

Young And Established Artists From Rumania Excel

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In this day and age when sparkling wine in the form of prosecco, spumante or champagne flows like water at **exhibitions** when they open I was immensely surprised to have a **group of artists** who'd come all the way **from Rumania** with their **most recent production** look disheartened at the meagre attendance their show in Rome fetched, a show that had sailed along without so much as a formal opening, inaugural speeches or the proverbial clinking of glasses.

It was soon after Ferragosto while braving the extreme heat I chanced upon a show where young and old, upcoming and experienced, **student and teacher were presented in a charming exhibition entitled Itinerary at the Academy of Rumania in Rome**. The artists all greeted me warmly anxious to have their say as I tried to hedge in a few explanatory words on the unique nature of Ferragosto, **scarcely exhibition season in Rome** and added honestly that for me in that culturally lean season **their show was a feast of colour for sore eyes**.

Two leading lights in the realm of figurative painting and landscapes, specialised in the art of the icon as well, **Victoria Ileana Dragomirescu** and **Sanda Butiu**, presented a host of their art works along with their former prize students today graduates and present students at the **Fine Arts Lyceum in Bucharest "N. Tonitza"** in a unique show where the guiding hand was visible but moving ever so gently away as young ideas took on formations and colours and identities of their own. However, in exposing the new world to tradition and in the thematic selections of subjects for study such as the old peasant village, **traditional Rumanian shoes Opinci** or ideas such as combinations of still life and landscapes, **the masters left their imprint stimulating young minds to think for themselves and make what they like of tradition**.

Mixes techniques and colours

When away from her teacher's desk, **Victoria Ileana Dragomirescu** is invariably at her one man show or **group exhibitions in various parts of the world** for she exhibits in the **USA, India and Europe** paintings with a **strict qualitative emphasis on aspects such as brilliant colour and ebullient movement which characterise her scenes**. Her painting style is defined by a **strength of colour and striated repetitive brushwork**. In the tonal treatment, modelling is achieved by manipulations of textured pigments rather than contrasts of light and shade. **Whether she is painting the house where she was born** in the Romulus and Remus Square in the capital ("**My Street**") or subtly placing a redhead (herself) "**In My Studio**" or touring in Ischia, **the artist is always observant and attentive to detail as she mixes techniques and lays the colour on thick with a heavyladen brush of mixed and unmixed colour till the work takes on an atypical layered appearance**. Specially impressive was "**Harbour**", a stormy sky somewhere, tempest brewing. "**Sant'Angelo In Ischia**" uses oil pastels and guache mixed techniques to effect as dark colours generate a movement in the hills while red and yellow houses look on. **The artist likes blending the realistic with the imaginary and occasionally brings stray objects and items from**

elsewhere, other lands for instance, into her landscapes. Odd perspectives reinforce with fervour images from experience as partial documentary, partially imagined scenes overlap. *“Barfleur”* is in France as we see from the boats, flat lands, a sea of blues and purples, all intense sea and sky, harbour and city. *“Harbour of Sulina”* features houses on the Danube Delta in Rumania although the boats are French! The icons on glass were works of labour and love as the traditional technique of painting directly onto glass on the reverse, thus working contrary to the visible like mirror painting, lent its own dimensions to the works’ intricacies. From 17x22 to 32x35cm, *“St. George”*; *“Jesus and John”*; *“St. Demetrius”* and *“Saints Michael and Gabriel”* were portrayed with their representative objects, related themes and colours highlighted in the manner of traditional icons. **Some modern elements lingered on in the representation.**

Sense and sensibility of consequence

One of Rumania’s senior experienced water colourists, **Sanda Butiu’s** accomplished water colours and guache on paper ranging from 11x36 to 38x27 were largely landscapes that pulsed with a vitality, as colours were stark and well juxtaposed or impressionistically treated. **In delightful pink hills and imaginative seas an eye for composition in the traditional sense was evident.** Sanda Butiu has developed her own consistent style and compositional character and in her fastidious romantic realism optimistic highs predominate as they tend to at certain periods of an artist’s midcareer. **She is a positive good humoured artist and there is an airy clarity to the uncluttered scene where the sky predominates.** Whether working on a leisurely morning by the river or *“Landscape In Balci”* (Bulgaria) where theatrical **rocky chalk cliffs range from pink and yellow to white, varying with the play of light in a light limpid yet lucid manner, the artist’s touch is always delicate.** Whereas *“Trees In Autumn”* in which reds and burnished golds comprise the scene and *“Winter Landscape”* which relies on stark effects were responses that seemed bordering on the instinctive, the spontaneous quality of her work visible in loose brushstrokes and strength of colour, in *“Boats In Normandy”* greys, blues, silvery blues and gentle colours were at work lovingly in a precisely drawn landscape. *“In The Country”* and *“Landscape Near Bailesti”*, the scene on the River Balasan in Rumania, spring’s first flowers on almond and apple trees contrast with a farm’s red roofs depictions. **While adhering to realism’s principles, Sanda captures the moment with a subjective intensity.** In the Icon section Sanda Butiu’s Icon upon Wood Panelling presented the traditional *“Madonna And Child”* in a modern manner using the tempera and egg yolk technique which adds longevity to the icon. In addition to being an artist of immense refinement and sensibility as evidenced in her stylistic responses to place and season, this graduate of the Fine Arts Academy is a mural painter and restoration specialist who has exhibited in Canada, the USA, Russia, France, Germany and India with her works in innumerable private collections.

Thought-packed stylised works by young artists

Of the young artist graduates represented in the show **Bianca Maria Ionita** came across as **a meditative artist who gives new dimensions to old concepts with her emphasis on form and stylised presentation in a visual language of a world variously inverted, contorted, convoluted.** In a unique stylistic response to abstracts such as time and space, she focusses on specifics. **Form to her is a rearrangement of the visual and apparent or a splitting of the whole into its parts and reassembling in her own manner so as to make each aspect clear and the whole meaningful.** And so we have in *“Anamorphoses i & ii”* and in *“Reflected Images i&ii”*, all oils on canvas, formations of images from reality and people viewed from different angles. We have framed windows, garden views and images reflected in the window glass panes in greens and blues, shop windows, city lights and evening scenes, all worked into the painting and then recomposed in newer surfaces and colours. **Piling detail upon detail is the closeup image from architectural reflections and refraction, themes portrayed with aplomb.** The curved windows bend and deform the scene and column, things are heaped, moved around and re-heaped, so that the whole is visible even when the images and aspects of it are dispersed so to speak. **Five pictures in the one on the same theme split across the canvas are delivered as seen through a window, through curtaining, its lace and latticework.** Plants shadows hover in greens and whites. Sea greens, emeralds, pale greens all blend. Turquoises add texture. A puddle of water on the ground gets explored in blues and ochres. **A box of wires, posters, jumbled up items such as tubes and signs of the city are all heaped up, juxtaposed in stark contrasts.** *“I’m realistic in my way, not photo-realistic,”* affirms the young lady emphatically.

Two other young graduates carving a niche for themselves in this competitive world included **Alexandra Terzi** individualistic in approach and stylistically at ease as revealed in her *“Building Images”* and *“Pieces Of the City”*,

both acrylic on canvas that welded fragments of life and living together in representations of thought emotion and sentiment with **all their undercurrents as in a fictional narrative and Radu Popescu with three oils on canvas and two water colours and pastels on paper, who spoke of life as an inescapable voyage in the darkest of terms**, an eerie sense of disorientation hovering in his stark expressionistic scenes such as “*Roads Of Life*”. Although Popescu’s relatively large paintings revealed a command of the idiom, he appeared to be much too melancholic in theme colour and tone for one his age.

Sixteen Year Olds All Delight

Undoubtedly the most charming collection was that of the sixteen year olds, students of the two established artist teachers, each of whom bore the hallmark of style, calibre and determination that went hand in hand with a joie de vivre. The abundance of their output, astonishingly modern and forward looking, had elements of tradition inherent or woven in at every point, whether in the tall steeples of Rumania’s old wooden churches that lurked in the background of a vibrant still life or the old village shoes contrasting with contemporary themes. **Ilinca Gavrilesescu’s** bright colours applied with an elegance in her still life “*Fruit Plate With Red Apples*” made an impression as did the drawing of “*The Opinci*”. “*Midnight On Danube*” (white ink on black) was particularly delightful as were the Peasant Houses she lined up for us. Irina-Liliana Costescu’s “*Still Life With Fish*” amazingly enough had the Danube Delta as the backdrop. Her sense of composition is imaginative, laden with modern ideas as glimpsed in “*Dream Goddess*” and attractive colour schemes characterised her nine mixed media/tempera on paper works on display. **Ionela-Andreea Ghete’s** mixed media/ ink on paper or tempera on paper dotted modern works and still life works with traditional images such as the opinci shoes. **Ingenious Stefan-Laurentin Serban had youthful yet masculine paintings**, tempera on paper and mixed media collages, highlighting themes as diverse as a “*Street Squabble*” or “*Breakfast Table*” and “*Granpa’s Glasses*” as still life foregrounds contrasted with remote glimpses of the Rumanian landscape of the north in the tall steeples and wooden churches. **His urban scape in particular though replete with figures involved in their day to day pursuits was descriptive of the turmoil and chaos of daily life in an affectionate lighthearted manner.** Classical proportions and style bore the stamp of modernity in the hands of the sixteen year olds and there was that irreverence in the movement, action and liveliness of form that is the hallmark of youth, as colours spring to life and contrasts are at work at all times. **A promising generation !**

In Rome, we’re back to days of wine and roses since this show, champagne flowing as I said, for timing’s the key to success. Come September, things begin again in this city in real earnest!

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Scheda **Titolo completo:**

[Accademia di Romania](#) [2]

ITINERARY: Exhibition at The Academia di Rumania in Rome from 16th. to 23rd. August 2011. Complete Listing of Art Works featured in this exhibition

Victoria Ileana Dragomirescu: Harbour, mixed media; In My Studio collage; Madeline’s Shoes, collage; German Newspaper, collage; Sant’Angelo Of Ischia, mixed media on paper; Barfleur, mixed media on paper; Harbour of Sulina, mixed media; My Street in Bucharest. Icons on glass: St. George; Jesus and St. John as children; St. Demetrius; St. Michael and Gabriel.

Sanda Butiu : Paintings, guache on paper from 11x36 to 38x27cm.: Landscape In Balcic; Trees In Autumn; Winter Landscape; Boats In Normandy; Landscape In The Country; Landscape near Bailesti. Icon: wood panel, Mother and Baby Jesus.

Bianca Maria Ionita: Anamorphoses 1&2; Reflected Images 1&2, oil on canvas.

Alexandra Terzi: Building Images; Pieces Of The City, acrylic on canvas.

Radu Popescu : Roads Of Life; Trip To Melancholy, water colour and pastels on paper. Personal Road; A Road; Wandering Mind, oils on canvas.

Ionela-Andreea Ghete : Escape, mixed media on paper; Still Life On The Seaside, tempera on paper; Still Life With My Paint Brushes, tempera on paper; Stepping On Field Flowers, mixed media; Grandma’s Table, ink on paper;

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Green Light, ink on paper; I Should Be Resting, tempera on paper; Violet Rush, tempera on paper. 30x40cm.
Ilinca Gavrilescu : Fruit Plate With Red Apples, acrylic on paper; Rumanian Traditional Shoes, pencil drawing;
Midnight On Danube, white ink on black paper; Street In Bucharest, pencil drawing on paper; Peasant's House,
tempera on paper; Peasant's Life, tempera on paper; Red Roofs, tempera on paper. All 22x15cm to 30x40cms.
Irina-Liliana Costescu: Still Life With Fish, tempera on paper; A Piece Of Humanity, mixed media on paper;
Dream Goddess, mixed media on paper; Diversity In Black And White, mixed media; Waterpipe Reflection,
tempera on paper; Sighisoara, tempera on paper; Traditional Shoes, tempera on paper. 30x20 to 30x40cms.
Stefan-Laurentin Serban: Strike, tempera on paper; Breakfast Table, mixed media; Granpa's Glasses, mixed media;
Hat In Front Of Window, tempera on paper. 30x40cms.

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