

10. UNAGE IAȘI ART RESIDENCY. INTERNATIONAL VISUAL ARTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM. EMERY HALL, AMERICAN ARTIST RESIDENT

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Abstract: *Iași Art Residency is an artistic residency program that takes place in Iași and involves the monthly invitation of an international visual artist, in order to materialize a specific art project related to the experience lived in the cultural space of Iași. The program aims to connect the students of the Faculty of Visual Arts and Design within “George Enescu” National University of Arts in Iași with the invited artists, in order to exchange artistic experiences. This article will briefly present the activity of the American resident artist Emery Hall which took place here, in Iași, in May and June 2022.*

Key words: *residency, international, collaboration, culture, art*

1. Introduction

The international artistic residence program (UNAGE I.A.R.) aims to create various connections between different cultures through organizing activities that are specific to the artistic educational realm, such as: workshops, exhibitions and artist talks. The students from the Visual Arts and Design Faculty from the *George Enescu* National University of Arts, especially the ones from the Painting department, are the target of this cultural international program. Our students are invited to get in touch with the international artist residents, graduates from prestigious art faculties, young artists themselves that hold experience in the artistic activity.

The interaction between young students and young artists is beneficial for the both sides, the students gaining knowledge and figuring out how the cultural system works in different contexts, whilst the invited artists interact with the Eastern European culture and artistic practices that define our space. The main long term objective is creating collaborations between the students and their resident artists through the following:

- International, group or personal exhibitions of our graduate students in galleries proposed by the artists in residence;
- Stimulating the participation in various projects, festivals and international biennials;
- Promoting internationally their projects and works of art;
- Networking international arts galleries;
- Promoting the Visual Arts and Design Faculty of Iași;
- Promoting the cultural scene of Iași.

The short term objective of the residence program is:

- Discovering innovating artistic techniques, from painting to graphic forms,

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discovering new artistic languages, such as performance art or video art;

- Broadening the students' perception in regards to artistic possibilities, gaining knowledge through understanding various new practices, artistic events, relevant from different countries, how the international art market works, the hierarchy between creator, gallery, curator and Arts dealer.

Usually, the timeframe for the invite to the artists is about 4 to 5 weeks, at the end of which the artists present their project through: Organizing a personal exhibition in the *Aparte* Gallery of the Visual Arts and Design Faculty or a different local one; Sustaining an open talk with students and professors from our institution; eventually, donating a work of art that was creating in the time frame of the Residence. The project is coordinated by Assistant Professor Ioana Palamar, with the support of Ph.D. Professor Birzu Zamfira and Ph.D. Professor Cristian Ungureanu from the Painting department, Assist. Professor Andrei Alecsandru Pantea from the Graphics department and Ph.D. Lecturer Maria Bilasevski, curator and teacher in the Visual Arts Pedagogy department. In 2022, visual artist Emery Hall was one of the artists-in-residence, her project was sustained by the Multidisciplinary Research Center in Iasi, coordinated by Nae Cristian, Ph.D. Associate Professor.

2. „Anamnesis” solo exhibition, American artist-in-residency Emery Hall

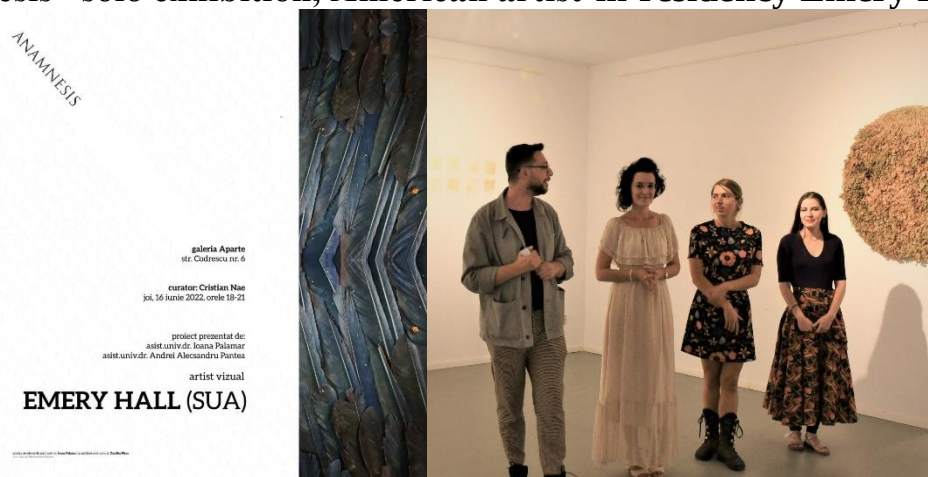


Fig.no. 1 Emery Hall, SUA (Arizona), multi-media solo exhibition *Anamnesis*, *Aparte* Gallery, Faculty of Visual Arts and Design, *George Enescu* National University of Arts, Iași, *UNAGE Iasi Art Residency Program* 16.06.2022, poster designed by Assistant Professor Andrei Alecsandru Pantea

Emery Hall's solo exhibition entitled *Anamnesis* took part at *Aparte* Gallery of the Faculty of Visual Arts and Design within *George Enescu* National University of Arts from Iași, Romania, on June 16th 2022. This exhibition is part of *UNAGE Iasi Art Residency Program* and is the result of her research spent within her residency period which started on May 22nd. As the title suggests, Emery's main purpose was to place an emphasis on drawing from the viewers' memory-conscious or not- to summon a relationship between all who enter the Gallery. All materials and modicums she used are sourced from the environment of Iasi to directly exemplify their own history, devoid from the interruption of their original purpose.²⁰⁹

As a Sculptor and Fiber artist, Emery has been repurposing industrial waste as

²⁰⁹Emery Hall's statement for her solo exhibition entitled *Anamnesis* organized at *Aparte* Gallery, Faculty of Visual Arts and Design, *George Enescu* National University of Arts, Iași, 16.06.2022, within *UNAGE Iasi Art Residency Program*

a solution to the modicums of her daily affairs for the past five years. This presents boundless opportunities to integrate technical processes with non-traditional materials and redefine an object's preconceived limits. She has worked in both intimate and large scales, ranging from 2x4 inch tabletop templates, to over 6 foot installations. She draws upon her technical training in traditional woodworking metal fabrication to provide the foundations of her artistic work. She strives to bring seemingly insignificant refuse into a greater consciousness via forms of mass and scale. Investigating other culture's traditional and technical processes has allowed for an unparalleled expansion and more informed bodies of work.

To further advance her efforts she intends on pushing her current modes of creativity by altering her physical location and learning from communities other than her own. Coming from the arid Sonoran Desert with cactus in place of trees, cookie-cutter homes instead of apartment buildings, and utterly insufferable heat, Emery is perpetually awed by the things that are forgetfully ordinary to residents of Iasi, she is eager to experience life influenced by moisture and other forms of weather. The past few years living in a large city has proven a creative haven allowing for material exploration, technology integration, and formal innovations. With reference to working in large scale permanent public art, she also draws upon the definitions of permanence in her own work.²¹⁰

According to Assistant Professors Andrei Alecsandru Pantea and Ioana Palamar, Emery's project reflects a creative perception of someone out of our context, identifying value where we often don't see it. Playing with the fragility of leaves and the steadiness of steel, discreet imprints of heavy history, Emery gives a lesson on what curiosity and sincere exploration is, reshaping these aspects in such way that offers us visual pleasure. She has an acute ability to look at a distant society from a different perspective and translating it in a visual way that managed to gather a sensitive, yet natural palette of colors. A bright light is the glimpse of what can seem unuseful, an attitude all artists should experience at least once. Emery is actually bringing to light some vegetal structures and small pieces of old walls from abandoned buildings, thus determining us to pay more attention to specific details which in fact take part in our identity. She is also making reference to our past, to our collective memory which defines us as individuals and as a community.

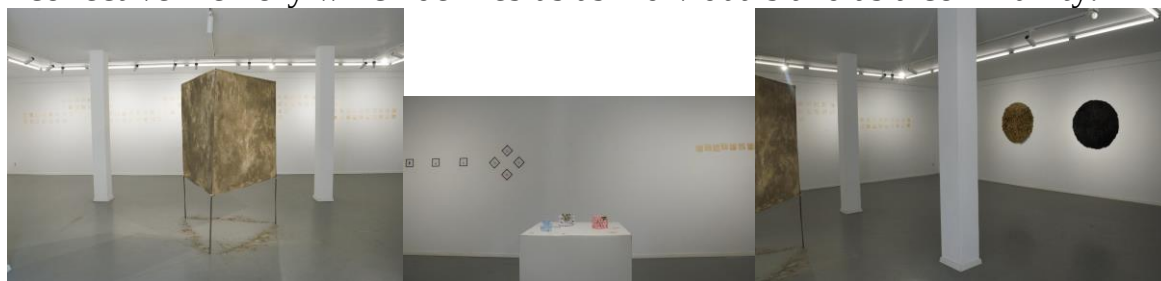


Fig. no. 2, 3, 4 Emery Hall, SUA (Arizona), multi-media solo exhibition *Anamnesis*, *Aparte* Galery, Faculty of Visual Arts and Design, *George Enescu* National University of Arts, Iași, *UNAGE Iasi Art Residency Program*, 16.06.2022

Emery actually searched for a place to mentally regroup and manifest a diverse body of post graduation work. She acquired matter from the surrounding city and local landscape (such as dried maple fruits, chipped paint or crow's feathers

²¹⁰Emery Hall's general statement she applied for *UNAGE Iasi Art Residency Program*, Faculty of Visual Arts and Design, *George Enescu* National University of Arts, Iași Romania

as you can notice in the images below: figures no. 5, 6 and 7) to literally immerse herself in a new environment and reveal the evanescence of local modicums. Some withered leaves are framed separately with iron sticks in order to highlight the beautiful plant structure, which is usually ignored by pedestrians in our daily life, but also in order to bring to light the relationship between fragility and hardness, between ephemerality and lastingness. The small pieces of walls themselves make reference to our communist background which still exists within a transgenerational trauma unconsciousness, despite the ‘physical’ deconstruction of this political regime; they still affect our mind which is very fragile and carries in its memory a collective pain.



Fig.no. 5, 6 Emery Hall, SUA (Arizona), multi-media solo exhibition *Anamnesis*, *Aparte* Galery, Faculty of Visual Arts and Design, *George Enescu* National University of Arts, Iași, *UNAGE Iasi Art Residency Program*, 16.06.2022, pieces of dried maples fruit, 20x20 cm each work, and cube from chiped paint, 10x10 cm each work



Fig. no. 7 Emery Hall, SUA (Arizona), multi-media solo exhibition *Anamnesis*, *Aparte* Galery, Faculty of Visual Arts and Design, *George Enescu* National University of Arts, Iași, *UNAGE Iasi Art Residency Program*, 16.06.2022, work made from crow's feathers, 1x1 meters and a detail

Collective memory has also been represented through a few series of circular and rectangular rusty artworks on white textile which presents the stages of chromatic desaturation that is a symbol of the necessity of forgetfulness.



Fig. no. 8, 9 Emery Hall, SUA (Arizona), multi-media solo exhibition *Anamnesis*, *Aparte* Galery, Faculty of Visual Arts and Design, *George Enescu* National University of Arts, Iași, *UNAGE Iasi Art Residency Program*, 16.06.2022, series of circular and rectangular rusty artworks, 20x20 cm each work

The triangular installation is made from dust-impregnated fabric which is a nostalgic reference to our historical past and the triangle form may make reference to the three communist rulers such as: the Romanian politician Gheorghe Gheorghiu - Dej, the Russian politician Nikita Sergheevici Hrușciiov and Yugoslav communist

revolutionary and statesman *Iosip Broz Tito*.²¹¹



Fig. no. 10 Emery Hall, SUA (Arizona), multi-media solo exhibition *Anamnesis*, *Aparte* Gallery, Faculty of Visual Arts and Design, *George Enescu* National University of Arts, Iași, *UNAGE Iasi Art Residency Program*, 16.06.2022, Installation, 3x1.5 meters, detail

3. Results

According to Emery's statement, her plan was to examine the current state of Communist-era constructions and the societal community post-revolution. Iași is renowned for its reputation as an artistic landmark, producing some of the most influential artists pre-Communism. While Communism halted the direction of art at the time, there are still many individuals who are nostalgic for the security brought about by standardized housing and job opportunity. Coming from America, her perception of Communism has always been one-sided and against the governmental structure. However, there are many parallels between current American architecture of the Southwest and the Brutalism still present in Iași. In both locations, domiciles and community buildings are used with means of imposing ideals of equality and represent to some, "a better time".

It is important for Emery to be physically present in Iași to understand how the lingering effects of imposed "equality" manifest nostalgia. To display these perspectives, she interacted with the greater community of Iași, and collecting pieces of architectural decay such as: chipped paint, drywall dust, and similar fragments from buildings around the city. By using tactile elements sourced from Iași's history, she was able to exemplify the collective memory of these materials by presenting them as a subject of art, rather than as a household byproduct.²¹²

4. Conclusions

UNAGE Iasi Art Residency Program provided the artist Emery Hall a simultaneously safe and stimulating environment to create and permits time to place an interrupted focus on her artistic endeavors. She believes that her spent within this residency program had a positive impact on her artistic direction while simultaneously providing the opportunity for an exchange of cultural differences. She was very excited by the prospects and possibilities of this residency and was eager to engage with the communities of Iași and the regions of Moldavia. By the same time, our students had the opportunity to discover new artistic approaches and

²¹¹Mihai Croitor, Sanda Borșa, *Triunghiul suspiciunii: Gheorghiu – Dej, Hrușciovși Tito* (1954-1964), vol. I / *Triangle of Suspicion: Gheorghiu – Dej, Krushchev and Tito* (1954-1964), vol. I, Ed. Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, https://www.academia.edu/6668177/Triunghiul_suspiciunii_Gheorghiu_Dej_Hru%C8%99ciov_%C8%99i_Tito_1954_1964_vol_I_Triangle_of_Suspicion_Gheorghiu_Dej_Khrushchev_and_Tito_1954_1964_vol_I (29.10.2022)

²¹²Emery Hall's statement for her solo exhibition entitled *Anamnesis* organized at *Aparte* Gallery, Faculty of Visual Arts and Design, *George Enescu* National University of Arts, Iași, within *UNAGE Iasi Art Residency Program*, 16.06.2022

to understand better what possibilities they have after graduating, given the fact that Emery Hall is a multidisciplinary artist and has various experiences in fields such as sculpture, textile work, art installations, among others.

Web resources

1. Iași Art Residency, I.A.R., <https://resartis.org/listings/artalpha/> (24.10.2022)
2. Ioana Palamar. About artists, <http://www.ioanapalamar.com/iasi-art-residency/#undefined3> (24.10.2022)
3. Croitor, Mihai, Borșa Sanda, *Triunghiul suspiciunii: Gheorghiu – Dej, Hrușciov și Tito* (1954-1964), vol. I / *Triangle of Suspicion: Gheorghiu – Dej, Krushchev and Tito* (1954-1964), vol. I, Ed. Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, https://www.academia.edu/6668177/Triunghiul_suspiciunii_Gheorghiu_Dej_Hru%C8%99ciov_%C8%99i_Tito_1954_1964_vol_I_Triangle_of_Suspicion_Gheorghiu_Dej_Khrushchev_and_Tito_1954_1964_vol_I (29.10.2022)