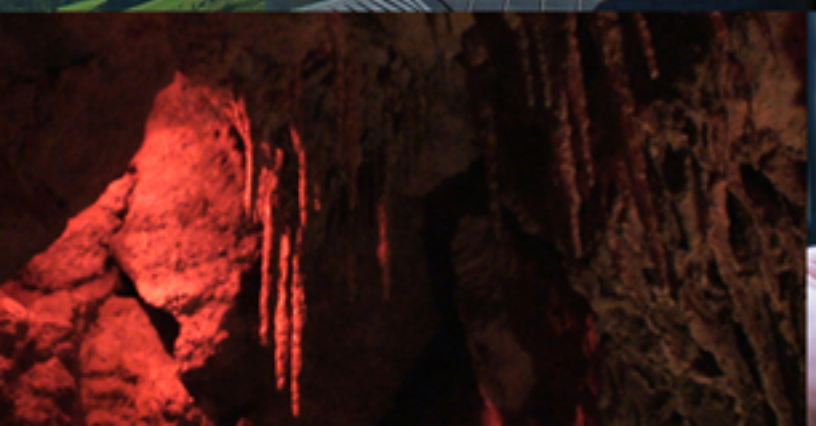







NEUSCHWANSTEIN/ HD VIDEO/ 6.50 MIN/ 2009 - 201






CATALINA NICULESCU

Born Bucharest, Romania
(Lives and works in London, UK)

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

2012 White Space, Limoncello Punctuation Program, London, UK
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

2012 Finished in L.A., Raid Projects, Los Angeles, USA
Two Architecture Studies, London Film Festival, BFI, London, UK
Man-made, Galerie Dominique Fiat, Paris, France
Bang-bang, La GAD, Marseilles, France
Spot Lights, Raid Projects, Los Angeles, USA
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, Yinka Shonibare's Space, 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

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

2013 Real Art Very Real Real Estate, South London Gallery, London, UK
Binary, Remap, Athens, Greece
A message to you, Trace, London, UK

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

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 comission 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, anonymos on *Cité Radieuse*
Shanhe Museum, Hangzhou China, *Trace*, exhibition catalogue
2009 Architects' Journal (September issue), Merlin Fulcher on *Schall und Rauch*

CURATORIAL PROJECTS

2012 Spot Lights, Raid Projects, Los Angeles, USA
2011 100 The Highway, Nomad Galleries, London, UK (co-curator)
2009 After The Curtain Falls, Wolstenholme Projects, Liverpool, UK (co-curator)
2008 Trace, Stoltzestrasse 11, Frankfurt am Main, Germany
2007 Trace, Slade Research Centre, London, UK

Artistic Statement

Catalina Niculescu's practice exists in architectural space, between performance and documentational observation, between the live and the mediated. Systematic responses to the places the artist encounters result in a series of visual interferences with architecture and urban structures, recorded and rhythmically edited to create evocative, transferable events in film, video and photography. Imagery to silently reference painting and simultaneously to create a volatile subjectivity through a linear composition wherein light, shadow and darkness in addition to long shots of landscape and nature recur as equilibrium and correspondence to a manmade environment.

While observing nature and light is per definition romantic, Modernism is per definition functional. Looking at their characteristics, both movements absorb several mutual concerns, e.g. the human body, nature, the vernacular and picturesque as well as a fascination for the exotic. In her work Niculescu often alludes to these similarities and casts their common interests through formal framing thus blurring the geometric organization of architecture and the constantly changing and unpredictable natural environment to reveal a peculiar synergetic relationship.

In exhibitions Niculescu's work is presented as installations, live performances take place as a series of collaborative or improvised shadow plays in large scale slide projections of urban landscape settings. The artist might dissect classical music scores and with the help of invited musicians 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 sound *(Valhalla, 2009/ 2010)*. In *White Space (2012*) a large-scale live drawing is created by an additive collaging technique of superimposed imagery (slides) and extracted, drawing elements.

Recent projects include *Cité Radieuse* (2010), a decomposed video portrait of Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in Marseille, structured in four episodes to cover the natural cycle of solstices and equinoxes. The principle of the Modulor is distorted, an abstract sculpture in resonance with the geometrical lines of the building enables the study on the relationship between body and architecture and questions the universalist vision of Modernism. The video *Along the Lines* (2011) follows up on the artist's recent journey to Romania and takes as a starting point the quest of vernacular influences in Romanian Modernism. Through formal analogies, architectural elements and styles are juxtaposed and collide into an anthology of visual signs. *Second in space* (HD video, 2012) explores a deconstructed Los Angeles based on its four ecologies, Modernist architecture and the car culture and space design influenced Googie, to originate in Southern California as a native commercial form of Modernism now considered vernacular.



CLOSED FOREVER/ AUTO ITALIA SOUTH EAST/ INSTALLATION VIEW





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






CITÉ RADIEUSE/ HD VIDEO/ 21.19 MIN/ 2009 - 2010















ALONG THE LINES/ HD VIDEO/ 16.14 MIN/ 201






CALIFORNIA/ HD VIDEO/ 4.19 MIN/ 2012





SECOND IN SPACE/ HD VIDEO/ 21.21 MIN/ 2012





ICIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS / HD VIDEO/ 14.10 MIN/ 2013



Recent moving image projects (selection)

To the end of the night, hd video, 5.12 min, 2009

Modernist Architecture is significantly rooted in Folklore, the pioneer of Modernism, French Architect and Designer Le Corbusier, was fascinated with vernacular art, design and buildings. Modernist architects aspired to reinvent the city and introduce a new way of living, where every citizen, independently of class would have the same comfort of living space and light. In "The human stupidity" the most successful collector of Romanian folktales, novelist and storyteller Ion Creanga, who shaped into their now classic form oral heritages, depicts a series of surreal anecdotes on human understanding and behaviour, one of which tells the story a man who tries to decant sunlight into his house with a bucket.
For the video "To the end of the night" this excerpt was reinterpreted as performative translation on moving image by capturing a selection of modernist buildings in London. The constructed action does not directly correspond to the initial story however the idea is based on the in/visibility of inner spaces in contrast to the public prominence of outer spaces and ambiguous light situations.

Cité Radieuse, hd video 21.21 min, 2009 – 2010

Invented by Le Corbusier in 1943, the Modulor is a silhouette corresponding to the human size standard that has been used to design the structure and size of building units. Corbusier said this system allows maximum comfort in the relationship between the inhabitant and his living space and should replace the current metric system. Directly related to the golden section, the proportions determined by the Modulor expected to surpass existing measurement systems that divide the world and to establish itself as a universal system.

For the series of films based in the Radiant City by Le Corbusier in Marseille, Catalina Niculescu distorts the principle of the Modulor, by replacing herself in the image through a compound meter of body proportions (height, length between elbow and hand, knee and foot) to become an abstract sculpture in resonance with the geometrical lines of modernist architecture. This also assumes an unexpected anthropomorphic dimension, as the artist places the object around the building in a logic suggesting human activities (move, climb, gaze). This study on the relationship between body and architecture questions the universalist vision of modernism through partial deconstruction.

For Marseilles Le Corbusier studied the parabolic paths of the sun at solstice and equinox and incorporated the results not only in the principle of the brise-soleil but considered this angle throughout the entire structure of the complex for the most efficient light situation. The series of recordings is a portrait of the decomposed Unité d'Habitation by Le Corbusier whose four episodes structuring the video piece correspond to four individual shoots during the four seasons. The stills not only explore the geometric structures of the building but also the way the reflection of light is ideally used in the construction, and develop the principles of a shadow and light theater to play throughout the space. The temporality of film covers the natural cycle of the solstices and equinoxes as much as it explores sun glare and the influence of moonlight.

The modernity that has guided the rationalist program of the Radiant City is then dipped/ dived into a romantic atmosphere (the contemplation of the landscape at sunset, through the clear moon), blurring the geometric organization of the architecture and the constantly changing and unpredictable natural environment.

Schall und Rauch, hd, 4.50 min, 2009

Schall und Rauch is located in Alexandra and Ainsworth estate, in the London Borough of Camden, England. The estate was designed in 1968 by Neave Brown and completed in 1978. It is constructed from white, reinforced concrete in a crescent shape, to reproduce the typical London street, with two rows of terraced apartments. Along with 520 apartments, the site also includes a school, community centre, youth club, heating complex, and parkland. Schall und Rauch is shot over the duration of several weeks in winter to capture the last 10 minutes of each day before dusk for greater contrast and detail.

Neuschwanstein, hd, 6.50 min, 2009 – 2011

The castle of Neuschwanstein was built by the Bavarian King Ludwig II as a homage to Wagner and his operas. Each of the castle's main and numerous chambers is decorated considering one of the mythological operas of the romantic composer.
The video Neuschwanstein starts with an impression of the landscape, the Bavarian lakes, the mountains and the forest surrounding the edifice. Back and forth the film is then edited between location and certain structural elements of the building. By no means does the spectator encounter the entire image of the citadel, once again deconstruction challenges the imagination to piece the remaining parts of the structure together. The first segment describes various views from the interior, looking out of different windows, the next sequence captures the castle's staircases, the viewer observes a selection of windows, a range of towers and images of the artificial grotto. Supported by a collage of Wagnerian music, original site sound and the echo of the landscape, Neuschwanstein doesn't forget to remind us of its relationship to Disneyworld, nor does it fail to give us a witty interpretation of the epic German "Heimatfilm".

Along the Lines, hd video, 16.40 min, 2011

Following up the artist's recent journey to Romania, the video takes as a starting point the quest of vernacular influences in Romanian Modernism. Through formal analogies, architectural elements and styles are juxtaposed and collide into an anthology of visual signs. The work is complemented and extended by a series of collages, slides, and sculptural elements. The journey leads to some of the country's most significant towns, cities and edifices to capture a (non-narrative) visual history of Romanian architecture as a moving image collage including selected shots of landscape, typical local flora, light and weather situations, Romanian folk patterns as well as any other related influences relevant to local architecture and its development.

A particular focus rests on the comparison between traditional/ vernacular Romanian dwellings and architecture's development into Modernism where vernacular elements have been revived and introduced into modern architecture.
The film further illustrate the disparity reinforced by communism and Romania's attempt to rejoin contemporary architecture by sensibly incorporating its past into the image of its cities and future town planning. The resulting work would be a socio- historical research expressed as an artistic approach to visualize described subject matters as a piece of experimental film/ video.

Second in Space, hd video, 21.21 min, 2012

From a European perspective the state of L.A.'s architecture is remarkable and disputable providing a great variety of prefabricated, imitated and primary styles only made attainable by the idea of the American Dream where everything is possible. Following her residency at Raid Projects Los Angeles, the artist concluded her research and recordings to result in a video piece, which describes a deconstructed and very subjective place, in which directionally dynamic Googie buildings are personified and architecture is the main, eccentric protagonist.

Influenced by car culture and space design Googie originates in Southern California, late 1940s and is a native commercial form of Modernism now considered vernacular. Perpetually occurring in Niculescu's projects, surrounding nature (desert, mountains, ocean) here once more reveals a significant role in the depiction and development of the place, as well as the placement of architecture within the landscape.

Incidents and Accidents, hd video, 14.10 min, 2013

Oxford is a city full of much-loved old buildings and mostly-unloved modern ones. The first reaction to the various quads, annexes, library extensions, laboratories, and offices built by the University and its Colleges since 1945 is often one of hostility or incomprehension. Many colleges have a 'modern eyesore' tucked away somewhere behind their statelier ranges or in an outlying annex. St John's College became one of Oxford's most important architectural patrons in the second half of the twentieth century, commissioning or completing major projects in every decade since the Second World War, and thus illustrating the story of modern architecture within the city limits of Oxford and beyond. The need for new accommodation in post-war Oxford increased rapidly, as the University and the government sought to improve access to higher education.

As post-war prosperity and confidence expanded, proponents of the architectural avant-garde began to outnumber the conservatives. British architects and patrons began to favor a movement whose roots in Geoffrey Tyack on the Modern College Britain stretched back to the International Style of the 1930s, in which function dictated form and ornament was eschewed. This atmosphere of rapid, progressive growth produced in Oxford more than a few buildings like Bryson's 'toaster with windows', whose ideologies of style and function seem dated today, but whose effects were profound. St John's contribution, the Thomas White Quadrangle of 1975, benefits through its detachment from the College's existing buildings, allowing it sufficient space to speak for itself, and from the landscaping which over the years has grown up to soften its harder edges. […]

(The Oxonian Review 15 June, 2005)