

MICHAIL MICHAILOV

Born 1978, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

About the Artist:

Michail Michailov is born in 1978 in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, living and working in Vienna and Paris. He studied at the Faculty of Visual Arts in Veliko Tarnovo (1999-2004) and Art History at the University of Vienna (2002-2007). From 2006-2009 he was working in cooperation with the Artist Group Gelitin. 2007 he participated in the Sommerakademie "Situation and Spectacle" at the Paul Klee Centre, Bern (lecturer: Cerith Wyn Evans). Besides several residences and awards he got the Drawing Now Paris Art Award 2018, the Austrian State Scholarship for visual art 2017 and the Austrian graphic award/ Lower Austria 2015. In 2022 he represented Bulgaria at the Venice Biennale with the exhibition "There You Are" curated by Irina Batkova.

"Michailov's work over the past two decades is multidisciplinary: he works across a broad range of visual media, but he is probably most famous for his performances as well as his hyperrealist drawings of dust, stains, useless plastic pieces, and mold.

Michailov's artistic approach is subversive and usually includes profound symbolism, often imposed through clandestine actions that are mostly based upon the intermediary position of the protagonist. The artist utilizes strategies of camouflage and transformation that involve changing reality, disclosure, and intervention. His work also uses white as an essential color, as the fabric for his means of expression. "White is a link, a blank piece of paper, which makes every little particle visible," as he puts it. "I use color in relation to the question of who I am and who or what I am not, or whether I am everything that surrounds me or none of it. I am fascinated by the undescribed, the pure, the undefined. ... In this way the insignificant [and] the unconscious acquires meaning." In his performances, the artist often wears a white protective suit, aiming to depersonalize his body and to minimize his physical presence in the environment. These suits are reminiscent of the protective suits used in criminology, or of medical or work overalls. Michailov applies this same white dress-up strategy to unnecessary objects as well, with the aim of breaking our everyday, habitual thought structures.

Nora Goleshevska, Art Margins

MICHAIL MICHAÏLOV, 1978

1. *dusttodust* #49, 2018

color pencil on paper

46x64 cm

Edition: Unique

Ownership history: The artist



MICHAIL MICHAILOV, *dusttodust*, 2018



Detail

MICHAIL MICHAILOV, *dusttodust*, 2018**About the work:**

The series of drawings *dust to dust* connects several of Michail Michailovs works, which he realised in different forms and media and suits the important questions of life and existence the artist poses himself. He connects the issue of inner purity - as a condition to achieve perfection - with the external cleaning of his rooms and surrounding. So inner and outer cleansing are artistically rendered.

The series shows dust and dirt like in a nature study. In the beginning he just used the automatically appearing dust bunnies in his atelier/studio as model for this pictures, meanwhile he graphically transforms stains and spots out of his immediate surrounding such as bath or kitchen.

The process of drawing takes nearly as long as, or longer as the development of the dirt itself and therefore becomes sort of a mediative contemplation contrasting the active awareness of the artist with the unconscious development of dirt and stains. This way this undesirable meaningless phenomenon/effect takes on a whole new significance. The unconscious gets into awareness, things unlikely to be seen become visible. The high level of drawing effort, which is necessary for this reproduction, playfully raises questions of meaning and value of man and art.

The drawings are presented as an installation within an especially created frame out of skirting boards and can be exhibited hanging on the wall as well as lying on the floor. Dust and dirt, very common to everybody but also repelling and easily overlooked, open up to new perspectives when displayed as a drawing. The aesthetics are only made clear by hanging them on the wall. Relating them to naturally developed dirtstains the spectator gets a new perception and another view on things. The handpainted microcosmos is supposed to provoke thought and enable new associations.

The series *Dust to Dust*, was exhibited at the Bulgarian pavilion during the 2022 Biennale di Venezia.