

The Development of Art Criticism in Budapest

from 1884 to 1901

Through the Works of Zoltán Ambrus, Tamás Szana and Károly Lyka

By

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the current research was to observe the development of art criticism as a separate field of expertise. The investigation entailed the search for and analysis of articles printed in the periodicals of fin-de-siècle Budapest. Within the framework of this thesis, the scope was limited to the investigation of only four publications: *A Hét* [The Week], *Magyar Salon* [Hungarian Salon], *Új Idők* [New Times] and *Élet* [Life]. Soon after launching my research, the existence of numerous critics turned out to be a problem that automatically led to narrowing down my focus on the three most prolific and diverse figures: Zoltán Ambrus, Tamás Szana and Károly Lyka. Focusing on these three critics enabled me to obtain a complex perspective assessing different approaches.

The results of my research were often startling, considering that as I set out on this voyage I expected to find a more evident trajectory of development of authors and was left with a more subtle change. Boundaries are not easy to draw in distinguishing different styles in art history and marking the borderline between amateur and professional texts of criticism was no exception. In conclusion, after completing the analysis of articles on Hungarian art, between 1884 and 1901 art criticism as a distinct discipline developed while Hungarian art culture began to thrive and acquire a national tone. It is still only the initial forms that are visible in art reviews consulted, which precisely constructs the essence and peculiarity of my research: seeing a flower bud is more fascinating than merely observing the flower itself. The flush of this new growth could certainly be seen in this period, which presumably reached a true opening in the wake of the twentieth century. Art criticism is after all, analyzing elements of a painting, meanwhile constructing meaning of its entirety, an understanding of fine art to which in some degree, Ambrus, Szana and Lyka all contribute but one of them excels.

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INTRODUCTION

The battle between the artist and the audience is eternal. The audience wants the artist to say what the audience wants to hear. The artist wants to be independent and follow his inner voice, without respect for the audience's wishes. The audience generally comes out the winner in this battle since it is his sovereign liking or disliking that determines the fate of the artist. Fortunate are those artists who can accomplish great works – without resorting to opportunism – in accordance with the audience, since the consensus with their contemporaries is in their being. Even more fortunate are those whose greatness can extend to such a level that they set a trend with their work. Unfortunate are those who lack both the commanding power of greatness and the aptitude for consensus but do possess the independence from their period and his contemporaries.¹

- Aladár Schöpflin, *Nyugat* (1932)

I plan to explore in this thesis how Hungarian art criticism gradually started to take shape in the last decade of the nineteenth century because my previous work inspired me in this area. An initial discussion with art historian Ilona Sármány-Parsons of the History Department led me to this topic of the development of art criticism in Hungary.

This idea was particularly inspiring, based on the fact that this topic has been largely neglected so far. Several books cast a glance at the state of Hungarian art criticism between 1850 and 1900 with only subchapters or a few lines dealing with the topic.² However, none of

¹ Aladár Schöpflin, *Nyugat* (1932. 6. szám) accessed August 25, 2014, <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00022/00533/16616.htm>:

“Örök a harc a művész és közönsége között. A közönség azt kívánja, hogy a művész mondja azt, amit ő hallani akar. A művész független akar lenni s azt akarja mondani, tekintet nélkül a közönség kíváncsiára, amire belső kényszerűség szorítja. Ebben a küzdelemben rendszerint a közönség a győztes, mert az ő szuverén tetszése vagy nem-tetszése dönti el a művész emberi sorsát. Szerencsés művészek, akik nagyot tudnak alkotni, megalkuvás nélkül, a közönséggel egyetértésben, mert a lényükben van consensus koruk embereivel. Még szerencsésebbek, akiknek nagysága olyan szuggesztíóval tud hatni, hogy rákényszeríti magát az emberekre. Szerencsétlenek azok, akikben nincs meg sem a nagyságnak parancsoló ereje, sem a consensus adottsága, de megvan a koruktól és embereitől való függetlenség.”

² For a concise overview, please consult the following: Tímár Árpád, “A műkritika alakulása Keleti Gusztávtól a “Má”-ig” [The development of art criticism from Gusztáv Keleti until “Ma”] in Lajos Németh, ed., *Magyar művészet 1890-1919*, Vol 1. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981): 178-82. For a brief introduction: “Művészeti intézmények. A műkritika helyzete” [Institution of Art. The State of Art Criticism] in Lajos Végvári, *Munkácsy Mihály élete és művei* [The Life and Works of Mihály Munkácsy], (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1958), 45-6.

the actual articles have been analyzed in further detail, or rarely ever quoted in the sources consulted thus far.³

Originally I had planned to look at a broader range of the period's art culture. I present hereinafter a more concise framework for my research. I have decided to focus exclusively on Hungarian painting. This primarily involved going through the art reviews reporting from the period – the state of Hungarian painting, art exhibitions or focusing on a single artist's works – and initially only including the leading periodical of the last decade of the nineteenth century: *A Hét* [The Week]. The circle soon expanded to include three further newspapers, *Élet* [Life], *Új Idők* [New Times] and *Magyar Salon* [Hungarian Salon], for comparative purposes. Fortunately three of the four periodicals are located in the Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library in printed format (*A Hét*, *Magyar Salon*, and *Új Idők*), whereas *Élet* is available in the National Széchenyi Library only in microfilm format.

After some deliberation, I photographed and printed out all the articles by Ambrus, Szana and Lyka, and next organized them into three separate booklets to facilitate their readability and review. In addition, I collected all the art reviews, in order to show them in their entirety and to demonstrate the complexity of the selection process. The full list displaying these titles from 1884 to 1901 is detailed in the Appendix. A close reading of the articles followed their selection and organization. The analyses and comparisons proceeded on the following basis: first, differences from critic to critic; secondly, comparisons of the various periodicals; and thirdly, the contrasts within a single author's style, as seen in the different periodicals.

Additionally, I have included biographical information about the authors. Some historians may have reservations regarding biographies as placing too much emphasis on an individual's uniqueness or exceptional qualities. However, my field of research involves a

³ for instance an article written by Lyka is briefly quoted problematizing the role of Benczúr as the professor of the College of Fine Arts. by György Széphelyi F., "Képzőművészeti felsőoktatás" [Education in Fine Arts] in *Magyar Művészet 1890-1918*, ed. Németh Lajos, 157.

more complex process: it is not merely the examination of words on paper but words reflecting a person's thoughts. The following statement supports my argument for taking into consideration the biographical details of the authors:

Why do you study the shell unless to form some idea of the animal? In the same way do you study the document in order to comprehend the man; both shell and document are dead fragments and of value only as indications of the complete living being. The aim is to reach this being; this is what you strive to reconstruct. It is a mistake to study the document as if it existed by itself.⁴

It is always a challenging task to evaluate existing judgments but I hope to arrive at a decent assessment of the period, being aware that reading contemporary intellectuals' thoughts on art clearly reveals personal opinions. Thus, it is vital to remain vigilant and objective, rather than blindly accepting their opinions. It is essential to keep in mind that because criticism is subjective, the critics themselves should not be completely disregarded as unreliable sources of information. Putting aside for the moment the authors' personal feelings, their contemporary thoughts committed to paper do evoke the atmosphere of the period. The foremost challenge is to filter and discern fact from fiction. We must always keep in mind that it was a remarkable period precisely because it was the budding time of art criticism; they had no formal guidelines given to them.

On the whole, Gombrich's argument helps to confirm my point of view:

The search for objective findings can only take the humanist a certain part of the way. It can and should narrow the scope of the purely subjective, but it cannot and must not eliminate subjectivity as such, for elimination would amount to [the] dehumanization of the humanities (...). I believe such a demonstration is neither desirable nor possible, for the humanities are after all about human beings.⁵

The texts under investigation are not unbiased reports, nor does anyone claim that they should have been; it is art criticism. Consequently, in the process of analyzing and responding to

⁴ Frank Lentricchia and Andrew DuBois, eds., *Close Reading: The Reader* (Duke University Press: Durham and London, 2003), 5.

⁵ Ernst Gombrich, "Focus on the Arts and Humanities" in *Tributes: Interpreters of our cultural tradition* (Phaidon Press Limited: Oxford, 1984), 16.

these writings, the author's subjectivity will be treated with due respect rather than completely disregarded. After all, "[the authors] must not be rejected definitively of course, but the tranquility with which they are accepted must be disturbed."⁶

THESIS ROADMAP

The introductory section informs the reader about the focal subjects of my research: the three critics and the four periodicals with a brief historical overview on its development. The body of the thesis is divided into three sections with the first providing a historical background and an account of the growth of art culture in *fin-de-siècle* Hungary. Incorporating the reports published by Ambrus, Szana, and Lyka, exhibitions as a social venue and artist profiles are introduced in the second and third chapter. Ultimately, my concluding thoughts end this study with an overall reflection on the results of my research.

THE CRITICS

Embarking on my research, I expected to find the same three or four authors reporting on cultural events related to art. To my surprise, the case is just about the opposite, with over thirty authors informing the contemporary audience about exhibitions and artists. Thus, in defining my scope I first excluded writers with one single article. Secondly, I realized that devoting my attention to versatile critics would enable me to provide a diverse overview of the period. After a lengthy review of various authors, I judged it best to concentrate my efforts on a study of three of the most indicative authors: Zoltán Ambrus, Tamás Szana and Károly Lyka. I decided to exclude from detailed examination such distinguished members of the Hungary's nineteenth century intelligentsia as József Nyitrai, Ödön Gerő, Sándor Bródy, Bernát Alexander, and József Diener-Dénes only because the overall corpus of their material

⁶ Thomas A. Schmitz, *An Introduction: Modern Literary Theory and Ancient Texts* (Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, 2007), 148.

was quite small or because their lifework seems similar to that of my three subjects. The critics Ambrus, Szana, and Lyka were all active members in the flourishing cultural life of the capital from 1884 to 1901, as well as all three figures with colourful and highly versatile personalities.

Zoltán Ambrus (1861-1932)

But even in his solitude, he remained an authority. He could not help that the right wing, the counterrevolution, denied him. In truth, he was apolitical; the mouthpiece of someone without illusion,⁷ who insisted on illusion.⁸

- Hegedűs Géza, *Ambrus Zoltán*



Born in Debrecen, Ambrus and his family moved to Pest in 1871. After starting to work in a bank, the institution's director, László Arany was the first to recognize his talent. Thereafter, Arany promoted his career "by introducing him to various newspapers, (...) and financing his trip to Paris, to study literary theory, aesthetics, philosophy, history of culture; he did not study law."⁹ The younger generation of literary enthusiasts expected him, upon his return from the French capital, to

spread Western-European modernity and turn into "their ideological leader," and Sándor Bródy considered him "the new literary authority"¹⁰ a role he failed to fulfill.¹¹ Inspired by Flaubert and Maupassant, Ambrus published his *magnum opus*, *Midás Király* [King Midás] in 1906. This psychological novel revealed his interest in the human soul; meanwhile, he also

⁷ mentioned formerly in the text, the meaning here is: Ambrus insisted on a reality without illusions

⁸ Zoltán Hegedűs, accessed August 20, 2014, http://www.literatura.hu/irok/xszazad/euproza/ambrus_zoltan.htm: "De magára maradottan is tekintély volt. Nem ő tehetett róla, hogy a jobboldal, az ellenforradalom megtagadta. Ő valóban apolitikus volt: az illúziótlanság szószólója ragaszkodott ehhez az illúzióhoz."

⁹ Ibidem: "ő vezette be a különböző lapokhoz, (...) és lehetővé tette, hogy Párizsba menjen tanulni, ne jogot, hanem irodalomelméletet, esztétikát, filozófiát, kultúrtörténetet."

¹⁰ Ibidem: "szellemi vezér" és "új irodalmi iránymutató."

¹¹ Instead, it was "Zsigmond Justh (1863-1894) next to Bródy [1863-1924] who was the most significant initiator of naturalism." Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, "A dualizmus válságától a forradalmakig (1890-1919)" [From the decline of dualism to the revolutions (1890-1919)], in *A magyarságtudomány kézikönyve* [The Manual of Hungarian Studies], László Kósa, ed., (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1991), 652: "Bródy mellett Justh Zsigmond (1863-1894) volt a naturalizmus legjelentősebb kezdeményezője."

excelled in his theatrical criticism, advancing him to the position of the director of the National Theater in 1917. Admired by such prominent poets and politicians as Endre Ady or Kálmán Tisza, Ambrus earned a well-respected social status, and he was mainly recognized for his aesthetic writings, and literary and theatrical criticism. With regard to his artistic ambitions, only one source has confirmed such interest so far, informing us that “Zoltán Ambrus presented himself with various illustrations to his novel bearing the title *The Demise of Niniveh* at the winter exhibition in 1907. The choice of this theme remained typical of him later, as well.”¹² Unfortunately, no pictures or further information surfaced in the books I consulted, thus this artistic venture was an experimental phase in his life.

Ambrus’ earliest known date of publication was in *Fővárosi Lapok* [Journal of the Capital] in 1879.¹³ Another source confirms his continuing reports straight from Paris in the years of 1885 and 1886.¹⁴ József Kiss invited Ambrus to work for *A Hét* [The Week] in the year of its foundation, in 1890 but he also composed articles in *Budapesti Szemle* [Budapest Review], Tamás Szana’s *Koszorú* [Wreath], *Magyar Salon* [Hungarian Salon], *Vasárnapi Ujság* [Sunday Periodical], and in *Az est* [The Night].¹⁵ The audience’s opinion turned out to be positive based on feedback acquired by *A Hét*: “They are praising several of his virtues, accrediting his education, envying his knowledge of languages, appraising his capacity for work – a bourgeois virtue. His short stories and feuilletons are considered to be samples of

¹² Lajos Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 451: “1907-ben a Nemzeti Szalon téli tárlatán Ambrus Zoltán *Ninive pusztulása* c. novellájához készített *illusztrációkkal* mutatkozott be. E témaválasztás a későbbiekben is jellemző rá.”

¹³ József Szinnyei, *Magyar írók élete és munkái* [The Life and Works of Hungarian Writers], accessed August 25, 2014, <http://www.arcanum.hu/oszk/lpext.dll/Infobase/a0e?fn=document-frame.htm&f=templates&2.0>

¹⁴ Marcell Benedek ed., *Magyar Irodalmi Lexikon* [Lexicon of Hungarian Literature], (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1963) s.v. “Ambrus Zoltán.”

¹⁵ Szinnyei, *Magyar*, accessed August 25, 2014, <http://www.arcanum.hu/oszk/lpext.dll/Infobase/a0e?fn=document-frame.htm&f=templates&2.0>; Ferenc Mucsi, “Sajtó és politika. A polgárság lapjai” [Press and politics. The bourgeois periodicals] in László Márkus, ed., *A magyar sajtó története* [The History of the Hungarian Press], (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1977), 73.

Europe.”¹⁶ Ambrus developed the status of “a distinguished stranger” and was also considered “elegant and distant, just like the heroes of the salon drama introduced in his [literary] criticism.”¹⁷ The following description by Ambrus’s contemporary, Pál Ignóty, suits the purpose of depicting his general image: “[he was one] whom – no matter how glorified he already was in his life, no matter how much he has been given all tolerance, discretion, honour – we still felt as though he was blocked, lost, abandoned and a cast out, lonely figure.”¹⁸ In brief, Ambrus, first and foremost a writer and translator of French literature, is of particular interest for his bluntness of speech and idiosyncratic argumentation intertwined with his aesthetic and psychological approach.

My case is complicated by the fact that writers in this period often published their articles under pseudonyms. At first sight, it appeared challenging to unequivocally determine his writing, since certain pseudonyms were used by other authors, as well. For instance, “Flaneur” was also deciphered as József Nyitrai, meanwhile “-s” and “Semper” as Adolf Kóbor.¹⁹ Considering that in the articles under investigation none of these ambiguous pseudonyms are applied but only ‘Masque,’ ‘Bojtorján,’ ‘?’ and ‘Idem’, the identification of his works was not so hard. In addition to the above, Zoltán Ambrus took up the following pseudonyms:

¹⁶ Tamás Dersi, *Századvégi üzenet* [Message from Fin-de-siècle] (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1973), 177: “Sok erényét dicsérik: műveltségét méltatják, nyelvtudását irigylük, munkabírását – mint polgárerényt – becsülik. Novelláit és tárcáit az európaiság példájaként említik.”

¹⁷ Hegedűs, accessed August 20, 2014, http://www.literatura.hu/irok/xxszazad/euproza/ambrus_zoltan.htm: “előkelő idegen”; Dersi, *Századvégi üzenet* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1973), 178: “elegáns és távoli, olyan, mint a kritikáiban bemutatott szalondrámák hősei.”

¹⁸ Pál Ignóty, *Jegyzetek a szabadságról* [Notes on Liberty], András Bozóki, ed. (Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2010), 330: “[olyan ember volt] akit – bármennyire megdicsőült volt is már életében, bárhogy megadatott is neki minden kímélet, tapintat, tisztesség – mégis megrekedt, elakadt, magára hagyott és számkivetett, szomorú alaknak éreztünk.”

¹⁹ For further information: Pál Gulyás, *Magyar írói álnév lexikon* [Lexicon of Hungarian Writer’s Pseudonyms], 2 Vol., (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978). or Kornélia Sz. Debreczeni, *Magyar írói álnév lexikon: Gulyás Pál Lexikonának kiegészítése* [Lexicon of Hungarian Writer’s Pseudonyms: The Extended Version of the Lexicon by Pál Gulyás], (Budapest: Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum, 1992).

A.; a.; A-s; A. Z.; a. z.; Csongor; Flaneur; f. p.; Gönczöl; I-c.; Idem, Igric; Little John; Lucius; Május; Mirror; Mizantróp; Mustármag; Nestor; Ovidovits László (or Lázó?); Pont; - que; Rab Jenő; -s; Semper; Spectator; Tiborcz; T. Z.; Vessző; Ygrec; Z.;⊙

Tamás Szana (1844-1908)

His periodicals (Szépirodalmi Közlöny [Bulletin of Belles Lettres], Figyelő [Observer], A Petőfi-Társaság Lapja [The Periodical for the Petőfi Association], Koszorú [Wreath]), his literary and art historical works, translations and evaluations guarantee him a certain literary value and prominence in the history of literature, yet both in literary and art history he was only an art lover.²⁰
- István Magyar, *Szana Tamás*, 1934



Born in Tiszafüred of Italian origins,²¹ Szana was an outstanding student with “an interest in fine art but primarily in painting.”²² Disregarding the career path of an artist, he followed the traditions of his well-to-do family to become a lawyer, settling down in Pest in 1867. Yet the same year he started working for the *Hortobágy*, showing his previously dormant interest in journalism. Szana aimed “to become the new generation’s critic and aesthetic.”²³

He often traveled to Germany and Italy to attend concerts, exhibitions and theatre performances. Among contemporary writers and artists, Szana was always “a welcome guest.”²⁴ His writings are characterized as “enthusiastic prose but somewhat flaunting,

²⁰ István Magyar, *Szana Tamás*, (PhD Dissertation, Budapest: Élet Irodalmi és Nyomda Részvénytársaság, 1934), 5: “Lapjai (Szépirodalmi Közlöny, Figyelő, A Petőfi-Társaság Lapja, Koszorú), irodalom és művészettörténeti munkái, fordításai és bírálati biztosítanak neki bizonyos írói értéket és irodalomtörténeti jelentőséget, bár mind az irodalomban, mind a művészettörténetben voltaképpen csak műkedvelő volt.”

²¹ Magyar, *Szana*, 7.

²² Ibid, 8: “Művészi érdeklődése diákkorában a képzőművészetek, elsősorban a festészet felé vonzotta.”

²³ Ibid, 4: “Az ifjabb nemzedék kritikusa és esztétikusa akart lenni.”

²⁴ accessed April 20, 2015. <http://mek.oszk.hu/02200/02228/html/04/296.html>: “szívesen látott vendég.”

dispensing with any individual trait.”²⁵ Szana was acquainted with such prominent members of the cultural intelligentsia as Sacher Masoch, Ernesto Rossi, Delibes, Pradilla, Ettore Tito, and Giacomo Favretto.²⁶

Szana was extremely productive, considering that from 1867 to 1877 he had already worked for seven periodicals including *Hazánk* [Our Homeland], *Szépirodalmi Közlöny* [Bulletin of *Belles Lettres*], *Figyelő* [Observer], *Otthon* [Home], *Regélő* [Romancing], *Életképek* [Pictures from Life], and *Petőfi Társaság Lapja* [The Periodical for the Petőfi Association] – having taken part in the foundation of this periodical, as well. Such productivity was also exemplary and foreshadowed the establishment of *Koszorú* [Wreath], his own periodical running between 1879 and 1882.²⁷ After the short-lived periodical, Szana remained active writing for periodicals such as *Magyar Salon* [Hungarian Salon] and *Fővárosi Lapok* [Periodical of the Capital]. Another outstanding date is 1901, the year he became the director of the Theatre of Uránia, also confirming his work to promote the popularization of literature and fine arts.

“Looking for a theme, in which he can be still innovative,” Szana’s main interest shifted to fine arts – an oft neglected theme in Hungary – after the 1880s.²⁸ It is indispensable information that Szana “in the genre of art historical writings becomes the leading figure shaping the audience’s taste.”²⁹ Szana’s first book about Hungarian art was *Magyar művészek* [Hungarian Artists] in 1888, soon to be followed by *A magyar művészet századunkban* [Hungarian Art in Our Century] in 1890, which he extended and republished a decade later. Szana is particularly remarkable for being the first to reflect on the overall achievements of

²⁵ Ibidem: “lelkes, de kissé szépelgő s minden egyéni vonást nélkülöző prózájában.”

²⁶ Magyar, *Szana*, 28; Ibid, 46.

²⁷ László Péter ed., *Új Magyar Irodalmi Lexikon* [Lexicon of the New Hungarian Literature] 2nd ed., (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2000) s.v. “Szana Tamás.”

²⁸ Magyar, *Szana*, “Olyan témakört keres, amelyben még újszerű lehet,” 4; Ibid, 44.

²⁹ László., *Új Magyar Irodalmi*: “művészettörténeti írás műfajában a közönség ízlésének irányítójává vált.”

the past century in Hungarian art.³⁰ He also wrote two monographs about the artists Károly Markó and János Jankó. Nevertheless, Szana's main merits are in his intention to compile existing data rather than presenting original studies.³¹ István Magyar, the author of the dissertation on Szana's biography, observed his way of analyzing literary works by stating:

Most of the time he [Szana] embarks from an aesthetic principle or a general truth from literary history and investigates to what extent the object of art has met the expectations of aesthetics and literary history, to what extent it meant progress in the writer's path and what its overall value is.³²

This analytical method seems to be true with regard to his approach to art criticism; particularly considering the fact that: "He neither has deep and original thoughts, nor is his taste always immaculate."³³ Magyar's insight into Szana's methods proved to be accurate as the following investigation shows. Even though the prolific writer also used two pseudonyms, Scriptor and Turul, all the articles I consulted have his full name rather than these possible versions.³⁴

³⁰ accessed April 26, 2015, <http://mek.oszk.hu/03600/03630/html/sz/sz25625.htm>.

³¹ Magyar, *Szana*, 45.

³² Ibid, 52: "Legtöbbször általános esztétikai elvből vagy irodalomtörténeti igazságból indul ki s azt vizsgálja, hogy a bírált munka mennyiben felel meg az esztétika és irodalomtörténet követelményeinek, mennyiben jelent haladást az író eddigi pályáján és mi az általános értéke."

³³ Ibid, 54: "Nincsenek mély és eredeti gondolatai, ízlése sem mindig kifogástalan."

³⁴ accessed April 26, 2015, <http://mek.oszk.hu/03600/03630/html/sz/sz25625.htm>

Károly Lyka (1869-1965)

He wanted to be nothing less than understanding, to be a guide, who had more knowledge and experience than the average man; had a more trained eye and taste, and who wanted to use such abilities for becoming a mediator between the artist and the audience.³⁵

– Elek Petrovics, *Lyka Károly*, 1944

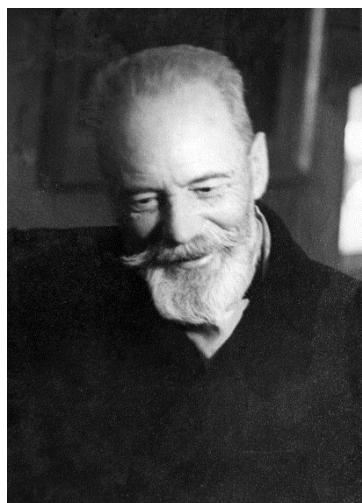


Fig. 1.: Károly Lyka, Institute of Art History

Lyka was born in Budapest in 1869 but his family relocated to Nyitra in 1873. The hard-working student completed his studies with outstanding results in 1887, and was sent to Munich for the following four years.³⁶ Lyka's interest in art was already evident during his primary and secondary education, hence his pursuing studies at the Royal Academy of

Fine Art from 1887 to 1891 was ideal. During his stay, he also became a close friend of Simon Hollósy, the founder of the private school he attended. Besides painting, he received education in art history and aesthetics; but he was also keen on learning about *belles lettres*, social sciences, philosophy, and music.³⁷ His first articles reporting from Munich date back to 1890 in the *Fővárosi Lapok*. After finishing his studies, Lyka returned to Nyitra in 1892, then quickly departing for a voyage lasting four years in Italy. His journey led him to two cities, “Naples and *Roma Aeterna*, already focusing on a close study of art history. Upon his return in 1896, he settled down in Budapest, resigning from his career in painting and becoming dedicated to art

³⁵ Elek Petrovics, “Lyka Károly” in *Lyka Károly Emlékkönyv* [In the Tribute of Károly Lyka], ed. Elek Petrovics, (Budapest: Új Idők Irodalmi Intézet Rt., 1944), 15: “Nem akart más lenni, mint megértő és útmutató, akinek az általánosnál nagyobb tudása és tapasztalata, gyakorlotabb szeme és iskolázottabb ízlése van, s aki ezeket a képességeit arra használja fel, hogy közvetítő legyen a művész és a közönség között.”

³⁶ *Lyka Károly, a szerkesztő* [Károly Lyka, the editor], accessed April 10, 2015, http://www.sk-szeged.hu/statikus_html/kiallitas/muveszet/lyka.html.

³⁷ Petrovics, *Lyka Károly Emlékkönyv*, 11.

historical works.”³⁸ He regularly wrote for *Új Idők*, as a main opponent of academic style, that “gaining recognition for them [the Nagybánya group] was the focal point of his career in criticism.”³⁹ Before receiving an offer to become the editor of the periodical *Művészet* [Art] from 1902 to 1918, he frequently composed articles for periodicals such as *Pesti Napló* [Pest Diary] and *Budapesti Napló* [Budapest Diary].⁴⁰ He devoted *Művészet* to the rediscovery of nineteenth century art in Hungary. The critic became the author of several books reflecting on Hungarian art, for example, *A tábla-bíró világ művészete* [The Regulated Art World] in 1922, or *Magyar Művészélet Münchenben, 1867-1896* [Hungarian Art Life in Munich, 1867-1896] in 1951; as well as studies of individual painters ranging from Mihály Munkácsy to Leonardo da Vinci.

In 1913, Lyka was appointed as a professor of the Hungarian College of Fine Arts, of



Fig. 2.: István Kállay, Minister of Culture handing over the Kossuth Prize

which he was later director, until 1934. Although in the articles under investigation he consistently signed his his full name ‘Lyka Károly’ or at times simply ‘l.’ he used the following pen names for other publications: ‘L. K.,’ ‘lk,’ ‘L L’* ‘l.,’ ‘ly.’ ‘Számadó János,’ ‘Sz. J.,’ ‘sz –ó,’ ‘Krónikás,’ ‘Kőris,’ ‘K-s,’ and ‘Carlo.’⁴¹ Despite this general trend of using pseudonyms, he edited and published in some periodicals anonymously, for instance, in *Haza Krónika*

³⁸ Brigitta Muladi, *Lyka Károly*, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://artportal.hu/lexikon/muveszettorteneszek/lyka-karoly>: “ahol Nápolyban és az Örök Városban már inkább a művészettörténetet tanulmányozta. 1896-ban Budapesten telepedett le, a festői pályáról végképp lemondott és művészetkritikai tevékenységének szentelte magát.”

³⁹ Nagybánya Group: further information is to follow in the chapter on Art Culture in Hungary; Muladi, *Lyka*, <http://artportal.hu/lexikon/muveszettorteneszek/lyka-karoly>.

⁴⁰ All the material of *Művészet* between 1902 and 1915 has been digitalised with only the last three years of its publications missing, for more information, please visit: <http://www.mke.hu/lyka/>.

⁴¹ Muladi, *Lyka*, <http://artportal.hu/lexikon/muveszettorteneszek/lyka-karoly>.

[Home Chronicle] and *Adatok művészetünk történetéhez* [Data to the History of Our Art].⁴²

Lyka was awarded the Kossuth-Prize in 1952 and 1964.⁴³

HISTORY OF THE PRESS

A short reflection about the development of the Hungarian press is necessary to contextualize written art criticism. The first Hungarian newspaper to appear in Pozsony was *Magyar Hirmondó* [Hungarian Newsteller] in 1780, followed by the first periodical, *Magyar Museum* [Hungarian Museum] in 1788.⁴⁴ Between 1794 and 1803, no new journals could be launched and the monarch, Francis I, attempted to prohibit the existing ones. In the 1840s, this censoring finally weakened and gave way to the development of the modern press. In the 1880s, given the change in the structure of society and the increase in literacy, “new needs of the new strata surfaced, which required and resulted in a change in the characteristics of the press.”⁴⁵

In the period between 1865 and 1878, the role of the press increased in political life as a means to guarantee political publicity.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, it also gave way for journalists to pursue their profession as a full-time job, followed by an unprecedented rise in the number of people employed in the press from 65 to 650 in a single year after 1867.⁴⁷ The number of newspapers also experienced an unexpected growth from 15.5 million in 1870 to 154 million in 1905.⁴⁸ This also facilitated its availability, as newspapers and periodicals were sold in tobacco shops, bookstores, and coffeehouses in the capital, as well as in grocery stores and

⁴² Ibidem.

⁴³ The Kossuth Prize is a national Hungarian award that recognizes excellence in the arts, sciences, and culture.

⁴⁴ present-day Bratislava in Slovakia, but belonged to Hungary under the name Pozsony until the Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918; István Fenyő, “A magyar sajtó története 1878-1919” [The History of the Press 1878-1919] in *A magyar sajtó története*, ed. László Márkus, 10.

⁴⁵ Ferenc Mucsi, *A magyar sajtó*, 44: “új rétegek, új igényei jelentkeztek, ami a sajtó jellegének megváltoztatását igényelte és eredményezte.”

⁴⁶ Géza Buzinkay, *Kis magyar sajtótörténet* [A Brief Overview of the History of the Press] (Budapest: Haza és haladás alapítvány, 1993), 59.

⁴⁷ Buzinkay, *Kis magyar*, 66.

⁴⁸ Géza Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó története* [The History of the Hungarian Press], eds. György Kókay, Géza Buzinkay and Gábor Murányi, (Budapest: Bálint György Újságíró-iskola kiadása, 1999), 137.

spice shops in the villages.⁴⁹ Still, at this point most readers usually “obtained the papers through subscription.”⁵⁰ From the 1890s onwards, selling newspapers on the street became a popular phenomenon with the emergence of the *rikkancs* [news-hawk].⁵¹ This was an essential turn in the history of the press since the business acquired an increasingly determining role after 1896; foreshadowing the path to corruption, a theme already beyond the scope of the current research.⁵² Thus the world press developed by 1900, including the emergence of periodicals published on various continents.⁵³

Mucsi observed the controversial role of the press, arguing that

It helped the readers adopt the habit of reading, it informed, but never investigated any issues in depth, and rather than entering into a dispute of principles, it acquired an overtly personal tone, promoting the creation of a harsh tone, conforming to the standard of the audience raised by the press itself, and mirrored the society it was working in, maintained by and which it desired to impress at the same time.⁵⁴

Who were these authors? Mucsi informs that journalists could rarely express their opinion freely as they “were entirely at the mercy of the periodical’s owner.”⁵⁵ Most writers were members of the middle class with secondary education, occasionally with university experience in the humanities or law. In certain cases, prominent figures in society could earn a living by their pen; for instance, Kálmán Mikszáth, Gyula Krúdy, and Zoltán Ambrus; but “the existence of a journalist was generally quite uncertain.”⁵⁶ The fact that editors, writers and their assistant-editors were not restricted to write only for their own periodical, various

⁴⁹ Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó*, 143.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 143: “előfizetés útján jutott a lapokhoz.”

⁵¹ Ibid, 145.

⁵² Mucsi, *A magyar sajtó*, 47.

⁵³ Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó*, 138.

⁵⁴ Mucsi, *A magyar sajtó*, 45: “olvasáshoz szoktatott, informált, de a tényleges problémák mélyére sohasem hatolt, s az elvek vitája helyett személyeskedés, a durva hangvétel elterjedését segítette elő, ezzel is alkalmazkodva a maga nevelete közönség színvonalához, és tükrözve is egyben azt a társadalmat, amelyben dolgozott, fennállt és hatni kívánt.”

⁵⁵ Ibid, 55: “teljes mértékben kiszolgáltatottja volt a lap tulajdonosának.”

⁵⁶ Ibid, 56: “az újságírói egzisztencia meglehetősen bizonytalan volt.”

authors' names pop up in several press products – a typical phenomenon of the period.⁵⁷ With regard to columns on art, there is merely a momentary mention about the fact that its development was in progress, even though the official publication, *Képzőművészeti Társulat Közleményei* [The Publications of the Association of Fine Arts], of the OMKT was already in circulation, with brief intermissions from 1885 to 1896 and from 1898 to 1901; until it became truly noteworthy under Lyka's editorship from 1902.⁵⁸ With this in mind, my focus can now shift towards the four periodicals themselves: *Magyar Salon*, *A Hét*, *Élet*, and *Új Idők*.

Magyar Salon [Hungarian Salon] 1884-1918



Fig. 3.: Magyar Salon, 1891

Initiated by its editors, József Fekete and József Hevesi, the publication of *Magyar Salon* was launched first in 1884, after which slight changes took place in its name; first turning into *Magyar Szalon* in 1891 and then republished as *Új Magyar Szalon* between 1936 and 1942.⁵⁹ The monthly periodical with a new ideology and spirit was based on its Viennese counterpart, *Der Salon* and it primarily targeted the aristocracy.⁶⁰ Typically,

most editors would build a permanent stuff, whereas *Magyar Salon* “admittedly gave floor only for famous or popular writers or journalists.”⁶¹ The chief editors only employed regular

⁵⁷ Buzinkay, “A Tisza Kálmán-korszak közművelődési sajtója 1875-1890” [The General Press of the Tisza Kálmán-era 1875-1890] in *A magyar sajtó története* [The History of the Hungarian Press], ed. Domokos Kosáry and Béla Németh G. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1985), 437.

⁵⁸ Mucsi, *A magyar sajtó*, 54; -, “Országos Képzőművészeti Társulat” in *Magyar Művészet 1890-1919*, ed. Lajos Németh (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó: 1981), 129.

⁵⁹ László Berza ed., *Budapest Lexikon* [Budapest Lexicon] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1993) s.v. “Magyar Salon.”

⁶⁰ Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó*, 168.

⁶¹ Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó*, 437: “Nem vonatkozik viszont (...) a Magyar Salonra, mely bevallottan csakis a neves vagy éppenséggel népszerű íróknak-újságíróknak adott teret.”

writers occasionally, such as Tamás Szana who reported casually on exhibitions and artistic themes; and Kornél Ábrányi Sr., a musical expert.⁶² *Magyar Salon* was conceived with the idea to open panels for thorough social, scientific and artistic discussions in an unbiased fashion, as well as to introduce all outstanding and acknowledged talents of the Hungarian social and cultural life. Lining up a great number of illustrious writers, such as Mór Jókai, József Kiss, and Kálmán Mikszáth, they aimed at ousting prevailing German periodicals.⁶³ *Magyar Salon* mainly intended to inform its reader of themes and topics concerning general cultural education; however, its platform shifted towards *belles lettres* by the end of the nineteenth century.⁶⁴ Following the emergence of *A Hét* in 1890, its role was restricted to entertainment.⁶⁵ *Magyar Salon* was among the first to openly oppose academic style and conservatism, a breakthrough eventually deemed to *A Hét*.⁶⁶

A Hét [The Week] 1890-1924

In the history of the press, the 1890s meant a radical break from conservative journalism. Whilst evoking the Reform Era, it attempted to create “a press with a new tone and new methods, [that manifested] above all in *A Hét*.”⁶⁷ In 1890, József Kiss launched the weekly, which “showed a substantial change both in the literary and cultural field that manifested not so much in its ideology than in its manners and style, of which



Fig. 4.: *A Hét*, 1892

⁶² Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó*, 478.

⁶³ Ibidem.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 438.

⁶⁵ Béla Németh G., “Szépirodalmi Lapok” [Periodicals of *Belles Lettres*] in *A magyar sajtó története* [The History of the Hungarian Press] eds. Domokos Kosáry and Béla Németh G., (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1985), 513.

⁶⁶ Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó*, 168.

⁶⁷ Németh G., *A magyar sajtó története*, 514: “új hangnemű, új módszerű sajtót, mindenekelőtt *A Hetet*.”

Ignotus⁶⁸ has become the main representative.”⁶⁹ The founding members originally had the idea of naming the periodical *Ifjú Magyarország* [Young Hungary], since there were primarily young writers, who aimed to accomplish a change in society, for example, by “standing up against conservatism, nationalism, and social backwardness.”⁷⁰

Kiss’s principal goal was to provide the progressive and modern bourgeoisie with a possibility to freely express their opinion, opening the floor for debates and disputes on a regular basis and surrounding himself with such distinguished intellectuals as Ignotus, Tamás Kóbor, or Zoltán Ambrus.⁷¹ The intended public was clearly “the modern reader living in the citified Budapest.”⁷² *A Hét*, one of the first Hungarian periodicals printed in large numbers, addressed issues of such diverse themes as literature, politics, and art; but also offered insights into international and national events in the fields of art and science. The modern spirit was present in such activities as calling for submissions and asking their audience to tell them “who your favourite writers are and why. The writer – in case he or she be unknown to you – please describe his or her look and nature, as you would imagine it.”⁷³ The one hundred and eighty-seven response letters duly verifies their popularity and the presence of an overall modern spirit.

Until *Nyugat* [West], a periodical pioneering in modern literature featuring such leading intellectuals as Ignotus, appeared in 1908,⁷⁴ “*A Hét* was the most important and most

⁶⁸ Ignotus originates from Latin and means “unknown,” the pseudonym of the famous Hungarian poet, Hugó Veigelsberg.

⁶⁹ Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó*: “Az irodalmilag, művelődéstörténetileg nagy jelentőségű váltás nem elsősorban az eszmékben, hanem a modorban, stílusban öltött testet, aminek legjelentősebb képviselője Ignotus lett,” 168.

⁷⁰ Anna Fábri and Ágota Steinert, *A Hét: politikai és irodalmi szemle* [The Week: Political and Literary Survey] (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1978), 5; György Nemes, “Irodalmi lapok, képes lapok” [Literary periodicals, magazines] in *A magyar sajtó 250 éve* [The 250 years of the Hungarian Press], eds. Béla Dezsényi and György Nemes, (Budapest: Művelt Nép Könyvkiadó, 1954), 219: “Harcolt a konzervativizmus, a nacionalizmus, a társadalmi visszasságok ellen.”

⁷¹ Ibidem.

⁷² Dersi, Századvégi, 166: “A nagyvárossá nőtt Budapesten (...) élő modern olvasó.”

⁷³ Ibid, 174: “arról, kik a kedves íróik és miért. Az író – ha nem ismerik – milyen külsejűnek és természetűnek képzelik.”

⁷⁴ Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó*, 169.

influential literary phenomenon of the turn of the century,” with its last publication dated to 1924.⁷⁵

Élet [Life] 1891-95

Founded by the editors, Lajos Katona and Béla Vikár, *Élet* was published between 1891 and 1895. Initially released on a monthly basis in 1891, it was then printed every fortnight from 1892 to 1894, before becoming a weekly in its final year. It mainly dealt with literary, artistic, social, economic, and musical themes.

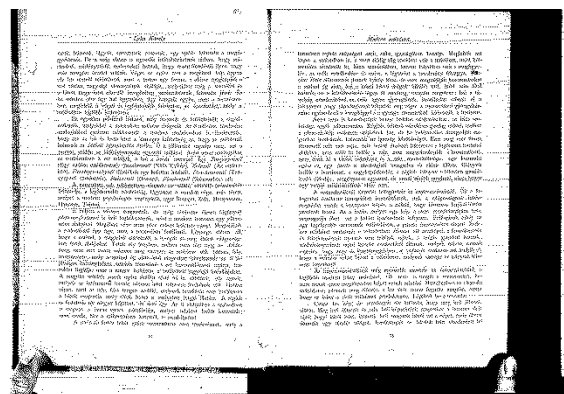


Fig. 5.: *Élet*, 1891

Élet was known for its overt socialism and radicalism, as Dersi contends “they are following a European viewpoint, they regard as their mission to acquaint their audience with Western scientific and artistic trends. Meanwhile, it also provides a forum for national isolation and outward nationalism.”⁷⁶ Károly Lyka worked also for this publication, thus providing a ground for comparison in style, tone and theme in different periodicals; particularly knowing “that the critique of the periodical was only worth reading until it was written by Lyka.”⁷⁷ Towards its final years, the periodical loses its prominence and becomes a patron of the arts represented by the Hall of Art, which was generally associated with the academic style, a form to which Lyka was opposed. Despite its obscurity and short life span, *Élet* contained the most insightful and in-depth coverage of artistic themes of the periodicals covered here.

⁷⁵ Ibidem: “A Hét volt a magyar századforduló legfontosabb és legbefolyásosabb irodalmi jelensége.”

⁷⁶ Dersi, *Századvégi*, 152: “Európai látókört követelnek, nyugati tudományos és művészeti irányzatok ismertetését vallják feladatuknak, közben pedig a nemzeti elzárkózás és a külsőséges nemzetieskedés is fórumot kap folyóiratukban.”

⁷⁷ Árpád Timár, *Magyar Művészet*, 179: “a lap képzőművészeti kritikái azonban csak addig számottevőek, míg Lyka Károly írta őket.”

Új Idők [New Times] 1894-1944

Ferenc Herczeg launched the belletristic and family-oriented periodical in 1894 along with the two leading figures: Kálmán Mikszáth and Sándor Bródy. Herczeg, a representative

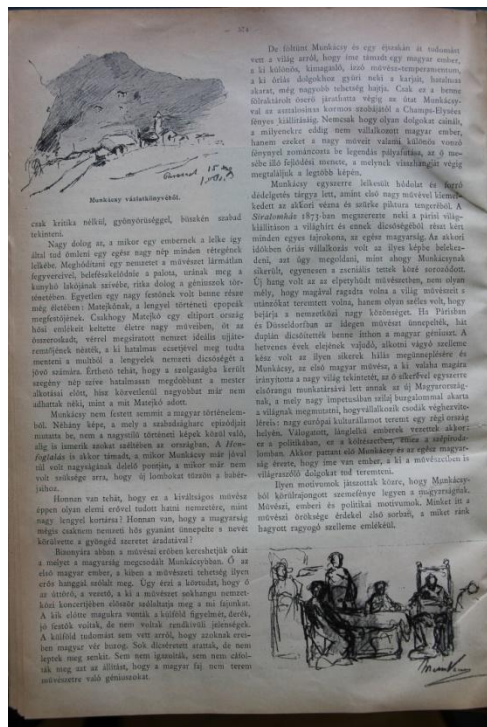


Fig. 6.: Új Idők, 1897

high number of subscriptions – fostering writers, both immuring themselves from society and having already earned their popularity.⁸¹ *Új Idők* introduced a wide range of illustrations; from kitschy salon portraits, to pictures of submissions for public art, including paintings by the members of the Nagybánya artist colony.⁸²

of the contemporary political powers, was a true defender of the remnants of the feudalistic social order.⁷⁸ The conservative weekly *Új Idők* primarily targeted “the genteel Hungarian families, to the so-called middle class,” meanwhile it also gave voice to and echoed the ideas of “the gentry [still] thinking in countryside terms [that is in a feudalistic manner].”⁷⁹ It aimed to adopt a liberal, modern, and national tone in the guise of a family paper that “also fourteen year old girls could read.”⁸⁰ It gradually turned into the chief

belletristic weekly – setting a new record with their

⁷⁸ Nemes, *A magyar sajtó*, 218.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 219: “Az úri magyar családok, az úgynevezett középosztály hetilapja”; Buzinkay, *A magyar sajtó*: “a vidéken gondolkodó dzsentrinek,” 160-1.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 169: “amelyet a 14 éves kislányok is olvashatnak.”

⁸¹ Ibidem.

⁸² Árpád Timár, *Magyar Művészet*, 179.

I. ART CULTURE IN HUNGARY

But what the Viennese did not know – and how could they? – was that in 1900 in Budapest the breaking away from the nineteenth century habits of thought, vision, manners and even speech was occurring ever faster than in Vienna and in different ways. At the very moment Budapest became the indisputable focus of Hungarian culture, a new generation of painters, writers and composers sought and gained their inspiration from the Magyar countryside.⁸³

– John Lukacs, *Budapest 1900* (1988)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Eight years following the end of Bach's absolutism, the *Ausgleich* [Compromise] of 1867 established the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary with separate parliaments and prime ministers for domestic affairs and two capitals (Vienna and Budapest), while creating a joint cabinet regarding war, foreign affairs, and the finance ministry, all under a single emperor, Francis Joseph.⁸⁴ Therefore, Hungary had equal status with Austria until the dissolution of the Monarchy in 1918.⁸⁵ In the peaceful period between 1875 and 1890, conditions became favourable for the roots of capitalism to gain firm ground under the presidency of Kálmán Tisza. After Sándor Wekerle's takeover in 1892, the 1890s crisis of dualism started to surface with "more pronounced efforts of the bourgeoisie for emancipation" lasting until 1919.⁸⁶ The industrial revolution coupled with the advanced state of commerce promoted the emergence of a general state of welfare for the Hungarian nation – though only available for a particular layer of society.

⁸³ John Lukacs, *A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture: Budapest 1900* (Grove Weidenfield: New York, 1988), 27-8.

⁸⁴ Alexander Bach, the minister of the interior under Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, kept Hungary under control from 1851 to 1859.

⁸⁵ For further information: Pirbright, Baron Henry de Worms, *The Austro-Hungarian Empire: a political sketch of men and events since 1866*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1877), András Gerö and János Poór eds., *Budapest: a history from its beginnings to 1996* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

⁸⁶ Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 21: "a polgári emancipációs törekvések megerősödése is"; The periodization is used relying on the division applied by Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, "A dualizmus válságától a forradalmakig" [From the Crisis of Dualism to the Revolutions] in *A magyarságtudomány kézikönyve* [The Handbook of the science of Hungarianness], ed. László Kósa, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1991): 642-70.

EDUCATION, INFRASTRUCTURE

Joseph Eötvös succeeded in introducing compulsory education in 1867.⁸⁷ Literacy greatly increased from 1869 to 1890, with the number of the literate men rising from 40.8% to 66.2 % and from 25.01% to 46.49% among women. Yet a more encompassing picture is provided by Ignác Romsics, informing that 80% of the population was illiterate in 1848, which was reduced to 30% by 1910.⁸⁸ Kósa claims that based on this 30%, Hungary already belonged to the European average.⁸⁹

As Hanák states: “the central theme of the new Hungarian culture was the country’s backwardness, which this generation may have thought more severe than it really was.”⁹⁰ Kósa confirmed the importance of stressing the advance by holding that “the Hungarian economy advanced at a faster pace than the Western-European average, in one word the country started its economic catching up.”⁹¹ Kontler also contends that “the pace of the development [of the capital] was only eclipsed by some American cities.”⁹² Due to the economic and cultural boom from the mid-1870s on, the city’s landscape changed greatly with the rapid urbanization; and in 1873 Óbuda, Buda and Pest joined to form Budapest, becoming the capital and royal seat of Hungary.

Gerő argues that “modernity and backwardness appeared in many dimensions and there were factors that hindered progress in one field and at the same time stimulated it in

⁸⁷ Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, “A dualizmus virágkora” [The Heyday of Dualism] in *A magyarságtudomány kézikönyve* [The Handbook of the science of Hungarianness], ed. László Kósa, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1991), 626.

⁸⁸ Ignác Romsics, lecture on the “Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia felbomlása és a trianoni békeszerződés” [The Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Treaty of Trianon], 13 October, 2014 in Budapest, Csili Művelődési Központ.

⁸⁹ Szegedy-Maszák, *A magyarságtudomány*, 642.

⁹⁰ Péter Hanák, “The Workshop: the attraction between life and public life” in *The Garden and the Workshop*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 77.

⁹¹ András Gergely, “A dualizmus nyugalmi időszaka” [The peaceful years of dualism] in *A magyarságtudomány kézikönyve*, 290: “A magyar gazdaság gyorsabb ütemben fejlődött, mint a nyugat-európai átlag, tehát az ország megkezdte gazdasági felzárkózását.”

⁹² László Kontler, *A History of Hungary*, 2 ed., (Budapest: Atlantisz Publishing House, 2009), 321.

another.”⁹³ This general impression may imply the coincidence of ‘rapid’ with ‘precipitous’ and ‘superficial’. Cities such as Győr, Nagyvárad, Szeged, and Debrecen “displayed features associated with urbanisation.”⁹⁴ Development occurred in a rather more restrained form in the countryside compared to the capital. The emphasis was evidently on the capital with its new bridges, means of transportation, boulevards, train stations, squares and statues decorating them. Among the numerous achievements of the period, the sudden emergence of 26 statues between 1851 and 1896, followed by another 37 statues until 1910 is certainly worth mentioning.⁹⁵ Several new buildings and bridges were erected but it suffices to highlight the construction of Margaret Bridge (1876), Sugárút [Avenue] (1876), the Opera House (1884), the Parliament (1885-1902), and the Museum of Applied Arts (1891-96).⁹⁶ With regard to the development of public transport, there were 120 kilometers of tramlines built between 1887 and 1914.⁹⁷ The railway lines extended at an ever-increasing rate from 2000 km railway lines in 1867, rising to 6000 km in 1873, and finally reaching a peak with 12000 km in 1900.⁹⁸ The first automobile appears in 1895, with local manufacturing launched two years later.⁹⁹

To mention only one of the major consequences, for instance, the formerly barren and rural lands of Pest were soon covered with a dense concentration of buildings with flats, often sheltering large families crowded in them. The style of these newly-built homes was predominantly revivalist historicism, which “has often been called the architecture of an upstart haute bourgeoisie unable to create a life of its own, aspiring to display mastery over the past as well as the present, and hiding its inward paucity and pretence behind outward

⁹³ András Gerő et al., *Once Upon a Time in Hungary: The World of the Late 19th and Early 20th Century* (Hungarian National Museum: Budapest, 1996), 122.

⁹⁴ Kontler, *A History*, 321.

⁹⁵ John Lukacs, *A Historical Portrait*, 51-2.

⁹⁶ Second bridge, following the Chain Bridge completed in 1849; today’s Andrassy út: connecting the Belváros and Városliget.

⁹⁷ Kontler, *A History*, 322.

⁹⁸ Szegedy-Maszák, *A magyarságtudomány*, 625; Ibid, 644.

⁹⁹ Gerő, *Once Upon*, 122.

pomp and pageant.”¹⁰⁰ However, public buildings were largely constructed in the eclectic or secessionist style.¹⁰¹ The process involved construction of numerous three- to five-story buildings in the city and was aptly described by Hanák as “another characteristic of urban architecture in Pest is an ornate facade coupled with a rather shabby interior.”¹⁰² This feverish development affected not only the city but also various other fields including society, education and art – the themes of this chapter.

SOCIETY

Hungary experienced a demographic boom: the number of population countrywide “grew in the age of dualism [1867-1919] by about one-third, from 13.5 million to more than 18.5 million (...), while that [the population] of Budapest rose from 270.000 to 880.000 (or over a million, if the urban agglomeration is taken into consideration), a three-fold increase.”¹⁰³ It is a remarkable fact that with 733.000 people documented in 1900, “it [Budapest] had become the sixth largest city of Europe.”¹⁰⁴ The main venues of the citizens of the modernizing capital were clubs, theatres, cinemas, sports clubs, and coffee houses.¹⁰⁵ By 1900, the number of coffeehouses established reached 600 – thereby constituting one of the most essential social venues.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, several cultural exhibitions were on display downtown; from 1874 on, horse and flower shows were organized, along with the first art historical and archaeological exhibitions as early as 1876.

Hungarian citizens were left unprepared for such an abrupt change as “the fast economic boom was not directly proportional with the adequate social and cognitive

¹⁰⁰ Hanák, *The Garden*, 14.

¹⁰¹ Kontler, *A History*, 321.

¹⁰² Hanák, *The Garden*, 20.

¹⁰³ Kontler, *A History*, 321.

¹⁰⁴ Lukacs, *A Historical Portrait*, 67.

¹⁰⁵ Kontler, *A History*, 322.

¹⁰⁶ Lukacs, *A Historical Portrait*, 81.

development.”¹⁰⁷ Indeed serfdom and the guild system were abolished only in 1848 and in the 1850s respectively, a state that left Hungary lagging behind Western societies. Unfortunately, in Hungary the industrial revolution took hold only in the 1880s and created the so-called “capitalizing agrarian society.”¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile in the West, the same industrialization occurred in two phases, mainly at the end of the eighteenth century and in the mid-nineteenth century. Thus, a certain coexistence of feudalism and capitalism characterized Hungary until the end of the nineteenth century; “in a city where misery and riches, servility and haughtiness, abjectness and power, the still strong presence of a feudal class-consciousness and the ever stronger, ever increasing influence of money live[d] side by side.”¹⁰⁹ Thus, the problem resided partially in lingering feudalism and more substantially in “the largely unbridled capitalist order, or disorder.”¹¹⁰

Therefore, the expressive term, “congested society” was acquired in Hungarian history. Keeping in mind that 85% of the inhabitants living in rural areas only decreased to under 80% by 1910 facilitates recognition and understanding the ambiguous nature of development.¹¹¹ Even though the peasantry still constituted “the largest segment of the population,” many of those with a marked social standing in feudalism aimed to maintain that facade, an illustrious example being the gentries; whereas, these former social borders started to loosen, as clearly shown by the changes taking place, for instance, in the middle class “whose lifestyle became standard points of reference in society.”¹¹² All in all, embourgeoisement did not reach fruition by 1900 due to the presence of elements from both past and modern times. The roots of the problem may have originated from the fact that “the entirety of the economy, the intellectual life and the society went through a dynamic

¹⁰⁷ Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 33: “a gyors gazdasági fejlődés nem állt egyenes arányban a vele adekvát társadalmi, tudati fejlődéssel.”

¹⁰⁸ Gergely, *A magyarságtudomány*, 290; Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 33: “kapitalizálódó agrártársadalom.”

¹⁰⁹ Lukacs, *A Historical Portrait*, 16-7.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 94.

¹¹¹ “torlódó társadalom”; Gerő, *Once Upon*, 14.

¹¹² Gerő, *Once Upon*, 66; Ibid, 63.

development, whereas the political life congealed, turning both anachronistic and vulnerable.”¹¹³ To conclude, John Lukacs appropriately conveys the transformed image of Hungary by 1900: “It was a European city. No Viennese would say in 1900 what Metternich had suggested eighty-five years earlier, that Hungary belonged to the ‘Orient.’”¹¹⁴

ART

Audience

Before delving into the work of major painters of the period – considered to be landmarks – an insight into the history of the institutions and the audience is necessary. The only city “for the artist and the audience to mutually influence each other” was Budapest, the capital.¹¹⁵ As Lyka stresses the painters had a chance to meet the public’s needs, which greatly contributed to the creation of a harmony between them; yet he calls attention to a consequent problem “the general public for art was not one with high expectations, resulting in the artists’ reluctance to represent but those sacred mediocre art.”¹¹⁶ Végvári confirms this statement by holding that the audience “was in great need of visual instruction.”¹¹⁷ In addition, he also complains about a lingering lack of interest. All of these could be directly connected to the absence of a painter with public authority. All that was to change with the proclamation of Benczúr’s return to Hungary in 1883.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Gergely, *A magyarságtudomány kézikönyve*, 298-9: “A gazdaság, a szellemi élet, a társadalom egésze dinamikusan fejlődött, a politikai élet viszont megmerevedett, anakronisztikussá is, törékennyé is vált.”

¹¹⁴ Lukacs, *A Historical Portrait*, 64.

¹¹⁵ Károly Lyka, *Közönség és művészet a századvégen: Magyar művészet (1867-1896)* [Fin-de-siècle Audience and Art: Hungarian Art (1867-1896)], vol. 2. (Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1947), 8: “művészet és közönség egymásra hatására.”

¹¹⁶ Lyka, *Közönség*, 8: “művészet dolgában ez a közönség átlag nem jelentett magasabb színvonalat, a művészek többsége szintén csak az áldott középszert képviselte.”

¹¹⁷ Végvári, *Munkácsy*, 45: “pedig alaposan rászorult a vizuális nevelésre.”

¹¹⁸ more information to follow in the section on Institutions.

A part of the audience involved collectors, an already established phenomenon, who continuously acquired new objects “merely for their deep interest in art.”¹¹⁹ In various cases,



Fig. 7.: Eszterházy Képtár, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1904

the collections of celebrities such as János Pálffy or László Podmaniczky were handed over to the state or to museums in the countryside. The most remarkable, the *Eszterházy-képtár* [Eszterházy-art-gallery], purchased by the state in 1871, largely contributed to the material of the Museum of Fine Arts in 1896.¹²⁰

Ultimately, certain members of the public not only took delight in collecting objects of art but also actively producing them. Earl Tivadar Andrassy was

among those few ones who depicted several landscapes in a quality “that stands its ground even among the professional exhibitors.”¹²¹ Numerous aristocrats and members of the nobility belonged to the group of dilettantes, such as József Somssich or Earl Jenő Lázár. Artists received commissions both by the state and by “the self-conscious bourgeois flaunting his wealth in the thriving Budapest who preferred not lagging behind it [the state].”¹²² Evidently, a certain layer of society turned into benefactors of art; as the following chapter will show.

¹¹⁹ Lyka, *Közönség*, 21: “pusztán a művészet iránt érzett meleg érdeklődésből,” 21.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 22: “A gyűjtők.”

¹²¹ Ibid, 25: “kiállja a versenyt sok hivatásos kiállító művésszel.”

¹²² István Genthon, *Az új magyar festőművészet története 1800-tól napjainkig* [The history of the new painting from 1800 to nowadays] (Budapest: Magyar Szemle Társaság, 1935), 75: “a gazdagodó önérzetes, jó módját fitogtató polgára nem igen szeretett mögöttük maradni.”

Institutions

First we need to create art with artists who were raised at home and represent the Hungarian spirit and who call the attention of the Hungarian audience through their art and education in secondary schools; and only thereafter can we think about higher education to create a higher standard and a subtle public taste in art – and finally aim to resolve the problems of art criticism, as well.¹²³
Lajos Végvári, *The Life and Works of Mihály Munkácsy* (1958)

I will now present a brief overview of institutions launched in order to promote artists and national art.¹²⁴ The first institution, *Pesti Műegylet* [Art Association of Pest] was founded in 1839, to launch a series of exhibitions to vitalize Hungarian art.¹²⁵ However, they turned out to be more supportive of the Viennese painters disappointing the Hungarian audience and artist. As a result, Gyula Andrassy and Imre Henszlmann founded the *Országos Magyar Képzőművészeti Társulat* [National Hungarian Fine Art Association, hereinafter referred to as OMKT] in 1861 with the explicit desire “to boost Hungarian painting.”¹²⁶

OMKT attempted to further contribute to the revival of national art by establishing the *nagy aranyérem* [the Golden Prize] in 1886. The jury members were responsible for selecting paintings, setting up the exhibition and adjudicating prizes based on a majority vote. Genthon aptly describes the jury’s role that “its aim is neutralization, its job is bargaining, its main achievement is a compromise, its rear-guard is no responsibilities.”¹²⁷ Furthermore, new members were admitted from among the laymen, debilitating their job as jurors even more.¹²⁸

¹²³ Végvári, *Munkácsy*, 45: “Először művészetet kell teremtenünk, olyan művészekkel, akik itthon nevelkedtek s magyar szellemiséget képviselnek, akik felébresztik művészetükkel és a középiskolában való oktatásukkal a magyar közönség érdeklődését, s azután kerülhet csak sor magasabb fokú iskolákra, igényesebb művészeti színvonal és közízlés kialakítására –s így a műkritika problémáinak megoldására is.”

¹²⁴ For further information please consult the recent publication: Jeffrey Taylor, *In Search of the Budapest Secession* (California: Helena History Press, 2014).

¹²⁵ Genthon, *Az új magyar*, 70.

¹²⁶ Ibidem: “a hazai festészet fellendítésére.”

¹²⁷ Ibid, 72: “Célja a közömbösítés, munkája az alkudozás, legfőbb eredménye a kompromisszum, hátvédje a felelősség.”

¹²⁸ Ibid, 73.

One of OMKT's main problems was that "it preserved the forms of artistic institutions prior to capitalism."¹²⁹ This involved a rigid structure with constant members for often 10 up



Fig. 8.: The jury members of the OMKT, 1859 (among them: Viktor Madarász, Károly Telepy, Gusztáv Keleti)

to 15 years, displaying also a strict taste monopoly when it came to adjudicating prizes and so on.¹³⁰ OMKT had its most efficient periods in the first two decades after its establishment, but from the 1880s it gradually started to decline. A certain group of its members obtained the moniker, *Benczúr-klika*

[Benczúr-clique]. OMKT's crisis truly surfaced when refusing the art of the new generation, which included painters like Károly Ferenczy, Lajos Gulácsy or József Rippl-Rónai.¹³¹ The Nagybánya artist colony filed a request to be able to organize its own exhibition with its own jury in a separate exhibition hall in 1897, without success. Their failed attempt was consequently followed by ever-stronger attacks against OMKT, which they regarded as "the bastion of the retrograde art."¹³² They only managed to counterbalance their unfavourable position in the twentieth century, which goes beyond the scope of the current research.

As a result, inner tensions were created among the members of the OMKT soon after



Fig. 9.: The opening of the Nemzeti Szalon, 1894

its foundation, to which the creation of another artistic centre was an automatic response. In 1894 the *Nemzeti Szalon* [National Salon] was established, and from October of the same year, they regularly organized spring, autumn and winter

¹²⁹ Németh, *Magyar Művészet*: "a kapitalista művészeti intézmények előtti formákat konzerválta," 128.

¹³⁰ Among its members were: Gyula Benczúr, Sándor Bihari, Árpád Feszty, Tihamér Margitay or Alajos Stróbl; Németh, *Magyar Művészet*: 129.

¹³¹ Ibidem.

¹³² Ibidem: "a retrográd művészet védőbástyája."

exhibitions.¹³³ The new institution was headed by the “insulted members” of OMKT, which in some ways was simply a newer version of the former institution.¹³⁴ Despite that fact, its specialty was in arranging collective and group exhibitions, therein meeting the expectations of the Nagybánya group, with whose show this initiation was launched in 1899. All in all, the National Salon already displayed certain features of modernity with its progressive views and programmes.

The first private drawing school was established in 1846 by Jakab Marastoni, but only a few years later it closed its gates due to the lack of interest. Joseph Eötvös hoped to set up a university for fine arts he was unable to accomplish this before his death. Gusztáv Keleti established a new drawing school in 1871, *Országos Magyar Királyi Mintarajztanoda és Rajztanárképezde* [National Hungarian Royal Institute for Art Studies and Instruction], representing historicism and academic style with artists such Bertalan Székely and Frigyes Schulek.¹³⁵

¹³³ Ibidem.

¹³⁴ Members included: Tihamér Margitay and Mór Karvaly.

¹³⁵ definition of academic style follows in the subchapter about the overview of Hungarian art.

In 1883, the state requested that Gyula Benczúr – teaching in Munich at the time – return to Hungary to become the director of the future master school in fine arts. As Lyka points out, the country now possessed a primary education, the aforementioned Royal Institute, and a higher education to be led by Benczúr. However, this created a gap in the system, which Hungarian students were forced to complete abroad.¹³⁶ This problem remained unsolved even in the twentieth century as Székely handed over the leading position to Pál Szinyei-Merse in 1905. Nevertheless, it is Szinyei’s merit to have loosened the boundaries of

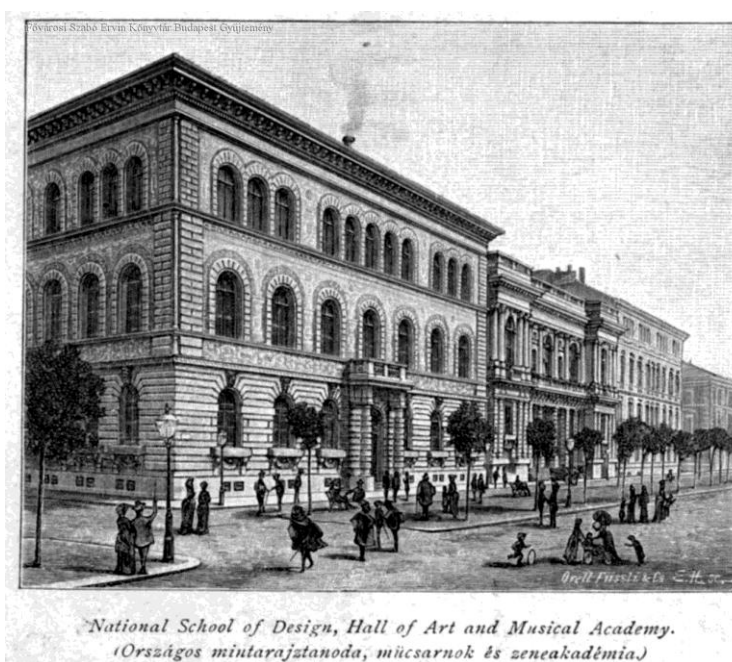


Fig. 10.: Mintarajztanoda, 1885

the rigid structure regarding the faculty by admitting distinguished painters such as Károly Ferenczy or István Réti.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Lyka, *Magyar művészet Münchenben* [Hungarian Art Life in Munich] (Budapest: Corvina, 1951), 6.

¹³⁷ György Széphelyi F., “Képzőművészeti felsőoktatás” [Education in Fine Arts] in *Magyar Művészet*, 158.

State of Art Criticism

These painters were criticized, indeed, excoriated by some of
the conservatives whose Bastion was that Hall of Arts from where
Munkácsy's body was sent forth on his last journey, but no matter:
these painters knew not only what they were doing
but also where they stood – and sat.¹³⁸
John Lukacs, *Budapest 1900* (1988)

Considering the long period of revival in the cultural life of Budapest, the presence of a press presenting various fields of interest was an absolute necessity. The shift in journalism happened at an unprecedented pace, turning the capital into a city with ever-increasing charms and bright prospects. Thus, numerous writers arrived to Budapest in the 1860s and 1870s, often lacking both talent and knowledge. Mikszáth complains that the overflow of writers gave rise to the so-called “critics-of-necessity.”¹³⁹ The new phenomenon meant the emergence of “the newly literate masters, who write without inspiration, write in every single hour of the day, whenever necessary, they write about everything, they even write things they have never felt and expand on ideas that were conceived by others.”¹⁴⁰ Végyvári highlights only Gusztáv Keleti, the representative of classicism, as the one with a sophisticated “though biased” knowledge.¹⁴¹ With markedly less enthusiasm, Végyvári later refers to Tamás Szana, as “the least talented among them [the critics],” but praises him for being the first to introduce the aesthetical approach to fine arts.¹⁴²

Árpád Timár, a contemporary art historian, claims that the first attempts at criticism in the form of articles appeared in the 1870s and 1880s in periodicals such as *Figyelő* or *Koszorú*.¹⁴³ Timár points out the obvious discrepancy of authors in *A Hét* with regard to the

¹³⁸ Lukacs, *A Historical Portrait*, 10.

¹³⁹ Végyvári, *Munkácsy*, 45: “szükségkritikusok.”

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 46: “az írástudómesterek, akik írnak ihlet nélkül, írnak a nap minden órájában, amikor kell, írnak mindenről, írnak olyat, amit nem is éreznek és olyat, amit mások gondoltak ki.”

¹⁴¹ Ibidem: “elfogult ugyan.”

¹⁴² Ibid, 47: “legkevésbé tehetséges közülök.”

¹⁴³ Árpád Timár, *Magyar Művészet*, 178.

inconsistency in their written opinions, as he argues “the characteristics of their writings changed depending on the personality of the critic.”¹⁴⁴ József Nyitrai and László Márkus also stood up against and explicitly attacked the academic style in their articles. Introducing the periodical *Élet*, Timár names József Diner-Dénes, Ödön Gerő, György Bölöni and Károly Lyka. However, Lyka is only highlighted as the critic “with the most extensive criticism on exhibitions and studies” in the conservative periodical *Új Idők*.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, Lyka also encompasses a more complex task: providing an insight into the state of Hungarian art and promoting artists of the new generation. Timár already presents Gusztáv Keleti and Károly Lyka as the representatives of two different extremes: the academic style and the new trend. All in all, Timár aptly confirms my argument concerning the 1890s as the initial phase of art criticism contending that “criticism of fine art was given only a modest space in contemporary journalism.”¹⁴⁶

A Brief Overview of Hungarian Art

With regard to the advance of art, a brief introduction to the following painters is indispensable in a period when “literature and art suddenly became colourful and polyphonic.”¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, art and the history of a country have always been inevitably intertwined and under each other’s mutual influence – the nineteenth century was no exception, as Lyka confirms.¹⁴⁸ Among the acute problems in the period, the quest for and definition of “national” in literature, music, and art had soon become the primary destination. However, the failure of the Revolution in 1848 and the consequent terror under Bach’s absolutist reign resulted in what Lyka referred to as the countrywide “stupefying silence of

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 179: “írásainak jellege aszerint változott, hogy ki volt éppen a kritikusa.”

¹⁴⁵ Ibidem: “legnagyobb terjedelmű kiállítási kritikákat és tanulmányokat.”

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 181: “A korszak hírlapírásában a képzőművészeti kritika igen szerény teret kapott.”

¹⁴⁷ Hanák, *The Garden*, 82.

¹⁴⁸ Lyka, *A művészetek története* [The History of Arts] (Budapest: Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalata, 1977), 309.

death.”¹⁴⁹ The voice of Hungarian artists gradually came to be heard only after 1867, recalling and reflecting on the events of the past.

The main representatives of historical painting were embodied by Gyula Benczúr, Mór

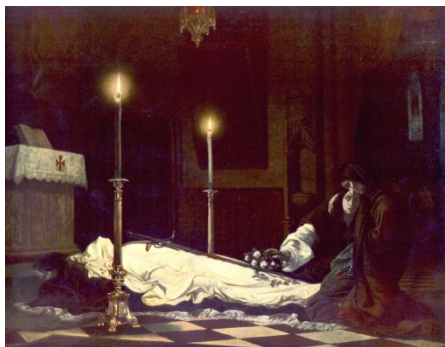


Fig. 11.: Viktor Madarász, *The Mourning of Hunyadi*, 1859

Than, Viktor Madarász and Bertalan Székely. Viktor Madarász (1830-1917), a former participant of the 1848 Revolution against the Habsburgs, depicted the tragical events of the Hungarian nation, as the *Mourning of László Hunyadi* aptly demonstrates. Despite the existence of other historical painters, Madarász stands out for his technical abilities revealed in the vivid play of colours.

His painting already foreshadowed national romanticism. Another excellent member of this group, Bertalan Székely (1835-1910) and his work, *Discovery of the Corpse of King Louis II* should be taken into consideration. The renowned fresco-painter, Károly Lotz (1833-1904), was commissioned to decorate several public buildings, including the National Museum, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and the Opera House; while also devoting time to genre and portrait painting. The golden age of the historical themes endured until the 1890s, when it gradually abated with the simultaneously flourishing capital and the emerging, novel themes.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ For further information please see: Domokos G. Kosáry, *The Hungarian revolution of 1848 in the context of European history* (Budapest: Collegium, 2000); or István Deák, *Lawful revolution : Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians, 1848-1849* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); Lyka, *A művészetek*, 309: “a halál dermesztő csöndje.”

¹⁵⁰ Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 81.

A great deal of painters were forced to study abroad due to the low standard in education in Hungary, a constant problem throughout the nineteenth century until 1896.¹⁵¹ However, as mentioned earlier, this was due to the absence of educational institutions that young artists tended to visit Vienna and Rome for educational purposes, however after the 1880s, “the new stars were: Munich and Paris.”¹⁵² Yet both Munich, the hotbed



Fig. 12.: Mihály Munkácsy, *The Last Day of a Condemned Man*, 1880

of historical painting, and Vienna proved to be the most attractive centers for artists to gather for lessons given by various influential professors, such as Karl von Piloty, Wilhelm von Kaulbach, Anselm Feuerbach, and Hans Makart.¹⁵³ Piloty appeared to take on a leading role impressing generations of students.¹⁵⁴ A recurrent and leading ideological theme of the period, the definition of academic style is crucial: “[it meant] superior because living artists representing this trend are more inspired by the art of the past than by [contemporary] society – at least on an ideological level.”¹⁵⁵ Munich, the bastion of academic painting, started to lose its popularity in the 1890s, since artists started to paint in their original style rather than merely following the prescribed rules. A reason that assured Paris an invariable popularity, or as Lyka pertinently epitomizes: “Rome meant the treasury of the shining past; Paris the exuberantly promising future; Munich the useful present.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Lyka, *Művészélet*, 6-7.

¹⁵² Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 145; Genthon, *Az új magyar*, 76: “az új csillagok: München és Párizs.”

¹⁵³ Ibidem; Genthon, *Az új magyar*, 81.

¹⁵⁴ Hans Makart himself was also one of Piloty’s students.

¹⁵⁵ Mária Bernáth, “A történelmi tábla- és falképfestészet záróakkordja” [The final chord of the Historical Tableaux and Fresco painting] in *Magyar Művészet*, 200: “Osztály feletti, mert ennek az irányzatnak még élő művelői nagyobb inspirációt kaptak a régmúlt művészetétől, mint a társadalomtól – legalábbis elméleti síkon.”

¹⁵⁶ Lyka, *Művészélet Münchenben*, 7: “Róma jelentette a ragyogó múlt kincsházát, Párizs a dúsan ígérő jövőt, München a hasznos élő jelent.”



Fig. 13.: Merse Szinyei-Pál, *Picnic In May*, 1873

Both Mihály Munkácsy and Pál Szinyei-Merse acquired their technical skills at the Munich Academy under the influence of the tired academic style, yet it is intriguing to observe their diverging paths. Munkácsy acquired worldwide fame and was even ennobled in

Hungary soon after his work, *Siralomház* – exhibited in Paris – won the Golden Prize of the Salon in 1878; whereas Szinyei's *Majális* [Picnic in May] on display in Vienna in 1873 – prefiguring plein air and impressionist painting – was not recognized, which turned the artist away from his canvas for several decades.¹⁵⁷

Munkácsy was an outstanding representative of genre-painting, but Lajos Deák-Ébner and Sándor Bihari also belong to this group. Károly Markó, Miklós Barabás, and Károly Lotz contributed to the development of a new illustrational methods of the great plains in the field of landscape painting.¹⁵⁸ I shall introduce Munkácsy and Markó in greater detail in a separate chapter on artist profiles. Nevertheless, two important followers of Munkácsy need to be mentioned: János Tornyai, who pioneered realist painting, and József Rippl-Rónai, who became an essential member of the post-impressionist Nabis group in Paris.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Németh, *A művészet története Magyarországon*, 374.

¹⁵⁸ Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 83.

¹⁵⁹ Accessed July 1, 2015, <http://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC15363/15864.htm>.

Szinyei-Merse and other artists stood out for their individual styles, providing a challenge for experts to categorize their place among the main trends of painting and were considered ‘the lonely’ painters such as József Koszta, László Mednyánszky or later Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka and Lajos Gulácsy.

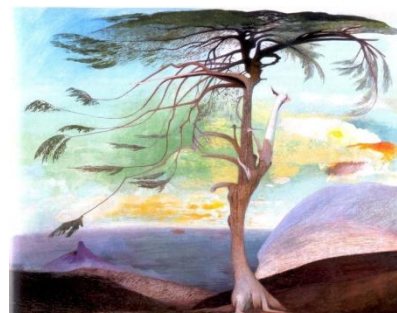


Fig. 14.: Tivadar Csontváry-Kosztka, *Lonely Cedar*, 1907

Mednyánszky’s case, for instance, stands out for creating a bridge between Barbizon painting, realism, and landscape painting.¹⁶⁰ Meanwhile the loneliest painter, Csontváry, completed such works as the *Lonely Cedar*, which became a boiling topic of debate among experts trying to decipher his style, or styles, and its meaning, eventually placing him among symbolists and as the founder of new landscape painting.

Eventually, Simon Hollósy, the “trailblazer,” created the first Hungarian artist colony following his first trip to Nagybánya in 1896.¹⁶¹ Inspired by Pál Szinyei-Merse’s talent, therein promoting his return after his defeat three decades earlier; Hollósy established his freestyle painting school in Munich, winning the support of several artists. With his ideology, he opposed the historicizing academic style predominant both in Munich and Hungary. Other founding members were such prominent painters as Károly Ferenczy, István Réti, János Thorma, Gyula Rudnay, and Béla Iványi-Grünwald; soon also attracting artists like István Csók and Oszkár Glatz.

CONCLUSION

This brief introduction to Hungarian art in the nineteenth century Hungarian art contextualizes my argument about the evolution of art criticism. The Nagybánya School

¹⁶⁰ Nóra Aradi, “A realizmus magányos mesterei” [The Lonely Painters of Realism] in *Magyar Művészet*, 250.

¹⁶¹ Romsics Ignác, “Arts and culture” in *Hungary in the Twentieth Century*, trans. by Tim Wilkinson, (Osiris Kiadó: Budapest, 1999), 75.

influenced the founding of further local artists' groups such *Nyolcak* [The Eight], *Szinyei Merse Pál Társaság* [Pál Szinyei Merse Association], *Szentendrei iskola* [The Szentendre School]; or local artist colonies countrywide in Szolnok, Gödöllő, and Kecskemét.

In conclusion, cultural development took shape at an unprecedented pace, and thus was received with both exultation and regret that led the generation of the twentieth century to experience a sense of “duality,” or “the recognition and acceptance of ambivalence as the modern form of existence.”¹⁶² Despite the obvious discomfort lingering in society, great achievements originated from this period. As Gerő observes: “until the turn of the century Budapest had the biggest milling industry in the world (...). First underground railway on the continent and the third telephone exchange in the world were also built here.”¹⁶³ Indeed when applying a comparative perspective, there is discrepancy regarding painters considered prominent by their contemporaries, and those who succeeded in retaining their fame later on in the twentieth century, as these articles also reflect.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Lukacs, *A Historical Portrait*, 14; Hanák, *The Garden*, 82.

¹⁶³ Gerő, *Once Upon*, 121.

¹⁶⁴ For further information focusing on painting, please consult: Gábor Pogány Ö. *A magyar festészet a XIX. században* [Hungarian Painting in the Nineteenth century] (Budapest: Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalta, 1962) or for a synthetic overview: *A művészet története Magyarországon: A honfoglalástól napjainkig* [The History of Art in Hungary: From the Conquest to Nowadays] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1983).

II. EXHIBITIONS AS A SOCIAL VENUE

Unlike in the 1860s, exhibitions constituted an essential part of the cultural venues in the 1890s. The rather low quality of the exhibited works was not truly representative of Hungarian art at the time; considering that a major problem was the absence of prominent painters such as Mihály Munkácsy, László Paál, Sándor Liezen-Mayer, and Sándor Wagner,¹⁶⁵ still working abroad. Nevertheless the standard of these cultural events was gradually improving with regard to both quality and attendance.

Exhibitions were organised mainly by the OMKT. At first, the exhibition was located



“in a series of rooms in the Academy of Sciences” until 1876, when the latest works of art were to be put on display in the new building called *Műcsarnok* [Hall of Art] on Sugárút, which was mainly “criticized from its inception in 1877 for its poor lighting and clumsy display arrangement.”¹⁶⁶ Despite this fact, a significant increase occurred. From 1876 to 1877, the number of artworks exhibited more than doubled: from 117 to 351 pieces.¹⁶⁷ Thus the importance of such an initiative cannot go

Fig. 15.: Old Hall of Art

unnoticed, yet its role in cultural life was often debated due to its strong support of academic painting. As already mentioned, from 1894 a new platform in the *Nemzeti Szalon* started its regular spring, autumn, and winter exhibitions.¹⁶⁸ The original aim of these social events was

¹⁶⁵ Lyka, *Magyar Művészet*, 6.

¹⁶⁶ Jeffrey Taylor, *In search of the Budapest Secession: The Artist Proletariat and Modernism's Rise in the Hungarian Art Market, 1800-1914*, (California: Helena History Press, 2014), 60; The name of *Műcsarnok* soon changed to *Régi Műcsarnok* [Old Hall of Arts], after its new building was erected on Heroes' Square in 1896, *Régi Műcsarnok* has been united with the University of Fine Arts in 1921, which today is located under 1062, Terézváros, Andrássy út 69-71; Sugárút is today's Andrássy út; Taylor, *In search*, 59-60.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 60.

¹⁶⁸ Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 129.

“to make it available for anyone to get acquainted with the latest artworks, as well as to provide an opportunity for purchasing art.”¹⁶⁹

It is indispensable to mention a few art patrons of the time, in particular, Arnold Ipolyi, Mór Wahrmann, Gyula Forster and Szilárd Röck, who contributed financially to inviting submissions and establishing art prizes or foundations.¹⁷⁰ For example, Ipolyi, an ambitious collector from the clergy, also donated his entire collection of a hundred and fifty medieval Italian paintings to the National Museum in 1872.¹⁷¹ He also offered five hundred forints for applications of historical painting in 1880.¹⁷² During this slow change of



Fig. 16.: The Opening Ceremony of the Millenium

development, a splendid event greatly aided placing Hungary on the map of art: The Millenium. 1896 was the celebration of the Hungarian Conquest and arrival in the Carpathian Basin in 896, a chance for Hungarians to show “that it [the country] owns an enormous independent industry,

agriculture, commerce, art and literature, that Hungarian nation, which almost fifty years ago was called *la nation anonime* by the great French literature.”¹⁷³

AMBRUS: THE PORTRAYAL OF THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE EXHIBITIONS

In the following chapter, I will analyse the reviews of Ambrus, then move on to Szana and Lyka. After observing the writings of each critic, both with regard to the exhibitions and

¹⁶⁹ Lyka, *Közönség*, 35.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 33.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 22.

¹⁷² Ibid, 33.

¹⁷³ András Gerő, *Budapest, 1896*, 331-2: *A város egy éve* [Budapest, 1896: A year of the city], (Budapest: Budapesti Negyed Alapítvány, 1996): “van hatalmas önálló ipara, mezőgazdasága, kereskedelme, művészete és irodalma annak a magyar nemzetnek, a melyet alig ötven esztendővel *la nation anonime*-nek nevezett a nagy francia irodalom.”

their own development, I will conclude the chapter with an all-encompassing comparison. In the following case study, I will analyse nine articles that Ambrus published between 1894 and 1898 in *A Hét*. In 1896, the year of the Millenium, he earned the honour of commemorating the illustrious exhibition in four detailed descriptions of the exhibition in the salon. The other five reviews are his reflections on regular exhibitions.

The First Impression is Sacred

In his first article, *Műtárlat* [Exhibition] in 1894, Ambrus gives us a mainly descriptive account of the event and the exhibited works.¹⁷⁴ For example, the critic informs the reader about the exact time of the exhibition, between six and eight in the evening, and illustrates the atmosphere of the cultural event. The critic goes off on a literary tangent as he attempts to enter the visitor's mind giving voice to their thoughts. Ambrus's entertaining writing style comes to the fore as he notes: "To the left and right, one can see painters who are pretending to be Mr. Nonchalants, and are always loitering accidentally near their own canvas."¹⁷⁵ With regard to the actual works, he primarily renders the scenes depicted and shares his opinion about their quality. However, Ambrus rarely comments more extensively, but even if he does, no real lessons can be learnt. As the critic presents József Rippl-Rónai's *Arczkép* [Portrait], he contends "in this portrait the face is not visible in effect; moreover the whole work is not so much a painting as merely a bunch of blackness in a lot of greyness."¹⁷⁶ Ambrus seems to be unable to arrive at a deeper understanding of the depicted scene. Indeed, Rippl-Rónai parted from Munkácsy's workshop and entered his so-called 'black-period' from

¹⁷⁴ Ambrus Zoltán, "Műtárlat," [The Exhibition] *A Hét* 5, no. 50 (16 Dec 1894), 758-760.

¹⁷⁵ Ambrus, "Műtárlat", 758: "Jobbra és balra piktorok, akik a hidegvérűt játszá, s akik véletlenül mindig a saját vásznaik körül őgyelegnek."

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 760: "ezen az arczképen t. i. arcz nem látható; továbbá az egész nem annyira kép, mint egy csomó feketeség sok szürkességben."

1889, which he “launched from silent picturesque voices from black crayon drawings.”¹⁷⁷ It was a phase in his life with works “organized around black and white chords whilst omitting louder tints of colour.”¹⁷⁸ Therefore Ambrus’ description is accurate, yet he does not attempt further analysis beyond taking note of the various shades of black.

Karlovsky, Horovitz, Benczúr, Lotz – Who is Who?

An interesting debate surfaces in examining Ambrus’ articles when he highlights painters of the period, such as Lipót Horovitz or Bertalan Karlovsky, whose works are nowadays considered less outstanding. In 1895, in *Tavaszi kiállítás* the critic singles out Karlovsky in an exhibition as the one “whose paintings are all but sheer beauty without exception,” even including foreign painters.¹⁷⁹ Using Karlovsky as the point of comparison, Ambrus mentions the paintings of such well-known artists as Károly Ferenczy, László Mednyánszky or Gyula Benczúr. Yet, he only deals with them in passing while devoting an entire paragraph to pondering the grandiosity of Karlovsky. In Ambrus’ view, the great artist has a high standard of painting; but we find that only eight months later he begins to foreshadow the road to Karlovsky’s oblivion, as he points out the decline in the quality of his art: “It is as if the excellent artist started to parody himself. (...) The drawing is perfect here as well, but it is already visible that his greatest virtue has started to turn into his deficiency.”¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, he continues to scrupulously analyze Karlovsky’s exhibited works, leaving other prominent artists with only a brief comment.

¹⁷⁷ Horváth János, *Rippl-Rónai József: A magyar festészet első modern mestere* [József Rippl-Rónai: the first master of modern painting] (Csíki Székely Múzeum: Csíkszereda, 2014), 13: “a halk festői szólamokat a fekete színrajzból indította el.”

¹⁷⁸ Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 341: “a képek fekete-fehér akkord alapján rendeződnek s kerülnek a hangosabb színhatásokat.”

¹⁷⁹ Ambrus, “Tavaszi kiállítás” [Spring Exhibition], *A Hét* 6, no. 16 (21 Apr 1895), 258: “Az ő képei mind egy szál gyönyörűség.”

¹⁸⁰ Ambrus, “A Tárlat” [The Exhibition], *A Hét* 6, no. 50 (13 Dec 1895), 799: “A kitűnő művész mintha parodizálni kezdené önmagát. (...) A rajz itt is tökéletes, de már ezen a képen is észrevenni, hogy nagy erénye kezd hibává válni.”

Ambrus fails to convey an in-depth analysis of artists. For example, he notes that Károly Lotz's painting "is most certainly one of the most beautiful portraits (...) of the exhibition" and thus suggests its remarkable character but refrains from telling the reader how he came to that conclusion.¹⁸¹ At the same time, the critic often refers to the works exhibited too briefly and vaguely. For instance, he calls the attention to certain works of art in the following manner: "Let's take a look at the vivacity of her face and then walk on."¹⁸² Such comments on 'sudden glimpses,' occurring at various times, may suggest uncertainty and indifference. At the same time, he often presents the public's opinion: "All my neighbours' countenances reflect a 'lively satisfaction.'"¹⁸³ Even though such remarks were certainly extremely valuable for artists at the time, with regard to the audience, Ambrus only makes a simple statement about the popularity of the painting without delving into the explications behind it.

The Millennial Reports: An Audience and a Critic Bewildered

In Ambrus' second account of the millennial exhibition of 1896 is divided into three major sections: Munkácsy, The Great Attractions and Horovitz.¹⁸⁴ In the first section about Munkácsy, he introduces three of his paintings with a short evaluation, giving credit for the well-known portraits of *Ferenc Liszt* and *Cardinal Haynald*, while questioning the quality of *The Wife of Joseph Pulitzer*. Under the second main heading, various artists are listed, such as Gyula Benczúr, Arthur Ferraris, and Fülöp László. This section is highly descriptive as he confirms the importance of painters such as Gyula Benczúr "if anywhere, it is visible here, that he is the master of details and that he is born eminent among painters."¹⁸⁵ However,

¹⁸¹ Ambrus, "Műtárlat", 759: "a tárlatnak (...) egész bizonyosan a legszebb portrait-ja."

¹⁸² Ambrus, "A Tárlat", 799: "Csodáljuk meg arcának elevenségét és menjünk tovább."

¹⁸³ Ambrus, "Műtárlat", 760: "összes szomszédaim arcáról 'élénk tetszés'-t olvasok le."

¹⁸⁴ Ambrus, "Az ezredik év Szalonja: Arcképek. – Horovitz." [The Salon of the Thousandth year: Portraits – Horovitz.], *A Hét* 7, no. 20 (17 May 1896), 345-7.

¹⁸⁵ Ambrus, "Arcképek. – Horovitz", 346: "ha valahol, itt látni való, hogy Benczur a detailok művésze, s hogy született első eminens a festők között."

Ambrus fails to place him into a wider context, pointing out that by this time his historical style of painting belongs to the previous generation; thus despite its excellence, his work does not show any real development. Today, Benczúr is considered the founder of Hungarian genre and portrait painting, in addition to being seen as “the first representative of the folk and national style.”¹⁸⁶

Eventually, in the third section of this review, Ambrus provides the reader with a profound description of the paintings by Lipót Horovitz. Interestingly, the spotlight is on Horovitz, with his analysis taking up the same length as the first two sections. His report clearly reveals an unprecedentedly biased point of view. The critic also shares the artist’s “secret” that resides in his ability to “look into the soul of his subjects, and then portrays on the canvas what he has seen, nothing more or nothing less.”¹⁸⁷ Ambrus’ statement conveys that this is his idea of a prerequisite that enables an artist to gain true recognition in the world of art. Such observations are supported by his following sentence, highly praising Horovitz, for “his paintings are living. His figures, though we have never met them before, are our acquaintances.”¹⁸⁸ Even though he appeared to be an illustrious talent, “a representative of the contemporary realistic painting” and “a popular portraitist,” the case of Horovitz calls the attention of today’s reader due to his disappearance from the line of prominent painters.¹⁸⁹ Currently two online sources confirm his particular concern “to strive to reflect the individual traits, the spiritual life of the person,” while portraying them “with utmost simplicity.”¹⁹⁰ The general academic consensus shows his undisputed popularity and mentions several prizes that he won, yet it gives cause for concern that three separate dates of birth are provided: 1838,

¹⁸⁶ Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 96; Ibid, 94: “a népies és a nemzeti irány első képviselője.”

¹⁸⁷ Ambrus, “Arczképek. – Horovitz”, 347: “Bele lát embereinek a lelkébe.”

¹⁸⁸ Ibidem: “az ő képei élnek. Alakjai, ha soha se is láttuk őket azelőtt, ismerősink.”

¹⁸⁹ László Éber, ed., *Művészeti Lexikon* [Lexicon of art] (Győző Andor Kiadása: Budapest 1926) s.v. “Horovitz Lipót”, 342: “A korabeli realisztikus festés képviselője”; Edit Lajta, *Művészeti Kislexikon* [The Little Lexicon of Art] (Akadémiai Kiadó: Budapest, 1973) s.v. “Horovitz Lipót”: “keresett arcképfestő volt.”

¹⁹⁰ accessed: 23 May, 2015, <http://www.kislexikon.hu/horovitz.html>: “egyéni tulajdonságokat, a lelki élet nyilvánulásait igyekszik visszatükrözni”; accessed: 23 May, 2015, <http://mek.oszk.hu/04000/04093/html/szocikk/12141.htm>: “legpuritánabb egyszerűséggel ábrázolták.”

1839 and 1848.¹⁹¹ Thus, the information acquired altogether implies that Horovitz played an important role as a portraitist in contemporary society but soon faded to oblivion. Genthon confirms my assumption by contending that

The fashionable portraitists likewise [compared to outstanding painters] earned illustrious sums of money, and thus it can generally be stated that those ones whose names became popular, could be reassured that with a minimal effort they were able to firmly lay the foundations of the bourgeois way of life for the rest of their lives.¹⁹²

Ambrus discloses his primary interest in portraits when he states “I confess honestly, also in the paintings the human soul is in the centre of my attention.”¹⁹³ On the one hand, his confession shows his interest in psychology, and foreshadows his famous novel, *Midás király*, published in 1906, which soon after became a seminal work in the psychological literature. His deep concern regarding the psyche of artists is also present in questions that he poses about Rippl-Rónai. For example, the critic interrogates the artist, asking “when will this talent eventually find himself?”¹⁹⁴ At the same, such a statement does show Ambrus’ ability to recognise the genuine spirit of Rippl-Rónai beyond the notions of blackness and greyness appearing on a canvas, even implying the idea that he sees that the artist’s path of self-discovery has not yet come to an end, and rightfully so. His black period is generally believed

¹⁹¹ Lajta, *Művészeti*, 248; Éber, *Művészeti*, 342 and <http://mek.oszk.hu/04000/04093/html/szocikk/12141.htm>; <http://www.kislexikon.hu/horovitz.html>

¹⁹² Genthon, *Az új magyar*, 75: “A divatos arcképfestők hasonlóan fényesen kerestek s általában el lehet mondani, hogy akinek neve forgalomba került, biztos lehetett arról, hogy bizonyos minimális szorgalommal egész életére megalapította polgári életfeltételeit.”

¹⁹³ Ambrus, “Arczképek. – Horovitz”, 345: “Megvallom őszintén, a képeken is az emberi lélek érdekel leginkább.”

¹⁹⁴ Ambrus, “Az ezredik év Szalonja: Még egy pár portrait – Históriás képek.” [The Salon of the Thousandth year: A few portraits more – Historical paintings.], *A Hét* 7, no. 22 (31 May 1896), 365: “Mikor fogja ez a nagy tehetség megtalálni önmagát?”

to have concluded in 1897, though “one of the major stages of his development” is deemed to the portrait of the artist, Aristide Maillol.¹⁹⁵

Ambrus’ capricious character reveals itself in all his writings, which might leave his audience bewildered. He habitually praises an artist, then immediately in the following sentence reprimands them in an unexpected way. Such is the example of the statement about Mednyánszky in his article. First, he is praised for his wonderful painting, and then he is called a delusional painter. It needs to be taken into consideration that all artists have successful and unsuccessful paintings. However, the manner in which Ambrus presents his opinion often seems confounding, particularly in his rush to list numerous works from various exhibitions, he often leaves us without a clear explanation. As a consequence, the audience has a hard time in distinguishing noteworthy works of art from those of lesser quality. Naturally, these articles were not written with the aim of creating guidelines for the lay people to assess art, yet it did have a major impact as it was the primary source of information on the matter. Moreover, the sudden and extreme shifts in Ambrus’s opinion about certain artists may also convey uncertainty.

Ambrus provides an overview of the spring show in two parts. For the first time critic provides the reader with background information about the period, as he states that “this period is no longer favourable for historical painting.”¹⁹⁶ Yet such a piece of information may already have been evident at the time, not considered to be something new and valuable.

Ambrus comes forward with an interesting claim by stating that “it [Bihari’s work] is painted in a way that leaves no room for criticism. His drawing is excellent, his colours are true. Still, this painting also lacks one thing: the soul. It is not a historical painting but a

¹⁹⁵ Genthon, *Az új magyar*, 227: “továbbfejlődésének egyik jelentős állomása.”

¹⁹⁶ Ambrus, “A tavaszi kiállításból I.: Jegyzetek a katalógus szélére [The Spring Exhibition: Notes on the Side of the Catalogue] *A Hét* 8, no. 16 (17 Apr 1898), 253: “a mi időnk nem kedvez a históriás festészetnek.”

historical tableau.”¹⁹⁷ No further explanation follows to demonstrate what it lacks by not having a ‘soul.’ It is particularly confusing that first he argues that it is flawless and then goes on to declare its great deficiency. Since he fails to explore its deeper meaning, the question arises whether Ambrus already knew about Lyka’s earlier criticism and simply picked up on it to support his argument.¹⁹⁸ If so, his originality may be questioned. Again, the critic contradicts himself as he contends that “here is a painter [Fabrés Antonio], who knows his trade! Composition, elaboration, all of this precision is bliss to see. (...) What a pity that there are so many faces, so many inexpressive countenances.”¹⁹⁹ The critic makes another exemplary observation about the emptiness in the depiction of the faces, yet would not a painter who knows his trade be able to give each of them a character?

Ambrus often appears to have irrelevant or negligible remarks. For instance, commenting on Arthur Krampf’s painting, he notes “it is indeed undeniable that Professor Kampf is better at painting than Vereshchagin. His hands are better than the great Russian’s, unlike his head,” thereby leaving the audience baffled since the importance of this message remains unclear.²⁰⁰ His review therefore is mainly descriptive, often filled with vague statements, the presence of which is difficult to justify.

Confession of Pride or Resignation?

Ambrus, the zealous writer openly confesses “That I am not adept at paintings, is true.”²⁰¹ This helps the reader understand the way in which he formulates his arguments. The tone he uses is often ironic and strikingly straightforward. That might explain his harsh criticism when he claims: “Though where there is no real interest on the part of the audience,

¹⁹⁷ Ambrus, “A tavaszi kiállításból I”, 253: “ugy van megfestve, hogy ahhoz nem fér kifogás. Rajza kitűnő, színei igazak. De ebből a képből is hiányzik valami: a lélek. Nem históriás kép ez, csak históriás tabló.”

¹⁹⁸ Lyka already put forward the issue of the spirit missing from the paintings in 1891.

¹⁹⁹ Ambrus, “A tavaszi kiállításból”, 254: “íme egy pikor, aki tudja a mesterségét! Kompozíció, kidolgozás, mindez oly szabályos, hogy öröm látni. (...) Kár, hogy annyi arc, annyi semmit mondás.”

²⁰⁰ Ibidem: “S tagadhatatlan, hogy Kampf tanár ur tökéletesebben pingás, mint Verescsagin. A keze jobb, mint a muszkáé; a feje nem.”

²⁰¹ Ambrus, “Arczképek. – Horovitz”, 345: “Hogy nem értek a képekhez, az igaz.”

art merely vegetates.”²⁰² Furthermore, in his opinion, “luckily no one is adept at art criticism, with the exception of the painter to whom you are talking.”²⁰³ Despite the crudeness of the statement, he managed to point out one of the major problems of the period. Yet his position as an art critic can be justified by his basic principle of looking at the soul of painting, as no painting is real if it lacks a soul.

Despite all his strengths and weaknesses, Ambrus definitely manages to fulfil the primary aim of literature: to capture the audience’s attention. Besides all the criticism, irony and sudden shifts in his temper, he also succeeds in maintaining the reader’s interest with his amusing style. As the following statement illustrates: “I have to confess that my objectivity is defective; a beautifully painted portrait of a woman and a beautifully painted ox do not have the same impact on me.”²⁰⁴ It is essential to keep in mind that he never strives to please the audience, but to unveil his true thoughts, which may have earned him a prestigious position in society.

Ambrus states that “our art is going through the period of puberty,” a statement conveying no information for contemporary society.²⁰⁵ He seems to refrain from placing such a statement into a larger cultural context in view of Hungarian art. His articles suggest his inability to convey a truly comprehensive account of artists or of the state of national art with original insights. Ambrus is largely descriptive and therefore less critical, thus his work appears to be more significant because of the information that can be retrieved. The list of painters and the atmosphere of the exhibition greatly contribute to our cultural knowledge of the period.

²⁰² Ambrus, “Műtárlat”, 758: “Már pedig ahol a közönségben nincsen igazi érdeklődés, ott a művészet csak vegetál.”

²⁰³ Ambrus, “Arczképek. – Horovitz”, 345: “De, szerencsémre senki se ért képekhez, kivéve a festőművészt, a kívül éppen beszélsz.”

²⁰⁴ Ibidem: “Megvallom, hogy objektivitásom hiányos; egy szépen festett asszonyfej és egy szépen festett ökör nem egyformán hatnak rám.”

²⁰⁵ Ambrus, “Az ezredik év Szalonja: Áttekintés” [The Salon of the Thousandth year: An Overview] *A Hét* 7, no. 19. (5 May 1896), 308: “művészetünk a serdülés korát éli.”

SZANA: IN THE SEARCH OF A TRUE ARTIST

I now shift my attention to observations regarding Szana's reflections on exhibitions. He published six articles but it is only in his first three pieces from 1886, 1887, and 1888 that he appears to be particularly resentful about Hungarian painters' preference for saving their paintings only for the second phase of the exhibition, since that was their opportunity to win prizes. The public therefore, keeping this in mind, also preferred to visit the second series of works presented.

Szana provides a comprehensive overview of a show in 1886 in the article bearing the title *A Műcsarnokból*, listing twenty Hungarian and foreign artists.²⁰⁶ His writing clearly reveals his high esteem for art that expresses the truth when he considers Moreau de Tours' painting: "it gives us the impression of real; it is true and expressive in every detail."²⁰⁷ However, little room is left for a deeper understanding of the "truth" implied or a critical analysis of the works. For instance, he argues that in László Mednyánszky's painting "there are no traces of pretence (...) that is the secret of their great impact," yet Szana does not explicate what he means by 'pretence.'²⁰⁸ Towards the end of his report, he mentions how important it is not to mix realistic elements with fantastic ones since the combination of the two "can only serve to leave the audience baffled."²⁰⁹ Whether Szana's observation regarding the feelings Böcklin's painting evoked is his own belief imposed on the audience, or the actual general impression (if there is such), remains uncertain.

Szana's relentless spirit comes to the fore in his second review *Az őszi tárlat* in 1887 as he encourages intimidated Hungarian artists to keep presenting their works despite the large number of foreign artists.²¹⁰ The critic claims that "such circumstance, even if there

²⁰⁶ Szana Tamás, "A Műcsarnokból" [From the Hall of Arts], *Magyar Salon* 6, no. 2 (1 Nov 1886), 161-71.

²⁰⁷ Szana, "A Műcsarnokból:" "a való hatását gyakorolja ránk; igaz és kifejező minden részletében", 171.

²⁰⁸ Ibid: "nincs semmi nyoma a hatásvadászatnak (...) nagy hatásuk titka ebben áll," 168.

²⁰⁹ Ibid: "csak arra szolgál, hogy zavarba hozza a nézőt," 171

²¹⁰ Szana, "Az őszi tárlat" [The Autumn Exhibition] *Magyar Salon* 8 (1 Nov 1887), 162-8.

were more grounds for repeated accusations [against the excess of foreign painters], can after all not be the reason for our artists' sulky retirement."²¹¹ After his complaint about the issue of Hungarian absence, Szana sadly remarks "if our artists are acting so indifferent, we have no reason to complain about the lack of interest [in the show]."²¹² Despite the fact that his disappointment is understandable, it may evoke a feeling of discomfort in the reader, as well as raise the question about what could have kept him from reporting only about the second phase. At the same time, Szana's frustration also demonstrates his deep concerns about the state of national art. However, due to the difficulties of earning one's living as an artist, prioritizing one's financial support is understandable.

In 1888 Szana published two consequent articles, one short and another longer one, knowing that the first phase of the autumn exhibition is mainly for beginner artists, he only reports on the event in three pages, whereas he contemplates the next phase of the show throughout the following six pages. Once again, he lists artists with brief comments on their works but it becomes clear that he regards the second series with more interest. Szana launches the longer 1888 review with a protracted laudation of Munkácsy, which is then followed by naming various participants with their respective works. He praises Munkácsy for his diverse character and claims that "he does not know the impossible."²¹³ By the end of the 1880s, Munkácsy had certainly gained an established position in society, yet the fact that Szana only compliments his work will be investigated in the chapter to follow about artist profiles.

Szana shows valuable observations by such statements as "he [Antal Ligeti] immerses himself so much in the details that it makes his whole painting suffer," and "the secret of art

²¹¹ Szana, "Az őszi tárlat", 162: "Ez a körülmény azonban, még ha több alapja volna is a vádaskodásnak, éppenséggel nem szolgálhat okul arra, hogy művészeink duzzogva visszavonuljanak."

²¹² Ibid, 164: "Ha művészeink ily közönyösen veszik a dolgot, nincs jogunk panaszkodni az érdeklődés hiánya miatt."

²¹³ Szana, "Magyar képek az őszi kiállításon: második sorozat" [Hungarian Paintings on the Autumn Exhibition: Second series] *Magyar Salon* 9 (1 Dec 1888), 274: "nem ismer lehetetlent."

quite often resides in reticence.”²¹⁴ Nonetheless, it often remains unclear what conclusion is to be drawn by them. The critic kindles the audience’s attention to only three of the six Munkácsy Prize nominees: Gyula Kardos, Gyula Tornai, and László Pataky. He describes the process that ends with the jury selecting the best three works, out of which Munkácsy picks the winner. Szana thus gives a “behind-the-scenes” insight into the process; however, it is surprising that he only introduces the three aforementioned artists with not deeming the rest worthy of mentioning. Being aware of his somewhat wanting knowledge of art, one is undeniably curious to find out who the other three were.

The Key Elements of Art: Truth and Eyes

In Szana’s last two articles, *Téli műtárlat II. Arczképek a műcsarnokban* and *A tárlat hősei* one discovers a minor development.²¹⁵ In the former, he contemplates two ingredients of efficacious art – truth and eyes – instead of jumping into a list of never-ending names; whereas in the latter, he highlights three prize-winning artists, Jenő Jendrassik, Tihamér Margitay, and Géza Vastagh in the show of 1895. In this latter article, Szana provides an overview of each painter’s development, with an approving laudation of the improvement in the end. The conclusion in Margitay’s case also reveals his point of view when he holds that “only those capable of becoming artists are those who are able to see through the incense [here meaning laudation] sprinkled by good friends, thus being impartial and strongly critical of themselves.”²¹⁶ His argument demonstrates his high expectations towards an artist and goes beyond the sheer description and praise of paintings, placing his attitude towards criticism into a larger context.

²¹⁴ Szana, “Az őszi műtárlat” [The Autumn Exhibition] *Magyar Salon* 9 (1 Nov 1888), 209: “de annyira belemerül a részletezésbe, hogy miatta az egész kép szenved” and “a művészet titka igen sokszor az elhallgatásban rejlik.”

²¹⁵ Szana, “Téli műtárlat II. Arczképek a műcsarnokban” [Winter exhibition II. Portraits in the Hall of Art], *A Hét* 1, no. 49 (7 Dec 1890), 366-67; Szana, “A tárlat hősei” [The Heroes of the Exhibition] *Magyar Salon* 22 (1 Feb 1895), 919-28.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 923: “Mesterré csak az lehet, a ki képes arra, hogy a jóbarátok által hintett tömjénfüstön keresztül lásson s önmaga felett részrehajlatlan, szigorú kritikát gyakoroljon.”

In 1890, Szana finally elaborates on two important factors that for him distinguish valuable art: truth and eyes, traits that he has previously mentioned. The critic notes that “*truth*, is the first requirement of art, and the artist who does not only feel it, but is also able to reflect it in his art, has worked not for a single period but for all times.”²¹⁷ Szana then explicates while presenting the painter Thomas Lawrence’s statement that the artist “shall pick a *single* feature on the figure of his model, keep copying it like a believer or moreover like a servant, and the rest can be embellished.”²¹⁸ From this point on, he expands on the importance of painting expressive eyes. Even though this latter idea was not his own with two rich paragraphs expanding on the ingredients of true art, he can easily contribute to the audience’s way of seeing and perceiving art. Particularly, since the former statement expresses a vital concept: an object of art becomes noteworthy if it stands the test of time; that is, if it bears unique marks, which turn it into a subject of discussion for generations to come.

On the whole, Szana’s articles are largely descriptive, though punctuated with a few remarkable observations. He provides posterity with valuable information, but is less helpful in teaching the contemporary audience ‘to see.’ Nevertheless, his accumulation of information enables future generations to know minute details of events that otherwise would have mostly been forgotten the following day. Overall, Szana’s evaluation methods improved, remarkably, especially considering that Szana had to compensate his lack of education in art in an autodidactic manner.

LYKA: TRAINING THE PUBLIC’S EYE

Károly Lyka reports altogether twenty-two times about exhibitions and their qualities. Due to the large variety of articles, I have selected fourteen for further analysis, out of which

²¹⁷ Szana, “Téli műtárlat”, 366: “*Igazság*, ez a művészet első követelménye, s aki nemcsak érezi, de műveiben vissza is tudja tükröztetni, nem egy kor, hanem minden idők számára dolgozott.”

²¹⁸ Ibidem: “válasszon ki mintájának alakján egyetlen vonást, másolja azt hiven, sőt szolgálilag: a többit aztán megszépítheti.”

two reports stand out, which inform the national audience about the Munich show instead of the Hungarian. The fact that Lyka's writings were collected from three periodicals, *Élet*, *A Hét*, and *Új Idők*, reveals his distinct popularity and hence also presupposes a greater familiarity within the field. Although it is generally more appropriate to follow a chronological order, analyzing the reviews of each separate appears to be more fitting here.

The Quest for Hungarian Art

The article that deals with Hungarian art on a theoretical level will be the primary subject of interrogation. Lyka reports on two separate topics in his articles, *Új magyar képek* [New Hungarian Paintings] and Marr Károly "A flagellánsok" c. képe a Műcsarnokban.²¹⁹ The first one appears to be more relevant considering that my focus is on exhibitions and that the latter singles out only one particular painting. The critic first introduces the audience to the state of art in the 1890s specifically, and then provides a glimpse into the current winter exhibition.

Lyka portrays the first signs of the emerging national art with the rather pessimistic conclusion that "those refined, deep traits that separate our kind from other peoples, has so far not been expressed by a single artist."²²⁰ He expounds his statement by claiming that Hungarian artists finally had started to pick national themes, however, the end product is but the accumulation of external features. The current exhibition thus fails to present a single work of art that "by its spirit could be entitled Hungarian."²²¹ The critic also complains about the overwhelming presence of foreign influence in Hungarian art as a result of the long centuries under foreign occupation [note: the country's independence was still incomplete

²¹⁹ Lyka, "Új magyar képek" [New Hungarian Paintings], *Élet* 2, no. 1 (15 Jan. 1892), 28-33; Lyka, "Marr Károly 'A flagellánsok' c. képe a Műcsarnokban" [The painting 'The Flagellants' in the Hall of Art] *Élet* 2, no. 4 (15 Mar 1892), 164-165.

²²⁰ Lyka, "Új magyar képek", 28: "azokat a finom, mély jellemvonásokat, mik fajunkat elkülönítik a többi népektől, Magyarországon eddig még nem fejezte ki művészember."

²²¹ Ibidem: "szelleménél fogva magyarnak mondhatnánk."

after the Compromise of 1867]. Moreover, Lyka also highlights the influence from abroad that Hungarian artists acquired during their stay in foreign lands. By such an argument, he thus determines what a Hungarian painting needs in order to be rightfully called Hungarian. The critic points out that “where the artistry is working unconsciously, there we still find truly original Hungarianness [in the works of art.]”²²²

The peculiarity of this article resides in its long introduction about the essentials of original art. The critic proposes four aspects: the importance of the effect, painting from within, the need for abandoning traditional values and sets of conventions, and a painter’s tool. These four critical requirements are addressed in more detail in the following section.

Effect Turned Inside Out and Outside In

The first aspect listed is the “effect,” with which the question of its definition simultaneously emerges. However, Lyka leaves no room for uncertainty and explains straightforwardly that “a painting is entitled for its true existence if it has an effect, the quality of which determines its value and thereby impacts our cultural life, and becomes the leader together with the other factors of the zeitgeist.”²²³ With such a statement, the critic teaches the audience not to simply fall for paintings depicted in a way that easily catches one’s attention, but to recognize that “what matters is the degree of the effect and we only take the most refined one, the most subtle one as guiding principles.”²²⁴ By presenting such a refined string of thoughts, Lyka undoubtedly unravels the complexity of his character.

Lyka brings an example from the theatre to demonstrate the way in which two different settings of the same play can either bring from page to stage a truly artistic piece or a

²²² Lyka, “Új magyar képek”, 30: “ott, ahol a műérzék *öntudatlanul* produkál, ott még találunk igazi eredeti magyarosságot.”

²²³ Lyka, “Új magyar képek”, 29: “egy kép elvégre is hatásában bírja létjogosultságát, ennek a minőségétől függ becse, ez által hat kulturéletünkre s vezet a korszellem egyéb faktoraival egyetemben.”

²²⁴ Ibidem: “itt tehát a hatások fokozatáról van szó s mi a legfinomabbakat, a legszubtilisabbakat vesszük irányjelzőkül.”

fully superficial work. The particular case he mentions entails a scene with some of the actors sitting with their back to the audience in the first case, and all facing the audience in the second. The critic argues that the setting with some of the actors seated with their backs to the audience enabled the play to have a rather natural effect, while the other was meticulously staged. For a minute, the reader might be confused trying to understand what a play has to do with paintings. However, Lyka then asserts that “it would indeed be desirable for our painters, whilst painting their figures, to turn their backs on the audience more often – in the figurative sense.”²²⁵ With such a firm statement, Lyka appears to encourage painters to go beyond the established rules and sets of conventions of the painting school and paint from within, following their intuitions, while he also educates the general public about the thought processes behind the layout of a painting.

Conventional Painting, the Stamp of Immaturity

On the third page of his article, Lyka presents his desire in the form of an outcry as he stresses that “we are *Hungarians*: we wish for our art to have the spice of *Hungarians*. We are *modern*: we wish for our art not to stop harping on the idea of *ancient traditions*.”²²⁶ The critic here appears to become a mouthpiece of Hungarian culture. Academic style and along with it the traditional values of art lingered, against which the appearance of a public figure such as Lyka was necessary to call people’s attention to the need of its abandonment. Prior to the above-mentioned statement, Lyka writes that “hopefully the age of aesthetes’ obsolete art theories, which prescribed the painters’ rules of classification, is already extinct!”²²⁷

²²⁵ Ibidem: “nagyon kíváncsi tartanók, hogy festőink többször fordítatnának hátat alakjaikkal a közönségnek – átvitt értelemben.”

²²⁶ Lyka, “Új magyar képek”, 30: “*magyarok* vagyunk: azt kívánjuk, hogy művészetünkben meglegyen a *magyarosság* zamata. *Modernek* vagyunk: azt kívánjuk, hogy művészetünk ne nyargaljon *régi tradíciókon*.”

²²⁷ Ibidem: “remélhetőleg letűnt már az avult műesztétikusok rozsdás elméleteinek kora, mely a festőknek csoportosítási szabályokat írt elő.”

Finally, Lyka contends two indispensable tools of a painter that in his view enable an artist to reflect the Hungarian spirit entirely. He holds that these are:

Two things. The first one being the requirement for painters to *know how to paint*, or as a writer aptly argued: they should know their lessons. The other one is that they should have inside of them what is called *inspiration or glow* (...). It is a secret inner spring that cannot be purchased in the shop, but if one has it, it can be improved, developed.²²⁸

This is another case where the critic reveals the tools that help a painter to become genuinely representative; while he also informs the general public about the traits of a true work of art. The peculiarity of his observations resides in the further qualification of various layers that goes beyond looking for the aforementioned technical details such as the drawing, the colour, and the accuracy, which Ambrus and Szana deemed crucial.

Lyka may at times appear to be making an extremely critical, even harsh criticism. For instance, he argues that “the audience of good taste cannot pass by the works of Margitay, Skuteczky, Zilzer etc. without the feeling of indignation,” or that there are only ten out of three-hundred works which “do not abound in the most primitive technical weaknesses.”²²⁹ Even though the critic highlights two ‘worthy’ artists, István Csók and Tivadar Zemplényi, he nevertheless concludes that the exhibition is like a “bazaar, where everything is sold but nothing is valuable.”²³⁰ With this high degree of negative criticism, Lyka supposedly intended to awaken Hungarian artists from their slumber, since as previously mentioned, there are

²²⁸ Lyka, “Új magyar képek:” “Két dolog. Az egyik az, hogy a festők *festeni tudjanak*, vagy mint egy író találóan mondta: tudják a leckéjüket. A másik, hogy meglegyen bennük az, amit *inspirációnak, hevülésnek* neveznek. Egy belső titkos rugó, amit nem lehet boltban vásárolni, de ha megvan, igenis lehet növelni, fejleszteni,” 30.

²²⁹ Ibid, 30-31: “a jóízű néző nem fog Margitay, Skuteczky, Zilzer stb. stb. képei mellett megbotránkozás nélkül elmenni.”; Ibid, 31: “ne bővelkednék a legprimitívabb technikai gyöngeségekben.”

²³⁰ Ibid, 33: “bazar, melyben minden kapható, de semmi sem értékes.”

already traces of interest in national art. With his criticism, he aimed to contribute to the promotion and encouragement of painters to become artists with individual characters.

The meaning behind Lyka's lines particularly calls for the audience's attention considering the fact that at the time of composing this article, he is only twenty-three years old. Yet, he proves to be well-informed both in his homeland and abroad as his comparison shows: "Out there in foreign lands the competitive spirit in art reveals itself not in the degree of refined drawings but in the conception of art. Our painting is still at the stage where we have to rejoice upon seeing a face decently drawn."²³¹ The critic comments on the exhibition of 1892 in broad terms, only mentioning a few of the artists, yet by doing so, he sheds new light on a few of them, such as Mihály Munkácsy and István Csók.

The Munich Exhibitions: The American Sonatas

Lyka published five articles in *A Hét*, two informing the reader about the Munich exhibition and the rest regarding the Hungarian exhibition. These are shorter articles mainly consisting of one to three pages and therefore will be analysed in less detail.

The reviews about Munich gain their outstanding importance by informing the contemporary audience about art culture abroad. The first article, *A müncheni szalon I* provides the reader with a general and theoretical introduction about the state of art in his time.²³² In the second, Lyka shifts to the subjects of the show: the artists and their work.²³³ To start with the earlier article, Lyka reflects on the art that has developed after casting off the robe of conventional rules that enables artists to finally act independently. The critic claims that "this principle has been semi-officially called 'individualism,' the ordinary mortal, who does not systematize every minute finding immediately, would probably put it this way: "let

²³¹ Lyka, "Új magyar képek", 31: "Ott künn a művészi küzdelmek nem abban állanak, hogy ki tud jobban rajzolni, hanem, hogy ki hogy fogja fel a művészetet. A mi festészetünk még oly stádiumban van, hogy örülnünk kell, ha egyszer egy tisztességesen megrajzolt arcot láthatunk."

²³² Lyka, "A müncheni szalon I," [The Munich Salon I], *A Hét* 3, no. 26 (26 Jun 1892), 417-8.

²³³ Lyka, "A müncheni szalon II," [The Munich Salon II], *A Hét* 3, no. 27 (3 Jul 1892), 433-35.

everyone paint the way their heart tells them, once they already know the alphabet.”²³⁴ Consequently, three significant messages are therein revealed. Lyka first points towards the rise of new and independent painters, who are finally finding their own paths, thus breathing life into their art. Secondly, he presents a brief recipe for art: once they have acquired the basics of painting, artists should follow their intuition. Last but not least, the critic’s positive perception of art abroad markedly contrasts with his opinion about national art.

Lyka shows the way landscape paintings are taking over the exhibition to the detriment of monumental works, in which the audience is no longer interested. Surprisingly, he believes that “looking naively through the American [part of the exhibition] and giving ourselves over to the senses rushing in, we see a sonata truly painted.”²³⁵ Lyka appears to be most amazed by American art, the highlight of the Munich show, with no attempt at pretence but portraying only feelings: “that is the direction the painting of the future is taking,” he concludes.²³⁶ Thus, his first section on the exhibition abroad shows his interest in and his ability to interpret what he has seen, and to determine the place of nation’s artworks’ with respect to the development in art. Moreover, Lyka’s manner of writing enables the reader to deconstruct the stages of becoming a painter into two simple phases: acquisition of the basics, followed by finding their individuality within the layers of paint. The critic’s particularly unique trait is that his text places a high value on the concepts of ‘seeing’ and ‘perceiving’.

Generally, Lyka’s articles unfold an all-encompassing view, the capacity to compare and contrast various works of art with a firm theoretical knowledge along with some experiences on the practical level. The two consequent articles on the Munich exhibition clearly reveal his familiarity with Swedish, Belgian, Polish, Spanish, and other paintings.

²³⁴ Lyka, “A müncheni szalon I”, 417: “ezt az eszmét hivatalosan ‘individualizmus’-nak nevezték el; a közönséges halandó, aki nem rendszerez azonnal minden apró leletet, tán így mondaná el: fessen kiki úgy, amint a szíve diktálja, - ha már egyszer tudja az a-b-c-t.”

²³⁵ Lyka, “A müncheni szalon I”, 418: “az amerikaiak végignézzük naiv szemmel s átengedjük magunkat a betóduló érzeteknek, valóságos festett szonátát látunk.”

²³⁶ Ibidem: “Ez az az út, melyen a jövő festészete haladni fog.”

Lyka's writing generally conveys a rather inviting atmosphere when compared with Ambrus and also to some extent to Szana. For instance, Lyka holds that "we cannot state that Vaszary's paintings now exhibited belong to his sensational pieces, but rather one of those studies that he prepares."²³⁷ As he comments on works of lesser quality, he succeeds in maintaining a more professional and refined approach.

The Budapest Exhibitions: Art at a Standstill

As we have seen, there is a great degree of pessimism in Lyka's writings whenever the state of national art is under investigation. In the overview of the 1892 Munich show, he evaluates Hungarian works, mainly regretting their backwardness and concludes by wishing "not only that the painter shall be Hungarian but also that *he be a poet, an artist!*"²³⁸ He also provides an insight into the Christmas exhibition of 1896, highlighting some worthy paintings among the many "immature, beginner works," Lyka complains about the low number of visitors and the absence of higher quality. In the end, he boils it down to the fact that "our audience cannot have a greater need [for seeing better works]!"²³⁹

This negativity still echoes in his 1901 overview. As Lyka argues, "the same objects are presented for many consecutive years with the same persistent themes: which is meaningless, grey, prosaic, ill-favoured. If one were to imagine nature based on these Hungarian paintings, one would never feel compelled to turn to nature."²⁴⁰ In the overview of nine years' criticism, his sour tone does not disperse when contemplating on Hungarian art. There is a double observation with regard to such a perennially present negative tone between

²³⁷ Lyka, "Karácsonyi képek" [Christmas Paintings] *A Hét* 7, no. 50 (13 Dec 1896), 865: "nem mondjuk, hogy Vaszarynak itt kiállított képei valami világgraszoló alkotások, inkább tanulmány-féle dolgok."

²³⁸ Lyka, "A müncheni Salon II.", 435: "nem csupán azt kívánhatjuk, hogy ez a festő magyar legyen. Hanem azt is, hogy *költő, hogy művész legyen!*"

²³⁹ Lyka, "Karácsonyi képek", 865: "kiforratlan, kezdő dolgokkal."; Ibidem: "nagyobb igénye nem lehet a mi közönségünknek."

²⁴⁰ Lyka, "A téli tárlat I" [Winter Exhibition I.], *A Hét* 12, no. 47 (24 Nov 1901), 782: "Évről évre ugyanazok a tárgyak, ugyanazok a témák: ami jelentéktelen, szürke, keveset mondó, visszatetsző. Ha az ember abból ítélné meg a természetet, amit ebből a magyar festők művei tükröznek, a természetet nem volna érdemes szeretni."

the lines. On the one hand, Lyka creates an atmosphere of resentment and distress that might convey a feeling of discomfort, similar to Szana's lamenting on Hungarian painters' absence. Yet, it is worth reflecting upon the reason behind such a recurring complaint. The critic was simultaneously calling the attention to a problem of the period and thus also instigating contemporary artists to respond to it, whether that took shape in their return to Hungary or by engaging in some activity towards the improvement of the nation's art life. Keeping in mind Lyka's wide knowledge, his critical tone at times requires the reader to look beyond the basic level of interpretation and look for this secondary intention lurking between the lines.

The (In)active and Interpretive Community: The Audience

Another aspect to reflect on from the articles written in 1901 is the audience. Lyka stands out for he does not only consider painters' works but also the general public attending exhibitions. The critic shows his awareness of their incapacity as he asserts "however, the general public cannot decode the painter's technical talent."²⁴¹ Interestingly, a great number of his articles in *Új Idők* also reflect his connection not only to the audience but also shows his point of view on the position of the artist in society. In his first article *Modern képek*, Lyka draws a parallel between the Potemkin villages and the artists' secluded life.²⁴² The critic defines the Potemkin-world of the 1890s as the place where people [presumably he mainly focuses on artists here] live, keeping aloof from the rest of the world. He contrasts this latter group of highly educated, law-abiding citizens to artists who are rather oblivious when it comes to such constraints or concerns with regard to the great rules of life. As a result, "there is some robust power exploding in these works, which wilfully pushes this paper wall away

²⁴¹ Lyka, "A téli tárlat I", 782: "Már pedig mesterségbeli ügyességének a fokát a nagyközönség nem igen tudja megítélni."

²⁴² Lyka, "Modern képek" [Modern Paintings], *Új Idők* 2, no. 31 (26 Jul 1896), 75-77.

with which the highbrow-men have hidden their heart away from themselves.”²⁴³ The principle therein established – the artist’s distancing away from his the society surrounding him, painting merely by following principles; rather than the manifestation of his spirit in his works – echoes all throughout his articles written between 1896 and 1900.

In 1897, Lyka contends that for Hungarian art to develop it is indispensable to win the support of the general public.²⁴⁴ Optimistically, he adds that this process has already begun. Despite this fact, Lyka points out in another article the deficient capacity of the audience to interpret art, coming forth with the example of the public extolment of Villegas’ painting, which lacks firm ground.²⁴⁵ While he claims that the painting by Lajos Márk, a Hungarian painter, appears to “truly occupy the nerves of the audience.”²⁴⁶ Concluding his writing, the critic reveals that these artists (Richir, Exter, Villegas, Márk) are in the spotlight of the audience’s discussion, and thereby shows the focus of the public interest. Yet with regard to understanding foreign artists’ work, one can observe stagnation considering that two years later, Lyka still complains that “the general public simply cannot understand the great foreigners [meaning: foreign artists].”²⁴⁷ On the whole, the general impression with regard to the audience seems that they largely remained incapable of interpreting art.

It is imperative to take a look at Lyka’s unusual approach that is his tone often unexpectedly shifting towards humour and sarcasm in his writings; presumably with the aim of entertaining and inviting his readers to take him as their guide in a tour walking through an exhibition. For instance, Lyka at times also gives voice to the audience, similarly to Ambrus. As the critic reflects on the incomprehension of the public about Olgyay’s use of the colour

²⁴³ Lyka, “Modern képek”, 76: “valami szilaj erő tör ki ezekből a művekből, mely akaratosan eltólja azt a papíros falat, melylyel a kultúr-ember maga elől eltakarta a szívét.”

²⁴⁴ Lyka, “A tavaszi műtárlat” [The Spring Exhibition], *Új Idők* 3, no. 17 (18 Apr 1897), 378-9.

²⁴⁵ Lyka, “Festett világ” [Painted World], *Új Idők* 3, no. 20 (9 May 1897), 435.

²⁴⁶ Ibidem: “dolgot ad a közönség idegeinek.”

²⁴⁷ Lyka, “A tavaszi műtárlat” [The Spring Exhibition], *Új Idők* 5, no. 17 (23 Apr 1899), 366: “A nagyközönség úgy sem értheti meg a nagy külföldieket.”

blue in his painting, he claims that instead of simply wondering about the use of that peculiar shade, they should state:

Lo and behold, I have learned something! This painter spends his entire life nosing about the colours with great attention. If I do not see them the way he does, it is more likely that my undisciplined eyes are mistaken and not his talent. Thus I thank him for leading me to this new moment, from now on I will strive to see better.²⁴⁸

First and foremost, Lyka's interest in instruction easily comes forward in these lines, though he only starts teaching later, in 1900. Secondly, he offers the audience a new way to think about art, even instigating them to go beyond simple observations. Last but not least, such comments can turn an otherwise dry, formal language into an amusing one. He also makes his audience smile by introducing them to foreign works of art as when he claims that Richir's *Perversite* is "a modern Magdalane, who rather than regretting her sins, is yearning for new ones with hell-born hungry eyes."²⁴⁹ Such sentences are often present in his writings, which keep diverting the audience even during the discussion of such formal matters.

Art in Development: The Era of New Exhibitions and Talents

The complexity of Lyka's articles resides in their pertinence, that is most of his writings are so densely interwoven with information both about contemporary cultural and artistic life that it would suffice to read one alone to extract the main issues of the period. For example, the majority of the intellectuals of the period were drawn to Budapest: only the flourishing capital

²⁴⁸ Lyka, "A tavaszi műtárlat", 366: "Lám, tanultam valamit. Ez a festő egész életét azzal tölti el, hogy feszült figyelemmel fürkészi a színeket. Ha én nem látom azokat olyanoknak, mint ő, valószínűbb, hogy az én fegyelmetlen szemem téved s nem az ő talentuma. Köszönöm tehát neki, hogy rávezetett erre az új momentumra, ezentúl jobban iparkodom látni."

²⁴⁹ Lyka, "Festett világ", 435: "modern Magdolna, a ki nem bánja bűneit, hanem pokoli szomjas szemekkel epekedik újabbak után."

proved to fulfil the needs of contemporaries. Thus Lyka salutes the country-wide event, the opening of the first exhibition in Szeged with the following words: “If only other cities joined the initiative of promoting art, since it can only become a truly cultural element, if it leaves Budapest and perambulates the countryside, dispersing its seeds.”²⁵⁰ In these lines, his desire for more artistic centres outside the capital becomes evident, partially fulfilled with the development of Nagybánya in 1896 and was to flourish by further artists’ colonies in Gödöllő and Szentendre among others in the twentieth century.

Lyka’s capacity to gain an overview of the period whilst still being in it is a unique and rare trait and one of these statements stand out, as he insightfully asserts that those observing the trajectory of young painters such as Adolf Fényes or Ignác Ujváry “will be able to create a clear picture about one of the most interesting periods of Hungarian art.”²⁵¹ Another such key moment was his recognition of Pál Szinyei Merse’s potential. The talented Hungarian painter had an adventurous road leading to fame. Szinyei (1845-1920) studied in Munich in the renowned Piloty-school, but being dissatisfied with it, he embarked on a voyage of self-discovery. Since he was deeply inspired by nature, he became determined to “quit the Piloty-school, and only follow one teacher, who is the best in guiding me, and this teacher is nature.”²⁵² Following his intuitions, Szinyei finished the extraordinary masterpiece, *Majális* in 1873. Unfortunately, the contemporary audience and criticism was unprepared for the wide scale of colours used since “the vivacity of its colours ran counter the bituminous painting, the so-called gallery-tone still fashionable back in those days.”²⁵³ However, Lyka

²⁵⁰ Lyka, “Művészeti Krónika” [Art Chronicle], *Új Idők* 5, no. 12 (19 Mar 1899), 257: “Bár utánozná műpártolását a többi város is, mert a művészet csak akkor válik nálunk igazán kulturális elemmé, ha otthagyja Budapestet és szertebarangolván az országban, elhullajta mindenhol virágait.”

²⁵¹ Lyka, “A téli műtárlat” [The Winter Exhibition], *Új Idők* 5, no. 52 (12 Dec 1899), 595: “biztos képet alkot magának a magyar művészet egyik legérdekesebb korszakáról.”

²⁵² Lyka, *Művészélet*, 36: “Elhatároztam a Piloty-iskolából kilépni, s ezután csak egy tanárt követni, mely engem a legjobban fog vezérelni és e tanárom a természet.”

²⁵³ Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 256: “színeinek elevensége az akkor még szokásos aszfaltos festéssel, az ún. galériatónussal szembehelyezkedett.”

renders Szinyei's debut, as the first in the line of original painters he is about to present, with retrospection into his first actual appearance:

There is one painting among them, which could be inserted into this section of the history of the young Hungarian art as a question mark. One painting, which was painted thirty years ago, in the most desolate period of Hungarian art, when the academic pigtail pulled the nightcap of its own on the head of the newly emerging talents and pulled it right down onto their eyes so that they could not see but only blindly copy the dictates of the academy. This painting was Pál Szinyei Merse's greatest painting bearing the title *Majális*, which he painted in 1862 [sic.] and which still today is so fresh, so dewy due to its indirectness and rich colours that it feels like it was painted only yesterday.²⁵⁴

Lyka then details how the prominent painter's cool reception turned him into a laughingstock. The critic, in agreement with Szinyei's style of *plein air*, takes the opportunity to show the importance of an artist's close contact with nature and claims that its neglect leads to the decay of art. Likewise, Lyka holds and thus reveals his *ars poetica* through saying "this is the only way to become a great artist: to enter into intimate kinship with nature and sticking to the fact that whatever our heart dictates is the only truly valuable thing."²⁵⁵ Such statements are crucial because of at least three reasons. First, Lyka explores Szinyei's talent and immediately is able to draw an overview from his first appearance in the 1860s to the present moment. Second, he openly opposes the academic style and thus reveals his position as an advocate of

²⁵⁴ Lyka, "Modern képek", 76: "Van köztük egy kép, melyet e részben kérdőjel gyanánt lehetne beleállítani a fiatal magyar művészet történetébe. Egy kép, mely harminc évvel ezelőtt festődött, a művészet legsivárabb korában, mikor az akadémikus copf ráhúzta a maga hálósipkáját a felbukkanó friss tehetségek fejére s lehúzta azt a szemükig, hogy ne láthassanak, hanem vakon írják az akadémiai tollbamondást. Ez a kép a Szinnyey-Merse Pál legnagyobbik képe, a Majális címmel, melyet 1862-ben festett s mely ma is oly üde olyan harmatos a maga művészi közvetlensége és gazdag színe révén, hogy szinte úgy hat, mintha tegnap festették volna."

²⁵⁵ Lyka, "A nagybányaiak" [The Nagybánya Artists], *Új Idők* 3, no. 52 (19 Dec 1897), 538: "ez az egyetlen módja annak, hogy valaki nagy művésszé legyen: intim atyafiságba kell lépni a természettel és nem tágítani attól, hogy amit a saját szívünk ösztöne érez, az egyetlen igazán értékes dolog."

free painting. Third, the critic unfolds some of his key concepts of what makes art truly Hungarian and therein also teaches the audience to see. Throughout the investigation of the twenty-two articles, Lyka's essential suggestion regarding Mednyánszky's artwork cannot be dismissed, when he says "if I was not afraid of being misunderstood, I would firmly state: this is Hungarian."²⁵⁶ It is the first time that Lyka proposes that an artist is Hungarian and therefore calls the attention to a change gradually taking place: the disappearance of academic style, the Hungarian painters' settlement in the country rather than abroad and the development of national art.

Ways of Activating the Audience and the Artist

Considering that my focus is on art criticism alongside this genesis of Hungarian art culture, Lyka's way of educating the public's eye calls for further explication. He claims that "a work of art has this magical power to destroy barriers and allows sounding only those notes, which are shared by all of us. The greatness of the work of art resides in its ability to sound all of these notes in common."²⁵⁷ The critic often links the painting with music to demonstrate his point of view in a more effective way, using an example that may appear easier for the laymen to comprehend, given that music has deep roots in Hungarian culture. Lyka emphasizes that "we can trace the power of their art not from their great compositions but from those smaller sketches on which the first idea of the great composition is fixed at the moment they are born."²⁵⁸ The critic appears at times playful or lenient and thus evokes a peculiar atmosphere by proposing that "we will never argue about how a portrait should be or

²⁵⁶ Lyka, "A tavaszi műtárlat", 365: "Ha nem tartanék attól, hogy alaposan félreértenek, szinte azt írnám ide: magyar kép ez."

²⁵⁷ Ibidem: "A műremeknek az a mágikus hatalma van, hogy lerombol válaszfalakat és csak azokat a hangokat engedi megszólalni, amelyek közősek mindannyiunkban. A műremek azáltal nagy, hogy megszólaltatja ezeket a közös hangokat."

²⁵⁸ Lyka, "A Nemzeti Szalon kiállítása" [The Exhibition in the National Salon], *Új Idők* 6, no. 25 (18 Mar 1900), 573: "Művészetének erejét azonban nem e nagy kompozíciókról olvassuk le, hanem azokról a kisebb vázlatokról, amelyeken a nagy képek első ideáját születésül percében megrögzítette."

should not be conceived.”²⁵⁹ In 1896, he concludes by informing us that the younger generation convey the message to the artists of the Potemkin-village that they should get to know themselves, which is followed by his rhetorical question: “Whether this really is the aim of art, you might and are welcome to debate.”²⁶⁰ Similarly the critic reaches out to the audience as he describes the scene on Mednyánszky’s painting and asks: “does he make us quiver, as well?”²⁶¹ Such an approach is unique by its character since Lyka thereafter invites the reader to take part in debates about the purpose of art or how it reaches its effect. All in all, the critic urges the audience to think beyond the general clichés in the field of art.

CONCLUSION

In brief, Szana fails to fulfil his role as an art critic, highlighting only artists’ valuable qualities in their work. On the other hand, Ambrus appears to display the opposite traits: he is straightforward, most of the time opinionated, and occasionally somewhat biased. Both of them show a tendency to list innumerable painters and their exhibited works, but lack the capacity to go beyond sheer observation and portrayal of these objects. The value of their articles rather resides in the collection of data and portrayal of the cultural life in Budapest rather than in equipping the general public with truly useful tools to assess art. Their style is often entertaining, Szana appears to use a more professional tone than Ambrus. Lyka also amuses the audience, yet even in these cases, he often sneaks in deep concerns with regard to the state of national art or its slow development. Likewise, the latter critic conveys the cultural feel of the period and thus enables us not only to extract information about the world of art but also about society and its problems. Lyka’s example is outstanding due to this complex overview of art history and such unrelated fields as literature, theatre and music. His lists of

²⁵⁹ Lyka, “Tájképek és emberképek” [Landscapes and Paintings with People], *Új Idők* 5, no. 19 (7 May 1899), 407: “Azon soha nem fogunk vitatkozni, hogy vajon milyen módon szabad fölfogni egy arcképet és milyenen nem.”

²⁶⁰ Lyka, “Modern képek”, 77: “Vajon ez-e a művészet célja, arról vitatkozni lehet is, szabad is.”

²⁶¹ Lyka, “A tavaszi műtárlat”, 365: “Megrezzentett-e bennünk is valamit?”

painters are not as overwhelming as those of Ambrus or Szana, since Lyka always takes care of arranging them into groups, often followed by comparing and contrasting them to one another, based on the general impression, their development or their temper, to list only a few of those aspects. His thorough background in art allows him to arrive at a deeper understanding of art works and state of national art. On the whole, Lyka is highly informative, straightforward, and critical in a rather refined manner. His use of language keeps the readers engaged whilst also leaving them speechless.

III. ARTIST PROFILES

SÁNDOR LIEZEN-MAYER (1839-1898) THE HISTORICAL PAINTER

Liezen-Mayer received education in the academies of Vienna and Munich. Liezen-Mayer ended up staying in Munich, where he obtained people's admiration and esteem with his first two major paintings, *Queens Elisabeth and Mary at the Tomb of King Lajos the Great* and *Marie Therese Feeds the Child of a Beggar Woman*, in 1862 and 1867, respectively. Liezen-Mayer's paintings are associated with the decline of academic style; he represents a break away from the "rigidity of the Munich style."²⁶² The artist certainly stands out for his novelty but fails to achieve a major breakthrough.

Szana on the 'Painter of Power(lessness)'

In Szana's writing, the reader learns about Liezen-Mayer's biography in more detail, as well as receives an ample description of his paintings and illustrations with occasional evaluations, for instance, he states that Liezen-Mayer paints "with an unusual power," "overflowing with unusual warmth," "with unusual luck."²⁶³ Besides mentioning such noteworthy traits, Szana deems him to be an artist "without parallel" and filled with "individual traits."²⁶⁴ Yet, he fails to further contemplate a deeper level of meaning beyond his own words. The critic leaves the audience in a state of confusion with his closing thought, holding that "his artistic power often was limited to the depiction of general people."²⁶⁵ Throughout his article Szana claims that Liezen-Mayer's paintings are imbued with national spirit; however, towards the end he asserts that the painter was but "the picturesque interpreter

²⁶² Genthon, *Az új magyar*, 100; István Genthon et al., *Magyar művészet 1800-1945* [Hungarian Art 1800 - 1945], (Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalata: Budapest, 1962), 212.

²⁶³ Szana, "Markó művészete" [The Art of Markó], *Új Idők* 27 (1 Sep 1897), 1157: "ritka erővel", "ritka melegség öntötte el."

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 1158: "ritka szerencsével," "teljesen egyéni tulajdonságokkal."

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 1160: "művészi ereje sokszor csak az általános emberi visszatükrözésre szorítkozott."

of the German spirit.”²⁶⁶ On the whole, Szana’s writing again abounds in information and description but fails to convey genuine ideas or new ways of looking at art.

Lyka: Liezen-Mayer, the Kind Professor and Excellent Illustrator

Lyka published two articles about Liezen-Mayer, shedding new light on his personality. The first one evokes the tone of an obituary, written a week after the artist’s death in 1898. Lyka places the emphasis on Liezen-Mayer’s illustrations rather than on his paintings, arguing in his comparisons for the former category by observing that “he is more independent and stronger because he is more intimate in his illustrations.”²⁶⁷ Lyka’s statement that the artist “has not only carved his name into the history of illustration, but has done so with bold letters,” coincides with expert opinion several decades later with regard to the illustrations of Goethe’s *Faust*, which “can be included among the best outcomes of the nineteenth century Hungarian graphics.”²⁶⁸

In Lyka’s 1900 article, incidentally from the same year as Szana’s, it turns out that the two critics happened to attend and report on the same event: an exhibition dedicated to Sándor Liezen-Mayer. Lyka analyzes his style intertwined with biographical details and focuses on the painter’s connection with the famous professor Piloty in particular. Lyka partially renders his personal experience with the master of those few years when they “spent several hours of the day together under the same roof.”²⁶⁹ The critic points out noteworthy traits of Liezen-Mayer’s talent, such as his ability to portray decorative elements in paintings imbued with German sentimentalism. Thus, the overall picture gained about the painter is a positive one. However, it seems to preempt the question Genthon asked thirty years later, pondering the

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 1160: “a német szellem festői tolmácsa.”

²⁶⁷ Lyka, “Liezen-Mayer Sándor” *Új Idők* 6, no. 9 (27 Feb 1898), 189: “az illusztrációiban önállóbb, erősebb, mert intimebb.”

²⁶⁸ Lyka, “Liezen-Mayer”, 190: “beleírta, még pedig vastag betűkkel, a nevét a modern illusztrálás történetébe”; 190; Genthon, *Magyar*, 214: “a magyar XIX. századi grafika legjobb eredményei közé számíthatók.”

²⁶⁹ Lyka, “Gretchen festője” [The Gretchen’s Painter] *Új Idők* 6, no. 21 (18 Feb 1900), 487: “egy azon födél alatt töltöttük a nap néhány óráját.”

fame he attained with the choice of colours and gentle depiction: “Whether it is because of this or for some other reason, we do not know but he has certainly reaped great success.”²⁷⁰

Lyka certainly suggested that Liezen-Mayer was a popular figure, a kind professor and an outstanding illustrator of his period. Szana devotes more attention to listing and describing his paintings, whereas Lyka also provides insights into the painter’s personality, as well as his place in Hungarian art.

KÁROLY MARKÓ (1793-1860): THE CENTRE OF DEBATE BETWEEN IDEALISM AND REALISM

Károly Markó’s role in the history of Hungarian painting is even more heavily contested than that of Liezen-Mayer. Markó is considered to have “established the stereotypes of depicting the Hungarian plain” along with Miklós Barabás and Károly Lotz.²⁷¹ Even though it remains a subject of debate whether the small landscape paintings by Barabás “reveal Markó’s impact or vica versa, his [Barabás’s] impact on Markó.”²⁷² Before resolving to devote his studies to art, Markó aimed to become an engineer and began to train himself in an autodidactic manner.²⁷³ After a short visit to Pest, Markó spent thirteen years partially studying in Vienna. Upon his return to his homeland, his experiments with portraits and landscapes are not met with appreciation by the Hungarian audience. The artist finds a patron in Vienna who promotes his trip to Italy, which became a landmark in his life; launching the so-called idealistic landscape paintings where “he set small mythological, biblical or historical figures” in the centre of his work.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Genthon, *Az új magyar*, 101: “Ezért-e vagy másért, nem tudni, de nagy sikereket aratott.”

²⁷¹ Németh, *Magyar Művészet*, 85: “alakították ki a pusztáábrázolás sablonjait.”

²⁷² Genthon, *Magyar*, 94: “Markó hatását mutatják-e, avagy fordítva, ő hatott-e Markóra.”

²⁷³ Barát Béla, István Genthon et al., *A Szépművészetek könyve* [The Book of Fine Arts] (Budapest: A Pesti Hírlap R.T. kiadása, 1940), 909.

²⁷⁴ Genthon, *Az új magyar*, 29: “apró mitológiai, bibliai vagy történeti figuráit állítja.”

Szana: A Theoretical Contemplation on Art and Markó Focusing on the Role of Nature

With a title such as *The Art of Markó*, Szana's article under discussion, one would expect a detailed analysis of Markó's oeuvre. Based on the productive life the artist led, it would not be challenging to devote a thorough study to his complete works. However, the critic only discusses him for less than half of the text; on pages four through nine of the eleven-page article. The analysis, however confusing and long, consists of subjects such as nature, realism, idealism, symbolism, illusion, sentiment, soul, historical, or even classic landscape painters. While showing his concerns about the connection between art and fashion, art and the audience, or the possible definition of a true painter, he somehow attempts to cover all of these themes. The plethora of aforementioned themes are scattered throughout in Szana's articles, notably his disagreements with Gusztáv Keleti's criticism of Markó, a recurrent element in the article. The general impression may surface in the form of confusion and an overflow of information, as the above-mentioned list suggests. The critic brings up several issues with regard to painting, to Markó and his criticism, with little noticeable order.

Before delving into his article though, the fact that Szana published an entire book about Markó and his art in the following year, in 1898, is remarkable for two reasons. On the one hand, gaining an insight into Szana's book, one finds a similar approach as seen in his article. For instance, the critic provides his reader with a combination of biographical details, reflections on Markó's art and the state of art in general; for example, "after cold and boring templates, the painters copied the diverse background of the human activities: nature, closing themselves up between four walls, where the sunshine, the scent of flowers and the songs of birds could not penetrate."²⁷⁵ On the other hand, to the disappointment of Bellák, some contemporary experts tend "to consider the children of Markó nothing but the belated

²⁷⁵ Szana, *Markó Károly és a tájképfestészet* [Károly Markó and the landscape painting], (Budapest: Athenaeum Irod. és Nyomdai R. Társulat, 1898), 1: A képírók hideg és unalmas chablonok szerint másolták emberi tevékenységünk változatos háttérét: a természetet, elzárkózva a műterem négy fala közé, hova nem tudott behatolnia napfény, a virágillat és a madárdal."

imitators of their father.”²⁷⁶ Bellák refers to Szana as the only one mentioning the importance of his children, in his attempt to show to counterbalance such common beliefs. The critic comes to the fore, Bellák holds, as the only source for specific biographical details, which he most likely gathered during his trip to Italy before starting the book, such as “in the last phase of his [Markó’s] life, Barberina [his daughter] completed the meticulous parts in the paintings.”²⁷⁷ These examples serve as the proof of Szana’s book as a point of reference even in the twenty-first century. The fact that his monograph is generally vaguely hinted at might also convey the idea that its importance lies not so much in his art historical approach as in the valuable data accumulated, in the same way as his informative articles.

Szana appears to rely on Markó’s example to prove his point about the connection between artist, soul, and nature in his theoretical contemplation. Some of his observations seem relevant and valuable, others exaggerated. For example, the critic holds that the true artist “does not paint nature as he has *seen* it but the way he has *felt* it.”²⁷⁸ Another similar claim is that “for the artist, nature is the source of launching deep emotions.”²⁷⁹ The critic lines up various arguments regarding the meaning of a true artist. The problem resides in the fact that seems to exclude other painters who do not fit this category, which becomes a problem in the case of artists such as Liezen-Mayer. Liezen-Mayer earned his fame even though his style was often described as “dispassionate.”²⁸⁰ Therefore, this and several other observations about the meaning of a true artist explicated in the article do not seem correct;

²⁷⁶ Bellák Gábor, “A Markó-iskola. Markó Károly gyermekei és tanítványai” [The Markó-school. Károly Markó’s kids and students] in *Markó Károly és köre: Mítosztól a képig 2011. május 6 – október 2.* [Károly Markó and his circle: From myth to painting 6 May to 2 October, 2011] (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 2011.), 75: “Markó-gyerekekben lényegében apjuk megkésett utánozták.”

²⁷⁷ Bellák, “Markó-iskola”, 76: “az utolsó időszakban lánya, Barberina végezte a képeken az aprólékosabb munkákat.”

²⁷⁸ Szana, “Markó művészete”, 1219: “nem is olyannak festő, aminőnek látta, hanem aminőnek érezte a természetet.”

²⁷⁹ Ibid, 1224: “a művész számára mély megindulások forrása a természet.”

²⁸⁰ Genthon, *Magyar*, 212: “szenvtelen.”

and possibly as a result of Szana's unfinished quest for that answer, he often reiterates former observations, therein bewildering his audience as they try to decipher his message.

Szana Versus Lyka: Interpreting a Painter's Microcosm

Let us now turn to Szana and Lyka's distinct ways of constructing different arguments with the notion of 'microcosm' proves to be a peculiar case to contrast. Szana asserts that "art (...) exactly differs from science in that with every remarkable artist it starts over. The painter, the sculptor, apart from some theoretical knowledge, start everything from scratch and create for themselves their own microcosm. Thus art as such does not develop."²⁸¹ The critic's concept of art experiencing a rebirth with the coming of a new artist appears as a valuable idea. Thus, works of art become unique only if they are able to reflect something truly genuine. However, the notion of certain trends becoming outdated, often resulting in the advance of something new is not only an established fact but is also easily traceable in numerous works of art – Markó and Merse Pál Szinyei themselves being examples. Interestingly, Lyka calls the reader's attention to a similar idea, yet arriving at a different understanding. Observing the exhibited works, he holds that "all significantly different frames of mind, these artists [Károly Ziegler, Lajos Márk, Andor Boruth] look down on each human microcosm from entirely different perspectives. It is a great achievement if only we look back on recent times."²⁸² Lyka evidently considers painters representing their personality in their works as not only essential, but as the result of a long-awaited change, the roots of which lead back to a world of set values and conventions.

²⁸¹ Szana, "Markó művészete", 1218-19: "A művészet (...) éppen abban különbözik a tudománytól, hogy minden valamirevaló művészszel újból kezdődik. [sic] A festő, a szobrász, eltekintve némely kevés jelentőségű művelettől, mindent előlről kezd és maga teremti meg a maga mikrokosmosát. Ezért magában a művészetben nincs haladás."

²⁸² Lyka, "Magyar művészek a Múcsarnokban" [Hungarian artists in the Hall of Art], *Új Idők* 6, no. 51 (16 Dec 1900), 534: "Csupa merőn más felfogás, egészen eltérő szempontokból néznek ezek a művészek egy-egy emberi mikrokosmoszra. Nagy eredmény, ha csak a közelmúlt is visszagondolunk."

Szana and Lyka seem to come to an agreement on the importance of artists portraying their world in an unprecedented manner. However, Szana concludes that art does not develop; only artists do. Meanwhile, Lyka defines genuine works of art as those that are essentially imbued with the painters' characters and show that a shift has taken place towards a new way of painting. Thus, Lyka presumes that art and artists both develop simultaneously. All in all, Szana transmits valuable insights, but presumably as a result of gaps in his knowledge, he apparently fails to retrieve an overall view of the development of art. Moreover, later on in the article he contradicts himself by stating that realistic landscape painting was not created by idealists "but by the stupefying coldness of the classical and historical landscape painters."²⁸³ Such an observation implies that there is a certain trend that creates another, thus art does change by taking on new shapes. Therefore an artist's refusal to paint in a certain way and opting for a new one is a development in art since he creates something new and unprecedented, as in the case of Markó.

It is an interesting parallel that in his argument towards accepting that his undiversified theme – the landscapes – Szana compares Markó's recurring themes to Rusydael's constant use of dark colours. The contemporary art historian Sabine Grabner also draws the same parallel as she contends that "both of them [Markó and Gauermann], walked on the two extremes of the artist's paths, as once upon a time did Ruysdael and Kaspar Dughet, the idealistic and the realist artist's prototypes."²⁸⁴ Finding such an unambiguous parallel authenticates Szana's words and also suggests a struggle to find his way to put thoughts into words. Nevertheless, his conclusion is surprisingly straightforward and motivating: "Be an idealist, a realist, be an impressionist or a symbolist, anove all else be *something* and be *yourself*. The Orthodox priests declare only in vain that there is no salvation

²⁸³ Szana, "Markó művészete", 1235: "hanem a klasszikus és hisztórikus tájképirók dermesztő hidegsége."

²⁸⁴ Sabine Grabner, "Idősebb Markó Károly bécsi kapcsolatai" [The Viennese connections of Károly Markó, the Senior] in *Markó Károly és köre*, 36: "Mindketten [Markó és Gauermann] "a művészi pálya legszélső ösvényén járnak, mint egykor Ruysdael és Kaspar Dughet, az idealista és a realista művész prototípusai."

outside the church: Every truly talented person is a *heretic*.”²⁸⁵ This is also probably one of the most valuable insights, with which the critic urges artists to look beyond the rules of the Academy and follow their spirit to become true painters.

Lyka: Placing Markó in the Context of Art history

Inspired by a painting exhibited in the National Salon, Lyka devotes a short article of two pages to the idealist landscape painter. Despite the brevity of his writing, the critic appears to be more organized and once again shows his ability to contextualize, as well as to precisely tell pretentious exultation apart from true merit. For instance, Lyka calls Markó a “famous father: the first Hungarian painter of the century, who earned the Hungarian name great appreciation abroad.”²⁸⁶ Indeed, Markó stands out by acquainting foreign artists with the abilities of a Hungarian painter.

The peculiarity of Lyka is, once again, the way he arrives at tenuous distinctions as he opposes the theory about his role as a trailblazer in the following way: “He gave himself over to an unusual passion, but he had no plans whatsoever to forge his own path.”²⁸⁷ The critic shows his importance in rejecting to follow the rules of the academy, unlike his peers who “flapped their wings in prescribed rhythms.”²⁸⁸ Instead, Lyka points out how Markó sat down and studied nature closely, taking it as his primary model. Turning to his disadvantages, the critic brings to the fore his refined observation about the painter: “Whatever the diligent master retrieved from genuine nature, the artist has often paralyzed that impact with those conventional figures sitting or standing in his landscapes.”²⁸⁹ Those conventional figures

²⁸⁵ Szana, “Markó művészete”, 1238: “Légy idealista, légy realista, légy impresszionista vagy szimbolista, de mindenekelőtt légy *valami* és légy *önmagad*. Hiábra hirdetik az orthodoxia papjai, hogy az egyházon kívül nincs üdvözlés: Minden valódi tehetség *eretnek*.”

²⁸⁶ Lyka, “Markó”, 189: “híres apa: az első magyar festő ebben a században, aki becsületet szerzett a magyar névnek külföldön.”

²⁸⁷ Ibidem: “Ritka lelki passzióra adta magát, de esze ágában sem volt utat törni.”

²⁸⁸ Ibidem: “szárnyaikat előírt ritmusban csattogtatták.”

²⁸⁹ Lyka, “Markó”, 190: “Amit a szorgalmas mester kiszedett az igaz természetből, azt a művész hatásban gyakran megbénította azokkal a konvencionális alakokkal, amelyeket a tájképeibe beleültetett vagy állított.”

named by Lyka are later acquiring the term “staffage-like (...) figures,”²⁹⁰ which “are inserted in order to intensify the vivacity of a large space, mainly in landscape painting.”²⁹¹ As becomes visible, Lyka’s writing is densely interwoven with information about academic style and a deep analysis of specifically Markó’s art. Moreover, though it has been unnecessary to mention so far, the critic gives certain biographical details, but even those have the function to enable the reader to obtain an overall picture about the artist.

Last but not least, one of the most difficult issues is placing an artist into art history. According to some sources, Markó belongs to the line of late Classicist painters,²⁹² whereas others suggest that “upon his arrival in Italy, he got caught up in the fashionable stream of the period and therein giving up his independence he became a Classicist (...) just like his peers.”²⁹³ Lyka also carefully words his idea this way: “Markó can be regarded as the first realistic painter from various aspects, not in Hungary alone but also possibly among artists from other countries.”²⁹⁴ Even though Lyka mostly manages to place artists in the gamut of Hungarian art, he clearly struggled with Markó’s case. It is not my intention to enter and resolve the debate of his classification as “the unique personality of Markó can hardly be delineated in its entirety until the contradictions are resolved.”²⁹⁵ Yet it is clear that already in the 1960s, his art was called “the opening of the realistic landscape painting,” from which he then shifted to “the idealistic landscape painting of the Italian academy.”²⁹⁶ Thus Lyka succeeded in grasping the realistic feel of Markó’s paintings. However, in the absence of the exact paintings he has seen in the exhibition, that is hard to tell.

²⁹⁰ Genthon, *Magyar*, 107: “staffázs-szerű (...) alakok.”

²⁹¹ Ibid, 483: “nagy tér-, főleg tájbrázolás elevenségének fokozása céljából beiktatott [figurák].”

²⁹² Barát, *Szépművészetek*, 910.

²⁹³ Genthon, *Az új magyar*, 27-8: “nyakig merült a kor divatos áramlatába s önállóságát feladva éppúgy klasszicista festővé vált, (...) mint társai.”

²⁹⁴ Lyka, “Markó”, 190: “Markó ily módon sok tekintetben az első realisztikus irányu festőnek mondható, nemcsak nálunk, hanem talán egy-két más ország művészei közt is.”

²⁹⁵ Genthon, *Magyar*, 110: “Markó érdekes egyéniségét a maga teljességében, az ellentmondások feloldásával alig lehet még felvázolni.”

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 107: “realista tájkép nyitánya,” “az olasz akadémia úgynevezett ideális tájképfestészete.”

Contemporary art historians have most certainly contributed to our knowledge of Markó's oeuvre. To only mention two interesting points, it is intriguing to observe that already in 1841 the *Wiener Zeitung* aimed at deciphering "the tension between the idealist and realist momenta of the Markó-paintings."²⁹⁷ On the other hand, Sabine asserts that "Markó was not particularly influenced by the fact landscape painting took a new direction with realistic painting's arrival since he attempted to find his own, personal realism in the details."²⁹⁸ Thus a new debate could apparently always be launched about the mysterious figure of Markó. Yet Lyka managed to contextualize him despite the fact that all he could have at his disposal to rely on was Szana's 1898 monograph, which he actually refers to vaguely, considering that this article's publication date is 1899.

Lyka's concluding line calls the reader's attention to the theme of sketches, a topic also emerging in Munkácsy's case. Talking about the exhibited paintings of Markó's collection in the National Salon, the critic asserts "they are interesting but even more so are among them the unfinished ones. Through them it is the easiest to look into the soul of the old, stalwart Hungarian painter."²⁹⁹ In this statement, Lyka appears to share his idea with Szana claiming similarly that "we praise some of the sketches of the great masters more than their finished works, because they reveal the personality of the artist in a more grandiose, honest and almost naked way."³⁰⁰ Sketches are still considered an outstanding part of the artists' oeuvre, as Hessky holds that "a certain group of his sketches is truly revealing on the

²⁹⁷ Sabine, "Idősebb", 36: "Markó-képek ideális és reális mozzanatai közötti feszültséget."

²⁹⁸ Ibid, 31: "Nem különösebben befolyásolta, hogy a tájképfestészet a realiztikus igény fellépésével új irányt vett, mivel saját, személyes realizmusát próbálta megtalálni a részletekben."

²⁹⁹ Lyka, "Markó", 190: "érdekes, de a legérdekesebbek köztük a félbemaradtak. Azokon át lehet a legjobban a régi, derék magyar tájfestő lelkébe bepillantani."

³⁰⁰ Szana, "Markó művészete", 1223: "A nagy mesterek némely vázlatait azért becsüljük többre azok kész képeinél, mert bennük a művész jelleme hatalmasabban, őszintébben, ugyszólván, meztelenül szokott megnyilatkozni."

one hand about the trajectory of landscape painting development in the nineteenth century, on the other hand about Markó's path of personal development.”³⁰¹

On the whole, Szana is descriptive, informative and contemplative, at times challenging to follow. Therefore, he is less effective in enabling the reader to acquire new ways of seeing, even though his style is certainly inspirational. Lyka is, however, informative and instructive at the same time expressing his thoughts in a more organised way that is easier to follow. His approach to Markó's art engenders new thoughts in the audience, in a way that invites them to participate in his theoretical voyage by agreeing or disagreeing, as in the case of the small figures in his painting.

³⁰¹ Hessky Orsolya, *Id. Markó Károly [Markó Károly, the Senior]* (Kossuth Kiadó: Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 2009), 64: “Vázlatainak egy csoportja igen sokat elárul egyrészt a tájképfestészet XIX. századi fejlődésének útjáról, másrészt Markó személyes fejlődéséről.”

MIHÁLY MUNKÁCSY (1844-1900) AND THE DEBATES ABOUT NATIONAL ART

Both Károly Lyka and Tamás Szana wrote about the painter Mihály Munkácsy and his works, each making additional efforts to place him on the map of painters in Europe. In the forthcoming analysis, I will aim to provide an insight into what meanings their words reveal and where these authors place Munkácsy and his work in the world of art. Reading the articles can prove to be quite intriguing and at times contradictory, as we shall see. It is an extraordinary experience to contrast two such different characters as Szana and Lyka, twenty-five years his elder, and presumably due to their different paths of life, the former being more of a conservative and the latter a reformer. I will first unfold the arguments about Szana's articles and then will move on to Lyka.

*Szana: Munkácsy, the Painter "Who Doesn't Know the Impossible"*³⁰²

Szana wrote altogether four articles about Munkácsy in 1884, 1892, 1894, and 1895; all published in the periodical *Magyar Salon*, exposing different aspects of his personality. To help the reader contextualize, a brief overview of Munkácsy's life is necessary. With his parents' early death, he became an orphan at the age of six and spent his childhood living with his uncle at Békéscsaba, who sent him off to a carpenter's workshop. He stayed there until 1858, then left for Arad. There he worked for several carpenters, but due to severe illness was forced to move back to his uncle's house in Gyula. Observing his fondness for drawing once his health had improved, his uncle sent him off to a painter's workshop in the village, where another painter took notice of his drawings and began to promote his talent. That was the turning point as by being sent off to Pest, his official education took place while visiting

³⁰² Szana, "Munkácsy Mihály," *Magyar Salon* 17 (1 Jul 1892), 439.

several cities such as Vienna, Düsseldorf, Munich, and finally Paris. From 1870 on, he became well-recognised and his works placed Hungary on the map of international artists.

Szana first wrote about the artist in his article, “Munkácsy Mihály,” fourteen years after Munkácsy’s breakthrough in 1870, with a Gold Medal of the Salon in Paris for *The Last Day of the Condemned Man*.³⁰³ The critic shows the painter’s path of life from being an introverted, anonymous person to a well-known, established painter; also as a road from vicissitudes to a life of welfare with no signs of decline or recess of any sort in between. From the moment of his award in Paris onward, he entered the world of art, evolving and unfolding new sides of his talent every day. He highly esteems his art, leaving no room for doubt for maintaining his acquired position and producing prestigious works of art.

Szana makes his argument particularly catching by inserting details of the artist’s life that were most likely unknown to the majority of the readers at the time. For instance, Szana presents Munkácsy’s request for an unusually high amount of money for his work for the first time to pay his debt in the form of a witty dialogue between Munkácsy and the English client. Such devices are essential to keep in mind since it is a way to lure the audience into his writing and at the same time invites them to walk the path of the poor man who gradually acquired recognition and success.

The expert takes care not only to mention Munkácsy’s ingenuity at the beginning of the article, but also supports his statement several times throughout the article with various arguments. He mentions only a few of the great painter’s first paintings, thereby leaving ample room for describing, analyzing, and assessing two of his most recent works: *Christ before Pilate* (1881) and *Golgotha* (1884). In these, he aims to highlight Munkácsy’s truly unique character by claiming that his article could not sufficiently present all the beauty residing in the first painting of the Christ trilogy, thus he concludes his praise with the

³⁰³ Szana, “Munkácsy Mihály,” *Magyar Salon* 2, no. 2 (1 Nov. 1884), 122-29.

following words: “Let me simply emphasize the unrivalled simplicity of the composition.”³⁰⁴

Szana proves to be accurate by calling Munkácsy's work one that “both aesthetically and philosophically illustrated the truth by uniting realism and idealism.”³⁰⁵

Munkácsy's work is labelled as “romantic realism” by the author of the artist's monograph, Lajos Végvári; therefore Szana's statement that already foreshadows the term given in the later period, appears to be adequate.³⁰⁶ Szana involves the audience in the analysis, for instance, by showing a gradual development of the artist by moving from dark colours to a greater variety. Giving such an insight into his oeuvre reveals the critic's refined taste and knowledge on how to look at a composition. At the same time, Szana also explores Golgotha in more detail and points out a ladder “which divides the composition into two fields.”³⁰⁷ To make his argument more complex, he adds that such a division is there “to show Munkácsy's virtuosity once again in its entirety.”³⁰⁸ Numerous similar explanations appear in the text, which guide the reader's eye whilst looking at the work of art; thus, by involving the audience in looking at the painting this way, he is teaching them how to appreciate art.

All in all, the 1884 article is highly informative, clearly demonstrating Szana's familiarity with contemporary art, thus giving his words credit. However, he praises Munkácsy throughout the entire article and therefore seems to present a biased point of view, calling into question its veracity.

³⁰⁴ Szana, “Munkácsy” (1884), 126: “Elég legyen azonban csak a compositió páratlan egyszerűségét hangsúlyoznom.”

³⁰⁵ Ibid, 125: “aesthetikailag és bölcsészetiileg igazat ábrázolta a realismus és az idealizmus egyesítése által.”

³⁰⁶ Végvári, Munkácsy, 6-7.

³⁰⁷ Szana, “Munkácsy”, 126: “mely két mezőre osztja a compositiót.”

³⁰⁸ Ibidem: “ismét egész erejében mutatja Munkácsy virtuozitását.”

A Personal Connection to Art and Artist

The second article from 1892 bears the same title as the first, that is nothing but the artist's name "Munkácsy Mihály," is salient for its extraordinary length of twenty pages. Szana emphasizes his close relations with the artist when in the second sentence he reveals having known the painter already in the late 1860s, before he gained fame.³⁰⁹ Such a particularly lengthy writing permitted Szana to delve into several topics, amongst which I will highlight four: the critic's own career, the bias surrounding Munkácsy, the question of contingency, and his own personal involvement in the painter's life.

To start with the first topic, Szana writes about his own ambitions of becoming a painter, stating that "there was a time when I myself also believed that once I would turn into a well-known painter."³¹⁰ An assertion as such unfolds various ways of looking at Szana and the way he is looking at art. First of all, it presumes a greater familiarity with art and also a true interest in it. Meanwhile, previous aspirations for an artist's path could suggest a feeling of jealousy lurking between the lines. Yet Szana's case is unambiguous: he is an intellectual, always open to enter a debate about art and if necessary promoting the career of his contemporaries rather than aiming to undermine them.

Regarding his first article, I argued that his one-sidedness might discredit Szana's arguments, for which he reassuringly makes up in the second. He challenges the exultation around Munkácsy and admits that he himself also questioned the painter's attached qualities, and doubted, in particular, if anybody could transform into "an artist of worldwide fame without training."³¹¹ Szana then introduces his first personal encounters in the Kammon coffeehouse. He provides an insight into the way he grew fond of the young painter both as an artist and as a person, laying special emphasis on such traits as honesty and loyalty; reiterating

³⁰⁹ Szana, "Munkácsy Mihály" (1892), 419-439.

³¹⁰ Ibid, 422: "volt idő, midőn magam is abban a boldog hitben éltem, hogy valamikor majd emlegetett piktor válik belőlem."

³¹¹ Ibid, 423: "világhírű művészsze [sic] tanulás nélkül."

the notion first used in his 1884 article, namely “the ancient power residing deep inside of him.”³¹² With this he informs the reader that he himself did not simply admire Munkácsy for his popularity, but unravels that seeing his sketches of life in the countryside drew attention to the artist. Szana holds that “he [Munkácsy] is the first, who could fill the canvas with real life and vitality.”³¹³ Therefore the issue of his bias seems partially resolved by such a strong personal statement.

To move on to the third topic, the question of contingency yearns for explanation. One can easily observe Szana’s admiration of art both as a spectator and as an artist. When exploring the totality of brushstrokes on a canvas he also investigates it from the point of view of the artist. He draws a direct parallel between the use of colours and events in the painter’s life, turning from the use of dark colours to brighter ones and from uncertainty to an established life. By creating and arguing for the importance of such a link, the critic once again appears to turn to the audience and provide guidelines on what aspects to keep in mind in order to understand the colours of a painting. However, the essence of the statement is not only the recurring instructive tone but also the assumption that Munkácsy himself told Szana about his choice of colours in one of their encounters. It is indeed foreboding to directly link and make an unambiguous statement about their meetings as sources of Szana’s thoughts, yet taking such information into account, it is indispensable to mention this as a source of inspiration during his writings about the great artist.

As Szana concludes his critique, their acquaintance is confirmed as he tells us about a discussion they had while on the tram, which was transcribed in his article. During their talk, Munkácsy revealed his future plan about his next painting, which was to be the first piece of the Christ trilogy completed in 1881, *Christ before Pilate*. Establishing such a clear connection between the painter and the critic certainly determines the way Szana wrote and

³¹² Ibid, 431: “a benne rejtőző és erőnek.”

³¹³ Ibid, 433: “ő az első, a ki igaz életet, vérlüktetést tudott önteni ezekbe az képekbe.”

thought about the artist. Moreover, considering that Munkácsy was still at the beginning of his successful career around the 1880s, reminiscing about such moments in the past may have been filled with a feeling of pride and nostalgia.

The secret to an artist's soul and a long awaited return

The third article about Munkácsy provides a brief introduction of five pages into *Munkácsy vázlataiból* [Munkácsy's sketches] and is filled with images from the artist's sketchbook, enabling the contemporary audience to compare them with his previously exhibited works of art.³¹⁴ Szana contends that the entire personality of the artist resides in a sketchbook since it serves as a map of evolvement of the artist – capturing the momentary impressions and initial plans from the birth of the idea in the mind until its realization. He proposes that a mediocre artist meets the required expectations, whereas “the modern artist looks for *life* and *justice* everywhere and challenges even the most rigorous traditions, if his artistic conviction rooted in realism desires so.”³¹⁵ This assertion conveys a standard of measurement as it unravels a standpoint and provides instructions on how to distinguish between the mediocre and the genuine artist. Szana also claims that after a scrupulous investigation of the sketches, “one can easily discover the driving force beneath the inspiration.”³¹⁶ Digging into a deeper level, the critic shows the reader how much more there is to be seen in a mere sketch than something that at first appears to be a child's doodle. Despite the brevity of Szana's article, it still serves as a guideline to interpreting sketches, a deeper and almost neglected field in art at the time.

³¹⁴ Szana, “Munkácsy vázlataiból” [From Munkácsy's Sketches], *Magyar Salon* 20, (1 Mar 1894), 1165-74.

³¹⁵ Ibid, 1172: “A modern művész *életet és igazságot* keres mindenütt s még a legszigorúbb tradícióknak is hadat üzen, ha ezt a realizmusban gyökerező művészi meggyőződése úgy kívánja.”

³¹⁶ Szana, “Munkácsy”, 1173: “megtalálhatja bennük az inspiráció gyorsan működő erejét.”

In his fourth article, *Munkácsy: A művész vázlataival* Szana sheds new light on Munkácsy and his relation to the Hungarian audience in his writing in 1895.³¹⁷ He acclaims the Parisian artist's return to his homeland, proclaiming joyfully that it "is no longer mere wishful thinking but our nation's shared joy."³¹⁸ It is his utmost belief that despite his prolonged absence, Munkácsy had always been a Hungarian at the bottom of his heart. Considering the existing void in art culture, he hoped for Munkácsy to fill that gap by establishing a real artistic centre, based on the overwhelming success of his frequent Friday receptions in his palace on 52 Avenue de Villiers in Paris.³¹⁹ Besides creating a vivid milieu for artists, Szana wished that it could fulfill various tasks, such as establishing a stronger link between the audience and the artist. Meanwhile, with a lively centre, he hoped that artists could cease to paint on commission and paint more based on their inspirations. His article sadly concludes that despite the sudden proliferation of painters, they failed to form any artistic community.

Szana reveals that the so-called exchange of art works was close to non-existent given the artists' rather introverted characters or lack of financial resources, with coffeehouses being the only places for intellectuals to meet one another. Szana unfolds Hungary's great need for a truly artistic salon that would serve as the locale for grand debates in the field of art, for the art dealers of refined taste to attend and promote the circulation of art works, and for providing the audience the opportunity for education. On the whole, Szana thinks of Munkácsy's return as an event that shall yield promising results that could help invigorate the flourishing capital from its slumber and bring about the increased interest of foreigners.

Despite the truth in his analyses, it often seems that Szana expects the great artist's return as if he was some Messianic figure. There is no doubt about the prominence of

³¹⁷ Szana, "Munkácsy: A művész vázlataival" [Munkácsy: With sketches by the artist], *Magyar Salon* 24 (1 Dec. 1895), 501-16.

³¹⁸ Ibid, 504: "most már nem jámbor óhajtás, hanem mindnyájunk közös öröme."

³¹⁹ Judit Borsos, *Munkácsy a nagyvilágban* [Munkácsy in the world], (Szemimpex Kiadó: Budapest, 2005), 50.

Munkácsy's figure, yet issues accumulated during centuries and decades that withheld Hungary's development in art are not likely to be resolved in the figure of a single man.

Lyka – Munkácsy: The Master of Genre Painting

Lyka, with an increased interest in the new generation of painters, only published one long article and three shorter articles about Munkácsy. It is understandable therefore that he appeared to be less supportive of the highly esteemed painter. The reason for the apparent lack of articles is partially because he entered a more active period after he was invited to be the editor of the periodical, *Művészet* later in 1902. He wrote three articles about Munkácsy in 1891 and two more in 1897, in *Élet* and *Új Idők* respectively.

Munkácsy, the nation's prodigy

Lyka challenges the idealized image of the widely known painter in his article *Munkácsy Mihály*.³²⁰ The complexity of Lyka's approach is put forth as he contends that "it is not enough to simply judge the great painter's works but our analysis needs to take place by contextualizing Hungarian criticism and the Hungarian audience's taste in art."³²¹ He clearly sets the tone of the article with an unusually strong statement, particularly considering that the critic is still in his early twenties at this time. Lyka's concept is particularly remarkable for its elaborateness, since he places Munkácsy's art into context; that is, he assesses the artist's works in view of the contemporary audience and existing criticism. Thus he takes on a hermeneutic approach.

The critic proposes that "he [Munkácsy] can only gain firm ground, on which he can become great, once we do away with the blind admiration of the sheer name," thereby conveying the cult that developed around him as the result of perpetual and often pointless

³²⁰ Lyka, "Munkácsy Mihály," *Élet* 1, no. 4. (4 Apr 1891), 271-84.

³²¹ Ibid, 271: "nemcsak a nagynevű festő alkotásait vesszük bírálat alá, hanem ezekkel együtt a magyar kritika és a magyar közönség műízlése is szükségképpen elemző bírálatunk körébe fog esni."

apotheosis. Only past that point is it possible “to refine the taste of the general public, educate their sense of artistry and to enable them to see with their eyes and feel with their hearts.”³²² Such a determined statement on the second and third pages of his article unambiguously calls for a great degree of sobriety.

Lyka certainly sets high standards for quality art and even though his thesis statement seems to convey the idea that he denies the talent of Munkácsy, he aims to demarcate the line between art and national art; for “it does not suffice for someone to be a Hungarian artist to be born in Hungary and to pick Hungarian themes for his painting. (...) It is the spirit that makes him so, that feeling and sentiment that characterizes the Hungarian.”³²³ Even though it is only a decade later that he is officially appointed to teach art history at the university, the seeds of his desire to teach people to see more in a painting than the totality of brushstrokes are clearly already present.

The genuine in sketches, historical, and genre paintings

In the process of interrogating the art of Munkácsy, Lyka maintains that his style is largely theatrical and lacks the spirit of Hungarian people. Towards the end of the article he is comparing his path primarily to that of Jean-Francois Millet. Such a parallel shows that in his analysis, Lyka not only locates and thinks about Munkácsy’s oeuvre in terms of Hungarian provincialism but also in a European perspective. The point of comparison is based on the likeness of their spirit at the beginning of their career and their great interest in illustrating the everyday life of the countryside. Munkácsy’s interest gradually shifted towards themes such as life in the metropolis, which he could no longer illustrate with the same spirit, and therefore Lyka holds that his historical and biblical paintings are not emblematic of his art, nor “are

³²² Ibid, 272: “csak akkor kapja meg a biztos alapot, melyen naggyá fejlődhetik, ha kiöljük a puszta név imádását,”; Ibid, 273: “a nagy közönség izlését finomítani, műérzékét nevelni, oda hatni, hogy tudjon két szemével látni és szívével érezni.”

³²³ Ibidem: “ahhoz, hogy valaki magyar művész legyen, nem elég, hogy Magyarországon született és nem elég, hogy magyar tárgyú képeket fest. (...) A szellem teszi azzá, az az érzés, az a fölfogás, mely a magyart jellemzi.”

they *truly Hungarian* works of art.”³²⁴ However, seeing the jubilation around Munkácsy and people’s blind admiration, Lyka sadly deducts that “in Hungary it is not fashionable to think independently.”³²⁵ Yet another point of view surfaces that could help incite the general public to form an independent way of thinking, seeing, feeling, and interpreting.

Lyka’s observation is unique considering that sixty years later Lajos Végvári arrived at a similar conclusion, as he holds that “speaking about Munkácsy, the problem is thus: not whether the sketch is his true form of expression or that the implementation of his artistic intentions already transcend his capacities; rather the question is whether his message suffices to give substance to the larger form [supposedly meaning: historical and biblical compositions], whether the ideological composition is solid enough for his intentions.”³²⁶ Lyka’s ability to point out such problems, which are re-discovered several decades later, truly singles him out among his contemporaries.

Throughout his elaborate analysis, Lyka comes forward with three main factors that contribute to the creation of the effect, such as “the drawing, the colour and the composition.”³²⁷ Lyka gradually constructs an inventory for the laymen, equipping them with standards of assessment to keep in mind during the observation of a painting. Based on these guidelines, he himself also explores works by Munkácsy, often preceded by an overview of and comparison to examples taken from Italian art on the given subject; for instance, the various depictions of Jesus. As he analyses the existing two pieces of the Christ trilogy, Lyka firmly states that “there is only one person missing from this painting whom we are looking for: Jesus.”³²⁸ One can sense the disappointment as he concludes that “the audience and the

³²⁴ Lyka, “Munkácsy”, 274: “ezek nem *igaz magyar* művek.”

³²⁵ Ibid, 275: “nálunk nem divat az önálló gondolkodás.”

³²⁶ Végvári, *Munkácsy*, 169: “Munkácsyról szólva tehát nem az a probléma, hogy a vázlat az ő igazi formája s a művészi szándék kivitelezése már meghaladja képességeit – hanem az a kérdés, hogy a nagy formára is elég-e a mondanivalója, eléggé szilárd-e az eszmei kompozíció?”

³²⁷ Lyka, “Munkácsy”, 278: “Ilyenekül vehetjük a rajzot, a színt és kompozíciót.”

³²⁸ Ibid, 281: “csak az nincs köztük, a kit keresünk: Jézus.”

national press still consider these [biblical] paintings as the *true* Munkácsy works.”³²⁹ Lyka attempts to instruct and enable people to see what these glorified works of art in reality conceal. Once again, Végvári appears to confirm Lyka’s interpretation of the genre of religious paintings as rather Munkácsy’s weakness than strength. Thus, during the analysis of Golgotha, Végvári claims that “the unusually excessive preparation for it [Golgotha], it only reveals the deficiencies of Munkácsy’s art” and that “there, where (...) he wishes to stand out, gets stuck in the very minute that the creative spirit of sentiment and empathy does no longer propel him.”³³⁰ The clear parallel between Végvári’s and Lyka’s observation recalls the unusual insightfulness of Lyka, hence authenticating his observation.

Lyka mainly argues that Munkácsy is only truly present in his genre paintings alone with his spirit and fire visible in his illustrations, which the biblical and historical paintings with international concerns or the revival of old figures of ancient times absolutely lack. At the same time, he is neither satisfied with the Hungarian’s attitude towards art as he states that “the rough and rudimentary taste of the great mass is creating a wreath”³³¹ around the person of Munkácsy. It becomes clear that the audience lacks a readiness to judge art critically. However, his strong criticism of Munkácsy’s oeuvre seems refreshing, for he does give him credit only based on strongly determined criteria.

In the first article “Könyv egy génuszról” [Book about a genius] from 1897 Lyka introduces a book published by Dezső Malonyay about Munkácsy.³³² It is surprising to find almost no traces of the kind of criticism that appeared in his article in 1891. Moreover, almost contradicting himself, Lyka claims that “this collection in a certain respect is the Bible of the

³²⁹ Ibidem: “A közönség és a belföldi sajtó mégis ezeket tartja az *igazi* Munkácsy-képeknek.”

³³⁰ Végvári, *Munkácsy*, 220: “a reá fordított szokatlanul nagyszabású előkészületek ellenére Munkácsy művészetének hiányosságait árulja el” és “ott, ahol (...) tündökölni szeretne, megakad, abban a pillanatban, amidőn nem lendíti őt tovább az érzés, az átélés teremtő ereje.”

³³¹ Lyka, “Munkácsy”, 283: “a nagy tömeg durva, kezdetleges ízlése koszorúkat fon.”

³³² Lyka, “Könyv egy génuszról” [Book about a Genius], *Új Idők* 3. no. 51. (12 Dec. 1897), 506-7.

artistic talent of the Hungarian.”³³³ His attitude towards the audience shows a change of tone, as well, as he thinks they are able to “appreciate such a precious book.”³³⁴ The book containing over 150 pictures also illustrates Munkácsy’s development as an artist and is a biography on its own, an approach Lyka shares with Szana. Lyka praises the author of the book as much as its subject, Munkácsy. In his last sentence he claims that “this is where we can launch the literature of Hungarian art.”³³⁵ There are several levels of change to observe in Lyka’s attitude, which might be the result of the passing of time or the brevity of the article. Nevertheless, the change cannot go unnoticed.

In the second article entitled “*Munkácsy művészete*” [The Art of Munkácsy] also written in 1897, Lyka introduces his art as a source of Hungarian pride.³³⁶ Lyka draws a parallel between the artist’s life and his work, claiming that his previous life experiences “kept him occupied every time he sat down in front of the canvas.”³³⁷ He links Munkácsy’s interest in martyrs such as Jesus, Mozart and Milton, to an inspiration from his private life. The main theme – the immortal fighting the mortal – is his “soul’s most intimate thought, and he could create great art whenever he listened to this thought,” whereas, in his later painting, *Conquest* he was no longer able to implant that spirit. Recalling his earlier criticism, Lyka claims once again that the artist’s spirit broke and started to move disjointedly, which became his tragedy.

Lyka eventually seems to join the acclamation of the artist with a particular laudation for making Hungary visible on the map of art, only portraying Munkácsy’s downfall as a sorrowful turn in his life. Whether it was due to Lyka’s youth that initially he did not give him as much credit as his contemporaries or whether he gradually learned to recognize Munkácsy’s spirit and place in the development of Hungarian art remains the subject of

³³³ Ibid, 507: “ez a gyűjtemény bizonyos tekintetben a magyar faj művészi tehetségének a bibliája is.”

³³⁴ Ibidem: “az igazán becses könyvet megbecsüli.”

³³⁵ Ibidem: “ezzel kezdetjük meg a magyar művészet irodalmát.”

³³⁶ Lyka, “Munkácsy művészete” [The Art of Munkácsy] in *Új Idők* 3, no. 53 (26 Dec. 1897), 573-6.

³³⁷ Ibid, 576: “mindenkor elfoglalták egész életét, a midőn odaült a vászon elé.”

further investigation. Whereas Szana is more inclined to praise Munkácsy since he personally witnessed his transformation into an artist, Lyka belongs to new generation that viewed his work in a more critical light. Last but not least, Végvári states that “the [immaturity of] criticism shaping the public opinion about art was one of the main reasons why the nature of Munkácsy’s art did not become a part of common knowledge as it deserved.”³³⁸ After this claim, Végvári only refers to Malonyay’s 1898 monograph as a contemporary source about the painter that added to the public’s general knowledge. However, there is no mention of Lyka’s extensive article that most certainly proves the exact opposite: a more all-encompassing approach in criticism had already existed. Clearly, a single piece of writing cannot change the overall interpretation of the period but the fact that the seeds were sown in this period has definitely contributed to the development of art criticism.

CONCLUSION

Szana’s acquaintance with various artists and his popularity in intellectual circles leaves no room for doubt regarding the authenticity of the information in his reports. His statements are likewise supported by his frequent travels abroad, for instance, in Markó’s case, as well. Despite such positive traits, he rather appears to show an interest in artists as friends, therein introducing a greater part of their life path than a comprehensive article on art would suggest. With all the data he compiled, Szana is certainly informative but only occasionally delves deeper into the meaning of various works of art.³³⁹

Lyka manages to maintain a rather objective viewpoint creating clear boundaries between true and imitating art; making his reports both instructive and informative. Lyka’s voice is particularly unique as in the glorious years of Munkácsy, he dared to think differently

³³⁸ Végvári, *Munkácsy*, 270: “A művészeti közvéleményt alakító kritika az egyik legfőbb oka annak, hogy Munkácsy művészetének jellege nem érdeme szerint került be a köztudatba.”

³³⁹ For instance, Szana’s book on Markó also reveals how thorough his research into the artist’s life was to the extent of even visiting Markó’s living family members and former friends in Italy for more information.

and without dismissing him from the line of renowned painters, introduce the reader to his biases. As one begins to read Lyka's extensive article published about Munkácsy in *Élet*, the idea might occur to the reader whether he aims to soothe the ongoing exultation around the painter in an attempt to give the floor to painters who truly deserve the merit. Once immersed in the text, it becomes clear that Lyka only wishes to prove that the quest for national art has not ended with the appearance of Munkácsy.

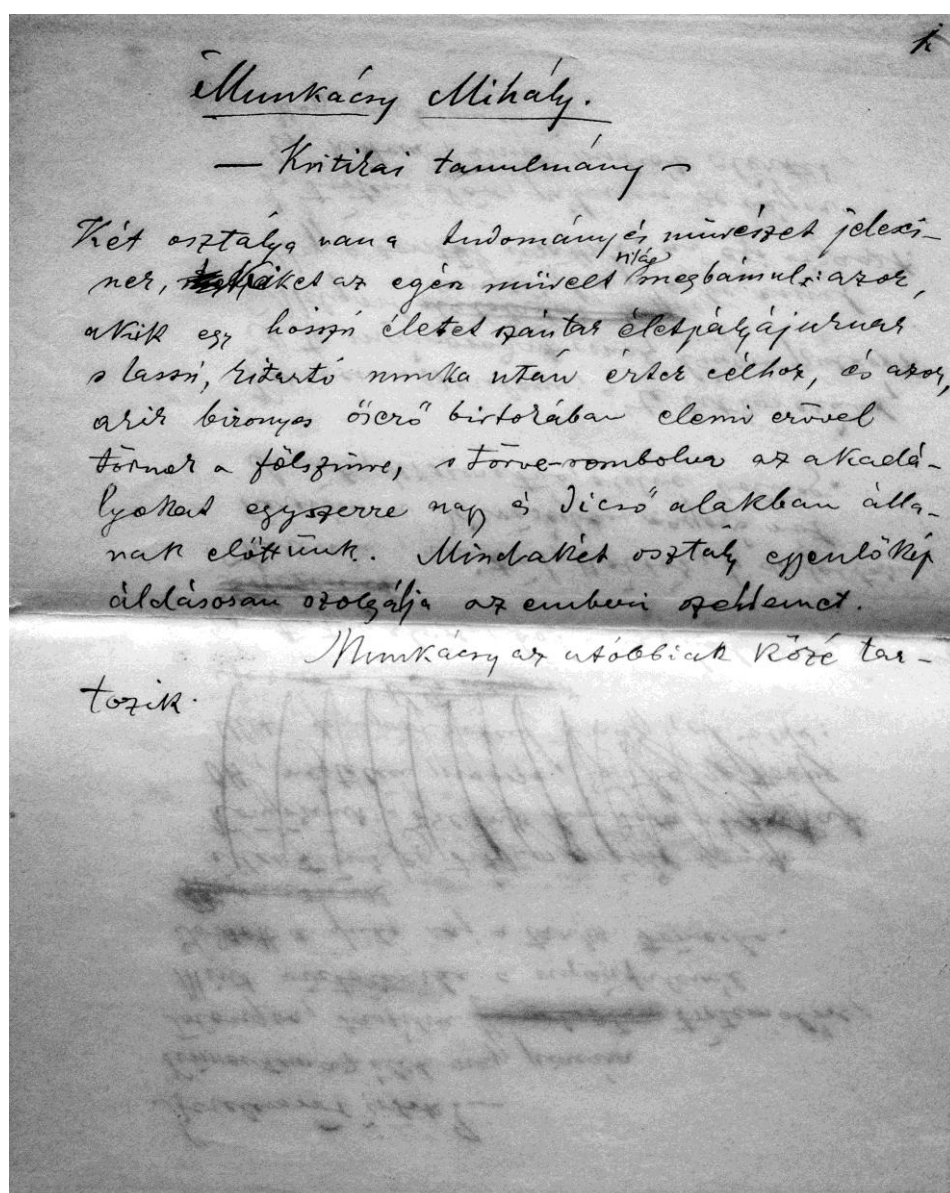


Fig. 17.: Károly Lyka's own handwriting, composing his study on Munkácsy

CONCLUSION

My research was to investigate the development of art criticism between 1884 and 1901. Embarking on the voyage, I expected to find a rather obvious change in the writings of Ambrus, Szana and Lyka. However, an unclear picture emerged. Following an in-depth analysis and close reading of their articles, I arrived at a deeper understanding of this process, mainly seeing that the degree of development observed in the articles was already noteworthy considering the rapid social, cultural, and infrastructural transformation of Budapest, the intellectual center.

Ambrus seems to have provided his audience with mainly a descriptive account of events, in which he most certainly conveyed the cultural atmosphere of the period. However, with the exception of some valuable insights, he failed to offer a genuinely in-depth analysis of exhibitions. The total absence of articles on individual artists may imply that he was not fully familiar with the field of art. Yet Ambrus certainly excites the audience with his psychological reflections, as his reports generally take readers on a cultural voyage into the past. But they do not enable the reader to learn how to see art and become involved in discussions about art. This is mainly due to his sudden mood swings, switching between two extreme poles of opinion, often without any transition or explanation, merely leaving his audience bewildered. Occasionally, he raises arguments that are promising, yet somehow refrain from or avoid delving into greater detail.

The style he adopts for his reviews can be entertaining showing his primary interest in literature. His honesty seems at times conspicuously daring, particularly as he admits his unfamiliarity with art. Despite his straightforward nature, the twelve articles, a fairly low number compared with the amount produced by Szana and Lyka, may also signal that his strength lies elsewhere: in literature and theatre. His remarks on the stagnation of art as a result of lack of interest from the side of the audience, Ambrus enables one to evoke the

period and see its manifold character, the so-called “dual” sense of feeling with coexistence of modernity and backwardness, previously mentioned.

Szana also highly contributes to that kind of evocation of the cultural feel of the *fin-de-siècle* Budapest by both reporting exhibitions and particular artists. Szana tends to treat painters as his dear friends – a typical trait of the period – that may invite one part of the general public, meanwhile distancing another. Regardless, he is already more successful in providing the audience with certain prerequisites to evaluate art. His observations about truth and eyes can equip laymen with certain skills to see more clearly the quality of art and be able to see more than mere brushstrokes on a canvas.

It was particularly intriguing to observe how Szana and Lyka prioritize sketches over finely elaborated paintings. Both critics suggest that the role of sketches resides in their ability to convey ‘an-artist-to-be-born,’ since it provides the onlooker with a unique chance to gaze into the soul of the painter. Sketches after all reveal the root of his ingenuity.

Lyka has gradually obtained methods to rely on when assessing art, in addition to his solid educational background in art. The most striking feature of his personality is his ability to convey an all-encompassing view not only in the field of art but also music and theatre. In addition, he also draws an excellent parallel, as seen in the article, analyzing the same theatrical piece staged once superficially and then more naturally shifting his message to art by contending that the artists should ‘turn their backs on their audience’ more often, i.e. paint more with passion, putting aside the external world around them. Lyka differs from Ambrus and Szana in that he has not only established his own clear principles in seeing and perceiving art but also developed a deep desire to instruct and educate the audience.

On the whole, Ambrus, Szana and Lyka’s works greatly promoted the revitalization of cultural life in Budapest in their own particular ways. Ambrus’ case can be singled out as his writings were deemed the least helpful in the actual instruction of the audience, a loss he may

have made up for in his respective cultural focus: literature and art. Szana's relentless spirit and intention in his attempt to involve the audience and acquaint them with the world of art cannot be disregarded within the framework of Budapest's growth into an artistic centre. Contrasting various art critics in this period and region, we can now better appreciate how Lyka enabled ground-breaking changes to take place in fin-de-siecle Hungarian art criticism, as exemplified by the adamant support of the Nagybánya group. These three authors may be considered to be pioneers in the emerging field of art criticism in Hungary. Their vision of the artistic endeavour revolutionizes the way in which we understand, perceive, and relate to art.

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reproduction obtained from Jeffrey Taylor, *In Search of the Budapest Secession* (California: Helena History Press, 2014).

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reproduction obtained from Lajos Németh, *Magyar Művészet 1890-1919*

Fig. 17.: Károly Lyka's own handwriting, p. 92

document obtained from the Archive of the Institute of Art History, Budapest

APPENDIX

The following appendix contains all the articles of art criticism. Those cultural reviews used the analysis of this thesis are boldfaced. Due to late notice, some data (the issue and the date) is missing at four of the articles published in *A Hét* and also the authors' names are kept in the Hungarian order: family name, first name. It also had a sample copy, which I decided to signal with "s." The list is presented in the following order: *Élet*, *Magyar Salon*, *Új Idők*, *A Hét*.

ÉLET

1891/1 - Élet				
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date
Lyka	Modern Art	17-30	1.	1. 15.
Lyka	Mihály Munkácsy	271-84	4.	4. 15.
Cserekye Bálint	Antique Art and Modernity	388-96	5.	5. 15.
Dénes József	Meissonier	172-74	2.	2. 15.
Gerecse Péter	Lotz Károly's Paintings in the Pécs Cathedral	509-14	6.	6. 15.
Gutenberg Pál	Two-thousand Year Old Paintings	171-72	2.	2. 15.
Idem	The Latest Panorama on Andrásy-út	355-58	4.	4. 15.
Impresszionista	The Winter Exhibition at the Hall of Arts	86-90	1.	1. 15.
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date
- ar. -	Simonyi G.'s Painting, Belgian water-colour paintings	233-34	9.	9. 15.
Impresszionista	The Winter Exhibition	422-25	12.	12. 15.
1892/1 Élet				
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date
Lyka	New Hungarian Paintings	28-33	1.	1. 15.
Kacziány Ödön	A Little Correction	85-86	2.	2. 15.
Lyka	The Painting "The Flagellants" in the Hall of Art by Károly Marr	164-65	4.	3. 15.
Kacziány Ödön	The painting "The Flagellants" in the Hall of Art II by Károly Marr	165-67	4.	3. 15.
Gerecse Péter Dr.	Once again "The Flagellants"	221-3	5.	3. 30.
k - s	The Statue of Kálmán Tóth	219	5.	3. 30.
Lyka	National Art Gallery	298-300	7.	4. 30.
-	Artist Ball in Epreskert	368		

1892/2 - Élet				
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date
Lyka	Programme Painting	491-94	13.	7. 15.
1895 - Élet				
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date
K.	Tip for art	10-11	33.	5. 12.
Julius	Historical Paintings	11	36.	6. 2.
Julius	On Statues	9-10	38.	6. 16.
Kritikus.	A Visit at Epreskert	10-11		
	Our Art Factory and the Millenium Gyula Jungfer, locksmith; Bruchsteiner S. And Sons, nameplate and poster factory	6-7	39.	6. 23.
	The Procession at the Millenium	7		
Csicseri Borsó	Our Art Factory and the Millenium II: József Fodor, furniture-contractor	7-8	40.	6. 30.
Julius	From the Master's School: Gyula Stetka.	9-10		
Seress Gy.	From the Master's School II: The Youth (Pál Vágó)	7-8	42.	7. 14.
S-ss.	A Busy Week: Feszty-panorama, Rippl, Paris	8-9	43.	7. 21.
	Exhibition Walks	9-10	44.	7. 28.
-er-	The Exit of the Hungarians, freely after Feszty	10		
	Exhibition Walks II	6-7	46.	8. 11.
S-ss.	From the Master's School: Sándor Ipoly, Adolf Fényes	8		
	Exhibition Walks III	6-7	50.	9. 8.
Prém József	Painted Hystery, Erzsébet Báthori	12-13	1.	10. 6.
Prém József	Hungarian Poets' Statues	10-11	3.	10. 20.
Velszi bárd	Munkácsy is Coming Home	11-12	5.	10. 3.
Seress Gyula	Two Exhibitions (Hall of Arts, National Salon)	12-13	6.	11. 10.
Seress	Képszüretkor (régi piktör vs. modern mester)	6-7	10.	12. 15.
Sz. G.	Sphinx: Ferenc Stuk's Painting	6-7	11.	12. 15.

MAGYAR SALON

1884 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Pulszky Ferenc	Filigree Art Objects Exhibition in Budapest	22-31	1		1
Szemere Attila	Japanese Art: Travel Reports	32-38	1		1
Tamás Szana	József Kiss	159-166	2		1
Tamás Szana	Italian Artists, Italian Ateliers	55-65	1	10. 1.	2
Jókai Mór	The Future of Mihály Munkácsy	113-14	2	11. 1.	2
Teleki Sándor	Conversing about Mihály Munkácsy	115-21	2	11. 1.	2
Tamás Szana	Mihály Munkácsy	122-29	2	11. 1.	2
Pataky László	The Parisian Home of Munkácsy	130-32	2	11. 1.	2
Telepy Károly	Munkácsy with Artists	133-39	2	11. 1.	2
Tamás Szana	Italian Artists, Italian Ateliers II.	260-274	3	12. 1.	2
Teleki Sándor	Conversing about Mihály Munkácsy (Concluding Report)	275-77	3	12. 1.	2
Kenessey Dezső	The Autumn Exhibition	289-92	3	12. 1.	2
1885 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Dr. Prém József	About the Portrait	517-26	5	2. 1.	2
Tábori Róbert	A Hungarian Sculptor Abroad	628-24	6	3. 1.	2
1886 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Tamás Szana	From the Hall of Arts	161-71	2	11. 1.	6
1887 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Tamás Szana	Literature and art in 1886	392-97	4	1. 1.	8
Rudnyánszky Gyula	Tihamér Margitay	483-88	5	2. 1.	8
Dr. Donáth Gyula	Witchcraft in Art	517-22	5	2. 1.	8
Tamás Szana	The Autumn Exhibition	162-68		11. 1.	8
Sturm Albert	Memorial Statue of János Arany	259-68		12. 1.	8
Written by an artist	From the Hall of Arts	281-82		12. 1.	8
1888 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Ligeti Antal	The Art Gallery of the Hungarian National Museum	485		2. 1.	9
Tamás Szana	The Hungarian Colony in Munich (Recollections).	578-87		3. 1.	9

Nyáry Sándor	The History of German Art	97-102		4. 1.	9
Székely Béla	Salon 1888	501-12		8. 1.	9
Pasteiner Gyula	The Submissions for the Arany Statue	201-3		10. 25.	9
Tamás Szana	The Autumn Exhibition	209-11		11. 1.	9
Tamás Szana	Hungarian Paintings on the Autumn Exhibition: Second series	274-79		12. 1.	9
1889 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Hevesi József	From The Parisian World Exhibition	529-535		7. 1.	11
Lázár Béla	Young Hungarians at the Academy of Art in Munich.	189-93		9. 1.	12
1890 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Tamás Szana	Margitay Tihamér	577-583		9. 1.	13
1891 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Tamás Szana	Memories of Antique Painting	561-64		3. 1.	14
Tamás Szana	Than Mór	283-7		6. 1.	15
Pekár Gyula	In Stróbl's Atelier	434-7		7. 1.	15
Tamás Szana	The Modern Art	1-12		10. 1.	16
Hektor	Hungarian Art in Munich	13-22		10. 1.	16
Pulszky Ferenc	The Hungarian Art	23-26		10. 1.	16
Dr. Szmrecsányi Miklós	Belgian Water-colour Paintings in the Hall of Art	113-18		11. 1.	16
Lenoir (F. J.)	Hungarian Fresco Paintings	322-23		12. 1.	16
1892 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
F.J.	Winter Exhibition in the Hall of Art	341-51		1. 1.	16
Tamás Szana	Fine Art in Hungary in the past 25 years	285-89		4. 1.	17
Tamás Szana	Mihály Munkácsy	419-439		7. 1.	17
Dr. Losonczy Lipót	Our Artists	34-48		10.1	18
Dr. Losonczy Lipót	Our Artists	114-26		11.1	18
Dr. Losonczy Lipót	Our Artists	170-76		12.1	18
1893 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Dr. Alexander Bernát	Winter Exhibition in the Hall of Art	242-55		1.1	18
Tamás Szana	The Statue of János Arany	322-28		6. 1.	19
Gróf Keglevich István	<i>Árpád</i> by Munkácsy	785-92		9. 1.	19
Le Noir	Feszty -panorama	87-96		10. 1.	20
Kacziány Ödön	What do artists work?	202		10. 1.	20
Keszler József	From the Winter Exhibition	462		12. 1.	20
1894 - M.S.					

Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Gróf Keglevich István	Árpád by Munkácsy I.	938		2. 1.	20
Borostyány Sándor	Árpád by Munkácsy II.	938-40		2. 1.	20
-	The Conquest: Munkácsy's New Painting	1162-4		3. 1.	20
Tamás Szana	From Munkácsy's Sketches	1165-74		3. 1.	20
Dr. Losonczi Lipót	Miraculous Element in the Fine Arts	1247-1256		3. 1.	20
Fekete József	From the Spring Exhibition	225-38		5. 1.	21
Fekete József	Paintings from the Millenium	801-14		7. 1.	21
Le Noir	Károly Lotz I.	43-52		10. 1.	22
Le Noir	József Rippl-Rónai II.	54-58		10. 1.	22
Rippl Rónay József	Modern Painting	59-64		10. 1.	22
Tamás Szana	Ettore Tito	384-92		11. 1.	22
Sz-y B-a	The Salon	458-62		12. 1.	22
Tamás Szana	Tivadar Zemplényi	463-74		12. 1.	22
1895 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Demeczkyne Volf Irma	Studies from the Winter Exhibition at the Hall of Art	667-702		1. 1.	22
Tamás Szana	The Heroes of the Exhibition	919-28		2. 1.	22
Demeczkyne Volf Irma	Studies from the Winter Exhibition	931-44		2. 1.	22
Tamás Szana	Double Jubilee	1283-88		3. 1.	22
Tamás Szana	Silvio Rotta	47-62		10. 1.	24
Tamás Szana	Munkácsy: With Sketches by the Artist	501-16		12. 1.	24
Trisztan	From the Winter Exhibition (First Impressions)	621		12. 1.	24
1896 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
-	József Kiss	953-54		2. 1.	24
Tamás Szana	The Latest Italian Art	1143-52		?	24
rt.	Japán festészet	1217-22		3. 1.	24
Dénes-Diner József	On Two Artists: János Jankó	265-70		5. 1.	25
Dénes-Diner József	On Two Artists: Viktor Tilgner	270-78		5. 1.	25
Hevesi Sándor	Paintings, Statues, Drawings	544-68		6. 1.	25
L. K.	The Legacy of János Jankó	959-64	11	8. 1.	25
Gelléri Mór	The Main Jury at the Exhibition	1121-30	12	9. 1.	25
Y. J.	Two Artists Leighton és Pradilla	2081-88	12	9. 1.	25
1897 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
M-H-th	Árpád Feszty	145-52		4. 1.	27
Szikszay Ferenc ifj.	An Academy of Fine Arts in Paris	945-60		8. 1.	27
Tamás Szana	The Art of Markó	1217-38		9. 1.	27

Lukács Béla	Hungary at the Parisian World Exhibition	449		12. 1.	28
1899 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Lázár Béla	The Art of Izidor Kaufmann	812-24		1. 1.	30
-	Criticism	1095-1104		2. 1.	30
Karvaly József	Mór Karvaly	131-42		4. 1.	31
Lázár Béla	The Spring Exhibition	321-52		5. 1.	31
1900 - M.S.					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Dr. Lázár Béla	The Art of Sándor Wagner	161-74		1. 1.	32
Márkus Emília	In the Atelier	179		1. 1.	32
Dr. Lázár Béla	Winter Exhibition	811-31		2. 1.	32
Tamás Szana	Sándor Liezen-Mayer	1153-60		3. 1.	32

ÚJ IDŐK

1894 - Új Idők					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
B.S.	The Salon	16	1	12. 16.	1
B.S.	On Painters	35	2	12. 30.	1
1895 - Új Idők					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
B.I.	Visit at the Atelier	50	3	1. 6.	i
S.Zs.	Over!	66	4	1. 13.	1
K.	Atelier-tenement houses	83	5	1. 20.	1
B.S.	The Abandoned	101	6	1. 27.	1
Gelléri Mór	The Millennial Exhibition	139-40	8	2. 10.	1
b.s.	From the Historical Themes	195	11	3. 3.	1
Kézdi Kovács László	Gyula Káldy	214	12	3. 10.	1
B.	Harvest of Paintings	258-59	14	3. 24.	1
B.S.	The Spring Exhibition	338-39	18	4. 21.	1
-i. -r.	The First Sip	339	18	4. 21.	1
B.S.	The Venetian Exhibition	402-3	21	5. 12.	1
Kézdi Kovács László	Painters from Abbazia	438-40	23	5. 26.	1
B.S.	The Saint Paintings of Andrassy	458-59	24	6. 2.	1
B.	László Tóth	474	25	6. 9.	1
Leone	Painters and Gossips	205	40	9. 22.	1
K. I.	On top of the Arbour	208	40	9. 22.	1
S.Zs.	The First Step	252	42	10. 6.	1

T.R.	The Novices	293	44	10. 20.	1
Borostyán Nándor	Munkácsy, the fast-drawer	408-9	50	12. 1.	1
B.S.	The Quarrel	454	52	12. 15.	1
1896 - Új Idők					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Lyka Károly	Reflections on Nagybánya	64	30	7. 19.	2
Lyka Károly	Modern Paintings	75-77	31	7. 26.	2
Lyka Károly	Artistic decoration	487-88	50	12. 6.	2
1897 - Új Idők					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Alexander Bernát	The Task of an Artist	369-74	17	4. 18.	3
L. K.	The Spring Exhibition	379-80	17	4. 18.	3
Lyka Károly	Painter Women	388-89	18	4. 25.	3
Lyka Károly	Landscapes	413-14	19	5. 2.	3
L. K.	Painted World	435	20	5. 9.	3
L. K.	The Statue of Maria Theresa in Pozsony	464	21	5. 16.	3
Malonyay Dezső	The Salon on the Champs-Élysée	569-71	26	6. 20.	3
Lyka Károly	Book about a Genius	506-7	51	12. 12.	3
L. K.	The Nagybánya Artists	537-38	52	12. 19.	3
Malonyay Dezső	Munkácsy	553	53	12. 26.	3
Lyka Károly	The Art of Munkácsy	573-76	53	12. 26.	3
Malonyay Dezső	Munkácsy on his own Statue	587	53	12. 26.	3
1898 - Új Idők					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
B. S.	The Celebration of Károly Lotz	148-49	7	2. 13.	4
	The Böcklin-Exhibition	149	7	2. 13.	4
Maszák Hugó	Miklós Barabás	167-68	8	2. 20.	4
L. K.	Art in the House of Parliament	170	8	2. 20.	4
L. K.	Művészet: Liezen Mayer Sándor.	189-90	9	2. 27.	4
L. K.	For Hungarian Art	307	14	4. 3.	4
I.	The Spring Exhibition	354	16	4. 17.	4
Lyka Károly	Street Art	367-68	17	4. 24.	4
Lyka Károly	Out Front Cover	392-94	18	5. 1.	4
b.	Events in May: Princess Isabel and Lotz. Mednyánszky	497-98	23	6. 5.	4
-br-	Munkácsy...	541-42	25	6. 19.	4
L.	About two Paintings and One Statue	586	26	6. 26.	4
M. D.	Munkácsy on his own Statue	587	26	6. 26.	4
1899 - Új Idők					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Lyka Károly	Gyula Donáth	18	1	1. 1.	5
L. K.	Italy	41-42	2	1. 8.	5
Lyka Károly	Markó	189-90	9	2. 26.	5

L.	Art Chronicle	255-57	12	3. 19.	5
Lyka Károly	Lajos Márk	305-6	14	4. 2.	5
Lyka Károly	The Spring Exhibition	336-37	17	4. 23.	5
Lyka Károly	Statues on the Spring Exhibition	385-6	18	4. 30.	5
Lyka Károly	Landscapes and Paintings with People	406-7	19	5. 7.	5
L. K.	István Csók	428-29	20	5. 14.	5
Lyka Károly	Paintings by Sándor Wagner	281	39	9. 24.	5
Lyka Károly	Winter Exhibition	595	52	12. 24.	5
Malonyay Dezső	National Art	419	45	11. 5.	5
1900 - Új Idők					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Lyka Károly	The Winter Exhibition	334	14	1. 1.	6
L. K.	Jánosné Fadrusz	402	17	1. 21.	6
Lyka Károly	The Gretchen's Painter	486-7	21	2. 18.	6
L. K.	The Exhibition in the National Salon	573	25	3. 18.	6
Lyka Károly	The Proletarian of Art	447-8	47	11.18	6
Lyka Károly	Hungarian artists in the Hall of Art	511-2	50	12. 9.	6
Lyka Károly	Hungarian artists in the Hall of Art	533-4	51	12. 16.	6

A HÉT

1890/1 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Pulszky Ferencz	Winter exhibition II.: Portraits in the Hall of Art	s. 10-11. o.		1889	1
Dr. K. D.	New School for Sculpture	16	1	1. 12.	1
Telegdy László	The Ligeti Exhibition	129-130	8	2. 23.	1
Justh Zsigmond	In Stróbl's Atelier	352	22	6. 1.	1
Méray-Horváth	Bronze or Marble?	386-7	24	6. 15.	1
1890/2 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
-	The New Munkácsy-Painting	177-178	38	9. 21.	1
Adorján Sándor	Visiting Munkácsy	233-234	41	10. 12.	1
I.F.	Hungarian Art in Our Century	237-238	41	10. 12.	1
S.	Winter Exhibition I	353-354	48	10. 30.	1
Pulszky Károly, dr.	Lipót Horovitz (front cover)	357-358	49	12. 7.	1
Szana Tamás	Winter exhibition II.: Portraits in the Hall of Art	366-367	49	12. 7.	1
Interview	József Keszler, Árpád Feszty	403	51	12. 21.	1
	Szana Tamás (<i>For our Front Page</i>)	423	52	12. 28.	1
1891/1 - A Hét					

Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
If	Árpád Feszty's Frescoes	141	9	3. 1.	2
Nemo	Visiting Bihari	226	14	4. 5.	2
Balogh Pál	The Statue of the War of Independence	229-231	15	4. 12.	2
Rákosi Jenő	József Róna	245-246	16	4. 19.	2
1891/2 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Nyitrai	The Philosophy of Hungarian Art	675-677	42	10. 18.	2
Y	Art in the Academy	756-757	47	11. 22.	2
Yartin	Art Exhibition I.	780-781	48	11. 29.	2
Nyitrai József	Art Exhibition III.	827-829	51	12. 20.	2
1892/1 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Alfa	The Viennese Exhibit	318	20	5. 15.	3
ismeretlen	Ignác Roskovics	399	25	6. 19.	3
Lyka Károly	The Munich Salon I.	417-418	26	6. 26.	3
1892/2 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Lyka Károly	The Munich Salon II.	433-435	27	7. 3.	3
1893/1 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Gonda Dezső	The Statue	134-136	9	2. 26.	4
g.d.	The Art Exhibition	227	14	4. 2.	4
Pekár Gyula	In the Atelier of Stróbl	317-318	20	5. 14.	4
1893/2 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Ják	In the Hall of Arts	353-4	22	5. 28.	4
1894/1 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Pekár Gyula	The Conquest - A Parisian Memory	40-41	3	1. 21.	5
(-nn)	The Conquest (About Munkácsy)	137-138	9	3. 4.	5
(-r-t)	The Metallic Baross	157	10	3. 11.	5
Viharos	Spring Exhibition	253-254	16	4. 22.	5
x.	The Arrival of the Hungarians - Feszty's Painting	315	20	5. 20.	5
1894/2 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Bojtorján	The Exhibition	758-760	50	12. 16.	5
1895/1 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
-	Mihály Zichy	15	1	1. 6.	6
Bojtorján	Spring Exhibition	257-8	16	4. 21.	6
Fényes, Spányik	Pál Vágó	409-411	26	6. 30.	6

1895/2 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
S	Báthori Erzsébet	642	40	10. 4.	6
?	Millenium: The Scandal	684-685	43	10. 25.	6
Piktor	A Tárlat - Krach	765-766	48	11. 29.	6
Masque	The Exhibition	798-800	50	12. 13.	6
1896/1 - A Hét					
Author	Title	Page	Issue	Date	Vol
Dessewffy Arisztid	Fra Sebastiano del Piombo	108-110	7	2. 16.	7
Szokolay Kornél	Bosnian Renaissance	154-155	10	3. 8.	7
I-s.	About János Jankó	220-221			7
Pukk	About Károly Lotz	265			7
x.	Ecce homo! - Mihály Munkácsy's painting -	287-288			7
-	János Thorma	288			7
Masque	The Salon of the Thousandth year: An Overview	307-8	19	5. 10.	7
Masque	The Salon of the Thousandth year: Portraits – Horovitz	345-7	20	5. 17.	7
Masque	The Salon of the Thousandth year: A few portraits more – Historical paintings	364-6	22	5. 31.	7
Masque	The Salon of the Thousandth year: Religious painting. Biblical themes. The landscape and genre painting. Animal paintings.	384-5	23	6. 8.	7
1896/2 - A Hét					
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