

Eastern European art exhibit opens at KMA

KMA is second museum to host Eastern European contemporary art exhibit

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Romanian artist Marius Bercea painted "After the Rain" in 2009. Born in 1979, Bercea often draws inspiration of photographs, newspaper clippings and his memories of growing up under a Communist regime. Photo by Special to the News Sentinel

Some of the images are stark reflections of the countries and times in which their creators lived. Others offer painted glimpses of everyday life in former Communist countries.

Twenty-five works — many large-scale paintings — are part of "After the Fall," an exhibit opening Nov. 4 at the Knoxville Museum of Art. The exhibit, which runs through Feb. 5, shows works by contemporary artists living in former Communist

countries in Eastern Europe.

"After the Fall" focuses on art produced by a new generation of artists from such countries as Romania, Croatia, Latvia, Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. Most of the artists are in their 30s and were born under Communist rule but began their artistic training after the fall of Communism.

The exhibit was put together by collectors/curators Drs. Marc and Livia Straus. The Strauses are founders of the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art in Peekskill, N.Y. They visited hundreds of studios across areas of Europe looking for artists and their works. The couple wanted to find works by artists whose careers had grown and evolved in Eastern Europe and whose works reflected a minimal amount of influence from America or Western European countries.

"After the Fall" was first shown at the Hudson Valley Center from September 2010 until this July. That exhibit included 40 works by 18 artists. The Knoxville exhibit is slightly smaller; the KMA is the second to show the works.