

MARTOR



Title: "Shop windows"

Author: Vlad Manoliu

How to cite this article: Manoliu, Vlad. 2005. "Shop windows". *Martor* 10: 149.

Published by: *Editura MARTOR* (MARTOR Publishing House), *Muzeul Țăranului Român* (The Museum of the Romanian Peasant)

URL: <http://martor.muzeultaranuluiroman.ro/archive/martor-10-2005/>

Martor (The Museum of the Romanian Peasant Anthropology Review) is a peer-reviewed academic journal established in 1996, with a focus on cultural and visual anthropology, ethnology, museum studies and the dialogue among these disciplines. *Martor* review is published by the Museum of the Romanian Peasant. Its aim is to provide, as widely as possible, a rich content at the highest academic and editorial standards for scientific, educational and (in)formational goals. Any use aside from these purposes and without mentioning the source of the article(s) is prohibited and will be considered an infringement of copyright.

Martor (Revue d'Anthropologie du Musée du Paysan Roumain) est un journal académique en système *peer-review* fondé en 1996, qui se concentre sur l'anthropologie visuelle et culturelle, l'ethnologie, la muséologie et sur le dialogue entre ces disciplines. La revue *Martor* est publiée par le Musée du Paysan Roumain. Son aspiration est de généraliser l'accès vers un riche contenu au plus haut niveau du point de vue académique et éditorial pour des objectifs scientifiques, éducatifs et informationnels. Toute utilisation au-delà de ces buts et sans mentionner la source des articles est interdite et sera considérée une violation des droits de l'auteur.

Shop windows

**Magda Manoliu, former university lecturer,
63 years old**

Interview done by Vlad Manoliu



Until the '90s our favourite walking places had been those outside the inhabited areas of the city. We would go to Herstru Park or to Cernica, in the forest. In 1990 we started taking some very strange and unusual walks, or so we thought – we began taking walks in the streets and looking at shop windows. We became aware that we were going through a frenzy caused by the colourful shop windows and by the multitude of names. We would walk along Calea Moşilor looking on each side of the street, mentally recording each new shop. Instead of the once familiar painted boards saying “Alimentara” (*grocery store*), “Textile” (*textiles*), “Carne” (*butcher's*) and so on, we now saw more cheerful names: “Blănăria La Popescu” (*Popescu's Fur Shop*) and I don't know what *Café* ... The shop windows were always extremely colourful and overloaded.

Somehow that represented the beginning of a new life for us. And the old habit hasn't died: we still go and have a good time in front of new shop windows. You don't have to buy something; their very existence is enough for us. Nothing seemed more noxious than the monotony of the streets before '89. The decade between 1990 and 2000 was also a decade of shop windows diversity in Bucharest. The beginning was a rather shy one, but then things began to develop into

something more complex and shops started looking different. Today, the sight of an “Escalada” store downtown and that of a Turkish bazaar in Obor Market are not shocking anymore. Back then the simplest Turkish products carelessly displayed on a stand represented a sort of gateway to a new world. And I think we weren't the only ones who felt this way. If you remember how things were before 1990, you most certainly remember that if we wanted a better dress, we would look for somebody who received packs from abroad and we would buy old or new clothes for astronomical prices without giving a second thought to fashion (even if we would have loved fashionable clothes). Little by little, during this decade, we have grown accustomed to take into account our figure when we bought something, to be mindful of the fashion magazines and of our budget. We buy what we like and what we can afford. Sometimes we shop in second-hand stores, some other times we buy new clothes, and there are days when we just visit the “Escalada” as if it were a museum. At any rate, the changes in the way the world presents itself to our eyes have triggered a change in the way Bucharest and its shops look.

Translated by Alina Popescu