DANIEL MOLDOVEANU

The Whatever Moment

December 14, 2022 - February 25, 2023

Daniel Moldoveanu (*1999 in Constanța, Romania; lives and works in Berlin, Germany) is an artist and essayist. His practice encompasses painting, video, photography, mixed media and text. Upon graduating from the Vienna Institute of Fashion, he enrolled at the Humboldt University and the University of Fine Arts, Berlin, studying Cultural Studies, Art History, and Fine Art.

The Whatever Moment is Moldoveanu's first solo exhibition with SABOT.

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It is when inconsequentiality becomes inconsequential that language is lost. Time becomes whatever-moment — the moment as neither *this or that* moment, but as the momentary as such, the unqualified course of things towards nothingness. And the whatever-moment is silent. This silence is not the silence of nature, where every moment is over-consequential *to the point of silence*. Rather, it is the silence of *compound inconsenquentiality*, when inconsequentiality becomes inconsequential. To live in the *present moment*, in the purely momentary, this then is to live in nothing. If I live in this nothing, perhaps I will then say it — *nothing matters*. But as I take to speech and exclaim: *nothing matters*, it is that this inconsequentiality overtakes me as *infinitely consequential*. As I say: *nothing matters*, an immediate insight is brought to light, the insight that I am really saying: *this nothing matters*. If I say: *nothing matters*, it matters to me that nothing matters. This nothing annihilates nothingness, and, at once, it matters. What matters now is this insight, the insight into the difference between *nothing matters* and *this nothing matters*. This difference is what matters — infinitely so.

Flickering alternates between the depthless and the performative, showing the internal *nothing* of the present moment, of *whatever-moment* — what Wallace Stevens named *the stale grandeur of annihilation*. What it forces upon us is a return. In whatever-moment, we are extended into the givenness of things, dispersed into objects, falling into nothingness, an Absolute Fall — and so this art must turn us from our downward procession, and back to ourselves. The unity of this procession and this return, is contemplation. But this contemplation is an action, it is the action through which we are in *this moment*, not in *whatever-moment*, nor as *living in the moment*, but in *this moment* which is nothing but that which matters.

As such there is *another silence* — the silence that matters. In the totalitarianism of chatter, where 'communication' and 'dialogue' are held as good in themselves, *Flickering* operates the twofold movement of bringing to the surface the *inner silence of chatter*, while granting us, as *this moment*, the silence where something worth saying can come to light. There is that sinfulness of art, that as we walk out of a gallery, a cinema, a museum, we have to turn to those around us and say what we think, what we thought, what we felt, what it means. But *Flickering* has already taken up the cross of chatter for us. We have been absolved from chatter.

It is said that the human is a *zoon logon ekhon*, an animal possessing language; but surely the opposite is true — it is an animal *possessed by language*. A whale sings; its voice is its voice speaking itself

songfully as its own voice. But the human voice does not speak itself, nor does it speak ourselves; it speaks *language*. And these vocal organs have evolved precisely to speak language; it is in fact no longer the voice, it is language that speaks. The stale grandeur of advertising lies in that it fully realizes the death of the voice — it lets language speak in a more total silence.
Flickering brings to light this silence of language, that we live in a generalized *inconsequentiality of language* where, outside of orders, what is said does not matter. The most powerful man in the world, Joe Biden, can say whatever — it does not matter. Such language, like advertising, is a pure silence, which is the silence of domination.

It matters that in *Flickering*, those scenes of intimacy are silent. The rest is drowned in a more silent chatter. Nature is not in the habit of chattering — it has better things to say. That churches, graveyards, and places of art invite us to silence, is the sign that their creators believe that they speak of something true. What Nietzsche called *the finest thing written in the New Testament*, was the question Pontius Pilate asked of Christ: *ti estin aletheia, what is truth?* And it was met with silence. What is this silence? A Christian would say: *faith*. But there was in the sauna that silence too. For whoever is transgender, there is also a silence of transition, an excess that language cannot capture. We look into the excessive difference that evades language, the excess that the concept cannot grasp, and as we do, we receive this insight that *this* is more than what can be said of it.

This insight brings to light that this exceeds the concept. It is, at first, a negative insight, which merely reduces the concept to *nothing*. And here lies the danger, that *nothing matters*. But the insight turns to the light that lights it, and removes itself from negation. The light had almost gone out, but it *returns* as a contemplation into the light, and the insight is that contemplation. The light must vascillate, for no one looks into the sun. It is in the lattermost danger, that *nothing matters*, that "the saving power grows," as Hölderlin saw. And this saving power is that this nothing matters infinitely — for it is nothing but the infinite.

Ulysse Carrière-Bouchard, Venice, 2022

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Flickering

HD video, sound, colour; 25:11 min (loop), 2020/21

In his Introduction to F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), Jesmyn Ward highlights a seemingly inconsequential word often used in the novel as emblematic for the authors predicament of the post-cinematic idiom: "flickering". The systematic relationship between value, property, length and visual language in the different scenes describes a lived experience already relational to cinema itself, a life flickering between experiences rendered into images: "(...) like the flicker of a light switch, so the flickering reality and conscious awareness of experiencing reality through the iconoclastic turn of modern society." In *Flickering* (2020) viewers are presented with a series of detached clues emphasizing the level of habituality maintained in all locations the protagonist is enraptured within, at once mesmerized and alienated by the generic sphere of the environments portrayed.
These real-life episodes converted into moving images are infused with shifting relationships providing an array of connotations raging from video overlays, found footage and a system of diverse audio bites.

Accompanied by stock-video intermezzos, the diaristic moments joggled around within the film present situational in-betweens, meditational counterpoints which seek to distinguish themselves as deeply personal and simultaneously banal to the point of becoming stock images themselves. Furthering this non-narrative, the scenes are devoid of dialogue and action, the characters always enraptured into institutional environments administering patterns of functionality and behavior (hospital, school, atelier, gym, sauna). Idiosyncratic snippets of sound are flirtatiously collaged along the array of permanently shifting frames. These include audiobooks such as Christian Kracht's Faserland (1995) or J. D Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), YouTube commentaries on Adorno and Horkheimer's *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception* (1944), movie soundbites from Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* (2013), commercial campaigns such as *The Paradoxes of CHANEL – Inside CHANEL* (2016) or other found monologues, interviews as well as music raging from classical to techno. Velocity acts as an agent, orchestrating the different cuts into increasingly shorter time periods, culminating the speed of constantly shifting frames into moments of incited climax.

Despite the employment of stylistic subversions repacking life as a constant oscillation between depthless re-enactments and performatively dramatized moments, parts of the film help situate the auto-biographical accuracy of what is being depicted or wilfully left out, anchoring the contexts in a

still-familiar world. Video overlays of microscopic footage showing the cellular inner workings of the lymphatic and immune system signal the dependency of any given situation on physicality as such, emphasizing the reactionary nature of the biological body. While the subject within these images may be rendered an object by circumstance, the body remains a consequential acteur continuing to visually penetrate the frames, at times faintly giving the impression of a retro filter and other times creating patterns which overshadow the composition itself.

Two frames protrude the prototypical layout. Inspired by the lux-gen-Z aesthetic of Sam Levinson's *Euphoria* (2019), the dancing scene presents viewers with a headless, glittering torso, whose seductive slow-motioned moves manipulate rays of light enveloping the body in an aura denoting the aesthetic of pop music videos from the heydays of the 2000s. Despite the film not shying away from homoeroticism, this specific component focuses on presenting a metaphorical alternative to the performing self, parting ways from the specificality of time, space, and identity other frames maintain. Another particularity presents viewers with a bird's-eye view frame showing one of the canvases painted during the production of the video at large. The exposure of this process unveils the work in a developing stage while building a bridge to the latter part of the installation, which consists of five large paintings. Each of these include black and white, low opacity video stills printed onto the finished surface using layers of UV-technology. Relating the individual, self-referential experience to a backdrop of heavily loaded historical iconography seeks to investigate the cognitive weight accumulated throughout cultural history while simultaneously questioning the significance pictorial relics carry in composing habitual rituals.

Flickering is a video triggered by the desire to mediate the feeling of constant emulation paired with a borderline narcissistic representation of an autobiographical coming-of-age. In retrospect, perhaps its greatest default lies within a subject that is either completely swallowed up by the omnipotent reappropriation of his invented self or finally allowed to flourish in a sensorial arena constantly reimbursed by infinite interpretations of the Self as Other. The protagonist senses his *Becoming ad infinitum*.

Daniel Moldoveanu, Berlin, 2021

Image 5, Scene 8, 2020, acrylic, correction pen, white marker, UV-Print on canvas, 160 x 120 cm
photo credit: YAP studio / Pavel Curagău

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Image 2, Scene 2, 2020, acrylic, correction pen, white marker, UV-Print on canvas, 160 x 120 cm
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Image 4, Scene 3, 2020, acrylic, correction pen, white marker, UV-Print on canvas, 160 x 120 cm
photo credit: YAP studio / Pavel Curagău

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Image 3, Scene 5, 2020, acrylic, correction pen, white marker, UV-Print on canvas, 160 x 120 cm
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Image 1, Scene 1, 2020, acrylic, correction pen, white marker, UV-Print on canvas, 160 x 120 cm
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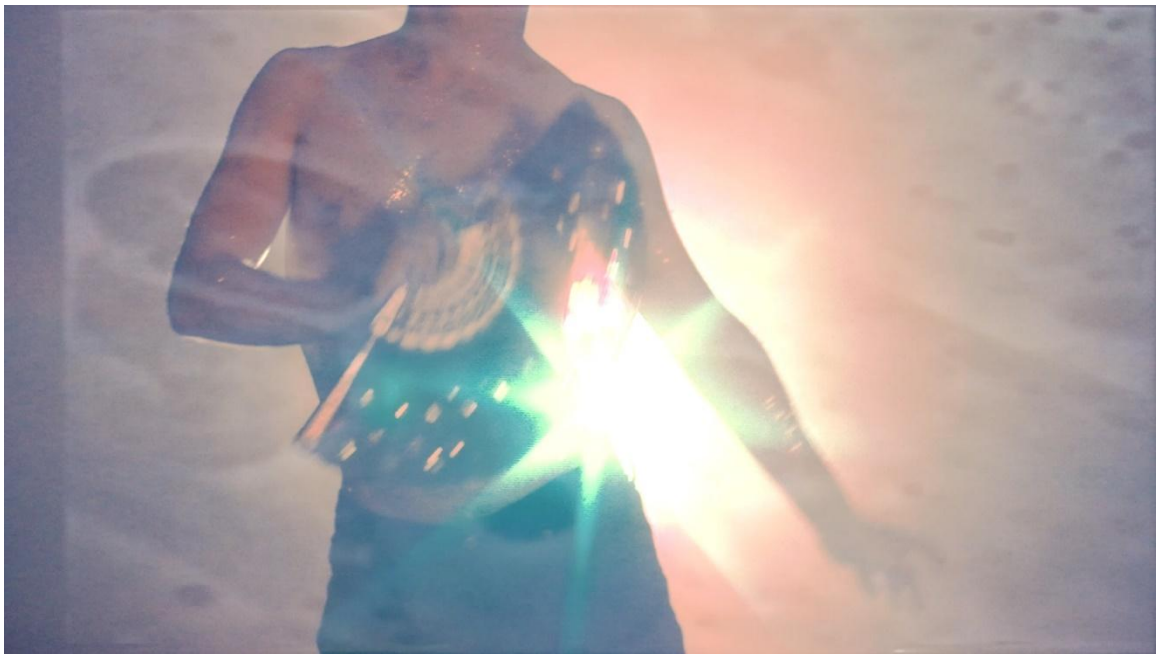
Flickering

HD video, colour, sound (DE/EN, no subtitles); 25:11 min (loop), 2020/21

Viewing link: **https://vimeo.com/574479949**

Password: Arthandler



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