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Dan Perjovschi

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Dan Perjovschi is a skeptical artist. With a great sense of humour, he deals with serious questions. In his drawings and performances, he repeats and mimics the ways in which we act today - while at the same time undermining this behaviour. Our times are characterized by velocity, superficiality and a collapse of intellectuality and critical thought.

“I come, I draw, I leave”, says the artist succinctly to explain what he does as an artist and his projects often appear as constellations of short texts, doodles and graphic marks and drawings, drafted quickly and decidedly on the walls of the places where he exhibits his art.

Perjovschi's writings are jokes, puns, epigrams and paradoxes that question dogmatic and stereotypical systems of thought; often through satire and irony, repeating and overturning common slogans. His large wall drawings are a selection from among thousands of small sketches that the artist makes and collects in small notebooks during his travels around the world. “Half the drawings for each new project are ones I have already used in other previous occasions. I transport them from one wall to another, from one museum to another, from one continent to another. I travel around the world drawing it.”

Perjovschi's art matured in the second half of the 1980s in Bucharest under the dictatorship of Ceausescu which ended with the Rumanian revolution in 1989, followed by the subsequent entry of Rumania into the European Union. He began to work in Performance art in the late 1980s and, in the early 1990s, together with his wife Lia, he set up the first space for contemporary art in Rumania. Called the CAA – Contemporary Art Archive – this space for art that was located in the artist's studio and soon became a major meeting place for artists, intellectuals, art critics and curators of the region. Perjovschi however became known internationally only in 1999, when he covered the floor of the Rumanian pavilion at the Venice Biennale with drawings. Since then, he has been observing and commenting with skepticism both the old pre-revolutionary world of Eastern Europe under dictatorships, and on the post-communist world of Western consumer culture that took its place and where he sees just as much squalor.

Perjovschi's practice – apparently so lacking in quality, apparently so "unartistic" made up of mere chalk doodles on black painted walls, or black marker on white walls, (sketches that get erased at the end of each exhibition) – seems to mimic a world that is characterized by the velocity of digital communications, chats, sms messages and blogs that are written in the interstices and gaps throughout the day, on Facebook or Twitter portals, and by amateur videos constantly uploaded on YouTube. His drawings lie somewhere between caricature and graffiti, and they describe thoughts that usually inhabit daily life and politics, referencing the local and the global, personal aspirations and frustrations, as well as the banality of evil. Behind this sense of immediacy and “anti-art” art lies however a profound reflection on the places and contexts where he decides to “act”, as well as a dramatic desire for freedom and autonomy from any form of constriction or inhibition.