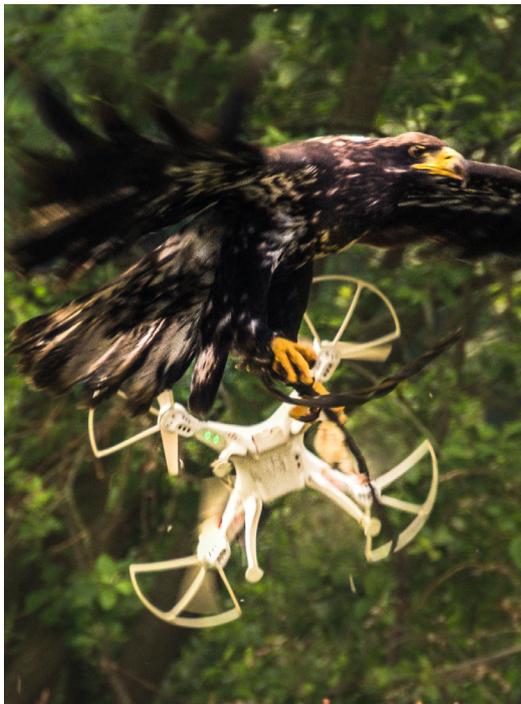


VÂNĂTORUL DE IMAGINI CHASSEUR D'IMAGES



Mircea Cantor, *Aquila non capit muscas* («The eagle doesn't hunt flies»)

3min 40 sec, colour, HD video – Courtesy of the artist and VNH Gallery, Paris

Within the framework of the France-Romania 2019 Season celebrating the 100th anniversary of the creation of modern-day Romania and coinciding with the Romanian presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature (Nature & Hunting Museum) has given carte blanche to artist Mircea Cantor.

Mircea Cantor (born in 1977), an internationally renowned artist and major figure of Romanian contemporary art, studied at the University of Art and Design in Cluj-Napoca, then at the Nantes Metropolitan School of Fine Arts (ESBANM). He was awarded the *Foundation d'entreprise Ricard Prize* in 2004 then the prestigious *Prix Marcel Duchamp* in 2011. His childhood, spent in a country under communist regime, and his personal memories are the starting point for most of his work. Faced with the globalization process, Cantor positions himself as an observer of different cultures and realities. His productions strive to highlight the social differences and boundaries remaining between countries. The formal and aesthetic research in his videos and installations merges with poetic commitment using simple gestures, but conveying universal messages.

For his “carte blanche” at the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Mircea Cantor addresses the notion of “territory”. That theme is at the heart of the encounter between the predator and its prey inspiring his recent video (*“Aquila non capit muscas”* 2018) where an eagle is seen hunting a drone. In another video (*“Departure”* 2005), the viewer witnesses the rising tension between a wolf and a deer meeting in the artificial environment of an empty gallery space. Mircea Cantor is also sensitive to the very special relationship that his native country’s vernacular tradition has with wild animals. The abundant and wide range of fauna (bears, wolves, migratory birds, etc.) inhabiting Romania’s vast expanses, from the Carpathian forests to the marshland of the Danube Delta, has inspired certain traditional festivals and the production of objects intended for them. Over the centuries, Christian culture has integrated ancient pagan rites, which resurface, in particular at the time of the *colinde* or end-of-the-year festivals. In these types of carnivals, goat or bear figures are called upon to celebrate the dying year. Especially developed in the province of Moldavia or in the Maramureş region, these rituals are also found in Wallachia or in Transylvania. On that occasion, the villagers fill the streets, dressed up as animals or savages.

Those rites will serve as a common thread in Mircea Cantor’s exhibition that he has laid out through the museum galleries as if they had become the territory of a strange parade. In “Image Hunter” or “vânătorul de imagini”, he has collected objects and works of art, arranging them in a way that gives them new meaning. Borrowing objects from popular art at the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucharest and commissioning works from his artist friends in Romania on the hunting theme, he has mixed this special genre of ready-made objects with his own works in a scenography that plays alongside the Museum’s permanent collections. His “carte blanche” will culminate with the “Bear Festival” (“Fête de l’ours”) orchestrated by Mircea Cantor on February 21st.

PRACTICAL INFO

62, rue des Archives
 75003 Paris
 The museum is open every
 day except Mondays & holidays,
 from 11 am - 6 pm,
 11 am - 9:30 pm on Wednesdays.
 Full price: €8
 Reduced price: €6

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© National Museum of the Romanian Peasant



Mircea Cantor, *Masks*, ink on paper, 2018
series of 30 drawings, 29.7x42cm each © Mircea Cantor

WORKS ON SHOW

Nearly 100 popular masks on loan from the **National Museum of the Romanian Peasant**. These ethnographic objects collected since the 1950s are representative of costumes worn by the villagers of Moldavia or Transylvania at the end-of-the-year festivals and testify to the strength of a popular art that is still alive. The 100 masks will be presented in a dramatic way, through the galleries, as if they were part of a typical *colinde* procession.

The contemporary works by artists from the **Cluj School**. Transylvania is more well-known to the general public for being the native land of Count Dracula, but it is also an active artistic hub with the presence of the Cluj-Napoca Art and Design University. Under the reign of Ceausescu and beyond, the University upheld an academic tradition of a “trade” apprenticeship and some of the school’s former apprentices (like Mircea Cantor) have put those skills to use successfully in their original creations. Although painting may seem to be one of the most popular mediums among these artists, their artwork cannot be summed up in a single word. All the same, their subjects seem to give preference to history, memory and the re-interpretation of avant-garde movements. For his exhibition, in the “Camera de oaspeți” (Guest Room) area, located on the top floor, Mircea Cantor asked his colleagues involved in the effervescent scene in Cluj, to produce works related to the themes at the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature. As a result, he invited different generations to join the parade, such as Marius Bercea, the master Corneliu Brudașcu, Dan Beudan, Mi Kafkin, Alin Bozbiciu, Sorin Câmpan, Gheorghe Ilea, Ciprian Mureșan, Radu Oreian, Eugen Roșca, Șerban Savu and Gabriela Vanga. Dispersed in the different museum galleries, their works will join the paintings by Chardin, Desportes, Oudry and those of great French artists who portrayed hunting scenes.

Mircea Cantor is also exhibiting his own works, some of which were especially created for the occasion.

- *Aquila non capit muscas*, video, 2018. (The video presents an eagle capturing drones, nature’s response to contemporary man’s desire for power)
- *Deeparture*, video, 2005. (Mircea Cantor quotes Beuys and his video *I like America* having it re-enacted by wild animals)
- *Breath separator*, installation, 2017. (Glass screens marked with fingerprints tracing a barbed wire fence)
- Drawings inspired by the traditional *colinde* and popular Romanian masks. The wall drawings cover the walls like wallpaper.

LA FÊTE DE L’OURS (BEAR FESTIVAL). 21 FEBRUARY 2019

The Bear Festival has become a major event in the life of the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature. The festival’s third anniversary was handed over to Mircea Cantor who has made it the climax of his exhibition *Vânătorul de imagini*. Reiterating the experience consisting of introducing components of living popular culture into the context of contemporary art, Mircea Cantor has invited a troupe of performers from Comanesti, a town in Moldavia, who, each year, re-enact the rite, which consists of chasing away evil spirits by parading around dressed in real bearskins. The bear parade in which the Parisian public is invited to take part by dressing up as bears, will depart from the Palais de la Conciergerie and end at the Museum. It will continue in the Museum galleries and courtyards where, among the different artistic endeavours imported from Romania for the occasion, Mircea Cantor will put on his own performance by drawing with fire.

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