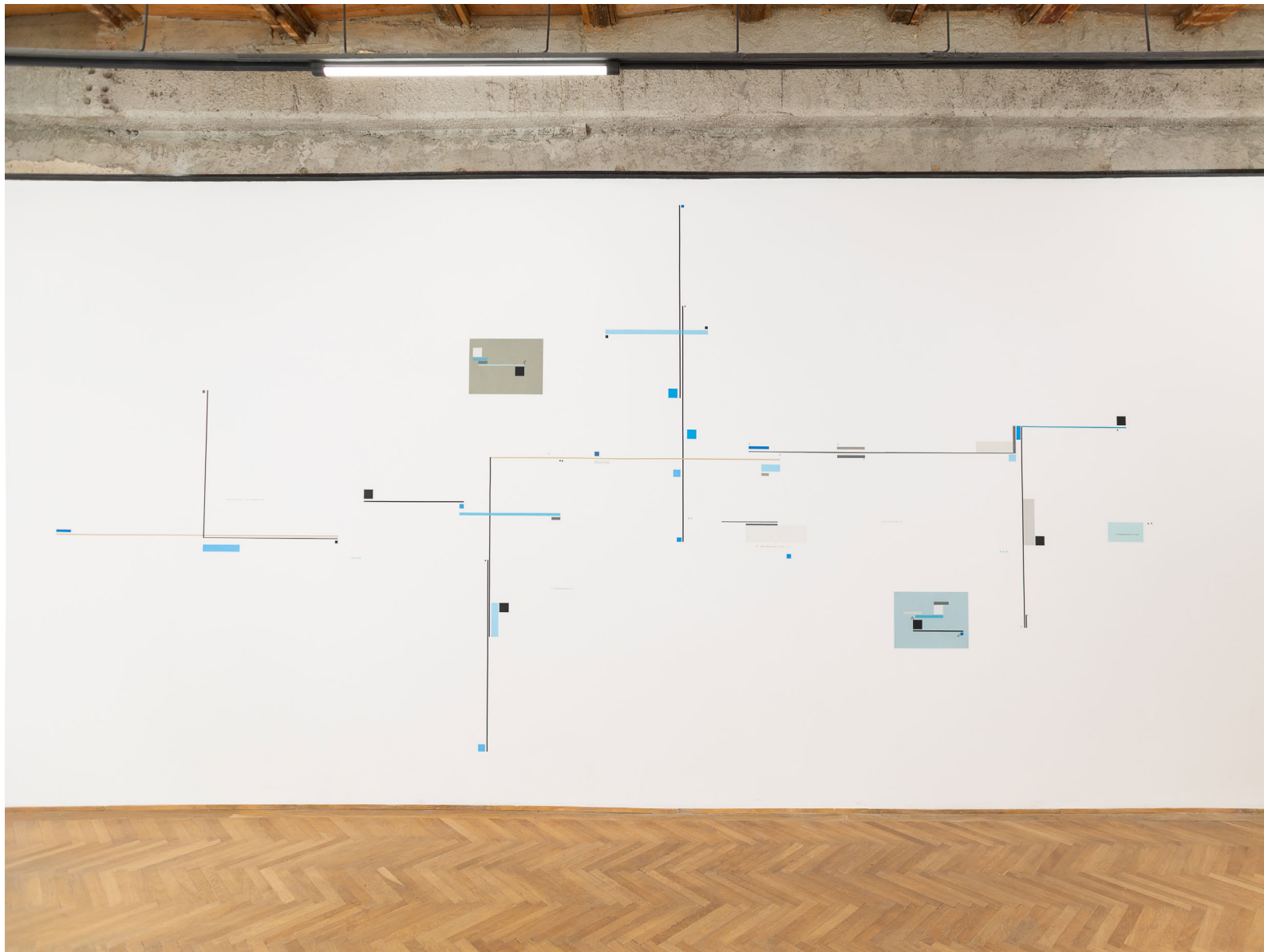
SCORES FOR THE END OF THE PRESENT (2024)

installation

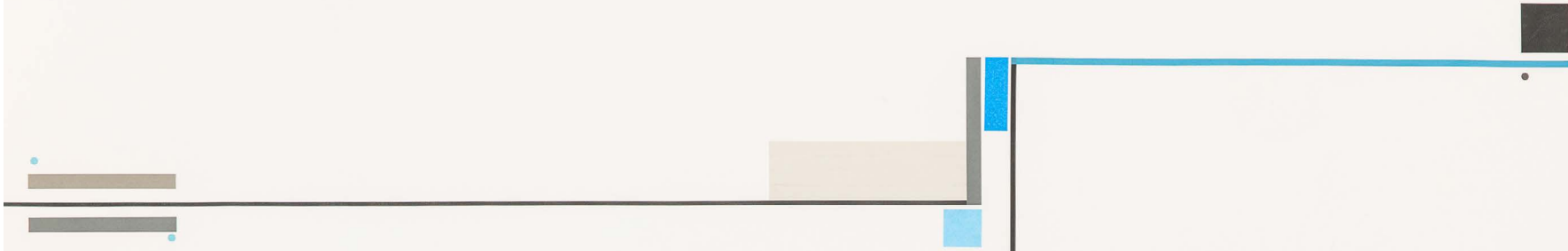
Cabinet 44, Rucharest, Romania



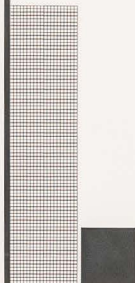
In a palindromic form, the site-specific installation presents a new iteration in the series Scores for the End of the Present. Through drawings and fragments of text, it imagines a dialogue between the here and the elsewhere, between the now some other time, interfering with the visitor's perception of space and time through subtle exercises of imagination.



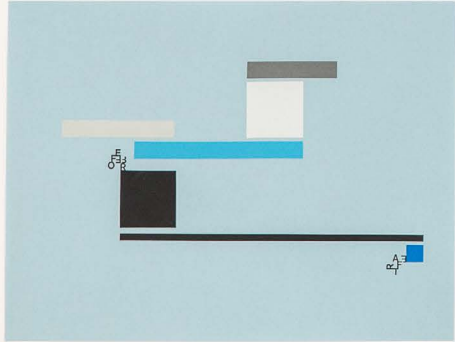
installation (adhesive tape, Satogami paper, decadry letters) in the two-person exhibition *The Time of the Gaze*, Cabinet 44, Bucharest, 2024



IT HAS NOT HAPPENED YET



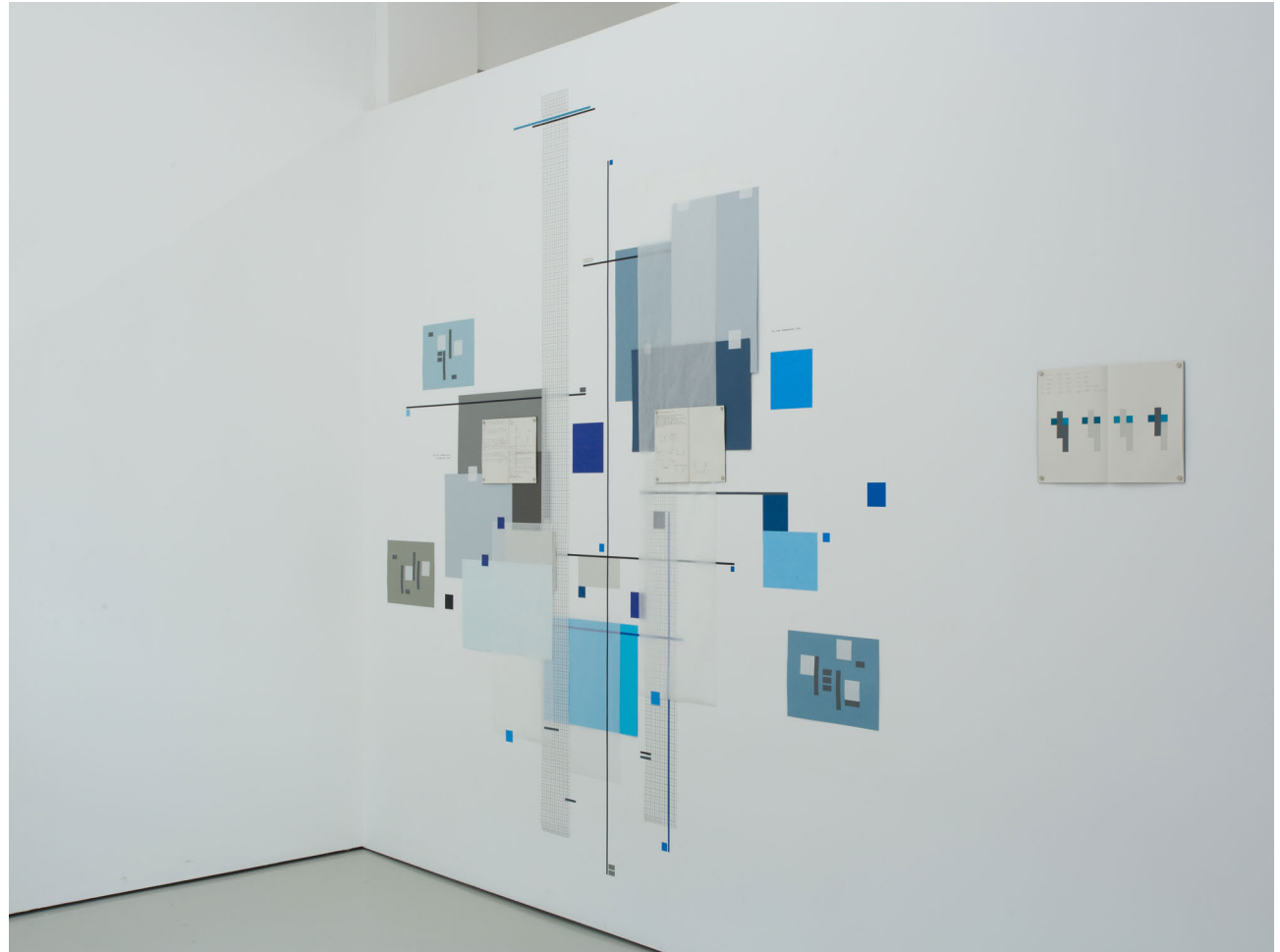
IT HAPPENED BEFORE YOU CAME



SCORES FOR THE END OF THE PRESENT (2023)  
installation and performance  
Broadside, Glasgow, Scotland

The installation *Scores for the End of the Present* expands a previous interest for systems of notation, cartographies of thought and abstract languages, developed in series of works such as *Scores for First Contact* or *All the Things Which Are Not There*, into an open ended visual language which is not limited to only one project. Rather than fixate the thematic concerns or a specific work which has a beginning and an end, the *Scores for the End of the Present* take shape as an abstract system of drawings, instructions and images that bring together past and future projects, as well as the empty space between them.

Taking its cue from theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli's assesment in *The Order of Time* that our "now" means nothing in wider cosmic terms, the project aims to formalise and develop a long term preoccupation for possible techniques of betraying, distorting, estranging the lived experience of the "here" and "now".



installation (various papers, adhesive tape, notebooks) and solo performance in the two-person exhibition *...the obtrusive presence of an absence...*, Broadside, 2023

SCORES FOR THE END OF THE PRESENT (2024)  
solo performance  
Broadside, Glasgow, Scotland



Solo performance in the two-person exhibition  
*...the obtrusive presence of an absence...*,  
Broadside, Glasgow, January 2024

VELOTRAUM (2023)  
maquettes  
unrealised public space project

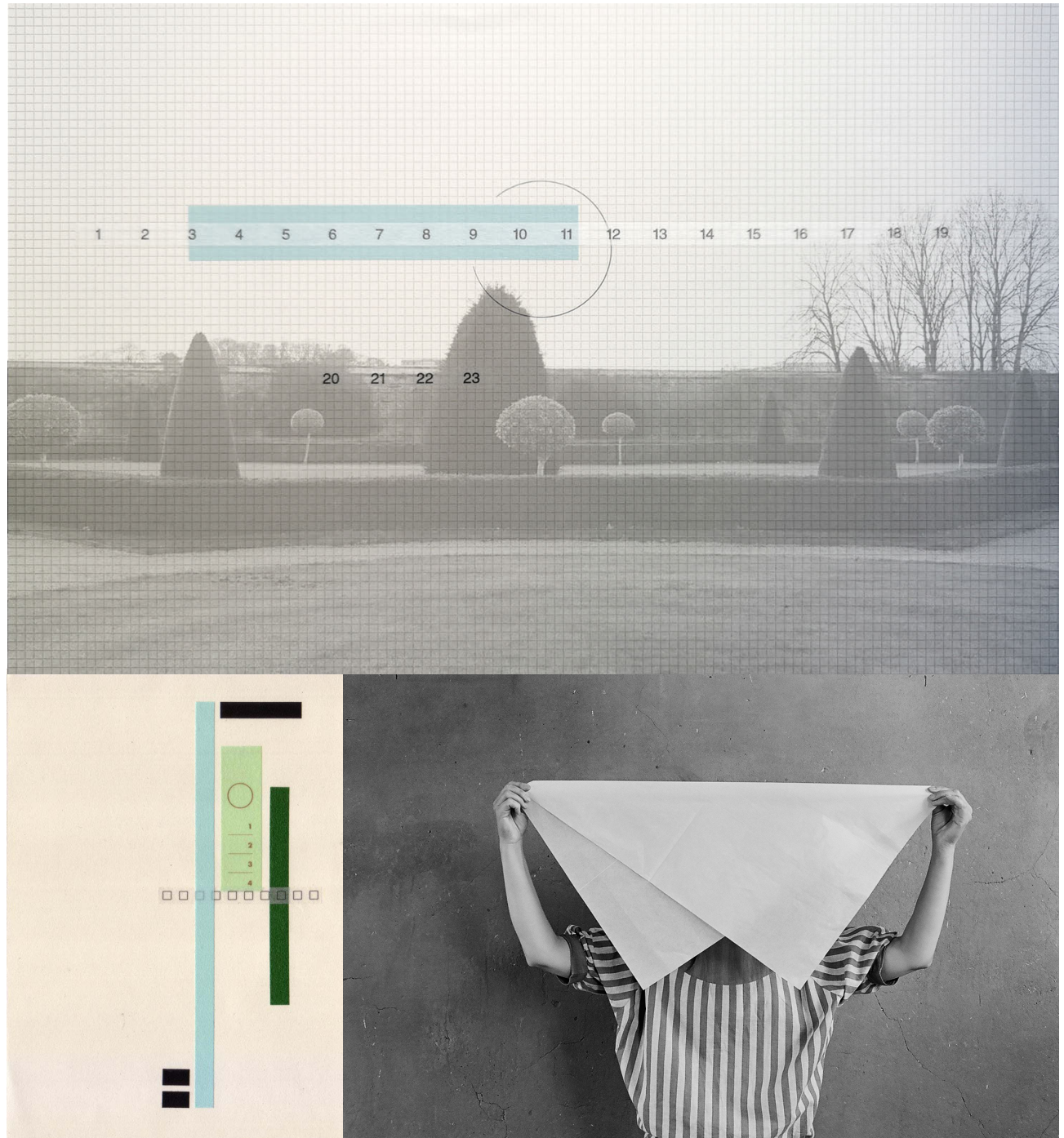
The basic components of European languages, the letters of the Latin alphabet, are the constitutive elements of large abstract sculptures. Inviting processes of exploration, decoding and discovery, the project addresses the “lost places” of public space. Navigating hidden geographies sedimented in the history of a place is not unlike trying to decipher lost or as yet unlearned languages. The act of decoding linguistic configurations in three dimensional trajectories becomes a process of traversing multiple layers of time, gradually erasing and replacing each other.



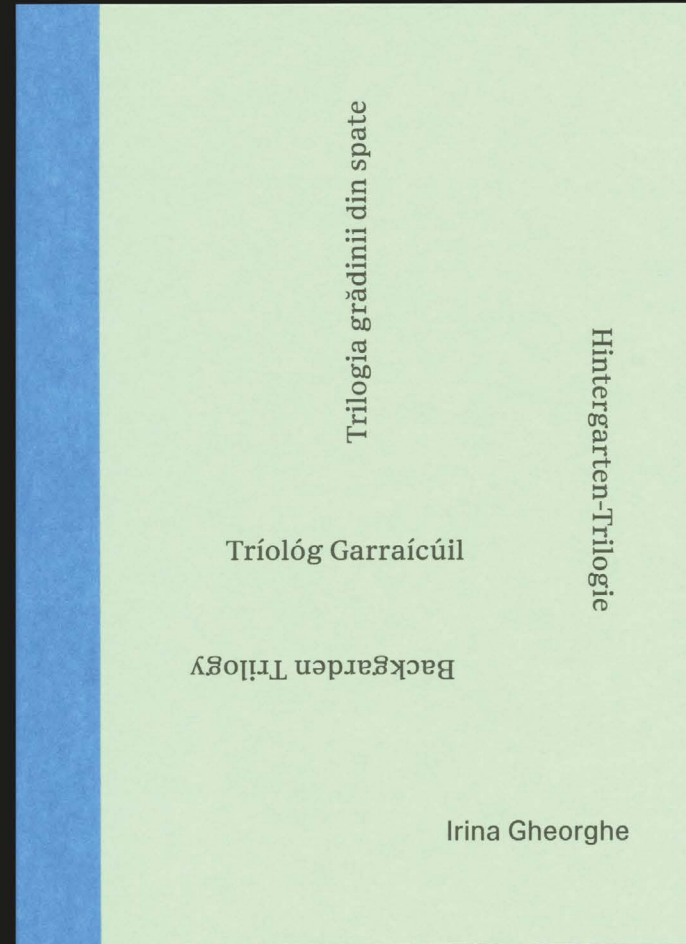
BACKGARDEN TRILOGY (2023)  
solo performance and publication  
Goethe-Institut, Dublin, IE

The new work uses strategies of defamiliarisation to engage with Dublin city's urban space, in particular its gardens, parks, sports fields and other green spaces. Environments otherwise recognisable to a Dublin audience will be integrated into new docu-fictional scenarios through spoken text, movement and sound, and thus rendered unfamiliar. Defamiliarisation is a central device of science fiction, a mechanism through which our everyday surroundings become strange due to their subjection to an alien, foreign perspective. Defamiliarisation of nature has, within science fiction, its own consistent history: from stories of alien vegetal entities to homey backgarden plants suddenly turned ominous, there's a tradition of the natural world becoming unfamiliar and menacing. The performance and the publication address wider themes such as our relationship to nature, ecology and potential environmental cataclysms while retaining a connection to the concrete presence of Dublin city's urban space. The relationship between the performance and the publication will also be constructed along strategies of estrangement: rather than document the performance, the publication will make visible what the performance doesn't through photography, drawing and text.

The park, the garden and the green area are all spaces that are both natural and artificial. The aim of the work is to render them even more unnatural, while retaining the feeling of their naturalness - to turn them, through an extra-terrestrial perspective, into terrestrial backgardens with a view to a "great outdoors".



BACKGARDEN TRILOGY (2023/2024)  
solo performance, publication, film,  
photography  
Goethe-Institut, Dublin & Bucharest



PRINCIPLES OF SPACE DETECTION (2023)  
solo exhibition - installation and performance  
NCAD Gallery, Dublin, IE

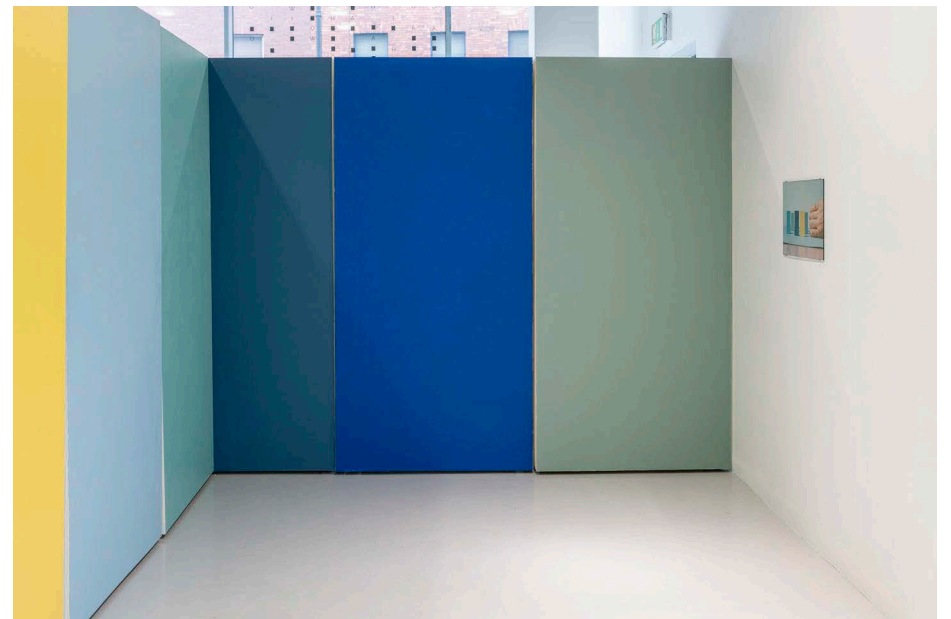
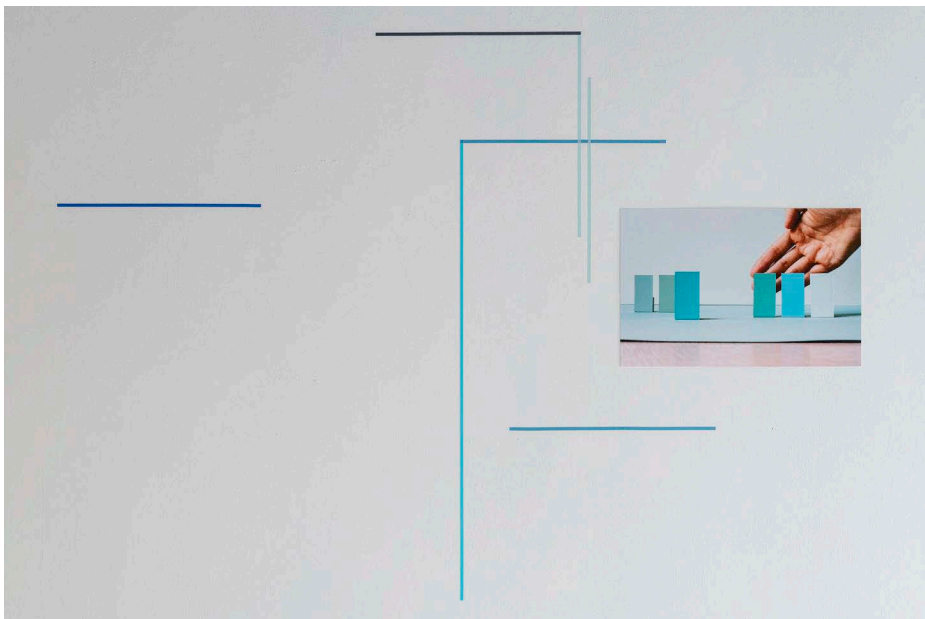
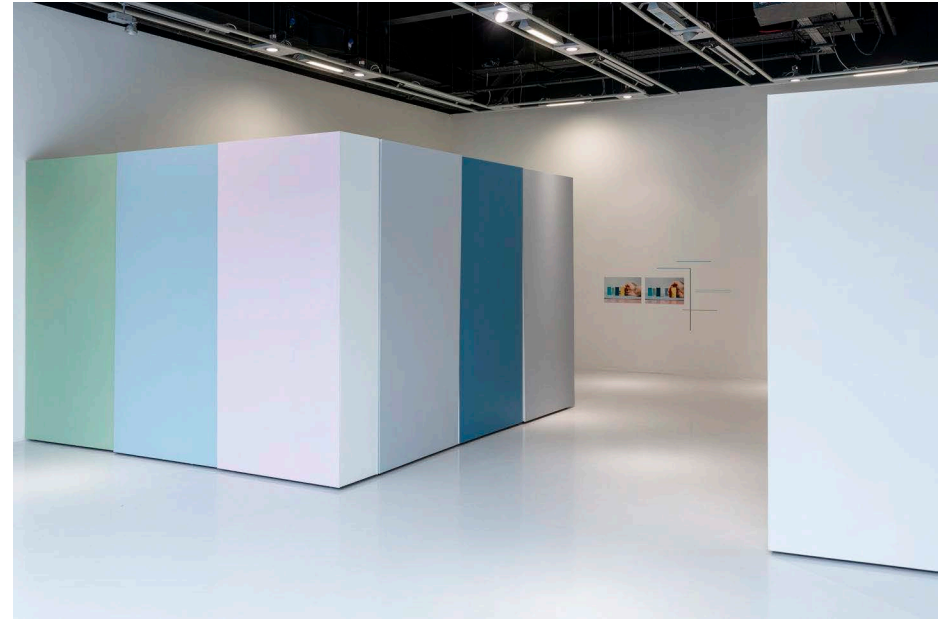
In Principles of Space Detection, Irina Gheorghe continues her extensive exploration of hypothetical, unobservable or invisible entities and how speculating on such matters manifests within banal everyday situations. In conjunction with a newly commissioned performance that gives the project its title, the exhibition presents a site-specific installation, functioning as the environment which the performance itself inhabits, and that visitors can interact with outside of the live event. Within this constructed space, the individual is invited to pursue their own hypothetical engagement with things that are present and things that are not.



installation (painted wooden panels on wheels, adhesive tape on wall, photographic prints, vinyl on window) and solo performance



PRINCIPLES OF SPACE DETECTION (2023)  
solo exhibition - installation and performance  
NCAD Gallery, Dublin, IE



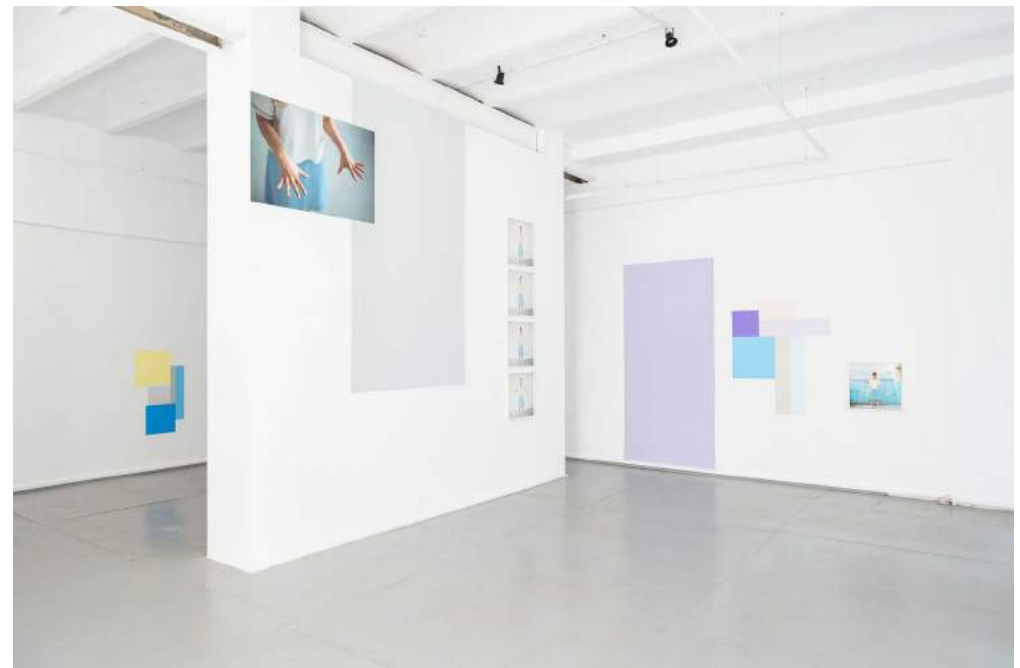


THINGS WHICH ARE NOT HERE, OF WHICH WE CANNOT SAY  
(2022)  
solo exhibition - installation  
Ivan Gallery, Bucharest, RO

Things Which Are Not Here, of Which We Cannot Say presents an installation that is part of the long term project Preliminary Remarks on the Study of What Is Not There, an investigation into the realm of the unobservable. The current iteration in the space of Ivan Gallery in Bucharest recollects and integrates previous components of the project while placing them in a dialogue with site-specific adhesive tape interventions and new works. Thus, besides the mural drawings, the photographs, and the performance, the display showcases the new series of collages which give the title of the exhibition, "Things of Which We Cannot Say."



installation (photographs, adhesive tape on wall, painted panels, performance, sound work)



THINGS OF WHICH WE CANNOT SAY (ongoing)  
adhesive tape on paper

The drawings from the series Things of Which We Cannot Say form a starting point for the artist's research. She draws them in notebooks where they resemble diagrams for a secret science, cartographies, or floorplans for unknown spaces. The formally rigorous pencil drawings and tape collages are composed of rectangular areas of color. Here, Gheorghe has developed a color scheme in which every color represents a different category of absence: one for things that are not here, which are; one for things that are not here, which are not; one for things of which we cannot tell whether they are or they are not; one for things that are not here but could, with some form of support; and one for things that are not here and could not be here, irrespective of any form of support, and so on. Gheorghe draws these maps as preliminary studies for her performances. They are scores or notations for the construction of imaginary spaces.  
(text by Nadja Quante)

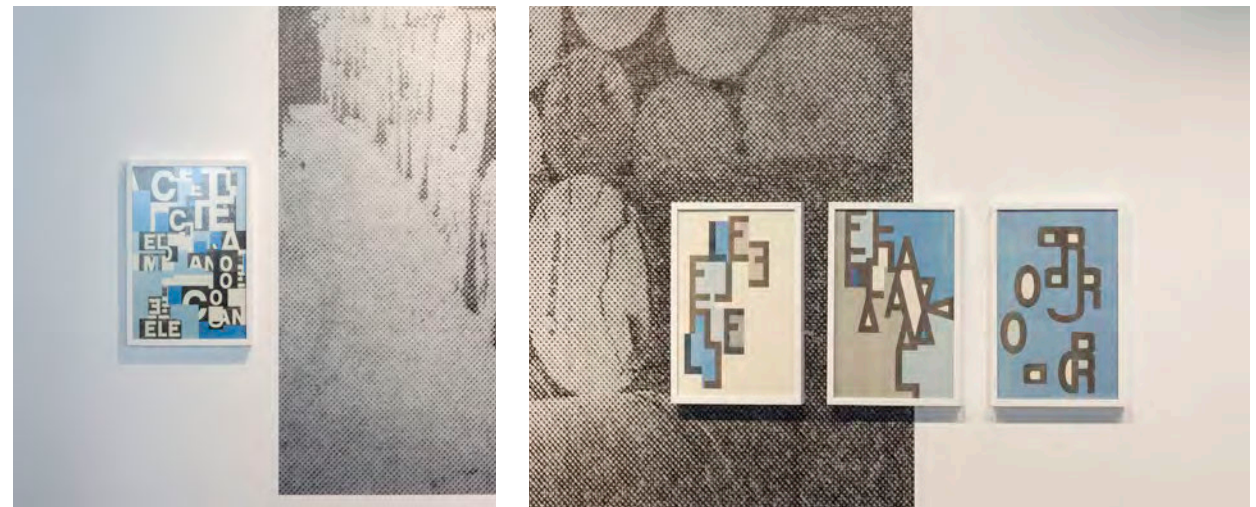
tape on paper, each 35 x 50 cm



OBJECTS NOBODY HAS SEEN (2022)  
installation (riso prints, wallpaper)  
Salonul de Proiecte, Bucharest RO

In Objects Nobody Has Seen, archive material from early twentieth century printed announcements and commercials is manipulated and abstracted to produce an indecipherable language. Mainly consisting of text filling the page in various graphic configurations, the early ads in the Universul, Adevarul and Dimineata publications put together a veritable time capsule in the form of the written word. Numerous objects are named as part of expansive enumerations but rarely seen, with the only differentiation between them produced through the choice of type, the size of the letters and their placement on the page. The series of riso prints in Objects Nobody Has Seen brings this typographic sensibility further by stripping language of its meaning and reducing it to its core visual components, which are then reassembled to create new covert codes whose interpretation is no longer possible. In a wider sens, the work considers the gaps and imprecisions which might appear when communication expands over large periods of time or distances, exploring the role of abstraction as a tool for both transmission and deception.

installation (framed riso prints, wallpaper)



PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON THE STUDY OF WHAT IS NOT THERE (2017-ongoing)  
performance

The performance creates a detailed map of all the things which are not present in each space in which it is shown, from things which are to things which are not, from things which could be to things which could not be. It develops as a guided tour through this map, of which both the space and the spectator become part. In this sense it is a site-specific work, not because it is tied to one space only but because it responds to each space differently, drawing a new map every time. Previous spaces in which the performance took place also become invisible presences in this mapping.

Performance excerpt, Project Arts Centre Dublin, 2020  
<https://vimeo.com/486999289> password: preliminary2020



Preliminary Remarks on the Study of What Is Not There, performance, Project Arts Centre Dublin (2020), Künstlerhaus Bremen (2021) and Ivan Gallery Bucharest (2022)



## METHODS FOR THE STUDY OF WHAT IS NOT THERE

(2021)

solo exhibition - installation  
Künstlerhaus Bremen, DE

Under the title *Methods for the Study of What Is Not There*, Irina Gheorghe presents a performance and an installation comprising photographs, colored panels, a sound work and tape drawings. The formally rigorous drawings, composed of rectangular areas of color, are studies for the performance *Preliminary Remarks for the Study of What Is Not There*, which Gheorghe will perform at the opening of the exhibition. They are scores for choreographies in which she uses language and gestures to unfold an imaginary map of intangible presences in the space. Color-coded arrangements conceal various categorizations of non-perceptible entities that come together to form a cartography. Elements of earlier scores overlap in the installation and create an idiosyncratic temporality that distorts the present. Photographs show the artist executing gestures that she uses in her performance. The fragmentary character of the series allows an indecipherable vocabulary of gestures to emerge. Similarly to the text in the performance and audio work, they create an atmosphere of absurdity and alienation in which the applied sign system is debunked as an arbitrary system. In the performance, Gheorghe uses body language and voice to connect the existing space with another dimension of invisible existences. She oscillates between script and improvisation and involves both the spatial situation and the audience.

installation (photographs, adhesive tape on wall, painted panels, performance, sound work)



TOOLS FOR PRECISION (2021)  
solo performance

Tools for Precision is a performance in which wooden sticks painted in different colors become instruments in an investigation of the world beyond our senses. The performer's interaction with the objects is characterised by repetition and failure, aiming to embody the contradictions of a research marked by incompleteness and uncertainty. The objects become the catalysts of absurd encounters rather than tools for the study of a particular subject. Their precise mode of usage is uncertain, as is the methodology of researching things which are not present. One could imagine such objects belong to a post-apocalyptic scenario, where the traces of old civilizations are still present but their meaning and utility are no longer accessible.



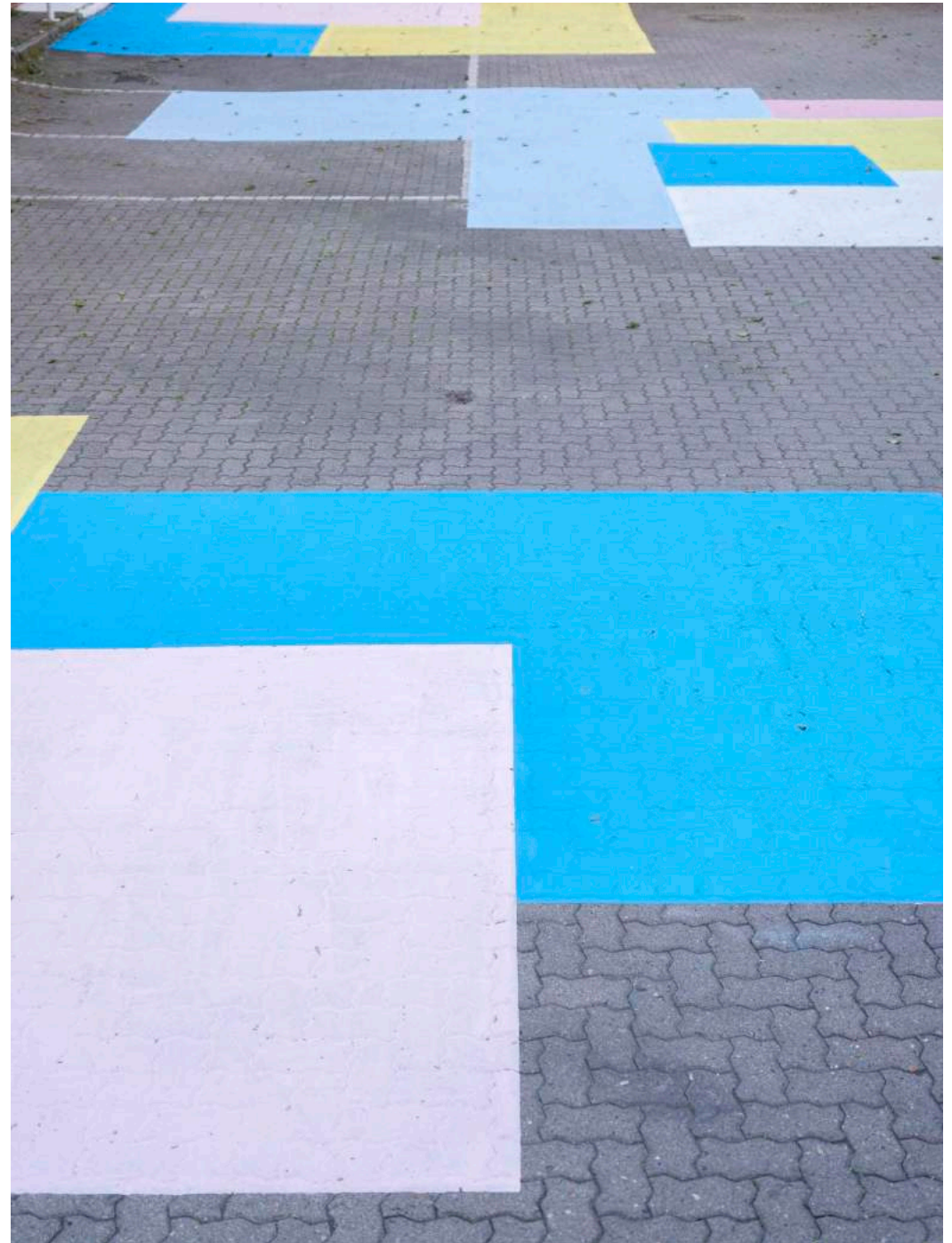
Performed at Künstlerhaus Bremen (2021),  
Zitadelle Spandau (2022) and Pavilioanele  
Expoflora Herastrau, Bucharest (2024)

ALL THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT THERE (2021) site specific installation (facade paint on asphalt)

For the exhibition Common Ground, in correlation with the performance Preliminary Remarks on the Study of What Is Not There, a new iteration of the installation All the Things Which Are Not There was realised. In response to the specific architecture of the location, the work took the form of a large floor painting across the grounds which disappears gradually over the course of the exhibition due to abrasion and weather conditions.



Produced for the group exhibition 'Common Ground' curated by Eva Berendes and Andrea van Reimersdahl at Atelier Gardens / Berliner Union Film Ateliers (BUFA) Berlin, DE, 2021



THE SECOND WALK (2021)  
sound work (audio walk)

Audio postcards from seven artists in their neighbourhoods.

Déambulations is an audio walk series launched by CCI in March 2021. One of the quiet consequences of restricted movement this last year has been a shift in our perceptions of the perimeters of place, locality and home. These moments of 'staying put' have brought heightened awareness of seasonality, the behavioural patterns of neighbours, biodiversity, multi-species throughways, soundscapes, accessibility and public amenities as well as natural and built environments.

Seven artists from different approaches and practices have been invited to create audio routes through their local neighbourhoods in different European cities.



<https://soundcloud.com/centreculturelirlandais/episode-n6-irina-gheorghe-prenzlauer-berg-a-berlin>

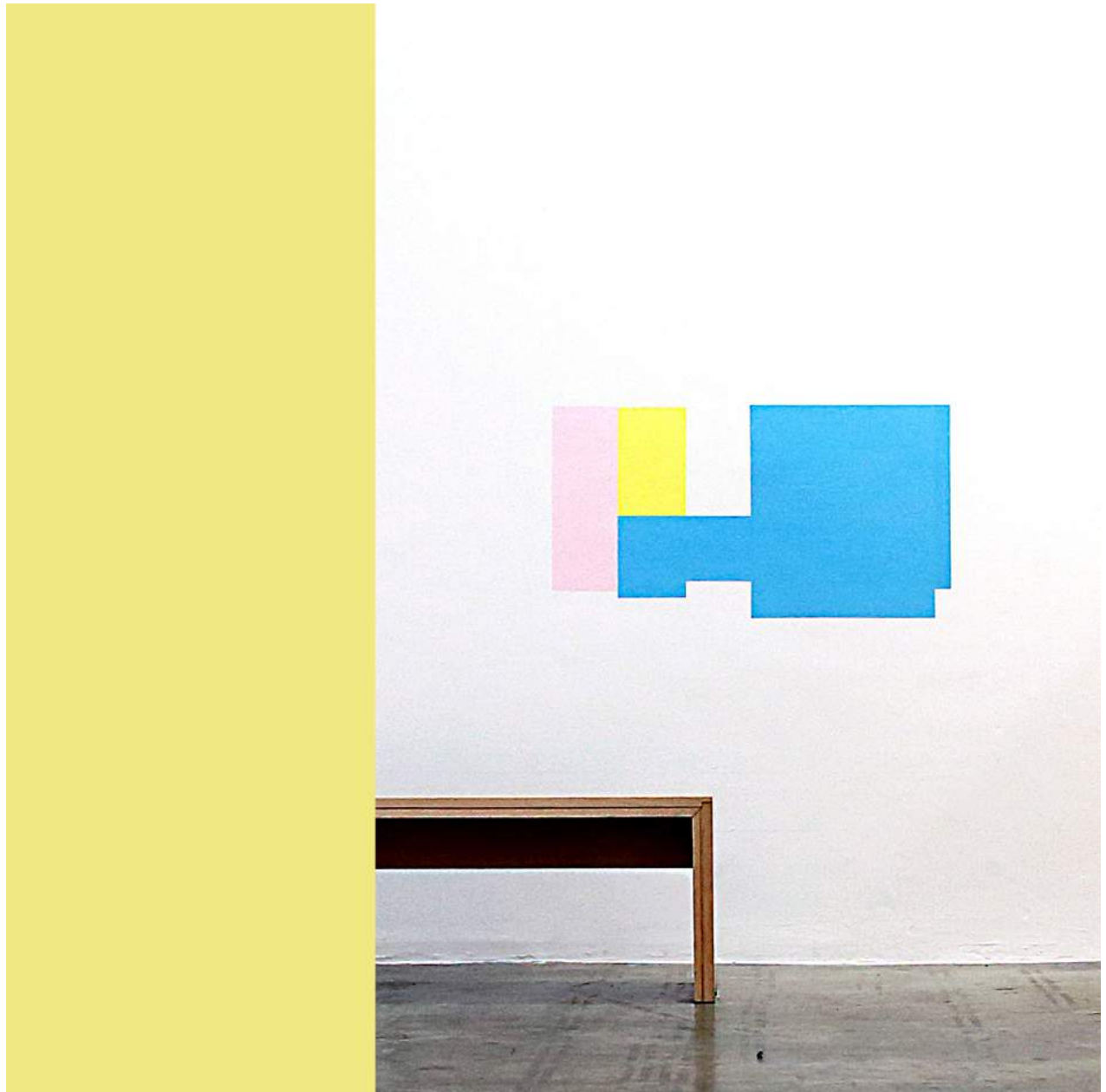
Part of the project Déambulations: keeping the ground of our being, co-curated by Fiona Hallinan and Nora Hickey M'Sichili, Centre Culturel Irlandais Paris



All the Things Which Are Not Here,  
installation, Project Arts Centre,  
Dublin, 2020

ROUTES TO WHAT IS NOT THERE (2020)  
sound work (audio walk)

The audio intervention guides the visitor's movement on invisible paths through the exhibition space. The experience of that which is present is shaped by that which is not, while the imagination of things not present is confronted with the awareness of the physical space around. Where does one place oneself in relation to what is not there and how precise can this placement be? How can distances be measured if visibility cannot provide support? Through the participation of the visitors, the sonic routes become embodied actions, drawing new trajectories through the room.



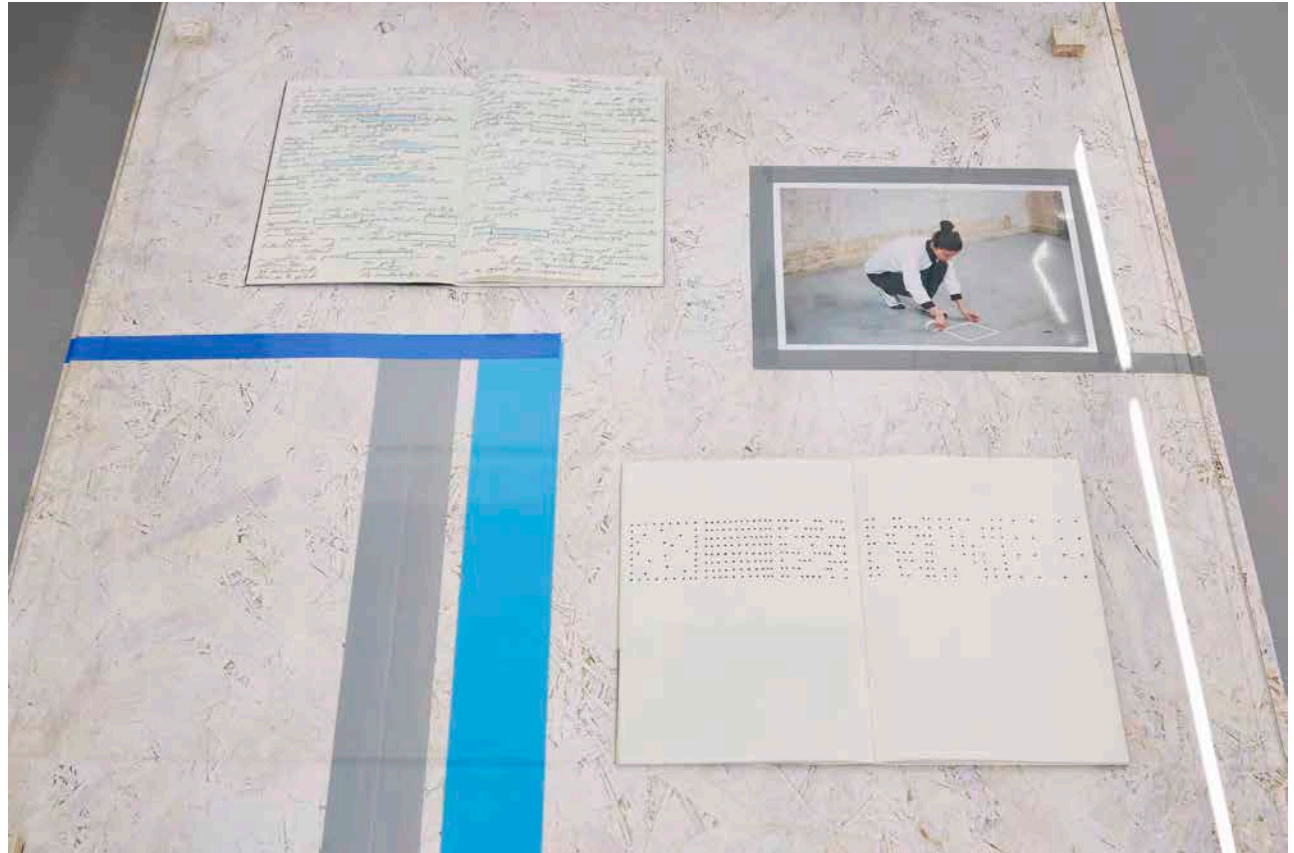
FOREIGN LANGUAGE FOR BEGINNERS and  
SCORES FOR FIRST CONTACT (ongoing)  
performance and installation

Foreign Language for Beginners is part of a long term project in which the history of attempted communication with a hypothetical extraterrestrial intelligence informs performative situations, drawings, photographs and installations. Starring from the idea of an abstract, universal language which might enable such an exchange, the performance which gives the project its title explores the dynamics and history of a potential first contact through text, sound and movement. The starting point are messages sent throughout human history in the hope of establishing an extra-planetary connection, recontextualised and brought to the everyday space of the meeting between the performer and her audience. Progressively, the mode of address, the language and the situation become increasingly uncanny. While the performance enacts the moment of first contact through speech, sound, and movement, the installation engages the question of a cosmic language through drawings, written notes and tape collages, collected in a selection of notebooks and a series of photographs.



Foreign Language for Beginners, performance,  
Research Pavilion, Venice Biennale, 2017 and  
Scores for First Contact, installation in  
the exhibition Secret Language, Ivan Gallery  
Bucharest, 2021

FOREIGN LANGUAGE FOR BEGINNERS (2015-2021)  
performance and site-specific installation  
(notebooks, screen prints, photographic  
prints, tape)



Foreign Language for Beginners, installation  
view, in 'The Landis Museum', CCA Derry and  
Glasgow International, 2018



MA-TE-MA (2019)  
game, photographic series

Using a childrens' game, MA-TE-MA explores the way abstract procedures in the space of the mind become physical objects, and the actions we might develop to engage with them. In the same way the installation All the Things Which Are Not There constructs imaginary geographies as concrete environments, MA-TE-MA uses abstract mathematical shapes as objects to be manipulated.



MA-TE-MA (2019)  
game and series of four photographic prints,  
installation view as part of "All the Things  
Which Are Not Here", solo exhibition at Swimming  
Pool, Sofia, 2019



TRANSELECTRIC (2015)

mixed-media installation (video, photography, artist book, wood, tape)

Transelectric is a parascientific study which brings together the Politehnica University in Bucharest, the Science and Technology Almamac and the metro station Precision (previously Industries). Transelectric is placed at the occult borders of the exact sciences and explores the unclear zones in which they are invaded by the inexact, the unknown and the irrational. It is a study of aesthetic engineering and poetic technology which questions the position of artistic practice between "realist" disciplines and the humanities, between the unhuman real and the unreal human. The transelectric methodology includes criptoaritmets, laterology and paraenergetics, deploys an armamentarium of secrecy and enjoys the grace of Saint Five, the protector of Politehnica.



Transelectric, mixed media installation, in 'Heroism Rises in a Warehouse', Salonul de Proiecte, Bucharest, 2015

THE ATTACK OF THE LATERAL: SEVERAL WAYS TO GET TO THE OTHER SIDE  
IMPRECISION (2015)  
video-performance

This is a series of actions recorded on video shot at various locations following the instructions below:

*Look out there.*

*Find a location whose structure is appropriate for the intended purpose.*

*Make sure the structure has no particular usage, an ambivalent usage, or a usage that is no longer known.*

*Carry out an action which leaves a trace.*

*Make sure the trace is minimal and ephemeral.*

*Carry out an action which leaves no trace.*

*Leave the spot.*

The character, wearing a long black overcoat, appears at the entrance of a metro station called PRECIZIEI (Precision) with a ladder. She climbs up the ladder and, using thin black tape, adds the letters IM at the beginning of the station's name, thus changing it to IMPRECIZIEI (Imprecision). According to accounts by local witnesses, two weeks later the two extra letters were still there.



THE ATTACK OF THE LATERAL: SEVERAL WAYS TO GET TO THE OTHER SIDE  
SIGNALS (2014)  
video-performance

The character, wearing a long black overcoat, appears on an unidentified beach. She uses movements of the arms to send what appears to be a series of messages, aimed at undetected recipient somewhere in the distance. The messages contain elements belonging to several communication systems, but their meaning has not been deciphered.

Watch the film here:  
<https://vimeo.com/117411278>



THE ATTACK OF THE LATERAL: SEVERAL WAYS TO GET TO THE OTHER SIDE  
BORDER (2014)  
video-performance

The character, wearing a long black overcoat, appears at the border between Lithuania and Kaliningrad. The border is situated in a remote beach area and is unguarded. The character is painstakingly carrying a stack of long sticks. Gradually, a second border is built, one meter in from the original border. An empty area is created in between the two borders.

Watch the film here:  
<https://vimeo.com/114674871>



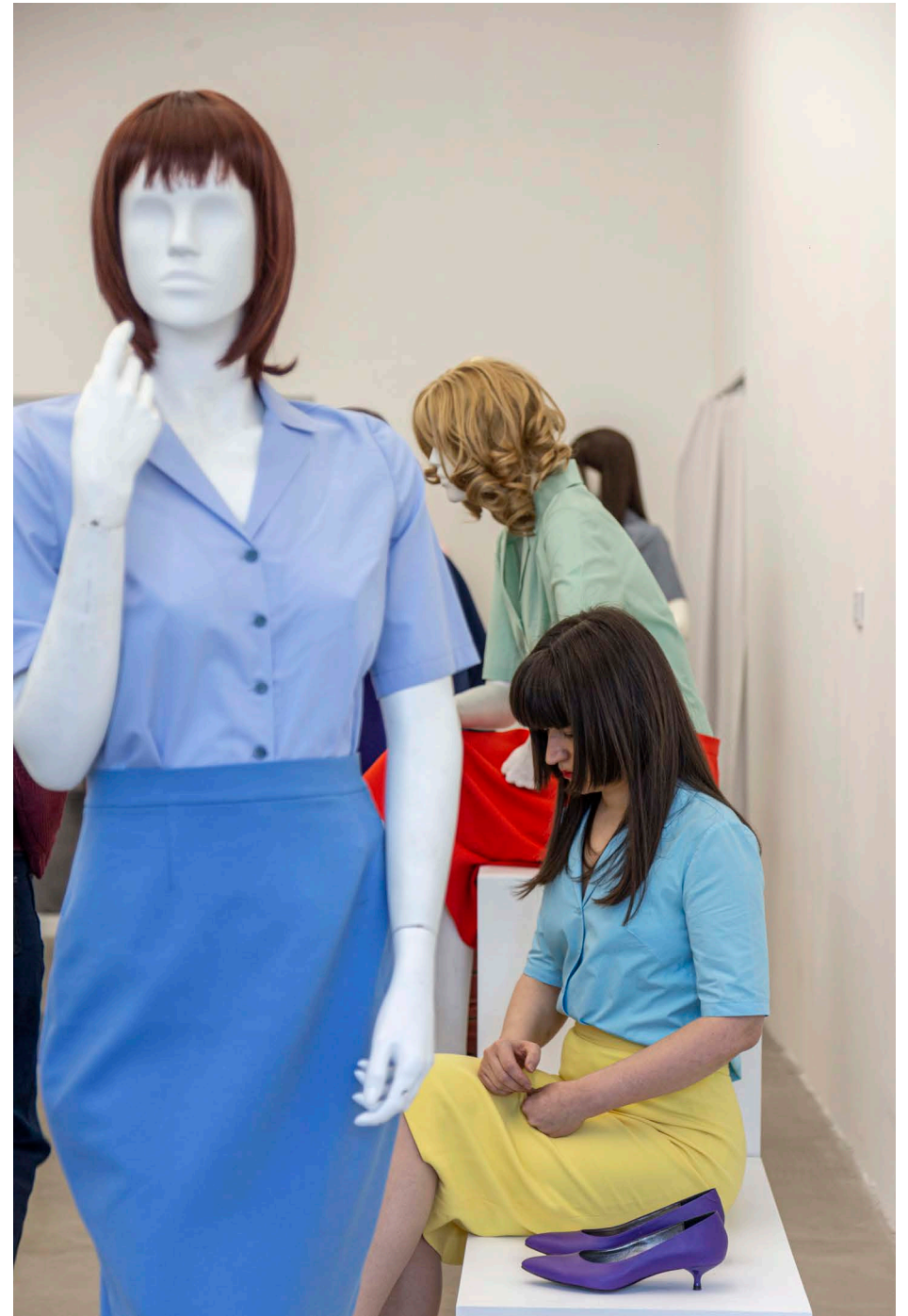


THE PERFECT HEEL (2023)  
solo exhibition and performance  
Punta Gallery, Sofia

The idea of equality produced with the technological support of the heel is in keeping with the Bureau's concerns and methodologies: an instrumentarium belonging to the production of a stereotypical image of femininity provides the context for a reflection on wider socio-political themes. For the exhibitions at Punta Gallery Sofia and the Kunstverein am Rosa-Luxemburg Platz Berlin, the project developed from its initial iteration in Bucharest into an installation including photographs, mannequins, costumes, prints, performances, as well as a newly produced 16mm film. The work is a reflection on ideas of social equality, gender representation and the role of the high heel as a symbolic instrument of subversion.



The Bureau of Melodramatic Research, *High Heel Communism*,  
installation (photography, mannequins, plinths, shoes,  
prints) and performance, 2025

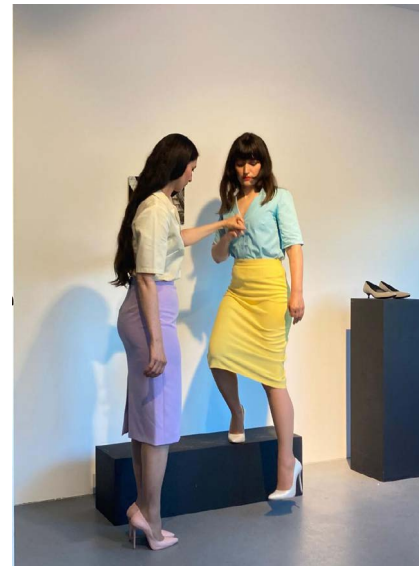
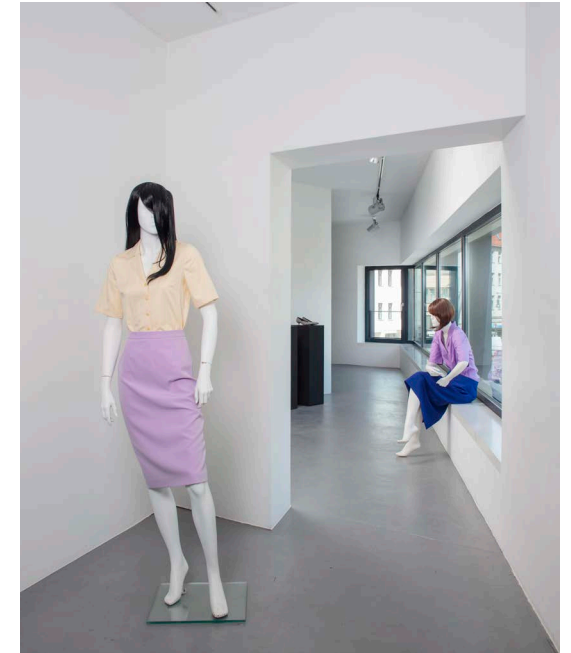




HIGH HEEL COMMUNISM (2023)  
THE PERFECT HEEL (2023)  
solo exhibition and performance  
Kunstverein am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz,  
Berlin

High Heel Communism will be the first large-scale presentation of the work of the Romanian duo The Bureau of Melodramatic Research in Germany. The project High Heel Communism is the first work developed by The Bureau of Melodramatic Research after Alina Popa's premature death in 2019. The idea of equality produced with the technological support of the heel is in keeping with the Bureau's concerns and methodologies: an instrumentarium belonging to the production of a stereotypical image of femininity provides the context for a reflection on wider socio-political themes. For the exhibition at the Kunstverein, the project developed into a mixed-media installation which included photographs, mannequins, costumes, prints, performances, as well as a newly produced 16mm film. It is a reflection on ideas of social equality, gender representation and the role of the high heel as a symbolic instrument of subversion.

The Bureau of Melodramatic Research, High Heel Communism, installation (photography, mannequins, plinths, shoes, artist publication, prints) and performance, 2023



HEARTBEAT DETECTION SYSTEMS (2022)  
solo exhibition and performance

Heartbeat Detection Systems is the first project developed and presented by The Bureau of Melodramatic Research after the premature death of Alina Popa in February 2019. It takes the form of a solo exhibition at Suprainfinit Gallery in Bucharest centered around the production of two new works, placed in a dialogue with existing Bureau works. Performative work, in which the two founding members Alina Popa and Irina Gheorghe were always present, was intrinsically central to the practice of the Bureau. Their presence in the performances was planned to transform in new contexts, as the artists moved towards old age. With Alina's death in 2019, this is no longer possible. The practice of The Bureau of Melodramatic Research will continue, but in the physical absence of its two initial agents, opening up for new collaborations.

Heartbeat Detection Systems thus presents itself both as the Bureau's set of techniques for examining affective flows in a wider social and political environment, as well as an experiment for exploring the pulsations of the heart in the Bureau's own practice. How can the vital signs of a long term practice be detected and maintained and how can they incorporate the idea of absence?

The Bureau of Melodramatic Research,  
Heartbeat Detection Systems, solo  
exhibition at Suprainfinit Gallery,  
Bucharest, RO, 2022



HIGH HEEL COMMUNISM (2022)  
inkjet print on Hahnemuehle paper,  
framed tryptic, each 200x150 cm

High Heel Communism is the first in a series of works conceived by Alina Popa and Irina Gheorghe as The Bureau of Melodramatic Research which remained unrealised, and one which Alina expressly wished to be completed. The work has two parts. The first one is a photograph from 2019, which is the last photograph taken of The Bureau of Melodramatic Research. Due to a difference in Alina and Irina's shoes, their height appears to be identical, unlike in previous documentation. The second part of the work is a large scale staged photograph in which a row of women is brought to the same height through the heels of their shoes, produced especially for the show. The idea of equality produced with the technological support of the heel is in keeping with the Bureau's concerns and methodologies: an instrumentarium belonging to the production of a stereotypical image of femininity provides the context for a reflection on wider socio-political themes.



The Bureau of Melodramatic Research,  
High Heel Communism, in Heartbeat  
Detection Systems, solo exhibition at  
Suprainfinit Gallery, Bucharest, RO,  
2022

CRY-BABY: HOW TO WIN HEARTS AND  
INFLUENCE PEOPLE (2010/2022)  
performance and artist book

The work Cry-Baby: How to Win Hearts and Influence People took the form of a performance in which the Bureau's founders, Alina Popa and Irina Gheorghe, would cry continuously with the help of onion for the duration of any event in which the work would be shown. In addition to the performance, the Cry-Baby guide was produced as a work on paper, containing a set of instructions on how to use onion to control one's display of emotions in the public space. In the Cry-Baby guide, BMR proposes a new etiquette of tears for socially forbidden outbursts. The work was restaged in the Sequence project space of Suprainfinit Gallery by Irina Gheorghe and performer Madalina Dan, accompanied by an updated version of the guide.



The Bureau of Melodramatic Research,  
Cry-Baby: How to Win Hearts and  
Influence People, in Heartbeat  
Detection Systems, solo exhibition at  
Suprainfinit Gallery, Bucharest, RO,

CRY-BABY: HOW TO WIN HEARTS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE (2010-2011)  
performance and artist book

Being interested in the circuit of emotions, the Bureau of Melodramatic Research recognizes the anti-hierarchical potential of cry-babies - weeping as a form of resistance, but also its manipulative purpose with the aim of producing consent. BMR proposes a new etiquette, the Cry-Baby Guide. This new guide turns to onion, as a natural catalyst for these socially forbidden eruptions in the public space. The new school of lachrymatory practice aims at breaking the alleged monopoly of emotional secretions and promotes reflex tears as a form of counter-crying, a protest which doesn't end but start with tear gas.



Cry-Baby, performance, Perla-Mode  
message salon, Zurich (2011)

# *The Etiquette of Crying in Public*

## *How to win hearts and influence people*

### 6 SIMPLE STEPS

Make sure you always have onions in your storage room. Carry one or two with you wherever you go, accompanied by any sharp tool that fits in your bag.

Choose the most appropriate public event to display your cry-baby skills. Don't forget to bring a large supply of handkerchiefs with you.

Pay attention to what is going on there or on the contrary ignore the event until you set to work.

Whip out your onion and knife.

Begin chopping up the onion.

As the tears come out, adjust the flow, intensity and noise according to the content and delivery of the speeches.



# *The Etiquette of Crying in Public*

## *Monument to the Onion*



The Bureau comes from an onion-rich country with a long tradition in cultivating this vegetable and using it as a medicine (*The onion requires, like any other crop, skills, devotion, toil, soul.*<sup>5</sup>). On the other hand, the vegetable has been playing a key role in the country's economic processes, as a large part of the rural population would grow it in their gardens and earn their living on this activity. Nevertheless, we cannot make sure that you get the desired bio-onion in accordance with the *Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety*<sup>6</sup>.

Whether within the safety norms or not, the golden vegetable is highly praised in Romania, as proven by the *Monument to the Onion* erected in a small village called Pericei. Built in 2007, it was acknowledged by the World Record Academy two years later as being the largest in the world, which reminds of another size record in the country, the highly controversial People's House.

The onionous climate partly explains the persistence of the mourning culture in this region of the world, and could represent a starting point for its further developments that we are proposing.

<sup>5</sup> Nina Marcu, *Revista Lumea Satului/Rural World Magazine*, online issue, no. 10, 16-31 may 2009

<sup>6</sup> On 29 January 2000, the Conference of the Parties, by its decision EM-I/3, adopted the *Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity*. The Protocol seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology.

<http://www.worldinbalance.net/intagreements/2000-cartagenaprotocol.php>



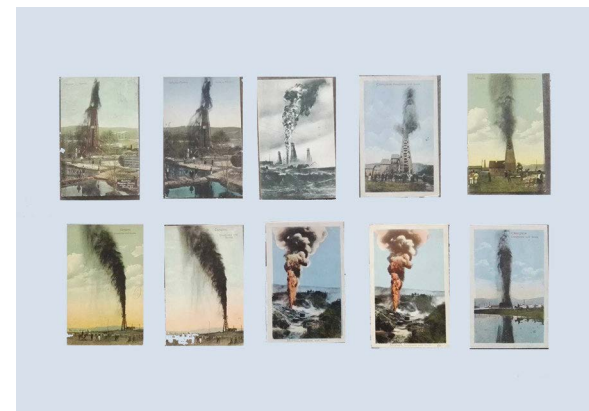
Cry-Baby, performance, KNOT project, Parcul Carol, Bucharest (2010)

THE INTERNAL FIRE (2022)  
installation (original vintage  
postcards, metal structures)

A new Bureau work which was produced for the exhibition at the Goethe-Institut Bukarest consists of a collection of historical postcards documenting the so-called “eternal fire from Moreni,” a petroleum explosion which could not be extinguished for three years, burning continuously between 1929 and 1931, and other explosions from the same area and the same period. The petroleum extraction area of Moreni provides the background for last film in The Bureau of Melodramatic Research’s Alien Passions Trilogy, Above the Weather (2015). Interpreted metaphorically as a continuous emotional outburst that cannot be overcome, the “eternal fire” acquires in this context new, material undertones, suggesting the gradual depletion of natural resources. The postcards are shown as part of an installation, placed in dialogue with its accompanying performance, performed on the opening exhibition event.



The Bureau of Melodramatic Research,  
The Internal Fire, solo exhibition at  
the Goethe-Institut, Bucharest, RO,  
2022



ABOVE THE WEATHER (PETROL)  
(2016/2022)  
performance

Part of the film Above the Weather, a reconfigured version of the performance was presented at the opening at Goethe-Institut, interpreting the song which ends the film, Ajda Pekkan's iconic love declaration to petrol from the 1980 Eurovision Song Contest, which becomes the pretext for a musical celebration of a looming ecological catastrophe. For the exhibition, Above the Weather, originally performed by Irina Gheorghe and Alina Popa, was performed by Irina Gheorghe and Cosima Opartan.

You can watch an excerpt from the performance here: <https://vimeo.com/735387343>, password: petrol



The Bureau of Melodramatic Research,  
Above the Weather (Petrol),  
(2016/2022), performed by Irina  
Gheorghe and Cosima Opartan. In The  
Internal Fire, solo exhibition at the  
Goethe-Institut, Bucharest, RO, 2022

ABOVE THE WEATHER (2016)  
video, 11 min

Above the Weather, the third part of the Alien Passions trilogy, takes the form of a road movie set in the atmosphere of a classical 50's Hollywood melodrama, shot against a background of industrial scenery from today's Romania, with shabby oil pumps and derelict gas tanks. It makes reference to Douglas Sirk's *Written on the Wind* (1957), taking the title literally, and hinting at the immaterial aspects of weather, and to the materiality of emotions, to the circuit linking affective and natural climates. It is a play on different temporalities, and follows how the end of humanity is recontextualized across different epochs - a 20's poem by Sara Teasdale on extinction, a 50's nuclear SF radio show, and the 80's Turkish Eurovision song *Petrol*.



Above the Weather was shown in the BIEFF Film Festival and in 'The Dark Side of Nature', National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest (2016)

ABOVE THE WEATHER (2016)  
performance

On the last day of the show, we are throwing a party. Above the Weather. When is it going to end? It goes in loops. Peak experience meets peak oil. Warm up your voice and spirits. Come join us and we'll celebrate the end together!

Above the Weather, in 'The Dark Side of Nature', National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest, Romania (2016)





Above the Weather, performance, WING, Hong Kong (2016)

LESSONS ON ANYTHING (2017)  
lecture-performance

Using the table as a stage to set up controversies on contemporary philosophical ideas and argue about the latest pop songs, the Bureau of Melodramatic Research will make a dialogue-performance where the phone is a speaker, smalltalk a script, and sometimes nothing at all. Where your side of the table is a representation and my side the real world and vice versa, the napkin a world and the teaspoon a thought. Like Flaubert's characters Bouvard and Pécuchet, the Bureau agents are experts in anything, from melodrama to philosophy - and in the end they are just complex copies, redundant to one another. The same half, repeated.

Audience is free to join, eavesdrop, check their feeds, sneak out of the bar. On this stage, they can choose to be free as in a museum, engaged as in the theater.



Lessons on Anything, part of 'Thought Sculpture' lecture performance series, Trafó House of Contemporary Arts, Budapest (2017)



THE GAME OF GIVING AND ASKING FOR REASONS  
(2016)  
performance

On Bertold Brecht's bedside table lay a pulp novel, whose covers suggest a crime story. I open the book and read between the lines: "In fact, in this paradise... on the smallest change in price of the most essential means of subsistence, a change in the number of deaths and crimes". The cover drops and reveals Marx's Das Kapital. High-brow cloaked in cheap thrills.

In The Game of Giving and Asking for Reasons, two piles of books stand next to each other: a tower of sentimental literature and one of philosophy. Two performers stand side by side and read out loud from each book. The routes of romance and metaphysics mingle: the performance of thinking veils the performance of sentimentality, the performance of sentimentality obstructs the performance of thinking. Words cover each other, reasons lie over reasons. Philosophy is cloaked in tears, sighs overflow sense. Two new piles of books grow, compete, copy each other's shape.

The Game of Giving and Asking for Reasons, in 'The House is Looking for an Admiral to Rent', curated by Marie Bechetoille, National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest, Romania (2016)



LOVEGOLD: A COSMIC COOKING SHOW (2013)  
performance and video  
20 min

Lovegold is a cooking show about cosmic cooking as a model for today's material-immaterial economy which does not start or end with the human element.

Cooking is the new alchemy. Cooking, just like alchemy, never ends. It goes on endlessly and doesn't even end with food. It doesn't matter what is cooked but how we are being cooked through our own thoughts and feelings.

We are part of a vast chemical paradigm, just a small cog in the big wheel of cosmic cooking. Material and immaterial are a continuum and transform one another, and we take love and gold to form a new chemical composite, which has the dual character of today's economy.



Lovegold: A Cosmic Cooking Show, in 'To the Reader', curated by Benjamin Fallon, bak Utrecht, 2013



Lovegold: A Cosmic Cooking Show, in  
'Alien Passions', BMR solo show, at  
Skolska 28, Prague (CZ)

PROTECT YOUR HEART AT WORK (2012)  
performance and video  
25 min

In the postindustrial economy the commodities are intangible: a feeling of well-being, the personal satisfaction, a sense of uniqueness and individuality, connectedness and protection. We produce emotions, trade in knowledge, invest on the market of ideas, speculate on compassion and monopolize happiness. Buy for a smile, sell for a laugh. Affectivity, knowledge, communication, social skills, kinship, creativity, human contact, proximity, forms of life are at the heart of the mechanisms of production and valorization today.

Under the present conditions, there is a high need to update the protection rules at the workplace. Since the workplace is everywhere and we embody the work, these rules become more and more important. What are the ergonomics of contemporary emotional work? How to avoid the repetitive strain injuries caused by recurrent smiling, compassionate inflections of the voice, endless nodding? We need new protection today because we no longer have a job, we are the job.



Protect Your Heart at Work, performance,  
Technical Museum, Palace of Science and  
Culture Warsaw (2012)



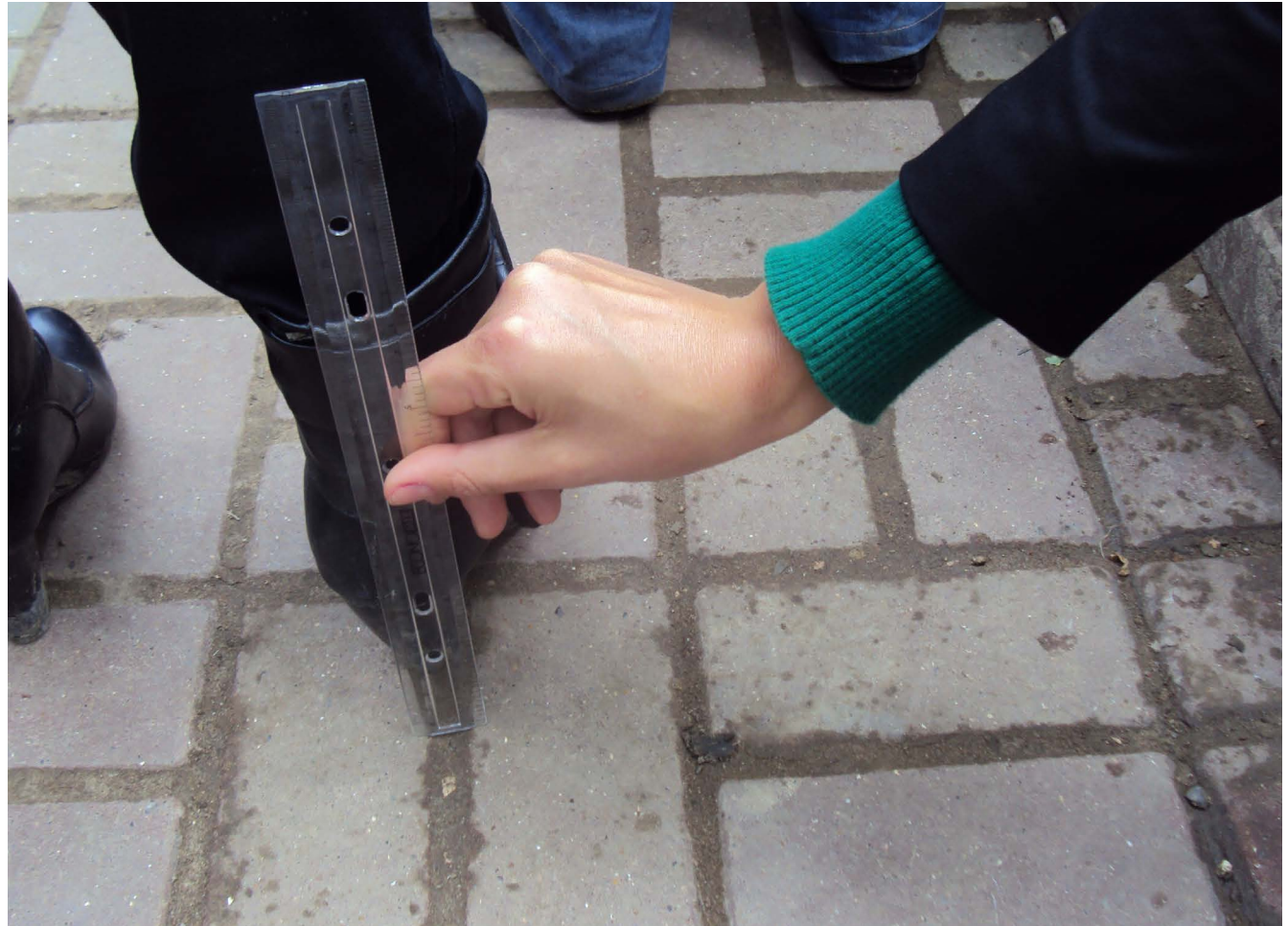


GROSS NATIONAL HEEL (2010)  
performance, printed graphics on paper

Moldova's Gross National Income is one of the lowest in Europe. The economic crevasse at the EU border is countered by wider railway lines and higher heels worn on women's stilettos. While the financial situation is extremely uneven across the ex-soviet territory, the train lines and the bodily elevation of the female population are rather constant, responding to invisible biometrics.

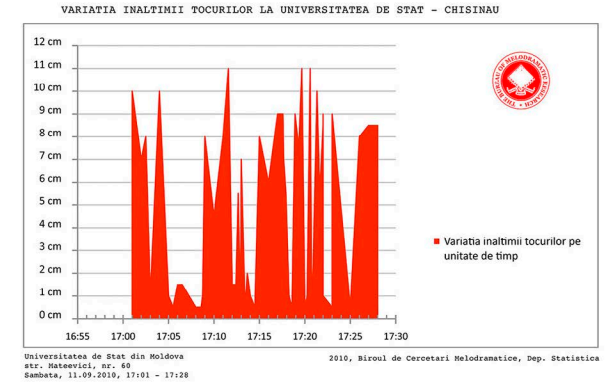
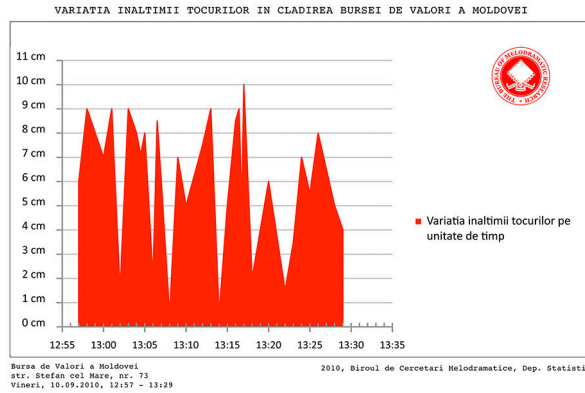
The imperative of verticality, typical of the civilized world, is completed by the one of height. The skyscraper and the space race, from the Cold War period, are gradually replaced by the new high altitude standard: the heel pedestal competition.

In the public space in Chisinau, the totalitarian sound of heels is oftentimes the only feminine voice. It obscures through frequency and intensity the spoken discourse, the controversies, gossips or neighbourhood arguments. The groundlessness of the high heeled Moldavian women is visible both on the sidewalks and on the billboards. It seems to be a resistance movement in the flood of nationalist slogans aiming at luring the citizens closer to the ground, but paradoxically the same company is responsible for both campaigns.



BMR has chosen several locations in Chisinau to collect numeric data regarding the height of the heels, thus warning against a lacuna in the official statistics. The results of the survey will be displayed in place of origin, in the form of a graphic of the heel height variation in time. This will be shown both in the public space and in the state institutions situated in the immediacy of the studied area. BMR recognises an institutional disregard of the relevance of such data. In the spotlight are: The Romanian Embassy, The Stock Exchange, The National Commission for the Financial Market, The State University, The Center for Contemporary Art [KSA:K].

All the graphics will eventually be displayed in the proximity of the National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova. The Bureau of Statistics has refused collaboration with the Bureau of Melodramatic Research, therefore the presentation will take place in the public space.



The graphic displayed at the National Commission of Financial Market, showing the variation of the height of the heels on the main boulevard in Chisinau on the 11th of September 2010, between 17:55-18:25.

The graphic displayed at the Moldova State University, showing the variation of the height of the heels at the entrance of the building on the 11th of September 2010, between 17:01-17:28

In the frame of the project Chisinau-Art, Research in the Public Sphere, The Bureau of Melodramatic Research announces the launch of the Department of Statistics, led by two Bureau agents from Chisinau: Valeria Barbas and Tatiana Fiodorova. The official launch of the new Department will take place in the park in front of the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova on the 20th of September 2010, at 16:30.

BNS refused to collaborate with BMR, that is why the presentation will take place in the public space.



CREATIVITY COUNSELLING FOR ARTISTS  
(2010)  
performance

The deadline race, the competition for residences, biennials and funding are constantly inflating the creativity-bubble which has been the pride of the years 2000. Artists, curators and other cultural workers are all lending a helping hand. For whom should we use our creative potential and who profits from the generated surplus-value?

Any curiosity regarding the origins of the much-touted creativity leads us straight to the right-brain activity, mainly responsible for emotions - the very object of the Bureau's research. How do we place ourselves on the neurobiological map of contemporary politics? And how to use emotions correctly and efficiently to respond to the generalized creative imperative?

The Bureau of Melodramatic Research provides creativity counselling services for all those interested. The sessions are open to all the artists and other actors on the local cultural scene who feel that the role attributed to them by the contemporary society, those of seismographs, needs further training. Give up your glittering portfolios, the namedropping mantras and institutional talismans and join BMR'S treatment sessions!

Creativity Counselling for Artists,  
CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw (2010)





ART COMMISSIONED BY KULTURKONTAKT/  
AUFTRAGSKUNST VON KULTURKONTAKT (2009)  
performance

The Bureau of Melodramatic Research was granted a residency in Vienna by KulturKontakt, thus financing its representatives Alina Popa and Irina Gheorghe a three-month research and direct action in the Viennese context. In return, when invited to the exhibition The Center of Attention. Kunst als Soziotopie, the Bureau placed itself at the service of its original supporter, gathering contacts for KulturKontakt's future residents. What does the Kontakt in KulturKontakt stand for? Who is Kontakt-ed and what is the final purpose of Kontakt?

Analysing this situation based on KulturKontakt leaflets and discourse, the Bureau decided to reassess the unfulfilled promise of Kontakt. Therefore, the representatives were dressed officially and did their best to act as matchmakers in Fluc, where all the participants in the exhibition were present, as well as casual passers-by and sponsors of the event.

The list of contacts will be decentralized by the Bureau and disseminated as an interdependent network via KulturKontakt residents.



GHIRTOIU / STANESCU ARCHIVE (2009)  
installation

The beginning

The mention of a private archive containing 35 mm footage in Mr. Ghirtoiu's obituary, recently published in a local newspaper, has revealed the roots of a yet unknown women's movement involved in producing independent films in Romania during the 40's.

The two initiators, Mona and Lisa Stanescu, were also playing the lead roles of these lost films, which stylistically mimic Hollywood classic melodrama and film noir. However, the backdrop seems to be real, diverting the artificial studio system of the American model through a keen touch of documentary. A collection of film stills exclusively featuring the two women has been preserved, but couldn't be exactly dated due to lack of information. Or so it seemed at that point in time.



Ghirtoiu/ Stanescu Archive,  
photographic print (2009)





Ghirtoiu/ Stanescu Archive,  
installation, in 'The Return of  
Memory', HOME Manchester, 2017