

Paradise Lost

The First Roma Pavilion



Curator and Artists

Biographies, texts

Tímea Junghaus, curator

Tímea Junghaus is an art historian and cultural activist. Her mother's family were Romunglo musicians and her father's family were traveling Sinti performers. She graduated from Eotvos Lorand University (Hungary) where she majored in art history. As the first Roma art historian in Hungary and an acknowledged advocate for the cultural rights of minorities she plays an active role in defining inclusive cultural strategies.

In 2002 she founded the János Balázs Gallery, which is located in the 8th district of Budapest, Hungary (an area known for its large Roma population) and she curated several exhibitions that proved and raised public awareness against the cultural oppression of Roma people.

Her articles on minority art, culture and education are published in several cultural magazines and newspapers such as Amaro Drom, Romapage, and the Indymedia Independent Media Network.

In March 2004 she was co-curator of the exhibition: *Hidden Holocaust* where for the first time, Roma artists have entered the official art scene and exhibited in the Kunsthalle

(Contemporary Art Museum) of Budapest. She generated interest, exhibitions and conferences on Roma culture internationally: *We are what we are - Aspects of Roma Life in Contemporary Art* (exhibition, Minoriten Galerie, Graz, Austria, October 2004); *North and South LAB, Culture and Colonization* (conference, Tanzquartier, Vienna, Austria, March 2005); *Common Space, Exhibition about the Hungarian minority representation* (exhibition, Ernst Museum, Budapest, Hungary, 2006); *About the Absence of the Camp* (exhibition, Kunsthaus Dresden, Germany, 2006).

She is author and co-editor of the first comprehensive publication on European Roma visual art, *Meet Your Neighbours - Contemporary Roma Art from Europe* (OSI Publication, 2006).

Since 2005 Junghaus has been affiliated with the Open Society Institute, where she is the head of the Roma Cultural Participation Project. RCPP as a component of Open Society Institute's Arts and Culture Network Program emphasizes the cultural inclusiveness and empowerment of Roma as well as changes in the majority societies' attitudes.

Daniel Baker

Daniel was born in St Mary Cray in Kent in 1961, the youngest son of a family of Romanichal Gypsies, which has existed in the area for many generations and represents the largest concentration of Gypsies in England. His family settled before he was born, making for a relatively stable education. Daniel studied painting at Ravensbourne School of Art from age 17 to 21. His art practice has become increasingly contextualised by an ongoing exploration of his cultural positioning. Having completed a Sociology MA specialising in Romani Studies, Daniel began his Doctoral Research at the Royal College of Art in 2006. He is currently serving as Chair of the Gypsy Council and editor of The HUB, the newsletter of the Gypsy Council. He exhibits widely both in the UK and abroad. He lives and works in London.

Artist's Statement:

My current work explores the imagined space occupied by the Gypsy, offering a window into the marginal area allocated to them - outside of, yet surrounded by, connected, yet dislocated from a society that they have existed within for hundreds of years. The imagined space here refers both to the symbolic space of myth and misconception held in the popular imagination, as well as the absence or disappearance of geographical space for Gypsy habitation in the light of recent legislation.

These works use painted, etched and gilded glass to produce illuminated mirrored surfaces, or looking glasses. Images appear behind the glass but in front of the mirrored background, locating

the subject in a liminal or in-between space – a space which the Gypsy continues to inhabit both physically and symbolically. The somewhat obscured nature of the gilded reflection allows the viewer to inhabit the landscape of the work whilst at the same time evading true likeness and recognition.

These looking glasses seek to highlight an ambiguity and confusion in the way that Gypsies

Tibor Balogh

* 1975 Fehérgyarmat, Hungary. Lives in Budapest, Hungary.

From the age of one he was brought up in the Tiszadob Children's Village, an institution raising mainly Roma orphans. He is the first Hungarian Roma artist who has graduated from the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts.

Text by Tímea Junghaus:

Tibor Balogh is the first Roma artist to be admitted to, and to have graduated from the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts. Testifying to a full mastery of his art, his diploma piece, a series of copperplates, blends childhood memories of the artist with fragments from another scene of his life, the 8th district of the capital, which has the highest percentage of Roma population in the city, and which gave home to Balogh during his Academy years. After graduation, his first

Mihaela Cimpeanu

Mihaela Ionela Cimpeanu was born in 1981 in Baliesti, southeastern Romania, into a family of young Roma. Her father was brought up in a brick-making family and became a construction worker. Her mother was unemployed.

She is the firstborn child in a family with five children. When she was one, the family moved to Craiova. She attended the grammar school and

Gabi Jimenez

* 1964 Paris, France. Lives in Marines (Val-d'Oise), France.

are seen – a state of obscured likeness and masked visibility that has been internalised by the Gypsy over time, making it difficult for Gypsies to fully see them-selves in the world. This difficulty in visualising the self has left popular stereotyped images relatively unchallenged, the legacy of which is a symbolic Gypsy that is ever present but never truly seen. These works are a meditation upon identity and dislocation.

important appearance was at the exhibition at the Múcsarnok/Kunsthalle, the Hidden Holocaust.

Balogh made a provocative work for the Holocaust exhibition, a booth with the dimensions of 1 x 1 x 2.3 m. Illuminated by a bare light bulb, the walls of the booth were papered with shocking documents, articles and photos on the Holocaust of the Roma and their ongoing discrimination. Stepping inside, it was impossible to ignore the evidence of their harrowing fate, no matter where one turned. Outside the booth, there were small test tubes, with the instructions pasted on the wall. You could take a test tube inside the booth, where you could spend as much time as you liked. You could collect your tears in the test tube, which you could sign if you wanted to. The test tube was to be passed onto a small table through an opening, whence the artist took it, and hung it up around the booth, among the other "raindrops." A hundred people took part in the action that preceded the exhibition, and the event had the mood of a Roma wake.

then high school, where she discovered her gift for drawing. She then was admitted to the High School of Arts and graduated with the highest grades.

In 2001 she was admitted to the Faculty of Sculpture at the National Academy of Fine and Applied Arts, Bucharest, and is currently a Master's degree student.

Artist's statement;

There are things we see, notice, remember – and there are things we don't want to see.

The Roma are frightening. Who are they? Where do they come from? What are they doing?

"I try to relate scenes of life in pictures, the moments of joy, the places we have borrowed for this while, the painful memories that still haunt."

All our memories are colourful. All my paintings, graphics, illustrations are coded, by necessity, in colour. Becoming independent of its material, my work concentrates entirely on the meaning, and the message that derives from it. A bit like in the

András Kállai

* 1982 Kerepestarcsa, Hungary. Lives in London, United Kingdom.

2001-2006 Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Budapest – Sculpture Programme by Tamás Körösenyi

1996-2000 Vocational Secondary and Training School for Building and Ornament Art, (sculptor)

Artist's statement:

All my works are the results of an intuitive creative process, as regards both their subjects and the process of realisation. It was always after the event that I could recognise my method and identify its sources, whether it be an attraction to primitive art, representations of Venus, compositions built from used dolls and toys, or Barbie dolls. Which is to say the work always comes first – spontaneously or by chance, – and the idea, the subject follows in its wake, whether

Damian Le Bas

* 1963 Sheffield, United Kingdom. Lives in Worthing (West-Sussex), United Kingdom.

1985-87 Royal College of Art, London

1980-85 West Sussex College of Art & Design, Worthing, West Sussex

Text by Thomas Acton:

For Damian the first complexity is his own identity. Is he an underground musician who just happens to be a professional artist? He is the outsider who, curiously, seems to be at ease almost anywhere. He stands at the confluence of three diasporic currents, his own family Huguenot and Irish Traveller heritage, and the English Romani heritage of his wife and in-laws. Sometimes the

stained glass windows of churches, only without the regulation. The cloisonné and the contours that curb the colours; the will to do without aesthetic devices that are completely meaningless; the desire to get as close to the essence as possible – these are the things that animate all my visual and artistic intentions. As in flamenco. Because I am flamenco. "Y que tengo sangre de Rey en la palma de la mano."

immediately or much later. I want to emphasise this because the Barbie dolls are again something I chanced upon. This figure had appeared in all of my earlier toy-compositions, but I had not accorded more attention to it than to any other degenerate and grotesque toys. But as two of my interests – or more precisely, those works that utilise primitive art and those that employ contemporary toys – were approaching one another, I realised I was using two idols, two completely different images of the woman! One is Venus, who serves fertility, the other Barbie, who serves infertility! My sculpture Fat Barbie is a result, the first refined form, of the encounter of these two idols. I want to represent the Barbie doll in certain situations, with the use of simple symbols. The works that emerged along this concept may at first sight be perplexing, even funny, but it is my hope that they are attention-arresting.

allusions to history are mythic. Not least the cultural specificity is in the written words which are sprinkled across much of his work. Possessing a linguistic facility that would be the envy of many anthropologists, Damian, like Shakespeare's Henry V, "can talk with every Tinker in his tongue".

The works of Damian and his wife, Delaine, constantly quote from each other, take note of and respond to each other. Exhibition by exhibition, the images broaden their scope and strike deeper and harder. In the end, don't look at these pictures for what they tell you about Damian and his family; look at them for what they will tell you about yourself.

Delaine Le Bas

* 1965 Worthing (West-Sussex), United Kingdom; lives there.
1981-86 West Sussex College of Art & Design, Worthing, West Sussex
1986-88 St Martins School of Art, London

Artist's Statement

"The nation's morals are like teeth: the more decayed they are, the more it hurts to touch them." George Bernard Shaw

My work is at the point where Outsider, Folk and Contemporary Art meet, combining a visionary, conceptual and craft approach. I live and work in the same space 24/7. There is no separation of daily life and art; they are intertwined. My works are the struggle to escape the stereotypes. I employ symbols that the viewer thinks they understand. I take these familiar images, retain

their democratic nature but create a shift in their meaning.

Scratch beneath the glittery surface and you will see a violent undercurrent, exposing things for what they are, drawn in by the prettiness to be confronted by what lurks beneath the surface, the wolf in sheep's clothing being a reoccurring theme.

As a Romani, my viewpoint has always been that of the outsider, and this position of the 'other' is reflected in the materials and messages within my work. We live in a culture of mixed values and garbled messages. My works are crafted from the disregarded and disparate objects of the car boot sale and the charity shop. A bricolage of materials. Employing the materials of the everyday, all formed together in a manner that allows them to be precious yet reclaimed.

Kiba Lumberg

* 1956 Lappeenranta, Finland. Lives in Helsinki, Finland.
1979-81 Conservatory of Helsinki.
1983-85 Artistic handicraft course for Gypsy entrepreneurs (University of Art and Design Helsinki UIAH).
1985-87 Extra student at UIAH

Text by Esko Nummelin:

"Well, where to begin..."

A long journey of running and jogging along a thorny path, writes Kiba Lumberg herself. The future artist, author and scriptwriter was born in the 1950s into a Romani family of nine in the small town of Lappeenranta in Southeastern Finland.

Kiba is said to have been a withdrawn, even defiant child, and consequently considered at

times difficult. The colourful life in the Roma community fascinated, but also oppressed her. According to Kiba she grew to know the feeling of otherness already as a child, otherness in relation to the non-Roma majority, but also otherness in relation to her own people. She rebelled because she was unable to accept all the traditional customs of her community. When Kiba was thirteen, she took her few belongings and entered an orphanage. Her family came to take her back, but the young girl kept her head.

Kiba has settled her relationship with her own ethnic framework and personal history. She continues to draw on its culture, both for her own existence and also her art – observing life and its phenomena from both within and without. She does not want to consider herself a Finn; she would much rather like to be a citizen of the world.

Omara (Mara Oláh)

* 1945 Monor, Hungary. Lives in Szarvasgede, Hungary.

Opens the first Roma art gallery in her home in the suburbs of Budapest, Kispest, 1993.

Text by Tímea Junghaus:

Mara Oláh started painting at the age of 43, after her mother's death. Parallel with her autobiography, she was painting major traumas in her life, in chronological order, using art as a therapeutic tool to come to terms with, and overcome, humiliation, the grief felt over losing

her mother, the anguish of alienation from her daughter, the physical pain of her cancer.

Since 1992, all her pictures have been completed with inscriptions. (...) Painted in various tones of blue and complemented with textual explanations and words of wisdom, the "Blue Pictures" are confessions about the artist's most important, personal experiences, her relationship with her daughter, her ordeals as a Roma and a woman. The inscriptions not only verbalise the story of the narrative pictures, but also relate the time of the event, and contain reflections that show their relevance to the present and the future. A good example is Mara and the Policeman: the story of

Marian Petre

Marian Petre was born in 1963 in Draganesti-Olt, Romania, into a family of Roma blacksmiths. 1982, he graduated from the High School of Art in Craiova, Romania. 1983, he is admitted to the Nicolae Grigorescu Fine Art Institute, from which he graduated in 1987.

Nihad Nino Pušija

* 1965 Sarajevo, Bosnia. Lives in Berlin, Germany since 1992.

2001 visits the classes of Marina Abramovic´ at the Academy of Arts in Braunschweig

1994 project leader of "Zyklop foto fabrik" [Cyclops photo factory], a group of young artists who had to abandon their studies because of the war in the former Yugoslavia, supported by the Kunstamt Kreuzberg and NGBK (New Society of Fine Art), Berlin; main themes: Bosnia, refugees, conflict resolution, integration and Roma in Europe

1988 1992 art photo projects and studies in England, Belgium, Italy and USA

1988 freelance photographer

1985 commencement of journalism study at University of Sarajevo; trainee photojournalist and photo illustrator for the Bosnian independent daily newspaper Oslobodjenje in Sarajevo (comparable to the Independent, London)

Artist's statement:

For the last fifteen years, I have consciously chosen to live and photograph in Berlin. There is no other metropolis in the world in which two divided halves are trying to grow back together. Nowhere else can you find both the division, and

young Mara, who refused to stand with her bicycle behind a policeman in the line waiting at the railway crossing, because she had arrived earlier; despite there being several eyewitnesses, the policeman beat her almost to death. (...)

When it comes to representing the interests of the Roma, Omara does not confine herself to the visual arts: she speaks out through actions and statements she makes on television, in printed and electronic journals. She visits prisons to talk with the inmates and tell them about the life of the Roma on the "outside." Though she would probably refrain from using such words, hers is a politically conscious, activist art..

2000 Founder and President of Artisrroma, an organisation of Roma visual artists. Since 1990 he has worked as a teacher of plastic-education.

the merging, between the East and West Bloc. In this time and place of transition, I have the unique opportunity to move around as an artist, exploring Berlin's microcosms of its streets, food stands and even park benches, as change in progress. Through my eyes, as a foreigner, and with the tool of artistic photography, the faces of the inhabitants become projections of the events.

Photography is used as a medium to (re)gain one's identity and self-image. This is true for the subjects I capture, as well as for my own experience and role within this societal process of transition. It becomes increasingly important for me to find strategies and approaches to communicate my own experiences as part of the whole and make them heard.

Roma and their unique personal stories are at the centre of attention in portrait photography series at the turn of this century. These photographs of individuals become defining documentaries for whole groups of people. It is my artistic goal to seek out microcosms, here, where I live and work, capturing the small changes and holding onto the unassuming, so that the resulting series of photographs will defy the vague generalisations of my surroundings and daily life.

Jenő André Raatzsch

* 1978 Ilmenau, Germany. Lives in Nuremberg, Germany.

Artist's statement:

My art is action: it is not a goal but a tool. It helps me to reach completeness, where art is no longer needed. It is when I do not need art that I know I have reached completeness. What is completeness? It is accepting opposites, experiencing universality, re-evaluating values.

What is action? I use the word not in its common sense, but to denote "the doing of life;" action need not be awe-inspiring or herculean; its point is its infinite simplicity, which outshines all kinds of artistic action. Everyone has their roots. Man is no different from other living creatures. Compare humans and trees: they all gain their nourishment from the earth, but they also need care in the "upper region," without which they cannot grow; we humans are responsible for our own care. This is the moment when harmony comes into being....

Dušan Ristić

* 1970 Valjevo, Serbia (former Yugoslavia). Lives in San Francisco, USA.

István Szentandrásy

* 1952 Vásárosnamény, Hungary. Lives in Budapest, Hungary.

Text by Tímea Junghaus:

István Szentandrásy is the only disciple of Tamas Péli, the prophet of Hungarian Roma art. He is now the leader of what is a school of painting in the classic sense, which Tamás Péli created in the early 1980s, and which still has several young, exceptionally talented followers.

By his own confession, Szentandrásy employs the great Renaissance masters' bravura

technique in works that are modern in subject, and reflect on the problems of contemporary society. He finished one of his chief works in 2004. The large canvases, which illustrate Lorca's Gypsy Ballads, represent the quintessence of Roma visual art. They are the artist's parable for the coming generations of Roma artists and intellectuals: they are a compendium of the iconography of Roma visual culture, and offer a virtuoso combination of the Roma narrative tradition and contemporary Roma literature. These pictures are astonishingly suggestive Roma visions, with charging wild horses, exotic Gypsy princesses, beggars, musicians and fatal romances.

János Révész

* 1984 Budapest, Hungary; lives there.

Norbert Szirmai

* 1981 Hódmezővásárhely. Lives in Budapest, Hungary.