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the Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest*

COLLEC_THINK TANK

conference on **ROMANIAN**

2024. MÁRC. 22-23.

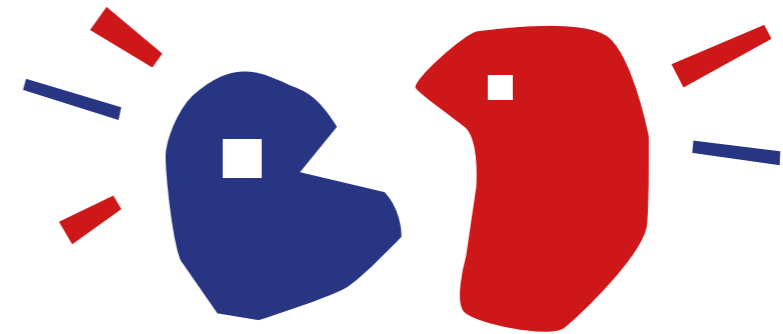
DESIGN



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COLLEC_THINK TANK

Konferencia a romániai designről
Conference on Romanian Design



Iparművészeti Múzeum – Museum of Applied Arts
Budapest, 2024



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A ROMÁNIAI DESIGN AZ IPARMŰVÉSZETI MÚZEUM KORTÁRS DESIGN GYŰJTEMÉNYÉBEN

Wenn wir das Museum nicht bloß als Speicher der Eigentum denken, sondern als Raum in dem es möglich ist, um Dinge herum zusammen zu kommen, um zu verhandeln, was war, was es für die Gegenwart bedeutet und welche Zukunft wir uns erträumen, bekommt die Notwendigkeit von Sammlung als Relation eine neue Dimension.¹

Ha a múzeumra nemcsak vagyontárgyak tárházaként tekintünk, hanem olyan térként, ahol össze lehet gyűlni a tárgyak körül, hogy átbeszéljük a múltat, hogy mit jelent mindez a jelen számára, és hogyan képzeljük el a jövőt, akkor a gyűjtemény mint kapcsolat szükségszerűsége egy új dimenziót kap. (az idézetek H.J. Ford.)

JUDIT HORVÁTH, PHD

head of Contemporary Design Department, Museum of Applied Arts Budapest

ROMANIAN DESIGN IN THE CONTEMPORARY DESIGN COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS BUDAPEST

Wenn wir das Museum nicht bloß als Speicher der Eigentum denken, sondern als Raum in dem es möglich ist, um Dinge herum zusammen zu kommen, um zu verhandeln, was war, was es für die Gegenwart bedeutet und welche Zukunft wir uns erträumen, bekommt die Notwendigkeit von Sammlung als Relation eine neue Dimension.¹

If we consider the museum not only as a repository of assets, but as a space where we can gather around objects, so that we can discuss the past, and what all of this means for the present, and how we imagine the future, then the collection as connection – by necessity – takes on a new dimension. (trans. A.E.)

We launched the *Collec_Think Tank* series in 2019 with the objective of shaping the collection policy of the Museum of Applied Arts – by way of the new practices of the Contemporary Design Collection, which was established in 2015 – in accordance with the challenges and problems raised in the current era.

One of our most important aims during the reconstruction of the museum's main building, commenced in 2018, is for the revived institution to build a collection representative of the branches of design and fashion of the 20th-21st centuries for its re-opening, with a primary focus on the countries of the post-Socialist region. We consider it our mission to supplement pieces characteristic of the design of the 'Eastern Bloc' prior to the political transition, as objects from this period can scarcely be found in

our collection currently. The Contemporary Design Department nurtures a close professional relationship with the museums and cultural institutions of the Central/Eastern European region.²

With this series, we would like to relax the traditional framework of collection, and to broaden the discourse on what and how we collect. We believe in the impact of engagement, and in the fact that history, which we experience together, is a matter for all of us, and thus it is important that we shape it together. It depends upon us that we preserve the era in which we are living and which we experience in our daily lives, for our children and grandchildren, either directing it from above or building it from the ground up. With this series, we are staking our vote on the latter.

Collections conserve time, but if we select appropriately what is worth preserving, the assembled objects can revitalise us and help us, through the past in comprehending the present, and in planning for our future.

With this series, we would like not only to collect new information on the design of the Central/Eastern European countries after 1945, but we would like to create a platform where we can encounter various viewpoints, and debate the questions arising in connection with these. We would like to develop fruitful relationships between the actors on the design scene of the post-Socialist countries, which will aid future collaborations.

¹ Martina GRIESSER, Nora STERNFELD: "Sedimentierte Konflikte und alternative Archive (Sich mit) Sammlungen anlegen." In: *Sammeln in der Zeit*. Leipzig, 2018, p. 7. https://www.academia.edu/36161063/Sedimentierte_Konflikte_und_alternative_Archive_Sich_mit_Sammlungen_anlegen [utolsó megtekintés: 2022. 08. 09.]

² Horváth Judit: *COLLEC_THINK TANK – Conference on Polish Design*. Iparművészeti Múzeum / Museum of Applied Arts Budapest, 2019, p. 2. https://www.imm.hu/files/inlineattachments/konferencia/Collec_%20Think%20Tank_konferencia_kiadvany.pdf [last accessed: 09.08.2022]

A *Collec_Think Tank* sorozatot 2019-ben indítottuk útjára azzal a céllal, hogy a 2015-ben megalakult Kortárs Design Gyűjtemény új gyakorlatain keresztül az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményezési politikáját a jelenkor kihívásainak, problémafelvetéseinek megfelelően alakítsuk.

A múzeumi főépület 2018-ban megkezdődött rekonstrukciójának ideje alatt egyik fontos célunk, hogy a megújuló intézmény megnyitására felépüljön egy, a 20–21. századi design és craft ágazatait reprezentáló gyűjtemény, elsődleges fókusszal a poszt-socialista régió országaira. Feladatunknak tekintjük, hogy a rendszerváltás előtti „keleti blokk” jellegzetes designdarabjait pótoljuk, hiszen ezen időszakból szinte alig található tárgy a gyűjteményünkben. A Kortárs Design Főosztály szoros szakmai kapcsolatot ápol a közép-európai régió múzeumaival, kulturális intézményeivel is.²

A sorozattal a gyűjteményezés hagyományos kereteit szeretnénk oldani, minél tágabban nyitni a diskurzust arról, mit és hogyan gyűjteményezzünk. Hiszünk a részvétel hatásában és abban, hogy a történelem, melyet közösen élünk át, mindannyiunk ügye, ezért fontos, hogy közösen formáljuk. Rajtunk múlik, hogy gyerekeink, unokáink számára felülről irányítva vagy alulról építkezve őrizzük meg azt a kort, amiben élünk és amit mindennapjainkban megtapasztalunk. Ezzel a sorozattal mi az utóbbi mellett tesszük le a voksunkat.

A gyűjtemények konzerválják az időt, de ha megfelelően választjuk ki, mi az, ami megőrzésre érdemes, a begyűjtött tárgyak új életre kelhetnek, segíthetnek minket a múlton keresztül a jelenünk megértésében és a jövőnk tervezésében.

Ezzel a sorozattal nemcsak új információkat szeretnénk begyűjteni a közép-kelet-európai

országok 1945 utáni designjáról, de olyan platformot kívánunk teremteni, ahol különféle nézőpontok találkozhatnak, és az ennek kapcsán felmerülő kérdések megvitathatók. Szeretnénk, ha olyan gyümölcsöző kapcsolatok alakulhatnának ki a poszt-socialista országok design szcénájának szereplői között, melyek segítik a jövőbeli együttműködéseket.

*A Collec_Think Tank konferenciasorozattal a gyűjteményezés egyoldalúságát próbáljuk oldani, a hierarchikus viszonyokat kívánjuk csökkenteni és egy mellérendeltebb viszonyrendszerben gondolkodni.*³

Fontosnak érezzük, hogy megkérdézzük azokat a szereplőket, akik közvetlenül érintettek az adott gyűjtőkör tekintetében, mi az, amit megőrzésre érdemesnek tartanak. Ütköztessük véleményeinket, hogy minél demokratikusabban és felelősebben, minél több szempont figyelembevételével szülessen döntés arról, mi válik a közjó részévé! A közgyűjteményeket fenntartó adófizetők mindegyikét szolgáltnia kellene a múzeumoknak.

A konferenciasorozat első részében a lengyel design volt a témánk. A think tank nemcsak érdekes tartalmakkal bővítette a tudásunkat, de az előadókkal azóta is aktív kapcsolatban vagyunk, sokukkal más nemzetközi projektekben is együttműködünk. A *Collec_Think Tank* második részét a cseh és szlovák designról rendeztük, a mostani pedig a romániai designról szól.

Hiszünk a beszélgetés, a kapcsolat, a közös munka erejében, a kultúra hosszú távú perspektívájában. „A kontaktus alapú nézőpont minden kultúragyűjtő stratégiát az uralomra, a hierarchiára, az ellenállásra és a mozgósításra épülő történelmi helyzetekre adott válasznak tekint.”⁴



*With the Collec_Think Tank conference series, we attempt to resolve the one-sidedness, or bias, of collecting, to reduce the hierarchical relations, and to think in terms of a more co-ordinated network of relationships.*³

We feel that it is important that we ask the stakeholders who are directly involved in the field of interest, what it is that they consider worthy of preserving. We engage and collide our opinions in order to allow a decision to be made as democratically and responsibly as possible, taking as many perspectives into account as possible, on what should become part of the common good. The museum must serve every single taxpayer who maintains the public collections.

In the first part of the conference series, our subject was Polish design. The think tank not only expanded our knowledge with interesting content, but we have remained in active connection with the presenters, and we have also col-

laborated on other international projects with many of them.

The second part of the *Collec_Think Tank* series centred on Czech and Slovak design, and this time we focus on Romanian design.

We believe in the power of discourse, good relations, and intensive collaborative work, in the long-term perspective of culture. Examining our common history from the power politics standpoint, we find no lack of conflict in Romanian–Hungarian relations, either. We would, nevertheless, like to generate common knowledge by way of the cultural institutional network, and we try to protect our audience and collaborators from having our thinking driven by incomprehension and hate.

This platform gives space for this community – which defined itself for decades relative to Western Europe, and always in the losing position – to seek out those elements of our identity, which in

² HORVÁTH Judit: COLLEC_THINK TANK - Konferencia a lengyel designról. Iparművészeti Múzeum / Museum of Applied Arts Budapest, 2019. p. 2. https://www.imm.hu/files/inlineattachments/konferencia/Collec_%20Think%20Tank_konferencia_kiadvany.pdf [utolsó megtekintés: 2022. 08. 09.]

³ uo.

³ Ibid. https://www.imm.hu/files/inlineattachments/konferencia/Collec_%20Think%20Tank_konferencia_kiadvany.pdf [last accessed: 09.08.2022]



Ha a hatalmi politika felől vizsgáljuk közös történelmünket, a román-magyar kapcsolatokban is bőven találunk konfliktust. Mi azonban a kulturális intézményi hálón keresztül közös tudásokat szeretnénk generálni, és igyekezni megóvni a közönségünket és a velünk együttműködőket attól, hogy az értetlenség és a gyűlölet vezérelje a gondolkodásukat.

Ez a platform annak is teret ad, hogy e közösség, mely évtizedeken keresztül Nyugat-Európához képest és mindig a vesztes pozíciójából definiálta magát, felkutassa identitásának azokat az elemeit, melyek a korunkat sújtó környezeti és politikai válságban ismét hasznos tudássá válhatnak. Hiszen még éppen él az a nemzedék, melynek tagjai háborúk, forradalmak, diktatúrák elnyomásában olyan életstratégiákat alakítottak ki, melyek sajnos az előttünk álló ínséges időkben hasznunkra válhatnak. Érdekel minket, hogyan lehet különböző összefüggéseket figyelembe

véve gyűjteni, hogy „gyűjteményezhetők-e a kapcsolatok, és hogyan őrizhetők meg az egyes gyűjtemények közötti relációk.”⁵

Remélem, a *Collec_Think Tank* alkalmat teremt majd arra, hogy ezek a kapcsolatok még jobban elmélyüljenek, és olyan bázist képezzenek, melyre a következő évek munkájában mindannyian támaszkodhatunk, és ez a közös erőfeszítés egyre szélesebb körben fejti majd ki a hatását.

A kortárs, Giorgio Agambennel szólva, bátorság: „(...) a kortárs sajátos viszonyt működtet a különféle idők között. (...) a törésből közös teret vagy találkozási pontot hoz létre a különböző idők és generációk között. (...) Vagyis a kortárs nem csupán annyi tesz, hogy érzékelve a jelen sötétségét, világosságot hoz, amely soha nem ér célba, hanem azt is, hogy az időt, megosztva és összekötve, képes átalakítani és kapcsolatba hozni más időkkel.”⁶

^{4,5} „Uns beschäftigte auch die Frage, wie relational gesammelt werden könnte: Wie können Beziehungen gesammelt werden, und wie können Sammlungen in Beziehung bleiben?” Martina GRIESSER-STERMSCHEG, Nora STERNFELD, Luisa ZIAJA: "Vorwort. [Introduction.]" In: Martina GRIESSER-STERMSCHEG, Nora STERNFELD, Luisa ZIAJA: *Sich mit Sammlungen anlegen*. Wien: De Gruyter – Universität für angewandte Kunst, 2020, p. 16.

⁶ Giorgio AGAMBEN: „What is the Contemporary?” In: Giorgio AGAMBEN: *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*. Stanford, 2009, pp. 52–53.

this era afflicted by environmental and political crisis, can again become useful knowledge. As that generation, whose members developed life strategies under the oppression of wars, revolutions and dictatorships – which, tragically, may again become useful in the distressed times before us. We are interested in how it is possible to collect, taking into account various correlations, how “these relationships can be collected, and how we can preserve the relations between the individual collections”.⁴

I truly hope that *Collec_Think Tank* can create the opportunity for these relationships to deepen further, so that they will constitute a foundation upon which we can all depend and lean on in the work of the next few years, and this com-

mon effort will evolve an impact over an ever increasing sphere.

The contemporary, in the words of Giorgio Agamben, is courage:

(...) the contemporary puts to work a special relation between the different times. (...) he also makes of this fracture a meeting place, or an encounter between times and generations. (...)

This means that the contemporary is not only the one who, perceiving the darkness of the present, grasps a light that never reach its destiny, he is also the one who, dividing and interpolating time, is capable of transforming it and putting it in relation with other times.⁵



⁴ „Uns beschäftigte auch die Frage, wie relational gesammelt werden könnte: Wie können Beziehungen gesammelt werden, und wie können Sammlungen in Beziehung bleiben?” Martina GRIESSER-STERMSCHEG, Nora STERNFELD, Luisa ZIAJA: "Vorwort. [Introduction.]" In: Martina GRIESSER-STERMSCHEG, Nora STERNFELD, Luisa ZIAJA: *Sich mit Sammlungen anlegen*. Wien: De Gruyter – Universität für angewandte Kunst, 2020, p. 16.

⁵ Giorgio AGAMBEN: "What is the Contemporary?" In: Giorgio AGAMBEN: *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays*. Stanford, 2009, pp. 52–53.



VARJAS BETTINA

A romániai iparművészet és design reprezentációja az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményében

Ez a tanulmány a romániai iparművészet és design jelenlétét vizsgálja az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményében, különös tekintettel a Kortárs Design Főosztály kollekciójában fellelhető műtárgyakra.

Az 1872-ben a világon negyedikként alapított Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteménye 152 éves fennállása alatt – vásárlásoknak, ajándékozásoknak köszönhetően, valamint a világban zajló

események és politikai intézkedések következtében – jelentősen gyarapodott: jelenleg mintegy 138 ezer műtárggyal dicsekedhet.

A mai Románia területén készült tárgyak a teljes gyűjtemény 1,8 százalékát teszik ki. Műfaj, technika, anyag, megmunkálás és funkció tekintetében rendkívül sokszínű és izgalmas kollekciót alkotnak, amelyben az iparművészeti műfajok szinte mindegyike megtalálható.

BETTINA VARJAS

art historian and assistant museologist, Museum of Applied Arts Budapest, Contemporary Design Department

Representation of Romanian Applied Arts and Design in the Collections of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest

With its collections currently comprising some 138,000 art objects, Hungarian and universal, historical and contemporary alike, the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest is one of Europe's most important museums. In the current study, I place under the microscope objects from this enormous collection that represent Romanian applied arts and design. In the course of my research, I seek answers to the following questions: How many objects are currently found in the collection that were made on the territory of Romania, and what portion of the museum's collections do these objects comprise? In each of the individual collections, how many objects can be found that were made in Romania, and what percentage does this represent of the entire collection of each of the individual departments? In which collection do we find the greatest number of art objects made in Romania? Currently, what types and genres of objects made on Romanian territory can be found in the collections of the museum – made of what materials and from which epochs? It is my aim to obtain a complete picture of the art objects representing Romanian applied arts and design found within the collections of the Museum of Applied Arts – with particular regard to the collection of the Contemporary Design Department, and also to highlight the “strengths” and potential shortcomings of this collection.

The Founding and History of the Museum of Applied Arts, in brief

The Museum of Applied Arts Budapest was established in 1872 on the model of the Victoria & Albert Museum¹ in London and the Museum für angewandte Kunst² in Vienna. From the outset, all genres of applied arts, Hungarian and international, works deriving from historical periods and contemporary pieces were all a part of the institution's field of interest for its collections. Alongside the museum's collections, a school of applied arts and a library were also established. The realisation of the museum-school-library institutional constellation was thanks to the endeavours of the period – along the lines of which the London and Vienna museums were also established – and according to which it was necessary to “orient”³ the artisans and the industrial students, but also to form and refine the taste of the larger public.

The History and Development of the Museum Collections

The foundation of the museum's collection was comprised of a portion of the historical holdings of the Hungarian National Museum, as well as contemporary artworks purchased at the 1873 Vienna, the 1878 and the 1889 Paris World Expositions, and also gifts from the Herendi Porcelain Manufacture and the Zsolnay Factory.

¹ The institution originally called the South Kensington Museum was inaugurated in 1857, as the world's first ever museum of applied arts. ÁCS: "A Budapesti Iparművészeti Múzeum...", p. 261.

² The museum was inaugurated in 1863 originally as the Österreichisches Museum für Kunst und Industrie. https://www.mak.at/en/museum/the_mak [last accessed: 28.02.2024]

³ ÁCS: Op.cit.

Thanks to the first two directors of the museum, György Ráth and Jenő Radisics⁴, “the museum grew to be a renowned institution of national significance, and even inspiring international acclaim”.⁵ As a result of their network of international relationships, the number of artwork holdings increased significantly: they made purchases at the world expositions, as well as from the Christmas exhibitions arranged annually in the museum, enriching both the historical and contemporary collections. A new building was erected to hold the increasingly expanding collections, whose keystone deposit celebration took place on 25 October 1896.⁶ The museum’s collections grew continuously up until World War I, with bequests (Zsigmond Bubics and the Delhaes estate) and gifts (Imre Szalay, Frigyes Glück, Marcell Nemes, Mrs. György Ráth, Baroness Mrs. Béla Liphay) also acquired, alongside purchases.⁷ In 1917, Gyula Végh became the museum director, and it was primarily thanks to his relationships with art collectors that the museum was enriched with entire collections.⁸

From the late 1940s until the early 1960s, the museum’s collections grew to an extraordinary extent, namely with the collaboration of the Ministerial Committee on Endangered Private Collections in the period following World War II, with artworks rescued from castles and palaces placed in museums.⁹ After 1948, several autonomous collections – including those of the Ráth Museum, and of Counts Zichy and Vigyázó – in the name of reorganisation and rationalisation, were liquidated and given to public collections, a portion of which was deposited at the Museum of Applied Arts. Between 1948 and 1949, two additional large-scale collections were deposited at the museum: Ottó Fettick’s collection of more than 5000 items, as well as the ce-

ramic collection of chemistry professor Vince Wartha.¹⁰ In 1961, the museum’s art collection was expanded with the collection of Viennese furniture manufacturer Miksa Schmidt.¹¹

From the second half of the 20th century, the collections of the museum have been expanded primarily with objects with Hungarian historical connections, as well as modern and contemporary pieces. Collection of contemporary Hungarian artworks, from the earliest endeavours up to the present day, is once again the chief direction for development of the collection.¹²

Objects related to Romania in the Collections of the Museum of Applied Arts

During the museum’s 152-year existence, its collection expanded with countless objects and object groupings, until reaching its current dimensions of some 138,000 items. This number refers to all materials deposited at the museum until the end of the 2023 year and recorded in its Inventory. Beyond this, there are also several hundred thousand documents, photographs, manuscripts and records found in the Archive, currently undergoing registration and processing. In the course of my research, I worked from the digital registry¹³ of the museum’s Inventory, completing detailed study extending to the entire collection of the museum. I examined the art objects according to their place of creation, and I filtered the entire inventory for 68 keywords, gradually narrowing the field from the entire territory of today’s Romania, progressing through the smaller regions, counties, and finally cities and towns.

There are currently a total of 2497 pieces produced on Romanian territory found in the mu-

seum’s collection, which comprises approximately 1.8 percent of the museum’s collection of 138,000 items. There are seven department collections at the museum: the Archive, the Furniture collection, the Ceramic and Glass collection, the Contemporary Design collection, the Book Art collection, the Goldsmith and Metalwork collection, and the Textile and Costume collection – and there are artworks produced in Romania within each of these department collections.

The Archive is the collection comprising the most material among all of the museum collections. Alongside the core collection preserving paper-based items (e.g., calling cards, icons, playing cards, stationery, etc.), there are also many auxiliary collections: the ex libris collection, drawing and plan collection, photography collection, and the collection of printed design sheets. There are currently 7383 artworks in the core collection,

while there are several hundred thousand documents held in the auxiliary collections, both processed and as yet unprocessed. Within the processed material of this enormous collection (also including the processed documents of the auxiliary collections), there are currently 851 items produced on the territory of today’s Romania. Among these, the majority are ex libris¹⁴, with a total 562 pieces. Alongside these, there are graphic works, architecture and interior photos, photos documenting artworks, art photographs, postcards, handmade sample books, correspondence, cards, advertisements, drawings and other documents, among others, found in the Archive. Because the entire breadth of material in both the core and auxiliary collections of the Archive comprises several hundred thousand items, it is not possible to precisely define the percentage of paper-based objects and documents originating on today’s Romanian territory in correlation with the complete collection.



Guild chest, early 19th century, Lugos (Lugoj). Materials: brass, yew veneer, iron; height: 63.5 cm, length: 67 cm, width: 42.5 cm; Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre – Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Furniture Collection; inventory no.: 11143. Photo: Jonatán Urbán and Dávid Kouács

Within the Furniture collection, there are currently 95 objects produced on the territory of Romania. These objects comprise approximately 1.26 percent of the entire collection of some 7537 items. Among the 95 objects, there are interior fixtures, household and decorative objects, for instance, chests, cupboards, stools, hope chests, travel trunks, and even woodwork, including gingerbread forms, and a painted wooden ceiling from the Calvinist Church of Maksa.¹⁵

⁴ In 1881, György Ráth was entrusted with the leadership of the collection, and Jenő Radisics was selected as his deputy. In 1886, Ráth was bestowed with the title of heralded executive director, and in 1887 Radisics received the managing director title. ACS: Ibid., pp. 263–265.

⁵ Ibid., 263.

⁶ Following the keystone deposit ceremony, Ráth asked to be discharged, and Radisics was made executive director. Ibid., 280.

⁷ Dr. FÜLEP: et al. (eds.), *Budapest múzeumai*, p. 39.

⁸ <https://www.imm.hu/hu/contents/29,A+m%C3%BAzeum+> [last accessed: 05.03.2024]

⁹ <https://www.imm.hu/hu/contents/29,A+m%C3%BAzeum+> [last accessed: 05.03.2024]

¹⁰ Vince Wartha worked together with Vilmos Zsolnay, and thanks to the glaze he called *eosin*, the Zsolnay porcelain factory in Pécs became world famous.

<https://www.arcanum.com/en/online-kiadvanyok/MuMaTu-a-mult-magyar-tudosai-1/wartha-vince-6783/> [last accessed: 02.03.2024]

¹¹ <https://www.imm.hu/hu/contents/29,A+m%C3%BAzeum+> [last accessed: 05.03.2024]

¹² Ibid.

¹³ The Inventory is not official, but a registry for internal use, with an audit to come.

¹⁴ The ex libris collection of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest, with close to 70,000 pieces, comprises one of the largest ex libris collections in the world. <https://gyujtemeny.imm.hu/gyujtemenyek/adattar-ex-libris-gyujtemeny/5> [last accessed: 05.03.2024]

¹⁵ For detailed information, please see the museum’s website: https://gyujtemeny.imm.hu/gyujtemeny/festett-famennyezet-a-maksai-reformatus-templombol/2910?f=1yhe0pgA3qeJgZqrBAGG1eHRTIOPb_Uez547IXRrD1ru6HxoC7xdx8Goh7H7C3xdx8BnQAqBUUmEAs18Y&n=5 [last accessed: 05.03.2024]

The extremely variegated Ceramic and Glass collection currently contains some 39,205 art objects. Among these, 436 objects and object fragments were produced on today's Romanian territory, which amounts to 1.11 percent of the material of the department. In this collection, we can encounter the broad palette of Romanian applied arts: glasses, flasks, decorative bottles, teacups, wall sculptures, plates, dishes, ashtrays, bowls, pieces and fragments of furnaces, jugs, kettles, ceramic tiles, sculptures, vases, and countless other household and decorative objects.

The Goldsmith and Metalwork collection holds 373 objects that were produced on today's Romanian territory. This comprises 1.95 percent of the department's total 19,056 items. Alongside the Ceramic and Glass collection, the Goldsmith and Metalwork collection is likewise an extraordinarily rich and variegated collection, with watches, jewel cases, bonbonnières, sign brackets, boxes, chandeliers, decorative knives and daggers, decorative plates, tools, jewellery, silverware, chalices, belts, candlesticks, goblets, pendants, buttons, irons, and countless other household and decorative objects among them.

The largest number of items of Romanian origin is found in the Textile and Costume collection, which holds a total of 27,464 pieces. The 716 objects produced in today's Romania amount to 2.6 percent of the department's entire collection. In this collection, among others, tablecloths, quilts, various garments (e.g., blouses, coats, and head coverings), weavings, lace, embroideries, embroidery samplers, bath linens, fans, pattern books, saddles, flags, handkerchiefs, altar cloths, communion cloths, and vestments enrich the museum's holdings representing Romanian applied arts.



István Souánka: Vase with geese, c. 1908, Sepsibüxád (Bixad, Romania), Sepsibüxád Glass Factory. Material: layered glass; height: 22.3 cm, mouth diameter: 11 cm, base diameter: 12 cm; Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre – Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Ceramic and Glass Collection; inventory no.: 84.145.1. Photo: Krisztina Friedrich

Within the Book Art collection, of its 4682 volumes, there are currently a total 26 relics of book art that were made on Romanian territory. These volumes comprise 0.55 percent of the department collection. The majority derive from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, but there are also a few volumes in the collection from the 19th and 20th centuries.



Vessel in the form of a dog, c. 1700, Transylvania. Material: cobalt glass (coloured with cobalt oxide); dimensions: 18 x 23 cm; Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre – Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Ceramic and Glass Collection; inventory no.: 20009. Photo: Krisztina Friedrich



Gabriela Cristu Sgarbura: Weave of Europe, tapestry, 2010–2011, Romania. Materials: wool (presumably), lurex thread, synthetic; 42.5 x 56.5 cm; Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre – Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Textile and Costume Collection; inventory no.: 2012.31.6. Photo: Ágnes Soltészné Haranghy

There is just one department collection, however, in which there is not a single item found that was produced on Romanian territory, and that is the Contemporary Design collection. The Contemporary Design collection was established in 2015, and is thus the youngest department of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest. The entire collection contains currently 2591 objects, and its field of collection includes objects representing the applied arts of the post-World War II period, as well as modern and contemporary design creations.

Of the possible total 2497 items originating in Romania from the entire collection of the museum, there are only 128 objects that derive from 1945 or afterwards, which comprise 5.12 percent of the collection. By far, the majority of these – 108 items – are found in the Archive. There is a total nine pieces in the Ceramic and Glass collection – every single piece the work of glass artist Constanta Dogeanu: one decorative bottle, two ashtrays, one ceramic plant pot, and five vases. There is likewise a total nine pieces produced after 1945 found in the Textile

and Costume collection: five wall-textiles from textile artist Anna Tamás, two tapestries from textile artist Ella Olosz Gazda, one mini-textile by Elena Staemesch, and one tapestry from Gabriela Cristu Sgarbura. In the Goldsmith and Metalwork collection, there is a total of two objects: one sculpture from Péter Balogh and one wall-piece from István Kozma.



Constanta Dogeanu: Vase, 1964, Romania. Materials: frosted glass, layered glass, green glass; height: 16.2 cm, greatest width: 12 cm, mouth diameter: 4.5–5 cm, base diameter: 7.5–8.5 cm; Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre – Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, Ceramic and Glass Collection; inventory no.: 65.72.1. Photo: Krisztina Friedrich

Summary

There are currently 2497 objects originating from Romanian territory in the collections of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest, which amounts to 1.8 percent of the entire collection. Objects representing Romanian applied arts are found in varying proportions in the individual department collections. The largest number of such items is found in the collection of the Archive; however, if we take into consideration all of the individual collections – keeping in mind that it is not possible to determine the correlated percentage of the entire collection of ephemera preserved in the Archive – then it is the Textile and Costume collection that contains proportionally the largest number of objects deriving from Romanian territory.

According to genre, technique, material, workmanship and function, it is an extremely diverse and exciting collection that takes form before our eyes, with nearly every genre and category of applied arts represented. Among the seven principal departments of the museum, however, we find objects originating on today's Romanian territory in only six department collections. Ninety-five percent of these objects were produced prior to 1945, the majority deriving from the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. A mere 5 percent of the items were made in the period following the Second World War.

The Contemporary Design Department aspires to develop a collection that is as rich and varied as possible, consisting of not only Hungarian items, but also international, with a special view to the art and design of the Central/Eastern European region and the post-Socialist countries. I feel confident that the current study – together with the other studies of this conference – can later on help guide the Contemporary Design collection, as well as the other collections of the museum, from the perspective of which periods, genres, artists and

designers, and even concrete artworks and creations are those worth focusing greater attention on in the course of developing and expanding the collections of the museum.

Resources, Literature:

ÁCS Piroska: "A Budapesti Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményeinek kialakulása, önálló épületének megszületése (1872–1897)" [Formation of the Collections of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest, and the Birth of its Own Building (1872–1897)], in: *Tanulmányok Budapest múltjából* [Studies from Budapest's Past], 28 (1999), pp. 261–284.

Dr. FÜLEP Ferenc, et al. (eds.): *Budapest Múzeumai* [The Museums of Budapest]. Budapest: Corvina, 1984.

Internet resources:

<https://www.imm.hu/hu/> [last accessed: 05.03.2024]
<https://www.vam.ac.uk/> [last accessed: 28.02.2024]
<https://www.mak.at/en> [last accessed: 28.02.2024]
<https://www.arcanum.com/en/online-kiadvanyok/MuMaTu-a-mult-magyar-tudosai-1/wartha-vince-6783/> [last accessed: 02.03.2024]







MIRELA DUCULESCU

Megjegyzések a szocialista és poszt-szocialista Románia formatervezési gyakorlatához

A tanulmány a szocialista (1945–1989) és a poszt-szocialista Románia (1990-től napjainkig) formatervezési gyakorlatával kíván foglalkozni, miközben a helyi designszcéna 1989 előtti és azt követő összefüggéseibe is bepillantást nyújt.

A szocialista iparban designerként dolgozók egyéni tapasztalataitól függően ellentétes vélemények fogalmazódnak meg azzal kapcsolatban, vajon létezett-e a szocialista Romániában formatervezési gyakorlat, ha a teljes tervezési ciklust (designer-gyártó-felhasználó) figyelembe vesszük.

A kommunizmus 1989-es kelet-európai bukását követően a formatervezés kérdése a helyi

designerek erőfeszítései ellenére sem szerepelt egyetlen demokratikus román kormány napirendjén sem.

A romániai designszcéna 2000-től aktív, bár maga a design esetleges, és számos nemzetközi stílushatásból és tervezéssel kapcsolatos elméletből merít.

Az idősebb designergenerációk és a frissen végzett tervezők gyakorlatában 2010-től kezdődően helyi mikronarratívák alakultak ki, amelyek a romániai design helyét többnyire az európai designhoz viszonyítva határozzák meg.

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Notes on Design Practices in Socialist and Post-Socialist Romania

This study aims to outline Romanian design practices, pointing out some important moments in Socialist and Post-Socialist Romania in relation to the European and international context, thereby mapping the stages of a relatively young history of design practice in Romania.

It is necessary to note that we briefly look at entangled histories over the course of modernism, socialism, the Cold War, post-socialism and contemporary times. Design higher education and the practice of design professionals were born under the Romanian communist regime, thus shaped by state institutions and politics. The design practised in socialist Romania manifested itself non-monolithically within that practised throughout the Socialist Bloc, which in turn was shaped by differentiated practices.¹ Conversely, contemporary design practices are driven by private entities despite a general lack of interest on the part of public bodies in the design of original Romanian products.

The historic moments essential to the establishment of Romanian design practice and education are marked by inherent close connections to the specific problematics and transformations of the design field. The premises of design can be found in the Romanian decorative arts at the turn of the twentieth century, which aimed to be in synchrony with the Western European framework, and in the local manifestation of the echoes of modernism in the interbellum

period and the efforts to industrialise the country, in an attempt to move beyond the agrarian economy.²

Notes on the Notion of Industrial Aesthetics/Design in Socialist Romania

One of the main characteristics of the postwar period of Soviet occupation of Romania (1944–1958), which was marked by the nationalisation of private property (1948), was the focus on heavy industry as part of the state's Five-Year Plans.

The emergence of the school of design is connected with the "openness" (the "thaw") that the Romanian Communist Party allowed itself over the period of one decade (1964–1974). This was in conjunction with the legitimisation of the profession of designer in socialist Romania, to which the efforts of architects educated in the modernist spirit contributed, as well as specialists in the field of art, and representatives of officialdom (who promoted the notion of industrial aesthetics in direct relation to socialist industrialisation), convinced of the need for design in industry and to improve the quality of life.

Thanks to the efforts of ground-breaking architects and artists, Industrial Forms (called design by the specialists in the school) departments were set up in Bucharest (1969) and Cluj (1971).³ The syllabus was inspired by the Bauhaus pedagogical model.

¹ David CROWLEY, Jane PAVITT (eds.): *Cold War Modern: Design 1945–1970*. London: V&A Publishing, 2008.

² Mirela DUCULESCU: "Romanian Design", in: Clive EDWARDS (ed.), *The Bloomsbury Encyclopaedia of Design*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing House, vol. 3, 2016, pp. 168–169; Mirela DUCULESCU: "Indefinite Faces of Modernism: Notes on Design in Interwar and Socialist Romania", in: *Studies in History and Theory of Architecture, Seasoned Modernism: Prudent Perspectives on an Unwary Past*, vol. 7, 2019, pp. 137–156.

³ Mirela DUCULESCU: "Designing an Intricate History: The Department of Industrial Forms [Design], The 'Nicolae Grigorescu' Institute of Fine Arts of Bucharest (1969–1989)", in: *50 Design UNArte. O istorie vizuală a școlii de la București (1969–2019) / A Visual History of the Bucharest School (1969–2019)*. Bucharest: Editura UNArte, 2019, pp. 25–110.

Notes on Designers' Practice in Socialist Industry

Almost 300 design graduates were trained in socialist Romania in the schools from Bucharest and Cluj until 1989. The profession was not included in the official nomenclature of trades and professions. The status of designers after graduation was unclear. They were generally allocated to state-owned factories and the research institutes of various industries that required designers, thereby legitimising the requirement for the profession and the real need on the part of society. The designers worked as "creators", "graduate draughtsmen", "scientific researchers" and, in exceptional cases, "designers".

Political and socio-economic aspects shaped practice in industrial aesthetics (design), a notion with various names and meanings, as well as professional manifestations and official endeavours and attempts at professional organisation (the design section of Uniunea Artiștilor Plastici/the Union of Plastic Artists, established in 1979, at the same time as Centrul Român de Design/the Romanian Design Centre). Among the professional manifestations were: Seminarul Național de Design (The National Design Seminar) of 1974, dedicated to "design and economic development", focusing on the connection between design, marketing and economy;



Decebal Scriba: faience tableware, 1978, ceramic prototypes produced by the Aesthetics Centre for Light Industry, Bucharest © Decebal Scriba Archive

exhibitions such as Expoziția Republicană de Design (The Republican Design Exhibition), and Bucharest 1982–1983, showing mainly design projects from the industry.

In socialist Romania, design concepts and prototypes were not usually connected to their mass production implementation. There were a few fortunate exceptions, involving educated decision-makers (factory and institute directors) who realised that design was a source of modernisation and improvement, and who insisted on working with designers who practised their profession with positive results.

Individual professional destinies were what marked Romanian design in the socialist period. The designers carried out their task as professionally as they could, given the decision-making system and technological limitations. Some designers defected or emigrated before 1989 and continued to pursue their professions abroad, including, among others, Marcel (Puțoreanu) Klamer (b. 1952; established in West Germany) and Alexandru Manu (b. 1954; established in Canada).

Within the framework of the Cold War, the regime was ambitious to manufacture "original Romanian products" in order to demonstrate the utopian power and autonomy of the



Interior view: The Republican Design Exhibition, Sala Dalles, Bucharest, Dec. 1982–Jan. 1983 © National University of Arts Bucharest

socio-economic system of the Romanian Socialist Republic (including the manufacture of a "car for all" in 1986 – *Lăstun* – whose body was designed by Radu Teodorescu [b. 1950], while Adrian Marian [b. 1955] designed the interior according to ergonomic and functional principles), rather than to employ design consistently as a resource suited to a strategy for the masses.

There were attempts to produce original designs for industries, by Mihai Maxim (b. 1947), Alexandru Alămoreanu (b. 1954), and Geza Aszalos (b. 1952), which took different concrete forms, such as the redesign of various products. Research in the aeronautics industry (Cezar Șuteu, b. 1953) and projects in the computer industry (Mircea Panduru, b. 1954) were undertaken. Other areas included the optical electronics industry (Alexandru Ghilduș, b. 1952) and the electronics industry, where designers adapted to the limitations of incorporated radio technology (Ioșif Szabó, b. 1951; Magda Sficlea, b. 1956).

A Kind of Design Practice in Romania (1990–2000): Efforts to Consolidate the Profession

After the events of 1989 and the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, Romanian designers and educators experienced moments of confidence and effervescence, lobbying for legislation, striving to establish a professional body related to industry, and trying to promote, on their own, design as a resource for economic and social development.

The Romanian Design Foundation (RDF) was created in 1996, with British expertise and co-financing. Although enthusiastically hailed, due to financial issues (the foundation was not self-sustainable after the end of British investment), the RDF project quickly dissipated, circa 1998, and failed to achieve the purpose for which it had been created.

Therefore, the inflection point between two political and socio-economic systems generated a renewed effort of pedagogical resources for the Bucharest and Cluj schools of design. The nucleus of founding professors would be enhanced by new workshop tutors from the ranks of graduates who had worked in the socialist industry. They would gradually connect and create an international specialised education while building up their own private practices: Alexandru Alămoreanu, Alexandru Ghilduș and Cezar Șuteu in industrial product design, Dinu Dumbrăvician (b. 1961) in visual communication and typographic design, Marina Theodorescu (b. 1958) in visual identity, and, among others, Dragoș Gheorghiu (b. 1953) in spatial planning, interior design and anthropology.

A Very Rough Sketch: Design Practices in Romania (2000–present)

Since the year 2000, Romania's design scene is dynamic, though design is random, drawing on a range of international stylistic influences and design philosophies.⁴

Since 2010, while higher design education adapted to the requirements of an expanded market (curriculum contents, the Erasmus programme, the integration of new technologies as tools in the design process, doctoral research), local micro-narratives have emerged in the practice of mature designers and young graduates, self-positioning Romanian design usually in relation to European design.

Noteworthy in this context is the fluid boundary between architects (Dragoș Motica,⁵ b. 1983) and designers, especially in the fields of product design and furniture and interior design. A new wave of design graduates (Arnold Estefán, b. 1978; Radu Manelici, b. 1985; Alexe Popescu,⁶ b. 1974; Eugen Erhan, b. 1980; Adelina Butnaru,⁷

⁴ *Common Roots: Design Map of Central Europe* [exh. cat.], Holon: Design Museum Holon, Israel, 2012.

⁵ <https://www.dragosmotica.ro/> [last accessed: 13.01.2024]

⁶ <https://alexe.ro/> [last accessed: 13.01.2024]

⁷ <https://adelinabutnaru.com/> [last accessed: 16.02.2024]



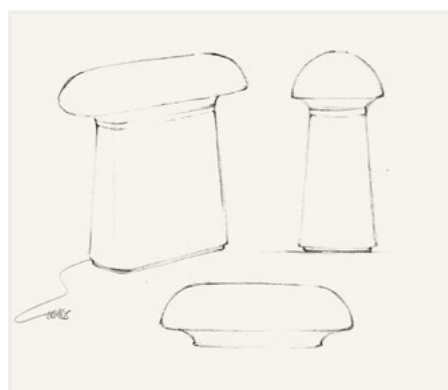
Book design by Radu Manelici, Raymond Bobar. Graphic design category, Romanian Design Week 2017, Bucharest. Photo: Roald Aron © The Institute

b. 1991, etc.) has played an important role and gained national and international professional recognition for editorial design, typography, visual identity, book cover design and illustration, etc. It is interesting to note the practice of Romanian-born graphic and typography designer Raymond Bobar (b. 1978), who studied in New York and the UK, lives in London, and also designs for the Romanian market⁸; his case study brings into focus another issue that requires further research: what does “Romanian” (*id est* nation-based ideology) design mean in terms of globalisation?

Another case study for extensive practice is that of the 201 Design Studio⁹ in Bucharest, found-

ed in 2012 by Romanian designers Mira Ene and Codrin Stanculescu, specialised in the development of concepts for furniture, lighting design and home accessories for both national (Askia Furniture) and international (Scandinavian) clients, such as Bolia and Woud. For example, the Nova table lamp (2024) that elongates one of its dimensions (focusing on functionality, sustainability and the optimisation of the manufacturing process), is designed in Romania by the 201 Design Studio for the Danish brand Woud.

The liberal design practice and associated private initiatives (within the confines of a poorly diversified and underperforming economic system) have attempted to compensate for the



201 Design Studio (Mira Ene and Codrin Stanculescu): Nova table lamp, 2024, designed for Woud © Woud

⁸ <https://bobar.studio/> [last accessed: 16.02.2024]
⁹ <https://201designstudio.ro/> [last accessed: 16.02.2024]

absence of state public design policies and/or the adoption of design principles for the public sector.

A number of case studies illustrate the aforementioned coagulation of private initiatives – some of them grassroots – in various design specialisations. An example is the association of professional interests in graphic design – Local Design Circle, established in Bucharest in 2018.¹⁰ Extremely relevant is the Romanian Design Week (2013–present) festival organised by the Institute Foundation in Bucharest, that works as a platform for connecting and promoting design and creative industries.

Other examples are: the creation in 2011 of Typopassage Timisoara,¹¹ a typography micro-museum network in accessible public spaces, initiated by graphic designer Ovidiu Hrin (b. 1977) with the Austrian graphic designer Erwin K. Bauer (b. 1965) as the first international extension of Typopassage Vienna; aligning with international directions such as *designer maker*, like the NOD Makerspace¹² collaborative/co-working space, an adaptive reuse of a former socialist

factory through the functional conversion of the cotton industry in Bucharest (2015), among others.

Another direction, in step with international practices, has been the recovery and reconnection of contemporary Romanian design as a slow design process – generally small series or one-offs – with the entrepreneurial notions of tradition and craft. One example is Platforma Tradițiilor Creative¹³ (the Creative Traditions Platform), founded in 2017 in Bucharest by a group of stakeholders in the field of cultural heritage; in this context, the phrase “creative traditions” is an interpretation of the “creative industries” notion as defined by UNESCO.

Despite the structural imbalances in the post-socialist socio-politic and economic system and the lack of interest on the part of public bodies for the design of original Romanian products, design practice in Romania has undergone significant developments; nevertheless, all of the above private attempts to shape the field of local design are an ongoing challenging and long-lasting process.



Product design category, interior view. Romanian Design Week 2016, Bucharest. Photo: Roald Aron © The Institute

¹⁰ <https://localdesigncircle.com/en/> [last accessed: 16.02.2024]
¹¹ <https://www.typopassage.ro/> [last accessed: 13.02.2024]
¹² <https://nodmakerspace.ro/> [last accessed: 13.02.2024]
¹³ <https://tradiitcreative.ro/> [last accessed: 13.02.2024]





COSMIN NASUI

Az ipari formák esztétikája:

a romániai design és iparművészet a kommunista időkben

Az ipar és a művészetek – amelyek mindegyikét felülről lefelé tervezték meg, vagyis a politikai hatalom szempontjaiból kiindulva és azoktól haladva a társadalmi és a szakmai tevékenységek szervezése felé – egyaránt sajátos válaszok és megoldások mentén illeszkedtek a kommunista Románia öt éves terveihez (az ún. cincinalokhoz), amelyek a nehéz- és a könnyűipari ágazatok fejlesztésével szándékozták a román társadalmat „sokoldalúan fejletté” alakítani. Ezért az ipari formák esztétikája (a design) és a tömegek esztétikai nevelése iránti érdeklődés inkább a programszerű (kényszerű) kommunista iparosítási folyamatok következményeként jelent meg, semmint a romániai művésztszadalomból, illetve a társadalmi igényekből eredően.

A design – az egyetemi oktatástól kezdve az ipari ágazatokig – inkább megmaradt elméleti és pro-

jekszinten, és csak korlátozott számú gyakorlati eredményt ért el (a belsőépítészet, a grafikai tervezés és a terméktervezés terén). Ehhez a tervezők, illetve designerek foglalkoztatásának helyzete is hozzátartozott: a Román Szocialista Köztársaságban ezek a munkakörök nem szerepeltek a szakmajegyzékben. A hetvenes és nyolcvanas években a design nagyrészt tervekben és tervrajzokban manifesztálódott, hasonlóan a „papírépítészet” jelenségéhez, amely főként az utóbbi évtizedre volt jellemző. A szakemberek egyetértének abban, hogy a hetvenes évek elején alkalmazott tárgytervezési elv, amely szerint a forma követi a funkciót, a nyolcvanas években egyszerűen a forma átalakításában merült ki. Ez leginkább szerény szerkezeti fejlesztéseket jelentett a korábban kialakult funkciókra alkalmazva (székek, hajszárítók, mindenféle készülékek, konyhabútor stb. terén).

COSMIN NASUI

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The Aesthetics of Industrial Forms: Romanian Design and Applied Arts during the Communist Period

Although apparently a field without an ideological imprint, Romanian design has been deeply marked by the industrial and economic processes of socialist Romania and cannot be understood outside the contexts that determined it. Starting from the communist political, ideological and propaganda desires in Romania, the attempt to raise and transform society to the stage of “multilaterally developed socialist society”, through heavy and light industry, had consequences, including in the fields of applied arts and design. Planned from top to bottom, i.e., from the factors of political power towards the organisation of socio-professional activities and actions, both industry and the arts sought specific solutions and answers to fit into the Five-Year Plans of socialist Romania. The impact of the consequences of planning all industrial, economic and social components (which, in the era, meant forcing the production plan to be exceeded, the standardization of production and orders, the reduction of costs and resources, and the ration-card basis of certain products) was, as we will see, major for design.

The policies of forced industrialisation paradoxically generated a decrease and deterioration of the standards and quality of life of the citizens of the Socialist Republic of Romania, and a shortage of goods and products (in the 1980s this included basic foods being accessible on a ration-card basis). The difficult effort to integrate Romanian design into heavy and light industry was often limited to the formal level and reduced to the concept of industrial aesthetics.

The Planned Birth of Design

Interest in the aesthetics of industrial forms (design) and in the aesthetic education of the masses emerged more as a politically “rendered” consequence of the processes of programmed (forced) socialist industrialisation, and less as an organically generated concern of the Romanian artistic world and life, on a large scale.

Discussions were held on the rise of interest in design in Romania, within the window of political thaw between the years 1968–1971 (after Nicolae Ceaușescu condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the troops of the Warsaw Pact in August 1968, and until he returned from his Asian tour in 1971). It should be specified here that the interest in modernisation was derived from a program of politically imposed reforms and modernisations at the official level, within which the interest in design could also find its place, in a favourable atmosphere, coordinated among others by Mircea Malița, Minister of Education, and Iulian Crețu, President of the Commission of Industrial Aesthetics of the Municipality of Bucharest (1970), and Scientific Director of the Institute of Industrial Creation and Product Aesthetics (1971–1974).

Thus, in 1969¹, the first form of higher education in design (officially called “industrial forms” or “industrial aesthetics”) was created in Romania: the Department of Industrial Forms, within the Faculty of Decorative Arts

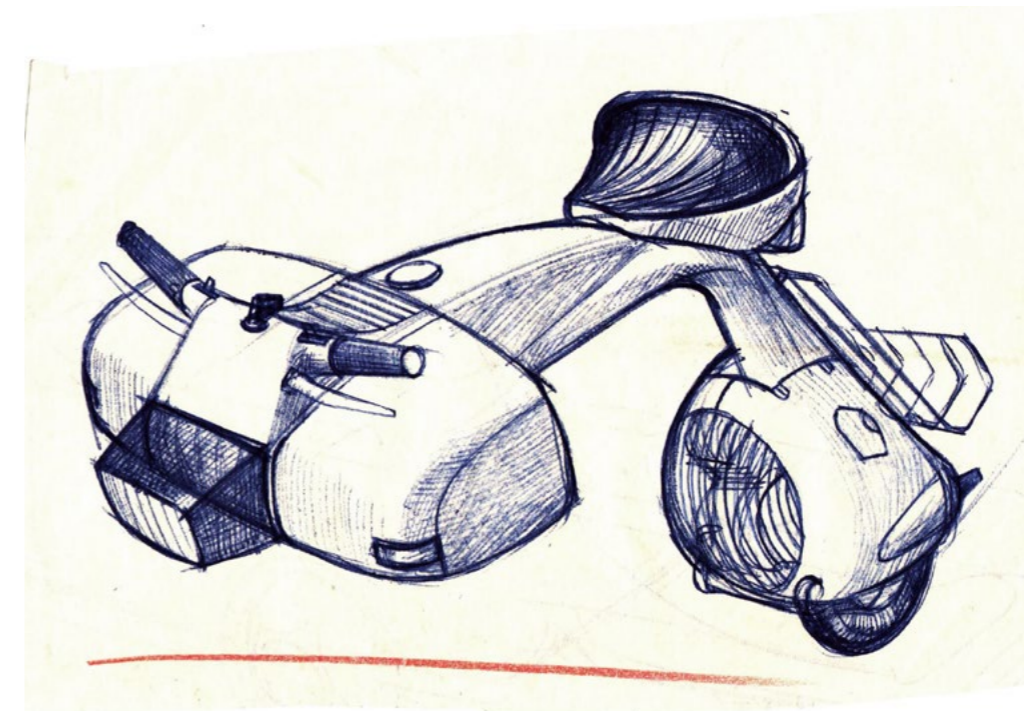
¹ In 1959, the Department of Form Studies (STUFO) was founded at the “Ion Mincu” Institute of Architecture in Bucharest (IAIM).

at the Institute of Fine Arts “N. Grigorescu” Bucharest (first head of department: architect Paul Bortnowski²; then artist Ion Bitzan, head of department of the Section of Industrial Forms 1977–1990, dean of the Faculty of Decorative Arts and Design 1990–1997). Design departments were also established in art high schools in Bucharest and Timișoara (also in 1969), and then in 1971 the Industrial Forms section was established at the Institute of Fine Arts in Cluj-Napoca (first head of department: architect Virgil Salvanu). The establishment of the Institute of Industrial Creation and Production Aesthetics (ICIEP), within the Ministry of Light Industry (MIU), later developed into two centres for industrial plants – the Centre for Aesthetics of Light Industry Products (CEPIU), and the Research and Technological Engineering Centre for Household Items (CCITAC, later CCSITAC). As an additional consequence of these pursuits, the Romanian Marketing Association (AROMAR) emerged, within the Academy of Economic Sciences (ASE); AROMAR hosted the graduation ceremony of the first class of designers from Romania/graduates of the Bucharest school (1973).³

It must be said that, at first, it was not clear where to establish and teach the discipline of the aesthetics of industrial forms: within the university institutions of art, architecture or polytechnics. Following some debates, the Institute of Fine Arts “N. Grigorescu” was the school appointed to establish the Industrial Forms Section. Later, over the following years, similar disciplines were also taught within the “Ion Mincu” Institute of Architecture and the Polytechnic University, and also within the Technical School of Architecture and Urban Construction – the post-secondary school of architecture.

Project Design on Paper vs. Design in Production

Beginning with the artistic university education environment, and continuing into the industrial context, design naturally remained closer to the academic stage of theory and design, with limited practical achievements (interior design, graphic design, and product design), including through the later employment of designers (this profession was not found in the classifi-



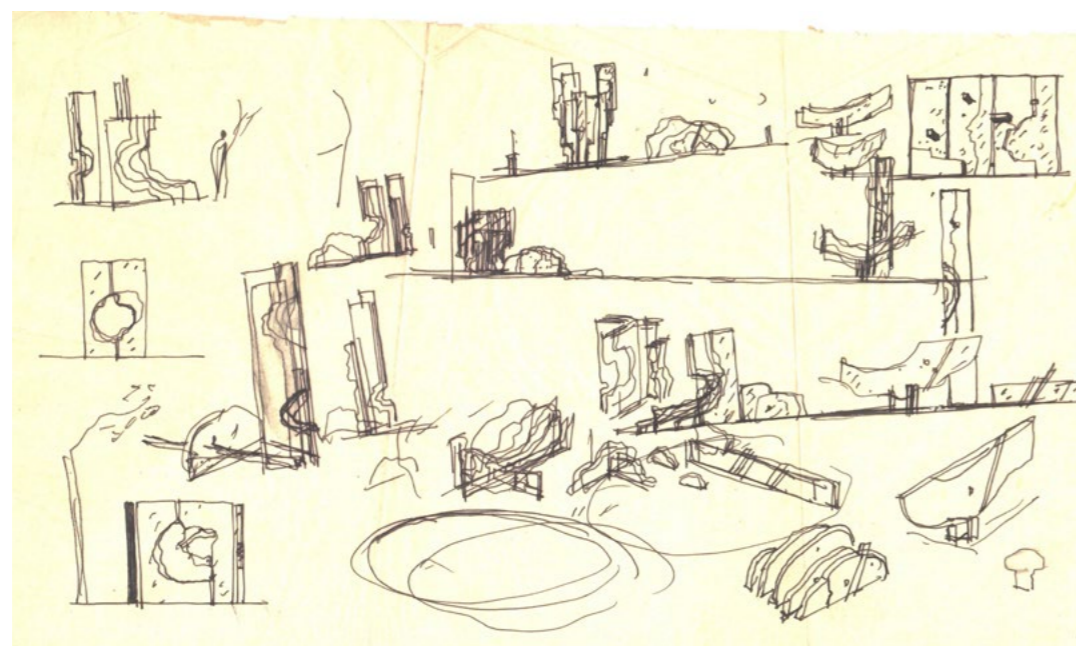
Romeo Voinescu, Scooter vehicle prototype, c. 1980, ballpoint pen on paper, 11.5x18 cm, Nasui Collection & Archives

cation of occupations in the Socialist Republic of Romania). A large quota of design from the 1970s and 80s was concentrated in design proposals and layouts (i.e., projects only on paper, never implemented)⁴, similar to the related phenomenon of “paper architecture”, characteristic especially of the 1980s. There is also a unanimous opinion among specialists that the natural development in object design – from function to form (in the early 1970s), then stopped (in the 1980s) at a rigid remodelling of the shape, implying modest improvements of some pre-existing functions – was the case for chairs, hairdryers, all kinds of appliances, kitchen furniture, etc. After the fall of communism, design, initially perceived as a specialty to be integrated into industry, changed its destination, developing towards the advertising field, which was later defined as an essential part of the creative industries.

The 1990s brought an abrupt transformation of applied arts and design: the disappearance of state orders and the industrial support infrastructure, and the gradual bankruptcy and abolition of the network of Combinatul Fondului Plastic stores, which served as an important



Romeo Voinescu, Scooter vehicle prototype, c. 1980, graphite on paper, 25x15 cm, Nasui Collection & Archives



Paul Bortnowski, Environmental design project for Amara location, 1970, pencil on trace paper, 35x20 cm, Nasui Collection & Archives

² See also Paul BORTNOWSKI: www.cosminnasui.com/2020/02/paul-bortnowski
³ See also Mirela DUCULESCU: “Designing an Intricate History: The Department of Industrial Forms (Design) The ‘Nicolae Grigorescu’ Institute of Fine Arts of Bucharest (1969–1989)”, in Ioana GRUENWALD (ed.), *50 Design UNArte. A visual history of the Bucharest School (1969–2019)*, trans.: Anamaria SASU, Bucharest: UNArte Publishing House, 2019. pp. 25–110.

⁴ See also Romeo Voinescu: www.cosminnasui.com/2020/09/romeo-voinescu

support of artistic production, in terms of income and quantity. At the same time, through the closure of various departments, production spaces and collective workshops, access to technological infrastructure, as well as the accumulated know-how, were lost. Under these conditions, although university education prepared specialisations in these fields, fewer and fewer young artists could continue their activity in these fields due to, on the one hand, difficult access to expensive means of production, and on the other hand, the abolition of the industrial infrastructure that allowed for the existence of practices and specialisations necessary to obtain artistic results.⁵

The Industrial Aesthetics of a Rationalised “Consumer Society”

The paradox of the activity of the first two decades of design in socialist Romania (1970s–1980s) was formed both by the scale of forced industrialisation and by the absence of a consumer society. The needs of the entire market were met by Romanian products (or products either with a Romanian license or copied locally, but at reduced quality standards). Foreign products, especially those from sister socialist countries, from Europe or Asia, were seen as exotic and were often sold together with unsaleable Romanian products. Due to their rarity, products from the West could be accessed only as contraband, through corruption and a black market.

Planned production, based on standardised products at the lowest possible cost, left little room for the implementation of the contributions of Romanian designers, on the rare occasion in which they actually reached production; all this, after a long process of interventions from other industrial departments with non-artistic responsibilities. This is how it happened that the same consumer products, in limited assortments, were found in all homes and households of Romanians, which ended up resembling

each other to the point of seeming identical. It was understood that the related design was minimal, austere, and made mainly according to production standards and not according to the principle of function creating form.

Examples of forms that violated the principle of function were glass containers, identical in shape and all in one-litre quantities, regardless of whether they were for oil, beer, or other liquids. Milk and milk products were the only exception: they had a different specific form; although they did not even have a label stating the contents, only the prompt to “rinse after emptying”, hot-printed directly in the glass. In a similar situation, the unitary design of jars was differentiated by just two or three types of capacity and label. Of course, all of these were recyclable, and most often the containers were reused simply after a brief wash, keeping traces of former chemical contamination from the contents of previous products. There were two models of automobiles: Dacia 1300 (1969–1984) and 1310 (1979–1999) under Renault license, and later Olcit (1981–1996) under Citroen license, with waiting lists for purchase lasting several years. There were two bicycle factories: Pegas and Tohan, each with two or three models; a few furniture models with women’s names; a few factories of clothing, shoes, cosmetics, and household appliances. Several types of Universal stores, Romarta, covered the entire retail market through a nationwide distribution network. Housing in blocks of flats, in prefabricated buildings, contributed as well to the standardisation and uniformisation of life and society.

In the 1980s, the foreign debt payment program of the Socialist Republic of Romania, carried out through a severe austerity policy, led by privileging products for export to obtain foreign currency, to their very absence on the domestic market. This austerity program created anomalies by qualitatively differentiating production for export from domestic production, including

their integrated design. On bizarre circuits, including the black market, “products refused for export” were in great demand. As a secondary consequence, the packaging of these products was collected as trophies and displayed on the shelves of the homes of lucky citizens.

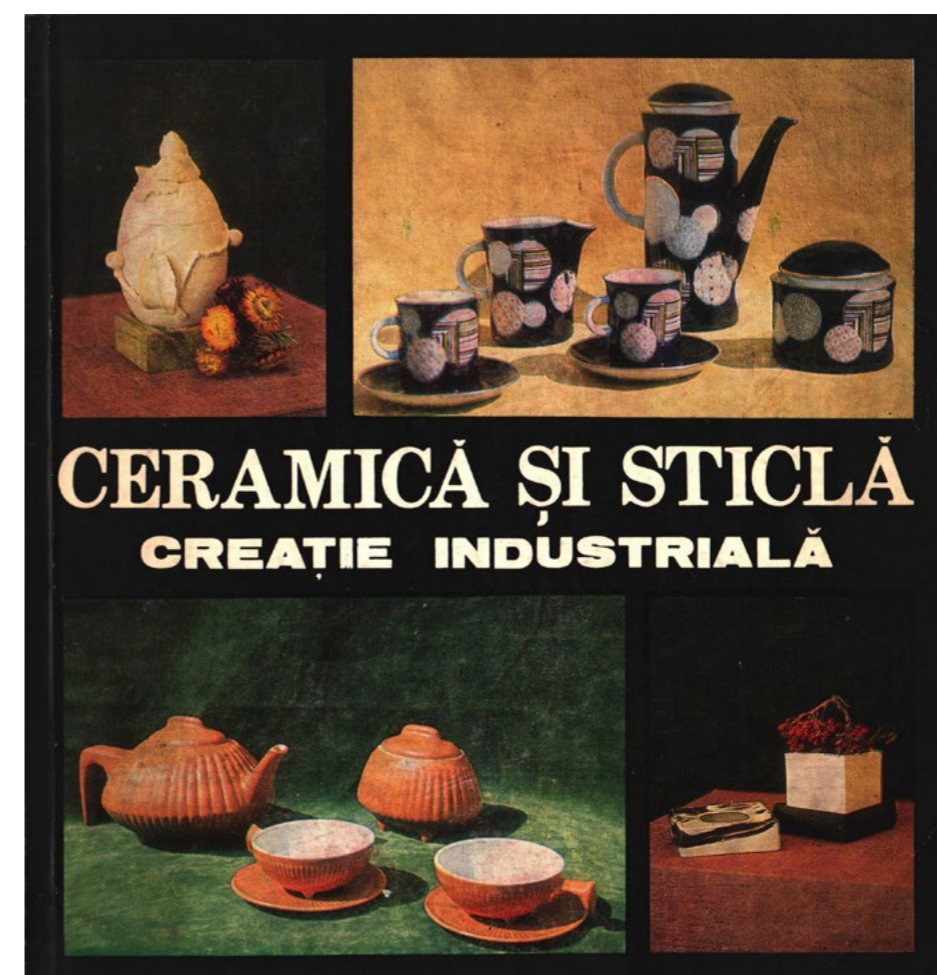
Applied Arts in Light Industry – Utilitarian Function and Aesthetic Education of the Masses

The term “applied arts” was defined by its utilitarian role, closer to the architectural, utilitarian-industrial fields, or to the household, domestic crafts (embroidery, stitching, wood carvings, braids, dolls, etc.), as being part of the phenomenon of mass culture, having a double function – utilitarian and aesthetic, and a role in the artistic education of the aesthetic sense. “Why, when we aim at ‘an art for the people’, do we not suf-

ficiently encourage the applied arts, the plastic field with the broadest mass character?”, rhetorically asked art historian Paul Constantin in a 1957 newspaper article.⁶

The ideological component was, of course, integrated especially at the explanatory level: “Disinterest in the applied arts – still referred to by many with the pejorative bourgeois term, *Minor Arts* – persists strongly, unfortunately, also among many members of the UAP [Uniunea Artiștilor Plastici – The Union of Visual Artists] committee. The creators of applied art are today still considered craftspeople: they do not find sufficient understanding, neither at the Ministry of Education and Culture (e.g., for years there has not even been an approved tariff for applied arts), nor at other ministries interested in this field, such as the Ministry of Light Industry or the Ministry of Commerce”.⁷

Thus, in the 1965 article, “Useful-beautiful, notions that cannot be separated”, artist and architect Florica Vasilescu appreciated the close development of decorative arts in connection with industrial development: “Multiplication on an industrial scale, first through small crafts and today through large industries, of beautiful industrial forms contributed greatly to the development the decorative arts reached”.⁸ The artist and later teacher and



Ceramics and Glass, Industrial Creation, catalogue cover, Museum of Art RSR, August 1981, Nasui Collection & Archives

⁶ Paul CONSTANTIN: “Art and Industry”, in: *Arta Plastică*, no. 4, 1957, p. 44.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁸ Florica VASILESCU: “Useful-beautiful, notions that cannot be separated”, in: *Arta*, no. 5, 1965, p. 266.

designer Ion Bitzan considered the presence of artists in the industrial branches and confronting art issues at the level of workers necessary and important: "Returning to the practice of several arts by the same artist – it seems to us that today, in our country, it is a necessary thing, because the visual arts field of our age must define its profile; the presence of artists is necessary in all industrial branches. Drawing a machine, a lathe, is a problem of art. Through the collaboration of visual artists in everything that is built, in all sectors of production, the general taste of the public develops, its demands and competence are greater".⁹

The desired participation of art in the industry was presented as a requirement: "Responsible in large part for the 'everyday beauty', a field of action opened up to decorative art, as vastly unexplored as it was years ago. The artistic ennoblement of objects of ordinary use produced in industry (ceramics, earthenware, porcelain, glassware, fabrics, prints, carpets, lighting fixtures, furniture) responded to the very requirements of contemporary man to evaluate the quality of products increasingly meaningfully, depending on their possibilities to satisfy, in a complex combination, material needs with aesthetic requirements. Decorative artists contributed greatly to raising the demands of the general public regarding the appearance of products, either through their direct presence in the industry, by participating in product approval commissions, or by setting the standard of beauty through decorative art exhibitions opened in Bucharest and Cluj, or by presenting some pieces in the Art stores of the Fondul Plastic, existing in the most important centres of the country".¹⁰

Design without Utilitarian Function – Craftsmanship

In the 1980s, against the background of accelerated industrialisation, due to the shift towards native, popular, folkloric sources of inspiration and

within the climate of political freeze, the subgenre of handicraft, at the crossroads of applied arts and design, mass culture was imposed – having no utilitarian function, only with aesthetic claims, most often teetering on the brink of kitsch. Handicraft production was organised by the National Union of Handicrafts Cooperation (UCECOM) in 40 craft cooperatives, plus another 80 sections of other cooperatives, such as COOP Applied Art, COOP Art and Precision, COOP Craft Art, COOP Toy Art, etc., where 50,000 people worked, of which 75% were women.¹¹ The example of the decorative glass fish object – usually displayed on the TV set, and which later became a "cult object" of the communist period – is testimony to this subculture becoming mainstream.

Restoring the history of design and applied arts in Romania today, we have the opportunity to better understand not only the limitations and constraints of creativity and artistic production, but also the consumer habits and lifestyle of several generations marked by them.



Municipal Salon of Painting, Sculpture, Graphics, Decorative Arts and Design, catalogue cover, 1986–1987, Nasui Collection & Archives

⁹ Ion BITAN (BITZAN): "(Visiting) art studios", in: *Contemporanul*, no. 38, 30.11.1962, p. 6.
¹⁰ Marina VANCEI: "Exhibition of decorative arts", in: *Contemporanul*, no. 36, 4.9.1964, p. 2.
¹¹ <http://www.ucecom.ro>







MIHNEA GHILDUȘ

#ROMÁNDESIGN

A román design létezik! A fenti állítás triviálisnak tűnik, hiszen a design immár több mint egy évszázada része az emberiség történetének. A román kultúrában azonban a designnak nem volt különösebben fontos szerepe, ezért a világot hosszú időn keresztül egyáltalán nem érdekelte.

Designer vagyok, és román vagyok; hiszek a román designerek és a #romándesign értékében és

kreativitásában. Részben emiatt szenteltem az elmúlt tizenöt év legnagyobb részét annak, hogy megismerjem és támogassam az ügyünket, illetve a tőlem telhető legjobb módon mondjam el a történetünket olyan tevékenységek segítségével, amelyek jó fényt vetnek a román designra: nemzetközi vásárokon való szerepléssel, a román designerek népszerűsítésével, valamint termékeik árusításával a 2012-ben nyílt Dizainăr – a román designbolt nevű üzletemben.

MIHNEA GHILDUȘ, PhD

product designer, founder of Dizainar.ro, creative director at DZNR Studio, university lecturer at UAD Cluj-Napoca

#ROMANIANDESIGN

I will begin by posing a famous philosophical dilemma, in this case considering the state of Romanian Design today: "If a person designs in Romania and no one in Hungary hears about it, does it leave a mark on the world?"

Romanian design exists! This statement may seem trivial, given that design has been part of human history for over a century now. However, Romanian culture has not shown much interest in design, and consequently, the world's interest in Romanian design has been completely lacking for a considerable period of time.

I am a designer, and I am Romanian, and I believe in the value and creativity of Romanian Designers and #Romaniandesign. This is one reason why I dedicated the better part of the last 15 years to studying and supporting our cause and telling our story, in the best way I know how, through actions that cast Romanian Design in a favourable light, such as exhibiting at international fairs, and promoting and selling Romanian designers and their products in the shop that I opened in 2012, Dizainăr – the Romanian Design Shop.

I believe it is necessary to provide the readers – both Romanian and international – with a wider context than just the history of contemporary design. This journey will contribute to a better understanding of the conditions under which "Contemporary Romanian Design" came into being.

After 1989

The year 1990 brought aggressive changes to Romania in the political and economic spheres. Initially, these changes gave courage to Romanian designers who believed in freedom and a new opportunity. However, the opportunities for Romanian design ended up closing one by one, due to the lack of production facilities, which, over the next 15 years, were destroyed, sold, or abandoned.

In the past, under the protection of the closed communist state system, designers found opportunities to introduce new ideas into the production process, or to win international awards with products designed within factory design departments, though there was no real international competition for them. After 1990, the new management lacked a global vision and focused only on immediate profit resulting from selling factory assets and terminating jobs.

The 1990s were the most depressed period for Romanian design, so the creators redirected their focus towards emerging advertising agencies. Product design disappeared, and with it, innovative Romanian products.

After 2000

The 2000s marked a period of growth and agitation for designers. Advertising flourished, and simultaneously, architects gradually became interior designers. The newly emerged market for office, commercial, club, and residential spaces provided job opportunities – i.e., financial opportunities – for those willing to accept working with the moody “nouveau riche” category of Romanians.

For the first time, during this period, there was a desire to rediscover or reinvent a Romanian identity, perhaps starting with values from the past, untouched by the political and economic context of the moment. However, design did not have enough time to thrive and have a say in the national identity between 2003 and 2008, the period of economic growth and the real estate boom.

In 2009, the real estate market collapsed, leading to the disappearance of many interior design jobs. Creative minds were forced back into branding and advertising. This shift partly explains the increased importance of graphic design departments in art universities compared to other departments, like interior or product design.

After 2010

The years 2000–2010 were a crucial period for Romanian design, laying the groundwork for a true rebirth in 2012. Romanian designers began to explore the broader world, with international exposure becoming accessible through online platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Behance – Creative Portfolios became populated with the works of Romanians winning international competitions, and freelancer websites were flooded with Romanian creators offering services at lower prices than their Western counterparts.

In anticipation of 2012, the Bucharest Design Centre was established, an association aimed at promoting Romanian design and creating opportunities for designers. A year earlier, designist.ro, a design blog, emerged as a natural continuation of design magazines that lost their audience and market after the 2008 crash. Some magazines, like *Igloo* or *Zeppelin*, have survived to this day and are a landmark of architecture and design, but they are few and far between.

Romanian design reappeared with the consolidation of internet access. In 2012, the community united – approximately 50 Romanian creators



The Dizainăr and Ubikubi Booth at the imm Cologne Furniture Fair, 2017. Photo: Mihnea Ghilduş



The Dizainăr object selection for the exhibition at the Milan Furniture Fair, 2016. Photo: Mihnea Ghilduş

nationwide whose products could be sold and presented as design products. In the same year, Dizainăr opened, a store where Romanian product creators could sell their products. The store aimed to create a close and direct connection

between design and the consumer market. At its launch in 2012, there were some 50 designers with almost 100 objects. Today, Dizainăr has a portfolio of over 200 designers with more than 1000 products.



Dizainăr – the Romanian Design Shop, Bucharest 2019. Photo: Mihai Georgiadi



For the first time since 1990, design was not an artistic phenomenon, but rather a market-related service. The goal of this new generation of Romanian design promoters, myself included, became the synchronisation of demand with supply, and the creation of a sustainable market for Romanian design, visible both in Romania and globally.

The Dizainăr motto is: "Create. Produce. Buy." It refers to the three essential players in the design market: the creator – having the idea and realising the project; the producer – capable of manufacturing an object; and the buyer – generating the need. There must always be a close connection between these three players, a curated link and, above all, a place where they can meet.

Another significant moment was the launch of Romanian Design Week in the spring of 2013. This project had been on the mind of the Romanian design community since the 2000s, a time when we all enjoyed the opportunity to travel to Milan for the International Furniture Fair, where we saw the latest designs presented during the most renowned design week. Since 2013, we have our own design week, known internationally and covered in the specialised press worldwide.

2013 was also the year when Romanian designers first participated in the Milan Furniture Fair. Since then, we have been present at various international events, such as the furniture fair in Cologne, the Clerkenwell Design Week in London, the

Vienna Design Week, the Stockholm Design Week, the Frankfurt Fair, the ICFF New York Fair, Maison & Objet in Paris, and many others. These appearances were possible due to the determination of the design promoters and support programmes funded by the Romanian state, the Romanian Cultural Institute, and the Export Council. As evident from this brief summary of recent Romanian design history, its existence is closely tied to support from the business sector and/or the state. This support, nevertheless, is rare and meagre.

Today

Today, in 2024, we can speak about a Romanian design market that is still very young, but incredibly enthusiastic. While enthusiasm has diminished in recent years due to the pandemic, sporadic support, and rare projects, it is still sufficient to attract many students aspiring to become designers or seeking development in other creative fields. While in the 2000s the most prosperous creative businesses were related to advertising, today architecture or interior design offices, office design companies, and residential furniture manufacturers with an international presence and collaborations are catching up rapidly.

In the early 2010s, some significant steps were taken to support Romanian design and put it on the map. Today, Romanian designers continue to benefit from these events, which they may not have fully perceived at the time of their occurrence.

Romanian designers are still seeking their identity, much like an adolescent searching for their fashion or musical style. It is a challenging yet fascinating period. Having worked with university students for over ten years, I can say that experience is essential in any field, but nothing compares to enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge. Through this quest, Romanian designers discover new ways of designing, producing, drawing, quickly learning the latest software, and also being open to using AI, and they are willing to grow.

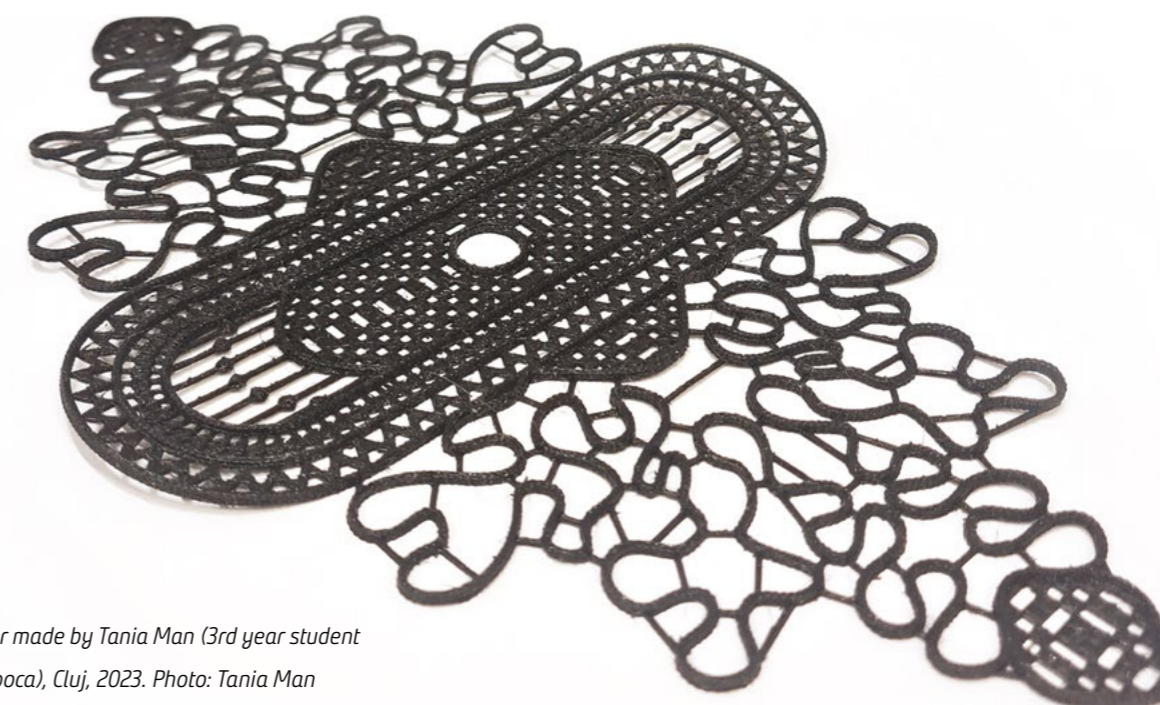
In the courses I teach at the University of Art and Design Cluj Napoca, I have a theme called #ROMANIANDESIGN that I work on together with third-year bachelor students and master's students. This is one of the most interesting topics for me, because I can see the vision of people active in today's design compared to what has been done before. I have been continually surprised to discover that students know more about Italian, Finnish or German designers than about their Romanian counterparts. Working on this assignment, they are pleasantly surprised to discover how rich the Romanian design market is and how high the demand for creativity.

It may be true that Romanian design is not where I would have wanted it to be when I finished university. Still, it is in a much more interesting place now, and I am glad to be a part of it. I am proud to be part of a community continually searching for development without forgetting its values. This means great flexibility and adaptability, qualities that have proven vital in Romania's rapidly changing market. Perhaps "Romanian design" has not yet resonated on the global stage, but in Romania, it is very much talked about today, with designers working actively. This was not the case ten years ago.

In conclusion, to the question, "If a person designs in Romania and no one in Hungary hears about it, does it leave a mark on the world?" – the answer is yes. We just need to pay a little more attention and open our ears in order to hear it better.



Stool made by Horatiu Radulesu (3rd year student at UAD Cluj-Napoca), Cluj, 2023. Photo: Horațiu Rădulescu



Decorative cover made by Tania Man (3rd year student at UAD Cluj-Napoca), Cluj, 2023. Photo: Tania Man



CSIBY-GINDELE REBEKA ÉS SÓGOR ABIGÉL

Regionális tárgyi kultúra a kortárs design szemszögéből, avagy a Hargita megyei kézművesség jelenlegi helyzete

A tanulmány egy régió (Hargita megye, Románia) tárgykultúrájára reflektál a kortárs design szemszögéből. Arra keresi a választ, hogy ma milyen elvek mentén érdemes megközelíteni a regionális kézműves tárgyakat. Áttekinti és elemzi a lokális tárgyalakotás viszonyrendszerét. A kéz-

művesség, illetve a kézműves tárgyak szerepét vizsgálja eredeti kontextusukban, majd összeveti mai megközelítésükkel. Mindezek alapján olyan szempontokat fogalmaz meg, amelyeket a tárgyi örökség adaptációja esetében alkalmazhatónak vél a kortárs formatervezésben.

REBEKA CSIBY-GINDELE

designer, MA Moholy-Nagy University of Art & Design

ABIGÉL SÓGOR

design theorist, BA Moholy-Nagy University of Art & Design, current MA candidate

Regional Material Culture from the Perspective of Contemporary Design, or: The Current State of the Artisanship of Hargita County

Abigél Sógor: *Rebeka and I met at the Moholy-Nagy University of Art & Design in Budapest. She studied design, and I studied design theory. We soon discovered that we had both grown up in Szeklerland in Romania, separated by some 60 km, and we had both received our diplomas from art high schools in Hargita County, and then continued our studies at the Moholy-Nagy University of Art & Design in Budapest. Independently of each other, we each completed apprenticeships in the Contemporary Design Department of the Museum of Applied Arts, and then we were invited to think together about the design situation of our homeland within the framework of this Collec_ThinkTank conference focusing on Romanian design.*

We took as the point of departure for our joint contemplation Rebeka's diploma work and her related dissertation. To understand what follows, it is important to become familiar with the complex material environment characteristic of our region, which we will allude to. In our homeland, one can encounter mass-produced contemporary objects, just as well as the material culture that preceded industrialisation, or a specific, artificially developed material layer visualising our region with an aim for representation. In what follows, we will attempt to disentangle this material culture that is layered complexly from the viewpoint of contemporary design, the culture that characterises

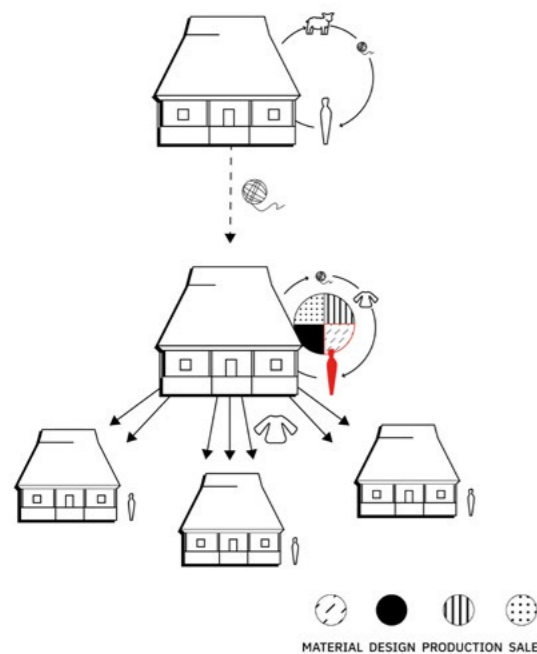
the Szekler region, in the hopes that in this way we will succeed in offering an alternative perspective for its contemplation.

Rebeka Csiby-Gindele: Recognition of our local material culture plays a role not only in the designer's search for identity, but also in the formation of a designer's attitude. As a designer, I have been occupied for some time with the question of how it is possible to create continuity between material folk culture and contemporary design. To conclude my master's program in design, the focus of the subject of my dissertation was the past and present of regional object creation, with the aim of considering its former role, and examining the current state of handicraft and its assessment, perambulating the system of correlations between the designer, the author, the contractor, the user, the materials and the location.

My research became focused on the region of Hargita County in Szeklerland, on the one hand due to my personal bond, and on the other, that now, too, there is currently an active community of artisans, which as a suitable entity can serve to examine the changing situation of artisanship.

The material world and the relationship between individuals might somehow be an inte-

gral and inherent part of quotidian life. This was emphasised not only with the use of objects, but also already by their coming into being. With the absence of a global market, the artisans and handicraftsmen of the settlement ensured the benefits whose preparations exceeded the limits of housework. The locally engendered products were connected to the region, not only by way of the location of their manufacture, but also because they were produced from materials obtained and made on site, based on local demands, with the aim of local distribution. Contrasted with this, in the course of industrial manufacture, a spatial shift can be observed between the manufacturer, the designer, the materials and the user.



Construction of artisanship: Material+Demand+Production+Marketing (graphic design by the author), 2023. © Rebeka CSIBY-GINDELE

One of the aims of my master's work was, based on the knowledge and raw materials that could be found locally, to create these four pillars of re-tuned collaboration. Transferring the features of the given region into the materials available locally (such as wood and cornhusk) and based on local knowledge (carpentry, weaving), I envisaged the adaptation of one object, which, though it is presently found in homes,

from a formal perspective does not adapt to the material environment or demands.



LOCAL DEMAND
KNOWLEDGE
MATERIAL

Diploma work research: the relationship between material and function (graphic design by the author), 2023. © Rebeka CSIBY-GINDELE

An important movement in design was creating a network with local artisans, and immersion in the recognition of raw materials and processing.

Working together with Júlia Bálint from Székelyudvarhely (Odorheiu Secuiesc, today in Romania) and her weaving of soft rushes, I recognised the (adaptive) possibilities inherent in cornhusk. Among other reasons, the choice of materials was motivated by the fact that it required little finishing, could be implemented with simple tools, and could be easily learned. Furthermore, this craft was threatened to disappear, and thus, the "rediscovery" of this technology was even more justifiable for me.

Cornhusk had once been applied as material for wicker furniture, but in the present day, its use of such nature had ceased. Thus, in the course of its employment, I set it into the form of a frame, which in some way would newly impart its effect

as a part of furniture, with a soft and flexible character, as compared to the heavy-duty material of bast. In connection with this, I wanted to reach back to the archetype of a piece of furniture whose adaptation could be justified from a formal perspective. Reflecting on this, the *Padka* (which would translate as "little bench") endeavours with its clarified, ergonomic form to "revitalise" the bench with arms, which is still found in Szekler households, though over the course of decades has not evolved at all in form together with residential interiors.

At the same time, my master's work was a reflection upon a tendency – existing in the region, which I believe highlights the aesthetic function of the material heritage, employing it with representative aims, while downplaying its original role and function.

A portion of artisanal objects underwent a change in function in the last century. The processes of folklorism described in cultural anthropology have offered support in the interpretation of this functional shift. In the course of the process of folklorism, "an element or group of elements from folk culture is placed into a milieu distinct and foreign from its original [...], and arriving into this alien environment, its meaning is changed, and it will be different than it was within the system of folk culture".¹ Within the original, complex system, the constituent elements organised within a hierarchy, reciprocally depend upon each other, and they influence and define each other.² In the changed context, these objects "become elements pointing beyond themselves, signs behind which something stands, which these symbols simply just symbolise".³ Here, we might think of a very simple example, like the carved paddle⁴, which at one time fulfilled the function of a symbol of love, its meaning unambiguous to everyone in

the community. To the contrary, presently, neither its original function (washing), nor its former function of communication (gift to a lover) comes to the fore, behind its usage. Ripped away from its folkloric order, it becomes simply a decorative element, becoming in itself a symbol of folk culture.

A portion of the artisanal objects found in our region take on an exclusively representative function, and in the course of this process, these elements of folk culture are degraded to simply decorative objects. The given object itself represents that folk culture, of which it was once an element of the system. In a commercial



Diploma work research: material manipulation of cornhusk, 2023. © Rebeka CSIBY-GINDELE

situation, when such an object is commodified, the consumer actually purchases a symbol of its belonging to a nation, without knowing how to reconstruct the former role of the object.

Margit Feischmidt, in one of her studies, expounded upon the image in which Transylvania "became the new archetype of Hungarian national culture"⁵, and which often represented as "the 'guardian' cult site of ancient, authentic

¹ BÍRÓ: "Egy új szempont esélyei", pp. 31–32.

² Ibid., 29.

³ Ibid., 128.

⁴ A carved paddle was once a basic implement for washing, a rectangular object made from hardwood, with a handle, with which clothing was beaten while being washed; the decorative carved version was given by a boy to a girl as a gift to a love-interest. Today we can encounter these objects simply as a carved wall decoration.

⁵ FEISCHMIDT: "A magyar nacionalizmus...", p. 12.

Hungarian culture”⁶, or as a “distant [...] underdeveloped, less modernised, or even directly uncivilised”⁷ territory. Thanks to this, there are two main branches of Transylvania-tourism on the part of the Hungarians: ecotourism (the beauty of nature, and the discovery of village culture living in harmony with this); and ethnic tourism, which Margit Feischmidt apostrophises as “ethnic and cultural identification and authentic national existence”.⁸ This picture of Transylvania has an impact not only on those arriving to Transylvania, but also on the locals and on local handicraft, who, exploiting the economic factor inherent in tourism, build upon the demand for artisanal products related to the authentic image of Transylvania (ethno-business).⁹

As a designer, these processes render more difficult the approach to local material culture, being that my aim is not to reinforce and serve this image of Transylvania, but rather to discover the order in which these objects once functioned, and then to appropriately apply this knowledge within the current context.

In the case of international examples, it can be observed that in connection with contemporary design and handiwork, often the emphasis is placed on the local materials and their processing related to the adaptation of traditional techniques, rather than the direct translation of pattern/form treasures. Inappropriate adaptations and interpretations of local values conceal dangers within them, as the revitalisation of the nostalgic past is a typical phenomenon, as well as the direct, indiscriminate application of folklore elements lifted out of context.

Artisanship, as a tool, can offer support toward the development of a design attitude springing from the qualities of the material, lost in industrial design. Experience gained from such deep knowledge of material results in a harmonious

combination of material-form-function. This sort of approach at the same time gives space to the unique expression of human work, in contrast with the schematic, perfect forms of machine production. The designer’s approach to object creation at the same time is limiting, too, as it is built on only certain materials, and thus only makes possible processes related to them. I believe, however, that the designer’s openness can become the harmonious complement to all of this, utilising technologies characteristic of the era. Presently, when our aim is to reduce the ecological footprint of industrial production, the function of handiwork can serve as a positive model. Collaboration with artisans who are still active can play a role of key importance in the creation of a self-identifying sustainable material environment.

*AS: Rebeka’s own design attitude shares a kinship with the architectural school of thought formulated in the 1980s, referred to as critical regionalism. While critical regionalism confronts the universalising efforts of Modernism, it does not aim to revitalise the folk culture of a given region. While it directs attention first to the location and then to the culture related to it, it attempts to resolve the basic problem of the design (which in the case of architecture combines the place [site] and the function to be filled) with the most effective tools. In this regard, it adjusts solutions to the location, but also employs materials accessible in the direct environment, as well as local knowledge and achievements and functioning solutions of the era.*¹⁰

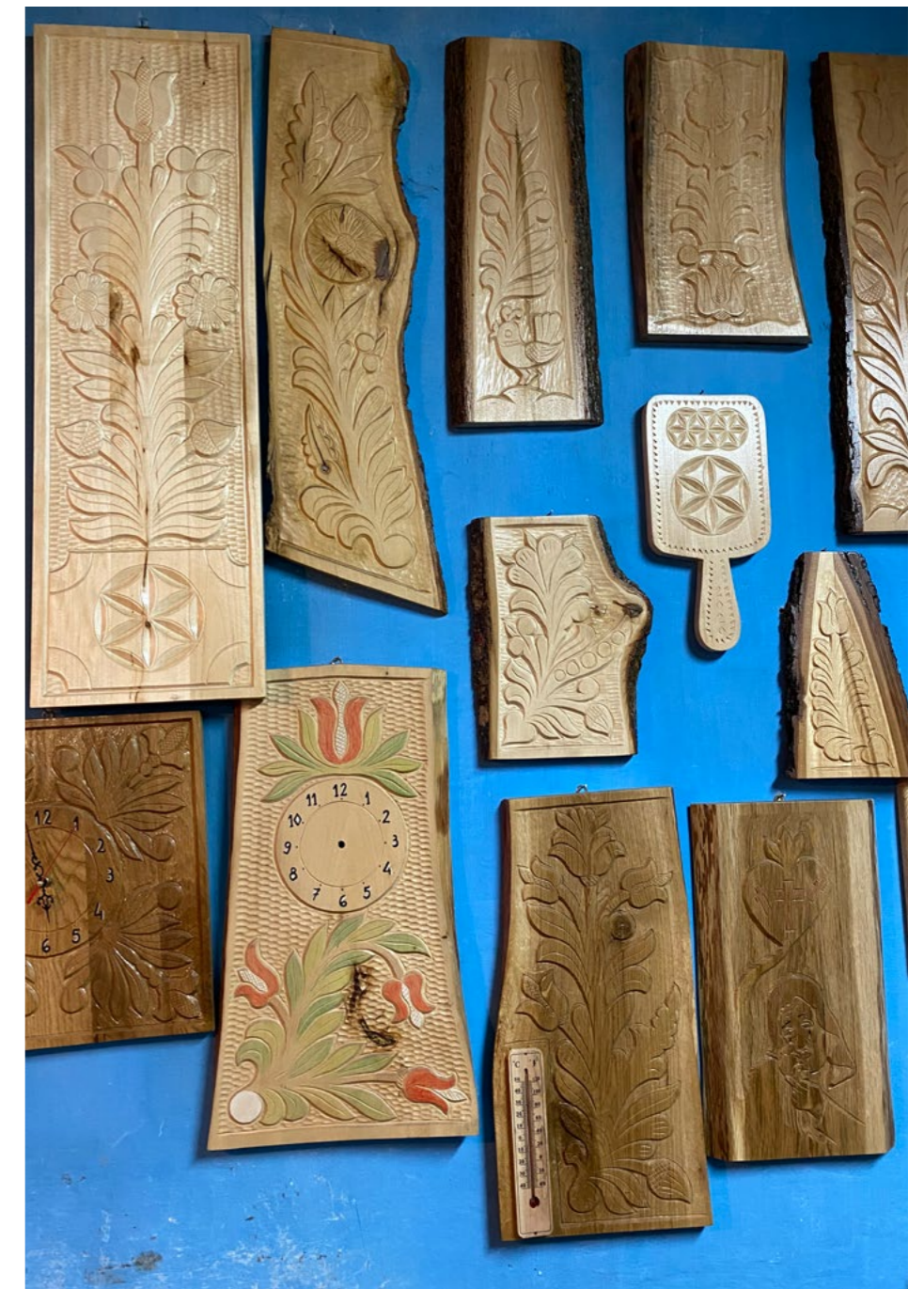
Although – contrary to the case of buildings – in the case of objects, bonds to the location are not defining, Rebeka nevertheless reasons that in designing objects, building from the culture of each place/region can also be considerable. In the case of object creation, the projection of sustainability of critical regionalism predominates: this favours

design from local raw materials, and reliance on local resources. Artisans often possess such knowledge of materials, as well as related technical and processing knowledge, whose regard can offer stopgap value for both architects and designers. The designers’ collaboration with local artisans is not a novel idea:¹¹ the fruitful results of their collaboration ensure their creations coming into the design history canon.

What was discussed above also indicates that the semantic layer of objects cannot be ignored. It can happen that there is also a reading of the above mentioned phenomenon of folklorism in which a community is no longer able to represent itself through contemporary objects, it tries to compensate by bringing out old objects, and as their primary functions have now mostly ceased to exist, the emphasis is placed on the formal elements, using them as a symbol. We might also say that in material culture, there is a kind of split that has come about between function and form. It fills primary needs (functional part) with objects from elsewhere, whose more universal forms are not capable of representing the given community. Thus, identity is expressed by using the formal elements (formal part) of a set of objects from the past.

We believe that as a bridge in the prevailing situation, contemporary designers can fill a key role. Leaning on this analytical way of seeing, we can come closer to

comprehending the original, functional roles of our material heritage. Together with this, we can create continuity between the material culture of the past and present: we are capable of transplanting the information obtained from our objects of the past into a contemporary framework. Objects may emerge in this way which reflect our current needs, and which communicate the identity of the community in contemporary formal language.



Carved boards and paddles, as wall ornament, 2023. Photo: Rebeka CSIBY-GINDELE

⁶ Ibid., p. 7.
⁷ Ibid.
⁸ Ibid.
⁹ Ibid., p. 19.
¹⁰ FRAMPTON: “Towards a Critical Regionalism...”, pp. 16–30.

¹¹ See, e.g., Catharine ROSSI: *Crafting Design in Italy*, 2015, in which she examines the role filled by artisans in Italian design history following the Second World War.



PadKa, diploma work of Rebeka Csiby-Gindele, 2023. Photo: Zsófia Zala

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HORVÁTH JUDIT, PHD

Szemléletbeli párhuzamok Oláh Gyárfás tervezői munkássága és az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményének vonatkozó darabjai között

Horváth Judit tanulmánya azokat a párhuzamokat vizsgálja, amelyek Oláh Gyárfás munkáiban és az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményének vonatkozó tárgyaiban kimutathatók.

A tanulmány egyrészt a tervezői üzenetekben fellelhető párhuzamokra világít rá, másrészt az Iparművészeti Múzeum gyűjteményében található olimpiai formaruhákat veszi sorra annak apropóján, hogy 2012-ben és 2024-ben romániai magyarként kétszer is Oláh Gyárfás tervezte a román olimpiai csapat formaruháját.

Az alkotó számára mindig is fontos volt, hogy sorozatban gyártható darabokat tervezzen. Tanulmányai lezárásaként gyártástechnológiai szempontból szeretett volna minél több dolgot kipróbálni, így nagy tapasztalatra tett szert a ruhagyártás és -ipar területén.

A tanulmány végén egy összehasonlító táblázatban követhetjük nyomon a 2012-es és a 2024-es olimpián részt vevő román csapat formaruhájának tervezési és gyártási folyamatát.

JUDIT HORVÁTH, PHD

head of Contemporary Design Department, Museum of Applied Arts Budapest

Parallels in Approach between the Design Work of Gyárfás Oláh and the Relevant Pieces in the Collection of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest

Even the Nobel Prize in Literature is sometimes divided. Paradoxically, this has happened in 1969, a single award being addressed to one man, two languages and a third nation, itself divided.¹

The final presentation in this year's *Collec_Think Tank* examines the parallels that can be demonstrated in the oeuvre of Gyárfás Oláh and the relevant objects at the Museum of Applied Arts.

This presentation aims to demonstrate how numerous pieces in the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts show kinship in various ways with different periods of the oeuvre of Gyárfás Oláh. The study also devotes special attention to his Olympic uniforms, as Gyárfás Oláh has designed the uniforms for the Romanian Olympic team this year for the second time. He designed the Romanian team uniforms for the 2012 London Olympics, and now twelve years later, he is once again designer of the Romanian team uniforms for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

In his work, he engages with the limits of the human body. He thinks of a garment fundamentally as a functional object, which conceals within itself the entire process of its emergence.

I like limits. I also really love to travel. But what is travel, really? What does a border mean? These could also be self-limits. Clothing is also a border between the body and the outer world. The primary function of clothing is to ensure that you are not too cold or too hot. Another function is more complex: why do

you put on clothing? – what is it that you would like to show or to conceal about yourself? Do you reveal your social class, or not? Clothing can also function as a mask. I also like the lifestyle quality of clothing, which relates to what you feel good wearing, what is your world.²

Already in his diploma work that concluded his studies at the Timișoara Western University, he felt it was important to design pieces that could be produced in series. As a conclusion of his studies, he wanted to try as many different methods as possible, in terms of manufacturing technology. His diploma work was produced in the Csíkszereda (Miercurea Ciuc in today's Romania) factory led by Márta Csomortáni.

He had barely finished his studies, when defining figures in Romania's fashion scene, Ovidiu Buta and Irina Schrotte, noticed his talent, and they invited him to take part in the 2002 Romanian Design Week, as well as introducing him to Romanian fashion designer Doina Levintza, the official supplier for the Romanian royal family. She invited him to take part in the fashion show organised at the Hilton Hotel Bucharest.

Hungarian label USE Unused diploma work from 2004 is a part of our Contemporary Design collection. The founders of the USE Unused brand, which ceased in 2017, donated the remaining pieces of their joint diploma collection to the Museum of Applied Arts' Contemporary Design

¹ Samuel BECKETT: Award ceremony speech at the Nobel Prize in Literature ceremony, 1969 <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1969/ceremony-speech/> [last accessed: 14.03.2024]
² Excerpt from Judit HORVÁTH's interview with Gyárfás OLÁH, January 2024

Collection in 2019: three evening dresses, five long and seven short coats.



USE UNUSED diploma work, 2004. inventory nos.: 2019.114.1. (brown coat), 2019.115.1. (yellow coat). Photo: Márton PERLAKI

The USE Unused diploma work was a unique phenomenon in the education system of the time, as the trio broke with the industrial design approach and instead acted as fashion designers, which was not typical of the University of Applied Arts at the time. The designers of USE Unused embarked on successful careers after graduation, but were met with a lack of understanding and were considered the odd man out at their alma mater. Their academic years could be seen as a symptom indicating that the University of Applied Arts at the time gave priority to artistic education and did not support a business-oriented approach at all. The Department of Contemporary Design at the Museum of Applied Arts also felt it was important to include the collection on offer because it captures a brief moment in the history of Hungarian fashion design that could provide many lessons for future research.³

We will return to the Use Unused label, which relates to Gyárfás Oláh, not only in relation to their diploma collection, but also in connection with Olympic team uniforms.

³ Rita KOMPORDAY: "The story of the diploma collection by USE unused", in: *Hype and Hyper*, March 2022; <https://hypeandhyper.com/the-story-of-the-diploma-collection-by-use-unused/> [last accessed: 14.03.2024]
⁴ https://irenebrination.typepad.com/irenebrination_notes_on_a/2008/08/rozalb-de-muras.html [last accessed: 14.03.2024]
⁵ <https://schloss-post.com/person/apparatus-22/> [last accessed: 14.03.2024]
⁶ <https://zsigmondoradomenswear.com/pages/ss18-enrobed-lookbook> [last accessed: 14.03.2024]

Teamwork is essential to Gyárfás Oláh's process. He established his first brand, Rozalb de Mura⁴, in 2006 with Lenke Rita Ferencz, Hungarian textile engineer from Beszterce (Bistrița in today's Romania), who had studied in Iași, and who had a textile factory in Csíkszereda (Miercurea Ciuc), with the designers of the Apparatus 22 group⁵ (Erika Olea, Maria Farcas, Dragos Olea and Ioana Nemes).

The brand produced two collections per year, which were constructed chiefly around fictitious themes. Rosalb de Mura has appeared in a boutique in Bucharest, in a private showroom in Japan, and also in Budapest. The raw material was obtained from China, Turkey, and Italy.



Dora ZSIGMOND menswear, S/S Enrobed lookbook, 2018. Photo: Péter LESTÁR. Models: Domonkos SZENDREI and Benjámín GRÓSZ⁶

Dora Zsigmond menswear, also found in our collection, represents similar values to those in the approach of Rosalb de Mura.



Dora ZSIGMOND menswear, F/W 2020 Rural Explorer, 2020. Inventory nos.: 2022.443.1. (blue coat), 2022.442.1. (scarf). Photos: Péter LESTÁR. Model: Péter MARKÓ⁷

Their REMADE line upcycles 50 to 100-year-old traditional Hungarian textiles in contemporary garments.

The materials of the Remade pieces are sourced from the countryside of Hungary by the designer, Dora, and her brother, György, who spent close to twenty years building close, trusting relationships with the villagers.

These traditional garments and household items are revered not only for their intricate craftsmanship but often for the stories and profound emotions attached to them. Thus, acquiring these pieces from their owner requires an understanding of their value – both tangible and intangible.

The Zsigmond siblings preserve these culturally significant pieces for the future through their private collection and the REMADE line.

Each REMADE material comes from items integral to rural living: hand-woven tapestries, traditional skirts, velvet headkerchiefs, aprons, scarves and



Patzaikin / Gyárfás OLÁH, 2019. Photos: Dan VEZENTAN

⁷ <https://zsigmondoradomenswear.com/pages/aw20-rural-explorer> [last accessed: 14.03.2024]

shawls. These pieces preserve their stories and characteristics in their contemporary reinterpretations through their REMADE garments.⁸

This close affiliation with local culture, as a foundation for design work, is also kindred to Gyárfás Oláh. In 2012, architect Theodor Frolu (a/k/a Theo Doru) introduced Gyárfás Oláh to Olympic champion Ivan Patzaikin. The two of them had established the Patzaikin brand in Bucharest, whose mission was to preserve the natural and built environment and cultural heritage of the Danube Delta. Romanian canoeist Ivan Patzaichin was a four-time Olympic and eight-time World champion, who had been born at the Danube Delta, in a fishing village at the 23rd river kilometre of the Danube. It was extremely important to him to preserve the inherited and built culture of his birthplace for future generations.

On Patzaikin's invitation, on a four-day canoe tour led by Ivan Patzaikin himself, Gyárfás Oláh discovered the diverse and multinational culture of the Danube Delta, dominated by the water, and only after serious consideration did he accept the request to design the Patzaikin clothing brand, which became the official Romanian uniform for the 2012 London Olympics.

*The architecture and culture of the Danube Delta is extremely interesting. Every religious denomination and every nation can be found here. It is truly a cosmopolitan place. This broad diversity is clearly visible in its cemeteries. The work was real man's work, as existence in this landscape is quite rugged. Ivan Patzaichin (Danube 23rd Mile, 26 November 1949 – Bucharest, 5 September 2021), according to Gyárfás' experience, had no idea about what to do with objects. These peoples of the Danube Delta are not tied to material objects, since their fundamental experience is that the waters wash everything away from time to time.*⁹

Together with Doru, he felt it was important for the Patzaikin collections to be made from basic materials typical of Romania and the local context. They devoted two years to material development. Until 1989, Romania was a world leader in hemp linen, which they chose to use. The fabric was woven at the Prodin textile factory in Bucharest. The thread was spun in Páskány (Pașcani in Iași county). They brought hemp and linen from Moldova, because they could not find a high enough quality of hemp in Romania for thread.

Doru and Ivan lobbied constantly. They established the Kender (hemp linen) cluster. They examined best practices. They found good models in Lithuania and Latvia. Lenke Rita Ferencz also joined the team, and the Patzaikin brand was born.

The first collection was built around denim. The material development comprised a process of about two years. The most essential consideration for Gyárfás Oláh was the tailoring and that the garments be timeless. Hemp denim is a material that ages beautifully and changes over time. It lives together and ages together with its wearer.

In connection with tailoring, let us return briefly to the collections of the Museum of Applied Arts, and to Olympic uniforms from two museum collections in Hungary: the first is in our collection, and the other is in the Hungarian Olympic and Sport Museum.

In our Archives, the design material for the uniforms of four Olympic games can be found: 1968 Mexico, 1972 Munich, 1976 Montreal, and 1980 Moscow. These are Olympic uniforms and pattern designs from Lujza Záhonyi and Gabriella Z. Horváth.

The previously mentioned Use Unused brand designed the uniforms for the Hungarian team at the 2016 Rio Olympics, which also won the acclaim of the international press:

Hungary's outfits (...) were in fact the most polished and wearable of the Opening Ceremony bunch. Although "polished" can often read as "boring," Hungary's outfits were anything but. From the perfectly-tailored suits with graphic-designed

*pocket squares to the red and white dresses that looked like they could fit in amongst the pleated creations at Gucci's spring 2016 runway show, the country's team looked fancy, fresh, and fantastic as it arrived to the Olympic games.*¹⁰



Lujza ZÁHONYI and Gabriella Z. HORVÁTH, Design for Hungarian team uniforms for the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow. Inventory nos.: KRTF/10883.8, KRTF/10883.11, KRTF/10883.10., KRTF/10883.9. Photos: HNM PCC – Museum of Applied Arts Budapest – Ágnes SOLTÉSZ HARANGHY

⁸ <https://zsigmondoramenswear.com/pages/remade-info> [last accessed: 14.03.2024]
⁹ Op.cit.: Judit HORVÁTH with Gyárfás OLÁH, January 2024.

¹⁰ Katharine McENTEE: "The Opening Ceremony Costume You Probably Missed", in: *Bustle*, 7 August 2016; <https://www.bustle.com/articles/177261-the-one-2016-olympics-opening-ceremony-costume-you-probably-missed-but-need-to-see-photos> [last accessed: 14.03.2024]



USE Unused, Hungarian Olympic team uniforms for the 2016 Olympic games in Rio de Janeiro. Photos: Bálint BARNA

In addition to those mentioned above, there is one other group of Olympic uniforms in the collection of the museum: the NUBU collection, which is found in our Contemporary Design Collection, and which were produced for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

a national uniform: "In 1992, Issey Miyake designed the official uniform for Lithuania, which had just acquired independence from the Soviet Union".¹¹



NUBU, Hungarian Olympic team uniforms for the 2020 Olympic games in Tokyo. Inventory nos.: 2022.606.1., 2022.608.1., 2022.610.1., 2022.612.1., 2022.607.1. Photos: HNM PCC – Museum of Applied Arts Budapest – Zoltán SZALONTAI

In 2024, for the second time, the Romanian Olympic team commissioned the Romanian-born, but ethnic Hungarian talented designer, Gyárfás Oláh, with designing their national uniform. Of course, it is also not unprecedented for a foreign designer to be invited to design

Just as in the previous case of the uniforms produced for the Romanian Olympic team at the 2012 London Olympics, Gyárfás designed these under the Patzaikin brand. The great Romanian photographer, Tibi Clenci, shot the photos of the uniforms in 2012.

¹¹ Patricia RAYMOND: *Get Dressed for the World's Largest Party: Olympic Uniforms through the Ages*. Lausanne, Switzerland: Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage, 2020.

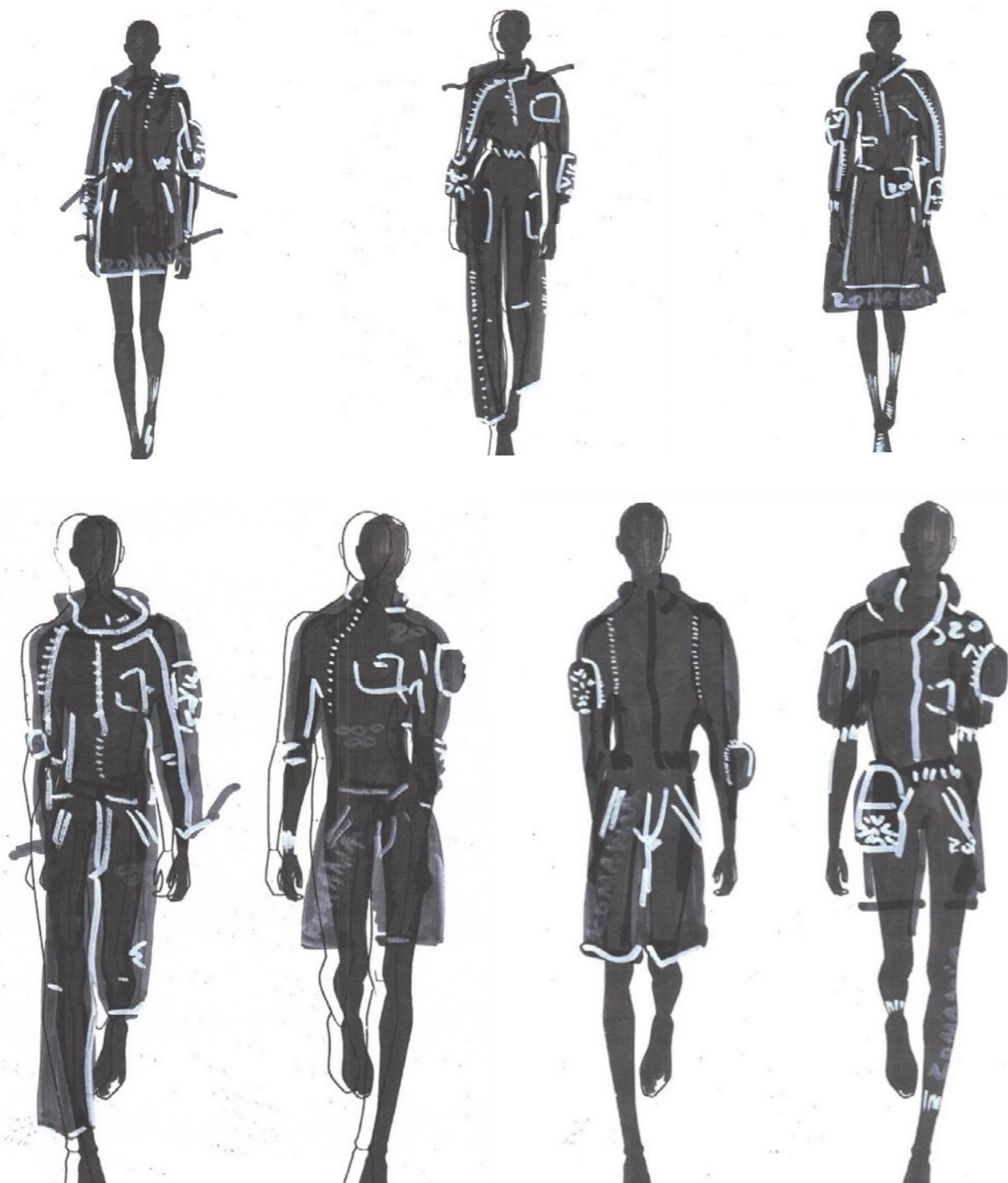


Gyárfás OLÁH for Patzaikin Romanian Olympic team uniforms for the 2012 Olympic games in London. Photos: Tibi CLENCI

We are thrilled that there is a chance for some pieces of the Patzaikin brand to be acquired by the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest.

Twelve years later, Gyárfás Oláh was again commissioned to design the uniforms for the Romanian team for the 2024 Olympic games in Paris.

To conclude this presentation, I will show some images of the uniforms designed by Gyárfás Oláh for the 2024 Olympics, and also compare the design and production processes of the 2012 and 2024 Romanian Olympic team uniforms in a table.



Gyárfás OLÁH, Design sketches for the Romanian Olympic team uniforms, 2024



Gyárfás OLÁH, Romanian Olympic team uniforms for the 2024 Olympic games in Paris. Photos: Gyárfás OLÁH



Gyárfás OLÁH, Romanian Olympic team uniforms for the 2024 Olympic games in Paris. Photos: Gyárfás OLÁH

It should be clear from the above parallels that Gyárfás Oláh's garments show correspondences with other pieces in the collection of the Museum of Applied Arts. Perhaps there is also the chance for some of the 2024 pieces to be acquired, and with this, the collection of Romanian contempo-

rary fashion and design can be resuscitated at the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest.

I would like to conclude this study with the words of an actress originally from Transylvania, Orsolya Török-Illyés:

	2012 London Patzaikin	2024 Paris
Commission	Ivan Patzaikin was a member of the Olympic committee.	There was a call for proposals by invitation, with a list of 6-7 designers (including 2 French designers). Gyárfás was the winner.
Team	He produced the collection with an already existing team, and thus had to adjust to the vision of an existing brand.	An agency invited Gyárfás, who took part in the process as a designer.
Brief	He had a conversation with Ivan Patzaikin about what the Olympic uniform meant to him, and he showed him the earlier uniforms in his closet, saying that he didn't like any of them. It was important to him that the clothing should be comfortable and exciting, and that the athletes would also like them and wear them afterwards, too.	This time the brief was different, with the commissioner concentrating first on building the image, the vision, the larger picture. It was important what the viewer would see when looking at the crowd. It was also important that the uniforms would be comfortable, and sporty, and suitable for being worn all day long. This time there would not be any suits or dresswear, because it's all about comfort, with less elegance. The colours are vibrant (five hues of yellow), and it is important that the overall view be a large, yellow blot.
Message	It was important that everything be produced in Romania, from materials characteristic of the landscape, like hemp linen, and that it be manufactured locally.	It is rather the background of the manufacturer that determines the basic materials.
National features	The design process was a challenge and very exciting, involving research and evocation of materials, colours, and techniques typical of the Danube Delta region.	The national elements have intensified, with greater emphasis on the flag. It is a part of the brief of the International Olympic Committee that the national and folk elements should predominate. The colours of the flag and the folk motif, which is red-yellow-blue (there are also five shades of red, five types of blue), and the national character are visible.
Design	With a team, he designed in his own workshop within the factory.	This time, an agency, "Brand di end" (company from Singapore in Bucharest) is responsible for the branding and the entire profile, for a general presence in Romania. Gyárfás worked closely with two colleagues, and there was a total of five textile engineers. They work like an international brand. It is important for all of it to be designed completely uniformly.
Trial process	Gyárfás did not take part in this.	Gyárfás was there while the swimmers and archers were testing. There were five outfits for women, and five outfits for men. Everyone had their own data sheet, with their measurements and a photo. There were five shades of yellow. They decided which shade of yellow looked best on who.
Basic materials	The factory is from a Dutch/Belgian/Indian company in Giorgiu, near the Bulgarian border. The denim is produced here from yellow and blue fabric.	From Italy The basic materials: silk, cashmere, merino wool
Modelling, tailoring	Harolt (Lenke Rita Ferencz's factory), Csíkszereda (Miercurea Ciuc)	Pandora, in Foksány (Focșani)
Stone washing and prewashing of the finished garments	A factory in Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfântu Gheorghe, in Transylvania)	
Labels, print, embro	Primo Service Székelykeresztúr (Cristuru Secuiesc)	Primo Service Székelykeresztúr (Cristuru Secuiesc)
Shoes	Kluzana Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca)	Christina Batlan – Musette
Accessories		A Japanese company (Ikiki) produced the zippers. undershirts, socks (Amia Maria)

The interdependence upon each other springing from minority existence, and the fact that many nations live together, taught those of us living in Transylvania so much, while in Hungary this coexistence among diverse cultures is missing, and perhaps the tolerance for differences in worldview is also much more difficult for those who live here. (Orsolya Török-Illyés)



BIOGRAPHIES



REBEKA CSIBY-GINDELE

Born in Miercurea Ciuc (county seat of Harghita County, in the Szeklerland, today in Romania), emerging designer currently living in Budapest. She completed her studies at the Moholy-Nagy University of Art & Design, and her professional internship at the Contemporary Design Department of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest.

She has taken part in the past few years as an exhibitor at various events in Hungary and on the international design scene, including the Stockholm Furniture Fair, Transylvanian Design Week, 360 Design Budapest, and the Hungarian Design Award. Her diploma work, "Padka", was selected among the projects exhibited at the 2023 Graduation Project.



MIRELA DUCULESCU

Design historian, PhD, assistant professor at the National University of Arts, Bucharest. Researcher in architecture and design, author and editor of architectural and design books and articles, curator of national and international design and architecture exhibitions, member of design juries, with a focus on architectural heritage, traditional crafts, urban regeneration and public space design.

Major exhibitions: Vice-Commissioner of the Romanian Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale 2008; the Romanian section for *Common Roots: Design Map of Central Europe*, Holon Design Museum (Israel), 2012–2013; *Honest Goods: Golescu Collection*, Pro Patrimonio Romania, London Design Festival 2016; co-curator of *50 Design UNArte: A Visual History of the Bucharest School (1969–2019)*, National University of Arts, Bucharest, 2019.

Forthcoming chapter section: "Design in Romania", in *World History of Design*, vol. 3, eds. Victor Margolin, Sylvia Margolin, and Rebecca Houze, London, Bloomsbury Academic, expected date of publication: 2025.



MIHNEA GHILDUȘ

PhD, product designer, founder of Dizainar.ro, creative director at DZNR Studio, university lecturer at UAD Cluj-Napoca.

Trained as a product designer at the National University of Arts, Bucharest, Ghildus continued his education at the Academy of Arts and Design in Stuttgart, Germany, with an MA in Integral Studies. In 2014 he received his PhD in Medical Design, at the National University of Arts, Bucharest, where he lectured as Associate Professor between 2008–2016. Since 2022, he holds the position of lecturer at the University of Art and Design Cluj-Napoca.

An enthusiastic interior and graphic designer, he focuses his passion and activity primarily in the field of product design.

In 2012, he founded Dizaină, the Romanian design concept-store which he manages from the perspective of “creative householder”, together with a team of three specialists in communications and design. Over the past decade, the Dizaină team has created and consolidated a recognised brand on the Romanian product design and interior design market and promoted more than 200 Romanian designers with over 1000 products designed and manufactured in Romania.



JUDIT HORVÁTH, PHD

museologist, curator

The Contemporary Design Department of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest was established in 2015 under her leadership.

She is a lecturer at the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design since 2012, and a member of the Professional Advisory Board of the Hungarian Fashion & Design Agency.

Speciality: contemporary collections.

Since 1999, she has curated more than 150 contemporary art and design exhibitions.

She has decades of experience in both the public and private spheres, and a broad view on the international contemporary art and design scene. The subject of both her MA from the Universität für angewandte Kunst in Vienna, and her doctoral dissertation from the Eötvös Lorand University Budapest is contemporary collecting.



COSMIN NASUI

Art historian specialised in the 20th and 21st centuries, and art critic, curator, cultural manager, and accredited evaluator of contemporary art and cultural projects. Founder of www.modernism.ro, the largest Romanian online platform for supporting and promoting Romanian contemporary art and culture. Senior researcher at the PostModernism Museum and partner in the Nasui Collection & Archives.

Author and co-author of the following publications (a selection): *Decorative Monumental Arts in Romania: A Foray into the Second Half of the 20th Century*, PostModernism Museum Publishing, 2020; "The Visual Arts in the Communist Regime", in: *Panorama of Communism in Romania*, Liliana Corobca (ed.), Polirom Publishing House, 2020; *Mass Culture in the "Golden Age": Cântarea României & Cenaclul Flacăra*, PostModernism Museum Publishing, 2019; *The Centenary of Women in Romanian Art*, PostModernism Museum Publishing, vol. 1, 2017, vol. 2, 2018, vol. 3, 2021; *Eroticism and Sexuality in the "Golden Age"*, PostModernism Museum Publishing, 2018; *Hedda Sterne – The Discovery of the Early Years 1910–1941*, PostModernism Museum Publishing, 2015.



GYÁRFÁS OLÁH

Born 1975 in Tuznád (Băile Tuşnad) in Harghita County, Romania, in eastern Transylvania. He studied textile art and fashion design in Timișoara Western University (RO) and at the Moholy-Nagy University of Arts & Design in Budapest. He is the designer of the Rozalb de Mura label, and since 2011 the Patzaikin brand. His collections display a light interplay of diverse materials and textures, and are characterised by refined tailoring and sculptural lines. Since 2020, Oláh has also participated as a sculptor in prestigious exhibitions.

As designer of the brand carrying the name of Ivan Patzaikin, Romanian Olympic champion in canoeing, together with his team, he designed the Romanian team uniforms for the 2012 Olympics, and now twelve years later, he is once again designer of the Romanian team uniforms for the 2024 Paris Olympics. The uniforms are made of natural hemp linen; with his minimalist collections, he is among the first to bring the issues of sustainability and affinity with nature into the Romanian fashion industry.



ABIGÉL SÓGOR

Abigél Sógor was born in Cluj, and currently lives between Ulieş (Harghita County, today in Romania) and Budapest. She graduated with a BA from the Design Culture faculty at the Moholy-Nagy University of Art & Design in 2023. She is currently continuing her studies there towards an MA in Design Theory, with a curatorial specialisation. She completed her professional internship at the Contemporary Design Department of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest in 2022–2023.



BETTINA VARJAS

Art historian and assistant museologist at the Contemporary Design Department of the Museum of Applied Arts Budapest. She completed her professional internship at the Fine Arts Collection and the Applied Arts Collection in the Ignác Trágor Museum in Vác, where she engaged with artwork from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, as well as with the work of contemporary artists. She received her MA in Art History, and her BA in Liberal Arts from the Gáspár Károli Calvinist University in Budapest. Her master's dissertation constituted an ideology on the art of the 1950s, examining the architectural solutions that emerged from the perspective of the era, as well as their sociological impacts. An abbreviated version of this dissertation was published as the *XIII. District Helytörténeti Füzetek* (Local History Pamphlets), no. 27, under the title, "Művésztelep – lakótelep. A Máglya köz művészház története" (Artist Colony – Housing Estate: History of the Máglya köz Artists House), with an accompanying exhibition, and it was also published in the form of a brief article in the *XIII. District Hírnök* (Herald).



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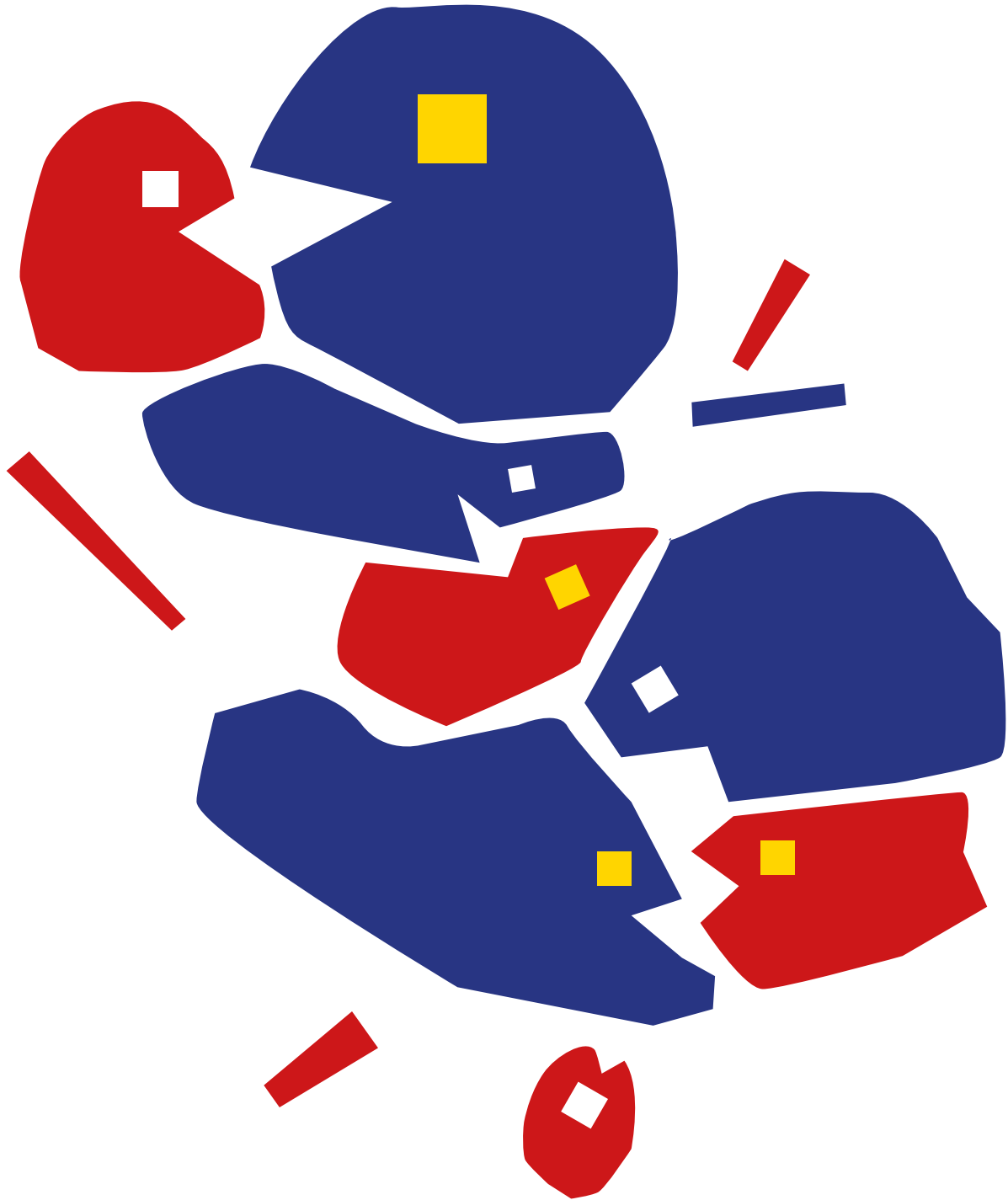
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