

# Dan Perjovschi

## *Drawing Anarchy*

kaufmann repetto is delighted to present *Drawing Anarchy*, Dan Perjovschi's second solo exhibition at the gallery. The site-specific installation is composed of drawings that are the fruit of a constant flow of production from the Romanian artist in recent years, large banners that were presented for the first time at dOCUMENTA 15 in 2022 and a black painted wall that democratically provides a carte blanche on which visitors are invited to exercise their freedom of expression by drawing or writing with pieces of white chalk.

In an era that sees us constantly bombed with information and news, living in a period of powerful over-construction by the media, freedom of expression seems once again to be under threat, undermined by restrictive governments that try to gain control of the most disparate forms of communication in order to deliver specific messages, and with the aim of shaping ideologies. Perjovschi criticizes this development and stimulates people to be vigilant towards threats, especially those coming from the far right.

Perjovschi explicitly takes a stand with regard to the recent wars, as he did at dOCUMENTA 15 in 2022 when he hung banners between the columns of the Fridericianum museum calling for an end to the war in Ukraine, something that immediately stood out as one of the most iconic works that year. In the exhibition at kaufmann repetto, the same banners are laid on the ground and the public is able to walk over them freely, similarly to his 1999 installation at the 48th Venice Biennale, where Perjovschi represented Romania. Thus, the visitors' footsteps slowly wear away the lines of the drawings, erasing them over time: "We all live in a drawing and sometimes that drawing is rubbed out."<sup>1</sup>

Perjovschi's works face us with current social problems in a direct way and at the same time with a vein of humor, highlighting the paradoxes and malaises that characterize contemporary existence. The selection on view also includes some of the drawings he did for *Revista 22*, where the artist contributed weekly from 1990 onward. It was the first unrestricted publication following the fall of the Communist regime in Romania, under which the information outlets were subjected to heavy censorship. The magazine was the first sign of the reawakening of public awareness after years of forced adherence to the ideals of the authoritarian system. "I think that this society is more intelligent than it seems and demonstrates. What I want to get across is that kind of strength of thinking, with a simple language. I'm not an artist who pretends to solve the conflicts in the world, because I cannot, but I can contribute once the war is over, putting a smile back on people's faces and getting them to think critically again<sup>2</sup>."

The drawings in *Drawing Anarchy* were made with the aim of speaking out on extremely complex political and social questions, resembling pieces of an enormous, boundless jigsaw puzzle. One group of works looks at the state of the world during the covid pandemic in 2020, and was shown at the GAMEC in Bergamo on the occasion of the exhibition *Ti Bergamo* and presented again in the social media of the MoMA in New York during the first lockdown. Other drawings once again tackle fundamental issues such as war, weapons, new technologies and the problems of climate change.

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Perjovschi, *The 1st at Moderna: Dan Perjovschi*, 2006 (<https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/en/exhibitions/the-1st-at-moderna-dan-perjovschi/>)

<sup>2</sup> Dan Perjovschi, *The Vertical Newspaper - An exploration of the work of Dan Perjovschi*, GBC News, 2024 ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4q4uati\\_hzY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4q4uati_hzY))

"I grew up in a society that did not have a diversity of voices in public art. Everything was controlled and censored. There was no *street art* in Romania until things were about to change. The first piece of graffiti I saw in 1989 was revolutionary, it said: Down with the dictatorship!<sup>3</sup>" The more traditional form of the magazine was the place where what Perjovschi's art has now become was born and developed. It is not limited to that space of creativity though, but has expanded to invade the architectural settings of his exhibitions, as happened at the MoMA in New York in 2007. The figures of his drawings spill onto the walls and floors of museums and galleries, thereby inextricably binding the act of drawing to the events of that time. Public space has also become a support for the artist's creations, as in the ongoing *Horizontal Newspaper* project staged for the first time in 2015, on a wall at no. 2 Coposu Boulevard in Sibiu, Romania, and then modified and expanded over time, including a special edition for 2022 in Kassel again, on the paving of a central square of the city.

Dan Perjovschi's works have been exhibited internationally in several solo exhibitions at institutions and museums such as the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, (2023), Ludwig Museum, Budapest (2020), KIASMA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki (2013), MACRO, Roma (2011); San Francisco Art Institute; Kunstverein, Hamburg (2010); Bloomberg Space, London; Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2009); Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven; Weils, Bruxelles (2008); MoMA, New York (2007); Kunsthalle Basel, Basel (2007); Portikus, Frankfurt; Moderna Muset, Stoccolma; Caixa Forum, Barcelona; Tate Modern, London (2006). Moreover, his works have been exhibited in numerous group exhibitions, including: Museo Nacional de Colombia, Bogota (2021), Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; GAMEC, Bergamo (2020), Museo de Colecciones ICO, Madrid (2011); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2007, 2010); MoMA, New York (2006); Zeitgenossische Kunst und Kritik, Essen; Fridericianum, Kassel (2003); ZKM, Karlsruhe (2000-2001); Musée d'art Modern de la Ville de Paris (2000); Ludwig Museum, Budapest (1999-2001). Among many major international events, the artist represented the Romanian Pavilion for the 48th Venice Biennale (1999) and participated in DOCUMENTA 15, Kassel (2022); 10th Lyon Biennale (2008), 52nd Biennale of Venice (2007), 9th Istanbul Biennale (2005) and Manifesta 2, Luxembourg (1998).

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3 Dan Perjovschi, *Ten Questions: Dan Perjovschi*, Kunstkritikk, 2014