

The good, the bad, the beautiful; schoolyard version by

Marius Bercea

Marius Bercea's paintings often refer to memory and memories and acquire a rather peculiar autobiographical profile. They circumscribe an universe of childhood and adolescence dreams, fantasies, pleasures and desires with a maturity and insightfulness of understanding few young (and more or less internationally successful) Romanian artists possess. And this is primarily result of Bercea's availability for reflection upon the specificity and potential of the medium he chooses and for sincere and often subtly perverse introspection.

Melting together an exquisite painterly technique (without indulging himself, still, in technical meaningless bravadoes), a photographic based and melancholy generating imagery, a gentle feeling of sympathy the artist obviously feels for his rather humble and banal subjects, his works on display at the Mie Lefever Gallery appear semantically stratified, multilayered. Thus, they are offering the viewer at least four levels of reference and meaning, which got more and more accurately and poignantly mastered by the Cluj based painter in the last years.

First (and foremost?), his works represent honest, feverish and successful attempts to build up beautiful –in the most primarily aesthetical meaning of the word– painterly images. Then, still on a basic level, they can be easily perceived and comprehended as visual transcription of episodes and of a certain kind of atmosphere which shaped (and, so to say, flavored) the artist's own school years and adolescence. Furthermore though, they are recollections, viewed through the eyes of a child growing up at that time and through the somewhat blurring lens of appropriated, non-artistic pictures, about a period in the recent history of Romania, the contrasting, strangely dynamic and fascinating years of the decay of an absurd communist political system and the rise of a rather incoherent Romanian capitalism.

Then again, there is no actual drama, no political tragic vein and no attempt by the artist to use the topic of communism and / or post communism just to make his art fashionably (especially for an East European artist) political. Because the "stories" Marius Bercea is constructing are, finally, about the behavior and obsessions of children and teenagers of maybe all times and contexts. His awkwardly impersonal characters epitomize sexual reveries and the sensuousness of banal episodes, innocent and naive dreams of friendship and infantile heroism, fantasies of control, authority and of escaping them both.

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