

University of Art and Design Cluj-Napoca

*Summary*

DOCTORAL THESIS

Matierist painting

History, developments, openings

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In the whole of my existence, within the space where the physical and the metaphysical coalesce, painting has long become an existential and spiritual breath, even going beyond ardent passion. Certainly, this is not a feature of personal uniqueness, since painting, in all its forms (I herein refer to the nonutilitarian) is a given, a gift and a talent for which human beings should be grateful to the Divine, probably, as well as to certain happenings of spiritual interiority that exceed the biological and the psychological. A form of communication, it occurs instinctively in children and even adults and, similarly to a wonder and a miracle, in those people who are or become artists. Comparatively to other art instances, but settled in a state of excellence preeminence, painting may be referred to in the plural as well, according to the territories, instances, directions and genres it follows or is guided towards.

“It is true that painting is an action, but drawing is an action as well, as is copying, representing etc. In fact, it is a puritan event that is of interest to the most fundamental artistic act only. Whereas the actions of copying, of representing etc. involve the action of painting, painting does not involve them: therefore, it can be considered a fundamental act.” (Danto, Arthur, *La Transfiguration du Banal – une philosophie de l’art*, Edition du Seuil, Paris, 1989). The aforementioned quotation reinforces the fact that painting is an exceptional state of excellence of the visual representation universe, even surmounting in terms of state and aggregation of physical and metaphysical many other sequences of these representations practised by other instances and genres of fine arts. Painting is also, in a short description dictated by the brevity of this summary, either distinct, individual sparkles, existing in its constitutive and defining territory and in its occurrence in historical time and space, or partnerships between various signs and meanings and the other directions and sequences of fine arts, as well as many other landmarks, sequences and territories having a general and/or human metaphysical sense.

Among this generous plurality, out of personal reasons I chose to refer to the practicing artist. Another reason for this choice is that this field is scarcely represented in art critique and art theory and often totally or partially included in other adjacent fields. Thus, I have chosen to start research on that precise moment, time and space where painting in its concepts, attitudes, acts, techniques and expressions takes on and allows an extraordinary partnership with matter

as such, which it does not enthrall, but which it honours by putting it forward and ennobling it. This is what could be translated from the concept used by Antoni Tàpies, *pintura matèrica*, as “matierist painting” in English and “peinture matiériste” in French. During research, I have added to the identity distinction of matierist painting within the field, territory and universe of painting, the term “pictorial matierism” (namely exceeding the will and chance of acting and of acutely pictorial practising for a preeminence and prevalence of relief and volume modelling, nevertheless joined by painting). Another term was matierist painting or pictorial matierism variation, associations, partnerships, fusions and hybridizations among these sequences and between them and other sequences, directions and genres of fine arts or of other adjacent subjects.

Personally, following reference to the theoretical and critical horizon, as well as to my artistic creeds, concepts, attitudes and deeds, I consider that matierist painting, pictorial matierism and generic matierism, to be found in fine/visual arts, refer to the positioning of a material layer (colour, pigment, pictorial gesture and/or anti-gesture, cement, primer, various materials and objects) used in the act and gesture of painting in relation to the painting surface; relating all these to the surface involves an explicit evidence of matierism in the modelling and removal of the pictorial layer on part or the entirety of the painting surface (the surface is usually two-dimensional in state and aggregation, but leaves room for exceptions, either deformations or deviations, or subtle or radical passages to relief, three-dimensionality and volume).

For the most part of the historical, spatial and temporal track of the inception, evolution and development of painting and other fields of fine arts, the state, statute and aggregation of matierist painting and pictorial matierism appear to be mere accidents, lacking up to this point the evidence of manifestos; however, we notice that elements, components and sequences of the types of matierism linked to painting occur naturally and/or providentially, ensuring the outlines of the birth of matierist painting and pictorial matierism as such, in the vein of definitions and contemporary fine art practice. But all these preparations prove to have been necessary once with reaching and passing through the historical time that began with the Renaissance, a historical time that we, as well as many voices within the theory and criticism of culture and art deem to be the beginning of modernity, to which we still belong. Concretely, we bring forward the contribution to pre and prime matierism in painting by the superisation engendered by the technical revolution, the practice of oil painting which allowed for the

distinct emphasizing of the layers, in the view of an expressiveness that enhances the sense of reality, and another revolution – of impressionist and post-impressionist painting -, with its follow-up and extensions, continuing or questioning it (Cubism, Dada, Expressionism, post-Cubism, Abstract expressionism, Informal art, Abstract art, Ready-made, Constructivism and Suprematism), meaning the birth/genesis/generation of matterist painting and pictorial matterism in their identity dimensions, states and aggregations, extended, multiplied and hybrid.

This paper is structured in several sequences, in five chapters, along with an *Argument*, *Introduction*, *Conclusions*, *Bibliography* and one more chapter dedicated to the presentation and argumentation of concepts, attitudes, techniques and expressions in the personal artistic undertaking. The chapters, in their turn, when the need arises, are divided into subchapters and sequences. In the *Table of Contents*, all these appear in the order necessary to bearing out the ideas and the entire thesis. The *Table of Contents* is thus crafted so as to act as an overview containing the main components, sequences and the subjects tackled by the paper. To exemplify, here is an excerpt of the *Table of Contents*: Argument; Introduction; 1. Image and Imaginary; 1.1 Image; 1.2 Structure components of the imaginary; 2. Fine arts and matterism; 2.1 Temptations of matterism; 2.2 Sources and resources of the genesis and evolution of matterist painting; 2.3 Definitions of matterist painting; 2.4 Preludes of matterist painting; 2.5 Outbreaks that generated matterist painting; 2.6 Presence and nonpresence of matterist painting and other instances of matterism in the history of visual arts; 2.6.1 Pictograms; 2.6.2 Petroglyphs; 2.6.3 Volumetric modelling; 2.6.4 Antiquity and methods of visual representation; 2.6.5 Sumerian script and its adjacency; 2.6.6 Egyptian painting and script – hieroglyphs; 2.6.7 Ancient Greece – visual arts from a matterist standpoint; 2.6.8 Mosaics and the connection with matterism; 2.6.9 Contribution of the Renaissance and its extensions to the invention and validation of pictorial matterism; 3. Axes, territories and adjacency of pictorial matterism; 3.1 Case study – Rembrandt; 3.2 Matterism from Vincent Van Gogh to contemporary artists; 4. Matterist painting and pictorial matterism; 4.1 Identity of matterist painting vs. identity of pictorial matterism; 4.2 Border matterist painting and pictorial matterism; 4.3 Adjacency of matterist painting and border pictorial matterism; 4.3 Adjacencies of matterist painting and pictorial matterism; 4.4 Pseudo pictorial matterism ; 5. Antoni Tàpies, ambassador of matterist painting – Case study; Conclusions; Matterist painting and personal manifesto; Bibliography.

In what follows, we will briefly refer to the content of the entire paper and the sequences called *Matierist painting – History, developments, openings*: the *Argument* submits to the reader's and to the (generic) evaluator's attention the motivation of this doctoral thesis, necessary, as an extension to my artistic preoccupations about matierist painting and brings forward the still sensitive issue of the translation and adaptation into Romanian of various concepts from other languages, names that highlight or explain the connection between painting and the presence of a dense (material) layer of the colour (pigment) used. The *Argument* also provides the beginning of a draft description, definition and clarification of the signs and meanings in matierist painting and in the footnote of the text we also bring up the importance of the technical tools by defining it as a sequence of fine arts, for painting *per se*, as well as for its identity sequences, one of which is matierist painting.

The *Introduction* provides a progressive discourse that quickly rises a question regarding the role and purpose of art in the dimensions of existence *in* and *through* the social, cultural, spiritual parts of the human being, and then drives its statements and interrogations towards the role and purpose of a painting that is in partnership with matter – namely, matierist painting within art and human culture and spirituality.

*Image and imaginary*, the first chapter of the doctoral thesis tackles the image and imaginary in their identity sequences as well as their role and purpose in the artistic discourse and undertaking throughout the history of mankind and of fine/visual arts. In the research of image, relevant references in the field are brought up - Jean-Jaques Wunenburger, Vilem Flusser – as well as personal clarification points, using as a source the gist of the theoretical research and the personal artistic and teaching practice. We will mention the relation of image to the territories of the physical and metaphysical, from light, sight and look, to generating, using and interpreting it by the human thought and spirit and the relationship with the real, with reality and the imaginary. "...we call image a concrete, sensitive representation (reproduction or copy) of an object (model, referent), be it material (a chair) or ideal (an abstract number), present or absent from the point of view of perceptions, and which has such a connection with its referent that it can be considered its representative and thus allows us to recognise it, recognise or understand it. Thus, the image is distinct from the real things, considered to be outside their sensitive representation, as well as from their representation as concept, which, at a first glance do not seem to bare any resemblance to their name and has no

participation relationship with it, a name which is distinct of any sensitive intuition of its content.” (Wunenburger, Jean-Jaques, *Philosophy of Images*, Polirom, Iași, 2004), and: “images are mediations between the world and humans. Man « ek-sists », which means that he has no immediate access to the world. Images are meant to render the world accessible and imaginable to man. ” (Flusser, Vilém, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, Ideea Design & Print, Cluj-Napoca, 2003), and in what concerns the personal contribution, we will rely on a confession sequence which is also edifying for the content of the chapter: “Reality and the real, however, first of all in the absence of light and its transformation in light, *invisible* through the diaphanous filtering ensured by the atmosphere and distance that allow for the *illumination* to take place, it does not deliver in the instances that engage the *visible* and *readable*; secondly, even in the presence of light, reality and the real *are not image, do not offer image*, but only *offer themselves to image*, an image which is engaged by the *imaginary*, in this case by the human imaginary, tainted, managed and assisted by human imagination.” (A/N)

The second subchapter brings up for discussion elements and components of the *imaginary*. For this part, a very useful research was that of Gabriel Liiceanu on the connection between art, image, imaginary and the equations of symbols and the symbolic, which appears in his writing *Man and Symbol. Interpretations of the symbol in art theory and culture philosophy*. We quote: “Any general consideration on the symbolic work must start with the double foundation that symbolic work has in our psyche: the need to *visualize the abstract and the need to transcend the visible*. It is difficult to talk about the origin of one of the moments within this conflicting dynamic. They are both present here and together maintain the tension which is characteristic of the symbolic work. As, on the other hand, abstract meaning is not the unpredictable effect with a heuristic value of symbolization; the spirit that accompanies the genesis of the symbolic work is not eminently perceptual and intuitive, only to take on a level of abstraction, theretofore absent, during the development of the symbolic significance.” (Liiceanu, Gabriel, *Man and Symbol. Interpretations of the symbol in art theory and culture philosophy*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2005). A fervent admirer of Heidegger’s, Gabriel Liiceanu magisterially compellingly and connects all the dimensions of the *image* and *the imaginary* with the human being – social, cultural and spiritual-, the territories of centrality, marginality, variations and extension of the symbol, symbolics and symbology. “As positivist methodology generally results from an assimilation of the images in the category of signs, while a more philosophical methodology *often links image to a symbolic dimension*”

(Liiceanu, Gabriel, *Man and Symbol. Interpretations of the symbol in art theory and culture philosophy.*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2005).

Another instance that manages the interpretation, acting, shaping and modelling of the imaginary is that of the *said*, still present in almost all dimensions of social and cultural existence, contemporary to the human being : the verbal and the text. “We could especially take into account the issues raised by the relationships, significant and sometimes culturally determined, between visual activities and linguistic activities in the ambit of image. Although, through its etymology and history, the image has a privileged relationship with visual representations, the term applies to linguistic representations as well (the metaphor, for instance). The literary image, the visual image’s twin sister, thus extends the category through a semantic procedure of reasoned analogy, introducing at the same time a strong heterogeneity of mental experiences. The language role thus gives way to a specific image entity, whose structural or functional correspondence with the visual image may become the source of numerous difficulties.” (Liiceanu, Gabriel, *Man and Symbol. Interpretations of the symbol in art theory and culture philosophy.*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2005).

The conspicuous relationship between image and text (a text understood not only in its aspect as *spoken* and *written* – without, though, denying this association – but also and especially as an action of surpassing the shield image through a transfer from *sight* to *narration* and especially to *allowing understanding*, put forward by Flusser’s dramatism. We will herein consider the *text* as an absolutely necessary, for the time being, operation associated/attached to any encounter with image, if we set out for a *waiting* in and through interpretation. We do not believe in a definitive primacy and pre-eminence, but in a subtle game of *variable geometries*, which we propose as illustration of a (necessary) relationship between sight and word, proposing the same relationship between text and image).

The second chapter of the paper is called *Visual arts and matterism*. In the subchapter called *Temptations of matterism* we develop suppositions related to the relationship between matterist painting and the *telluric* and *earth* as an artistic celebration of the admiration and obligation to direct our sight and thought towards the frame and receptacle of the matter, which, for the human existence, proves to be confined to earth and earth dwelling (as opposed to the voracious, impatient and perpetual aspiration of the human being towards the celestial, the ether and the divine, supposed to be sheltered there). It seems paradoxical, since a whole

lot of the attitude and acting in matterist painting stems from and is inscribed to the abstract, abstraction and abstractionism. Matterist painting usually transcends its initial genesis from the art/s of abstractionism (from the modern to the contemporary), because going through the modelling *by* and *filling with* abstract of a surface as such or of a pseudo-surface leads to the formation and aggregation of an eclectic bringing together of materials (from substance to object), which through physical, spatial, colour-wise and texture-wise modelling engenders a perceptual challenge and *world* evaluation as a *territory-scenery model*. This usually guides the artist's journey backward, beyond symbols, imitating archetypes of *terra*, because very rarely do matterist painting and its adjacencies take on the journey, the appearance, the narration and modelling towards the ether, the sky, the astral and/or towards their opposite, the aquatic more often, though rarely.

Matterist painting and its adjacencies bring to our sight, perception and evaluation the *world* that is like the Earth, the lands, a simulation of a world, of our planet or of other matter aggregations seen from a certain physical distance (Antoni Tàpies, Zoltan Kemeny, Alberto Burri).

Gabriel Liiceanu is the one who, following Heidegger's ideas, brings here the nuances of the theoretical *demarche* aimed at implementing and promoting the relationship between human presence and human existence with and through earth, in making the distinction between earth and world and in the view of finding defining features of matterist painting and pictorial matterism.

The "ex-posure of a world" appeared to be the first essential characteristic of the work of art, respectively of the "placing of the self into action" of the truth through the work of art. Along with the "world" as a first characteristic of the work of art, Heidegger places a second one – *earth* (die Erde). The nature of the work of art, Heidegger will conclude in the end of this chapter, lies in the dispute between *earth* and *world*. [...] We will hereinafter dwell on what Heidegger called – equally essential to the work of art – "the earth".

*The issue of the theoretical justification of the "earth" as a component of the work of art.* All commentators have noticed – and any reader, however superficial, of Heidegger's work will bear them out – that at this point, Heidegger's reasoning reaches the pinnacle of its strangeness. What connection could there be between the nature of the work and earth? What

feature of the earth could make it have a say in the essence of the work of art? [...] Is it only the concept of “earth”? “The surprising thing is – and this observation belongs to a *connoisseur* of Heidegger’s thought, H.G. Gadamer – that this concept of the world now finds its counterterm (*Gegenbegriff*) in the concept of *earth*. Since, while the concept of world, thought of as the integrating ensemble towards which the self-interpretation of the human unfolds, had its degree of flagrancy to the degree to which it started from the very self-understanding of the human existence, the concept of earth echoed a primitive mystical or gnostic vocable that could claim a place in the world of poetry at most. It was obvious that Heidegger took the concept of earth only to transpose it in his own philosophy from the poetry of Hölderlin, to whom he had grown passionately close during that time. But what granted him the right to make this transposition? The *Dasein* that understood itself in its being, this being – in-world, this standpoint, radical and new, that lies at the origin of every transcendental question – how can in it be connected ontologically to a concept such as earth?” (H.G. Gadamer, *Introduction to Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, Reclam edition, 1970, pp. 108-109). What Gadamer brings to discussion here is the *theoretical dignity* of the term “earth”. How can it pair the authentic concept of “world”, which *at least* in Heidegger’s work had a theoretical tradition? From Empedocles and the Neoplatonists, where it has mythical or metaphorical connotations as well, the earth had not been successful in the market of philosophical thinking.” (Liiceanu, Gabriel, *Man and Symbol. Interpretations of the symbol in art theory and culture philosophy.*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 2005). Concerning Heidegger’s motivations that we will use in the discourse on matterist painting, we note that in a top-down duality of aspiration and expiration, of rise and fall, the earth from physical to metaphysical is given as a basis, even though this quality is interpreted to its disadvantage.

In subchapter *Sources and resources of the genesis and evolution of matterist painting* we lay the premises of matterist painting allowed by the specificity of visual representation as a reference to the world and also provides the punctual registration of diffusion in the aforementioned context or of the lack of a project or manifesto of some identity sequences of protohistory matterist painting.

The three following chapters, *Definitions of matterist painting*, *Preludes of matterist painting* and *Outbreaks that generated matterist painting* deal with the relationship between the specific of the relation between materials and the pictorial gesture characteristic of matterism

and the condition of art, in general, of visual art and its sequences in history (arch-, proto-, pre-) and the relation to other sequences of communication, representation, information.

We will bring forward an excerpt of the paper referring to the specific of the state and statute of materism in relationship to the support surface. “Visual representations need a two or threedimensional surface for the perception of visual and representational signs; in other words, a support surface. Thus, there are three sorts of surfaces in visual representation, in relation and association to the support surface: the sub-surface, the surface offered to penetration/incision for the highlighting of marks (trails, segments, sequences, trail configurations), the surface (as such), which coincides with the support surface, which hosts and facilitates the laying of *nontraces*, strokes and lines that seem to be looked at from afar and finally, the meta-surface, related to the support surface, allowing to make powerful and/or slight identity distinctions of the layers and/or of the fragments of layers put on the support surface. These are layers and/or fragments of layers characteristic of all pictorial gestures, from proto-painting to nowadays’ materist painting. The support surface (real, named or agreed support) of the gesture and the pictorial ceremony is thus a territory that manages the types of pictorial acts (conceptual, expressive, technical) or its extensions and vicinity looked at from its perspective. Thus, the support surface offers two ways of laying the visual representation gestures: exclusive pictorial source (watered-down, scattered or assisted) and a billowy aggregation, having especially positive deformations (counter-gravity, risings, heights) and negative deformations (pro-gravity: depths and falls), joined by the availability to host formations of the layer/pictorial gesture and/or host buffer areas between the surface receiving the gesture and the layer generated by the pictorial gesture. Maybe we could also include here the corporality through which the surface becomes volume and architectural, environmental, sculptural modelling. All these allow for and even reclaim the presence of the layers generated by the pictorial gesture. The relationship between the receiving surface and the layers (materist visual representation) is managed by an interval dwelling between hazard and the ceremony of putting layers on the surface, be it buffer layers or layers engendered by the gesture of visual representation or by the intentionality and action of materist painting. From the standpoint of authorial decision, this interval, with a direct reference to materist painting is in a process of action.”

The stratifying action may be from accidental/haphazard/circumstantial, to the decisional, in the form of a project. Stratifications, from the point of view of their meeting the surface, may

be of various types, such as (taken from bibliographic research): parsimonious in decision and stratification, excessive, exuberant. We could also speak of a punctual stratification, with a minimal presence on the surface, which can see vicinity relations between the territories of musical harmony (rhythm, eurhythmy, bars); *superficial* stratifications, layers covering as evenly as possible the surface; these are all anti-gravity and upward stratifications, counter/anti stratifications containing all the definition points of the above-mentioned stratifications, but becoming anti-gravity tracks that penetrate the receiving surface and fragment the rising sign actions of stratifications through destratification. There are also *dematerialisation* pictorial actions made through penetration or incision that unveil the presence of these layers and superisation appears in the pictorial gesture in time equations encompassing the immediate and the remote through new matterist superpositions. A particular identity is given to the matterist painting assisted by an art object, be it a receiving surface, a buffer layer or an accidental act on the surface; this is completed by the presence of ready-made objects as sequences and components of a buffer layer, which make the surface rugged in an eclectic and hybrid manner” (A/N).

The sixth subchapter is called *Presence and nonpresence of matterist painting and other instances of matterism in the history of visual arts*. It identifies premises and conspicuous and/or subliminal components, weak or strong, of the evolution and/or involution of matterist painting and pictorial matterism throughout human history, from the primitive commune to modern art (Impressionism, Post-Impressionism). The chapter lists aspects directly or indirectly linked to the visual matterism involved in art and culture, in artisanal arts, fine arts and their derivatives, extensions, variations. Rupestral paintings, the positive (heights) and negative (incisions) matterism of ornaments in various eras, the tattoo in relief, the mask, the garments, the Antiquity painting, the mosaic, the printing press and writing, oil painting and the inception matterist premises of Renaissance painting, the visual illusionism of the Baroque, the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist revolution – all these moments of sequence, of track and territory, lead to the point when matterist painting is invented in the state and aggregation of its contemporary status.

The third chapter is called *Axes, territories and adjacency of matterist painting and pictorial matterism* and is divided into two subchapters: *Case study – Rembrandt* and *Matterism from Vincent Van Gogh to contemporary artists*. The former brings to the forefront the relevance for matterist painting of authoritarian centrality through painting qualification and

superisation, represented by Rembrandt. “The only painter who could afford to mix mire with the brightness of eyes, fire with ashes, or make colours shine freshly, like a flower, pink or light blue on the mortuary shroud.” (Élie Faure). The artist ceaselessly tries to broaden his means of expression in painting. The pictorial material, at first smooth, later on becomes thicker, richer. *Rembrandt is the first matterist painter; the model and textures convinced the painter to cover with a thick layer of paint the brighter parts and leave the darker parts in thinner layers.* In order to model structures, Rembrandt would scratch with the other end of the paintbrush, make juxtapositions in order to convey the multiple positive and/or negative pictorial prime-matierism, a method deemed to be unconventional at the time. (*Artistic Anthropology*, vol. I, Gheorghe Ghițescu, Didactică și Pedagogică Publishing House, Bucharest, 1979).

The second subchapter starts from the prime-matierist painting foundation by Vincent van Gogh and goes through real-matierism, be it towards/from painting (Jackson Pollock, Jean Fautrier) or towards pictorial matierism (Kurt Schwitters), to vicinities, using (or useful to) matierism, such as ready-made (Marcel Duchamp). “Precisely because Dadaism acts through surprise, with unplanned interventions, its device calls for a variety of technical means void of prejudice. Even the separation (which we were compelled to make here) of fine art or visual creations from poetic, theatre, graphic or verbal creations is an error. Among the various types of intervention there is no analogy or parity, but simply a lack of distinctiveness. One cannot say whether the Dadaist objects of Arp consisting in cropped, colourful, overlapping boards are sculptures or paintings, relief or collages: they are geometrical shapes, splashes that could be haphazard, but which are given the plastic consistency of serious objects. [...] The technique Schwitters uses is originally the Cubist *collage*. For Cubists, however, the *collage* was the proof that there is no separation between the real space and the space of art, thus things from reality can enter painting without changing their substance. Schwitters, nevertheless, does not have a problem with space, his work is but a place where the most varied things meet. His *opus magnum* is *Merz-bau* (the term *Merz* is as accidental as *Dada*), a sort of column with a totem, made of random objects and added day after day. His paintings (if we can call them that) are made up of everything he accidentally laid eyes on or had at hand, captured his attention for a moment and stole a moment of his existence: used tram tickets, snippets of letters, ropes, caps, buttons etc. [...] The reality laid in order in the painting, creating a new context, is nothing but existence and there is no such thing as order or disorder *per se*.” (Argan, Giulio Carlo, *Modern Art*, Meridiane Publishing house, Bucharest,

1982). “Abstract expressionism, too, used thick layers of pigments, avoiding any transfiguration, as it used to be introduced/induced by the image and the subject: the substance and the subject were one and the same. Since the subject of his work was painting in its genuine materiality, the artist was a painter in the technical sense of the term and the fundamental act was the action of painting. (Not copying, imitating, representing, expressing a message, but simply painting). It is this idea expressed by Harold Rosenberg when he says that the artist uses the canvass as if it were an arena: s/he applies strokes that have no hidden signification (in their genuine action) and are their own subject” (Argan, Giulio Carlo, *Modern Art*, Meridiane Publishinh house, Bucure□ti, 1982).

The fourth chapter, called *Matierist painting and pictorial matierism* is the section dedicated to examples of specific features and definitions of the territories of matierist painting, pictorial matierism, their variations and vicinities within contemporary visual arts. This spans four subchapters: *Identity of matierist painting vs. identity of pictorial matierism*, *Border matierist painting and pictorial matierism*, *Adjacency of matierist painting and border pictorial matierism*, *Pseudo pictorial matierism*. The first chapter starts, of course, with Jean Dubuffet: “Drawing, which is the sharp tool of Dubuffet’s analysis, only acts as an incentive that compels the matter to reveal its own secret contents or significations. Let us analyse this painting. If we considered it a portrait, be it a caricature, of a person or of a human type, we could never exemplify it. Let us study it by starting with matter first. The background is a dirty, scratched, chapped plaster of an old wall. In the middle there is a brighter spot where *someone* saw a strange, grotesque human face and entertained him/herself by discovering and painting it, chipping even more of the plaster and adding a sign in black lead.” (Argan, Giulio Carlo, *Modern Art*, Meridiane Publishing house, Bucharest, 1982). Then comes Jean Fautrier, already presented in the previous chapter, but differently. In the present chapter, Fautrier, under the observation of Giulio Carlo Argan, is presented as one of the first painters to have consistency and continuity in matierist painting: to Fautrier, who can be considered the *painter of crisis*, as Sartre is the philosopher and Camus the man of letters of the crisis, matter is pure existential reality. [...]. It is, therefore, an extremely sensitive matter, able to capture and retain even the ficklest sensations, the swiftest impression, the most secret throbs of the being. Fautrier lays it directly on the support in thick layers, as if shattered by a vital and profound emotion, handling it with delicate gestures like a caress or blunt, almost furious ones, covering it in colours that are sometimes delicate, sometimes violent. This communicates the emotion of its own existence, the alert and desperate rhythm of the passage

from wish to regret, from hope to unrest. Thus, he impresses a space and a time, but they are left hanging, prisoners of his thick layers. (Argan, Giulio Carlo, *Modern Art*, Meridiane Publishing house, Bucharest, 1982).

Alberto Burri is the artist, the painter who brings into the foreground the dialogue between textures and materials, techniques where Burri builds expressive abstractive, pictorial, real-matierist languages. He experiments with many a material, in the view of obtaining layer-surfaces, layer-subsurfaces and layer-oversurfaces dedicated to real-matierist features.

Antoni Tapies is the main and exemplary character concerning the creation and handling of matierist painting as well as pictorial matierism. His work, metaphorically speaking, is made in the kitchen, the laboratory, the workshop and the library of matierism: "Tapies avoids symbols, because the symbol means overcoming matter. In his work, it is not about symbology, but about the semantics of anguish. The sign does not surpass matter, but imprints it with indelible mass, it pins it to its state of matter. Walls, bars, door locks, crosses, handprints and pebbles on sand, in mud, in cement, in tarmac deny the matter all space amplitude, all capacity to react to light, considering it an irredeemable stranger to natural life and history." (Argan, Giulio Carlo, *Modern Art*, Meridiane Publishin house, Bucharest, 1982). Feruccio Bertoluzzi, Emilio Scanavino, Wagemaker Jaap, Bram Bogart are the other exemplary points of reference in matierist painting and pictorial matierism.

In the following chapter, Zoltan Kemeny, Gerry Judah, Arman are the artists called upon to represent and emphasise the state and moment where pictorial matierism takes on cleavages which shift it, but which do not make it lose its initial identity.

The subchapter dedicated to adjacency has the following main characters: Julian Schnabel, Anselm Kiefer, Pierre Soulges, Pierre Alechinski, Lucio Munoz, Lucio Fontana, Kazuo Shiraga, Jannis Kounellis, Gerhard Richter, Peter Voulkos, Paul Soldner, Damien Hirst, Robert Rauchenberg and Daniel Spoerri; they were chosen as examples of artists who, sometimes circumstantially, sometimes patently, reach, revolutionise, pierce, flabbergast, challenge, found vicinities of painting and the pictorial, of matierist sign and meaning.

The last subchapter engages a brief discourse on the installation and practice of simulations, representations/documentations, simulacra of physical matterism, the new dimension of concept and attitude being connected especially to the new media. The only punctual example chosen is Jan Saudek and the way he pseudo materises photographs in paradoxical ceremonies, similarly to and different from Gerhard Richter.

The fifth chapter, *Antoni Tàpies, ambassador of matterist painting – Case study* is a necessary development made of biographical references and features referring to concept, attitude, technique, expression of his work, but also a acknowledged admiration exercise for the quality of mentor to all contemporaries that draw on his *pintura materica*.

In the final pages of the summary of the doctoral thesis *Matterist Painting. History, Developments, Openings*, done under the magistral scientific coordination of distinguished Professor, Phd and painter, Ioan Sbârciu, we will reproduce wholly the *Conclusions* and the chapter *Matterist painting and personal manifesto*.

Matterist painting, along with pictorial matterism, is one of the directions/sequences of mega painting and pictoriality, that tries to overcome its content and form as a mimetic and/or symbolic representation contained by the two-dimensionality of the support surface. There is a long itinerary of laying/integrating colour (pigment, paste, stroke, line, dot, trace) where the relief accidents of a single and/or wholly/partially overlapping layers have drawn attention to how light is cast or shadows as if in an adventure of three dimensional spatiality and volume. Slowly, on a journey of mastering techniques, the exercise and meaning of leaving strokes with the paintbrush, a finger, a palette knife or another tool, are part of accumulating experience. They are joined by ceremonies of putting layers that perform dimensions of transparency and translucence, the most spectacular being brought about by the invention and practice of oil painting. The freedom from too strong a pressure and rules of technical excellence and expression, but which became barriers for the authorial message, impression and suggestion, highlighted Impressionism and post-Impressionism, triggers an avalanche of threshold and boundary crossing, taking painting to a revolution of its essence; the novelty is that the artist/painter lays the result of an inner and mental turmoil transcending, as simulation and presentation of thoughts, energetic and psychotic features of a *sensation* of the self, of the

world. In this waterfall of experiments, painting claims its exit through the rise and/or fall from the two-dimensional sufficiency of the surface. This brings fruitful results in the form of identity sequences such as tachism, action painting, *in-pasto* painting, *a haute pâte* and, of course, materist painting, which takes on two identities: a chromatic adventure on the painting surface and a model or creation of coloured layer freedom; its heights and depths echo the extension of the two-dimensional towards the sequences, features and territories of the three-dimensional. At this point of painting's breaking from the norms of the two-dimensional beyond the powerful identity of the materist painting, it takes on a role of interval between painting and sculpture, between painting and installation, between painting and art direction, between painting and ceramics, between painting and architecture. Materist painting is a sort of painting and at the same time a trans-painting, but regardless of its name, it exists through its artists: Antoni Tàpies, Alberto Burri, Gery Judah, Ettore Colla, Zoltan Kemenyi, Fabrizio Bortoluzzi.

During research, investigation and documentation, we have reached the conclusion that materist painting is joined in its identity and variations by the state, aggregation and status, sign and meaning of pictorial materism. From a theoretical and art critique point of view and even from the point of view of practical sequences, we have identified several standpoints and positions where materist painting overlaps and identifies with pictorial materism. We insist upon the fact that there is painting and there is pictorial, that there is materist painting and pictorial materism. We admit, notwithstanding, that there are sequences in modern and contemporary art where identity is difficult to discern. However, materism, from its beginning as modern and contemporary identity, be it painting or pictorial, joins in any of its sequences those features, vectors and actions coming from the concept, attitude and expression that have contributed to the freedom of art and the artist as never before. Obviously, today, painting and its materist painting sequences, pictorial materism and even materism that includes painting and the pictorial, must face great challenges coming from the new directions of visual arts, which diffuse their identity features. These belonged to the territories of no ceremonies of the presence of matter requested and ensured by the sciences, techniques and technologies dedicated to the new virtual sign.

I have been drawing since the age of four and I have been painting since the first grade; I have been doing so within the organised framework of fine arts since I was 20. The chance to do it

professionally and to grow up in this field probably came with the B.A. and M.A. studies at the University of Art and Design in Cluj-Napoca, between 2003 and 2009. It was the gift I received as an artist; also a gift were my colleagues, all exceptional, as were the professors and the entire spirit of this university. At first, waiting and acting as an artist was directed towards the relationship between painting and the human body, but gradually, without giving it up though, starting with the third year of B.A. studies, I also discovered the territory of matterist painting and of pictorial matterism. Of course, my love for painting brought first of all matterist painting closer to my thought, act and attitude, which has led me to write a doctoral thesis on this topic. Even though during my doctoral studies the theoretical pieces of information and their validation in authorial practice were numerous and important, they were evenly doubled by my natural artistic track. Hopefully, this is apparent and has helped me surpass the mere acquisition of sterile information.

Concerning matterist painting, which I practice and will practice, I can say that it lies under the sign of a radiation ceremony and of a beautiful contamination, which all take place in the universal dimension between earth and sky and in a personal dimension, between a sensitive and candid romanticism and a wild lust for life. Thus, the sequences of my matterist painting engage a mixture of juxtapositions, from the serenity of a surface covered in a single colour that only affords delicate accents of matterism, to the transfer of matterist painting to the honour and celebration of a pictorial matterism that already flirts with the art-object and the installation-type collage. I could also share the way I think and act in matterist painting; everything, however wild or discrete the matter presences could be (a matter belonging to the earth), the filter used is that of the spirit, which belongs to the close and farther sky, the sky belonging to yearning and the sacred sky, belonging to gift and the Divine.

The last sequence is dedicated to bibliography, which contains seventy-five titles belonging to critique and theory, as well as a series of publications and websites.