



Oto Hudec: *Giraffe*, around 1991 (10 years), courtesy of the artist, photo: Ema Lančaričová

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE? AN ARTIST? The Childhood Creativity of Artists at Kunsthalle Bratislava

Do you have a childhood drawing at home? This is the question we have asked several dozen artists of different generations — the result is the current exhibition of the childhood creativity of 26 artists, mostly published for the first time.

Opening: 22. 7. 2021 | 5 pm — 8 pm

Curators: Daniela Čarná, Lucia Kotvanová

Duration: 23. 7. — 19. 9. 2021

Place: Kunsthalle LAB

Presented artists:

Peter BARÉNYI, Maria BARTUSZOVÁ, András CSÉFALVAY, Ladislav ČARNÝ, Radovan ČEREVKA, Ľubomír ĎURČEK, Pavlína FICHTA-ČIERNA, Květa FULIEROVÁ, Daniel FISCHER, Juraj GÁBOR, Oto HUDEC, Jana KAPELOVÁ, Daniela KRAJČOVÁ, Otis LAUBERT, Zorka LEDNÁROVÁ, Stano MASÁR, Ladislav MEDNYÁNSZKY, Michal MORAVČÍK, Svätopluk MIKYTA, Ilona NÉMETH, Vladimír POPOVIČ, Peter RÓNAI, Veronika RÓNAIOVÁ, Rudolf SIKORA, Viliam SLAMINKA, Emöke VARGOVÁ

Every family ascribes a different significance to the child's creativity, influenced by the time period and family situation. Whether childhood works by a given artist are extant also has to do with how frequently his/her family (and subsequently the artist) moved house, and which traces of the past were preserved in doing so. Equally relevant is the given artist's attitude to the art produced in childhood. A well-known example is Paul Klee, who included his childhood productions in the list of his works and upheld children's creativity as an artist, a Bauhaus teacher, and a parent who supported the creativity of his son Felix. Klee was not the first in art history who drew attention to children's art, but he was one of the first who worked with it as a direct and significant source of inspiration.

A share of the credit for the growth of interest in children's creativity in the Slovak context should be given to Ľudovít Fulla, Mikuláš Galanda and their colleagues, initiators of children's courses at the School of Applied Arts in Bratislava (1928 – 1939, followed by Rudolf Fila and artists of the unofficial scene, who during 1970s – 1980s worked as progressive teachers at elementary art schools (D. Fischer, M. Mudroch, L. Čarný, I. Minárik). Some of them incorporated children's creativity in participative projects (Ľ. Ďurček, J. Koller, D. Tóth), did creative work together with their own children (R. Fila, R. Sikora, V. Kordoš, R. Ondak, E. Binder et al.), or responded to anonymous children's art.

"Childhood is a broad and many-layered concept, taking in the age up to fifteen years. Material covered by the term "childhood art" is therefore diverse, as demonstrated by the current exhibition of childhood works by twenty-five artists of various generations. They could be classified additionally according to developmental stages, circumstances of production, themes depicted, or age. We can find spontaneity and authenticity in them, and in the later years an indication of stereotypes that are taking hold and a prefiguration of professional growth or discovery of one's own visual language." says Daniela Čarná, co-author and curator of the project.

Every artwork done in early childhood is distinguished by spontaneity and the charm of a protoconceptual view of the world. If we are able to find something there that relates to the later professional work of the artist, that has its peculiar interest. For example, we find pictograms of a hospital and the prohibition of whale-hunting in drawings from his elementary school years by S. Masár; by A. Cséfalvay paintings of dinosaurs; by V. Rónai images with a breath of lyrical melancholy; by P. Rónai a collage of a square and precise works with material. With V. Popovič we encounter the relationship with paper that distinguishes his collages and related forms (muchlages, krkvages).

We find many of the artists as children already expressing themselves naturally in the language of art, discovering its potentials and dreaming of the artist's profession. Others, however, were planning to pursue other professions, for example science or music and occupations such as dustman, hairdresser, icecream seller, paleontologist, vet, priest and ballet dancer. In most cases they found support in their families, but some of them had to fight for their calling and enrol at the art school behind their parents' backs. In a special category were the artists from artists' families, who from childhood onwards had seen their parents at work and knew the positives and risks of this profession." explains Lucia Kotvanová, co-author and curator of the project.

The period of first beginnings in art offers several hitherto unexplored themes which are worthy of attention. Works done by the artists as children were often produced with the support of adults, but also sometimes without it. The highlight the importance of developing creativity in the childhood years, which may, though it need not necessarily, start off the later career of future artists. But even outside the world of art it will not be wasted, because the sustaining power of "small everyday creativity" in its varied forms and shadings has an important place in everybody's life, and to promote it is most certainly worthwhile.

A publication with interviews on the childhood of artists is being prepared as part of the exhibition, and it will also include workshops and lectures on the topic of promoting creativity.

For more information visit our website:

kunsthallebratislava.sk/en/event/cim-chces-byt-umelec-detska-tvorba-umelcov

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