



**OPTIMISTIC EXHIBITION**

**MIKLÓS ERDÉLY AND THE HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF FINE ARTS**

**1946 – 2018**

## IMPRINT

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*Photogram with Ladder*. Photo by Gábor Palotai, 1981.

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## OPTIMISTIC EXHIBITION. INTRODUCTION

The Doctoral School of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts has dedicated the first semester of the academic year 2018/19 to studying Miklós Erdély's oeuvre. This exhibition, which has been announced under the working title *Miklós Erdély and the Hungarian University of Fine Arts*, serves as the concluding event of the semester-long research project, and will be on view in HUFA's Barcsay Hall from mid-December 2018 until the end of January 2019. The project is coordinated by Péter Kóhalmi, János Sugár, Zoltán Szegedy-Maszák and Miklós Peternák. In addition to its historical thematic and a presentation of several older works, reproductions and archival materials, the exhibition primarily aims to present new art created for the occasion within the framework of the project. Through this approach, as indicated by the subtitle, the new works are viewed in a broader historical context (which reaches until present days), organized around a few key dates. As made possible by the selection and the highlights, formerly existing, living relationships and events – “parallel nonsynchronism” or present tense durations and simultaneity – appear as stories of the here and now, “... which has finally led me to acknowledge the slowly forming messages: we simultaneously exist on multiple levels; our relationships are organized along various planes of being. What appears to have passed continues on, and what will be in the future is already at work.” (Miklós Erdély: KB)

In the exhibition hall, a collection of prints from the Hungarian press between 1946 and 2018 is displayed like historical wallpaper or a kind of static movie. Of all the press items at our disposal (numbering over a thousand), up to three hundred pieces were chosen; in some cases, the original document is showcased under glass, for a new generation that rarely lay their hands on printed newspapers – though not only with them in mind. This digital photo-mosaic composed of fragments that have been turned into images, together with the sensuous – though not tactile – presence of original newsprints, possibly can perhaps conjure the aura of the ever-prevailing “now”. In other words, rather than engaging in the inconvenience of obligate interpretation, the exhibition offers visitors a real, experiential mind-travel through time, while leaving the *locus communis* of possible conclusions, morals and interpretations up to the viewer's personal experience-based, symbolic and complementary

activities for the extinguishing of meaning.

The title of the exhibition also bears reference to the Optimistic Lecture by Miklós Erdély, held in 1980, where, by way of an introduction, he read the following memorable text, composed of 9 points, an oft-quoted, widely referred to and several times published passage:

- “1. One must acknowledge one’s own competence with regards to one’s life and fate, and keep to it above all else.
2. This competence extends to whatever concerns one’s life, whether directly or indirectly.
3. In this manner one’s competence extends to everything.
4. One must have the courage to perceive whatever is bad, faulty, torturous, dangerous or meaningless, whether it be the most accepted, seemingly unchangeable case or thing.
5. One must have the boldness to propose even the most unfounded, least realizable alternative.
6. One must be able to imagine that these variants can be attained.
7. One must give as much consideration to possibilities that have only a slight chance but promise great advantages as to possibilities that in all likelihood can be attained but promise few advantages.
8. Whatever one can accomplish with the limited tools at one’s disposal one must do without delay.
9. One must refrain from any form of organization or institutionalization.”

(Miklós Erdély: *Optimistic Lecture: The Features of the Post-neo-avant-garde Attitude*. [Translated by: Zsuzsanna Szegedy-Maszák.] Originally read at Eötvös Loránd University’s Faculty of Aesthetics, Budapest, 22 April 1981.)

As it would be impossible – and perhaps misleading – to list all the artists, writers, and theoreticians who should be mentioned in connection to the documents, texts and reproductions, let these few names suffice as reference: Sándor Altorjai, István Ágh, Endre Bálint, László Beke, Ákos Birkás, Kosztká Tivadar Csontváry, György Galántai, Lajos Gulácsy, Katalin Ladik, András Halász, Tamás Kaszás, Endre Kukorelly, founding editors of *Magyar Műhely* [Atelier hongrois], Dóra Maurer, Gábor Németh, Lajos Németh, János Pilinszky, Imre Sarkadi, Tamás StAuby, Ádám Tábor, Dezső Tandori, and Tamás Vigh. Since it would be similarly impossible – even pointless – to list

Miklós Erdély's works that are directly quoted or indirectly alluded to, we will only mention a few titles (without any further specifications on genre or technique) that can, from a number of vantage points, be brought in connection with particular works and exhibition units: *My Golden Fascists*, *Anti-aspect*, *Mineral Wool*, *Studies in the Theory of Identification*, *Hidden Green*, *Black Necrology*, *Suspicion – Saturated Solution*, *Time-Möbius*, *Theses on the Theory of Repetition*, *Two Persons Who Had a Decisive Effect on My Fate*, *Poetry as Self-assembling System*, *An Investigation of Possibility*, *Montage Gesture and Effect*, *Optimistic Lecture*, *Unguarded Money*, *Hidden Parameters*, *Execution in Spring*, *Version*, and *Textured Line (Line Canon)*.

The project entitled *Miklós Erdély and the Hungarian University of Fine Arts – Optimistic Exhibition* was realized with the participation of every student of the Doctoral School. Moreover, in response to the internal call for artworks announced for the exhibition, over twenty projects were submitted. Of these, works will be presented by the following artists: Szabolcs Barakonyi, Anna Barnaföldi, Márta Czene, Adrienn Dorsánszki, Veronika Filo, Mátyás Fusz, Margit Koller, Zsuzsa Kozsuhárov, Gábor Kristóf, Áron Kútvölgyi-Szabó, Loránd Szécsényi-Nagy, András Tábori, András Zalavári and Dia Zékány. Furthermore, new or previously created, original works are showcased by the following artists: Gábor Altorjay, Ágnes Eperjesi, Balázs Kicsiny, Béla Kondor, and János Sugár. Additionally, works will be presented by students of the Intermedia Department, including a new, musical project by Rozina Pátkai, Barnabás Bácsi, Richárd Melykó, Dániel Németh, and Áron Tihanyi.

The exhibition was organized and realized with the assistance of: Éva Kozma, Anikó Bojtos, and Réka Majsai. Graphic design: Gábor Palotai. Web: Géza Nyíry. Installation: István Győri. Translation: Dániel Sipos, Zsófia Rudnay, Andrea Tóth.

The preparatory work for the exhibition, in addition to the Library, Archives, and Collections of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, was immensely supported by the thematic online collection and publications of Artpool, as well as the databases of Arcanum Digitheca and Hungaricana. For lending materials, we owe thanks to Petőfi Literary Museum, the C3 Foundation, as well as several private individuals. Special thanks are due to the Erdély Family, the heirs, the Miklós Erdély Foundation, as well as members of the Indigo Group.



## **MIKLÓS ERDÉLY** **(1928–1986)**

Miklós Erdély was born 90 years ago in 1928 and died in 1986. As we move forward in time, away from the closing of his oeuvre, it seems to be more apparent that his activity and the role he played was not exceptional only within the settings of the 20th century Hungarian culture, but he had a distinctive place in the art-life of the whole Eastern European region. His role should be weighed against the most distinguished and most representative artists on a global scale, even if the proper art-historic place of the oeuvre and the time-space dimensions available to Erdély hardly have a meeting point, and even if it is hardly possible to create a connexion or suspension bridge between these “places”.

In Hungary, the first impulses of conceptual art started to gain strength in the second half of the 1960s, and by the 1970s it grew itself out to be the most decisive strand of the avantgarde movement. These years intersect with the appearance of Miklós Erdély on the artistic stage. Soon his presence became impossible to evade due to his artefacts, his vibrant, authentic and extraordinary perspective, and his marked habitus. Bit by bit he became the most significant master of the era, the central figure for younger generations, the free artist of the avantgarde movement, a movement in a constant search for new directions. He detached himself from the narrow understandings of conceptual art already by the mid-1970s, but the dense conceptual motivation and the interdisciplinary attitude — as well as the direct moral stance always ready for gentle provocations — remained inherent to his works till the end.

Erdély’s vibrantly intensive works always generate intellectual eagerness. If we want to find a place for his activities in closed categorical boxes, we have to say that his art is a conceptually motivated, philosophical art wrestling with heavy thoughts, as opposed to the sensible art of the second half of the century, called retinal art by Duchamp, stimulating the eyes, the retinal and receptor cells primarily. Nevertheless, the categorization of Erdély’s oeuvre cannot be contained within one simple sentence. The multi-layered, complex and at the same time singular nature of his works pushes away from itself the familiar cultural taxonomies. Tracing his all-round oeuvre we have to talk about his films, photo works, radio plays, the less-

known paintings, and also about his graphics, objects, material collages and collage tableaus, installations, environments as well as his actions. But we also cannot forget about his poems, lectures, theses, and his essays exerting exceptional reflexive power. In other words, we have to talk about Erdély's unrestrained interest in all kinds of forms of expression, his always rejuvenating and embarrassingly multifaceted oeuvre, categorically defying categorical fixation. Getting closer to his art requires more from us than the cataloguing of his works. Understanding Erdély is possible only by placing his works in the context of his thoughts, since he was as much a thinker as he was an artist. His oeuvre is deeply interdisciplinary: it is held together by his concepts, his conceptualism as well as by his medial experimentations.

Thus, in order to trace Erdély's art we cannot settle with knowing the era's contemporary art theories and the classical Western philosophical tradition; we have to open up our minds to the different and distant methods of getting to know the world, widening our scope towards scientific discoveries, the psychology of creativity, as well as the different dimensions of the sacred, including Zen Buddhism, Jewish-Christian tradition and spiritism. Walking in Erdély's footsteps there are no boundaries between the diverse modes of discovering the world. More precisely, the boundaries are not posited between the different ways of discovery: there is only one frontier, the one separating the already known from the yet-to-be known. And for the reader/viewer the real difficulty lies exactly here: to arrive at the cracking frontier of the horizon of the yet-to-be known and even further, at the final frontier of the unknown, instead of stumbling into the enclosed aggregate of the already known, despite breaking down the territorial boundaries separating different knowledges.

Miklós Erdély's oeuvre is neither the series of self-enclosed works, nor a discrete system of lineally organized pieces of art. There are problem circles in the oeuvre appearing and disappearing from time to time, expanding with fresh thoughts and new media when he reaches back to them. Thus, picking out and categorising certain works separately from the oeuvre can be done only at serious losses. The pieces of his art are held together by a matrix that is similar to the way the participants of the action *Dirac in front of the Cinema Cashier* were standing in a line and proceeding towards the exit, but their sentences were answering each other's circulating words. Or the way at

his exhibition opening Sándor Altorjai whispered the *Gyagyaistic Manifesto's* theses to Erdély's ears and he repeated them out loud. Erdély's works' connection to each other is allegorised by the piece of his photocollage *Time Travel* on which he whispers into the ears of his younger self — because “the only one who can shape himself is the one who turns back and works on himself as a cause” —, or by the way the latter images of the *Dreamcopies* interpret the earlier images, until the point where the different layers of the reconstructed dreams start to move together, or by the “remembering and foretelling” structure of the *Train Trip* unfolds the reels of the train travel to Hatvan from the beginning and the end simultaneously. The connection between Erdély's works is similar to the way the images of his Mobius films and the loop films create a montage out of themselves, and the way the different layers of a carbon paper roll repeat, rhythmize and interpret themselves.

The most works of Miklós Erdély set difficult tasks for the audience. His oeuvre is an excellent example for artefacts as suggestions for new modes of application of different media, but it also exemplifies that the artworks are variations for palpable emanations of ideas. Also, his works turn upside down our routinely used forms of expression, the settled schemes of thinking, and by loosening these structures they prepare the ground for the yet-to-be-known. It is because of this path leading out of the customized practices that his oeuvre might prove to be outstanding, timeless, and independent of changing styles and times.

So, the question whether what was Miklós Erdély's main occupation cannot be answered easily. We can quote Erdély himself, or we can recall a story from the *Tales of the Hasidim*. *The Most Important* reads as follows: “Soon after the death of Rabbi Moshe, Rabbi Mendel of Kotzk asked one of his disciples: »What was most important to your teacher?« The disciple thought and then replied: »Whatever he happened to be doing at the moment.«” Erdély put it this way in his conversation with Zoltán Sebők in 1982: “I have realized that I am engaged with many things so as not to dissipate myself. If a man points himself to something particular, he must chisel off his countless abilities.” In 1964 he wrote: “I have never had any pleasure, if I don't count that sometimes I filled in a cleft across the wall with mud, and until it dried and dropped out, the work I completed filled me with some satisfaction,

and when it fell out, I was displeased. After some time my displeasure was replaced by pleasure, because I was looking forward to the satisfaction that followed my luting work, so I was waiting with excited fake-displeasure for the mud to fall out. When I discovered that in this manner my way of living is more tolerable, I started to look for a range of futile activities.”

The era’s conceptual art has, as Dóra Maurer put it, liberated creative reflexion to any phenomenon in the world. In Erdély’s interpretation, during those years art has expanded its competence, to which he had an enormous contribution, we may add. And the repercussions of this are highly significant. Miklós Erdély caused great commotion already in his own lifetime, and — beside the re-interpretation, prefixing and periodization of the term ‘conceptual art’, or rather bridging this all — his influence — along the experimental spirit able to uproot narrow-mindedness, the validity of independent authenticity, the moral stance as well as the competence of art over the whole lifeworld — holds sway beyond his direct impact spread from mouth to mouth till today, reaching out to the youngest generations of artists who did not have the opportunity to know him in person.

## Péter Kőhalmi

1. On 29 November 1968, at the exhibition *Do You See What I See?* organized at the headquarter of the IPARTERV Company Miklós Erdély, Miklós Urbán, Tamás Cseh and Tamás Szentjóby performed three epistemological and scientific actions under the title *Three Quarks to King Marke*. The three actions were the *Clips*, *Dirac in front of the Cinema Cashier* and *Presentiments*. Beside these three actions created by Erdély, Tamás Szentjóby also performed three actions, and the paintings of László Méhes were also exhibited.

2. Erdély Miklós: Jegyzetek egy soha el nem készülő Gyagyaista kiáltványból. In: Uő: *Művészeti írások. (Válogatott művészetelméleti tanulmányok I.)* Szerk. Peternák Miklós. Képzőművészeti Kiadó, Budapest, 1991. 119–120. The manifesto appeared first in the catalogue of the posthumous exhibition of Sándor Altorjai: *Altorjai Sándor kiállítása. Kiállítási katalógus*, Szerk. Beke László. Óbuda Galéria, 1979. 22.

3. Erdély Miklós: Idő-móbiusz. In: Uő: *Második kötet*. Vál., szerk. Beke László, Peternák Miklós és a Magyar Műhely szerkesztősége. Magyar Műhely, Párizs, Bécs, Budapest, 1991. 95. Erdély prepared his *Time Travel* photo montage series in 1976: it consisted of five pieces in which he combined together old family photographs with fresh photos made of himself. Property of the King Stephen Museum. First exhibition: *Najnowsza Sztuka Wegjerska*. Galeria Sztuki Najnowszej, Wrocław, 20 April – 20 May 1976.

4. Erdély Miklós: *Álommásolatok*. BBS, 1977. Standard kópia: BBS, 1978.
5. Erdély Miklós: *Vonatút*. BBS, 1981–1983. Standard kópia: BBS K-szekció, 1988.
6. Martin Buber. *Tales of the Hasidim*. New York: Schocken Books, 2013.
7. Sebők Zoltán. Új misztika felé – Beszélgetés Erdély Miklóssal. In: *Hid*. 1982/3, 373.
8. Erdély Miklós: Parton. In: Uő: *Második kötet*. Vál., szerk. Beke László, Peternák Miklós és a Magyar Műhely szerkesztősége. Magyar Műhely, Párizs, Bécs, Budapest, 1991, 23.



## **EXHIBITED WORKS**

### **Gábor Altorjay – Bill McCagg**

MEemory, 1988. Video, colour, stereo, 27 min.

MIF Video Studio – Soros Foundation C3, 1998.

### **Ágnes Eperjesi**

Two Men, 2015. Photos, collage, 30x40 cm

Caption: Two men who decisively influence my days.

### **Miklós Erdély**

Portrait of Zsuzsa Szenes, late 1940s, clay, 24 cm

Portrait of Gizella Solti, late 1940s, clay, 23.5 cm

Erdély Estate. photos: Dániel Erdély

### **Dániel Erdély's photo of József Kótai and the sculpture portraying him, 2018.**

#### **Miklós Erdély**

József Kótai's portrait. 1956. Terracotta, 23.5 cm

Gift by Miklós Erdély. (Property of József Kótai)

In the summer of 1954 a group of architects led by professor Rados began to survey the heritage building of the Esterházy Palace in Fertőd. The architects were Károly Ferenczy, Gyula Hajnóczy and Elemér Nagy. I was a kid working on the farm as a summer job, and we met at the mess hall. I told them that I had been admitted to the Secondary School of Fine Arts in Budapest, and I asked their permission to join them in drawing the interiors of the building when I'm off duty, of course, without disturbing their work. They kindly gave their permission, so mostly under the supervision of Károly Ferenczy, I walked around the entire palace, making drawings. The palace garden and the building were not unfamiliar to me, as my grandfather had been a farm supervisor there and my father started learning masonry by working in the renovation of the building. Later, already in Budapest, I became the protégé of Elemér Nagy and his wife. Their circle of friends included Miklós Erdély, to whom I was introduced by Elemér Nagy in the library of the Technical University. Erdély asked me if I would pose for a sculpture. As I was living in

the dormitory, I had to ask for permission to go out during the quiet hours. Once I had obtained it, Miklós took me to the studio of his acquaintance, sculptor Dezső Bokros Birman. The Master, by then elderly and half-paralyzed, had probably acquired that studio not long before, as there was no trace of substantive work, but it did have a modelling stand and usable clay in a crate. Besides that, I could observe traces of several cats, and of course their smell. If I remember well, I “sat” on three occasions (there was no chair), then I forgot about this episode during the turbulent times that came to pass. One day a tram driver I knew by sight informed me that he had regularly seen the head modelled after me. I plucked up the courage and asked him to ask Miklós Erdély if he’d give it to me. Eventually he, and Zsuzsa Szenes, with whom I had become acquainted in the meantime and whose protégé I had been upon my admission to the Academy, kindly presented my “head” to me. I don’t remember the exact date, but it was already I who lent it for the exhibitions at the Múcsarnok / Kunsthalle and in Székesfehérvár, as well as for this year’s Mission-Art exhibition commemorating Miklós Erdély.

Budapest, 13. November 2018.

József Kótai, goldsmith

### **Miklós Erdély: A Hunger for Montage.**

Valóság, 1966. 4. Visualisation of the text by 1st and 2nd year students of the Intermedia Department at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, 2016/17.

### **Four Erdély Songs**

Miklós Erdély: *The Handle of the Soul, Memoirs, Mineral Wool, The Most Beautiful Word is Yet Music*, performance: Rozina Pátkai – vocal, keyboard, electronics, Richárd Melykó – recitation, Barnabás Bácsi – guitar, Dániel Németh, Áron Tihanyi – visuals Intermedia Department, Hungarian University of Fine Arts. Advisor: Mária Rigó Performance at the event *Erdély '90. Festival of the Hungarian Society of Writers*, Három Holló / Drei Raben, Tuesday, 22. May 2018.. Event organizer: András Müllner. Professional contribution: Vera Baksa Soós, Piroska Kéri, Kinga Szokács, Anna Zsellér. Video made by: Mihály Józsa

## **Balázs Kicsiny**

Final Reconciliation, 2018. Installation

Two parachutes are hanging from the ceiling of the Barcsay Hall, about 2 metres from each other. The parachutes have a black and white chequered pattern. Their straps are dangling open, as if the parachutist had left the scene after landing. Between the two parachutes, on the floor of the exhibition hall lies an 80x80cm MDF board of 1cm thickness, on which the following quote is painted in white letters on black background:

“IN THE MEANTIME, THE MANOEUVERS OF THE TAKEOVER ARE SILENTLY TAKING PLACE ON THE STREET: THE DESCENT AND SILENT COMING TO REST OF AUXILIARY PARATROOPER FORCES SMUGGLED IN UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE WEATHER CONDITIONS, THE SLOWLY COMMENCING CARNIVAL OF VICTORY, THE FESTIVE TRANSPOSITION OF THE REPRESSED INNER AND TORMENTED OUTER WORLDS; THE VETERAN SOLDIERS OF AN ANCIENT WAR ON THE NO MAN’S LAND, ONE CRESTED BY HIS SURPRISE OVER UNEXPECTED AND UNINTENTIONAL VICTORY, AND THE OTHER BY THE MERCIFUL SNOW-CAP THAT RENDERS ALL THINGS HARMLESS, HESITANTLY AND HASTILY MAKE PEACE FOR GOOD.”

MIKLÓS ERDÉLY

The installation quotes a long compound sentence from Miklós Erdély’s text *Nakonxipánban hull a hó* [It is Snowing in Naconxipan] about the art of Lajos Gulácsy, published in issue 1967/8. of the journal *Művészet* [Art]. *The Final Reconciliation* partly alludes to the title of the exhibition: *Optimistic Exhibition*, while also closely connected to an installation of mine from 2010, titled *Temporary Resurrection*. I no longer remember whether this work was inspired by Erdély’s text, or it was later, once I had finished the installation that I discovered the similarity in motifs and narrative between Erdély’s text and my work. As a result, I implemented certain elements of my work *Temporary Resurrection* (2010) in my piece *Final Reconciliation*.

### **Béla Kondor**

Preparation for the Revolution. 1956. Etching from the Dózsa-series, 200 x 210 mm. The Library, Archives and Art Collections of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, Inv. No. 2273. URL: <http://corvina.mke.hu:8080/voyager/images/grafika/02273.htm>

### **Gábor Palotai**

Erdély with the ladder, 1981/2018. Three prints on aquarell paper, 30x42 cm. Miklós Erdély during the making of the work *Photogram with Ladder*, 1981.

### **János Sugár**

Silence (with Black Swans), 2017. C-print, 84 x 119 cm

### **János Sugár**

Miklós Erdély Portrait, 1983. Plaster relief, 40 x 40 x 6 cm

Photograph of the exhibition presenting artworks submitted for the [Karl] Marx competition at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, February 1983. Each year, the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts announced a thematic competition for its students. Generally these were associated with some anniversary (1980, Attila József; 1981, Béla Bartók; 1982, 70th anniversary of the CPSU; 1982, Zoltán Kodály) and the submitted artworks were put on display at the exhibition hall that was not yet called Barcsay Hall. I was intrigued by this situation from the first moment, and with the exception of one competition, I submitted something every year. In 1983, on the anniversary of his death, the theme was Karl Marx, and I thought that since their profiles are so alike, I would submit a portrait of Miklós Erdély, who had been banned from the Academy. I discussed this with him, and made a silhouette of him in early February 1983, on the Veranda of the Virágárok Street flat, which I then rendered three-dimensional at the academy's sculpture studio using the simplest technique to my knowledge. The profile facing left is more accurate, while the one facing right is more rough on account of the technique. No one but my friends knew who the relief actually portrayed. No one dared to touch my work, although it had a hanger, and throughout the show it was left where I had placed it upon submission. The paper visible under the relief has a separate story, which is inadvertently also related to the portrait.

## **NEW WORKS**

### **DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF THE HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF FINE ARTS**

#### **Szabolcs Barakonyi**

From the series “Empty Space” (2017). Photograph

#### **Szabolcs Barakonyi**

[fortepan pictures]

“...there is only aesthetic value in things that can also be ugly. I don't like folk art because I have never found, for instance, an ugly old jug. And this is why I have spelled out that artists must refrain from three things: children's drawings, folk art, and old photographs. These are all automatically beautiful. The avant-gardist must delimit him/herself from this.” (Zoltán Sebők: „Új misztika felé” [Towards a New Mysticism], in: Híd [Bridge], 1982/3, p. 374. <https://post.at.moma.org/sources/32/publications/294> (Translated by Adele Eisenstein)

These photographs were all taken between 1915 and 1972. At first one might think these are all old photographs. I can't tell when, from what age a photograph should be considered old. Just as I can't tell whether there are photos I've taken that already count as old. What is old is completely relative in this case. It is obvious that Miklós Erdély was not talking about such old photographs, as he himself also used photographs that had been taken a while before.

All photographs are taken with a purpose. With much of the Fortepan photos, the exact intention of the photographer remains somewhat mysterious, as devoid of context, only the image remains. The camera is a very honest device, much rather than realistic: it gives equal treatment to each point in the image, without exception. If we succeed at accepting this decisive moment in image creation without any intention of actually understanding it, then deeper and more substantial layers will be revealed. This is the moment when the temporal status of an image becomes irrelevant.

Objects, texts, etc., just as molecules in the „primordial soup”, in the course of their free (random) movements seek out their own „geometric loci”, taken in the poetic sense.

Humans are left with the task of on the one hand, noticing the existing poetic features, and on the other hand, by adding and projecting their conceptual stock-pile, transforming into poetry the already extant formal-aesthetic beauties (pebbles, landscape, etc.)

Miklós Erdély: Poetry as a Self-Assembling System (1973). Translated by John Batki

**List of Fortepan images:**

Year taken: 1930

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Find: 14851 / 107678

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taken by ÚJ ÉLET EDITORIAL

Year taken: 1929

Image No.: 07856

Find: 13369 / 107678

Orig: FORTEPAN

Year taken: 1930

Image No.: 11925

Find: 14778 / 107678

Orig: MÁRTON KURUTZ

Year taken: 1954

Image No.: 16378

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Orig: MÁRTON KURUTZ

Year taken: 1939  
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Orig: ZSOLT PÁLINKÁS

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Orig: MÁRTON ERNŐ KOVÁCS

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Orig: JULI

Year taken: 1964  
Image No.: 44546  
Find: 72852 / 107678  
Orig: LÁSZLÓ KORENCHY

Year taken: 1955  
Image No.: 51758  
Find: 49395 / 107678  
Orig: GYULA NAGY

Year taken: 1953  
Image No.: 51840  
Find: 46643 / 107678  
Orig: GYULA NAGY

Year taken: 1942  
Image No.: 60387  
Find: 33705 / 107678  
Orig: ZSOLT ZSANDA

Year taken: 1972  
Image No.: 65946  
Find: 90718 / 107678  
Orig: MAGYAR RENDŐR

Year taken: 1915  
Image No.: 73324  
Find: 7639 / 107678  
Orig: ESZTER BABARCZY

Year taken: 1939  
Image No.: 83879  
Find: 25589 / 107678  
Orig: EBNER

Year taken: 1951  
Image No.: 91439  
Find: 45003 / 107678  
Orig: UVATERV

Year taken: 1972  
Image No.: 98186  
Find: 90098 / 107678  
Orig: UVATERV

Year taken: 1967  
Image No.: 118484  
Find: 78985 / 107678  
Orig: MHSZ

Year taken: 1969  
Image No.: 128615  
Find: 83172 / 107678  
Orig: GÁBOR BAGI  
taken by RÓBERT BAGI

Year taken: 1916  
Image No.: 132130  
Find: 8269 / 107678  
Orig: ANDRÁS BARJÁK

Year taken: 1969  
Image No.: 135700  
Find: 83024 / 107678  
Orig: HEIRS OF ANDRÁS SÜTŐ /  
taken by ÚJ ÉLET EDITORIAL

### **Anna Barnaföldi**

Miklós Erdély: *My Golden Fascists* (poem excerpt), 2014. Digitalized 16mm analogue film, 5 min 11 sec.

In making this digitalized 16mm film I used an excerpt from the poem *My Golden Fascists* by Miklós Erdély. In making this film, visual representation was determined by the text and the depth of its message. I typed the excerpt from the poem onto the blank 16 mm film letter by letter, using a typewriter. Each letter was typed on 10 consecutive frames to make it readable to the human eye. The poem can be heard as a vocal canon underscoring the film. Several actors from different generations read the poem. Even the original voice of Miklós Erdély can be heard.

„Now, that after forty years I'm coming around from my first indignation, now, that the size of natural and man-made mountains of the dead seem to be equal, now, that the suspicion of »everything is fascist here« is nestling into me, that I'm counting the souls be-vagin, be-vagined, be-waggoned into

the womb, one by one, they 're only taking them to work, to fresh air, to the country, to see beautiful scenery, that the hospitals are mengele-ing away with the relatives and friends, that they are just taking them to work in the nether world, to the nether country, to fresh air, that the nether world is healthy but nobody can send messages from there, that workers are needed over there, too, or if not, they must be good for something, those who have already lived and worked once, because like the Germans, those on the other side weren't born yesterday, either. The well-meaning bunnies don't gasify into nothing,

I believe in good like a Melanesian”

(Miklós Erdély: *My Golden Fascists*. Excerpt. Translated by Adele Eisenstein and John Batki)

### **Anna Barnaföldi**

Audio-guide, 2018.

The audio-guide which can be rented at the exhibition does not provide the usual service. In this audio guide you will hear a mashup of Erdély's selected original lectures found on the Artpool website.

### **Márta Czene**

Erdély number, 2018.

1.1. The Erdős number describes the “collaborative distance” between mathematician Paul Erdős and another researcher.

1.1.1. Paul Erdős has an Erdős number of zero.

1.1.2. All people who have written a joint paper with Paul Erdős have an Erdős number of 1.

1.1.3. All people who have written a joint paper with anyone who has an Erdős number of 1 but not with Erdős himself have an Erdős number of 2.

1.2. The Erdős number is no measure of value.

1.3. However, Nobel Prize winners tend to have small Erdős numbers.

2.1. The Erdély number describes the “collaborative distance” between Miklós Erdély and another artist.

2.1.1. Miklós Erdély has an Erdély number of zero.

2.1.2. All people who have had a group exhibition or have made an artwork jointly with Miklós Erdély have an Erdély number of 1.

2.1.3. All people who have had a group exhibition or have made an artwork jointly with anyone who has an Erdély number of 1 but not with Erdély himself have an Erdély number of 2.

2.2. The Erdély number is no measure of value.

2.3. However, leading figures of the contemporary Hungarian art scene tend to have small Erdély numbers.

3.1. The Erdély number is not like the Erdős number as the situation of art is not like that of science.

### **Márta Czene**

Can you still hear me? 2018. Acrylic paint, fibreboard, 130 x 107 cm

Miklós Erdély often gave cues or pointers to aid the interpretation of his works. His researchers mainly interpret his works using these tools. I was interested in taking a new look at one of his works approaching it with no preconception as in the case of an unknown artist.

I engaged this way in *Hidden Parameters*, the text and the audio play.

From my related associations, I have made a painting modelling my train of thought and showing my attempts to interpret this work. The title quotes the female character of Erdély's audio play. „Can you still hear me?” I was particularly interested in the female role as well as the dialogue of the male and female voices intermingling and losing each other time and again.

### **Adrienn Dorsánszki**

Are You Identical? 2018. Video installation

Repetition, similar, identical. What is the difference? And what is its significance? Around the age of seven or eight, children start playing a game of mimicking each other. One child starts repeating the other's movements,

gestures and utterances. This is great fun for a while, until it becomes so annoying that the mimicked kid wants to escape the situation. If the kid is smart enough, he or she will find some error, some deviation in the imitation and use it to turn the tables and start mimicking the dysfunctional mimicker. If, however, the imitation is perfect, then all that remains is screaming “stop it already!” as a result of extreme annoyance. Psychodrama also uses this game element to achieve self-awareness. Our gestures and speech tone sometimes become so natural to us that we fail to see/hear ourselves from outside, but a mirrored self can help us recognize our actions. The more people there are and the more accurate the mimicker is, the more efficient the game will be.

We are put into roles, but we also choose roles ourselves. Being fully aware of the behaviour of the self in different roles is difficult at every level. The solitary self, the self in a work environment, the family self, the collective social selves... The dynamics of each of these can be different, even if we may discover similarities/repetitions between them or see them as identical.

### **Veronika Filó**

Encounter, 2018. Digitál print, 29 x 21.5 cm

I wanted to meet Miklós Erdély. I wanted him to give me a sign here and now, in the moment of creation. For our relationship to turn around somehow, I wanted to genuinely like him. The things he wrote aren't close to me. His films give me shivers, I'm terrified of his mother's spirit(uality). I like his work *Faith / Loyalty*, anecdotes about him intrigue me, and it makes me sad that I couldn't get to know him as a teacher. In a word, I wanted to clear up this ambivalence, and even if he remains inaccessible... to accept him... This is a comic strip, the creative process of which started with me just waiting with some bubble wrap and a pin in my hand, just waiting; to me this is more like snapshots of 19 unexpected – and happy – moments.

The encounter takes place.

*Now things are different.*

Now I have my own Miklós Erdély.

**Mátyás Fusz, Andrea Knetik**

Portable slit-drawing tool for travelling, 2018.

The two-way time flow is represented and visualized by the progress of the paper roll advanced by the device. The maker of the slit drawing just keeps his or her eyes on the landscape swooshing by outside the vehicle's window, while the paper on the drawing board can be advanced according to the direction of movement. Thus, when reaching the end of the roll, we get a series of motifs that exponentially represent the structure of the human gaze as it constantly seeks focus.

**Margit Koller**

Out-of-place Identity, 2017–2018. Lenticular print

I have been photographing Budapest's 8th district since 2016, when I moved away from there. The district's example reveals the mechanisms of urban redevelopment related to gentrification processes, wherein buildings that used to represent a former complex local identity are demolished in order to be replaced by an entirely new district that could be conceived of anywhere globally and lacks any identity. I believe that the space surrounding us should be the symbolic but immediate manifestation of our intellectual scene, also capable of reacting to it. Without individuals who have plans and dreams, there is no scene, without a scene there are no *places*, without *places*, there is no healthy society.

Beyond the profits of real estate speculation, is it profitable to disrupt the life of an area so radically that the community living there is almost completely replaced? Can a new community, able to relate to its new space, evolve by terminating the area's former image along with its problems? To what extent is this the naturalness of pulsating change and to what extent a false and harmful problem management? How sterile is a community in a sterile *place*? Can a scene survive if it has no place? My lenticular image is a query about *place* and identity from alternating viewpoints.

**Zsuzsanna Kozsuhárov**

No Norm, 2018. Short film

Contributors: István Balázs, Gréta Benkő, Berta Bognár, Kinga Csoszor, Réka Dezső, Enikő Dravec, Dorka Dulin, Eszter Faragó, Noémi Fecser, Bálint Halcsik, Dóra Horváth, Virág Kardos, Petra Konecsni, Lili Konics, Dóra Napsugár Kovács, Tamara Kovács, Dorottya Kőrösi, Kata Kumli, Laura Markos, Nikolett Markó, Benedek Nógrádi, Zita Pákozdi, Júlia Pálhegyi, Petra Radics, Alexa Rinth, Anna Sály, Lili Somogyi, Áron Székely, Jázmin Varga, Eszter Varjú, Veronika Végh, Barnabás Zavodnyik (students of Madách Imre Secondary School), István Dancs, Ágnes Lipták, Ferenc Mező, János Novák, Levente Rezsabek, Attila Zérczi

The misinterpretation of subordination and superiority causes a lot of frustration. This is experienced in many types of human relationships: family, school, workplace...

Our work frames and illustrates such seemingly everyday events with a scene each, which are all connected links in a chain. Each link is a trait. Reality is much nicer without even just one such trait. We have painted this picture to tear it up.

**Gábor Kristóf**

Suspended Military Secret, 2018. Electrostatically charged powder paint on steel shelves, 610 x 305 mm each.

“At this exhibition I will attempt to call attention to the autocratic mechanism of the military industry that obliterates everything in its path. This phenomenon limits our awareness and destroys our personality and its consequences affect the foundation of the existence of human beings facing the unknown.” (from the text attached by Miklós Erdély to his work titled *Military Secret* at the 1984 Orwell exhibition in Vienna, published in the exhibition’s catalogue. Source: [http://www.artpool.hu/2013/pepita\\_en.html](http://www.artpool.hu/2013/pepita_en.html))

RAL 1039-F9 Sand beige  
RAL 1040-F9 Clay beige  
RAL 6031-F9 Bronze green  
RAL 6040-F9-Light olive  
RAL 7050-F9 Camouflage grey  
RAL 8027-F9 Leather brown  
RAL 8031-F9 Sand brown  
RAL 9021-F9 Tar black

As part of the RAL Classic colour standard system, RAL F9 is a special chart that was developed in 1961. It is made up of eight colours used by the German Armed Forces for camouflage coatings. Although it is possible to obtain the standardized colour samples with detailed information from the RAL Institute, there are no commercially available paints from this palette.

### **Áron Kútvölgyi-Szabó**

An Investigation of Possibility, 2018. Installation

The work entitled *An Investigation of Possibility* deals with epistemological problems that are in close relation to the role of imagery and spatiality in human knowledge. The original installation was part of the solo exhibition *Gettier's Cave* in 2017 at Óbudai Társaskör Gallery, but this modified version focuses on some specific phenomena of quantum mechanics, like the wave-particle duality, the principle of complementarity or Heisenberg's uncertainty principle.

The latter points out the fundamental limits of cognition, namely that even in our scientific knowledge there is always some inherent uncertainty. The more accurate the diagnosis of one particular type of information is, the less accurate the detection of other characteristics will be. For instance, in case of an electron, we have to decide which property we are aiming for, its wave or its particle nature – both are not possible to capture simultaneously with high precision.

The elements of the installation point out the possibilities and problematics of the “maximization of knowledge” through various techniques of 2D projection and material samples. The composition itself also requires the viewer to

circumnavigate the installation in order to avoid one-sided perception and the neglect of various – perhaps even contradictory – aspects that can easily lead to false conclusions and incorrect interpretations – to the illusion of knowledge.

### **Lóránt Szécsényi-Nagy**

Digital Copy, 2018. Multimedia installation

Using the technical media of analogue and digital imaging, the installation explores the relation of original and copy. The piece makes a digital scan of a single point in the image produced by the camera obscura operating in the main building of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, simultaneously reconstructing it in a different space, thus extending, duplicating it.

The silhouette of the scanning device is faintly visible on the matte glass of the pinhole camera, obscuring the scanned point. The spectator can estimate the missing ‘pixel’ from the live image of Andrassy road around the device, the digital copy of which pixel is reproduced on site by a colour LED. The signal is transformed into a colour code which is then transmitted from here into a room of the exhibition, where the other half of the installation, a lamp displays the real-time colour data, extending the colour of a particular pixel of the scanned image into the space.

### **András Zalavári**

A Caterpillar’s Relativity, 2014–2018. Three channel video installation

1. The world revolves not around You, but around the caterpillar!
2. If You feel like a caterpillar, You are significant
3. If You feel like a caterpillar, You are not this caterpillar
4. If You are this caterpillar...
5. The world revolves around me
6. The world can only revolve around me

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## **Dia Zékány**

Komment, 2018. Mixed media

I'm interested in overloaded, disorganized interiors, chaotic and intimate living spaces in my immediate surroundings. My paintings are imprints of creative research examining the relation of humans and their environment, which is determined by objects. I was looking to find a "common denominator" between Miklós Erdély's work and my sphere of interest, the observation of order and disorder, and the psychological phenomena behind them. That was how I came across his *Poetry as a Self-Assembling System*:

"If your room is untidy enough, or if you are obliged to keep too many objects in it; if your interests are wide-ranging enough and especially if the room is the scene of at least your periodical activities, you must have noticed that certain loci give rise to poetic nodes; expressive concatenations organize themselves without your conscious participation. (Finally you end up not daring to touch anything, lest you disrupt these 'flowers' grown by your room.)

In the exhibition hall these 'piles' will confess their poetic destinations more readily than when embedded in their original environment, and often they possess a more intense and at the same time more delicate content than constructions made expressly for the purpose of exhibition."

(Miklós Erdély: *Poetry as a Self-Assembling System*, 1973. Translated by John Batki)

I tried to create my exhibited piece by harmonizing my own topos with the characteristic features of Erdély's work (mainly his paintings, drawings and collages).



**MIKLÓS ERDÉLY**  
**AND THE HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF FINE ARTS**  
**(1946 – 2018)**

“...between us, this newspaper is an antiquated piece of junk. I’m so sick of it.”

**1. What’s the news?**

A medium growing obsolete these days, the newspaper used to be something people regularly read, and news reports had unexpected, or anticipated, consequences in their daily lives: for instance, news of Soviet colonel Gagarin’s space journey in the special edition of *Esti Hírlap* [Evening News] on the 12th of April 1961 (Wednesday afternoon, but dated Thursday, April 13th, cf. ‘tomorrow’s paper’) led to a house party of tragic outcome,<sup>1</sup> an article “pressing charges” in the Party’s central newspaper, timed to be issued on the Fourth Sunday of Advent of 1973, with the purpose of banning an independent avant-garde exhibition and meeting place that had operated for several years, and investigating all those involved.<sup>2</sup>

In English, the word *news* evolved from ‘now’ (cf. *nouvelle*, *Nachricht*), and the words *Zeitung* and *journal*, with connotations of time and (to)day, render the potential semantic field complete, while the expression *press* can be traced back to Gutenberg’s invention, the refunctioned wine press, the original tool of publication, in other words, of making information public. The masses or the people, or more humbly: readers, citizens, consumers, subscribers could stay informed about the world for centuries, and this was the situation that changed fundamentally during the very historical period this exhibition covers.

Miklós Erdély was also a newspaper reader. This much is clear from his countless lectures, writings, poems and works that referentially or directly feature the newspaper. Examples include his photo series accompanying the *Theses on the Theory of Repetition*<sup>3</sup> or the poem *My Golden Fascists*. As opposed to the private, the newspaper represents the public, the outside world, (mass) medium as message, see also: *Newspaper Cake*.<sup>4</sup>

To cite Vilém Flusser on the relation of public and private space: “...you write in private, and then you publish in the open space. And if you want to get the message, you have to go in the open space, get the text, and take it

home, in order to read it. Now, this dialectics between private creation and publication, this is the dialectics of politics. Politics is the distinction between a private space and a public space. An *oikai* and an *agora*, a *domus* and a *forum*. Now this pendulum use: I go out from the private space into the public space in order to get that information, I take the information on the public space, and take it home in order to elaborate on it and store it away, this is the dynamics of political consciousness. Hegel, as you know, used to call it the unhappy consciousness. Because he said: ‘When I leave home to conquer the world I lose myself. And when I go home in order to find myself again, I lose the world.’<sup>5</sup>

The public sphere has undergone a new structural transformation, for the first time since the 17th-18th century: for a while, the television continued the tradition that had started with the printed press, and transformed citizens into easily controllable couch potatoes, the internet, especially its mobile version, has fundamentally changed everything. Easy controllability remained, but regardless of home or any public space, while the distinction of private or public space has lost its meaning in this context. People today try to gather information during in-between times and in *non-places* using their cell phones, and mostly not from an expertly edited professional source, but some secondary or tertiary source shared by their “friends”, or perhaps following a zealous tweeter or Youtuber, who can signal at any moment with a beep that “there’s some news”, regardless of where the hundreds of thousands or millions of “followers” are at that moment and what they are doing – the Pavlovian conditioning works: first the media, then reality. Attention and information are both fragmented and random, that is, massive and ill-structured – if we try to apply classical criteria of quality. If we don’t, then the same adjectives have no meaning. But what does all of this have to do with the topic raised in the title?

The permanent present of the 21st century is an illusion; the hysterical, permanent state of readiness for something to come, coupled with the rejection of yesterday’s “retro” for being outdated, is equivalent to the abandonment of historical consciousness, more broadly: culture. This is perceivable as a current tendency, but one that is not exclusive and that can perhaps still be turned around. One of the main motifs of Miklós Erdély’s work was the protest against information lockdown, which can be associated with the

broader context of the present exhibition, namely the new type of information economy and its casual lessons, as well as its ambivalence. Whether useful or useless. Newspapers, news and facts reckoned to have disappeared can now resurface owing to the potential of the post-informational hypermedium we have just derided for its quotidian use, the internet, which is accessible in every household and beyond. Thus, deprived of their nostalgic aura, the private experiences of the 19th-20th century coffeehouse subculture, taking place in their own time, turn into a parallel present, as besides the web 2.0 palimpsest that continuously overwrites itself, the "big data" of novelty archives clouded into timelessness is also easy to browse. Having replaced anecdotes and myths, the reanimated corpus of the printed word and image (constantly on the *way to virtue*) can be examined, interpreted and perhaps even managed as the sensible epidermis of the historical public sphere. Of course it does not show everything, but it could be exact enough, it could generate a new kind of comprehension of what we used to think we knew all too well. New techniques may also entail new methods for historical consciousness and culture.

Even though, approaching the end of the 21st century's second decade, the greatest problem of globalised humanity is probably the climate change, perhaps we also shouldn't be indifferent to the transformation of the human microclimate, in other words, we should be aware of and acknowledge the individual and his or her fate as well as the private experience of history. If culture-creating and -preserving activity is classified as a generally irrelevant, cast-aside, insignificant accident by a particular authoritative intention or global fashion, that may be inherently dangerous: for instance, it can be the cause and catalyst of the escalation of the aforementioned global problem. "*One must acknowledge one's own competence with regard to one's life and fate, and keep to it above all else.*"<sup>6</sup>

## **2. (1946–1956)**

*"Tribulations. Scholastic tribulations"*

On Tuesday, 1st of October 1946, a special issue of Szabad Nép [Free People], the Hungarian Communist Party's [MKP] central newspaper was published

with a headline set in red letters and the photographic portrait of the Party's general secretary, Mátyás Rákosi. The day before, on Monday, 30th of September 1946, Miklós Erdély had enrolled to start his first year as a sculpture major at the Academy of Fine Arts.

Szabad Nép was not published on Monday. The previous issue, on Sunday, 28th of September was also a red-letter one, celebrating the commencement of the 3rd congress of the MKP. The article on page 6, titled *Exhibition of Communist Artists*, revealed that the titular show was organised by the 5th District organisation of the Party. "The halls are dominated by careful direction, circumspect arrangement, not a flagrant or offensive detail anywhere. The generally outstanding quality of the works proclaims the high-ranking unity of Hungarian painting and sculpture. It is not threatened by uniformisation, as it conforms only to the requirements of exceptional quality and cultivated taste. Only true talent can be the token of so diverse trends and approaches appearing in such perfect harmony. Each of the exhibitors represents serious value." The author then names quite a few exhibitors, arranged in groups, with brief evaluations, which we will now disregard: János Kmetty, Dezső Bokros Biermann (sic!), Noémi Ferenczy, Márk Vedres, Oszkár Varga, Károly Háty, Béla Bán, András Beck, Dezső Korniss, Ernő Schubert, Piroska Szántó, Emil Novotny, Sándor Bortnyik, Kálmán G. Szabó, Judit Beck, Anna Oelmacher, Gyula Papp, Tamás Lossonczy, Ferenc Martyn, Ernő Berda, István Nolipa, József Jakovits, Erzsébet Forgács Hann, Lenke Földes. The article's conclusion is this: "The prolificacy of artistic work is ensured by this rich and laudable diversity, as the art of the future can only develop on broad foundations, embracing all tendencies." One might add, this failed to come true in the short term, partly with the assistance of the same author, who would write such things only three years later: "There is no field of social life where Stalin's initiative, ideological and organising operation would not have resulted in a fundamental turn towards progress. (...) Stalin has made it indubitable that the only art capable of progress is the one in accordance with the Party, and that amidst the gravened class struggle, the only way to create good art is in expression of the historical purpose of the vanguard of the working class. The definition of socialist realism, the proletarian tendency in art, was also conceived by him."<sup>7</sup>

Miklós Erdély spent the 1946/47 schoolyear studying at the Academy of

Fine Arts. "...I left the academy precisely because it started to be socialist realised, and I started frequenting Bokros-Birman's<sup>8</sup> studio," he said in an interview much later.<sup>9</sup> According to an even later recollection by Zsuzsa Szenes, "...he wasn't admitted to the university at first attempt, so he went to study sculpture for a year at the Academy of Fine Arts, although he was still preparing to be an architect."<sup>10</sup> Probably both approaches are true, as from autumn 1947, Erdély was a student at the Technical University.<sup>11</sup> The school register books that list Erdély – those of first and second year students for the schoolyear 1946/47, preserved in the archives of the University of Fine Arts<sup>12</sup> – list 165 enrolled students in the first semester and 149 in the second, and according to the customs of the time, the appropriate pages of the register contain the courses taken by the students by title of lecture, seminar or practice, name of teacher and classes per week, as well as confirmation of attendance. In the first semester, Erdély is listed on page 75., in the second, on page 66., and he took the same courses in both semesters (number of classes in parentheses): Modelling, Zsigmond Kisfaludi-Stróbl (20), Figure drawing, Béni Ferenczy (2), Descriptive geometry, Emil Krocsák (2), Aesthetics, Dr. Menyhért Takács (1), Introduction to geometry, Emil Krocsák (2), Erasmus, Montaigne, Goethe, Dr. László Cs. Szabó (2), Psychology, Dr. Menyhért Takács (2). Architectural encyclopaedia, Gedeon Gerlóczy (1). Altogether 32 classes per week, out of which 20 were modelling, that is, studio work – class workload did not differ much from that of today.

The list of students includes ones with whom Erdély would stay in touch in later years, such as Tibor Csernus<sup>13</sup> or Tamás Vigh.<sup>14</sup> Out of the teachers, architect Gedeon Gerlóczy and László Cs. Szabó should be noted. Based on the date on his letter of appointment, the autumn semester of 1946 was Cs. Szabó's first official semester.<sup>15</sup> He plunged into teaching with great enthusiasm, he had several courses and soon was entrusted with managing the library.<sup>16</sup> Later he remembered this period thus: "After the Second World War I was appointed as a teacher of cultural history at the Academy of Fine Arts. I had free reign, I could mould the curriculum and the souls like soft wax. I chose the discovery of Greece and Ancient Greek culture as my first experiment. (...) Will I have students? – I had wondered for days before the first class. I could barely wiggle my way through the crowd of hungry, shabby, glowing youth to the cathedra. Tivadar Csontváry's immense canvas, Mary's

Well was hanging on the back wall,<sup>17</sup> at the students' request. It was a part of restoring the homeland. I spent a year speaking to the jam-packed lecture hall with mosquito-bodied women filling their buckets in the Holy Land across the room and shaggy kids listening beneath me with jaws dropped like to a freshly returned sailor with stories of fairy tale lands rippling from his mouth. But I had also never been there, I was just like them! I spoke my desire. And the desire of others: Berzsenyi's, Hölderlin's, Keats' yearning. One time two girls brought in a basket of cherries to share with the class: they were eating, spitting seeds and listening alertly – unaware how Greek they were."<sup>18</sup>

By 1949,<sup>19</sup> both names had disappeared from the list of teachers, just as all of the Csonváry paintings had disappeared from the walls. The latter had participated at a number of exhibitions abroad and had had quite and adventurous history,<sup>20</sup> from which what concerns us is that the large canvases were on display at the Academy for a while following their 1946 exhibition after the war.<sup>21</sup>

Béla Kondor started his studies at the Academy in 1950<sup>22</sup> and graduated in May 1956. Miklós Erdély acquainted him around 1953-54, which resulted in lifelong friendship.<sup>23</sup> Erdély visited him at the Academy on several occasions, as it turns out from his recollections: "He was in the third year at the Academy when we got acquainted..." and: "...when I visited the Academy, he was engaged in drawing the Dózsa-series, I took a look at it, and it also really surprised me..."<sup>24</sup> The Dózsa-series<sup>25</sup> was a part of Kondor's diploma work, as revealed by the typewritten minutes of the public thesis defence. At the defence, Kondor was matter-of-fact in the technical sense and almost too detailed, while avoiding interpretation.<sup>26</sup> Not Erdély, although much later:

"A similar endeavour of his had already been published in '56 in *Új Hang* [New Voice]. Strange that nobody thought it had something to do with the events of 1956. It is astounding that in March '56, when the atmosphere had still been relatively calm, he had a large copper engraving published in *Új Hang*, with a title something like *Preparing for the Revolution*. I'm not sure, do you know this engraving? There's a chariot-like thing in it. It should be noted that Kondor had a strong penchant for technical things. He could be found every morning at the Nárcisz Espresso, reading the *Autó-Motor* magazine, which is important and typical of him – I would never read anything like this, it had never intrigued me."<sup>27</sup>

*Új Hang* did not mention the title of the engraving, and it was published in August, but in the light of the historical events that were about to transpire, a *premonition of the revolution* can be retrospectively read into it.<sup>28</sup> Especially as in the cited interview, Erdély also refers to his action in 1956: “I did some things too in '56, in an artistic sense (...) – I’ll talk about this some other time ... –, which Kondor also regarded with interest, but a bit like, you know, he looked at these things the way a chicken stares at red corn...”<sup>29</sup> Erdély’s street action *Unguarded Money*, that is, the action that took place on the 2nd and 3rd of November 1956 with the purpose of collecting money for the family members of the victims, was a publicity breakthrough already in its own time: two photographs and several written reports were published about it in the press.<sup>30</sup> Let us note regarding the action that it is worth to pay attention to every detail, namely what happened where, how, why and who the participants were, what was preserved of it by private and public memory, and how its afterlife evolved – for what happened there was something so fundamentally new that it had no name at the time.

Fresh news (as I write this, not when it is published): one of the most prominent commercial art galleries in Budapest is (was) about to exhibit perhaps the most famous piece from Miklós Erdély’s photo mosaic workshop, the Fabulon advertisement dismounted in 2000 from the bare wall it had adorned for decades on Budapest’s Kálvin Square, modelled after Andrea Németh’s photograph. The magically resurfaced mosaic is (was) “unveiled and revived by its former model, Ági Pataki”<sup>31</sup> on the 5th of November 2018. One of the money collecting crates in 1956 was located near the mosaic’s original site. Perhaps one day there will be a virtual Kálvin Square where both will be on view.

### **3. Mosaic**

*“That readying is ready already”*

As there is no room here for a detailed analysis of the era from the retaliations following the 1956 revolution through Kádár’s period of consolidation, the regime change of 1989-90 and the ensuing democratic transition until the recent establishment of the System of National Cooperation, in other words,

the last 60 years – thus we encourage the spectators with an exhibition and the reader with a few mosaic tiles to autonomously grasp the full picture.

### **Gagaism**

Sándor Altorjai started the Academy in 1958, already as a graduate pharmacist. He graduated on 30. June 1963. He got acquainted with Miklós Erdély in 1965, at Ákos Szabó's exhibition, and as his biography reads: "This friendship, which accompanied him till the end of his life, had also had significant influence on his art."<sup>32</sup> Besides his 1967 painting known by the titles *Let Me Sink Upwards / Waving Picture / Portrait of Miklós Erdély*, originally discarded by the jury but nowadays considered the greatest masterpiece of Hungarian Pop Art, the exhibition that opened on the 5th of March 1971 at the Mednyánszky Hall in Budapest has to be mentioned by all means.<sup>33</sup> Altorjai's first and – in his lifetime – only solo exhibition was opened by Erdély reading his *Gaga Manifesto* and performing his related action. The special attention devoted to the event by contemporaneous press illustrates not only the public taste of the time ("gibberish exhibition" – they write, and it is even featured by the radio comedy show), but it also foreshadows the ideological control imposed by increasing political attention around 1973-74, which entailed severe consequences. ("How is it possible that this detrimental tomfoolery, which should so obviously be 'prohibited', is outright 'promoted'...?") Miklós Erdély commemorates his deceased friend in a number of works (The film *Version*, the poem *Failed Attempts*, the work *MESA* presented at the exhibition *Aquarelle*, and one of his last graphics: *But Good God! It's Quarter to Two*). The relationship of the two men, the plethora of works that are in dialogical interaction could be the subject of a separate exhibition.

### **Montage theory**

András Halász recalls the following: "We got acquainted around [19]74, but we didn't become really good friends until '75. In the four years that followed, I spent more time with him than with my wife or he with his. Around that time we organised our lives so that we would meet every day. Still, my relationship with him was ambivalent. I was no longer young, and I often saw Miklós as a rival artist. I thought he was using me for my ideas, but then I realised that this was far from the case. We were not in the same league. From '75

until '79 I visited all of his exhibitions and assisted in the conception of all of his works. I was the one who organised his lecture titled *Montage* at the Academy as a student. He got really frightened when I invited him. That was the first occasion in the history of the school that an outsider, an existentially insecure person had given a lecture. He asked me what he should talk about and I told him whatever he wanted to. The lecture was taking shape, we looked it through, talked it through, and then I started organising an audience to come and listen to it. He was so nervous that he ended up reading the text, sometimes looking up and adding comments, which were of course much more interesting, but were, unfortunately, not recorded. It amounted to two two-hour lectures. Most of the students didn't understand a word of it, as if nothing had happened, life went on. A small group, however, including me, began showing great interest and enthusiasm. They started regularly meeting Miklós, who took this very seriously. This was what eventually became the Rózsa Espresso Circle."<sup>34</sup>

Miklós Erdély recalling the same period in 1983: "I had always done montages, as you might guess, together with the films. I gave a lecture at the Academy of Fine Arts... two lectures. Both of them were very long lectures, and unfortunately I gave an abridged version of the text to the periodical *Világosság* [Light], who forwarded it to the *Filozófiai Szemle* [Philosophy Review] for publication... and somewhere along the way it disappeared. I had another copy, which someone borrowed... but somehow it's all still there in the mix – two three-hour lectures, after all. It was all laid out in there... the whole theory of montage in those two lectures. It would make a 60-page book."<sup>35</sup>

The Academy's party organisation also discussed the lectures, although with some delay, and without mentioning either Miklós Erdély or Éva Körner: "The lecturer reported that at the previous week's Komsomol members' assembly a well-definable group of students criticised the content and level of education at the Academy. They demanded that the Academy's curriculum enable the students to become thoroughly acquainted with certain tendencies in the art scene currently advocated by a very narrow circle, which predominantly address and propagate the latest Western trends. Based on their suggestion, such lecturers were invited to hold extracurricular lectures on the aforementioned topics, whose approach is irreconcilable

with the Marxism-based approach endorsed by the Academy. In the opinion of the Party's leadership, the above views are professed by only a very small group of students at the Academy, and their views are influenced by the aforementioned narrow circle who want to use these students to influence the educational approach of the Academy according to their interests.

*The resolution of the membership assembly and the party conference regarding the discussed item on the agenda (person in charge and deadline indicated):* Discussing the developments at the Komsomol members' assembly, the party leadership has decided to more closely monitor the Komsomol's activity in the future, while providing effective doctrinal support to the Komsomol leadership in order to dispense with the aforementioned phenomena. To this end, in the days to follow, but not later than Nov. 19th, the party leadership and the Komsomol leadership shall discuss the arising problems at a joint session."<sup>36</sup>

### **Time-Möbius**

In 1949 László Cs. Szabó decided not to obey the bureaucratic command ordering him to return home ahead of time from his residency in Rome, and thus it was not before 1980 that he first returned to visit the People's Republic of Hungary – as it was then called – after his departure in 1948. He only allowed one public appearance in his program: on the Wednesday of 1st October 1980, from 3 pm to 5 pm, he held a two-hour lecture at the Academy of Fine Arts, where he had been a professor before 1949. So began his lecture: "As I said in the last class... thirty-one years ago..."

On the same day, 1st of October 1980, Miklós Erdély also held a lecture at the conference *Art in a Changing World*, upon invitation by Lajos Németh. So began his lecture: "These past days we have been looking at the peculiar fate of art in a changing world." Following the introduction, he read his *Marly Theses*.<sup>37</sup>

The first sentence, conception of time and historical context of László Cs Szabó's lecture at the Academy<sup>38</sup> evokes the first line of the second part of Miklós Erdély's poem *My Golden Fascists*, written on the 40th anniversary of Hungary's liberation from fascism:

"Now, that after forty years I'm coming around from my first indignation,"  
Private time, fate, the "continuity of the history" of the individual and the

memory of the changing world as historical time, now and once upon a time, the time and content of the “previous class (hour)” and the moment of *first indignation* collectively and even so concisely, perfectly expresses everything we know about time, up until the moment someone asks us to explain.

Several photographs were taken at László Cs. Szabó’s lecture and the following reception. The armchairs and table that are still in use in the institution’s conference room are recognizable, and the lecture hall now called screening hall has also remained mostly the same. In a colour photograph, the lecturer can be seen in the latter room in the company of Rector József Somogyi, some red flowers and a magnetic tape recorder.<sup>39</sup> According to another, black-and-white photograph from the lecture hall,<sup>40</sup> at least three members of the *InDiGo Group*,<sup>41</sup> then students of the Academy, had also listened to Cs. Szabó’s lecture: Tivadar Nemesi, Zoltán Lábás, Ádám Bálint. They would also participate in the *InDiGo* exhibition *Aquarelle* arranged a month and a half later, for which each of them would receive an official letter from the aforementioned rector.

On the 30th of January 1981, six students of the Academy of Fine Arts received a rector’s warning for having participated in a particular exhibition: 4th year painter Ádám Bálint, 4th year painter András Böröcz, 2nd year scenic- and costume designer Zoltán Lábás, 5th year painter Tivadar Nemesi, 4th year painter László Révész and 5th year graphic artist János Szirtes. The text of the warning: “In December 1980, you participated in an exhibition that I had not permitted. With regard to the fact that with this act you violated the rules of the Academy, I hereby give you a written warning. Moreover, I prohibit your participation in any exhibition outside the Academy for the duration of the entire schoolyear. I advise you not to exhibit such behaviour in the future as in case of repeated violation, I shall initiate disciplinary proceedings.” Dated 30 January 1981, signed by the rector. According to a number of recollections, the event that had given cause to the warning was *Aquarelle, exhibition of the Indigo Group*, which had opened at 7 pm on Tuesday, 18th of November 1980 at the Bercsényi Club in Budapest and was banned and shut down shortly after. The Indigo Group was supposed to have another exhibition in December 1980 at the Csepel Paper Works titled *Paper Works 3*, for which the poster had already been made, but the exhibition was put off, and according to the stencilled flyer, eventually opened at 3 pm on

Wednesday, 14th of January 1981.

The operation of political authority is rarely transparent, especially in everyday life; in other words, the presence of the prevailing regime is barely and only indirectly perceivable. For instance, neither the previously cited minutes of a party conference nor the student reports contain any factual data. Deliberately so, as it is these documents, still referable and identifiable in their own time, are the key for interpretation. If the facts are forgotten and fall into the oblivion of history as they so often do, the obscure<sup>42</sup> documents remain impenetrable and thus uninteresting. At the same time, with the appropriate background, seemingly insignificant details reveal and clarify the fundamental nature of the regime.

The significance of the event, the 1975 lectures and their consequences, and the warnings is this: in the light of the associated facts it becomes clear that the main problem was unequivocally Miklós Erdély, and through his person, the approach that was as undesirable in 1981 as it had been in 1975 and 1949 – namely, up-to-date, autonomous, independent artistic thought and all the things in support of it, such as being well-informed and aware of contemporary art events, current trends and tendencies. In even more general terms, the freedom of learning, gathering knowledge and information, the natural place and medium of which is incidentally education itself, with special regard to academic, university education. Therefore, neither the institution, nor the individual can acquiesce in the restriction of *libertas scholastica*, academic freedom, and thus the freedom of creative work, research, learning and teaching. It is undoubtedly at this point that the common denominator which can place individual and institution on the same platform is manifested as a rare and therefore peculiar conjunction of these two often confronted *bodies*. An interesting moral – that is, if an exhibition can even have such thing as a moral.

Miklós Peternák

1. Ágh, István: Kondor-memoár. [Kondor-memoire] *Magyar Nemzet*, 25 February 1989. p. 11.

2. About the Chapel in Balatonboglár: [http://artpool.hu/boglar/default\\_e.html](http://artpool.hu/boglar/default_e.html) and *Törvénytelen avantgárd. Galántai György balatonboglári kápolnaműterme 1970–1973* [Illegal Avant-garde, the

- Chapel Studio of György Galántai in Balatonboglár 1970–1973], (eds. Júlia Klaniczay – Edit Sasvári), Artpool–Balassi, Budapest, 2003. pp. 43–90 (English translation by Krisztina Sarkady-Hart) The text of the cited article in English on Artpool: [http://www.artpool.hu/boglar/Szabo\\_e.html](http://www.artpool.hu/boglar/Szabo_e.html)
3. The respective part of *My Golden Fascists* refers to two articles published side by side on page 9. of the Friday, 20 July 1984 issue of the daily Magyar Nemzet (*The cargo-cult; Am I doing what you want?*), and the photo series displays the title page and unpaginated 10th page of the Wednesday, 11 April 1972 issue of the daily Népszabadság. The daily Magyar Nemzet was discontinued after 80 years on 11 April 2018, and the last issue of Népszabadság, established in November 1956, was published on 8 October 2016. The poem recited by Miklós Erdély: <http://artpool.hu/Erdely/aranyfasiztaim.html> [Miklós Erdély: *My Golden Fascists*. Translated by Adele Eisenstein and John Batki]
4. “Artpool exhibits 4-4 objects, or works of art in the broader sense by each of the three authors from the period of 1965-70. In theory they have no copyright as Fluxus work, anyone can produce or reproduce them. Their status however is rather varied. We have produced the works of Miklós Erdély, who died in 1986, according to his instructions with the exception of ‘Solitaire for the Dead’. His ‘Newspaper Cake’ was produced by Gábor Altorjay in 1967.” Beke, László: [http://www.artpool.hu/Fluxus/3x4/Beke\\_en.html](http://www.artpool.hu/Fluxus/3x4/Beke_en.html)
5. Flusser, Vilém: Television Image and Political Space in the Light of the Romanian Revolution. Lecture in the Symposium THE MEDIA ARE WITH US. The Role of Television in the Romanian Revolution. Budapest, 7th April, 1990 (24’30”). In: “*We shall survive in the memory of others*” Vilém Flusser. DVD. 2010. ISBN 978-3-86560-806-2 <http://flusserdvd.c3.hu/>
6. Erdély, Miklós: *Optimistic lecture*. (Translated by Zsuzsanna Szegedy-Maszák)
7. Pogány Ö., Gábor: Sztálin a művészetért. [Stalin for Art] *Szabad Művészet*, 1949. 11-12. p. 433, 434.
8. Dezső Bokros Birman (Újpest, 19 November 1889 – Budapest, 24 January 1965.) Also see: Erdély, Miklós: Bokros. In: Erdély, Miklós: *Művészeti írások*. [Writings on Art] (ed. Miklós Peternák). Képzőművészeti Kiadó, Budapest, 1991. pp. 74–77., as well as the recollection by József Kótai in the present publication.
9. Interview from 1983: „Kicsit úgy nézte ezeket a dolgokat, mint a tyúk a piros kukoricát...” Erdély Miklós Kondor Béla és az avantgárd kapcsolatáról. [“He looked at these things the way a chicken stares at red corn...” Miklós Erdély on Béla Kondor’s relation to the avant-garde] Interview by András Rényi. Edited and annotated by Annamária Szőke. Műút, No. 037. 2013. pp. 50–58. [http://www.muut.hu/archivum/543#\\_ftnref22](http://www.muut.hu/archivum/543#_ftnref22) and [http://epa.oszk.hu/02300/02381/00037/pdf/EPA02381\\_muut\\_2013\\_37\\_050-059.pdf](http://epa.oszk.hu/02300/02381/00037/pdf/EPA02381_muut_2013_37_050-059.pdf)
10. Szípócs, Krisztina: Történetek Erdély Miklósról. (Szenes Zsuzsa) [Stories about Miklós Erdély. (Zsuzsa Szenes)], *Balkon*, 11/1998. p. 4.
11. Erdély briefly spoke about these years when in his lecture “New Trends in Current Art”, organised by Éva Körner in the frame of the art history series of the Society for Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge, describing his own action held on the 25th of November 1981 at the Budapest Technical University: I considered it auspicious that I had to perform in the environment of the Polytechnic Institute. At first I was assigned the R building but that wouldn’t have been so interesting. But all this took place in a barren lecture hall, where I had attended as an architecture

student, and can recall drawing my structural notes in a panic – it was horribly thrilling now to be sloshing mineral water on this lectern, for the student who had once upon a time sat cringing in these seats. I was also pleased by the relation in which the Bible, or the Book of Ecclesiastes with its realistic but not rationalist attitude clashes with this ultra-rationalist spirit of the Polytechnic Institute, so palpable even in the corridors. Another point of contact with the Bible was this anti-Semitic atmosphere at the Polytechnic. I can certainly understand how the Christian spirit of the '20's would have surfaced there. I had always seen anti-Semitic doors there, and could see how in the '20's the chauvinist Hungarian movement gathered there, and sensed that this too added a delicate link to the situation I found myself in now. I had attended the Polytechnic during the Rákosi-regime, when such considerations were left rather vague. In this respect it is most difficult to discuss that period because that's when such matters were most blurred over. During the Hitler era – in its tragedy – there had been an incredible Biblical opportunity to examine this, but not so in the Fifties. Miklós Erdély: *Apocryphal Lecture*, 2 December 1981, Young Artists Club (FMK), Translated by John Bárti. Audio and transcript in Hungarian: <http://www.artpool.hu/FMK/apokrif/Erdely.html>

12. School Register page of 1st and 2nd year students of the 1st semester of schoolyear 1946-47., MKE Archives 11/a 198; School Register page of 1st and 2nd year students of the 2nd semester of schoolyear 1946-47., MKE Archives 11/a 220

13. "...we were classmates then, also lived close to each other, so we also met very often ..." Cf. Interview in 1983., note 9.

14. "...I attended sculpture with Tamás Vígh and I know that he is a man of high taste and excellent abilities..." Cf. Interview in 1983., note 9.

15. I hereby appoint writer dr. László Cs. Szabó to Pay Class 5 in Group A) of the teaching staff at the National Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts. Dated Budapest, 4th of March, 1946. underigned Zoltán Tildy, Ferenc Nagy. *Magyar Közlöny - Hivatalos lap* [Hungarian Official Gazette], 02. 04. 1946.; Cs. Szabó László író a Képzőművészeti főiskola tanárává nevezték ki. [Writer László Cs. Szabó appointed as professor of the Academy of Fine Arts] *Népszava*, 7 April 1946., p. 7.

16. "As a result of László Cs. Szabó's conscious efforts before 1948, the academy's library was replete with publications introducing modern endeavours. Otherwise, those were grave and tormented times. This whole socialist realism seemed to us to be a load of nonsense, namely that we should paint naturally, as we see things, but the theme of the image should represent the Soviet Union twenty years in the future." Kis, Tibor: Századvégi zárszámadás. Beszélgetés Csernus Tiborral [Final Accounts at the End of the Century. Conversation with Tibor Csernus]. *Kritika*, 1996. p. 10. 31.

17. "By courtesy of Gedeon Gerlőczy, the architecture professor safeguarding the Csontváry-estate, at the end of the war, the majority of the master's works were transferred from the family's paltry home in Galamb street to the Academy. According to the recollections of Lajos Luzsicza and Gábor Szinte, the large canvases were hanging in the rooms of the library." Révész, Emese: *A realizmus akadémiaja. A Magyar Képzőművészeti Főiskola 1945 és 1956 között*. [The Academy of Realism. The Hungarian University of Fine Arts between 1945 and 1956.] In: *Forradalom előtt. A Magyar Képzőművészeti Főiskola 1945 és 1956 között*. (ed.: Katalin B. Majkó) Magyar Képzőművészeti

Egyetem, Budapest, 2017. p. 25. For more about the period, cf. this publication and the exhibition it accompanies.

18. Cs. Szabó, László: HALFEJŰ PÁSZTORBOT [Fish-headed Shepherd's Staff]. Magyar Könyves Céh, London, 1960. Electronic edition: Bibliotheca Mikes International, 2007. p. 6. <http://mek.oszk.hu/05100/05118/05118.pdf>

19. The daily *Szabad Nép* gave a report on the opening of the academic year in 1949: "The academic year at the Academy of Fine Arts was opened on Saturday. The entire board of professors as well as the students of the academy were present, and even comrade Géza Losonczy, State Secretary for Popular Culture made an appearance. Representing the Ministry of Popular Culture, comrade Ágnes Kenyeres, Head of Department gave a speech: [...] The Academy must dispose of soulless formalism, naturalism and the slightest remains of bourgeois ideology. Of great assistance in this effort are the Soviet Union's copious experiences. The world's leading, superior art will show us the way, aid us through the obstacles and motivate us towards our achievements." *Szabad Nép* [Free People], 16. October 1949., p. 10.

20. Cf. Gedeon Gerlóczy's notes on the preparations of the 1949 exhibition and its reception. *Csontváry-émlékkönyv. Válogatás Csontváry Kosztká Tivadar írásaiból és a Csontváry-irodalomból.* [Csontváry Memory Book. A selection of writings by and about Tivadar Csontváry Kosztká.] Selected and annotated by Gedeon Gerlóczy. Introduction, commentary and editing by Lajos Németh. Corvina, Budapest, 1976. pp. 136–139. Gerlóczy writes: "... the large canvases had not been recovered until 1956. (...) The eight small paintings were returned to me in September 1956 and the seven drawings in June 1964." There are relatively few contemporaneous Hungarian reports on the success of the show in Paris: "The latest issue of the French periodical *Cahiers d'Art* is dedicated to the art of Matisse, Miro and Csontváry. The most characteristic works of the revolutionary Hungarian artist are represented by ten large reproductions and a thorough article co-authored by Árpád Mezei and Marcel Jean." *Kis Ujság* [Small News] 28. September 1949. *Kis Ujság* had been the central paper of the Independent Smallholders Party, and was discontinued in the same year – practically together with the party itself.

21. Several newspapers published reports on the exhibition; the most detailed one was in *Világosság* [Light], 5. November 1946.: "Eleven paintings and four drawings by painter Tivadar Csontváry Kosztká are on view at the 2nd District Party Office ..." In 1946, 69. Andrásy Avenue was also the venue of a number of important exhibitions, for instance the show of the European School in November 1946. *Világ* [World], 27. November 1946. p. 2. A scathing criticism by György Lukács about the works of Ernő Kállai: *A természet rejtett arca* [The hidden face of nature] and Béla Hamvas – Katalin Kemény: *Forradalom a művészetben* [Revolution in art] was published in Issue 9/1947 of *Forum.*, under the title *Az absztrakt művészet magyar elméletei* [Hungarian theories of abstract art].

22. MKE Archives 11/a 217. 1950-51, Year 1.

23. Cf. especially: Erdély, Miklós: KB. *Életünk*, 6/1985. pp. 557–562.; re-published in *Kultúra és közösség* [Culture and community] 4/1990., pp. 142–146. (including Dániel Erdély's recollection); and Erdély, Miklós: *Művészeti írások* [Writings on art], Képzőművészeti Kiadó, Budapest, 1991. pp. 14–22.

Erdély Miklós Kondor Béláról. Részlet egy 1981 körül készült magnófelvétélből. [Miklós Erdély on Béla Kondor. Excerpt from a tape recording from around 1981.] *Beszélő*, 1/1999., pp. 104–115. The audio recording is available online in Hungarian: <http://artpool.hu/Erdely/Kondor.html>

Interview of András Rényi from 1983, cf. note 9. The history of Erdély's piece *Black Obituary* is described and analysed in detail by János Sugár: Minden más ezután. [Everything else hereinafter] *Artmagazin*, 6/2017., pp. 54-59. [http://artmagazin.hu/artmagazin\\_hirek/minden\\_mas\\_ezutan.3917.html](http://artmagazin.hu/artmagazin_hirek/minden_mas_ezutan.3917.html)

24. Cf. note. 9.

25. "Sándor Bortnyik did not want the power to slip from his hands, so contrary to his prior approach, he pretended to be an advocate of naturalism. Painted around this time, his parody series "Modernised Classics" was also meant to make this impression. With a smart tactical move, he made the practical realisation of the new educational principles the exclusive duty of the arts teachers, and he personally safeguarded the theoretical purity and scholastic orderliness of the institution. He established the so-called science department, the task of which was to influence teachers and students using the methods of ideological campaigns, as well as the monitoring of teachers to make sure they were actually reading the brochures that had been handed out to them. The so-called director-general's seminars were also tools of the theoretical struggle, at which he forced students to take a stand by making them choose between incomparable artworks. In this manner, for instance, Kondor had to choose between two projected reproductions: one depicting *A Bar at the Folies-Bergere* by Manet and the other loganson's *Interrogation of the Communists*. [...] The majority of students could study traditions only among very rigid boundaries. Most of them acquiesced, but some wanted to know more and freely select their role models for themselves, by to their own taste. These were the most diligent visitors of the library. It was for their supervision that book cards were introduced, which were then studied by the director general on a monthly basis. Students' reading lists had a significant role in cadre assessment." Végvári, Lajos: Kondor Béla Dózsa-sorozatának keletkezése. [The conception of Béla Kondor's Dózsa-series] *A Miskolci Hermann Ottó Múzeum Közleményei* 17. Miskolc, 1979, pp. 5–11.

26. MKE Archives, Diplomamunka bírálókat [Thesis reviews], 1955/56. The whole defence is on pages 165 – 204. The related section: "6. Preparing for the Revolution. This was my first plate that I had managed to complete with one etching. Every difference in colour and material is the result of divergence in the etching needle's work. Overall, there are no crossing lines on the plate, but on a small surface I did use fully non-transparent paint. I used the knowledge I had gained from studying Dürer's original copper engravings and etchings. The advantage of the single-etch procedure is its simplicity and visibility, devoid of the speculations of pre-planning multiple etchings. In this case, all the artist can rely on is the accuracy of his graphic data, the liveliness of line rhythm and the richness of the facture. Etching duration should be determined so as to bring out the purity as well as darkness of the figure. In other words, a particular chosen line thickness entirely determines the possibilities of the needle's work." p. 168. It is worth comparing the picture with Dürer's famous copper engraving made in the year of Dózsa's peasant revolt: *Melencolia I.* 1514. 240x188 mm

27. Erdély, Miklós: lecture excerpt based on tape recording, autumn 1981 / spring 1982 <http://beszelo.c3.hu/cikkek/erdely-miklos-kondor-belarol>

*Preparing for the Revolution*. 1956, 200 x 210 mm, *Béla Kondor (1931–1972) Oeuvre-catalogue*. Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest, 1984. (Compiled by Kálmán Bolgár and Katalin Nagy T.) p. 49., 56/9. The engraving was published in *Új Hang*, 8/1956., p. 48. as an illustration of the study by Lajos Németh titled *Kondor Béla rézkarcai* [On Béla Kondor's copper engravings]. Re-published: Németh, Lajos: *Gesztus vagy alkotás. Válogatott írások a kortárs magyar képzőművészetről*. [Gesture or artwork. Selected writings on contemporary Hungarian art.] MTA Művészettörténeti Kutatóintézet. Budapest, 2001. pp. 4-7.

28. “Andás Rényi: But this whole series is a big, one might say, political pamphlet. (...)

Miklós Erdély: This is an off-the-rack topic, but apparently this was the one that could convey the most of that zeitgeist. I think this was subconscious with Kondor. And he wasn't even politically...

A. R.: Don't misunderstand me, I'm not saying that this was some deliberate allegory governed by political intentions, as that is not the case. The case is much rather that the whole... If one looks at these pages, the value structure of these works is such that it is impossible to ascertain whether the peasant leader, when holding his speech at Cegléd, whether he is a revolutionary with a flaming soul or a dark manipulator. M. E.: Yes, this is entirely so with all of Kondor. I don't know if you know his drawing that actually expressed his political irony. It's a parade, I think during the Hungarian Soviet Republic after World War I, with everyone carrying signs, that say “Surrender your places to others”. Perhaps you know that engraving.” Cf. note 9. The mentioned graphic: *A Tanácsköztársaság emlékére, Tüntetés*. [In Memory of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Protest.] 1958. copper engraving, 70x170 mm. Kondor, Béla. Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest, 1984. p. 65. 29. Cf. note 9.

30. Erdély in 1983 about the action: “Erdély: The first time it occurred to me that art was good for more than what it was being used for – that it was more than decoration or material for collecting, and just creating works – was in 1956. At the time, no one in the world was thinking of that yet, maybe with the exception of Cage in music. This realization culminated in a conceptual action. From then on, I stuck with it. Strangely, in '56, everyone wanted to do something – everything – that had been missing in art up to that point. They wanted to compensate for what was missing.

M.P.: And what was it that you did?

Erdély: It was that ‘unguarded money on the street’ project. I made six posters that had a total of six hundred forints stuck in them, each with a 100-forint bill you could pull out. When artists came to my place – Gáyor and others – saying we should start a new periodical, etc. – that was when I felt that things were really underway, because I heard on the radio that someone shot a bullet into a shop window and a shoe was wounded – then the shooter put a 10-forint coin under the shoe, which is still there. That was the important part, the new part. Then we rounded up a group of people and had them toss money into an unguarded box at six different locations all over Budapest, and from that point on it was my job to go around in the Writers' Association car and shoo off the national guardsmen standing next to the box, because it was impossible for them to understand there was no reason to guard it. One time they almost shot me when I said ‘Okay boys, get away from that box!’... Now this was really the application of artistic thinking in a given situation; if enthusiasm suddenly establishes a new moral phenomenon, the artist must recognize this. This really must be emphasized, because it is the artist's task.” Peternák, Miklós: *Beszélgetés*

Erdély Miklóssal, 1983 tavaszán. [Conversation with Miklós Erdély, Spring 1983.] *Árgus*, 5/1991., pp. 75-88. Translated by Jim Tucker.

The most detailed analysis of the action thus far: Boros, Géza, Pénz az utcán. Egy 1956-os akció és utóélete. [Money on the street. An action in 1956 and its afterlife.] *Artnmagazin* 8/2016. [http://epa.oszk.hu/02900/02996/00008/pdf/EPA02996\\_artm\\_2016\\_8\\_054-063.pdf](http://epa.oszk.hu/02900/02996/00008/pdf/EPA02996_artm_2016_8_054-063.pdf)

31. <http://hirlevel.webformance.hu/w/1763Fw1PxYsOAocOFLcnM763nw/TnYOvu0xvhFdjFjQ4zYGUw/892UHD7APkfr0G51ORkvKBWw>

32. Beke, László: Altorjai Sándor életrajza. [Biography of Sándor Altorjai] *Altorjai Sándor (1933-1979)*. Eds.: László Beke, Krisztina Dékei. Műcsarnok, Első Magyar Látványtár, MTA Művészettörténeti Kutatóintézet, Budapest, 2003. p. 15. For more detailed information, in addition to the volume published to accompany the retrospective exhibition at the Műcsarnok / Kunsthalle, we recommend the compilations of György Galántai and Artpool: Galántai, György: Aleatorikus demontázs vagy képinstalláció? Gondolatok Altorjai Sándor kiállítása kapcsán. Altorjai Sándor (1933–1979) tárgymunkáinak kiállítása [Aleatoric demontage or picture installation? Thoughts on Sándor Altorjai's exhibition. Exhibition of object works by Sándor Altorjai (1933–1979)], *Balkon*, 10/1998., pp. 28–29. English version online: [http://www.artpool.hu/Altorjai/galantai\\_en.html](http://www.artpool.hu/Altorjai/galantai_en.html) (translated by Krisztina Sarkady-Hart); pages in Hungarian: <http://www.artpool.hu/Altorjai/default.html> and <http://www.artpool.hu/Research/altorjai.html>

Let Me Sink Upwards, Hungarian National Gallery – Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest

<https://hu.museum-digital.de/portal/index.php?t=objekt&oges=204893&navlang=en>

33. Cf. previous note, related documents in the cited book on Altorjai published in 2003, on pages 344 – 354.

34. “Ennek az interjúnak sem örülne” (interjú Halász Andrással) [“He wouldn’t be happy about this interview” (interview with András Halász)], *Puskin utca*, 4/2008., pp. 33-34. Cf. also: Halász, András: Közvetítés pohárban [Broadcast in a glass], *Magyar Műhely*, 15. June 1983. (Year 21., No. 67.) pp. 41–48. He mentions here that Éva Körner, who also held a lecture at the Academy in 1975, spoke about Documenta 5 in Kassel. She was the curator of the exhibition *Rózsa presszó* 1976-1998 at the Ernst Museum in Budapest, 10. December 1998. – 10. January 1999. *Magyar Lettre*, 1998. spring, <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00012/00016/37arc.htm>

35. *Árgus*, 1991., cf. note 30. The mentioned fragment of the lectures in manuscript form was published as: Erdély, Miklós: *Montázsgesztus és effektus*. [Montage gesture and effect] In: Erdély, Miklós: *A filmről. (Filmelméleti írások, forgatókönyvek, filmtervek, kritikák). Válogatott írások II.* [On film. (Writings in film theory, scripts, synopses, reviews). Selected writings II.] Compiled by Miklós Peternák. Eds.: László Beke, Annamária Szőke. Balassi Kiadó – BAE Tartóshullám – Intermédia, Budapest, 1995. pp. 142 – 160. The letters of invitation can be found at the MKE Archives (Filed documents of the Rector’s Office, Fond 46., 144/1975), based on which the date of the second lecture should be corrected. The first lecture took place at 4 pm on Tuesday, 4. March 1975., the second, as opposed to former publications, at 4 pm on Tuesday, 15. April 1975. Éva Körner’s lecture was on 18. March 1975.

36. Emlékeztető az 1975. november 12-én tartott MSZMP vezetőségi ülésről. Beszámoló az elmúlt KISZ taggyűlés tapasztalatairól. Előadó: dr. Nemes László. [Memorandum on the

leadership conference of the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party on 12. November 1975. Report on the experiences of the last Komszol membership meeting. Rapporteur: dr. László Nemes.] A Képzőművészeti Főiskola MSZMP szervezet (Alapszáma: VI. 182.) emlékeztetői, 1973 – 1976. [Academy of Fine Arts HSWP Organisation (Fond. No. VI. 182.) memoranda, 1973-1976.] MKE Archives. Collectively filed mixed documents, 1975-77. Box 4.

37. Miklós Erdély ART AS AN EMPTY SIGN. Introduction to the THESES FOR THE MARLY CONFERENCE OF 1980. Translated by John Batki Theoretical conference of the Association of Hungarian Fine and Applied Artists on the occasion of the World Art Week. 29-30. September – 1. October 1980. <http://www.artpool.hu/kontextus/mono/nullpont6b2.html>

38. “«As I said in the last class... thirty-one years ago.» This was how I began. If anyone is well-versed in old Spanish literature, they will probably figure out that this opening was borrowed. 16th century poet, Augustinian priest and professor of the University of Salamanca Fray Luis de León had had an altercation with the Dominicans over some tenets, which was the most foolish thing he could have done in those times. His fellow teachers sold him out to the Inquisition and he was punished with a sentence of aggravated imprisonment for five years. (His cellmate died next to him.) After he was set free, he got his university department back, and these were his first words in his first class: «As we said yesterday... »” Békés, Gellért: Beszélgetés a 75 éves Cs. Szabó Lászlóval. [Conversation with the 75-year-old László Cs. Szabó] *Katolikus Szemle* 32. (Rome), 4/1980. p. 345.

39. József Somogyi's beautiful letter of invitation to Cs. Szabó was preserved at the MKE Archives, dated 1. August 1980. As a transcript of the tape recording, the lecture was published 37 years later, in Issue 3/2017 of the periodical *Jelenkor* [Present day], with an accompanying essay by József Takáts.

40. The black-and-white photographs were taken by Ferenc Novotta. The photographs are preserved at the Petőfi Literary Museum, catalogued under F.9698, F.9730, and the photographs of the conference hall under F.9695, F.9697.

41. Creativity Exercises, Fantasy Developing Exercises (FAFEJ) and Inter-Disciplinary-Thinking (InDiGo). Miklós Erdély's art pedagogical activity, 1975–1986 Written and compiled by Sándor Hornyik and Annamária Szőke. Published as a summary in: *Kreativitási gyakorlatok, FAFEJ, INDIGO. Erdély Miklós művészetpedagógiai tevékenysége 1975–1986*. Compiled by Sándor Hornyik and Annamária Szőke. Edited by Annamária Szőke. MTA Művészettörténeti Kutatóintézet – Gondolat Kiadó – 2B Alapítvány – Erdély Miklós Alapítvány, Budapest, 2008. pp. 497–523. Translated by Ágnes Csonka, using the earlier translations of Dániel Bíró and Györgyi Zala.

42. Cf. Bardi, Teri: A senki földjén voltunk ... Beszélgetés Sugár Jánossal. [We were in the no man's land ... Conversation with János Sugár.] *A senki földjén. A Beszélő melléklete Erdély Miklósról*. [In the no man's land. Beszélő's supplement on Miklós Erdély] 26. October 1991. p. 10.

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