

## Couleur Locale 2

Today, when it comes to cultural forms and artistic means of expression – due to its easier communication than ever before and its wide international spread – it is natural for individual modes of self-expression to globalize and become part of the syntagm of ‘culture anywhere’. An interesting question is how the characteristics of a place or ‘local spirit’ appear in culture and the fine arts? What can be contrasted with an approach that does not pay attention to the specifics of the generalizing, space, time, and local worlds? Of course, nowadays there can be no question of anyone interpreting cultural works following the “milieu theory” of Hippolyte Taine, relying on the aspects of the “three forces” (race, environment, time), moreover, it can be stated with certainty that the opposite is what makes what is currently happening in culture interesting: the relaxation, the removal, the reflected treatment of the definitions related to the national, social and cultural-artistic heritage. The defining experience of our time is that significant cultural creations are born where creators are able to separate local curiosity from provincialism, ready to transcend inwardness, popularity, and nationalism to find a way to fuller feelings and worldviews that enrich their own cultural traditions. There are situations when you avoid being locked into your own culture with the help of other local cultures, by the personal and collegial relationships with them. Transylvania is also a place, where artists have learned to see the issue of isolation and openness to the world together with alternatives to cultural oppression and creative collaboration. This leads to the understanding that local colors themselves are diverse, even if the problems inherent in them are similar. Thus, appreciating the couleur locale also means susceptibility to detail, uniqueness, and otherness, as well as a rejection of impatience and aggression towards it. The true artist lives and creates in this receptivity and is therefore able to create new sensations and structures of meaning.

So what does it mean to search for and rediscover the local curiosity in the vision of a group of young and middle-generation artists from Transylvania? At first glance, perhaps, is the fact that artists can easily find inspiration in the moments of Romanian-Hungarian cultural division and forced togetherness, the inventory situation of transfer and takeover with historical power changes, separation or the expropriation of culture. That is indeed the case, but they do not do so in the spirit of some loud activism and the ruthlessness of ‘savior purposefulness’, but at the same time they are able to view it with an ironic distance, exploit the tension inherent in generating creative meaning surpluses. The tone of “non-public”, “only artistic” also prevails in the fact that the search and evocation of the local hue has innumerable personal, self-searching and self-displaying aspects, and treats pictorial reality as a primary medium, and thus, naturally, the couleur locale is just as much a part of the "Loneliness Street" in the light of the flashlight, or the experience of a “performance anthropologist” wandering between the creative world of the ‘homeless’ present and the past, as well as a surreal evocation of the historical pictorial world in the present, in the landscape, since the colors and forms of the mural and the landscape are both local. It is understandable, therefore, that this theme is not incidental to the exhibiting Transylvanian artists, some of whom took part in the Couleur Locale 1 exhibition in Târgu Mureș Castle Gallery in November 2002.

The Couleur Locale 2 exhibition was organized by the ARTeast Foundation in November 2013 in Târgu Mureș, at the B5 Studio Gallery. Invited artists: Márta Adorjáni, Dénes Miklósi, Szilárd

Miklós (Cluj-Napoca), Attila Kispál, Ágnes Evelin Kispál, Ferenc Wanek, Barnabás Vetro (Sfântu Gheorghe) József Bartha, Zsolt Fekete, Monotremu (Târgu Mureş).

The thematic overview of the exhibited works (mostly installations and video installations) should be no more than open alternatives, outlining mere points of reference that do not represent some kind of external, intellectualizing metanarrative in relation to the pictorial world of each work or the in the film narratives. It is only a tangential approximation that Ágnes Evelin Kispál's *Untitled, 6 '40"* video installation evokes the line of action in which someone routinely, according to one's taste, selects what they don't eat from a mixed vegetable soup. However, placed in the exhibition space, this line of action becomes a carrier of cultural connotations. The reference to the cultural policy context is similarly strong in Dénes Miklósi's installation: *The concept of authority. Logo of the Romanian National Opera in Cluj-Napoca*. The work refers to the authority by composing the statue of Thalia – the logo of the theater, (what became a symbol of the theater building) into a traffic prohibition sign. This refers to the fact, that during the historical changes of power between Hungarians and Romanians, the building was always home to the national theater of the currently ruling nation. In a broader sense, the protest is against the expropriation of theater for power purposes. We encounter a more definite formulation of potential political meanings, specifically in plastic forms and in ludic contexts, in József Bartha's installation: *National Goal Throwing Game*. Hungarian and Romanian national color patterns formed from the boxes of the fair's throwing toy cannot be knocked tumbled down even with the most targeted throw without the other national pattern being overturned. So one can decide: either not play at all, or play without considering any of them. The political connotations mentioned so far as possible thoughts of the observer live longer, but they only appear as a distant and not at all concretized possibility in the series of scenes accelerated to humor in the video installation of Attila Kispál and Ferenc Wanek, titled *Leletár (Inventory)*. The authors transfer various objects to each other, and the flux of images can be stopped at any time with a button placed on a stand, known from television quizzes, but continued by releasing the button. The interactions of the Hungarian and Romanian cultures in Transylvania (but at the same time their unnatural relationship, which carries both opportunity and compulsion) are perhaps most emphatically represented by the work of the artist dou called Monotremu: *Hungarian Language Lesson*. An ad framed and placed under a glass does not advertise a service, but acceptance. Caption: *I accept a Hungarian (language) lesson*. But the slices of paper containing the telephone number at the bottom of the leaflet are inaccessible because of the glass, and this definitely calls into question the sincerity of the intention contained in the text.

A definite and insoluble duality can be felt in almost all the works in the exhibition. Even in the case of works such as Dénes Miklósi's: *József Bob, a young artist (1982) Promenade painting studio of the Institute of Fine Arts of Cluj-Napoca, former building of the Art Gallery*. The image is a light-box illuminating a special white graphics. The figure is lying loosely on a casual bed made up of two benches, which obviously can't be comfortable. With his inverted posture, it seems as if he is just between the two benches, but this intermittency also evokes in us the saying, "between two chairs under the bench". Attention to similarly ambivalent situations and a sense of life referring to soillessness can be seen in the installation of Márta Adorjáni: *Untitled*. The work is a combination of a white board and a flashlight, the inscription can be read in the shadow of the pins inserted in the board under the light of the lamp: *Loneliness street*. Miklós Szilárd: *Homeless Anthropology (Notes for an Art History Research, 2012)* reflects the meaning

written into space and the search for an arrangement in the world of meaning, evoking the specific possibilities of performance art. The exhibited spatial structure is a camp table of a visual anthropologist field researcher who commutes between the present and the past, and whose inscriptions evoke the lesson of the avant-garde performance and the regime change of the Eastern Bloc: "The sources of power evaporate and reappear elsewhere." The pictures of the related video installation show the "archive recordings" recreated as "participating observers" of the former Ann-Art performance festivals (1990-1999), there are fragments of text evoking performance accounts, ideas, and art history sentiments, all of which alternate with the life scenes of a Cocker Spaniel named Kobak. Due to the continuous movement and the parallel and alternating presence of the two lines of reference, the viewer loses the separability of the time planes of the work of art, and the events constructed afterwards also seem to be elements of the evoked past. The most astonishing example of duality, forced coexistence, and the motor and mental coordination of the finest bodily functions and movements is the work of the Monotremu dou: *Two driving licenses*. The subjects of the photograph and description as components of the work are Abigail and Brittany, a Siamese twin couple living in London who, albeit in one body, came into the world with a separate heads and control their own body side separately. Nevertheless, they both got their driving license. Compared to such examples of duality and interdependence, any other duality, for example, what is a peculiar but obviously far from perfect congruence between the sound of a musical work and the play of the "child-musician" who plays it seems less dissonant. Barnabás Vetró (Barunabasu Betoro): *Benicio live, 3'50* "is a repetitive film of a video installation that captures such joyful, self-forgotten music making, in which harmony and incoherence melt into cheerfulness. A complex pictorial work depicting duality and even trinity and intertwining different genres of reality is the image of Zsolt Fekete (Lovacska), which creates a visual space that interacts with the works of Aladár Kőrösfői-Kriesch and Ágnes Szakács. In this way, a mural, a photograph and a clothing piece are combined into a single reference, and as a result of the 'image transfer' thus achieved, the sight of a sitting woman floating above the landscape creates a strong surreal effect. All three kinds of reality involve something peculiarly local, but projecting them on top of each other for those who are able to follow the artist's locally relevant references further enhances this feeling.

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