

**Sándor Bartha, Flaviu Cacoveanu, Cristina David, Mihaela Hudrea,  
Simona Runcan, Iulia Toma, Cătălin Velea**

25.02 - 08.04.2022

The exhibition takes shape around the intuitive dialogue between the selected artworks, sharing a mutual attitude towards art-making based on experimental and conceptual processes. The “Favourite Games” represent strategies for exploring, re-imagining, and ‘improving’ reality by the artists’ own rules, with artistic gestures that confer different meanings, possibilities and chances to objective deeds and data. The “Favourite Games” are non-competitive and light, games in which there are no opposite sides, no judges, no scores.

The game starts with a series of etchings by **Simona Runcan** from 1973-1978, titled “Children Games”, a well-defined and limited body of works from the beginning of her career that renders still-lives with various ‘games’ invented by the artist: “The Game with Spools”, “Sailor’s Game”, “Game for Tuesday”, “Game for the 1st of January”. Simona Runcan’s games aren’t childish games at all, but rather graphic-pop art experiments with mysterious repetitive elements, in the specific manner of her conceptualist practice. The abstract landscapes created by these cylindrical ‘spools’ placed in space according to some unknown rules evoke sceneries of indecipherable, encrypted games.

**Cristina David**’s installation with playing cards, “Happy End for Herman”, 2013, brings forth a mathematical resolve for a game of cards that obsesses - and eventually drives mad - the German officer Herman, the main character of the short story “The Queen of Spades”, written by Aleksandr Pushkin in 1833. The deck of cards is prepared by the artist after an algorithm that ensures complete chances of winning, thus being able to heal Herman’s obsession and rewrite the short story’s tragic and unfair ending.

In the proximity of these rather explicit ‘games’, **Cătălin Velea**’s soft sculptures made of sponge during the past year introduce into space beings and characters flowing from his inner affective world, created from transformed unconventional materials, and from the artist’s passion for fashion and design. The fragmentary and hybrid creatures are pieced together from figurative elements inspired by daily, human life, as well as from the animal realm, such as the ‘panther’ with references to antiquity and cartoons, likewise.

The drawings “Celestial Events. Grandpa’s Possible Dreams” created by **Sándor Bartha** in recent times, 2021-22, explore forgotten corners of the trans-generational subconscious, revisiting childhood remembrances in a Surrealist manner, under the influence of the altering effects of memory. The site-specific text intervention refers to another grandfather and to other dreams, recontextualised at present in the exhibition after the original 1995 intervention presented at Grabner House in Arad.

**Iulia Toma**’s new installation, “SAYA, the wrapped scabbard”, 2021, presents a memorial of feminine and feminist resistance in a series of reinvented scabbards. Inspired by the Japanese culture of samurai-women, the scabbards created by the artist carry inside their textile wrapping specific narratives entwined in the process of their making, from wrapped, and sometimes sown textile spirals of fragments of clothes, scarfs, carpets, strings, that sequentially record, throughout time, subjective experiences, chronologies, and histories.

**Mihaela Hudrea** explores the universe of essential geometric shapes in minimalist compositions investigating the mechanisms of visuality and perception. Her 2022 paintings, “Around the Sun” and “Moonfall”, are inspired by interplanetary connections, the nature of time and the human being on a cosmic level.

**Flaviu Cacoveanu**’s interventions more than often access an area of conceptual deconstruction, experiment and temporary, apparently absurde gestures. The “Sculpture” interactive installation, 2018-2022, brings forth a certain type of sculptural anti-monument with performative features, activated through the visitors’ collaboration in spontaneous, random configurations of language games. “Chess for Snails”, 2016-2022, offers the mesmerising experience of watching a game of chess in the animal kingdom of snails, with equal and undifferentiated players, who ignore the rules of the game and advance at their own pace.

The team of the exhibition: Marian Ivan, Diana Ursan, Robert Băjenaru, Ștefan Balint.

The exhibition can be visited in Ivan Gallery's space inside Atelierele Malmaison on Calea Plevnei 137C, B side, 1st floor, until 8th of April 2022, Thur-Sat 3-7 pm, or by appointment outside the visiting hours.

The artists' biographies:

>> The artistic practice of **Sándor Bartha** (b. 1962, Odorheiu-Secuiesc, Romania) conveys personal messages with a political, ironical twist on the current state of things on a national or international level, through playful, clever and skilful strategies. His works combine different media, such as drawing, painting, installation or photography, more than often integrating common, insignificant or recycled materials, scraps and objects. His projects have been shown in the Prague Biennial (2003), in the Romanian Pavilion at The Venice Biennale (2001) and in exhibitions at the Ludwig Museum (Budapest, 2003), Kulturkontakt (Vienna, 1997 with an adjacent artistic residency program). He lives and works in Budapest, Hungary.

>> **Flaviu Cacoveanu** (b. 1989, Cluj-Napoca, Romania) presents himself as a "Con&Temporary" artist. "Con" refers to the conceptual side of his practice but also to questioning the role of the artist in current times, while "temporary" refers to his interest for ephemeral and fragile situations and also to the idea of process. Having a trans-disciplinary practice, Flaviu Cacoveanu's works develop at the border between art and visual communication, by using mediums such as photography, video, drawing, painting and also performative interventions or experiments which transcend a specific medium. He lives and works in Berlin.

>> **Cristina David's** (b. 1979, Bucharest, Romania) artistic practice employs video and text as main means of expression and documenting the artist's personal and peculiar view on the world, herself and the passing of time. With a MFA from the Art Academy Of Bergen, Norway, Cristina David was engaged in various artistic residencies, in Seydisfjordur, Iceland (2015), Vienna, Austria (2014), Santa Monica, California (2012), etc. Her works have been shown in the "The School of Kyiv", Kyiv Biennial 2015, in exhibitions at Frei\_raum Q21, Vienna (2017), Kunsthalle Winterthur (2015), Futura Gallery (Prague, 2013), in Manifesta8 (Murcia, Cartagena, 2010), to name just a few. She lives and works in Bucharest, Romania.

>> **Mihaela Hudrea** (b. 1989, Cluj-Napoca, Romania) holds a MA from KASK School of Arts Gent, Belgium and a BA from the University of Art and Design Cluj-Napoca, Romania. With her work, the artist opens a dialogue through her personal interests, which connect to universal issues, from scientific questions to environmental concerns. She creates a visual and conceptual mapping, by using different materials and ideas rooted in our ephemeral condition. Mihaela is intrigued by the objectiveness of science and how it influences the way we see the world. Through her practice, the artist explores a deeper understanding of our surrounding environment. She lives and works in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

>> **Simona Runcan** (b. 1942, Bucharest - d. 2007, Bucharest) graduated in 1966 from the Graphic Arts Department of the Fine Arts Institute. Although she has exhibited in national and international solo and group shows, her practice remained overall little known or acknowledged, especially abroad. After she passed away somewhat prematurely in 2007, her works haven't been exhibited until 2016, when her family together with a group of young art historians organised an extensive retrospective at the Mogoșoia Cultural Centre near Bucharest, followed by a first solo show at Ivan Gallery in 2016, "The Presence of Objects", and a second solo show in 2018, "Silent Cohabitations". In Winter 2021 Standard (Oslo) presented Simona Runcan's first international solo show since 1978.

>> **Iulia Toma** (b. 1974, Constanța, Romania) lives and works in Bucharest, where she teaches in the Department of Art & Design, Textile section at the National University of Arts Bucharest, her pedagogical and artistic activity coming together into a harmonious mix. Iulia Toma is an intermedia artist who works with the means of aesthetic expression through textile, as well as with photography, installation, text and performance. Recently she has been focusing on social issues that she expresses in her own individual way: feminism, women's rights, interpersonal relations of closed communities, the materiality of urban living, social justice, etc. Toma builds a personal discourse that is expressively and aesthetically organised in visual and activist orientations, every time trying to place the balance between message and material at an ever increasingly elaborate level.

>> **Cătălin Velea** (b. 1997, Romania) is constantly changing his practice, juggling with various non-conventional materials. Through these approaches, expressed either by deconstructing, modelling or recomposing the materials he uses, Cătălin depicts a world populated by ambiguous beings which are meant to reveal distant corners of his affective core. He modifies and assembles figurative elements originated from the archaic animal area and ordinary life. His artworks reflect both the love for animated series, fashion and present, and the fascination for antiquity, such as therianthropic miniatures and Egyptian funeral crypts. He lives and works in Bucharest.