



2006

CANADIAN HUNGARIAN ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE

NEWSLETTER - EDITOR: Rose Dancs Telch

Volume 3, No. 4

"Art is not a pastime but a priesthood." - Jean Cocteau

REFLECTIONS: CANADA - HUNGARY

Vernissage: Sunday March 19th at 2 p.m.

In 1956, 37,000 Hungarians sought refuge in Canada during the Hungarian Revolution and its aftermath. They joined the already growing number of Hungarian communities established in Canada since the late 1880's. Like all immigrants to Canada, the Canadian-Hungarians have, through their hard work, cultural traditions and social, economic and intellectual abilities, contributed significantly to the enrichment of life in Canada. Today, the Hungarian community numbers over 260,000.

"It has been almost half a century that Canada admitted a larger wave of Hungarian refugees fleeing from the threat of oppression and dictatorship.

The country's free and open attitude towards immigrants turned out to be the ideal ground to help their talents to bloom in every areas and aspects of life.

This exhibition proves that such a policy towards immigrants was not made in vain, in fact, it helped two cultures and traditions blend into something new, into beautiful, challenging concepts. . . .and art as a means does good in conveying messages of such blend of traditions.

I am thankful to the organizers of this exhibition, to the Mayor of Pointe-Claire and particularly to the 14 artists for making us aware of new ways of understanding between Canada and Hungary, and strongly believe that their message will find way to many recipients among the art lovers of the two peoples," said Laszlo Bakos, Consul, Cultural and Press Attaché of the Republic of Hungary.

The Stewart Hall Art Gallery is pleased to present Reflections: Canada - Hungary, an exhibition of fourteen visual artists of Hungarian descent, all members of the Canadian-Hungarian Artists' Collective. Coinciding as it does with the 50th Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution, the exhibition becomes a symbolic event that unites and honours all those who have chosen to make Canada their home.

As Canadian-Hungarian artist Andrea Blanar has



written: Canada welcomed Hungarians who sought freedom of mind and body, a better world to live and create free of impediments, fear and persecution. Canada provided a safe haven that allowed creative people the opportunity to maximize their assets. The respect Canada has for the ethnic diversity of its people, permitted these artists to surge forward in their creative endeavours without negating their origins and cultural fabric. What is important to stress is that creators were not lost in adaptation and survival in this new country; that despite the economic struggles, so many were able to pursue their vocations. In some respects, this exhibition thanks Canada for providing conditions that would lead to the existence of so many visual artists who have made important contributions in the visual arts sector.

The Canadian-Hungarian artists represented in this multidisciplinary exhibition reflect the plurality and diversity of contemporary Canadian art - one that has been enriched by different ethnic heritages. Whether their cultural ties directly inform their work or offer an intriguing point of departure, the Canadian-Hungarian artists in this exhibition clearly acknowledge their collective heritage and, with us, celebrate achievements and commemorate the freedom of all Canadians.

The exhibition will travel to venues in Canada and Budapest (dates and venues to be confirmed). A catalogue for the exhibition will be published.

Andrew Benyei "...portrays his creations with humour and irony, but he does not laugh at them. He shows great empathy for their problems, feels with them and, at times, appears to be one of them." Dr. Mariann Gergely, Curator, The National Gallery of Hungary

Andrea Blanar: „Deep down inside of us sleeps a longing to live nature as Andrea Blanar paints it." Collette Bourgoin, Director/ Curator, Restigouche Gallery, Campbellton.

Yvonne Singer: „The way in which identity is constructed is a persistent concern for Singer,



"Art is not a pastime but a priesthood." - Jean Cocteau



manifesting itself in the artist's need to map the memories of her parents, such as the home video, exploring how these memories have been reconstituted and adopted as her own." (Canadian Artists of Eastern European Origin)

Vera David: „Should you find the very interpretation I intended, we obviously have something in common, and that makes me happy. Should you happen upon an interpretation that I never thought of, it is fulfilling to know that you have found something special to you, and that makes me happy too.”

Gabor Szilasi: „Traces of man interest me very much, whether it's architecture or interiors or just a street or sign. There has to be a connection between nature and man in my photographs.”

Andrea Szilasi's „Photographs are concerned with various aspects of the human body, such as sexuality, verbal and sexual communication, corporal functions and emotional interaction with others.”(Artist's CV)

Peter Horvath: „In Peter Horvath's films for the web a multi screened, quasi-narrative unfolds with the participation of the viewer. Many of his pieces examine family histories, the city as organism, matters of the heart and the complexities of connection or disconnection with others. His audiovisual reveries share some of the open-ended qualities ...”

Anna Torma: „Torma's embroidered designs are often based upon her children's drawings and hand writing. This borrowing of images and compilation permits Torma to infuse her spiritual, personal, and mundane experiences with those of others.” (Theresa Morin, 1996)

Sofie Fekete: „My hungarian origins, english upbringing and total immersion in french canadian culture have made me a very inquisitive person always on the lookout for the new, always in search for new characteristics of people and places.”

Judith Klugerman „held an exhibit of her art-

work at Galerie Circulaire in Montreal, February 9-March 5 also. The exhibit included her etchings (sometimes combined with collagraphy) as well as mixed media on paper and canvas.”

Balint Zsako „Like my journals, these works deal with the overwhelming amount of visual information encountered in today's society and how this affects the language of fine art. The works are combinations of my drawings, collages and photographs, together with fragments taken from popular print and broadcast media.”

Emilia Kun's „textiles become elements of our everyday life, decorative motifs of our interiors and festive tables or clothes. Emilia feels that high artistic achievement can only be accomplished by special effort and honest approach to life.”

John A. Schweitzer: „... collects the ephemera (paper, packaging, tickets, programs, bags, boxes) of consumerism with which to construct his collages, reflecting the society from which they issue.”

Istvan Zsako „casts his surrealistic, playful figures from bronze, first forming small figures from wax, then making enlargement in plaster. Istvan Zsako's figures are modern time idols, playful variations of freedom, sexuality, love, masculinity and femininity”. (Gallery 78)

Next show will be held in Nova Scotia.

SUBSCRIBE TO

MAGYAR KRÓNKA

**IT IS YOUR NEWSPAPER,
PUBLISHED IN MONTRÉAL**

\$40/ year

**5211 Hingston Montréal, QC,
Canada, H3X 3R5**



2006

CANADIAN HUNGARIAN ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, No. 4

“Art is not a pastime but a priesthood.” - Jean Cocteau

Sunday, April 2, 2006

“**MEDIATIONS ON HYPHENATED IDENTITIES**” -
A ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION ORGANIZED BY **JOYCE MILLAR**, DIRECTOR/CURATOR OF EXHIBITIONS AT **STEWART HALL ART GALLERY, POINTE CLAIRE, QUEBEC DURING THE EXHIBITION “REFLECTIONS: HONGRIE-CANADA-HUNGARY”**,
by Doreen Lindsey

On a warm, sunny Sunday afternoon, eight of the fourteen artists who are members of CHAC (Canadian Hungarian Artists Collective) and have work included in the exhibition “REFLECTIONS: Hongrie-Canada-Hungary” at Stewart Hall Art Gallery, in Pointe-Claire, Quebec, formed a panel to talk about the dual aspect of being Canadian and Hungarian. The invited moderator was Dr. Loren Lerner, head of Art History at Concordia University, Montreal.

Responding to the question, “What does the idea of being a Canadian, hyphen, other, artist mean to you”? by moderator, Dr. Loren Lerner, the artists responded according to their personal experience.

Yvonne Singer, who traveled from Toronto to Montreal to take part in the round-table discussion, responded first. She emphasized that it is through language that she feels a sense of identity. Language is central to understanding the culture one is living in. During the afternoon, several other artists repeated this same concept that having command of a language is central to having an identity.

Andrea Szilasi, born in Montreal to a Hungarian father and Canadian mother was the youngest artist on the panel. She remembered growing up feeling enriched by having another language spoken at home and feeling “special”. When asked about the use of mirrors in her images in the exhibition, she expressed hope that her artwork may lead her to other things.

Judith Klugerman told the attentive audience of other artists and gallery regulars how she began to relate to her Hungarian background only after her parents died. “When younger, I resented being categorized and even when I went back to Budapest after my children were born, I could not relate to a

Hungarian past.”

Vera David who has lived in Montreal only five and a half years, said that she “does not yet feel integrated, I feel Hungarian, home for me is Budapest.

Gabor Szilasi, who came to Canada in 1956 and learned both French and English in Halifax before coming to settle in Quebec, said “I feel comfortable in any place. I feel like a citizen of the world, not only Quebec. “ Mr. Szilasi printed seven photographs especially for this exhibition relating to his youth in Budapest, the Hungarian uprising, experiences on the boat *Saturnia* crossing the Atlantic and arriving in Quebec City.

Andrea Blanar explained that the reason she founded the Canadian-Hungarian artists group was to help her reclaim her own roots. “I do not exist without the hyphen. I am slowly claiming my background and I need to make links with the past to feel whole.”

John Schweitzer who identified himself as an English speaking Quebecer with a Hungarian mother who emigrated to Canada at the age of one, said, “An artist needs to be an observer, being an artist of the world is most important.” He rejected the idea of defining an artist by sex or nationality. Referring to language, he confessed “I only learned to speak English when I went to school at the age of five.” I spoke German as a child.

Sophie Fékété the last artist to speak around the table emphasized the aspect of being an individual. “I am an adventurous artist, always starting a new adventure”

Yvonne Singer summed up the afternoon discussions by saying that artists should not dwell on the past, nor ignore the past. Being a part of something has advantages. The specificity of who you are is important.

Hyphenated Panel: Andrea Blanar

The hyphen in my opinion indicates that the whole is made of parts. Denial of any portion of oneself creates a fractured person, incomplete. I could not become truly Canadian until I had come to terms with my origins and fully embraced them. I needed to go back to Hungary trace the journey of immigration, come to that overwhelming emotional realization that I am not



separate. There is a country speaks the language of my parents, has the signs of that language in their daily lives, on billboards, on signs etc... I was at that moment of discovery of Hungary no longer marginalized. I realized that I was Hungarian, but also understood that I could never belong there either. Were I to return to Hungary, there too I would be marginalized. Searching for my roots, I suddenly realized I belonged nowhere. I was a Canadian who does not yet feel that she deserves to be Canadian, who still feels that I must, immigrant style, earn my keep, be thankful for no longer being stateless. I felt that I must thank everyone for my existence and for having offered me a haven. Thus, to reach at the hyphenated existence which truly represents me I had to lay claim to being Hungarian first and that enabled me to somehow also come to some settlement of my position in Canada.

So being Hungarian was not enough, I needed to have that same emotional link with Canada. I needed the hyphen. This drama occurred 20 years ago, when I first stepped into the marshes of NB. An epiphany as in the marshes I found my spiritual home. Not only did I suddenly belong to this country, but I claimed that country, I began to paint those marshes and have never stopped representing them. This event 20 years ago, not only made me complete in that I was now evidently and joyfully Canadian-Hungarian, but more important I suddenly realized that all of it was singularly the foolish insecurity of a child uprooted and constantly moving to new countries... That realization freed me to acknowledge that I am in fact, internationally connected, that I am preoccupied by a universal order that goes beyond the preoccupation with nationhood. I had to earn that right to be Canadian-Hungarian, I was neither for so much of my life, feeling I belonged nowhere. For me then the Canadian-Hungarian represents the final healthy conclusion of my immigration and adaptation.

CHAC EVENTS IN MONTREAL

April 17, 2006

ATTILA BERTALAN-BETWEEN THE MOON AND MONTEVIDEO

by Judith Klugerman

On April 17th CHAC members and their friends were treated to a viewing of Attila Bertalan's recent film titled, "Between the Moon and Montevideo" at The Hungaria social club in Montreal.

Attila Bertalan is an independent film maker and actor. His first feature film was, "A Bullet in the Head". He was born in British Columbia, grew up in Hungary and returned to Canada where he received his education. "Between the Moon and Montevideo" was filmed in Havana, Cuba with such noted Quebec actors as Pascale Bussi eres and Gerald Gagnon as well as Bertalan in the star role of Toby. Many of the cast members were Cuban. Anna Biro, a CHAC member, created the costumes.

Bertalan considers his film Futuristic as opposed to Science Fiction. Havana was chosen for the location because "the setting gave the feeling of being suspended in time" as well as both representing many places and a third world setting. Havana becomes a place somewhere between the moon and earth, an imaginary place. The moon and earth are often shown as a visual background.

According to Bertalan, the theme of the film is "the story of emigration and immigration". People leave their homes (in this case Montevideo) for many reasons to go to the promised land. For some it turns out well for others not but you cannot go home again. Toby, the main character wants to go home to Montevideo. He is a scrap collector living in a violent world ruled by a mafia-like dictator called Senor. Senor terrorizes the colony with his surveillance men called Pisteleros and Luis his debt collector. In addition the moon of Jupiter has disappeared, according to Toby's uncle Tio, and rock particles are falling on people's heads. As Tio says, "When God came up with gravity he didn't quiet get it right". The only way to survive is to keep running.



Even Toby is often violent, not the perfect hero but he wants to find the right path out of the colony. He tries to earn money through gambling to get himself and girlfriend Uta back to Montevideo. He fails, Uta is killed and he stays behind working for Senor.

The film is a metaphor for immigration and immigrant's rights as Bertalan says. It is also a metaphor for life: "You never know what comes at you".



The film was followed by a question and answer period with the filmmaker. He explained his choice of location and theme. Discussion followed about the amount of violence and relationships between the characters as well as the role of the two women in the film. This thought provoking film has been shown in many festivals including those in Sao Paolo, Senegal, Portugal, France, New York, Toronto, Vancouver and Fantasia in Montreal. Most recently it played on Movie Network and Bravo.

APRIL 22, 2006 - EARTH DAY. GÉZA HERMANN'S OPEN STUDIO

by Kornélia Beck

In front of the abundance of organisms and environments of our planet, art remains one of the most effective languages to convey a new consciousness of our human actions as interactions with all. Hermann's work celebrates the magical forces of the earth. With his aquarelled blues and greens of hundreds of portals on nature, we experience the relations of simultaneous opacity and translucency that bring to mind infinity of variations of times of day and points of view. We encounter first a physical relation. Horizons, which are never in the compositional middle, fluctuate with a gestural brushstroke, into a wavy spectacle. Then one has to be there when suddenly the lights go down. One changes dimensions. The solidity of the greens and browns becomes suddenly absence of color. The chiaroscuro effect of the pinks and yellows disappears to give way to the emergence of phosphoric colors where light becomes essence of nature.

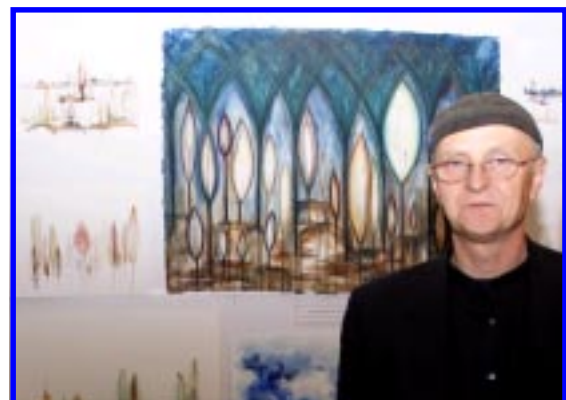
For Géza 'light is every stone's dream'. Whenever you have a chance go to an open studio, go. Where we have strict social and spatial laws in exhibitions, here intimacy and dialogue seeps in. Candles and ambient music contribute to the event and not a single empty spot is left on the walls. Géza Hermann is more than just an artist. He doesn't separate the artist, from the friend, from the promoter, from the sensualist, from the activist. He is a way of living art as fully as one can.

JUNE 25, SUNDAY, STARTING AT 2 PM.

Garden Pool Party at Andrea Blanar's home.

Pot Luck. Bring your bathing suits and towels.

5 Windsor Place, Beaconsfield, Quebec.





CANADIAN HUNGARIAN ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE

NEWSLETTER

2006

"Art is not a pastime but a priesthood." - Jean Cocteau

Volume 3, No. 4

EVENTS IN TORONTO

MARCH 11, 6 P. M.

Fundraising dinner for the Autonomy of Seklerland.

Guest Speaker: Cselényi László, the President of Duna TV .

Gala program: Dinnyés József from Budapest, guitar: Without Boundaries

MARCH 12, 3 P. M.

Commemorative Celebration of March 15

Gala Program: Dinnyés József, "Zúg Március", Scola Cantorum, Erdélyi Rózsa, Horváth Géza, Dobi Gábor

MARCH 12, AT 6 P. M. PIANO CONCERT

Szokolay Balázs and Szokolay Gergely

info/tickets: 416-654-4926

Hungarian House

840 St. Clair Ave. W. Toronto

MARCH 15, 6:30 P. M.

"Márctius Örökködike"

Dinnyés József from Budapest

Hungarian House

840 St. Clair Ave. W. Toronto

MARCH 17, 7 P. M.

Literary evening with Dinnyés József

Hungarian House

840 St. Clair Ave. W. Toronto

MARCH 18, 7 P. M.

Great entertainment with the stars of Dáridó és

Szuperbuli : Márió and Postás Józsi

Hungarian House

840 St. Clair Ave. W. Toronto

MARCH 25, 7 P. M.

Spring in the Hungarian House

Music: Gypsy Brothers Roma jazz-orchestra, Poór Péter and Szeredy Kriszti from Budapest



JUNE 3, 2006, 8:00 P. M.

Fall Ilona, Gáll Annamária, Péterfy Lajos: **Üzenet Erdélyből - Trianon**

June 4., 3 p. m.-Film: **Trianon**

8:00 p. m. - **Dr. Raffay Ernő, university professor: Treaty of Trianon**

Tickets for both events \$30

Hungarian House

840 St. Clair Ave. W. Toronto

SUBSCRIBE TO

HUNGARIAN-ENGLISH CULTURAL MAGAZINE

LITERATURE - ARTS - HISTORY EVEN FOR

NON-HUNGARIAN SPEAKING PEOPLE

KALEJDOSZKÓP
ALEIDOSCOPE

Publisher: Kaleidoscope Publishing

George Telch, President

Rózsa Dancs, Editor

122 Silas Hill Drive, Toronto, ON, M2J 2X9

Tel.: 416-491-4631; Fax: 416-491-9661

E-mail: rosacae@hotmail.com

Bimonthly Magazine

Subscription: CA\$59.95 - US\$58.00/ year

Your advertisement includes a free subscription for the year!