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Mediated Memory: Scenarios for Staging the Revolution

Abstract: *Mediated Memory. Scenarios for Staging the Revolution* interrogates visual testimonies and memories of a traumatic past re-accessed through cultural memory. Irina Botea's video project *Auditions for a Revolution* (2006) investigates the collective memory of an event – the Romanian Revolution from 1989 – that radically altered the structure of Romanian society. It records a performance given at the Art Institute in Chicago, where the artist asked her fellow students and colleagues to audition for the “mise-en-scène” of the Romanian Revolution. Botea's attempt is inscribed in an almost impossible scenario in terms of credibility and veridicity. Botea makes use of canonic images, and twists them by their juxtaposition with recordings made twenty years after the Revolution, featuring actors who had little access to the collective memory formed about this socio-cultural space. Instead of reconfiguring and establishing a re-encounter with the past, she underlines the mediated access to the past through the present, entangling this negotiation in a series of disruptions, subverting the creation of a national imagery and the way it is perceived, and ultimately determined, by international patterns of representation.

Keywords: mediated memory, trauma, collective memory, ideology, re-enactment, theatricality.

Representing the revolution

Irina Botea's video project *Auditions for a Revolution* (2006) investigates the collective memory of an event – the Romanian Revolution from 1989 – that radically altered the structure of Romanian society. The 24-minute video records a performance given at the Art Institute in Chicago, where she asked her fellow students and colleagues to audition for the “mise-en-scène” of the Romanian Revolution. She presents video and film documentation of these auditions and the players' re-enactments of key moments of this historic event. The footage is displayed on a

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