

Mircea Suciu | *Champagne and Strawberries*

Champagne and strawberries evokes a state of effortless perfection—luxury, refinement, celebration and sensory indulgence. It conjures a world untouched by friction, a surface of pleasure unmarred by consequence. Yet here, the phrase is mobilized as a paradox. It becomes a deliberately dissonant title, a gesture not of affirmation but of refusal. In a world increasingly defined by conflict, instability, and moral fatigue, such an image of indulgence operates as a Dada-like inversion—an ironic celebration staged against a backdrop of collapse.

Suciu's exhibition unfolds within this tension. It does not offer resolution, nor does it attempt to synthesize the contradictions of the present into a unified narrative. Instead, it mirrors a state of fragmentation: political, social, and psychological. The works respond to a reality in which war proliferates, alliances fracture, and public consciousness appears suspended between saturation and indifference. If anything binds these paintings together, it is precisely this condition of disorientation—a shared awareness of a world slipping beyond coherence.

Rather than developing a singular thematic line, *Champagne and Strawberries* presents an intentionally eclectic constellation of images and references. This multiplicity reflects the conditions of contemporary visual culture, where meaning is continuously reshaped through exposure, repetition, and displacement. Archival material, film stills, art historical quotations, and staged photography intersect and overlap, forming a dense visual syntax that resists hierarchy. Suciu does not merely appropriate these sources; he subjects them to a process of painterly transformation that destabilizes their origin and reorients their significance.

At the core of this body of work lies a renewed commitment to painting. After a period of experimentation, Suciu returns to what he describes as “pure painting”—a conscious re-engagement with the analog as a counterweight to the pervasive influence of digital space. This return is neither nostalgic nor reactionary. It is, rather, an attempt to restore balance: to reassert the physicality of the image in an era increasingly governed by immaterial flows of information.

The paintings foreground surface as a site of tension and accumulation. Layers of pigment are applied, erased, scratched, and reworked, producing a density that is both visual and conceptual. Color is not governed by a fixed system but responds to the demands of each image, oscillating between restraint and excess. This chromatic instability mirrors the thematic volatility of the works themselves. Structure and gesture coexist uneasily; figuration dissolves into abstraction and re-emerges, never fully stabilized.

Within this painterly field, Suciu addresses a range of urgent concerns: the erosion of democratic values, the normalization of violence, the mechanisms of surveillance, the distortions of digital communication, and the resurgence of authoritarian ideologies. Yet these themes are never treated didactically. They appear instead as fragments—scenes, symbols, or gestures that point beyond themselves without closing into fixed meaning.

Several works articulate a growing rupture between Europe and the United States, suggesting the end of a long-standing geopolitical alignment. Others reflect on the transformation of power into spectacle, where political authority assumes the logic of performance, oscillating between absurdity and menace. The image of the drone, recurrent in contemporary discourse, emerges as both instrument and metaphor: a sign of technological advancement that simultaneously embodies control, surveillance, and violence.

Elsewhere, Suciu explores the psychological effects of image saturation. In a landscape where outrage is constant, its impact is paradoxically diminished. The extraordinary becomes banal; empathy is eroded by repetition. This condition—what might be described as a collective desensitization—finds visual form in works that hover between seriousness and irony, between emotional intensity and aesthetic ambiguity.

Art history functions as both resource and interlocutor throughout the exhibition. References to painters such as Georges de La Tour, Caravaggio, or René Magritte are not invoked as homage but as points of friction. Their visual languages are reactivated within a contemporary context marked by instability, allowing past and present to collide within the same pictorial space. Similarly, cinematic and literary sources—from Stanley Kubrick to Primo Levi—extend the network of references, reinforcing the exhibition’s intermedial character.

Despite the gravity of its themes, *Champagne and Strawberries* does not relinquish irony or even humor. On the contrary, these elements function as critical tools—mechanisms for negotiating the overwhelming nature of the present. In certain works, absurdity becomes a form of resistance, a way of exposing the contradictions embedded within systems of power and belief.

Ultimately, Suciu’s paintings do not claim to diagnose or resolve the crises they engage. They operate instead as a form of witness: attentive, critical, and unresolved. The exhibition remains deliberately open-ended, emphasizing process over conclusion. It captures a moment of transition—a state in which meanings are still in flux, and the future remains uncertain.

In this sense, *Champagne and Strawberries* is less a statement than a condition. It reflects a world caught between awareness and denial, urgency and inertia. A world in which celebration persists, even as the ground beneath it begins to give way.

The exhibition will be on view 9 May - 20 June, 2026.