

Quelques notes sur les beaux-arts de Bessarabie au cours des deux derniers siècles).

Résumé. Ces notes ont pour objet l'étude de l'art de la Bessarabie du XIX^e et de la première moitié du XX^e siècle et l'art de la République de Moldova depuis 1944 et jusqu'au début du XXI^e siècle. Le terme « Bessarabie » est bien ambigu, avec une sémantique polyvalente, définissant initialement une bande de terre aux embouchures du Danube (appartenant il y a des siècles à la dynastie valaque des Bassarabs), mais qui fut plus tard étendue par les autorités tsaristes (et dans ce sens repris dans l'entre-deux-guerres par les autorités roumaines) à toute la zone inter-fluviale Prut-Dniester, autrement dit à tout le territoire de la moitié orientale de l'Etat féodal moldave.

Dans le domaine des beaux-arts, la période Bessarabienne comprend trois étapes distinctes. La première (1812-1887) se caractérise par la continuité des formes principales de l'art médiéval et prémoderne (peinture murale ecclésiastique, iconographie, décoration sculptée des iconostases, monuments funéraires en milieu rural, etc.). La seconde période est fortement influencée par l'émergence de l'éducation professionnelle dans le domaine des arts. Cette période a commencé en 1887 – l'année où a été ouverte à Kichinev (Chişinău) la première école de dessin – et a duré jusqu'en 1918 – l'année de la Grande Union des terres habitées par les Roumains. Pendant cette période – en 1903 – a été fondée la première organisation des artistes professionnels de la Bessarabie, la soi-disant « Société des amateurs des beaux-arts ». La troisième et dernière étape du développement de l'art dit « Bessarabien » coïncide avec l'entre-deux-guerres (1918-1940), lorsque la Bessarabie devient une partie composante du royaume roumain. La vie artistique de cette époque ne manque pas d'événements importants. Ainsi, en 1921 à Kichinev est fondé la « Société des Beaux-Arts de Bessarabie » qui – entre 1921 et 1939 – organisa onze expositions (appelées « salons »): sept à Chişinău, deux à Bucarest, une à Bolgrad et une à Ialoveni.

NOTES ET DOCUMENTS

SOME NOTES ON THE FINE AND DECORATIVE ARTS OF BESSARABIA DURING THE LAST TWO CENTURIES

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Les informations succinctes des archives révèlent que l'actuel Musée National des Beaux-Arts de la République de Moldova est le successeur légal de la Galerie Municipale de Kichinev, fondée en 1939 à l'initiative du sculpteur Alexandru Plămădeală et de plusieurs autres artistes bessarabiens. Le patrimoine artistique de cette Galerie fut initialement composé de 173 œuvres (peintures, dessins, sculptures, arts décoratifs, dont la plupart ont été données par les participants au dixième Salon de la Société des Beaux-Arts de Bessarabie, tenu à Kichinev en novembre 1939), auxquelles nous devons ajouter les 11 œuvres offertes par le ministère des Affaires religieuses et des Arts de Roumanie (y compris des peintures signées par Max Hermann Maxy et Alexandru Phoebus, des dessins signés par Theodor Pallady et Nicolae Tonitza, des sculptures d'Ion Jalea, etc.). Dans la seconde moitié de 1940, après l'occupation soviétique de la Bessarabie et la formation de la République Soviétique Socialiste Moldave, sur la base des œuvres de la Galerie Municipale de Kichinev (et d'autres donations) fut inauguré le Musée Républicain des Beaux-Arts. Après le début de la guerre, pendant l'été de 1941, le musée fut évacué à Kharkov (Ukraine), où sa collection d'œuvres est disparue sans laisser les moindres traces. Le contexte dans lequel les arts de la République de Moldova se sont développés

dans l'après-guerre et dans les décennies suivantes ne peut pas être compris si nous nous référons uniquement au territoire de la Bessarabie et ne tenons pas compte des processus socioculturels complexes qui ont eu lieu dans les grands centres de l'ex-URSS. Étant depuis près de cinq décennies totalement isolée de la Roumanie, la culture bessarabienne ne connut pas la **polémique entre les protochronistes et les synchronistes, les disputes entre les partisans du peintre Corneliu Baba et ceux du peintre Alexandru Ciucurencu etc.** L'art de la République Moldave gravitait plutôt vers les grandes villes soviétiques: principalement Moscou et Leningrad (Saint-Petersbourg), mais aussi Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, Lvov, Odessa, Kiev et d'autres. Beaucoup de débats locaux étaient des répliques ou des émulations d'actions déjà accomplies dans d'autres régions de l'Union Soviétique.

Le processus de l'introduction forcée des principes du réalisme socialiste et de l'esthétique normative – processus qui a duré dans l'ex-URSS des années 30 jusqu'à l'époque de la perestroïka de Mikhaïl Gorbatchev de la seconde moitié des années 80 – a affecté de façon extrêmement dure le domaine des beaux-arts. Selon les idéologues communistes, le rôle de «l'art» était de promouvoir à travers ses méthodes spécifiques le message du seul Parti-Etat au peuple, de l'éduquer dans l'esprit du marxisme-léninisme et de la haine envers le capitalisme et l'impérialisme. L'art devait être direct, accessible aux masses et totalement soumis au pouvoir. La hiérarchie anachronique des genres fut réintroduite: ainsi, la peinture thématique ou le portrait de parade étaient considérés comme supérieurs par rapport au paysage ou à la nature morte.

Une fois avec l'occupation de la Bessarabie par l'URSS, beaucoup d'artistes qui avaient été éduqués dans l'entre-deux-guerres en Roumanie ou qui avaient étudié après 1944 (mais étaient encore étroitement liés aux problématiques de l'art de l'avant-guerre) ont dû changer radicalement de style et de manière, en se soumettant au régime. Les quinze premières années qui ont suivi la Seconde Guerre mondiale ont été les années les plus difficiles. Ce ne fut que vers la fin de

la sixième décennie et la première moitié de la septième décennie du siècle dernier qu'on a réussi à émanciper en partie le style et la thématique des œuvres de beaux-arts.

Dans les années 1970 et 1980, une série de nouveaux phénomènes sont apparus, tels que l'interférence ou même la fusion des langages appartenant à différents genres d'arts visuels; le caractère idéologique agressif et militant des expositions de l'époque précédente est de plus en plus souvent remplacé par «l'extase» festive de l'« époque de Brejnev ». C'est le moment où la peinture réhabilite les valeurs du « climat domestique », de l'« individuel », etc. Un problème qui, de notre point de vue, mérite d'être abordé avec beaucoup d'attention est le phénomène de l'art d'opposition à l'idéologie officielle (le soi-disant underground soviétique des années 1970-1980). Pourtant, nous devons admettre que, malgré quelques tentatives de renouvellement du langage artistique (telles que les peintures de Mikhaïl Grecu ou de Valentina Rusu-Ciobanu), en République Soviétique Socialiste de Moldova il n'y avait pas de véritable art d'opposition comme celui de Moscou ou de Saint-Petersbourg.

La situation créée dans les dernières années de la perestroïka de Gorbatchev et dans les premières années d'indépendance de la République de Moldova a radicalement modifié les structures de fonctionnement de la culture en général et des arts visuels en particulier. La censure idéologique et les commissions de sélection (sur critères politiques!) des œuvres d'art pour les expositions ont disparu. Les discussions sur la synchronisation du processus artistique de la République Moldave avec les processus artistiques européens et mondiaux ont commencé.

Dans le contexte de la démocratisation créée par la perestroïka, l'Union des Écrivains de Moldova a présenté les projets de la nouvelle législation linguistique, destinée à donner à la langue roumaine le statut de langue officielle sur le territoire de la République. Après de nombreux débats et d'hostilités – générés à la fois par l'opposition de la

nomenclature (locale et centrale) et par une grande partie de la population russophone – la Constitution de la République de Moldova fut complétée (le 31 août 1989) par l'article sur le statut et les principes de fonctionnement de la langue d'état. Des expositions d'art consacrées à la langue roumaine ou à Mihai Eminescu – grand poète roumain – ont commencé à être organisées (la première en 1989). Les « Salons de Moldavie » – des expositions des peintres des deux côtés de la rivière Prout – sont devenus des événements récurrents.

Pendant la période de transition, en République de Moldova ont été ouvertes les premières galeries d'art privées ("Elita", "Coral", "L", "Aorte", etc.). À la fin des années 1980 et au début des années 1990, les premiers groupes parallèles ou alternatifs à l'Union des Artistes Plastiques ont vu le jour : le groupe « Fantôme », le groupe « Zece » (fr. : « Dix ») et autres.

De toute évidence, le fait de «hâter» l'accès aux avantages de la civilisation moderne avec ses technologies développées – qui ne correspondent pas toujours à un mode de vie et à une pensée qui avaient été enfermés pendant plus d'un demi-siècle dans une «réserve totalitaire» – a de nombreux obstacles à affronter. Ces obstacles sont liés aux immenses disparités existantes actuellement dans les réalités quotidiennes de la République de Moldavie: le clivage économique et culturel entre la capitale et la province, entre la ville et le village, la polarisation exacerbée de la situation matérielle des différentes couches de citoyens du pays, le conflit de mentalités et d'âges, la segmentation de la structure démographique de la population, les migrations massives à l'étranger de ceux qui sont capables de travailler, etc. Cependant, ce qui était considéré à l'époque comme un simple acte d'enculturation artificielle a vraiment aidé les jeunes artistes à promouvoir un discours au niveau des nouveaux impératifs du temps.

Keywords: *Bessarabia, Fine arts, Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, Perestroika, Republic of Moldova, Salons of Moldova, Socialist realism, Soviet underground.*

The content of these notes is dedicated to a territory – namely *Bessarabia* – an ambiguous term with a versatile semantics, initially defining a strip of land at the mouths of the Danube (belonging to the Wallachian dynasty of Basarabs centuries ago!), but which was later extended by the Tsarist authorities (and this amplified sense was taken over by the Romanian authorities in the interwar period) to the entire Prut-Dniester inter-fluvial area, in other words, to the whole territory of the eastern half of the Moldovan feudal state. This term provokes even today the discontent of the *Moldovenists* from the Republic of Moldova, as well as of some representatives of the obsolete *Protochronism* in Romania. However, like a well-adjusted glove, the *Bessarabian* term (territorial and not ethnic!) fits just fine with the historical realities and artistic achievements in the eastern side of the river Prut in the last two centuries.

In the field of fine arts, the Bessarabian period comprises three distinct stages. The first (1812-1887) is characterized by the continuity of the main forms of medieval and pre-modern art (ecclesiastical wall painting, icon art, sculptured decoration of iconostasis, funerary monuments in rural areas, etc.). The neoclassical and academic trends in painting and sculpture become more and more obvious, and the conventional-symbolic language of the art of the icon is gradually replaced by the narrative of painting on biblical or historical themes. An increasingly important role is played by the secular theme, the representative portrait, the modelling through *chiaroscuro* in the treatment of images etc.

The naive style of Bessarabian icons from the beginning of the nineteenth century is well illustrated by the icon of *St. George killing the dragon*, painted by the painter Mihail Leontovici in 1806 for the church of Orac (district Leova) village. The language of the works of the painter Gherasim and the wood master Ștefan – who made the iconostasis for the churches in the villages of

Cogâlniceni (district Rezina) and Ghermănești (district Telenești) at the beginning of the nineteenth century – is much more refined and sophisticated.

From what has been known so far, we can assume that there were no important painting schools on the territory of Bessarabia and that most iconographers were self-taught: this hypothesis was confirmed by the creation of Ioan Iavorschi, Constantin and Mardare, the monk Iezechil and other craftsmen-iconographers quite demanded in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Iavorschi's earliest work – the painting of the tetrapod in the church of Ivancea village (district Orhei) – was completed in 1807 and, from the technical point of view, it is no different from the manner of a popular autodidact artist. The following works of the artist (the icons of *Christ the Baptist Pantocrator* and *Mother of God with the Child on the Throne*, both painted in 1813 and coming from the church of Saint Nicholas of Horodiște village (district Călărași) – or the icons *Deisis* and *Mother of God with the Child* of 1826 and 1827, from the same village) demonstrate the introduction of *chiaroscuro* in the treatment of faces and hands, – a procedure which conflicts directly with the plaster flattened ornamentation of the clothes of the painted figures.

Chiaroscuro is also practiced by the painters Constantin and Mardare in the painting of the royal gates with the scene of *Annunciation* in Baimaclia village (1812) or by the painter Zabolotnâi in *St. Nicholas* icon in Ocnîța Veche village (1829).

As regards the monk Iezechil's work, it is represented primarily by the great series of icons, which were part of the iconostasis of St. Nicholas winter church of Căpriana Monastery and were painted in 1840-1841. Despite of some clumsiness, these icons possess a special charm, unprecedented in the work of other painters of those times.

In the middle and during the second half of the nineteenth century, more and more churches and monasteries in Bessarabia prefer to command or purchase icons painted in the academic style. The most eloquent case in this regard is the

history of iconostasis and icons for New Neamț monastery in Chițcani. Thus, the woodwork of the iconostasis for the Church of the Ascension of the Lord (built in 1867-1878 according to the design of the Russian architect M. Golikov in St. Petersburg) was ordered in the capital of Russia, to a certain Platonov. The icons for the iconostasis were made in Odessa in 1870 by the painter Teofil Dziarkovski.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the number of icon-painters fell sharply, as they were replaced by professional artists who promoted the academic trend in religious painting. The work of these professionals would be continued by the painters of the Bessarabian churches from the beginning of the twentieth century and the interwar period, the names and works of artists such as Pavel Piskariov, Alexandru Plămădeală, Grigore Filatov, Victor Ivanov and others being a convincing testimony in this respect.

The deathblow to the traditional language of Orthodox painting was given by the spread of stamps and woodcut on religious themes in rural areas. Autodidact painters began to imitate, sometimes even to copy identically the prints, which considerably damaged the style and quality of their icons and deformed the taste of the public and buyers in a negative way.

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The second period of Bessarabian art development is strongly influenced by the emergence of professional secular art education. This period begins in 1887 – the year when the night drawing school was opened in Chisinau, initially organized by Iosif Stepankovski but led since 1891 by Terenti Zubkov (Terinte Zubcu), – and lasted until 1918 – the year of the Great Union of most of the lands inhabited by Romanians. During this period, the first organization of the professional artists of Bessarabia, the so-called *Amateur Art Society*, was founded. This happened in 1903 at the initiative of the painters Vladimir Okushko, Mihail Berezovschi,

Nicolae Gumalic, Alexandru Climașevschi, Iosif Stepanovschi and others, with Vasili Blinov as president.

Vladimir Okushko (1862-1919) can be considered the “patriarch” of the Bessarabian painting at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. His painting *Ploughing: The Oxen* of 1896 belongs to the genre of works inspired by the rural realities of time, which can be easily discovered in various national painting schools: from the naturalism of Jules Bastien-Lepage in France to the *itinerant* Russian painters, called *Peredvizhniki*, or to the Romanian painter Nicolae Grigorescu’s *Oxen-drawn carriages*.

Prior to 1918 *The Bessarabian Amateur Art Society* organized six exhibitions (in 1903, 1904, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1910). The works reflected the influence of the Russian art, especially of the *itinerant* painters, and later, of the symbolic groups of St. Petersburg and Moscow: especially the artists affiliated to the aesthetics promoted by *Mir iskusstva* [The World of Art] magazine. In the second decade of the twentieth century the unmistakable profiles of the creation of some Bessarabian artists such as Pavel Shilingovski, Eugenia Maleshevski, Nicolae Gumalic, Gavril Remmer, Vladimir Donchev were configured. In the same period of time, young people such as Lia Arionescu, Auguste Baillayre and Alexandru Plămădeală started to make a name for themselves.

In the context of modern art in Bessarabia, Pavel Shillingovski (1881-1942) holds a special place. In spite of the short time he spent in Bessarabia and the numerous and various influences, often contradictory, which marked his creation, this painter and graphic artist managed to create his own, easily recognizable style. In Chișinău – his home town – the future fine artist made the first steps in the arts under the guidance of Terinte Zubcu. Subsequently, he continued his studies at St. Petersburg Art Academy, where he worked in the painting workshop of the famous Russian fine artist Dmitri Kardovski. Shillingovski mastered the principles of academic art,

while being receptive to the symbolic message of the followers of the *Mir iskusstva* (The World of Art) trend. The paintings of the artist *Bessarabia: Fortune-telling* (1911) or *Threshing* (1922) have become truly anthological.

Eugenia Maleshevski (1868-1940) was a former student of the famous Russian realist painter Ilia Repin. But most important part of her work approaches the *Art Nouveau style* of the early decades of the twentieth century. The portrait of *The French lady* (1910) and *The Spring* panel (1916) certify a successful insertion of the figurative motif into the almost theatrical decorative structure of the backgrounds of both works.

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The third and the last stage of development of the so-called Bessarabian art coincides with the interwar period (1918-1940), after the Great Union of 1918, when Bessarabia becomes a component part of the Romanian Kingdom. The artistic life of that time does not lack important events. Vasile Cijevschi, Alexandru Plămădeală, Auguste Baillayre, Vladimir Donchev, Șneer Kogan, Alexandru Climașevschi, Vasili Blinov and other fine artists, writers, singers, journalists and politicians founded *Fine Arts Society of Bessarabia* in Chișinău in 1921, which organized eleven exhibitions (called *salons*) in 1921-1939: seven in Chișinău, two in Bucharest (1921, 1922), one in Bolgrad (1934) and Ialoveni (1938). The ninth *Salon* that took place in Chișinău in 1934 legalized the already existent segregation within this society. Its initiators were Iurie (Gheorghe) Bulat and Vasili Blinov, because they were discontent with the jury – designated by the society – that selected the works for exhibitions. Thus, it was formed the so-called *Iurie Bulat’s Circle*, which included Nicolae Gumalic, Mihail Berezovschi, Vasili Blinov, Pavel Piscariov, Victor Adiasevici and other artists. This circle lasted until 1938 and organized several exhibitions in the Orangery of the city park, which generated the colloquial name of the new group of artists: *orangery painters*.



Fig. 1 – Painter Mihail Leontovici, Icon *St. George killing the dragon*, painted in 1806 for the church of Orac village (district Leova).



Fig. 2 – Painter Gherasim, Icon *Nativity of the Mother of God* painted in 1808 for the iconostasis of the village of Cogâlniceni (district Rezina).



Fig. 3 – Vladimir Ocushko, *Ploughing: The Oxen*. 1896.



Fig. 4 – Pavel Shillingovski, *Bessarabia: Fortune-telling*. 1911.

Auguste Baillayre (1879-1961) and Alexandru Plămădeală (1888-1940) were the two personalities who marked the main trends of interwar art in the area. Plămădeală – the author of the well-known monument dedicated to Stephen the Great in the centre of Chişinău – was an emblematic figure of the Bessarabian fine arts of that period. A student of the Russian

sculptor Serguey Volnuhin (1859-1921), returned to his home during the Russian Revolution, he was one of the founders of *Fine Arts Society of Bessarabia*, of the Municipal Picture Gallery of Chişinău, and he permanently occupied the position of director of the School of Fine Arts. As regards Baillayre, he was probably the most “picturesque” personality in the whole

Bessarabian cultural landscape of the 1930s and 1940s. A talented colourist, an innate *causeur*, an overwhelming bohemian nature, he was loved by his students at the School of Arts. Baillayre was born in Vernet-les-Bains, in southern France, spent his childhood and adolescence in Georgia, and studied in St. Petersburg, Grenoble and

Amsterdam. He was a cosmopolite personality with a Western mentality. His works – *The Wife's Portrait* in 1921 and *Still Life with Fish* in 1927 – reveal an authentic decorative spirit largely due to the artist's affiliation to the aesthetics of the Art Nouveau trend from the beginning of the last century.



Fig. 5 – Eugenia Maleshevski, The portrait of *The French lady*. 1910.



Fig. 6 – Alexandru Plămădeală,
Monument dedicated to Stephen the Great in the centre of Chişinău, 1925-1928.

Another prominent figure in the artistic environments of interwar Chişinău and Iaşi (Yassi) was Theodor Kiriacoff (1900-1958) – one of the fine artists on the left bank of the Prut who managed to make a name for himself in the post-war cultural environment in Bucharest. The disciple of the famous Bessarabian painter Auguste Baillayre and of the Russian scenographer Gheorghe Pojedaeff (who emigrated from Russia), Theodor Kiriacoff knew how to combine in his creation the former's preference for the

new trends in universal fine art with the latter's mastery in the sphere of theatrical art. At the confluence of several cultural models, Kiriacoff harmonized with great discernment in his works the magnitude, dynamism and refinement of the *Art Nouveau* artistic approach with the autochthonous spirit, which was traditional, folkloric and deeply tributary to the Christian-Orthodox values.

Kiriacoff was neither the first nor the only Bessarabian who managed to make a

name for himself in the cultural circles of Bucharest. The interwar Romanian art journalism focused not only once on the creation and personality of Dimitrie Sevastianov (1908-1956). This painter came from a family of Lipovan Russians established initially in Bessarabia and later moved to the city of Tulcea, in the

Romanian Dobrogea. The Romanian art historian George Oprescu appreciated “the courage of the colour combinations” in Sevastianov’s *Odalisques* painting, which was exhibited in the mid-1930s in Bucharest and which is now in the collection of the National Art Museum of the Republic of Moldova.



Fig. 7 – Auguste Baillayre, *Still Life with Fish*. 1927.

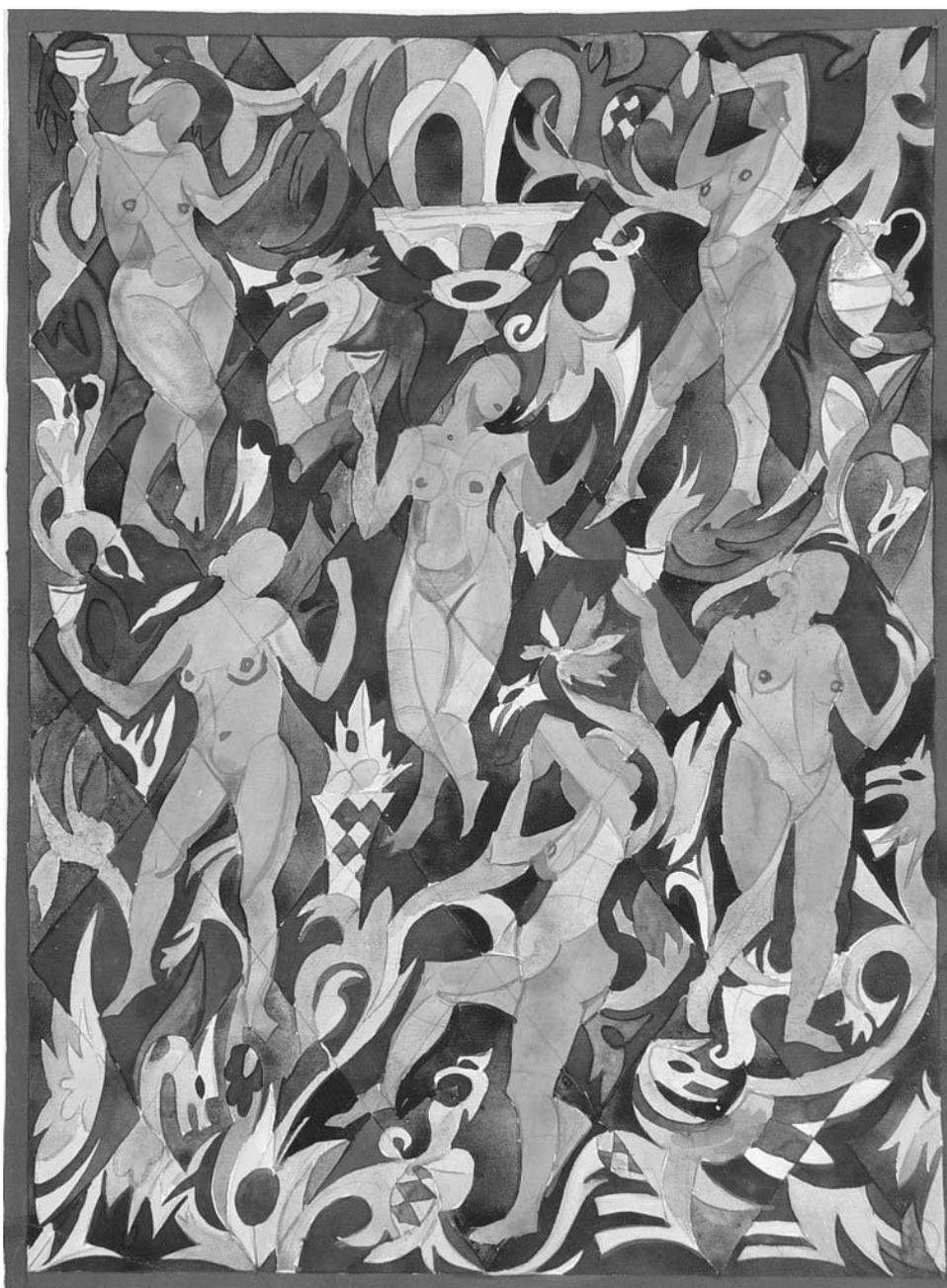


Fig. 8 – Elisabeth Ivanovsky, *Sketch for a carpet*. 1926.

The list of great achievements of Boris Nesvedov (1903-1963) includes dozens of decorations created at the National Theatre of Chişinău and dozens of illustrated books. Born in the village of Mitki, Poltava region, Ukraine, the future graphic artist, painter, and scenographer, moved in 1912 to Bessarabia, the land where he lived until his death. During the interwar period, he

was Auguste Baillayre's student (in 1923) and participated as a painter-muralist together with other artists in the renovation of the interior decorations of the Mazarakie church in Chişinău (1936). After the war, he mostly works in the field of book graphics, being known especially for the illustrations to the poem "Andrieş" by Emilian Bucov (1949). *The Self-portrait*

from 1933 seems to be the *unique* work in the context of the entire creation biography of the master. The generalizing spirit, the predilection for the shaping of the form through big surfaces of light and shadow, the exclusion of useless details – all these stylistic particularities of the oil on cardboard do not characterize the postwar creation of Nesvedov, conceived in most cases in a narrative key, with an abundance of descriptive details.

The work *Gothic Cathedral* (1933) by Vladimir Donchev (1886-1940) seems to be a quite lapidary study, with certain

scenographical valences. The personal biography of the artist is extremely rich in events: born in 1876 in the village of Kureni in a family of landowners, he became an agronomist, but, at the same time, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Saint Petersburg. Subsequently, he abandoned the service at the Senate in Saint Petersburg and devoted himself entirely to the fine arts. Around 1908, Donchev visited Paris where, he befriended “the great Mexican” Diego Rivera. He came to Chişinău in 1916 and lived here until his death, in 1941.



Fig. 9 – Theodor Kiriacoff, *Apocalypse. The black angel*. 1936.

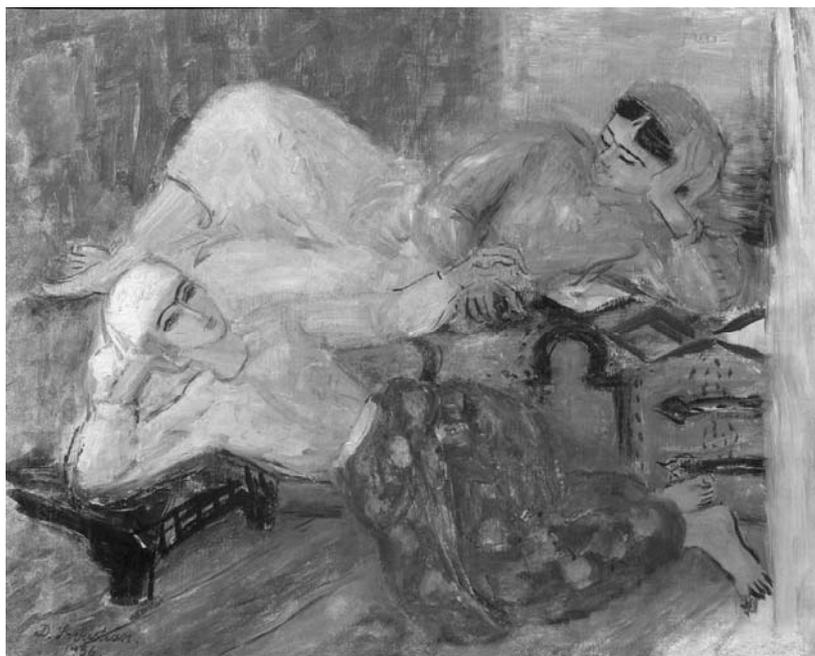


Fig. 10 – Dimitrie Sevastianov, *Odalisques*. 1936.



Fig. 11 – Şneer Kogan, *The Mazaraki Church in Chişinău*. 1936.

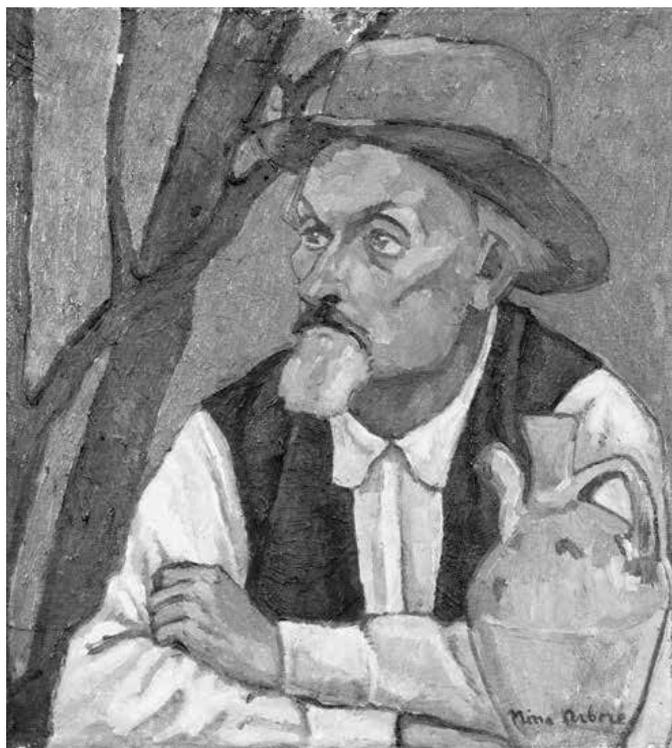


Fig. 12 – Nina Arbore, *Father's portrait (Zamfir Ralli-Arbore)*.1932.



Fig. 13 – Milița Petrașcu, *Mask (portrait of Mrs. Stoenescu)*. The 1930-1940s of the 20th century.



Fig. 14 – Vladimir Donchev, *Gothic cathedral*. 1933.

A characteristic of the interwar period is that most of the Bessarabian painters, sculptors and graphic artists, especially those from Bălți and Chișinău, studied at the most prestigious artistic education institutions in Europe. Our colleague, the art historian Tudor Stavilă, in the second edition of our co-authored book *The Cultural Patrimony of the Republic of Moldova* presented an extremely instructive review of the academies and art schools attended by the Bessarabian students of that period. Thus, Isaac Antcher (1920), Olga Hrschanovskaia (1923), Lydia Luzanowsky (1923-1927) and Antoine Irisse (1926) studied at *Academy de la Grande Chaumière* in Paris. Nina Patlajan (1910) and Pertz Vaxman (1910) appear on *Académie Ranson* list of students. Most of the Bessarabians – such as Felix Roitman (1925), Gregoire Michonze (1923), Joseph Bronstein (1924), Elena Barlo (1932-1934), Natalia Bragalia (1928-1931) and Tatiana Senkevici-Bulavițchi (1929-1932) – studied at *École*

Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs during various periods of 1910-1930. The old capital of Bavaria, the German city of Munich – an important European cultural centre – hosted Sneer and Moise Kogan brothers, Bessarabians who studied at the *Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts*. Fine artist Gheorghe Ceglokoff studied graphics at the *Dresden Academy of Painting* (1926-1928). Nicolae Coleadici studied in Amsterdam in 1934-1936, Idel Ianchelevici (1928-1933) and Tatiana Nicolaidi (1932-1934) studied in Belgium, in Liège. In Brussels, Samson Flexor (1922-1924) continued his studies, and also attended *École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs* in Paris (1924-1926). In the capital of Belgium, Elisabeth Ivanovsky (1932-1935), Afanasie Modval (1929-1933), Claudia Cobizev (1932-1935), Moisei Gamburd (1925-1929) and Nina Jascinsky (1934-1936) studied, and their works from that period were largely inspired by various trends of French art.

Fig. 15 – Boris Nesvedov,
The Self-portrait. 1933.



Fig. 16 – Moisei Gamburg,
The Spinster. 1944-1946.

Milița Petrașcu (1892-1976), considered by many art critics the most talented sculptress of the twentieth-century Romania, studied during the Secondary School in her native town, Chișinău, and then entered Stroganov School of Fine Arts in Moscow. There, between 1907 and 1908, she studied sculpture in the workshop of the famous Serguey Konionkov, nicknamed “Rodin of Russia.” After a short period of study at the so-called *Bestujev* Courses (for mademoiselles!) in St. Petersburg, like Nina Arbore, the future sculptor went to The Academy of Fine Arts in Munich where she studied under the guidance of the great masters of the European Vanguard Wassily Kandinsky and Alexei von Jawlensky. There she became also familiar with the creation platform of the group of intellectuals affiliated to *Die Jugend* German magazine. From Germany, the artist left for Paris, where she worked in the workshops of Henri Matisse and Antoine Bourdelle, participated in *Salon des Indépendants*, and met Constantin Brâncuși. Established in 1925 in Bucharest, the sculptress entered the avant-garde movement of *Contimporanul*, *Grupul nostru*, and *Criterion*, and participated in *The Romanian Art Exhibition* in Amsterdam at the World Futuristic Art Exhibition in Rome in 1933. Milița Petrașcu’s one of the most important works from the interwar period is represented by the mosaic of Miorița Fountain in Bucharest (1927). At the same time, the artist did not lose contact with her native land; she participated in various salons in Bessarabia, and made the bust of Zamfir Arbore in 1938, exhibited that year in Chișinău but disappeared after 1940.

The main works of Chișinău painter Moisei Gamburd (1903-1954) belong also to the interwar period. Inspired by the realities of the Bessarabian village, the paintings and the graphics in charcoal or in sanguine of the graduate of the School of Fine Arts in Chișinău (1923) and of the Art Academy in Brussels (1928, K. Mantoldt’s workshop), are characterized by the firmness of the drawing and the compositional equilibrium. These are creations of harsh, ruthless realism. Everyday life in rural areas is presented in all splendour but also in all its tragedy.

Gamburd’s peasants are, according to Miron Paraschivescu’s expression, “... real, massive, tanned by the sun and winds, not smiling, rather *frowned* ...” The bucolic poetry of the “pastoral” scenes is totally foreign to the young Gamburd. Later, in the first post-war decade, the message of the artist’s creation changed, as he was forced to obey the new authorities and to join the politically engaged Stalinist art (the most famous works of this period are *The Curse* and *The Elimination of Illiteracy*). The painting *Spinster*, even if it was painted in the last years of war and, possibly, finished in the first year of peace, pertains to the aesthetic pre-war platform of the artist.

The succinct information from archives and encyclopaedias reveals that the current National Art Museum of the Republic of Moldova is the legal successor of the Municipal Picture Gallery in Chișinău, founded in 1939 at the initiative of sculptor Alexandru Plămădeală and several other Bessarabian artists. The artistic patrimony of the Gallery was initially made up of 173 works (painting, graphics, sculpture, decorative art), most of them donated by the participants in the tenth Salon of the Society of Fine Arts in Bessarabia, held in Chișinău in November 1939, consisting of 11 works donated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Arts, including paintings signed by Max Hermann Maxy, Alexandru Phoebus, graphics by Theodor Pallady, Nicolae Tonitza, sculptures by Ion Jalea etc.

In the second half of 1940, after the Soviet occupation of Bessarabia, the Republican Museum of Fine Arts was inaugurated, based on the works of the above-mentioned Picture Gallery (as well as further additions). After the beginning of the war, in the summer of 1941, the museum was evacuated to Harkov, where the museum collection and the archive disappeared without any trace. As a result – except for two works of sculpture by Alexandru Plămădeală, sent to the museum later, only after the war, by the artist’s wife, Olga Plămădeală, – nothing was preserved from the original collection of the Gallery. The current museum is reinaugurated in November 1944, with only 51 paintings, 5 sculptures and 49 graphic drawings at the

beginning – mostly obtained due to funds transfers from the Tretiakov Gallery, Aleksandr S. Puşkin Museum of Fine Arts

from Moscow and Hermitage Museum from St. Petersburg (then Leningrad).

* * *



Fig. 17 – Lazăr Dubinovski, *Strâmbă-Lemne (The Wood-Twister)*. 1945.



Fig. 18 – Claudia Cobizev, *Head of Moldavian Woman*. Wood. 1947.



Fig. 19 – Ana Baranovici, *The Noon*. 1960.



Fig. 20 – Mihail Greco,
The Girls from Ciadâr-Lunga. 1960.

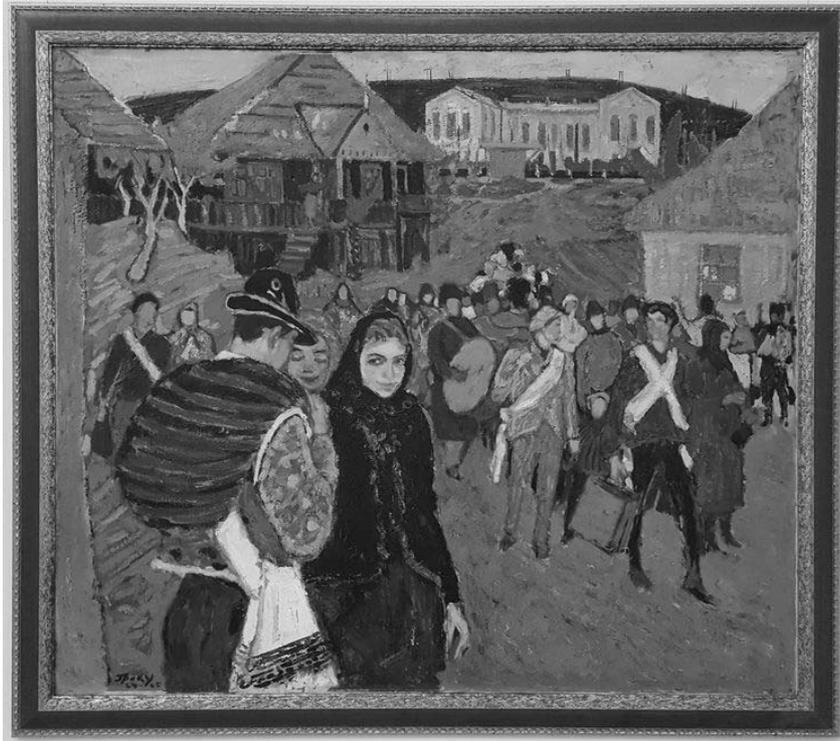


Fig. 21 – Mihail Grecu, *The Recruits*. 1964-1965.



Fig. 22 – Valentina Rusu-Ciobanu, *The portrait of Emil Loteanu*. 1966-1967.



Fig. 23 – Valentina Rusu-Ciobanu, *Quotes from Art History*. 1978.

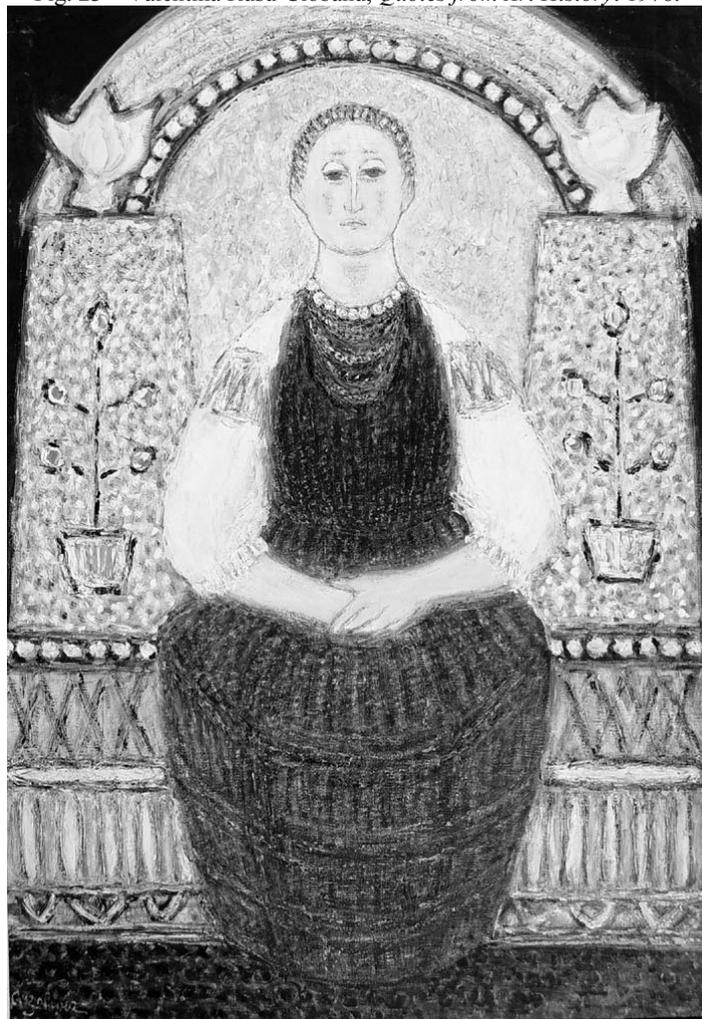


Fig. 24 – Ada Zevin, *Pearls*. 1967.

The year 1940 – when following the additional secret protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact Bessarabia is occupied by the Soviet troops – was a time of extreme agitation and full of anxiety. A few days before the Soviets came (June 28), Alexandru Plămădeală died on June 15, and consequently the School of Arts in Chişinău remained without its “legendary” and “permanent” director. The Romanian officials, an important part of the clergy and much of the Bessarabian creative intelligentsia, are forced to flee to Romania. Yet, the movement of culture representatives is not unidirectional: at that time almost

entire Europe was dominated by totalitarian dictatorships and anti-Semitism. In the first weeks after June 28, 1940 in Chişinău, a large number of talented artists, who were afraid of the Nazi threat and especially Hitler’s persecution against the Jews, returned from Romania and other Western countries. Thus, the painter Moisei Gamburg, the sculptors Lazăr Dubinovski and Iosif Cheptănar, the architect Robert Curţ and many others returned to Bessarabia. Among those returned from Bucharest were the young artists Mihail Grecu, his wife Estera, and their colleague, the future painter and art critic, Ada Zevin.

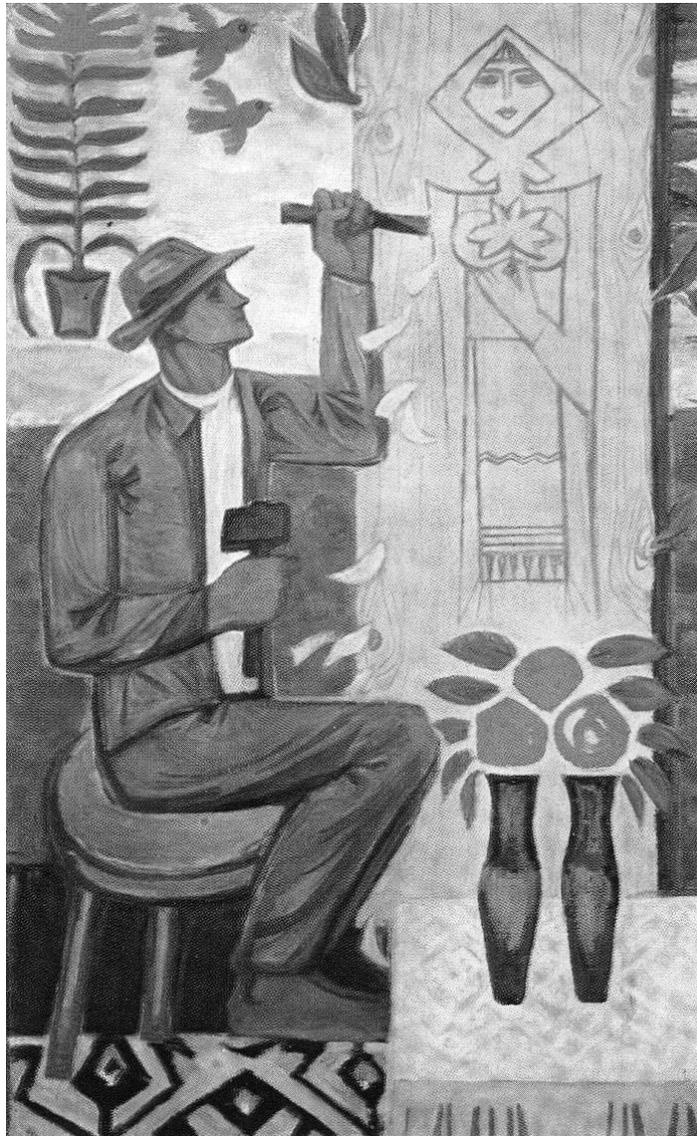


Fig. 25 – Igor Vieru. *Ion's, Happiness*. 1967.

A few weeks after the arrival of the “repatriated,” Bessarabia suddenly turned into an isolated “closed space,” where even the citizens of the rest of the USSR territory could not enter without a special permit. Nevertheless, in order to “regulate” the artistic life of the country and in accordance with the new ideological imperatives, during the pre-war years 1940-1941 many fine artists and art critics from the main cities of the USSR were sent in Chişinău. Thus, in 1941 Aleksei Vasiliev (1907-1975) came there. He was a painter and art historian, appointed in April head of the Fine Arts Department of the Art Directorate by the Soviet of the People’s Commissariat of the newly created (on August 2, 1940) Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. The same Vasiliev was also the secretary of the organizing committee of the Artists’ Union of the Moldavian Republic – Union which, in that short period of time (before the beginning of the war), has not been established anymore. It is worth mentioning that the officials from the Art Department did not want to cooperate with the over 100 fine artists from Bessarabia who registered voluntarily in the autumn of 1940, especially because the fifth part of them had excellent studies in the field of arts, made obviously abroad. There is no doubt that the Soviet officials wanted to create an Artists’ Union according to the Soviet standard, and not a free association of professional fine artists, in compliance with the Western models.

The context in which the arts of the Republic of Moldova developed in the post-war period and in the following decades cannot be understood if we refer only to the territory of Bessarabia and do not take into account the complicated sociocultural processes that took place in the big centers of former USSR. Being for almost five decades totally isolated from Romania, the Bessarabian culture did not know the polemics between *protochronists* and *synchronists*, and the Bessarabian painting – the arguments between the supporters of the painter Baba and those of the painter Ciucurencu etc. Fine art in the Moldavian Republic gravitated more toward the great Soviet cities: mainly

Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg), but also Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, Lvov, Odessa, Kiev and others. Many of the decisions, reasons, polemics, local debates were replicas or emulations of actions already accomplished on a union scale.

The process of the forced introduction of the principles of *normative aesthetics* – process that lasted in the former USSR from the '30s until the epoch of Mihail Gorbaciov’s *perestroika* from the second half of the 80s – affected in an extremely acute way the fine arts sector. The role of “art” was to promote through its specific methods the message of the only party-state to the people, to educate this people in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, the hate towards the capitalism and imperialism. The art had to be direct, accessible to the masses and totally subdued to the power. The anachronistic *hierarchy* of the genres and of the art species was reintroduced: thus, the thematic painting or the parade portrait were considered superior and were better paid than the landscape or the still life. This principle of the genre hierarchy (that in fact existed in the aesthetics of the European classicism of the 17th – 18th century) was already considered obsolete by the art theory from the 19th century; still, with the emergence of the French impressionists (whose creation presents mostly landscapes and still lives) this theoretical discipline reevaluated radically its axiological criteria. As the only *method* of creation (in fact, the *only style*) was accepted the *socialist realism*, as rightful descendant of the *critical realism* of the 19th century, but adapted to the new conditions of the 20th century. Those familiar with the evolution of the intellectual processes in the former USSR know very well that the idea of *method*, in relation to the phenomenon already called by the art critique *socialist realism*, appears relatively late. *The recourse to the method* – pardon my similitude with the title of the famous novel by Alejo Carpentier – was made to hide the only style accepted in the '40s – '50s, the style called now more and more often by the Russian art historians as *Stalinist academism*. This terminological disguise of the rigid notion of *style* by a less

rigid notion with more labile borders and more difficult to define as it would be, for example, the notion of *method*, was made in order to enlarge the area of expression of the Soviet art (suffocated previously by the Stalinist period restrictions!) and to avoid the accusations of *lack of freedom of creation*

in the former USSR, the accusation made by the western politicians and men of culture. Yet not all types of figurative or realist art from the former USSR (including the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic) become part of *socialist realism* !



Fig. 26 – Mihail Petric, *The Morning on the Dniester*. 1957.

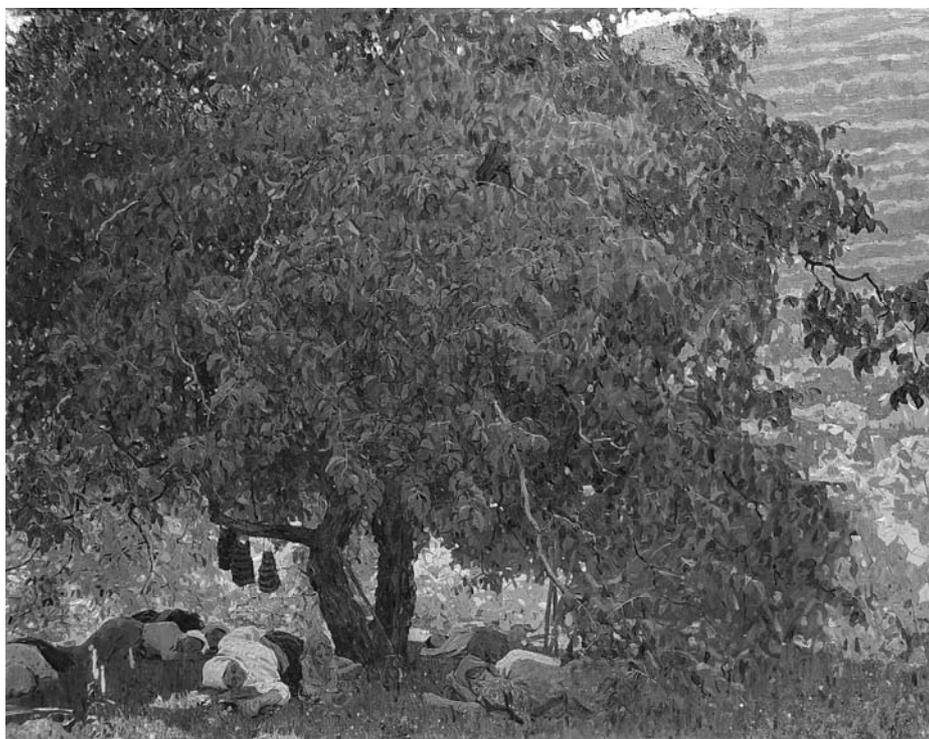


Fig. 27 – Aurel David, *The Noon*. 1964.



Fig. 28 – Serguey Chokolov, *Decorative pot with three crests*. 1966.



Fig. 29 – Leonid Grigorashenko, *The Massacre*. 1972.



Fig. 30 – Alexandra Picunov-Târțău, *The portrait of the painter Eleonora Romanescu*. 1981.

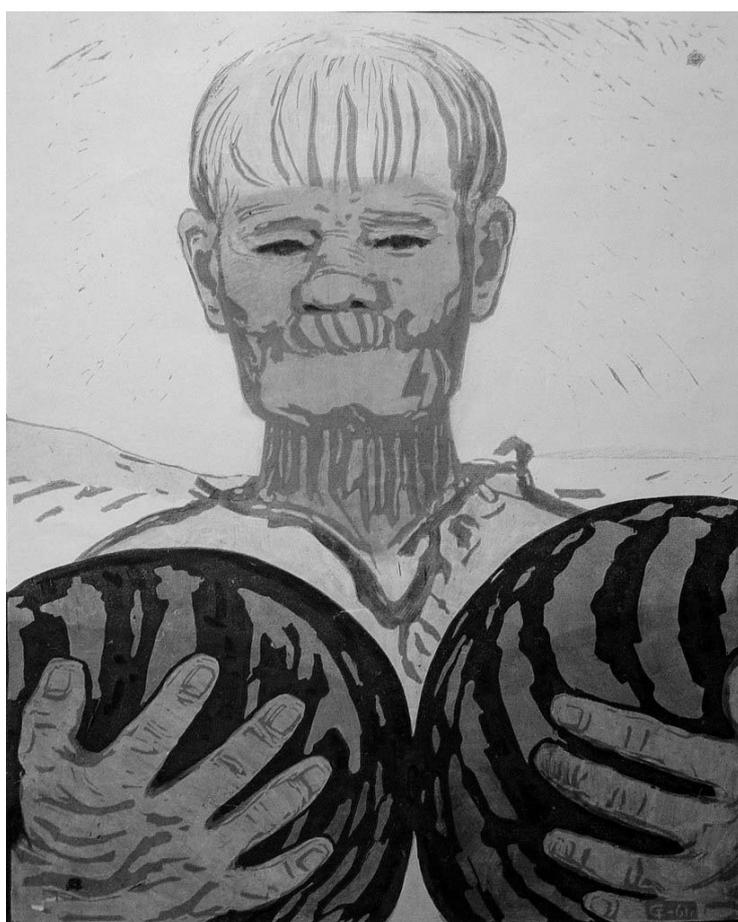


Fig. 31 – Stepan Tuhari, *Old man Agachi*. Color linography. 1961.



Fig. 32 – Ilia Bogdesco, *Illustration of “Gulliver’s Travels” by Jonathan Swift*. 1978.

After August Baillayre’s departure to Romania in 1944, the most important figure of the School of Fine Arts in the post-war Chişinău was Ivan Hazov (1885-1967). A former pupil of Konstantin Korovin at the Superior School of Industrial Arts (currently Stroganov School) in Moscow, a former member of the Association of the Revolutionary Artists of Russia (AHR) and of the Regional Union of Artists of Moscow (the so-called MOSSH), Hazov made a name for himself due to his system of teaching the painting and drawing inspired by nature. His system promoted in fact the realist painting but was in opposition to the pseudo-realist style of the socialist academism (often called Stalinist academism) supported by the Academy of Arts of the USSR in the early post-war years. At the basis of Hazov’s system was

the rigorous selection and synthesis of masses of light and shadow, treated in a very generalized manner. The emphasis was not on the analysis, but on the synthesis, on the unity and the organicity of the motif. Thanks to this synthesis, the works and, in particular, the studies seemed fresh and natural. Fragmentariness and elaborate processing of unnecessary details were thus eluded. Obviously, under the conditions of the second half of the 1940s, when thematic painting – par excellence narrative and encomiastic, which paid special attention to insignificant details, as they were considered a guarantee of the representation – had priority, Hazov’s system was not likely to withstand the restrictions imposed by the regime for a long time. Hazov himself was persecuted, marginalized, labelled as “formalist,” etc.

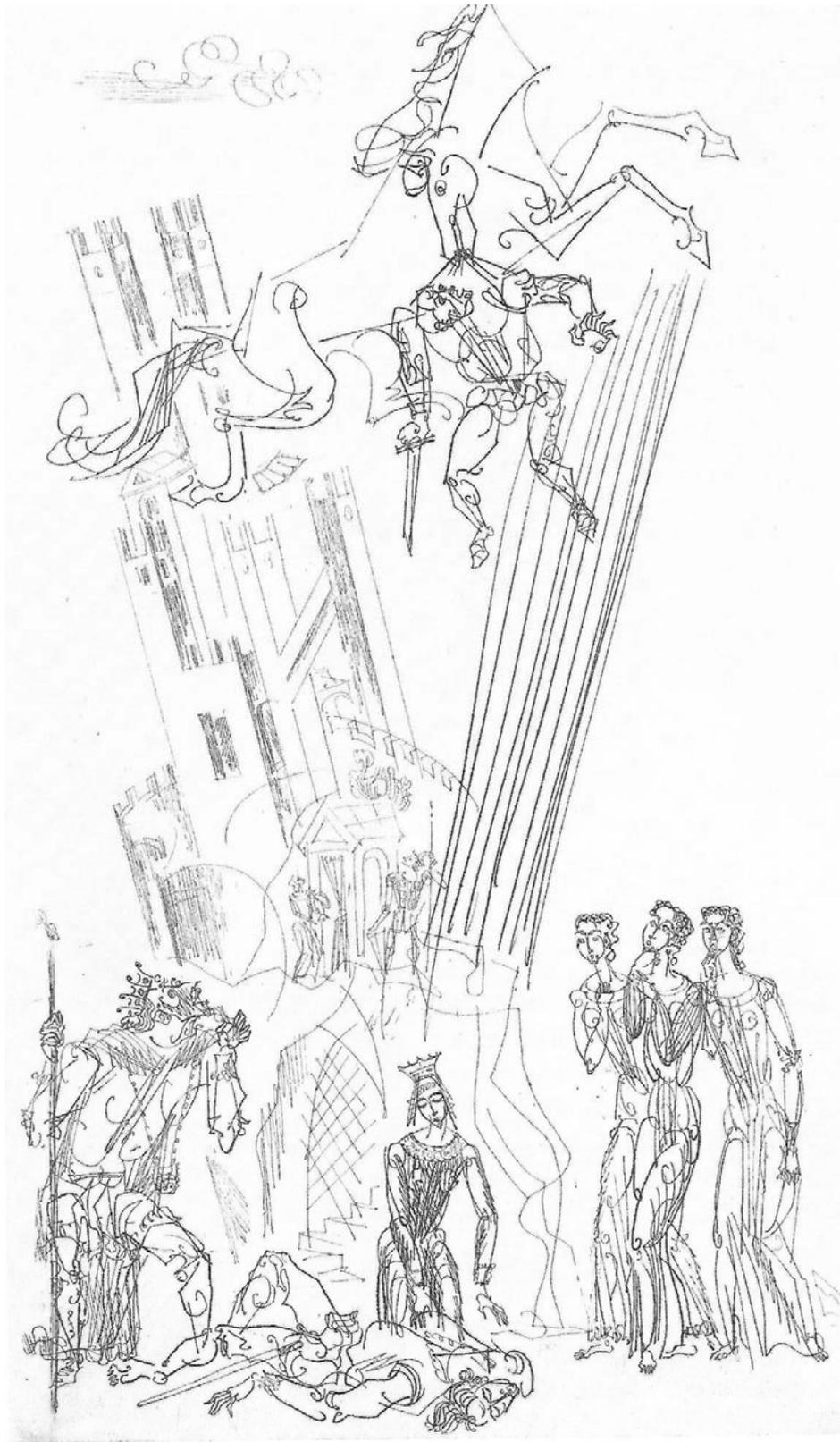


Fig. 33 – Gheorghe Vrabie, *Illustration at fairy tale „Arap Alb” („The White Moor”)* by Ion Creangă. 1967.



Fig. 34 – Isai Cârnu, *The Mother*. 1990.

Symptomatic for the realist-socialist portraiture of the Republic of Moldova in the 1950s and in the early 1960s is the creation of the painter Konstantin Kitaika (1914-1962). He graduated from the Institute of Arts in Moscow (Professor Pokarjevski's class), and later became a member of the M. V. Grekov Military Art Studio. Kitaika's parade or equestrian portraits of Soviet commanders (*Brigadier Grigory Kotovsky, Marshal Georgy K. Zhukov, General I. V. Tutarinov and Colonel M. V. Turchaninov* etc.) are particularly known.

Aleksandr Foinitzky was an older but still a more mediocre contemporary of Kitaika, a

contemporary who also embraced as sincerely as possible the doctrinal precepts and the engaged pseudo-aesthetics of the so-called *socialist realism*. Born in 1886 in Kurlugovka village of the Elizavetgrad province (Ukraine), he subsequently moved to Tiraspol, in Transnistria, where he lived and taught fine arts until the day of his death in 1973. Author of many thematic works, praising festive compositions, *bataille* landscapes and paintings, he also tried his hand in the field of the portrait genre, *Self-portrait of the Artist* from the collection of the National Art Museum of Moldova being one of his best works.



Fig. 35 – Andrei Sârbu, *If Through the Copper Woods You Pass... (Mihai Eminescu)*. 1989.



Fig. 36 – Mihai Potârniche, *The Village Izvoare (district Făleşti)*. Art photography. 1990.



Fig. 37 – Tudor Zbârnea, *Petrified image*. 1995.

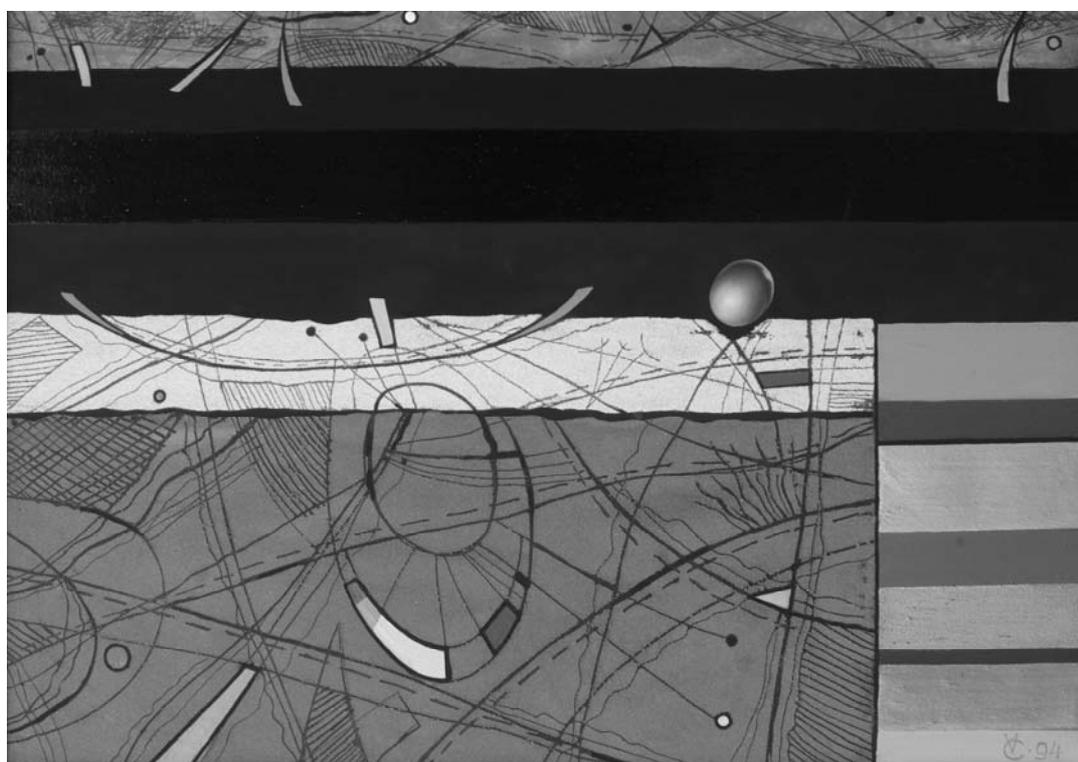


Fig. 38 – Viktor Kuzmenko, *Presence*. 1994.



Fig. 39 – Iurie Matei, *Source of infection*. 2008.



Fig. 40 – Mihai Țăruș, *Disintegration*. 1991.

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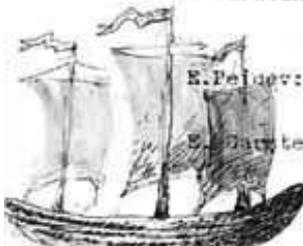
grigoras




VAMA REPUBLICII MOLDOVA

DINEȘIU P. 56.984

Artiștii plastici din Republica Moldova **SIMION ZAMȘA, ELENA CARACIŢEVA, ECATERINA PRICAV, GARȘTEA ELENA** pleacă în statul Ucraina (Odessa) pentru a participa la expoziția internațională de artă plastică "Marina-96" și intenționează să expună peste treizeci de lucrări de autor:

<p>Simion Zamșa:</p> <p>E Caracițev:</p> <p>E. Pricav:</p> <p>E. Garștea:</p> 	<p>"Peștele exotic I". 1990 Ulei, p. 60x90 cm</p> <p>"Peștele exotic II". 1990 Ulei, p. 60x90 cm</p> <p>"Fosilă". 1996. P. sup. h. 58x91 cm</p> <p>"Armonie". Aovaforte. Ulei, p. 43x71 cm</p> <p>"Soară în aer". 1993. U. p. 60x90 cm</p> <p>"Peștele exotic". 1996. Litogr. 43x70 cm</p> <p>"Peștele". Litografie. 43x70 cm 1996</p> <p>"Peștele lunii". 40x50 cm Piele naturală</p> <p>"Peștii". 50x50 cm</p> <p>"Soții". 35x25 cm</p> <p>"Vara visurilor". Litogr. 1992. 28,5x19,5 cm</p> <p>"Metamorfoză". Litogr. 1993 32x49 cm</p> <p>"Visul ospitalității". " 44x34 cm</p> <p>"Fantezie". " 31x25 cm</p> <p>"Compoziție". " 34x34 cm</p>	 <p>e = 1757</p> 
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Создательство

Ma oblig să întorc lucrările enumerate conform regulamentului în termen de 4 luni, conform regulamentului concursului și să particip la expoziție.



REPUBLICA MOLDOVA

108 IBER DE VAMA

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Fig. 41 – Simion Zamșa, Document graphics. 1996.

The most controversial in the whole array of fine artists who – through their art – served in good faith the communist regime seems to have been the correspondent member of the USSR

Academy of Arts, the painter and graphic designer Leonid Grigorashenko (1924-1995). Endowed with a phenomenal visual memory and sense of colours, an unparalleled master of complex

compositions with dozens of sophisticated “knotted” figures, distributed on multiple levels, an exceptional watercolourist, Grigorashenko was that child-wonder to whom the Bessarabian experienced artist and pedagogue August Baillayre predicted a brilliant future. Unfortunately, most of the works of this corresponding member were contaminated by the virus of the absence of critical and objective evaluation of the observed and painted phenomena. Only when he approached historical themes neutral from the point of view of political connotations (the known painting *Blood Tribute*, which remained unfinished!) or when he approached the biblical themes – towards the end of his life – Grigorashenko’s innate talent fully manifested and glowed at maximum capacity.

The generation of sculptors formed during the interwar period includes Claudia Cobizev (1905-1995) and Lazar Dubinovschi (1910-1982). Student of

Alexandru Plămădeală, Claudia Cobizev excelled in portrait and relief. Her work, *Head of Moldavian Woman*, became an anthological piece of the Bessarabian sculpture in the post-war years. Lazar Dubinovschi studied art in Bucharest and worked for a while in Paris. After World War II, he became the most important monumental sculptor in the Moldavian Republic, paying tribute to the “committed” art or to the so-called “socialist realism.” However, in chamber works, where the influence of ideological factors was minor, his innate talent and his good interwar training enabled him to create sculptures of genuine value. *Strâmbă-Lemne (The Wood-Twister)* composition – influenced by Antoine Bourdelle’s *Hercules the Archer* sculpture –, the portraits of the poet Andrei Lupan, of the architects Aleksei Shchusev, Guenady Solominov, the funeral alto-relief on his wife’s tomb (now vanished) are works that denote the indisputable talent of this fine artist.



Fig. 42 – Elena Karachentzev, *Plus and minus*. 2000.



Fig. 43 – Vlad Bolboceanu, *Two objects of the "Non-Speaking" cycle*. Porcelain. 1994.

The most profoundly affected by the interferences of the ideology was the monumental sculpture. Thus, in 1949, according to the model executed by the famous Soviet sculptor Serguey Merkurov, the monument of Vladimir I. Lenin (architects A. Shchusev and D. Turcheaninov) was unveiled in Chişinău, at the centre of the Biruinţei Square (currently the Square of the

Great National Assembly). The statue of the Bolshevik leader – a static, massive sculpture, carved in red granite – corresponded entirely to the already established Soviet “iconography.” In 1991, being transferred to Moldexpo International Exhibition Center and lacking the environment for which it was conceived, the statue lost much of its original monumentality.

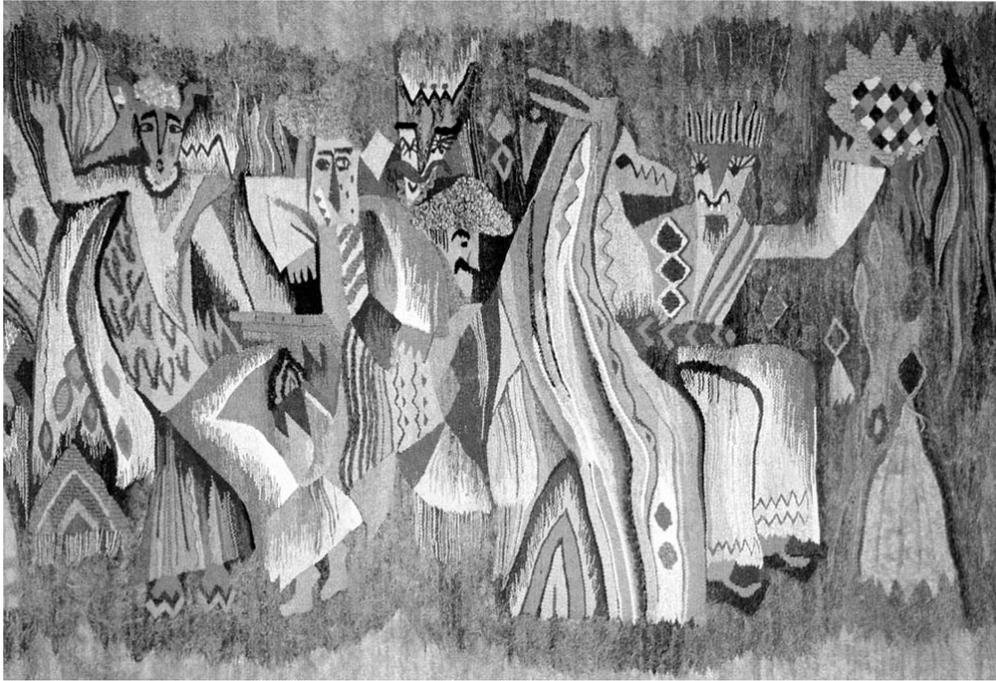


Fig. 44 – Silvia Vrănceanu, *Malanca*”(Folk holiday celebrated on New Year's Eve).Tapestry.1971.

During the Soviet period, but in different decades, two equestrian statues were also erected on the territory of the Republic of Moldova: the monument of Grigory Kotovsky (1959) in Chişinău and the monument of Aleksandr Suvorov (1979) in Tiraspol. The group of authors who designed the monument of Kotovsky (L. Dubinovschi, K. Kitaika, I. Pershudchev, A. Posjado and F. Naumov) drew inspiration from the Renaissance equestrian statue of Colleoni, created by the famous Verrocchio sculptor in Venice. The monument of the Russian general Suvorov was created by the sculptors Viktor and Vladimir Artamonov and by the architects I. Druzhinin and I. Chisteakov in a dynamic manner specific to the Soviet sculpture from the late 1970s to early 1980s. Both monuments glorify the personality of military commanders praised by Soviet propaganda. Other examples of politically engaged works are the monumental compositions dedicated to the *The Heroes of the Leninist Komsomol* (1958-1959, sculptor L. Dubinovschi, architect F. Naumov) and *The Fighters for the Soviet Power in Moldova* (1966, sculptors I. Poniatovschi, L. Fitov, A. Maiko).

In the 1950s, a series of busts of men of culture, especially of writers, were sculpted. Thus, on April 29, 1958, in the current Stephen the Great Public Garden in Chişinău was inaugurated the sculptural ensemble *Alley of the Classics of the Romanian Literature* (then called *Moldovan literature* by the authorities). Initially made up of twelve bronze busts, on polished red granite pedestal, the alley was continued in the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century by the inauguration of another sixteen busts. In 2010 and 2011, the sculptural ensemble was completed with the busts of Grigore Vieru and Adrian Păunescu, contemporary poets.

After the inauguration of the *Alley of the Classics*, there is a period when busts carry again a pronounced ideological meaning. Thus, the busts of Karl Marx (sculptor A. Maiko), Georgy Dimitrov (sculptor N. Gorionyshev) and the Decembrist Mihail Orlov (sculptor I. Canashin) were installed in Chişinău in the 1960s and 1970s, and in Bălţi that of the writer Nikolai Ostrovski, author of the propaganda novel *So Was the Steel Tempered* (sculptor I. Davidovich).



Fig. 45 – Iurie Cibotaru, *The "Guillotine" installation*. Exhibition "Kilometer 6". Chisinau, 1997.

The end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s are characterized by a return to the authentic values of the national art and culture. In this period of gaining and consolidating the independence of the Republic of Moldova were created the statue of Mihai Eminescu in the square of the National Theatre (sculptor T. Cataraga), the monument of Vasile Alecsandri in front of the National Library (sculptor I. Zderciuc),

the bust of the writer Nicolae Costenco (sculptor B. Dubrovin), the surgeon Nicolae Testemițanu (sculptor M. Spinei, architect G. Sluris), the historian Nicolae Iorga (sculptor M. Ecobici), the writer and encyclopaedist Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu in the town of Cahul (sculptor M. Spinei). During this period the donations of artworks (including busts) to the Moldavian cities by some sculptors from Romania became frequent.



Fig. 46 – Valentin Vârtosu, *The portrait of Eugène Ionesco*. 1997.



Fig. 47 – Marc Verlan, *The Globe of Moldova*. 1997.

Censorship existing in post-war years made the artist's freedom of expression impossible. New trends of *monumentalism* and *decorativism* in easel painting were severely criticized. The promoters of socialist realism saw *monumentalism* as a subterfuge meant to replace *action* by *presentation* and considered *decorativism* as an attempt to replace *action* by *ornaments*. Even *metaphor* in fine arts was criticized. Engaged critics considered *metaphor* as an attempt to substitute the *direct* message of the work of art by a mediate message whose meaning becomes *allegorical* or *allusive*, which can create

difficulties in the perception of the work of art by the uninitiated spectator. Under such circumstances unengaged artists and critics had to resort to multiple subterfuges in order to promote their creation. The party slogan saying that *art should be socialist in content and national in form* comprised a tiny "loophole" in the monolith wall of restrictive Soviet aesthetics. The second part of this slogan, in which *form* was identified with the possibilities of expressing the national and ethnical spirit, offered plastic artists the opportunity to introduce abstract decorative elements in their works and this choice would be

motivated by the actual existence of abstract motifs in folk art as well as to enrich chromatic palette. Another subterfuge, to which some liberal critics resorted, referred to the expansion of the idea of *realism* as far as possible. It was, actually, a falsity, but one absolutely necessary to enlarge the too narrow range of expression of Soviet plastic art. But even here the possibilities for maneuver were rather few. Official critics even started an entire campaign to discredit the “revisionist” Roger Garaudy and his book *D'un réalisme sans rivages (About a Boundless Realism)*. Once with the occupation of Bessarabia by the USSR, many of the Bessarabian plastic artists who had been educated in inter-war Romania or had studied after 1944 (but were still closely linked to the problematics of pre-war art) had to change their style and manner radically, subduing themselves to the regime. The first fifteen years that followed the Second World War were the toughest years. It was not until the end of the sixth decade and the first half of the seven decade of the last century that the generation of fine artists including Mihail

Greco, Valentina Rusu-Ciobanu, Glebus Sainciuc, Igor Vieru, Ada Zevin, Ilia Bogdesco, Eleonora Romanescu, Vilhelmina Zazerskaia and others managed to substantially emancipate the style and the thematic of their fine or decorative artworks. From a chronological point of view, this period of emancipation of the arts coincided with the creation in the former USSR of the so-called “austere style” – a reaction within the bounds of realist art to the dogmatism of “Stalinist academism” of the 1940s and the 1950s. Although the “austere style” in the Republic of Moldova did not take roots, the emergence of an art that was different from everything promoted by the Academy of Fine Arts of the USSR and by the “official ideology” played a positive role in those years. Thus, far from the “austere style,” the suggestive metaphor expressed by Mihail Greco in the triptych *Story of a Life* enjoyed a well-earned success at the jubilee exhibition (1967) in Moscow – dedicated to the 50th Anniversary of the October Revolution – and was declared by the Union criticism as the best painting of that decade.



Fig. 48 – Iurie Platon, *Monument to the victims of the communist regime*. Chişinău. Railway Station Square. 2013.

In the 1970s and 1980s a series of new phenomena appeared, such as the interference or even the fusion of languages belonging to different art genres of visual arts; the aggressive, militant ideological character of previous period exhibitions are more often replaced by the festive “ecstasy” of Brezhnev’s era. This is the time when the easel painting rehabilitates the values of the domestic, of the individual, etc. A problem which, from our point of view, deserves to be approached with great attention is the phenomenon of the art of opposition to the official ideology (the so-called *Soviet underground* from the 1970s to the 1980s). Yet, we must admit that, despite some attempts to renew the artistic language (such as Mihail Grecu or Valentina Rusu-Ciobanu), in the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic there was no genuine underground such as that in Moscow or St. Petersburg. The only manifestations of the opposition art on the territory of Bessarabia were the *scrap iron installations from the Sculeni barrier* (authors Nicolae Ischimji, Valeri Moshkov with the participation of Yury Horovsky and Valeriu Rotari) and the events of the group of alternative artists from Bălți (Ștefan Sadovnic, Leonid Pinchevski etc.) that did not raise the interest of art critics in Chișinău. Partly, this phenomenon is due to the traditional lack of interest of Bessarabian artists towards the “content” of the paintings and towards the social issues. Thus, in an interview given to Alexandru Schiopu, painter Andrei Sârbu mentioned: “In Bessarabia, the tradition of painting was influenced by the French school, which was not particularly interested in the issue of content. For my generation and probably for the previous one, it was important to get rid of social narrativity. I have aimed to and I am now to a painting without exterior implications ...”

One of the most prominent figures of the painting in the Republic of Moldova was Mihail Grecu (1916-1988) – for more than half a century (starting with the post-war period and ending with the last decade of

the twentieth century). Formed in the intellectual milieu of the Academy of Fine Arts in Bucharest, a student of Nicolae Dărăscu and Francisc Șirato, and later of Ivan Hazov at the School of Fine Arts in Chișinău, the painter became known in the USSR in the 1960s for some inspired metaphorical paintings such as *The Girls from Ciadâr-Lunga* (1960), *The Recruits* (1964-1965) and the triptych *Story of a Life* (1966). In the second half of the 1970s and during the 1980s, Mihail Grecu showed a deeper understanding of the archetypal values of folk art. To this period belong the canvases inspired by the environment of the Bessarabian peasants, suggestively entitled *Stone Drain in Bugeac*, *Golden Bucket*, *The Oak*, *House in Bugeac*, the famous cycle of *The Gates*.

Valentina Rusu-Ciobanu (born in 1920) belongs to that generation of Bessarabian artists who was also educated in the cultural environment of interwar Romania (during the war she was the student of professor Jean Cosmovici and of his assistant – the future famous Romanian painter Corneliu Baba – in Yassi) but whose creative activity took place in the second half of the twentieth century. By creating a new poetics of the image, the artist embraced the sincere manner of naive art, a manner in which caricature, grotesque, mild humour were somehow in response to the clichés and principles promoted by the regime. She successfully experimented in a photorealistic manner and used the possibilities of intertextuality (such as the painting *Quotes from Art History*), creating works with deep metaphorical meanings.

In paintings such as *Pearls* (1967) and *Portrait of a Gagauz Woman* (1972) the painter and art critic Ada Zevin (1918-2005) – Valentina Rusu-Ciobanu’s colleague of studies – demonstrated a profound understanding of the decorative values of folk art.

The portraits of her contemporaries, especially of the intellectuals from the field of culture and education, became the favorite painting genre of Glebus Sainciuc

(1919-2012). The artist is also known as the protagonist of a specific art genre: mini-performances with the demonstration of self-made masks-caricatures, presenting his colleagues from the realm of art.

Painter Igor Vieru (1923-1988) made a name for himself as an inspired rhapsodist of the Bessarabian villages. At the same time realist, symbolist and romantic, the painter used the polyphonic valences of the metaphor. The triptych *Ion's Happiness* (1967) is a reference work not only for the artist's creation, but also for the evolution of the Moldavian painting of the 1970s. The painting *Something about Humans and Waters*, completed in 1981, seems to be one of the most successful poetic and allegorical personifications in modern Bessarabian painting.

For many generations of art lovers from Moldova, Mihail Petric (1923-2005) will remain the most representative master of the "panoramic" Bessarabian landscape. His paintings *The Morning on the Dniester* (1957) and *The Road to Codru* (1959) have gained certain symbolic valences in time, becoming nowadays true "visiting cards" of the Prut-Dniester region.

The artists from the generation of the end of 1960s and 1970s include the talented colourists Ana Baranovici (1906-2002) and Ion Jumati (1909-1997), as well as the younger – born in the interwar period – Nichita Bahcevan (1919-1996), Eleonora Romanescu (born in 1926), Vilhelmina Zazerskaia (born in 1927), Alexei Katalnikov (born in 1929), Yury Shibaev (1930 – 1986), Alexei Novicov (born in 1931), Vasile Cojocaru (1932-2012), Filimon Hămuraru (1932-2006), Elena Bontea (born in 1933), Gheorghe Munteanu (born in 1934), Emil Childescu (born in 1937), Ion Stepanov (born in 1937), Vasile Nașcu (born in 1939), Victor Tretiacenco (1937-1979), Sergiu Cuciuc (born in 1940), Ion Chitoroagă (born in 1940). To the same generation belonged also the painter, graphic designer and muralist Aurel David (1935-1984), author of the well-known *Noon* painting (1964).

The genre of the industrial landscape at that time was embraced by Ivan Ershov (1915-1986); in the "portrait" genre excelled the painters Gheorghe Jankov (1921-1984), Olga Orlova (born in 1932) and the graphic artist Stepan Tuhari (1928-1997); the tradition of the professional teaching of the fine arts was assured and transmitted to the young generation by the painters-pedagogues Valeriu Pușcaș (1937-1990), Stanislav Babiuc (1935), Boris Kolomeetz (1936-2000) and Ion Serbinov (born in 1946).

Born during or immediately after the Second World War, the painters Dimitrie Peichev (born in 1943), Mihail Statnâi (born in 1942), Sergiu Galben (born in 1942), Ludmila Ţoncev (1946-2017), Inessa Ţâpin (1946-2013), Victor Hristov (born in 1946) and Valentina Bahcevan (born in 1948) contributed, each in his/her own way, to the beginning of a deeply passionate, emotive and energetic manner in easel painting.

An intellectual artist and an extremely refined painter, Andrei Sârbu (1950-2000) is the personality that "guarantees" the strength of the *bridge* built between the art of the older painters of the interwar generation and the experiences of the contemporary artists, already formed in the years of Gorbachev's *perestroika*. Mihail Grecu's disciple, Andrei Sârbu succeeded in make a name for himself both through his fascinating "non-figurative" *visions* and through his works in the style of *pop-art*, photographic realism or lyrical abstraction (such as the painting *If Through the Copper Woods You Pass...*). Subjugated, at first glance, by the mystery of the monotony of painted surfaces, Andrei Sârbu "brings life" into his canvases spontaneously: through rhythm, chromatic alternations, texture, etc. For Sârbu, the non-subordination of the artist's gesture in relation to the restrictive "court" of reason is decisive. This is, in fact, a fundamental principle of purely intuitive creation, in which the transcendence descends unconsciously into the sphere of the material world. With

barely perceptible passages from one tone to another or with violent impulsive brush strokes, through a restrictive chromatic (*grisaille*-generating) or with kaleidoscopic displays of the entire Newtonian spectrum, Andrei Sârbu's painting possesses absolutely an unmistakable language and architecture.

The ascetic and purged forms promoted by Mihai Țăruș (born in 1948) in the creations of the last two decades prove a refined taste and complex problem issues, specific to the 1980s and 1990s generations.

Tudor Zbârnea's paintings of the last fifteen years reveal an overwhelming role of the mythical dimension of history. The creations of this artist (born in 1955) are characterized by compositional complexity and subtle chromatic orchestrations.

The dream world and the objective reality are the two poles that orientate the painting of Iurie Matei (born in 1968). His paintings, of surrealistic inspiration – through the attention paid to some key images in the world's history of the arts –, successfully exploit the trans-textuality of the quotation and tend to fit into the current post-modern cultural paradigm.

Alexandra Picunov-Târțău (1928-2002) belongs to the generation of sculptors formed in the immediate post-war generation. Endowed with a special sense of monumental form and authentic decorative spirit, the sculptor managed to merge these two qualities in an unmistakable symbiosis with certain philosophical connotations.

One of the most inspired works of Naum Epelbaum (born in 1927) is the memorial dedicated to the memory of the victims in the ghetto in Chișinău (1993). This monument of modest size, located on Jerusalem Street, seems to be one of the most expressive sculptures of the Moldavian capital.

Brunhilda Epelbaum-Marcenco (born in 1927) excelled in the field of sculptural portraits. The image of the artist Maria Sagaidac, carved in wood in 1979, can be considered one of the great achievements of the portrait genre in Bessarabian fine art.

The sculptors Galina Dubrovin (1938-1997) and Boris Dubrovin (1939-2013) are

known especially for the monument of Metropolitan Petru Movilă from Chișinău, carved in stone and inaugurated in 1996.

An indisputable success of sculptor Iurie Canașin (born in 1939) is the *Monument of the Heroes Fallen during the Armed Conflict in Transnistria*, erected in 1998 on the territory of the Eternitate Memorial Complex in Chișinău.

Premature death did not allow the sculptor Valeriu Rotari (1945-1986) to show all his talent. We should mention that his works from the middle of the 80s played a decisive role in the evolution of the modern sculpture of Bessarabia and its liberation from the "stereotypes" of the engaged aesthetics.

Yury Horovsky (born in 1946), a colleague of generation and workshop with Valeriu Rotari while he lived in Chișinău, renewed significantly the sculpture means of expression and chose an authentic opening towards the language, the issues and philosophy of the contemporary art.

The sculptors Tudor Cataraga (1956-2010), Ion Zderciuc (born in 1957) and Valentin Vârțosu (born in 1962) debuted in the second half of the 1980s. Each of them has developed his own artistic language. Thus, Valentin Vârțosu – in some works, such as *The portrait of Eugène Ionesco* or *The Illuminated Cactus* – is ironic, while Tudor Cataraga – in the composition *Archaeology* – is "retrospective" and Ion Zderciuc – in *Eminescu-The Morning Star* – is romantic and spontaneous.

The artist Mircea Pușcaș (born in 1967) belongs to generations of Bessarabian sculptors who began to make a name for themselves in the 90s of the last century. Approaching both traditional sculpture and alternative art, in many of his creations Mircea Pușcaș uses a hermetically language, letting the viewer to decrypt the message of the opera on his/her own.

One of the most important calligraphers and book illustrators in Bessarabia was the graphic artist Ilia Bogdesco (1923-2010). Well-known in the Union and international arena, he was the only artist in the Republic

of Moldova who was elected member of the Academy of Arts of the former USSR. His illustrations to *Miorița* [*The Little Ewe Lamb*] ballad became truly anthological – as well as those to a series of works of the patrimony of universal literature: *The Pouch with Two Coins* by Ion Creangă, *The Gypsies* by Aleksandr S. Pushkin, *The Praise of Folly* by Erasmus of Rotterdam, *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes etc.

The graphic designers of the “middle” generation – Emil Childescu (born in 1937), Gheorghe Vrabie (1939-2016), Isai Cârnu (1940-2015) and Alexei Colâbneac (born in 1943) – were formed in the 1960s. Expanding the possibilities of the language of book and easel graphics, they have also succeeded in imposing the aesthetic priority in art.

The use of the suggestive metaphor, the concern for the quality of the texture of the sheet of paper are just a few coordinates around which gravitates the creation of the graphic artists Simion Zamșa (born in 1958) and Elena Karachentzev (born in 1960), both graduates from “*Ilia E. Repin*” *Institute of Fine Arts* in St. Petersburg.

In the last decades, the possibilities of expression in graphic art have been greatly expanded. Due to the development of digitization of printing methods, of the growing impact of industrial design, this old art genre knows a true revival. At present, the qualities and possibilities offered by the raw material on which the image is printed – the paper – have gained special importance. Workshops dedicated to the preparation of various types of paper for the needs of the easel or book graphics have already become a tradition in the artistic environment of Chișinău.

For centuries, the pottery and the art of traditional carpet have belonged to the field of folk craftsmanship and have had a particularly applicative value and functionality. The autonomy of these arts emerge in Bessarabia only towards the end of the nineteenth century, with the establishment of professional artistic education in the country. But until the

middle of the twentieth century the functional aspect or, at least, allegedly functional, continued to play a dominant role in the field of decorative arts. Thus, if we compare the works of the well-known ceramist Serguey Chokolov (1892-1977) from Chișinău in the 1940s or early 1950s to the works made in the 1960s, we can notice a radical change of concept: the decorative force and the expressionist abstraction of the late works overcome the concern for the initial applicative purpose of ceramics.

A similar situation is in the case of the comparison of the creations made by the artists of the older generation – formed until the Second World War (such as V. Neceaev, I. Postolachi, etc.), – to those belonging to the artists who debuted in the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, we can see that Valentina Neceaev's (1909-1977) ceramic or terracotta works are still under the influence of folk art. The work of Nicolae Coțofan (born in 1939), a representative of the generation of the first post-war decades, is a synthesis between the language of the ceramics belonging to the ancient archaeological culture of the Moldovian territory (Cucuteni-Tripolie etc.) and the language of the traditional art folklore. Mihai Grati (1933-2005) – another representative of the generation of post-war artists – used mainly chamotte and organically combined the image with narrative subject (more specific to painting, graphics or sculpture) with the more abstract language of decorative art. Interesting processes take place in the 70s-80s in the field of “monumental” ceramics. Analyzing the immense figurative compositions made by Luiza Iantzen (born in 1936) in the Palace of the Republic or in the Circus building in Chișinău, it can be noticed that ceramics is increasingly giving way the strictly applicative character in favour of the “sculptural-decorative” spirit.

For two decades (1970s-1980s), Filip Nutovici (born in 1920) was a famous name in the field of artistically processed glass. Initially alone, then with the help of his son

Alexandru, the artist contributed essentially to the interior design of a series of public edifices: Friendship Hall (the current Palace of the Republic) and the Supreme Soviet Building (the current Presidency of the Republic of Moldova).

Particular fineness in terms of texture and chromaticity characterizes the pieces of porcelain, faience or ceramics made by the late Vlad Bolboceanu (1956-2004) and by Irina Filip (born in 1972), who made a name for themselves in the second half of the 1990s. Equally unprecedented are the works in artistic glass technique by Virgil Tecuci (born in 1961), a graduate of the Tallinn Academy of Arts.

In the middle and in the late 1960s, innovative processes emerged not only in painting or graphics but also in decorative arts. The tapestries by Maria Saca-Răcilă (born in 1941), Elena Rotaru (born in 1938) and Silvia Vrânceanu (born in 1940) were largely discussed in the Union press, being often associated with the phrase *the Moldovan school of artistic Gobelin tapestry*. These remarkable artists have made the Moldovan rugs famous far across the borders of the republic. Younger, but no less talented, seems to be the author of Gobelin tapestry, the painter and graphic designer Andrei Negură (born in 1956). A graduate of the Academy of Decorative Arts in Budapest, the artist has managed to go far beyond the language of traditional tapestry.

The situation created in the last years of Gorbachev's *perestroika* and in the first years of state independence of the Republic of Moldova radically altered the functioning structures of culture in general and of visual arts in particular. Ideological censorship and the selection commissions (on political criteria!) of the works for exhibitions disappeared. Discussions on the synchronization of the artistic process in the Republic with the European and world artistic processes began. Yet, there were no more advantageous orders given to the Fine Arts Fund by ex-ministries, state-owned enterprises, or collective households.

The russification policy, originally promoted by the Tsarist authorities, and subsequently taken over by the Soviet authorities, aimed to suppress the identity trends of the non-Russian nations of the former Soviet Socialist Republic. However, this fact determined the increased interest of the intellectuals in the former Union republics in the identity dimension, the autochthonous languages, history, traditions and culture.

In the context of the democratization created by *perestroika*, the Writers' Union of Moldova submitted the project of the new linguistic legislation, meant to give the Romanian language the status of state language on the territory of the Republic. After many debates and hostilities generated both by the nomenclature opposition (local and central) and by a large part of the Russian-speaking population on August 31, 1989, the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova was completed with the article on the status and principles of functioning of the state language. In the exhibition hall of the Union of Artists of Moldova, in addition to the traditional *Autumn Salon* and *Spring Salon*, *Our Romanian Language* Exhibition was opened on an annual basis. Art exhibitions dedicated to the classic Romanian literature writer Mihai Eminescu began to be organized (the first was in 1989). The *Salons of Moldova* – these exhibitions of the painters on both sides of the Prut, which were held in Bacău (Romania) and Chișinău (the Republic of Moldova) – became a recurrent event. At the first exhibition of the *Salons of Moldova*, inaugurated in July 1991 in Bacău, 135 works by 74 authors were displayed, and seven prizes were awarded by different organizations from Romania and Moldova. Mihail Grecu's painting *In the Memory of the Ancestors* was awarded the Grand Prize of the Ministry of Culture in Romania.

Parallel to the exhibitions organized at the Union of Fine Artists, various group and personal exhibitions were carried out in various galleries. During the transition

period, the first private art galleries were opened, trying (to a greater or lesser extent!) to promote innovative works: “Elita,” “Coral,” “L,” “Aorta” etc.

At the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s the first parallel or alternative groups to the Union of Artists emerged. The *Phantom* Group was formed at the beginning of 1990 and had the first exhibitions in February-March of the same year at the Picture Gallery of Ismail city, at the Friendship Hall in Chişinău in June, and in July-August at the headquarters of the Exhibition of the National Economy Achievements of the Republic of Moldova. The group included – in different time periods – the fine artists Viktor Kuzmenko (the leader of the group), Igor Şcerbina, Vladimir Palamarciuk, Yury Klementiev, Ivan Kavtea, Ernesta Freudzon, Victor Guţu, Lidia Mudrac and the art critic Natalia Ponomariova. The name *Phantom* was based on the message promoted by the group: eluding as much as possible the objective reality and reflecting in art only the subjective, immaterial ideas of the creator. Another problem that animated the members of the group was the overcoming of the provincialism of Bessarabian artistic thinking and the aspiration of connecting to and synchronizing with the trends of world art. One of the most important exhibitions of *Phantom* was in August 1992 at the Central Hall of the Union of Artists of Moldova (the current Constantin Brâncuşi Exhibition Centre). The last exhibition – after which the group, for various reasons, broke up – was in 1993 at the National Art Museum of Moldova.

At the end of 1991, *Ten* Group was created. The name of this group – without symbolic connotations – indicated the initial number of its members: Andrei Sârbu, Dumitru Bolboceanu, Anatol (Nicolae) Rurac, Victor Hristov, Ilie Cojocar, Tudor Zbârnea, Andrei Mudrea, Vasile Moşanu, Iurie Platon, Dimitrie Peichev – one the last exhibited within the group only at the exhibition at the ¾ Floor Galleries at the National Theatre in

Bucharest in 1993). Painter Andrei Sârbu became the spokesman for this group. In *Sud-Est* (Southeast) magazine (no. 1 of 1993, p. 33), he defined the tasks of the group as follows: “What seems to me to be significant in this manifestation of culture – the exhibition of *Ten* Group – is the consistency of the attachment to the modern forms of expression, the fine artists’ connection to the current context of universal culture... We hope that *Ten* Group will also stimulate an instantaneous process of formation of groups and re-groups, the association and dissociation of artists, ideas and tendencies, the ultimate goal being the freedom of creation and not the reconstruction of a guild guided by the old ideology. At the same time, this contributes to the refreshment, the revival, the radical change of our fine art thinking, severely affected by a long stagnation.”

Unfortunately, Sârbu’s wishes did not come true. The difficulties of the current transition period of the Republic of Moldova, the total indifference of many cultural institutions in Chişinău, the lack of sponsorship, and the fact that a good part of the artists were still anchored to old stereotypes, made impossible the emergence of serious groups of creators and thus the diversification of the artistic life. With the exception of alternative events (such as the events of the Soros Center for Contemporary Art), largely due to the phenomena of *enculturation*, Bessarabia remained outside the free association of creators based on ideas. Moreover, even *Ten* group, after three exhibitions – in Chişinău, Bucharest and Ancona (Italy) – ceases to work. The exhibition of the same group, which was organized ten years later (in 2002), demonstrated once again the divergence of messages promoted by each of the former members of the group. The reasons for the disintegration of this group are easy to explain. There has never been a common aesthetic platform that could coagulate all the artists of the group. In fact, as some art critics noted, the exhibitions organized by

the group were “some meetings of solitary, scattered identities, some personal mini-exhibitions which did not betray in any way their authors’ adherence to a common platform necessary for teamwork” (Vladimir Bulat, *Artă și ideologie* [Art and Ideology], Chișinău, Cartier Publishing House,” 2000, p. 150).

A certain role in the failure of these groups was probably played by the extremely uncertain situation referring to the status and role of art in contemporary civilization. Fine artists from the former socialist countries, accustomed either to faithfully obey certain ethical-aesthetic doctrines, or to fight against them vehemently, were totally disoriented in a world of tolerance and of total lack of a dominant artistic theory. This was the Western world of art that our artists faced in the late 1980s. In this regard, Jacques Aumont, the theorist of cinema, in the French magazine “Hors cadre” (no. 7, 1989, pp. 199-203) commented upon the situation in the visual arts of the eighth decade of the last century: “First of all, there is no dominant theory (in visual arts – CC); moreover, there is no clearly defined theory. There is nothing that could be compared to Freudo-Marxism, psychoanalysis or semiotics of the 1960s and 1970s. If today there is any dominant scientific discourse, this is the discourse of history: a problematic discourse by its very nature, with enormous difficulties in self-defining.”

This *discourse of history* – also present in Andrei Sârbu’s last works (in *Archeo* series) – has acquired ethnographic and folkloric shades in the works of several Bessarabian 80s and 90s painters not affiliated to the artistic groups alternative to the Union of Artists. It can be traced in paintings by Mihai Jomir, Petru Jireghea, Ghenadie Jalbă, Gheorghe Oprea, Natalia Bichir, Timotei Bătrânu, Vasile Dohotaru, Eudochia Zavtur, Ștefan Beiu.

Special attention should be paid to the activity on the territory of the Republic of Moldova of organizations affiliated to

Soros Foundation in Moldova. Unlike the Soros foundations in other post-socialist countries, the Moldavian Foundation (between 1995 and 2005) played a leading role in the promotion of contemporary visual arts, largely replacing the Ministry of Culture and other national bodies designed to support the arts. Obviously, the phenomenon of “hurrying” the access to the benefits of modern civilization with its developed technologies – not always fit for a way of life and thinking that had been secluded for more than half a century in a “totalitarian reservation” – still has many obstacles to face. These obstacles are related to the immense discrepancies currently existing in the daily realities of the Republic of Moldova: the economic and cultural gap between the capital and the province, between the city and the village, the exacerbated polarization of the material situation, the conflict of mentalities and ages, the segmentation of the demographic structure of the population, the massive migration abroad of those who are able to work, etc. However, what at first was regarded as a mere act of artificial *enculturation* really helped the youth to promote a professional artistic discourse at the level of the new imperatives of time. The heterogeneous optics of receiving some so-called hermetic initiatives or the elitism of publications such as *Art-hoc* did not, however, prevent the Soros Foundation in Moldova and its affiliated institutions from generating, structuring and promoting (through the artists they have supported!) an approach complementary to that of the Union of Artists. This approach was absolutely necessary in the mid-1990s, in the conditions of the lability of the artistic groups and of the homogenizing centralism of the only organization of the fine artists from the Republic at that time – an organization that had barely escaped from censorship and ideological control.

Even if some of the “major” objectives of the Soros Center launched fifteen-twenty years ago could seem puerile today, the heterogenous projects related, first of all, to

the idea of opening towards a tolerant European civilization in its pluriculturalism seem entirely valid. These include projects such as *Kilometer 6*, *Kinovari (Cinnabar)*, *Invasion*, *Meditations from Tzara: Reflections in Re-* and, most importantly,

the creation of a climate favourable to the free expression of the artists who practice the most diverse creative methods and the funding of such manifestations that, without economic support, would have been impossible to achieve.

- ¹ Braga T., *Alexandru Plămădeală*, Chişinău, 2006.
- ² Brigalda-Barbas E., *Evoluția picturii de gen din Republica Moldova*, Chişinău, 2002.
- ³ Brigalda-Barbas E., *Pavel Şillingovschi*, Chişinău, 2005.
- ⁴ Brigalda-Barbas E., *Igor Vieru*, Chişinău, 2006.
- ⁵ Bulat V., *Lazăr Dubinovschi*, Chişinău, 2003.
- ⁶ Bulat V., *O antologie a picturii moldoveneşti*, Chişinău, 2015.
- ⁷ Calăşnicov I., *Leonid Grigoraşenco*, Chişinău, 2005.
- ⁸ Ciobanu C., Stăvilă T., *Icoane vechi din colecții basarabene*, Chişinău, 2000.
- ⁹ Ciobanu C., *Valentina Rusu-Ciobanu*, Chişinău, 2003.
- ¹⁰ Ciobanu C., *Andrei Sârbu*, Chişinău, 2005.
- ¹¹ Ciobanu C., *Mihail Petric*, Chişinău, 2007.
- ¹² Ciobanu C., *Muzeul Național de Artă al Moldovei: Colecția Pictură Națională*, Chişinău, 2014.
- ¹³ Ciobanu C., *Un secol de artă prin personalități*, studiu introductiv la antologia *Arta măștrilor basarabeni din secolul XX*, Chişinău, 2015.
- ¹⁴ Cuciuc S., Lişciț M., *Gleb Sainciuc*, Chişinău, 1975.
- ¹⁵ Golțov D., *Ilia Bogdesco*, Moscow, 1987 (in Russian).
- ¹⁶ Lişciț M., *Lazăr Dubinovschi. Sculptura*, Moscow, 1987 (in Russian).
- ¹⁷ *Literatura și Arta Moldovei. Enciclopedie*, Vol. 1-2, Chişinău, 1985 - 1986.
- ¹⁸ Marian A., *Sculptura contemporană din Moldova*, Chişinău, 2007.

- ¹⁹ Ploşniță E., *Muzeul basarabean în fluxul istoriei*, Chişinău, 1998.
- ²⁰ Simac A., *Tapiseria contemporană din Republica Moldova*, Chişinău, 2001.
- ²¹ Spânu C., *Emil Childescu*, Chişinău, 2005.
- ²² Stăvilă T., Ciobanu C., Diaconescu T., *Patrimoniul cultural al Republicii Moldova*, Chişinău, 1999.
- ²³ Stăvilă T., *Arta plastică din basarabia de la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea – începutul secolului XX*, Chişinău, 1990.
- ²⁴ Stăvilă T., *Muzeul de Stat de Arte Plastice al RSS Moldova*, Chişinău, 1990.
- ²⁵ Stăvilă T., *Arta plastică modernă din Basarabia (1887 – 1940)*, Chişinău, 2000.
- ²⁶ Stăvilă T., *Eugenia Maleşevschi*, Chişinău, 2002.
- ²⁷ Stăvilă T., *August Baillyre*, Chişinău, 2004.
- ²⁸ Stăvilă T., *Theodor KiriacoŃ*, Chişinău, 2006.
- ²⁹ Stăvilă T., *Icoana basarabeană din secolul XIX*, Chişinău, 2011.
- ³⁰ Toma L., *Moisey Gamburg*, Chişinău/Tel Aviv, 1998.
- ³¹ Toma L., *Portretul în pictura moldovenească (anii 1940 – 1970)*, Chişinău, 1983 (in Russian).
- ³² Toma L., *Mihail Greco*, Chişinău, 2005.
- ³³ Toma L., *Dumitru Sevastian*, Chişinău, 2012.
- ³⁴ Vasilieva N., *Serghei Ciokolov*, Chişinău, 2004.
- ³⁵ Vida G., *Nina Arbore*, Chişinău, 2004.
- ³⁶ Vlasiu I., *Milița Petraşcu*, Chişinău, 2004.
- ³⁷ Vrabie Gh., *Aurel David. Timpul, artistul și opera*, Chişinău, 2004.

Notes

