

PREVIOUS PROJECTS

MIRELA IVANCIU

By mistaking what disintegrates moment by moment for something constant, I bring pain upon myself as well as others.
(How to See Yourself As You Really Are - His Holiness the Dalai Lama)

Right where you stand, is the valley of the endless spring. Dew on the pine, the grasses and trees, the waves crashing on a rocky beach, a piece of kelp washed out at the tide line are all the real form of truth. (Hearing with the Eye- John Daido Looi- catalogue of photographic work)

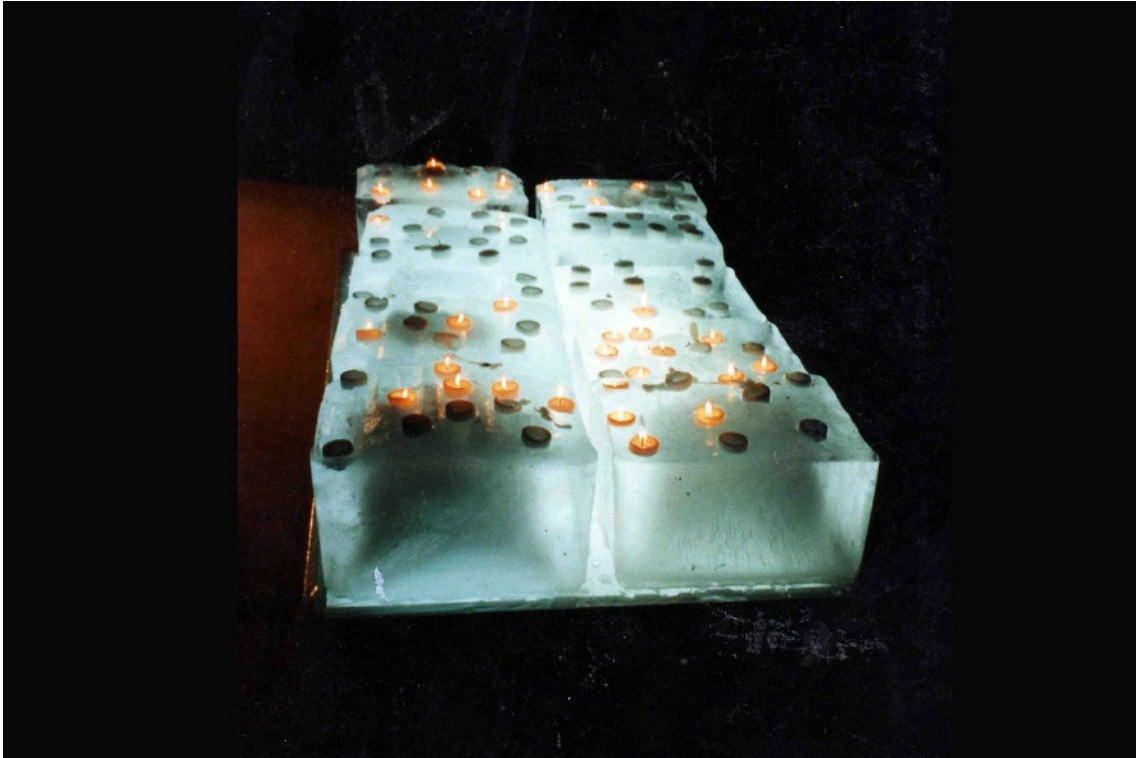
The picture... is but a succession or variety of stronger lights thrown upon one part of the paper; and of deeper shadows on another. Now Light, where it exists, can exert an action. (William Henry Fox Talbot, 1000 Photo Icons by Anthony Bannon (Foreword), George Eastman House)

The theme of impermanence and love has been the main theme of my work which appeared again and again in different forms and guises, followed by a secondary one - sometimes interwoven with the first one, that is the one of the relationship between the life of a professional in the artworld in relation to everyday life.

For the purpose of this presentation I will choose a couple of works realised and almost all exhibited in the Netherlands and US, leaving in the shadow a more recent part of the work realised lately and partly exhibited in China and UK as well as some work recently done and not exhibited yet from Romania.

1. **The Distance Between Presence and Absence**, 1998, The Netherlands, Maastricht

Fire melts the ice in a process based work that included also light projections and sound.
The work has been installed into an empty cement non- gallery space in Maastricht for one night.



2. **The Light as Usual: All in Its Place**, 1999 , The Netherlands, Maastricht

Light projections of slides with images of situations were light has been seen were transforming by wrapping the architectural elements - therefore illusory and temporary warming them up- of a deserted and no longer in use gothic cathedral from Maastricht.

The title is the appropriation of a poem, from a tradition of poems written right before death, by a zen monk - *Life as usual, all in its place*.

The work has been open for public for three consecutive nights.

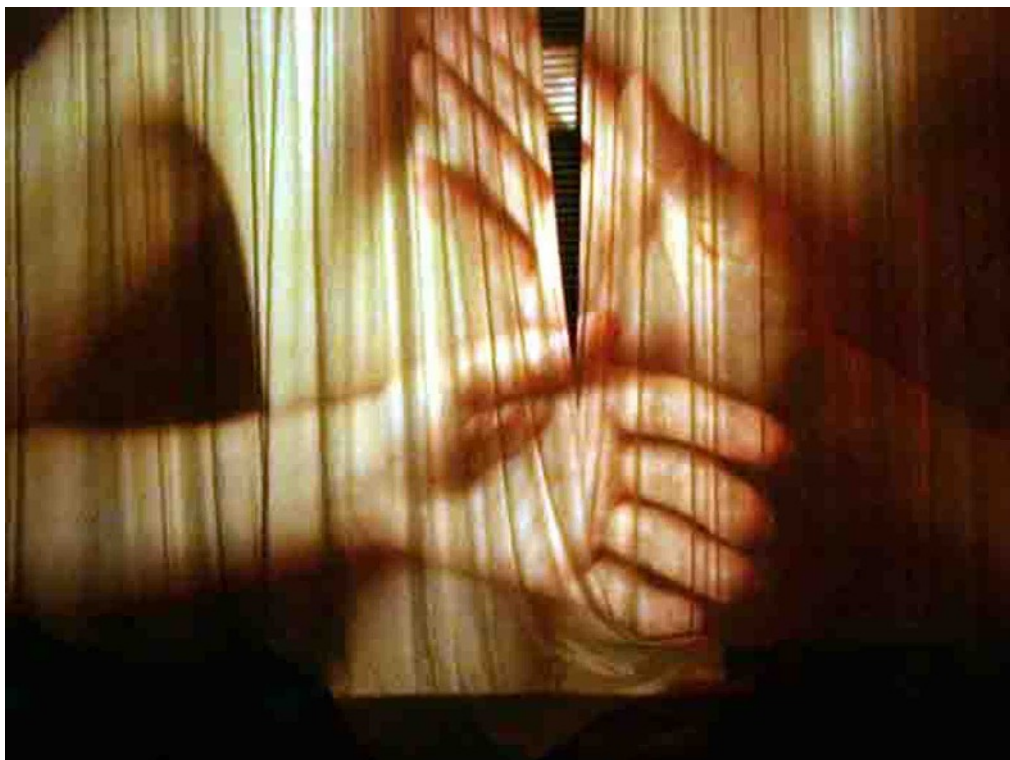


3. **Sebastian**, 1999 , The Netherlands, Maastricht

A slide image of the back of my body has been projected on a curtain of a private's home window in Maastricht. The projection has been done such as the folds of the curtain to create the illusion of wrapping around the hands and the opening resembling the cut from the curtain to appear such as a cut into the body.

The title of the work has been chosen both in relation to the Renaissance painting of St. Sebastian of Massacio - pointing towards the unseen part of the body in the painting as well as because this was the hiding name of one of the characters from Shakespear's plays, name taken by the feminine character both for the purpose of travel as well as other social deeds usually assigned to men in that society - in her quest for finding her brother.

The work was not publicly exhibited. Just its documentation remained and has been seen.



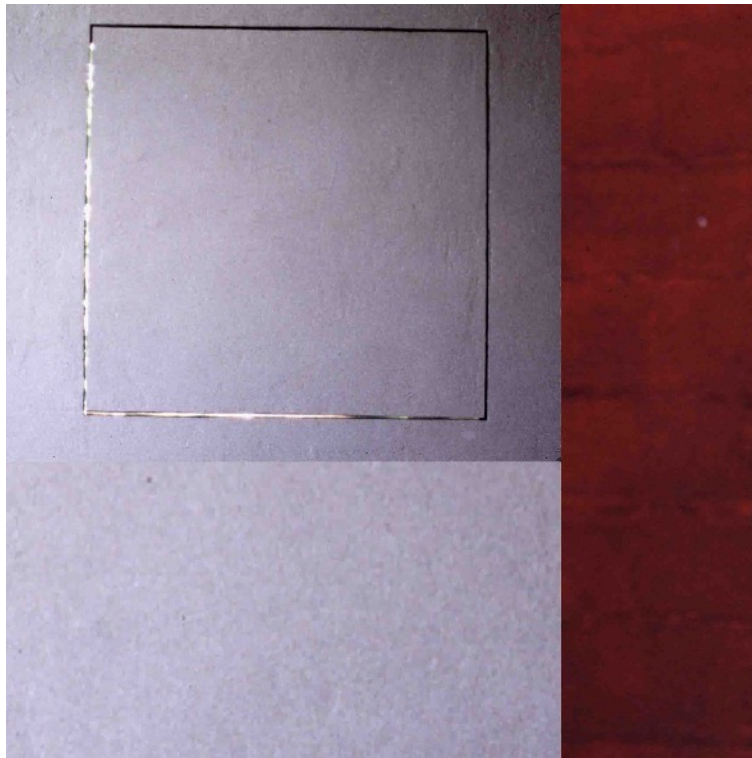
4. **The Red-Light Room**, 2000 , The Netherlands, Maastricht

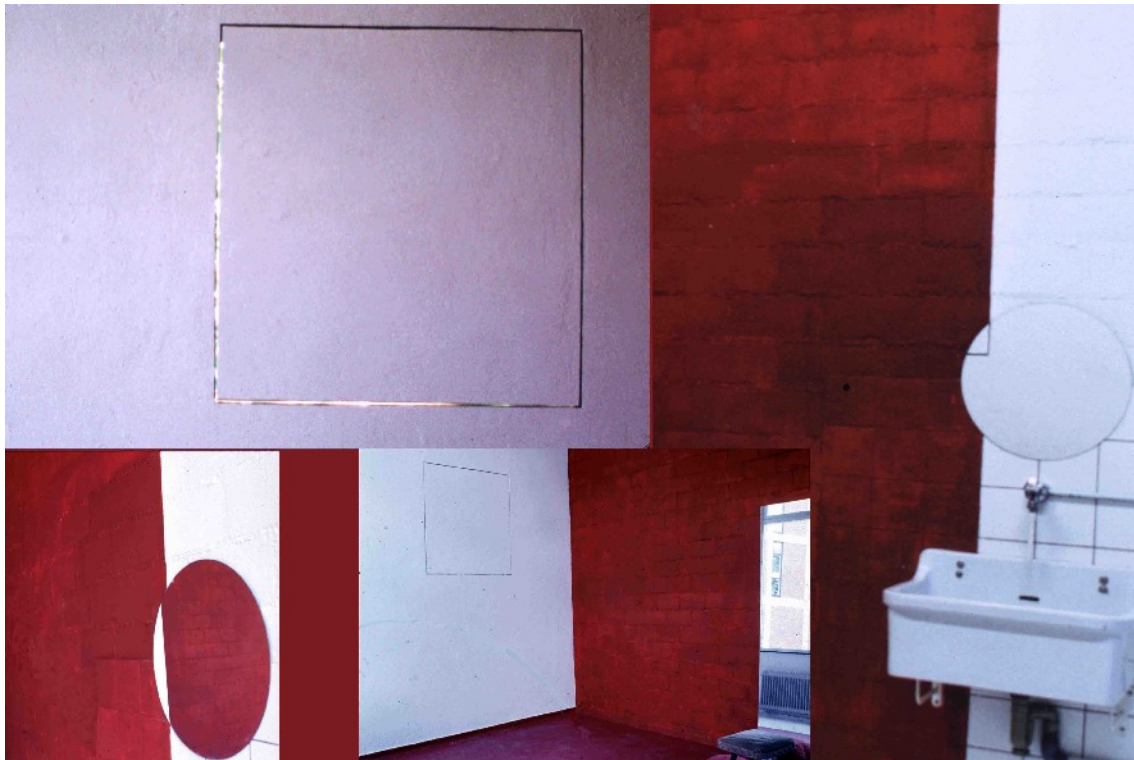
A wall has been cut with about a 1cm cut, in a square shape of 1 meter side. The left square sided volume has been left inside of the wall and has been supported by a transparent piece of plexiglass such as a thin layer of light could communicate, unite and pass between the inside and outside spaces. This situation of light has been envisioned such as the natural light could be seen inside during the daytime, while the artificial time could be seen outside during the night time.

The rest of the room has been painted in two spaces with red and white and two mirrors were placed to mirror, one of them precisely the cut and the passing light from outside - a round shaped one- while another one the outside landscape with a tree that was existing in front of the window of the studio where the work has been done - a long, rectangular shape mirror.

The work work had to do with sacrifice and had as a starting point the Romanian myth Meşterul Manole- the story of Ana.

The work still exists at Jan van Eyck Academy, in my former studio from there.



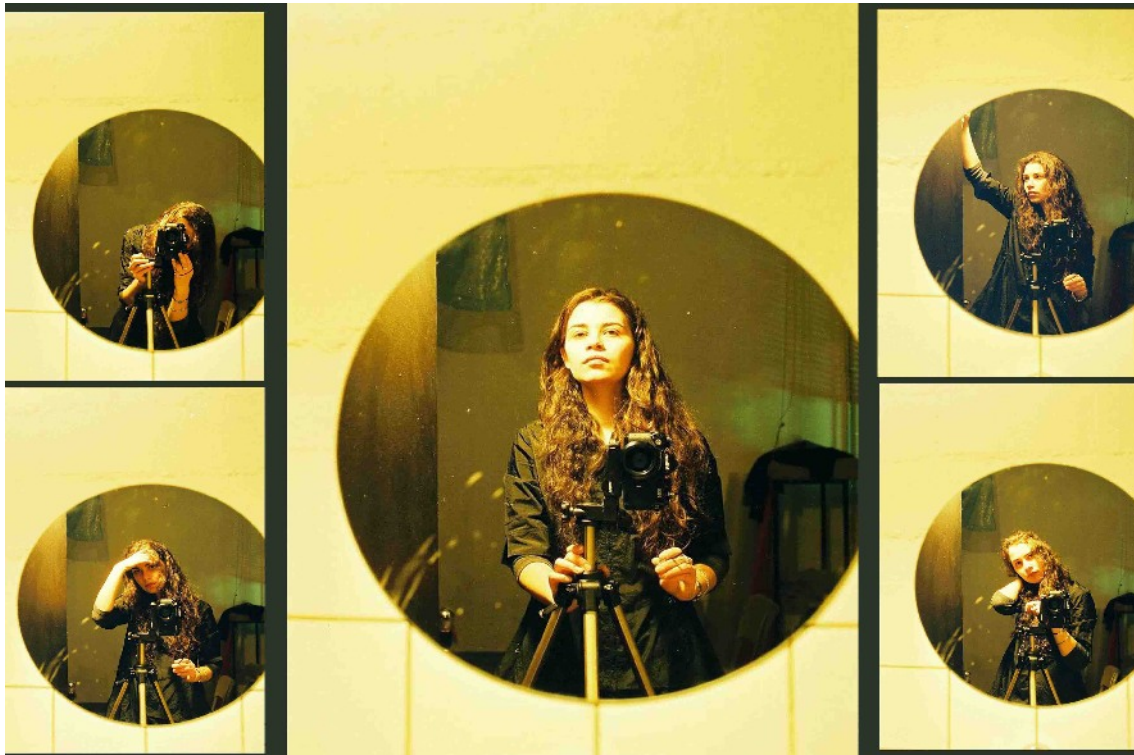


5. **Self-portraits**, 2000, The Netherlands, Maastricht

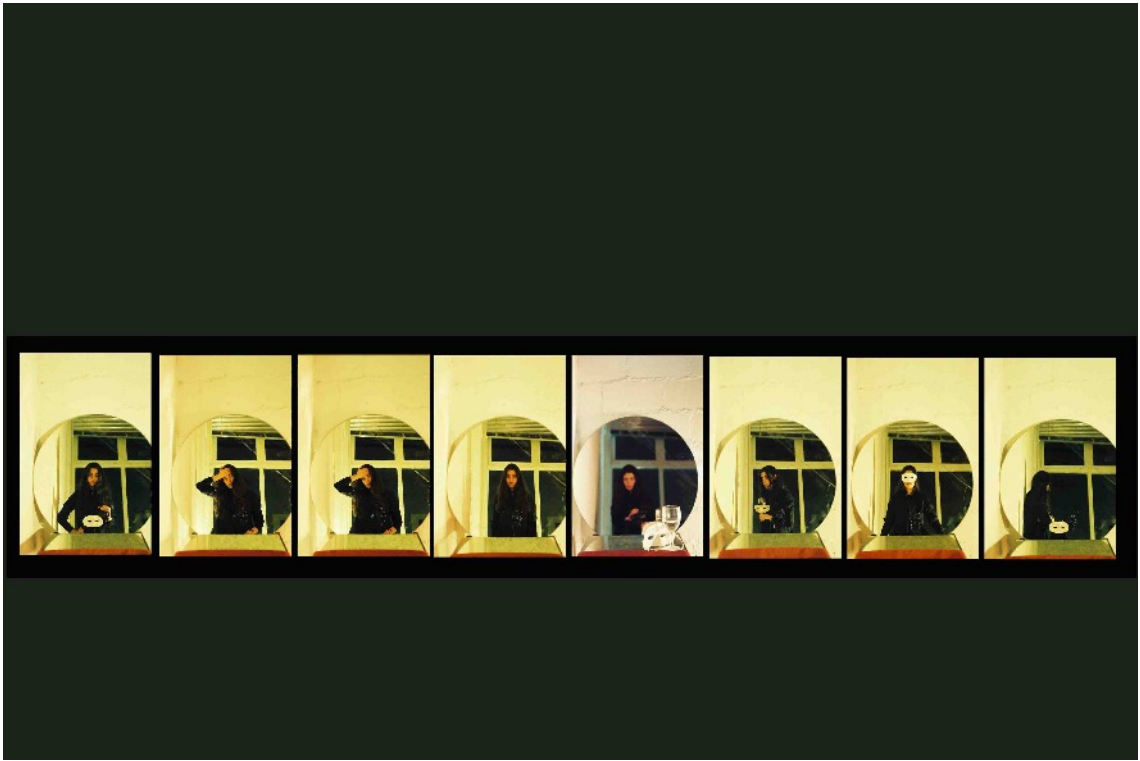
Several series of self-portraits were made having as a starting point Culianu's book *Călătorie în lumea de dincolo* (Travel to the Other World). The other world, that in Culianu's book was referring to death, in my view was also pointing to the world inside of the mirror (such as in Alice) as well as it pointed towards my own state of being in the Netherlands (another world in relation to Romania).

Each series of images has been making reference to a certain specific cultural area, such as Victorian photography, Spanish painting of Velázquez, the Russian movie Evgheni Oneghin, Hamlet, Baroque space of Italian paintings, International Gothic Style of paintings, etc. The work and expression of those photographical images has been based on the interplay of the space and light that was existing between two round mirrors placed in front of each other, as well as on highly coded gestures that were alluding to particular works of painting from the Western tradition - the most recent one being of the Contemporary Portuguese painter Juliao Sarmiento.

The work was exhibited once in Jan van Eyck Academy, and still exists in my collection of works.









6. Syrup of the Roses, Taming of the Play and Left to Be, 2001, Buffalo, NY

The work is a video documentation /made in collaboration with the video artist Terry Cuddy /of three short performances I made in Buffalo, NY. The performances had to do with feminine roles but also with the tension felt from being away from home and the desire of returning home.

- a. Syrup of the Roses - my hand decorated with small pink satin roses is painting a small porcelain saucer with dark-red lipstick, while afterwards is washing the saucer both with hot coffee as well as pieces of snow and ice collected from the snow covered lawn.
- b. I wash my hair with milk and water given by my collaborator who works filming, on the background of an audio selection from Shakespear's play *Taming of the Shrew*.
- c. Dressed -up in Romanian folk costume I make a ritualistic slow gesture of washing my face with imaginary water taken from an wooden round cup. The setting is idyllic, compose from pink satin, wheat, bread and honey while the background song is Maria Tanase's song *Cine iubeste si lasa*. (Who Loves and Leaves).

The work has been screened at Squeaky Wheel Gallery in Buffalo, NY as part of a show called *Love and Sex*.

7. Transient Views of Western New York, 2002, Buffalo, NY.

This is another documentary work done together with the video artist Terry Cuddy. The concept of the work was to document the area of Buffalo and Western NY- where we were living and studying by then- through asking a number of artists to provide us a piece of written text or composed music related to a particular local place. The video is realised by integrating the provided materials with material filmed by us of the places selected by the artists.

The video has been screened at SUNY at Buffalo.

8. A Tenderness for Everything That is Always to Be Lost, 2002

This work was my MFA thesis show from SUNY at Buffalo. It was an installation and site-specific piece. For this work I have chosen a title which was a quote from a book written by a Canadian woman immigrant from a Jewish family from Eastern Europe. She wrote a book in English after dramatical events in her life in order to integrate the experiences and memories from her home country into her new cultural and English speaking environment of adoption.

The work included layered analogue photographical images of my hands superposed over images from a botanical garden, as well as old images of myself and my mother and new images of friends, texts written by myself on pieces of tortilla, colour and fabric as well as a sound piece that was an autobiographical account of my experiences with pain.

The work stayed open for the public about three weeks and it was realised in a house from the Polish area of Buffalo.



In the end I would like to mention other two pieces which, even though one was lost and one was left unfinished, I think the story about them can help for the understanding of the work I have done in the past.

1. This was a lost audio piece whose title I cannot remember now that was consisting in an imaginary dialogue between myself and a small blind girl whom I met in Bucharest. The work was dealing with the relationship between blindness and the amazing capacity of people to develop other senses and qualities such as the quality of a good storyteller that the girl had. The work also was emphasising and drawing its main expression from the passage between speaking and singing, passage that appeared in the work through my voice that I was trying to modulate accordingly in order to tell the story of our dialogue.

The work was presented once to the students of SUNY at Buffalo and subsequently lost during my journey.

2. It was a collaborative- performative untitled piece where I would invite chosen people into my studio to serve specially prepared meals in order to meet and record our conversations. We have realised two such meetings with recorded documentation in 2001 at SUNY at Buffalo. The work had its main issue that of freedom and remained unfinished.

