



CATALINA NICULESCU/WORKS



ARTISTIC STATEMENT

Absurd and strangely poignant, Catalina Niculescu's practice exists in the space between performance and documentation, between the live and the mediated. Seemingly impulsive responses to the places she encounters result in a series of interferences with architecture and urban structures, recorded and sparsely edited to create enigmatic, transferable events in film, video and photography.

Ever present in her work her actions are frequently short interventions that would remain overlooked, were it not for the presence of the camera. To present this back to the viewer in the gallery suggests that otherwise something of importance would have been missed. What that something is, or what it means, opens the work up to a variety of possible readings and equally manages to frustrate a definite interpretation while consistently engaging the viewer through their simple realization.

Formal framing encourages a theatrical sense to these often-slight episodes, revealing a peculiar relationship between the moving body and the static environment. The artist's approach to civic entity alters the perception through the largely personal point of view and creates a wider understanding of cities, landscape and public spaces pointing out at easily forgotten details or their conventional employment.

The absence of a camera person or crew adds to the urgency and intimacy of these unrehearsed scenes inducing an air of mischief to the performance that belies a complex idea employing simple means to powerful effect. Although the projected moving image is looped it is the internal loop located in the editing of live episodes that structures the work. The performed actions are often obstinately repeated over and over again to introduce an implication of urgency for the procedure.

In *MATCHES* an entire box of matches is struck one by one throughout the duration of one complete roll of 16mm film. Reminiscent in composition of Old Dutch masters, a strong contrasting light punctuates the nocturnal scene, momentarily revealing the artist before instantly returning her to darkness. The extended duration of looking implicit in this genre of painting is here prohibited by the real time of the match, struck and then dropped, snatched from the frame by the mechanism of film projection.

Recorded in High Definition digital video GUEST captures the repeated, inexhaustible climbing of a variety of urban barriers. These public obstacles vary significantly in scale and purpose from the elaborate and yet exclusory ornamentation of the palace gates to temporary metal crowd barriers. The illustrated action reoccurs persistently as Niculescu hurriedly enters the frame and begins to climb the obstacles in front of her, some are loaded with notions of exclusivity and authority while others are blatantly self-imposed barriers. Significantly the artist is always prevented from a successful ascent by her own editing that refuses to allow what would seem to be the successful conclusion of the task.

In exhibitions Niculescu's work is presented as installations, live performances take place as a series of collaborative and improvised shadow plays in large scale slide projections of rural or urban landscape settings. The artist cuts classical music scores into sections and passes the geometrical shaped elements onto musicians (e.g. piano player, beat boxer, trombone player) for interpretation. Together the performers generate a composition marked by the sound of scissors, rips of paper, moments of silence and by visibly and audibly adding or extracting melody. The imagery converges and diverges with the soundtrack creating an audio-visual collage of projected film, slides and resonance.

Cinematic, black and white silkscreen posters, produced to mark each performance and subsequent film, reinforce the idea of a missed encounter. Reminiscent of posters advertising films in the 1960s they in fact publicize an event that has already happened, presented in the gallery they are artefacts of the event they explain. More than documentation however, these pieces condense both the durational aspect of the work into a single frame and its conceptual concerns to the level of a sign, echoing Boris Groys statement that "artistic documentation, whether real or fictive, is primarily narrative, and thus evokes the unrepeatability of living time".

THE RITE OF SPRING



**AN INSTALLATION BY CATALINA NICULESCU
PERFORMED BY
MATTHEW LEE KNOWLES/ CATALINA NICULESCU
4.58 MIN/ PIANO/ SLIDE PROJECTORS/ 2008**

CATALINA NICULESCU

Born 1978 in Bucharest, Romania
niculescu.catalina@gmail.com

EDUCATION

- 2008 MFA Slade School of Art, London, UK
2000 - 2005 Diploma in Fine Art, Academy of Art and Design,
Offenbach am Main, Germany

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 Game People Play, Homeprojects, Milan, Italy
Closed Forever, Autoitalia, London, UK
The Culture Industry at VOX, Athens, Greece
Giatrakou 28, Remap (parallel to 2nd Athens Biannual), Athens, Greece
Catalina Niculescu, Riflemaker Gallery, London, UK (solo)
The Voice and Nothing More, Woburn Studios, London, UK
After The Curtain Falls, Wolstenholme Projects, Liverpool, UK
- 2008 Illuminations, Interval, Manchester, UK
The Glass Onion Shop, Riflemaker at the A-Foundation, London, UK
The Rehearsal Room, FormContent, London, UK
Festival of Architecture, Hyde Park, London, UK
Screen Banditas, Edinburgh Film Festival, Edinburgh, UK
The Nothing and the Nothingness, L T Blouin Institute, London, UK
Tanenu, Tactile Bosch, Cardiff, UK
Films we like, Plan B, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 2007 Trace, Stoltzstrasse I I, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Delicate Situations, London, UK
Mercury Art Prize, Hotel, London, UK
Trial pit cinema, Site 07, Stroud, UK
Trace, Woburn Studios, London, UK
Niveaualarm, Kunstraum Innsbruck, Austria
- 2005 Kunsthalle Berlin-Pankow, Berlin, Germany
- 2004 Museum für angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany
IMA, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
IMA, Berlin, Germany
Stöveler Halle, Darmstadt, Germany
- 2003 Festival der Jungen Talente, Offenbach, Germany
Kunstforum der Sparkasse 1822, Frankfurt, Germany

PUBLICATIONS

- 2009 The Evening Standard, London, UK
The Daily Post, Liverpool, UK
The Independent, London, UK
- 2008 IRP, London, UK
- 2007 Turtle Gazette, London, UK
- 2006 – 2003 Artkaleidoskop, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Frankfurter Rundschau, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Journal Frankfurt, Frankfurt am Main, Germany



VALHALLA/ INSTALLATION/ 2009



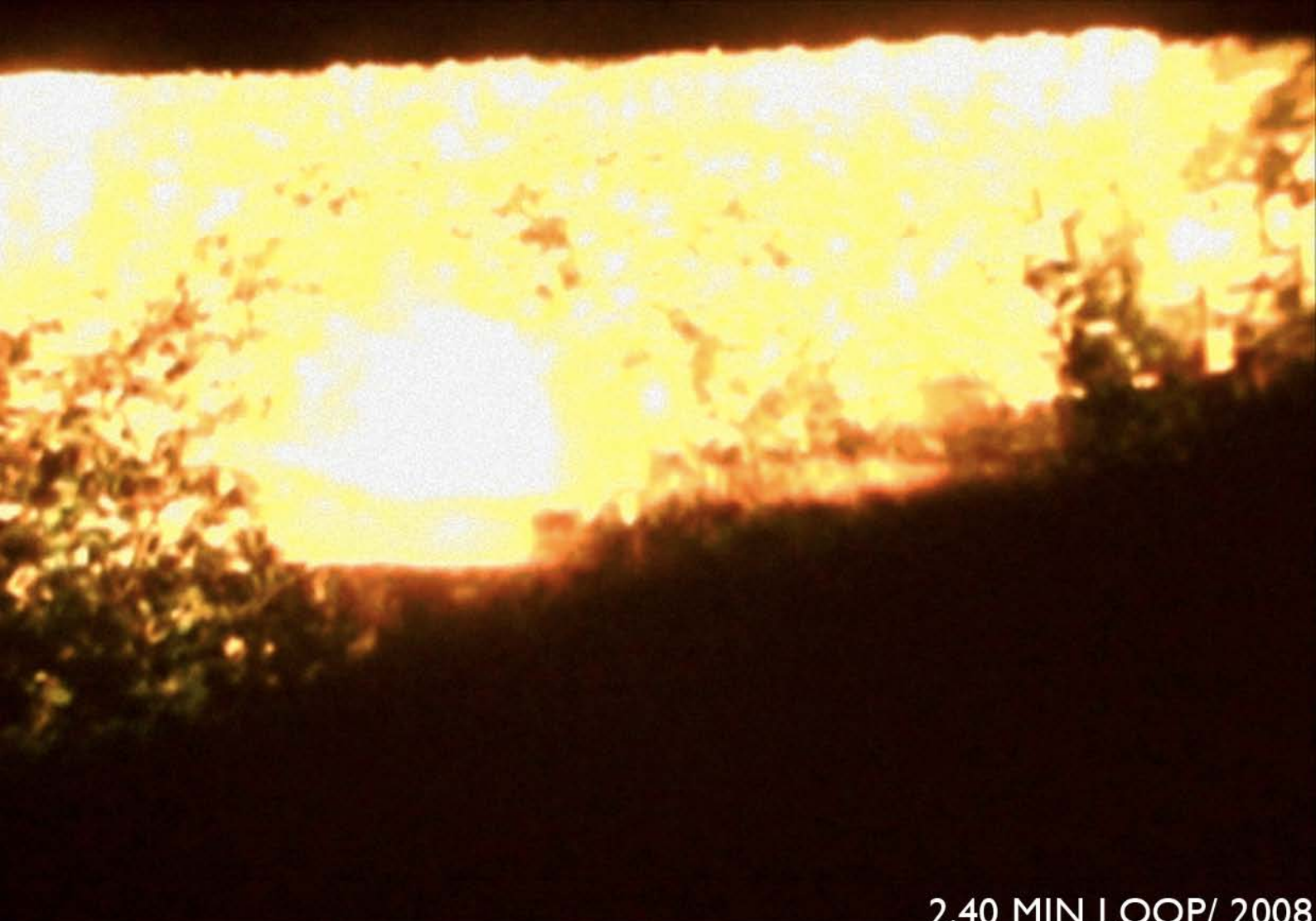


VALHALLA/ SLIDE/ 16 MM FILM/ PERFORMANCE





MATCHES/ 16 MM FILM INSTALLATION



2.40 MIN LOOP/ 2008





TO THE END OF THE NIGHT/VIDEO INSTALLATION/
5.12 MIN/ LOOP/ 2009



A GOLDEN THREAD/ INSTALLATION/ 2009





GUEST/ VIDEO INSTALLATION/ 4.10 MIN LOOP/ 2008





SCHALL UND RAUCH/VIDEO INSTALLATION/
4.50 MIN LOOP/ 2009

TOWARDS MARSEILLE

Last September I visited Marseille for a project based around the Unité d'Habitation by Le Corbusier. It might seem trivial for someone living in the city, but for a person working with architecture, often modernist architecture, it was an essential and important part of my research to discover and include this complex in my body of work. Furthermore I am not only interested in the structure but also in the way sun glare is used within the construction, as light is another important part of my practice and the Mediterranean light is supposed to be strong and unique in its beauty.

The journey will result in a video and slide installation structured in four episodes exploring the principles of sun and shadow play throughout the building, on surfaces, corridors, windows, staircases, etc. on the dates and times of solstices and equinoxes, in anticipation of close results to Le Corbusiers' ideal light situation and a further, visual understanding of his ideas and compositions. To complete the work I will have to return to Marseille another three times during the following eight months, consequently it would be very beneficial to actually be able to spend more time observing and examining the site and the influence of sun (and moon) illumination.

Le Corbusier developed *the modulator* as a harmonic measure to the human scale, universally applicable to architecture and mechanics. Ever present in my films and performances for this particular piece I replace the actual body with a substitute in order to introduce a more abstract element relating to this geometric, simple though complex building. A wooden meter composed of different proportions of my body, e.g. height, the length from elbow to fingertips, knee to toes, etc. is placed in the architectural environment to juxtapose my personal golden section with the modulator, scattered around the building as a symbol for my absent presence to facilitate an accurate but peculiar study of the relationship between architecture and the body.

The episodes are structured by the architectural configuration of the complex. Starting with the exploration of the environment, the foundation, façade and pilotus, the Unité d'Habitation is and will be captured from its external location and viewpoint to trace the exterior image. The shots will gradually proceed through the storeys onto the terrace to finally end the circular journey back in the open skies, this time from an inner and prominent perspective.

After visiting Marseille I feel challenged to further explore and study the city's general architectural development, its public spaces and urban structures within my work. The civic history of the old center, destroyed during World War II to eradicate the Resistance, the later fortune of this quarter, the remains of historic structures especially around the cathedral and equally the contrast offered by the new and modern buildings which now shape the cityscape, were influential and inspiring thoughts towards my application for the residency and induced the desire for an extended involvement with Marseille and its urbanity.



UNITE D'HABITATION (WORKING TITLE)/WORK IN PROGRESS

