









# PARADISE LOST

Edited by Tímea Junghaus and Katalin Székely



THE FIRST ROMA PAVILION  
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2007

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## Acknowledgements

With this publication, the Open Society Institute, Allianz Kulturstiftung and the European Cultural Foundation announce the First Roma Pavilion at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale, which presents a selection of contemporary Roma artists from eight European countries.

This catalogue is the result of an initiative undertaken by the Open Society Institute's Arts and Culture Network Program to find untapped talent and identify Roma artists who are generally unknown to the European art scene. During our research, we contacted organisations, institutions and individuals who had already worked to create fair representations of Roma, to help Roma participate in cultural life and to attain recognition for Roma art.

We are indebted to all those who have generously devoted time to this project: particularly the artists, who have allowed us to publish their biographies and statements along with reproductions of their works; the team of scientific consultants, which includes Viktor Misiano (art historian, international curator and critic); Thomas Acton (Professor of Romani Studies, University of Greenwich); Barnabás Bencsik (curator, Director, ACAX | Agency for Contemporary Art Exchange); Dragan Klaić (scholar, cultural analyst and writer in the field of European cultural policy) and Marketta Seppälä (Director, Frame Foundation and Commissioner of the Nordic Pavilion 2007); as well as the Sub-Board of the OSI Arts and Culture Network Program.

We would like to express our appreciation to the sponsors of the Roma Pavilion: George Soros, Founder and Chairman of the Open Society Institute; Michael Thoss, Director of the Allianz Kulturstiftung; and Gottfried Wagner, Director of the European Cultural Foundation, for encouraging us with the wise advice, new ideas and helpful solutions; to the Swiss Cultural Programme South-East Europe and Ukraine, a program of SDC and Pro Helvetia, which has provided additional funding; to Pierre Mirabaud, András Ujlaky, Tibor Derdák and Suzanne Wettenschwiler, who were the first individual supporters of the Roma Pavilion, setting an example for other "Friends of the Roma Pavilion". We have been inspired by the suggestions of Peter Stepan, editor of Prestel Verlag.

We invite readers to use this catalogue as it is intended: not as the last word on the subject of contemporary Roma art, but as an introduction and an irritant – an intellectual provocation that hopefully will raise as many questions as it answers.

*Tímea Junghaus*  
Curator

## Foreword

The Open Society Institute, the Allianz Kulturstiftung and the European Cultural Foundation are pleased to sponsor the First Roma Pavilion at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale. With artists representing eight countries, this is the first truly European pavilion in the Biennale's history, located in an exceptional space – Palazzo Pisani Santa Marina, a typical 16<sup>th</sup>-century Venetian palace in the city's Canareggio district.

A Roma Pavilion alongside the Biennale's national pavilions is a significant step toward giving contemporary Roma culture the audience it deserves. The Roma Pavilion marks the arrival of contemporary Roma culture on the international stage and sends an important message of inclusion: the Roma have a vital role to play in the cultural and political landscape of Europe.

As the largest minority group in Europe (estimated at between 8 to 12 million), the Roma have faced centuries of exclusion and discrimination. With the enlargement of the European Union, this exclusion has become impossible to ignore. As a result, many governments in Europe have recognised the need to improve socio-economic conditions for the Roma and to fight against discrimination. Roma issues are also being addressed by international and European-level initiatives such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All 2007. Moreover, since the collapse of Communism, a new generation of Roma intellectuals and artists has emerged, along with a new Roma consciousness. As the Roma Pavilion attests, a vibrant Roma culture has endured in the face of depredation.

Although the focus during the Biennale is on the artists and the contribution of Roma culture to European culture, highlighting Roma culture complements the objectives of Roma inclusion and equal rights. Cultural work, in our view, can often reveal social injustice to a broad public far more creatively and effectively than can politics. Cultural work can also provide a positive starting point for the development of effective policies by recognising that Roma people contribute to the tapestry of a united Europe by enriching its fabric.

*Aryeh Neier*  
President, Open Society Institute

overleaf, pp. 14-15

Daniel Baker  
static, 2006  
photographic image, variable size, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker



## Paradise Lost

### The First Roma Pavilion

by Tímea Junghaus

The Roma are not a homogeneous group. Assimilation, emancipation, migration, miscegenation, education and social status have diversified the populace to such an extent that today the Roma population is as diverse as the general European non-Roma population. Yet for all the diversity, a common cultural framework and a social history sustain the classification.

Romani communities are dispersed far and wide across Europe, creating discontinuous diasporas. Today, the Romani population in Europe is variously estimated at between eight and twelve million people.<sup>1</sup> Precise demographic data are not available, due in large part to

*“The reluctance of many Roma to identify themselves as such for official purposes, and the refusal of many governments to include Roma as a legitimate category for census purposes.”<sup>2</sup>*

With the May 2004 enlargement of the European Union, approximately 1.5 million Roma became EU citizens. The accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 means an additional 3 million EU citizens of Romani origin.

The Roma speak different dialects of Romani, as well as a variety of languages from their “host” countries. They share a number of religious and church affiliations, whilst maintaining at the same time cultural boundaries not only between themselves and the surrounding environment, but also between different Romani groups.

Roma politics lack even the most fundamental methodological tools necessary to define, organise and implement policy. Students of the Roma as a minority are divided over principal theoretical issues. Experts are hesitant in their choice between a standpoint advocating human rights and anti-discrimination, and approaches that promote “human development.”<sup>3</sup> The assessment and critical analysis of the situation is further hindered by the conflict of the standpoint that prioritises the assertion of individual, human rights, and theories that rely on a unified group identity for the Roma.

To counter and overcome massive prejudice, hate and discrimination in Europe, policies and action plans are needed, which apply to the entire Roma community. In order to make these efficient by maximising social awareness and participation, they must be employed not on the level of the individual, but of the group(s), through the communication and representation of community identity. Thanks to the communication and information potential of images, the culture of the Roma has a far more important role in the contemporary politics of representation and the conveyance of a valid Roma identity than any other media.

As the distinguished Romologist Thomas Acton points out:

*“Multiculturalism might be an appropriate concept to describe the basic reality of Gypsy people.”*

The Roma community is a transnational minority; their rights and identity are contingent upon not only the discretion of individual states, and thus the legitimacy of Roma identity is the competence not only of the particular nations. The Roma community knows no territorial boundaries, uniting people of different tongues and religions. Understood this way, Roma identity coincides with Stuart Hall’s cultural identity, which is a “matter of becoming,”<sup>4</sup> or with Homi Bhabha’s description:

*“restless, uneasy, interstitial hybridity: a radical heterogeneity, discontinuity, the permanent revolution of forms.”<sup>5</sup>*

In creating Roma identity, the discourse of locality, of origin, is far more important than construing “nomadicity.”

Such a definition of cultural identity became a cornerstone of post-colonial thought: imaginary contents emerged, a

*“coherence in the experience of dispersal and fragmentation, which is the history of all enforced diasporas.”<sup>6</sup>*

The history of Roma representation shows a strong resemblance to that of colonised peoples; thus, post-colonial theory is one of the obvious choices in analysing the works of Roma artists. It is not uncommon to employ post-colonial theory in a context that is not typically post-colonial; it is, in fact, a favoured method in critical cultural studies, when a different culture, historical or social phenomenon is to be understood. Ian Hancock, an acknowledged linguist of Romani origin, also emphasises this analogy:



The storage facility of the largest European Roma Art Collection (Budapest, 4<sup>th</sup> district)

*“A similarity of life conditions (oppression, discrimination) may produce a similarity in the development of language and culture.”<sup>7</sup>*

Since our approach is post-colonial and the present study can be considered an ethnicist text, it is necessary to define or rewrite the concept of nation. The grounds on which this rewriting can take place is the idea of the nation as an allegory, because any other gesture within the territory of the possible critical interpretations would not so much rewrite the nation as power relations, but reproduce it. The nation must be present as an idea and not as an ideology (in the Benedetto Crocean sense), as an element of value and not as an evaluator. This way, the nation ceases to be a manipulation that contains and dominates everything, and becomes instead a circumscription that allows for the recognition of current truths: an opportunity for multiple meanings.

Cultural representations play an important role in the construction of the Roma identity. Until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the representation of the Gypsy was the exclusive monopoly of non-Roma (*gadhe*) artists. This could be done by representing Romani music as “folk-music,” Romani verbal accounts as folklore and Romani-made images as “folk art” or “naïve art.” In other words, Romani productions were represented as being not the work of individual authors, but rather as collective facts of nature, which only become a concrete representation when in some way presented by the art collector or the folklorist. As a new generation of Roma intellectuals emerges, we are witnessing the birth of Roma consciousness,<sup>8</sup> a state when successful, wealthy and well-educated Roma proudly acknowledge their origin, rather than opt for assimilation and the relinquishment of their cultural heritage. The latter is a real reason for concern, even now when there are only a few well-to-do Roma. As OSI Chairman George Soros put it,

*“It is a very natural inclination to try not to be Roma, to meld into the general population, to assimilate. And therefore what is left, what the rest of the population sees, are the disenfranchised, the underclass. And that is the stereotype that prevails in society.”<sup>9</sup>*

These well-educated professionals are rewriting the history of Roma culture, representation and art. If we draw on Stuart Hall’s analysis of minority cultural politics, we might suggest that in order to deconstruct dominant cultural

## SECOND SITE

AVERE YAKHA – AVERE THANA  
WAVVER YOKS – WAVVER TANS



Daniel Baker • Ferdinand Koci • Damien Le Bas • Delaine Le Bas  
An Exhibition by four artists from Roma/Gypsy/Traveller communities

Cover page of the exhibition catalogue *Second Site*, 2006

Community Centre (Budapest).<sup>11</sup> This exhibition raised international awareness, generated fans and supporters to Roma culture, and had a long-lasting propagating effect on the Central/Eastern European Roma cultural production. The third such display, in 2000, was still organised in the Museum of Ethnography (Budapest), rather than an institute of contemporary art, as if the exhibits were the exotic objects of an alien civilisation.

Serge Poliakoff, Otto Mueller, even Sandra Jayat, were welcomed to the artistic context they lived in, the avant-garde. In the second part of the twentieth century we finally find the odd creative Romani writer, artist or film director making self-representations, but when (after 1971) the Roma artists claimed recognition as a group, their works were still relegated to the status of collective (folk, popular) manifestations of Roma culture, of exotic Roma objects. If the artists were not reduced to anonymity, their fate was circumscribed by being presented, for over three decades, in marginal institutions which did not have the necessary infrastructure for creation and exhibition. In 1981, Sandra Jayat organised the first world exhibition of Roma artists in the Conciergerie of Paris.<sup>12</sup> The exhibition was again an international success, which did not manage to break into the art scene, but its significance in keeping Europe's Roma artists inspired and the creative production stimulated was outstanding. The initiators of these internationally acknowledged events were pioneers, but the time was not yet right. Between 1980 and 1990, "social inclusion" became an important pan-European agenda, with the consideration of the situation of the Roma population, and although it did not have a component of "cultural inclusion", it prepared the ground for the second and more momentous wave of the Roma Cultural Movement.

*"The Roma, as Europe's largest ethnic minority, have not benefited from the dramatic transition, consolidation and expansion of democracy and democratic values in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989. The continued ostracism and segregation faced by the Roma registers as perhaps the most critical of democratic deficits within and beyond the*

representations, Roma artists need to fight on two fronts. First, they need to reverse the stereotypes that prevail in the media, by producing images of the Roma that oppose those created in mainstream culture. Secondly, they need to fight for access to mainstream audiences. Otherwise, even the rare examples of truly authentic self-representations remain visible only within the narrow circles of academia or human rights festivals. If, as leading Romani scholar-politician Nicolae Gheorghe suggests,

*"the representation of Romani identity is a process of ethno-genesis which involves the Roma self-consciously playing with their identities, then perhaps we must recognise that constructing effective representations involves the artist as much as the scientist or politician."*<sup>10</sup>

An event of historical importance marks the beginning of the Roma Cultural Movement in Europe, the 1979 *First National Exhibition of Self-Taught Artists* in Hungary, organised by Ágnes Daróczy and hosted by the Pataki



David Zeman: *The Roma Road*  
Facade mural of the Museum of Romani Culture, Brno

that it was outdated, merely illustrative or, at best, nostalgic. Roma artists rarely had the opportunity to experiment with new techniques, and they could exhibit only in community centres, venues which seem marginal from the perspective of the cultural discourse. When Roma intellectuals defined one of their chief missions as the exploration and presentation of Roma art, and the removal of stereotypes and prejudices from the image of the Roma, they only expected to face a scarcity of resources and very difficult circumstances under which to realise ideas; what they did not anticipate was that the international cultural scene and cultural policy would become sensitive towards, and interested in, the same cultural products, contents and problems they were examining, and that this context would be essentially appreciative and encouraging. During this second wave of the Cultural Movement, Roma artists have been successful participants of several international contemporary art events.<sup>16</sup>

However, for Roma artists, acknowledging their identity and cultural heritage is still a double-edged sword, despite the fact that the increasingly vigorous discourse on Roma identity and representation, together with the appearance of Roma cultural experts, has begun to dismantle this sophisticated machinery of cultural oppression.

Roma culture has generated such interesting new phenomena as the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno, a professionally installed museum space with multiple functions and a carefully elaborated strategy of presenting the

*European Union. Their predicament needs to be understood as the legacy of long-standing discrimination and exclusion compounded by extreme poverty. The challenge of closing the gap in living conditions between Roma and non-Roma, eliminating anti-Roma prejudices and ending social exclusion needs to be understood as a complex, multi-faceted, pan-European issue."*<sup>13</sup>

The establishment of the First Roma Pavilion at the 52<sup>nd</sup> International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia – is the climax of the process that began in Central and Eastern Europe in the mid-1990's, when the interpretation of the cultural practice of minorities was enabled by a paradigm shift, commonly referred to in specialist literature as the "cultural turn."<sup>14</sup> The idea of the cultural turn was introduced; and this was also the time when the notion of cultural democracy became crystallised in the debates carried on at various public forums. Civil society gained strength, and civil politics appeared, which is a prerequisite for cultural democracy. This shift of attitude in scholarly circles derived from concerns specific not only to ethnicity, but also to society, gender and class.<sup>15</sup>

This change brought about an interest in exploring the history and value of Roma culture. Not only has it become obvious that the arts are laden with stereotypes about the Roma, but also that the cultural classification describes the visual products of the Roma with terms the experts themselves claim to be positive, like naïve, barbarian, primitive, primordial, archetypal, autodidactic. Roma art was evaluated solely by non-Roma experts, who excluded it from the official canon on the grounds



Delaine and Damian Le Bas, Daniel Baker | photo: Karl Grady

history of Roma representation accurately and engagingly. Most of the museum's staff are Roma,<sup>17</sup> and it is a place where everyone in the populous Brno Roma community can spend their time constructively. The building is decorated by a large mural, painted by David Zeman and his team: *The Roma Road* is screaming for recognition with vigorous oranges, reds and blues.

Similarly momentous are those attempts which present Roma artists in the official spaces of contemporary culture. The 2004 exhibition *Hidden Holocaust* was the first in Hungary to open the gates of Múcsarnok/Kunsthalle Budapest, this bastion of contemporary art, to the Roma artists. This was in effect the first time that Roma artists (eleven in all) could exhibit in an official space of contemporary art, and could use the infrastructure of the institution to realise their works.<sup>18</sup> A glimpse at the exhibits

of the *Second Site* show, held in London in March 2006, will also convince us that the way we are invited and allowed to think about Roma visual art has changed irreversibly: the paradigm shift has occurred.

The new paradigm is the creation of mega-projects which find their way into the institutions of official culture. What is needed are cultural events whose concepts are consciously developed on the basis of scholarly research, careful preparation and a comprehensive strategy for the representation of Roma culture. The most important element in this paradigm shift is the use of the new space and the related infrastructure. Using a new, different infrastructure (theatres, concert halls and museums, together with their experts) has a positive effect on Roma cultural centres, which in time could boast quality promotion, more professional teams, and extensive experience in cultural management. Roma culture should infiltrate the official spaces, create professional solutions after conscious preparation and the reconsideration of its own representation, and rely on the expertise (in organisation and performance), participation and involvement of the majority societies.

The creation of the Roma minority's own infrastructure – museums, theatres, concert halls etc. – remains on the agenda. There are countries where the need for the Roma's own institutions has been an issue in social discourse for decades.<sup>19</sup> Despite the many available proofs (institutions, exhibitions) of the advantages of acknowledging, or better yet, recognising, the culture of the Roma minority, of how it improves the image of the Roma in society and the self-esteem of Roma individuals, it is still debated whether there is any need for exclusively Roma institutions. Thus it is a question of whether there is a need for a Roma Pavilion. The answer may be another question: without creating an independent Roma Pavilion, how can we introduce Roma artists to the international art scene and the Roma community? The Roma Pavilion does not reinforce the segregation of the Roma (is not a "cultural ghetto") when it represents Roma culture not as part of national cultures. Identity-based cooperation, as in the case of this Biennale, is needed not because we have a ghettoising or separatist agenda in the representation of Roma culture, but because

Roma representation does not have a well-developed infrastructure we could rely on, and there has been extensive evidence that contemporary Roma art has not been able to find its niche of representation within the national structures. There is no other way Roma artists could have access to the infrastructure necessary for international appearance: exhibition spaces, a communication campaign, a contemporary arts institution that manages logistics.

Of course, in an ideal world Roma artists would be able to exhibit in any of the European pavilions, but it is a fact that no artist of Roma origin has been presented at the Venice Biennale throughout its 112-year.

It is an emphatic part of the curatorial concept that this display seeks to counter wild romantic stereotypes and misconceptions about Gypsy culture, fostering thereby a more self-assured Roma identity. It also wants to prove that Roma artists speak a visual language that is understandable all over the world, and that this language is in line with the "sophisticated, problem-conscious" approach of contemporary art. Though sensitivity to problems may be an attribute of contemporary art, it lost its interest in the kind of self-representation that relies on a homogenous identity some time ago.

The title of the exhibition, *Paradise Lost*, refers to the fact that the majority society should at last give up not only negative stereotypes about the Roma, but also the exotic "Gypsy romances." The self-image that is to emerge at this display through the reinterpretation of Roma identity is not expected to be homogenous or stable. It is our belief that the identity of the Roma serves as a model for a modern, European transnational identity that is capable of cultural fusion and adaptation to changing circumstances. This is how the artists invited represent themselves, and this is how they experience their Gypsy identity. But while the goals of the Pavilion include the representation of this flexible identity, the individual artists have not been requested to deal with their own identity. Not every one of the artists in the Pavilion is of Roma origin. Nihad Nino Pušija, for instance, who lives in Berlin, has been documenting the life of a Gypsy family for two decades and had built strong links with this minority before learning (about two years ago) that he himself has Roma ancestors. The Finnish Kiba Lumberg's video work ends with this sentence:

*"I don't recall being a Gypsy, but I have Gypsies in my dreams, and Gypsies surround me."*

This Roma heritage, the traces of it, the memories, experiences and traumas define the pieces, and the artists' identity will never be irrelevant when interpreting their work. As Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe, the distinguished expert of mixed-race studies said:

*"So many things have happened to me because of what I am, and they shape the way I am today..."<sup>20</sup>*

These artists embrace and transform, deny and deconstruct, oppose and analyse, challenge and overwrite the existing stereotypes in a confident and intellectual manner, reinventing the Roma tradition and its elements as contemporary culture. The archetypical motives provide a firm underlying sentiment, but the result unexpectedly suggests a new interpretation, one that is created by the Roma artists themselves. The envisioned alternative identity highlights the strengths of the Roma, their capacity for fusion, sense of glamour, humour and irony, adaptability, mobility and transnationalism. The intention of opposing and denying the existing (mis)representations and promoting the contrary carry an irresolvable dichotomy, which becomes manifest in an art that is laden with sorrowful beauty, traces of paranoia, schizophrenia and post-traumatic syndromes.

The representations set models before the majority society, as well as the Roma, and represent the Roma as a group of civilised, successful individuals whose dignity is complete and worthy of acknowledgement.

Visual art has the palpable power to define and communicate particularised ideas, as well as collective cultural codes. Makers of art throughout history have exercised their immanent power to define themselves through art and to fashion a self-definition that reveals them and their respective societies in the best possible light. Roma artists have exercised the same right, but until recently they were condemned to anonymity and their voices have been hushed. If nothing else, this exhibition stands as evidence that their voices are now heard and will continue to resonate over time.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Bernard RORKE and Andre WILKENS (eds.), *Roma Inclusion: Lessons Learned from OSI's Roma Programming*, Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2006

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union*, 2004, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/fundamental\\_rights/pdf/pubst/roma04\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/pubst/roma04_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> The principal idea behind the concept of "human development" is enabling people to realise their talents through improving their opportunities and life quality.

<sup>4</sup> Stewart HALL, *Cultural Identity and Diaspora, Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, eds. Patrick WILLIAMS and Laura CHRISMAN, Harlow: Longman, 1993, p. 394

<sup>5</sup> J. C. Robert YOUNG, *Colonial Desire, Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London, New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 25

<sup>6</sup> See note 4

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Nicolae GHEORGHE and Thomas ACTON, *Citizens of the world and nowhere: Minority, ethnic and human rights*, In: *Roma during the Last Hurrah of the Nation-State, Between Past and Future*, ed. Will GUY, Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001, p. 59

<sup>8</sup> I introduce the term after Gloria Anzaldúa, one of the greatest theoreticians of Chicano studies. In her writing, *LA conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a new consciousness*, she describes the state when instead of revolt, resistance and anger, the Chicano's consciousness is characterised by pride and peace, evoked by the esteem and respect of the majority society.

<sup>9</sup> [www.romadecade.org](http://www.romadecade.org)

<sup>10</sup> Dragica FELJA, *Representation of Roma Culture in Contemporary Film*, PhD Dissertation, 2004, See note 7

<sup>11</sup> Ágnes DARÓCZI, *The First National Exhibition of Autodidact Gypsy Artists* Budapest: National Centre of Adult Education, Budapest: MMI, 1979

<sup>12</sup> Sandra JAYAT: *Première Mondiale D'art Tzigane*, Paris, La Conciergerie May 6- May 30 1985.

<sup>13</sup> See note 1

<sup>14</sup> The birth and the impact of the cultural revolution is outlined in the bibliography.

<sup>15</sup> The shift was originally initiated in western societies by intellectuals outside academia, in a response to the civil rights and student movements, which generated social changes.

<sup>16</sup> A few examples: János Balázs, monographic exhibition, Hungarian Institute, Paris; "*We are what we are*" – *Aspects of Roma Life in Contemporary Art*, Minoriten Galerie, Graz, Austria, 2004; the exhibition travelled to Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary (2006); Tibor Balogh, Teréz Orsós, *International Sinti Festival*, Hungarian Institute, Berlin, 2004; *Hidden Holocaust*, Múcsarnok/Kunsthalle Budapest, March 2004; *North and South LAB, Culture and Colonisation*, Tranzquartier, Vienna, March 2005; *Strategies of (In)visibility*, Camden Arts Centre, London, May 2005; Omara at the Rijeka Arts Biennial, Rijeka, Museum of Modern Art, November 2005; *Second Site* Exhibition, 2006

<sup>17</sup> Including the director, Jana Horváthová, Ph.D

<sup>18</sup> *The Hidden Holocaust*, Múcsarnok/Kunsthalle Budapest, March 2004

<sup>19</sup> For example, the Hungarian Roma have been maintaining a discussion about the founding of a Museum for almost 25 years. The Roma minority of the Czech Republic and Romania have succeeded in their effort of building their own Roma Museums.

<sup>20</sup> Jayne O. IFEKWUNIGWE: *Let Blackness and Whiteness Wash Through: Competing Discourses On Bi-Racialisation and the Compulsion of Genealogical Erasures*. Extract from *Scattered Belongings: Cultural Paradoxes of 'Race', Nation and Gender*, London, New York: Routledge, 1999, pp. 183-187.



Group photo, Venice workshop, 2007 | photo: Nihad Nino Pušija

*A note on the terminology of the essay. Though there is widespread consensus that the politically correct term to be used instead of Gypsy is Roma, I use both in the text as synonyms of equal value, because "Roma" does not describe all groups of Gypsies (like the Sintis, Romunglo, Beas, Gitanes, Manus, etc.) as it is derived from the name of one group. Furthermore, I consider it far less important to use a politically correct term than to clean the word "Gypsy" of prejudices and negative stereotypes, and to rehabilitate it by employing it in positive contexts.*

The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which a third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the third space which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom.

H.K. BHABHA  
(The Third Space)

Colorism is one legacy of Colonization.

Carol Camper:

(Miscegenation Blues: Voices of Mixed Race Women)

What is more European, after all, than to be corrupted by the Orient

Richard Howard

Representation of Romani identity is a process of ethno genesis which involves Roma self-consciously playing with their identities, then perhaps we must recognise that constructing effective representations involves the artist as much as the scientist or politician.

Nicolae Gheorghe

If you don't honor your ancestors  
in the real sense then you are  
committing a kind of suicide.

Sam Shephard

Participating in the diminishing  
of ourselves and of others is how we  
learned to survive...

Joanne Arnott

The slave trade is a cruel war against  
human nature itself, violating its most  
sacred rights of life and liberty

Thomas Jefferson, a slaveholder

Human salvation lies in the hands of  
the creatively maladjusted.  
Martin Luther King, Jr., Strength to  
Love, 1963.

It is necessary to understand that Black Power is a cry of disappointment. The Black Power slogan did not spring full grown from the head of some philosophical Zeus. It was born from the wounds of despair and disappointment. It is a cry of daily hurt and persistent pain. Martin Luther King, Jr.,  
Where Do We Go from  
Here: Chaos or Community?, 1967.

Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?

Black church song

The diaspora experience is defined, not by essence or purity, but by recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.

Stuart hall

White supremacy means color bars, racial segregation, and the restriction of meaningful citizenship rights to a privileged group characterized by its light pigmentation.

G.M. Fredrickson,  
(White Supremacy: Study in American & South African History)

There are more than twelve million Roma located in many countries.

Patrin

I have always wondered about our right to ourselves, to inviolability, spiritual growth and freedom.

Kiba lumborg

Race itself is simply a conversation people either align with or they don't. It is real only in our speaking of it not in science... The one drop rule is an irrational notion born out of economic greed exploitation and repression over 200 years old. It is time to let it die once and for all in our hearts and in our minds. To continue to speak (of) it as if it is real or has any merit only serves to limit the possibilities that human diversity as for today and for all our tomorrows.

Ramona Douglass

L'uomo multiculturale costruirà il mondo.  
(Multicultural man creates the world)

Writing from a plate placed in front of the  
Faculty of Economy at the Sarajevo University

Strange to wake up and realize you are on style. That's what happened to me just the other morning. It was the first day of the new millenium and I woke to find that Mulatto's had taken over.

Danzy Senna: (The Mulatto Millenium.)

Time is on the side of the oppressed today, it's against the oppressor. Truth is on the side of the oppressed today, it's against the oppressor. You don't need anything else.

Malcolm X, Malcolm 1965

Usually when people are sad, they don't do anything. They just cry over their condition. But when they get angry, they bring about a change.

Malcolm X, Malcolm, 1965

When we look into each other's eyes,  
our war torn souls communicate in their silences.

Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe:  
(Let Blackness and Whiteness Wash Through.)

## Second Site<sup>1</sup>

by Thomas Acton

This exhibition is an act of affirmation, not one of defence.

For some four centuries, Romani/Gypsy/Traveller communities lived in the aftermath of a social disaster. Although the details vary enormously from country to country, their image in Europe, and taken by Europeans to their colonies, has been one of problems. Consequently, any analysis of their situation by Europeans tended to be in the context of finding a solution, right up until Hitler tried the final solution – which failed as all the others had done. They failed, of course, because these communities had strategies of self-defence and survival, of accommodating to, rather than challenging, racism and ethnic cleansing. Some accepted slavery; others, more fortunate, became taxable collectives of traders; others, survivors of genocide, became marginal commercial nomads, especially in north-western Europe. Whatever public performance they put on, they had to play along with non-Gypsy stereotyped images that suggested they had somehow deserved the genocides and enslavements of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Only after Hitler, only after the discrediting of racism, could the Roma challenge the self-serving silences of European historiography, and Romani nationalism emerge.

In a way, however, Romani nationalism was another kind of defensiveness. Built into its ideology is acceptance that nations are entities entitled to a selfish defence of their own interests – the very ideology that led to the Romani calamity in the first place, and seems to make prejudice against Gypsies/Travellers seem natural. Roma/Gypsies/Travellers who became educated were faced with a terrible dilemma. Either they could keep their ethnicity to themselves and “pass” to get on in life. Or they could become the new progressive miracle, the literate, educated Gypsy, the token ethnic minority member, the professional Traveller community worker helping the educational and planning agents of the state, who, however anti-racist they may be, are still trying to solve the Gypsy problem.

I do not mean to question either the goodwill or the courage or the necessity of the Romani movement. I have been involved in it myself since 1967, and we have made some progress. Visual art had a place in it. One of the heroines of the struggle, Ági Daróczy, used her position in the Hungarian Ministry of Culture under Communism to encourage dozens of Romani artists.<sup>2</sup> But their exhibitions were labelled naïve art. Progress came at a price. This marginal minority struggle made those in it, whether they are Roma/Gypsy/Travellers themselves, or non-Gypsy friends, become marginalised, obsessive and, in the older generation, even paranoid – in a word, defensive, still.

Daniel, Delaine and Damian belong to the first generation that has transcended this dilemma. They are not professional Gypsies; they are not Gypsy artists any more than David Essex is a Gypsy singer. They are definitely not naïve. They are artists who happen to be of Roma/Gypsy/Traveller origin. They are not part of any Gypsy problem. If you have a problem with their origins, that's your problem, not theirs.

This does not mean, of course, that they don't still have to face prejudice and misunderstanding. When *The Sun* tried to start an anti-Gypsy pogrom with its infamous “Stamp on the Camps!” headline, Delaine's own parents suffered vicious anti-Gypsy graffiti daubed on the fences of their (long-established, perfectly legal) site. But normal people will realise that it is not Delaine's parents, but *The Sun's* racism which is the problem.

“Ah, but!”, exclaims the romantic ignoramus, the one who has read no serious Romani history but thinks he knows some hidden wisdom of the ages about racial purity, “are they really true Gypsies? You use this politically correct inclusive term ‘Roma/Gypsies/Travellers’ but what are they really? Are they Romanies or just Travellers?”

To deconstruct this question we have to look again at the disaster which befell the Roma about 200 years after they arrived in Europe. When the mixture of Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic feudal empires gave way to the fiercely nationalist states of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Roma found themselves, along with Jews and Africans, the victims of enslavement, ethnic cleansing and genocide. As capitalism replaced famine with unemployment, both migration and commercial nomadism became demonised as vagrancy. Within national boundaries, Romani traders often dominated

commercial nomadic groups, even though the majority of Roma remained sedentary. A mosaic of groups was left behind when the tide of persecution receded a little, some still very Indian, some localised and acculturated, and some like Irish Travellers and Dutch Woonwagenbewoners starting their account of their own identity by asserting that whatever else they are, they are not Gypsies.

All of the groups, and all of the individuals in them or straddling their boundaries, are what they are, with their own history and culture, and no one does them any favours by asking whether they are really something else, whether the racial essence of Bohemia, or the wild deviant of non-Gypsy fears. Looking at those real histories and cultures means that we are no longer imprisoned by them, but can celebrate them as our starting point for the future.

This exhibition is an act of affirmation, not one of defence.

Each of these artists looks to the future. As I have laboured in the long, slow struggle of Romani Studies to replace the Gypsy problem, coming across their work has been like a glimpse of life beyond that grind, a holiday from the constant duty to explain. Their styles are utterly different, but each expresses vital components of what it means to be Romani in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I dreamt of seeing their work together in one place.

Damian's extraordinary stream-of-consciousness concrete poems embodied in images evoked Gypsy history and everyday experience, and spoke to me so personally as someone trying to make sense of Romani history that sometimes I wondered if anyone else could understand them as I did. But when I spoke to other people, I realised they did. I learnt the salutary lesson that an artist can put together in one image what a professor strives to say in a hundred lectures, and still cannot quite encompass.

Delaine's work both embodies the assertive spirit of all the Roma/Gypsy/Traveller children's art I have ever seen, combined with the hard-won self-reliance of maturity. I once heard a Gypsy preacher in his sermon say “Before I was converted, I lived what I thought was an honourable life – I earned good money and liked nice things around me, good cups and saucers and pieces – well I still like nice things around me – God doesn't take those away from you...”. Delaine's creations, the soft figures and images, incarnate the spirit of those nice things. They are not the statuettes and Crown Derby themselves, but they are a commentary, both ironic and loving, on the Gypsy determination to create an environment with style. And also a warning about the threats to that environment from intolerance and ignorance.

In contrast to the intertwined lushness of Delaine and Damian, some of Daniel's earlier abstract works examined questions of identity and difference through the vehicle of process painting, exploring boundary formation as a means of protection and segregation. The non-figuration of these earlier works was partly a response to the absence of the human figure in traditional Gypsy decoration with painted scrollwork and motifs in contrasting colours set apart by strong outlining. Daniel saw this use of strong outlining as an attempt to maintain a clear boundary definition between diverse elements while at the same time seeking compositional harmony – a concern echoed in Romani people's desire to preserve their cultural identity from the perceived threat of assimilation. The works on display here, however, have moved on, from his concentration on the boundaries to a far less austere exploration of the imagined space within them, which, like the sites actually occupied by Gypsies, is marginal, and constantly under threat from ever more restrictive laws which undermine their own formal commitment to progress and equality. Because we find both parts of the contradictory myth in this space, the romance and the deviance, the possibility is finally offered of transcending it.

All three artists have to refer to the visual vocabulary with which world culture has represented Gypsies, and so cannot escape the legacy of the past because they have to use it to enable their wider audience to know what they are talking about. Lemon<sup>1</sup> has shown brilliantly how this worked for music, theatre and film for the Roma in Russia before, during and after the Soviet era. But among the arts, visual art has always been the avant-garde to take the past on board and then move on. This exhibition<sup>2</sup> is staged as a curtain-raiser for the London International Romani Film Festival, with its mixed bag of bold experiment, historic stereotype and worthy documentary. For better or worse, those films show the concepts with which we think about the place of Roma/Gypsies/Travellers in the world, the challenging of stereotypes which is the first site of resistance. These three artists have reached a second site, where they transcend the stereotypes, affirm the value of their experience, and represent the future.

NOTES

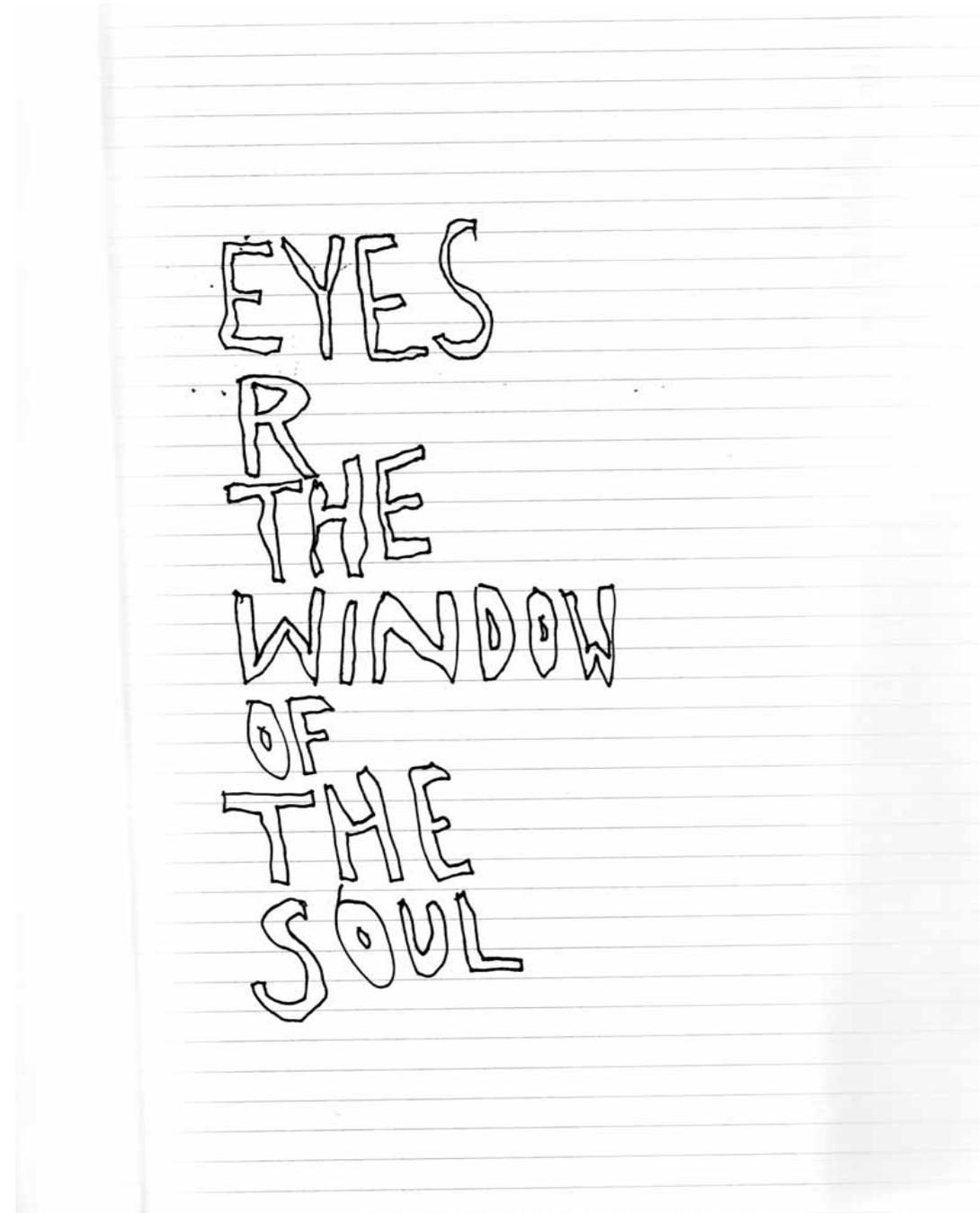
<sup>1</sup> *Second Site – Daniel Baker, Ferdinand Koci, Damien Le Bas, Delaine Le Bas – An Exhibition by four artists from Roma/Gypsy/Traveller communities.*  
Compiled and edited by Thomas ACTON and Grace ACTON, London: University of Greenwich, 2006

<sup>2</sup> Ágnes DARÓCZI and István KERÉKVÁRTÓ (eds.), *The Second National Exhibition of Autodidact Gypsy Artists*, Budapest: Hungarian Cultural Institute, 1989. Not until 2000 was she able to catalogue *The Third National Exhibition of Roma Artists*, Budapest: Hungarian Cultural Institute. The change of name and publisher marks more progress.

<sup>3</sup> Alaina LEMON, *Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romani Memory from Pushkin to Postsocialism*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2000. For further contextualising discussion of Romani aesthetics see Thomas ACTON, *Modernity, Culture and Gypsies*, In N. SAUL and S. TEBBUTT (eds.), *The Role of the Romanies: Images and Counter-Images of 'Gypsies'/Romanies in European Cultures*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004

<sup>4</sup> *Second Site*, Stephen Lawrence Gallery, University of Greenwich, 20<sup>th</sup> February - 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2006

Delaine Le Bas,  
sketches and notes for site-specific installation  
2007, Roma Pavilion, Venice



# Towards Europe's First Nation

by Michael M. Thoss

The poetic and multifaceted exhibition title 'Paradise Lost' heralds the first transnational European artists' pavilion in the history of the Venice Biennale spanning the past 112 years. Naturally, there's no pavilion available in the Giardini for a Pan-European exhibition of this nature. And so the Palazzo Pisani had to be leased for this exhibition featuring sixteen artists from eight European countries, curated by Timea Junghaus. This state of affairs exists because the Biennale reflects the concept of national representations typical of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an approach, which is completely outmoded in the modern world. The situation has been a continual source of complaint from art critics, although no major changes have been implemented. The problem is that artists from all over the world, curators and galleries are desperate to be present at the Biennale once in their lifetime.

Even if a Pan-European pavilion comes into being at some point in the near future – and I don't really know if that's actually desirable, if you think about the difficulties of putting together a suitable jury – there would certainly never be an exhibition there devoted exclusively to Roma artists. After all, it would be utterly inconceivable within the European Union, expanded to twenty-seven members, that one of the countries with the largest population of Gypsies should give even one artist from this community the privilege of exhibiting and representing their home country in Venice. This is not simply because it would entail acknowledging the Roma as full members of their society for the first time – not the case in any European country so far! We Europeans would also have to move away from our kitschy images of the Roma that became a fixed element in European mass culture at the latest when Georges Bizet's opera *Carmen* was staged. Incidentally, this opera remains one of the most frequently staged operas in the international repertoire. The popular Romani image has since been perpetuated in many films (Francesco Rosi, Carlos Saura, etc.) and in advertising campaigns right up to the present day. What's more, the image of "romantic Gypsies" represents an ideal of our own longings for freedom without being trammled by possessions, and this image appears to be in fashion once again.

Author Colum McCann, based in New York, tells the heart-rending story of a female Roma poet in his successful novel *Zoli*. He draws on several historical sources (including the Polish poet Papusza) to create her character. Singing, drinking and brutality characterise the exceptionally successful novel by the adopted New Yorker, as Zoli travels endlessly in a caravan through Central Europe. On the other hand, famous Roma orchestras, such as Taraf de Haïdouk's "Kocani" Orchestra, and the Mahala Rai Band, are continuously being remixed and sampled in Western European music studios. This is because Gypsy rock and electronic manele music are currently hits at the latest hot 'Balkan parties' in Berlin, London and Paris. By contrast, it's difficult to find the heady mix of Balkan and Turkish manele music in 'normal' music shops in Belgrade, Budapest, Bucharest and Sofia. Because of its associations with Gypsy music, manele is frequently incorrectly designated as such, and Gypsy music is often boycotted by state radio broadcasters in these countries.

The Roma people have frequently been valued protagonists in European romantic productions, and this is also the case in neo-romantic remakes today. But generally, other people benefit financially from these ventures: producers and directors, such as the Bosnian Serb Emir Kusturica (*Time of the Gypsies*), who stated in an interview that he sought the roots of his creative work in the culture of the Roma. He went on to say that this was why in his flight from the inhuman society inherent in the modern world he had retreated to the realm of the Gypsies, where he professed to have found humanity and loyalty.

Roma identities have frequently been borrowed by third parties, and this continues to be the case. They are used as tools for criticising civilisation without ever having done anything to redress the political disenfranchisement of the Roma people. The opposite has in fact been the rule. The flip side of the romanticisation of the Roma as exotic 'Racy' outsiders was presented by the Nazis when they demonised the Gypsies as a "non-European foreign race" and 500,000 Gypsies became the victims of this policy. Even today, members of the Roma people are viewed primarily in terms of their ethnic affiliation rather than as individuals. For example, it is often assumed that contemporary Roma artists

The author is the director of the Allianz Kulturstiftung

should conform to prevalent clichés about "Gypsy art." They are identified with their heritage and effectively excluded from the arena of contemporary art. It is therefore long overdue for the Roma to be given the opportunity to speak for themselves with their work rather than having their culture mediated through others.

However, our Foundations should be wary of presenting them primarily as representatives of a political or ethnic collective since this would automatically subvert their artistic individuality and transform the Roma pavilion into an NGO office or a section of an Ethnographic Museum. As a result, hardly any of them would be taken seriously as artists. In the same way that African artists are not representatives of their continent's plight, nor are contemporary German artists representatives of Nazi crimes, Roma artists do not represent the so-called "others" of European history and its pretended pure origins. The Roma express Europe's cultural diversity and its multiple origins through their customs and daily lives. In the same way that a Roma artist today deserves the same attention as other contemporary artists, the Roma people cannot be considered any longer to be a backward community living solely by their traditions, but as citizens with equal rights rooted in our common presence.

The Roma Pavilion, the first transnational pavilion in the Biennial's history, is a genuine European pavilion highlighting the artificiality of national borders and the fiction of "otherness" in Europe today. As far as artists are concerned who are not (yet) part of the international art market and who are being ignored by museums and collections, the exhibition represents an intermediate stage for these artists until their artistic works receive fully individual recognition. The basic features of this exhibition by curator Timea Junghaus recall the initiative by Salah Hassan and Okwui Enwezor when they asked for the creation of a pavilion for African artists at the Venice Biennale. However, the concept developed by Timea Junghaus moves the debate further forward because it does not simply seek new forms of representation for Europe's largest minority. Their message at the Venice Biennial is a positive one: the artists who have been selected express the much quoted cultural diversity of Europe within their original culture. This culture stretches right across Europe and never needed national borders in order to define its cultural identity.

# The Roma Pavilion in Venice – A Bold Beginning

## Ambivalence, sophistication and politics

by Gottfried Wagner

*“Marking out is never an innocent act.”* (Maria Todorova)

This dictum also applies in our case, the Roma Pavilion in Venice. Are we creating an ethnicising, socially motivated ‘special case’, sponsored by philanthropy, in the hybrid environment of the art establishment?

No doubt, there are multiple risks:

- That this endeavour will be perceived as patronising (by the Roma community, as well as the artistic and critical communities)
- That it will be sidelined by the art world as a merely well-intentioned, extraterritorial exercise
- That it will be accused of being a symbolic act that has no impact on “reality”, the reality of Roma, Sinti, and ... (it starts with the name...), living in Europe in often still desperate conditions.

Of course, we have good arguments in favour of the project.

- We are breaking the established pattern of national pavilions with a transnational exhibition. (However, transnationalism is, as yet, a “minority programme” in the political reality, a cosmopolitan paradigm which makes little impact on contemporary ideologies of “identity”, despite trends in the wider socio-economic environment. Will the art world, the art markets value the paradox?)
- OSI has diligently and courageously collected wide-ranging examples of “Roma” art. (However, so far this has been done in relative isolation, not yet accompanied by critical discourse, and the examples have been largely “pictorial”: such an “intuitive” approach may well be subjected to harsh, or encouraging, scrutiny in Venice.)
- The “representational” mode of this exhibition will be complemented by a series of side events which, along with the opening event, may become equally important “main events”; let us raise expectations that the whole approach can be redirected into mainstream (ultimately political) debate about the Roma in Europe! (However, these plans must transcend the “innocence” of the creative basis of the enterprise. On the other hand, one may decide – knowing too much about the world of politics – to abstain from these “sophistications” and remain “naïve”, in a deliberate choice for the autonomy of the arts.

Such considerations are perhaps too self-critical, but they do have consequences for the project’s presentation and “use.”

- The Pavilion represents a kind of “third space” (to use Homi Bhabha’s term), a transnational attempt to sail between memories, spaces and identities. It is neither innocently transnational (the social conditions experienced by the Roma do not allow for idealism) nor innocently extraterritorial in the art world. Hopefully, the curator will exploit and the visitors will appreciate these paradigms in such a way as to frustrate simplistic expectations.
- The Pavilion “represents” and questions intra-European decolonisation of minds. The post-colonial theory of Edward Said applies here as well, both in rejecting “exoticism”, “intra-European Orientalism”, as well as decoding discourses of alleged superiority and exclusion.
- This decolonising approach entails recognition of the fact that we are living in an age marked more by “synchrony” than “progress.” Art’s power lies in this simultaneity of phenomena, rather than the standards – subject to fashion – of marketability or so-called progress. Reference to the material conditions of transit, homelessness, exposure, etc., can help to locate memories and their oppressiveness.

The author is the director of the European Cultural Foundation

- The pavilion contradicts high-cultural notions of art imagery and values. The question it raises, in essence, is *“What do pictures want?”* (as W.J.T. Mitchell titled one of his books). Perhaps, contravening the monopoly of letters, they are demanding that the unwritten “sub-history” be told. The pavilion sets a new benchmark in the “economy of attention” and asks for a new mode of comprehending – and changing – the world (and the world of the Roma).

What does that mean for the future proceedings?

- Reflection must be present from the first. This means investing in the opening event – OSI has chosen good speakers, combining sponsors, artists, politicians and theoreticians – as well as in a few major side events (with partners such as the European Cultural Foundation) in order to achieve some consistency.
- Make the exception the rule: ensure that the exhibition, and the spirit and reflection behind it, travel – not only to New York, but also (and foremost) to European “destinations of destiny”, cities at the EU’s “internal” cultural borders of exclusion and potential inclusion. (Future European Capitals of Culture, such as Stavanger 2008, Linz 2009, Essen, Pécs and Istanbul 2010 may well be catalysts of change in perception.)
- For maximum impact, engagement with the political sphere must be achieved, both at the public level (EU Commission, Council of Europe, Ministers of Culture) and the private level (foundations, corporate partners).

The exceptional Pavilion proves to be extremely inspiring. Can we share this inspiration?



artists  
statements  
works

## 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.

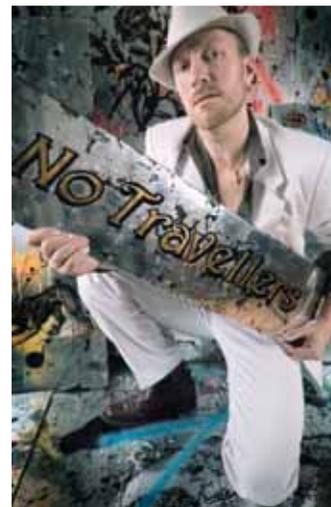
These works use painted, etched and gilded glass to produce illuminated mirrored surfaces, or looking glasses. Images appear behind the glass but in front of the mirrored background, locating the subject in a liminal or in-between space – a space which the Gypsy continues to inhabit both physically and 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 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 themselves 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 intended as a meditation upon identity and dislocation.

In earlier abstract works I have examined questions of identity and difference through the vehicle of process painting. These abstract pieces explore boundary formation as a means of protection and segregation. Concerns regarding the perceived threat of difference and the consequent construction of boundaries refer in part to my experience of growing up in my Romani community in Kent.

The works explore boundary patterning formed by conflicting identities and are informed by the ongoing negotiations between this enclosed group and the adjacent non-Romani community.

The non-figuration of these earlier works is partly a response to the absence of the human figure in Gypsy artifact decoration. An example of this can be seen in the painted caravan, where artwork consists mainly of painted scrollwork and motifs in contrasting colours set apart by strong outlining. As well as the more obvious decorative function served by this means of ornamentation, I see the use of strong outlining in Gypsy paintwork as an attempt to maintain clear boundary definition between diverse elements whilst at the same time seeking compositional harmony – a concern echoed in the Romani peoples' desire to preserve their cultural identity from the perceived threat of assimilation.



Daniel Baker | photo: Karl Grady

## Biography

Daniel was born in St Mary Cray in Kent in 1961, the youngest son of a family of Romanichal Gypsies. This community 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.

## Education

- 2006 Commenced PhD at Royal College of Art – *Site Unseen: Camouflage and Passing in the Construction of Gypsy Identities*
- 2003 *Silenced Voices* – delivered paper on Gypsy identity at PEN event, Royal Festival Hall, London
- 2002 *The Queer Gypsy* – MA dissertation: an analysis of Gay Romani identity

## Exhibitions & Projects

- 2007 *Productive Matter*, Café Gallery, Southwark Park, London – Upcoming
- No Gorgios*, co-curator at Novas Gallery, London
- Paranoia*, Freud Museum, London
- What are Feelings for?*, Centre for Drawing, London
- Wimbledon College of Art, London
- 2006 *Contemporary Gypsy* group show, Mascalls Gallery, Paddock Wood, Kent
- Paranoia*, Leeds City Art Gallery & Focal Point Southend, Kent
- lookingglass*, Novas Gallery, London\*
- Second Site*, Stephen Lawrence Gallery, London
- Appleby Cumbria, Stowmarket, East Anglia
- 2005 *When in Rome V*, Third Floor Gallery, Southampton
- When in Rome IV*, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham
- No Travellers*, Victoria Hall, Oakham, Rutland\*
- 2004 *When in Rome III*, Castlefields Art Gallery, Manchester
- Homeland*, SpaceX Gallery and concurrent venues around Exeter
- Passing Places*, touring exhibition of Gypsy and Traveller Culture, Hertford Museum
- 2003 *When in Rome I*, Art House Gallery, London
- BODIES*, Corn Exchange Gallery, Newbury\*

- 2000 *Romani Jivapen Jinapen*, a medal commissioned by BAMS, British Museum, London
  - 1999 Gallery Artists, Beardsmore Gallery, London
  - Paintings at Beardsmore Gallery, London
  - 1997 Oriol Mostyn open exhibition, Llandudno, Wales
  - Royal Over-Seas League open exhibition, London and Edinburgh
  - 1996 *DROM*, a multimedia collaboration, funded by the London Arts Board, performed at The Place Theatre, London
  - 1995 Toynbee Hall, London
- \* indicates a solo exhibition

## Works in Public Collections

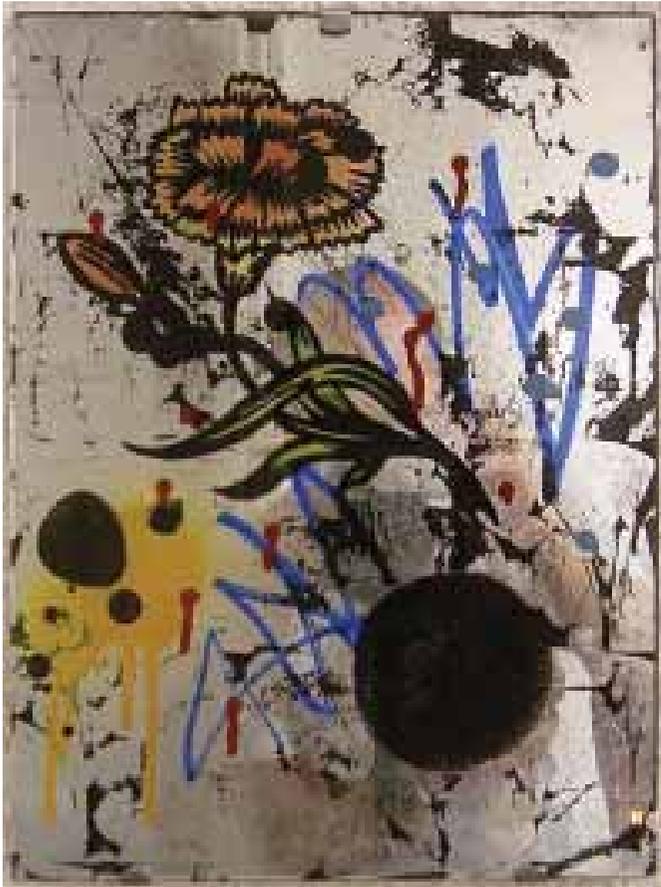
British Museum, Novas Gallery, ACERT, private collections in UK and abroad

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- Colin MARTIN, "Paranoid Visions", *The Lancet*, 3.2.2007
- Peter CONRAD, "Paranoid? This lot really ought to be", *The Observer*, 28.1.2007
- Andrew GRAHAM-DIXON, "Carefully Deranged", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 21.1.2007
- Timea JUNGHAUS, *Meet Your Neighbours, Contemporary Roma Art from Europe*, Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2006
- "Funny ha ha", (An essay commenting on media representation of Roma, for *Catalyst Magazine*, The Campaign for Racial Equality), 8.12.2006
- Abigail DUNN, *Catalyst Magazine*, 7.7.2006
- Alfred HICKLING, "Paranoia", *The Guardian*, 5.7.2006
- Sarah VINE, "Second Site – the Caravans roll into town", *The Times*, Section 2, 27.2.2006



*vardo looking glass*, 2005  
 mixed media on perspex, Ø 92 cm, collection of the artist, London  
 photo: Daniel Baker



*small pink looking glass, 2005*  
mixed media on glass, 35 x 26 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker



*bluebird looking glass, 2006*  
mixed media on perspex, 73 x 73 cm, collection of ACERT, UK  
photo: Daniel Baker



*gold rose looking glass, 2006*  
mixed media on glass, 36 x 35 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker

*ornament, 2005*  
mixed media on ceramic, 35 x 35 x 35 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker



*cock and flower looking glass*, 2004  
mixed media on glass, 32 x 36 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker



*golden bird looking glass*, 2006  
mixed media on perspex, 50 x 23 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker

*horses looking glass*, 2005  
mixed media on perspex, 100 x 113 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker



*gold flowers looking glass*, 2005  
mixed media on perspex, 100 x 100 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker

*cock and hen looking glass*, 2004  
mixed media on glass, 60 x 30 cm each, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker

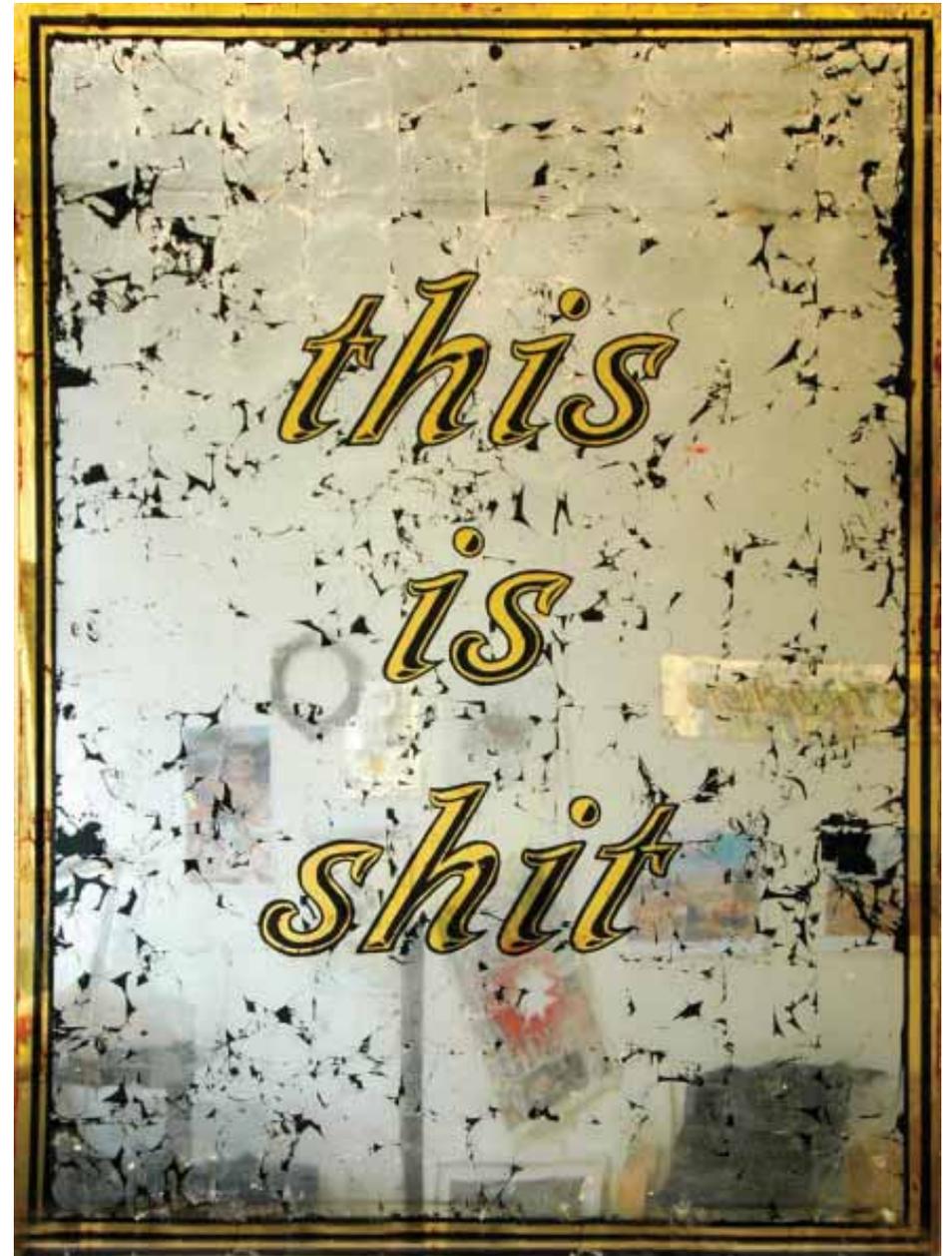


*bouquet looking glass*, diptych, 2006/07  
mixed media on perspex, 120 x 90 cm each, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker



*anagrammatic looking glass*, 2007  
mixed media on perspex, 120 x 90 cm,  
collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker

*pink looking glass*, 2005  
mixed media on glass, 127 x 47 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker



*copse*, 2006  
mixed media, 180 x 90 x 50 cm each, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker

*wish you were here*, 2006 (and *copse* detail)  
mixed media, 170 x 85 x 60 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker



*clear sign*, 2007  
mixed media on perspex, 11 x 85 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Paul Ryan





*small house*, 2006  
mixed media, 50 x 40 x 40 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker

*bird - table - lamp*, 2006  
mixed media, 150 x 40 x 40 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker



*sign looking glass*, 2005  
mixed media on perspex, 21 x 85 cm, collection of the artist, London  
photo: Daniel Baker

# Tibor BALOGH [H]

## CV



Tibor Balogh | photo: Nihad Nino Pušija

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 8<sup>th</sup> district of the capital, which has the highest percentage of Roma population in the city, and which was home to Balogh during his Academy years. After graduation, his first important appearance was at the exhibition at the Múcsarnok/Kunsthalle, the *Hidden Holocaust*.

Balogh left the installation he set up in the apse of the building untitled. The cold brick piles and the songs about the Roma Holocaust that hovered about them like a prayer invited a great many associations, and the artist did not want to delimit or control the flow of ideas provoked by the vision. Two bed-sized piles of brick formed the core of the work. The distance between them is exactly the same as in the sleeping quarters of the Tiszadob children's home, where the artist spent his childhood; the two beds evoked an abandoned children's room. These beds would never be warm again, not only because those who slept there would never return, but also because they were made of a rigid material, bricks. The brick smokestacks that became the

symbol of thousands of Roma deaths, turn in this installation into graves. The complex thought of the work is enhanced by the Holocaust songs, painted above the installation, which throb with endless pain and bitterness.

Balogh made yet another 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 dealing with 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.

*Timea Junghaus*

## Biography

Born in Fehérgyarmat, Hungary in 1975  
Lives and works 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 to graduate from the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts.

## Education

Tiszadob, Ilku Pál Trade School (house-painter, decorator and paper-hanger)

1998-2003 Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Budapest  
1994-96 Tiszavasvár, Secondary School

Masters: Gitta Rózsavölgyiné Tomonyák, Róbert König, András Baranyai

## Selected Exhibitions

- 2006 ARC poster exhibition, Budapest  
*Portraits of Roma Men*, Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library
- 2005 *Self-portrait – The European School and Contemporary Artists*,  
2B Gallery, Budapest
- 2004 *The Roma Colours of Budapest*, Budapest (curator)  
*The Hidden Holocaust*, Múcsarnok/Kunsthalle, Budapest, curated by:  
János Sugár, Attila Nemes, Júlia Fabényi, József Készman, Éva  
Gelencsér, and Timea Junghaus  
Hajdúböszörmény, Roma Days
- 2003 *Interaction – Group Exhibition at the Hungarian Roma Parliament*  
Lobby of the Budapest University of Economic Sciences  
Paintings of the Tiszadob Artist Community, Fészek Gallery, Budapest
- 2000 Andrassy Palace, Tiszadob
- 1998 Community Centre, Tiszaluc  
Gallery of the XVIII District, Budapest
- 1996 Cultural Centre, Sárospatak

## Works in Public Collections

Budapest Municipality – Romano Kher

*Rain of tears, 2004*  
photo from the *Hidden Holocaust* exhibition, 2004



*Rain of tears, 2004*  
photo from the *Hidden Holocaust* exhibition, 2004



# Mihaela CIMPEANU [RO]

CV

Mihaela Ionela Cimpeanu was born in 1981 in Băilești, southeastern Romania, into a family of young Roma. Her father came from a family of brick-makers and became a construction worker. Her mother was unemployed.

She is the oldest of five children. When she was one, the family moved to Craiova. She attended the grammar school and 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.

After graduation in 1999 she attended a public administration course. In the year 2000 she moved to Bucharest, where she attended a journalism course and specialised in press photography, later working at a newspaper in Bucharest, *Curierul National*, and as a painter at the Buftea Movie Studios. 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.

In 2003 she became member of the cultural organisation, Artisroma.

She is currently working as a freelance photographer and as a teacher at "Ioan Socolescu" College of Architecture and the "AD Xenopol" Business School in Bucharest.

*Timea Junghaus*

## Studies

MA in sculpture, National University of Plastic Art and Decoration, Bucharest  
"Marin Sorescu" College of Art, Craiova

## Projects

Organisation "Artisroma"

*Roma in Romanian Art*, supported by National Museum of Romanian Art, 2004

*Big Masters within the Understanding of Small Artists*, National Museum of Romanian Art, 2003



Mihaela Cimpeanu | photo: Mirela Bratu

## Exhibitions

- 2005 *Pictures and Sculptures*, National Theatre, Bucharest
- 2004 *Sculpture*, Căminul Artei, Bucharest  
*Photography Drawing and Sculpture*, Bucharest Museum "Sutu Palace"  
*Photography and Children Drawing*, CNR – U.N.E.S.C.O, Bucharest
- 2003 *Photography, Drawing and Sculpture*, Bucharest Museum "Sutu Palace"
- 2002 *Thana Romane*, Goethe Institute, Bucharest
- 1999 Group exhibition, National Theatre, Craiova

## Bibliography

- 2006 Timea JUNGHAUS, *Meet Your Neighbours, Contemporary Roma Art from Europe*, Budapest: The Open Society Institute  
Delia GRIGORE and Gheorge SARAU: *History and Roma Traditions*, directory of the organisation Save the Children





*Wings, 2005 (detail)*  
wood and metal, 200 x 90 x 7 cm, National Academy of Fine and Applied Arts, Bucharest  
photo: Mihaela Cimpeanu



*Wings, 2005*  
wood and metal, 200 x 90 x 7 cm, National Academy of Fine and Applied Arts, Bucharest  
photo: Mihaela Cimpeanu

# Gabi JIMÉNEZ [F]

## 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 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."*

I could have called all my exhibitions DUENDE, which is the flamenco trance, what enables us to live in a community, to feel this is our part in nature, to understand who we are and what position things assume in space. In other words, it is the Gypsies' voodoo. So while you see washing lines in my pictures, mud, piles of garbage, caravan camps and Gypsies, I can see happiness there, my family, and what I am.

I could have submitted a detailed biography, an exhaustive account of my artistic intentions, all of it in perfect chronological order, but unfortunately time does not exist for me, for us. So I may have created a lot of things, but to neatly arrange them, that would be an impossible undertaking for me.

Thanks to me and to us for being here with me, with us.

I am known as Gabi Jiménez.

But I am also called François Lopez, Xavier Jiménez, François-Xavier Lopez... It depends on how my mum has written my names down on the official papers. My mother, my father and one of my brothers are Spanish. Another brother is French. So am I.

What is sure is that I was born in Paris in 1964.

1979-82 Applied and graphic art studies at "Rue Madame – Paris" school

1982-95 Marriage and divorce, various trips where the wind took me, or where policemen and trials put me. Several decorative, artistic and advertising works (logos, illustrations, advertising campaign and things I do not dare tell here)

1989-94 Artistic director of a communication agency in Paris – Creation of a guitar magazine entitled *La Corde de Nylon* (The Nylon Rope), specialised in promoting and music of those who are inspired by Gypsy music.

Various concerts of flamenco guitar and rumba gitana (Gypsy).

1994-2000 I met my real wife. Birth of my daughters Ana-Milagros (Nana) and Marina-Bahia (Poupouille), renouncement of my life as a nomad. Various decorative and artistic works (paintings, pewter vases and jugs, Gypsy figurines...). The beginning of my work of stylisation and line refining, locating of the primitive elements constituent to the Roma culture (instruments, imaginative world, social life, living conditions, history, the people, the tales, expulsions, discriminations...). Revelation of the importance of colour, symbolic (message, connotation, denotation, primitive and social symbolisms, impacts...), transposed and coded on various supports such as paintings, digital works, performances, installations. Awareness of the Romani identity (*Taverny and les Manouches* painting). In 2000, stabilisation of my



Gabi Jiménez | photo: family of the artist

refining work and of the Gypsies and Travelling People from France and Spain symbolic.

1995-2006 Member of the board of directors and vice-president of the ADVOG association ([www.advog.org](http://www.advog.org)). Manager of the "show and communication" department, employee of an integration structure for people in difficulty. Resumption of my activity as a musician, concerts and flamenco guitar teaching. Various collaborations and articles written for several magazines such as *Tchachipen* (Spain), ADVOG info... Creation of my most significant works. Founder and chairman of an association called "Romani Art" to promote the cultural initiatives of Gypsies and Travelling People in 2006. Resumption of my research work on the symbolic and representations of Gypsies and Travelling People: caravan, hanging laundry, people...

## Selected Exhibitions & Artworks

- 2006 *Itinérances Tsiganes* [Gypsy Tourings] – Lyon, France  
Ville de Ermont [Town of Ermont] – Ermont, Paris  
*Les mille et une... Cultures du monde* [The Thousand and One... Cultures of the World] – Villeeneuve d'Ascq, Lille, France  
*Sound Festival Furia* – Pontoise, Paris
- 2005 *12ème Salon National d'Arts* [12th National Exhibition of Arts] – Franconville, Paris  
*Itinéraires Citoyens* [Routes of Citizens] – Bessancourt, Paris  
*Itinéraires Citoyens* [Routes of Citizens] – Taverny, Paris  
*Itinéraires Citoyens* [Routes of Citizens] – Ermont, Paris  
*Traversées Tsiganes* [Gypsy Crossings] – Dijon, France  
*Les gens du Voyage* [The Travelling People] – Pontoise, Paris
- 1992-2004 *L'envers du Voyage* [The Other Side of the Trip] – FNASAT /Etudes Tsiganes – Paris  
*Les Gens du Voyage* [The Travelling People] – Pontoise / Paris / France  
*L'envers du décors* [The Other Side of the Décor] – Ville d'Herblay, Herblay, Paris  
*Le voyage / La luciole* [The Trip / Firefly] – Herblay / Paris / France

Logo of the ADVOG association / Travelling People – Pontoise, Paris  
Book illustrations

*Landscape with Caravans*, 2006  
digital print, 18 x 24 cm, private collection  
photo: Gabi Jiménez



*Caravans and the Cypresses*, 2001  
oil on canvas, 80 x 60 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Gabi Jiménez

overleaf, pp. 76-77

*Caravans*, 2007  
digital print, 80 x 80 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Gabi Jiménez

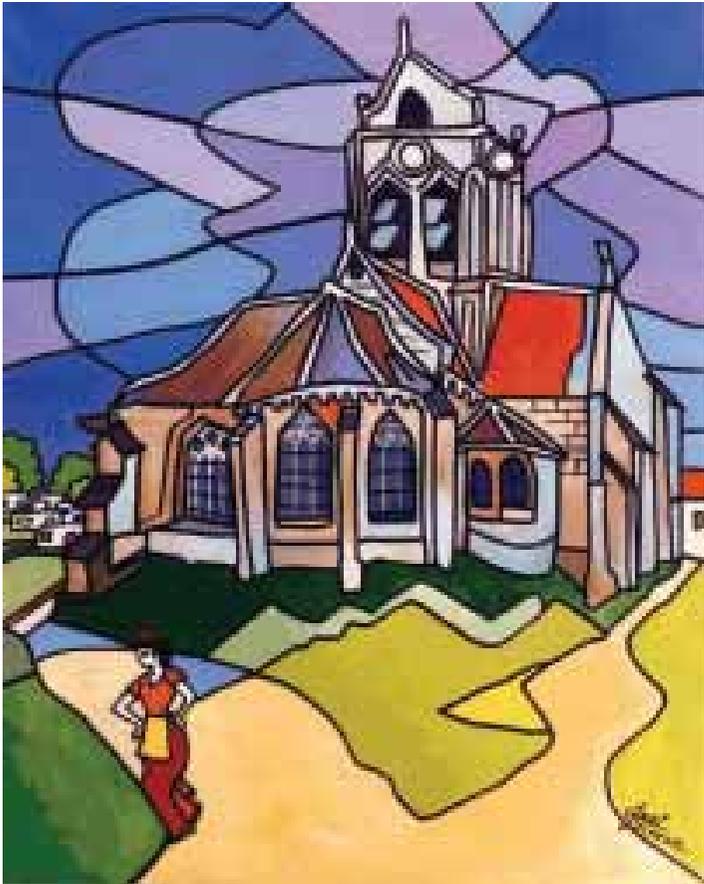




*Drying Laundry*, 2006  
acrylic on canvas, 24 x 30 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Gabi Jiménez

*Caravan, Drying Laundry*, 2006  
acrylic on canvas, 18 x 24 cm, private collection / Paris  
photo: Gabi Jiménez





*The Travellers of Auvers*, 2000  
acrylic on canvas, 92 x 73 cm, private collection / Paris  
photo: Gabi Jiménez



*Saintes Maries de la Mer 3 – The Caravans*, 2002  
oil on canvas, 73 x 116 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Gabi Jiménez

overleaf, pp. 82-83

*Saintes Maries de la Mer 2 – The People*, 2000  
acryl on canvas, 146 x 114 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Gabi Jiménez



## András KÁLLAI [H/GB]



András Kállai | photo: Nihad Nino Pušija

Born in Kerepestarcsa, Hungary in 1982.

### Education

2001-2006 Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Budapest – Sculpture Programme by Tamás Körösnéyi  
1996-2000 Vocational Secondary and Training School for Building and Ornament Art (sculptor)

### Group Exhibitions

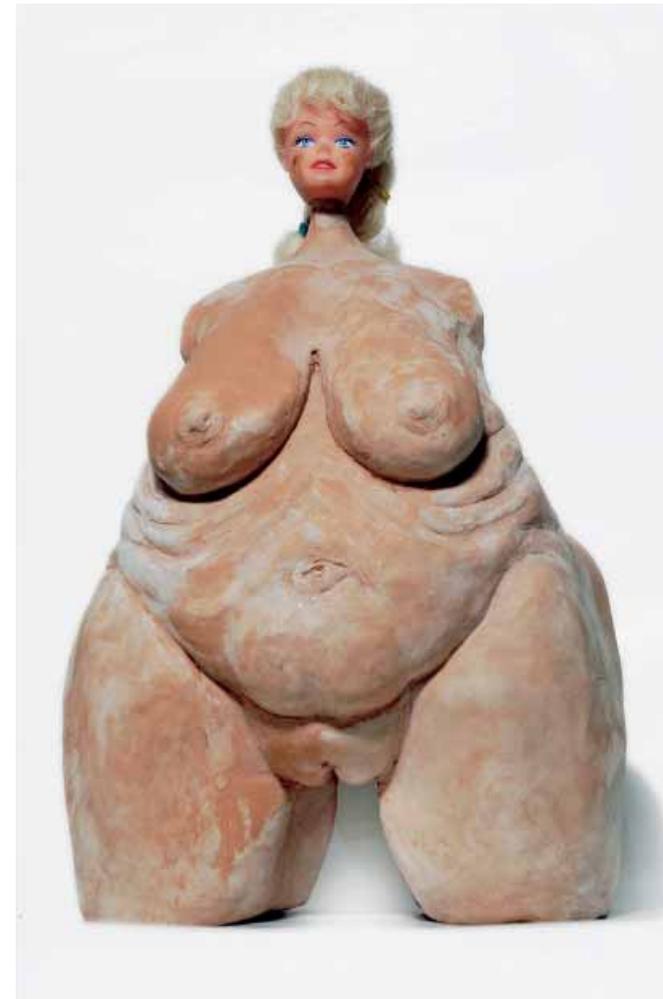
- 2006 Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Epreskert, Budapest, – Thesis Show  
Szentendre, Malomház Gallery  
Újpest Gallery, Budapest
- 2005 Hungarian Culture Foundation, Budapest  
Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Epreskert, Budapest
- 2004 Soroksár, Budapest  
Kossuth Klub, Budapest  
Józsefváros Community Centre, Budapest
- 2003 Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Epreskert, Budapest  
Veresegyháza, Átrium Gallery
- 2001/2002 Tiszabura

### Bibliography

Gábor RIEDER, "Kéznyomtól az üvegszilánkig", *Új Művészet*, September 2006, XVII. 9., pp. 12-13.  
*Catalogue of the Graduating Students* – Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Budapest, 2007

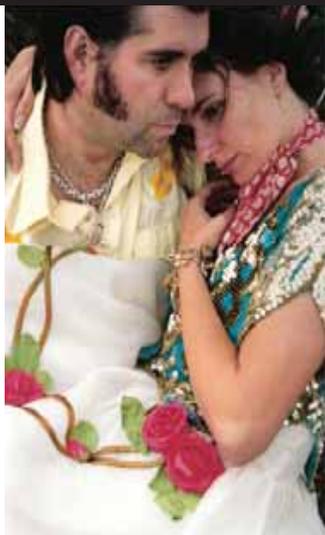
All my works are the results of an intuitive creative process, as regards both their subjects and the process of realisation. It was always after the event that I could recognise my method and identify its sources, whether it be an attraction to primitive art, representations of Venus, compositions built 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 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 women! 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.

*Fat Barbie*, 2006  
terracotta, plastic, 28 x 13 x 14 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: barnabas toth





*Dirty Laundry, 2007*  
DVD projection, collection of the artist



Damian and Delaine Le Bas | photo: Tim Walker

When we gaze into the embers of a fire, we can see endless stories in the flickering interplay of glow and shadow and ash. In Damian's images there is the same depth of narrative, yet the stories are not creatures of our own imagination, but paths through the labyrinths of his intersecting universes, real adventures that will not fade like a dying fire but capture forever confrontations of people, ideas and culture.

The Damian of the pictures is in constant dialogue with a cast of bystanders, traders and grafters, with oppressive, but ridiculous and ephemeral authorities, and celebrities like the iconic Elvis,<sup>1</sup> but above all with the recurring figures of his wife and son. The ultimate bystander is the one standing watching the drama in the picture. I don't "see" Damian's pictures, I watch them, eagerly but warily, half-hopeful, but also half-fearful of what will happen next, of what emotions might be stirred.

For Damian the first complexity is his own identity. Is he an underground musician who just happens to be a professional artist? When he is collecting scrap metal, could Travellers who comment, "Kushti to see you doing a bit of real work, mush!" be half right? 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 allusions to history are mythic – preachers in the forests, potheen in the hills or caravans from India, but more often they are in little details, of clothing or utensils utterly characteristic of their

time, place and provenance (but you don't realise this until Damian picks them out). Not least the cultural specificity is in the written words which are sprinkled across much of his work, sometimes to the point of becoming a torrent of concrete poetry. Phrases in Irish Traveller Cant or Gammon jostle knowingly with various dialects of Romani, and other European languages and argots, scoring witty points off each other. 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". You don't have to know the meaning of every last Cant word to find meaning in Damian's pictures, however. It is not just every Tinker, but every watcher who will find himself addressed. The imagery of the family is universal, of man and woman, wife and husband, parent and child. The works of Damian and Delaine constantly quote from each other, take note of and respond to each other. They are not a joint artist, but the watchers find themselves the privileged observers of an ever-deepening relationship. You don't need to know the details of their son's achievements to see the sometimes perplexed but always committed development of the dialogue between father and son. The faces of the characters in this family drama are embedded in the clothes and limbs and flowing hair of the other characters, sometimes loving, sometimes angry, sometimes quizzical, always intimate, and always connected to their heritage by a myriad of peripheral details. 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.

Thomas Acton

<sup>1</sup> Painted at a time when there was much speculation about Elvis's Scottish Traveller ancestry.

## Biography

Born in Sheffield, Yorkshire, Great Britain, 30 January 1963  
 1985-87 Royal College of Art, London  
 1980-85 West Sussex College of Art & Design, Worthing, West Sussex  
 Lives and works in Worthing

## Group & Solo Exhibitions

- 2006 *International Festival d'Art Singulier*, Roquevaire, France  
*Second Site*, Abbot's Hall, Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, Suffolk, UK  
 Woolley Gallery, Portland, Oregon, USA  
*Second Site*, Stephen Lawrence Gallery, Greenwich University, London
- 2005 *Acid Drops & Sugar Candy*, Transition, London  
*Acid Drops & Sugar Candy*, Fosterart, London  
*Eng-Er-Land*, Studio at 102, Tea Building, London  
*Raw Vision 50*, Serpentine, London  
*Divine Messages*, Harmony Gallery, Los Angeles  
*Prague Biennial*, Prague  
 Kolly Kibber, Hed Quarters, Brighton  
*Kartoffelkopf*, Mish Mash Video, Rampart Creative Centre, Whitechapel, London  
*Punk*, People Unknown Collective, London
- 2004 *Shop*, Space Two-Ten-Two, London  
 Group Show, Studio at 102, Tea Building, London  
*She's No Angel*, James Colman, London  
*60 Seconds Darklight Film Festival*, Dublin  
 Group Show, Studio at 102, Tea Building, London  
*Miniatures*, Mark Woolley Gallery, Oregon, USA  
*Raw Vision, Equal rights to Creativity: An Exhibition of Outsider Art*, Mexico Gallery, London  
*60 Seconds*, 291 Gallery, London  
 Gallery Artists, James Colman, London  
*Love n Bullets*, Transition, UK  
*Tribe of One*, Studio at 102, Tea Building, London
- 2003 *Souvenir*, Transition, London  
*Outlaws*, James Colman / Pauline Flach, London  
*The Tail That Wags The Dog*, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin  
*'Orrible Little Bastards'*, Neon Gallery, London  
*Sense and Sensibility*, Transition, London
- 2002 *Idolize*, Notting Hill Arts Club, London  
*Wanted: Dead or Alive*, James Colman, London  
*International Festival d'Art Singulier*, Roquevaire, France  
*The Art of War and Peace: Toward an End to Hatred*, American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore, USA  
*Upstart*, James Colman, London

- 2001 *Obsessive Visions: Art Outside The Mainstream*, England & Co, London  
*Outlaws*, James Colman, London  
*The Art of War and Peace: Toward an End to Hatred*,  
 American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore, USA  
*Le Bas: Outsider Art at Made To Measure*, London  
 Jaber, Damian Le Bas, Paul Duhem, Judy Saslow Gallery, Chicago  
*Shop*, Brighton Festival, Brighton  
*Group Show*, Judy Saslow Gallery, Chicago  
*Outsiders at The October*, October Gallery, London  
*Intuition*, Crescent Arts, Scarborough, UK
- 2000 *Elvion 2000, Intuit: The Centre for Intuitive and Outsider Art*, Chicago  
 Damian and Delaine Le Bas at Broomhill, Broomhill Art Hotel and Sculpture  
 Garden, Barnstaple, UK  
*Group Show*, England & Co, London  
*International Festival d'Art Singulier*, Roquevaire, France
- 1999 *Error and Eros: Love Profane and Divine*,  
 American Visionary Art Museum, USA
- 1998 *Art Unsolved: The Musgrave Kinley Collection of Outsider Art*,  
 Irish Museum Of Modern Art, Dublin  
*Error and Eros: Love Profane and Divine*, American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore, USA  
*International Self Taught / Outsider Art*, St Brannoeks Gallery, Norfolk, UK  
 Damian and Delaine Le Bas at Fashion Street, London
- 1997 *Installation*, Broomhill Art Hotel and Sculpture Garden,  
 Barnstaple, Devon, UK  
*Ingenious Creator*, Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham, UK
- 1996 *Outsiders & Co*, England & Co, London  
*Group Show*, Judy Saslow Gallery, Chicago  
*Group Show*, Phyllis Kind Gallery, New York
- 1995 *Courtauld Galleries*, London  
*Group Show*, Phyllis Kind Gallery, New York  
*Group Show*, Gardener Arts Centre, University of Sussex, UK
- 1994 *Paul Smith*, New York  
 London Post, London  
*Another World / The Outsider*, RONA Gallery, London  
*Group Show*, Phyllis Kind Gallery, New York  
*Group Show*, Contemporary Art Huyse, Oirschot, The Netherlands
- 1993 *Art in Boxes*, England & Co, London  
*Art in Boxes*, Nottingham Museum Art Gallery, Nottingham, UK  
*Group Show*, Conway Hall, London

## Catalogues & Other Publications

- 2006 *Meet Your Neighbours – Contemporary Roma Art from Europe*, Open  
 Society Institute: Arts and Culture Network Program, Budapest  
*International Festival d'Art Singulier*,  
 Compagnie d'Art Singulier
- 2005 *Monika's Story – A Personal History of the Musgrave Kinley Outsider Collection*,  
 Published on the occasion of a display of works from the Musgrave Kinley Outsider Collection  
 at Tate Britain  
*Prague Biennale 2<sup>nd</sup> Expanded Painting*, Giancarlo Politi Editore,  
 Flash Art (Outsider Art curated by James COLMAN. Essay  
*It's Cold Outside – Let Me In* by James COLMAN)
- 2004 *ARTY: Greatest Hits*, First Edition, Transition, Editions 02
- 2003 *The Riddle from Gargantua*, Translated by Damian LE BAS  
*The Tail wags the Dog*, Outsiders in the Expressionist Tradition  
 from the Musgrave Kinley Collection of Outsider Art
- 2002 *WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE*, ARTY, Cathy LOMAX and Alex MICHON  
*International Festival d'Art Singulier*,  
 Compagnie d'Art Singulier
- 2001 *Obsessive Visions, Art Outside the Mainstream*,  
 England & Co.
- 2000 *International Festival d'Art Singulier*,  
 Compagnie d'Art Singulier
- 1999 *Butterfly* (illustrations throughout). Issue No. 4,  
 Winter 99/00
- 1998 *Art Unsolved*, Musgrave Kinley Outsider Collection & Archive,  
 Museum of Modern Art, Dublin
- 1997 *Ingenious Creator, Fifteen Artists from the Outsider  
 Collection & Archive*, foreword by Monika KINLEY,  
 Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham, UK  
*OUTSIDERS & CO*, England & Co.
- 1993 *Art in Boxes*, England & Co.
- 1991 *Sarlinger*, Malmo KONSTHALL  
*Art en Marge présente des œuvres choisies par l'Aracanie Musée*, Yolanda Gallery, Gallery Hamer, Outsiders,  
 Art en Marge, foreword by Françoise HENRION
- 1990 *Outsider Art Exhibition*, Alpha Cubic Gallery, Tokyo, foreword by Monika KINLEY
- 1987 *Degree Catalogue 1987*, Royal College of Art



*The Apple of your Eye*, 2005 (detail)  
 acrylic on canvas, 127 x 127 cm, collection of the artist  
 photo: Delaine Le Bas



*COLT 45*, 2005 (detail)  
 acrylic on canvas, 127 x 127 cm, collection of the artist  
 photo: Delaine Le Bas

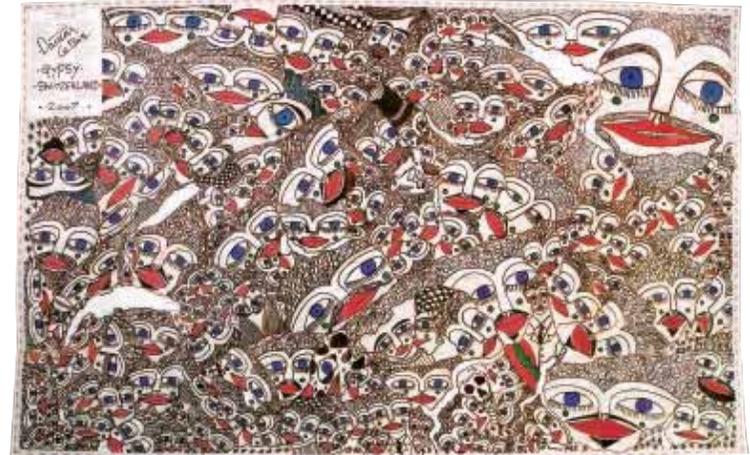
overleaf, pp. 94-95

*Gypsyland*, 2007  
 mixed media on printed map, 88.3 x 63.2 cm, collection of the artist  
 photo: Delaine Le Bas

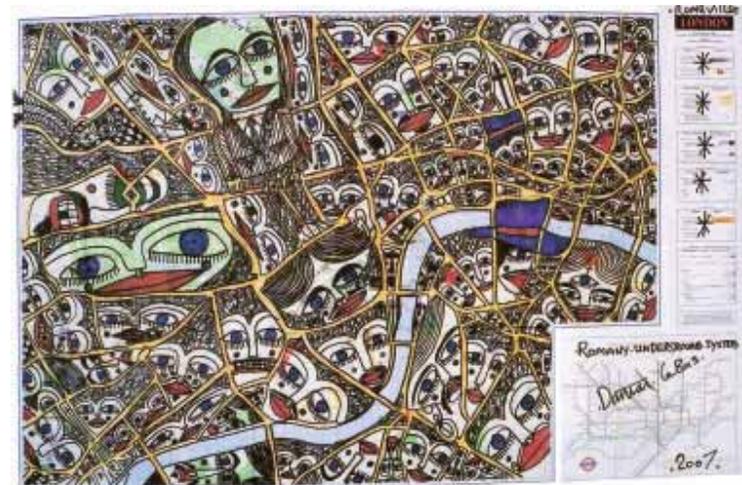




*Roma Road Map of England and Wales, 2007*  
 mixed media on printed map, 86 x 57 cm, collection of the artist  
 photo: Delaine Le Bas



*Gypsy Switzerland, 2007*  
 pen on printed map, 82.6 x 123.3 cm, collection of the artist  
 photo: Delaine Le Bas



*Romeville (London), 2007*  
 pen on printed map, 86 x 57 cm, collection of the artist  
 photo: Delaine Le Bas



"ROME", 2007  
 printed map mounted on canvas, 18 x 12.8 cm each, collection of the artist  
 photo: Delaine Le Bas

Roma Europe, 2007 (detail)  
 mixed media on printed map, 76.5 x 67.3 cm, collection of the artist  
 photo: Delaine Le Bas



### 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*



Delaine Le Bas | photo: Tara Darby

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 both and one intertwined. There is a sense of claustrophobia within this scene of domesticity. The idea of the home being the site of women's creativity, "embroidering the sampler in the parlour." My Romani life adds to this domestic claustrophobia of confined spaces and ritual cleaning habits of domestic feverish madness. This is not the "happy housewife in the country kitchen or the barefoot Gypsy idling away with a painted wagon in the background." My works are the struggle to escape the stereotypes, and I employ symbols that the viewer thinks they understand. Union Jacks, Disney characters, children's animal motifs, nursery rhymes and traditional embroidered cottages. I take these familiar images, retain their democratic nature but create a shift in their meaning. Utilising a shared, universal store of popular icons: badges, patches and slogans – all are images drawn naturally from my own time. The author Colin Rhodes notes in ROOM: "The national-cultural machine is present in dominant motifs like the skull and crossbones... a mass-produced fabric patch invites the viewer to celebrate the 1991 Gulf War." Both are turned on their heads, but as a result of, not in spite of, their intended 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.

Observing from two cultural viewpoints and creating a visual representation of those thoughts, an individual vision that appears from this dual perspective. From one aspect, always being the 'Outsider, a Visionary Voyeur'. Like fairy tales, all very pretty on the outside but holding dark tales. Myths, stories and religious motifs assembled together. The good and the evil, the dark and the light, politically correct and incorrect. 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.

### Biography

Born in Worthing, West Sussex, Great Britain, 17 July 1965  
 1981-86 West Sussex College of Art & Design, Worthing, West Sussex  
 1986-88 St Martins School of Art, London  
 Lives and works in Worthing

### Group & Solo Exhibitions

- 2006 *Contemporary Gypsy*, Mascalls Gallery, Paddock Wood, Kent, UK  
*International Festival d'Art Singulier*, Roquevaire, France  
*Outsider Art*, Moscow Museum of Outsider Art (in collaboration with the City of Bar)  
*Second Site*, Abbott's Hall, Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, Suffolk, UK  
*Paper World*, Transition, London  
*Second Site*, The Stephen Lawrence Gallery, Greenwich, London  
*Internal Guidance Systems*, Pearl and Wonder Ballroom Locations, Mark
- 2005 *Acid Drops & Sugar Candy*, Transition, London  
*The Art of The Book*, University of Missouri, St Louis, USA  
*Race, Class, Gender # Character*, American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore, USA  
*Eng-Er-Land*, Studio at 102, Tea Building, London  
*ROOM*, Transition, London  
*Raw Vision 50*, Serpentine, London  
*Divine Messages*, Harmony Gallery, Los Angeles  
*Prague Biennial*, Prague  
*Kartoffelkopf*, *Mish Mash Video*, Rampart Centre, Whitechapel, London  
*Punk*, People Unknown Collective, London
- 2004 *Shop*, Space-Two-Ten-Two, London  
*She's No Angel*, James Colman, London  
*60 Seconds*, Darklight, Film Festival, Dublin, Ireland  
*Miniatures*, Mark Woolley Gallery, Portland, Oregon  
*International Festival d'Art Singulier*, Roquevaire, France  
*Raw Vision, Equal Rights to Creativity: An Exhibition of Outsider Art*, Mexico Gallery, London  
*60 Seconds*, 291 Gallery, London  
*60 Seconds*, Space Two-Ten-Two, London  
 Gallery Artists, James Colman, London  
*Love n Bullets*, Transition, London  
*Girl on Girl*, Transition, London
- 2003 *Souvenir*, Transition, London  
*Outlaws*, James Colman / Pauline Flach, London  
*'Orrible Little Bastards'*, Neon Gallery, London  
*The Book Project*, West End Arts Festival, Glasgow  
*Scratch Scratch*, Transition, London

- 2002 *Wanted: Dead or Alive*, James Colman, London  
*The Book Project*, Norwich Fringe Festival, Norwich, UK  
*International Festival d'Art Singulier*, Roquevaire, France  
*Upstart*, James Colman, London  
*The Book Project*, 5<sup>th</sup> Contemporary Artist Book Fair, Dean Clough, Halifax, UK
- 2001 *Obsessive Visions: Art Outside the Mainstream*, England & Co, London  
*Outlaws*, James Colman, London  
*Le Bas: Outsider Art*, Made to Measure, London  
*Shop*, Brighton Festival, Brighton  
*Outsiders at The October Gallery*, October Gallery, London  
*The Book Project*, University of Lancaster, Preston, Lancashire, UK
- 2000 *Evision 2000*, INTUIT: The Centre for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago  
*Damian & Delaine Le Bas at Broomhill*, Broomhill Art Hotel and Sculpture  
*Damian & Delaine Le Bas at Raw Vision*, Raw Vision Headquarters, Hertfordshire, UK  
*International Festival d'Art Singulier*, Roquevaire, France  
*The Book Project*, touring exhibition, venues throughout the UK  
*International Romani Conference*, Greenwich, UK
- 1999 *Error and Eros: Love Profane and Divine*, American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore, USA  
*Group Show*, Raw Vision Headquarters, Hertfordshire, UK
- 1998 *Error and Eros: Love Profane and Divine*, American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore, USA
- 1997 *International Self Taught / Outsider Art*, St Brannocks Gallery, Norfolk, UK  
*Damian & Delaine Le Bas*, Fashion Street, London  
*The Book Project*, touring exhibition, venues throughout the UK  
*City*, The Clerk's House, London

## Catalogues & Other Publications

- 2006 *Meet Your Neighbours – Contemporary Roma Art from Europe*, Open Society Institute: Arts and Culture Program, Budapest  
*Second Site*, Compiled by Thomas ACTON and Grace ACTON  
*International Festival d'Art Singulier*, Compagnie d'Art Singulier
- 2005 *ROOM*, Transition Editions  
*Prague Biennale 2<sup>nd</sup> Expanded Painting*, Giancarlo Politi Editore, Flash Art (*Outsider Art* curated by James COLMAN. Essay *It's Cold Outside – Let Me In* by James COLMAN)
- 2004 *ARTY: Greatest Hits*, First Edition  
*International Festival d'Art Singulier*, Compagnie d'Art Singulier  
*She's No Angel*, exhibition catalogue by Delaine LE BAS
- 2003 *Outsider Art*, Moscow Museum of Outsider Art  
*The Riddle from Gargantua – Translated by Damian James LE BAS*  
 Illustrated by Damian and Delaine LE BAS
- 2002 *WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE*, ARTY, Cathy LOMAX and Alex MICHON  
*International Festival d'Art Singulier*, Compagnie d'Art Singulier
- 2001 *Obsessive Visions: Art Outside The Mainstream*, England & Co



*Nation of Dog Lovers*, 2005  
appliqué and embroidery on found flag, 88.5 x 65 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Cathy Lomax



*Four Facts of Life*, 2004-05  
mixed media on fabric, appliqué and embroidery, 36.5 x 23.5 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Daniel Baker



*Damaged Goods, PART I, 2004*  
mixed media on fabric,  
70 x 58 cm  
collection of the artist  
photo: Tara Darby



*Damaged Goods, PART II, 2005*  
mixed media on fabric,  
66.5 x 55 cm  
collection of the artist  
photo: Delaine Le Bas



*Damaged Goods, PART III, 2005*  
mixed media on fabric,  
69.5 x 47.5 cm  
collection of the artist  
photo: Daniel Baker



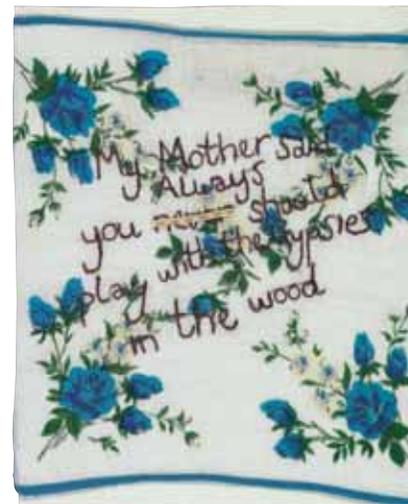
*Damaged Goods, 2005*  
installation, mixed media on fabric,  
collection of the artist  
photo: Daniel Baker



WE HAVE A HISTORY, 2005  
mixed media on fabric, embroidery and appliqué, c. 29 x 24 cm  
Hampshire County Council



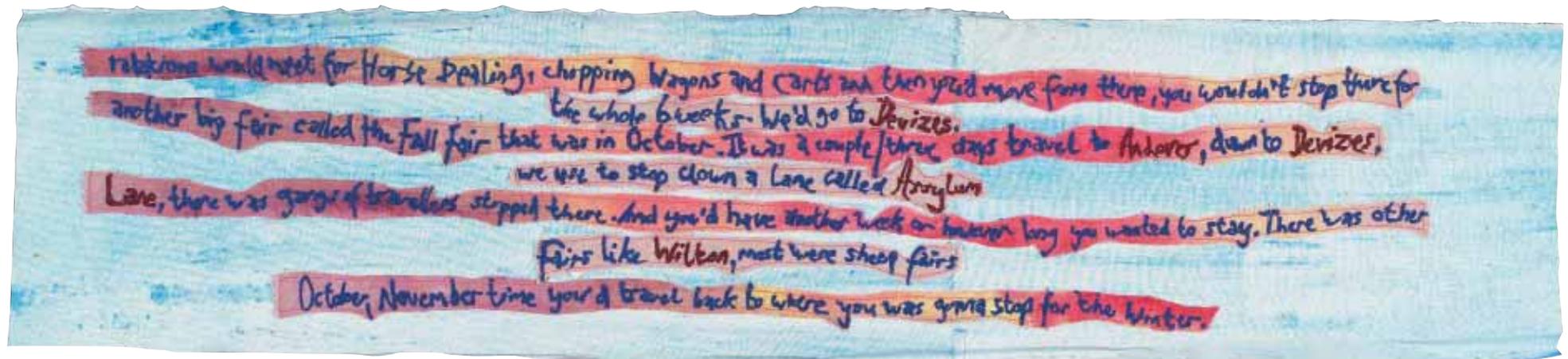
WE HAVE A HISTORY, 2005  
mixed media on fabric, embroidery and appliqué, c. 64 x 44 cm  
Hampshire County Council



WE HAVE A HISTORY, 2005  
mixed media on fabric, embroidery and appliqué, c. 29 x 24 cm  
Hampshire County Council



WE HAVE A HISTORY, 2005  
embroidery on hanky, c. 29 x 24 cm  
Hampshire County Council



WE HAVE A HISTORY, 2005  
mixed media on fabric, embroidery and appliqué, c. 22 x 94 cm  
Hampshire County Council, Hampshire



Installation: Room at 28 St Elmo Road, 2005  
mixed media Dolls I, II & III with collected objects, various dimensions, collection of the artist  
photo: Tara Darby



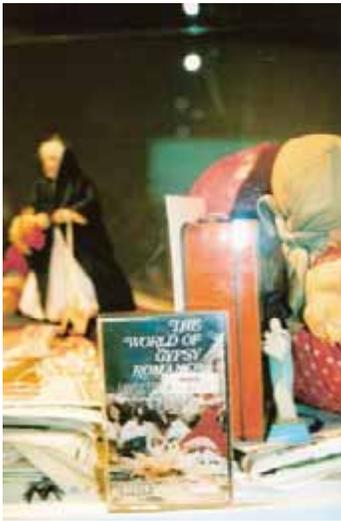
Crucified, 2005  
mixed media, height c. 50 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Delaine Le Bas



*BONDAGE? IDENTITY?*, June 2003  
 video / DVD, 2 versions running a. 3 mins 20 secs b. 4 mins 17 secs, installation, collection of the artist photo: Delaine Le Bas

*MEET YOUR NEIGHBOURS*, 2005  
 mixed media on canvas, c. 150 x 150 cm, collection of the artist  
 photo: Delaine Le Bas

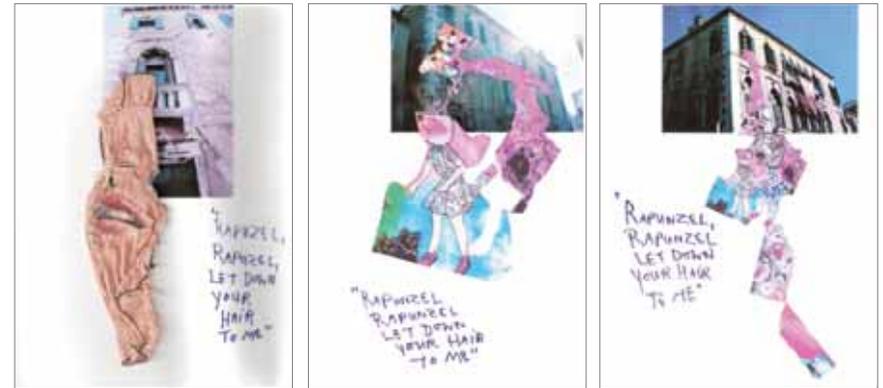




*The World of Gypsy Romance*, 2006  
installation of collected and found objects, box size c. 80 x 40 x 40 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Delaine Le Bas



NEIGHBOURS MAKING EVIL, 2007  
site-specific work, sketches



NEIGHBOURS MAKING EVIL, 2007  
site-specific work, sketches

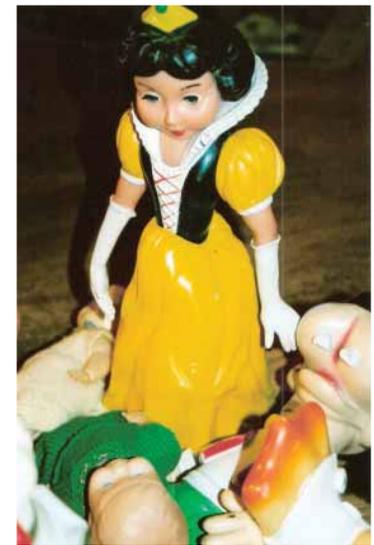


LOCATION? , LONG HAIR PREDOMINANT  
A STILL AMONGST  
ROMANIES.

ATTIC RAPUNZEL TYPE  
INSTALLATION EMBROIDERY  
LEADING OUT THRU WINDOW  
KEEPS PRISTINE INSIDE  
AND DECAYS OUTSIDE TO  
REFLECT VENICE  
WORN WEATHERED ETC  
LIKE THE FLAGS I USE.



NEIGHBOURS MAKING EVIL, 2007  
mixed media, ready-made objects, etc.  
site-specific installation



# Kiba LUMBERG [FI]



Kiba Lumberg | photo: Nihad Nino Pusija

## Otherness and Nostalgia Dressed in Stories

“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. Dressed in jogging pants and a sweater, Daddy's girl Kiba – there is something in her that almost compels you to call her by her first name – went with her father trading horses. All people, the non-Roma majority included, were united by the poverty and optimism of the post-war era. If you needed, say, to borrow flour, you could always count on the community spirit and willingness to help. Many people still remember those days as a happy time. However, Kiba's home was filled to the brim like a sinking ship. It was overcrowded, which meant that tensions constantly ran high.

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. An important watershed in Kiba's life was puberty. It meant a change of role, a transformation from child to adult, from girl to woman. Now she, too, had to accept her place in the community; the tomboy would be moulded into a Roma woman.

The distinctive mark of Roma women in Finland is a voluminous skirt that can weigh up to ten kilos. As such, it is unique in the world. Derived from women's clothing in 19<sup>th</sup>-century agrarian Finland, the costume remains a central symbol in the customs of the community to this day. Dress, good manners and modesty may be more important indicators of esteem and success in the Roma community than, say, education.

Kiba's relationship to the traditional Roma woman's dress was problematic. She, too, saw the skirt as a symbol. But in addition to familial ties and related obligations, it also symbolised for her the oppressed status of women among the Roma. By adopting the dress, a Roma girl was also expected to accept her place in the community and learn humility. Consequently, the Roma woman's skirt was in Kiba's eyes also a prison uniform. This is not restricted to the Roma, however; Kiba also recognises the problem among the majority population. “Whatever the community, they always try to suppress the woman's life energy. It is stronger or more visible in a minority, that's all. I left.” 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.

## Endless Process

Although the rate of change and pace of internationalisation have been fast in Finland, even in the fields of culture and art, the basic pattern has in many instances remained unaltered in a way that would merit more attention in the future. Concepts involving nationality and national identity still seem to occupy a central role and meaning. We are interested in the success of Finnish art in cultural arenas at home and abroad. The state is considering how to more efficiently market art and Finnish cultural exports and to exploit more consistently the hidden potential of the copyright industry on the global market.

Occasionally at least, it seems that the administration still wants to package and conserve art and the work of artists under a single brand, a single framework and context. As long as the quality is right and it says Made in Finland on the label, all is well. And quality is easy to measure, if crossing the threshold of media attention and the amount of publicity

are taken as its indicators. Success becomes, then, merely a matter of marketing and related skills. Cultural products become like any other products. All that is needed is that they be produced and that they offer enough material for a well-conducted project. Whether art has something real to say or not, or whether the results of cultural work have any effect on society, not to mention globally – this does not seem to matter. In such a scenario, the responsibility of actors in art and culture, like that of any producers, is limited to the turnover and the growth of market shares.

In her article for the exhibition book *Side by Side*, museum director Marketta Seppälä discussed a painting by Kiba Lumberg that was adopted as the symbol of the exhibition and the book. The painting depicts a naked man in a hot desert, reaching for a box of *sisu* pastilles. The brand, familiar to all Finns, found itself in a totally alien environment. *Sisu* pastilles came on the market in 1928 and are today almost a national icon. They have remained popular over decades, and are still sold today. Apart from the pastilles themselves, the box has also kept its status. Designed by Arnold Tilgman from Turun Kivipaino printers, the design with its gothic typeface still looks the same as it did originally.

The reference on the *sisu* box to Finnish *sisu*, the myth of an unbending and tenacious people of a small northern country, still belongs to the common store of notions associated with Finnish identity. *Sisu* implies a special attitude to life. As such, it is authentically Finnish, something that unites us, something one does not see in other nations. It is the quality that has enabled the nation living on the outermost edge of Europe to clear rocky forests and successfully cultivate for centuries the frost-prone fields of this northernmost part of the world. It is with *sisu* that Finns have gone to battle and war against overwhelming enemies, and preserved Finnish culture, language and soul.

*Sisu* is part of the story Finns have made up about themselves, the shared story of Finnishness. History links *sisu* with the land, the soil, the people and the language – concepts now being changed by internationalisation. Their meaning and significance are simultaneously becoming deeper and thinner. Old stories fade, partly vanishing, partly being replaced by new ones. Some collective narratives have been replaced by the fresh stories of different subcultures and groups, told about themselves by themselves.

## Skirts

What would it take for Kiba Lumberg to consider herself to be an accepted Finn, a member of Finnish culture – or perhaps the question is, after all, wrongly asked? Kiba has settled her relationship with her own ethnic framework and personal history. She left the Roma community while still a young girl, even though 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.

What, then, is Kiba's position in the field of culture and art? Is it possible to see her and her art without curling up in the received mould of interpretation: “an ethnic minority artist from Finland”. Kiba can, of course, use her ethnic identity, but is it possible in the harsh arena of the art world to stay back, to remain an outsider who observes, searches for new perspectives, standing on no man's land? Can the actors in art, the art public, individual viewers see the universal in Kiba's work? Can she draft a message that could be construed in any context or community where the encounter between individuals, minority and majority culture, the powers that be and the objects of power, takes place?

We wield power and point directions by defining and classifying. By building signs and making symbols, we direct the gaze and mould perception. Being an outsider can offer an artist tools that aid her in her task. Kiba Lumberg tells stories about and for herself to increase her understanding, to be able to live as she builds her own life. How can viewers build up a personal relationship to Kiba's work? Can they possibly put to use the new perspective offered by the stories? What happens to viewers if they are blinded in their role and resort in their interpretation to received models, to stereotypes? Will the figure lost in the desert stop reaching for the box of pastilles stand up and go to see what kind of life there may be behind the next dune? And what demands will this place on Kiba? What kind of skirt must she wear to be accepted as a full-fledged member in the field of art: a Roma skirt?

*Esko Nummelin*

Born in Lappeenranta, Finland in 1956

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

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2006 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition, Galleria Uusitalo, Helsinki  
*Julmuus on jokapäiväistä* [Cruelty is Daily], Kiban Aurinkogalleria [the gallery of Kiba Lumberg], Helsinki
- 2005 *Take Me Away*, Pori Art Museum, Pori, Finland  
*Take Me Away*, Kiban Aurinkogalleria, Helsinki
- 2004-05 Gallerie Art Adeleine
- 2004 Oluthuone William K, Helsinki  
 Varkaus Theater, Varkaus, Finland
- 2003 Gallerie Nasledie, St. Petersburg 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (Finland Week), Russia Lappeenranta Art Museum, Finland  
 Galleri Cupido, Stockholm (together with Finnish National Museum)  
 Galleria Bronda, Helsinki  
 Finnish National Museum, Helsinki  
 Gallerie Pelin, Helsinki  
 Galleri Marius Projekt, Copenhagen, Denmark  
 South Carelian Art Museum, Lappeenranta, Finland  
 Oluthuone William K, Helsinki  
 Kiban Aurinkogalleria, Helsinki
- 2002- Kiban Aurinkogalleria, Helsinki
- 1998-2001 Kiba's studio [work room exhibition], Helsinki  
 Nordea Bank, Helsinki  
 Bar Klaus Kurki, Helsinki  
 Solana Fitness, Helsinki
- 1997 Kallio Library, Helsinki
- 1996 Lappia House, Rovaniemi, Finland  
 Merita Bank, Porvoo, Finland  
 The League of Finnish Feminists, Helsinki  
 Lepakko Bar & Club, Helsinki  
 HSP Bank, Helsinki  
*Kuopio tanssii ja soi* music festival, Kuopio, Finland  
 The Finnish-Swedish Cultural Centre of Hanasaari, Espoo, Finland
- 1984 Valkoinen sali, The Old Student House, Helsinki

## Shared & Group Exhibitions

- 2005 Sovintola Galleria, Kesälahti, Finland  
 Finnish Painters' Union exhibition at Cable Factory, Helsinki
- 2004 Maila Talvio Salonki, Hartola, Finland  
*Kallio kukkii ja kipinöi*, annual Kallio district festival, Helsinki
- 2001 Finnish Painters' Union exhibition at Cable Factory, Helsinki  
*Art Paimensaari*, Savitaipale, Finland  
*Samaa maata*, Pori Art Museum

- The 98<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of Finnish Artists*, Karkkila, Finland
- 1993 *Suvi-Pinx*, summer exhibition, Sysmä, Finland
- 1992 *Suur-Helsingin ja Uudenmaan aluenäyttely*, Helsinki  
 Finnish Painters' Union exhibition at Cable Factory, Helsinki  
 Helsinki Cathedral Crypt  
 University of Art and Design UIAH, Helsinki

## Works in Public Collections

Helsinki City Museum, Finnish National Museum, Helsinki City Art Museum, Pori Art Museum, Porvoo Art Museum (Porvoo, Finland), Yrjö A. Jäntti Collection, South Carelian Art Museum (Lappeenranta, Finland), University of Art and Design UIAH (Helsinki), Thominvest Oy

## Other Artistic Activity

- 2006 *Repaleiset siivet* [Ragged Wings], novel, Sammakko Publishers  
*Helsinki kehyksissä* [In Frames], book. Art from the collections of Helsinki City Museum, collection of paintings from different decades
- 2005 First book event, Literature seminar, Pentinkulma, Urjala, Finland
- 2004 *Musta perhonen* [Black Butterfly], novel, Sammakko Publishers  
 Oluthuone William K, planning and realisation of a performance (Night of the Arts)  
 Transforming the manuscript *Tumma ja Hehkuva Veri* [Dark and Gleaming Blood] into a theater version, premiere in Varkaus Theater 2004  
*Gypsy Comix*, cartoon exhibition (sale exhibition)
- 2003 Planning of Kallio Kipinöi performance (music, scriptwriting, set, performing)
- 2002 Night of the Arts (performance planning and realisation)  
 Planning of Kallio Kipinöi performance (music, scriptwriting, set, performing)  
 Planning of Kallio Kipinöi performance (music, scriptwriting, set, performing)  
 A story in the book *Elämäni Opettaja* [Teacher of my Life]
- 1999 *Mustalaiskuvia* [Gypsy Pictures], Kiasma Museum of Modern Art  
 Cover painting *Muisto Suomesta* for the book based on the exhibition *Samaa maata Viisi Helsinki, Finlandläistä*, video, script and direction, *Mustalaiskuvia*, video, script
- 1997 *Tumma ja hehkuva veri*, television series manuscript, viewed on TV2 Finland 1997-98 as a 4-episode series (directed by Eija-Elina Bergholm), chosen to represent Finland in the 1998 Prix Italia drama series
- 1993 *Kettupäivät* (documentary video); *Gräi-Hevonen*, performance  
*Gypsy-comix*, Manuscript for the Cartoon of the Month in Finnish magazine *Ilta-Sanomata*
- 1990 Script for documentary video *Gräi-Hevonen*

## Bibliography

Laura SELIN – Esko NUMMELIN: *Kiba Lumberg, Vie minut pois / Musta Perhonen – Take me away / Black Butterfly*, Pori Art Museum Publications 75, 2005



*Letters from the Sky*, 2004  
gouache, 64 x 88 cm, private collection  
photo: Erkki Valli-Jaakola

*Death on the trotting-track*, 1995  
gouache, 62 x 88 cm, National Bureau of Antiquities, The Archives for Prints and Photographs, Finland  
photo: Ritva Bäckman





*Lace Tablecloth*, 1995  
gouache, 50 x 88 cm, National Bureau of Antiquities, The Archives for Prints and Photographs, Finland  
photo: Ritva Bäckman

*Birds that Fly at Night*, 1995  
gouache, 56 x 76 cm, National Bureau of Antiquities, The Archives for Prints and Photographs, Finland  
photo: Ritva Bäckman





*Mother Hangs Laundry to Dry*, 1995  
gouache, 52 x 80 cm, National Bureau of Antiquities, The Archives for Prints and Photographs, Finland  
photo: Ritva Bäckman

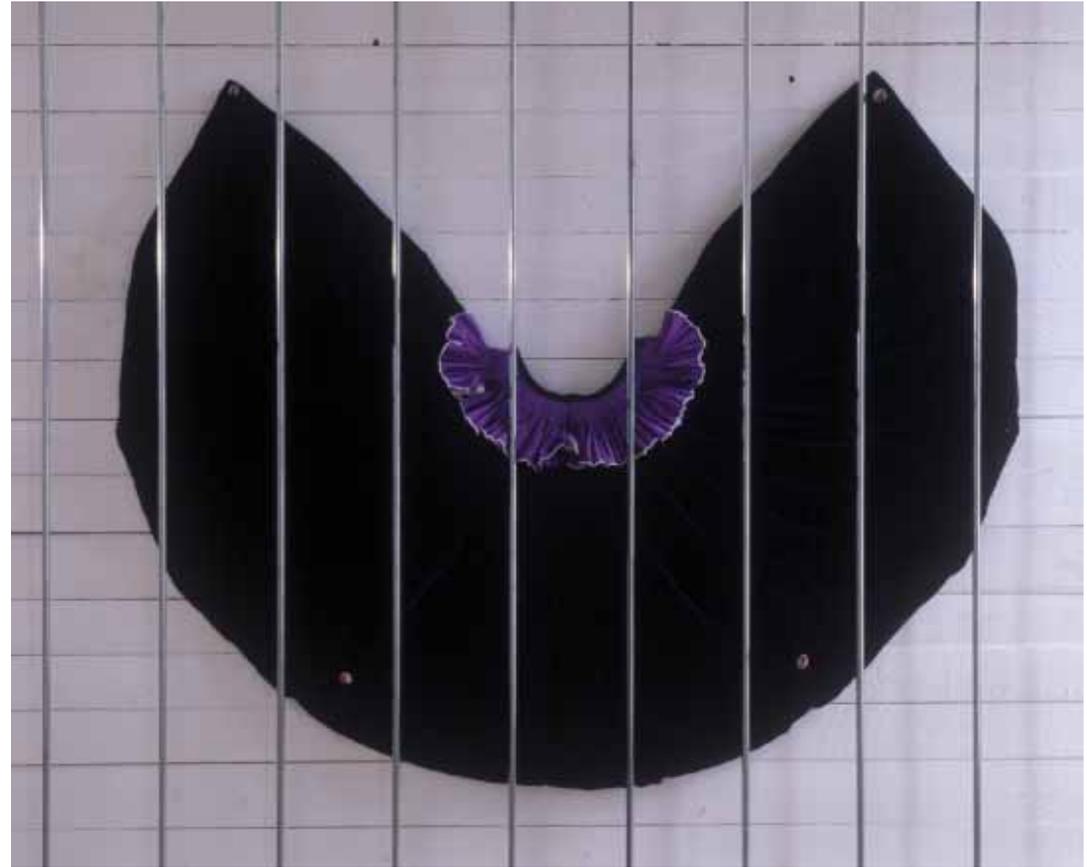
*The Bottle-Cap Factory's Waterfront*, 1995  
gouache, 88 x 104 cm, National Bureau of Antiquities, The Archives for Prints and Photographs, Finland  
photo: Ritva Bäckman





*Bird Killer*, 1995  
gouache, 55 x 78 cm, National Bureau of Antiquities, The Archives for Prints and Photographs, Finland  
photo: Ritva Bäckman

*The Black Butterfly*, 2000  
installation: wood, fabric (skirt), paint, 310 x 280 x 30 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Erkki Valli-Jaakola







*Golden Moment*, 1996  
gouache, acrylic, 99 x 50 cm, Pori Art Museum  
photo: Erkki Valli-Jaakola



*Sisu*, 1994  
acrylic, 46 x 80 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Erkki Valli-Jaakola

# OMARA [H]

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. She made the decision when, at a 1992 exhibition in Szeged, her picture of a woman on all fours in the grass was presented as "Mara Resting," when it, in fact, represented Mara looking for her glass eye in the grass, a real occurrence. At the same exhibition, the double portrait of OMARA and her sister was put on display as "Lesbians". Mara had to ask the curator what the word meant. Outraged by the misunderstanding, she would later paint a picture with "lesbians". The first blue pictures appeared in 1997, because, as she puts it in her self-published autobiography: "Blue was always the colour of my daughter, blue was her best dress when she was a little girl, she wanted her room to be painted blue when she grew up, it was her favourite. The happiest day of my life was when my daughter came over to stay with me, we were making photos, and those which had my daughter on turned blue. We had no idea what happened, I'm sure it was my daughter's beautiful blue eyes that tainted the pictures blue. In 1997 I had a dream which told me I should paint the picture I was to give to my daughter on her name day in blue. I could hardly wait to lay my hands on the paint and the boards. I had ice blue and white at home. And what did I paint? Myself with my hand on my heart, bowing deeply, thanking God for creating this in my dream. My daughter is the person I love most in the world, and this way I could make my girl's dream come true."<sup>1</sup>

Painted in various tones of blue and complemented with textual explanations and wisdoms, 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 for the present and the future. A good example is *Mara and the Policeman*: the story of young Mara, who refused to stand with her bicycle behind the 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.

In the picture that represents the engagement of Omara's daughter, Mara gives voice to her indignation over the fiancé's refusal to marry her (a gadjo, Mara thinks, who had no intention of marrying a Gypsy girl), and adds the line to the bottom: "AND IT TURNED OUT I WAS RIGHT, HE HAS LEFT MY DAUGHTER." As if this sentence were the last mantra of a magic chant. This is needed for the lesson to be complete: the evil one is punished, the prophecy of the priestess-artist becomes reality.

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 to the inmates and tell them about the life of the Roma on the "outside". Although she would probably refrain from using such words, hers is a politically conscious, activist art.

*Tímea Junghaus*

<sup>1</sup> *Omara festőművész [Painter Omara]*, Self-published, Szolnok: Repro Stúdió, 1997

## Biography

Born in Monor, Hungary in 1945

## Solo Exhibitions

1996–2005 Temporary exhibitions at the Omnibusz, Oriental Hotel, Budapest

2000 Hungarian Cultural Institute, Paris, organised and supported by ROMART Foundation  
Kültiplex Cultural Centre and Cinema, Budapest



Omara | photo: Tímea Junghaus

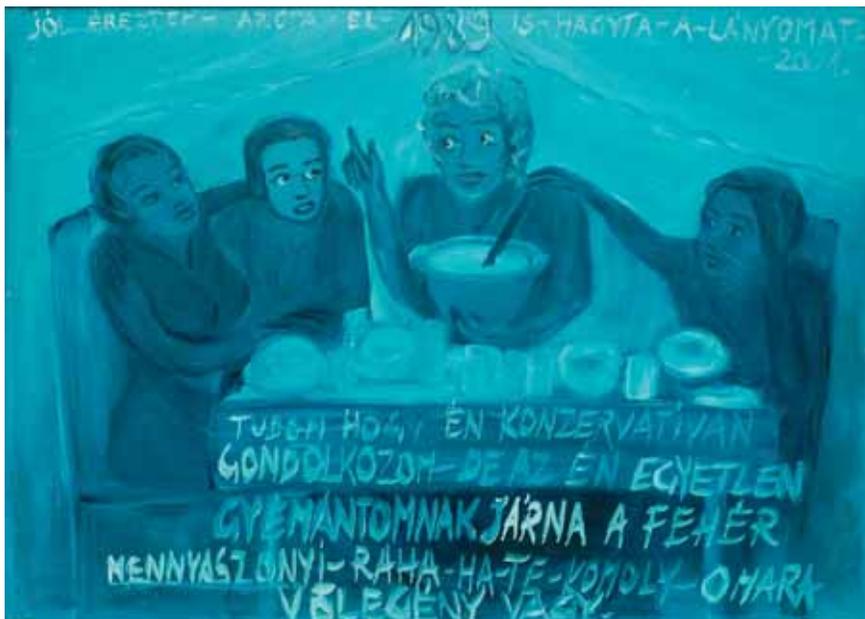
- 1998 Szolnok, exhibition for prisoners at Szolnok Prison  
Graffiti Art Cinema, Budapest
- 1996 Secondary school, Tiszavasvár, exhibition supported by the Tiszadob Children's Village, an institution raising mainly Roma orphans  
Prison at Tököl, exhibition organised by the artists for the prisoners
- 1994 Hunnia Art Cinema, Budapest  
Hotel Venus, Conference Hall, Budapest
- 1993 *Hungarian naïva*, exhibition organised by ethnographer Pál Bánszky in the lobby of the American Embassy, Budapest  
Cultural Centre of District XI, Budapest
- 1992 Naïve Museum, Kecskemét

## Group Exhibitions

- 2006 *Common Space – Issues of Ethnical Minority and Cultural Identity in the Carpathian Basin*, Ernst Museum, Budapest
- 2004 *Basic Instinct, contemporary Roma art in Hungary*, Hungarian Cultural Institute, Berlin, curator: Ágnes Gelencsér and Tímea Junghaus  
*The Hidden Holocaust*, Mücsarnok/Kunsthalle, Budapest, curator: János Sugár, Attila Nemes, Júlia Fabényi, Készman József, Éva Gelencsér and Tímea Junghaus
- 2003 *Roma Religious Pictures*, Hungarian Roma Parliament, Budapest  
*Paintings of the Tiszadob Artist Community*, Hungarian Roma Parliament, Budapest  
*Orientalism in Contemporary Roma Art*, Hungarian Roma Parliament, Budapest, curator: Tímea Junghaus  
*Contemporary Roma Women's Art I*, Hungarian Roma Parliament, Budapest, curators: Emese Süvecz and Tímea Junghaus  
Castle Gallery, Budapest, organised by the ROMART Foundation  
Lobby of the Budapest University of Economic Sciences
- 2000 *III Art Exhibition for Autodidact Roma Artists*, Museum of Ethnography, Budapest
- 1994 Hotel Gellert, Budapest
- 1993 Opens the first Roma art gallery in her home in the suburbs of Budapest, Kispest  
Kossuth Klub, Budapest
- 1992 Hollókő village, Cultural Centre  
Rátkai Club of community culture, Budapest  
Local Municipality Museum, Veszprém  
Cultural Centre, Kaposvár  
Jurisics Palace, Kőszeg
- 1991 Vizivárosi Gallery, Budapest



*My Daughter is Getting Married, 2001*  
oil on fibreboard, 50 x 70 cm, private collection  
photo: barnabas toth



"I WAS RIGHT HE HAS LEFT MY DAUGHTER SINCE, JUST AS I FELT HE WOULD 1989"  
"I KNOW THAT I THINK CONSERVATIVELY, BUT MY ONLY DIAMOND DAUGHTER DESERVES THE WHITE WEDDING DRESS, IF YOU ARE A SERIOUS GROOM"



*I Already Felt it Then That Who I Love is Not for Me, 2000*  
oil on fibreboard, 60 x 90 cm, private collection  
photo: barnabas toth

"THE PEASANT - MOTHER - OF - THE - GROOM - SENT - THE - POLICE - AFTER - ME - SO THAT - THE - ENGAGEMENT - WOULD - BE - CANCELED" "1962"

overleaf, pp. 142-143

*Nursery School, 1998*  
oil on fibreboard, 80 x 50 cm, private collection  
photo: barnabas toth

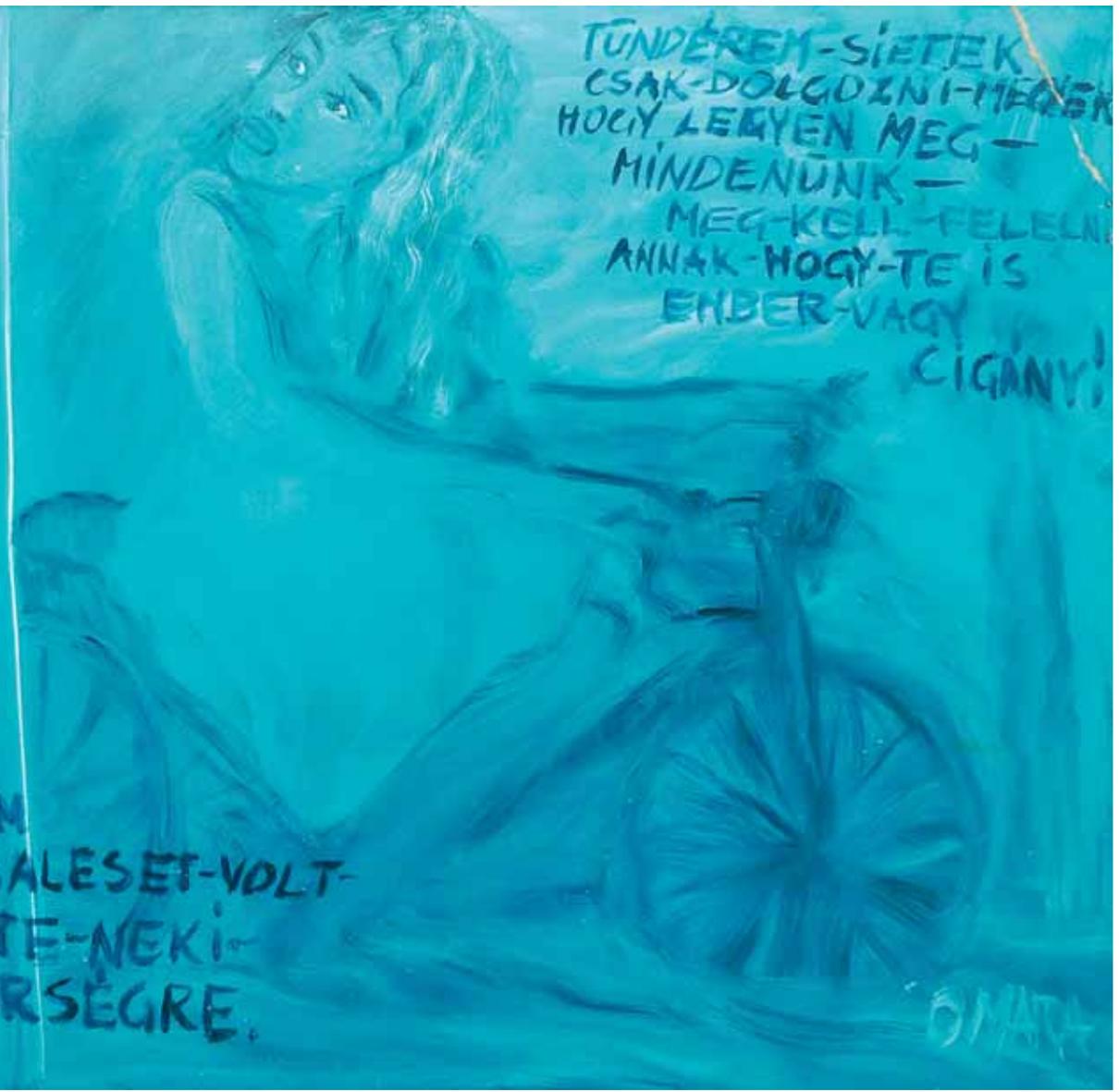
NURSERY SCHOOL 1971  
" SHE - HAS - NEVER - FORGIVEN - ME - AND - I AGREE - WITH - HER"  
"MY - LITTLE - DOLL, - I - WILL - HURRY - BACK, - I AM - JUST - GOING - TO - WORK, - SO WE - CAN - HAVE - EVERYTHING, - WE HAVE - TO LIVE - UP TO - THE - EXPECTATIONS, YOU - ARE - A MAN - TOO - GYPSY"  
"THE DAY BEFORE I DID NOT GET THERE ON TIME, BECAUSE OF A TRAIN ACCIDENT AND THE TEACHER TOLD HER THAT SHE WILL BE HANDED TO THE POLICE."

ÓVÓDA 1971



AZÓTA-SEM-BOCSÁJT MEG,  
ÉS-JGÁZAT ADOK NEKI!!!

ELŐTTE LÉVŐ NAP-NEN-ÉRTEN  
IDŐBEN ÉRTE-MERT-VONATBALESET-VOLT-  
ÉS AZ ÓVÓNŐ-AZT-KÖZÖLTE-NEKI-  
HOGY-LEADJA-A-RENDŐRSÉGRE.



TÜNDEREM-SIETEK  
CSAK-DOLGOZNI-MEGESK  
HOGY LEÉYEN MEG -  
MINDENUNK -  
MEG-KELL-FELELN  
ANNAK-HOGY-TE IS  
EMBER-VAGY  
CIGANY!

B.M.A.R.

# Marian PETRE [RO]



Marian Petre | photo: Livia Teodorescu

## Biography

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 was admitted to the Nicolae Grigorescu Fine Art Institute, from which he graduated in 1987
- 2000 Founder and President of Artisrroma, an organisation of Roma visual artists
- Since 1990 he has worked as a teacher of plastic-education at school.

## Exhibitions & Projects

Fine Art Biennale, Galati, Romania (2002); Tokyo Metropolitan Art Space Exhibition Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2000-2003)

### Solo Exhibitions

Bucharest (1997-1998), Artisrroma exhibition, Bucharest and Rimnicu-Valcea, Romania (2003)

### Group Exhibitions

Municipal Art Showroom, Bucharest (1999-2002); Dantesca, Ravenna, Italy (1999); Art between the Studio and the Museum, Ramnicu Valcea, Romania (1999); Small Sculpture Biennale, Arad, Romania (1998); Fine Art Biennial, Piatra-Neamt, Romania (1997); 35 Studio, Bucharest (1995); The Youth Exhibition, Bucharest, Romania (1987)

### Art Colonies

Bulgary – Veliko Tarnovo (2004), Reed, Tulcea – Romania (2004), Graphic and Drawing Camp – Ramnicu Valcea (2003) Habitat and Art in Romania program – Ramnicu Valcea (2001-2003), Awards: The 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize for sculpture at the Municipal Art Showroom, Bucharest (2002), Hungary – International Camp of Visual Arts in Surdopuspoki (2001) Brancusiana, Targu Jiu (2001), Oarba de Mures (1996), Scanteia (1988), Romania – Covasna (1987)

## Bibliography & Press

- 2006 *Meet Your Neighbours – Contemporary Roma Art from Europe*, Open Society Institute, Timea JUNGHAUS (ed.) National Art Showroom, Romanian Professional Artists' Association, Bucharest
- 2003 *Beyond the Smith's Sign*, Ziarul Financiar, Corneliu ANTIM  
*Romaniart – First Exhibition of Roma Contemporary Art from Romania*, Adevarul
- 1999 *Art between the Studio and the Museum*, H.A.R. Foundation, Luiza BARCAN  
*Habitat and Art in Romania – H.A.R. Foundation*, Alexandru Nancu
- 1998 *An Aesthetics of Metamorphosis*, Curentul, Corneliu ANTIM
- 1997 *Nine o'clock*, Gallery, Cristina Maria ANGELESCU  
*Between Abstract and Figurative*, Azi, Luiza BARCAN



*The Trace of Suffering*, 2002  
wood and metal, 165 x 12 x 12 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Marian Petre



*The Trace*, 2002  
wood and metal, 28 x 22 x 18 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Marian Petre



*In Memoriam*, 2003  
metal, 185 x 19 x 19 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Marian Petre

# Nihad Nino PUŠIJA [BIH/D]

## 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 the merging, between the East and West Blocs. 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.

The 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.

## Biography

Born in Sarajevo, Bosnia, in 1965

- 2001 Visits the classes of Marina Abramović at the Academy of Arts in Braunschweig  
Birth of Namik Luis Pušija
- 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 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
- 1992- Lives in Berlin, Germany
- 1988-92 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)

## Memberships

- 2001 Association of Artists (Ars Bosnae), Berlin
- 1993 New Society of Fine Art (NGBK), Berlin
- 1991 Association of Fine Artists of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ULUPUBiH), Sarajevo

## Selected Exhibitions

- 2006 *Roma and Gadje*, Kortárs Roma Galéria, Budapest  
National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo  
2B Galéria, Budapest
- 2005 *180°*, Schwartzsche Villa, Berlin (catalogue)



Nihad Nino Pušija

- PEER Gallery, New York
- Centre for Contemporary Central European Art, Usti nad Labem, Czech Republic
- Galéria Jána Koniarka, Trnava, Slovakia
- Galerija ŠKUC, Ljubljana
- 2004 *We are what we are, Aspects of Roma Life in Contemporary Art*, Minoriten Galerien, Graz (catalogue)  
*Transit, Life of Roma in Rome*, camp Casillino 900, Rome  
*Quo Vadis, Solarised Portraits*, National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo
- 2003 *Représentation du Travail / Travail du Représentation*, portraits, Centre de la Photographie, Geneva, Switzerland  
gallery FAXX, Kunststichting Tilburg, The Netherlands  
*cimdata.de, solarised portraits*, Galerie 35, Berlin
- 2002 *Zwischen Himmel und Erde*, Hochschule für Künste, Bremen, Germany (catalogue)  
*Fotografische Impressionen*, Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Berlin (catalogue)  
NGBK (New Society of Fine Arts) Gallery, Berlin
- 2001 Museet for Fotokunst, Odense, Denmark  
Kulturverein, Rottenburg, Germany (catalogue)
- 2000 *Sarajevo Self-Portrait*, life of Refugees and Roma from Bosnia in Berlin and Germany, The Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, USA (photo book)  
*Heimat Kunst*, photographic portraits on textiles, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin  
*Futura Existencia*, solarised portraits, Gallery Kunstraum, Berlin
- 1999 Gallery Novi Hram, Sarajevo  
*Formen sind Begriffe / Begriffe sind Formen*, drag portraits, Gallery Nagornaja, Moscow  
*Integration*, photographic portraits on textiles, Gallery Kunstraum, Berlin
- 1998 Gallery Collegium Artisticum, Sarajevo
- 1997 *Duldung*, life of Roma from Bosnia in Berlin, Cyclops photo factory, exhibition project supported by NGBK Gallery, Berlin (catalogue)  
Gallery INA, Zagreb (catalogue)
- 1992-96 *Aus der Hölle ins Ungewisse*, life of Roma and refugees from Bosnia in Germany, in twenty cities so far, including: Berlin, Hamburg, Bielefeld, Lübeck, Cologne, Kiel...
- 1996 *Komparsen*, filmed portraits of prisoners, Gallery Brotfabrik, Berlin (catalogue)
- 1995 *Queens*, drag portraits, exhibition and performance at Moabit florists, Berlin
- 1994 *Raumeroberung*, Cyclops photo factory exhibition and performance, gallery Süd Ost Europa Kultur, Berlin  
*Ave Maria*, photos of found objects at Hamburg harbour, Galerie Franz Mehring, Berlin  
*Hotel Europa*, photo biennial, Salon Futura, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- 1993 *Strano – Fremd – Obcy*, homage exhibition and performance; organiser "Aliens with us" Kunstamt Schöneberg, Berlin
- 1991 *NOB*, Galerija Kamerni Teatar, Sarajevo
- 1988 *Fotografija*, Galerija Crvena, Sarajevo

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- Timea JUNGHAUS, "Egy 'báromannus' Magyarországon, Nihad Nino Pušija fotóművész Berlinből", *Amaro Drom, Roma Magazin*, Budapest, May 2006
- Michael NUNGESESSER, "Heimat Kunst: Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin," *Kunstforum*, July-September 2000



*TRIPTYCH* 1996, 2007  
installation, wallpaper, photos, 60 x 55 cm each, collection of the artist  
photo: Nihad Nino Pušija

# Jenő Andr  Raatzsch [H/D]



Jenő Andr  Raatzsch | photo: the artist

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. (...)

Born in Ilmenau, Germany, in 1978

## Education

2001-2006 Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Budapest – Sculpture programme, Tam s K r s nyi  
1998-2000 Vocational Secondary and Training School for Building and Ornamental Art, Budapest  
1993-1998 Pollack Mih ly Technical College, P cs

## Solo Exhibitions

2006  budai Cellar Gallery  
Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Epreskert, Budapest

## Group Exhibitions

2007 Vasarely Museum, P cs  
2005 Ericsson Art Gallery, Budapest  
Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Epreskert, Budapest  
2004 Stuttgart, Ungarisches Kulturinstitut  
2003 Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Epreskert, Budapest  
2002 Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Barcsay Hall, Budapest

## Awards

2007 XX National Stauette Biennial, P cs – 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize  
2003 XXVI National Scientific Students' Associations Conference – 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize  
2002 Barcsay Prize, Budapest  
2000 European Stone Festival, Rencontres de la Pierre, Junas, France – 1<sup>st</sup> Prize

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*Catalogue of the Graduating Students*, Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, 2007



*My Mother's Apron*, 2005  
copperplate, mixed media,  
100 x 60 x 3 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Jenő Andr  Raatzsch



*Sommersault*, 2005  
mixed media, 300 x 90 x 35 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Jenő Andr  Raatzsch



*Sommersault*, 2005 (detail)  
photo: Jenő Andr  Raatzsch

## Dusan RISTIC [SRB / USA]

Dusan Ristic commenced his studies at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade in 1993, after seven years of private training, during which he mostly experimented with objects, photography, installations and landscape art. The war in Serbia and Montenegro (the former Yugoslavia) had begun in 1992. After a few productive years, Dusan could no longer see any point in working on art during the war. Consequently, in 1997 he stopped studying or producing any art for what was to be seven years. He left Serbia for Budapest, Hungary, where he got involved in the Romani movement and human rights work. The only exception to this break in his artistic work was the installation *I Simply Cannot Understand* (Budapest, 2000), inspired by, and dedicated to, Anastazia Balasova, a Roma woman who was murdered in her own home by racists.

During this time, and especially after the end of the war in 2001, Dusan's supervising professor constantly encouraged Dusan to return to the Belgrade Faculty of Fine Arts to finish his studies. Dusan took up painting again in early 2004, completed his degree a few months later, and moved to California, where he began a new life and a new art.

Recently, Dusan returned to his artistic roots, working in traditional media (oil on canvas). Inspired by California's sun, light and horizon, he created a new series, called *Genetic Code*.

Suzanne Leonora

### Biography

Born in Valjevo, Serbia, in 1970

Lives and works in San Francisco, California, USA

Dusan Ristic mostly experiments with objects, photography, installations and landscape art, occasionally returning to his artistic roots, working in traditional media (oil on canvas).

A graduate of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade, Dusan has exhibited his work in Eastern Europe and the USA

### Education

- 2004 Graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Belgrade
- 1993 Following formal training, commenced Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Belgrade, working in various media: clay, plaster, wax, fired clay, photography, cardboard, light, installations
- 1992 Studied with Prof. Gradimir Petrovic
- 1991 Shumatovachka (standard preparatory school for University of Belgrade art department)
- 1990 Studied with Prof. Svetlana Knezevic, Belgrade
- 1986-1989 Studied with Prof. Milomir Romanovic, Valjevo (Serbia)

### Solo Exhibitions

- 2004 Backstage Gallery in San Francisco, Paintings
- 2000 Exhibition for International Roma Day, Central European University, Budapest  
This was the only exhibition during the break 1997-2004
- 1997 *Introspection*, Students Cultural Centre, Belgrade  
Youth Centre of Novi Sad (Serbia)



Dusan Ristic | photo: the artist

### Group Exhibitions

- 1997 Students exhibition, Belgrade, objects and installations  
*Memorial Chamber* in the Belgrade Fortress, objects
- 1996 Student exhibition, Belgrade, objects, paintings and drawings  
Youth Centre, Belgrade, drawings  
City Museum, Valjevo, paintings
- 1995 National students' drawing competition (1<sup>st</sup> Prize), Serbia  
Lelic, installations, Valjevo  
Student exhibition, Belgrade, drawings and paintings  
City Gallery, Valjevo, drawings and paintings
- 1994 Student exhibition, Belgrade, drawings
- 1993 Student exhibition, Belgrade, drawings  
City Gallery, Valjevo, drawings

### Other Creative Activities

#### Founded

- 2004 Galbeno LLC
- Amalipen Romani (Gypsy) community online ([www.amalipen.net](http://www.amalipen.net))
- 2002 *Beograd Saptac* periodical
- 2000 Romani Crisis Network  
Amala Summer School for Romani Culture  
Galbeno Co.  
International (8 East European countries) Romani artists group "G" for joint exhibitions and promotion of Romani artists' work
- 1997 Kal (Romani-Gypsy music band)
- 1996 Periodical *Prosopon*  
Independent artists' group "Prosopon" (ancient Gk: personhood)

#### Organised

- 2003 International Romani artists' retreat, Valjevo, Serbia
- 2002 The Brass Music Oscar – Documentary movie – translator and location manager (Arte / NDR / WDR Discovery Channel)
- 2001 International Romani artists' retreat, Valjevo, Serbia
- 1999 Went to Rajko Djuric's School for Romani Culture and Language, Berlin, for one month; inspired to begin conscious Romani activism, drawing on earlier experiences: father was activist, educating people to say "Roma" instead of "Tzigani" ("Gypsies"), founding a local Romani activist theatre, and producing the first Romani-language radio broadcasts (news and discussion) in 1978
- 1997 With Romani Cultural Centre in Belgrade and the Romani theatre Vareso Aver in Budapest, presented four plays in Romanes, serving as translator, set designer, centre manager and publicist. Translated the plays *Blood Wedding* by Lorca, *Jacques or Obedience* by Ionesco, *Cirkusiada* by Jovan Nikolic (Romani), and *Bahanalie* by Goran Stefanovski  
Violinist/singer, co-founder of the band Kal
- 1996 Artists' retreat at spiritual centre Lelic



*Global Warming 1/2, 2007*  
digital print, 397 mm x 467 mm  
collection of the artist



*Global Warming 1/3, 2007*  
digital print, 199 mm x 276 mm  
collection of the artist

## István SZENTANDRÁSSY [H]



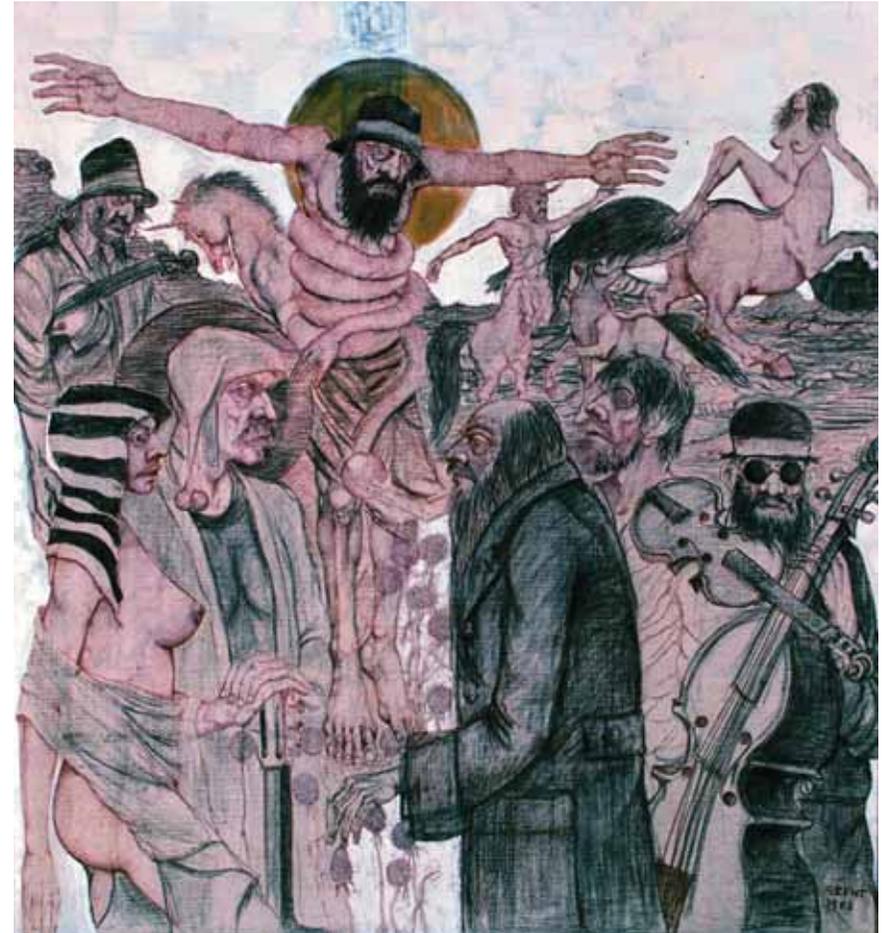
István Szentandrassy | photo: László Szelényi

István Szentandrassy 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 classical sense, which Tamás Péli created in the early 1980s, and which still has several young, exceptionally talented followers.

By his own confession, Szentandrassy 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.

*Timea Junghaus*

Born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1957  
Lives and works in Budapest



*Illustration, 1983*  
pencil on paper, 60 x 50 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: László Szelényi

## Norbert SZIRMAI / János RÉVÉSZ [H]

### Norbert SZIRMAI

Born in Hódmezővásárhely, Hungary, in 1981  
Lives and works in Budapest



Still  
*Fradí [FTC, Hungary] is better*, 2002  
DVD, 15 min 37 sec, Black Box Foundation  
Director: Norbert Szirmai, Camera: János Révész

### János RÉVÉSZ

Born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1984  
Lives and works in Budapest



Still  
*Fradí [FTC, Hungary] is better*, 2002  
DVD, 15 min 37 sec, Black Box Foundation  
Director: Norbert Szirmai, Camera: János Révész



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This book is published in conjunction with la Biennale di Venezia, 10 June – 21 November 2007  
Commissioner of the Roma Pavilion, Palazzo Pisani Santa Marina: **Open Society Institute**  
Curator: *Timea Junghaus*

Editors | *Timea Junghaus, Katalin Székely*  
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Copy editing | *Adèle Eisenstein, Linda Vadász*  
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Cover design and spreads | *Károly Királyfalvi* | [www.solid.hu](http://www.solid.hu)  
Pages 2-9 | from *wish you were here* series by *Daniel Baker*

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Prestel Verlag  
Königsstrasse 9, 80539 Munich  
Tel. +49 (0)89 38 17 09-0  
Fax +49 (0)89 38 17 09-35  
[www.prestel.de](http://www.prestel.de)

Prestel Publishing Ltd.  
4, Bloomsbury Place, London WC1A 2QA  
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Fax +44 (0)20 7636-8004

Prestel Publishing  
900 Broadway, Suite 603, New York, NY 10003  
Tel. +1 (212) 995-2720; Fax +1 (212) 995-2733  
[www.prestel.com](http://www.prestel.com)

Library of Congress Control Number is available; British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data: a catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library; Deutsche Nationalbibliothek holds a record of this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographical data can be found under: <http://dnb.dnb.de>

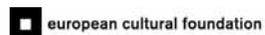
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Design and Pre-press | *Károly Királyfalvi, Zsigmond Bernáthy, Tamás Bereznai* | [www.solid.hu](http://www.solid.hu)

Origination: Reproline Mediateam, Munich  
Printing and Binding: Print Consult, Munich

Printed in Germany on acid-free paper.

ISBN 978-3-7913-6145-1



Swiss Cultural Programme South-East Europe  
and Ukraine, a programme of SDC  
and Pro Helvetia

