

**BERSZAN
VERES
BETUKER**| press release:
Welcome to the Uncanny Valley| **BÁZIS** – contemporary art gallery
artists: **Berszán Zsolt, Betuker István, Veres Szabolcs**
curator: **Adriana Oprea**| event details:
opening, **March 11, 2011, h: 19.00;**
exhibition calendar: March 11, 2011 – May 25, 2011, on request, by phone;
address: Fabrica de Pensule, 59-61 Henri Barbusse st., 1st floor, Cluj-Napoca, Cluj.| **Welcome to the Uncanny Valley**

The painting has died several times until now, but, every time the contemporary art buried it, we mourned at a funeral without a body, just because the painting had been buried alive. It always came back to life afterwards. Because, in fact, it had never left.

Berszán Zsolt, Betuker István and Veres Szabolcs are artists that took on their account the return of the painting (its most recent resurrection) in Romanian contemporary art. Their painting expresses what it seems to state: a thoughtful practice, wrapped without almost any creases. At the same time, being the revival of something that has never died, their painting seems exactly what expresses: a haunted experience, a realm of subjectivity, ravaged. Not incidentally, one of the concepts that could define it is of a Freudian origin – *the uncanny* (strange, unfamiliar, eerie, odd).

An expression originating in Japanese robotics, *the uncanny valley* represents the transposition of the psychic dynamic in the very core of the confrontation of that which is human and alive with that which is inhuman and lifeless (the origin of the expression being the cohabitation of the man and the machine). *The uncanny*, already mentioned in connection with the sixties' painting, i.e. after one of its death experiences (the moment asserted "a failed, dead environment" when talking about painting) – first carries the meaning of what would be, in secret, something well-known to us – therefore alive, but sinister, unbearable, and therefore repressed – "born" dead. And secondly, it signifies something of the inner self, of our own, well-known, long-established and familiar, that, even if forcefully choked, deeply clogged by ourselves, comes back, reoccurs and appears irremovably in front of the subject. It comes back to life.

Uncanny is the robot placed behind the appearance, the flesh prosthesis which begins to move through thousands of artificial nerves, spread all over the veins and muscles, the stranger which is teeming underneath the skin, the dead from inside and the living that is screaming underground. *Uncanny* is the monster that cannot get out of that place (we all know where that is), and therefore is haunting around the pores like a stench, conferring the human being with an aura of a horrible creature, crippled, monstrous. A sensed atmosphere, vaguely prefigured through an authentic painting technique into Betuker István's imagery, while in Veres Szabolcs' paintings, the atmosphere is striking, with the copious violence of a macabre portraiture.

If what's in front of our eyes has been so well internalized and biased, brought into the human sphere through figurativeness (in the painting of the first two), why does it seem – and is – so very sinister? Because, as Berszán Zsolt figures it, abstracting, radicalizing the problem in painting terms, the familiar that is the most strange to us, the most approachable unknown for us is the dark black of death. *The uncanny* is the remembrance of the death we fear, the confrontation with what we do not want to acknowledge, even if we are fully aware of it: the black that, sooner or later, swallows all colors.

Adriana Oprea
art criticresearcher in contemporary art
archivist at the National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest

| for further details, please contact us:

bazisgallery@gmail.com
www.bazis.ro