

FROM EASEL TO PROFESSORSHIP. THE CREATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF HUNGARIAN PROFESSIONAL FINE ARTS EDUCATION IN TRANSYLVANIA

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Abstract: The study encompasses the history of fine arts education in Hungarian language from Transylvania, beginning from the end of the 19th century to recent times, placing special emphasis on the period between 1944 and 1948, when the number of fine arts educational institutions in Transylvania was the highest. Beside the Hungarian civil organisations from Transylvania (the Free Painting School from Baia Mare, the Barabás Miklós Guild and the Józsa Béla Athenaeum Fine Arts Free School from Cluj) the state-run educational institutions (the Hungarian Art Institute from Cluj, the Ion Andreescu Fine Arts Institute) that were attended by many students are also presented. With this, the study aims to offer a comprehensive perspective on the education of the successive generations of Hungarian fine artists from Transylvania.

Palabras clave: Hungarians of Romania, demographic dynamic of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania, demographic changes, assimilation, ethnic classification.

Out of the various art forms fine arts were probably the last to develop in the Hungarian cultural area of the Carpathian Basin. In the 19th century, compared to music and drama, fine arts – even though of high quality – were barely starting to test their wings and held a periferic spot on the cultural palette. This unfavourable situation was even more emphatic in the traditionally inward looking Transylvanian cultural life. No wonder that in Transylvania the first organised form of

fine arts materialised only in the last years of the 19th century in Cluj, considered the spiritual capital of the region. Moreover, with its less than five year lifespan, the *Fine Arts Society of Transylvania* (Erdélyrészi Szépművészeti Társaság), also proved to be ephemeral and, with its disappearance in 1904, it could not live up to the lofty and ever more timely goal to organise the Hungarian fine arts education in Transylvania.

At the beginning of the 20th century, in order to benefit from a training that was in line with European fine arts tendencies, more and more interested and talented Hungarian youth of Transylvania went to study in Budapest at the *Model Drawing and Drawing Teacher Training School* (Mintarajziskola és Rajztanárképző), and from 1908 onwards at the *National Hungarian Royal Academy of Fine Arts* (Országos M. Kir. Képzőművészeti Főiskola). Nevertheless, only the well-off and the lucky could gain access to these institutions. From there, due to the by then declining fine arts education from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, instead of Vienna, the more ambitious alumni went on to study mainly in Munich and, sometimes in the prestigious art schools of Paris and London.

A more radical change in this field occurred only at the end of World War II with the change of empires. At this point the Hungarian lines of force within the Carpathian Basin broke apart and the parts of the nation that were cut off were forced to start an independent life. In the case of Hungarian fine art this meant that the above outlined classic western orientation of art

education ceased and the issue of organising local art education got in the foreground.

Following 1918, Hungarian artists from Transylvania – like most Hungarians – at first chose to turn inwards and to live withdrawn from the Romanian state and Romanian art life. By making old relationships stronger, small regional Hungarian art groups of 10-15 members were formed throughout Transylvania in Târgu Mureş, Baia Mare, Braşov, Oradea, Satu Mare, Arad, Timișoara and even at Dej. On the long term, however, this course was impracticable, and most fine artists knew this. This way, the momentary withdrawal – which could be considered a self defense reflex – was gradually replaced by contact-seeking with the Transylvanian representatives of Romanian fine arts. The most shining examples of this were the Transylvanian collective expositions organised for the first time in 1919, then in 1921, 1930 and 1947¹.

Nevertheless, the full change of direction, meaning establishing intensive contact with Bucharest, only took place in 1925. It was in that year that, due to central government measures, the first state fine arts educational institution the *School of Fine Arts* (Școala de Arte Frumoase), or mostly known as *Belle Arte*, was established in Cluj. Even though its teaching staff comprised only Romanians, almost half of its students were Hungarian youths from Transylvania². With this, although at the expense of certain linguistic compromises, the long time aspiration of Transylvanian fine artists for the establishment of a local institution providing high quality education that was relatively accessible for everybody was fulfilled. However, after a few years the functioning of the state-financed art school was almost entirely paralysed by the financial hardships caused by the global economic crisis. This is why, based on certain financial considerations in 1933 the Romanian government ordered the relocation of the institution to Timișoara. With this fine art education within inner Transylvania lapsed back into its former state.

Even though it did not offer a definite solution, the Barabás Miklós Guild (Barabás Miklós Céh BMC), established in 1929 in Cluj succeeded at least in easing the problem of educating young Hungarian fine artists³. This significant initiative of regional self-organisation served the purpose of ensuring the continuity and channeling of Hungarian fine arts from Transylvania.

In these circumstances, the new situation resulting from the Second Vienna Award and the division of Transylvania had a dual effect on the local artistic life. On the one hand, in Northern Transylvania, which was re-assigned to the Hungarian state, due to several initiatives with positive effects, fine arts education was presented with entirely new opportunities. On the other hand, in the Southern Transylvanian territories that remained within Romania a total regression took place and Hungarian art education became impossible. This way, an unfortunate duality developed in Transylvanian fine arts. While in Northern Transylvania at the Franz Joseph University, which was brought back to Cluj, under the expert leadership of Zoltán Felvinczi Takács an art history department was established in the autumn of 1940⁴, in 1943 in the Central Park an art gallery was built and innaugurated⁵ and, with the involvement of the BMC then at its peak, a series of large-scale expositions were organised (e.g. Szekler Art Year between September 1943 and June 1944⁶, the exposition of the *Szinyei Merse Pál Society* in March 1944 etc.)⁷, in Southern Transylvania even the Romanian language *Belle Arte* from Timișoara was closed in 1941⁸.

This strange Janus-faced situation of art life in Transylvania ended with the battles from September-October 1944 and the occupation of Northern Transylvania by the Soviet-Romanian army. In minority for the second time, Hungarians from Transylvania, as in almost all other areas, had to start fine arts education from scratch again. While in Northern Transylvania it was the collapse of the old institutional system, in Southern Transylvania it was its total absence that threw the active fine artists of the period in front of a difficult task. Moreover, the Hungarian language art education in Transylvania had to be rebuilt in the conditions in which in the turbulent times of the passage of the front, the society of artists itself suffered heavy losses. Many artists of Israelite origin (Mór Barát, Alfréd Grünfeld, József Klein, Éva Lázár and Ernő Tibor) fell victim to the deportations of May-June 1944. Several Jewish artists from Transylvania (Dávid Jándi, Márton Katz and Alex Leon) died on the front while doing labour service because of the harsh and sometimes inhuman treatment⁹. Out of the Transylvanian fine artists of Hungarian origin many were taken prisoners by the Soviets while in the army and had to languish for long years in the GULAG

labour camps. This was the faith of Béla Abodi Nagy, Zoltán Andrásy, Károly Fuhrmann, András Kós, Ferenc Kósa-Huba, Károly Pattantyús and Jenő Szervátiusz from Cluj, and István Barabás from Târgu Mureş¹⁰.

In these conditions, the establishment of the new fine arts education system covering the entire territory of Transylvania fell on the shoulders of the few fine artists left home. However, following the Soviet occupation this was only possible at the price of a fundamental ideological compromise – the mandatory embracing of communist ideals. This, in turn, set new tasks for fine arts education. The three most important objectives became the taking over of the socialist realism in artistic creation, the assuming of a pronounced propaganda-role in art and the upbringing of a new generation of artists that was devoted to the regime. In this – rightly so – many saw the violation of freedom of art, in which they were not willing to play a role. This was the decision of two leading personalities of the BMC, Károly Kós and Sándor Szolnay, who resigned from their positions on 16 January 1945¹¹. With this, the most important Hungarian fine art organisation led by them automatically ceased to exist.

Even though the ideological expectations of the new regime were given from the start, there were no financial resources to implement them. Blaming the general poverty that followed World War II and partly out of genuine economic reasons and partly because of nationalist motivations, the Romanian government denied any financing of the Hungarian fine arts education from Transylvania. This is why, between 1944 and 1946, local initiatives in Transylvania for restarting Hungarian fine arts education had to be financed from own resources. These initiatives, understandably, continued the interwar traditions, and, as such, could not and did not benefit from the trust and goodwill of the central government, which shifted ever more to the left. The fine arts schools centered around the more prominent personalities of art life and significant creative groups were established or relaunched in the four cultural centres of Transylvania: Cluj, Oradea, Baia Mare and Târgu Mureş. Their primary role was to ensure the continuity of fine arts education in the transitional years from the end of the war to the coming to power of the communists. In the same time, they created the opportunity for several known artists from Transylvania to instill their artistic creed and

creative experience in a new, fledgling generation of artists.

First of all it is worth mentioning the art colony from Baia Mare established in 1896, in the year of Hungarian millennium celebrations and the *Free Painting School* (Szabad Festőiskola) operating next to it, which with its half century activity by that time had already become a mature teaching atelier. Although in the years of World War II this renown art centre passed through a difficult period¹² – what is more, with the resignation of its leader, András Mikola on 4 May 1944 it ceased to function for a while¹³ – it gradually became the most important centre of Transylvanian fine arts which was also known abroad. It is, thus, understandable that some of its members tried to continue its traditions and relaunch its functioning. After several unsuccessful attempts it was in the autumn of 1946 that, following the rehabilitation of the art colony's buildings, one of the students of János Krizsán and András Mikola, *Lídia Agricola* reopened the *Free painting School*. As its name shows, its particularity was that those willing to learn could sign in without admission tests and diplomas on previous studies. Consequently, the painting school could not issue diplomas to its „alumni”. In her endeavour, *Lídia Agricola* was supported both by Hungarian and Romanian fine artists, in the park of the painting colony, in an especially beautiful surrounding, painting courses were held among others by Géza Vida, Piroska Makkai and Petre Abrudan¹⁴. Even though in the teaching process students did not receive theoretical training of academic type, special emphasis was placed on practical education, which was at least as important¹⁵. It was in this form that the worthily renowned Free Painting School of Baia Mare operated in its last period until 1949, following which, in 1950, concomitantly with its inclusion in the Romanian educational system, it was downgraded to a simple fine arts technical school.

Beside Baia Mare, another fine arts school – established in the same period but of a more humble character – functioned in Tîrgu Mureş. One of the fine arts teachers from *Belle Arte*, Aurel Ciupe, moved to Tîrgu Mureş, the main Szekler town of the period, one year prior to the institution being moved from Cluj, and opened his painting school there under the name of *Plastic Arts Town Course from Tîrgu Mureş* (Cursul Orăşenesc de Arte Plastice din Tîrgu Mureş)¹⁶. The fact that it was housed on the third floor of the Culture Palace, the emblematic

building of Târgu Mureș, indicates the important role this new educational institution of private character played in the town. The educational activity profited from the fact that the town's art gallery was located in the same building.

In January 1941 a change occurred in the leadership of the fine arts school from Târgu Mureș – Aurel Ciupe was replaced by the young painter, András Bordy. Nevertheless, this change did not lead to fundamental organisational transformations. The school was invariably open to anyone interested, regardless of their nationality, and for enrolment one had to fulfil only minimal requirements, that is, to submit secondary school diplomas. In order to provide the opportunity for more and more students to acquire the basics of fine arts, the tuition fee for a semester was only 30 pengő. However, as it was in the case of the Free Painting School from Baia Mare, this institution could not offer official recognition either – issue diplomas – for graduate students.

However, the two fine arts schools differed from each other in the fact that in Transylvania, theoretical education was preferred to practical education. With the leadership of Bordy a professional library was created from where pupils could also loan basic works. In order to make it possible for young people with jobs to participate in the classes, these were held each day late in the afternoon or in the evening. This way, the student-centered institution offered to many subsequently acknowledged fine artists the possibility to finish their preparatory studies. This is where besides Endre Szász, Péter Balázs, Anna Bitay, Tibor Borbáth, Rozália Dóczi, István Élesdy, József Macskássy, Pál Nagy, Irén Nemes, Gábor Olajos, Zsuzsa Osváth and others went to courses.

While in the free school of the painter's colony from Baia Mare the number of students gradually decreased, that of the students from the educational institution in Târgu Mureș increased each year, reaching its peak in the 1942/1943 school year. At that time 27 pupils attended regularly the courses held in the Culture Palace. However, in the following year, a drastic change occurred. Because of the ever-graver war conditions the town could not financially support the painting school anymore. This is why in the 1943/1944 school year it was forced to decrease the number of its students by 50%¹⁷, following which in the autumn of 1944,

prior to the passage of the front it closed its doors.

However, the institution with a tradition of more than a decade did not disappear totally in the vortex of the war; following the relative normalisation of the general situation, beginning from 1945 it restarted its activity as the private course of painter András Bordy¹⁸. This, however, was only a mere shadow of the former school. Nevertheless, it was this initiative that the famous fine arts secondary school of Târgu Mureș grew out of in 1949, where several illustrious artists taught, too. Beside Aurel Ciupe among the most known teachers were Márton Izsák and the painter and graphic artist Pál Nagy. Although the educational institution, which continued to function under the direction of András Bordy for years – as part of the Romanian educational system –, could not officially become the successor of the fine arts school functioning in the interwar period, the latter's noble spirituality and traditions were undeniably kept alive during the dogmatic period, too.

In the transitional period following 1944, not only the former centres of art education kept on functioning with more or less intensity, but in the larger Transylvanian towns new educational institutions were born, such as the reputable *Conservatoire and Fine Art School from Oradea* and the *Józsa Béla Athenaeum Fine Arts Free School* from Cluj. In Oradea already from the beginning of the 20th century there were a series of short-lived private schools that served the purpose of fine arts education. These – like Ciupe's and Bordy's institution in Târgu Mureș – relied on the collection of the town's art gallery in their pedagogical activity.

Following World War II and overpassing the provincialism of former initiatives, a new and ambitious generation of artists came forward in the intellectual life of Oradea with the unconcealed goal to create there central institution of art education of academic level in Hungarian language. They were led by painter Gábor Miklóssy, the prospective famous professor of the Ion Andreescu Fine Arts Institute. The accomplishment of the noble goals of the artist group was unfortunately impeded by the ravages of the period immediately following the war, which curbed these exaggerated hopes. The *Conservatoire and Fine Arts School* was established though, but it was far from becoming the art academy of Transylvania.

Additionally, its establishment was largely due to the support of the local authorities, and thus the mayor's office had direct control over the institution¹⁹.

Considering the possibilities, the founding group of artists tried to introduce in the art school of Oradea – functioning as a free school – an as wide as possible curriculum. Within the department of fine arts painting, graphic arts, sculpture and various branches of decorative arts were all taught. This led to an intense interest in the institution, also proven by the fact that 60 applicants enrolled in the first year, including the conservatoire²⁰. This relatively high number of students more or less remained constant in the following years. According to the registers, the art educational institution had 69 students in 1946, 60 in 1947 and 47 in 1948. The students were both Hungarian and Romanian, most of them – in line with the political expectations of the period – were of working class or peasant, that is, „healthy” origin²¹.

The teaching schedule of the institution was set between 16 and 20 o'clock in the afternoons in order to make it possible for its pupils with jobs to participate in classes. At weekends common study trips were often organised, which were led by teachers. The school year ended each time with a collective exhibition presenting the works of the students²².

Gábor Miklóssy's manuscript teaching programme, which is still available to us, demonstrates that the director-teacher and his fellow teachers Tibor Cs. Erdős, István Balogh, József Fekete, Károly Radványi, József Máté etc. endeavoured to offer their students a diverse and bold instruction of academic level²³. This was the case throughout the years while Gábor Miklóssy stood at the helm of the institution. Moreover, even after the prominent director became a teacher at the Hungarian Art Institute from Cluj in 1948²⁴, his exigence and authoritative intellectual spirit continued to imbue the life of the art school of Oradea.

The capital of Transylvania also had its share in the attempts of postwar Hungarian fine arts education. Cluj had considerably more opportunities in this field than other towns because the large number of fine artists living there could rely on the traditions of the Belle Arte, and following 1944 there was a real opportunity to call back the illustrious teachers of the former institution and to create the kernel

of the teaching staff of a new institution. Undoubtedly, this is the reason why the first postwar fine arts free school of Cluj opened its gates within the barely established Józsa Béla Athenaeum. On the initiative of Sándor Szolnay, a representative of the older generation of artists, and the young and dynamic painter, Zoltán Kovács, the institution, which started to function on 1 June 1945, could not break away from the strongly leftist orientation of the Athenaeum. Furthermore, the opening of the fine arts school was also intensely featured in the press, and this gave place to the expectations of the regime towards the institution on several occasions. Thus, the well-determined long term goal was „*the cultivation of talents emerging from the working class*”²⁵.

Hence, the task was set for the free school housed in the upper floor galleries of the skating pavilion of the Central Park, but the practical operational conditions were totally lacking. This is why, despite the momentum of its beginnings, the institution was soon hindered in its functioning by worrying economic-financial troubles. In the city that still wore the scars of the war the replacement of the school's missing window panes was not considered to be the main priority...

At the price of an almost superhuman effort, the young director of the institution in charge with the day-to-day management of the school, Zoltán Kovács was still able to steer the fine arts free school clear of the initial hurdles. Soon 44 young pupils had the possibility to continue their studies at this institution. According to its decision no. 9844/1945, the mayor's office gave free use of five studios to the Józsa Béla Athenaeum Free Fine Arts School. One of the biggest merits of Kovács was that he succeeded in convincing the famous Hungarian archeology professor Gyula László – at the time still living in Cluj – to teach, besides his university engagements art history and aesthetics to the pupils of the painting school. At the same time, beside the teaching of the various branches of decorative arts and graphic art techniques, Zoltán Kovács also placed emphasis on practical teaching often making corrections to the drawings based on models²⁶. In his latter pedagogic activity he was also helped by painters Sándor Szolnay and Aurel Cornea²⁷. The Józsa Béla Athenaeum Free Fine Arts School continued to function for several years until 1948, when it gave its place to the Hungarian Art Institute, which had considerably

more significant possibilities in the field of fine arts education.

The rise to power in 1948 of the Romanian Worker's Party (RWP) among other things meant the start of the total reorganisation of the country's educational system. The promulgation on 3 August of the so-called „educational reform law” led to a fundamentally new situation. The changes basically followed three goals: the nationalisation of the entire educational network, its centralisation for better control and, finally, its complete reorganisation following the Soviet model.

The minority Hungarian language education was affected in two ways. On the one hand, the confessional educational institutions, which until then formed the basis of education in Hungarian language, and all other schools of private character were closed down. At the same time, new state institutions were established to ensure mother tongue education for the Hungarians from Transylvania. The continuous functioning of these – thanks to government financing – was ensured, but this came at an unproportionally high price. The Hungarian school network, from kindergarten to university lost even the remnants of its independence and, built in the Romanian educational system, it became completely subordinate to the regime. However, very few perceived this at the time, as this was visibly counterbalanced by the existence, beside the three Romanian universities (in Bucharest, Cluj and Iași), of the independent Bolyai University – which was guaranteed by law – as well as the Hungarian Art Institute from Cluj, launched with high hopes among the 41 independent educational institutions that were newly established based on the Soviet model²⁸. In truth, fine arts education squeezed out from universities to one Hungarian and three Romanian language institutions (București, Cluj, Timișoara and Iași)²⁹ was brought under tight control. This had an especially powerful effect on Hungarian art education since due to the liquidation of private school initiatives from Baia Mare, Tîrgu Mureș, Oradea and Cluj everything was squeezed into one institution.

According to statutory ordinance no. 263.327 of 25 October 1948, which established the Hungarian Art Institute, the institution had three faculties: Music, Dramatic Arts and Fine Arts. The Romanian Art Institute, which can be considered its twin institution, had almost the same structure, with the exception that instead

of a fine arts faculty it had a Choreography Faculty³⁰.

We also have to mention that the Hungarian artists from Transylvania interested in education tried to make full use of the opportunities provided by the system. The plan of rector Zoltán Kovács and his colleagues was to develop the Hungarian Art Institute into an actual academy. This can be seen in the curriculum, too: with the exception of the 5 year instruction in vocational art education, it prescribed 6 years of instruction in the case of five specialisations (painting, sculpture, graphic arts, interior architecture and textile arts). At the same time, the management of the institute endeavoured to obtain for its institution adequate buildings, which due to the general lack of money and construction materials was only possible through the purchase of existing buildings. For these, however, they had to fight serious battles with the various state institutions. A good example of this was the case of the gothic Franciscan monastery from the city centre, which, following the dissolution of the order, the city's management intended to turn into a boarding house for steelwork apprentices. Following a long series of interventions the assertive young rector, Zoltán Kovács, succeeded in obtaining for the Hungarian Art Institute not only this prestigious building but also the Art Gallery and the skating pavillion from the Central Park, the emblematic building of the city, the house in which King Matthias Corvinus, the famous Hungarian king was born, and also other buildings from the city centre³¹.

First of all aiming for quality education, the management of the institute did not make any nationality-based distinctions in the selection of teaching staff. In line with the expectations of the regime, the teaching staff was selected in a half Hungarian-half Romanian proportion. On the one hand, beside the prestigious old instructors of the Belle Arte, Aurel Ciupe and painter and graphic artist Atanasie Demian³² it also invited famous Romanian artists from Bucharest (Ion Irimescu), from Baia Mare (Petre Abrudan) and Arad (Petru Feier). On the other hand, an entire file of Hungarian artists were appointed from the whole territory of Transylvania. This way, from among the painter members of the BMC there were Gábor Miklóssy from Oradea³³, Béla Abodi Nagy and Zoltán Andrásy from Cluj and József Bene and Tibor Kádár from Tîrgu Mureș, from among the sculptors András Kós, Ferenc Kósa-Huba and

Jenő Szervátiusz from Cluj, Artúr Vetró from Timișoara and Nándor Balaskó from Oradea. Beside them the two most well-known Hungarian graphic artists from Transylvania, Imre Nagy from Jigodin and Tibor Cs. Erdős also assumed teaching positions at the Hungarian Art Institute³⁴. This way, chancellor Zoltán Kovács disposed of a teaching staff whose quality was not matched before or after in the Hungarian fine arts education from Transylvania.

This ensured the success of the Hungarian Art Institute: the 400 students admitted following the admission tests from December 1948 (out of which 100 were admitted to the Fine Arts Faculty) were able to take part in a high quality instruction beginning from January next year. The students – 38% of which were of working class or peasant origins, according to the requirements – entered a fascinating world of high standard, European level lectures and studio-practices that combined tradition with modern elements. Although the student selection system based on political criteria meant that many talentless but “trustworthy” individuals had to be accepted, the instruction still led to great results. This is where many successful fine artists started from, such as interior architect János Sóvágó and painter László Tóth.

In the Hungarian Art Institute all this had to be achieved during constant incompetent interference from the political level. The emphatically Hungarian fine arts traditions were requested to be excluded from the curriculum, hence their teaching became possible only after teaching time. At the same time, the main goal was to secure the undisputed reign of the Soviet realist style and the development of a new, politically charged system of themes (the mandatory immortalisation of the victory over the fascists, of the symbols of the Soviet-Romanian friendship, of the common struggle against imperialism, of worker’s life or the activities of top workers, stakhanovites etc.). Moreover, the fine artists who wanted to teach had to make serious compromises with the fact that their former themes got blacklisted, this being almost incompatible with their former creative credos. It was forbidden to give the students assignments to portray the great figures of Hungarian history, rulers and members of the aristocracy; religious symbols and church life had to disappear from the canvases; furthermore, owing to false pruderie and the facade optimism of the system nudes and gloomy landscapes had

no place in the galleries of the institute. As for still-lives, in the eyes of the authorities, they were considered „bourgeois vestiges to be eradicated”.

All this degraded fine arts education to a plain propaganda tool and put it in the service of spreading communist ideology. The triumph of proletarian culture (proletkult) transformed art as a spectacle into a tool for achieving political goals. This way, the prescribed goal of Hungarian fine arts education became the instruction of engaged „art activists” willing to serve the regime, after which their main task was to convince the Hungarians from Transylvania to accept the communist system using artistic tools and to proclaim and encourage their gradual integration into the Romanian society.

However, the management and academic staff of the Hungarian Art Institute was not willing to go that far and it subjected itself to political requirements only to the minimum extent possible. By superficially pursuing proletkult and by saving traditional values, the institution’s fine arts education achieved spectacular artistic successes and in a short time succeeded in earning the appreciation of not just the Hungarians from Transylvania, but also of the whole Romanian society. This, however, crossed the line of what the RWP still tolerated. This is why in April 1950, in the usual method of the time, an ideological attack was launched against the institute in the form of a „denunciatory article”.

In the masterly constructed article containing the most severe accusations of the period, which was published in the official Cluj county newspaper of the party, it was held against the management and educational staff of the Hungarian Art Institute that they „neglected ideological training in the educational process”, and that they made „pedagogical use of publications that had their roots in formalism”, arguing that through this they „hindered the blossoming of socialist art” because „they hung on to the bourgeois vestiges”. According to the author of the article, all this led to a situation in which – contrarily to other similar institutions of Romanian language from the country – instead of promoting peace among nations, the institute became the hotbed of „deviation towards national separatism”³⁵.

Under the circumstances, the representatives of the regime in order to protect the system, had no choice but to shut down this „powder keg”. The forced closure of the Hungarian Art Institute in the autumn of 1950 – using the later commonly used method – started with its separation into three sections and the merging of its departments with the twin-faculties in Romanian language. In a different fashion from the other faculties, the Faculty of Fine Arts was organised into an independent educational institution under the name of *Ion Andreescu Fine Arts Institute*, where both Romanian and Hungarian were languages of instruction. It was this institution that inherited out of the valuable buildings of the Hungarian Art Institute among others the Matthias Corvinus house and the Art Gallery from the Central Park, where it is still housed. However, its students are seldom of Hungarian nationality. Its first rector was Aurel Ciupe, while the former leader of the Hungarian Art Institute, Zoltán Kovács was banned from the educational profession in 1951.

The final act of the dismantling of the Hungarian Art Institute was the moving of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts to *Tîrgu Mureş* as an independent institute in Hungarian language, through which the role of Cluj as the Hungarian cultural centre was further weakened.

With this, the institutional background of art education in Hungarian language ceased to exist, even before it could fully emerge. Nevertheless, during the brief time while the Hungarian fine arts education existed in an organised fashion between 1944 and 1950, first in the form of private and then in the form of state educational institutions, it was able to achieve long lasting successes. Beside the partial salvage of Hungarian fine arts traditions, with the seeding of a new Hungarian artist generation, the continuity of Hungarian fine arts in Transylvania was secured. The artists who took on educational roles launched those talented youth, mainly from rural areas, (painter *Endre Kusztos*, graphic artist *László Feszt* etc.) who today represent the frontlines of Hungarian fine arts education in Transylvania.

NOTAS

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² *Lăptoiu, Negoită, Şcoala de arte frumoase din Cluj şi Timişoara (1925–1941)*, Bucureşti, Editura „Arc 2000”, 1999, 205–218.

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⁶ A székelyföldi ösztöndíjban részesített festők kiállítása, Kolozsvár, 1943.

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⁸ *Lăptoiu, Negoită, Şcoala de arte frumoase*, op. cit., 195-196.

⁹ *Murádin Jenő*, „Erdélyi Zsidó Művészek”, *Múlt és Jövő. Zsidó Kulturális folyóirat*, January 2000, nr. 1, 81–84.

¹⁰ *Kós András*, *Élet és rajz*, Kolozsvár, *Polis Könyvkiadó*, 2004, 236–241.

¹¹ The resignation letter of *Károly Kós* and *Sándor Szolnay*, 16 January 1945, archive document in the property of the descendants of painter *Irma Brósz*, Cluj-Napoca.

¹² The slow decline was most visible in the ever-smaller number of students of the Free Painting School. While between 1936 and in 1937 there were 20 debuting fine artists regularly attending the courses, between 1940 and 1944 their number gradually decreased and fell below 10. On this, see in more detail: *Lăptoiu, Negoită*, *Incursiuni în arta românească*, volume III, Bucureşti, Editura „Arc 2000”, 1999, 103–116.

¹³ Already in 1943, because of overlaps in the scope of their competence and due to financial reasons, *András Mikola* fell out with the other leader of the painting school from *Baia Mare*, *János Krizsán*. The former left the institution’s management in the same year. On this and on the resignation of *András Mikola* see in more detail: *Genthon István*, *A nagybányai iskola*, in *Murádin Jenő (szerk.)*, *A nagybányai művészet és művésztelep a magyar sajtóban 1919–1944. Dokumentumok a nagybányai művésztelep történetéből*, Miskolc, a *MissionArt Galéria* kiadása, 2000, 465–472.

¹⁴ The Hungarian press of the time published several articles on the renewing of the painting school. See: “Megnyílik a festőiskola”, *Egység*, 7 April 1946, I, nr. 1, [2].; *Tóth Kálmán*, „Munkások áldozatkészségéből újjászületik a nagybányai

festőiskola”, *Világosság*, 19 December 1947, IV, nr. 310, [2].

¹⁵ Murádin Jenő, *Erdélyi festőiskolák*, Bukarest–Kolozsvár, Kriterion Könyvkiadó, 1997, 10-11.

¹⁶ Ciupe, Aurel, *Născut odată cu secolul*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1998, 87–90.

¹⁷ Murádin Jenő, *Erdélyi festőiskolák*, op. cit, 100.

¹⁸ Banner Zoltán, Bordi András, Bukarest, Kriterion Könyvkiadó, 1978, 37-38.

¹⁹ „Képzőművészeti és színésziskola Nagyváradon”, *Erdély*, 21 July 1945, II, nr. 102, [3].

²⁰ “A művészet két iskolája Váradon. A Zenekonzervatórium és a Képzőművészeti Iskola helyzete”, *Népakarat*, 23 November 1945, I, nr. 37, [3].

²¹ Horváth Imre, “Hatvan növendéke van a nagyváradai Képzőművészeti Szabadiskolának”, *Romániai Magyar Szó*, 21 September 1947, I, nr. 23, [2].

²² Murádin Jenő, *Erdélyi festőiskolák*, op. cit, 126.

²³ Painter Gábor Miklóssy’s unpublished manuscript, in the property of the descendants of the artist, Cluj-Napoca.

²⁴ Sümei György, Miklóssy Gábor, Marosvásárhely, Mentor Kiadó, 2001, 15.

²⁵ *Világosság*, 24 May 1945, II, nr. 122, [4].

²⁶ On this see the unpublished document entitled „Summary Report on the Józsa Béla Athenaeum Fine Arts Free School” (A Józsa Béla Athenaeum képzőművészeti szabadiskolájának összefoglaló jelentése), dated 20 September 1945, in the property of the descendants of painter Zoltán Kovács, Cluj-Napoca.

²⁷ “Komoly sikerrel kecsegtetnek a Józsa Béla Athenaeum műkedvelő tanfolyamának eddigi eredményei”, *Erdély*, 9 June 1945, II, nr. 70, [5].

²⁸ “A főiskolai oktatás új megszervezése. 4 egyetem és 41 felsőfokú tanulmányi intézet lesz az országban” – excerpt from the Law on educational reform, *Romániai Magyar Szó*, 16 October 1948, II, nr. 339, [1].

²⁹ MAGYAR ORSZÁGOS LEVÉLTÁR. Külügyminisztériumi Iratok. (National Archives of Hungary. Ministry of Foreign Affairs). XIX-J-1-j-Rom-16/b-1945-1968-II. 141.

³⁰ A romániai magyar főiskolai oktatás, Kolozsvár, 14.

³¹ Murádin Jenő, Kovács Zoltán, Kolozsvár, Minerva Könyvkiadó, 1998, 72-73.

³² On this see the letter of Romul Ladea from Timișoara to Zoltán Kovács written in Hungarian, in the property of the descendants of painter Zoltán Kovács, Cluj-Napoca.

³³ Sümei György, Miklóssy Gábor, op. cit, 23, 44.

³⁴ Murádin Jenő, Kovács Zoltán, op. cit., 74-75.

³⁵ [Balázs Péter], „Elvszerű művészeti nevelést a Magyar Művészeti Intézetben”, *Igazság*, 2 April 1950, VIII, nr. 77, [5].