

ARTS

Simple drawings, complex ideas

Exhibit at Spencer illuminates artist's social philosophies

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A man with a thick black and gray beard stands 20-feet high on a cherry picker in the Spencer Museum of Art, drawing on the walls. He wears a green fly-fishing jacket, which holds everything he needs — a few markers and a notebook.

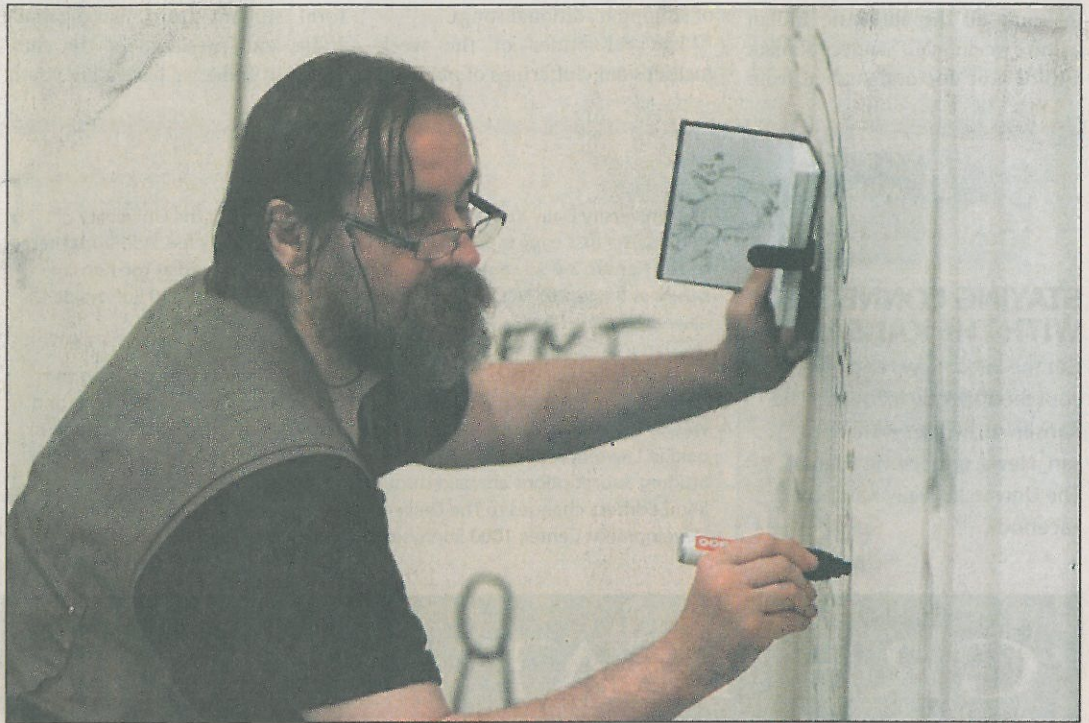
His arms move quickly and deliberately, like a teacher at a chalkboard. He draws simple figurines, as if the walls were just a giant comic strip. Somehow, a clear message comes through.

"I have my own language," Dan Perjovschi said. "These are my words, and I recombine them into new phrases."

Perjovschi is the artist-in-residence at the Spencer Museum of Art. He has been drawing in the central court of the museum for almost two weeks now, creating walls of statements and observations through cartoon-looking, graffiti-style art. His exhibit, Dan Perjovschi Central Court, will officially open Thursday and run until Feb. 6, 2011. His artwork will stay on the walls until the end of the exhibit.

Perjovschi mixes political messages with simple observations of life. One of his favorite and recurring drawings depicts a man in a business suit pointing and yelling at a young skateboarder. The speech bubble coming from the man in the business suit reads "I was at Woodstock?"

"It's not conventional art," Rachel



Sarah Hockel/KANSAN

Artist-In-Residence, Dan Perjovschi, works on his exhibit in the Spencer Museum of Art's Central Court Friday afternoon. Romanian-born Perjovschi will be at KU until Sept. 16th. While here, he will share his art and reflections with students and the community through his exhibit and artist talks.

Schmidt, a freshman from Paola, said as she looked up at the walls of the Spencer. "It's just true, he puts things in a way that can relate to."

It is that connection that Dan looks for. He said that everything he writes or draws, we have all thought about at some point. He said he has just trained himself to capture those thoughts in his notebook.

Walls have always been a part of Perjovschi's life. He was born in 1961 in the city of Sibiu, Romania, the same year the Berlin Wall was erected.

Perjovschi said living in communist Romania was a life of restrictions. The government controlled all sources of information, blocking what Perjovschi starved for. He said he survived some of the worst dictatorial regimes of communist Romania where there

was no freedom to travel or read certain books.

"It was a culture of missing," Perjovschi said.

There would be periods where his family had no milk or bread. His working-class parents somehow managed to send all three of their children to universities, where Perjovschi studied painting.

While there, he started a sort of underground art project with his wife, Lia, whom he met at a special art school when they were 10 years old.

"It is new all the time," Lia said. "We had a common idea to do what we want, a kind of ambition to contribute to our context."

Because of censorship in Romania, each of Dan's art shows went through three different censorship committees before the public could see it. So, he began private

CENTRAL COURT

Dan Perjovschi's "Central Court" exhibit will officially open Thursday night. Perjovschi will speak at 5 p.m. at the SMA Auditorium inside the museum.

The exhibit will run from Thursday to Feb. 6, 2011.

showings in his loft in Bucharest. Then, in 1990, Perjovschi helped begin and run the first independent magazine in Romania called "Revista 22," named after a key date in the Romanian revolution: Dec. 22, 1989.

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Dan's need to break the barrier holding him and all people back from information made this publication an important step in his life. He began drawing cartoons to convey the message of particular articles.

He said that because of the way a message was conveyed through his drawings, he could get away with making points about more controversial issues.

"I am very seriously using humor," Dan said with a laugh.

Lia said Dan always wanted to make people laugh. But Dan said he did not realize what he was doing in these drawings was a talent until a series of invitations to showcase his work made him realize what he was doing was a real asset.

However, because he wasn't being paid to travel he had to pack light. This led to the deconstruction of some of his more artistic skills to the more simple black drawings seen at the Spencer.

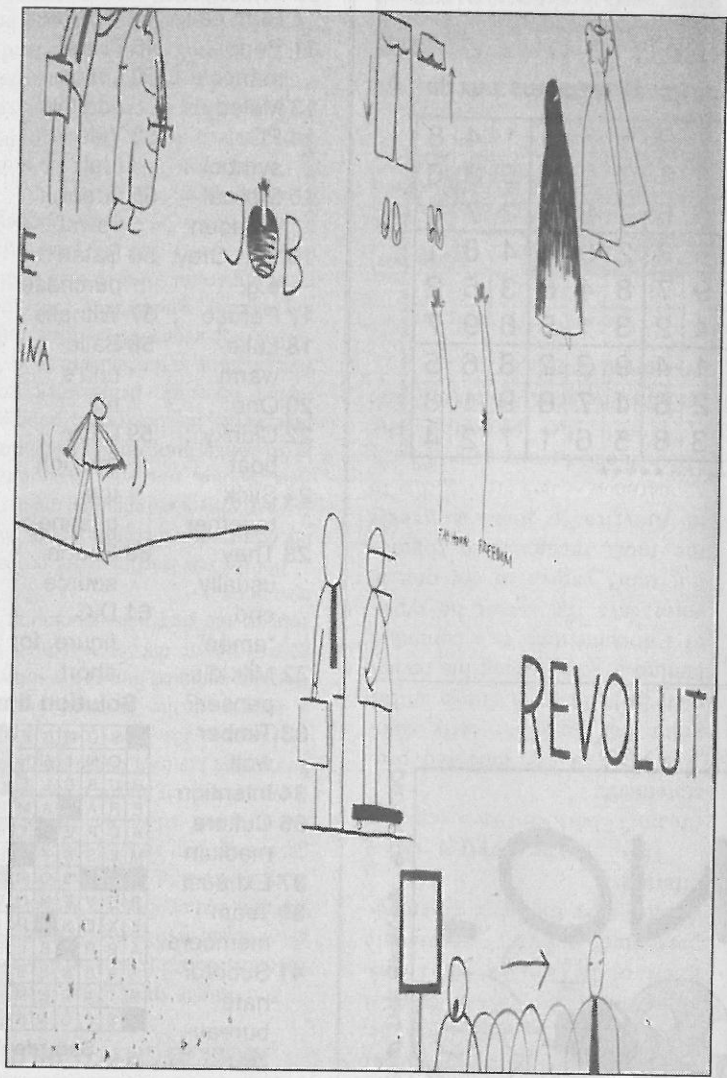
Now Dan has exhibits all over the world. His graffiti-style art has been scattered on one of the biggest walls in the Museum of Modern Art in New York City as well as museums in China.

Dan calls museums the platforms guarding freedom of invention and new things and experiments today. And no matter how people look at his art, he feels that what he does has the power to change the world.

"They can be cartoons, or graffiti or art, but who cares if the message is there," Dan said. "If the intelligence is there, who cares how we define it."

Dan never thought he would be able to travel the world doing what he once thought of as a hobby. Then again, he never thought he would see the fall of the communist regime or the tearing down of the Berlin wall.

Dan has broken down the walls that used to keep information and



Sarah Hockel/KANSAN

Artist-In-Residence, Dan Perjovschi, has turned the walls of the Spencer Museum of Art's Central Court into his canvas. Romanian born Perjovschi will be at KU until September 16th.

freedom from him. He now uses walls to communicate and connect with people.

"I have experienced moments in my life with no freedom, I can't forget that," he said.

Then with a smile through his gate of a moustache covering his mouth, Perjovschi said: "I am still standing."

— Edited by Clark Goble

T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST

The Spencer Museum of Art will be holding a T-shirt design contest where visitors can sketch their own version of Dan Perjovschi's art and vote for which one is deserved of a T-shirt.

CULTURE

