

ART AT EP



HUNGARY



WORKS OF ART FROM

Organised by the European Parliament
in cooperation with the Hungarian Presidency
of the Council of the European Union.



European
Parliament

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This publication was produced in Luxembourg for information purposes on the occasion of the Hungarian Presidency Exhibition featuring works from the European Parliament Contemporary art collection and Central Bank of Hungary Art Collection, with the aim of providing an educational reference about the background and artistic legacy of the artists whose creations are displayed, and of preserving and promoting their contribution to Europe's cultural heritage.

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WORKS OF ART FROM
HUNGARY

P R E F A C E



Roberta METSOLA

President of the European Parliament

Dear art lovers,

For more than a decade, we have proudly hosted presidency exhibitions at the European Parliament, allowing us to open windows into the diverse cultures of the European Union. The Hungarian presidency exhibition is another testament to our efforts to make art accessible to the public and to promote intercultural dialogue.

Art is not just decoration and entertainment, but an essential part of our lives and society. It has the power to enrich the soul, open the mind and strengthen mutual understanding. The contribution of art to mental health, well-being and personal development is undeniable, and I am glad that the Hungarian exhibition is dedicated to this very topic.

Since the 1980s, the European Parliament has been passionately building a Contemporary art collection of over 500 works of art from all Member States of European Union. It began with the idea of President Simone Veil, who wanted to show the beauty and richness of European art and support contemporary artists. Today, we can proudly say that this idea has developed into a thriving tradition that enriches not only ourselves but also society as a whole.

The collection of Hungarian works in our collection was initiated in 2006. From 2007 to 2009, we purchased a total of 16 works of art of Hungarian origin. This collection consists mainly of paintings by contemporary Hungarian painters, but also classical, academically conceived sculptures. The most famous of these, "Europe Rediscovered" by Györgyi Lantos can be admired in front of the restaurant on the ground floor of Spinelli building. The exhibition we are currently presenting features also three paintings by Csaba Balogh, Attila Szücs and Péter Szarka from the Parliament collection.

I believe that the Hungarian presidency exhibition will win your hearts and stimulate your thoughts. Immerse yourself in the world of colours, shapes and emotions and let yourself be carried away by the beauty of art.

I thank everyone who contributed to the preparation of this exhibition, and to you, dear visitors, I wish you an extraordinary cultural experience.

P R E F A C E



Balázs HANKÓ

Minister of Culture and Innovation

In the second half of 2024, Hungary holds the Presidency of the Council of the EU for the second time, which provides an excellent opportunity to thematise contemporary challenges in the field of culture. In this mission, I am delighted to have the chance to join the habit of organizing an exhibition at the European Parliament, and it is with great pride and a profound sense of responsibility to present the artefacts of the Central Bank of Hungary. This collection not only showcases the rich cultural heritage of Hungary but also addresses contemporary issues that resonate deeply within Europe today. The Hungarian Presidency has placed a significant emphasis on facilitating access to national values and culture for everyone, and supporting the arts which showcase the richness of our nation's creativity.

The Central Bank of Hungary's (MNB) commitment to the arts is an integral part of its social responsibility strategy. By curating and preserving over 1400 works of fine art, the MNB plays a crucial role in promoting Hungarian cultural values and contemporary artistic expressions. This exhibition is a testament to that mission, highlighting the intersection of tradition and modernity, and the evolving narrative of Hungarian art within the European context.

In an era marked by rapid societal changes, the Hungarian Presidency aims to address key issues, such as work-life balance and intergenerational cooperation. The selected artworks reflect these themes, offering profound insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by families across Europe. The emphasis on reducing the burden on young parents, fairly sharing domestic chores, and encouraging the participation of mothers in the labour market are central to our policies and are beautifully encapsulated in the artworks on display.

In conclusion, this exhibition is a celebration of Hungarian art's dynamic dialogue with contemporary European issues. It reflects our commitment to cultural accessibility and the promotion of artistic expressions that resonate with the lived experiences of people today. I invite you all to explore this rich collection of artworks and to reflect on the themes it presents, as we continue to support and promote the invaluable role of culture in shaping a conscious society.

INTRODUCTION

The Hungarian presidency exhibition focuses on themes that resonate not only within the presidency itself, but in society as a whole. These are social and intergenerational equity and responsibility, and work-life balance. These themes have become increasingly significant in the light of the challenging living conditions we have been experiencing since the onset of the pandemic. Parliament's contemporary art collection is based on the core values of supporting contemporary European artists and art in all their diversity and richness. Furthermore, the art collection fosters the idea of well-being, encompassing both physical and mental health. The artworks on display at the European Parliament not only make the environment more pleasant, but also improve our ability to concentrate, motivate us, boost our mood, and make us feel more at ease. In this sense, the artworks selected for this exhibition reflect and thereby compliment the themes at the centre of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

It should be noted that, for the first time, the current presidency exhibition was not conceived in collaboration with a museum institution, but with a bank. There are numerous examples from all over the world of banks with art collections containing works by artists ranging from the modern masters [of the post-war period/of early 20th century] to contemporary artists. The Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection revolves around modern art, which is also the focus of our own parliamentary collection.

In 2006, the Bureau decided to expand Parliament's contemporary art collection to include works of art from Hungary and Latvia. The acquisition programme for Hungarian art ran from 2007 to 2009 and Hungary's first contribution was the sculpture *Europe Rediscovered* by Györgyi Lantos, which now adorns the ground floor of the Altiero Spinelli building.

The Hungarian artworks in our collection can be divided into pictorial and sculptural pieces. The paintings represent contemporary trends, with abstract themes featuring throughout. Among the most striking works are three large-scale abstract canvases by András Braun. Whereas the sculptural component is represented by four classical academic sculptures by Györgyi Lantos, who is one of the most famous Hungarian sculptors of traditional forms influenced by the classical tradition of European art.

For the Hungarian presidency exhibition, we have selected sixteen Hungarian artworks that embody the main themes of the exhibition: work-life balance, intergenerational cooperation, and solidarity. Meanwhile, we ensured that our selection interacts cohesively and synergistically with the pieces coming from the Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection.

The exhibition opens with the painting *Budapest Legend* by András Braun. The forms used in the painting might refer to Budapest's legendary thermal springs. Additionally, in terms of its composition and colour, the painting perfectly complements the work *Clouds* by Zsófi Barabás, which seems to have just escaped from Braun's canvas. It is impossible to mistake András Braun's paintings due to their distinctive and recognisable repetitive geometric patterns, figurative elements and colour scheme, typically favouring red and yellow. The repetitive and ornamental quality of Braun's paintings makes them resemble computer-generated images.

Another work from Parliament's contemporary art collection is the painting *Paprika* by Csaba Balogh. The painted glass plates create a clear geometry, suggesting balance, but the resulting shape is unstable, evoking a sense of unease, rather than comfort. The splashes and smudges of colour on the glass plates and the asymmetrical shape of the artwork enhance the

dynamism of the painting. Csaba Balogh was born in Romania where he studied painting at the Institute of Fine Art (today the University of Art and Design) in Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár. After 1989 he moved to Budapest and became an active member of the MAMÚ Atelier, a group of Transylvanian-born artists displaced to Hungary.

In stark contrast is *Swimming Woman with Stripe of Light*, a painting by Attila Szücs. This scene is one of serenity and calmness, in which the swimmer floats in an almost suspended, meditative state, evoking a sense of balance and introspection. When describing his approach to painting, Attila Szücs speaks about decoding and interpreting ideas and knowledge in a fresh way. His compositions evoke vacuum-like spaces, with elements depicted as isolated and strangely transcendent, almost in a state of levitation. The sight of the swimmer inspires similar feelings. The rippled surface at the bottom of the painting suggests that the woman is indeed swimming and not floating in the emptiness that Attila Szücs alludes to. Attila Szücs is one of the most famous Hungarian painters of our time. In the 1990s, he adopted his own personal style of painting. He frequently draws inspiration from popular culture and reworks motifs in a unique way. The mirrored pattern that we see in the exhibited painting is one that he uses frequently.

The exhibition ends with the painting *Secret Company* by Péter Szarka. In this painting, we are the observers, watching the mysterious figures who are reflected schematically in the mirrors. The overriding feeling is one of loneliness and distance. We, the viewer, are cut off from the people in the painting by both the empty

space, broken only by empty chairs, and the wall of mirrors, which prohibits any kind of interaction. The symbolism of the painting, with the shadowy figures perceived indirectly in the light of the lamps and reflected in the mirrors, recalls Plato's parable of the cave, where knowledge, education and the distortion of reality play a key role. Towards the end of the 1990s, Szarka began experimenting with graphic design and 3D modelling, essentially anticipating the rapid development of digital art in the following decades. He later returned to gestural painting and incorporating recycled plastic objects or sound in his work.

Hungarian art follows the typical evolution seen in modern painting from central Europe. Its roots go back to the famous German and French academies of the nineteenth century, and following a period of involuntary isolation after the Second World War, it developed through critical re-acquaintance with the rest of European art in a distinctive way. In contemporary Hungarian art we find the same themes and ideas that fascinate artists throughout Europe, as well as responses to current social and cultural conditions and questions.

We believe that this exhibition will contribute to a common understanding and provide visitors with a profoundly rewarding and inspirational visual experience.

Cultural Outreach Unit
DG COMM

INTRODUCTION

The efforts of the Central Bank of Hungary (Magyar Nemzeti Bank, MNB) to promote the arts align with its social responsibility strategy. Its key objective in this spirit is to present and support contemporary Hungarian artists with a view to preserving and perpetuating cultural and artistic traditions. As part of this mission, and in line with European Central Bank practice, it has established a collection of fine art. The collection of contemporary works consists mainly of paintings, but also includes photography, glass objects, textiles, installation and other mixed-media works. The core of the collection is made up of works by the so-called neo-avant-garde generation of artists, who emerged in the 1960s and 1970s with experimental aspirations and have since become world-famous. The other key pillar of the collection comprises works by the youngest generation. The MNB Arts and Culture division, which manages the collection of 1,400 pieces of art, aims to make its material known and widely accessible to the public, available to professionals for research and further processing, and to promote international canonisation.

This is why it gives us such great pleasure to be able to present a selection of the collection in Brussels, one of the major centres of the European art scene, in the European Parliament building, in connection with the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. From a curatorial perspective, it is an exciting challenge to encourage dialogue about the two collections, the contemporary collections of the European Parliament and the Magyar Nemzeti Bank. While the former typically features Hungarian artists in the middle of their careers, the latter is made up of younger emerging artists.

The exhibition concept aligns with the Hungarian Presidency's objectives of promoting a work-life balance in the spirit of social equality, taking into account intergenerational cooperation and solidarity, our ageing society as well as other challenges affecting families. The emphasis is on reducing the burdens on young parents, on a fairer sharing of housework and care responsibilities, and on encouraging mothers to participate in the labour market.

With this in mind, our exhibition focuses on the family as a micro-community, highlighting some typical life situations. One of the most important traditions for Hungarian families is Sunday lunch, where the whole family – several generations – comes together. Among the items on show, the richly symbolic works by **Nikolett Balázs** entitled *Origo* (2021) and *Ingredients* (2021) revolve around this idea. The artistic approach of the artist employs techniques she brought from her home in Létavértes, near the Romanian-Hungarian border, from her parents and grandparents who worked in farming. **József Csató's** work entitled *Served* (2020), which also lent its name to the exhibition, is linked to shared meals, evoking the still life and vanitas art traditions of the Low Countries, traversing the border between figuration and abstraction. One of the components of **Csaba Balogh's** mixed-media work entitled *Paprika* (2008) is genuine Kalocsa paprika, a traditional Hungarian spice. It is not only the paprika that appears as an unusual 'ingredient' in the work, since the artist's glass palettes used for mixing colours in his work as a painting restorer play a role here too: the recycled tools reflect a kind of eco-aware attitude, while the visual perception of the colour spots on the palettes allows us to associate them with restored classical Hungarian artworks.

Some of the works deal with roles often associated with women, such as creating a home, for example *Nest* (2021) by **Nikolett Balázs**. Reflecting on the issue of invisible work we have the abstract collage paintings by **Anna Eszter Tóth** entitled *Big Laundry Series* (2021), evoking huge piles of clothes sorted out before washing, which can be interpreted as totems or monuments to the work of the artist's mother. At the same time, the washed clothes get dirty again, and have to be washed again. The cyclical nature of housework is reflected in the geometric abstract creation of **Judit Horváth Lóczy** – herself a mother, and most often inspired by this experience – entitled *Monotonous work, humble work, unseen work* (2019). The composition, built from straight lines and their repetition,

is structured with engineering precision and softened by the outlines of a red cottage, a kind of female sensitivity. The work by **Attila Szűcs** entitled *Swimming Woman with Stripes of Light* (2008) is linked to the exhibition along the lines of the increasingly valorised notion of 'me time'. The artist, who often uses found images as the basis for his paintings, achieves an illusory effect with his work that addresses time thanks to his characteristic treatment of light.

Space Taxi (2022), by **Balázs Szabó Lobot**, is linked to the playful side of bringing up children, evoking the ease and magic of children's drawings. The crayon-like form of the work is inspired by the fantasy world of street art and comics. For many of us, looking at clouds and associating them with something else is a childhood memory and a way of telling stories (excellent for training and stimulating the imagination), and this can be evoked by the canvases of **Zsófi Barabás** entitled *Cloud 5, 6 and 7* (2022). The artist, who employs so-called "emotional abstraction", complements the exhibition with her unmistakable style of organic abstract sculpture entitled *Yellow Vortex* in the Citizen's Garden. *Budapest Legend* (2007) by **András Braun**, evoking the blowing of soap bubbles, also conjures memories of a carefree childhood in the viewer. The psychedelic, hypnotic effect of the work reveals the character of pop-art, which compels the eye to work very hard. The influence of pop-art is also evident in the composition that magnifies, repeats and varies a single motif in a square format arranged in an organic configuration typical of the artist. The visionary, dream-like character appears as a figurative vision in virtual space in **Péter Szarka's** digital print entitled *Secret Society* (2007). The artist's works reflect on typical issues of mass culture, media and design, employing their imagery.

Kinga Hamvai

Head of MNB Arts and Culture, curator of the exhibition

Featured artists

NIKOLETT BALÁZS

CSABA BALOGH

ZSÓFI BARABÁS

ANDRÁS BRAUN

JÓZSEF CSATÓ

JUDIT HORVÁTH LÓCZI

BALÁZS SZABÓ LOBOT

PÉTER SZARKA

ATTILA SZŰCS

ANNA ESZTER TÓTH

Nikolett BALÁZS

Ingredients (2021)



Textile, paint, metal chips, mixed media
100 × 100 × 15 cm

Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection

Nikolett Balázs, a member of the MŰTŐ collective, graduated from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in 2016 with a degree in painting and has since received several significant awards: in 2020 she won the Secondary Archive Young Woman Artist competition, which was presented during Manifesta 14 – Prishtina 2022. In 2021 she was nominated for both the Leopold Bloom and Esterházy Art Awards, and two years later she was the first Hungarian artist invited to the SACO Biennale in Chile, followed by a 2-month residency program of the Visegrad Fund in New York. In February 2024, she had a solo exhibition in Bratislava titled Born Free.

Balázs explores and reinterprets the dichotomies, generational, social, cultural and societal value crises that define and surround her, both aesthetically and substantively, in a raw, revealing act of letting go/resolving, in a constructivist synthesis of self-searching and self-reflection from a female perspective. Nikolett Balázs describes her own works as “object clutches” that reach down to deep layers, offering a visual and haptic experience, a social and ecological imprint, through their abstract, austere structure, yet proliferating symbolism. The works *Hozzávalók (Ingredients)*, *Origo* and *Fészek (Nest)* (2021) are maternal metamorphosis stories of the sublime materials that have to be extracted from the “smoothness aesthetics” of the present, confessional monuments to self-portraiture, bodily representation and inner lyricism. (Annamária Szabó)

Nikolett BALÁZS

Nest (2021)



Textile, metal chips, paint, xps sheet

45 × 65 × 25 cm

Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection

Nikolett BALÁZS

Origo (2021)



Metal sheet, wire, sand, industrial foam

160 × 140 × 40 cm

Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection

Csaba BALOGH

Paprika (2008)



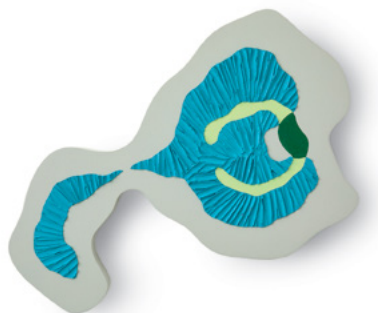
Wood fibre, dispersion paint, oil, glass, Kalocsa paprika
154 × 254 cm
European Parliament Contemporary Art Collection

In his early works, Csaba Balogh showed naturalistic tendencies, but relatively soon he began to devote himself to expressive works based on colour and gesture, as well as conceptual works. When creating his collages, he recycles 'ingredients' collected during his time as a restorer, such as dried glass palettes, frames and canvas fragments, but also invitations, catalogues, posters and the like. *Paprika*, a painting we acquired in 2008, uses a form that Balogh also used in other works from that period. The main 'ingredient' of this image is the traditional Hungarian spice, Kalocsa paprika.

Abstract and chaotic collages composed of 'ingredients' are in opposition to the regular geometric grid and this contrast reminds us of the need for balance.

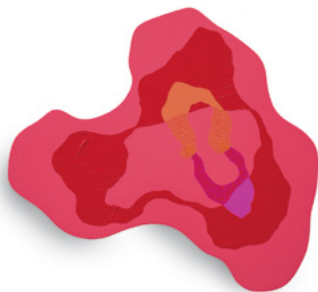
Zsófi BARABÁS

Cloud 5, Cloud 7, Cloud 6 (2022)



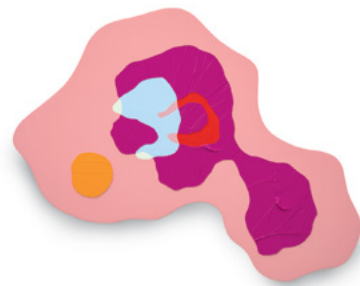
Oil, acrylic on wood
50 × 43 × 4 cm

Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection



Oil, acrylic on wood
49 × 42 × 4 cm

Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection



Oil, acrylic on wood
58 × 39 × 4 cm

Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection

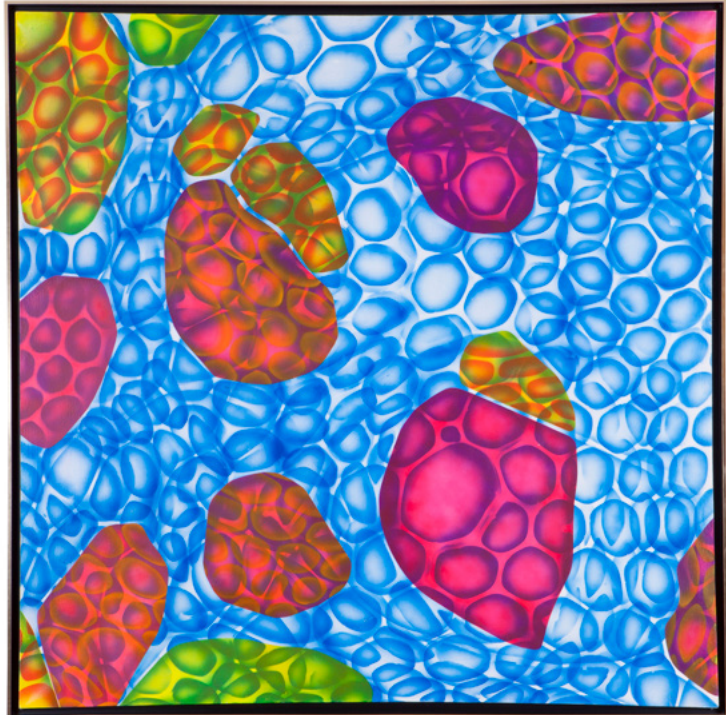
Zsófi Barabás comes from a family of artists, so she started to express herself artistically at quite an early age. This natural, organic attachment to the language of visual art still describes her work. She began her studies in fine arts as a graphic artist, and later painting became her main language of expression. She studied at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in Budapest (2004), Cambridge and Tokyo (2009), and completed her doctoral studies in Pécs under the supervision of Ilona Keserü in 2022.

She speaks with ease in the language of drawing, painting and installations, but whatever she touches, her visual world emerges through an organic abstraction. Using different sizes and colours, she throws herself into this swirling world of forms, where the works – following the ideas of László F. Földényi – almost

create themselves. At first glance, the abstract forms of the light, colourful paintings blend together with playful dynamics, as if they were deep-sea creatures, projections of a dream world, or even inspired by a fantastic film. In addition to the playful movement and dynamics, the shapes are meticulously crafted and the choice of colour – perhaps just as important as the ensemble of shapes – is also quite deliberate. We get the impression that the artist is – consciously or unconsciously – following her own theory of colour, which is perhaps not so surprising for an artist walking in the footsteps of Kandinsky. (Délia Vékony)

András BRAUN

Budapest Legend (2007)



Acrylic on canvas
200 × 200 cm
European Parliament Contemporary Art Collection

András Braun's paintings are instantly recognisable. Their repetitive geometric forms, figurative elements and bold reds and yellows are unmistakable. Braun's decorative appeal hints at computer-generated images, with his repeated patterns and unique algorithms reflecting digital culture, but without the sterile perfection of tech-generated art. His work often features enlarged details of objects, either painted or cut out, along with grid-like structures and concentric circles. These circles, reminiscent of pop culture and advertising, create a dynamic effect that gives viewers a sense of movement and depth, despite being on a flat surface. His painting communicates perfectly with other works in the exhibition, especially *Clouds* by Zsófi Barabás.

József CSATÓ

Served (2020)



Oil and acrylic on canvas
180 × 155 × 5 cm

Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection

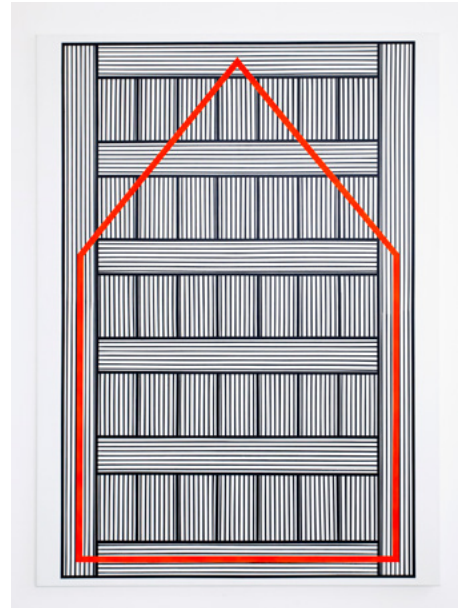
József Csató is a representative of the young generation of painters who showcase a hybrid understanding of painting, creating their works by deploying a wide range of pictorial and multimedia tools of the current age while remaining within the conventions of painting without relying on its representational function. The imitation of abstraction and figurativity is reversed: the figurative emerges as abstract, the abstract as figurative. An “as if” effect in a medium that does not cater to obsolete notions of beauty. Radical assertions in friendly narrative mode.

József Csató's paintings speak a unique visual language. His figures and shapes merge to become a psychedelic personal symbolism. Amorphous forms appear as real, existing entities: plant-like beings or single-celled animals magnified to the extreme.

These quasi-figural and abstract works, or image organisations, fuse several art-historical references into current fantasy worlds. The repetitive forms are re-expressed in the pictorial – compositional – order of the images as if the dynamics of this painted, animate world were put into motion by exactly these speculative botanical experiments. Besides his visual art, Csató is an inspired musician, working sometimes with cosmic sound effects that transport the listener into spherical dimensions. (Julia Fabényi)

Judit HORVÁTH LÓCZI

Monotonous work, humble work, unseen work (2019)



Acrylic on canvas
180 × 130 × 2 cm

Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection

Judit Horváth Lóczy graduated as a landscape architect and obtained a second degree in colour engineering at the Budapest University of Technology. Between 2011 and 2014, she graduated from the Budapest Metropolitan University with a degree in Visual Representation. In 2019, she was awarded the Fellowship of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation in the United States of America. In 2022, she was the finalist of the Kassák Contemporary Art Prize.

Judit Horváth Lóczy's work is connected to the constructivist-geometric tradition, and her individual vision represents a new (female) sensibility in the Hungarian art scene. Her oeuvre to date consists of a series of paintings and objects that are thematically interconnected, searching for new paths concerning

the question of form and exploring possible points of intersection between the medium of painting and sculpture. Her works blend pictorial flatness and spatiality to create a distinctive visual language based on abstraction, geometry, dynamics and rhythm. The supports of Horváth's spatially expansive paintings are pre-designed shaped canvas constructions whose geometric rigidity is counterbalanced by a vivid palette and intuitive compositional style. Her work is usually inspired by everyday situations or personal stories, which she presents through constructing geometric compositions built on fundamental forms. She gives voice to intimate yet universal experiences such as becoming a mother or the everyday difficulties of raising a child. As she puts it, "each work is an entry in my diary." (Viktória Popovics)

Balázs SZABÓ LOBOT

Space Taxi (2022)



Acrylic, acrylic spray, oil pastel, oil stick, charcoal on canvas
160 × 140 × 2 cm
Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection

Balázs Szabó Lobot is one of the emblematic figures of the street art scene of Pest, which emerged after the turn of the millennium. His painting is defined by a naive character similar to children's drawings, and is inspired by graffiti. Szabó, born in Nagykanizsa, graduated from the Hungarian University of Applied Arts in 2005 after a short detour in Ljubljana. His career as a member of the street art group named 1000% was defined by ephemeral, anonymous, street visuals. Hence the stage name "Lobot", which he used later on. His art world was defined by a spontaneous fusion of graffiti and comics, by a style reminiscent of the Basquiat of the 80s, combined with an Eastern European DIY-spirit. His visual narratives are permeated by the experiences and objects

of the underground music scene (mixing desks, synthesizers, posters, etc.), often embodied as objects. Around 2020, his painting moved closer to the abstract language, but retained its naive, children's drawing-like character – often reminiscent of crayon drawing because of the oil pastel and oil stick. Brick grids, coiled strands, tubes and circles are snaked in front of a neutral space or stacked as building blocks. The playfully composed works, which tend towards non-figurativity, sometimes contain fragments of motifs from earlier pictorial narratives mixed with hidden symbols of fresh experiences. Szabó lives and works in Budapest. (Gábor Rieder)

Péter SZARKA

Secret Company (2007)



Durst Lambda print
100 × 150 cm

European Parliament Contemporary Art Collection

Péter Szarka co-founded the Budapest-based Újlak Group (1990-1995) as a student at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts. This art group was characterised by the rediscovery of artistic practices. Szarka continued with his innovative approach and experimented with 3D modelling as early as the late 1990s. Later, however, he returned to painting. Dystopian elements appear in some of his paintings.

Likewise, the work on display recalls a secret community of people from a dystopian future. Szarka conceived the painting so that we become part of the society we observe in the mirrors on the walls. The anonymity of the individual figures only emphasises the mysterious air of the scene. The principle of observing reflections in mirrors evokes that of observing shadows in Plato's Cave. As with Plato's Cave, we must think of knowledge and education in Szarka's painting.

Attila SZŰCS

Swimming Woman with Stripes of Light (2008)



Oil on canvas
190 × 140 cm

European Parliament Contemporary Art Collection

Attila Szűcs is a Hungarian painter who creates very realistic paintings, but with surprising twists that make you question what is actually going on. He uses his artistic abilities to play out scenes full of tricks on the canvas.

Szűcs likes to use bright colours and vast, open spaces in his paintings. He also likes to add things that seem a little off, like smoke or odd ways of arranging objects. He sometimes even breaks the rules of physics a little.

Water is a favourite element of Szűcs. He uses it to create special effects, such as distorted shapes, strange perspectives and faded colours. In this painting, the woman's body symbolically divides the scene between a solid one, above the surface, and a deformed one in the water. In addition to this division between visible and invisible, the painting references the main theme of the exhibition: the need to divide time fairly between work and rest.

Anna Eszter TÓTH

Big Laundry Series II., IV., V. (2021)



Acrylic, paper on canvas
120 × 60 × 2 cm each
Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary
Art Collection



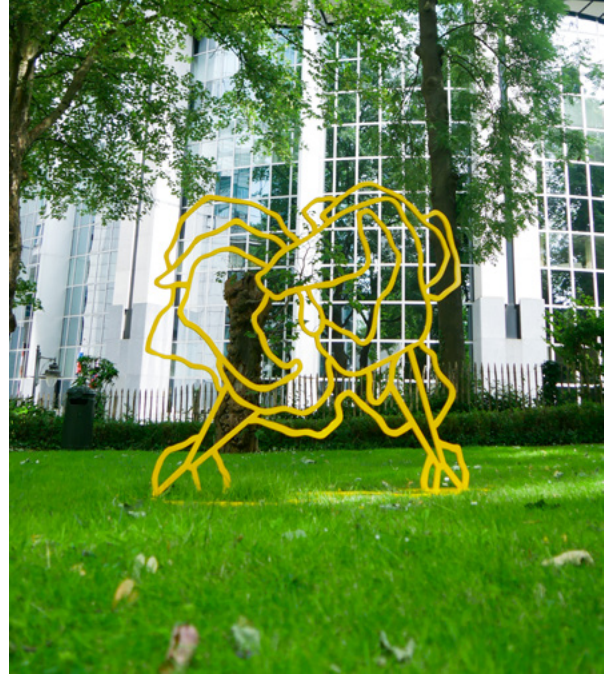
Anna Eszter Tóth graduated from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in 2014, majoring in painting, as a student of Zsigmond Károlyi, and then she participated in DLA doctoral studies. In 2016 she was awarded the Barcsay Prize. Her artistic interests focus on constantly pushing the boundaries of panel painting, blurring the boundaries between figuration and abstraction, and the representation of spatial objects within the plane. Her favourite subjects include everyday objects, banal motifs and, above all, the artistic expression of activities that fall under the concept of invisible work. The piles of colourful textiles in her paintings and sculptures evoke the world of forms typical of abstract art, confronting the randomness of the compositions with the carefully

composed patterns and fields of colour. She transforms the variously shaped piles of clothes into non-figurative spatial column compositions, somehow sculpting the constantly recurring, invisible and domestic tasks typically done by women, such as washing, hanging out clothes to dry, ironing and folding. The “close-up” observation, the abstraction of these banal activities is in fact a painting and visual experiment to display the wrinkling of materials, the randomness of forms and the stacking of layers in a variety of ways. The Giants and the Laundry series reflect on the themes and techniques of great periods of art history, marked by predominantly male artists, from a uniquely female perspective. (Viktória Popovics)

**OUTDOOR
INSTALLATION**

Zsófi BARABÁS

Yellow Whirl (2020)



151 × 157 × 72 cm, 100 kg
Courtesy of the Artist and the Erika Deák Gallery

'The sculpture *Yellow Whirl* is a spatial extension of my paintings. The lines connect in an organic whirl. The forms symbolise encounters and points of contact. The "missing" elements from the space form the foundation of the line drawing. The sculpture aims to convey the importance of completion, possibility and the dynamic connection at the points. We see straight lines only in two places, connected to the base. These geometric elements act like scaffolding, supporting and elevating the soft forms. The colour refers to the yellow of the sun, symbolising the power of light.' (Zsófi Barabás)

This sculpture complements the temporary art exhibition that has been organised inside the European Parliament to shine a light on the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU. The exhibition includes works from the European Parliament's Contemporary Art Collection and from the collection of the Central Bank of Hungary. This sculpture specifically relates to other paintings by Zsófi Barabás that are on display in the Spinelli building.

I M P R I N T

July - December 2024

The European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium.

Curators

Cultural Outreach Unit, Directorate-General for Communication / Kinga Hamvai, Gabriella Simon-Csinos (Central Bank of Hungary's Contemporary Art Collection).

Texts

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