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Art and Potentials for Change in an Era of Neoliberalism

A discourse of socially engaged art that encompasses practices referred to as participatory, collaborative, community-based and socio-politically conscious forms of public art has been developing since the early 1990s as a major contemporary art current throughout the world. The content of such practices is represented by interactions, participations or multi-layered collaborations with specific publics of a particular site that unfold over long periods of time or within pre-determined spatial-temporal parameters. The artists' projects aim to function as catalysts for change or as platforms for collective representation, thus implicitly questioning traditional forms of making art and building upon earlier forms of avant-garde, such as Constructivism with its ultimate goal of merging art and life.

Most often associated with the well-known artistic figures of Vladimir Tatlin and Aleksandr Rodchenko, Constructivism represented a significant artistic manifestation of the early 20th century "historical avant-garde," alongside Dada and Surrealism.ⁱ One of the two main branches of the Russian avant-garde,ⁱⁱ Constructivism was fuelled by the belief in art and artists' direct roles in overcoming the impoverished life conditions in Russia following the 1917 October Revolution that ousted the tsarist regime from the country. Even though for only a relatively short period of time - lasting only till the mid-to-late 1920s - avant-garde artists were invited and supported by the newly instated Bolshevik political regime to take part in the transformation of a predominately agrarian society into an industrialized socialist economy led by the proletariat. Especially during the peak years between 1917 and the early 1920s, artists were encouraged and expected to envision, propose and design innovative ways for the social use of art or in Peter Bürger's terms to "organize a new life praxis from a basis in art."ⁱⁱⁱ

Art historian Christina Kiaer, in her 2005 book *Imagining No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism*, investigates the Constructivist art-into-life ambitions during the New Economic Policy (NEP) between 1921-1928, a semicapitalist period initiated by Vladimir Lenin to help boost and prepare the local Russian economy for its socialist future. Considering various everyday and utilitarian Constructivist objects designed for industrial production by Tatlin, Liubov Popova, Varvara Stepanova and Rodchenko, Kiaer puts forward the concept of the "socialist object" rooted in viewing the "object-as-comrade,"^{iv} which in contrast to the capitalist commodity fetish based on a possessive relation between object and consumer and an alienated relation between object and producer. This implicitly invested the object with subjectivity, conferring upon the three-partite relation a renewed form of sociability. As Russian curator and art critic Ekaterina Degot reflected on the Russian Constructivists endeavors:

Passive spectators were to become creators and their works transformed into a kind of human being that is not to be judged by beauty alone. [...] This new artwork was a speaking one, a working one, a human one. Art had to become live.^v

Such goals of creating renewed forms of sociability among people, of transforming the viewer of art into a direct participant and collaborator in (art) production are what contemporary artist Matei Bejenaru builds upon in his socially engaged works included in the exhibition *Art Into Life, Life Into Art*, which are closely examined later in this essay. Through his various art projects, Bejenaru aims to recover the transformative potential of politics as a discursive and participatory practice open to a multitude of voices and interests. Such artistic attempts carry potentials for change in the current era of neoliberalism. Contemporary democratic governments have considerably distanced themselves from their original mandates to represent and act in the interests of people, as was the case, for instance, with the Bolshevik revolutionary government when art and politics were united, and their current role has increasingly been to facilitate the expansion of free-market mechanisms worldwide.

However, the Constructivist vanguard dream of bypassing the autonomous art object meant for solitary reflection on the one hand, and conducting artistic experimentation aimed at coalescing art into life and life into art on the other hand, was cut short. It was not to be mentioned for several decades in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) until after the fall of communist regimes during 1989-1990. The increasing government demands for practical outcomes, insisting that artists abandon artistic experimentation in favor of solely industrial production, determined many avant-garde artists to leave the country and several project proposals remained confined to the drawing board.

Upon Lenin's death in 1924 and since 1929, under Joseph Stalin's reign until his death in 1953, the earlier avant-garde fervent activities had been replaced by a stringent artistic mandate of socialist realism meant to communicate a utopian society based on gender and class equality. This was exemplified through pictorial and monumental sculptural depiction of the virile and heroic figures of the worker, or the smiling figure of the factory woman with her headscarf tied at the back working along men. All primarily devised as propaganda tools for the Stalinist communist regime. This cultural mandate of socialist realism was instated in the entirety of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) including, of course, all CEE countries that fell under its influence in the aftermath of World War II following the Yalta conference that divided the world camps of the Cold War for the next half century.

Although the official artistic style of socialist realism had almost been entirely abandoned by the late 1950s, artists all across the eastern part of the Cold War most often conducted their artistic experiments, or what have been referred to as neo-avant-gardes,^{vi} in secluded circles away from the watchful eye of the communist political regime. From the onset it must be noted that despite being under the influence of the USSR, each of the satellite countries had manifested its own socialist path. Even between neighboring countries, such as Hungary and Romania, the differences were striking. While Hungary saw the least severe totalitarian political socialist regime in the CEE region, Romania experienced one of the harshest authoritarian communist governances under the dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. In such different socio-political contexts, contemporary art practices likewise varied considerably. For instance, enclaves such as those at the Chapel Studio Balaton Balatonboglár art space (active

during the summers between 1970-73 on Lake Balaton about sixty miles from Budapest) represented one of the most important and complex Hungarian neo-avant-garde manifestations. Art practices ranging from happenings, land-art, performances, body art and mail art were possible in the more politically relaxed Hungary.^{vii} In Romania, especially in the 1980s when the country suffered the most under the dictator's nationalist type of communism, contemporary art developed in tight circles gathering in private apartments and organizing basement shows and "pocket-shows" in various cities across the country. By making use of irony, grotesque quotations, eclectic combinations, withdrawal and passive participation, these artists flouted the authorities by ignoring their rules and retreating within private spaces away from the public eye.^{viii}

What are now considered middle generation artists, such as Matei Bejenaru, paid witness to these enclosed neo-avant-garde art circles and informed their artistic practices emerging after the fall of communism in 1989. Since the early 1990s contemporary socially engaged art, as exemplified by Bejenaru's work, has been developing in various forms throughout the world. Through the nature of their work, these artists aim to counteract current market-oriented tendencies centered on the financial and/or symbolic investment properties of an art object and art practice, by reviving art's direct role in society, viewer's direct engagement in (art's) creation as opposed to passive consumer of (aesthetic) objects, art's potentialities in provoking relational associations and inspiring change at both the local and global level. Under the increasing influence of global neoliberalism with national states facilitating its borderless policies, art in general and socially engaged art in particular has increasingly been part of government cultural policies and incorporated into the programs of privately and/or state funded organizations often only to contribute to the leading political party's interests or the institutions' symbolic capital. Such maneuvers are often seen as modes of apolitical delectation or occasions for charitable donations primarily meant to elevate the benefactor's social and symbolic status. Ultimately, these are part of the broader field of culture considered primarily for its entertainment and commercial value, aimed to function as a lubricant for the ever-expanding engines of the neoliberal market forces and the advancement of the neoliberal ideology.

Emerging in the late 1970s with a series of sustained questions on the relevance and efficiency of the welfare state in both US and Western Europe, and then in the early 1980s with fully implemented policies of President Ronald Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in the UK, neoliberal theory affirms that:

Human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.^{ix}

Thus, our contemporary conditions governed by the global neoliberalism's emphasis on individual libertarianism have continued to trigger increasing worldwide gaps between the rich and the poor, environmental degradation, communal and familial separations, a wild craze for profit accumulation through deregulation and outsourcing of production to third world countries around the globe in order to exploit low manufacturing costs, all sustained by the precarious condition of the worker. Such a precarious condition implies

short-term and/or part-time jobs, health and pension insecurity, long commutes and global migrations, among other aspects.

Neoliberal forces therefore control and organize life through various technologies of power affecting everyday living and working conditions, health, education and essentially the entire space of existence. Michel Foucault called such mechanisms of control biopower. According to him, biopower is that which “designates what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life.”^x Closely related to biopower in its systematic control of life in all of its facets at the macro level, biopolitics or “biopolitical production creates actual social relationships and forms of life”^{xi} at the micro level, which ultimately controls attitudes and beliefs by engendering consumerism, apathy, distance and entertainment. Such technologies are also at the core of global migrations of people determined to relocate from their impoverished nations towards first world countries only to encounter even deeper precarious conditions, as vividly communicated in several of Bejenaru’s works.

Without a doubt, both biopower and biopolitics as mechanisms of control and forms of governmentality have been the driving engines of contemporary neoliberalism since its inception. In order to secure its financial capital in multinational companies built in urban metropolises around the world, neoliberalism’s global forces conquer spaces by transforming public territories into private assets. Most importantly, it produces forms of life and/or life-styles through “immaterial labor”^{xii} resulting in images, symbols, ideas, forms of communications, a sense of satisfaction communicated through an increasingly diversified mass media and service industry catering to the top one percent and supported by the precarious labor conditions of the rest of the ninety-nine percent.

As such, at the core of neoliberalism is what Nikolas Rose called an “advanced liberalism,” which divorces members of the society from political decisions taken at the institutional level that directly impact their lives. Moreover, it invests the individual with moral responsibility for all his or her actions and shapes him/her into a consumer of private benefits such as healthcare and education. In such a context then, the contemporary precarious condition of the worker is solely the responsibility of the individual who is even blamed for his or her own socio-economic situation. Neoliberal programs devised to remedy such situations are designed to eclipse the systemic inequalities at the core of its policies and instead focus on ethical and moral concerns to re-educate the marginalized and transform them into active citizens by:

Training to equip them with the skills of self-promotion, counseling to restore their sense of self-worth and self-esteem, programs of empowerment to enable them to assume their rightful place as the self-actualizing and demanding subjects of an “advanced” liberal democracy.^{xiii}

The global economic collapse that began in late 2008 revealed the crisis of neoliberalism with its craze for overconsumption, over accumulation and over individualizations. It provoked global mass protest movements such as Occupy Wall Street “that began on September 17, 2011 in Liberty Square in Manhattan’s Financial District, and has spread to over 100 cities in the United States and actions in over 1,500 globally.”^{xiv} At the core of this heterogeneous movement was solidarity among people

from all walks of life protesting against their precarious existence and empowered to reclaim their democratic rights of freedom and equality. Other protests around the world included the popular uprising in Tunisia and Egypt that demanded the removal of dictatorial regimes and the institution of democratic values and rights. Popular mass movements of hundred of thousands on January 2, 2012 surrounding the Opera House in Budapest, Hungary protested against the country's new constitution brought in by the current right-wing nationalist government led by Viktor Orban. The Orban government changed the meaning of the 1989 constitution from "in the Hungarian Republic, all power belongs to the people" to "the source of public power are the people," which in its vague sentencing essentially transfers the power from the people into the hands of public officials in political offices.^{xv} Likewise, week-long mass protests erupted in mid-January, 2012 in the University Square in Bucharest, Romania with the eclectic mix of crowd protesting the austerity cuts introduced by the right-wing government led by Traian Basescu under the International Monetary Fund's directives in light of the EU-wide economic crisis.

Noam Chomsky pointed out the importance of such mass movements protesting social injustice brought on by the neoliberal model of government:

One of the really remarkable and almost spectacular successes of the Occupy movement is that it has simply changed the entire framework of discussion of many issues. There were things that were sort of known, but in the margins, hidden, which are now right up front – like the imagery of the 99 percent and 1 percent; and the dramatic facts of sharply rising inequality over the past roughly thirty years, with wealth being concentrated in actually a small fraction of 1 percent of the population.^{xvi}

Moreover, if the bonds and associations formed among people during these historical events can be maintained and extend into various and wider communities over longer periods of time then this sense of solidarity can be sustained and a real and democratic change can actually occur.^{xvii} Although referring to the Occupy Wall Street movement, Chomsky's observations could be extended over all of the recent mass protests around the globe.

It must be emphasized that these proposed community associations are meant to act as empowerment platforms for collective gatherings able to continuously intervene in the political processes geared primarily towards implementing legislation that facilitates the global free-market and disregards the interests of local communities and the precarious conditions of the individual workers. Therefore, political associations initiated and organized by the people drastically differ from the weak voluntary associations, such as charitable or philanthropic organizations imbued in a discourse of (often religious) morality and ethics. The latter are heavily promoted by the neoliberal rhetoric aimed to conceal the inequalities triggered by the free-market mechanisms and its repressive authoritarianism at the core of its systemic structure.

In fact the term "community" has been used and abused across the political spectrum in order to serve various political interests. American art historian, Grant Kester observed how "community" is perceived "as either wholly positive (the redemptive domain of 'community values' so dear to conservatives) or entirely negative (the

dangerously essentializing community that is regularly invoked in continental theory).^{xxviii} Similarly, various contemporary art institutions and art museums and foundations have increasingly been inviting and funding artists to develop site-specific projects with communities, yet whose local political dynamics, histories and cultures are most often unknown to the artist. In many such instances, the institution and the curator act as mediators between artists and local groups, predetermining in fact the nature of the community projects. As art historian Miwon Kwon observed, “the contribution of the community partners was limited to the realization of projects that fully prescribed the nature of their participation in advance.”^{xxix} Thus, rather than fully collaborative works, community members were excluded from many of the projects’ initial conceptualization and featured instead as assistant help in their material construction.

It is therefore important to avoid such misappropriations of both the term and actual fabric of a community by approaching it, for instance, in terms of its members’ constantly shifting identities and histories. It is essential to develop tools of engagement that establish reciprocity between the artist and community members and allows for both debates and negotiations. Ultimately, the resulting projects would either be collaboratively conceptualized and produced, reflect and call attention to a particularly relevant issue in the community, or function as a participatory platform for the local individuals empowered to pursue their shared interests at the political level. Although different in scope, at the core of most contemporary socially engaged art practices lies a renewed sense of sociability centered on dialogic exchanges and direct participation. In different ways around the world, such contemporary artists employ various methods and strategies to imagine and produce artistic projects most often with and for the members of a particular community.

Euro-American art criticism, art historical research and curatorial practice – led by authors such as Nicolas Bourriaud^{xx} and Maria Lind in Western Europe and Suzanne Lacy,^{xxi} Grant Kester^{xxii} and Claire Bishop^{xxiii} in the US – in the last two decades has taken it up as a key theme. Furthermore, several recent major exhibitions – *The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 2008-2009; Creative Time’s Summit on *Revolutions in Public Practice I and II* organized under the leadership of curator Nato Thompson in Manhattan in 2010 and 2011 respectively; as well as Creative Time’s on-line database of over 350 socially engaged art projects initiated in conjunction with the *Living as Form* exhibition in 2011–attest to the widespread institutionalization of this discourse. Yet this scholarship rarely documents or minimally refers to similar developments in CEE shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Art Into Life, Life Into Art: Matei Bejenaru

The exhibition *Art into Life, Life Into Art: Matei Bejenaru* aims to contribute to the broader international discourse of socially engaged art by featuring several works by the Romanian artist Matei Bejenaru created since the early 1990s to the late 2000s within a context that is simultaneously characterized by post-communist and neoliberal conditions. The individual works act as collective critical inquiries into our contemporary

everyday precarious conditions by opening discussion, for example on the cause and effects of the social, political and economic marginalization of the worker under the local and global impact of neoliberal capitalism. While Bejenaru's works presented in the exhibition most often emerged from within the Romanian transitional period and the broader post-1989 European context, the issues raised by the artist's projects connect in intriguing and provocative ways to the location of the exhibition in North Adams, where economically and politically marginalized populations struggle to survive in a city abandoned by once booming industries and factories.

As the city with the smallest population in the state of Massachusetts, North Adams is representative of the drastic effects of global capital flows in the last thirty plus years. Neoliberalism's thirst for over production and over accumulation are not only global phenomena, but most importantly have localized dimensions, seen within the fabric of small towns across U.S., in the abandoned massive infrastructures and their socio-economic impact on the surrounding community. In order to maximize profit through cheaper labor costs, capital shifts locations. As a result, the specific locality is left to deal with redundant infrastructure and local working population is left behind when businesses move elsewhere. Numerous empty buildings will rarely be torn down because the retailer will continue to pay mortgage in order to keep the building empty. "An empty building staves competition off of the parcel, which is also one factor leading to the empty big box trend."^{xxiv} Most recently in 2011-2012, this can be seen in North Adams with the closing of such big chain stores as Staples and Sears that add to the small city's landscape of deserted warehouses and deepen its economic marginalization.

Matei Bejenaru comes from Romania, a country where capital eagerly outsourced production in the 2000s in order to exploit the minimally paid workers, especially the local female labor force, and the already existing infrastructure built under the former communist regime. Before its entrance into the European Union (EU) in 2007, Romania was the leading European exporter of textiles onto the EU market and the world's fourth exporter after China, Turkey and India. Bejenaru's sculptural work ***Enlarged Clothing*** (2004-2005) vividly represents the size of profit gained by multinational companies making use of inexpensive Romanian labor force, where workers were paid one eights of the wage of a similar worker in any EU country.

Visually recalling the large-scale 1960s pop sculptures of American artist Claes Oldenburg seen as a critique of American consumerism and his 1980s "anti-monuments" challenging traditional forms of public art, Bejenaru's ominously hanging sweat shirts and pants on oversized cloths hangers hooked to the ceiling, directly confront the viewer with the irregular effects of global neoliberal capitalism. As ghostly remnants of some giant entrepreneurs, they speak of the precarious condition of the worker most often forced into temporary and flexible labor contracts, long commutes and long working hours with no job security, health benefits or proper working conditions. This is a significant aspect of the contemporary neoliberal conditions shared by workers across the world from cities in Romania, cities like North Adams in the US, the maquiladoras in Tijuana, Mexico, and the manufacturing sweatshops in China or India.

Bejenaru began his artistic work in the mid-1990s within the highly fluctuating post-1989 transitional period. The first two post-communist decades, across most, if not all CEE nations, had been characterized by a perpetual fluidity, swinging between collapsing communist institutions and not yet fully reformed neoliberal political, social, cultural and economic structures and infrastructures. According to Romanian theorist Ovidiu Tichindeleanu the post-communist condition has been characterized by: “capitalocentrism (free market fundamentalism) and eurocentrism (the epistemic privileging of the Western experience) [...] introduced as the organic principles needed for a ‘return to normality’”^{xxv}

Bejenaru’s *Alexandru Cel Bun* (*Alexander the Good*) (1994-2003) offers an eloquent spatio-temporal portrait of the country’s post-socialist societal fluidity with its inherent precariousness experienced by the majority of the population. It does so by focusing attention on a group of residents in the Alexandru Cel Bun district located in the Romanian city of Iasi. As expressed by Bejenaru:

I have been living for one year in that district and I had noticed that in winter many people would use this sort of devices to smoke meat coming from animals reared in the countryside, in their parents’ yards.^{xxvi}

The artist’s work consisted in the building of several smoking meat devices that were made available for free to use by the residents. Smoking meat is a Romanian tradition practiced in the rural communities a short time before Christmas. Directly engaged in making the socialist dream a reality, hundreds of thousands of peasants moved (most often were forced to do so) to the city and left behind their now collectivized lands for the highly regimented work in factories. Once communism fell and factories closed, the not yet fully urbanized peasants lost their jobs, yet continued to live in their cheaply and rapidly constructed flats that form the majority of housing projects in Romania and represent a staple of any Central and Eastern European country’s urban landscape.

The meaning of Bejenaru’s project lies less in its formal attributes but in the relational possibilities that it is able to provoke. His objects become “objects-as-comrade” igniting a renewed sense of genuine sociability among local residents. One only needs to recall the poorly supplied subsidized housing structures, where electricity was often not available for long periods of time and people lived and walked through dark staircases. Moreover, private apartments and suspected individuals were under constant surveillance of Communist Secret Police agents. Coerced or benevolent civilian recruiters were asked to spy on their neighbors or even family members. In the early 1990s, the memory of this recent past was still very much vivid in people’s minds. In such a context, Bejenaru’s subtle yet functional interventions into the residential district were able, even if for a short time, to provide a communal platform for interaction, communication and a shared use of public space.

Alexandru Cel Bun includes additional video footage of the same urban sites where the smoking meat devices were initially installed, taken ten years after the project has started. Known as Romania’s spiritual capital, Iasi revealed in 2003 the disjointed effects of transition from a collectivized and centralized form of government and forced communal living to a neoliberal form of government with its focus on free-market, private property and an individualized liberalism. Grey and dilapidated housing projects sit

uneasily next to newly or soon to be built churches. Flea market stands with haphazard and inexpensive items sold by Roma and peasants with wooden baskets selling products from their small gardens are present in the vicinity of parking lots and the freshly erected and brightly lit foreign chain supermarkets. Such juxtapositions reveal the increasingly socio-economic disparities among the population in a country where neoliberal economic forces combine with remnants from the past and continuingly diversified informal economy.

A key ingredient for the smooth functioning of neoliberal economy is the geographical mobility of capital. As David Harvey points out, this includes “reduction of artificial barriers [...] movement of commodities such as tariffs, exchange controls or even more simply, waiting times at borders.” At the global level, the World Trade Organizations (WTO), which took effect in 1995 and was signed in that year by more than a hundred countries, established “a standardization of trade agreements through international agreements.”^{xvii} At regional levels, treaties such as the Maastricht agreement signed in 1991 fulfilled the role of freeing capital circulation across the entire European Union.

With the fall of communism in CEE, the EU was eager to extend its market into these territories and facilitate at any cost the local economies’ transformation into the neoliberal model of government. Like many other countries, Romania saw huge disparities between the top few who were able to grossly profit from the various processes of privatization of publicly owned assets under communism and the rest of the population who struggled to survive and make ends meet. In great part provoked by the drastic effects of the dismantling of the former socialist protection programs that offered some stability for the majority of the nation’s citizens, thousands of Romanians emigrated both legally and illegally to Western European countries in search for jobs and better lives. Most people’s decisions to emigrate were thus not because of an individual or personal failure to compete on the newly instated and unregulated free-market, as the neoliberal theory would have it, but provoked by systemic changes carefully orchestrated in the interests of full privatization and capital growth. The avalanche of local TV commercials, fast-food restaurants, and large billboards (aggressively installed throughout the cities in places where until only recently slogans of a socialist utopia stood) greatly contributed to the allure of Western European countries as an Eden for better lives.

Several of Bejenaru’s works call attention to the immigrant conditions of Romanian workers in EU countries. *Strawberry Fields Forever* (2002) focuses on a group of female legal immigrant workers on a strawberry farm in Lleida in Catalonia, Spain who were paid minimum wages. The artist’s project consisted in dialogic exchanges with the women who shared their experiences of leaving their families for seasonal work and their aspirations and fears of an unsure future. The second component of the project consisted in a performative element presented at the Barcelona Centre for Contemporary Culture (BCCC). Bejenaru prepared strawberry preserve in front of the audience using the fruit collected by the Romanian workers. The jar’s label clearly stated its content provenance, but also the hourly wage the pickers were paid.

At first glance, the act of cooking recalls the Thai artist Rikrit Tiravanija cooking-as-art-sculptures first performed in 1992 and then recreated in various international art venues. Yet, Bejenaru's process of making jam aims to provoke in his audience the opposite of convivial social interactivity theorized by Bourriauds in his concept of "relational aesthetic" and exemplified by Tiravanija's work. Bejenaru both performs and personifies the role of the Romanian worker, himself on a temporary contract at BCCC. The artist brings to the fore the tacit yet already known fact of the precarious condition of the multitude of global workers. His brightly red strawberry mixture, as seen in one of the photographs documenting the performance, provides a visceral visual statement through its layered chromatics of melted sugar glazing the freshly picked strawberries. The sweetness of the jam, however, can no longer be consumed by an induced oblivion towards its producers. By bringing to the public's consciousness the condition of the minimally paid Romanian laborers in Spain, Bejenaru's performance implicitly provokes the institution of art to question its own role in the local and global network of capital flows with its implicit biopower over the lives of the migrant workers.

Moreover, extending beyond the shaping and control of all aspects of individual and collective lives, biopolitics, as one of the most significant technologies of neoliberal domination, amplifies into the capitalization of human death, morphing into what Achille Mbembe termed "necropolitics."^{xxviii} Rooted in Foucault's conceptualization of biopower as a systemic power technology controlling every facet of human existence, necropower and necropolitics represent renewed and diversified modes of neoliberal domination. These create the very conditions for neoliberalism to exercise its power of control by not only allowing and determining people's way of living but also their modes of dying. According to Subhabrata Bobby Banerjee:

Necrocapitalism emerges from the intersection of necropolitics and necroeconomics, as practices of accumulation in colonial contexts by specific economic actors – multinational corporations for example – that involve dispossessions, death, torture, suicide, slavery, destruction of livelihoods and the general management of violence. It is a new form of imperialism."^{xxix}

While Mbembe and Banerjee developed and made use of the concept of the necropolitical within an African post-apartheid locality, it is present in various contexts around the world. It can be encountered, for instance, within the legally enforced hierarchical categories of EU citizenship, as discussed later in the essay through some of Bejenaru's projects. Referring to the drastic anti-immigrant EU legislation towards citizens of nations excluded from the border-free EU territory, Slovenian and Vienna-based philosopher, artist and curator Marina Grzinic observed that a "necropolitical logic organizes the contemporary neoliberal global capitalist social body."^{xxx} Bejenaru's two works *Maersk Dubai* (2007) and *From Afar / De Departe* (2009) are potent illustrations of the conditions engendering control over the lives and death of human being. Both are short videos in which the artist narrates the 1996 tragic death of three Romanian immigrants thrown off board of a Taiwanese transportation ship and the alienation or the death-infused lives of four Romanian women workers respectively.

At one level, the necropolitical is localized in the cumulative circumstances encountered in their country that provoked the three young Romanians – Radu Danciu,

Petru Sangeorzan and Florin Mihoc - to attempt to cross the Atlantic over to Canada by embarking illegally on board the ship and hiding in air-sealed shipping containers. At another level, the necropolitical emerges in the unhesitant decision of the ship captains to get rid of the bodies out of fear of losing their jobs upon public revelation of dead illegal immigrant bodies on their ship.

It is the very condition of illegality, of living as a marginalized citizen in an impoverished European post-communist nation restricted by a complex web of legal requirements to travel or work in other countries, which contributes to an alienation of life and an acceleration of actual death. Bejenaru's glimpse into the lives of the Romanian female immigrants in Israel working as caretakers for the elderly reveals the women's liminal conditions. They are caught in between a daily existence in their role as assistants of real human death and their own gradual individual disintegration and alienation from a country that no longer is able to provide them everyday sustenance. As such, the right to live and the right to die as free individuals are politically and economically controlled in the interests of the free movement of capital.

In 1993, the Maastricht Treaty on the EU legalized the category of European Citizenship that conferred upon every legal citizen of any EU member nation the status of Citizen of the European community.^{xxxii} Demonstrating a free-market notion of citizenship, the principal rights enjoyed by European Citizens are referred to as the Four Fundamental Freedoms that include the freedom of goods, persons, services and capital. Reducing citizenship to a legal right, it limits non-EU residents' access to political and social opportunities at the pan-European level, transforming them into second-class citizens, an economic underclass of unwanted yet needed foreigners. While aiming to facilitate a borderless territory of free economic transactions, it ultimately contradicts the ideological claims of an inclusive European space.^{xxxiii} As such, it exemplifies an exclusionary approach to community that transcends difference and is rather constituted of like-minded individuals and groups (or nation states) bound together by shared norms on free-trade agreements signed among national state politicians and CEOs of transnational corporations.

In 2000, Etienne Balibar spoke of a *European apartheid* that exists simultaneously with the notion of European Citizenship. It implies that immigrant populations on the EU territory coming most often from African nations - historically tied to Europe through the labor circuits of recruitment – and Eastern Europe – societies that underwent a selective admission process into the EU community – are constituted “as “inferior” in rights and dignity, subject to violent forms of security control and forced to live on the border, neither absolutely inside nor totally outside.”^{xxxiii} Similarly, Cris Shore used the term *Fortress Europe* to indicate the tightening of EU borders against immigrants in the early 2000s.^{xxxiv}

Bejenaru's *Travel Guide* (2005-2007) was conceived in 2005 before Romania joined the EU - when its citizens were not able to travel to UK without a visa. It vividly articulated the exclusionary effects of the EU legislation instated to prevent migration of people, which was considered a threat given the financial “burden” it would impose on the European states' social assistance programs.^{xxxv} The *Guide* details several ways in which Romanian citizens could travel illegally, yet safely to England. It takes the form of

an actual travel guide with a schematic map of different routes across Europe. It features photographs of various modes of transportation, border crossing sites, and a color-coded statistical chart illustrating the risk conditions for passing the frontiers. The text appears to be written by former illegal immigrants based on their own experiences or those of their friends.^{xxxvi} As such, Bejenaru's *Travel Guide* articulates a notion of community whose individual members not only share a way of life, common interests, and a sense of exclusion, but also a strong sense of solidarity across national borders.

Whether the information is true or not is much less important than what it indicates about the conditions that sustain the ideal communitarian form of citizenship. Its real effects are captured, for example, when the *Guide* warned future immigrants of the danger of hiding in shipping containers. Subverting the language and scope of generic travel guides designed for well-off tourists to explore new sites, Bejenaru's *Travel Guide* revealed the worldwide contemporary liminal condition of immigrants.

As a follow-up to *Travel Guide*, *Impreuna/Together* is a video documentation of a one-minute performance that resulted from a two-month long collaboration with various organizations and individuals of the Romanian immigrant community in London. It was a site and time specific performance in front of Tate Modern London as part of the 2007 *Irresistible Force* exhibition.^{xxxvii} At first sight, the choreographed performance suggests an identity politics approach to community formation, emphasizing a generalized view of the Romanian diaspora.

At a deeper level Bejenaru's work proposes a shared construction of citizenship based on what Balibar considered "the universal right of *circulation* and *residency*, including reciprocity of cultural contributions."^{xxxviii} This is most evident in the artist's multi-layered collaborative process that led to the performance. Over the course of several weeks Bejenaru entered in numerous dialogic interactions with several members of the Romanian immigrant community. According to the artist: "30 to 40 people responded to my call and I personally met with them. Several discussions happened in a Romanian restaurant in London..."^{xxxix} Inevitably, being a Romanian citizen and speaking the language, the artist identified with the Romanian immigrant community and was also able to gain support for his project from both official organizations and individual members, such as the religious community encouraged to participate in the project by the priest of the Romanian Orthodox Church of London.

Bejenaru's individual interactions were coalesced in a collective representation as seen in the *Together/Impreuna* video of performance, which consisted in individual bodies gradually coming together into a nearly forty-member group. While a symbolic gesture, it nevertheless brought together an active collective of bodies into a form of community where its members were in control of enacting its own self-presence, desires and goals. In a podcast on the museum's website, Bejenaru referred to the performance as a space where the Romanian immigrant community can communicate self-esteem through "the power of a gaze" aimed at breaking through the public perception of their identity based on ethnically and culturally divisive stereotypical notions. His collaborative work with politically coherent communities challenged the cultural and economic discrimination towards a specific immigrant community. He brought together various organizations of the Romanian diaspora, each contributing a different aspect to the

project while also providing a space to advance each of their individual missions. For example, Bejenaru engaged members of the Romanca Society, whose mission was to support Romanians' integration into the British society. In 2008 the Romanca Society filed a petition signed by 208 individuals addressed to the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown asking for legislation that would give Romanians in the UK an unrestricted right to work.^{xi}

This request is particularly significant especially since currently Romanian and Bulgarian nationals are subject to restricted regulations, although both countries have joined the EU in the meantime. This is due to one of EU's regulations instated in 2001 regarding accession negotiations with several CEE countries. It states that citizens of new EU-members do not have the legal permission to work in any of the existing 15 member states for a period of seven years following their nations' official entrance in the EU.^{xii} Thus, EU policy discriminates not only against non-EU state citizens but also against specific EU-nations by going against one of its core idea - the four freedoms that theoretically should be open to any EU-state.

The common thread that unites the issues addressed by Bejenaru's artworks represents the precarious conditions of the worker in the contemporary era of neoliberalism. They implicitly provoke the question: What are the potentials for change and future possibilities for both individuals and groups in marginalized cities around the world?

North Adams has already begun a decades-long process of reinventing itself based on what can be called a "cultural workers industry." This cultural renaissance has been initiated with the opening of the MASS MOCA in 1999, which along with the existing local museums, art institutions and colleges continues to attract various artists working in visual and performing arts, transforming this region in the Berkshires into a now sought after tourist destination. DownStreetArt (DSA), a four-month long summer festival, currently in its fifth edition continues this reactivation process of the city by temporarily injecting artistic impulses into empty downtown spaces, most of which are held by their owners in a process called "land banking." This implies that the owners will not sell the property until its value will increase due to a possible future revitalized "business climate" attractive to corporations and businesses, which would relocate to the area.

Without a doubt urban renewal initiatives, such as DSA, reawaken interest in the city and the surrounding region as a welcoming tourist spot, incite the opening of businesses, as well as provide a valuable platform for emerging and international artists and curators to showcase their works. However, there is also an inherently visible divide between the majority of residents of the city and the increasingly growing number of cultural workers. During this transitional period, the implicit question is whether the continued artistic interventions could bridge the divide or rather contribute to private property' revitalizations serving a limited few and thus aiding to a further displacement and marginalization of the majority of the surrounding population.

What perhaps could be some of the strategies to create platforms seen as forms of empowerment - rather than simply beautification projects - for the existing community, which could ultimately be able to influence and determine, for example, the future

politico-economic decisions concerning the functions of the currently abandoned structures? Noam Chomsky, for instance, proposes that in industrial towns, instead of moving somewhere else local industries and manufacturers could hand over its production to the local workforce. Essentially he proposes worker-owned and worker-managed major industrial complexes and “have it produce things that people need.”^{xliii}

With the aim of both bringing to the fore a tacit, yet deeply felt, divide among the city’s various workers, as well as activating the community’s collective and individual potentials, Bejenaru aimed to develop a site-sensitive project titled ***A Collection of Futures*** as part of his participation in the *Art Into Life, Life Into Art* exhibition. His goals have been to provoke several of the city’s residents to envision the future. This could be a personal future, a collective one at the level of the environment, a political one or a communal one at the level of the city. The participants’ creative contributions took the form of either a monologue, statement, poem, musical refrain, noise and or other sound-based responses. In his one-month residency in North Adams, the artist interacted and involved the participation of various local residents of different generations, such as high school and college students and senior citizens, with varied interests and socio-economic and political backgrounds, such as the city’s mayor, college faculty, farmers, real estate agents, a museum director and parents from low income housing. As any future vision is rooted in both the past and present, such projections of multi-layered futures could result in a richly textured exposition of desires, frustrations, fears, regrets and hopes. It could reveal not only tensions and points of fracture, but also potentialities for future negotiations.

An integral component of Bejenaru’s *A Collection of Futures* are his actual interactions and conversations with the locals. His walks and dialogic exchanges weave together a town’s mental map that while rooted in personal histories and experiences also encompasses its ghostly factory buildings, recently abandoned corporate big-box stores and their potential for change. Bejenaru’s project could be seen as enabling a counter-space by revealing the contention between the production of space for profit and control and the use of space in everyday life.

The collection of audio material initiated and edited by the artist yet co-authored and realized with the direct participation of various local people, is publicly broadcasted thorough the local college radio station of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) and through speakers placed in various public spaces throughout the city. Thus, the art project could be seen as both a symbolic and an actual intervention that brings about sustained contradictions. The voices from within a divided local community are given back to the community while opening up possibilities for its future collective negotiations.

The project’s mode of presentation are through various public platforms that ultimately could have the potential to provide the tools for the formative conditions of what the French political analyst Chantal Mouffe called “agonistic” public spheres. At the basis of agonism lies a pluralist form of democratic politics that embraces the unresolved tension between liberty and equality. Mouffe’s “agonistic pluralism” nurtures and keeps the democratic contestation alive, ultimately recognizing “the impossibility of establishing a consensus without exclusion.” Rather than eliminating the enemy, which implicitly

conveys confrontation in order to champion a democratic societal form based on consensus, Mouffe emphasizes the notion of the adversary who is:

Somebody whose ideas we combat but whose right to defend those ideas we do not put into questions. [...] This requires providing channels through which collective passions will be given ways to express themselves over issues which, allowing enough possibility for identification, will not construct the opponent as an enemy but as an adversary.^{xliii}

Thus, enacting agonistic public spheres aims to resist “neoliberal dogmas about the inviolable rights of property, the all-encompassing virtues of the market and the dangers of interfering with its logics, that constitute nowadays the ‘common sense’ in liberal-democratic societies.”^{xliiv}

Ultimately, only the future can reveal the possible reverberations of Bejenaru’s *A Collection of Futures* in its aim to act as a sound-based art project enacting an “agonistic” public sphere.

Endnotes

ⁱ In his 1974 book *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Peter Bürger distinguishes between the avant-garde as it has been developing since the 19th century and the “historical avant-garde” of the early 20th century, especially Dada, Surrealism and the Russian Constructivism. Bürger analyses the intention of the historical avant-garde movements - the attack on art as an institution divorced from life (e.g. Duchamp’s urinal negates artistic creation) and the nature of the actual avant-gardist work (e.g. a non-organic work, employing the collage technique or Dada’s elimination of separation between producer and viewer). See Peter Bürger, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Trans. Michael Shaw. *Theory and History of Literature*, ed. Wlad Godzich and Jochen Schulte-Sasse, vol.4 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

ⁱⁱ The other branch of the Russian avant-garde was Suprematism led by Kazimir Malevich. Not everyone within the Constructivist camp had a unified vision of the art’s role in society. Several debates about the form and function of the art object following the October 1917 revolution took place at the Moscow Institute of Artistic Culture (INKhUK) in between 1920-1922. The main divide occurred between those supporting Wassily Kandinsky’s focus on the spiritual and psychological effects of art and those who advocated Rodchenko’s and (later) Tatlin’s visions and beliefs in an “antisubjective materialism” adopting a stance against an individual, personal and psychological approach to art. See Christina Kiaer, “The Socialist Object” in *Imagine no Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 2005), 1-40.

ⁱⁱⁱ Although this avant-garde goal ultimately failed, Bürger emphasized the important role of the historical avant-gardes in revealing the influence that art as an institution comprised of the web of curators, collectors, market, commerce, among others has upon the reception and effect of individual works. See Bürger, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*.

^{iv} See Christina Kiaer, “The Socialist Object.”

^v Ekaterina Degot, “Dreams That Money Can Buy: Creativity versus Art” in Judit Angel (ed.) *The Phenomena of Post-socialist Economy in Contemporary Art*. (Budapest, Hungary: Mucsarnok, 2010), 20-25.

^{vi} American art historian and critic Hal Foster distinguishes between two main moments of the neo-avant-garde that drew upon both Dada and Constructivism. The first moment refers back to the early 1960s and is associated with artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, Allan Kaprow, Dan Flavian, Donald Judd, and Robert Morris. It recovers the historical avant-garde, in particular, Dada devices in order “to transform the avant-garde into an institution.” Within the second phase most often represented by the practices of artists such as Daniel Buren, Michael Asher, and Hans Haacke in the late 1960s, the neo-avant-garde becomes a critique of this process of appropriation and institutionalization. So the neo-avant-garde actually comprehends for the first time the project of the historical avant-garde. Although Foster’s study does not take into consideration the artistic practices within pre-1989 Central and Eastern European contexts, such as Hungary and Romania, one could certainly see a similar model of deferred action. See Hal Foster “Who’s Afraid of the neo-Avant-Garde?” in *The Return of the Real*. An October book (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1996), 1-34.

^{vii} See Júlia Klaniczay and Edit Sasvári (eds.), *Törvénytelen avantgárd, Galántai György balatonboglári kápolnaműterme, 1970-1973*, (Illegal Avantgarde, Chapel Studio of György Galántai in Balatonboglár, 1970-1973) Artpool-Balassi, Budapest, Hungary 2003.

^{viii} See Magda Carneci, *Artele Plastice in Romania, 1945-1989 / Plastic Arts in Romania, 1945-1989*. (Author’s translation from Romanian into English) (Bucharest, Romania: Editura Meridiane, 2000), 58-62.

^{ix} David Harvey, “Introduction” in his *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 2.

^x Michel Foucault, “Right of Death and Power over Life” in *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume 1* trans. by Robert Hurley. (New York: Vintage Books, 1990): 143

^{xi} Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, “Multitude” in *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004): 94.

^{xii} Hardt and Negri conceive of immaterial labor in two principal forms. “The first refers to labor is primarily intellectual or linguistic [...] it produces ideas, symbols, codes, texts, linguistic figures, images and other such products.” The other form represents the “affective labor” that “produces and manipulates affects such as feeling of ease, well-being, satisfaction, excitement, or passion.” *Ibid.*, 108

^{xiii} Nikolas Rose, “Governing “advanced” liberal democracies” in Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose (eds.) *Foucault and Political Reason: liberalism, neo-liberalism and rationalities of government* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996), 59-60.

^{xiv} See occupywallst.org

^{xv} See “To the Margins of An Early January Protest in Hungary” in *The Contrarian Hungarian*. Last accessed on July 15, 2012 <http://thecontrarianhungarian.wordpress.com/2012/01/08/to-the-margins-of-an-early-january-protest-in-hungary>

^{xvi} Noam Chomsky at InterOccupy via conference call published in *Occupy: Noam Chomsky*. (London and New York: A Penguin Special, 2012): 70.

^{xvii} *Ibid.*, 74.

^{xviii} Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2004): 129.

^{xix} She is referring here to the *Culture in Action* exhibition curated by Mary Jane Jacobs in Chicago from 1992 to 1993. See Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge Mass: MIT Press, 2004), 122-123.

^{xx} In 1998 Nicolas Bourriaud coined the term “relational aesthetics” in order to address various art practices emerging in the 1990s that are based on participatory forms of audience engagement, staged within the museum context or gallery space setting and creating social interaction and conviviality among people. See Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*. Originally published in French in 1998. Translated from French by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2002).

^{xxi} In the early 1990s, American artist and critic Suzanne Lacy defined the term “new-genre public art” to refer to then emerging participatory and community-oriented art practices. It addressed public and social issues, engaged marginalized groups and mostly took part outside the art institution. It emphasized the process of production and communication, where collaborative strategies of engagement became its artistic and aesthetic features. See Suzanne Lacy, “Debated Territory: Toward a Critical Language for Public Art,” in S. Lacy (ed.), *Mapping the terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995), 171-188.

^{xxii} Grant Kester’s dialogic approach to community formation is based on a mandatory presence of an ingredient: *empathetic identification*, which should exist between artists and collaborators and between collaborators themselves. He objects the lack of political and social responsibility evident in both Bishop’s relational antagonistic practices based on destabilizing the presumed harmonious fabric of a community and Bourriaud’s concept of relational aesthetics even as it stakes a claim for micro-utopian concepts. In contrast, Kester puts forward his notion of *politically coherent communities*, which he developed in response to the forms of negation that can occur when artists view their collaborators as raw and inert material to be transformed or improved in some ways. Specifically, Kester refers to groups that have a defined political identity already prior to the process of collaboration with the artists. See Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

^{xxiii} In response to Bourriaud’s harmonious conception of community at the core of his relational aesthetic, Claire Bishop proposed the concept of “relational antagonism.” Despite Bishops’ insistence on participatory projects that aim to create a space where tensions and differences are made visible and sustained rather than eliminated, her theoretical approach eludes discussion of the impact the artists’ practice have on the lives of their participants or on the community in which they erected their artwork/installation. As a result, the usually economically and politically marginalized ethnic community becomes simple props in the artist’s attempt to make a broader (political) statement. See Claire Bishop, “Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics,” *October* 110 (Fall 2004), pp. 51-79

^{xxiv} Julia Christensen discusses the potential for change in the process of reclaiming empty big-box buildings and repurposing them into various non-retail functions that would serve the needs of the local community. By focusing on different case studies in cities across the U.S. she argues that “big box reuse is a cultural, architectural, urban, and encompassing phenomenon – possibly an unavoidable wave of the imminent global future.” See Julia Christensen, *Big Box Reuse* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2008). See also Stacey Mitchell, *Big-Box Swindle* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2006)

^{xxv} See Ovidiu Tichindeleanu, “Non-Capitalist Economies and the Postcommunist Transition” in Judit Angel (ed.) *The Phenomena of Post-socialist Economy in Contemporary Art*. (Budapest, Hungary: Mucsarnok, 2010): 112.

^{xxvi} Matei Bejenaru in *Matei Bejenaru: Situatii*. (Romania: Galeria Posibila, 2007): 26

^{xxvii} See Harvey, “Uneven Geographical Developments” in his *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 92.

^{xxviii} Although he develops his concept in the African context, it can be applied to both third and first world contexts. See Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” trans. by Libby Meintjes. *Public Culture*, 2003. 15(1): 11-40

^{xxix} Subhabrata Bobby Banerjee, “Live and Let Die: Colonial Sovereignties and the Death Worlds of Necrocapitalism” in *Borderland* ejournal, vol. 5, nr. 1, 2006.

^{xxx} Marina Grzinic, “From Biopolitics to Necropolitics and the Institution of Contemporary Art” in Marina Grzinic, Razvan Ion and Eugen Radescu (eds.) *Pavilion #14: Biopolitics, Necropolitics, De-Coloniality*. (Bucharest, Romania: Pavilion -Journal for Politics and Culture, 2010): 15

^{xxxi} Technically the term community was used in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which was established in 1951 and brought France, Germany, and Italy and the Benelux countries together in a Community with the aim of organizing free movement of coal and steel and free access of sources of production. In 1957 to ECSC was added EEC and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC) all forming the European Communities. See <http://europa.eu>. It may certainly be revealing to elaborate on the etymological aspects and the social, political and cultural implications of the shift in the use of the term “Community” after World War II to the use of the term “Union” in the early 1990s. However, as my aim in this text is not to offer a history of this political and economic formation, I do not use the term community to refer to a particular phase in the history of the EU, but rather to refer to current EU-member nations and (arguably) to the sense of cultural belonging that the status of European citizenship aims to invoke.

^{xxxii} Cris Shore noted that the freedom to reside within any EU Member State is subject to numerous exceptions, as in the case of pensioners, students or any others that might become a burden on the member state’s social assistance programs. Moreover, Shore observed that the EU Citizenship is seen as supplementary and contingent upon the rights and obligations

attached to every national member state, which in effect retains the power to define and decide who is or is not a European citizen. See Cris Shore, "Citizenship of the Union: the cultural construction of a European citizen" in *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 66 - 83.

^{xxxiii} Etienne Balibar, *We, The People of Europe? Reflection on Transnational Citizenship* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 171-172.

^{xxxiv} See Shore "Citizenship of the Union," 77.

^{xxxv} The last page of the *Travel Guide* mentions the increased security measures taken in UK with the introduction of a Nationality Identity Scheme announced by the Queen in her May 17, 2005 speech. The Identity Cards Act became law in March 2006 with the first IDs being issued to British citizens in 2009. At the same time, biometric residence permits were introduced for foreign nationals in 2008. *Travel Guide*

^{xxxvi} In an interview with the author in May 2010, the artist stated that the text was based on his conversations with three Romanian citizens and their friends who illegally crossed the border into UK. For confidentiality reasons their names have been withheld.

^{xxxvii} Installed in the Level 2 Gallery (dedicated to emerging international artists) the exhibition was curated by Ben Borthwick and Kerry Greenberg. It was part of a series of four related shows that aimed to "explore ideas of citizenship through themes of economy, belief, the state and the individual. Tate Modern's website: www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/theirresistibleforce. While Bejenaru was invited by Tate Modern to participate in the exhibition, he created *Impreuna/Together* during a two-month residence at the Romanian Cultural Institute (ICR), which provided organizational and financial support for the project. A non-profit institution, ICR represents Romania's official organization.

^{xxxviii} Balibar, *We, The People*, 177.

^{xxxix} Author's e-mail correspondence with Matei Bejenaru, December 2010

^{xl} "Societatea Romanca – patru ani de voluntariat in interesul comunitatii" in *Diaspora Romaneasca*, no. 305, July 3-9, 2009

^{xli} Heather Grabbe observes that even though they were aware of EU's hypocrisy, candidate states agreed to the condition since the overall gains of membership, especially in terms of economic investments outweighs the costs of the restriction. As the decision concerning who can belong or not belong to the privileged community is made independently by each of the EU member states, the restriction further indicates the highly negative impact the presence of immigrants in EU-nations have on the overall tightening of European borders as a way to politically manage the presence and future intake of foreigners. See Heather Grabbe, "Regulating the Flow of People across Europe," in *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe* (eds) Frank Schimmelfenning and Ulrich Sedelmeier (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005): 113

^{xlii} Noam Chomsky, *Occupy: Noam Chomsky*.

^{xliii} Chantal Mouffe, "For An Agonistic Model of Democracy" in her *The Democratic Paradox* (London and New York: Verso, 2009), 102-103.

^{xliv} Mouffe, "Introduction: The Democratic Paradox," 6.