

DAVID NOLAN **NEW YORK**

527 West 29th Street New York NY 10001

Tel 212-925-6190 Fax 212-334-9139

info@davidnolangallery.com

www.davidnolangallery.com

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Serban Savu

ARTIST TO WATCH

Realist painter, Serban Savu, was born in 1978 in Sighisoara, Romania. He attended the University of Art and Design in Cluj, Romania (2001), after which he was awarded a two-year postgraduate research grant to Venice. He returned to Cluj, where he continues to live and paint. He is one of the (if not the) most well-known Contemporary Romanian artists, and in the opinion of The Art Economist editorial staff, the most talented. As has been remarked in reviews of his work, surprisingly, he was 11 when the Communist dictator fled Romania and the government changed. Savu's subject matter is filled with Communist-era architecture, way of life and the feeling of wanting. The skies are gray and the atmosphere dismal in a bleak landscape. The figures are disengaged, seemingly suffering and anonymous. The social overtones make Savu's paintings an obvious heir to the early twentieth-century Social Realists in Europe and the U.S. He paints the Romania of today, which appears to be not all that much different than the Communist version that fell in 1989. The post-industrial narratives feature Romanian urban life—men doing manual labor, a group waiting by the side of a road and unsuccessful fishermen. All works are oil on canvas and range in size from 7 x 11 inches to 4 x 6 feet.

Since 2006, he has had solo gallery shows in Bucharest, Gent and Cluj, along with Kontainer Gallery and Nicodim Gallery in Los Angeles, FA Projects and PM Gallery & House London, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, Plan B in Berlin and Cluj (which featured his work at Frieze Art Fair in 2010) and in New York at David Nolan Gallery (his U.S. gallery representation, which showed his work at Art Basel Miami Beach 2010 and will present his next solo show in 2011). His 2009 show at David Nolan was chosen as a Critics' Picks by artforum.com.



Serban Savu, *The Edge of the Empire*, 2008, Oil on canvas, 49 5/8 x 74 3/4 in. (126 x 190 cm), Courtesy of David Nolan Gallery, New York.