

Răzvan Botiș

**Trying to purchase
what I once
wanted to forget**

KRINZINGER PROJEKTE



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When Absence is Breathing

On the exhibition of Răzvan Botiș
at Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna, 2011

by Raluca Voinea

Natural as this might seem now, for a generation accustomed to the challenges of global knowledge, if one looks back at the artistic production in Romania in the past 20 years, very few artists' works can be interpreted without necessarily referring to the context from which they stem. While having been trained as an artist in Romania, Răzvan Botiș arouses the public's attention with a sense of placelessness in his works, without however making one feel comfortable, at home, only because one is not expected to empathize with a foreign genealogy. It is a recognizable, but at the same time absurd, twisted or uncanny character of the objects, installations and photographs presented in the exhibition at Krinzinger Projekte which create meaning in an increasing meaningless world, the present one that we are **all** living in. It's a present which penetrates borders, no matter how hidden, which permeates skins, no matter how thick, which disrupts and shatters millennia-old traditions no matter how rooted they are. A gloomy present, in which instead of gun control decisions, politicians are expressing sorrow (wasn't sorrow something that belonged to private, domestic life, until not so long ago?!); in which animals from the forest are migrating to the city's peripheries in search of canned food, a present in which the glitter and silver and gold are only superficial covers of sweat, to blood or to corruption. As much as this sounds like anticipation of doomsday, it is nothing more than the daily news, which often we have in common more than the same weather, the same banks or shops. This world news is challenged by Răzvan Botiș in his exhibition, when he opposes them with witty reflections on the everyday, employing a simple blending of apparently opposing elements. In the work *Camouflage*, in which he covers a Katana sword with a tie – both strong masculine symbols – he annihilates the power of both of them, only leaving us a glimpse of the skill and the codes required to use or to wear them. Ancient rituals are indeed becoming obsolete today, which doesn't mean that they need to be replaced with others, similarly lethal or hegemonic, but

instead they should be memorized and looked at against the backdrop of the historic context in which they legitimize each other.

Some characteristics of these works are their acuity, delicacy, awkwardness, and the unexpected juxtapositions in them. Such a constellation can be found in the photograph which gives the title of the show, where one is struck by the incompatibility between the credit card paying terminal, a machine which traces one's steps, takes fingerprints, monitors our identity, and the raw, used mans' glove, most likely protective of heavy hands, clumsy maybe with a small electronic card. It could be that these hands are working on extracting the coal with which this sentence – *The warmer, the cozier* – was written on the white wall in this other work, an antinomy between the conditions of existence of this statement and its semantics. Here the comfort and the intimacy are exposed in their dependency to the outer world. In a relation of interdependency, as in a Mikado game, there are also the straws concealing thin silver lines in the work *Alchemy game no. 6*. One can only wonder if a special magic whisper takes place between them or they are dormant.

The breathing wallets, lying on a table and barely pulsating, in *Breathing lessons*, is the last work that the visitor of the exhibition encounters. The piece and its careful specifically designed frame and mechanism are juxtaposed with the ready-found character of the photograph *Trying to purchase what I once wanted to forget*. Thus, the exhibition subtly places the viewer between two of the most common symbols of the crisis capitalism which is currently guiding one's life on narrow paths: the paying machine, alluding to the missing hand that is supposed to activate it, and the empty wallet, with a life of its own, just as mechanical in the absence of the owner who is to validate its meaning by filling it with a certain currency. In the end, the exhibition resembles a newsroom which has been turned upside down, freed from residues and danger, where you are given a crash (albeit subtle) course into how to invest banal objects with preciousness, with uniqueness.

If we could all only learn that it wouldn't be long until we find ourselves sharing better news.

Raluca Voinea is an art critic and curator based in Bucharest, Romania. Since 2006 she has been running E-cart.ro Association, a small institution dedicated to researching, producing and disseminating modern and contemporary art and architecture. Since 2009 E-cart.ro has been organizing a series of public debates and artistic commissions, grouped under the programme The Department for Art in Public Space. Since 2008 Raluca Voinea is also part of the editorial team of IDEA. Art + Society magazine, published in Cluj, Romania. www.e-cart.ro; www.ideamagazine.ro; www.knotland.eu.



The warmer, the cosier.







The warmer, the cosier.





Raised together, 2010
Wood, horn
193 x 8 x 7 cm



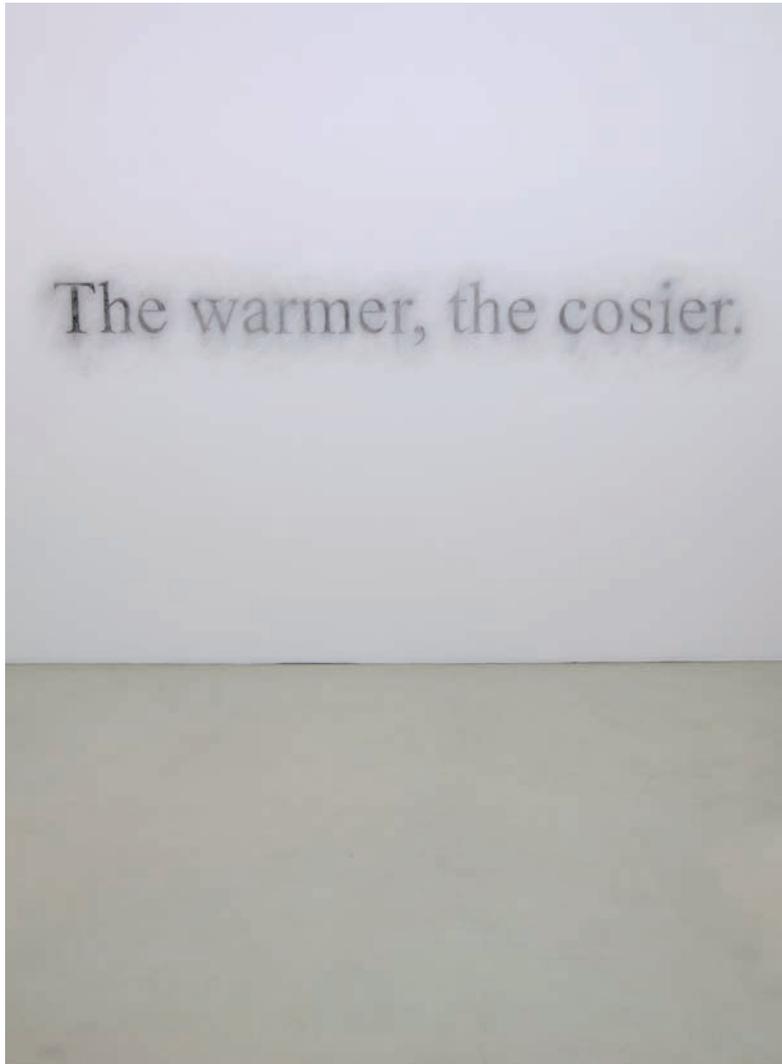
Detail of *Raised together*, 2010
Wood, horn
193 x 8 x 7 cm



Trying to purchase what I once wanted to forget, 2010
Lambdaprint
50 x 70 cm



Don't trust the colors, 2010
Sword, leather
31 x 109 x 10 cm



The warmer, the cosier, 2011
Coal on wall
40 x 325 cm



Primary colors, 2011
Light box
24 x 43 x 19 cm





The gallery as a medieval church, 2010
Lambdaprint
50 x 70 cm



Easy shaping b, 2011
Lambdaprint
50 x 70 cm



Easy shaping a, 2010
Lambdaprint
50 x 70 cm



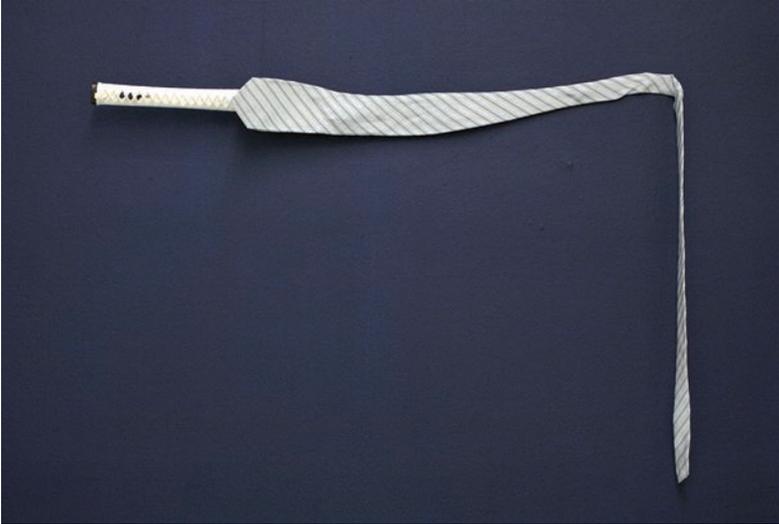
Alchemy Game Nr. 6, 2010
Silver, straw
30 x 30 x 2 cm (dimensions variable)



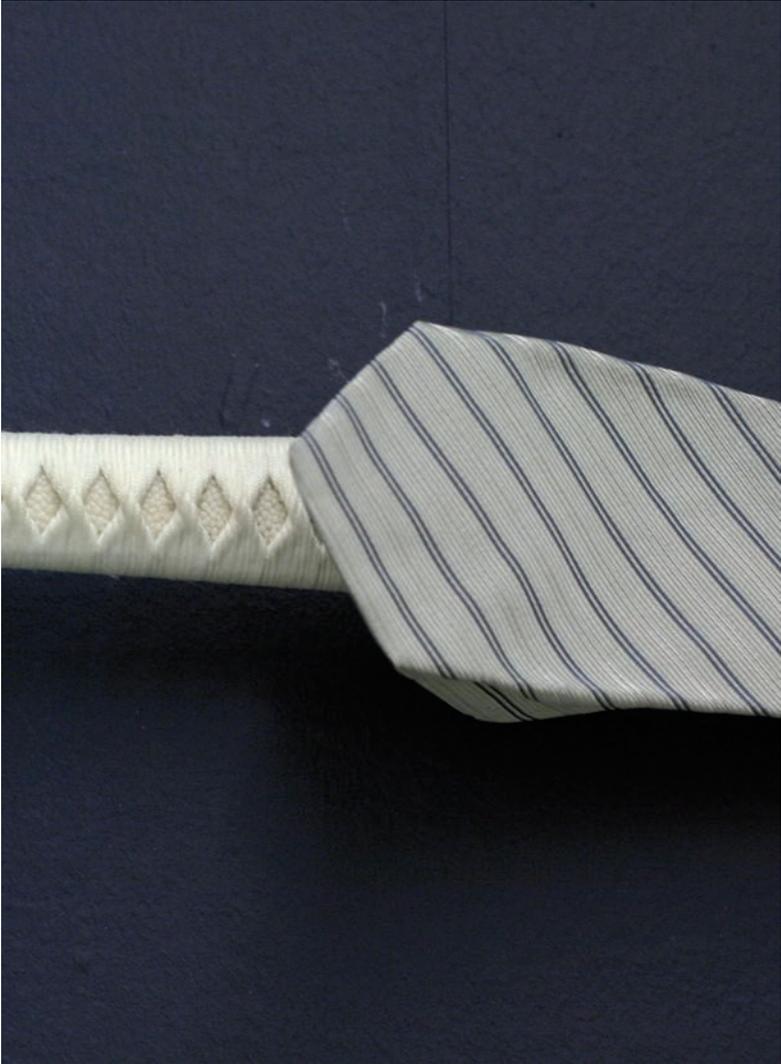
Detail of *Alchemy Game Nr. 6*, 2010
Silver, straw
30 x 30 x 2 cm (dimensions variable)







Bushidō, 2010
Sword, tie
70 x 100 x 9.5 cm



Detail of *Bushidō*, 2010
Sword, tie
70 x 100 x 9.5 cm



Breathing lessons, 2011
Wood, money pockets, electronics
250 x 125 x 12.5 cm (dimensions variable)



Detail of *Breathing lessons*, 2011
Wood, money pockets, electronics
250 x 125 x 12.5 cm (dimensions variable)

Răzvan Botiș

Biography

Born 1984, lives and works in Cluj, Romania

Selected Exhibitions

- 2011 »**Trying to purchase what I once wanted to forget**«, Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna (solo)
- 2010 »**By It's Our Playground**«, Abies Firma, Scotland
»**Crossing Limits**«, Vienna Art Week
»**The Idiot**«, Center for Visual Introspection, Bucharest (solo)
- 2009 »**The Hill was a Mountain**«, Andreiana Mihail Gallery, Bucharest (solo)
»**Missing Link**«, Andreiana Mihail Gallery, Bucharest
»**Invisible Body Conspicuous Mind**«, Luckman Gallery, LA
»**Young Romanian Art**«, selection of works by Mircea Nicolae, ICR Venice
- 2008 »**Zahar/Pamant/Parizer**«, 29 Gallery, Bucharest (solo)
»**Show and Tell**«, Paradise Garage, Bucharest
»**Land Export**«, Zendai Moma, Shanghai
- 2007 »**Interferenzen**«, Museum Keramion, Cologne, Germany

Selected Publications

Dust, Nano issue (08), Omagiu Magazine
Sugar, log lady, Green issue (11), Omagiu Magazine
Calvar-caviar, Rawmania issue (12), Omagiu Magazine
Magic Beans, Magic Issue (13), Omagiu Magazine
Land export, Intrude Art&Live, no. 09, Zendai MOMA, Shanghai
City report Cluj, Frieze Magazine, January 2010
100 to Watch, selection of Roumanian Artist, 2010
Igloo Magazine, June 2010
NY Art Magazine June, Down to the Roumanian Path, 2010
Da legst die Bäume nieder, Wiener Zeitung, February 2011
Komische Kohle, artmagazine.cc, March 2011

Imprint

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