

Hungarian University of Fine Arts Doctoral Program

Theses of DLA dissertation

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I was always interested in the career of László Paizs, I find him an important artist. The development of his oeuvre is interesting and instructive. I felt, and I still feel an analogy between his and my changes of style. I had a relatively easy task as I met his works and the artist in person quite early. When I prepared for the DLA degree, I decided to dedicate my dissertation to his work.

1. László Paizs found out about the work of American and Belgian pop artists at the 1964 Venice Biennale exhibition. Several years after this encounter he presented pop art works at his exhibition in 1971 in the Adolf Fényes Saloon.

My first thesis tries to refine this well-known fact. Through my research I found out that Paizs could have seen at the 1964 Biennale those works of the American pop artist who were close to the abstract expressionism. He must have seen in the Belgian pavilion works that can be considered art brut. Robert Rauschenberg was awarded the top prize in the painting category, and a sculptor of Hungarian origin representing Switzerland, Zoltán Kemény - described in the critical reviews as representing art brut - received the top prize in the sculpture category. All the oeuvre of Paizs could have been influenced by *Zabriskie Point*, the movie of the Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni. Paizs met the works of the French Nouveau Réalisme - the works of Arman at the first place - later, after starting his own experiences, and the realization of his own first important works.

2. Instead the schematic, simplistic definitions of the styles I propose more elaborated definitions. I don't consider the early mosaics of Paizs typical socialist realist works. I regard the stylized representation of humans and situations related to the architecture of the 60's as a realization of a different artistic ideal when compared to the narrative and obedient socialist realism of the 50's. The source of the few ambiguous definitions of style in the reports and in the reminiscences is László Paizs himself. These denominations - such as the repeatedly mentioned postimpressionism and socialist realism - were adapted sometimes in an unreflected manner in the critics and analyses.

3. It was a guiding principle for Paizs to synchronize his works with the actual mainstream artistic tendencies. This happened for the first time after he came across the phenomena of pop

art and art brut. In the mid 70's he started to make geometrical, structural works instead of the pop art. This period brought for Paizs the widest recognition. The modernist art historians who were at that time still at a rearguard fight against dogmatism, took his side. However, the artist asked to drop out these works from his retrospective exhibition in 2000. In the press reviews and for instance the analysis of János Frank the period before the geometrical works was considered as less important compared to the structural sculptures seen mature. The same thing happened with the later works as well. Paizs did not want to become his own icon. For his further artistic development he might have wanted to bracket his earlier periods.

4. I take into account in this thesis that after the changes following World War 2, starting from 1948, the history of art cannot be described solely with the presentation of the so called counterculture. Accepting the concept of the historian Ignác Romsics, I would like to make allowance for the cultural achievement that was accomplished during the two consolidation periods in Hungary. László Paizs realized much of his oeuvre starting from the mid-60's, late 60's during the often-inconsistent consolidation of the cultural policies. (The other period of consolidation started in 1921, and it is known as the Bethlen István period.) Paizs got through the stations of the Three T's (supported, forbidden, tolerated and supported) with his works. His geometrical statues displayed partly in public spaces became a means to legitimate the system. Later his critical works came into conflict with the harmony found in the geometric statues. Perhaps this is why this geometric period became later embarrassing, so that it was omitted from the summing-up publications. Two years after his death I find it actual to overlook and to analyze his complete oeuvre.

I was concerned with the entire artistic career in my dissertation. Since the oeuvre is articulated in many different artistic periods, it was possible to present the influences on this work, the inventing and the alteration of the individual style. I take into consideration the early mosaics that are exposed in public space, but were omitted from the retrospective exhibition and from the summing-up publications: these can be seen as precursors of the late period starting from 1983. Where justified, I describe the historical environment as well that could influence the life and art of László Paizs.