

CATALINA NICULESCU/ SELECTED WORKS



CATALINA NICULESCU

EDUCATION

- 2008 MFA Fine Art Media, Slade School of Art, University College London, UK
2005 Diploma Visual Communication, Academy of Art and Design,
Offenbach am Main, Germany

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2013 Neuschwanstein, Galerie Arnaud Deschin at Loop, Barcelona, Spain
2011 Along the Lines, Liangwest at Art-O-Rama, Marseilles, France
2010 Collection of Natural Environments and Experimental Habitats,
Niklas Schechinger Fine Art, Berlin, Germany
Cité Radieuse, Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes, UK (screening)
Rectangular Forms and Other Shapes, La GAD, Marseilles, France
2009 Catalina Niculescu, Riflemaker Gallery, London, UK

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND SCREENINGS

- 2013 Bling, Galerie Arnaud Deschin, Paris, France
Binary, Remap KM4, Athens, Greece
Getting In, South London Gallery, London, UK
Romantic Duo, Galerie Arnaud Deschin, Marseilles, France
Strong Enough, Enclave Projects, London, UK
- 2012 Finished in L.A., Raid Projects, Los Angeles, USA
Back and Forth, Limoncello, London, UK
Two Architecture Studies, London Film Festival, BFI, London, UK
Man-made, Galerie Dominique Fiat, Paris, France
Bang-bang, Galerie Arnaud Deschin, Marseilles, France
- 2011 IMHB, Newport Museum and Art Gallery, Newport, UK
Object Subject, Silverman Gallery, San Francisco, USA
More Soup and Tart, Barbican Centre, London, UK
Jump Cut, Dialectic Dream, The Barber Shop, Lisbon, Portugal
Physical Center, Guest Projects, London, UK
- 2010 Crash Taste, Vasarely Foundation, Aix-en-Provence, France
Catalina Niculescu & Rachel Champion, Copenhagen Place, London, UK
Destroying Public Harmony, Museum Brukenthal, Sibiu, Romania
Catalina Niculescu and Alex Hartley, Liangwest, London, UK
Trace, Shanhe Museum, Hangzhou, China
Musrara Mix Art Festival, Jerusalem, Israel

- 2009 Game People Play, Homeprojects, Milan, Italy
 Closed Forever, Autoitalia, London, UK
 Giatrakou 28, Remap (parallel to 2nd Athens Biannual), Athens, Greece
 After The Curtain Falls, Wolstenholme Projects, Liverpool, UK
- 2008 Illuminations, Interval, Manchester, UK
 The Rehearsal Room, FormContent, London, UK
 The Nothing and the Nothingness, L T Blouin Institute, London, UK
 Taenu, Tactile Bosch, Cardiff, UK
 Films we like, Plan B, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

AWARDS/ RESIDENCIES

- 2012 Raid Projects Residency, Los Angeles, USA
2011 Ratiu Foundation Arts Grant, London, UK
2010 Triangle France Residency, Marseilles, France
 Shanhe Museum Residency, Hangzhou, China
 Arts Council England, Grants for the Arts, London, UK

PUBLICATIONS

- 2013 Selected 8, Artists' Film and Video Today, Loop Catalogue 2013
2012 56th BFI London Film Festival publication on *Along the Lines*
 Long April, an article by Anca Rujoiu on *Along the Lines*
 Forth and Back, publication and commission by Tamsin Clark
 artycok.tv on *Cité Radieuse*
 Art Press n° 390, by Anaël Pigeat, on *Man-Made*, Dominique Fiat 2012
- 2011 Artforum, September 2011, Cathryn Drake on *Along the Lines*
 The Institute of Mental Health is Burning, Newport Museum and Art Gallery,
 exhibition catalogue
- 2010 Domusweb, *Blue Moon* published by Giulia Guzzini (on *Cité Radieuse*)
 7000 Articulations, anonymous on *Cité Radieuse*
 Shanhe Museum, Hangzhou China, *Trace*, exhibition catalogue
- 2009 Architects' Journal (September issue), Merlin Fulcher on *Schall und Rauch*

TO THE END OF THE NIGHT/ UK/ 5.12 MIN/ 2009



The Romanian artist Catalina Niculescu is telling me about her recently concluded sojourn in Japan where she was undertaking research for a new work. The research draws upon Japanese *Metabolism*, a post-war architectural movement that derived inspiration from Marxist theories and biological processes, to mention a couple of influences. She explains that her interests have evolved from looking at a distinct movement in architecture i.e. Modernism, to encompass whole cities, looking at their systems, processes, and infrastructure. ‘In recent times the concept of the *Metacity* has emerged as a new vision of the metropolis in response to a rapidly increasing global tendency towards urbanization. For the first time in human history more than fifty percent of the global population resides in large urban areas; simultaneously rural regions in various parts of the world are being abandoned. The urban structures of these Metacities reveal and shape the way people live and how they will live in the future.’

This shift in ways of seeing is already apparent in *Second in Space* (2012), a work filmed in and around LA, which apart from being a systematic investigation of Southern Californian Modernism also looked at its evolution into the pop phenomenon of roadside architecture known as *Googie*, and the relationship between the built LA environment and the surrounding nature.

Second in Space is a striking work. The camerawork is as seductive as (some of) the architecture it documents. The buildings are beautiful and they frame the nature beautifully. The camera then frames the buildings that frame nature beautifully, beautifully.

Watching, I feel transported to a post-apocalyptic world from which the humans have all but disappeared. It’s like exploring a pristine ruin. The thought crosses my mind that a world without humans is the ultimate utopia.

I am curious to know how Catalina came to architecture as a subject in her work. She explains that on a trip to her native Romania in 2008 she started questioning the obvious differences between western cities and those of the ex-communist block. This experience prompted her to look at cities differently, or perhaps to really start looking at cities and the built environment for the first time. All this led her to look into socialist housing, concrete structures and tower blocks, to discover that originally what has started out as an ambitious and visionary idea to improve standards of living for all, ultimately ran out of money and deteriorated into cheaply built housing, lacking in substance and susceptible to decay.

On her return to London, Niculescu started researching the origins of it all, Modernism, especially how Le Corbusier developed it. And especially how it manifests in The Radiant City, Marseilles, bringing living space and nature together. The site was originally located away from the city, in woodland. Corbusier calculated the movement of the sun and moon and integrated these calculations in the design and layout of The Radiant City. In its form and design The Radiant City was meant to be the ultimate Utopia, constructed according to the Modular, a system of measurement invented by LeCorbusier, based on the human scale.

Thus for Niculescu, that is how it started, the subject of Modernism, it seeded in Romania, it flourished in Marseilles, in tune with the changing seasons, resulting in a work of particular beauty and pathos, *Cité Radieuse* (2009-10).

Then of course, it was time to return to Romania, to make *Along the Lines* (2011), to delve deeper into the roots of Romanian Modernism.

The singular characteristic of Romanian Modernism is that the architects involved in the movement turned to Romanian folk architecture for stylistic inspiration. They wanted to make a new architecture that was simultaneously sympathetic to Romania's traditional heritage. Whereas Corbusier went to Algiers, and Mies van der Rohe to Japan, Romanian architects drew inspiration from the Romanian vernacular. (Of course they looked to Corbusier too, 'everybody looked at Corbusier!').

Along the Lines was followed by *Second in Space*, in 2012.

Whereas Romania has a rich vernacular heritage, LA doesn't. Romania was seeped in socialism; LA has always been a market-oriented society where everything is possible. So is everything in architecture. Modernism in Europe is socialist in outlook; to LA it was imported by the wealthy and privileged. A particular style of LA Modernism is Googie, a type of architecture that developed in parallel with the rise of automobile culture in America in the late 1940s, California's pop answer to high modernism, now considered a vernacular style of Southern Californian architecture.

With Googie what you essentially have is advertisement disguised as architecture. It is a form of roadside architecture that is attractive, brightly coloured, and alluring, meant to bring in the punters and encourage consumption.

Then the Japanese story is even stranger. You had modernist architects from the west going to Japan to learn aspects of Japanese architecture, importing vernacular Japanese elements to the west, and then this Japanese vernacular style was imported back to Japan via European Modernism where it triggered the last known avant-garde movement in architecture, Metabolism.

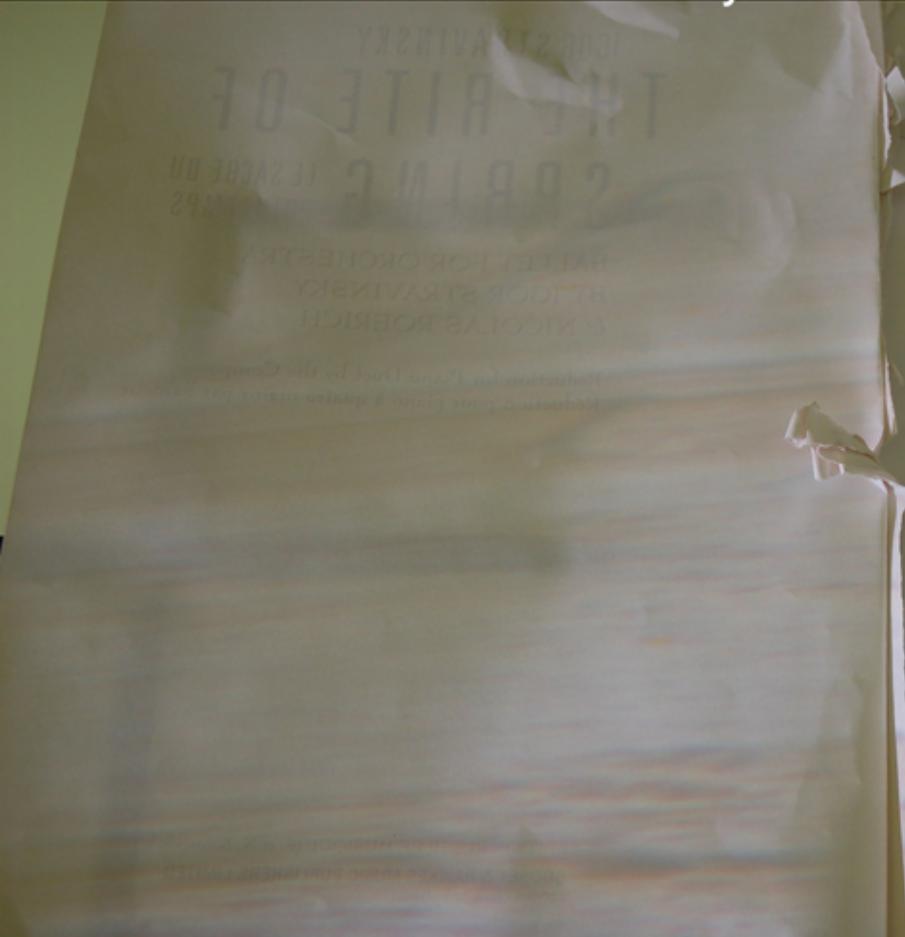
Thinking about all the various transformations and metamorphoses that Modernism has undergone during the course of our conversation, I ask, 'So nothing is what it seems?' 'Modernism is quite what it seems.' 'Modernism failed. It became a cheap, selfish way of putting people into bad accommodation.'

Except for a few examples including The Radiant City. That is why Catalina started there. On the subject of Corbusier, she comments 'Corbusier was a dictator but he revolutionized architecture. Until today it is the most radical architecture that anyone came up with in our century.'

Revati Mann, October 2013



THE RITE OF SPRING/ SLIDE PROJECTION/ PERFORMANCE/ 2008

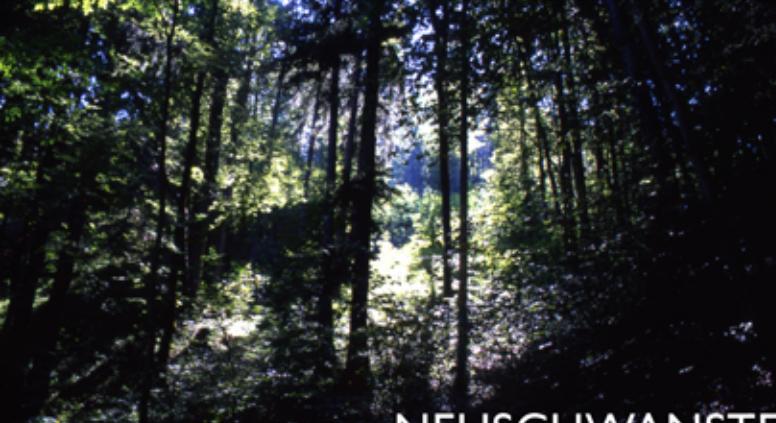


A page of sheet music for 'The Rite of Spring' by Igor Stravinsky. The page is titled 'Second Part THE SACRIFICE' and includes the subtitle 'Second Partie LE SACRIFICE'. The music is divided into two sections: 'INTRODUCTION' and 'Prima' and 'Seconda'. The introduction section starts with a 'Largo, 4/4' time signature. The Prima and Seconda sections follow, also in 'Largo, 4/4'. The music is written for multiple voices and includes dynamic markings like 'poco cresc.' and 'poco creto.'. The page is filled with dense musical notation on several staves.



CLOSED FOREVER/ AUTO ITALIA SOUTH EAST/ INSTALLATION VIEW





NEUSCHWANSTEIN/ 6.50 MIN/ GERMANY/ 2009 - 2011





LOOP/ INSTALLATION VIEW/ GALERIE ARNAUD DESCHIN/ 2013





CITÉ RADIEUSE/ 21.19 MIN/ FRANCE/ 2009 - 2010





INSTALLATION VIEW ALMOST INTERNATIONAL (STYLE)/
LONDON/ LIANGWEST/ 2011





ALONG THE LINES/ ROMANIA/ UK/ 16.14 MIN/ 2011





CALIFORNIA/ USA/ UK/ 4.19 MIN/ 2012





WHITE SPACE/ SLIDE PROJECTION/ PERFORMANCE/ 2012





SECOND IN SPACE/ USA/ UK/ 21.21 MIN/ 2012





THIS WAS TOMORROW/ UK/ 14.10 MIN/ 2013

