

5. IASSY – SOURCE OF LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TALENTS

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Abstract: *The city of Iași, one of the most important visual art centers in the country, is one with an extraordinary creative potential, this being the reason why in this paper we mentioned local artistic personalities of national and international value. In this context, we will present among the most relevant exhibiting events that are constantly organized in Iași and which bring together local, national and international creative values. We would like to mention the ArtIS Salons, the Drawing Salon, the Iasi Identity Exhibitions, the Visual Arts Exhibitions of the International Festival of Education, the Visual Arts Exhibitions of Euroinvent, Inventica, the International Triennial Texpoart, the International Biennale of Contemporary Engraving, as well as visual artists who have already integrated into the international circuit, being rewarded with numerous awards and distinctions among the most honored. Thus, local artistic life is in a continuous creative effervescence, supported by the numerous exhibitions of consecrated and young artists who come to the audience with a great variety of styles.*

Key words: *visual center, creative potential, exhibition events, international value*

1. Introduction

The Iassy city, defined by history, culture and spirituality, enjoys to an authentic and valuable cultural heritage, being one of the oldest and most important urban²⁵¹ centers in the country, with a considerable offer of valuable artists, writers, critics, historians, scientists, doctors, engineers, etc. which have successfully integrated to European culture and values. Being a remarkable educational center, it was natural for many important people to educate themselves, to live and to create in Iassy, some of them remained, and others chose to go to other cities in the country or abroad. „With an institutionalized artistic life from the beginning of the nineteenth century, with national priorities in the field of performing arts, literature and visual arts, Iassy is a great cultural center with an artistic offer which is an important share of value in our recent history”²⁵².

Among the representative names of the Romanian culture that have worked in Iassy we mention, plastic artists such as: Constantin Stahi, Gheorghe Popovici, Theodor Pallady, Octav Băncilă, Camil Ressu, Nicolae Tonitza, Ștefan Dimitrescu, Jean L. Cosmovici, Richard Hette, Călin Alupi, Corneliu

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²⁵¹ Iașul is crystallized as a city center 611 years ago

²⁵² Presentation of Iasi - Iasi Foundation - European Capital of Culture - <http://iasi2021.ro/content/uploads/2015/11/Culture-IASI.pdf>, 25.03.2017.

Baba, Sabin Balasa; art critics: Petru Comarnescu, Constantin Ciopraga, Dan Hăulică, Radu Varia; writers: Mihai Eminescu, Titu Maiorescu, Ion Creanga, Vasile Alecsandri, Gheoghe Asachi; musicians: George Enescu, Eduard Caudella, Gavril Musicescu, Sergiu Celibidache, Iosif Sava; actors: Matei Milo, Lucia Sturdza-Bulandra, Petre Gheorghiu, and many others;

Along side the people of culture in the area of Iassy, we find famous physicians or great doctors such as: Ștefan Procopiu, Ion Ionescu de la Brad, Petru Poni, Alexandru Obregia, Grigore T. Popa etc. Remarkable musicians and actors had real successes in the country and abroad, including: Viorica Cortez²⁵³, Ovidiu Lipan, Elena Mosuc²⁵⁴, Anamaria Marinca²⁵⁵, Cristian Mungiu²⁵⁶, etc.

2. Discussions

If we make an overview about history of the culture from Iassy, a city considered *The Spiritual Capital of Romania*, we find a significant number of personalities, artists and scientists representative for their specialty field. Thus, we will present in this paper the important visual artists both for the history of national art, but especially for the local history of painting, graphics and sculpture.

The creative talent of the visual artists from Iassy was noted in relevant exhibition events organized in the country and abroad, where the aesthetic value of the exhibited works of art is appreciated. Among the visual artists who present to the public various stylistic approaches, which are meant to illustrate the contemporary art from Iassy in various personal or collective exhibitions and who they have already integrated in an international artistic circuit, we mention: Felix Aftene, Jenő Bartos, Dan Covataru, Dragos Pătrașcu, Matei Bejenaru, Atena Elena Simionescu, Constantin Tofan, Mircea Ștefănescu, Liviu Suhar, Carmen Solomonea, Miruna Hașegan, Cristian Ungureanu, Mihai Tarasi and many others, being rewarded with numerous awards and distinctions among the most honorable. "The particularity of Iassy's visual art is that the cultural and artistic events unfolded in Iassy have a great relevance on national and European level, which being well reflected in the art critique and mass-media"²⁵⁷.

Iassy, one of the most important centers of visual arts from country, is a city with an extraordinary creative potential, in which are constantly organized exhibition events that bring together the local, national and international creative values. We would like to mention some of these events, such as: *ArtIS annual UAPR Iassy Exhibition*, *Drawing Exhibition*, *Iassy Identity Exhibitions*, *Visual Arts Exhibitions of the International Festival of Education*, *Visual Art*

²⁵³ He received the title of Doage Honoris Causa of UNAGE in 2015 on the occasion of the 155th anniversary of the establishment of the first institution of modern artistic education in Iasi.

²⁵⁴ He received the title of Honorary Citizen of Iasi in 2010

²⁵⁵ Actress

²⁵⁶ Director

²⁵⁷ Mirela Ștefănescu *Arta vizuală ieșeană între tradiție și inovație*, Review of artistic education, nr. 13-14/2017, Ed. Artes, Iași, 2017, p.221

Exhibitions of *Euroinvent*, *Inventica*, the *International Triennial Texpoart*, the *International Biennale of Contemporary Engraving*, etc.



Fig. 1. Collective Exhibition *Inventica*, Université de la UNAGE, 2016

It is appropriate to detail the *ArtIS annual UAPR Iassy Exhibitions*²⁵⁸, because actually the contemporary plastic creation from Iassy revolves around them, which are a tradition over 80 years²⁵⁹, bringing together all the specializations of visual arts: painting, sculpture, graphics, decorative arts, photography²⁶⁰. Well-represented in the newspapers, *ArtIS annual UAPR Iassy Exhibitions* give us an overview of the contemporary visual art from Iassy, confirming the value of artists' creations. "The quality of the art works, the seriousness of judging, the care for a proper panotation demonstrates the desire of Iasi's plastic artists to present themselves to the public at their true value."²⁶¹

ArtIS annual UAPR Iassy Exhibitions are great cultural events and professional visual arts exhibitions which express ideological tendencies and research of new forms and techniques of plastic expression. "In exhibitions face dozens of contradictory styles and trends, in a delightful variety, an open and ambitious fight"²⁶².



Fig. 2. Exhibition *ArtIS Salon*, Hotel Europa, Iasi, 2013, critic Valentin Ciuca

²⁵⁸ Over time, it has been called the Official Salon, *ArtIS Salon* (Art = Art, IS = Iasi), Autumn Salon, UAP Iasi Salon.

²⁵⁹ The official salons of Moldova have been organized since 1939

²⁶⁰ After the Photo - Video section appeared at the Faculty of Visual Arts and Design, UNAGE.

²⁶¹ Magda Sficlea Obreja, *Salonul oficial 92*, în *24 de ore*, Iași, 14 decembrie 1992

²⁶² Radu Negru, *Salonul de Toamnă* în *Cronica*, Iași, 1-15 .XI.1995.



Fig. 3. Exhibition of the ArtIS Salon at the Royal Foundation Galleries in the Mihai Eminescu Central Library in Iasi, 2014

One of the relevant exhibitions into the national visual arts, which highlights the value of the creations of consecrated artists, which also promoting young local students of the Faculty of Visual Arts and Design, is the *National Contemporary Art Exhibition Erotica*, whose curator is the graphician Dragoș Pătrașcu. The visual spectacle offered by the visual art exhibitions that yearly animate the art landscape from Iassy through the Art Galleries of Union of Fine Artists branch from Iassy and other local galleries within the *National Contemporary Art Exhibition Erotica*, reveals the diversity of aesthetic visions and the creative potential artists form Iassy representing a special cultural event for the contemporary local art.

Impressed by the retrospective exhibition *A century of erotism in art from the Pompidou Center in Paris*, Dragoș Pătrașcu managed to open in Iași the Erotica Exhibition which, since the first edition, enjoyed an impressive participation of visual artists and, over time, became the *National Contemporary Art Exhibition Erotica*, which can be anytime compared with other exhibitions abroad.



Fig. 4. Poster of the Erotic Exhibition April 2017 Fig. 5. Images from the Erotic Exhibition April 2017

The dynamics, freshness and inventiveness of the exhibitions is given by the presence of the young artists, the salon increasing qualitatively and quantitatively becoming more attractive, being from one edition to another assaulted by numerous requests for participation.

Another great exhibition event is the *Drawing Exhibition Salon*, which aims to redefine an essential formula. Within this creative framework, the local artists seek to be in the trends of revalorization of the tradition, but also to be consistent with the experiments of the current art world²⁶³. The actualization of the drawing on the stage of contemporary local art was initiated by graphician Dragoș Pătrașcu, the author of the project, who considers that this *Drawing Exhibition Salon* was opened for "the freedom that it offers to the artists. (...) In recent years, both in the American artistic space and in the great European cultural centers, the drawing has become an increasingly important presence in exhibitions and biennials, knowing well the local artistic potential, the organization of the first *Drawing Exhibition Salon* after 1989 has been imposed by itself. The novelty of this Salon is that in addition to the traditional techniques, the gates have been opened to other means of expression such as: drawing-installation, drawing-object, drawing-video, drawing-projection ... We want to highlight the idea that drawing is everywhere and that all the materials of the world are drawn that the drawing is vibrated and experimental, that the drawing was never more dynamic"²⁶⁴.



Fig. 6, 7. Exhibition and picture from the Exhibition Drawing Gallery, Cupola Art Galleries, 10th - 30th May 2015, 4th edition, curator Dragoș Patrascu

From the perspective of increasing the visibility of Iași at national and European level²⁶⁵, the International Festival of Education is part of this dimension which promotes the Romanian spirit of education and culture, having all the chances to become one of the greatest cultural manifestation from East Europe. The International Festival of Education, FIE, an extensive cultural project, is organized by the City Hall of Iassy, in partnership with the local Universities, County School Inspectorate, the cultural institutions and civil

²⁶³ See Mircea Ștefănescu – *The importance of the drawing in the artistic creation process* publicat în Review of Artistic Education, no. 13-14/2017, Revista BDI, Ed. Artes, Iași, 2017, p. 200

²⁶⁴ As Dragoș Pătrașcu said in Bianca Grigoriu, *Salon de desen 2010 la Iași interviu cu Dragoș Pătrașcu* în AltIasi.ro, Iași, 07/05/2010 - <http://www.altiasi.ro/expozitie/salon-de-desen-2010-la-iasi>, 6.05.2016.

²⁶⁵ See Mirela Ștefănescu, *The contemporary visual arts from Iassy in the light of internationalization*, published at the "Alecu Russo" State University from Bălți, Republica Moldova at the International Conference Valorificarea Strategiilor Inovatoare de dezvoltare a învățământului artistic contemporan, 2018;

society, encompassing numerous educational and artistic events with guests from the country and abroad, including motivational conferences, FIE evenings, Celebrations Gala for excellence in education, graduate day, music and theater performances, visual art exhibitions, workshops and creative camps, etc.



Fig. 8. FIE poster, May 2017



Fig. 9. FIE Catalog - Visual Arts 2017

A traveling contest - exhibition which brings together many artists, many styles of plastic expression, many artistic techniques from Iassy and also from other parts of the country, as well as artists from Republic of Moldova, is the *Exhibition of Visual Arts Salons of Moldova Bacău - Chișinău*. It is important to mention it because this contemporary art exhibition has a tradition of 28 years at which every year we find over 350 visual artists from Romania and Republic of Moldova.



Fig. 10. Exhibition of Visual Arts Salons of Moldova - Chisinau, 2017

In the same tendency to integrate Iasi's visual art into an international context, we include the *International Biennial of Contemporary Engraving North East, Iassy, (BIGC)*, whose first edition was organized in 2015. The *International Biennial of Contemporary Engraving* is a valuable project funded by the Administration of National Cultural Fund and organized by the Art Museum of the National Complex Museum "Moldova" Iassy in partnership with the "George Enescu" National University of Arts Iassy and the National Art Museum of Moldova in Chisinau - Republic of Moldova. The contest-exhibition, being at the second edition, is dedicated to professional visual artists,

master students and students in the final years of artistic education institutions in the country and abroad.

The exhibition event which is realised with responsibility and professionalism has the substance of an important artistic approach that will become a landmark in the regional, national and international artistic landscape. At the same time, the *International Engraving Biennial* is a real source for enriching the heritage art museum from Iassy through the donations which are being made on this occasion. The "George Enescu" National University of Arts gives an outstanding educational dimension to this remarkable project, thus promoting high school of artistic education from Iassy.



Fig. 11,12 The poster and picture of the International Biennial of Contemporary Biennial Exhibition, 2nd edition, Iași, 2017 National Museum of Art of Moldova.

3. Conclusions

A first conclusion refers at the important role which arts education institutions play, especially the University of Arts from Iasi²⁶⁶, in the formation of the artistic personalities who are local and internationally recognized as well as the local cultural institutions, such as U.A.P.R. branch from Iassy, National Museum of Moldova, Culture Directions in the City Hall, etc. which promote and supports the works of the local visual artists.



Fig. 13. Exhibition of visual arts of the professors and graduates of the "George Enescu" National University of Arts from Iasi, Past, Present and Future, at the "Lost Passing Hall", 16 Nov.2016-16 Jan. 2017

²⁶⁶ See Mirela Ștefănescu *Rolul instituțiilor de artă în integrarea artei vizuale ieșene în cultura locală, națională și internațională*, Conferința Științifică Internațională ediția a-IX-a, 25 mai, 2018, Comunicarea interpersonală – repere psihologice și educative, Ed. Ars Longa, Iasi, 2018

A second conclusion that we want to highlight in the end of this paper is the place that visual art has it in local culture, and the aesthetic tendencies acquired by the new generation²⁶⁷, more and more preoccupied about technology along with the older artistic expression define the value of contemporary cultural heritage from Iasi²⁶⁸.



Fig. 14. The retrospective exhibition "Thoughts and Concerns of Life" and the launch of Dumitru Căileanu album, 2016, presented by graphic designer Dragoș Pătrașcu and museographer Ivona Aramă

Therefore, regarding the cultural artistic manifestations from Iassy, we note that they reunite artists from different generations²⁶⁹ being the proof of unity of guild, a dialogue between different stylistic manners, which gives a great joy to art lovers who are delighted to discover the artistic values of Iassy - a beautiful cultural center.

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²⁶⁸ Mirela Ștefănescu *Arta vizuală ieșeană între tradiție și inovație*, Review of artistic education, nr. 13-14/2017, Ed. Artes, Iași, 2017

²⁶⁹ See Mirela Ștefănescu, *The Iași School of Painting – between myth and reality*, published în Review of Artistic Education (indexată BDI), nr. 15 – 16, feb. 2018 Ed. Artes, Iași.

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