

## Studio



BY MIRCEA CANTOR; YVON LAMBERT GALERIE, PARIS, NEW YORK

### THE IDEA

## Predator, Prey, Provocative

A still from Mircea Cantor's "Deeparture," a 2-minute 43-second video now showing in a continuous loop in the Hirshhorn Museum's Black Box space. Cantor confined a deer and its ancient enemy, a wolf, in an elegant, white-walled space that might almost be another gallery in the museum, then filmed the result. It is mesmerizing, and surprisingly peaceable. No blood or guts; just a lot of fast breaths, attentive smelling and a kind of intense awareness of another creature that humans only rarely achieve. Cantor is a 30-year-old Romanian based in France since 1999. His reputation is now spreading around the globe.



### WHY DID THE WOLF NOT EAT THE DEER?

I don't know how to answer! I was not even interested in that. For me it was a matter of the tension in the image. Seeing blood wasn't part of my interest, in the sense that we are so accustomed to seeing such images around us that we are not even surprised anymore by seeing kidnapped journalists, bomb attacks and all of that. I wanted to build a relationship into the image that affects us more deeply than seeing a horror image.

We all know that deer and wolves never live together. So what is beautiful is to keep this tension — as though you had a bow, and you kept bending it. For this reason, the piece has no sound. When you enter the room, you can hear your breathing, your heartbeat.

I simply put a deer and a wolf in a room. There is nothing that is a trick, or false. You can see that it is not an animation, that it's not Photoshop, not a manipulated image. We need these real things — to be *so*, to be *there*.

That's the reason I am an artist: To concentrate the message, and not to have a passivity toward a certain reality.



Watch Mircea Cantor's "Deeparture" video at [washingtonpost.com/museums](http://washingtonpost.com/museums).