

***Neue Malerei: Cultural Cubism* by artist Christian Jankowski**  
***A conceptual painting exhibition that reverses Picasso's gaze on female identity***  
September 23 - October 28, 2023

*Neue Malerei: Cultural Cubism* presents artist Christian Jankowski's third series of conceptual paintings under the name *Neue Malerei* (New Painting), exploring and expanding upon Pablo Picasso's traits and visual worlds. The exhibition at SUPRAINFINIT brings together over 35 newly commissioned works by Jankowski, including an existing reinterpreted version of *Guernica* that stays true to the original's real dimensions (349 x 777cm) and to the subject of Picasso's well-known oeuvre. The show at SUPRAINFINIT is well synchronised with the much-awaited *Picasso Effect* exhibition at the Museum of Recent Art in Bucharest, which takes place after a considerable period of time has passed since the first presentation of Picasso at the National Museum of Romanian Art in the then Socialist Republic of Romania in 1968.

Jankowski's *Cultural Cubism* is a reversal of Picasso's artistic output. Since 2015, Jankowski has been developing an archive consisting of digital found-photographs of people reenacting famous paintings by the employment of poses, costumes, props, sets, and makeup. The photographs delve into various milieus of both domestic and professional stage design, manifesting themselves as ultimately performative photos. Jankowski sends his selection of these paintings, with exact size specifications, to established painting reproducers from Dafen, China, who ship the exact replicas back to him, the only difference being the change in medium: from photography to painting. The dimensions of the canvas are maintained true to the size of the masterpieces, but the new painting almost always leaves a stripe on the bottom or the right side of the canvas untouched, depending on the proportion of the photograph.

Through *Neue Malerei*, Jankowski manages to not only avoid reifying the idea of painting by capturing its preceding liveness and performative dimension, but also to show the traditional portrayal of a relationship that starts with the artist and ends with the artwork, posited to an uncontextualised viewer. This is similar to his first exhibition *Family Constellation*\* held at SUPRAINFINIT, where Jankowski invited his outcast brother to come together and work on what was called a family constellation (family tree), one that came to being by chainsaw-sculpting the *poiesis* of the bloodline. A considerable part of this process took place under the close supervision of a psychotherapist, and it led to the establishment of a bridge between the two estranged brothers. The dialogue is not only just traced by the space, but functions as a starting point for the follow-up that is *Neue Malerei*.

The exhibition *Neue Malerei: Cultural Cubism* is financed with the support of EEA Grants 2014 – 2021 within the RO-CULTURE Programme.

In many of Picasso's paintings, women are portrayed as objects of desire, of prolonged gazes, yet also factored by the stimulation of fear. The representations often contain elongated bodies, desirable expressions but also slightly depressing attitudes, deconstructing the socio-cultural background by expanding upon the sense of dread blooming amongst the post-war bourgeois society. By contrast, there is a very specific chorus of voices underscored in the *Neue Malerei* concept. The *tableaux vivants* are vibrant, bizarre, beautiful, and uncanny. The subjectivities of the female characters emphasise an active process of communication —between their choice of paintings, their creative

reinterpretations and photo framings—over passive contemplation, as often outlined in Picasso's portraits. As Jankowski expands the medium of painting in a cunning yet jestful way, he also contributes to the extension of the identities that are previously involved. In a sort of centrefold of the entire exhibition, all of the women found in the *tableaux vivants* become beacons of a reversed gaze. Jankowski moves the eye of the beholder in between the artist and the *workers* found inside the art(world).

\**Family Constellation* (2020) was commissioned and curated by [Quote—Unquote](#), an interdisciplinary platform that investigates the mechanisms, uses and effects of (public) speech in contemporary society through artistic practice and its intersection with other fields of activity. Quote—Unquote was founded in 2019 by Irina Radu, Cristina Vasilescu and Dan Angelescu and is currently run by Irina Radu and Cristina Vasilescu.

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