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The Art of Ilka Gedő as Reflected in Her Writings, Notes and in Other Documents

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1. Instead of a Lengthy Preface

- *From László Beke's Letter Written to Gedő (August 10, 1980)*

"I believe it is utterly pointless to draw any parallels between your art and the «contemporary» trends because your art could have been born any time between 1860 and 2000. It draws its inspirations not from the «outside», but from the «inside», and its coherence and authenticity are derived from the relationship this art has with her creator—and this cannot possibly escape the attention of any of the viewers of these works."

- *Sándor Lukácsy's exhibition opening speech (King St Stephen's Museum of Székesfehérvári, 1980*

"Anyone who senses it is worth waiting can wait," wrote the famous Hungarian poet, Endre Ady in one of his late poems. By the time the period of creating beauty arrived in Gedő's life, she had waited a lot."

- *Endre Bálint: Életrajzi törmelékek (Memoire Fragments) Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1984, p. 150 & p. 242*

"Concerning the colours, it is perhaps Gedő's handling of colour that elevates her to the rank of the best painters: her colour chords are so much original that she stands unparalleled in Hungarian painting. / She does not have well-proven tricks, she is present in all her pictures in terms of both the topic and the colour selection in such a way that she cannot be confused with anyone else, and her style can only be compared to herself even if we suppose that there is some criterion which should be followed by a painter. Her unique approach is reflected by her whole oeuvre."

- *From Iboly Ury's Exhibition Opening Speech at Gedő's Memorial Exhibition, June 28, 1985*

"Let there be no doubt about it: this exhibition shows the works of an artist who does not depend on anything or anybody outside her internal forces. It is Ilka Gedő's painterly approach that makes her specifically unique and, as a result, her art is unlike anybody else's."

- *From the Exhibition Opening Speech of György Spiró, Műcsarnok, May of 198*

"A painting can be a lot of things: it can be a document, a fighting field, religious and irreligious symbolism, an ideological exclamation mark, or a gesture as the black square. Least commonly can it be an independent work of art. The twentieth century, at least for

me, shows that works of art, no matter which genre they belong to, were not primarily created by persons who regarded themselves to be artists, but by hiding, secretive special people, not having the status of an artist. (…) In vain do these people live within the limits of time, whatever they create is timeless and ageless. / The painting oeuvre of Gedő exists in and of itself, it shows the triumph of creative power over time, over the ages and death. Viewing these pictures here together, one has the feeling as if nothing were more natural. / This, however, do I need to say, is the wonder itself."

- *János Frank: „Ilka Gedő" In: Anita Semjén Anita (ed): Áldozatok és gyilkosok, Victims and Perpetrators, Cultural Exchange Foundation, Budapest, 1996*

"Any art historian trying to find the predecessors of Ilka Gedő's art would be in trouble, and justifiably so. He would not be able to find any. Gedő is of her own world that consists of several hundred drawings[1] and 152 paintings."

- *Géza Perneczky' book review, Holmi , December, 2003, pp. 1629-1630*

"I feel that Ilka Gedő's withdrawal was an act that was made within the artistic arena. On reaching a point beyond which the sole path open to her lay in the direction of sterile planning or proliferation of copycats, she turned away and fell silent, because that was the only way she could remain true to herself and to the world of her earlier drawings."

- *Géza Perneczky:* "A rajzmappa" (The Folder of Drawings), shortened text, *Holmi*, Volume 19, No. 8 August 2007, pp. 1042-1043.

"The avant-garde of the 20th century began, as a matter of fact, when the artist abandoned the safe harbours that had been in existence since the Renaissance, and started to face the dangers that rendered their human and artistic existence fragile. The collection and imitation of the wooden sculptures of African peoples and those of Oceania, the paradox inexplicableness of geometric presentation or adventurous journeys into the subconscious, all these attempts were, in fact, experiments that brought these artists into a near-death condition. This is at least sure in the aesthetic and moral sense, as the society surrounding these artistic attempts regarded these attempts to be absurd and even

[1] The exact numbers of works on paper, including the juvenilia is 5,112.

immoral. When, in due course, some really sinful things did happen, then the artists no longer needed these artificial means of creation. Every-day reality had become so much absurd that its support systems simply collapsed, and on the reflection of every-day phenomena nothingness and death had become visible.

Ilka Gedő came to experience such situations already in her youth. The folders show those men and women, together with Ilka Gedő, to have been in this dangerously fragile situation. What is interesting here is that Ilka Gedő as a graphic artist did not need the isms to create something which makes you hold your breath when viewing her works on paper. In these works on paper no acrobatics is needed, because tension becomes unbearable even without acrobatic tricks. It is enough to open a folder, and one can see this immediately."

- *Gyula Rózsa's Exhibition Review about Ilka Gedő's retrospective memorial exhibition at the Hungrain National Gallery (Népszabadság, January 29, 2005)*

"Ilka Gedő could have been a political painter, or she could have been a painter of the Holocaust. One part of the Hungarian art scene expelled her becuase she was not an abstract painter, while she did not ask for admission from the other group of painters, as she was not a realist painter. The whole of Hungary's art scence forced her into exile. Her oeuvre is independent of art trends and it represents autonomous art. In this region of Europe precious value can only be obtained for a high price."

- *Exhibition opening speech by art historian Ursula Prinz, deputy-director of the Berlinische Galerie at the Berlin Collegium Hungaricum, 8 March 2006*

"Despite all her internal emigration, she has remained part of her world. It is not out of ignorance that she has not joined the common art movements. She ultimately followed what Ernő Kállai had already written to her in his short letter in 1949: "I would advise you to use your eyes and follow your heart. Don't take any notice of the clever know-it-alls and snobs to whom van Gogh is an outdated concept and according to whose opinion you should follow Picasso's abstract art. Ilka Gedő always followed her heart, and she later found her own style and now, even later, her deserved fame."

- *Péter György – Gábor Pataki: Official Arts Policies in Hungary (1945-1980's), page 179 of this volume*

"One must also bear in mind that while in Western Europe discussions centred on issues relating to art that actually existed, in Hungary many decades were wasted on the pointless discussion as to «what art should be like». A too intensive, politically inspired focus on what art *should* be like had nearly led to the demise of Hungarian art. The fact that this did not happen is to the credit of Ilka Gedő and her fellow artists."

The complete digitized works of the artist can be accessed here:
Gedő Ilka (1921-1985) minden munkája: digitalizált oeuvre katalógus /The Complete Works of Ilka Gedő (1921-1985): Digitised Catalogue Raisonne http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/

2. Introduction (Péter György–Gábor Pataki-Júlia Szabó-Endre Bíró) [2]

Ilka Gedő was born in Budapest on 26 May 1921, shortly after the election of Miklós Horthy as Regent of Hungary, and grew up against a backdrop of political instability and crisis. Her father, Gedő Simon belonged to the Jewish intelligentsia, a small yet significant group of Hungarian Jewry who had, through close involvement with contemporary culture, grown away from the communal structure of religious life.

Simon Gedő studied at Budapest University, the subject of his thesis being the lyric poet, Imre Madách. He became a teacher of German and Hungarian language and literature at the Jewish Grammar School in Budapest, and continued to pursue his intellectual interests. Some of his critical writings and translations from the German were

[2] Text of the catalogue Introduction to Ilka Gedő's Glasgow Exhibition. Gedő's second Glasgow exhibition took place between 9 December 1989 and 12 January 1990 in Glasgow at the Third Eye Centre (346-354 Sauchiehall Street). This major retrospective exhibition, featuring 199 works on paper and 45 paintings, titled *Ilka Gedő–Paintings, Pastels and Drawings (1932-1985)* was organised by Third Eye Centre in association with the British Council, the Palace of Exhibitions Műcsarnok, Budapest and the Hungarian Ministry of Culture. (The material of this exhibition is available for download from Third Eye Centre's website: http://www.cca-glasgow.com/archive/ilka-ged-paintings-pastels-drawings-19321985)

The catalogue of the exhibition, though fully finished and prepared as a manuscript, was regrettably not published due to financial constraints. The manuscript of the book included three studies:

1. Péter György–Gábor Pataki: The Paradox of an Artistic Conception (The Art of Ilka Gedő)
2. Péter György–Gábor Pataki: Official Arts Policies in Hungary Between 1945-1988
3. Júlia Szabó: Ilka Gedő's Artistic Activities

In 1997 the Budapest arts publisher, *Új Művészet* decided to publish these manuscripts in a dual-language (Hungarian-English) volume. (*Gedő Ilka művészete (1921-1985)* György Péter-Pataki Gábor, Szabó Júlia és Mészáros F. István tanulmányai /*The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921-1985)* Studies by Péter György-Gábor Pataki, Júlia Szabó and F. István Mészáros/ Budapest, Új Művészet Kiadó, 1997) However, one of the above studies, dealing with the official arts policies was left out and replaced by another one written by F. István Mészáros. The editors of the originally planned volume, *Jekaterina Young* (Lecturer, Department of Russian Studies, Manchester University) and *Chris Carrell*, the director of Third Eye Centre, taking also into account Endre Bíró's notes on Ilka Gedő (*Recollections of Ilka Gedő's Artistic Career*), prepared one consolidated text meant for the British general public. This text is published here now alongside with images of the works mentioned.

published in periodicals and he was the first in Hungary to write about the Jewish philosopher, Franz Rosenzweig.

Gedő's mother, Elza Weiszkopf, was the eldest of three sisters, and the only one not to go on to further education. Her sister Lenke went to university and gained a doctorate, becoming a secondary school teacher, whilst the youngest, Aranka, chose art school and became a professional graphic artist illustrator, working under the pseudonym Aranka Győri, until her death from cancer at the age of thirty, shortly before Gedő was born.

However, in spite of her lack of formal education, Elza was an avid reader, with a passionate interest in poetry, and spoke fluent French, German and English. She also translated from German, and her translation of E.T.A. Hoffmann's fairy-tales was published with illustrations by Aranka.

Among the Gedő family's circle of friends were many painters, sculptors, writers and critics–including some of the most important personalities of the time–who frequented the family home, and Gedő was raised in an environment where the issues of art were regarded as more important than traditional middle-class values, an attitude that Gedő was to uncompromisingly uphold throughout her life. P.Gy. & G.P.

Gedő was not educated at her father's prestigious school. Her father had declared, "Why should a girl learn so much Hebrew?". This remark was often mentioned by Gedő, especially in connection with the fact that she learnt no Latin either in the otherwise very good school she attended.

Both Gedő's mother and surviving aunt, Lenke who married Ervin Steiner, a factory owner, and had two children, Juli and Erik, were talented amateur artists, and Gedő, in later life, preserved some of her mother's watercolours and drawings. Gedő herself, from the age of eleven, in 1932, was constantly drawing, both during regular summer family holidays on the banks of the Danube, in the villages of Kisoroszi, Lepence, Nagymaros and the town of Szentendre, and later in her Budapest home. In surviving sketchbooks, her childhood drawings–of members of her family, peasants working in the fields, landscapes and local views–already reveal her vivid imagination and innate sense of colour and form. Her earliest surviving sketchbook, originating from 1932, contains mostly landscapes, but in her drawings from 1935 Gedő made intense efforts to relate figuration to reality. Her sketchbooks are full of complicated figure drawings of people, performing a variety of

activities, whose torsos are too short, limbs too fat, or head too small. Gedő was driven by the naked curiosity to represent them in drawings as they are in reality.

Lepence Scenery, 1936 colour paint, paper, 237 x 190 mm
signed lower left: Ili, 1936 Lepence,
Item No. 1 of the Glasgow Exhibition of 1989-1990 at the Third Eye Center

In 1938, at the age seventeen, when she spent her holidays in the Bakony Hills, to the west of Budapest, she had already overcome these first difficulties. In the fields she followed the scythe-men with a sketchbook in hand, so as "to see again and again the recurring movement from the same angle", capturing the rhythms with considerable fluency and sophistication.

In 1939, her final examination year, Gedő attended the graphic artist Tibor Gallé's open school in his studio. Tibor Gallé (1896–1944), who had opened his school in 1935 and occasionally rented a ship for his pupils and taught them while sailing on the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas, was famous for his etchings and linocuts. He considered Gedő to be very talented, with inclinations very much like Honoré Daumier's. However, after passing her school leaving examinations, Gedő chose not to enrol in the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts, which would have been the usual way to become a professional artist. Instead, she continued her studies in smaller private schools and developed her skills following the instructions of artist friends of the family. Gedő rapidly matured as an artist, and even at that early stage her drawings were too individual and too expressive to have fitted comfortably into the classically proportioned natural form of representation practised at that time by the Academy. When considering whether or not to sit the Academy entrance exams, Gedő had taken her drawings to a family friend, the painter

Róbert Berény, and asked for his advice. He replied, “Why should you learn at the Academy? Those teachers at the Academy should come to you to learn!” J.Sz.

Drawing 7 of Folder 45, (Self-Portrait), 1939, coal, paper, 411 x 250 mm, Department of Drawings and Prints, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany

Even had Gedő wished to attend the Academy, it is likely that he would have found her way barred. With the increase in influence of the Hungarian Fascist Arrow Cross Party (Nyilaskeresztes Párt), the open disenfranchisement of the Jews began once again in 1938, with the so-called First Jewish Law, followed by the Second and Third in 1939 and 1941. Hungary’s Jews, however, were spared the genocidal horrors inflicted on other Jewish populations throughout Europe until 1944, the year of the German occupation.[3]

In addition to Gallé, two other artists in the late 1930s and early ‘40s, for shorter and longer periods, one directly, the other indirectly, taught her figure-drawing, painting technique and the knowledge of materials. All three artists were Jewish and all died in the same year, 1944 victims of the Holocaust. The oldest and most distinguished one was Victor Erdei (1906–1945). Gedő’s “student” relationship with Erdei was the most informal. “Adopted” by Erdei’s wife, Ada, the younger sister of Frigyes Karinthy, one of Hungary’s most famous writers and humourists, she spent her holidays with them on several occasions, and while there is no evidence of formal tuition, she undoubtedly benefitted from close and frequent proximity to Erdei’s work and he, in turn, would have had many opportunities to comment on her drawings. Viktor Erdei was a painter and graphic artist of the naturalist-impressionist Art Nouveau style, whose way of drawing and painting is

[3]Around May 15, 1944, the deportation of provincial Jews to concentration camps was started. „The Hungarian Jewish community lost 564,500 lives during the war including 63,000 before the German occupation. Of the 501,500 casualties of the post occupation era 267,800 lives were from Trianon Hungary—85,000 from Budapest and 182,000 from the provinces—and 233,7000 from the territories acquired from Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia.”(*Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust*, McMillan Publishing House, 1990, II. p. 702)

reservedly modern. Simultaneously detailed and synthesising, his lines flow loosely and softly, but at the same time suggestive of an unswerving self-discipline and firmness. The Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest possesses one of his lithographs, *Meditation*, which represents a seated male figure. The profile, the chin and the brows are emphasised, while the hair is just marked, and both the arches of the shoulders (drawn by individual lines) and the posture of the hands, possess a simple harmony. This drawing may be rightly considered a precedent to Gedő's portrait drawings. J.Sz.

Gedő's third teacher István Örkényi Strasser (1911–1944) was a sculptor. Through his school and exhibitions he was connected with *OMIKE* (The Hungarian National Cultural Association of Israelites). From Örkényi Strasser, Gedő learnt the firmness of sculpturesque modelling and the representation of mass. J.Sz.

Of her three tutors, Gallé's work was the most expressionist, yet he retained a closeness to nature in his studies of heads, his landscape drawings and especially in his repeated self-portraits. His influence on Gedő is particularly noticeable in his colour linocuts–in the way he depicts the houses of small provincial towns, which have their own almost human character, the grotesque tiny people, clown and old women, and in the yellow-lilac-blue-brown colour harmonies of his pastels. J.Sz.

From their family home in Budapest, 30 Fillér Street, the Gedős continued to go regularly to Szentendre for their holidays. Of all the towns where they spent their holidays, Szentendre was the most popular. A small provincial town on the Danube, some twenty miles from Budapest, it provided, between the wars, a shelter for numerous artists working in different styles. Its architecture which goes back some three hundred years, its Mediterranean-like atmosphere and rural way of life, proved to be conducive to Gedő's art, and from 1938 to 1947 she made many pencil, ink and pastel drawings of the town, taking her forms and colours directly from nature. Her drawings, like the townscapes of Erdei and Gallé, are at once loose, capricious, structurally bold and tautly handled. The colours of red, vivid yellow, dark brown, blue and green are intensified, at times, to an almost barbarian colourfulness. In her striving to master reality and to breathe life into her models, Gedő stood apart from other painters of Szentendre, for example Lajos Vajda (1908–1941), who approached abstraction in his attempt to create transcendental meaning out of visual elements. However, she highly respected Vajda's work, which she saw for the first time at

his memorial exhibition in 1943, held at the Alkotás House of Creative Arts (Alkotás Művészetek Háza), Budapest. J.Sz.

Figure with Houses, 1939-1943 pastel, paper, 235 x 322 mm, Item No. 21 of the Glasgow Exhibition of 1989-1990 at the Third Eye Centre

Gedő first exhibited her drawings in shows organised by OMIKE. She also exhibited a drawing, *Gendarmes on a Bench*, in the famous but short-lived 1942 anti-fascist exhibition *Freedom and the People* (Szabadság és a nép), organised by the Group of Socialist Artists. Held in Budapest at the Trade Union Centre of Steelworkers, all the artists of the Group were represented. J.Sz.

Gendarmes on a Bench, 1939, pencil, paper, 229 x 155 mm, Department of Drawings, Hungarian National Gallery, Inv. No.: 63.201

During these years, up to 1944, Gedő made intimate studies, mainly in pencil of family life–ironing, reading by lamplight, sleeping. She began a series of self-portraits which were to continue to the end of the first period of her artistic career in 1949, and made a number of drawings in a Jewish Old People's Home. P.Gy. & G.P.

Gedő's drawings are talented, sensitive explorations, her portraits are attempts to grasp the mental character of her models and to seek articulate representation. What all of a sudden made Gedő a significant artist was a fateful act in history, the German occupation of Hungary. P.Gy. & G.P.

On 19 March 1944, eight German divisions invaded Hungary at the "request" of the Hungarian Government and encountered no opposition. The persecution of Jewish people

began in earnest. The Hungarian gendarmerie, helped and personally supervised by Adolf Eichmann's corps, deported with unparalleled speed almost all of Hungary's provincial Jews, over 450,000 people to German concentration camps in Poland. Despite protests by church leaders and Horthy's hesitant attempts to halt the deportations, by the summer of 1944 only 200,000 or so Jews herded together in a ghetto in the centre of Budapest, and imprisoned within hastily erected surrounding walls, were provisionally spared liquidation.

The Gedő family were evicted from Fillér Street and removed to the ghetto, to a huge tenement block on the Ring, part of which constituted the ghetto's boundary. The Gedő family were given accommodation, along with other families, including the Steiners, in the apartment of a distant relative. The Gedő's relationship with the Steiners was particularly close, and Ilka and her cousins Erik and Julia grew up together almost as one family.

Living conditions inside the ghetto were appalling. There was no drinking water, food or medication: families were crammed together, children and old people co-existing in dark, stuffy rooms. Gy. & G.P.

Gedő lived in constant terror. Fascist henchmen often turned up in the yard of the apartment house and after long rollcalls carried off able-bodied young residents to work, and, in all likelihood, death. Once, her name was called too. Frightened, she didn't answer. Rushing into the flat, she buried her head into the pillow and shouted "No!". Meanwhile, an old man, with a frail, childlike voice, shouted in her place, "Present!". J.Sz.

Following the unsuccessful attempt by Miklós Horthy to arrange a ceasefire and take Hungary out of the war, the Arrow Cross Party carried out a military take-over with German assistance on 15 October 1944.

In the ghetto, the worst days of the nightmare began. The walls gave little protection for those inside. Thousand were taken to the banks of the Danube, and shot into the water. One of the victims was, almost certainly, Gedő's uncle, Ervin Steiner, who, as a workshop owner was allowed out of the ghetto each evening to work, disappeared during this time.

In this hell, only slightly better than concentration camps, Gedő continued to draw. Using sketchbooks taken with her into the ghetto, or the unused sides of paper used for lecture notes found in the flat, Gedő recorded her surroundings, her companions, the old

people and the children. Gedő's series is unique in Hungarian art history. They are invaluable as documents but much more than that, they are also allegories of human humiliation and defencelessness. P.Gy. & G.P.

The living horrors are represented indirectly. Depressed people are sitting in crowded rooms, having lost all hope. We see the faces of sad little girls and the scared look in the eyes of little boys standing in shorts. The pencil depicts the form with honesty, without any distortion; the modelling is precise and eloquent. Instead of showing the full scale of the suffering, the pictures are more like understatements. Gedő did not create accusatory documents with political overtones, she made her drawings in an attempt to salvage her own personality. Life is worth living only as long as the possibility of creating is there. The unaffected and devoted documentation of people forced to the peripheries of life proved to be the only chance to account for her own existence as a human being and as an artist. Therefore, she did not need to rely on symbols, religious or historical examples; she was content to portray, with simple directness, these people who, deprived of their own environment and their freedom, still waited for liberation. P.Gy. & G.P.

3243/30
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Girl, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

3243/129
Ilka Gedő
Melancholic Girl, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

33243/32
Ilka Gedő
Young Girl Sitting on an Armchair, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.5X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

3243/70
Ilka Gedő
Self-portrait in the Ghetto, 1944
Pencil on paper
22.5X21.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

The same is true in the case of the self-portraits done in the ghetto. *The Self-Portrait in the Ghetto* is striking for its gentleness and humility. Instead of the usual three-quarter profile, she presents a frontal view of herself. The drawing is the portrait of a person who

has lost control over her own fate. Accordingly, she has no age, almost no gender any more. She has become a hollow image of herself. It enhances the tragedy that Gedő evokes the feeling of endless isolation with a spider-web of soft, tender and delicate lines. She records the effects of aggression with the least possible aggression. And when she passes agression, she transcends the concrete situation in history. These works are no longer just the documents of the Budapest ghetto, but they may rightfully claim universal importrance. P.Gy. & G.P.

As an analogy to the ghetto-series one cannot help thinking of Henry Moore's wartime drawings of the London Underground turned into an air-raid shelter. Beyond the common theme, they share a moral artistic attitude. But while Moore's figures are the free members of a community united by fear and resistance, Gedő's old women and children are lonely victims. What meant hope for Moore and his figures was exactly what Gedő's characters were deprived of: the English artist's works were done in an air-raid shelter, Gedő's drawings in a condemned cell. For the twenty-three-year old girl, the ghetto, in a cruel way, was the school where she matured into an artist, bringing out of her the depth and psychological hyperrealism which were typical of her drawings in the ghetto. P.Gy. & G.P.

On 13 February 1945, Budapest, largely destroyed by the bitter street fighting, fell to the Soviet armed forces. On 4 April, the last Wehrmacht units left the country which was now placed under Soviet military occupation. In the spring of 1945, following the liberation of the ghetto, the Gedő family moved to No. 18 Alsóerdősor to the pre-war flat of Ilka's aunt, Lenke, with whose family they shared accommodation. In 1946, the Gedő family were finally able to go back to their pre-war home on Fillér Street.

In 1945 Gedő attended the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts for one term, being taught anatomy and the theory of perspective by Jenő Barcsay (1900-1988). The Academy at that time, compared to its pre-war existence, was a revitalised institution, and Barcsay, as a young artist and teacher, introduced new approaches to the human figure and its structure, basing his studies and research on geometric construction. J.Sz.

Gedő also continued her private studies with artist friends of the family, including Gyula Pap (1899-1983), a former member of Bauhaus, who became a naturalist-expressive artist.[4] Pap taught Gedő the technique of making informal quickly realised sketches, and

[4] It should be mentioned here that Ilka Gedő visited the free school organised at the studio of Gyula Pap also

while her drawings do not show the influence of Pap's own work, they display outstanding confidence. Gedő also enjoyed making more detailed studies, which can be executed at a slower pace and demand complex shading and thorough consideration. J.Sz. During these years when Gedő used colours it was in a manner similar to the spontaneity of her drawings, without theorising or speculation. In addition to her use of colour in the Szentendre series, a small number of still-lifes drawn in pastel survive from her first post-war years (1945–46). Undoubtedly, Gedő's use of colour was affected by knowledge of Van Gogh, yet no conscious construction of colour relationships or attempts at harmonising colour with the composition can be discerned. E.B.

On New Year's eve 1945, Gedő met Endre Bíró (1919–1988), who had recently returned from Romania, and they married in 1946. Bíró was only two years older than Gedő. He studied chemistry at Szeged University, in the south of Hungary, and at the end of the war he went to work at the Institute of Albert Szent-Györgyi, the world famous, Nobel prize-winning biochemist. Bíró was passionately interested in literature. Fluent in German, English and French, he read widely in all three languages – he and Gedő reading everything together–and made literary translations in his spare time. He was also interested in and sensitive to the secrets of painting. Through her husband, Gedő was drawn into the circle of the philosopher Lajos Szabó (1902–1967). J.Sz.

Bíró was one of a small number of intellectuals who joined Lajos Szabó just after the war, and regarded him as their spiritual and intellectual mentor. Szabó's circle, consisting mostly of artist and other intellectuals who felt uneasy within the narrow confines of their professions, comprised members encompassing several generations, all of whom deeply respected him. It was a company of friends, but, at the same time, it represented something similar to an open school, or "free university", with a multi-disciplinary approach. Some of the circle's get-togethers were similar to a seminar with an arranged topic. Often, especially in the case of newcomers, Szabó delivered lectures to only two or three people. On other occasions, however, ten to twenty persons came together, and the

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before the world war. Nóra Aradi (ed.), *Magyar Művészet (1919-1945), I. kötet* (Hungarian Art /1919-1945/, Volume I) Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1985, p. 398: "Gyula Pap became actively involved in artistic life, even though he secured his livelihood by taking a job as textile designer in the Goldberger textile factory. In his studio, located on Lehel út, he gave training courses. From among the members of the group around Lajos Kassák, Lajos Lengyel learnt here, and later on several artists, including Aranka Kasznár, László Kontraszty, Ilka Gedő and Gergely Vince, got acquainted with the basics of visual arts in the studio of Gyula Pap." (Gyula Pap was a disciple of Johannes Itten.)

notes made during these seminars were frequently typed out and circulated later. Parties were often arranged, but on almost every occasion, the festivities soon gave way to lively debate. E.B.

The circle had a hierarchy: Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor (1907–1992) were the "professors" who delivered "lectures" at the seminars. Other members also gave talks: Endre Bíró, for example, gave lectures on science, and the most comprehensive range of topics was discussed. E.B.

Both Bíró and Gedő visited Szabó almost daily, and they could turn to him with personal or theoretical problems whenever they wanted to. Bíró attempted to involve Gedő in the intellectual life of the circle, but initially she appreciated their meetings only because they provided her with a variety of models and during them she drew the participants constantly. Coming from a liberal family, where political issues were constantly discussed, Bíró, when he first met Gedő, was struck by her total lack of knowledge of history, politics and society. Gedő was particularly interested in poetry and knew by heart an extensive repertoire of poems by both contemporary and classic poets. This intense interest in poetry, however, did not inhibit a growing interest in other fields and, from being an onlooker hunting for models to draw, Gedő soon became an active participant in the debates. Her growing involvement with Szabó's circle did not lessen in any way the strength of her commitment to art, and she continued to produce large numbers of increasingly accomplished drawings. E.B.

Working in a strictly figurative idiom, an artist needs models and, in addition to family and friends, Gedő found in herself the most convenient model, always at hand. When, 1946-47, Gedő started again the series of self-portraits[5] variously executed in pencil, china-ink, and pastel, she returned to a familiar world, although her artistic attitude

[5] There are many who have attributed various—positive or negative—deeper meanings to the large number of self-portraits. Undoubtedly, drawing self-portraits is quite a particular situation psychologically. At the same time, the primary and most certain explanation for the preponderance of self-portraits could be rather prosaic: work strictly attached to reality calls for a model. The artist is the ideal model, always at hand. (E.B.) Based on a digitized catalogue of her oeuvre, the folders contain more than 3,000 drawings by Ilka Gedő, plus the Juvenilia drawings, which number approximately 1,700. The number of drawings made between 1944 and 1949 is 740. The total number of self-portraits on paper is about 370. The number of self-portraits in oil is nine. (D.B.)

was slowly changing. Doubts were creeping into her efforts to give a faithful and accurate representation of reality: what was the purpose of that concentration and exertion needed

Drawing 4 from Folder 49, 1947, charcoal, paper, 290 x 205 mm, marked lower left: *„1947 őszének végén?*" (The end of the autumn of 1947?), Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany

Drawing from Folder 6, 1947, charcoal, pencil, paper, 470 x 430mm, marked lower left: *„1947 (ősz/tél?*", (autumn or winter of 1947?), Hungarian National Gallery

for the portrayal of a model on paper? The traditional and composed modelling that had been so typical of her was replaced by an expressive, eruptive, tense style. The sitting and standing self-portraits, some in pastel, bearing the signs of pregnancy, and in colour harmonies already anticipating a world of colour shaped through conscious effort and investigation, retained the frankness of the previous pictures, but the source of this frankness is not physiognomic any longer. The compelling search for psychological honesty, comes searingly to the surface. The hands are spastically grasping beside an elongated body, the face is strained, almost distorted. They bear the marks of that tense feeling which has its roots in the dilemma between the possibility and the impossibility of creation. The state of naïve and innocent creation had ended for Gedő. She already knew that immortalising a model, art, is a vocation that affects one's existence. It is not coincidence that the subject of her vivisection, her struggle, is herself. P.Gy. & G.P.

Self-Portrait, 1947, black ink, paper, 220 x 231 mm, marked lower right: „Gedő Ilka", British Museum

Self-Portrait in Pregnancy, 1947, pastel, paper, 415 x 295 mm, Israel Museum, No. 1

Although at this time Gedő did not know Albero Giacometti's drawings, it is not unjustified to compare her art to his. The loneliness and defencelessness of her self-portraits render an existence just as bleak, and she becomes transfigured in suffering just like Giacometti's[6] figures. P.Gy. & G.P.

Gedő's self-portraits are not "advertisements of the artist", as are many self-portraits in twentieth-century art, from Marc Chagall's seven-fingered self-portrait to El Lissitzky's photogram self-portrait. Gedő considered herself as a model to be easily studied and a personality worthy of representation. In these drawings there are no external, narrative elements. Gedő, in most instances, is sitting with her hands on her lap, sometimes she bends her head to the side or rests her elbow on a table. There are drawings in which only her head and naked neck appear, and in others she is represented with a light shawl tied under her chin as if she was a working or peasant woman. There are also, however, self-portraits with strange hats, in which she is as mysterious and elegant as the heroines of middle class novels. J.Sz.

This introverted and plain repetition revealed in the series of self-portraits is unparalleled in European drawing. Apart from Giacometti, comparison can also be made with Antonin Artaud's large self-portraits, drawn with colourful and entangled lines. Artaud overtly expressed that the human face cannot be represented in art via symbolic forms, but is must be drawn from morning till night, in the "state of two hundred thousand

[6] This reference to Giacometti is repeated over and over again in the studies on Gedő. Let me be absolutely clear. (Those of Giacometti's drawings that can be compared to some of Gedő's works, were all made after 1950.) By this time, however, the first stage in Gedő's art, characterised almost exclusively by works on paper, had come to an end. Gedő saw an exhibition of Giacometti during her Paris stay in 1969-1970. The catalogue to this exhibition is preserved in Gedő's library (Item No. 23 on the list of Gedő's books).

dreams", because the human face is the "embodiment of the Ego; it is the power of life in the body, which is also the cave of death." Gedő did not know Artaud's concepts, which date from 1947, but she drew and painted his self-portraits, both small and large, with a similarly stubborn and exclusive attention. J.Sz.

Bíró describes going into his wife's small studio in their Fillér Street flat, which he rarely did–when a work was finished Gedő would bring it out to show him–during her absence in hospital for the birth of their first son Dániel in September 1948, and discovering a whole series of pastel self-portraits in the greatest mess. He had the feeling that when Gedő finished a portrait she completely forgot about it and started another one. E.B.

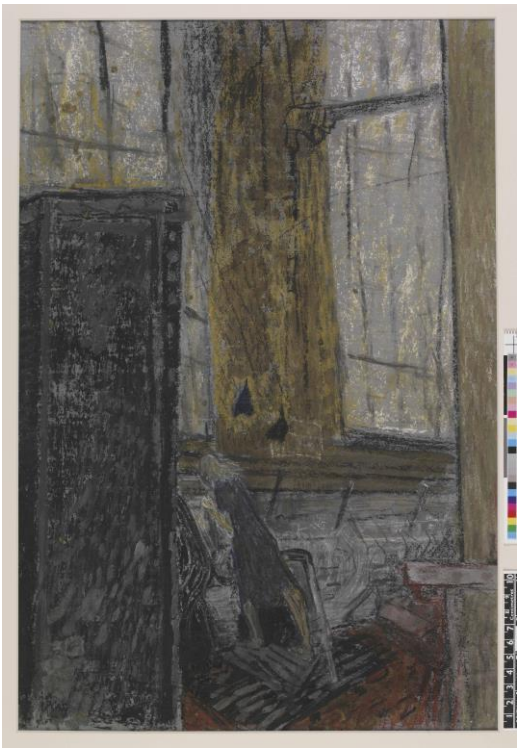
Bíró commented in his *Recollections of Ilka Gedő's Artitic Career* on Gedő's relationship to her work at this time: "When we started to live together, Ilka was already aware of the burden of loneliness really creative work implies. Let me mention one case: I was a young research worker at that time in 1947 and spent most of the day at the Institute of Albert Szent-Györgyi, while Ilka was sitting in front of her pictures in the sunlit attic rooms of our apartment. One morning, just before I Ieft for work, she talked to me with such vividness about the gruesome liberty that an area of white canvas bestows on an artist. The blank area is there and you are free to paint on it anything that you want. You are not controlled by anybody else, you are in charge." E.B.

Constantly in search of new subjects, Gedő found in the Ganz Machine Factory, near Fillér Street, a rich and visually animated environment to draw. She badly needed models (as she did when she went to the Jewish Old People's Home or when she was drawing self-portraits) and in 1947 she was readily given permission to go into the factory. Amidst the tumult and noise of the factory floor, in one of the workshops, Gedő conveyed her visual experiences directly and truthfully. Dramatic panoramic views of the vast interior alternate with quietly compassionate studies of exhausted workers at rest. Without the slightest trace of idealisation, Gedő's studies capture, instead, the stark, brutal dreariness of post-war industrial working life. J.Sz.

Ilka Gedő: *Ganz Factory Drawing No. 1* from Folder No. 44, 1947-48¸ pastel, pencil, silver cover paint, paper, 251 x 349 mm, seal on the verso: "The estate of Ilka Gedő", Albertina

As in her self-portraits of the same period, her drawings and pastels, quick sketches of momentary experience, reveal an intense spiritual concentration and expressive power, Nervous wavering lines replace the steady precision of the ghetto drawings, and the composition becomes a little unsure. P.Gy. & G.P.

Woman in factory with windows, grey wall in right foreground, 1947–48, pastel with gold and silver paint, paper, 495 x 344 mm, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings



Her decision to draw in such an environment was not politically motivated, yet going to the factory made the artists belonging to her circle suspicious. The critique of Stalinism was an issue that frequently came up during the circle's discussions. Gedő's

situation was rendered more complicated by the growing pressures imposed on artists by the “People’s Democracy’, including the disbanding at the end of 1948 of all independent groups of artists and art associations. However, as her drawings reveal, her approach had nothing in common with the various post-war manifestations of left-wing neorealism, and even less with the Socialist Realism propagated by Stalin and imposed in 1949 as the only official style for Hungarian artists to follow.

Gedő had no desire to win the approval of the authorities and her mistrust of all orthodoxy and ideology made it impossible for her to subscribe to the ruling that it was the artist’s duty to represent work and the working people. How the authorities responded to her Ganz Machine Factory Drawings is not recorded, but it is inconceivable that permission would have been renewed, following the establishment of the Association of Hungarian Artist in 1949, had she wished to continue working in the factory.

Apart from her family and a few friends, no one saw Gedő’s works at the time they were made. During this period, 1946-49, as well as pastel, she started to use oil, but Gedő, in a fit depression and seeing no way out of the dilemmas she was experiencing, destroyed the oil paintings produced during these years, as well as a number of works in pastel, later preserving some of the remaining the fragments. J.Sz.

In 1949, Ilka Gedő stopped painting and drawing. Her voluntary abandonment lasted until 1965. During these years, apart from a few colour sketches, she took no pencil or brush in her hand, refusing to do so even in play with her children. Her decision must be explained, since it happens only very rarely that an artist, who has considered art the meaning and purpose of life, stops creating without being forced to do so. This silence has the same significance in her career as the works themselves. The conflict that led to this abandonment and later to the new start is to the key to her life’s work. P.Gy. & G.P.

Gedő did not become preoccupied with the problems of art theory until 1946. She still believed that her vocation was to master reality and to breathe life into her models. She only realised the theoretical difficulties surrounding the creation of an artwork through her involvement with Lajos Szabó, whose circle included Árpád Mezei, Stefánia Mándy, Lajos Kassák, Béla Hamvas, and his wife Katalin Kemény as well as Endre Bálint and Júlia Vajda (both of whom Gedő already knew). Their views made a decisive impression on Gedő. P.Gy. & G.P.

The circle which had been formed around the end of the 1920s, had chosen the "left-wing radical" solution of assimilation, just as several German-Jewish philosophers did (e.g., Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch). Through this they were able to break away from being Jewish, which had predestined their place in society, and also from the middle-class and nationalistic traditions, which they felt too confining. By choosing this road, they could attain the feeling of universality which was so important for them. The circle started out from Marxism and Trotskyism in 1920's, which led them to the philosophy of the dialogue by the beginning of the 1940s. They recognised its renowned scholars–Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Ferdinad Ebner–as their masters. P.Gy. & G.P.

Both Szabó and Tábor were self-made philosophers, but it would be more appropriate to say that they were "critics of culture", if anything like this category existed at all. In 1935, Tábor and Szabó published an eighty-three-page pamphlet *Vádirat a szellem ellen* (The Indictment of the Spirit)[7]. The pamphlet is a polemic on Fascism and Marxism and reveals their common features. Between the wars in Europe, "where fear was most nakedly shivering", Szabó and Tábor saw that the "spirit had retired into natural sciences". The authors suggest observation in nature as everyday practice, and argue for the reconciliation of the unity of body and spirit. Important for them are "the primitive man, the artist, the symbol, the dream, the myth and language". In nature, Szabó and Tábor found Man's shelter, a location for meditation and action. E.B.

In his *Recollections of Ilka Gedő's Artitic Career*[8] Endre Bíró describes the intellectual climate when he became a member: "When we, the newcomers, joined the circle, the other members knew each from the «movement» and from the circle *Work* (Munka) led by Lajos Kassák (1887—1967). By the term «movement» I mean the oppositional, perhaps partly even Trotskyist, splinter groups that separated themselves from the illegal Communist movement of the 1930s. *Work* (Munka) was the artistic and literary journal which appeared legally and was edited by Lajos Kassák, who returned to Hungary after emigration in 1919. Around Kassák, a circle emerged representing an extended editorial staff, to whom Kassák delivered lectures on art. As far as I know, they met regularly in a café". / "To me the most relevant ideas of Szabó and Tábor were the following: the dedicated endorsement of the organic unity of the whole of the European tradition

[7] Lajos Szabó–Béla Tábor: *Vádirat a szellem ellen* (Indictment of the Spirit*),* Budapest, Az Idő Könyvei, 1936
[8] This memoir is published in full in the present volume.

including the arts, science, philosophy and religion: the assertion of the idea of unity of language and thinking and the methodological use of this conviction, and finally, partly based on the above views, an anti-materialist and anti-Marxist theory of values. / This theory traced back all value creating processes (including the production of material goods) to research. The term "research" which is considered to be a crucial activity, includes also non-scientific research; it includes the arts and all types of human endeavour which create something new. Yet creation does not take place out of nothing. Creation, research, must rely upon cultural, language and philosophical traditions and their expansion." E.B.

This circle created its own form of openness, which was not accessible to the outside world, so its members never attempted integrate into other areas of cultural life and activity. Yet they had a major effect on the group of artists, the *European School* (Európai Iskola), which existed from 1945 until its suppression in 1948, and they had close personal contacts with the art theorists and artists of another group who were drawn to Surrealism. According to the aesthetics of Szabó's circle, art was a religious issue after all and was one of the possible answers which could be given to the basic existential questions. Everything else should be evaluated from this perspective. This was the origin of the conflict between Gedő and Szabó. The painter had kept a distance from all doctrines from Marxism just as much as from the philosophy of religion. Although Gedő was absolutely willing to listen to the philosophical problems presented by Szabó, she was unable to draw the conclusion which would have also been demanded by the aesthetics based on theology in regards to artistic practice, which holds that the task of avant-garde art is not the representation of reality based on sensations in an oblique way; rather it is the symbolic documentation of transcendental connections. P.Gy. & G.P.

One of the main reasons for Gedő stopping work for such a long time was the conflict between her efforts at figuration and the hard-line avant-gardist attitudes of that aspect of the "alternative culture" represented by Szabó's circle, whose members had a "hostile attitude to everything that was representational or figurative", an attitude further reinforced by a broader political resistance to the ideology of "socialist realism". Non-figuration was adopted as a means of political opposition. However, rejection of figuration was not total. Lajos Vajda, who already at that time was highly esteemed and regarded as a perfect artist, left behind overwhelmingly figurative works. Endre Bálint did not follow a

totally abstract line either. Yet, the fact is that these persons did not and could not appreciate Gedő's drawings of the post-war period. E.B.

They interpreted modernity in quite a blurred way largely in terms of the notion of figurative versus abstract. There were only a few exceptions. When exceptions *were* made, or rather, when it *was* forgiven that someone painted figuratively, this heavily depended upon personal sympathies and antipathies. At that time, the precise description of a style that–in the words of the Hungarian historian of literature and art critic, Sándor Lukácsy– "separated from nature without having rejected it" was not yet available. E.B.

The political implications of Gedő's earlier decision to work as an artist in the Ganz Machine Factory exacerbated the tension between her and the other members of the circle with regard to her commitment to figuration and drawing after nature. Even where Gedő transcended this commitment, as she did during 1948 and '49 in a number of the last self-portraits and in the series of *Table Still-Lifes,* which are of a completely different spirit, her work continued to meet a wall indifference. While Gedő was too independently minded to be hindered by her friend's lack of understanding of her art, she felt deeply the lack of support given to her when in such difficulty. E.B.

The letter she wrote to Ernst Kállai (1890-1954) in August 1948, after re-reading his preface to Vajda's memorial exhibition catalogue[9] written in 1943, is proof of her inner struggles. Although he did not belong to Szabó's circle, Kállai's views were respected by its members. In his preface, Ernst Kállai speaks of Vajda's fascination just before his death with a Post-Impressionist painting by Pablo Picasso, depicting a loving couple against the background of a Parisian street. Gedő wrote Kállai: "I felt a personal absolution through his fascination and from the statement. «The astonishing power of pictorial depiction conjured up in the guise of reality the eternal ecstasy of love." In the guise of reality… these words between the lines recall the agony of years of contemplation, and they now ease the torment of those years! (…) Is it possible not to exclude objective representation? Could it be «in the guise of reality»?: This question has been tormenting me for years." . P.Gy. & G.P.

In her letter Gedő asks Ernst Kállai the leading question, "Why does modern art exclude representation?" She did not accept the alternative of, "We do not represent, we

[9]In 1943 Ernő Kállai wrote a catalogue introduction for Lajos Vajda's memorial exhibition in Alkotás Művészház.

create," and she did not yield to the doctrine of abstraction, when, for her, perception was much more important than then the symbol. P.Gy. & G.P.

Although Gedő had responded very strongly to Vajda's work when she first saw it, she preferred those works in which Vajda's understanding of natural representation is revealed, rather than those embodying "the iconic, mask-like emblematic" qualities so admired by Szabó and the other members of his circle." J.Sz.

In his *Recollections of Ilka Gedő's on the Artistic Career,* Bíró describes a further incident closely related to Gedő's ceasing to make art: "This memory is connected with two nearly life-size charcoal self-portraits in the pose of a thinker. I am pretty sure that these were the last works before she stopped her work for sixteen years. Probably, Ilka had not been working for a very long time, and we started to discuss this problem while these pictures were lying on the floor. Ilka mentioned that the form of the bottom of the shirt was somewhat similar to the last pictures by Vajda, showing big swirls in charcoal. «But if these Vajdas, that represent nothing in themselves, are works of art, then why does complying with the demands of depicting a model on paper require such a brain-wracking concentration and effort? And why did I draw the skirt in exactly this way? Why did I not use points... or any of the countless other ways?»" E.B.

Pensive Self-Portrait I, 1949, pencil, coal, paper, 570 x 455 mm, Hungarian National Gallery

Pensive Self-Portrait II, 1949, coal, paper, 705 x 448 mm, signed lower right: „Gedő Ilka" Robert Kashey's Collection, New York

Lajos Vajda: *Owl with Nest*, 1940, coal, paper, 628 x 900 mm, Budapest, private collection

These retrospective speculations provide an insight into Gedő's state of mind at the time she was struggling with her last works. The security, offered by concentrating solely on depicting the model the way it really existed, had vanished. The fact that all types of

representation are to some extent abstractions started to reveal itself in reality. While this came up in the circle's theoretical discussions, it is totally different to experience it as a daily problem as Gedő was forced to do. However, Gedő remained convinced, that provided an artist is thoroughly determined and really concentrates, it is possible to produce realistic portrayal. Gedő reiterated this belief on several occasions to Bíró at different stages of her career. E.B.

Gedő's inner turmoil was further exacerbated by Szabó's teachings on "the attitude of women to intellectual issues". Szabó basically followed the Jewish tradition (which in ancient times excluded women totally from religious activity). A number of lectures were given on women's attitude to intellectual issues, saying women's role in this field was essentially secondary. Mention was made of the ultra-extremists who theorised on the difference of men and women in terms of intellectual endowment. One of them was Otto Weinger who wrote *Sex and Character* (Geschlecht und Charakter), although reference to him did not imply an unconditional acceptance of what he said. Gedő read Weininger with hair-splitting accuracy; she filled a notebook with questions to Szabó. E.B.

Gedő interpreted Szabó's viewpoint as revealing his conceptual non-acceptance of the artistic competence of women, herself included. It is highly likely that Szabó's attitude reminded Gedő of her father's refusal to allow her to go to the Jewish Grammar School. E.B.

Gedő did not expect an answer from Szabó in writing, since she and her husband continued to meet Szabó nearly on a daily basis. Yet the questions remained unresolved even after discussion and consequently Gedő continued unfulfilled speculation on the issue. She gathered together a series of sharp-witted theoretical questions like "Can an artist be a normal woman? Can a normal woman be an artist?" or "In the important centuries of painting, women were models not artists. Has the world really changed so much by now that there can be other alternatives?", and became obsessed with these and similar questions. E.B.

All this occurred just before Gedő stopped work. The personal encounter with the issue of figuration versus non-figuration in itself, combined with the hostile political climate, might have been sufficient to cause the discontinuation, yet Gedő's difficulties were certainly heightened and aggravated by these unresolved issues. E.B.

The contradiction of Gedő's situation was that while she retained a strong interest in the circle's intellectual activities—no other such channel for communication could be found in a society that had already started to disintegrate through Stalinist pressure—she did not wish to live up to the expectations imposed on her with regard to her art. Since she wanted neither to leave nor to assimilate, the only way for her to preserve her place on the one hand and her autonomy on the other was to stop making art. P.Gy. & G.P.

The 1950s were solitary years for many artistss, writers and other intellectuals, who chose or were forced in the prevailing conditions to live a hermit-like existence. In Hungary, as well as in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, there was no political democracy, and any divergence from "official Marxism" was prohibited. Citizens were threatened by coercive action based on trumped-up charges, and many were sentenced to death or imprisonment. Gedő's cousin, Júlia Steiner, one of the Hungarian nationals employed by the Israeli Embassy in Budapest, and therefore in contact with foreigners, was a victim. All Hungarian subjects who worked in foreign embassies were liable to persecution, unless they agreed to be informers, and during the 1950s, one of the worst periods of oppression, she was picked up off the street by the secret police on her way to work and, refusing to collaborate, imprisoned on spurious charges. She was released along with many other political prisoners when the repressive climate eased just before the October revolution of 1956, and, with a companion walked to the border. Among the first Hungarians to leave the country, they arrived safely in Vienna.[10] E.B.

Intellectuals turned their attention to the revelations of the Bible, Buddhism, Theosophy and Oriental philosophy, in circles barely wider than their families. Writers knew their works would not be published, but they wrote in anticipation of a better future, and stored their works for that time. This is how, for example Béla Hamvas (1897–1968) wrote his essays, while working at the Ervin Szabó Municipal Library in the 1940s and as a storeman in Tiszapalkonya in the 1950s. Lajos Szabó (1902–1967) practised philosophy in the silent manner, continuing the anti-fascist *and* anti-communist opposition he had begun in the 1930s. In 1955, he also started to draw calligraphies, based on automatism and improvisation, which later enjoyed some success[11] in the West. J.Sz.

[10] The source of this information: Endre Bíró: *Megemlékezés a Gedő-Weiszkopf családról* (Recollections of the Gedő-Weiszkopf Family, MS, 30 pages

Ernst Kállai (1890—1954) and Lajos Kassák (1886–1867) withdrew from public view. Kassák into his house in Békásmegyer. He fished in the Danube and met few people. Between 1949 and 1956 no book of his was published, yet he was a target of constant attacks. In March 1955, after a long silence, he began to write his diary entitled *Szénaboglya* (Haystack) in pencil. The heroes of this diary are plants, animals, the artist's faithful dog, doves and seagulls. He also made drawings and paintings of them in a simple representational style. J.Sz.

The experience of Hamvas, Szabó, Kállai and Kassák and her cousin, Júlia Steiner, typical of so many, help establish a context for Gedő's own isolation during the 1950's. These were solitary years of introspection, full of inners struggles, private research and study, in which the writings and works of art matured. However, only the political and spiritual changes made after 1956 made their return to public circulation possible. J.Sz.

Szabó's circle, Bíró and Gedő's "company of friends", began to disintegrate in 1956. Szabó, like many others, emigrated to West Germany, while the members who stayed gradually fell away and ceased their activities. J.Sz.

In the cultural vacuum that prevailed immediately after 1956, the 1957 Spring Salon exhibition in Budapest represented a turning towards a more tolerant climate compared to the years before. As was noted by Lajos Németh, through its organization according to artist's groups, the public exhibition of Ultra-Realism and the abstract art of the European School, as well as the sudden change in many artists' styles, the Spring Salon showed that Hungarian visual art was striving to return to the positions it occupied before the start of Communist dictatorship in 1949. In the 1950s and early 1960s the public began to be acquainted with the outstanding artists of the turn of the century such as Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka, the unique self-taught Impressionist-Symbolist painter, reproductions of whose works hung over Gedő's desk in the corner of the bedroom where she had her working area. J.Sz.

[11] Since the writing of these lines in 1989, the following museums and one library have acquired calligraphies by Lajos Szabó (all donations by Dávid Bíró and Dániel Bíró): Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf; Sammlung Haubrich im Museum Ludwig Köln; Stiftung Lehmbruch Museum-Zentrum Internationaler Skulptur, Duisburg; Kunstmuseum Bochum Kunstsammlung; The Berlin Calligraphy Collection in Berlin's Arts Academy the latter institution received a total of 414 calligraphies by Lajos Szabó which were created before Szabó's emigration to the West.)

When Gedő stopped making art she did not altogether abandon the possibility of resuming, and stubbornly rejected the idea of finding a job. Her husband's family suggested that she should attend a course of industrial design. When this proposal was flatly refused, a bitter quarrel ensued, in which Gedő was called a parasite and criticized for "not helping her husband in the hard struggle of life." E.B.

It is likely that both the views of Gedő's father and Szabó's perceived belief in the secondary status of women with regard to intellectual endowment and artistic competence gave added strength to her resistance. First art and literature and then intellectual enquiry and research had been the priorities of Gedő's life since her youth, and she did not intend to subordinate them to the mundane necessity of earning a living. P.Gy. & G.P.

In addition, she had now two children, the eldest Dániel, and Dávid born in February 1953 to look after. They have moved from Fillér Streeet to a more spacious flat on Baross Street in 1952, and in caring for the children as well domestic matters generally, Gedő had strong support from her husband, who did his utmost to ensure that Gedő had the time and space to pursue her theoretical studies, as well as finding time for his own academic and intellectual interest. In 1953 Bíró was appointed Head of the Department of Biochemistry of ELTE University of Budapest, and he was awarded his PhD in Biochemistry in 1955.

During these long years Gedő read philosophy in German, English and French, and books on the history, theory and practice of art, making notes and extensive translations, as was the practice amongst the members of Szabó's circle. Her theoretical studies can be reconstructed on the basis of entries in her notebooks, all of which are preserved. When she started to read an author, she read everything that the author had written. Gedő particularly liked the German classics–Hebbel, Kleist and Kafka. (Kafka's writing were available in the Fischer Publishing House Collected Works in Budapest's Central Muncipal Library, conveniently situated next to her flat.) J.Sz.

The emphasis of the circle placed on the crucial importance of language undoubtedly had a role in her researches, which were given the name *Wissen-Können*. Through her love of the German language, philosophy and literature inherited from her father, Gedő became aware of the fact that in German a distinction is made between just knowing something (*Wissen*) and to really capable of doing something (*Können*). It was

while reading Rilke's work that Gedő became aware of the ideal of life for itself, for, as she quoted Rilke in one of her notebooks: "How can a person be aware of the real things existing, if he has not yet found a way to himself?" The questions concerning the fundamental meaning of existence and the relationship of "Man and the World" were raised and thought through by many people in Hungary during the "personality cult years" of the 1950s. J. Sz. & E.B.

Gedő's main researches during this period, however, centred on Goethe's theory of colour. She embarked on a complete translation into Hungarian of *Zur Farbenlehre. Vollständige Ausgabe der theoretischen Schriften*, copying the accompanying drawings. She filled three large notebooks with her detailed handwritten translations. In the beginning this was undertaken as a task to hold on to, something to fill the vacuum left when she put pencil and brush aside. As the years passed, the colour theory of Goethe and colour theory in general became increasingly important to her, and the key to her second period as an artist is to be found here. The search for precision and clarity in "imitational art", which is an essential requirement of Goethe's aesthetics of visual art, may have attracted the young artist who had created numerous works in a similar manner. The aesthetic significance of Goethe's theory of colour is fundamental because a decisive role is given to colour, to the light of different colours and to the light of the sun whose rays produce the phenomenon of refraction. Gedő made notes of Goethe's colour experiments and immediately tried them on paper in watercolour, and later in oil paint on sheets of glass (used because they were at hand), producing thousand of colour patterns over the years. Gedő, who was learning the grammar of painting in her colour patterns on glass, focussed her energies on studying the Goethean universal sense of colour, colours as sensual-moral category, the relationship of colour to light and shade, and contrast between warm and cold colours. Geothe insisted on the human character of physical perception. He renounced formal descriptions, the mechanical experiments using instruments, and the new scientific conception of the Universe based on them. This is reminiscent of the world view of Béla Hamvas. Gedő responded to these concepts, just as she responded to Goethe's principle regarding the sensual-moral effect of colour. P.Gy. & G.P.

Gedő's growing interest in colour theory is significant because colour did not have any important role in her art before 1948. At the time of the early pastel drawings in

Szentendre the sensual-moral effect of colours did not interest her, and her use of colours was always adequate but no more than that in terms of the composition and the visual possibilities. Colour had not yet become the organising factor in the composition. Accordingly, in the period before 1947, line is the compositional element. Therefore, until the Fillér Street period, Gedő should be considered a graphic artist, rather than a painter. She became a painter only at the time of the self-portraits of 1947-48, executed in pastel, where autonomous colour patterns and the strange, almost irritating, colour harmonies and dissonances make their first appearance. P.Gy. & G.P.

Her "colour tables" are partly the investigation, analysis and illustration of Goethe's impressions, and partly the presentiments of later problems. As it turned out, Gedő discovered the theoretical reassurance, the model, on which to base her entire second period in these colour studies. During her silent-period-researches, she read newer and newer books on the theory of colour, maintaining this interest throughout her life. Among her sources were the colour theories of Philipp Otto Runge, the German Romantic Painter and a contemporary of Goethe; Arthur Schopenhauer's *On Visions and Colours* (Das Sehen und die Farben), published in 1816; Wilhelm Ostwald's colour theory, which influenced 20th-century painting in different ways, as well as many of Seurat's writings on colour theory. She became particularly interested in Orphists and Rayonnists, especially Robert Delaunay and Mikhail Larionov after reading Herbert Read's *A Concise History of Modern Painting.* Influenced by her readings, Gedő laid the foundations of a multi-refined and intricate colour poetry. J.Sz.

During the summer of 1965, encouraged by her husband and by Endre Bálint, as well several of her friends, Gedő agreed to help Endre Bálint organise, in her flat, a week-long exhibition of her pre-1949 drawings and pastels. It attracted more than a hundred visitors on the first day, and scores of interested people on the following days J.Sz..

Katalin Néray wrote in the preface to the catalogue of Gedő's 1987 memorial exhibition at the Palace of Exhibitions (*Műcsarnok*), Budapest: "Even art critics and artists had only a vague awareness of her activities. As enthusiastic yet «green» beginners in our careers as art historians, with the help of Endre Bálint, we were fortunate to see Ilka Gedő's studio exhibition in her flat in Baross Street. We made loose connections between

her work and the *European School* (Európai Iskola), yet her work was not related to it at all except through a few personal connections." J.Sz.

There is no recorded explanation as to why Bálint became attracted to Gedő's art after his earlier indifference. Taking into consideration the easing of the political climate, and the cultural diversity it allowed, it is not unreasonable to assume that the more relaxed attitude towards figuration–other than the discredited Socialist Realist version–allowed a re-evaluation of Gedő's work and a belated recognition, on Endre Bálint's part, of both its quality and the highly individual vision embodied within it. Another factor may have been Bálint's confessed attraction to "people living on the peripheries of life… who cannot be helped by any means, neither by benevolence, nor loyalty, nor by actual assistance…and whose suffering cannot be altered by theory whatsoever". Endre Bálint had lived in Paris from 1957 to 1962, where he made illustrations of the Old Testament and created naïve, intricate works combining memories of objects and possessions from his childhood with motifs of Hungarian folklore. A fundamental vitalising element in Bálint's`art is its expectation of miracles. J.Sz.

Gedő and Bálint appeared to have a mutual interest in each other's work. In Bálint paintings of the 1950s and 60s, for example, a variety of motifs are arranged in free association within a visionary landscape. Although they did not follow Bálint's methods directly, Gedő's pastel studies made after 1965 and her paintings made after 1968 also portray an array motifs and objects arranged in a plane-like manner within the pictorial field that is not perspectively arrranged, or arranged from different viewpoints. J.Sz.

In the autumn of 1965 Gedő began a new creative period, as sudden and unexpected as her decision to stop making art sixteen years previously. Bíró in his *Recollections of Ilka Gedő's Artitic Career* describes arriving home and being told by Gedő that she had drawn a caricature of their friend Béla Veszelszky (1905–1977), her first art work since 1949: "It was a small-sized pen drawing, slightly coloured with pastel or coloured crayon, of the characteristic slender, upright figure of Béla Veszelszky, who always looked elegant even when dressed in rags: but instead of his head there was something like a star, which was remotely suggestive of Veszelszky's extremely thin and angular face." The choice of subject might not have been coincidental. Veszelszky was Gedő's contemporary, and a painter with a highly individual style. In the 1920s and 30s he painted

constructivist compositions with nudes, then expressionist self-portraits. Later he abandoned all means of representation and painted imaginary portraits and landscapes using a system of coloured dots. Veszelszky was a strict and clear colourist, a pointillist painter following the paths of Seurat and Signac. He, too, was a solitary artist, who retired to concentrate on his art and for years meditated in a pit he dug himself in his garden. He was an ascetic and reckless dreamer who, in an age that adhered strictly to thematic art, dared to paint "intergalactic landscapes" with only an inkling of motifs. It is no coincidence that Gedő portrayed his face in a star-like form, and it is no coincidence either that she always had a painting by Veszelszky on the wall near her working area. J.Sz.

Following Veszelszky's portrait, Gedő made a number of caricatures of her husband, children, and nearly all their relatives and friends, which conjured up the given subject in a strange way. Gedő, when making the small drawings and sketches, concentrated intensively on the person concerned, though the drawings themselves displayed no actual semblance to reality. In these portraits there is always a dominating characteristic gesture, body position, or physical attribute, often exaggerated. If a face appears at all, it is given a mask shape. One female figure is transformed into a huge hip that could "support the world"; a man is transformed into shoulders supporting a head of wild leaves folding over each other, another woman is shown in the form of a fishtail. In Gedő's portrait of her kneeling husband, his head is replaced with wavering flames, while in the portrayal of their son Dániel both his spectacles and his paralysed arms are depicted. The fact that this figures can be recognised is not an adequate explanation of the mystic metamorphosis these sketches achieve. J.Sz.

M47 005 Pastel sketch 05, pastel, paper, 359 x 139 mm, the pastel sketch of the *Portrait of Endre Bíró* (Catalogue of Oil Paintings No. 22), Budapest, private collection

Gedő M47 006 Pastel sketch 06, pastel, paper, 483 x 356 mm, the pastel sketch of the *Portrait of Klári Horváth* I (Catalogue of Oil Paintings Nos. 62)

Gedő M47 006 Pastel sketch 06, pastel, paper, 483 x 330 mm, the pastel sketch of the *Portrait of Klári Horváth* II (Catalogue of Oil Paintings Nos. 62 & 63)

In between 1965 and 1971, approximately a dozen of these portrait sketches were developed in a magnified form as paintings in pastel or oil, each of them in several versions with the names of the depicted persons as titles: *Anna*[12], *Eszter*[13], *Judit*[14], *Dániel*[15], etc. *The Portrait of Klára Horváth*[16], for example, which was painted in two different colour versions, represents a woman's figure from behind as she is bending forward and somewhat to the right. The head is small and the lower body is disproportionately strong. The portrait strongly exaggerates some of Horváth's most noticeable features. While they definitely reminded Bíró of Horváth, the inclusion of a raised and truncated arm initially puzzled him. Then he remembered a party at the Horváth's home: "Suddenly the phone rang and Klára, on hearing unexpected news, made a gesture with her arm expressing

[12] (From the list of o complete paintings comprising 152 works.) 12. ANNA, 1968–69 Oil on cardboard, 42 x 25 cm

[13] 53. ESZTER I, 1971, Oil on paper laid down on wooden board, 33 x 29 cm; 50. ESZTER II, 1971 Oil on layered cardboard, 32 x 28 cm;

[14] 9. JUDIT I, 1965 Oil on wooden board, 54 x 19.5 cm; 10. JUDIT II, 1965 Oil on wooden board, 52 x 20 cm

[15] 16. DANI, 1968 Oil on cardboard, 35 x 27 cm

[16] 62. PORTRAIT OF KLÁRI HORVÁTH I, 1971–72 Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48 cm & 63. PORTRAIT OF KLÁRI HORVÁTH II, 1971–72 Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 61.5 x 47 cm

astonishment. I am fairly sure that this movement must have fixed itself in Ilka's mind and inspired the original drawing and later the actual portrait developed from it." E.B.

In these works, the colours of the portrayed figures and their backgrounds are harmonious. With colours she strove to express the subject's human qualities, characterising in one work, for example, the subject by greens, in another by silvers, and in a third, by orange-reds. As her notes prove, she had insight into colour's changeability: "I try to put the green colours onto B.F.'s face, and also the whites under them, only a shadow remained: still there is some coldness and some otherness in B.F.' face." J.Sz.

Dress plays an important role in each figure, as it is an organic part of the personality. The hands are often emphasised, with the basic contours showing through. Gedő was upset if the picture's colours differed from the "colours" of the person represented; she spent a long time in choosing the "cold yellow to which violet responds", the cold green on the white background, the reds and warm yellows. Gedő superimposed the colours and then scratched back and restructured the superimposed colour layers. Through this technique, combined with the mysterious tones, she endeavoured to grasp the most essential, most characteristic colour and feature of the person portrayed. "But what should that cool clarity that surrounds B. be?" she asked herself over and over again. J.Sz.

In the early 1970s, Gedő embarked on two series of paintings featuring plants–the *Artificial Flower Series* and the *Rose Garden Series*. It is not known which came first, but the starting point for the latter was the rose garden of the Biological Research Cenre in Göd. The *Artificial Flower Series*, on the other hand, was consciously detached from direct depiction of nature, as emphasised by its title. Gedő had carefully preserved several children's drawings representing flowers, and she made almost extra copies of them, enlarging them into oil paintings. J.Sz.

She took great delight in observing the life of plants, as did Philipp Otto Runge, whose writings she had read and densely annotated for herself. During her stay in Paris in 1969-1970, accompanying her husband who was on a research visit she spent most of her time in the Botanic Gardens or in the Luxembourg Gardens, Gedő's Rose Garden series contains a multitude of colours and endless variations of organic forms. In some paintings everything is moving, changing, intermingling, while in others the flowers and plants are

either withdrawn or seem to dance, sorrowful here and violent there, sometimes defensive and at other times clinging to the ground. J.Sz.

Katalin Kemény referred to Gedő's flowers as "Persephone Flowers" alluding to the abduction, in Greek mythology, of Persephone, which occurred in a meadow full of flowers–rose, crocus, violet, iris, and hyacinth. Taken down to Hades through an abyss, which opens at the base of the most beautiful flower in the meadow, Persephone wandered among poplar trees and lean willows and could only look on the ash-coloured flowers of asphodel. J.Sz.

Kemény's perceptive observation reveals the sadness and sense of transience that underlies a number of these paintings, even though only one work of lilac and bone-white colour is explicitly entitled *All Saints' Day*[17].The flowers in Gedő's paintings grow precariously on the edge of abysses or around small lakes, their petal heads bending over their mirrored reflections in the water. Her flowers are anthropomorphic creatures and it was only natural that Gedő painted her own flower alter ego, *Self-Portrait Flower*[18] as well. J.Sz.

All Saints' Day, 1979 Oil on cardboard, 34 x 26 cm

Self-Portrait Flower, 1971 Oil on canvas, 48 x 33 cm

In addition to the plant series, Gedő concentrated her efforts on the painterly transmutation of objects, as for example, *Kitchen Window in Puschino*[19]. This work resulted from a visit to Puschino, a small provincial town in Russia, in 1975-1976, when Gedő

[17] 114. ALL SAINTS' DAY, 1979 Oil on cardboard, 34 x 26 cm
[18] 58. SELF-PORTRAIT FLOWER, 1971 Oil on canvas, 48 x 33 cm
[19] 100. KITCHEN WINDOW IN PUSCHINO II, 1976, Pencil, watercolours and opaque paint on paper, 72.5 x 42.5 cm

accompanied her husband on his study tour. She found the environment unfamiliar and stimulating, and the painting depicts the dark green of Russian window frames, the characteristic stove silver, the tea-towel, and some tiny petaled northern flowers on the window sill. J.Sz.

KITCHEN WINDOW IN PUSCHINO II, 1976
Pencil, watercolours and opaque paint on paper, 72.5 x 42.5 cm

Concurrently with these series, Gedő also created paintings with dream-like subject matter and poetic imagery derived from carnival, the circus, the theatre, as well as from nature, with the figures appearing in imaginary spaces. The circus, theatre, and carnival have been major themes in European painting from the late Baroque to Post-Impressionism and symbolism. Gedő's circus pictures are reminiscent of James Ensor's grotesques, the fragile harmony of the young Pablo Picasso's "Pink Period", Paul Klee's childlike naivety and Joan Miro's liberated playfulness, but characterised by Gedő's own particular fears, joys, struggles and wry sense of humour. J.Sz.

Gedő's "tiny creatures", the elves and "playful" monsters which adorned the pages of her notebooks, first appeared in public in 1979 as illustrations to Bíró's selected translations into Hungarian of James Joyce's Finnegan's Wake, and after 1980 in her oil paintings as well. The two most characteristic works of this series are *Witches in Preparation*[20] and *Man and Woman (Kidnap)*[21]. In the former, string iron bars divide two worlds from each other (the inner world of the painting and the outer world of the

[20] 131. WITHCES IN PREPARATION, 1980–81 Oil on canvas, 59 x 58 cm
[21] 136. MAN AND WOMAN (KIDNAP), 1982 Oil on canvas, 80 x 66 cm

spectator) but they are unable to contain the monster-witches, simultaneously humorous and menacing, who are preparing to slip through into the spectator's world, capable of both good and evil. A similar tension and ambiguity exists, in *Man and Woman (Kidnap)*, where a figure, leg stretched high, braces herself in a futile attempt to resist a monster who, instead of a head, has a two-branched lash and only one leg and one arm; yet the monster is still able to drag the woman along. J.Sz.

WITHCES IN PREPARATION, 1980–81 Oil on canvas, 59 x 58 cm

MAN AND WOMAN (KIDNAP), 1982 Oil on canvas, 80 x 66 cm

MONSTER AND BOY 1981
Oil on canvas, 55 x 66 cm

This tension is maintained throughout the series, as in *Monster and Boy*[22], but a more playful and liberated tone also appears as in *The Carnival of Dwarves*[23]. In these paintings Gedő's imagination, saturated with literary reminiscences, creates real picture-stories, and large numbers of sketches reveal that she planned to make many others. J.Sz.

THE CARNEVAL OF DWARVES 1984
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 49 x 51 cm

[22] 128. MONSTER AND BOY, 1981 Oil on canvas, 55 x 66 cm
[23] 138. THE CARNEVAL OF DWARVES, 1984 Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 49 x 51 cm

In a number of works left unfinished at her death, Gedő appears to have lost confidence in visual recollection and composition altogether, and she began making copies of earlier drawings. In a group of three or four self-portraits, she used as the "model" drawings she made several decades before, photographically enlarging them and retaining the original and retaining the original link lines, but introducing colour. In one work, two such drawings are superimposed on each other. In the *Double Self-Portrait*[24] we see two self-portraits superimposed on each other. One image is the mature Gedő in hat, pensive and watchful, her head raised, the other is the artist as a tired young girl head tilted to one side, eyes closed as though seeking rest. Besides their dream-like quality these self-portraits are also delicately suggestive of death. J.Sz.

DOUBLE SELF-PORTRAIT, 1985
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 58 x 42 cm

Throughout her life, Gedő kept her distance from the Hungarian visual arts world, while maintaining an interest in current developments within Hungary and internationally. She attempted to imitate in a playful way, the work of artists whose work attracted her attention. She visited exhibitions by young artists, and in response to those who preferred clean colour surfaces and simple geometric forms she painted *The March of Triangles*[25] which created anthropomorphic creatures out of geometry in apple green. E.B.

[24] 152. DOUBLE SELF-PORTRAIT, 1985 Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 58 x 42 cm
[25] 129. THE MARCH OF TRIANGLES, 1981 Oil on canvas, 84 x 75 cm

THE MARCH OF TRIANGLES, 1981
Oil on canvas, 84 x 75 cm

After reading a monograph on Francis bacon, with many colour plates, she made a sketch in oil of Bacon's self-portrait. Gedő's interest in Bacon was first aroused on seeing reproductions in the catalogue titled *50 ans d'art moderne. (Palais international des Beaux Arts. Bruxelles*, 1958) and later, in 1970s after reading an interview in *La Quinzaine Littéraire.* There was a period when she made some works in the style of Hans Hartung, though she never showed these to anyone other than her husband. Yet, these works were preserved in a folder alongside series of "onion prints", created in response to the monoprints made by Lili Ország (1926–1978) using carved potatoes. E.B.

Gedő paid also close attention to David Hockney after seeing an exhibition of his etchings, completed in 1969 based on *Six Fairy Tales From the Brothers Grimm*, and read a number of books on the artist. E.B.

Large numbers of photographs, assorted documents, newspaper cuttings, her sons' childhood drawings, reproduction of works by other artists, encompassing a wide range in style and period¸ festooned the walls and furniture in the corner of the room, where she painted, giving it the appearance and atmosphere of a fascinating, exotic, but extraordinarily untidy, studio. E.B.

The newspaper cut-outs featured all kind of information. However, the reproduction of the works by contemporary artists served only as warning to the artists, who often commented: “I pinned this on the wall to remind me of what I must by all means avoid; I am glad to avoid doing things like that.” On one occasion, the young friend of one Gedő’s sons showed interest in her work, and Bíró suggested she should teach art. Gedő sharply protested. “What I am doing may kill other people’s art.” E.B.

When Gedő began her second creative period, the rejection of arbitrariness was the basis for the working method she adopted. She needed the “external” security provided for her in her first period by the objects she used as models, where the view was unambiguously given from the outside. The fear of the “gruesome liberty that an area of white canvas” bestows upon the artist, described to Bíró in 1947, remained. Gedő had always been concerned with the moral burden of the responsibility of creation and the agony of making decisions. E.B.

In her second period, while actual experiences or memories (a rose, the corner of a park, the view from a window) could serve as basic motifs, the external security she sought was found primarily in the use of small drawings and sketches which came to life when concentrating on a topic. The same role could be played by a small sketch, or scribble, drawn just for fun, like the tiny creatures from her notebooks, or anything originating from alien hands, such as a child’s drawing or a photograph. After the preliminary drawing or sketch had been chosen for a painting in much bigger size, it became an “object”, as much as had been the case with living models. Both the Rose Garden Series and the Artificial Flower Series were based on such practice.

The “scribbles” were produced in relaxed, semi-conscious mood, akin to automatism. Bíró in his *Recollections* describes the “scribble” chosen for a small painting in the Rose Garden Series as having been drawn with closed eyes. The circumstance of its origin was embodied in the finished work’s title *Rose Garden with Closed Eyes*[26]*,* and was later presented to Enrde Bálint. By this time, a number of Rose Garden paintings had already been completed, and the “forms were safe in Gedő’s hand.” P.Gy. & G.P.

[26] 67. ROSE GARDEN WITH CLOSED EYES, 1972 Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48 cm

ROSE GARDEN WITH CLOSED EYES,
1972 Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48 cm

Her need for some kind of external security was strong since she instinctively felt "the distressing infinity" whereby, as Bíró writes in his *Recollections* "The deeper one explores into the self, without any transcendental frame of reference, the clearer it becomes that nothing is there."[27] In a paradoxical way, the ad hoc nature of her choice of subject—she always selected her themes suddenly, impulsively–resulted from this anxiety. How Gedő chose a subject is revealed by her comments on the origin of *Conjurer's Trick*[28] her last finished oil painting. "Today, as I was looking at the colour tables, all of a sudden I felt like painting the "scribble" on the back of *Artificial Flower with "Flypaper" 1.* Therefore, I have cut out just a square of that part that became meaningful to me." P.Gy. & G.P.

CONJURER'S TRICK, 1984–85
Oil, pastel on paper, 49 x 27 cm

[27] Bíró quotes from an article by Irving Kristol: "The Adversary Culture of Intellectuals" *Encounter,* October 1979, pp. 5-14.
[28] 147. CONJURER'S TRICK, 1984–85 Oil, pastel on paper, 49 x 27 cm

The true anguish and dilemma of creation began once the choice of subject has been made. In Gedő's case, the process of creation was only made possible through the adoption of particular and time-consuming "ceremonies" or "rituals', which provided the "mind-blowing concentration" of which she had spoken, years earlier, in connection with the drawing model. There were three main interwoven components to this process: the construction of colour patterns, the accurate copying and enlarging of the initial sketch and the compilation of notebooks to record and assist the genesis of each painting.

From the outset of her second period, Gedő complied colour schemes, as she had during her searches into colour throughout the 1950. Her studio was packed with colour patterns painted by brush on strips of cardboard, canvas or paper. On these colour patterns she analysed either the grades of one colour or the relationship between two colours. E.B.

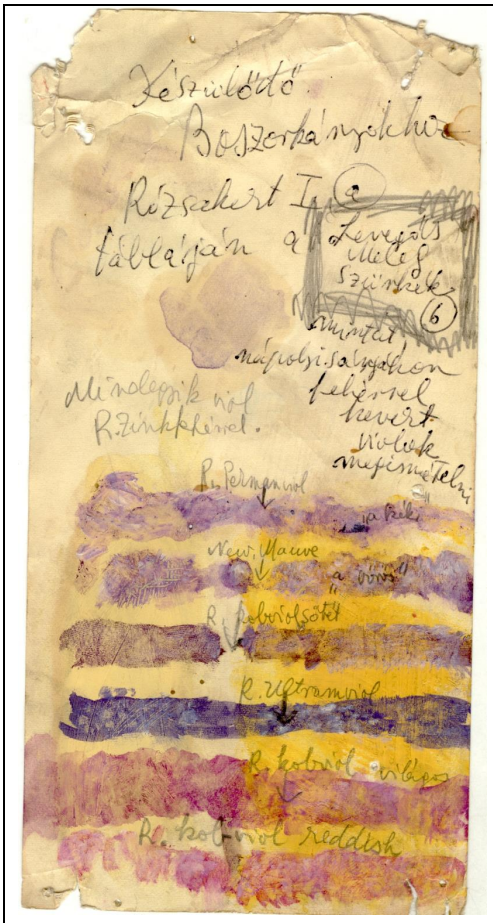
Gedő regarded colours with the deepest respect, though she also enjoyed just playing with colours, mixing the paints up and seeing what would happen. As a result, a combination of considerable order and disorder occurred. She never threw away a colour or paint; paint was very seldom washed out from the brush. Before cleaning the brushes, she usually painted the colour remaining onto a clean piece of paper, all of which were carefully preserved. Gedő often used matchsticks for fixing colours on canvas, and in her work area she kept a huge box and a soup bowl full of matchsticks, with paint on their tips. There was a practical purpose behind such economic use. During her stay in Paris in 1969-1970, Gedő bought a huge supply of paint, and from 1970 onwards these were used exclusively. She worried a great deal as to what would happen if she ran out of, as the paints manufactured in Hungary were of a very poor quality. E.B.

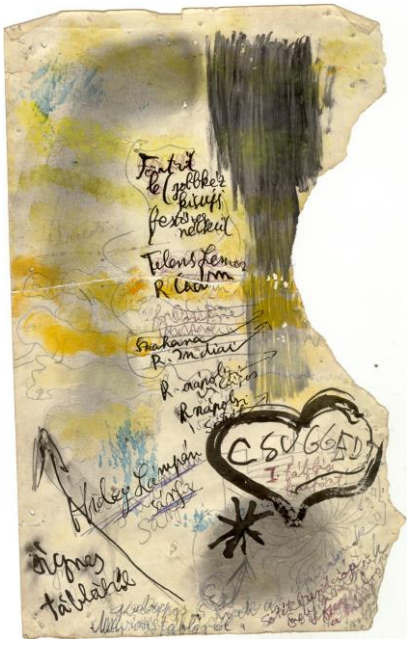
Pieces of paper often provided the bases for colour patterns. The standard names of the colour components were written on the colour patterns, the manufacturer being specified too. Gedő often pointed out to Bíró the differences which existed between colours having the same name, but produced by different factories. The colour patterns created through conscious effort or by chance were kept in huge cardboard boxes according to their dominant colour.

Ilka Gedő in Her Studio, 1982

For painting an actual picture, Gedő used colour patterns which had been selected as a result of several days' search and contemplation from the colour pattern boxes. A photo of Gedő presented above shows her absorbed in looking for colour patterns. The chosen colour patterns were then assembled and pinned on cardboard sheets, referred to by Gedő as "colour plates". For easier reference some of them were subtitled in ink or in oil. The titles underline the moral interpretation Gedő has given the colours: *Dejected, Sad, Prone to Cruelty*, etc. When reading Goethe's colour theory in the 1950s one of the chapters she discussed most often with her husband was the "Sensual-Moral Effect of Colours". Gedő gave these names through a sort of empathy, though for an onlooker it is difficult to see the connection between the titles and the atmosphere suggested by the colour patterns[29]. The name written under or above a colour patters is usually framed by heart drawn in ink. P.Gy. & G.P.

[29] The total number of the carefully preserved colour patterns is 318. They can all be viewed in *Complete Works of Ilka Gedő (1921-1985): Digitised Catalogue Raisonne* at *https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/colourpatt/index_en.php.htm*





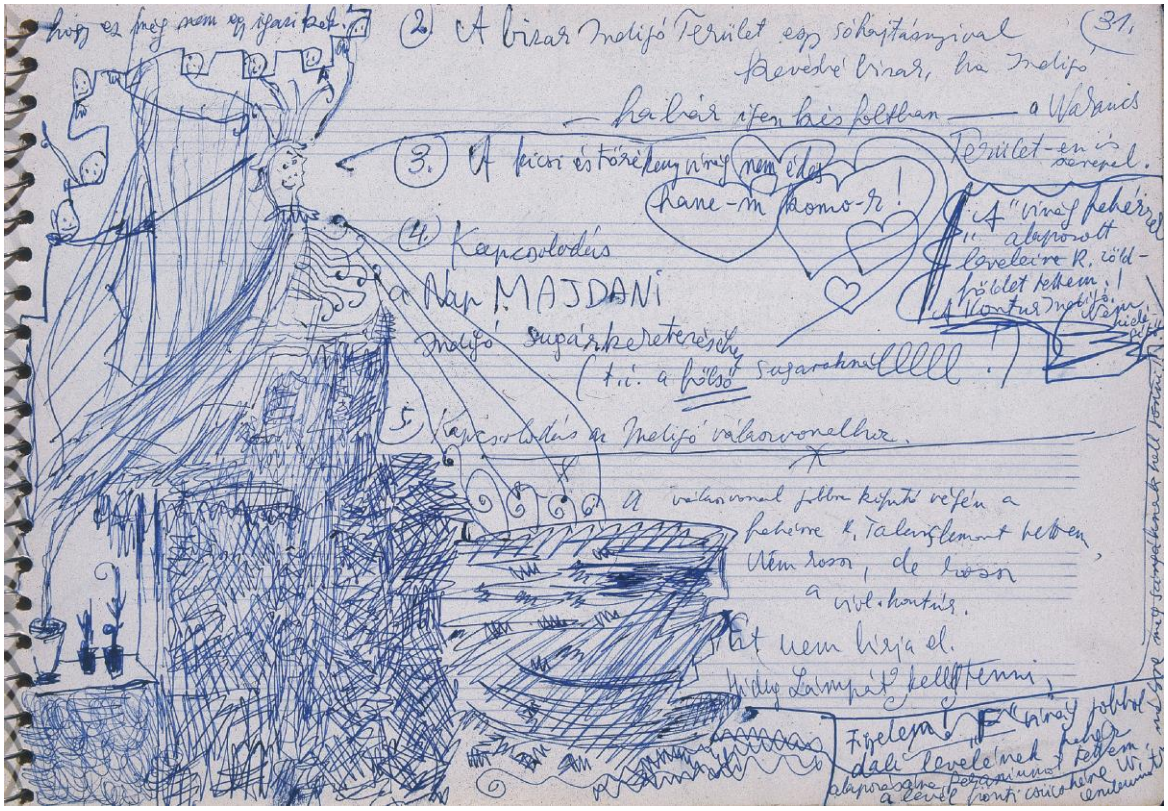
It was suggested that the colour sheets with the colour patters pinned on them could be exhibited by themselves or alongside the work. She always rejected the idea, in

spite of the fact that she enjoyed looking at them and often remarked that colour spots similar to hers were exhibited as works of art by other artists. E.B.

As an integral part of the creative process, and as a further means of establishing her "external reality", Gedő stubbornly insisted on copying and enlarging the sources of her inspiration, the original pictorial idea accurately. In the early works of her second period she copied and magnified freely by hand and chalk. Finding this too inaccurate, as the inaccurate magnification preventing adequate colouring, she then used a grid to enlarge the starting sketch. Finally, photographic enlarging was used. The "rituals" necessary for the creation of a work grew with the passing of the years, during which the artist's copying–the technique of preserving and transferring forms–became more and more exact. P.Gy. & G.P.

The 128 notebooks that parallel the paintings are exceptional documents of creation. They record the genesis of each work, and are striking testaments to the continuous dialogue Gedő had with her pictures. The notebooks[30] were given titles: *Jerusalem, Exercise-Book of Masks, Hurray, Brr., Very Great Effort, Really?, China Exiled* (ranging from No. 1 to … No. 26).These titles were a sort of play, and Gedő found great pleasure in the fact that words may assume private or self-determined connotations in addition to their original meaning. In childhood, Gedő and her mother developed an extensive vocabulary of pet and nicknames which were understood only by them. E.B.

[30] In 2019 the complete manuscript estate of the artist, including the diaries recording the making of all the oil-paintings, was digitised.



The layout of the notebook pages display a total freedom, a mixture of order and disorder, but the overall effect is reminiscent of a visual poem. Amongst the notes on colours, events of Gedő's daily life are sometimes included, as are the humorous drawings which later appeared in her paintings. On occasion the colour which is actually discussed is painted on the page, and there are a lot of jokes with spelling. The text itself contains jokes and most often humorous speeches delivered to herself, detailing instructions about the execution of the painting. In addition to their metaphysical importance, it is possible that the jokes served as a means of brushing aside, or overcoming the fear of the solitude and "freedom" that Gedő suffered when confronting the empty canvas. Gedő refers to herself as "comrade", "VIP comrade", "special artist", "artist of specialities", "kid". For example, the notebook recording the making of *Monster and Boy* contains such words of encouragement: "Comrade Gedő, you cannot do this, because the great mass of yellow of the foot at the bottom will scream out…I'm hesitating: a little green earth, or a little red? Rather green earth." P.Gy. & G.P.

If the cliché that the artist creates his or her own world has any validity at all, then it is certainly true in the case of Gedő's art. P.Gy. & G.P.

MONSTER AND BOY 1981
Oil on canvas, 55 x 66 cm

While she placed the structural resemblance of the source and its image before anything else, her use of colours was absolutely autonomous. In *Monster and Boy,* painted after a child's drawing, we can see the outlines of a monster, scary and funny at the same time, and a boy with arms wide open. Although lacking in a uniformly constructed space, this picture, with its different colour consonants, in some spaces suggests spacial depth. The figures are, once again, "given" here; therefore no symbolic meaning can be attributed to them. Gedő did not simply copy the two figures, but enlarged the original drawing. She thought that the faithful construction of the perforation of the edge of the torn out piece

of paper was just as important as the portrayal of the figures. There is no major or minor theme, since each point on the original drawing enlarged by means of a grid drawn on the canvas, has the same importance for her; she painted them the same way with the same devotion. Gedő did not only paint the torn-out notepad paper, she also painted the painting stretcher holding drawing. This way she blurred the border-line between reality and illusion. This boundary was extremely important to her since her system is one of multiple reflections: the exact magnified copy of a drawing put on a stretcher, which finally is the painting itself. The frame gets an existential meaning. The limits of the picture become the limits of the universe. Gedő did not want to acknowledge what is beyond the painting, beyond the subject matter. What exists, only exists by the act of painting: what is not painted vanishes in the dust of the studio, where the elements of the world are nothing else but the source materials of painting, ready and waiting to be chosen. However, in the world of painting every tiny detail receives the same impartial and meticulous attention. Accordingly, Gedő created her pictures the way people weave, where every single pattern, every detail needed the same amount of concentration and discipline. P.Gy. & G.P.

EQUILIBRISTS, CIRCUS, 1977
Oil on canvas, 64 x 42 cm

Gedő did not create colour associations simply in order to enhance or to interpret a figure; instead she placed her figures into a vast colour system. A new colour in the picture, however insignificant, was always a decision that influenced the meaning of the entire

picture. The following notes were made about the painting titled *Equilibrists, Circus*[31] which features two clowns, one of them standing on a floating balloon.

"The left-hand edge of the next section (colour not yet determined) is set at the point where the leg intersects with the picked up knee that leads to the other leg (from this point I dropped a vertical line). /I put on the two blues! They are livelier than the patterns on the off-white paper. Because they are on a white paper. / That's no problem, but: I need to wait until its totally dry./ But, you can get down to listing the Benefits? Mate./ This will be a viol. - a gloomy, dark viol. to the extreme which is

1. a ceaseless intensity of the viol. Dome
2. a perverted intensity, here blueish red, there cooled to a cold ghost red, here 'body red' warmed to ochre. 'Flesh ochre'…
3. this, too, intensifies the yellowness of the yellow background in the L.C. [Little Clown], moreover, this fully intensifies it, this warm 'viol'.
4. with its immeasurable darkness it intensifies the immeasurable lightness of the same [here there is an arrow from the encircled word "same" to the above "background" under point 3]
5. it makes the body of B.C. [Big Clown] light
6. it enters into connection with the viol. on the globe, this fact still hides unexpected motifs (because the yellows are not yet put on here) [from "here" there is an arrow to "globe"]" E.B.

There could be numerous quotations of this kind, since in the majority of the notebooks she contemplates and reflects the effects of a given brushstroke. She takes them all into account. Most often they refer to the contrast between cold and warm colours and they are never restricted to the correlation between two colour patches next to each other. In her view, not just a new colour but a single brushstroke could bring about important changes in the colour structure of a painting. Gedő painted the way professional chess players play. She calculated each combination and the consequences of each move. An extremely fine web of references is created this way, where the different colour dots contrast each other, intensify or suppress the melancholic or cheerful quality of the picture through their emotional attributes and where delicate vertical brushstrokes counterpoint horizontal strips. P.Gy. & G.P.

This meticulous way of painting, proceeding from one brushstroke to the next, is the reason why Gedő's pictures were created very slowly, taking years in some cases. She was simultaneously working on several canvasses, because she always waited until the thin layers of oil dried completely, to achieve a perfect colour effect. She put the picture aside, took another one, and with the help of notebooks, containing all the previous events of the given picture in a diary-like manner, she devised the next brushstroke. P.Gy. & G.P.

~~119.~~ There is an obvious question: how did she know when the picture was finished, whether the next brushstroke was the final one? Her notebooks do not contain

[31] 104. EQUILIBRISTS, CIRCUS, 1977 Oil on canvas, 64 x 42 cm

information about this. The most we can discover is that after lining out a thin contour on one painting, she called upon herself: “Put this picture away!” The viewer has no way to tell which picture is finished and which one is considered incomplete. And, knowing her method of painting, this is not surprising at all. The only person who was able to find her way through the unbelievable wealth of interrelationship in her pictures, their systems built on the intricate and myriad connections between the most subtle nuances, was Gedő herself. (And even she had to rely on written records.) However, although the familiarity with her method might give certain additional clues to her works, they are accessible without special guidance. They offer an inexhaustible wealth of colours and feelings and invite us to make a visual and emotional journey. They lead us into a fantasy world of gentle and velvety poetry, populated by roses, plastic flowers, clowns, dwarfs and fun-loving monsters, though it is a world where the undertones of melancholy and menace are rarely absent. We find ourselves in a golden age, but not a wholly innocent one, as seen through the eyes which are both child-like and grotesque. (This, in itself, very definitely distinguishes her works from those of the fin de siècle and Jugendstil, the tempting candidates for analogy.) Nevertheless, this outwardly friendly paradise is definitely and artificial world where deliberate “alienating effects” (the square-ruled paper used in blowing up the image, the other auxiliary lines, the grid of the original drawings and their torn edges) primarily serve to warn us of the prosaic and material boundaries of this phantasy world. P.Gy. & G.P.

Beyond this “multiple reference” imaginary world there is still the emotional benefit arising from the colour associations and contrasts. In general, the pictures do not have an overall ambience: what they have is an emotional tapestry of harmonious and dissonant effects, according to the harmonies or dissonances of the relevant small blocks of colours. This is why the overall effect of these pictures is one of subdued iridescence and opalescence, and the resulting emotion, an enigmatic turmoil. P.Gy. & G.P.

Once again, the ascetic discipline lying behind these iridescent, fabulous and emotional paintings should be emphasised, together with the strictness, which the painter showed in bridling her fantasy. Gedő could not accept–or could not admit openly–that a work of art should be the result of a series of instinctive and arbitrary decisions. So when she returned to art, she relinquished, in effect, the free (according to her, arbitrary)

manipulation of forms. She was left with the colours, but choosing from them would, once again, imply her control. The freedom was "forced" on her, and this is one reason why she continuously tried to rationalise and justify her decisions and why she kept pondering over them in her notebooks. P.Gy. & G.P.

Gedő had always disliked the attitude of some of her contemporaries whose philosophy can be summarised as: "We do not depict, we create!" Gedő rejected this in the name of religious humility: a natural consequence of the insatiable desire for all that we may see in the created world. Though Gedő practised no religion, just before she became ill, she read again the Book of Job and, fascinated, she stopped when reading Job 42:5: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." These words of Job came after the Lord has shown him the splendour of the created world compared to which all human efforts and capabilities seem to be wretched. E.B.

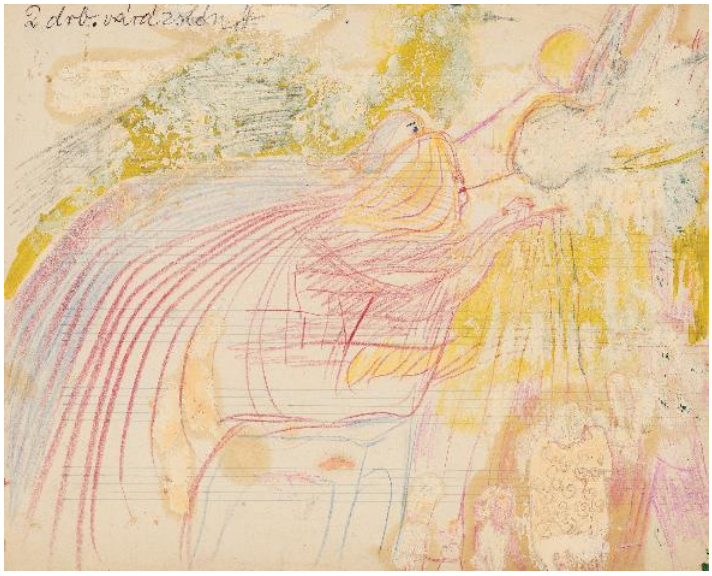
Ilka Gedő died in 1985 at the age of sixty-four, only a few months before her first exhibition in the West held as part of the festival *Hungarian Arts in Glasgow*. Her work attracted the unanimous acclaim of all the major British critics who visited the exhibition yet at the time of her death, at the height of her creative powers, her work was known and admired only by a handful of Hungarian artist, art critics and art historians, relatives and friends, and unknown to the world at large.

In 1980, the King St Stephen Museum of Székesfehérvár, which in 1964 started to collect and show the best works of Hungarian contemporary art, had organised a retrospective exhibition of Gedő's work. This exhibition represented the first real professional and public acclaim of her career. Ender Bálint, in reviewing the exhibition, stated, "Her colour harmonies are so original that they stand alone in Hungarian painting. The lyric opalescence of the best works can only recall to mid the boldness of the old Bonnard." J.Sz.

In memorial tributes to her, Endre Bíró who died three years after Gedő, at the age 68, spoke of a playful freedom when characterising her working method, while Katalin Néray emphasised her exquisite observations, humour and revealing irony. The writer György Spiró assessed her world as a private mythology, and commented that in her sorrowful yet optimistic outlook he did not find tragedy. However, he said, tragedy was

undoubtedly present, concealed in Gedő's lyric and melancholy colours and the tenderly falling lines. J.Sz.

The art historian Péter Kovács described Gedő as "the most soft-spoken of Hungarian artist, both as an individual and in her creative life. She passed out of this life as quietly and imperceptibly as she had lived." J.Sz.



Prima Idea for a painting: *Two Sorceresses and an Angel*, the beginning of the 1980s, pencil, oil, paper, 170 x 207 mm, marked upper left: "2 drb. varázslónő" (Two Sorceresses)

3. Gedő's Letters to Her Parents (1936-1943)

Visegrád, 2 August 1936

"Dear Mom and Dad / I have arrived. I do not have anything yet to write about. The kids? We have Mária, three American kids, Jinny and Alice and Hanna who is the least friendly. There are two grown-up children, Ilonka and another child whose name I have forgotten. (...) The ship journey was excellent and enjoyable, the sun was shining in the deep blue sky. I was drawing and I was alive. Anyuli, write me a long letter, please. Hugs Ili."

A few days later she writes:

"Dear Mom / I hope you no longer worry about me and that you are no longer angry with me. It really goes too far that Lenkice phoned me up. I draw the scenery, and the longer I am here, the better I like it. I like Aunt Olga very much. I wrote a five-page letter to Sziszi (if I do write, why should not it be a long letter). I am good at gymnastics."

Another letter from this vacation camp:

"Dear Mom / Yesterday we went out to the shore of the Danube, and we sat on top of the timber pile and watched the water. Ships were slowly passing by and it was all completely silent. Máriusz was also with us. He is always here and he cheers us up all the time and helps in everything we do. I got a letter from Sziszi. The day before yesterday we climbed the hill to watch the full moon rise over the horizon. I would not have believed how beautiful it is here at the top. The narrow path leading to the top and winding through the forest and the trees is also nice. As you walk along the path, you can see the Danube on the one side (Mádi said it looked like a mountain lake and it really is like that), while on the other side you can see the mountains as if they had been strewn upon each other and behind one of the mountains you can see the moon rise amongst millions of stars throwing light on the Danube and the mountains. On the way back the trees looked as if snow had fallen on them. Jinny believes this is due to the white moonlight."

Bakonybél, 2 July 1938

"My dear Mother / I am here, and thanks God I can say that we have a really wonderful and simple life here. It is a pleasure for me to watch this life, but I can also do what I want to.

Yesterday afternoon was spent with packing and looking around, and, like the first afternoon, it was long. I and my very young and lovely roommates slept well at night. There is a five-year-old boy with his seven-year-old sister and an eleven-year-old girl with her sister aged 8. I had breakfast very early at five thirty and then I walked into the village. The village has broad streets and clean houses and all around you can see the sloping fields at whose edge already the «jungle» starts. I could see the trees of the abbey park only behind the park fence, and the large-sized croft with huge stalls is also behind the fence. Two girl children led me to the potato field in the vicinity, where I drew a woman hoeing weeds. I came home with her; she spoke about the owls of which there are very many here. (She has lived in a manor for 18 years, and whole groups of owls are attracted by light.) I'm writing this letter in the afternoon: this is the time of rest and I'm writing, while I'm sitting on my «nice» white bed. My things are in my suitcase under the bed and there was ample room in the wardrobe for the other things. I have already been to the open-air swimming pool; and never in my life have I enjoyed water so much as today. Our host, Márk Bakonyvári is a nice young chap of marriageable age and I am afraid he seems to me half-educated. But he is good-willed to people. Our house is at the very end of the village. The final part of the voyage was very beautiful. The other parts were insignificant, the only exception being the town of Székesfehérvár. The part around the church is quite old and you can see quite a lot of beautiful horse-drawn carriages and peasants with a swaggering walk. Aunt Vali asked me to tell her how long I would stay, because there is someone to replace me if I wanted to leave and she would have to inform her. I replied that I would definitely stay for another two weeks. To be sure, that does not necessarily mean that another four weeks could also be possible."

On 4 July 1938 she writes:

"I already know a lot more about things here than yesterday. Behind the house and beyond the bridge there are meadows and a lot of things to draw, you do not have to walk far to draw. The wheat harvest will start in two weeks. Then I will really have a lot to draw. But even until then I can find people hoeing the weeds or peasant kids. If you walk through the village at about three o'clock, it is completely deserted. At half past six, however, the hay carts are coming through the streets and perched on them you can really see very good

drawing models. I have never seen a peasant in the streets during the day. Everybody is working. They say there is so much work that everyone who is not lazy can make a living. There is also some charcoal making going on and lime burning deep down in the middle of the forest. People say that at night you can see the smoke above the forest and, in the case of lime burning, the flame. I've only brought two aquarelle papers, you could send some of them along with the apron and the strong drawing pins that Lenke is going to send anyway. (Granulated drawing paper: 4 fillérs. It is surely available everywhere.)"

Bakonybél, 3 July 1938

"I am sitting here on the top of small hillock and in the vicinity of our house. Opposite me there are long strips of agricultural land, and the church spire, is thirty yards from me. As I have just been told by the cowherd children coming this way that an elderly man (I've forgotten his name) is burning lime. Deep within the forest there is also a stone quarry. I will go to the village to post this card and then I will go home, where everything is fine. Last night I talked with Mr. Péczely, he is a nice and good-willed and kind man. Aunt Vali is also kind and clever. There are two other aunts. One of them is Austrian, but she has already corrected me saying that she was «*reichsdeutsche*». After the children had gone to bed, I was also sitting with Marianna on the terrace. She kept telling me about the place she came from (Mürzenschlag) and the forests, etc. that are there."

Bakonybél, 7 July 1938

"Dear Mother / I am sending you a card and a letter at the same time. It is Wednesday evening now. I have just come back from a fantastic walk in the forest, a walk that surpassed everything you can imagine in every respect. There are lots of blackberries in the forest and a strange magic feeling overcomes you if you are there. You can find such tall beech trees there that I have never seen in my life. We were at the hunting castle (an edifice made from wood inside/outside, the rooms smell of wood and in one of them there is a huge white stove) and there are two smaller castles by the side of the hunting castle. I was continuously telling myself Goethe's poem *Rastlose Liebe* and I had the feeling that "*Lieber durch Leiden / Wollt ich mich schlagen / Als so vie Freuden / Des Lebens ertragen."* The word "Freude" refers here to beauty about which we have already pointed out once that it is yearning for happiness. (...) Thanks for your card. So strange that aunt Lenke has

not visited us for ages. I started to read the short story by Keller. Please write to me. Hugs for everyone. Your faithful daughter."

Bakonybél, 8 July 1938

"In the jungle that is five minutes' walk from our house you can pick a lot wild strawberries. And you can also find here huge blood-red blackberries under the huge beech trees. This village, along with its in many respects «old» abbey, was built around 1792 with its water mill and its church. I have already got used to village life, to the smell of fresh hay, cows and grass and the «sad sound of cowbells», as Skylark[32] writes back from the manor farm. I had finished this book the day before yesterday, because there is time also for reading, after lunch, when it is so hot and the kids take a rest. I work a lot. I talk to the village folk, the fork makers because it is on our street that forks needed for the harvest of this whole region are carved out. The days go by with incredible speed, which is quite painful but which proves beyond doubt that I don't get bored here!'

Bakonybél, 9 July 1938

"In the morning I visited the fork makers once again. (...) They do the carving while sitting on a strange chair, and then the fork is assembled out of its parts. Uncle János, one of the fork makers, said that I spoke Hungarian in a strange way, with a German accent. To me the peasants' dialect is not strange, because I heard it from Annus."

Bakonybél, 13 July 1938

"Dear Mom / Thanks for your letter and the lot of papers that you sent to me. I do not know yet whether I stay next week for the fourth week. The first three weeks went by like three days, and the fourth week won't seem more than just one hour, during which you can't really benefit more, but it nevertheless costs 32 pengős, or to be more exact just let's take half of this amount, which is the extra cost of staying here, and this amount would be lavishly enough to pay model fees, and I would want to have this amount. Travelling around in the region would cost a lot of money. (Anyhow, I want to see Zirc by all means!) But I have a problem: I have completely run out of the pocket money, but this is because I had my brown shoes heeled: two heels and two soles cost me 3 pengős 20. I will write to

[32] The artist refers to Dezső Kosztolányi's novel A pacsírta [Skylark]. This novel is now available in English (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993).

you on Wednesday and let you know whether I go home on Friday or not. But if I do come on Monday I would need, in the same manner as on the way here, the travel costs of about 6-7 pengős. It is not a good idea to ask Vali for this amount, and to go home with leaving behind a debt. This is why it would be good to get 10 pengős from you right away. (If the money is not spent, the better it is.) If you get my Wednesday message on Thursday, and if I decide to stay, Vali will get her money either on Friday or on Saturday. If I go home now, I suppose I can lengthen my summer, and I can even enjoy a part of July at home. I want to get the money immediately so that I can have time to go to Zirc. I hope I will get a reply also from aunt Máli by Wednesday. It is a pity I can's see the village fair of Zirc."

Bakonybél, 2 July 1938

"The peasant swears. He looks at the field to see how much he has already harvested. To hell with everything, to hell with the pig, to hell with the blunt scythe and to hell with the late wife."

Szentendre, 21 June 1943

"Just as I was finishing my lunch at H, Ada[33] and Viktor[34] entered. While eating they had a debate, and I waited for them to finish their meal, and went with them to Teri. Then Viktor and I went for a walk. We had dinner at Teri and then I took Viktor to the ship station and saw him off. He promised to bring me a marvellous book by the painter Signac. I will write about it later, and he will bring the book the next time."

[33] Ada Karinthy (1980-1955), the elder sister of the famous Hungarian writer Frigyes Karinthy and the wife of the painter Viktor Erdei.

[34] Viktor Erdei (1879-1945) a Hungarian sculptor and graphic artist. From 1939 on, he started to exhibit at the exhibitions of OMIKE (the Hungarian Jewish Educational Association), the last time in May 1944. During the siege of Budapest, he lived in the ghetto. He died soon after the liberation of the ghetto by the Red Army.

Szentendre, 22 June 1943

"Right now I am sitting at the table of the ship station... I was already here at ten in the morning at the Borpince utca, at a small rundown house. Now I found a motif on the shore and I am hurrying there. I am, of course, in continuous contact with Ada. The Singers visited Ada and tonight I am going to see the Singers with Ada. I see them every day. I have already seen Kmetty and Barcsay. Perlrott is also out here, but I have not met him yet, and neither do I want to meet him. A letter dated 23 June she wrote: "I had a good lunch, and now I am taking a short break and then I celebrate the long afternoon that may even last until 9 o'clock. When you left, I was still staying with Ada who invited me to dinner, and on arriving home, I had dinner once again. Viktor Erdei is going to come out to Szentendre either on the 28th or 29th. I am sure he will bring me the book by Signac."

4. Anna Lesznai's Letter to Ilka Gedő, 1939

"Dear little girl / I answer your letter with delay but there were many problems with the post and there were many obstacles to correspondence. I found great joy in your letter: you are a humane, lovely and intelligent girl, and this is one of the reasons why you can become a genuine artist. In addition to acquiring the technique of the profession, drawing and painting a lot, you should strive to develop in yourself genuine humanity, understanding, forgiveness and patient discipline, because these are the traits that may also best serve your art. /If these were normal times, I would be happy to invite you for a few weeks into my house. However, we live on occupied territory, I am unable to invite you this year, and neither would I assume the responsibility of inviting you. / Unfortunately, I only know the northern part of Hungary. I tried to think hard, but I could not remember the right family. / But during the Easter holidays I spent two days on the southern shores of Lake Balaton. This is a region of unparalleled beauty, and I lived in a fantastic peasant house. It has an incomparable beauty. / Enclosed with this letter, I am sending you the address of my acquaintance. (He lives at a small town, and is a hotel owner. He is an interesting and educated man who publishes his writings and he deals with folklore. You could learn a lot from him, as he is a great friend and advisor of the peasantry.) Maybe he can find some good accommodation for you. His hotel is not at a summer resort but in a small town. / Zala county is a fantastic mountainous area replete with the traces of an ancient civilisation. Like all the parts of Transdanubia, this region has a warm climate. You should send your drawings to him and let him know how much you can afford to spend. / I hope, God will help us, and I will be able to see you next winter. Do write to my summer address sometimes. Obviously,, you should be aware of the fact that letters are being censored at the border. To sum it up, you should never write about anything that is or can be regarded to be political news. / Here is my summer address: Amália Jászi or Amália Lesznai, but it is better to write Amália Jászi. There in the village, I am mostly known by this latter name. / Work a lot and remain as smart and honest as I believe, you are now. /Hugs Anna Lesznai / Your Aunt Máli."[35]

[35] Manuscript in the estate of Ilka Gedő.

5. Róbert Berény's Advice to Ilka Gedő, June 12, 1939

For a talented person, all teachers are good. In fact, it is more correct to say that to receive instruction from a teacher who is not excellent is a waste of time. And it also true that a talented student can learn from a talented master more easily and more quickly, and this is true even then when the master is not the best teacher. Initially, it is important to acquire a reliable and good basic knowledge and to develop taste in the good direction so that the artist identifies with important requirements. These are the right principles, but they do not help you choose the right school based on the prospectuses. And I who do not know all these schools cannot give you advice. / What speaks for Paris is the fact that since the beginning of the 18th century the best pictures have been painted there, and this town is the home of first-rate painterly taste. I think the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* or the *École des Arts Metiers* (applied arts) are conservative institutions «handing out degrees» and most probably they are excellently managed. Anyway, those who want to become painters, mostly visit the free schools. (I myself used to visit the Academy Julian for a few months and at that time the best master, J.P. Laurens was still living. He was not a good painter, but he was an ideal teacher, who often promoted ideas that were in contrast with his own painterly work!) / As for England, all I know about this country is that the prime minister is Chamberlain, and that it is very foggy. (But maybe if everything comes off as I planned, maybe I will go there myself this autumn.) Therefore, I haven't got the slightest idea as regards your questions on England. / Concerning your question on whether I would aim to acquire miscellaneous techniques, and on top of all this, to visit an illustrator training course – to these questions I would reply: an artist must be familiar with and possibly use the techniques, while the illustrator must first love the art of illustration and then he can do it well. However, this conclusion must be brought in harmony with the expectations that one has towards himself. / I am glad that you have passed the school-leaving examinations. Should you have made drawings, bring them to me because I would like to see them. I stay another two weeks in Budapest. / See you later: Berény"

6. Letter of Recommendation by Gusztáv Végh[36], August 31, 1939

I hereby certify that I have been guiding Ilka Gedő in her artistic studies for two years, and I regard her an art student with promising potentials, talent and a fine taste: I think the unfolding of her excellent talent would be largely helped, if she had the opportunity to continue her studies at the Paris School of Fine Arts.

[36] Gustáv Végh was a painter, art teacher and the president of Hungarian Society of Book and Advertisement Artists

7. Letter by Olga Kovács Székely, a Hungarian painter living in Paris, February 7, 1939

My dear Ili, / Don't be angry with me, because I answer both of your lovely letters now. I have absolutely no excuse, as I do hardly any work. Somehow my interest in anything has waned. / I was glad about your letter, and I think what you said to Robert (Berény) is perfectly OK, because, if someone asked me what my «goal» is, I myself would immediately reply the same. Well, I have grown quite old, but I myself have not found any reason for doing something than love. And, practically I do not believe there is any other reason. This, incidentally, was always the subject of debate between me and Robert. He asked me, «Why have you painted this? » I told him the reason was that I loved it to which he replied, «Who the hell is interested in what you love? » But this is what I can learn by creating the picture. If I am capable of loving with a sufficient energy, then, maybe, the whole world will be interested if not may be no one will be interested. / The reason why I have written such a long letter is to encourage you to be what you are courageously and honestly, and to paint and to draw what you love, and then we will see whether you can really love. To be sure, as regards the work method, you have to be very careful. I am afraid I have already told you this so often that you will get bored by it. The image that you bring to canvas or paper must really be composed so that what you love and have chosen to be your subject should be as suggestive as possible, so that we, the viewers, can feel what you were moved by or what you were so much glad about. / And you only need this discipline. You should whole-heartedly follow your fantasy and you should leave out everything that disturbs or does not belong there. You should carefully choose the material and the medium through which you wish to give expression to your message. / Well, that's all. I would be willing to teach you and help you, but right now this is impossible. What you are writing about taking a job is nearly impossible, because right now France does not issue any work permits. You could only come here as a student, and I do not know whether the National Bank really issues the required licence. Anyhow, if I were you I would try to mobilise some good contacts. / You are absolutely right. Do not allow your spirits to fail you. You have no reason to be sad, especially if you can see things that you do not forget, because they have moved you or made you happy.

8. Milán Füst's Letter to Ilka Gedő, May 23, 1943

Dear Ilka / Thank you for your beautiful and clever letter. I appreciate the trust you put in me. / My reply: just think it over; you are going through something that everybody must go through who has a heart. Just one more question: do you really believe it is such a good thing to be married. / The short reply is that it is all suffering and this is what you have to get prepared for. / And this is why I oppose the idea of a woman giving birth to a child. But all women have a child, which means I am an enemy of all women. / In other words, you have to put up with life as it is. Don't expect life to become like you would like it to be, because it won't be like that. In other words, «break or bend» as the Germans say. You must accept conditions as they are; this is how things happen here. / Your poems do not sound bad, and this is already something very good. At some place they are not exempt from talent but they are not succinct enough: they are beautiful but somewhat weird. Beauty must have a more intense glow. / I am very glad that your mother has a good opinion about me, but it would also be a great thing if she could benefit from my persevering and heartily felt emotions of benevolence towards her and from my knowledge and experience. / Hugs M. F.

9. Gedő's Letter to Milán Füst June 30, 1943

Dear Master!

I was very glad to receive your letter asking me about how things are going. I received it right before I had to report to compulsory labour service. That is why my response is delayed. In the meantime, I went through some exciting events the result of which is that I am going to be free for some months. As regards my artistic activity, it is out of the question that I can fully devote myself to it, because I have to earn my livelihood. But in my free time I work hard and for my own pleasure and this is how I made the two drawings that you saw at the exhibition. While sculpting I usually also paint. One has a need for using colours and that need has to be fulfilled.

Most recently, I was making pottery objects. I have been living with my aunt, since I terminated my small art studio rental contract. I do not have clear plans for the future. I would like to go on vacation. I need it because it would be good for my mental and physical health. However, since my life does not allow me to have a rest, I will probably, once again, have to let history decide if my desire for a mental peace can be fulfilled.

Dear Master! I was sad to have heard about your illness. In the near future I will go to Pest, and I would like to visit you. Until then, my Dear Master, I look forward to hearing from you.

10. István Örkényi-Strasser on Ilka Gedő, 1942[37]

Gedő was born in 1921 in Budapest. After finishing her secondary-school studies, she visited a painting school for a few months. Apart from this training, she has been developing her knowledge as a self-taught artist since her childhood. Her first models were family members. Later on, she started to draw street scenes. We publish some of her drawings that are rare examples of artistic immersion. In these drawings the depicted human figures never display the false and deceptive traits of showiness, but they give us a sincere reflection of reality.

[37] Quoted by Katalin S. Nagy in *Emlékkavicsok /Holocaust a magyar képzőművészetben 1938-1945*, (Stones of Remembering, The Holocaust in Hungarian Visual Arts), Budapest, Glória Kiadó, 2006, page 272 (The work Katalin S. Nagy is referring to is Fiatalok művészete *(Yound Artists)* (ed. by Sándor Varga Sándor; Selection of Works by István Örkényi Strasser), Budapest, Némethy Ny., 1942

11. A Letter from Hódmezővásárhely, 1944[38]

Hódmezővásáshely, 16 February 1944

Dear Ilka!

I am replying to both of your letters now: the one that you sent to Pest and also the one that you sent to Tildy. We discussed your letter with Tildy and we agreed on the following. We ask you to do the same what we did also when we met in person.

You indicate only your retail prices, and, for the time being, we find them a little bit too high. Later, maybe when we have more customers and we have sold more of your ceramics, we could pay more. However, for now, you are little bit too expensive for us. (…)

Mrs. Tildy asked me to tell you that you should not be angry with her. Her husband was called up for military service again and both her sons are ill and confined to bed. Her life is full of troubles and cares. I stay at home until 27 February.

We would be happy if you could answer until then, so then we can discuss the finalisation of our order. (…)

I send my best regards to you and also your parents.

Magda[39]

[38] Based on the recollection of the artist's sousin, Júlia Steiner in the years 1943-1944 had some revenue from the sale of burnt ceramic objects.

[39] Dr Magda Langfelder Magda was a medical doctor born in the town of Hódmezővásárhely.

12. My Life, Autobiographical Report from 1951, Excerpts[40]

Many weeks ago, on a very cold morning I started to write these notes. I was looking for a place in the streets for long time seeking a refuge from the harsh weather. This report is in various dog-eared note-books. Now I started to copy everything into one note-book, because I knew I would show it to you. So, I am going to copy everything in the order I wrote down the topics.

In the cold frozen streets of Óbuda where the dirty curtains of the one-storey buildings froze between the unheated morning rooms and ice-cold streets, with the janitors were waiting for the garbage trucks. The janitors were all looking into one direction as if they were waiting for salvation. For example, this is also a beginning. This June, it will have been for two years that I stopped drawing. (…)

The thing that I'd been gradually coming aware of in the first two years since the start of my life with Endre, formed in the second two years from small „fragments" into something unbearable on the edge of which I have been crouching for a long time. (…)
Since childhood I have been having a bad conscience due to the fact that I am an artist. This is true in so much as that I looked around in the world with sensitivity and I experienced and I suffered a lot when I looked around in the world. Later, I did perceive the other girls to be different from me, but I did not believe them to be different or true women, I just thought they were less sensitive and more cheerful and easy-going. This was a covert and semi-conscious suffering, exempt from anger and suspicion and motivated by a silently felt envy for the normal, in a manner Tonio Kröger felt it. (…)

At the age of 15, I stayed in a vacation camp with the Szentpál family located on the side of the river Danube, and while the other girls were doing gymnastics and dancing, I (not being a disciple of Olga Szentpál[41] was drawing the whole day in the garden or on the Danube bank, and Rabinovszky[42] suddenly started to criticize me pointing out that I am alone not for being able to draw, but I am drawing so that I can have an excuse for being alone. (…)

[40] Notebook No. 250 in Gedő's manuscript estate containing 92 pages.
[41] Olga Szentpál (1895–1968) choreographer, dance artist.
[42] Máriusz Rabinovszky (1895-1953) was an art historian and an art critic. His home was a meeting point for leftist intellectuals in the time between the two wars. Olga Szentpál was her wife.

I hardly remember anything that would have suggested that this rather strong awareness was related to an awareness that these girls would be much more attractive to boys (...) Until the age of 19, I did not notice the opposite sex, it was non-existent, yes it was just like this.

In the meantime what was my attitude to art? I had been continuously drawing from early childhood on up until the time of the final examinations of the secondary school. Memory flashes from the past. She is ten years old and while on holiday in Tirol she walks around alone, in a village totally unknown to her, with her sketchbook looking for motives. She is eleven years old, but she is drawing on the shore of lake Balaton with a deadly seriousness. Aged 13-14-15 she is standing there in Városmajor, with the unmitigated wrath of any angry ascetic, drawing the elderly men playing chess and the old women sitting on the benches, straining her nerves to a breaking point so that the drawings resemble the depicted reality, so that it looks the same as reality. In the hustle and bustle of Saturday markets she tries out the impossible, she tries to capture the fleeing moment, and if someone casts a glance at the drawing in the sketchbook, her face goes red with anger despite her shame and disgust of causing a stir. She was 17 years old when she was alone in a Bakony mountain village on the deserted slopes, and she was drawing from morning till night, following the reaper step by step on the slopes in the summer heat, always waiting *for the same specific movement*. She turned up unexpectedly at strange farmsteads to be received by children. Why did she not try to draw the peasant women walking with a rolling gait? Where were the Sunday couples? Why did not she have any interest in them? Fatigued, she slept like a day labourer. Weeks later she got home and she put all the drawings of the harvest on the sofa showing them to her mother. With what a boyish gesture! (…)

She was 19 years old. In the autumn that followed the grammar-school final examinations she went to the private school of Tibor Gallé. She fell in love with the master, a man aged 45 with two children, and she confessed this to him in a small, mad, lofty and lyrical letter: she humiliated herself in front of him, made herself ridiculous in front of people, began to smoke, made half-witted phone calls, she ran in the street to avoid being late for a date, started to lie to her mother at home, with whom she had, until then, been making excursions, with whom she slept and read in the same bed and with whom she also

worked. (...) On one occasion, after she had met him for a short while in the street she could not part with him, and he told her that a woman was not supposed to behave like this. Then another love. Somewhat a repetition of what happened before. I told my stories to Lucy[43]. She said I had not behaved like a woman is supposed to behave. (…)

Let us take, for example, a woman who does not become aware of her femininity. Her father is to be blamed for this, because, from early childhood on, what she hears and sees when her mother talks to her father clearly indicates that her mother does not love her father. Her father is not the respected head of the family, but a psychopathic invalid. Mother has never shown the emotions and words of a woman who is in love with her husband. Mother was living with me, instead of father. Did I play the role of a boy or that of a girl in this collusion? (…)

In my life, in my fate, in my past my 'talent' was somehow interconnected with a certain lack of belonging to a given gender. If the bond to the mother (father) has the meaning of a life-axis, then if someone is an artist, and her work is also related to it, then this is the axis upon which the rope of the draw-well is rolled up, then with letting down the bucket is unrolled again, and then rolled back again. It can be logically assumed that this axis could not have been missing from my life either and it connects me with my mother. However, as she was in some sense not really a woman (her look, way of life and behaviour), my relationship with her lacked sin, beauty and mystery. It could be said that it was in sublimation of this that I was working for her. This is why my 'gender' remained undefined for an unpredictably long time. All the inner movements that were related to artistic work in my life, all the skills, processes, moods, emotions and raptures were the skills, processes, etc. of being genderless. With my relationship to Endre, this undefined something, this gender role had become immensely more pronounced, but is this the case when we compare it to a more pronounced gender role? Now I am experimenting with an explanation that could clarify the situation even to a psychoanalyst: there is an unbridgeable gap between artistic work and femininity. (…)

Paula Modersohn-Becker was a talented painter. (She is the exception that proves the rule.) She died at the age of thirty right after giving birth to her child. And this was very clever of her. She left behind a beautiful oeuvre. But just considering the issue of women

[43] Dr. Lucy Liebermann was the wife of Pál Pátzay and a close associate of Pál Kiss Gegesi who was the founder of the European School.

artists with a detached scientific attitude, what is the reason for the fact that the monks of the Middle Age created paintings, but the nuns didn't. Why is not there a single woman in the whole of Japanese and Chinese painting? (…)

Extremely talented, the old guys, some of them nice chaps, said. «Do not learn at the academy, they will only spoil you!» Pressured by my mother, I visited them. Sometimes I got on a tram with a drawing folder, and within 1-2 hours I came back, got off the tram at the stop walked up Garas utca, and I told mother that the person that I visited liked my drawings very much indeed. Sometimes I even showed her the particular drawings that were liked. I even visited Pál Pátzay[44] twice. The first time I went there it was with my mother. This was when mother would have wanted to send me to England, and she was busy collecting the catalogues of various schools. This bastard Pátzay[45] told me whichever school I went to I would be the star of that school. A few years later I visited him alone. That time he was worried about me: there is nothing more terrible than an unfinished artist. (He was right.) It was probably at this time that he tried to persuade me to go to Paris. I myself did not want to go, I was absolutely passive, I did not think much, I did not plan ahead, and I did not make a decision to become a painter, I didn't say to myself I will show what a woman can do as a painter. I was not aware of the problem of being a woman painter, but even though I was not aware of this problem there might have been in me a sense of vocation. I should have been aware of the future, of the difficulties and of the benefits of studying in Paris, living among artists. No there was no awareness. I kept on drawing with unthinkable fervour, and I visited the Museum of Fine Arts and a number of exhibitions. (…)

I was 19 years old scribbling something at the private school of Tibor Gallé[46], where in winter and spring evenings Mediocrity Preparing for the Academy Entrance Examination was drawing a nude in some horrid coal in the nauseating fixture spray smell of a good-for-nothing studio in a school building located at the corner of Bulyovszky utca-Andrássy utca.

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[45] Pál Pátzay (1896-1979) was a Hungarian sculptor

[46] Tibor Galle was born in 1896 in Budapest. Between 1925 and 1928 he studied at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, where his teachers were Gyula Rudnai and Viktor Olgyai. He was a strong, sober-talented artist, who appeared twice at public

But let us forget about falling in love. There was absolutely no connection between this private drawing school and the enthusiasm, verging on self-sacrifice, that motivated me to draw at the age of 17 in the village of Bakonybél. Then I searched for motives from morning to night. (...) The overflowing joy of my drawings, their great number and originality that were praised with such vehemence". I can assume that old Viktor Erdei said with good intentions: „Don't go to the Academy of Fine Arts! Do you want to learn from them? The teachers there should be learning from you." (Erdei's advice may have also been motivated by his bad opinion of the Academy's faculty.) I do not know who the faculty members were at that time. (…)

Is it possible to paint together? These lonesome beasts expelled from society, these painters, these are the really good ones. Bandi[47] said that the modern age does not have a painting, it just has great painters. Cézanne, Van Gogh – what sort of academy did they go to? (...) Yes, but would it have been reasonable to become aware of what is obvious for everyone, would it have been good to destroy that «self-sacrificing» dynamism? But maybe I am wrong. Maybe, despite all this, it would have been good for me to study three years at the Academy and another three in Paris, in the same way as Lajos Vajda[48] did, and to gain skills, knowledge and experience. Such a six-year-study is something all the same, but so was a four-year study at 30 Fillér utca even with thoughts of disgusting uncertainty. Perhaps it would have been better if Lajos Vajda had died a few years later. Then he could have shown me around the streets of Ferencváros and shown me the motifs just as he did much earlier for Endre Bálint. (…)

Van Gogh wrote at the start of his career: "I have two choices: I become either a bad painter or a good one. I chose the second possibility." I either become a good painter or a punched paper for some body exercise. Which of these two options should I choose? The answer is very simple: you should be both a good painter and a good nurse. Maybe you just can't be just one of the two. You have to be both. That's what wise men say. (Isn't this a little sentimental?) But still, where is *my message*? Maybe it can still be found. (...) But maybe it was all fiction? (Remember: Gedő draws only to find an excuse to hide.) What can be the message of a woman painter? What does it look like? Painting is a craft whose physical and spiritual traditions since Ancient Egypt have been handed over from

[47] Endre Bálint (1916–1985) painter
[48] Lajos Vajda (1908–1942) painter

generation to generation by men only. So, … female painters should take over the way of life, the craftsmanship and perhaps even the geniality of male painters.

Sadness, 1946-1947, black ink, paper, 145 x 88 mm, Hungarian National Gallery

13. Letter to Ernő Kállai[49] and Ernő Kállai's Response, 1949[50]

August 2, 1949

Dear Ernő Kállai,

I often look at the catalogue of the Vajda exhibition that took place many year ago in the Alkotás Gallery. In the midst of what sometimes seems like hopeless torment and brooding these few pictures refresh me like mountain air.

A few days ago in the Foreword to the catalogue my attention was caught by a reference to Vajda's fascination (before his death) with a picture in a certain 'Post-Imressionist' style, depicting a loving couple. He couldn't admire enough how the shape of the couple had been transformed into the essence of expressive ornamentation and thought-inspiring form. I experienced a personal absolution through his fascination and from the statement: "The astonishing power of pictorial depiction conjured up in the guise of reality the eternal ecstasy of love..." IN THE GUISE OF REALITY.. These words between the lines recall the agony of years of contemplation, and they now ease the torment of those years. The poem of Attila József comes to mind: "Destiny, loosen the knot." I am amazed that Vajda should choose, just before his death, to talk of this picture with such love, and the knowledge that Vajda could be so fond of such a picture came as a relief.

This is why I mention the merciful easing of torment. I could have written of freedom. I felt the choice of love, the choice of light in Vajda seeing (in a Post-Impressionist picture!) the transformation of form into expressive ornament. I love him for that and felt as though I wanted to talk to him immediately. That is why I am writing this letter now. Something else reinforced my need to write to you--the discovery, two days later, of the following sentence in an old issue of the magazine *Szép Szó* (Beautiful Word): «The history of art proves that all art with a universal perspective is an ornamental and symbolic art. This applies to the vision of medieval painting and sculpture in addition to all the objective

[49] Ernst Kállai (1890-1954) was a famous, internationally recognised art critic. His father was German. He published his articles both in German and Hungarian. Starting in 1920, he worked as a journalist in Germany writing for such papers as the *Ararat*, *Weltbühne* and *Cicerone*. In 1928, the Bauhaus Dessau employed him as the editorial director of the Bauhaus magazine and he held this position until 1929. During the last years of his life, Kállai increasing retreated from the public offices due to the onset Communist dictatorship.

[50] The manuscript of the letters is in the Archives of the Art History Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MKCS-C-I-11/157).

representation they contain. There is a significant justification for the fact that modern symbolic art almost totally excludes representation. However, I cannot expand on this within the scope of the present article. »My immediate reaction was to ask why does modern art exclude representation? That is how I got to this letter. Is it possible not to exclude objective representation? Could it be *in the guise of reality*? This question has been tormenting me for years. I know, of course, it is possible, but is it possible for us today, for me? I read in one of Van Gogh's letters: "I have a terrible fear of losing the reality of form." What was he afraid of losing: Roulin's real 'true' face, the man wearing his coat, the buttons on his coat acting as a focal point, a *storehouse* of symbols? Is reality for him a pretext through which he expresses his symbols? Or is the cypress tree the reality, the symbol itself, in front of which he bows his head and follows? Certainly, something makes me adopt this view. And this is not cowardice, is it? Once I dare go forward on this road even one step, bang, one of my fellow debaters hits me on the head, claiming we artists moved beyond these realist and impressionist styles a long time ago. Or I am told: "You are still at Van Gogh, but we are at Picasso." Therefore, according to these people, I belong to those whom the Vajda catalogue describes as weak, cowardly and lazy for existing on such a level of intellectual tension, as is called, for want of a better word, abstract art. I often hear the remark, «You are not my fellow sufferer.» However, I don't belong to those who are mentioned in the Haggadah as being incapable of asking pertinent questions. *Why does modern symbolic art exclude representation?*"

No amount of work seems too much for me to learn about these matters. Not only am I willing to plane the wood but I am prepared to cut down the tree. I only wait for someone to tell me: «Go, there is the forest!»

Dear Master Kállai, don't be offended by this letter, I am not good at fancy speeches but this is a stammering (although not a cry) for help! I am looking for a spring to quench my thirst or to be more prosaic, I am looking for sources from which I can learn something. Time is rushing by. Once again, please forgive me troubling you!

Kind regards,

Ilka Gedő

Budapest
III., Kiscelli utca 76
August 10, 1949

Dear Ilka Gedő,

Please excuse my pencil-written reply. Thank you for the very interesting and captivating letter, and also for the trust in me. I am willing to try and help you find your way out of the your mental torment with art. For this it is necessary for us occasionally to have searching discussions about these things. I presume you are a painter, so it would be sensible if I could look at your pictures first and our discussions would start from there. At the moment, I am very busy, but I shall do my best to visit you soon. Please write and tell me if you are usually at home at six o'clock in the evening, and whether that would be a convenient time for you. For my part I will announce my visit a day or two beforehand.

Until then, I would advise you to use your eyes and follow your heart. What I say is a bit banal, but wise. Don't take any notice of the clever know-alls and snobs to whom Van Gogh is an «outworn concept» and according to whom you have to go by Picasso's abstract art. All aesthetic dogma and direct programs of development are a lot of hot air. There is no set way to salvation in art where every road leads to Rome and where there are many kinds of green forests. Think of old Bonnard: even today his Post-Impressionism is alive and vigorously beautiful. But we'll be talking about all this and the various motivations of abstract art, personally.

Kind regards,
Ernő Kállai

14. Mándy Stefánia: On the Prehistory of Ilka Gedő's Study on Lajos Vajda[51]

In the autumn of 1954, after visiting a then characteristic studio of a non-outstanding painter, I wrote an essay originally meant only as personal notes. Not much later we could view a number of Lajos Vajda's drawings that were preserved in a folder in the studio flat of Rottenbiller utca. [52] It was in the autumn of 1954 that I wrote these ideas down, ideas that were originally merely meant to be a self-clarification. Not much later, our circle of friends had the opportunity to view many of Lajos Vada's pictures preserved in the "studio" flat of Rottenbiller utca. This occasion gave me the reason to read this essay to our friends present at the viewing.

I never thought this essay will have any significance for others. After some exchanges of letter, the debate that promised to be fierce came to an end. And yet, my partially sketchy and forceful "provocation" proved to be useful in many ways.

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[51] Published in the December 1990 issue of *Holmi* 1990. This short report desribes the circumstanceces that gave rise to Gedő's essay on Lajos Vajda.

[52] Two families were forced to share the flat, measuring 120 square metres, located under 1 Rottenbiller utca in downtown of Budapest. The members of the first family were: the painter, *Endre Bálint* (1916 – 1985) and his wife *Iréna Richter* (1915-1996) and their son *István Bálint* (1943-2007). The members of the second family were the painter *Júlia Vajda* née Júlia Richter (1913 – 1982), the widow of the painter, *Lajos Vajda* (1908-1942), Júlia Vajda's second husband, *József Jakovits* (1909 – 1994) and their twin children, *Vera Jakovits* (1946 -) and *Iván Jakovits* (1946-1992). Júlia Vajda stored the artistic estate of her first husband in this crowded flat.

The *Rottenbiller*, as people came to call it, was always open for friends and acquaintances who were partially the members of the group of artists and intellectuals called *Európai Iskola* (1945-1948). Some names of the people who sometimes visited the *Rottenbiller*: the writer, Miklós Szentkuthy (1908–1988); the philosopher, Lajos Szabó (1902–1967); the philosopher Béla Hamvas (1897–1968); the art historian and writer, Kató Kemény (1909–2004); the philosopher, translator, Béla Tábor (1907–1992); the art historian, poet and translator, Stefánia Mándy (1918–2001); the art historian, philopher, writer Árpád Mezei (1902-1998); the art critic, art manager, editor, poet and art collector, Imre Pán (1904-1972); the composer, pianist György Kurtág, (1926–); the classical pianist and academic piano teacher, Márta Kurtág (1927–2019); the psychologist Ferencz Mérei (1909–1986); the writer and psychoplogist, Alaine Polcz (1922-2007); the writer, Miklós Mészöly (1921–2001); the art critic Ernő Kállai, (1890–1954); the painter Béla Veszelszky (1905-1977); the painter Margit Anna (1913-1991); the painter Lili Ország (1926–1978); the painter Endre Rozsda (1913–1999);the writer and painter Lajos Kassák (1887–1967) and last but not least Ilka Gedő Ilka (1921-1985) and her husband, the biochemist Endre Bíró (1919-1988) and the art historian and painter, Géza Perneczky (1936–) who wrote extensively about Ilka Gedő (cf. two essays published in this volume). On the history and influence of *Rottenbiller* cf. Gyula Kozák: *A szabadság kicsiny szigete* (The Tiny Island of Liberty), Budapest, Balassi Kiadó, 2015.

The most remarkable reaction to my ideas was Ilka Gedő's uniquely motivated and quick-witted essay. Gedő's essay, a mixture of agreement and disagreement with my ideas, deals with problems that for the most part my essay I never wanted to address. In other words, my critical opinion of Hungary's then current art scene induced Ilka Gedő to summarise vividly the artistic and literary traditions (on the one hand, primitivism, gothic art, Matthias Grünewald, El Greco, Van Gogh, Cézanne, Klee, etc., on the other hand, the Hungarian poet Endre Ady, Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Kafka and Dostoevsky, etc.) cherished by the circle. These traditions, alongside with the biblical world view, were vividly shared just in our group of intellectuals. Thus, the main message of Gedő's essay, with all its evaluations, had naturally found great resonance in me and in all of us.

15. Stefánia Mándy: Reflections, November 1954[53]

I have assessed my memories from the studios of various visual artists. Although I have not yet seen a lot of things, I have nevertheless managed to get an overview about the complicated and multi-layered anti-catacomb art that equips me with some perspective and freedom to evaluate the overall situation of art. However, I would like to start by saying that what I say here is based on subjective, semi-raw, semi-composed experience fragments and also on a not yet completely explored jungle. This jungle sometimes seems to be very close to me, but sometimes it seems to be rather weird and inauspicious. This essay deals with the duality of my overall experience combining disharmony with a great deal of excitement and richness. The frame of reference inspiring this essay is my talks with Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor, who called my attention to the philosophy of the dialogue (Ferdinand Ebner, Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber).

I call today's art anti-catacomb-art. I mean the following by the opposite, catacomb art: it is a style-creating art that forms the basic features of the visual arts of the coming centuries in a joint catacomb, in the process of formulating something that is inseparable from our shared problem. This is not characteristic of today's art, although based on its modernist efforts, it made significant steps towards creating the preconditions for such a uniform visual arts language. However, today's art stopped short of creating a uniform arts language. There is no jointly-shared catacomb, and commonly shared pressures of the time and fate do not seem to have created a common artistic language that is capable of giving answers and highlighting choices and replies. No language had been born that rejects nihilism and supports a confirmation that promises a continuation.

That part of present-day Hungarian art that got stuck in studios is directly dependent on today's popular global styles. It is becoming more and more obvious that, in–a sense the–lack of style mentioned before does not exist. There is a single dominant *negative style*, a form language born out of the chaos of the isms of the past fifty years. Though this form language has many layers, they all point into the same direction. The charteristics of this

[53] Published in *Holmi* (December, 1990), pp. 1340-1342

form language are accurately noticeable in the works of any of the artists of today's Hungarian avant-garde. This is a counter style, a counter language that could be continued and made into style only if in the focus of avant-garde trends a positive core would crystallise. Only Lajos Vajda managed to do that. For now, Vajda, however, remains alone without, as he has no followers.

In this writing, I aim to find the common traits of this style.

The first is unreachability. These works are unreachable, as they do not speak to anyone. They do not look for the second person, the "thou", they are digging only downward, towards the ego of dreams, desires and instincts, and therefore these works do not create a language. That is the reason why these works do not even have a real and internal contact to each other. These works are either too much under each other's influence, or they are separate islands. These works do not have strict laws, and neither do they search for such strict laws. Law is the "thou". Style is the "thou". Architectonics is the "thou". This kind of art will just not be capable of saying the truth, because as much as we are not driven by proportions as much we are driven by hysterics. The result is enervated romanticism, self-destructive psychoanalysis and meaningless confessions on a world that is basically unresponsive to sincere confessions. The problems persist; they become stiff like cramps, because no effort is made to relieve them. That is the source of the cramped forms. The source of persistent motifs that recur over and over again without forming a rhythm, is a mathematicised form structure. Or we meet obviously unsolved problems. (These are the consistent absence of the depiction of the human face, making abstractions abstract and, at the same time, an obsession with the body.) Or we see sterile mannerism exempt from any spontaneous suggestiveness which means covering up the basic problems hermetically. This rationalising constructivist trend is in itself less honest than confession-like art, because not only does it give up spiritual effort, but it also negates subjective tensions, too. Positive trends are discernible when abstraction and self-confession are mixed with authentic, spontaneous lyricism.

This anti-catacomb-art does not go the way of restoring basic relationships. It does not make supplementary movements but increasingly movements of self-mutilation. This art runs off from one type of l'art pour l'art to another one. It becomes obvious here that aesthetic sensibility in itself is not sufficient for creating a style.

Aesthetic sensibility in itself is a subjective, truncated existence. There is not any language element in it. It is the avoidance of language; it is a monologue. It is obvious. If I am just searching for my own self, I will even lose myself. Inhumanity in our art originates from here. Artist holding on to instincts ignore their true roots. In contrast to this trends based on the instincts there is another related and simultaneous trend assimilating organic natural forms (plant, crystal and animal forms). These compositions are also permeated by the underworld of the soul, so they stay within the world of inhumanity that lacks focus and is non-organic. This escape into the biological is the other side of the crisis. In such a painting you cannot paint a face, you can only paint a scowl.

Nietzsche writes as follows*: "*My style is a dance; a style of symmetries of all kinds and skipping and mocking those symmetries.")[54] This is the dual nature of creating a language. One cannot be the creator of a language if you are doing only one of these two things.

Now I wish to briefly reflect on the oeuvre of the single artist in whose art we can find the answer, the positive style, the confirmation given by art. I wish to comment on artist about whom we will have to talk a lot in the future.

Lajos Vajda is the only visual artist who is authentic. This ensures his genuineness. Lajos Vajda is authentic in the strict sense of the word. He is in the middle.

He is in the middle in the spaces of our existence. He walks the road both upward and downward with the same intensity. Self-clarification is only possible if the source of light is above me. It follows from this that Vajda is an artist creating a language. He complies with the law, and consequently he is the source of law. His style-creating architectonics follows from this.

Lajos Vajda is also in the middle in terms of time. His art has become a style because he does not only remember the past, but the future, too. At the same time, the whole of his artistic presence has the maximum intensity and it is focussed on really topical issues. Because this art lights from the above, it can set itself a perspective, it can relate to its roots. This art can shape its own chaos, it can heal its own self and it can release its cramps. Thus, it releases common cramps. Lajos Vada's lines are smoothed cramps. I feel an analogy can be set up with the line culture of Leonardo. Maybe Lajos Vajda did not like

[54] „Mein Stil ist ein *Tanz*; ein Stil der Symmetrien aller Art und ein Überspringen und Verspotten dieser Symmetrien." Letter written to Erwin Rohde, Nizza, 22 Februar 1984

Leonardo, but he is regardless connected with Leonardo through the densified dynamics of mathematised line.

Lajos Vajda is in the middle between the body and the soul. He does not avoid the face and he does not avoid gender. In his art we see the most transparent layers of the form assuming the shape of the body. We can see the human being; emotion and thought arise before our very eyes. Vajda depicts the process of the emergence of body and shape either through a detached, cold detailing in the architectonic works or through the magic energies of the drama of birth in his last period dark whirly drawings.

However, the depiction of both of these extremes is structured. Also in this regard, Vajda is the artist of the middle. The structure is the middle. Between the drama of birth and the solidified form, there is the strict order of the structure. Inside there is glowing lava on the surface we can see frozen forms of rocks, but in the middle there is bone, metal and logos[55]. Inside there is a glowing and emotional raw-material whose condensation, crystallization is a binding effort of human existence. This binding effort consists in the ethics of form and the structuring force of constructive thought, logos.

Viewing the works of Vajda, we can go the way of the emergence of the body and shape, but we can also go backward, when the human becomes a thought, intellectual force and creative energy. The reverse process is the dismantling of the body, taking off the various layers of the skin or the blowing up of the surface. This dual movement is Vajda's dynamic benchmark, the point of reference.

Lajos Vajda is the only artist who becomes aware of all the layers of our existence, who lights up all these layers and struggles with them. He knows about the bone, the flesh and the face, and the whole of man, but he does not know the frozen body, the gypsum form and the bacchic mirror dances of torn off parts. He knows the magic rites of the savages, the *participation mystique*, but he is not attracted by their vortexes. He knows the force of self-expression, but he is not giving monologues; he builds a structure not just a construct. In other words, Lajos Vajda builds from the inside, not from the external. Vajda does not copy the golden ratio, or other ratios of proportions, but with an amazing perseverance he himself creates the laws of his art. This is what we can call Vajda's rhythm of lines, a

[55] Word, speech, purpose and meaning.

musical struggle of motifs, which underlie the external and internal composedness of his art.

Thus, Lajos Vajda is the only contemporary artist who considers and overcomes his fear and dismay. He is able to choose between fear and dismay and to overcome them. In the struggle he overcomes them because he knows the second person, the You; he knows who he is talking to and he confronts his own demons with the You. Vajda is an artist who has really been addressed by the questions of existence. He is an artist who is addressing us, and now it is our task to give an answer to Vajda and to give an answer to us.

16. Gedő Ilka's Study on Lajos Vajda, 1954[56]

Dear S. [57]

A few days after I went to see you, B. gave me your essay, and he also gave me a copy of his response to you. After reading both several times, comparing and confronting them, I buckled down to write an answer. My reply is addressed not just to you but to all those with whom I have discussed (or did not discuss) these problems in the last few years. Of course, it takes off from your essay first of all, because next to viewing Vajda's pictures it was this which motivated me to attempt to put into words the great many things crowding up inside me which I feel I must deal with.

In your introduction you speak of a partially-negotiated jungle. You say, "*In connection with the multi-layered anti catacombic art my fundamental experience is ambiguous and conflicting."* You never refer to your experience of this ambiguity again. Right in the first sentence you break away from the subjective tone. You give a definition of

[56] "The painter and graphic artist Ilka Gedő (1921-1985) stopped painting and drawing at the age of twenty-eight and continued only after an interruption of eighteen years. We know of this turning point in her life as a fact, but the reasons for it we can only infer. Her breaking with her chosen vocation was a consequential decision in her life. Her husband, Endre Bíró mentions in his memoir *a personal reason*, no further explained, which now will probably remain so forever. *A second reason* and one which is perceivable even to someone less close to her was the new situation created by the communist seizure of power in 1949./ As it happened, in 1947-1948 Ilka Gedő was given the opportunity to draw from models in one of the workshops of the Ganz Factory in Buda. The result was an exciting sequence of studies, swirls in black, red and white chalk. But her work here had another, unexpected and unfortunate consequence. Some of Ilka Gedő's friends, those who belonged to the European School thought to discover in her choosing this subject a concession, on her part, to the period's official art. They were unwilling to accept what to us, in retrospect, is obvious among others from her correspondence with Ernő Kállai. Ilka Gedő was always obsessed with the choice between figuration or non-figuration. She was willing to seize any opportunity she came upon to gain insight into a newly visible world. / We can say, therefore, that double isolation, that of modern art from the official Hungarian culture and her own from the circle of modern artists, was the *third reason* why she abandoned creating art for a long time. /Thank God the story did continue after all. Artists following the same trend and belonging to the same circle as Ilka Gedő survived these years of harsh dictatorship by working in isolation and by supporting each other. Ilka Gedő was able to find encouragement from those who thought in the same and worked in the same way as she did. A memorial article on Lajos Szabó published in last autumn's literary monthly *Életünk* is there for everyone who wants to be informed about the essential facts of the circle, its history and its activities. As in several other areas of Hungarian culture, the energies liberated and accumulated between 1946 and 1948, continued to operate in circles that were barely aware of each other. The circle of friends and colleagues that had gathered around Lajos Szabó considered it one of its primary tasks to preserve and analyse Lajos Vajda's intellectual legacy. This essay by Ilka Gedő written in 1954 is one of the documents of the debate on the art and significance of Lajos Vajda. I believe it enables us to reconstruct the theoretical questions that interested Ilka Gedő in the years of long silence." Dániel Bíró: "Ilka Gedő's Essay on Lajos Vajda", *Holmi*, Vol. II. No. 12 , December 1990. p. 1338

[57] The letter is addressed to Stefánia Mándy, a poet, literary translator and art historian. Gedő received Stefán Mándy's essay (*Reflections*, November 1954, cf. the previuos section of this volume) from Bálint Endre.

anti-catacombic art. I cannot agree with all of thats; because at this moment I believe that this art is indeed " *in the process off formulating something that is inseparable from our shared problem."* What follows implies that anti-catacombic art does not reject '"nihilism". I might add that perhaps there existed an even more emphatic rejection because you know the bitter suspicion and repugnance with which I often responded against the so-called negative style. But your essay now helps me to more clearly express what has anyway become increasingly clear to me lately, how much it was our 'age' against which I reacted, and how much was embodied in the negative style that was for us inevitable. What I am going to say will sound ridiculous: it *seems* it cannot be otherwise. How could we consider ourselves more sensitive, more honest than Klee, Picasso, or Miró; or if you like, that we have ties to that certain *'second person'* and they didn't. No matter how ridiculous it may sound, I know for certain, as if I were both persons myself, that Klee was not a trace more dishonest than van Gogh. I am not saying 'dishonest' as a joke, because that is what it finally comes down to, whether they believe in their testimonies, or whether they are lying. If the latter is true, then the nature of humanity has changed, and we live in a community where artists lie and then we, too, must necessarily lie; and in such circumstances it matters not in the least how we evaluate Vajda. But if the former is true, and we conclude this retrospectively from ourselves not (always) lying, then it is worth taking a good look at the pictures of Picasso, Klee etc. and to bring what they testify into contact with the world around us; and to thus find proof that they do not lie, that the nature of humanity has not changed but is the same as has always existed at any time and in any place; and thus it is possible for styles to change and redemption to take place just as it was in the past (when redemption was brought neither by Homer nor by Leonardo). If the great anti-catacomb artists do lie (you don't mention anywhere that you're speaking about imitators) then Vajda lied too, and all the signs which cause us to see him in a different light from the rest are only there to fool us. Because no matter how true it might be that he was more of a believer than the rest of the artists (one proof for this lies in the affirmation and assimilation of the art of the past), it would be impossible for a fair-skinned English Lord to live among Neanderthal primitives (and even this comparison is too weak, because you never speak about gradations of difference but a *"monologue, just digging downward,"* etc.). If these artists do not proclaim "*their own rejection of 'nothingness'"* then neither

does he. They have to justify the fact that “he chose and replied”, or vice versa: of course, he cannot be exonerated completely from the others’ ‘nothingness’ (or ‘art of nothingness’), but from this inevitable and defined manner in which his choices or replies were made in the past and present. Catacomb art can only replace anti-catacomb art if we believe in it, and the pre-condition for this is the manner in which we live, that is to say, in an age in which artists do not lie. In spite of all this I cannot agree to interchange the expression ‘nothingness’ with ‘Nirvana’. This way I can even accept the contrast between primitive man and the English Lord, because the road leading to Nirvana has gradations along which Vajda is perhaps much further ahead than ‘the rest’. However, the lies, negative art, negative testimony, monologues, have no gradations. They are truly ‘nothingness’.

The artist, the painter, is not Christ who redeems the world, at best he is a Grünewald (his Golgotha!), but at the very most he creates only to his own highest level. The ‘negative style’ does the same. Without wanting to, I must believe the greater and lesser artists of the negative style when they reveal that nowadays suffering is like that. (I, for example, have protested against such suffering and thus against its depiction as well.) I specifically believe this mutual suffering to be extremely ‘catacombic’, as I do this common depiction that bears the marks of the negative style. This art can reject ‘nothingness’ with tremendous force if you formulate it this way: it does not reject the ‘no’. But then, do we have the right to demand this rejection (a rejection which is proclaimed by the whole of history right up to the present on-going moment, and this rejection is contained in every style waiting with eternal patience to take its place within the whole.) Precisely for this reason, the mood of your essay is such that it brings to mind such comparisons as the previous reference to Christ.

In defining the negative style you speak first of an inability to communicate. For now I can only say that without the ability to communicate not one Klee or Bálint picture would have been born. Even if I think only of those pictures of Picasso’s I like least, I still have to express anger at your emphatic declaration that these artists did not search for the ‘second person’; the ‘Du’, familiar from Ebner’s diary. The same applies to Kafka, who searched for it with such despair. Can it be that it isn’t there in pictures of that period? Maybe, at times, they can’t find it but why do you deny them even their search? Why do

you speak of a monologue? With this you directly question the existence of the artists who established the negative style. Besides, if they dug only downwards then they would have been building genuine catacombs ever since the 1910s, in other words, it is impossible that all this digging should have produced only a pit, as can be proved by the confessions of even the style's lesser artists.

*"And below us and above us and inside us"...*the question marks of this period stand out. One can write a poem about that (ref. artists), and run away from it swearing and sulking as, for example, I do. You speak of a confession without an aim, of enervated romanticism. Ever since reading Kafka's diary the word 'confession', pronounced in connection with the 20th century, has definitely meant to me engaging that *'other person';* moreover, engaging right from the heart of such suffering which exists more than anything else in our age, and which stands closest to the ring of the word 'catacomb'. And of a confession by Klee, I don't think it is more pointless than any other confession made since the beginning of the world, and I believe that no confessions have ever been sought with such yearning.

In spite of all this I somehow agree with the inability to communicate. Perhaps the communication isn't undertaken in our mother tongue because we are not living in the land of our birth. I believe the 'mother tongue' to be a language, varied components of which are used by everyone in some way and to some degree, and everyone responds to it. Just like Holbein's *Portrait of Henry VIII.* From the picture's subject and commissioner to every citizen of Tudor (and present day) England, everyone understands some aspect of the work; a child, the human face; the court, the king's face; kings, that of another king; furriers, silversmiths or jewellers, the dress in the picture as an industrial product of the highest quality; a 20th century movie director, the fashion of the time. And none are mistaken because what everyone sees and enjoys represents a part of that picture, while behind what they see and enjoy there necessarily lies also the picture in its entirety. And painters, poets and philosophers are happy about that, they experience in the picture the reality of *"Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichnis",* and question both the individual elements and the whole, "Wessen Gleichnis?" But their individual questions are already contained within all those questions raised previously and in their answers is contained the implicit reply of all the others. After all, the universality of the picture itself guarantees the

certainty of this all-embracing empathy. At this moment, I cannot conceive that such universal communication could be in any other language than our mother tongue. This language is one axis of the system of communication, the other is the land of our birth; and every work can be depicted on these co-ordinates. *The Funeral of the Count of Orgaz,* with Toledo in the background and in the foreground the burghers of Toledo, is so familiar that spiritual and material existence embraces no individual *who would fail to recognise what it portrays*; encompassing the houses, dogs, children, wives, spiritual beings, angels, all the way to God the Father, who created the burgher and his world in such an image. So we cannot be surprised at the universality of such works which confirm all aspects of material, historical and metaphysical existence and thus consequently depict everything from that which can be read as a photograph or a fashion drawing to the ascension to heaven. The image one gets of art is both horrifying and enigmatic if one simultaneously thinks of The *Funeral of the Count of Orgaz* and the present. From time immemorial, painting has co-existed with pharaohs, popes, kings etc., and to the extent to which our knowledge of what these courts of pharaohs etc. actually correspond to has vanished, and the more we expelled art from within ourselves, the more true art relinquished the hierarchical portrayal of every stratum of existence and the more court painters became less Holbein and more Philip Alexius de László, the history painters less the Delacroix of the Chios massacre and more the painters of the target shooting or the Feszty panorama and religious painters less Michelangelo and more Pál C. Molnár. It is as if the concept of universality itself changed, as if Divinity had exclaimed that from now on it is no longer valid that *"Alles Vergängliche is nur ein Gleichnis*" (und nur das Vergängliche is ein Gleichnis), *that* ascension to heaven takes off not from the earth, not right from the middle of the burghers in *The Burial of the Count of Orgaz,* whose *"similarities are valid for every level of existence"* as I have tried to describe above, but from heaven itself, as if the validity of Buddha's pronouncement, "*I was born in this house, I belonged to this family,"* had ceased. In short, the meaning of the 'transmigration of the soul' is no longer valid, and in consequence, neither is the meaning of historic periods.

In spite of all this I am uncertain about two things.

1. Is there a place for pictures of the negative style within a non-Euclidean geometry?

2. Does this non-Euclidean geometry differ ultimately from the Euclidean one? (Does this mean, therefore, that in an artist's ouevre the style is a particle of the prevailing characteristic style of a given time, and does the 'providence' of the 20th century differ from that of anytime?)

Still, I cannot break away from the fact that such a decisive change has occurred, as if artists had been depicting an ever-decreasing circle of ephemera (by depiction I always mean those things which have existence, i.e. as proof by analogy of things that are ephemeral). Perhaps Delacroix was the last artist who, in spite of being a painter, painted a *Slaughter at Khios.* A landscape, a still life! In Cézanne's picture, some apples on an old dresser, a cup, a few objects, become worthy of connecting the ephemeral with eternity, and there is a double value to that; affirmative (you see, even a few apples are worthy) and negative (France's present king, the current knowledge people have of Biblical events is not appropriate). The portrayal of a human figure. Anonymous boy in a red vest, a postman. And self-portraits made with the same insistence that applies to the Grünewald picture I mentioned. The question cannot be resolved simply by saying that every still life is a Biblical image, no matter how sincerely we feel this to be so. (Why was El Greco so hard to please?) So the time will come when the boy in the red vest and the apple lying there become invested with too many of the attributes of historical and religious painting, when the eyes become shrouded, but still open, their gaze turning inwards toward the *"individual world of instinct and desires"*.

"...is not going the road of restoring basic connections. - self-mutilation" Has anyone ever evaluated the role of the latter in preserving some painters, or art and history, from harm? Do we have the right or the means to measure it? Are we absolutely sure that every change, which we accept sometimes with distress and sometimes with pleasure, is not a superficial change, that El Greco's style of communication is not merely one version, just one mode of addressing? At this moment, I can respond to these suspicions only with an emotional denial, but even if this denial were true in its spiritual dimension, and visual art was deviating from its own path, then it would have been free-falling somewhere in space a long time ago: if history has any meaning then this occurrence is not negative either (it has direction).

*"*For in that sleep of death what dreams may come.*"* I am unable to reply as to whether the 'isms' provided answers to Hamlet's question. If my answer is "no" and if in order to emphasise this I think of the eyes "never completely glazing over", (in spite of all the manifestos the objects of the real world pop up their heads time and again but without an ability to communicate in the universal sense I described earlier, so in consequence continually oscillating between El Greco's realism and the 'unreal' metaphysics of an objectless world of fear) then all is refuted by the question as to whether "the dreams that come in death" might not be just that; that is to say that the objects and events of El Greco's world that he found worth depicting do not fall, sporadically and transformed, amongst the dreams. Those manifestos that say *"We do not depict but create,"* etc. sound more like speeches by futurists and camp-followers. In contrast to this, Picasso in 1923 wrote the following, *"Cubism is not different from any other school of painting. The same principles and the same elements are common to all."*[58] * And in 1935, *"There is no abstract art. You must always start with something. Afterwards you can remove all traces of reality."* And also here: *"Nor is there any 'figurative' and 'non-figurative' art. Everything appears to us in the guise of a 'figure'. Even in metaphysics ideas are expressed by means of symbolic 'figures'... See how ridiculous it is, then, to think of painting without 'figuration'."* Léger *(1935), "They are not 'abstract', since they are composed of real values: colours and geometric forms. There is no abstraction."* Mondrian (1937), *"[Non-figurative art shows that] 'art' is not the expression of the appearance of reality such as we see it, nor of the life which we live, but that it is the expression of true reality and true life... indefinable but realisable"* in art. Could it be that what this is all about is nothing more than that this *"true reality and true life"* once coincided with the reality we see and in which we live? Klee (1902), *"I want to be as though new-born, knowing nothing, absolutely nothing, about Europe; ignoring poets and fashions...Then I want to do something very modest; to work out by myself a tiny, formal motive, one that my pencil will be able to hold without any technique. One favourable moment is enough. The little thing is easily and concisely set down. It's already*

[58] The quote is from the anthology *Artists on Art*, Eagan Paul, London, 1974. This book has been preserved in the artist's estate. The quotes from Pablo Picasso: p. 417 and p. 420; Fernand Léger: p. 424; Piet Mondrian: p. 428.; Paul Klee: pp. 442-443.)

done! It was a tiny but real affair, and someday, through the repetition of such small but original deeds there will come one work upon which I can really build. (...) And thus a little uncontested personal property has already been discovered, a style has been created." These "*small but original deeds"*, this creation of a style, also goes for those whom we respect less than Klee; and that the 20th century is filled with these tiny accomplishments is in itself proof of the fusion of our shared problems; of individuals of similar fate clutched together in the fist of providence – *only* providence, granted. *Truly* it seems such an abstract 'something' is the positive catacomb style of the 20th century, and its church architecture is abstract; Gothic cathedrals replaced by fate-cathedrals.

Two aspects of modern art, in all its convulsions, could be an escape into the dual world of instincts and biology. If for example, you think of East Asian animal and plant symbolism (which is very obvious in connection with Vajda), you cannot avoid seeing the striking difference which exists between such a closed and defined system of symbols and our own range of arbitrarily picked symbols, which nonetheless remain close to the world of mythology. (For years I kept frightening myself with the painfulness of this difference.) Today it seems possible that the escape of negatives into the world of biology and instincts is nothing more than the proof that this loss of the closed and defined systems of symbols is nothing more than a phantom, a bogeyman conjured up to frighten those who do not want to be living in our time. And perhaps the delight of those who believe in the eternal validity of symbols is such that they take on the responsibility of revealing these symbols through their own personality, each in their own way, with the most up to date chemical methods, and, belonging to no sect or state, free from spiritual and maternal commissions and the demands, punishments and repentance of their non-artist fellow human beings. Perhaps the 'feats' of those who escape into the world of instincts and biology, for example, Klee, approximate to the planets which revolve around the heavenly bodies of forgotten systems of symbols; and the paths of these planets cannot, at this moment in time, be precisely charted because we do not sufficiently understand the heavenly bodies or their nuclei.

I think at the moment that those around whom reality forms a closed circle, within which an otherworldly pure light delineates every object as sharply as a crystal (perhaps even more so with Vajda), and who, in this blindingly bright space, perpetually moving,

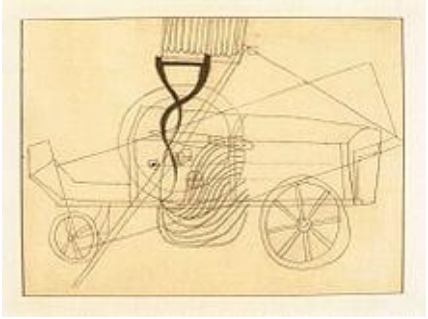
spin around the objects, incessantly and breath-takingly, do not cast a very dark shadow; and perhaps it is this gliding shadow which we see as an escape (into the world of instincts and biology), *because we do not see the objects* around which those whom Endre Bálint described as 'moving profoundly' are circling around. I believe this to be true for Klee, Picasso, etc. not just for Vajda, and only for the camp-followers can I consider valid the totally negative emphasis you adopt when speaking of escaping into the world of instincts; and even with them, only if by the 'world of instincts' I were to mean lying, idle talk, juggling around with artistic styles, or absolutely negative instincts such as imitation, renunciation of God, etc. (And where does it say that this is what I must understand by 'instinct', or by 'biology'?) If the world of instincts is after all to be understood negatively, and if we really talk about sin and not of a prudishness that is ashamed to be as bourgeois, naturalistic and respectful of authority as *it actually is* by instinct; if it were about criminality and not an avoidance of being considered prudish, or a new- or old-realist artist, then go ahead! If this is so, and there is no better place to escape to, then this escape is a moral obligation, and the only thing we can do is draw in our own breath and root for them, as we would for Mitya in *The Brothers Karamazov.* What will come of this? Judicial murder? And what will come of Mitya in Siberia?

You write that digging downwards is pointless if we cannot dig upwards. We cannot blame ourselves for this impotence if we take a look at the image we formulate when we hear the expression 'digging downward'. In quoting Nietzsche the 'only' thing you don't indicate is which of the two motions is being carried out. If it is the first one, then why should we not without sinking to triviality be able to just *"skip over every kind of symmetrical style"*? If it is the second one, then what they skipped over should be evident.

"Vajda is in the middle". 1. He walks downwards as well as upwards. He follows laws and thus creates laws. You are pronouncing something extremely serious here, and I don't see any use in contradicting you if by 'following laws' you also mean criminality and that Vajda is not devoid of the sins of others. (But watch out! The others are few because most only fake sin.) Maybe with a lot of hard work one could show why Vajda was more pure in his upholding of the laws than were the others, but one would have to define precisely why and who these others were. *2. In the centre of time* -- I would have to think intensively about bow he was spinning around the objects in his blindingly bright space, what the

space was like, what the objects were like and how they rotated, at the same time always watching the shadow he was casting while moving (while walking between brightly illuminated fences and houses in Szentendre and Ferencváros). He said “yes” to the act of the past, and dealt with it as he would with a most personal experience, and he went through this same process of affirmation and processing with his visions of the future. *3. In the middle between body and soul. (?)* -- Hopefully this is true for the lives of humans in general. When we walk with Vajda, the most translucent layers assume shape. Here one can feel that you’re talking about Vajda, simply from the expression ‘translucent’. One constantly sees this translucence when one thinks about a picture of Vajda’s. To me his pictures also seem more like x-rays than many other pictures. In spite of this, the doubt within me is considerable, that in view of what was said, it might be me who is non-translucent. However, I still respond to the fact that I like Vajda better than the others, and it is this feeling that I will try to rationalise later. 4. *The structure is central…the structural force of ’logos’* - the expressions ‘bone, metal’ wonderfully resonate with ‘logos’; and with ‘bone’ and ‘metal’ resonate ‘dead’ and ‘metal coffin’. The two substances are, though I may not be scientifically precise here, respectively the hardest and the shiniest - as perhaps Vajda portrayed this cursed period, hard as the skeleton of a dead man, shiny, in our imagination, as are all the whites of all the burial shirts of everyone ever buried. ‘Bone-metal-logos’, intellectual, intelligible, necessary objects, laid down white as bone into the metalically shining air for a time that spans eternity. Can we comprehend his corporatisation? Vajda’s most of all? Do you think so? Because what you write after that, that he builds a structure, not a construction, implies that all the others build only the latter. After careful consideration, I will perhaps accept that other people’s ‘structures’ signify the point when Ivan Karamazov semi-consciously entrusts Smerdiakov to murder his father, and Vajda’s for that point when Ivan, after “visiting Smerdiakov for the third and last time,” finds himself in the extreme region of consciousness and suffering, in an ever more Vajdian light. Did he “*choose to overcome repulsion”?* Vajda’s pictures in their unperturbed, sober simplicity, give the slight feeling that one would reject this role, which is reminiscent of Wagner's *Ring of the Niebelung,* and would instead speak of Vajda’s brotherhood with Kafka and Rilke. To a certain extent every picture is a victory over terror, even those which depict terror, presuming that they have arrived at *true* terror (Kafka’s

and Rilke's fear of death), and are not just frightened by the great styles of the past, of neo-realism, of critics, the world of instincts, and of biology. Vajda overcame these fears, for example of realism, with tremendous strength. *Some of his self-portraits are 'faithful' in the most Holbeinian and Grecoian sense.* The tone in which you express the word 'fear' irreperably reminds me of the fear which even Shakespeare did not choose to overcome.



Lajos Vajda: *Still-Life with Horse Cart*, 1936, pencil, paper, 233 x 305 mm, Ferenczy Múzeum, Szentendre

In order to try describing how I see Vajda, I first have to gain access to his models; this term I'm using in the sense that Cézanne and van Gogh did in their letters. For a long time I've designated Vajda's models as 'Biblical Objects' and while, I'm writing, their images are perpetually with me. These Biblical Objects we come across wherever we let our imaginations wander, in space or time. I'm thinking of real objects, a single-storey house staring out into the world through a solitary window, not constructed in any particular style; a fence hammered together from a few boards, behind it, at any time and place, in some season or at sometime of day, small children toddle around or sit in the dust and use their hands to play; van Gogh's 'seedsower', in Arles, in the 19th century; in Babylon in Old Testament times, and in Egypt even earlier. Lastly, again in no particular style, I think about a man, when he is alone, being dressed before he is put in his grave, a situation that transcends any dress or action of his time, whether in ancient days or in the court of King Louis XIV. Whether our imagination strains back to the past or to remote foreign regions of the earth, we always find this handful of Objects, in the outskirts of Egyptian cities in the time of the Pharaohs or today, or outside Cologne or Bamberg in the Middle Ages, at the edge of Amsterdam in the 17th century, or in outer Madrid at the time when Velázquez was painting the court of Philip IV. The Biblical Objects have always stood waiting at the outskirts and edges, where the events and styles of history end, and where the Nirvana,

that lies beyond history and style, season and time of day, begins (in Vajda's pictures one can point to the white skies that are beyond all seasons, or to his self-portraits). Over these Biblical Objects the European and non-European styles of art, like gigantic squads of armoured cars, rumble past without the Objects being in the least bit damaged. They have waited patiently until the pyramids, churches and palaces of the pharaoh-emperors and popes dried up and withered like the peel of some infested fruit, and then expelled art. Only some dry leaves are tumbling along the empty palace hallways, tossed by the wind that blows in through the shattered windows. The Biblical Objects came here from the outskirts of town--in the palace rooms tiny princesses were no longer being clothed in tons of lace--when the kings began to wear civilian clothing, and the bank clerk named Franz Kafka stepped into the empty cathedral one weekday morning, having arrived by bus, to show a foreign client the historic objects in the cathedral. The foreigner did not come to the meeting.... (For further details ask G. B). So the Biblical Objects waited for all this, and van Gogh and Vajda looked them up again - it was they, most of all who responded, although there were many who did something similar - from Millet, through the Impressionists, to those who depict 'pretty-nature-too-and-not-just-socialist-work-competition' subjects. All those who produced 'something similar', brought along the papal and other courts to join the Biblical Objects; one or two of them were more or less of the same culture as the builders and commissioners of the cathedrals (Renoir, Corrot, Millet, etc.); thousands and hundreds of thousands reflected the taste of the tiny princess' court jester, or the taste of the scampering rats in the cellars of El Greco's Toledo houses (Soviet village still-lifes), or some connecting step taken from the long stairway.

These Biblical Objects can 1. Appear objectively a) 'Cave paintings.' --The Biblical Objects coinciding with the universality that can be seen in *The Burial of Count Orgaz.* Schematically, the single-window house is not literally at the edge of town but stands for the period's architecture. The goat crunching the grass on a lone meadow on the outskirts of Szentendre represents animal husbandry; the child behind the fence playing in the sand with his fingers, the cultural life of the time. b) The ambling animals and half-naked slaves on Egyptian friezes correspond, in relation to the depiction of reality, both to a documentary made in Stalin City and, also at the same time, to the irrationality in El

Greco's depiction of the ascension. Osiris and Isis were ambling on the friezes in the same way, and the animals were holy animals.

2. The Biblical Objects can become absorbed by the universal myth, by Biblical *themes.* Their 'object-ness' (which as an independent theme appears again with the Realists and Impressionists) can shrink down to become a component, an ornamental motif. Mediaeval and Eastern Church painting and their reverberations in Dürer, Brueghel, etc. - where the religious feeling which van Gogh, János Nagy Balogh, or Lajos Vajda, through their affiliation to Biblical Objects, can set into the life of ancients - are not linked to the so-called Biblical Objects but to Biblical themes, whose depiction has at its disposal the stores of symbols of entire religious systems. Abundantly real as figures and objects, the symbols depict the limits of man's possibilities, just brushing the edge of eternity. They depict myth itself, which the sunflower and the haystack suggested to van Gogh's mind.

3. The Biblical Objects can become absorbed (as they did from the Renaissance on) by myths created by individual painters and, in some way, related to universal mythology. The 'otherwordly' clarity of Biblical Objects is transferred to the illumination of royal mantles and to the facial expressions in the portraits of burghers (Dürer, Holbein, Rembrandt, Cézanne.) With Vajda, the Biblical Objects again appear as objects, as in Egyptian art or in Cro-Magnon cave paintings, *but weighed down by everything that has happened since then:* styles having passed them by but in such a way that they remained intact - religious art having at its disposal the saints and church ornamentations of whole religious systems to express that which Vajda used these Objects *as symbols of:* - the Biblical Objects, having been *witnesses to* everything that has occurred. The fact that they were present after all as witnesses in Brueghel's paintings, or somewhere in the background landscapes of devotional pictures, is proof that these otherworldly events are continually happening here in Nürnberg, say, or amidst our present objects. All this makes them immensely valuable. The return to their objective depiction has been going on for a long time, and continuously since the possibilities opened up by the work of El Greco and Delacroix ceased. Because the world hopelessly consists of just that: of worldly and heavenly events, and of objects which are the symbols, ramifications, attendants and connectors of these same events; and a whole jungle of still-life and landscape painting is

burgeoning around us since the depiction of worldly and heavenly events ceased (or became transformed?). From Dutch still-lifes to transitional styles of which there are infinite variations to this day, the Biblical Objects encompass everything, from being symbols of worldly and heavenly events (Cézanne) to proving life's total senselessness (the bouquet of roses on the table of top worker Nina P.). Vajda peels off from these Objects everything that is strongly tempted to cling on to so much and in so many ways: Rousseauism, naturalism, socialism, the fairy-tale, theatricality, a longing to return to a primitive way of life, the denial of the great styles of arts, the denial of the significance of History (I believe that this is one of the reasons for the 'translucency' you describe when writing about Vajda). And fort his reason he is able to utilise in so many ways the multiplicity of meanings imbued in these Objects, and which have so many connotations in our day. These connotations imply a reference back to the earliest times, signifying and proving the parallels which exist between the past and subsequent ages. They point to the lack of style in the architecture of our time (we find we are most at home in the little house in Szentendre which stylistically fits comfortably into those of any period); they highlight the most pressing problems of the present by the fact that they are constantly disappearing ('healthy workers' lodgings replacing all the houses of all the Szentendres in the world). They emphasise that we must examine what they stand for, before they disappear completely from the face of the earth.

Using the Biblical Objects and their meanings in so many ways means parting with the past, with one's birthplace and mother tongue; a question called out to the future, all knowledge of all the fine arts of the world often coinciding with objective, geographically and photographically true matter (J. recognises in the drawings some specific houses in Szentendre); an escape from being up in the clouds of 'isms' and cheerless naturalism--in short, it means the creation of an atmosphere that dominates not only a Sophocles drama, where myths take place in concrete geographic places (Oedipus in *Kolonos),* not only Hamlet, the prince of *Denmark* who returns from *Wittenberg,* or Dostoevsky, where Rogozhin murders Filippovna, in her St. Petersburg apartment, but also Flaubert (concrete Rouen and concrete Yonville), and so on, not to mention Ady, Rilke or Kafka. Not that I learn very much about the sights of St Petersburg, but I do find out a lot more about Rogozhin. First of all, I believe fully that he exists. That is an important precondition for

being able to believe that Prince Mishkin loves him, etc. In the same way I believe Vajda's houses and thus I can follow him on all the levels of similarity I mentioned in connection with *The Burial of the* Count *of Orgaz.* The same thing makes Vajda's nights as white as Dostoevsky's, and neither's 'ability to communicate' can be defined *by* their *"addressing the second person,"* whom the others had not the slightest wish to communicate with at any level. By this I just want to say that Vajda and Dostoevsky are geniuses. Is it not immodest to show curiosity and inquire further what the method of these geniuses was? Vajda did not want to be more Homer than Homer; he was satisfied with a concrete Troy which the gods came down from Mount Olympus to visit from time to time; with the room where the young men of Emmaus received Christ as their guest; with the stairs and entrance to a burgher's house in Amsterdam from which an angel with muscular legs is determined to launch himself towards Heaven in Rembrandt's *The Angel disappears from before the eyes of the family of Tobias.* This same motion, which may seem almost angry to those who watch the angel from their porches, is seen in Vajda's pictures. The angel's continuing close proximity to the house and to the inhabitants he had visited, his turning his back on those who were to remain earthbound, who are clearly startled by his preparations for flight, the flight itself, all is contained in this initial motion. I believe the angel in Rembrandt's picture is so very believable because he is so close to those on whom he turns his back; they could easily reach for his foot and detain him, but the inescapable fact that he is flying stuns them so much that normal reactions [straightforward, logical responses become impossible] are suspended. I know that Tahiti was home to Gauguin in a different way than Arles was to van Gogh. Still, of the two, I cannot choose van Gogh as unequivocally as I once did. I suspect that their agonising friendship and their clashes (self-portrait with bandaged ear) continue to have validity even today, and I don't know whether the home which J. and the others search for and find somewhere far away, both geographically and in the *geisteswissenschaftliche* sense, is *essentially* different from van Gogh's. I only know for certain that Gaugin's is different. But is it not a necessity a thousand times over - though is it still possible today, or more precisely, *is it still permissable--to* go to Szentendre or Arles? The 'rest', somehow, always travel to Tahiti, and try to find the exotic, winged, pink deep-sea fish in the bay of the Mycenae of ten thousand years ago, or to those streets in Rome with an otherworldly atmosphere where, at Carnival

time, Julius Caesar, Chaplin and Einstein walked arm-in-arm at dawn; the Venus de Milo in the museum's Hall of Statues on a winter weekday at noon, a checkered sporting-scarf from a New York designer around her neck. In their savage way, they provide a comprehensive picture of the horrors of our time; their works are confessions to such a degree that the confession sometimes spills over and we don't know whether to admire or feel sorry for them. Sometimes one might think that only Biblical Objects can provide a refuge from all this commotion, and just as the Bible stood waiting, consubstantial with itself, at the edges of the ages, so Szentendre stood at the town's edge waiting for Vajda, and a house here or there, at the edge of Szentendre, turned towards where the dense forests of the Pilis Mountains begin, in defiance of any Rousseauisms. (Perhaps it is not a contradiction to speak about Vajda in connection with the Biblical Objects, either as a refugee, who as a child was in hiding in his native village, or as one who renounced all worldly things, because perhaps belief itself is, simultaneously or metathetically, most difficult and elementary.) In *Gegenstandlose Kunst* they want to avoid communicating with the objects, but there must be horrible reasons for this, and I believe Vajda must have known a lot about these reasons if he was able to present such houses on the periphery with his love, and not ruined amphitheatres, or a Bauhaus district in some major city of the world (perhaps 'sublimating' the subject into a speeding car or a flickering neon light--ref. the Futurists). There are no whirlpools or wildernesses in any 'ism' that Vajda does not comprehend (nothing human is unfamiliar to him), but all that is soothed by, and finds redemption in, the Biblical Objects. Today, it seems to me that in his dialogue with the object, he came upon the Biblical Objects in the most noble way and consequently they deserve this name because they contain all of history and exist above all history. No matter how mufti-layered his relationship with them is, and no matter how much he, too, is not entirely free from the 'exoticism' of the rest, nevertheless it sometimes seems to me that, in essence, he renounced the 20th century's sensual anguishes.

Because there are moments, when someone makes the above-mentioned upheaval a *part* of his artistic concept, transforming the colours and movements of the ancient oceans' fantastic fish into the ramshackle boards of a crumbling fence; the pyramids into the window of a small house which stares out into the world; the gothic cathedrals into a delapidated church spire, whose bells, perhaps, ceased their ringing; the enchantment of

antique statues embodied in a single hand that, on white paper, seems to find contact with Nirvana, having overcome its fear of open space; a 20th century face staring at us simultaneously from all points in space and time, transformed into a single face, his own; and when be spreads, as he always does, such a white sky over all this, the viewer is stimulated to reflect on his past and future life. These are moments when I cannot see all this as anything but resignation. That this handful of Biblical Objects is capable of partially absorbing into itself all this pictorial and disparate material, this intricate web of 'seaweed', only demonstrates their toughness. (Already, or not before too long, the painter gazes into the street through a window, each angle of which is at 90 degrees, and through which air pours in, fresh enough to allow him, in sound health, to build socialism until he is eighty. The glass is clear and there is no broken pane stuffed with Sunday colour supplements; in summer and winter you can see outside the...--but I must mind my manners! Are you certain that Vajda did not go so early just to get away from this change, in spite of all his remembrance of the future?) The whole world is filled with Ferencváros's and Szentendres, and still the others, Klee, Picasso, Miró, have believed for a long time that that which will come for certain has arrived already. As if looking through a right-angled window they no longer saw anything of what van Gogh, Nagy Balogh, or Vajda loved, as if the self-centred world of instincts and desires was the only thing left to be loved and so they become those fish from Mycenae, giraffes standing around in the desert with countless half-open drawers in their necks, and so many other things - not parts, but the whole. The yellowness of the yellow giraffe's neck does not turn the sunflowers of Arles even more yellow, and the Harlequin's ambiguous madness is not something that advances oddly from a somewhat distorted box. The giraffe will be a giraffe, in a real desert, and madness madness. It is as if the names of styles were transposed, as if Cézanne or van Gogh were the abstract ones. It's just that they believed so much in the self-centred world of instincts and desires that they didn't see any point in depicting its embodiment; and they also believed so much in the flowers on Nina P'. s table that they thought all the underworld and the otherworld could fit inside: This is my attempt to express in words the personal experience of complete and utter belief in them, and the same experience is true for Vajda. He is rushing towards madness, face slashed, like a train coming at you head on from the silver screen--like the bogeyman; you mustn't be scared, even a six-year-old who is at the movies for the second

time knows already that it won't run him over. In a somewhat similar way to this, the pictures of the so-called 'negative styles' run by over our heads, their approaching rumble, their even larger reality, rushing past us, like that train which goes off the screen, just in the nick of time.

Sometimes I don't know if I should consider what happened to Vajda, and the things he did, as wisdom, fate, or a stroke of luck; or to put it more precisely, whether there isn't some point of vision from where those who suffer in a more heathen way are not the ones who have chosen the more difficult part (for them it is a part, whereas for Vajda it is the whole; Vajda's skies dressed in the white gowns of mourning are elements that exist also in us). What I'm trying to convey is that the terrible horror and despair that by now has been accumulated in pictorial material can become purified to the point of renunciation only in a few, perhaps in a single artist, as it happened with Vajda.

I wonder if Vajda was free from these restrictions, which you refer to as an *"escape into the world of instincts and biology"?* 1. Biology. The world of plants that lay beyond the peripheral houses he treated in the most van Gogh-like style, though, of course, in a 20th century rather than a 19th century way. One aspect of his affinity to van Gogh is expressed in his ties to the various 'isms' of his own time. Of course the latter has only a singular term, Impressionism, but this connects such diverse manifestations as Monet and Renoir, who perhaps were more different from each other than the representatives of various later 'isms'. Van Gogh liked the Impressionists and learned from them, but his personal fate made it impossible for him to consider himself one of them; on the contrary, it made it mandatory for him to seek contact by way of a personally selected component from the past (Delacroix, Millet, etc.). The same goes for Vajda.

2. The world of instincts. Here we might think not just of Vajda's montages, but also of his use of Biblical Objects, which are perceived not only objectively but, as I pointed out earlier, symbolically as well. He used the religious symbols of an art for which divine occurences exist to such a degree that they have no need to engage in proving the existence of this world's objects, but instead glorify divine occurrences, with 'allegory ' itself. However, he did not paint religious pictures as such. Only those who refuse to acknowledge, like Pál C Molnár, that no houses or churches exist for this kind of work are able to produce it, but in using the symbols from religious pictures he declared that the

significance of Byzantine-Gothic-Grünewald pictures, pictures with religious subjects, remains. Perhaps he used these symbols as mementoes, saying that there existed, alongside the mass of people shouting in unison at the People's Stadium during a Hungary versus England football match on Sunday morning, another Mass, comprising symbols gathered in the vicinity of these religious pictures; saying that we must find the significance of the symbols, and not forget that they can still be understood today. The Biblical Objects, thoroughly overhauled, connect to the system of symbols which has come down to us from the world of biblical themes, filtered through 20th - century man, and totally refined. Even the most remote awareness of this artistic effort will inspire viewers to devotion and reflection. But it is as if in this enraptured silence we were hearing from the distance, from a roofless church spire, the veiled sound of a funeral bell. As if Vajda was seeing the time in which he lived as being at the edge of the same time and space as the *periphery of the town* that he visited, and here, at the end of the world--as though recalling one's entire life in the moments before death--he was once more joining together everything that constituted, or what remained of, a handful of objects from this world, such as the one's children draw, or a handful of religious symbols from the otherworld, which anyone can see in his dreams, or when looking, through closed eyes, into the sun.

(Translated by Christina Rozsnyai.)

17. A Draft Letter Written to Lenke Haulisch, 1979

I am Ilka Gedő, a painter. Maybe it is strange that I write to you without knowing you. In November 1969, the exhibition on the history of Szentendre shown at the Székesfehérvár Museum featured two of my works, but, due to some error, these two works were left out from the catalogue.

Encouraged by the oeuvre exhibition of Lajos Vajda wonderfully curated by you and by your book on the history of the Szentendre arts colony[59] that I have most recently read, I thought I would I would like to invite you to show you my pictures. I believe it could help my work a great deal if you saw my pictures. After a long break, I resumed artistic work and I have been working for the past ten years, in a great isolation, an isolation that is too strong given my artwork.

[59] Lenke Haulisch: *A szentendrei festészet kialakulása, története és stílusa 1945*-ig (The Emergence, History and Style of the Painting of Szentendre), Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1977

18. Three Letters Written to Ilka Gedő by the Arts Fund[60], 1971, 1972, 1982

1.

Registry no.: 30200/1971.
Budapest, November 11, 1971
Administrator: Mrs József Zöld Dr
Phone: 120-118

Mrs. Endre Bíró Dr.[61]
Budapest

In order for us to be able to evaluate your membership application, you are kindly asked to bring or to send on 19 November between 8-10 a.m. five of your works (including figuration works) created over the past five years to the Secretariat of the Arts Fund (Budapest, Vth district, 10 Báthory utca, second floor, room No. 230).
Mrs. József Gallai
Secretariat Head

2.

Mrs. Endre Bíró Dr.
Budapest

Registry no.: 30200/1971.
Budapest, January 10, 1972
Administrator: Mrs József Zöld Dr
Phone: 120-118

We hereby notify you that the Management of the Visual Arts Section of the Art Fund has found that your membership application cannot be accepted.

Mrs. József Gallai
Secretariat Head

[60] The Arts Fund of the Hungarian People's Republic was a central state organ that was, among others, responsible for the total control of the visual arts by the state and the communist party.
[61] There is no salutation line in the letter and the maiden name, Ilka Gedő, which is the artist's name is not even mentioned here.

3.

Dear Artist!
Both the Management of the Visual Arts Section of the Art Fund and I personally wish you a happy birthday. We wish you many happy returns of the day in good health and unbroken creativity.

Budapest, May 26, 1981

With kind regards,

Károly Borbély,
deputy director
Head of the Visual Arts Section

Drawing 90 from Folder 15
(Self-portrait with Hat),
1946-1947, black ink paper, 173 x 145 mm,
Hungarian National Gallery

19. Júlia Vajda's Letter to Iván Dévényi[62] on Ilka Gedő, 1974

Dear Iván,

The address of Béla Veszelszky is Bp. III. Váradó u. 33. 3rd floor flat no. 2. You will remember that on Sunday we talked about artists who are doing something original. I would like to call your attention to my, Ender Bálint's[63] and also Béla Veszelszky's[64] friend, Ilka Gedő. She is about ten years younger than us. After the war, she was painting and drawing in Szentendre, and she has a wonderful ghetto drawings and self-portraits series from that time (from a little bit earlier). Approximately during the 1950's she stopped creating art, and, if I am right, she has been painting now for five years in an individual style. We would be very glad, if together with Feri, we could view Ilka's works. She is going to be at home from the beginning of August.

I had a very good time at Esztergom on Sunday. Maybe I will go to the opening of the Mária Modok's exhibition.

With kind regards,

Júlia

PS

Stefánia Mándy asks you to inform her when you expect her to finish the study on the Szentendre artists. The study is finished but it still has to be typed.

[62] Iván Dévényi (1929 – 1977) teacher, art critic, art collector.
[63] Endre Bálint (1916-1985) painter
[64] Béla Veszelszky (1905-1977) painter

20. Diary Records Tracing the Making of the Painting Titled Equilibrists, 1977[65] [66]

From the notebook titled* Jujjj. *Notebook No. 45, pp. 75-78

The drawing is nearly completely finished. The lower clown (L.C.) has a cool Yellow, Turquoise colour[67], Indigo colour, while the upper clown is of a lighter Blue colour. (So the two clowns are now finished, but the „right of changing them has been reserved". But, finally, especially with regard to the L.C., the oscillation between Yellow and Blue has been finalised, and this contrasts with the calmness of the L.C.'s posture, which I like very much indeed.

*

[65] Gedő's manuscript estate, which has been fully digitised (available and accessible at the Art History Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the joint Library of the Hungarian National Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts as well as the Budapest Collection of the Ervin Szabó Municipal Library of Budapest) has been divided into two parts. Part 1 of the manuscript estate contains 128 note-books recording the making of nearly all the paintings as if Gedő were keeping a diary. (The titles being used in these diary notes can sometimes be different from the final titles of the paintings.) The diary notes of one painting can be found in several note-books. Part 2 of the manuscript estate contains notes, translations and biographical material.

[66] I present here the notes pertaining to oil painting No. 104 on the list of paintings (*Equilibrists, Circus*, 1977, oil, canvas, 64 x 42). The painter refers to this painting as *Equilibre* in her diary-notes.

[67] In his memoir the artist's husband points out „ Ilka looked at colours and paints with what amounted to a fetish-adoring rapture. Again the characteristic mixture of fastidious, pedantic order and the most charming chaos arose from it. She never threw away colour or paint or washed any out of her brushes. She smudged the paint out of her brushes onto a piece of paper at hand (clean or scrap). She kept all of these. Paints that would have been wasted due to 'accidents' such as spillage, dropped tubes, stepping on tubes and so forth were treated similarly." Bíró Endre: „ Recollections of Ilka Gedő's Artistic Career" In: István Hajdu– Dávid Bíró: *The Art of Ilka Gedő*, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, p. 253. (Also in this volume cf. Section 31)

As regards the background, I have already assembled a large number of colour patterns. There is one thing I know for sure: there should be vertical icicles going through L.C.'s cap. The LC needs to be surrounded by colours warmer than the LC itself, and the latter has to be darker. I put by the side of the neck my old Chrome Green Deep and Reds on White colour pattern. The middle part of this colour pattern, framed now in pencil, has a deepness that is appropriate. In addition, it has also been decided that the background needs to get lighter and cooler. What should be the cool darkness that surrounds the Upper Clown?

*

I realise suddenly: if I make the Sphere cooler, then the background—to be sure not in manner that the Sphere „springs forward" because of its warmth, thus increasingly making the background lose its character, by making the background to have the same vivid special character as the figures–so then the cool Green appears. This is good. Should the Yellow-Blue solution of the LC seem to be „Green", the cool Green makes this disappear.

*

In connection with the parts adjacent to LC, I thought of the following colour: it comes from the colour patterns of Reds mixed with White. It is the warmer Red Scarlet Cadmium. This colour has to be mixed so that it is darker than the whole of the LC. Then, this colour has to be broken with warm Greens as a result of which the Turquoise, having become Green through Red, would again be Blue .

*

The variation of the two afore-mentioned possibilities could also be possible. If this is possible at all, then only the area to the left of the string holding the Sphere, would get Green grounding, as this part has to be by all means further backwards compared with the area where the Lower Clown (L.C.) is lying. The Cadmium Scarlet around this area could be changed to the cooler Winsor Cadmium Scarlet.

From the notebook titled* Jujjj*. Notebook No. 45, pp. 89-93

I have changed the plan described the last time. A not yet selected colour pattern was lying on the lower shelf: White plus Talens Green Light on Purpur and Talens Green Light on Scarlet. It is more beautiful than Cadmium Scarlet. I start from the knee vertically, scrapping off the paint and in the lower regions I see the glitter of Green.

Huhh!

It is as yet uncertain how the Green will „glitter" in the deeper layers of the Yellowy canvas. That is why I apply above the lower part Titan thinly rubbed in also for the area to the left of the knee for the Purpur White. The Cadmium Deep White will be visible in two ways between and through the fraying part. (Deep down it will be a sordid Green glitter, higher up it will be a brightly glimmering Green.) As a background warmer than the figure of the clown is „unnatural", in the same way a Sphere that does not step forward from the background is also „unnatural".

*

What I can do right now is that I prepare a very bright grey not by using Ivory Black, but by using Lamp Soot Black for the Sphere. However, before doing so, I put on the two dry leaves lamp soot Black, i.e. there will be one on White and one with White.

Attention! The repletion of the belly curve of the Reclining Clown accidentally got into the Red background area.

*

The Lamp Soot Black is less cool on White than mixed with White: these two warm greys contrast with the languid coldness of the Sphere.

From the notebook titled* Krrr*. Notebook No. 258, pp. 11-18, pp. 72-84 & pp. 92-95

The face of the Outside Clown (OC) has been provided with White grounding. It will be cool Green. On the side of the right arm it will be cooler than on the other side. Now I start the continuation of the Green of the Red dome part. In the corner it should be warm! What

about putting here a decisively warmer Green than into the other parts. How about using Talens Light? OK, you should do it, old friend. I tried this colour at the meeting point with the Violet on an area of one square inch. The benefits are as follows: 1. A lighter and softer repetition of the area around the head!; 2. A colossal contrast with the ice tongue.

*

After using the Talens Light, on an area smaller than that of the Talens Light, we try to use the duller Winsor Cadmium Green. In order to cool this colour down more in comparison with the Talens Light, I scratched with the edge of the brush some vertical lines into it through which the grounding beneath the Red came out. With the same method I dull, to SOME extent, the intense warming of the Talens Light. (Hurray, Kid! etc.)

*

After this I start the Veronese Green and deck Green part on the right, more exactly, I switch over to the Veronese with which I step to the right. Unfortunately, this cannot be finished as in the right hand corner the White priming has not yet dried.

*

I put Rembrandt Mortuum Violet on the cool faint Blue on the edge of the painting, then, using paint, the frame of the left-hand margin… (Oh, this whole stuff is quite hard…)

After having looked at the original sketch, I decided that I will cheat a little bit with the White line. A little bit above the space where the Yellow background meets the Red on the Green, I stop it. A line intersects the original. Using a ruler and a pen, I set the margin… Bang!

*

This change made the broadening of the picture on the left-hand side. At the same time, the part of the dome on the upper left has been expanded. Not a problem! Indeed the LC benefits from this, as the space around him has become somewhat larger.

*

There where my stove silver diluter seeped into the Greenish Red area, and where this seeping primarily got into he inside due to the magnifying of the picture, I put tiny patches of White.

*

This is good although the margin terminates already a little bit upwards; this is at the minimum a continuation of the margin which is, incidentally, present only in the form of a memory. The cool Yellow horizontal line follows the shape of the margin: it turns downward.

*

Now some steadiness: on the White that is already on the Red I put some Green Earth thus connecting it to the form on the outside. After this I put the *Equilibrists* aside to dry.

*

I try to put the Greens on the face of the Reclining Clown. On the right-hand side, I put some Rembrandt Green, on the left-hand side I put some Newton Cobalt Green. How does it look? The White was not completely dry, especially on the right-hand side it was thicker, but the Cobalt Green is good. (Some scratches with the end of the knife-handle that reach the canvas. The Rembrandt Green seems to be too cool, too sharp and too “Blue”, even though it has been scratched a few times.) Now I try some more scratches, to be sure vertical scratches. Brrr!

*

How does it look? Well, kid, it seems to have improved.

*

Let it rest a bit. (…) LATER it can perhaps be broken with the least amount of Red, PERHAPS…

*

As in the right-hand corner of the dome the White is dry, put on it appropriately the Red Cadmium Scarlet. (But you should be sly! For the deck Green, there should be tiny blank areas on the Red Cadmium Scarlet.)

The area at the meeting point with the warmest Violet has to be made less intense: this means that you have to put Whites on both the Reds and warm Green parts. (…) Brrrr! (…)

*

Some improvement has occurred, but now you can see more clearly the incompleteness of the Violet part, i. e., despite the completeness of the underlying idea, the area is rough and it is “too dark” and “too dark”. Due to this latter phenomenon I mitigate the excessive Redness not with more Blue, but with White. Always and everywhere I put just one single point, dark-hued stain on the Blues.

Already at the beginning of putting up the Whites, I nearly completely removed the Green form the face of the Reclining Clown. Only a conjecture of it remained. Thus compared to the face of the Reclining Clown, some cool ness and some otherness has emerged.

.

*

On the violet dome I (temporarily) stop the Whites, i.e., the Yellow on White grounding beneath this dome should not be left as bright! I try to break it with ultramarine, and then it can be decided if it is too dark or not.

*

An improvement can be seen! Now the problem is that it is too Red. In other words, I paint Ultramarine Violet upon the wedge of the “more than margin” in the left-hand upper corner. This will be followed by scratching the colours back with a knife, as the whole thing has to be in line with the dipping part. The tip of the knife has broken off. It is too sharp. Well, kid, you should try to use a needle. (First, you should be doing the vertical and then the horizontal parts, and when you get close to the tip of the wedge, you should scratch only vertically.

*

At the end of the Yellow section broken by the new Violet, the border line has to be done. Only later on, can you possibly work on the Violet dome. To the left of the narrow left-hand line, I put Mortuum Violet, knowing ahead of time that it is not sure that it can stay.

*

This is what has happened:

1. In the narrow section next to the Violet dome, the White has not completely dried. Here I have a White with Violet Mortuum which can probably remain already, as the conclusion of the Blues on Red in another manner, as a subdued Violet.
2. In the middle only Mortuum and then virtualisation with brush handle and making it lighter.
3. At the bottom, Mortuum to the right darkening towards the White line.

*

After having made both the lighter and the darker Mortuums lighter without changing their proportion, I put up the Yellows on the internal side of the thin White line. This, as we move downwards, becomes lighter. At the top, there is a somewhat arrogant Soufre and downwards Talens Lemon Yellow, as at the bottom there is practically no grounding.

*

This is not bad, but it is now far from being complete. There needs to be a transition (tiny Whites). In addition, at some places more horizontally I scratched off the Yellows on White together with their White grounding. This means that at some places the canvas itself is visible. I corrected the lacks of continuity in the White line.

*

The top Indigo line has become green due to the Yellow. You should make this disappear through using Cobalt Violet. The Cobalt Violet makes this disappear as it is not visible as a colour next to the White line, although it does make the Yellow more Yellow.

What could I have wanted at the waist of the “mora than margin” area with the White horizontal groundings? You have to look up this, i. e., the interpretable Green Earth and also the dark Violet on White grounding.

*

Towards the end of the note-book titled *Bumm*, on pages that have not been provided with page numbers. However, I have not found any notes on what happened to the White, i. e. I have not found notes on using the White for covering up an old cool dark.

*

It has to be decided now (this idea has come suddenly), if the bay has to be connected with the dark Yellow of the left-hand lower area in a manner that it responds to it as Violet. Only now have I recognised that this is nothing else but one of the above-mentioned possibilities. This means that you should be using ultramarine Violet that has not yet been used so far on a White grounding.
On the lower part of the middle of the left-hand side of the Sphere, put Soufre, but only in the middle.

From the notebook titled* Bumm*. Notebook No. 125 pp. 28-44, pp. 89-89 & pp. 122-132

I start reading the notebooks! First, I take a look at the notebook titled *Brrr* that dealt with this painting last. Now, I carry out putting the colours on a White sheet mentioned on page 5. Here come the Greens that become cooler as we move towards the left: Winsor & Newton Permanent Green, R. Green, Permanent Rembrandt Green.

*

I don't want to brag much. However, I find these three Greens appearing on the White grounding by one grade cooler. I extended each of these three colours so that they cover the Yellow vertically above them.

*

Then I add Reds becoming cooler to the left of the three Greens located outside the White grounding. I don't look them up in the old notebook, because it is not a problem, when they look here somewhat different, or when there is an extra cooling, when they look Red as is the case with finished parts. So, I start with Geranium.[68] The paint is brought onto the canvas in a manner slightly different from the area beneath the old one: it is smaller, and it contains more lines. This means that the small hatchings to the right of the Sphere are somewhat approximated. However, while this latter one has been provided with lines with a knife, this current area is done with lax brush strokes…

*

[68] Three model colour spots from three hardly different colour tubes named, Geranium, Madder Deep and Rose Madder.

After having carried out these brush strokes, in a manner that it is darker by one degree than it should be, I do this. I soak up the colour with a small pad that is below the little finger of my right hand… No matter how long it takes, I have to look up now what I really wanted with the upper "ice tongue". (This is a Garanium mixed with White, which, swinging upwards, meets with the Yellow located next to the Upper Clown.)

*

First, I had a look at the notebook *Brrr*. In it there is only one remark on the "ice-tongue". Although "it is exempt from Green and ugly, you should not give up on this painting." Attention. In the course of the search, I found at the bottom of page 65 of notebook *Trrr.* that for the Green Earth area behind Reclining Clown's jacket there is a dry colour pattern on which the Reds are also indicated. I have looked through all the notebooks, but I have not found a detailed description of the Greens of the "ice-tongue". But this search was good in terms of getting into close contact with the picture. Let us get started on this again, shall we! Huh!!!

What type of Green have I put on the lowest part of the canvas? I mean the Green that extends from the medium-cool area next to the Sphere up to this part. This Green seems to be the warmer Winsor Newton? No, this does not seem to be the case, but now that I am trying out colours I left one part of it intact.

*

In vain am I looking at my bigger cardboard on which the colour patterns belonging to the painting *Equilibrists*[69] have been pinned from this point of view. However, looking at this cardboard is important in terms of the beams painting the lower part. However, the precondition for this was important in terms of the lower beam[70] and the dome.

I have a good idea: the Green of the ice tongue should not be cooling from right to left, but from left to right! The benefits: 1.) On the left the warm Green merges with the Yellow. 2.) On the right the cool warmth increases the mysteriousness of the wider than margin area.

[69] Cardboard sheet = the colour patterns belonging to one picture fastened on a drawing cardboard sheet with a drawing pin.
[70] This probably means the vertical stripes of the "inner frame" of the picture.

I also realise that now we should not be using the cool Greens on the left-hand side, but the bright and aggressive Greens. As the coolest colour, I try to use the Deco Green, and the warmest Rembrandt Veronese. Huhh? Should they turn out to be ugly, I can delete these colours. Well, I don't delete them.

*

In the cap section the upper two Greens are now side by side. In the waist area, however, I left out a stripe horizontally that extends into the cap swinging upwards. I put into this a little of the cooler Rembrandt permanent. Now I start the huge "wider than margin" area to which a White ground was applied. In the course of studying the notebooks, it turned out that, originally, I wanted a cool Yellow here, too. To be more exact, I wanted a cooler Yellow than the background of the RC[71], and this is why I applied White grounding. The fact that the coolest area is at the bottom is well-reflected by the Yellow put on the Blue (Turquoise) ground. (I still do not know whether upwards the colours get cooler. Yes, they do. But if this is true, then what is the greatest coolness at the bottom? What is it? Well, it is a separate area. By the side of the Upper Clown, there is a margin, where there is a reverse world: the colours get warmer as we move upwards. At the same height as the top of the cap it dies off warmly.

*

What should be the uppermost lightest and coolest Yellow on this White grounding? On the left, it should be Soufre, on the right Talens Lemon in the middle of the cool Green with its different Greenness. I paint it horizontally, as the White ground applied is carefully horizontal. I start with Soufre: above and next to the ice tongue in the same way, with the same density so that this also connects the ice-tongue with the blunt Yellow that is the background to the upper clown.

*

Indeed: Soufre should be put into the waist area next to the Sphere in the same way as has been the case when the ice-tongue was connected with the waist area.

*

[71] R.C.= Reclining Clown

I started Soufre in small brush strokes in the upper right above the Indigo border line of the internal area. I moved downwards with horizontal brush strokes that continually were becoming shorter. Involuntarily… Now I add one inch, the shortest part that gets next to the warm colours beneath the Sphere. And thus, Soufre is finished.

*

Then, I started to scratch off paint from the verticals! I scratched off R. Talens not caring about the fact that it was painted in the Whites horizontals. Neither did I care about the fact that at 17[72], going downwards, T Talens lemon intersected a circle of paint. In the right-hand corner at the top, I stopped at the height at the bottom of 10.

*

I omitted a White stripe at the top, at the top involuntarily. Should you lengthen it, this will repeat the movement of the Upper Clown. Another advantage is that the colour of the ghost-like form jammed in between the Yellows is a ghost itself as it is surrounded by Yellows. The bottom of stripe 10 and the middle of 8, the "reverse part" next to the clown, is becoming cooler, and at the internal end of it a blank area remains that will have to be considered thoroughly.

*

Now I put up Zink onto the Red of the Sphere where it is still missing. To be more exact, the Red is already there everywhere, but now I am making it more intense. On the leaf-like areas I put some Violet too. I mean the two areas on the far right, i.e. on the cool side.

*

Later on, I ought to look for the drawing, and the line separating the dome from the internal area should be redrawn in brush. There is a vague desire in me that suggests that there should be a tiny amount of Violet. (This would result in emphasising the Yellow areas.) But this is far from certain. In order to decide the issue, Green Earth is needed painted on Red, and the frame at the top has to be drawn.

*

I put the picture aside.

[72] This number refers to a certain location of the grid that has been drawn on the canvas for the purpose of magnifying the original sketch of the painting.

From the notebook titled* Bumm*, notebook No. 125, pp. 86-89

First, let us devote some time to the *Equilibrists*. Maybe the margin area won't be a Yellow on White. But there is still a trick! On the area next to the coolness tongue, the Yellow must be broken with Ultramarine Violet, and on the external part the Yellow must be broken with Cobalt Violet Deep. Let us get started on this! First, at the top, I drew with Pelikan 4018 (Ultramarine Violet) horizontals (certainly painting the material with turpentine), lower downstairs I dubbed it with spread-out brush, so that the end of the stem, where the brush starts, tapped to the picture. This, of course, happens with Pelikan 4016. (I intend to draw lines horizontally. I leave the ghostlike in the middle.)

For now, I leave it this way, but before that I do the left-hand side of the margin with White again. In the curve I have thickened the White line, and there, where the darkest Pink is visible I used kind of dots. On the left-hand upper side, by using the brush handle of Pelikán 1018, I scratch off the excessive amount of Ultramarine Viol. I Redrew in White the right-hand side contour of the Sphere as far as the lower part of the ice tongue.

*

The lower part of the right foot of the Reclining Clown got a secondary contour in White.

From the notebok titled* Bumm, *Notebook No. 258 pp. 122-132

I put up the Reds on the cooler part located on the left on White grounding. The colours moving from left to right are: Geranium, Madder, Deep Rose Madder.[73]

Caution! The Reds go further to the right than the Greens. The matchstick has been put not only on the coolest Green but also on the least cool Green. The next colour pair has been indicated in the same manner.

*

[73] Next to each colour name the given colour is painted.

I try to continue the painting of the “more than margin” area by using Rembrandt Green Earth. In the same way as above, I used the little Green Earth without turpentine, but in the lower regions I try to use an increasing amount of turpentine, with the objective of cooling.

*

In the lower regions I was very lucky with the area with White grounding (approximately stripes eight and nine)[74] that I left empty above the cool Yellow part the last time. It was also a lucky circumstance that, as I moved downwards, on what used to be Yellow there were Violets everywhere. This contributed to the cooling. However, the clear and Yellow horizontals in the sudden descent of the “more than margin” (approx. lines 12 & 13 of the original sketch). These parts have now been overpainted in White.

*

Using a very small amount of Green Earth, I also painted over what used to be Ghost Violet White grounding, a shape similar to the Reclining Clown. (I used everywhere the thimble finger of my right hand.) I used a small amount of Green Earth as here it was not Yellow upon which a cooler colour was painted.

*

It happened before I put the cold Red on the canvas: under the foot of the Reclining Clown, lower down to the left (between the part with Green on Red and the beam) I rammed very little Green Earth. Can this stay? No one knows. After this, I made the left-hand upper part lighter because I did not scratch back with a matchstick but with the end of a coffee spoon handle. Now, I will also apply the end of a knife blade, and I will also use the smaller blade of my silver pocket knife.

*

Huhh! I have had enough! I put the painting away. I make notes on page 65 of the notebook titled T.R. I put on the Reds regarded necessary on the Green Earth behind the nape of the Big Clown. It has been done.

[74] These are the numbers of the grid that have been used for the magnification of the original visual sketch on the canvas.

*

I was considering what would happen if the area called “more than a margin”, having a strange Green, would be turned into a real Green by the Pink of the Dome, and the strange hardly Yellow background of the Reclining Clown would be turned into Yellow by the Violet of the dome. To be sure, it has already become finally actual to draw the upward sloping. But where is the original sketch?

*

Based on this, I put up the Reds on the picture, but only two Reds out of the ones I have tried out. First, I thought of a cooler colour. I painted the Purpur and the Red Cadmium Deep. I did not take a warmer colour for the Green Earth right-hand edge, and I left the medium-density Green Earth a bit, as it is so beautiful, kid. It is so beautiful when this meets the cold Yellow bottom of the “more than a margin”area.

*

There where I painted Green Earth into the missed out forms on the left that I described yesterday, there I put very little Purpur so that this connects with the Pink part.

*

Now comes the beam. Endre pointed out that darkness would be good here. He is right. Somehow, on the falling Green Earth the Purpur darkness must be continued, and moving to the left to paint a brighter colour. It is important that the Green Earth Reds mentioned before should not fall vertically, but they are tilted somewhat to the right. Namely, I have realised that the contrast enhances the verticality of the Reclining Clown’s nape.

*

I thought about the Violet dome being painted on Red with Blue added on White glaze. So far, I haven’t done this. This is worth trying as the Zinc strongly cools the Red. So, you should be using warm, Rembrandt Scarlet Red, upon which you should put Zinc and then various Blues. I search for and find the old colour pattern showing White on Red. Stuck on Blue colour paper, this colour pattern used to be pinned on the wall in the darker right-hand corner of my room. Exceptionally, I draw the contour of the dome with ballpoint pen.

I also the replicate that in the original sketch the topmost part of the picture is slightly rising. If I transform 29 to be a rectangle, there is still space for a wavy line.

It has been done:

1. I did not go as far as the step, but I left a millimetre-wide space.
2. On the right-hand side of „17", there was some White grounding next to the Sphere. (It has not died completely yet, but I painted over it nevertheless. On this you can immediately see the more intense coolness of Soufre .
3. On the left-hand edge of the picture, I left an area blank as wide as the half of a child's little finger. This either stays so as a "warm" contrast to the Soufre, or White grounding will be applied so that the Soufre on the grounding be a bit cooler.
4. There is a vertical column next to the hand on the edge of the painting, through the surface of which the pencil lines are visible. Somewhat lower than this[75], I put on it a sort of crow's feet, and I do the same with the numbers of the vertical lines 24 and 27 written in pencil.

*

You should put medium-density Geranium next to the wavy border line upon which you should put Zink, in other words, this is going to be the final good-bye of the Red background part and at the same time its coolest form.

Notes from the following day.

I was half asleep, when I suddenly realised that I should put the same Yellow on the Whites within the body, as on the Yellowy White of the linen, that is a translucent Talens Lemon. I have tried it out and I find it great: the Yellow appearing in the bluish Blue is simultaneously gentle and determined. I liked it so much that I erased the pencil-drawn grid from the background, and I put the Yellow up on both sides of the body, on the left as

[75] An arrow is leading to the "dense White" at the top of the page.

far as the bottom of 17[76]. On the right it should go higher up, that is at the lowest from the three up to the last curving line next to the body. This provides a third value.

*

While putting up the colours, in my imagination I lengthened the wavy line downwards as far as the heel of the right-hand foot, and upwards as far as the right-hand upper corner of the fragile internal frame. Only now has it turned out how well-shaped and well-located it is: the big flat wavy line thus repeats the fact that the Reclining Clown leans to the right.

*

The upper border line of this has not been drawn yet, but I also painted over the Yellow with jeans Blue applying a width of a little finger. I finished the left-hand side next to the body in a manner that I used as a border line the non erasable blueish vertical line next to the head. In the arm-pit the Yellow forms a Yellow triangle, then next to the waist it is vertical with a one-inch-width, at the thigh it juts out, and from there it falls down to the little toe of the left foot nearly vertically. (All these phenomena provide a sensible context to the gesture of the Reclining Clown.)

*

Now the area stretching from the bottom of column 17 of the grid to the new border line must be solved. The reason why I stopped and finished using the Talens Lemon this way is because I intended to use on the left a Yellow that is somewhat different. I try out Soufre. I think it is somewhat colder.

The right bottom corner of the this plunge has been drawn somewhat incorrectly: it is more to the inner side, i.e. the „more than margin" area is wider. The lower part of column 29 of the grid has been drawn in with a wonderful, thin-line ballpoint pen.

This gave me the idea to have the "more than a margin" stretch out as far as this. This means that, like a wedge, it stretches up above the Yellow part, which is good and gets

[76] The numbering of the grid whereby the original drawing idea (sketch) is drawn onto the canvas.

immediately reflected in the colour, too: it is Green Earth, but not on a Yellowish Violet basis, but on canvas. Let us get started on this! But before that write down the benefits.

1. This responds to the Green Earth, but in a warmer variation, as, in contrast to the lower part, it won't be on a White basis.
2. The "more than margin" presents itself to the Pink without a yellow background.
3. The upper border line responds to the horizontality of the Reclining Clown.
4. Due to its being straight, the border-line enhances the dancing and foolish non-straight nature of the Dome's contour.
5. The "more than a margin"enhances the fall of the right-hand area.
6. The fact that this new part of the picture is darker to the left, has to correspond with the other part. This is beneficial for the wedge as, it contrasts with the faint nature of the Yellow plunge and the end of the Ice Tongue.

*

The vertex of the edge is at a depth equal to that of column "10" of the grid. At this point, I made a vertical line, and this will be the border of the Violet and Pink dome section.

*

Should I now want to follow the plan according to which here, too, there should be Red Cadmium Scarlet, just as it was the case with the Violet, but on a White grounding, then I should apply White grounding to this part.

*

Driven by curiosity, I carry out this idea even though I might have to change it one time later. Don't panic, kid! I have got the White… And now we are in a situation wherein there is no obstacle to applying the Red Cadmium Scarlet. (Carry on!) You have got this colour now. Driven by self-indulgence, you got carried away. And now you can wait for drying. I strongly dissuade you from touching the picture anywhere before the end of this experiment. Put this picture away now! Start working on *Spring* for a while.

From the notebook titled* Trrr. Notebook No. *61./B pp. 122-132

I have drawn the contour line of the dome with Rembrandt Green. Then at some places I surrounded it with White. I put on the cap of the Reclining Clown: White mixed with Sevres Blue, then I scratched it off leaving back some remnants, and painted into some Flesh Ochre, a colour that can be found at the bottom. Into the tip of the cap I put White and into the middle one streak of Mortuum Violet.

*

In the Green Earth left corner in the upper part there was a Blue blemish. I applied White grounding to it, followed by Green Earth scratched back by the point of a knife.

Benefits:

1. The region beneath the Reclining Clown and its repetition on the faint left part.
2. The face has now become fainter.

The Ultramarine Violet on White in the armpit of the "more than a margin" area has been broken by Rembrandt Green Earth. Put it away to dry!

This is what still needs to be done:

1. Green Earth to White grounding.
2. Cold Green to the upper left side.
3. At the very bottom of the picture you should put Souffre on White.
4. You should put some Winsor Newton Cerulean Blue on the White of the left margin.

From the notebook titled Huhh, Notebook No. 92 pp. 20-35

I have finished the preparations in line with what I wrote down on pages 83-85. (White grounding alongside the new right angles…) On the right-hand side I put Green Earth on a longer stretch than on the left-hand side. In the middle, I left a White section whereon I wish to put cool Green.

*

Above the Pink part, Green Earth was applied; in the cool "corner" on the right densely and warmly and on the left coldly and thinly. This means there is everywhere a contrast to the edge. Beneath the falling of the Yellow background part between the newly-born vertical stripes with a width of a little finger vertical White falls become visible.
Which of the two should be used here?[77]

*

I try to use Rembrandt Green quite courageously. To be precise, this has to be put on the grounding of the tip of the ice tongue. This is bad, and only the starting idea is good: besides the cool Green, up comes the interpretation of the Rembrandt Green Earth as Yellow. However, this Green is so much cool that it is actually Blue! In addition to Green Earth, you should try using Veronese Green or Deck Green that is cooler than Veronese Green.

At the top of the left Yellow background section, I put Talens Lemon Yellow that, according to my plans, should be falling on the White groundings. I am dissatisfied. The result is not cool enough and not beautiful enough and that is why, in order to cool down the Yellow, I put Turquoise on the White grounding located above the head of the Reclining Clown. However this is too Green. Take it off and put up Manganese Blue instead. You should do the same with the Whites under the left lower arm.

What was your plan with White groundings above the middle section of the ice tongue? You should try to make vertical lines in ballpoint pen drawn in cruelly along the right angle. With my right-hand finger, with a thimble on, I made a shiny and slippery strip above these places. A fragile Zinc-White brush-stroke will be applied here.

*

The situation is this. There is nothing in my notes regarding the White spots next to the ice-tongue. No problem. It is clear that Auerolin must be put on it. This was the Yellow that I

[77] Here two small figures can be seen.

used here on the “warm” side opposite to the Talens Lemon on the left. There has been an irresistible but, in reality, basically false temptation for me to use completely cool Yellow as a transition. No, no, no! Contrast is needed here. So, let us see now how Aureolin White responds to your islands. Do you like it? Yes, I do. It has become a light and COOL GOLD, and also in terms of form it constitutes a contrast to the downward falls of the upper left Yellow. Another advantage is that the Aureolin White is the distant sibling of the Gold around the Reclining Clown.

*

I don’t see any instructions about the White under the beam!

It has to be left as it is. The small Yellows that flash up above it located next to the Violet are sufficient. Incidentally, this is a ghostlike Yellow. (It is the Violet that makes it Yellow.) There is a great desire in me: to have only one exception to the ghost-like Yellow. On the left, as far as the depth of the Sphere’s jumping space mostly to the left, you should be using a cool Yellow! In order for me to do this I apply Turquoise grounding.

Once it has dried, Talens Lemon Yellow will be used. The expected benefits are as follows:

1. The lower part is warm, and this location warms up more.
2. The warm lower part of the background’s Red on Green warms up more.
3. The left Green area (between the Green Earths) of the dome becomes fainter.
4. Due to the early removal of this place, moving from the left this removal happens earlier than that of the tip of the clown’s toe. The Reclining Clown gets shifted more to the right.
5. The faintest part of the Sphere gets more emphasis.
6. Due to this dark Yellow, all the other Yellows are united in a unity of faintness.
7. If we sum this up reading from the left to the right, this place expresses: above me there is only Violet. What I do is to just start the running Violet.
8. A coldness that is infinitely different from the cool Pink that is on the opposite side.
9. Compared with this roaring, all the Yellows of the Reclining Clown retreat more shyly.

Suddenly, I thought Soufre that could be the countervailing point of the warm Green Earth. Namely Soufre cools off to the right and downwards, as in the upper left there is Cobalt Violet, which means near to the ice tongue and on the warm Green Earth an intensive warmth. In addition to this, on the left-hand side of the more than a margin, up to the height of the deepest point of the middle bay, you should leave the White, and only starting out from the deepest point and moving upwards should you put up Soufre. (1-2-3) This has happened.

*

I let a certain warming moving upwards manifest itself: this is parallel to the warming of the other parts (of the big field). I stopped using the White at a level identical with the height where a bulge is located above the nave. This was the right thing for me to do. However, a White vertical line is missing on the outermost part that connects the White which connects the narrow part next to the cool Yellow dotted with brown on White. The advantage of Soufre is: brotherhood with the Soufre located at about the middle of the Sphere.

*

Why is the stripe ending at the middle of the bay?

1. Brightness that is even bigger than the ice tongue. That is why it connects the Ice Tongue with all the other parts of the background despite its icy character.
2. The bottom of the bright Yellow of the „more than a margin" area enters into brotherhood with the darker head of the Reclining Clown.
3. The White string of the Sphere gets a White brother.
4. The Black contour of this White string gets an absolute contrast.
5. A White does not become ghost Yellow in the same way as does the bottom of the pedestal near to it.
6. The fact that this White stripe ends at a point higher than the string shows that the Sphere is far from being "that high".

*

What should happen with the left White that, in contrast with the right White, is becoming narrow as it goes up? This White must not by any means stay White. As the Greens to its rightmost are cooling as we move outwards, they should appear (on White and without Red) mostly on the edge in cooler tones. Be careful! Which Green do you think you should be using? Should it be Rembrandt Green?

*

A day later, first thing in the morning. How about using only Rembrandt Green very thinly? So: the higher up you are, the thinner layer you should be using. It is important not to forget that the same Green goes upward, which in turn means that lower than in the proximity of the Greener colours, where this strip is “wide”, it becomes separated from the internal part, and higher up it blends with it to an increasing extent. This means that next to the Sphere there is a completely faint strip that is , however, not fainter than the Sphere. I like this idea. You should implement it.

*

Yesterday I failed to point out one of the advantages of the left upper verticals drawn by a ruler. The „more than a margin” area is completely different: it is not precise and broadly shaped and vertical. My new Green is more useful than I expected.

1. It opens the space from the left.
2. It increases the warmth of the Reclining Clown’s background.
3. Lower down, where this Green is dark, it enters into brotherly contact with the would-be cool Yellow due its darkness and coolness.
4. The Reclining Clown is made more kind due to the more pronounced frame.
5. The afore-mentioned further warming of the lower warm background section.
6. The warming of the Dark Violet of the Reclining Clown’s upper body.

Now, Kid, carry on with yesterday’s vertical lines! Now, you should not be using the Russian paint brush, but the new brush from Vienna.

*

The inner border of the whole of the Green stripe at the level of the Sphere has been drawn with sharp pencil lines with the help of a ruler, and in a hideous manner I leave these lines in the painting.

One inch to the side of the already narrow Green, you drew most recently a vertical line in pencil as far as the knee of the Reclining Clown. This should be the only deeply hanging vertical line. Pay attention now! Due to the texture of the linen the brush gets stuck, and therefore continuity of colour can only be achieved by painting small bits side by side. I don't resist to the temptation that in between the legs of the Reclining Clown, up in the triangle the Yellow should be like Yellow on the lower left on the beam pedestal. I apply now zinc as grounding to this part. The lower part of the new Yellow should run parallel in Yellow.

I yield to the temptation of painting the Yellow up in the triangle between the two legs of the Reclining Clown in the same was as it is in the lower left on the beam pedestal.

I apply Zinc grounding to this part. The lower part of the new Yellow should be parallel Yellowishly.

The expected benefits:

1. The legs become more pronounced than the body.
2. The lower part of the right leg is lower, and this becomes more visible through the verticality of the lower part of the left leg.
3. The lower part of the right foot is lower, and this is enhanced by the parallelism of the lower part of the left foot.
4. Obliquely opposite to the beam-intersected pedestal.
5. It becomes even more occult because the small face of the Reclining Clown is fainter. (Maybe this aspect is the most important here.)
6. This faint face gets closer to the dome that is darker than the face.

7. The small horizontal line enhances the roundness of the Sphere.
8. Like a lightening up, the line attracts your eye to the Sphere. This lightening up constitutes a counterpoint to the three Violet line fragments close to the ice tongue
9. The movement made by the upper part of the Reclining Clown is continued.

I painted over my brown-on-silver frame with Rembrandt Lead White. I wonder when it Yellows to such a degree that it becomes different from the right-hand White stripe. Once the lead dries on the Black upholstery nails, then I will have nails with White heads. Once the Yellowing has occurred, the picture frame is hardly different from the wall colour which is not really White. Is lead better than brown? Yes, it is. I got tired putting up the vertical Whites. You have to put up more, as the number of vertical Whites is far from being enough. This is true even though you have put up a lot of them in addition to the lined Whites.

*

You have to try to do the upper line section devoted to Violet, as it is too much Violet. Now you have to warm it up, too. I tried to do this in such a way that I cooled the Yellow surrounding it (naturally the Yellow close to the line) with White spots. But this is not enough. I try it with dense Aureolin (first breaking it then warming it up). Look and behold! It is still to a great extent Violet, but without any kind of show-off. Now I put additional Whites (1.2.3.4.) on the side of the Reclining Clown (in contrast to the downward going bluishness of the Violets)

*

Just recently, still at the beginning of the vertical lines, I put a few Whites on the left hand upper side of the dome just in time. This is warmer even than the left-hand side, when it is made a bit brighter.

*

Attention! There where on the bottom of the Reclining Clown, in an infinitely faint movement, there is a convex line, I created a very thin White contrast, and then I put the picture away to dry.

21. Endre Bálint on Ilka Gedő, 1984[78]

From the mid-1930s, Ilka Gedő, similarly to many other artists, visited Szentendre, and her flaming red hair made her a phenomenon in the town. Her master was Viktor Erdei whose works on paper showed the magical influence of Rembrandt, and this impact, together with some feminine emotions, could also be traced in Gedő's drawings. Ilka Gedő drew marvellously. Not only were her drawings perfect in the academic sense of the words, but they blended *form* and *emotions* to such an extent that one could hardly believe her maturity, consciousness and artistic determination.(…) For nearly twenty years she stopped creating art, but around 1965 I persuaded her to organise a studio exhibition, and I helped her to select the works to be shown, and the administrative tasks hoping that her exhibition would give her impetus due to intellectual and emotional response to her exhibition. This did not happen. The silence that followed her studio exhibition was enigmatic. However, a few years later she started to paint, and her previous artistic activities fell into the deep well of the past. A new artistic period started that had absolutely nothing to do with the origins of her art. To be more exact, a new *origin* was born, a new and unique painterly message that cannot be mixed up with the message of any other artist. It would be good to describe exactly what I can see in these pictures. However, I fear I will fail here. Are these signs? Yes, they are, but what do these signs correspond to, who do they reflect? I could say that these pictures are the amber stones of the mind's arboretum. We see semi-plants, semi-human figures from a world of illusion, yet these forms are vividly pulsating. Everything comes from the mind of the artist. If there is figuration, it is not the reflection of reality. The artist might "trick" the viewer with titles, but these titles do not help the viewer to understand the picture. The artist does not leave any room for imitation, since all her pictures are based on sketches on whose various parts Gedő indicates the planned colour. Concerning the colours, it is perhaps Gedő's handling of colours that elevates her to the rank of the best painters: her colour chords are so much original that she stands unparalleled in Hungarian painting. Due to their iridescence, Gedő's best colour chords perhaps remind us of the old Pierre Bonnard's courageous use of colours.

[78]Endre Bálint: *Életrajzi törmelékek* (Biographical Fragments), Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1984, pp. 148-150

*

It was good to see Ilka Gedő's pictures again, as this artist has made a great deal of progress since her exhibition in Székesfehérvár. She does not have well-proven tricks, she is present in all her pictures in terms of both the topic and the colour selection in such a way that she cannot be confused with anyone else, and her style can only be compared to herself even if we supposed that there is some criterion which should be followed by a painter. Her unique approach is reflected by her whole oeuvre.[79]

[79] Ibid.: p. 242 Endre Bálint writes here about Gedő's 1982 exhibition at the Dorottya Street Gallery of Budapest.

22. Ilka Gedő's Letter to Mikós Szentkuthy, 1984

I have never been a member of the European School[80]. I could not have been. When I started to draw in Szentendre as a schoolgirl aged 13-14, then Júlia Vajda[81], Margit Anna[82], etc., etc., all were ten years older than me, and they did not even talk to me. They were rebelling, young artists. I was a teenaged girl good at drawing. Not for a moment did they intend to include me as the youngest member of their group.

When after the war I went to the Ganz factory to make drawings, and shame of shames I was drawing after nature, and I showed my work to one member of the European School, he said: «Alas, you are not my fellow sufferer!» I was by no means doing the then obligatory depiction of the workers, but SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT, even though it was «figuration». My greatest regret has always been that Ernő Kállai has never seen my works. He would have explained this to them (and here I refer to the words above in capital letters). But they never even allowed me to get close to him. We have known each other only superficially. I wrote a letter to him that was full of despairing questions. He answered my letter. His letter gave me strength to follow my own way. / Young art historians make some vague attempts to identify me as belonging to the European School. They think I must have been a member of this group, even though not a single exhibition catalogue reveals any such information. From their vantage point it does not matter if one is 60, 70 or 80. But for me … You can easily imagine!

Budapest, August 21, 1984

[80] The European School (1945-1948) was a group of artists founded in 1945 by Imre Pán, Pál Gegesi Kiss, Ernő Kállai and Árpád Mezei, and existed for only four years because it fell victim to communist repression. The members worked to create a new artistic life, and they wanted to create an art that was in harmony with the European artistic trends. They supported avant-garde tendencies, especially surrealism. They wanted to represent expressionism, fauvism, surrealism and abstract art at the same time. The European School was related to the "Ecole de Paris" both in its name and in its universalist and tolerant attitude towards coexisting values.

[81] Júlia Vajda (1913–1982) painter and graphic artist

[82] Margit Anna (1913–1991) painter and graphic artist

23. Gedő' letter to Péter Surányi (details) [83]

Dear Péter,

I thought I would try to write the strange story of the poor Bíró Family. Maybe you can help me.

In September 1964, Endre said all of a sudden: I am curious to get to know how much extra revenue we have had this year. Ilka was surprised to see that Endre wanted to deal with this now, and she was quite stunned as Endre energetically scooped from the depth of his desk a box containing receipts, reached for his pen and started to write out the numbers. Did I really get so much in extra revenues and fees!

Ilka was so much surprised that she could not even utter a single word. For ages, she has only heard that Endre's salary is simply not enough to make both ends meet. Endre told me how lucky we were that we had extra revenues that allowed us to repay our debts. I was so much stunned and, somewhat later, so much surprised that I could not utter a sound, when Endre added up the extra outlays of the family. It turned out that, compared with the extra revenues, the sum of extra expenses is ridiculously low and it is hopelessly far away from the extra revenues.

In the months and, indeed, in the years that followed, Ilka, who has an inquisitive nature, attempted over and over again to get to know where the money was going and when and with what sort of methods Endre had been feeding the Unknown and Insatiable Stomach (U.I.S.), with one word Ilka was inquisitive and curious. But this curiosity was not a ceaseless. Ilka's curiosity plummeted when she discovered and understood a method whereby the money was made to disappear.

The money is needed for secret purposes. Maybe for cards, alcohol or gambling. If Endre were a drinker and in his sober moments were sorry about the squandered money, then I would steal from our money openly. I would have stolen money (would have channeled the money to secret places) even under our circumstances if we had not had enough money to properly feed our children, or to buy schoolbooks. This would have been a basically different situation. However, what happened to our family was "only" that we

[83] In the last four-five years of her life, Ilka Gedő has realized that she has created an important work without having received material recognition for it. In this mood of desperation, a long letter (actually a very detailed study) was written to Péter Surányi by Gedő to one of her husband's cousins. This letter has been preserved in the manuscript estate of Gedő as booklet no. 236 (a notebook with thirty densely handwritten pages).

had a different way of life than we could have had. We lived in pseudo poverty, living an unauthentic life style. Had we cheated the world based on a consensus, this would have been different.

It seems to me that our dishonest poverty resulted in my permanent bad conscience about not working and not making money which made me stupid: I forgot adding up sums that I learnt at elementary school.

Had it been otherwise, I could have asked myself the question: How is it possible that other married couples (where both husband and wife worked, and their combined salary was less than Endre's salary) had a higher standard of living than ours? I have never been dissatisfied with our life. I started to resent various "hardships", doing household work etc. only from that time on and IN RETROSPECT, when I realized that our modest life style was superfluous, with one word it was an absurd farce that could have been avoided. (…) There is an important thing here. With the exception of the first years of our marriage, Endre's extra revenues did not come from sweaty robot but from team work aimed at new inventions, writing textbooks, assessing PhD dissertations and being an examiner, etc. All these activities are part of having a prestigious university position. Just as a physician cannot refuse to attend a concilium, Endre couldn't refuse to participate in various job-related activities, even if his enthusiasm and commitment, depending on the given activity, was not the same. Endre had told me countless times that for him the writing of a dissertation assessment took as long as for me to cook the Sunday lunch. Endre also told me what a good thing is for him to get royalties from his inventions like the Reanal invention. Like interest revenue, royalties are steady flow of money. Granted, experimental work had to be done, but this was exciting and interesting.

But simultaneously, Endre kept complaining to his brother, Gábor[84] about "how much he had to work". This could be heard from aunt Emmi[85] and Gábor's responses suggesting that Endre had to work too much. Over the period of twenty years, never have they mentioned or made a gesture indicating that they knew: even though Endre had to support himself and three other family members, Endre was actually doing the same thing as he would do anyway when he would live alone

[84] Gedő's brother-in-law Gábor Bíró (1912-?)
[85] Mrs. Lipót Bíró Lipót, née Emma Gráber (1888-1973)

On the contrary, there was a general mood of lamentation about the "poor Bírós". Compared to Endre, who was a professional, doing what he liked, how much more pitiful is a person who has to earn his livelihood through drudgery and partial or full self-denial. I would have looked for a job, had Endre been forced to do the same a sacrifice of drudgery and self-denial as Jaki[86], as Bandi[87] (doing advertisement graphics), Béla Tábor[88] or Laci Horváth (who had not given up his profession, but, taking a second job, started a new shift after work). I would definitely have taken a job. (Seventeen years later, when I resumed artistic this dilemma was off the table.)

Once when Endre was crouching over his desk and studying his financial notes, Ilka pointed out that it was pointless to write down all the expenses and recommended to make records only of the extra expenses and extra costs. Ilka's proposal was optimistic and detached, it was devoid of any hostile intentions, which could hardly be explained with anything else that Ilka had simply got so much fed up with this nightmarish horror that at the time of making this proposal she felt only satisfaction over a wise suggestion.

Endre's exclamation was like a sudden slap in the face: "In no case should I be a fool to do that! Then you will ask me where all that money has gone! The letter goes on to describe the events of 1970-1971, the time of the Paris stay and comes to the conclusion that Endre Bíró was probably forced to make regular hush money payments to a close relative: "One day I said. The same goes on here in Paris as at home, where you recorded an amount lower than your actual salary, and in the week before we left for Paris you suddenly needed 2,000 forints and you said that that the money had mysteriously disappeared. Anyhow, I could still have a lot to say. Endre did not even bother to ask what I wanted to say. Overcoming his disgust over having to be confronted with such slander, he said courteously: this problem with the missing salary is some misunderstanding. The money that was gone missing before we went to Paris, seems to have been taken away by you. I will never talk to you. (...) I am not willing to add up the amounts that went missing after our return from Paris. (...) To be sure, I feel more desperation when on the sheet of a "large financial record" I discover that 12,000 forints are missing than when realizing that

[86] József Jakovits (1909-1994) sculptor, grapic artist
[87] Endre Bálint (1916-1985) painter, grapic artist
[88] Béla Tábor (1907-1902) philosopher, translator

500 forints are missing. And when you count, you would like to count exactly, but for good reasons the fate of a large part of the gone sums will never be revealed.

So in my imagination I build two holiday cottages at Lake Balaton. A beautiful one out of money that surely evaporated and an even more beautiful one from all the amounts that evaporated. And before I finish, I would like to mention that on the way home from Paris during our stopover in Vienna at aunt Vica, Endre, using the opportunity, when aunt Vica left the room, asked me not to say a word to anyone at home about the fact that his U.S. scholarship was raised from 8,000 to 11,000 dollars. Ilka promised to do so, and from then on Endre was so happy as a kid.

Now that I have broken my promise, I apologize that it took me 31 pages to do so.

24. Sándor Lukácsy's Exhibition Opening Speech, 1980[89]

Greco kept a good library, Pontormo kept live poisonous snakes in his flat. Giotto lent money at usury rates, Georges de la Tour from time to time beat her neighbours. One can wonder about such biographical details, yet it is not likely that these data will provide the key to the oeuvre. When speaking about Gedő, I nevertheless start with mentioning a few data, and the reason for this is that they are strange data.

This is the first time that Ilka Gedő presents her works to the public in a solo exhibition, although Gedő's artistic career did not start recently, but decades earlier, at times that in Hungary's history were not really favourable. Then, soon after 1945, harsh years followed during which Szentendre, a small town that had always been famous for artists, simply became just a geographical location. It could be due to this or due to internal reasons that Gedő stopped creating art for fifteen years. This is unusual and strange, but what is even stranger and is to be admired is that, after such a long intermission, she had the strength for a new start resuming artistic work. The psyches of artist, so it seems, are unfathomable.

Gedő started her career as a graphic artist. We see figures, quickly made portraits long necks, reminding us of Modigliani, grieving female faces, the clumsy figures of bewildered persons, longish descending lines that are not the means of analysis but with their dense multitude depict form. What is expressed here is compassion and anxiety. These early works are significant in themselves, and the inclinations manifested in them determine and energize Gedő's art.

After a long period of silence, she continued creating art where she stopped. She developed from a graphic artist into a painter. She seems to have participated in the movements of Hungarian painting maintaining a latent state of readiness that separated itself from representation without having rejected it through total abstraction. There remained remnants of representation in it, but these were transposed into a distant piece of memory, a reference or a quote in the same was as Klee did it. The various individual styles of this movement were elaborated by Dezső Korniss, Endre Bálint, Júlia Vajda and Oszkár Papp and also the unforgettable Lili Országh who can be amongst us now as Ilka Gedő made

[89] King St Stephen's Museum, Székesfehérvár, Hungary, 1980

a portrait poem about her. Ilka Gedő is part of this overall trend without her art being similar to any of these artists.

When we sum up the main and recurring features of the paintings, we thus create a phantom portrait which can be described as follows.

The base of the painting is like a dirty, shabby and forlorn wall. The greatest surface unit of the painting forms a frame around a window-like another field that is only somewhat smaller. On the surface of the "window" we can see human figures, more often plants that are presented without any dimensionality, like bodiless forms of ice.

From the seemingly dirty layer that in reality was created with great painterly care colours are slowly emerging, groping their way in the painting. The window-frame is, of course, somewhat shifted to the side, thus creating an ever-recurring asymmetry. To be sure, these figures are visual memory fragments: they are the transfiguration of figures. And these figures have a graphic character. We can see everywhere clear contours and line systems that have their own life.

Contours, asymmetries and colours: the works of Gedő are composed of these elements, and all these three elements have a unified message.

I believe that the works in the history of painting can be categorised according to the types of contour and the lines used by the painters. Let us take an example from the Middle Ages. In the pictures of P.N. master, the contours are continuous, smooth and calm. On the other hand, M.S. master forms his lines in a tormented way through zigzagged angles and in a fragmentary way. Ilka Gedő's paintings belong to the second category.

Gedő starts a line but it immediately becomes splintered and fragmented; the line etches itself the surface, creates wedge-like forms and sometimes even congested ice floes. The scraffito of our age is visible on a dirty wall; it is the scrafitto of an aggressive and turbulent age in which the artist can express the order of structure only in an asymmetrical manner. The colours are restrained and hiding as if they were under a ban. Seldom do they become harsh. The colours whisper as if they were begging for some harmony. The flowers in Gedő's paintings are not the flowers of free nature, they desperately want to stay in the ground, although they are exposed to rough winds. These flowers seem to be lonely even when they stand in groups.

We should not hesitate to point out: these paintings are the manifestations of a world view or, and I do not say this in a deprecatory manner, of a world intimation. This art does not pass definite verdicts. It tells us what world we live in an emotional and brooding manner. The poetry of these paintings is not the poetry of thoughts, but it knows everything about mood. The relatives of this mood are Odilon Redon without his visions of witches, and Lajos Gulácsy without Tuscany sceneries.

We should not believe, however, that everything has been told about this painting oeuvre, by trying to understand Gedő's world view. A painting is per defintionem or, if you wish, per analogiam, is a spectacle for itself. Behold! These are flowers: they all say "I am a flower!". Behold! These are curving lines! They all say: "I am a curving line." Behold these are yellows. The all say. 'I am yellow and I light a little bit."

These paintings tell us this. But what do we say? I use an old word here, a word that Kant and many other philosophers tried to explain with very complicated words, without having found final certainty. I use an ancient and mysteriously explicit word: these pictures are simply beautiful.

"Anyone who senses it is worth waiting, can wait," wrote the famous Hungarian poet, Endre Ady in one of his late poems. By the time the period of creating beauty arrived in Gedő's life, she had waited a lot. What gave her the strength to wait? In some of her paintings, among feelings of self-confidence, the motif of the colourful radiating Sun appears. Maybe it was these blissful colours that expected that an artistwould paint them.

It could surely have happened otherwise. In this case there would be one more unhappy person in this country, and we, the museum visitors and the general public, would be poorer. In fact, Hungary's national culture would be poorer.

25. Ilka Gedő about the Background of Her Study on Lajos Vajda[90]

Dear Juli,

I received your letter yesterday and I am in a hurry to answer it. After reading my study on Lajos Vajda, I have come to the following „conclusion": from the first paragraph of page 13 of this text, as you put it, this writing is really an „independent study", and should the literary journal *Somogy* want to publish it, then only this second part of my study on Vajda should be published. Without having read Stefánia Mándy's study[91], the first part of my study is hard to understand, and it may well happen that, one day, Stefánia Mándy's study will also be included in the Data Archive[92]. Right now, this is hopeless. They would never ever hand it over to anyone. Even if I swore I wouldn't show Mándy's study to anyone, not even the Data Archive for publication, they would never hand it over to anyone.

The reason for this is that Mándy's study attacks József Jakovits[93] and Endre Bálint[94] alleging that these two painters flee into "the world of instincts and the biology". Or that they "do not address the Thou". By saying this, the philosophers, Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor were referring to Ferdinand Ebner's Thou. Or that these artists "do not dig upwards", and thus I mentioned just two ideas born in the minds of Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor, and discussed by the circle, and also used in Stefánia Mándis study to reprimand Endre Bálint. The reason why Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor commissioned Stefánia Mándy to do this attack was that they did not want to be the ones who criticised Endre Bálint, based on philosophical, moral a religious considerations, should Endre Bálint and later József Jakovits become really recognized artist.

Endre Bálint also wrote an answer to this essay before I wrote my own response, which meant that I wrote my study after having read theirs, and while I was progressing I forgot more and more about the polemics. In Endre Bálint's study it was all different, he countered the attack with a counter attack. (I quote a sentence that has stuck in my

[90] This draft letter showing the date March 4, 1983, was found in the manuscript estate of the artist. The addressee of the letter is the art historian Júlia Szabó. We do not know if Gedő really sent her letter to Júlia Szabó.
[91] Cf. Section 16 of this book.
[92] Archive of the Institute of Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.
[93] József Jakovits (1909 – 1994) painter, grahic artist and sculptor.
[94] Endre Bálint (1914–1986) painter and graphic artist.

memory: «From your seven-league boots with which you want to approach reality the sack of memories is missing.»)

A public debate was planned on the exchange of letters between Mándy and Bálint. I wrote my contribution as a preparation for the debating session. I was waiting, waiting for a long time!

Finally, Béla Tábor and Lajos Szabó suddenly blurted out that my essay tainted the atmosphere...From that time on, not a single remark or conversation has taken place about these three essays. (Later on, Stefánia Mándy asked me whether I wanted to publish it, even though they knew that this essay of mine had been meant for the debating session.) A long time had to go by before I understood: no principles, no ideas, no issues of art history or of religious morality were at stake. They understood well that I did not aim to get praise from them for my enthusiastic views. I rather aimed at stimulating a joint discussion! And I also wanted to get a reply to my burning questions! Oh yes, in my case it took quite a while for the penny to drop. Now I see clearly that this was a sordid power struggle during which the opponents tried to manipulate and psychologically intimidate one another. To mention just one thing. One or two years before this essay of mine was born Lajos Szabó started to draw calligraphies. Maybe at the very same time when Endre Bálint was criticised for turning to the „instincts" instead of „digging upward". Maybe Lajos Szabó expected Endre Bálint to be frightened and to become discouraged in his artistic work and become instead a fan of Lajos Szabó's calligraphies.

Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor enjoyed a great deal of respect among the members of the circle, which should not be forgotten. And I was about more than 20 years younger than them.

In my essay, apart from my instinctive rejection of this dogmatic and narrow-minded tone, I refused to accept an absolute separation of Lajos Vajda from Klee and other figures of modern art that were alleged to have done the same as Endre Bálint. This separation took place in the same way referring to values metaphysics and religious morality that you could only understand if you had the opportunity to read the study of Stefánia Mándy.

The reason for this separation was not of a nature that it could have been discussed or talked about and this is why my essay tainted the atmosphere. This problem ceases to

exist the very moment when they decide that it is worth betting on a different horse. / In other words, it is completely understandable that both Endre Bálint and Béla Tábor wanted these writings to fall into oblivion. Endre Bálint wanted to forget this because it is not really something to boast about that one is in the closest friendship with those who used to condemn him by invoking principles of metaphysics and the holiest things. Béla Tábor wanted to forget this debate because he might have thought it inappropriate to make such a turn-about without «having exercised any self-criticism».

26. László Beke's Letter Written to Ilka Gedő, 1980

Budapest, 10 August 1980

Dear Ilka Gedő,

I apologise for contacting you with this letter. The direct antecedent to wiring this letter are your exhibition at Székesfehérvár and a longer conversation with Dániel.

I don't think that I can write a "review" for a newspaper about your exhibition, but I definitely want to reflect on the pictures. That is the reason why I have written this letter. I couldn't write earlier because my best friend has died recently. Sadly, I was under the shock of this tragedy, when I saw your exhibition.

First, I would like to mention that your studio exhibition back in 1964 was one of my best artistic experiences, and I wanted to connect to this earlier experience with viewing the Székesfehérvár exhibition. I was not disappointed. Back at the mid-1970s there was for years a note in my pocket diary warning me that I should see your pictures. Unfortunately, this visit to your studio never happened. I do not want to apologise for this very much, though it is my fault that the meeting did not take place.

I believe it is utterly pointless to draw any parallels between your art and the «contemporary» trends, because your art could have been born any time between 1860 and 2000. It draws its inspirations not from the «outside», but from the «inside», and its coherence and authenticity are derived from the relationship this art has with its creator— and this cannot possibly escape the attention of any of the viewers of these works.

With regard to the "external" influences, one thing is important: it is the motif of the artificial flowers whose original form I could not discover in your pictures, and I don't even know if they exist as models. Nevertheless, these artificial flowers are capable of structuring everything–man, flower, colour or line, etc.–into one geographical unit. There are no options for me to view these pictures other than to try to conjecture your ideas behind the artificial flowers; for me the artificial flowers are membrane sensitive and insensitive at the same time, that is between you and the viewer both as a protective shield and as means of communication.

The colours are also the same: they bear testimony about a lot of internal sufferings until they, get mixed, overlapping and intersected by lines, they get to the surface (the plane of the picture that the viewer sees). With regard to the "external" influences, one

thing is important: it is the motif of the artificial flowers whose original form I could not discover in your pictures, and I don't even know if they exist as models. Nevertheless, these artificial flowers are capable of structuring everything–man, flower, colour or line, etc.–into one geographical unit. There are no options for me to view these pictures other than to try to conjecture your ideas behind the artificial flowers; for me the artificial flowers are a membrane that is sensitive and insensitive at the same time. It is located between you and the viewer both as a protective shield and as means of communication.

It is the same story with the colours as well: they bear testimony to a lot of internal sufferings until they, mixed, overlapping and intersected by decorative lines, they get to the surface (the plane of the picture that the viewer sees). But these colours also want to hide the internal sufferings so that the viewer can be happy and can avoid thinking of dismal things. (The question remains, however, whether the viewer can succeed in this completely.) I can easily imagine that you are painting most of the time without worrying and completely indulging in lines and colours like a bouquet maker that concentrates her emotional world on the flowers to such an extent that while arranging leaves , petals and branches, she can identify herself with creation with a completey emptied mind. (This is the greatest thing in Zen meditation.)

It is amazing that the majority of the pictures have a multiple „framing" as if multiple canvases had been placed upon each other which do not overlap precisely. The upper layers cover the lower ones, and one can only guess what subjective messages are hidden from the inconsiderate eyes of the viewer. It is a kind of hiding that, at least, immediately reminds me to drill deep in spite of the "ban".

Among the paintings a small-sized painting showing a mask drew my attention in the middle of which a venomous red is glowing in a wicked way overwhelming the whole of the composition as if no one had managed to suppress it.

Now I get back to the drawings, in connection with which Júlia Szabó is right when she compares them with those of Giacometti. Important museum departments of drawings all over the world should be glad to have them.[95] They are excruciating, mysterious, they

[95] Gedős works in public collections: National Gallery, Budapest; King St. Stephen' Museum, Székesfehérvár, Hungary; Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; British Museum; Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf; The Jewish Museum, New York; Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York State; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; Albertina, Vienna; Metropolitan Museum of

only intimate physiognomy, the obvious reason being that independent line systems have become a thousand times more important on the self-portraits; they reflect the emotions much better than if these lines had rather served the depiction of a mental state through showing the face as it looks. These independently emerging bundles of lines are likely to be the forerunners of the intersecting lines of the later oil paintings.

However, the Table drawings series is the most wonderful. I remembered them from Gedő Ilka's studio exhibition back in 1965. If I had been in the place of Júlia Szabó[96] I would have included more of them in the current exhibition. (Reportedly, there are many more drawings in this series.) They are beautiful, subtly drawn, clumsy, excruciating, moving and fearsome. The lines showing these tables start out from the object and wither away in the lines. The table boards are heavy, yet they seem to be floating. (I apologise for using the banality: these lines are so moving, vulnerable and subtle as humans thrown into the world.) About the big-sized drawing on the left-side edge of which the traces of trying out a pen a separate study should be written.)

But I don't continue because I don't know what reception these sometimes personal lines will get. Please give my best regards and respects to Endre Bíró. I have read his translation of passages from Joyce's Finnegan's Wake that was published in *Magyar Műhely*.

With kind regards,

László Beke

Art, New York; Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany; Cleveland Museum of Fine Art, Cleveland, Ohio, MoMA, New York and Städel Museum, Frankfurt.

[96] The curator of the exhibition that László Beke is writing about.

27. Gedő Requests the Use of an Atelier at the Arts Colony of Szentendre, 1985

I, the undersigned, Ilka Gedő turn to the Management of the Visual Arts Section of the Arts Fund to allow me the use of one of the vacated ateliers at the Szentendre Artists' Colony.

My first artistic period is related to the town of Szentendre. Before I was admitted to the Academy of Fine Arts in 1945, I worked there under the guidance of Viktor Erdei. Before and during the war, I drew several hundred drawings and pastels in Szentendre.

In 1942 I took part in the exhibition *The People and Freedom* organised by the group of socialist artists. My drawings were also featured in a commemorative exhibition on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of this exhibition, and the Hungarian National Gallery bought three of my drawings.

In 1969-70 I spent a year in Paris. During this time the Galerie Lambert showed two of my works at a group exhibition.[97]

In 1974 I gained admission into the Arts Fund. Although my works are not widely known, they are recognised by art historians. In 1980 Márta Kovalovszky was the curator of my 1980 exhibition at the King St Stephen Museum of Székesfehérvár. This exhibition was reviewed and well-received in Hungarian press by Sándor Lukácsy and by Endre Bálint.[98]

The King St Stephen Museum of Székesfehérvár bought two of my oil paintings which are included in museum's permanent exhibition of modern and contemporary art.

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[97] This letter of July 1, 1970 of the Lambert Gallery to Gedő was preserved in the papers of the artist.

Madame
Ilka Bíró
95, Bd. Saint-Michel
Paris VI

Madame,

Ma Galerie organise en août septembre un accrochage d'été. Des amis m'ont parlé très favorablement de votre ouevre, je suis donc tout a fait disposé a vous inclure dans cette exposition. Voulez-vous m'apporter deux de vos toiles le plus représentatives de format moyen, ceci avant le I-er août? La Galerie est fermée dimanches et lundis et vous me trouverez plus facilement dans la matinée.

En attendant votre reponse, je vous prie de recevoir, Madame, l'expression de mes sentiments les meilleurs.

C. Romanowicz

[98] Sándor Lukácsy *Élet és Irodalom*, June 26, 1980 and Endre Bálint : „Életrajzi törmelékek" (Biographical Splitters) *Életünk*, 1981/2

In 1982 I had an exhibition at the chamber exhibition gallery of the Budapest Arts Hall. Ibolya Ury was the curator of the exhibition, and she wrote the preface to the catalogue. The exhibition reviews were positive.[99]

The István Ferencz Museum plans to have an exhibition of my works in the summer of this year at the Gallery of the Szentendre Artists' Colony.

According to plans, the exhibition to be opened in the winter of this year in Glasgow showing contemporary Hungarian art is going to feature some of my works.

I hope you will consider my request favourably, as for the continuation of my work, having an atelier in Szentendre, a town that has always played a great role in my career, would mean a great inspiration.

[99] András Bán in *Magyar Nemzet* (August 15, 1982) and Endre Bálint in (*Életünk*, 1983/1).

28. Ibolya Ury's Opening Speech, at the Artist's Posthumous Exhibition, 1985

We are standing here at Gedő's exhibition opening, and have not yet recovered from the shock of the news of Ilka Gedő's death. The significance of this exhibition is strengthened by the fact that the artist's funeral took place two days before. Originally, this exhibition would have been that of a living artist, but now it has irrevocably become a memorial exhibition, like that of Lili Országh. A similarity between the two artists can also be traced in the two artists' careers.

Ilka Gedő's artistic career is full of setbacks. The artist had the fate of a Hungarian artist exposed to the storms of history. The fact that there are breaks in her artistic career did not harm her artistic development in which there are no stalemates. Ilka Gedő's artistic development was instinctive and this helped her overcome her crises. In the period in which she stopped creating art, she pursued her studies of art history. She never became separated from painting. In her life, she had only three exhibitions. The exhibition that took place in 1980 was a touching and great experience for those who had the opportunity to see it.

This was followed by the exhibition at the Dorottya Street Art Gallery in Budapest in 1982. Endre Bálint wrote about this exhibition and Ilka Gedő's art: "She does not have well-proven tricks, she is present in all her pictures in terms of both the topic and the colour selection in such a way that she cannot be confused with anyone else, and her style can only be compared to herself even if we supposed that there is some criterion which should be followed by a painter. Her unique approach is reflected by her whole oeuvre."[100]

Let there be no doubt about it: this exhibition shows the works of an artist who does not depend on anything or anybody outside her internal forces. It is Ilka Gedő's painterly approach that makes her specifically unique and, as a result, her art is unlike anybody's else.

Both her paintings and drawings are figurative but they manifest strong emotions. Her self-portraits, portraits and still-lives display a unique approach. In her portrait and self-portrait paintings the persons appear in an abstract manner with grotesque features.

[100] Endre Bálint: *Életrajzi törmelékek* (Biographical Fragments and Recollections), Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1984, p. 242

Her meandering flowers, rose gardens are subtle manifestations of her soul. Their fine lyricism hides conflict and broodings. Tangled and irregular lines and doodles disrupt the peaceful quiet of the rose gardens and disturb calm of the soul

Strangely, painting styles or the style of given painters did not influence the art of Ilka Gedő. Her pictures emerged in response to intellectual movements, and her pictures are the manifestations of internal mental processes. Her habitude, her intellectual skills and education played the most important role in that. Her professional education is much more the result of instinctive impulses than a conscious plan.

The current exhibition gives an overview. The pastel drawings of the early 1940's graveyards with the old stone crosses intertwined with the branches of plants are the forerunners of the later development of her painting. Following a nearly twenty-year-interruption, she continued creating portraits, self-portraits and rose gardens and other topics becoming increasing abstract. Her mind was occupied by strange and contradictory topics. She painted the beauty of flower gardens several times. In the painting titled *Rose Garden with a Yellow Background*[101] we can see one big rose, as the triumph of beauty, among the many small flowers of the garden. *The March of Triangles*[102] is the funny play of ships depicted through splendid colours. One of the artist's most dramatic paintings is titled the *Man and Woman (Kidnap*)[103] which could be interpreted as a life and death struggle. In this period were born the figures reminding us of Giacometti, and pictures interwoven with tangled lines become more common. We can see a rope dance on the border area between life and death, and an insistence on beauty and goodness. We can see a hopeless and perhaps subconscious struggle against death.

Despite the tangled lines an internal structure prevails in the pictures that reflect intense emotions and bears witness to the artist's emotions. The artist kept her secrets but through her pictures she shows them to all viewers.

Over the past years, the paintings of Ilka Gedő has reached maturity and, sadly, they close her career.

[101] *Rose Garden with a Yellow Background,* 1975–76 , Oil on canvas, 56.5 x 60 cm, item no. 95 in the list of oil paintings
[102] *The March of Triangles*, 1981, Oil on canvas, 84 x 75 cm, item no. 129 in the list of oil painting
[103] *Man and Woman (Kidnap),* 1982 , Oil on canvas, 80 x 66 cm

29. Endre Bíró: Ilka Gedő's Studio, As It Was Left at the Time of Her Death, 1985[104]

Three of the four walls of the approximately five by six metre living room have doors or windows, the fourth has no apertures. A home-made partition cobbled together from cardboard is joined vertically to this wall, dividing this part of the room into two sections, one served as a sleeping cubicle and the other smaller one, facing the windows, was Ilka's work area. The latter is effectively shut off from the rest of the room by her easel.

I shall begin by recounting all those things fastened onto the walls, from the door leading out of the sleeping cubicle scanning rightwards to the partition, and so on. A peculiar montage hangs on the door itself. A photograph of an owl sitting on its nest from some popular scientific magazine. A photograph of an elderly woman who once played a role in the art-political arena, is stuck onto this. She is giving an interview and resembles the owl astonishingly. This is partly due, amongst other features, to her widely stretched fingers standing out from her gesticulating arms, and partly to the shadows around her eyes. This is Ilka poking fun and exploiting her physiognomic sensitivity. A small section of the wall near to the door comes next. Three child's drawings can be seen there, made by Ilka's granddaughter at various periods of her life, and an aquarelle from the hands of our son David at about six or seven years of age. Then comes Ilka's self-portrait in pastel from 1948-49, signed and with a passepartout. This pastel was salvaged from among those that were torn up. Originally it was much larger, and the passe-partout helped to enclose these particular fragments into a well-composed picture. On the next wall there is another of David's childhood paintings, a aquarelle on a black background. Above it is a page from the *Vajda Album* with Ilka's handwriting noting, "4. *Still-life with a Plate and a Bird*, 30 x 20 mm, pencil, 1936". It is followed by a still-life of three carrots and two eggs on a kitchen table, it was painted in Puscsino using a mixture of techniques, signed "1976, Gedő Ilka". A small pastel comes next, *Júlia's Garden*. Hanging from the light switch is an ancient postcard of the hot pool of a very down-at-heel, dusty, little Hungarian spa town. The women lined up for the photograph are wearing wide hats and swimming costumes right up to their necks. Another drawing by our son David from his early childhood is pinned up,

[104] First published in: István Hajdu–Dávid Bíró: *The Art of Ilka Gedő, Oeuvre Catalogue and Documents*, Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2003

a figure the size of a playing card with the caption "hairdresser". Next to that is a half-torn postcard reproduction of a classical stained-glass window in St Jacob's Church at Gouda, *Mary with the Child* by Dirc Crabeth, a sixteenth-century Dutch master. The sender wrote that it resembled Ilka. Another characteristic Ilka Gedő montage follows on, a postcard reproduction, Utrecht ca. in the early sixteenth century, a statuette *Madonna and Child on a Donkey* is glued onto a sheet of paper. The writing is illegible except that it is Utrecht and ca. 1510 or 1520. Stuck to the same sheet is a poor amateur photograph of Dani, David and one of their elder cousins. Next to this hangs a reproduction of a realist painting. I do not know why it was put there. Its title is: *The German Delegates Boarding the Queen Elisabeth, on 17 November 1918*. It seems to be a graphic representation of a major event from the cease-fire negotiation on Armistice Day. The interesting thing about it is that in the best part of the illustration chapter 6, verses 23 and 24 of the Book of Daniel is visible copied out in three versions: the same piece in English, in French and in German, in Ilka's handwriting with easily legible but minute letters. Perhaps she made this composition when our son Dani was in hospital in a rather dire state. Further on, pinned to the partition, is a piece of blackened photographic paper with an abstract sketch stuck onto it, I could not say of what. On its reverse is some writing that has become completely illegible. There could have been some superstitious or mysterious connection, as with the quote from the Book of Daniel. This is succeeded by a reproduction of a classical Japanese wood carving, the picture was taken from my Japanese colleague's Christmas greeting. Above, along the top of the partition is David's large child's drawing of a bus with passengers, drawn with the greatest naïveté. Below there is a newspaper cutting, again stuck to blackened photographic paper. It seems to be an advertisement for a book *Der heilige Wildhund* [The sacred greyhound] and a beautiful photographic portrait of a greyhound. Beside it are more pictures of animals and a newspaper cutting from the magazine *Élet és Tudomány* [Life and science]: "Starlings often feed their chicks with insects picked from the hide of cattle. For the article entitled "Magatartás az életközösségben" [Behaviour in life communities]. Photograph by Ervin Somfai." Below, but glued to it, is a bird feeding its chicks. Then there is a postcard of Blankenberg, its rudimentary colours obviously from the turn of the last but one century, or even earlier. Below it is a tiny toad in a greatly enlarged hand that is cosily peeking out from between the thumb and the index finger, sticking its

legs out. Next, there is "*Le cheval dans le plain* [The horse on the plain], 1867, aquarelle". This picture might have been stolen from a book. It is a heartbreaking picture of a solitary and emaciated horse standing beside a puddle. I do not know its creator. Below that is a reproduction preserved in a rather tattered state. If my memory serves me well, it is a drawing by the Austrian expressionist Kubin. Then comes a beautiful drawing of a very weary wolf in Indian ink. It is not out of the question that it might be an unusual drawing by George Grosz. Next to it, a newspaper cutting from the West German weekly *Die Zeit*, a peasant holding a rooster in his hand with the whole article beneath it, entitled "*Der Hahn darf nicht krähen*" [The cock is forbidden to crow]. It relates the story of a court case in which neighbours took legal action against somebody for breach of the peace because of their cockerel, which was ordered to refrain from crowing. Above are more pictures of animals, this seems to be mainly an animal wall: a completely banal picture of three lion cubs from a zoo, obviously rather sweet. Beneath it is an ancient statue, I am incapable of determining what it might be. Again something from *Die Zeit*: a woman is lying on a couch, she has a halo and is holding a lute. Besides and a little above this is a colour picture from the magazine *Élet és Tudomány* showing a beautiful wild donkey at the foot of some giant rocky mountains in a stone desert, looking straight into the camera. A fantastic shot. Above, a rather unusual child's drawing by Daniel, showing nothing but a beaming sun and the sky. Below the wild donkey, there is a another shot, again from *Die Zeit,* of a jumping hare at the crossing next to no-man's land at the Berlin Wall near Heine Straße. This 'no man's land' is so deserted that hares settled there. Beneath it, stuck to the same paper is a beautifully drawn portrait of Heine, I do not know by whom. Two small life drawings of our son Dani slightly obscure the Heine portrait, simply due to lack of space. The drawings were made in the gardens of a clinic when Dani was recuperating. I believe she drew them on the small pages of a notebook as we were talking. They are sketches in their initial stage. Below that is another picture of the Berlin Wall, a perennial theme in *Die Zeit,* the Wall stretches alongside a cemetery, barbed wire with a high voltage cable, and on the other side kneel two gravestone angels. Still on the wall of animals, but further along, and again from *Die Zeit,* is a spotted big cat, perhaps a jaguar or a leopard, on the publication of a book on infant animals. The mother with her four cubs are, of course, charming. Below is a large picture, a section of a herd of zebras living in the wild. Below that is another animal

picture, a 48mm tall Shetland pony with her foal. Above it is the renowned Egyptian statue of a cat with her six kittens. Above the zebras, there is a photograph of a Greek amphitheatre, and above that the great Pyramid of Gizeh with the famous giant sphinx. Above and a little to the left, is a piece of calligraphy in pencil by Lajos Szabó, in a very poor state. A couple of figures representing János Vitéz and Iluska [John the Valient]crocheted from colourful yarn. There was a period when Ilka's mother made such figures. Next to that is the last piece on the partition, a large article pinned up in its entirety, again from *Die Zeit*, entitled "Drama mit Puppe" [Drama with doll]. The article was published on the re-launch of Kokoschka's correspondence. The article is decorated with Kokoschka's drawing of Alma Mahler. The article describes how Kokoschka, "in connection" with his love for Alma Mahler, withdrew to a solitary place somewhere in the Alps—this engaged Ilka a lot, she had read about it in books on Kokoschka. He took a doll with him, a life-size female figure. He had had it made by a seamstress with the greatest of care and there was an extended correspondence about how it should be done. I believe, he used that doll as a model on a few occasions. Ilka was astonishingly preoccupied with it.. I somehow felt her curiosity to be disproportionately strong in relation to the interest level of the story. It crops up over and over again in a book on Kokoschka, then here in *Die Zeit*, and elsewhere. Perhaps the problematique of representation versus non-representation offers an explanation for her preoccupation with the story.

Approximately two meter high shelves fixed to cabinets run along the studio in almost every possible place. Ilka kept her finished pictures on them, mostly carefully wrapped in newspaper in order to protect them from dust. On the edges of the shelves, where they were within reach, various 'picture notes' were also pinned up, which also require discussion. It should also be mentioned that the current colour plates were stood on the ground where the walls were vacant (for colour plates see footnote 29 in "Recollections"). Just now, there are many more of them in the studio than usual. All of them are here. Normally, the ones she was not using she kept elsewhere.

I move on: right next to the door to the bathroom there is a photograph of the mime artist Marcell Marceau in make up. We saw him perform in Paris and this picture was taken from the programme. Sections from this booklet crop up elsewhere, too. Directly above Marceau, practically pinned to the door post, is a watercolour by a child, one of David's

many seven headed dragons. Next to it on the wall, a self-portrait in pencil from the old Fillér street days, the paper has yellowed, but the drawing is clearly visible. In the picture she is sneaking a glance into a mirror from the corner of her eyes, it carries a hint of humour in that, along with the posture, it reminds me of Kmetty's pretty little self-portrait drawings in Indian ink. Perhaps not even the actual technique, but the topic itself. Behind it there is a rather fantastic child's drawing, actually by our grandchild. It is a bit confused, some kind of a wind-mill-like object, a child's drawing where we cannot know what it intends to represent. On the wall next to that there is a piece of one of those drawings torn up in her fit of depression, a pastel from Fillér street showing the kitchen window with clothes drying on the ceiling clothes-airer. Later Ilka carefully stuck it to a background, complete with a protective paper over the top. On this section of the wall, on the edge of the top shelf, there is a playful sketch from among those that Ilka used to enjoy making whilst resting, glued onto a music pad. It is a strongly stylised head at play with an animal, below is written "Give us a kiss!". I have no idea why that is stuck there, it is not particularly exceptional, I suspect she found it funny so she pinned it out. Beside that is another fragment of a pastel self-portrait salvaged after being ripped up—evidently, she could not find the other parts, most likely they were thrown out. It is perhaps interesting in that it dates from the same time as her self-portraits when pregnant. The only attempted oil surviving from Fillér Street comes next, also torn to pieces. There were others but not many. This one depicts the corner of a room, slightly after the style of Van Gogh, with light colours, totally cut up, but with all the pieces together. Next, a painting from Pompei, *The Birth of Adonis*. Further over, on the other side of the tiled-stove there is a throng of objects hanging one above the other. Furthest back is the poster from the memorial exhibition for Béla Veszelszky. The poster contains a highly characteristic and beautiful portrait photograph. Veszelszky was a close friend, and this poster caught both of our heartstrings when we spotted it. The nail it is fixed with has something attached to it that has become completely unrecognisable. I cannot even identify it. Perhaps a child's drawing, it must have been in chalk, for protection it has been lacquered and is mounted on a piece of cardboard. Next, a terrible montage from *Die Zeit*: an advertisement for an encyclopaedia or something of that ilk, with the caption "*Die klügsten köpfe der Welt*" [The world's cleverest heads] with the portraits of fourteen "great heads", beginning with

Goethe and ending with Einstein. Among the fourteen there are Aristotle, Werner von Braun, Albert Schweitzer and George Washington. Two notes are stuck on it. One is in pencil in Lajos Szabó's handwriting, a timetable with various famous people's birth dates, such as Freud, Jung (remaining blank), or "Béla Zalai, 1883-1915". Next to it, there is a fragment, a sheet torn in half, some calligraphy, perhaps from Lajos Szabó's hand. The Veszelszky poster is only partially visible, it is mostly covered with these other things. There is also a speculative game by Ferenc Ficzek here, one of the young titans of the Pécsi Műhely [Pécs Workshop]—Ilka was not fond of them. It is a reproduced graphic showing a chair with painting tools, a book, turpentine or some other glass pot, and tools for reproduction, a paint roller. Next to it is a chair in various distortions, crumpled or tortured to a greater or lesser extent and drawn into twelve small blocks. Ilka seems to have used this sheet for the study of how different whites are light-proof. She painted different white patches on it and scratched on "Hungarian Zink", "Hungarian Titan". An arrow leads to a third patch with the writing "Rembrandt Zink" in pencil. Next to the Veszelszky poster there are two pictures that bear witness to Ilka's enthusiasm for animals. One of them is a colour picture of a small bearded animal, a rodent from *Élet és Tudomány*. The other one is a photograph from some newspaper with a caption in Hungarian saying, "This is fantastic!" It is a sheet of ice with a flock of penguins en masse. Left from there, graphic reproductions have been pinned up—not out of flattery. One of them is a something in colours, with one of Ilka's automatic playful attempts glued onto it. These graphic attempts were partly dripped, partly quite interesting shapes and formations in paint on squared paper onto which was glued, back to front so that it could not be seen, is that horribly distasteful drawing *The secret of the Universe—a study trip to Pompei*, a 'cartoon story' drawn by poor old János Major and published in some underground paper—a disgusting horror with a 'mamma' sitting on a privy, and so on. Further serial graphics appear, displayed with the same antipathy. I cannot establish whose they are. A terribly geometric tile-like something, then a somewhat wittier non-geometric black and white something that I find not completely uninteresting. It is hard to say what Ilka might have thought about these. Most of them were held in front of her eyes as deterrents, but it is not certain that all of them had that same function. This last one is also unattributed. They come from some album, perhaps the one we bought in the Józsefváros Gallery, where artists from the Pécsi Műhely

and others who were fond of geometry exhibited. Walking further, next to the half-door leading to the other room, there are two small child's drawings. These have an interesting story behind them. My Russian friends were visiting us with their two daughters. The younger one must have been about six or seven, the elder about ten or eleven. We took them to Gerbaud Café, and they started arguing over some business about an ice-cream. The smaller one begun to cry and Ilka gave her a piece of paper and a biro to draw with. First she drew mice, but she also drew a girl figure, twice and in a very similar manner. Ilka claimed that it had a remarkable resemblance to her elder sister. She reckoned that it was intended to be a caricature of her sister, a kind of revenge. Perhaps I can be easily convinced, nevertheless, after a while I also started to see how it wanted to be a portrait. Above the two child's drawings, still on the same door post, there is a Chinese picture from *Élet és Tudomány*, an old drawing, *Battle with the catfish, the source of earthquakes*. It is the illustration to an article about earthquakes and animals. A little above is another cutting from *Die Zeit*, a classical bust of Hannibal with a cutting underneath it—this is the key to a puzzle "*Er war es*" [He was it]. The historical description offers a clue to who it is.

Proceeding to the other side of the door that leads to our middle room, from top to bottom. At the very top there is a reproduction of *Moonlight Drive in Athens* from the Csontváry album. To the right from there is one of Ilka's carefully gridded sketches, a group of stylised girls (or perhaps boys) that was done on an envelope and prepared for painting. Next comes another *Die Zeit* cutting, an Alfred Kubin drawing which is rarely published in Kubin albums, *Der Krieg* [The war]. What it illustrated in *Die Zeit* is irrelevant. Next to that, there is a drawing by our granddaughter Zsuzsi, which is noteworthy because she drew an tiny, elongated little house in the corner of a large sheet of paper. I think children often do this because they get frightened by the size of the paper. Left of that, there is another child's drawing labelled "Ili, 1931", obviously drawn by Ilka. It is perhaps interesting because she tried to render it transparent by soaking it in drying oil. There was a period when Ilka experimented with paper that she had soaked in oil and thus made transparent, then with the aid of a projector she enlarged the pictures and drew them up. She seems to have began to draw this one up as well. Beneath the door there are two photos of our two sons. A colour picture of Dani in the *Jardin des Plants* taken, I believe, by Pál Wiener. The background is a giant turtle in the museum of prehistoric animals. Next to David's photo is

an amateur picture I took myself; below it there is a small postcard-sized drawing of a Parisian street by Margit Gráber. Beneath it, stuck low down is a small spontaneous sketch by Ilka, representing a devil's head and someone's profile. On the right is a drawing from her very early childhood. It is the size of a playing card with a naked woman and child, the woman is offering some fruit to the child, but it could also be Adam and Eve where Adam has emerged as a minute child-sized figure. Further down, glued to the door post and partly to the door is another spontaneous drawing on a piece of paper painted over with paint. There is another spontaneous drawing next to it, and below that a colour photograph of our granddaughter Zsuzsi. Then there is an apple and a pear drawn after nature with great care, I do not know who did it, it is certainly a child's drawing, but one of a different age than Zsuzsi is in the photo. It is drawn with coloured pencil and the pear is a pear-shape and yellow, and the apple is an apple-shape and red. Next to that, half hidden behind various dried flowers, lavender and the like, there is a Csontváry reproduction. If I am right, it is the *Maroccan Teacher* where a bearded figure holds a book in his hand. Another little piece of paper that Ilka has drawn on is stuck to the same pile. It has something illegible written on it, which means I cannot fathom out what this drawing of basically stick-figures 'represents'. I step further along and arrive in the densest area—Ilka's desk. A tatty old thing, which we once bought at the Ecseri second-hand market for something like fifty forints. On one of the drawers there is some writing "state awards". She kept the various refusals she received in there, as she was denied admission into the Fine Arts Foundation and other such responses to applications. There is a photograph below the aforementioned drawing that she had cut out from some newspaper. It shows giant portrait drawings above a terribly messy work desk. Ilka must have read in a book on Artaud that he was a serious drug addict and this picture was taken in a sanatorium room during one of his stays in the detoxification unit. Again there is a reproduction, above the desk on the left, a still-life by Pertov-Vodkin, a table laid with a teapot, and with a dog peeking at the table from a corner with only his head visible. As an animal lover Ilka is likely to have been touched by that. I should note that because on my official journeys I was always talking about my artist wife, we have many Soviet books of reproductions. My Soviet scientist acquaintances and friends quite quickly came to understand our taste and they brought us relatively modern and untendentious fine art books. I shall keep the

different albums given to us by these people that Ilka studied in detail. She was well-acquainted with Mikhail Vrubel, Viktor Borisov-Musatov, Benoist or Isaak Levitan. A postcard of a well-known work by Matisse is stuck behind the Petrov-Vodkin picture. Above that there are different sections from the Marceau programme mentioned above: various faces are glued chaotically onto silver paper to form a montage. Further to the left there is some squared paper with different browns and yellows as paint tests, paint patches marked with tube names such as "Newton, Marsh Yellow", "Rembrandt, Raw Sienna", and so on. At the bottom comes another sketch again depicting various animals staring at each other. A reproduction from the seventies by an artist called Talcott is to the left of that. A very simplistic representation, something like a monochrome paint test. Again, half hidden below that is one of the young Dávid's frieze-like drawings. It is a rather rudimentary depiction of a camp with tents and people. It is hardly visible because a reproduction showing Leonardo drawings covers it—Ilka bought an issue of an old Hungarian magazine on art from a second-hand bookshop which was full of such drawings, this presumably came from that. The writing is in English "Measured profile and sketches for the battle of Anghiari". A fantastically drawn figure on a horse, a face with its construction drawn into it showing various structures. A Levitan landscape is on the left partly covering David's aforementioned frieze. Ilka marvelled at this picture. She liked Levitan a lot and she particularly adored this picture. It is awash with melancholia. In actual fact the lighting is a sunny spring or autumn morning and yet the picture somehow oozes this great despondency. Above is a photograph of an angel from the choir of Cologne Cathedral. She was also very fond of this picture, she even glued it to the middle of a large paper background primed black. Next to it there is a small drawing by Ilka from the old Fillér street days or even earlier, showing her mother sleeping. Then an aquarelle from a child's hand, not really representing anything. Our granddaughter Zsuzsi started something, she obviously tried to make a shape, perhaps a table, but became completely confused. Left of that, next to the window, comes the last piece around the desk area. A reproduction of Leonardo's *Last Supper* where the structure lines of the perspective are drawn into the very detailed construction complete with numbers and lettering, it is obviously an etching that has been stolen from a book. The shelf above the desk offers a great collection of all sorts of things. A drawing in coloured pencil stuck onto a piece of dark metallic paper, perhaps

she made it on the occasion of a common excursion or holiday. When on holiday, she used to take colour pencils and used only those. Next, on a small piece of paper, there are two groups of matchbox size stick figures marching (or fighting) in a frieze-like formation, stuck onto a grey background. There is an A4-sized picture drawn in pale red and blue pencil with very faintly visible female figures and the title *Witches at Dawn*. Left, something that evidently started as a paint test using greens and whites. She picked it out, perhaps because it is drawn full of shapes of birds and human figures. Further on there is an extract from a signed pastel still-life from Alsóerdősor right after the War. She must have chopped it off from the bottom of a larger picture. She probably felt it was particularly good. It shows apples and onions. Perhaps she intended to use it on a further piece. One of the fruit items is traced out in Indian ink. Next to that, there is a peculiar thing, the eyes of an old self-portrait in pencil, peeking through a small window cut in the middle of a piece of paper itself scribbled over with pastel shapes. Only the eyes. They beam an intense look. Left from there are two pictures, half covering one another, a spontaneous drawing that she evidently started to grid for magnification. It has a great many birds and heaps of small devil figures. Further on again are the remains of a pastel torn off from a version of *Kitchen Window with Drying Clothes*, the result of this particular destructive act was later regretted. She thought so highly of it that she put rice paper in front of it as protection (which has some irrelevant scribble on it in Indian ink). There is a lower row as well, an extensive and detailed drawing from David with a lot of figures that form a march and with the caption "Devils go to war". Behind that is a postcard reproduction of a work by Max Ernst, and below are two little figures by Ilka's mother glued onto a small piece of paper that I have described in "The Recollections". Ilka kept them mounted and wrapped in foil for protection. Behind that is another postcard, a Miro reproduction, and Gráber Margit's handmade postcard is beside it—something she had never done, or at least not with my knowledge—a completely non-figurative sketch forms the picture on the postcard.

Finally I step into the corner where Ilka used to work. First: there are a number of things I would like to enumerate on the easel itself. Various postcards from an old issue of *Acta Historiae Artium* obtained from a second-hand bookshop. Among them are numerous Leonardo drawings that Ilka cut out, some are stuck and others pinned up. *Study for the battle of Anghiari* and for the *Angel of the Annunciation*. There is an illustration for Dante

by Botticelli, a drawing to a line in the section "Purgatory". Then a postcard with an Egyptian relief, a well-known scene with a man playing the harp. There are also various mysterious pieces of paper on the easel, there are papers Dávid worked with in his student years, a line here and there from *Midsummer's Night Dream* in both Hungarian and in English. There is a reproduction of another relief *Die Vertreibung aus dem Paradies* [The expulsion from paradise], something from the Middle Ages. She wrote out its original size, glued it onto cardboard and pinned it out. Well glued to the side of the easel is a (perhaps Roman) mask, the tragic mask from the double mask symbol of the theatre of antiquity.

I shall continue with the other side of the partition described above. A colour pattern plate rests against it. An illustrated report is pinned onto it. "Ady statue for Debrecen", which is amusing because the statue is only slightly larger than life-size and natural size people are moving around it whilst it is being erected. I will describe the screen itself from left to right. An Ilona Keserű reproduction, with its size noted on it. It was a supplement to an issue of *Mozgó Világ* [World in motion]. Next to that is another newspaper cutting: Leonardo da Vinci, *Zeichnung einer Luftschraube* [Drawing of a helicopter] from *Die Zeit*. Then a caricature from *Élet és Irodalom* [Life and literature], György Kemény, a graphic artist, slightly mimicking Márta Lacza's mannerisms, or rather her themes, has drawn an obese female derriere with the remark, "What can you see, Lacza?". It has no head. Ilka viewed it with glee, she hated Lacza's works with a vengeance. The animal theme crops up again, a newspaper cutting about an Alsatian dog after the great Italian earthquake, one of those which are used to sniff out survivors among the ruins. It is another example of Ilka's sharp pantomimic sensitivity. The photograph is indeed worthy of preservation—the dog is visible from behind in a foreshortened view, but it can clearly hardly contain its excitement. Next to that there is a box from our travels in the Soviet Union, from Pushchino, a five-kopeck souvenir that probably once contained semolina because a small child can be seen on it spooning out of a large bowl. Its naive and old-fashioned style caught Ilka's attention so she kept it. The little girl with a ribbon appears twice. Beneath it there is a sheet from Dani from the time he studied cuneiform writing, it is entirely and beautifully filled with these signs with a newspaper cutting pinned onto it saying "The trial of the picture thieves has started". Next is another newspaper cutting, a critique, apparently protesting against a newly fashionable linguistic term, "Waiting for a wire". Ilka was interested in the sly,

twisting and twirling language recently applied in the press "not one straight word can be uttered". She occasionally collected these articles and underlined the expressions she disapproved of. Then there is another sheet taken from David's school pad with a collection of dates from his history studies, for example "Bastille, 14 July 1789", "Capturing of the Bastille", and so on. Then a child's drawing depicting the body of Christ, given to us by Júlia Vajda and created by her son Iván in his early teenage years and even labelled "IN-RI". Next to it there is a photograph of one of Ilka's nieces in Israel. Above it there is a row of photographs of a statue from the Middle Ages or Early Renaissance from the Naumburg Cathedral "Die Verleugnung des Petrus" [The denial of Peter], a gorgeous relief. Beneath it is a graphic work by Imre Szemethy cut out from *Élet és Irodalom*. Then a cutting from some German colour postcard of Ronald Reagan. Below, a newspaper report is attached concerning some outrageous running-over incident at a zebra crossing where the perpetrator is being rescued, without the name being given, she even underlined it. Ilka was readily incensed by things like that. After Reagan, there are cuttings from *Die Zeit* about some neo-fascist movements. Below it is some paper with a small drawing by Ilka. It is a chaotic sketch with a figure and a German marriage broker advertisement glued on top with a long Goethe quote woven into it that begins [You, too, have the right to happiness] and refers to Goethe. Then there is a child's drawing. Here and there are some colour patterns pinned up with some notation, but I shall not go into detail about them. There is some more child's scrawl. A photographic reproduction of some Lajos Szabó calligraphy is glued onto the sheet. A part of the child's drawing is astonishingly similar to it. Further on is an elephant cut out from a children's book. Ilka took it from an aunt who was about to throw it out. It was a book about animals for children from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century. It is a rather rudimentary and badly drawn elephant defined in four languages, in Gothic letters in German, Cyrillic, French and, I think, English. This is the end of the section of the screen above the upper shelves of the shelf unit. A three-story imitation baroque shelf unit stands in front of the screen. Ilka's tubes are spread out on that with labels of the names of the tubes here and there painted on the shelves themself. Unbelievable as it may seem, she was able to find everything in this huge mess. I shall enumerate the things pinned on the shelf unit's lower parts and onto the edges of those things. There is a newspaper cutting about an East German woman animal trainer with five

vast horses where, at the climax of the show, the horses are standing on their hind legs. Then a child's drawing with the label "Hungarian shepherd", a rather rudimentary drawing by Ilka in coloured pencil on a small piece of paper—her mother had kept some of her very early drawings. Next, there is an etching and some newspaper cuttings, "The Vidáts Agricultural Machine Factory in Pest, at the end of the last century". Then there is a colour photograph of Ilka's niece and her two daughters in Israel. A monochrome black and green Bacon self-portrait reproduction from a *Quinzaine Littéraire* issue which featured an interview with Francis Bacon. A small sketch by Ilka is stuck on it from the time when she used masks as models. Then the pictures *The Mask and Orange*, *Two Masks* and so on, which had several versions. Further on there is an ancient picture postcard, a photograph from some rather barren place. Then again a *Die Zeit* cutting "Rilke's portrait". Then a large newspaper photograph of a long-eared owl stuck on paper. I shall proceed a row down along this side of the easel. She completely papered the sheet of cardboard that forms the back of the shelf unit with pinned-up things. There is a Klee reproduction and a Gulácsy reproduction, a female head. Above it, there is another picture of the Berlin Wall. We had seen the Berlin Wall and Ilka had given it a lot of thought. To the left from there is a Vajda reproduction, I know not where from, perhaps the cover of a Vajda book. Below there is a newspaper cutting of Gromyko meeting the Pope? Left from there, another newspaper cutting where a bulldozer is destroying old buildings somewhere and new buildings are being built behind it. Above that is another newspaper cutting with a Jew in a prayer mantle praying on a boat. It is from a Czech paper because something is written underneath it in Czech. Above that, van Gogh's *Café Terrace on the Place du Forum,* a street scene of a café terrace from the exterior. Then comes a Suzdal reproduction, an icon with Ilka's handwriting in French "le Staretz, XIII c." Above is another newspaper cutting of a Klee drawing. On the left there is a black and white reproduction of van Gogh's self-portrait of when he had cut off his ear. Above it is Rubinstein's hand on a newspaper cutting with his photograph, a picture of the pianist as a greybeard at ninety. Next, is a reproduction of a (?) Toulouse-Lautrec drawing from a newspaper. This was the upper row.

Now come the things that are stuck onto the edge of the second row. On one of the bars on the left is a well-known (?) Monet drawing of a man and a woman. Below is another reproduction of a Leonardo drawing, and below that is a colour postcard, a cutting

of Mária Antalffy's graphic of a Jewish man and a little boy. It is drawn in a rather stylised way and of rather doubtful value, a suspicious something with stylised Hebrew writing. Next to it is another picture of "Ilike" at about seven or eight, in her swimming costume at Lake Balaton, next to which there is a small photograph of me holding my glassesAlongside it is a photograph from olden times showing me and my two children. When I had a car, I took them and their friend out on an excursion in the suburbs of Pest. I took the photo of the children there, in front of the car. Left of that is another photograph of Dani and Ilka, next to which is another one of the above-mentioned three children. Then there is another postcard "Lugano, May 1914". After which is a reproduction of a painting that Ilka pinned out for its awfulness, a picture representing Emperor William I before sending the declaration of war, painted with a photographic realism. He is praying in his parents crypt and contemplating about whether or not he was doing the right thing. The date reveals that this is before the 1870 Franco-Prussian War.

On the partition, between the first and the second rows, there are a number of other things. There is a postcard on top of two rather worn drawings by Suzanne Valadon of her son Utrillo from the same profile view, but at two quite different ages. In one he is a small child and in the other an aged alcoholic. Right from these is an article by Oskar Kokoschka entitled "*Dirnen Mörder und Blumen*" [Whores, murderers and flowers] along with a reproduction of one of his pictures taken from *Die Zeit*. Next to that comes a photograph, seemingly from *Élet és Tudomány*. It apparently shows frightened monkeys cringing in the corner of their cage. After which is a completely tattered little piece of calligraphy made by our friend Kotányi at the time when, after Lajos Szabó, everyone did a little calligraphy. Then there is a newspaper cutting, a photograph of the Berlin Wall under the title *An der Mauer* [At the wall]. There were certain places in West-Berlin from where it was possible to peek into the 'eastern zone'. Partially obscuring this cutting there is something arty with the title *Anschlag bei Nacht* [Assassination at night]. It must come from the time when in the West the graffiti fever started spreading. Certain barren parts of the city were 'decorated'. On the picture there is a large figure painted on a fire wall with an aerosol spray, reminiscent of Csontváry's work. One row down the following things are pinned up: a piece of a colour test of various oranges and cadmiums marked in biro or paint "Windsor Cadmium Orange", etc.; a Chinese croquis sketch from the Guimet Museum, a wonderful

little figure; the next colour test of different yellows and oranges is painted on a postcard (of a goods train, which is not really important since she used it because it is a high-quality printing paper); a very old postcard follows, of some spa with a wooden structure and ladies in the swimming costumes of our grandmothers' era standing on the gallery, beside the pool, coming out of the water or jumping into it; then a colour reproduction, I think of a Cézanne portrait, quite a well-known reproduction, perhaps of Rilke—if that is possible—it shows an elegant bearded man. On the screen itself there is a postcard, a facsimile reproduction with a few lines from the hand of Verlaine and a sketched portrait, which must also be of him. Who the artist was is irrelevant, but it is a portrait of Verlaine. Another row down, things are stuck on the edge of the lowest shelf. There is a photograph of an owl from *Die Zeit*, two statesmen, one is perhaps Willy Brandt, the other I do not recognise, and I have no idea why they are there. Then there is a well-known photograph of Matisse (from a news paper). The aged Matisse with his white beard is sitting on a battered old armchair beside a birdcage. Next to it, twice over, is the same facsimile of Beethoven's signature in black and white and, perhaps cut out from a record cover, in white on a green background. This complicated signature with a large curlicue is a fantastic graphic image. Then there is a Japanese woodprint from one of the Christmas greetings that a friend of mine sent from year to year. It is a high quality reproduction. Then there is another Leonardo da Vinci reproduction of the red chalk drawing *Sordello*. After which comes an animal tamer practising with lion cubs, "Before a show at the Cinkota premises of the Circus Company. Mr and Mrs László Samu are preparing lion cubs for the performance". Then some very strange birds can be seen. Perhaps young turkeys, about half a dozen of them, and with a squatting female figure feeding them. Then on the post at the edge of the shelf unit is another well-known fresco from Pompei showing a mythological scene with a centaur and two horses, a female figure and a naked man.

I shall continue with the section on the wall that was to Ilka's back when she used to sit and work in the corner. There are various pictures wrapped up on the upper shelf to the edge of which a lot of things are pinned. Occasionally the primary drawing of the work in progress was pinned there, too. The first object on the wall here is a bigger sheet of drawing paper with *Plan with Rooster* by Béla Veszelszky. There was some talk about him being commissioned to do a mural. He wanted to embed figural representations among

folk motifs with a rooster. He made many plans of it and there is another example of one a little lower down in the same corner. It is mounted on paper and the Indian ink drawing on tracing paper is in a terrible state. It is an attempt to imitate cross-stitching with the rooster pattern being drawn in crosses. On the same piece of paper a photograph of an antique relief is mounted. It shows a lion biting through a man's, a hunter's, throat. I am not sure, but perhaps it is a lion hunting scene, perhaps from Babylon. Above is, a reproduction of a Vajda drawing taken from a *Vajda Catalogue* with writing in French, showing two houses, two plates above which is a peeled apple and a knife. Above that is a piece of calligraphy by Lajos Szabó, quite unique as it is made on one millimetre grid paper. Then there is a child's drawing. Below an Endre Ady facsimile of *Verseskönyvem elé* (Preface to my poems) is the manuscript version of the prologue to Endre Ady's *Új Versek* (New poems). Pinned in front of it is a colour test smudged with blues entitled *La Danseuse* (The dancer). Next to that is another Lajos Szabó graphic completely buried in dust. It is very crowded here. Beneath it is Amenophis IV's plaster mask, pinned onto paper from a notebook with "nothing is more important for a human than their state, nothing is more frightening than reality" written on it in Ilka's handwriting. I believe it to be a Pascal quote that Ilka often mentioned. A reproduction aquarelle is glued to the Ady facsimile manuscript—*Sunset, 1869* by Johan Barthold Jongkind—also bathed in dust and in a dreadful state. A great many reproductions are collected here; a tattered Utrillo picture; a child's drawing; a stanza from the *National Anthem* in David's childish handwriting, copied out into one of his school notebooks; Csontváry's *Self-portrait with Palette and Brush in Hand*. Then a reproduction of a beautiful painting, made by Felix Vallotton in 1925. Its atmosphere reminds us of the pictures of József Nemes Lampérth. Then there is a Fillér street self-portrait pinned out with a diagonal and bisecting structure constructed into it. She most likely meant to work it into a painting. Above that is another *Die Zeit* cutting "Skandal in Stolzenberg" (Scandal in Stolzenburg). A toxic waste dump was once discovered there which had not been appropriately stored and endangered the environment. Next to the article is a Vajda reproduction and the remains of a Beethoven portrait. Then various things are mounted on paper: a Cézanne drawing, a mountain scene from 1910; beneath it and still mounted on the same paper is another sheet from David's school notebook, then below that there is something from his kindergarten years, it seems to be a row of patterns

in colour pencil. Next is another cutting from a magazine on art. *The Matzo* is a decorative picture from the Italian Haggadah of the *Izidor Kaufmann Collection* of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, with another Haggadah illustration below it. Now comes a peculiar 'collection': quite a large sheet of cardboard hanging down the shelf on a piece of string. At the top there is a large reproduction of the Mona Lisa, below it is a picture of two handcuffed young men being led by police that she cut out from a postcard while we were staying in France. Two drugged hitchhikers had given themselves up to the police because whilst under the influence of drugs they had murdered a driver and eaten his flesh. They were devil worshipers of some sort, etcetera. At that time, such cases of hippie debauchery were at their height in Europe. Underneath that, still a part of the same montage, there is an amusing, characteristically Ilka machination. *Élet és Tudomány* published pictures of outlaws. At the end of the outlaw era captured outlaws had been photographed. Ilka thought that one of the executed outlaws. I am not sure if it is not actually Sándor Rózsa himself (a famous Robin Hood type figure in Hungary) This figure resembled the girl Dani was dating at that time, whom Ilka disliked intensely. I challenged her by saying "His look is exactly the same, bar the vast moustache, which is nothing compared to his look." She instantly took some tempera and covered over the moustache, painted in round red cheeks and indeed created the similarity. Pinned out next to the cannibalistic hitchhikers there is another cutting from *Élet és Tudomány* illustrating some psychological research on animals: six pictures were taken of a sleeping monkey in the same position. Its facial expression changes markedly as it rests. I move on. There is a cutting from the *Quinzaine Littéraire,* which we were registered to receive from Paris for a while after we returned home. It is on an exhibition by a woman painter called Leonor Fini with a double female portrait, to me slightly reminiscent of Gulácsy's style. Stuck to the bottom of that is an illustration called *Dawn* by a graphic artist called József Obermajer published in the *Élet és Irodalom*. Two works by Monet, I think, are montaged into a barren street scene—a sitting woman putting on her stockings and a standing figure holding her hands in front of her pubic hair. Whether this is theft or citation I leave to others. Ilka viewed it as plagiarism and was outraged by his cowardly copying. However, given how well-known both works are, I am not sure whether it should be looked upon in this way. Beside it there is a photograph of an ivory statuette of a cat from 1700 BC Palestine. The figure is astonishing, no one could think of it as anything

but a cat, albeit highly stylised. Beneath it is some Lajos Szabó calligraphy that Ilka overpainted because it somehow became torn or soaked. She salvaged it onto a sheet of paper and added different colours. It is likely that she was only trying her brushes out because I see no connection between the drawing and the paint. Another sheet from David's school pad, evidently a disciplinary task since he had written between thirty or fifty times that "Homework has to be done precisely." Ilka displayed it to encourage herself to carry out household and other duties. Further on another representation of an angel, a relief from the Early Roman period.

Next to that is a page on fresco painters from Crete, taken from a book on icons and entitled called *Wandmalerei des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts* [Fresco painting of the 15th century]. On drawing paper, almost covering it, is another example of calligraphy, probably by Lajos Szabó, which had seemingly been intended for the bin since it is more or less torn up. Lajos tore up pieces that he considered unsuccessful.

Ilka showed great interest in calligraphy. A page from a book comes next with the signatures of various Hassidic rabbis next to each other. I have not really seen hand-written Hebrew besides this example. Underneath the rabbis' writing there is a piece of paper with quotes from Imre Madách poems [a classical Hungarian poet]. Ilka's father wrote his PhD on Madách Imre: *Madách as a Lyricist*. She either found the quote in his thesis or in a volume called *Madách's Lyrical Poems*. The other two poems are also likely to be from Madách. A Jean Cocteau quote from 1920 is glued onto the same sheet, [in paraphrase] it states that a negro whose teeth are shiny is black on the outside and pink on the inside. He was black on the inside and pink on the outside… Change yourself! Pinned onto the same text is a facsimile of a page from a Flaubert manuscript. There is visibly more deletion and transcription than the few words left from the first draft. It is an astonishing impression. Ilka often referred to this terrible conscientiousness which she deeply respected. At the bottom, on the same nail is an Edvard Munch reproduction in black and white. On the same wall and a little below it is another poem copied out by hand. This surrealist verse, *Mâison de santé* is in French and is written at the bottom. Perhaps Cocteau wrote it whilst in the sanatorium. There is something on its other side called *Prelude Leger* that might have been written in the *Mâison de santé*, I do not know. Most likely it was by Cocteau because Ilka had a book by him of that type. On the same page there is a wax seal with a

recumbent boar from late fourth-century Mesopotamia. On the other side of the animal figure is the imprint seal. Further on, there is a shapeless piece of paper with blue paint tests on it, then comes a practically disintegrating example of Lajos Szabó calligraphy. He had a period when he experimented with drawing lines in different colours and ways in the various loops, or with filling them in, but he abandoned it. This one is a remnant of such an attempt.

Further on, the above mentioned icon sheet from Crete, then a photograph of Haydn's death mask. Then there is another sheet from David's school pad with examples of a Hungarian grammatical rule termed "Say it differently, write it differently". Then an organised colour test with violets and whites labelled "New Titan; Rembrandt Cadmium Lemon; New Titan Lefranc Cobalt Viola" and so on. Beneath it there are dates from history written by Dani, obviously written in very fine letters for studying, or perhaps cribbing. Then comes a large sweetcorn leaf, with the text of a Hungarian folk song pinned to it (written on a library reminder). Underneath this, covered by the text there is a reproduction of a painting by a French painter titled *Deer in a Forest* showing a fantastically painted forest and with a wide perspective.

On the narrow wall next to the window there is what is really a playful sketch Ilka made of various elongated figures on blue wrapping paper with colour chalks. Above it is another almost disintegrating piece of Lajos Szabó calligraphy that is unusual in that it was made with charcoal on its side. This was originally very beautiful, but it became smudged and ended up here. It is also apparent that a paint cup or something was once placed on it leaving a round mark that is evidently not part of the picture. Lajos Szabó could give life to very interesting effects, which I could believe of anyone who draws such thick lines with charcoal on its side. On the shelf directly above this picture is the gridded primary drawing for *Big Clowns* (see picture no.150), which was the last picture Ilka worked on. Its longer edge is numbered from one to eighty-two. It is a picture of an especially long shape. Next, there is a primary drawing of another picture called *Carnival of Dwarfs* which Ilka referred to, "Dwarfs with masks" is written at the bottom. This is the last item on this side.

A few places remain to look at. At the entrance to the little cubicle stands a small cupboard between the two windows. Between that and one of the windows there is a wall,

on the side of the cupboard there is a home-made shelf with turpentine pots and other things. In this little nook there is a well-known Chagall reproduction, a painter stands in front of his easel with a palette and brushes in his right hand and he is painting with his left. The painter is face on and a female head is drawn in profile on the canvas. Underneath there is a full page article from *Die Zeit* with pictures concerning another pollution scandal. Next to that comes a rectangular plank which has a number of yellowed cuttings glued onto it, the majority of which are old-fashioned turn-of-the-century etchings from a small French textbook: *Le jeu*, *Le dada*, *La rue*, *La cuve*—a tub with a little boy bathing in it; *La petite brodeuse*—a little girl doing embroidery, all from a French storybook. In among these there is a part of a photographic face-front portrait from *Élet és Tudomány* showing some small rodent. Then the famous Törley [a renowned Hungarian variety of sparkling wine] poster where a dandy is sitting on a back to front chair in his spats. This one I found in original or reproduction, I cannot remember which, in an old paper and it was my favourite. I showed it to Ilka who then stuck it there. Finally one last little drawing *Der genickte Schwan* [The bow-necked swan], probably from the *Tom-Tit 100 kísérlet* [Tom-Tit 100 experiments], a book for children with 'tricks' in physics. It was very popular in my childhood. Ilka came across it in a second-hand bookshop and bought it. Mocking her own ideas on science and technology she said that she thought I dealt with such things. On the side of the wardrobe there is an etching by Lucas van Leyden (deceased 1533) cut out from an exhibition poster that I think we obtained in Paris. It seems to be a self-portrait, the figure is holding a skull in his left hand half visible from under his robe, which he points at with his right hand. I believe it is a well known picture. He wears a large hat with ostrich feathers, it is beautiful and he has a fascinating facial expression. Then comes another picture from the book I thought was a French storybook, but must instead be an edition from the era of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy because, for example, under a shark it says *cápa* in Hungarian, and *Haifish* in German, as well as *zarlock* which is perhaps Czech or Serbian in Latin script and then some old Cyrillic script letters that are not in the current alphabet, and that I am unable to read. Underneath it is another picture, of a seal saying: *fóka*, *Seehund*, *Norski Pass*, and *Tulen* in Cyrillic, if my reading is correct. It is also to some extent decipherable that the etchings were made "*in Pesth bei V. Green*" ('Pest' spelt with a '-th'). Under the shelf there is a Roux still-life reproduction. Next, glued onto a sheet of

paper, is figure 63 from "The human skeleton, Andreas Vesalius, 1543. The posture of the pelvis is incorrect". Where Ilka got this and who cited this Vesalius figure, I have no idea. On the same sheet there are two small fortune-telling cards. Ilka and I bought them once. They must also be engraving patterns from the Monarchic era because again four languages are apparent: Hungarian, German in Gothic script, a Slavic in Cyrillic and one in Latin script. One says *Szomorúság*, *Traurigkeit*, *Nada*, and *Nada* [sorrow] the other *Halál*, *Tod*, *Smrt*, and *Smrt* [death]. Next to that is another cutting from a reproduction, perhaps from *Élet és Irodalom*. Izodor Isl, and some calligraphy from France, somewhat similar to Lili Ország's stuff. This practically brings us to the end of her 'nook'. I have to add that a vast number of *Die Zeit* magazines are stacked with 'interesting things' in them. When she had shown a picture Ilka used to pack it in old *Zeit*s. When wrapping she used to browse in the magazine again and put aside those that she found interesting. Finally, one last comment, that is that these pictures or pinned/glued/hung items used, of course, to change. She handled them with absolute ease. When something fell off, something else would appear in its place or it would be returned. For example a newspaper cutting that had been on the easel for years is missing. That particular picture actually threw a rather characteristic light on Ilka's humour, equally ever ready to be applied to herself. One of the world-famous singers of the near past (perhaps Saljapin, Caruso or Gigli) is leaning on his elbows in front of a huge gramophone horn, practically swooning from delight—he is listening to his own voice. Many a word passed between us about self-admiration among artists, unbearable, but vital at the same time.

One more significant note is necessary here. When the famous Hungarian art historian Júlia Szabó visited her for the first time, and Ilka began to show her pictures she brought the easel out into the middle room, then put the pictures on it. Júlia Szabó instantly noticed the Caravaggio reproduction pinned onto the easel. It is a picture of one of the apostles sitting in front of his writing, his book, with a pen in his hand. An angel is pointing at the writing with an angry and strict movement directing him in what to write. Júlia Szabó spotted that picture and she and Ilka agreed, in a rather conspiratorial way, that its just place was precisely there on the easel.

And this is the end of this irremediably incomplete account. (1985)

30. Ágnes Gyetvai: The Art of Ilka Gedő[105]

Ilka Gedő was discovered in the course of 1980's. She stopped painting in 1949 to resume it in 1968. A period of twenty-year-silence was followed by quiet development for ten years, and then, in 1980 she had her first solo exhibition at the King St. Stephen Museum in Székesfehérvár. In 1982 she another exhibition at the Dorottya Utca Gallery, and from the on her art could not be ignored any longer.

Gedő's career actually started in 1940's. She regularly exhibited her works at group exhibitions, for example she showed her works at the 1943 exhibition of the Hungarian Jewish Educational Association together with such big names as Margit Anna, Imre Ámos, Endre Bálint, Márta Pap and Júlia Vajda.

In 1942 she took part in the exhibition titled *Szabadság és a nép* (Freedom and the People) at the Headquarters of the Metalworkers' Trade Union. Gedő's parents knew Viktor Erdei and his wife Ada Karinthy, and that is why Gedő regularly visited Szentendre in the 1940s, and she belonged to the group artists around Júlia Vajda. Gedő got to know Endre Bálint through her husband, Endre Bíró. Being much younger than Júlia Vajda and the other artists of the European School, these artists regarded Gedő just a youngster. Gedő's poetic approach to painting that was also open to surrealism and expressionism can be better understood in this context.

As shown by Gedő's letter written to the art critic, Ernő Kállai, around 1947 she was very much worried about her own "modernity", about the fact that she did figuration in her art in an age when only abstract art was regarded as modern. Only in the last few years of her life did Gedő have the luck of having an arts scene around her in which just that genre was regarded newsworthy in which she herself created masterworks. Her own way of painting that was created in isolation and based on her own talent, her own style that was based on a tremendous amount of work was much later received very positive reviews in British press after her first and second Glasgow exhibition. Gedő can regarded a precursor of Hungarian neo expressionism. Her is related to both the expressionism before Word War II and the abstract expressionism of the 1950s. Had not it been for the

[105] Manuscript dating from the second half of the 1980s.

"timeliness", it might have been possible that her grotesque lyricism and modernity are forgotten. It could have been possible that we go past this art without noticing it.

The reason why I regard Gedő a great artist is because of the extraordinary multi-layer structure of her paintings. This reflects the differences and the different qualities of various layers of reality as well as their interaction. This multilayer quality is emphasised in nearly all of her oil paintings. A "picture in picture" situation is quite common in her oil paintings. The composition that becomes multi-layered through many frames is then "analysed" and sometimes her text comments also appear.

However much in principle Gedő had an aversion to non-figurative painting, the basic plain of her paintings, as a matter of fact the painterly surface par excellence, is constructed according to the rules of abstract painting. Gedő started painting only in the 1960s, and she got prepared for this task by previously pursuing studies. From 1947 on, she had been dealing with colour theory. Sketches and detailed diary notes accompanied the making of each oil painting. (There are hundred and twenty-eight such sketch-books full of these diary notes.[106]) This is how the artist composed the colour chords and contrasting colours of her pictures that are often divided into horizontal and vertical colour zones. Gedő did not mix the colours but she positioned them on top of each other layer by layer. This is how optical colour mixing emerges.[107] Through this, the basic structure of the paintings has become tangibly thicker and this lends such an atmospheric and emotional inner glow to the background that is reminiscent of the effects of colour field painting. The colour world of each painting is closely connected to the subjective and poetic symbolism of colours. In nearly all the oil paintings, this colour world has been thoroughly elaborated and explained in writing in the diaries.

The second layer of the oil paintings is actual figuration. In the picture we often see a figure taken from a sketch-book page, which reminds us of Gedő's work method: most of her paintings are based on a small-sized sketch or doodle made on the pages on a sketch-

[106] The Appendix to this volume contains a detailed list of the Gedő's maunscripts. The whole manuscript estate has been digitised, and it is available to the public in the joint Library of the Hungarian National Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts, the Archives of the Arts History Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Budapest Municipal Library.

[107] When two colours are placed side by side or on top of each other, your vision produces the illusion of a third colour - this is called optical mixing. Optical mixtures emit an inner glow that you cannot get with physical mixtures - the colours retain their intensity and brightness. (https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/sep/20/guide-to-painting-optical-colour-mixing)

book, and it is quite common to see the sketch-book page itself depicted on the painting. The painterly base plane is sometimes surrounded by an internal frame suggesting that the base plane is "is living material reality", a fertile soil, and a nourishing placenta, from which menaingful figures, flowers and creatures arise. Most often this figurative layer inscribes itself on the basic surface in the manner of a one-line drawing or often, in contradiction to the painterly character of the base surface, we see a lighting one-line drawing against a dark background.

The magic of the motifs derives from the fact that these motifs have many faces; they simultaneously yearn for and attempt to reach out to various planes of existence. The painterly surface often includes a softly geometric or formless pattern consisting of magic signs rather than realistic figuration. The figurative layer is often calligraphic or it is often reminiscent of the letters of cursive handwriting or of music score notes (the world of musicality or that of image poetry). It is due to these structured lines that the characteristic one-plane decorative nature of these compositions (exempt from special dimensions) arises.

The emotional figurative plane that reflects the naivety of children's drawings and does not take into account real proportions and the norms of "mature" drawings desperately strives at condensed and authentic psychological expression. The dramatic tension is lessened only by the grotesque, sometimes caricature like, humour of the paintings.

The painting titled *Turreted Rose Garden*[108] shows an organic cycle and metamorphosis, and this depiction, so it seems, shows a cross-section of the typical changes in the multi-layered cycle. The following spheres can be distinguished: the lower

Turreted Rose garden, 1969-70,
oil on cardboard, 58 x 42 cm, Hungarian National Gallery

sphere: the location under the ground; the middle sphere: terrestrial sphere; the upper sphere: the aerial and celestial sphere. In the lower sphere, in the extremely fertile soil a system of stems develops. These stems shoot up in the earthly sphere. Then the stems, while they accumulate energy, break into the sky, thus forming a tower. Then, at one place, the sprawling branches break through the border separating the middle and the upper spheres to float on in the air while assuming yet another quality. The transitions “flower-human-sign”, “flower-human”, “flower-sign” and “human-sign”, the capability of change is always present Ilka Gedő’s oil paintings, and it suggests a cosmic and organic, poetic-philosophical world view.

The constantly appearing masks and clown figures are undoubtedly very important. They indicate that Gedő lived in the characteristically 20th-century world of anxiety and grotesque play. The faceless figures, the double self-portraits, the distorted figures, puppet like creatures, people transfused into a flower or a sign as well as colours similar to Kokoschka’s expressive colour world show the sensitive internal life of Gedő. The artist considered her difficult and unique life to be a masked ball, a dramatic stage out of which she created a revolving universe held together by magic signs, her paintings.

31. Endre Bíró: The Group of Intellectuals Around Lajos Szabó Lajos, 1985[109]

The information recorded here concerning Lajos Szabó and his 'circle' is what the writer of these lines personally experienced, understood or misunderstood. Consequently, it should not be used in any other context without cross-checking and independent agreement. Nonetheless these remarks are necessary in order to elucidate on Ilka's intellectual background. Although Ilka Gedő had known two artists, Júlia Vajda and Endre Bálint (and briefly Lajos Vajda) who were in close contact with Lajos Szabó, she only encountered the intellectual orientation and trends of Lajos Szabó's circle right after the War when she met me. This was when I began to forge a closer connection with Lajos Szabó. I attended his seminars for the few 'newcomers'.

One could also turn to Lajos Szabó with both personal and theoretical problems at any time. Thus it came naturally that at the beginning of our relationship I took Ilka to him and included her in our (more or less didactic) conversations. By 'newcomers' I mean those few young intellectuals who joined Lajos Szabó after the War and who regarded him as a kind of intellectual leader or *mâitre à penser*. Born in 1902, from each generation up until ours (born in the 1920s), Szabó had people who paid unconditional respect to him (I for example met him through my seven years older brother). I use the term 'Lajos Szabó and his circle' in the absence of any better phrase. We never referred to ourselves by this term (nor by any other). In another circle, which was loosely connected to ours through ties of old friendships and so on, we were gently mocked as the "Believers". By no means should anyone imagine anything like an organisation. This was a company of friends. At the same time, it represented a sort of open school or, with a certain amount of conceit, a multidisciplinary research group. Part of our gatherings was, so to say, a series of seminars dealing with pre-arranged topics. These thematic discussions were usually not attended by all members of the circle and were in any case not rigidly demarked. Very often, especially in the case of newcomers, Lajos Szabó delivered lectures to only two or three of us. On other occasions, however, ten to twenty people came together. The notes made during these 'seminars' (to stick to the word, like this, in dittos) were hand written and then often

[109] This essay is a part, more exactly just one footnote, of a greater study *titled Recollections on the Artistic Career* (see the next section in this volume) written by the artists husband, Endre Bíró.

typed out. We often arranged parties, but they frequently became discussion evenings around some recent or age-old issues. This circle was also different from a simple social circle of friends in that it had a certain hierarchy. Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor (to whom a similar respect was due), were the intellectual leaders of the company and the lecturers at the seminars. Both Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor were, so to say, self-taught philosophers. Perhaps it would be better to say that they were critics of culture. They also published, *Indictment Against the Intellect*, an 83 page booklet. It starts with a critique of the ethics based upon the prevailing materialist and positivist epistemologies and is formulated with succinct aphorism-like utterances. A discussion of psychoanalysis and 'existentialist thinkers' follows. The latter (Karl Jaspers, Alfred Schütz, Franz Rosenzweig and Ferdinand Ebner) are also placed in a critical light, but there is an open opting for their side. The epigrammatic bitterness vanishes. It is important to mention that immediately after the War Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor picked up contact with Béla Hamvas and for a while they worked together. Hamvas and his wife, Katalin Kemény, also attended some of the 'major' gatherings.

This description gives a little insight into the intellectual atmosphere represented by the leaders of the circle at the time when we newcomers became involved. The older members knew each other from the 'movement' and in the *Munka-kör* [Work circle] led by Lajos Kassák. The term 'movement' denotes the opposition, perhaps partly even Trotskyite splinter groups that, in the early thirties, separated from the illegal Communist movement. *Munka* was the legally published artistic and literary journal edited by Lajos Kassák who had returned to Hungary after his emigration. Around this, more precisely around Kassák, a circle of young people emerged forming some sort of an extended editorial staff. Kassák delivered lectures on theory and art to them. As far as I know, they held regular meetings in a café. I only have second-hand information unravelled from anecdotes about the opposition movement and the *Munka-kör*. I could not offer a more detailed picture, but this is not my intention anyway. I mention all this because I want to illuminate the intellectual climate in which Lajos Szabó began his career. Lajos Szabó considered himself to be a Marxist throughout his life, even after he settled in West Germany in 1956. Of course, a certain provocative and sarcastic overtone in this expression was obvious to those who were at all familiar with his

teachings. Although knowledge of Marxism and its ways of thinking were indeed present in Lajos Szabó's and Béla Tábor's thinking, their main sources were the above-mentioned existentialist thinkers in particular the twentieth-century philosophy of the dialogue represented by Franz Rosenzweig and above all Franz Ebner, *Das Wort and die geistigen Realitäten*. To me Szabó and Tábor's most relevant ideas were the following:

- they were convincing and dedicated preachers and protectors of the organic unity of the European tradition as a whole, including the arts, science, philosophy and religion
- their assertion of the unity of language and thinking and the methodological use of this conviction
- to some extent, perhaps directly coming from the above, an anti-materialist and anti-Marxist theory of values, which traced back all value-creating processes (including the production of material goods) to 'research'. The term 'research', which is considered to be a fundamental human activity, includes not only scientific research but also all types of arts and all human acts that indeed bring something new into the world, evidently not out of thin air, but from cultural, linguistic and philosophical traditions, and their expansion.

The members of this circle were mostly artists and, to a lesser extent, intellectuals who felt uneasy within the 'narrow confines' of their professions, as we would currently put it, 'professional intellectuals'. The circle disintegrated in 1956. Lajos Szabó and a few others with him went to the West. The group that stayed gradually fell apart and their regular activities stopped. Perhaps it is inappropriate to write in such detail about this circle. Especially as Ilka later, embittered by the break in her work, denied having learnt anything there or that the intellectual atmosphere had affected her, even sharply and wittily criticising and mocking certain 'members' (in our personal discussions) for their snobbish or high-brow features—I believe this goes hand-in-hand with such groupings. However, as I see it, this expansive and broad interpretation of research and creative work among the membership was a great aid in the period when she undertook no actual creative work and instead concentrated on her studies. She replaced drawing and painting with reading professional literature and taking notes (there is a complete

list of her notebooks, see for example the list in this current volume under "Ilka Gedő's Manuscript Heritage"). An emphasis on the fundamental importance of language undoubtedly played a role in her research, in brief dubbed '*Wissen-Können*'. Ilka, while contemplating her artistic problems, became aware that in the German language there are two words representing the Hungarian verb '*tudni*'. They express the distinction between the possession of information (*wissen*) and the possession of a physical or professional capability or of other skills (*können*). She began to explore the issue consulting various language and etymological dictionaries that she was able to find in the Ervin Szabó Library's dictionary hall. The memory of these investigations is preserved in several notebooks marked "*Wissen-Können*".

32. Endre Bíró: Recollections of Ilka Gedő's Artistic Career[110], 1985

The aim of these recollections is to provide material and data for theoretical future writers of monographs or other studies. There is much that might be of significance that I alone am able to preserve. Writing such recollections has certain 'dangers', as the whole body of memories that ought to be recorded is intimately intertwined with the web of my, or rather *our* life. There is consequently a temptation to enter into the following diversions:

- personal anecdotal details
- the philosophical and other implications of the debates and discussions about art that stretched across our entire life
- worldview orientations
- aesthetic issues around Ilka's oeuvre, which I shall leave for the professionals

These recollections strive, to the greatest possible extent, to offer a description of the artist's work from the perspectives of her technique and methodology. At the same time, it is impossible to sharply divide my message from the possible diversions outlined above (and others) and absolute avoidance is unworkable. The footnotes are intended to ease any confusion.

A further comment is necessary, that is, Ilka's artistic career calls for and deserves this kind of interpretation. For most contemporary artists such a commentary would lack significance, the majority of commentaries consists of the oeuvre itself. Ilka's particular 'two-stage' method was apparent from the very instant she resumed work after a seventeen year break, and later was only further refined. This method is closely related to one of the problems, if not *the* fundamental problem of twentieth-century art—the problematique of representation and abstraction. She outlined the question in a passionate letter to Ernő Kállai (see *Catalogue of the Székesfehérvár Exhibition*, 1980, which includes a French translation; [this letter is published also in this volume: X.1.]). The answer, or rather the practical response, was the two-stage method that arose when she resumed work. One of the most important aspects of these recollections is a detailed

[110] The author was the husband and companion of the artist for 39 years. This study was translated by Dávid Bíró and Michael Webb.

examination of this problematique. The other main issue, partly resulting from the former, is Ilka's relationship to colours, that is her 'rational method', or at least shown to be rational in the search for colour harmonies.

I believe it likely that, somewhat like music, pictorial representation has its 'child prodigies'.[111] [112] I am not thinking here of absorbed and, as such, always to some extent 'brilliant' children's drawings. There is no gradual transformation from these into drawings expressing and representing characters, motions and actual images. Much else could or ought to be said concerning the sketching child prodigy, a topic that, however, I only brush upon because I consider Ilka to have been one.[113]

It is possible to establish that she had been drawing from nature incessantly and enthusiastically from the age of eleven. The notebook that remains from the year 1932 contains only landscapes, whilst the one from 1935 (she was fourteen) has quite complicated attempts at life drawings as well. From the years 1932 to 1935 there are no notebooks with dates, but in the packet of sketchbooks from her childhood there are a few undated notebooks with attempts at life drawings.[114] At that time it is certain that she was not receiving any professional guidance. (As far as I can see from Ilka's narratives, her later tuition was also insubstantial.) These sketchbooks show a desperate effort to approximate drawing and reality. Entire sketchbooks are filled with figures carrying out recognisable activities (quite probably also recognisable individuals) with limbs that are too short, fat or round, or with heads that are too small, and so on. During her vacation in the Bakony hills

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[111] E.g. Paul Gustave Doré. Art historians will know more examples.

[112] More likely in early adolescence than in childhood.

[113] Let me add some genetic considerations to this idea of the sketching 'child prodigy'. The talent probably came from her mother's side, Of the three Weiszkopf girls (Ilka's mother Elza, Aranka and Lenke) Aranka (art name: Győri) had all the promise of a significant graphic artist. At around age thirty, several fairy tale books and posters carried her secessionist illustrations in line with the trend of the day. She died of cancer on almost the same day as Ilka was born. Furthermore, Ilka kept some of her mother's drawings, typical young girl's drawings, figures from the playground, two-three-centimetre girls playing with a hoop or a ball, a girl with a skipping rope, a nurse with a pram and a dog. The vividness of the movement and the clothing, which make it possible to determine the date, is surprising. After Ilka's death, a letter from one of her cousin's on her mother's side (the son of the Hungarian and German literature and language teacher Lenke Steiner) made me realise that Lenke also had a talent in drawing. This cousin has one of Lenke's drawings, of Ilka with her own two children, a few years younger, as they were gazing at a home puppet show. Apparently all three children can easily be recognised.

[114] There are two notebooks from Lepence from 1936 and 1937. The first contains these figures, whose limbs are too short, among refined watercolour landscapes. She was fifteen at the time. An anecdotal addition: Rabinovszky, obviously from pedagogical well-meaning, 'teased' Ilka saying her incessant drawing was an excuse for not partaking in common sport activities, he called it "antisocial behaviour".

(age seventeen), she transcended these first attempts at figuration. She recalled later that it had a great effect on the peasants, who recognised the figures—"Look! Old uncle Jani!" At the same time, she was solely led by a naïve and pure curiosity to depict and draw things as they are.[115]

All this would not be very interesting, as such precedents can be traced in the fresh youth of nearly all artists, nor indeed worthy of more than a brief mention were it not for the fact that, without receiving much help,[116] she reached the point where she shared exhibition space with ripe and 'successful' artists.[117] [118] It all becomes fascinating with the realisation that, among the main reasons for the long break in her work, the conflict between this self-absorbed frenzy of following reality/an image and the post-war 'hard-line', avant-garde exertions of our friends played important rôles. This conflict between the sketching child prodigy's attitude and the existence of modern art would obviously have arisen in some other sphere as well, sooner or later. For the moment it is sufficient to

[115] Ilka's story: during her vacation in Bakonybél in 1938, she drew scything figures—she walked alongside the men as they scythed, following them with her notebook in her hand to see the same recurring movement from the same angle and distance and so on.

[116] In the rather brief preface to the *Catalogue of the Székesfehérvár Exhibition* Victor Erdei (1879-1944) and the open school of István Örkényi Strasser (1911-1944) are mentioned. Ada was Victor Erdei's wife and the younger sister of Frigyes Karinthy [one of Hungary's most famous writers and humorists]. She more or less 'adopted' Ilka, for example she spent holidays with them in Szentendre, perhaps even on several occasions. Ilka never said that Erdei would have given her regular lessons, though he obviously looked over and commented on her attempts. The *Catalogue of the Székesfehérvár Exhibition* does not mention Tibor Gallé's (1869-1944) open school, which, as far as I know, Ilka attended in the year of her A Levels (most likely in the following autumn term, that is in 1939). One of Ilka's friends, with whom Ilka became acquainted at this rather popular school, said that Gallé considered Ilka to be very talented. He thought Ilka's inclinations were very much like Daumier's. I know from her, and from Ilka herself (who attributed no significance to it) that at that time Ilka also made some small clay figurines. If I am right, Ilka's friend has one or two of these. However, I might have seen one or two of these statues somewhere else. Ilka did not seem to have appreciated her studies at Gallé's school very much because she mentioned them less often than her other studies, although this could have been due to some unimportant personal reasons. Ilka told a story about her school years several times. Some time after her A Levels, I believe, that is in 1939, Ilka took her drawings, as she said to Róbert Berény, with the question of whether she should dare to apply for the entrance examination for the Academy of Arts. Berény answered: "Why would you study at the Academy? They could come to you to learn how to draw." Part of the anecdote (though it may be indifferent from the recollections' point of view) that the person who said this was more likely to have been Rudolf Dénes-Diener and not Berény. At Ilka's funeral Rudolf Dénes-Diener's widow repeated *this* story practically with the same words. The Gedő family was in contact with both masters. It is probable that Ilka (or her mother) showed the drawings to both. It is either a simple mistake or the amalgamation of two similar stories in the memory.

[117] OMIKE [The Hungarian National Cultural Association of Jews] organised exhibitions at which Ilka exhibited her drawings. Some of Ilka's drawings were shown at the renowned 1943 exhibition of Socialist Artists "Freedom and the People". At the exhibition commemorating the twentieth anniversary of this show, Ilka was asked to contribute drawings (if I remember well, three pieces) which were bought by the Magyar Nemzeti Galéria [The Hungarian National Gallery]. One of these drawings we know to be among the materials at the new permanent exhibition of the Modern Gallery of Szombathely.

[118] At the time of the exhibition "Freedom and the People" Ilka was twenty-two years old.

document that with the exchange of letters between Ilka and Ernő Kállai, published in the *Catalogue of the István Király Múzeum* [King Stephen Museum] *Exhibition*.

The circle, including myself, let us call it Lajos Szabó's circle, which Ilka became a part of with our marriage, looked at everything that was 'figurative' representation with a misty and uncomprehending suspicion. It was not an absolute refusal, for example Vajda, who was viewed as an authority, left mostly figurative works behind, neither had Endre Bálint ever done 'total' abstraction. Still, the members did not know what to do with Ilka's drawings during and following the War. They, or rather we interpreted actuality and modernity in a rather confused and clumsy manner in the dichotomy between representation and non-representation. There were a few exceptions that were difficult to define and instead of purely artistic or aesthetic aspects, personal and clique feelings played a role. Sándor Lukácsy's simple formulation, expressed in an exhibition opening speech, was not yet at our disposal, "it separated from nature without rejecting it through a complete abstraction" (i.e. one of the main trends of painting in Hungary).

The situation was rendered even more complicated by the developing pressure of official art policy (e.g. "Representation of work", etc). In this spirit, the Artists' Union, I believe, readily gave a permit to Ilka to go to the Ganz Factory to draw. Ilka needed models. She needed the Ganz Factory in the stead of models sitting around aimlessly in old people's homes or the ghetto and we lived in its vicinity. Yet, this provoked automatic suspicion among the artists of our circle. Ilka lived in a world completely outside politics (practically outside society) and she was further away from any of the potential social positions open to artists than any other artist member of the circle. Thus she sensed little of the increasing pressure of art policy. She heard about it, as it was, of course, a matter of discussion at our crowded meetings, but she showed no interest in it. While we were debating topics of every imaginable kind, often pre-set, or emerging from Lajos Szabó's or Béla Tábor's lectures, initially Ilka was busy drawing. She appreciated these meetings most from the perspective of a lot of models huddled together.[119]

[119] When I became acquainted with Ilka, I was struck by her total lack of knowledge of the concepts of politics, society and history. This, however, did not mean an absence of knowledge about the horrors of the Second World War, that would have been inconceivable. Yet in Ilka's mind these events were engulfed in a myth populated by monsters. It did not even occur to her that these horrible events, in addition to justified fear, anxiety and hatred felt for certain persons, also deserve a sort of analysis. I came from a leftist-liberal family where we discussed politics—political issues were constantly debated so we learnt the 'basics' of politics in early adolescence.

Of course, it was not that she was simply hurt; nor the way in which her representative, physiognomic and pantomimic sensitivity, painfully acquired (actually hers from birth and further developed through hard work) was unappreciated; nor was it her knowledge that allowed her to realise this talent. However, everyone needs feedback of some sort. It was impossible to seek out another milieu in our society, increasingly pushed towards atomisation from political ill-will, and not in the least because we had connected to the other intellectual activities of the circle with any passionate interest. It became obvious that the style Ilka naïvely regarded as simply depicting her model could not be continued. She had exhausted that. In fact, she had transcended it, and the 'Giacomettian'[120] self-portraits from Fillér street[121] are of a totally different ilk.

Ilka grew up totally under the influence of her mother who was a romantic and hurt soul. She was primarily interested in poetry. It is characteristic of her influence that, against the absence of any knowledge of politics, Ilka knew by heart a tremendous number of poems both by contemporary and classic poets. However, this one-sidedness did not mean a lack of interest in other fields. Ilka soon came to understand the debates on social and political issues, as well as the popular lectures on science I tried to deliver in this circle. From an onlooker just hunting for models Ilka soon became an active participant. One of the fruits of this active participation was writing by Ilka on Lajos Vajda, which led to tensions; this was an unsolicited contribution from Ilka to a debate on Vajda that was primarily between Stefánia Mándy and Endre Bálint in an open exchange of letters, which, however, was followed with interest by the other members of the circle (the study is included in this volume under the title "Concerning Lajos Vajda").

For all of us (including Ilka), Lajos Vajda was appreciated very highly and without reservations; indeed Vajda's art was considered to be a criterion of the possibilities of art. In order to forestall criticism of this excessive enthusiasm felt for Vajda, Lajos Szabó said the following: "I belong to the sect of incorrigible Vajda enthusiasts."

In the autumn of 1955 we accidentally dropped in when some members of the circle (primarily artists) were just having a look at a part of Lajos Vajda's preserved folders. This party was followed by the open letter from Stefánia Mándy and Endre Bálint's rather polemic response. Naturally, everyone's comments were welcome at get-togethers like these. We (Ilka and I) did not see the hierarchy of this circle. This why Ilka, who took a passionate interest in the issue of "the role of art in the world" (this exchange of letters was, in the final analysis, about this) quite inappropriately joined the debate. She wrote an extensive reply to Stefánia Mándy's open letter, and this started to circulate in the company. I do not intend to go very much into the details of this ill-fated story. It was well known that Ilka very much disliked Stefánia Mándy for personal reasons and thus the authenticity of this writing was lessened; the polemic parts of Ilka's writing may really have been coloured by animosity. At the same time, this writing was a protest against putting Vajda against the *whole* of 20th century avant-garde art as a genuine metaphysical artist, as if Vajda had been a *Telegraph von Jenseits* (cable from beyond) or the *Bauchredner Gottes* (ventriloquist of God). I have used here some of the sarcastic remarks of Nietzsche's anti-Wagner writings to illustrate the fervour with which Ilka rejected the idea of drawing a gap between Vajda and 20th century avant-garde art. This originated at the very heart of Ilka's ideas on art.

[120] The parallel is, without doubt, not based on influence. In the Fillér Street era we had not even heard about Alberto Giacometti who, if I am right, started painting portraits late, towards the end of his career as a sculptor.

[121] As a chronological guideline: The family Gedő was living at 30, Fillér street from around the beginning of the thirties. In dating the works, the phrase 'from Fillér street' refers to the flat that was returned to them after the War in April 1946. From this flat the family had been evacuated to the ghetto in 1944, to 26, Erzsébet Boulevard. (The ghetto's border at one end was a section of the then Erzsébet Boulevard. There, they cramped into the apartment of a distant relative, the Endrei family, along with many other families.)

Nevertheless, she saw, especially in her retrospection after ceasing work, that these pieces were met with the same wall of incomprehension.[122]

It is difficult to measure the role her connection with the Lajos Szabó circle played in her stopping work. For Ilka, it retrospectively continued to gain a negative light, which I shall expand on later.

It is important to say a few words in explanation of the emergence of the two-stage method. When we started to live together in 1946, Ilka was already very much aware of (and took upon herself) the burden of loneliness inherent in creative work. I remember a concrete case, most likely among many other discussions. As a young researcher at that time I spent long days at the Institute of Albert Szent-Györgyi, while Ilka was sitting in front of her pictures in the sunlit attic apartment in Fillér Street. One morning, just before I left for work, sitting in front of a primed canvas, she depicted to me with great vividness the spine-chilling freedom innate in such a white square. There it was and she was free to paint anything she wanted on it[123] with no other restraint than herself. The naïve absorbency had ceased. The feeling of certainty that the model to be depicted would tell her what to do (it had to be drawn as it really was) vanished into thin air. The fact that every type of representation is, to some extent, an abstraction started to manifest itself in practice. Such pontifications were surely frequent in the masses of theoretical chatter that filled our conversations about art in the circle, nonetheless, it is a totally different matter, when, like rising damp, this hitch crops up in daily practice.

I have another recollection closely related to her stopping work. It is connected with two, about three-quarters life-size charcoal self-portraits in the pose of *The Thinker*. I am almost certain that these were the last works before she stopped. Ilka must not have been

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From there, when the ghetto opened, they moved to her aunt's, Dr. Lenke Steiner's old apartment at 18, Alsóerdősor street, together with the Steiner's. Ilka and her mother moved back to Fillér Street in April 1946, i.e. Alsóerdősor from the spring of 1945 to the spring of 1946. Drawings predating the ghetto move are not referred to by either Fillér street or Alsóerdősor.

[122] The refusal and antipathy was not without exception. Attila Kotányi, for example, was enthusiastic about the self-portrait drawn in charcoal. This sheds a typical light on the situation. Attila Kotányi was an architect by education, who carried out an enormous amount of 'intellectual research work' and, among other areas, tried his hand at the field of fine art. He had personal experience of what it means to draw a figure. The few dozen original drawings of his children in a bemused moment, full of character but less routine, bear witness to that.

[123] There are many who have attributed various—positive or negative—deeper meanings to the large number of self-portraits. Undoubtedly, drawing self-portraits is quite a particular situation psychologically. At the same time, the primary and most certain explanation for the preponderance of self-portraits could be rather prosaic: work strictly attached to reality calls for a model. The artist is the ideal model, always at hand.

working for a worrying length of time and we were talking about it. These two pictures were there and came into the discussion, perhaps Ilka mentioned that the shape of the skirt was somewhat similar to the great charcoal-whirls of Vajda's last period. "But if these Vajdas, that represent nothing in themselves, are works of art, then why does complying with the demands of depicting a model on paper require such brain-wracking concentration and effort?[124] And why did I draw the skirt in exactly this way? Why did I not use points... or any of the countless other ways?"

In other words, the terrible conflict springing from outgrowing the prodigy child in fact occurred at a deeper level. It was not rooted in the uncomprehending reception, nor in the atmosphere in our circle against which she tried to appeal to Ernő Kállai in that particular letter. In actual fact, Ilka was too independent to be hindered by such things. She expressed her dissatisfaction with the circle by saying, that at points when she felt stuck, she received everything except impediment. This is an exaggeration filled with generalisation, but one element deserves some detail in a footnote, and of course, as in every such existential conflict, the whole tangle has a very personal aspect as well, which I shall reserve.[125]

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[124] She often talked about the brain-wracking concentration she needed when working from a model at the time when her aim was still purely, with a naïve conviction, to achieve a resemblance. She was also adamant, and she told me so on numerous occasions at various stages in her artistic career, that everybody could produce realistic representations with sufficient attention, will and concentration.

[125] The most serious 'impediment' for Ilka was Lajos Szabó's (real or misinterpreted) teaching on "women's place in the intellectual world". Dialectic lectures were delivered, essentially following Jewish tradition (which in ancient times totally excluded women from the cult). Thus, women's relation to the intellect would be different *in its essence* and, as such, secondary to that of men's. Lajos Szabó viewed the entire European intellectual tradition as one organic and inter-linked whole. He tried to demonstrate to us the main trends, structure and anatomy of this living process. Accordingly, he also spoke about the ultra-radicalists in this men-women-intellect issue, namely about Otto Weininger (*Geschlecht und Charakter*). However, by no means did he present it as somebody whose views he would share. Ilka launched herself on the topic. With characteristic precision, she read Otto Weininger in almost hair-splitting detail, took notes, and filled a big notebook with questions and ponderings directly addressed to Lajos Szabó. All this was just after discontinuing work, perhaps parallel with reading Goethe's colour theory or directly afterwards. In any case, Ilka interpreted Lajos Szabó's concept as the conceptual doubting of the artistic competence of women and thus, personally, her own. This approach is likely to have resonated with old, deeply suppressed resentments. Ilka's father taught in a very good Jewish grammar school. Ilka was *not* sent there, saying, "Why should little girls learn so much Hebrew?" I often heard this memory dragged up (for example in connection with the fact that Ilka did not learnt Latin in an otherwise very good grammar school that specialised in sciences). The recollection did not reveal bitter emotions, which does not mean that this fact of her childhood was not harboured as a grievance. Actually it was likely to have been. It is also likely that she reacted to the views on the unequal relation between the sexes and the intellect, voiced frequently and in many different ways in our circle. Well, there was never an answer to the notebook addressed to Lajos Szabó, to this torrent of questions here and there written with the tempestuous passion inherent in some psalms. Of course, Ilka did not expect a written answer since we met Lajos Szabó nearly on a daily basis. But orally nothing more happened than a

Perhaps this is the place to examine the way in which Ilka's view of all types of 'automatism' became a form of artistic method. When Lajos Szabó began to draw calligraphic pictures in 1955-1956 the artists of our circle unanimously blew him down. I know only of two artists who viewed them positively, Dezső Korniss and Ilka (perhaps Júlia Vajda was not completely hostile either). Although Ilka's new start set out from a kind of automatism, this always remained only a single element, one of the stages of her art. This was to the extent that, for example, the last big self-portrait paintings are not based on any automatism at all, but are the products of the above-mentioned brain-wracking concentration. These self-portrait paintings are based on the photographic enlargements of the few self-portrait drawings from the period just before she ceased work.

Despite Ilka's positive reception of Lajos Szabó's abruptly arising automatic calligraphic method, she always remained critically hesitant about automatic momentum in other artists' works. Later she also grew more critical of Lajos Szabó's calligraphy in his career in the West. As for her own work, she never accepted the temptation of automatism, even when it was suggested to her by greatly respected people. Amongst others, Júlia Szabó suggested once or twice that her colour plates could also be exhibited in themselves.[126] She always resisted this, despite having enjoyed some such paint-experiments with an inciting effect. She even played with the idea that X or Y would frame something like that with a *passepartout* and exhibit it. Nonetheless, she never went further than empathising and toying with the idea, and always ended with rejection. Various dripping, smudging and monotypes stayed in the realm of play, often starting from the accidental spillage of some paint or Indian ink. When she got to know that Lili Ország started her prints from a series of shapes carved out of potatoes, I found her pottering with something similar as I popped in at the end of her days work. If I remember correctly she was doing very funny concentric circular-congeries with some spilt and thinned out Indian ink. These, however, fulfilled the same function as the numerous reproductions,

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summary closure either, which was by no means adequate for Ilka to forget this futile speculation. Moreover, she concocted a whole theoretical whirlwind of sharp-witted contemplation, though mostly led by emotion: "Can an artist be a true woman, and visa versa? In the centuries of painting, women were models, not masters. Has the world changed so much that this could be different today?" Pondering of the ilk swelled to a real monomania. The personal battle with the problematique of figuration vs. non-figuration (see the letter to Ernő Kállai) would have been enough in itself to stop her work, but to top it with this issue of woman--artist...!

[126] For a detailed description on colour plates and colour patterns see footnote 27.

newspaper cuttings and other pieces of paper that she surrounded herself with in her workplace as 'negative examples'.[127] These were partly negative examples from the field of art, but there were also all kinds of newspaper clippings. Whenever the subject of the pinned-up cutting was contemporary art reproduction it always played the role of a memento. They showed what *not*! As she put it, "I pinned it out so that it would remind me that this is what I do not want, what I do not believe in, that I am happy I am not doing it", and so on.[128]

Ilka's 'abhorrence of arbitrariness' was the primary motivator for the method that took shape when she resumed work. She needed some 'external' security, something akin to what the figure had been for her when she had worked from life, something that was unambiguously there from the 'exterior'. In her second artistic period, after the big gap, this external security was represented by tiny scribbles that came to life while she concentrated on some topic. A small absorbed sketch made without much conscious attention could play the same role, or anything from some other hand, such as a child's drawing. Enlargement itself was not the important element. This is also shown in that, from time to time, especially at the end, she used enlargements via photography. In the winter of 1984-85 she pinned up three old damaged drawings that were big enough and simply repainted them with oil. In one of them, *Clown with Mask*, the repaint completely changed the meaning. Originally it had been one of the Fillér Street self-portraits in charcoal holding nothing in its lap. In the case of *Conjuror's Trick*, perhaps the last finished oil, the drawing was made in a similarly 'direct' way. Originally, the two funny figures had been jotted down

[127] Detailed notes and photographic documentation were made about all the small pictures, newspaper clippings, etc. that were pinned on the walls, as well as the whole collection of images that lent the atmosphere of a studio to the simple living room (on this see Endre Bíró's description in this volume, "The Description of Ilka Gedő's studio, as it was left at her death").

[128] It is worth enumerating what Ilka considered interesting from among the contemporary or modern art known to her from books on reproductions that she would playfully imitate in study. When she had a big Francis Bacon album from the library she made a sketch with a brush and one colour of one of Bacon's self-portraits on her drawing board. Ilka's interest in Bacon arose after seeing some reproductions in the catalogue of the Brussels world exhibition "*50 ans painter moderne*" in 1958 and later reading an interview with him in the *Quinzaine Littéraire* in the seventies. There was a period in which she made some 'Hartung-ian' attempts, using left over paint on brown wrapping paper. Moreover, to better imagine a certain picture, from brown wrapping paper she reproduced the original, rather large quadrangle of the picture. She never considered these bits of 'Hartung-ian' fun to be works of art and never showed them to anyone else besides me. I found them in a folder among the debris left behind, alongside the 'onion print' after Lili Ország. Ilka paid much attention to David Hockney after we had seen an exhibition of Hockney's illustrations for the *Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. After that, many different Hockney books appeared in our home, borrowed from various libraries.

by chance over a few minutes, by hand with a brush dipped into spilt Indian ink. The straight lines are the auxiliary lines for the colourings. The Indian ink sketch lay about among the debris for a long time until one day she came across it and suddenly decided "I'll paint this!" I know of only one piece that was made with a brush dipped into paint without a previous drawing or other motif 'becoming an object' and that was *The Forest* mainly in green and black on grey cardboard [see Picture 41 in the "Oeuvre Catalogue"]. So, the point was that after choosing a source motif for painting on a large scale, the source motif would then become an 'object' much like a living model. Later, some of the playful elements in certain pictures would spring from this type of activity. Initially the enlargement of a chosen motif would be done free hand, in the earliest examples directly in pastel, later with the aid of a grid.[129] Occasionally, the facsimile enlargement of this grid, or the holes on the side of the paper torn out from an exercise-book or the accidentally torn edge of the 'primary motif', the lines of a used score, a neat little Indian ink smudge, or even the colouring notes scribbled whilst drawing up the 'primary motif' would end up being included in the picture. In the case of the portraits these are like objects in the environment around the depicted person.

"This is the always alert manuality of a person who pays no attention," wrote György Spiró in the Catalogue of the Szentendre Exhibition in 1985. Ilka used this alertness later in her selection of colours. Yet, the description "a person who pays no attention" is in fact only valid of some of the primary drawings. It will be simplest if I tell the story of her resuming work.

As I arrived home once in the autumn of 1964 or 1965, Ilka told me that she had drawn a caricature of our painter friend Béla Veszelszky (not the one she later made in oil that was exhibited, for example, at the exhibition in Dorottya Street), it still survives somewhere: a small drawing in ink, with a little hint of pastel or coloured chalk. Béla Veszelszky's typically tall, lean, straight figure, elegant even in rags, in a standing pose given back in a very characteristic way. Instead of his head, there is a star-like form which somehow from a great distance (but in a much less 'naturalistic' way) suggests Béla Veszelszky's intensely thin, angular head. A few days later she showed me some small

[129] Enlargement in free hand and in colour was replaced by the grid-method because, as she often emphasised, if magnification in drawing is inaccurate then the solution in colour will also be dissatisfying. It repeatedly occurred that, as she put it, the colours did not come together in a pleasing way and after some fiddling about she realised that the drawing itself was not precise.

motifs (in an old, largely empty schoolbook belonging to one of our children), some of which were later painted enlarged (some in five or six versions). These were all 'portraits' (or caricatures?) that 'represented' various people of our acquaintance. They included our children and nearly all of our relatives and close friends. Some vividly conjured up the actual person for me in a strange and mystical way, although no portrait-like similarity could be detected. Others did not have that effect at all. At most, a dozen were later painted in an enlarged form. Most of them in several versions in various colours and sizes. First the realisation was direct, mostly in pastel (but at times in oils and brush) through a direct enlargement, as if she was, say, dealing with a still-life theme. Later, through the above-described enlargement methods, initially in pastel and then in oil, these would usually be pictures with a name as their title (Anna, Eszter, Judit, etc.).

It is worth contemplating the extent to which these small motifs, felt to be very apt (by myself and others), are actually representations. It is impossible to put one's finger on why (or at least I cannot). In some cases, a detail can be detected, in which some evident characteristic of the depicted person can be traced. Indeed, occasionally we find 'caricatures' in the traditional sense of the word, for example Béla Tábor's portrait or the above-mentioned portrait of Béla Veszelszky enlarged and done in oils. There are several portraits of our son Dani in an assortment of sizes. His look through his glasses can be recognised as can his 'carried' (paralysed) left arm. For identification these motifs do not at all serve as adequate explanation of the mystical transposition that these figurines convey. I believe it more probable that it is in some recurring motion characteristic of the person concerned, in other words some pantomimic essence is the conveyer of reality. I base this opinion on the portrait of Klári Horváth with its many versions and techniques. However, the story behind it requires too long a description to include here.[130]

[130] For the portrait of Klára Horváth see the *Catalogue of the Székesfehérvár Exhibition*, 1980. It has several versions of colour-scheme. It shows a female figure from the back, bending slightly forward and to the right. Her head is small with a disproportionately strong lower body. These proportions strongly exaggerate some of the striking features of the model, Klára Horváth. But why the picked up and disproportionately short arms? I kept thinking that I was reminded of some specifically typical characteristic of Klára Horváth that these short arms expressed. They also greatly contribute to the 'portrait' belonging to those where I sense 'similarity' and understand its portrait nature. One day a scene came to my mind. It was at a gathering of friends in the Horváth's home. The telephone rang and the hostess, Klára Horváth, picked it up. She practically shouted out loud and made an involuntary gesture expressing astonishment. Later she told us that a pre-war friend of hers was on the other end, she had no idea that the caller was even alive. This person was making a visit to [Buda]Pest from somewhere abroad. I am certain that this event must have inspired the 'primary drawing' to Klára Horváth's portrait. The moment was dramatic enough to become fixed in Ilka's

The above explanations are my attempt to offer a more detailed insight into the György Spiró quote above, i.e. "This is the always alert manuality of a person who pays no attention." In the case of the portraits and later the preliminary sketches of the rose gardens, the expression "person who pays no attention" is imprecise. Ilka told me about their conception. While making these small sketches she thought intensely of the person concerned, but at the same time *she made no attempt to draw them from memory*. The same applies to the rose garden pictures (they are based on the rose garden of the Biological Station at Göd). Of course, if we did not accept this state as "not paying attention" (since she concentrated on the person in question or her memories of the rose garden whilst drawing), then we would have to reckon with what she concentrated on when scribbling the 'primary drawings' of the artificial flowers. All of them were also based on motifs which were mostly drawn alternating with the other two themes. [131]

The unique colour harmonies, or actually the development of her handling of colours could be best explained setting out once more from her abhorrence of arbitrariness. Ilka used colours before her big artistic break, but like her simple naïvety then, without any theorising or speculation. We keep a big bundle of sheets, drawn in Szentendre during the War, in pencil and coloured chalk (but not pastel) of yards, street cameos, rural scenes, market animals and fruit harvesting. The colours are part of the reality, the horse is red-brown, the tree top is green, and so on (perhaps a professional would relate these with a trend or someone's style). A significant pack of pastel still-life pictures remain from Alsóerdősor (1945-46), with strong, striking colours perhaps in the style of German expressionism of the twenties or the *Fauve* (Van Gogh's influence is beyond doubt. Ilka knew his pictures and held them in high esteem). I believe that no conscious strivings for colour harmony or for a connection between colours and the composition can be demonstrated here, although professional opinion would also be more valid in this. I refer to all the statements belittling the significance of colours relative to the

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mind. The posture of the depicted figure was that she had to slightly lean forward and to the side to reach the telephone (there was perhaps an arm-chair in the way). The short 'stumps' representing the arms shows one arm holding a receiver and the other symbolises an arm 'thrust in the air' in a gesture of astonishment.

[131] It is hard to distinguish between paying attention and not. There is a beautiful little picture, a 'primary drawing' of a rose garden that was drawn with eyes closed—as a game. The title of the picture, later offered to Endre Bálint as a gift, is also that: *With Closed Eyes* (After Ilka Gedő's death, the artist's widow gave the picture back to her family—Editor's note.) By then, there had been a number of rose garden pictures. These shapes were 'in Ilka's hand', as when someone who can write can also write with closed eyes.

last period's fantastic poetry of colours. Ilka also worked with pastel in Fillér Street and began to use oil, too (1946-49). She tore up a major part of this work in a deep moment of depression during her break. She later gathered together a few of these broken fragments from these pastel and oil pictures and even tried to put some of them together again.

The "Pastel Self-portraits from Fillér utca" are another important series from before Ilka's break, dating from the summer and autumn of 1947.[132] These were also prepared without any contemplation on the theory of colours through 'spontaneous' choice. However, I have a feeling that the colour scheme was a precursor to the world of colours developed through conscious speculation that appeared later after the big break. This certainly applies to the light and 'rainbow-like' colour harmonies in segments of these pictures resembling mother-of -pearl. I shall return to this connection later.

Stopping artistic work did not amount to giving up. She strongly rejected all thought of finding a 'paying job'.[133] She began to study, mainly the theoretical issues of art, but she also read philosophy, theory of literature and literature**,** in a 'professional' way. I mean that she read authors, not just any interesting book that she would find. We inherited German classics from my father-in-law, from which she read, for example, Hebbel, volume after volume, Kleist, several of Nietzsche's works, and Franz Kafka, whose works were available by the mid-fifties in the Fischer comprehensive edition in the Ervin Szabó Library. All these she read almost *da capo al fine*. Her theoretical studies (especially those on the arts) were accompanied by note-taking or even extensive translations done solely for her own use. I could not put together her theoretical readings, but I have kept many of her note-books.

From the perspective of these recollections it is worth noting that one of her first readings was Goethe's *Theory of Colours*, it was one that she translated completely, she also copied

[132] Ilka drew these pastel self-portraits with a manic passion, practically up until the minute she had to leave for the delivery ward. In our Fillér Street flat the servants' room served as a studio. It was a small, brightly sun-lit room. It lay aside from the 'main routes' of the flat, I seldom entered it. When something was finished Ilka brought it for me to see. After she left to give birth, I went in and found the whole series of pastel self-portraits in the greatest mess, all over the walls, mostly on the floor, on top of one another. I had the feeling that as she finished something she hastily threw it aside and started afresh.

[133] The tense relationship between Ilka and my family is clearly manifested in a concrete dramatic incident. When Ilka had not done any artistic work for a long while, 'only' household and motherhood chores (alone, without any help), my brother, who worked as the head of the accounting department of a foundry, suggested that Ilka should undertake a course on industrial design that was just starting then at a very advantageous price. As far as I can recall, I also approved of the idea. Ilka flatly rejected this, to which my mother responded with an unusual vehemence. A nasty quarrel ensued. My mother called Ilka a sponger and rubbed it to her nose that “[she] did not help [her] husband in life's difficult struggles!” I can quote this so precisely, because, of course, later these words became battle cries.

out the figures in coloured pencil. This reading was so close to her putting down her tools that I remember we viewed it as the bridging of an 'artistic crisis' (of course, Ilka herself would have used these words only in a sarcastic sense).

Perhaps parallel or prior to reading Goethe's theories, she prepared 'colour patterns' on glass plates from her rich supply of oil paints. Glass plates because they were close to hand. These represented a form of systematic 'practising of scales'. As an example I shall describe one of them (these glass plates have survived, despite movings, decorations and spring cleanings. Ilka had a magical attachment to them). I doubt that she would ever have used them in her new period together with the colour patterns prepared afresh that are described below (of course this could simply be because she gave the tubes that these were made with to Lajos Szabó in 1955 when he began to produce fine arts and she was not actually working). The example contains the combinations of the black and grey scale with various other colour scales, on a 20x25 cm glass plate. In the top row there are more or less identical rectangles shaped with a small brush, taken directly from tubes, ranging colours from dark black through eight shades of grey to ivory (this last one stands out, and is dropped from the rest). Next, there are six rows of approximately 2x0.5 cm strokes from the above black and grey scale: ten fields from the first, deepest black, ten from the next grade, and so on. In each such group, there is a colour mixed in from a series of a certain recurring ten colours, ranging from ochre to deep orange. Every other colour is painted from course-thick to a hair's breadth and next to each combination there is a small dot from the second colour without mixing, the whole glass plate is stuck onto white drawing paper to compensate for the absence of white priming. On the same plate there is the same black and grey scale similarly combined with a blue scale and partly with a light yellow to dark ochre scale.

Later, Ilka read several other works on the theory of colours mainly by Arthur Schopenhauer, Wilhelm Ostwald, Philipp Otto Runge and, much later, if I remember well, Georges Seurat's writings on the subject. It would be hard to pinpoint the effect of these readings on the increasingly intricate colour poetry of Ilka's second artistic period. We had many discussions about the pictures under preparation and the main principle of her choice of colours was centred around coldness and warmth. The speculations dealt with connecting and contrasting these qualities with the composition. Local contrast, i.e. what

comes next to what and so on, along with the texture and hue of the coloured surface played a constant role in working out these cold and warm colour qualities. All this may seem banal, I imagine something of the sort arises in every painter's thoughts more or less consciously. Ilka Gedő worked entranced by the harmony of colours. She recorded the speculations that lead to the colour harmonies characteristic of her finished pictures. Eighty-eight notebooks of the most varied form, from pocket note-pads to A4 ring-bound school notebooks, remain of Ilka's colour speculations. In addition to these, I am unsure of how many different-sized corrugated cardboard boxes there are containing colour-patterns (the descendants of the above-mentioned Fillér Street colour plates). Neither am I sure of how Ilka grouped these seemingly chaotic collections.

These writings on colour speculations were not the results of some arbitrary caprice, but simply a technical requirement that stemmed from her layered method of painting, naturally chosen from the moment of using oils. Three or four pictures were always underway because of this layered painting method, as after a while the picture in progress had to be put aside to dry. The writing served as a reminder of the colour concepts that had already been envisaged during the work on the picture, but which had not yet been realised. That was how it had all started and soon it became an absolutely conscious method. Knowing the mess, resembling a hay-stack, which surrounded Ilka, this was a surprisingly pedantic method. The notebooks were given fantasy names, I assume that they were words substituting a lyric diary. Some examples: The Jerusalem Notebook; The Mask Notebook; Hold On; Hurrah; Ouch; Getaway; Patience; Simon Ha Caddik; Zipper; Yuck; May; Later; Z; Exile no. 1, no. 2 to no. 26. This naming was a kind of game,[134] a dull number system would have sufficed. The labels on the cover of her notebooks show which pictures the notes refer to, also indicating the notebooks containing the preliminary notes to the actual picture and the notebooks that followed, as well as including page numbers

[134] I offer some of the notebook titles to illustrate the playful freedom that infused Ilka's use of language. She found a wealth of pleasure in words assuming agreed or epigraphic connotations in addition to their traditional linguistic meaning. Perhaps, in a way, that the agreement was only for one person, herself. This linguistic play may have had its roots in her childhood. Ilka and her mother used pet-names (nicknames) for people (and important objects) in their environment that they alone understood. Ilka's father, who rose into immensely high spheres, was a frightening and ridiculous *pater familias* figure for the two women. He was utterly excluded from this private language and it is likely that he never even noticed its existence. But let us take a look at the notebook titles: Excluded; China; Very Great Diligence; King Stephen; King With a Hat; Really?; Cat Show; Great Diligence; Immense Diligence; Red; No-Vain Diligence; Monster; Diligence.

(in cases where these continuity notes are not on the cover then they are in the notebook). This is best illustrated with a random example:

The Kukkk Notebook The KUKKK Notebook [Hand-written once then again in capitals]

In a separately framed area:

Continuation of Spring a/ pp. 1-20

b/ bottom of pp. 34-39

c/ bottom of pp. 46-49

[Spring is the title of a canvas with two children playing with a ball, painted after a child's drawing, with 'spring' written on it.]

In another framed area:

Equilibre p. 21 to bottom of p. 33

p. 40 to bottom of p. 45

[Equilibre is the picture listed under Circus in the Catalogue of the Székesfehérvár Exhibition that has also been reproduced.]

In a third frame:

Pougni's Artificial Flower p. 20 Notes[135]

The notebooks strictly served as a diary of the work, although very occasionally a remark about a small event from our life would slip in. Thus, with some effort, it would be possible to date them. The preparation of all the pictures could be traced relatively easily. The intimate arbitrariness of the use of language would pose certain difficulties. The maze of the names of the pictures could perhaps be fathomed out, although sometimes even they went through changes or had several names simultaneously. However, the web of names denoting actual areas in the pictures necessary for the colour speculations could hardly be unravelled or would at least require an enormous amount work (recurring expressions are those referring to the four parts of the outer frame, and to the multiple frames appearing to be rows: "lower edge, cupola, right margin, left margin").

As with the titles, the contents of these notebooks should not be thought of as a dry, matter-of-fact diary. It is *also* that. At the same time, its 'typography', if I may use this expression for a manuscript, shows an entirely 'fluttering' freedom, a mixture of order and

[135] *Pougni's Artificial Flower* is one of the titles of a picture. As she magnified it she drew, composing a part of Pougni's painting into the picture. She was especially fond of one of the reproductions in the book on Pougni (a park with strollers, children and dogs). She drew or composed a part of that into the picture she had in progress.

disorder:

- the writing often shapes loose 'patches', and arrows point to the next patch
- at times, the hand-written text is interspersed with words in various types of capitals
- words that recur after a few lines are often not spelled out in full, only pulled down from above with winding arrows (Ilka frequently used this feminine method in her correspondence or notes on her readings)
- at places, funny little drawings cheer up the pages[136]
- occasionally she put a patch of paint of the colour in question
- in the text itself there are different orthographic jokes

The whole thing, each page, resembles a picture-poem. The text itself contains games, often humorous speeches she delivered to herself, whom she refers to as: comrade, VIP special comrade, special artist, artist speciality, little mate, and so on. They always contain the plans of the concrete actions to be carried out on the pictures and instructions to herself about the execution.

Again I give a random example (*Kukkk Notebook*, pp. 24-25). I shall not attempt to give back the typography. The note is to the *Equilibre* picture with the two clowns, one of which is standing on a globe (cf. "Oeuvre Catalogue" Oil Painting No. 104.).

The left-hand edge of the next section (colour not yet detemined) is set at the point where the leg intersects with the picked up knee that leads to the other leg (from this point I dropp-pped a ver-ti-cle).
I put on the two blues! They are livelier than the patterns on the off-white paper. Because they are on a white paper.
That's no problem, but: I need to wait until its totally dry.
But, you can get down to listing the Benefits? Mate.[137]
This will be a viol. - a gloomy, dark viol. to the extreme.
Which
7. Is a ceaseless intensity of the viol. Kupola
8. A perverted intensity, here blue-ish red, there cooled to a cold ghost red, here 'body red' warmed to ochre. 'Flesh ochre'…
9. This, too, intensifies the yellowness of the yellow background in the L.C. [Little Clown], moreover, this fully intensifies it, this warm 'viol'.

[136] My selection of *Finnegans Wake* illustrations, some of which were exhibited in Székesfehérvár, are scribbles 'decorating' the work diaries and drawn whilst at rest.
[137] The majority of the notes enumerate the 'benefits' of selecting a colour (i.e. its significant relationship, harmony, counterpoints and connections with the other parts of the picture). Their retrospective rationalisations and justifications are decisions about a choice of colour.

10. With its immeasurable darkness it intensifies the immeasurable lightness of the same [here there is an assured arrow from the encircled word "same" to the above "background" under point 3]
11. It makes the body of B.C. [Big Clown] light
12. It enters into connection with the viol. on the globe, this fact still hides unexpected motifs (because the yellows are not yet put on here) [from "here" there is an arrow to "globe"]
13. Although the Prussian (evidently: blue), as a cold colour, is in contrast with the plunge of the reds – in an R [Rembrandt] green field - next to the nape, but the Flesh-ochre on it tilts this area into relationship with it [arrow to "in an R. green field"]. In other words, contrast and relatedness are simultaneously present. This goes well with the clown's posture.
14. [With great big hand-written letters, diagonally, across the whole page:] The great redness of this viol. in progress [renders] the current Morethanmargin's greenness even more fragile and light!

After this taster there is not much else to say about the colour-patterns and colour-plates.[138]

Ilka looked at colours and paints with what amounted to a fetish-adoring rapture. Again the characteristic mixture of fastidious, pedantic order and the most charming chaos arose from it. She never threw away colour or paint or washed any out of her brushes. She smudged the paint out of her brushes onto a piece of paper at hand (clean or scrap). She kept all of these. Paints that would have been wasted due to 'accidents' such as spillage, dropped tubes, stepping on tubes and so forth were treated similarly. She often put on or took off paint using matchsticks. A huge soup bowl and a cardboard box are full of such matchsticks with paint on their ends. It has to be added that this scrupulous guarding of every last drop of paint was not only a simple fastidiousness, but had rational roots. Paints manufactured in Hungary were of an unusable quality. During our stay in Paris, Ilka bought a vast paint collection. After 1970, she exclusively used this oil collection and there was a constant worry about a possible need for a new supply. At the same time several consciously and purposefully put together colour patterns were prepared on pieces of paper and primed canvas pieces of the most varied kind. These usually show the colours, taken from the tube or thinned down to various extents, alongside the combinations

[138] By "colour pattern" (Ilka's expression), I mean the small pieces of scraps that served as a trial for various colour combinations: paints put on a piece of paper or canvas with the make of the original tubes. The colour plates are big pieces of corrugated cardboard on which colour patterns, chosen or prepared for a picture, were pinned with a drawing pin. She collected the colour patterns in big corrugated cardboard boxes, categorising them by the dominant colour. From these boxes, she selected the colour patterns for the colour plate of the picture in progress, often over days.

largely created by painting over layers (another colour painted over dry paint) or less often by mixing colours. The names of each component and the manufacturer were carefully written on them. She often showed me the fine differences between colours of the same name produced by different factories. She filed these colour patterns by their hundreds, the results of conscious experiments, as well as by chance, in huge cardboard boxes categorised according to their dominant colour. Labels painted with thick brush or Indian ink help us to orient ourselves among them: BLUE—GREEN—BLACK—GREY—VIOL, etc. I am not sure whether she could ever have found the actual tube necessary for recreating an accidental colour pattern without a label, as she could for those with labels. I suspect she only found the 'conscious' patterns labelled after the tubes.

When painting an actual picture, she used colour patterns pinned on cardboard sheets after a selection process lasting several days—obviously based on a preceding vision. (The amateur photograph of Ilka published in the *Catalogue of the Műcsarnok Exhibition* was taken during such a selection and without her noticing it.) It is mostly these types that are among the surviving collections. On some of the scraps even the already finished picture's colour plate that it was transferred from is marked. Occasionally, even two transfers are traceable.

Colour Pattern No. 123, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, canvas, 90 x 240 mm

Colour Pattern No. 263¸1970-1985 oil, black ink, paper, 190 x 155 mm

Colour Pattern No. 140¸ 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper,140 x 285

Similarly to the titles and texts of her workbooks, the labels of these colour plates also carry a very intimate, solitary and poetic content, as if they were the aura of the pictures in preparation. The pinned-up colourful scraps have names written with a thick brush or Indian ink and expressing a certain mood. As a taster for those expressing an inner state of mind: Languid; Pensive; Calm Before a Storm; Ruffled; Sorrow; Protestation; Omen; Insidious Gentleness; Attack; Forced Delight; Stubborn; Wild; Closed, etc. I would be dishonest if I were to say that I could see the connection between the 'colour-atmosphere' and the titles of the actual scraps, yet Ilka must have given these names through some sort of empathy. It is impossible for me not to believe that, back then, when Ilka was reading Goethe's colour theory, that we would not have talked a lot about the chapter "*Sinnlich-sittliche Wirkung der Farben*" [The Sensual-Moral Effect of Colours]. The naming is usually in thick Indian ink framed in a heart shape, obviously also making the references in the workbooks easier. I attempt to depict such a colour plate, or colour pattern collection by copying all the written text. The title of the plate itself is (painted several times in various places on the 44x37cm cardboard sheet):

DOUBLE-HEADED, a [This is the home-use title of the picture that was exhibited in Szentendre under the title *Double Self-Portrait*. See "Oeuvre Catalogue," Picture 151. 'a' means that there are further, 'b', 'c', etc. plates for this picture.]
[First scrap: white sheet of paper, glued on a piece of news paper. On the latter] *Resolute Sorrow* [framed in a heart shape]. *From Rose-Garden I.* [i.e. transferred from the plate made for that picture]
[The rest of the texts given here are the names of the colours and paints on this first scrap.]
Burni Carmin
From the bottle Rose Madder [i.e. paint thinned down with turpentine] Two Talens Lemon finger print into the watered one.
Geranium supplement. [This 'supplement' is obviously a home-use] From a Talens Lemon dish.

[Next to the paint smudges on the glued on news paper]
Scarlet Lake, Geranium, Rose Madder, Rose Madder Deep. [On the further scraps I do not give the names of the tubes next to the smudges, only what is legible besides those. On the wrapping of a blue schoolbook] *Unbridled* [in a heart shape] *Taken off in Fright* [in a heart shape]
[On a piece of rough drawing paper] Beautiful.
[Another scrap] Lost Melancholia.
[Another] Cruel. [From the *Dejected Angel*] [Next] Despair. [Then:] Surrender. [From Rose-Garden I.] [On this colour plate, among the smallest, there are seven colour patterns in all.]

At the end of these recollections the question arises: is Ilka Gedő's unusual 'work method' a method? In terms of a method being a teachable or transferable process? Hardly![139] What is it, then? Is it a meticulous experimentation with paint and the conscientious diary keeping on each phase of the work? After much pondering various complementary rather than contradictory explanations seem to be appropriate.

I find the most important aspect to be that that this extremely time-consuming activity around painting was a ceremony, a ritual. This is particularly true of the 'two-stage' method. The story about the *frightening* freedom of the empty canvas (and our numerous discussions) demonstrate that Ilka obviously had an aversion to the postures of the various modern trends, which are best summed up as "We do not represent, we create!"[140] We could say that Ilka rejected this in the name of a religious humility. This humility is the natural concomitant of an insatiable thirst for all that can be perceived in the created world. Although Ilka practised no religion, in the footsteps of Jewish tradition she must have instinctively felt the evil infinite that Irvin Kristol phrased in his essay on 'counter culture' (in connection with modern art), "The deeper one explores into the self, *without* any transcendental reference, the clearer it becomes that there is nothing there." [141] Perhaps she protected herself from that "nothing" with her 'ritual'.

Just before she fell ill, she had reread the *Book of Job*. She stopped in amazement at chapter 42:5 "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." She could not satiate herself with this closing sentence of the story. These words of

[139] One day, when interested young people showed up from among our son's friends, I proposed, on the spur of the moment, that she should teach art. Ilka sharply protested, "What I am doing may be a deadly weapon against a talent in an other person's hand."
[140] For the quote see Ilka Gedő's study on Lajos Vajda (discussed under footnote 10). Among friends she used this expression to denote the crux of various non-figurative 'manifestos' and programmes.
[141] Irvin Kristol, "The Adversary Culture of Intellectuals" in *The Third Century--America as a Post-Industrial Society*. S. M. Lipset (Ed.) Hoover Inst. Press, 1979, pp. 327-342. See quote on p. 341.

Job come at the end of the book, after the Lord has shown Job the splendour of the created world, degrading all human ability and toil to a pitiful nothing.

Of course, this ritual could be seen as self-deceit since the image, viewed as an unchangeable model, was the scribble or creation of her own hand. Nonetheless, for an outsider, all types of ritual action are self-deceit.

Naturally, the significance of the 'double-stage' method in Ilka's oeuvre could be formulated in a more rational way, that is, that she needed that brain-wracking concentration which she mentioned in connection with drawing from life. However, the magnification of the small scribbles, which by the end she simply trusted to a photographic lens, could not take over the role of this concentrated attention. This role was perhaps transferred into the 'construction' of colours. 'Construction' in dittos, because the texts of her notebooks reveal that this speculation was not a conception in a scientific sense either. On the one hand, the texts unanimously show a rationalisation following intuitive decision. On the other hand, the colour scheme of the late pictures displays a striking similarity to the pastel Fillér Street self-portraits (in 1947!). In other words, behind the rationalisation hides the lyrical individual who can experience the colours, that is the fact of a colourful world in one way only (remember Goethe's *"Sinnlich-sittliche Wirkung der Farben!"*).

And of course, the notebooks filled with speculations are replenished with private humour (expressed in figures and text) disclosing that, besides their metaphysical importance (perhaps through forced interpretation), they also served as a means of brushing aside the fear of freedom and solitude in front of the white empty rectangle. Without doubt, that *also*. Nonetheless, the adherence to the small model drawings she pinned up was obviously a rejection of the 'ultra' trends, the unbridled 'creation' as a cultural historical fact and at the same time a defence against its temptations.

33. Júlia Szabó: Exhibition Opening Speech at the Budapest Arts Hall, 1987

For quite some years now again, the Arts Hall of Budapest has been exhibiting the most appreciated and contemporary art, it is a European and Hungarian centre of art. The exhibitions shown here include the most talented representatives of the young generation as well as Hungarian and foreign artists well-known from art history. The Arts Hall also considers it to be its mission to research and present such oeuvres as have been less accessible to the general public in Budapest exhibitions over the past decades.

Ilka Gedő presented her works to a rather small circle of Budapest intellectuals back in 1964 in a studio exhibition. The Székesfehérvár King St Stephen Museum, an of exhibition venue for European-level art since 1958, showed a retrospective from the works of Ilka Gedő back in 1980. In 1982 the chamber exhibition gallery of the Arts Hall, the Dorottya utca Art Gallery showed a smaller selection of Ilka Gedő's works. All these events were just an antecedent of the great breakthrough that happened in October 1985 in Glasgow, in the course of the Hungarian Cultural Weeks (Hungarain Season). The Glasgow Compass Galery presented approximately eighty works of the artist to the general public. A very great number of articles were published in British press about the exhibitions of the Hungarian Cultural Weeks. Surprisingly, it was not the art of young avant-garde artists that caught the attention of art critics but the exhibition showing painting and works on paper by Ilka Gedő. [142] Later on *The New Hungarian Quarterly* also gave an account of the work of Ilka Gedő. [143] Ilka Gedő died on June 19, 1985. The current exhibition of the Arts Hall is thus a memorial restrispective, and at the same the preparatory material of a monograph and of a documentation one copy of which will be deposited in the Arts Hall while the

[142] The footnotes have been added by Dávid Bíró.

Packer, William: „Hungarian Arts in Glasgow." *The Financial Times*, October 8, 1985;
Taylor, John Russel: „Brilliant Exponent of an Outdated Style." *The Times*, 29 October 1985;
Shepherd, Michael "Hungarian Temperament." *Sunday Telegrap*h, 27 October 1985;
Clare Henry "Chance to Gain a Unique Perspective." *Glasgow Herald*. 1 October 1985;
Clare Henry: "Hungarian Arts in Glasgow" *Studio International*, Vol 199. (1986, Nos. 10-12), 59. o.

[143] Péter György-Gábor Pataki: „Two Hungarian Artists Rediscovered" *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, 1986, Vol. 27, No. 101, pp. 176-178.

other copy will be placed in the library and photo archives of the Washington National Gallery[144].

Ilka Gedő's artistic career started in the 1930s. She learned in various private schools of Budapest. The artist came from a family of Jewish intellectuals Her father, Simon Gedő was a secondary-school teacher of German as a second language and of Hungarian literature, her mother, Elza Weisskopf was a clerk and, apart from running the household, she translated literary works from German into Hungarian. For Example, she translated E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Das fremde Kind*[145] into Hungarian, and the book was illustrated by her sister, Aranka Weisskopf (Győry).

Ilka Gedő's first drawings that are remarkable were made in 1944-1945 in the Budapest Ghetto. In her drawings showing children and elderly people artist was callable of expressing feelings of hopelessness and abandonment in her drawings. Both before and after the war she did landscape drawings. She also drew her flat and the neighbourhood close to her place of residence. She applied for a permission to draw in the Ganz Factory close to her flat. It is here that her first drawing shown at this exhibition was made. It shows the yard of the Ganz Factory[146] and as well as the drawing of a stone store in Fillér utca, in which the artist represents such a simple style that can only be compared to drawings of Paul Klee.

Gedő was, however, capable of using a heroic and dramatic tone as well. On another study from Ganz Factory we can see a work bench as well as metal plates all drawn with such passionate lines as if the Gedő had taken over the effort of the workers hammering these plates.

From the beginning, Gedő's most important topic had been the self-portrait. In her self-portraits, Giacometti's concentration and modesty as well as his clarity and restrained colours are repeated. Gedő, however, could not have consciously followed this Swiss artist as she did not see any of the Giacometti's work before the 1960s. Gedő also has self-

[144] https://library.nga.gov/permalink/01NGA_INST/1cl1g8d/alma993106313504896

[145] E.T.A. Hoffmann: *Az idegen gyermek. Mese* (Das fremde Kind), translated by Elza Gedő, Sacelláry, Bp., 1921

[146] „The Ganz Factory, situated at Margit körút in Budapest, was a large enterprise producing element for electrical engineering in one plant, and metal parts for machines and tools in another plant. In the late 1940, after the war, it offered an educational program, organised by a liberally minded engineer. Ilka Gedő was welcome on the premises to sit and draw, even if the result did not correspond to the official image of the worker." *Ilka Gedő (1921–1985) Drawings and Pastels*, kiállításkatalógus, New York, Shepherd Gallery, 21 East 84th Street, 1995, edited by: Elizabeth Kashey, p.21

portraits (drawn in pastel, chalk and black-ink) from the end of the 1940's which can be compared to the dramatic tone Antonin Artaud's poems.

At this time, the artist was already married and was expecting a child. In her *Self-Portrait in Pregnancy*[147] she depicts herself in a sculpturesque way. At this time, the artist was already married an expecting a child. In her Self-Portrait in Pregnancy she depicts herself in a sculpturesque way. This drawing does not show the conflict between being a painter and motherhood but it rather expresses many mothers' anxiety in the second half of the 20th century, an anxiety over the child's future that Gedő probably never expressed in words, but showed instinctively.

When the most important works of Ilka Gedő were born, apart from the artist's family, these works did not get any recognition. Gedő did not take part in exhibitions. The circle of artists (the European School, the group of artists around Lajos Szabó, Júlia Vajda and Endre Bálint) whose events Gedő visited respected only Gedő's profound and sensitive personality, and admired her beautiful red hair. However, these artists did not know that in their circle an artist on an equal footing, and even surpassing many of them, began her career. Ilka Gedő was deeply affected by this. She stopped creating art, and between 1950 and 1962 she was not present in artistic life. The officially recognised art style of the period, the so-called socialist realism was alien to her art.

Gedő carefully preserved her drawings created between 1943 and 1949, she brought up her children, kept the household. She did not draw or paint. However, her manuscript estate reveals that not even for a single day did she stop being deeply interested in arts and pursuing art historical studies. He regularly visited the Municipal Ervin Szabó Library of

[147] Júlia Szabó writes about one work in the series of self-portraits in pregnancy held by the Israel Museum.

Self-Portrait in Pregnancy, 1947, pastel, paper, 415 x 295 mm, Israel Museum,

Budapest, where she read books on art history in German, English and French. She prepared notes of her readings and the list[148] of note-books is just being prepared. Let me give some examples from these art history notebooks. In September 1949 (every notebook has a date at the top) Gedő read Gino Severini's works, but it turns out from Gedő's notes that she found the colour theory of the futurist Severini written in the 1920's chaotic. In the autumn and winter of 1952 Gedő read Herbert Read's *Concise History of Modern Painting.* In March Gedő read and prepared notes about György Lukács's work titled *Die Seele und die Formen.* In the summer of 1955, she read Uhde-Bernays' two-volume work titled *Künstlerbriefe*[149] In this book, she believed Philipp Otto Runge's letter written to his brother, Daniel the most important. Here, the great painter of romanticism gives an account of his colour theory and his connection with nature. Gedő took notes, sometimes copying out long passages from the text, remarking by the side of this text: „Dense like sour cream, the whole needs a precise translation into Hungarian!"

Ilka Gedő read a lot about the masters of the early 19th century. She respected Philipp Otto Runge, she carefully read Goethe's colour theory, making notes and translating a substantial part of it.[150] In the *Künstlerbriefe* she paid special attention to Caspar David Friedrich and Salomon Gessner. Regarding her, we can mention that she very much liked

[148] Gedő's complete manuscript estate was digitised in 2019. This digitization project, along with the *complete digitised works* and *oeuvre catalogue* can be viewed at the Library of the Hungarian National Gallery–Museum of Fine Arts, at Archives of the Art History Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MKI-C-I-204) and at the Budapest Ervin Szabó Library. *The Complete Works of Ilka Gedő---A Digitized Oeuvre Catalogue–The Complete Manuscripts of Ilka Gedő (the Detailed List of Notebooks),* Budapest, 2019, 285 pages */Gedő Ilka minden munkája, digitalizált oeuvre-katalógus műtárgylistái--Gedő Ilka minden kézirata (a füzetek részletes listája), Budapest, 2019, 264. oldal*

[149] Hermann Uhde-Ber*nays: Künstlerbriefe über Kunst: Bekenntnisse von Malern, Architekten u. Bildhauern aus fünf Jahrhunderten, mit sechzig Selbstbildnissen und den Künstler-Unterschriften*, Dresden, Verlag von Wolfgang Jess, 1926 (This book is preserved in the estate.)

[150] On this topic cf. the note-books in Gedő's manuscript estate: **133**_The continuation of the translation of Goethe's colour theory / From the Beginning up until the physiology of colours (1949 / **134**_The continuation of the translation of Goethe's colour theory / From the back of the notebook three of Goethe's scientific studies are translated / **135**_Ostwald's colour theory; Severini on colours; Ostwald's critique of Goethe (1949)_The estate of Ilka Gedő / **136**_A summary of Goethe's colour theory / Copies of Goethe's explanatory drawings / Subjective speculations concerning the metaphysics of the hexagon (1949)_The estate of Ilka Gedő / **140**_A comparison of Goethe's and Schopenhauer's colour theory (1949) / **141_**Translations from of Goethe's, Ostwald's and Roger Bacon's colour theory and Newton's Optics (1949) / **150**_Translation of the Introduction to Goethe's colour theory (1949).

and read in the German original E.T.A. Hoffmann's novella *Mademoiselle de Scudéri and* the novel *The Life and Opinions of the Tomcat Murr.*

Similarly to the great painters of the 19th century, she paid a lot of attention to the painterly practice and the compositional methods of Far-Eastern cultures. In the manuscript estate there is note-book on Curt Glasers book, titled *Die Kunst Ostasiens*[151] containing very detailed noes. Gedő paid special attention to ideas like this: "Only in the landscape can you find depth and pleasures that never fail. That's why the educated man who paints turns mainly to the landscape."[152]

When Gedő resumed artistic activities, her main génre was the scenery picture, in the same sense as the painters of the Far East who believed. The plant is not an ornament, not a colourful spot, but a living being[153]. However, she also knew that the picture is not living nature but only its essence and reflection. That is the reason why Gedő named the series made in the 1960s and 1970s artificial flowers. These "artificial flowers with dagger" and "bowing artificial-flowers" are, in fact, real portraits. However, these are not portraits of of individual people, but images originating from the rich and sad regions of the human soul full of both pains and sweet memories.

Gedő was passionately concerned about painterly genres and the artistic instruments of painting. In 1949 she wrote a letter to the most significant art critic in the history of Hungarian art, to Ernő Kállai. The main issue of this exchange of letters was: what is more important the depiction of the human face or the creating an abstract balance of colours and forms. Ernő Kállai encouraged the artist to follow her own instincts. Though Kállai is primarily known to have been a theoretician of abstract art, he nevertheless sets Ilka Gedő the vividness Pierre Bonnard's painting as an example to be followed.

In one Gedő's notebooks made about a book on ancient Greek art the following sentence is found in her beautiful lettering: „Is the human form a stronger reflection of

[151] Gedő 280. számú jegyzetfüzetéről van szó. (Curt Glaser, Die Kunst Ostasiens, der Umkreis ihres Denkens und Gestaltens, Insel Verlag, Leipzig, 1913)

[152] Ibid. p. 94: *Nur in der Landschaft findet man Tiefe und Genüsse, die nimmer versagen. Darum wendet sich der gebildete Mann, der malt, vor allem der Landschaft zu.*

[153] Gedő copied out this sentence, too (p. 125): *Die Pflanze ist dem Künstler nicht ein ornamentales Formgebilde, nicht ein bunter Farbenfleck. Sie ist ein lebendes Wesen, und der Künstler hat das gleiche Interesse an dem Bildungsgesetz, das dem Bau einer Blume immanent ist, wie an Formen des Gesteins oder der Berge, der Tiere oder der Menschen.* (For the artist, the plant is not an ornamental shape, not a colourful spot of colour. It is a living being, and the artist has the same interest in the law of education inherent in the construction of a flower as in forms of rock or mountains, animals or people.)

God's spirit than the scenery? Yes, undoubtedly. And yet man is capable of turning also a landscape into a memento. The creations of a scenery remind us of both God and the human being. In almost every landscape there is human being as one of God's thoughts.

Gedő's scenery pictures are works layered by subtleties. The grass and flowers come to life through subtle lines, often carved into the surface, while the background appears in grey, yellow, blue and in thousand colour shades. Figuration in these paintings ranges from recognisability to providing an impression. The colours are simultaneously real and dreamlike. The blue rose has a yellowish background, the sound of colours us dense, yet clear. Gedő did not only read and translate Goethe's colour theory, she also read and translated passages from Wilhelm Ostwald's colour theory. [154]

Gedő was a conscious and instinctive creator at the same time. The painting of every painting was preceded by a preliminary sketch, the selection of the required colour patterns, and the making of a painting was a slow, conscientious process with lots arduous work and cheerful insights. The artist was looking for her own place in the world, and whenever an opportunity arose, she was always keen to exhibit her work. In 1970s her source of information about art were not only albums, but she spent some months in Moscow, lived a year in Paris, and paid a short visit to Berlin. She was an avid visitor of exhibitions looking for artists who she could like, but also observing those who did something she did not like. In her studio there were illustrations from her favourite artists, the one who paid attention to. A drawing by Lajos Vajda and a painting by Béla Veszelszky were reminders of some of the painters she liked. She pinned reproductions of paintings (Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka's *Riding at New Moon in Athens*) and photos of ancient Egyptian and Greek art on her easel. After Gedő's death, her husband made a monumental video[155] about Gedő's studio.

Ilka Gedő died at the age sixty-four. She was relatively young and still in the fullness of her creative powers. In his funeral speech rabbi István Berger quoted from the book of Job: "The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, though they cannot compare with the wings and

[154] Notebooks from the manuscript estate: 135_Ostwald's colour theory; Severini on colours; Ostwald's critique of Goethe (1949)/ 136_A summary of Goethe's colour theory / Copies of Goethe's explanatory drawings / Subjective speculations concerning the metaphysics of the hexagon (1949)/ 138_Wilhelm Ostwald's colour theory (notes and translation into Hungarian of various passages) (1949) / 141_Translations from of Goethe's, Ostwald's and Roger Bacon's colour theory and Newton's Optics (1949)

[155] This video is currently not available. A detailed description of the artist's studio as it was left behind at the artist death is in Section 28.

feathers of the stork. She lays her eggs on the ground and lets them warm in the sand, unmindful that a foot may crush them, that some wild animal may trample them." (Job 39: 13-15) And: „Yet when she spreads her feathers to run, she laughs at horse and rider." (Job 39: 18).

34. György Spiró's Exhibition Opening Speech at the Budapest Arts Hall, May 1987

This is the fourth time that I see an exhibition by Ilka Gedő, but because this is the biggest, it seems as I saw something different from what I had seen before. I see now a beautiful, balanced painterly work, canvases in harmonious colours. I start to see, among others, thanks to the artist's hand gracefully drawing lines into the paintings, with the artist's eye viewing the world with introverted irony. And, most importantly, I see that these paintings exist by and in themselves. Any person wishing to understand these images doesn't need any external knowledge. This oeuvre simply exists.

I am forced to see that Ilka Gedő did not oppose any trends, she did not stand above or below any school; she stood sideways. What Gedő did is not a polemic art. The basis of this painting oeuvre is not some kind of ideology, but an indivisible life experience. No matter whether Gedő wanted it or did not want it, no matter if this happened accidentally or simply had to happen this way, Gedő avoided the greatest trap that kills the art of the twentieth century.

Ilka Gedő paid attention only to herself and only to the canvas, and these two sides of her painting gradually merged into one. She was watching what an influence a doodle created by herself had on her mind. She was the ideal viewer, and as no one else created what Gedő would have liked to see, she had to create the ideal picture. Even if I knew that she had practically no, or at the most only some accidental, contacts with her contemporaries, with official or highly acclaimed artists, I would know, based on her paintings, that Ilka Gedő was everything but an officially recognised artist. She was an ignored self-made artist who probably suffered a lot because of this, but could not do anything else but remain a dilettante in the original sense of the word: a person loving and admiring the arts.

She was original without having consciously aimed at originality. She viewed things without interfering factors and restrictions, because what she could have learnt from art teachers, she could not learn; she could only learn from herself.

There are no traces of this self-teaching process. In fact, the struggle that had to be fought to finish a painting cannot really be precisely documented. One can only guess what a great effort had to be made until such time as the paintings started to shine an

undisturbed brightness. These works cannot be planned in advance, they cannot be made up, and they can be created only through determined and tough experimenting accidentally. We know that arduous work always bears its fruits, but we can never know exactly how. For Gedő painting was a most personal private matter. Whatever forms or colours she composed, it never occurred to her to project anything big into them: these charming dancing figures, these relief plants, these deep burning reds and greens, these self-portraits exempt from any form of self-criticism with a big hat, without a hat, all these works belong to the sphere unreachably pure painting, a sphere entered by very few visual artists. In vain does one try to use similes and words for describing it, these colours and form are undecipherable. Even if we see a symbol, for example a feather-light dancer, one has to immediately give up the attempt at verbal description, because the nuances of blue cannot be analysed in words, we can only delight in viewing them.

A painting can be a lot of things: it can be a document, a fighting field, religious and irreligious symbolism, an ideological exclamation mark, or a gesture as the black square. Least commonly can it be an independent work of art. The twentieth century, at least for me, shows that works of art, no matter which genre, were not primarily created by persons who regarded themselves to be artists, but by hiding, secretive special people, not having the status of an artist. These people always encounter the essential: they encounter the self. For these people the external world is identical with the created inner world. They cannot really view and feel in any other ways. They are given freedom together with its pains and inconvenience. These people cannot help having received an initial spark from the inextinguishable fire of creation. In vain do these people live within the limits of time, whatever they create is timeless and ageless.

The painting oeuvre of Gedő exists in and of itself; it shows the triumph of creative power over time, over the ages and death. Viewing these pictures here together one has the feeling as if nothing were more natural.

This, however, do I need to say, is *the* miracle itself.

35. Péter György – Gábor Pataki: Official Arts Policies in Hungary Between 1945-1988[156]

When considering the history of 20th-century Hungarian visual art, one must not forget the decisive impact of official, state arts policies to which other nations have had had the good luck not be exposed. In 20th-century Hungarian art there have only been only a few exceptional periods, when state power did not want to influence artists, and did not want to impose its political influence in a dictatorial way on cultural life. This was the case also in the period between the two World Wars, when the ruling, conservative political regime wanted to push modern art into the background by relying both on covert and overt means. This policy was followed, when official exhibitions were organised, when grants were awarded and other financial support was given to artists. The effect of the politics on the training of artists could be clearly seen, when in 1932, the more progressive professors of the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts who were teaching in the spirit of the *Ecole de Paris* were removed from their positions.

However conservative and narrow-minded the official arts policies of the Horthy regime (1919-1944) were, it never hit upon the idea of gaining total control over Hungarian art. Various artistic groups or galleries could freely operate and no obstacles were thrown in the way of publishing art journals. Very seldom did the regime really resort to coercion. One of the very uncommon examples was the banning of the exhibition of the Group of Socialist Artists titled *Szabadság és a nép* (Freedom and the People). Although she was not a member of the group, one of Ilka Gedő's drawings, currently in the collection of the National Gallery of Hungary was also shown at this exhibition.

In the short period between 1945 and 1948, by the end of which the Communist Party had crushed the newly-emerged young democracy and taken complete control, the various artistic trends and groups with diverse styles were still allowed to operate freely. This meant that, both in the arts schools and exhibitions the representatives of the so-called *Európai Iskola* (European School) connecting surrealism and the spirit of the *Ecole de Paris* with the progressive traditions of Hungarian art could have their voices heard, and

[156] This study was written as a background materal for Gedő's second Glasgow eshibition at the turn of 1989-1990.

the same is true of the *Elvont Művészek Magyarországi Csoportja* (Group of Hungrian Abstract Artists) and the *Szinyei Társaság* (Szinyei Association). The years between 1945 and 1948, a uniquely vibrant and lively art scene emerged in Hungary, and Hungarian visual artists tried to resume the trends that were disrupted back in 1919.

According to Communist terminology, 1948 was the so-called "year of the turn". By that time, the Communist party had managed to crush all the achievements of democracy. It gained total control over both the political life and the economy, and it set out to impose the will of the state on culture and artistic life. By the end of 1948, all independent art groups and associations had been disbanded, and a threatening and fierce criticism was levelled at the "individualistic" type of both artists and group of artists which were dubbed "cliques". The Andrei Zhdanov of Hungarian cultural life, József Révai defined the tasks to be solved by Hungarian artists. They were expected to cut off all ties with the "isms" "meanting the deadly fumes of imperialism". Artists were commanded "to cast their wary exes not on Patis but on Mossow". They were instructed to "lean" from Soviet culture and Soviet art and to work for the Hungarian people.

Instead of the disbanded groupings and associations, the only official and legally operating organ of Hungarian artists, the Hungarian Associations of Artists was set up. Only those artists gained admission who were thought to be living up to the dogmas of socialist realism. Artist who could not fit into this narrowly defined set of criteria were prevented from organising exhibitions. (Art galleries were also nationalised in 1949.) Many artists were even prevented from buying the materials (paint, brushes, etc.) necessary for their work. No wonder that under such circumstances, similarly to Ilka Gedő, many artists stopped artistic work altogether.[157] The more stubborn artists became junior poster designers, worked for the puppet theatre as craftsmen, produced metal buttons or worked at a factory as an instructor of apprentices. They could at best devote their energies to creating art at night or during the weekend under more or less legal circumstances. This was a period in Hungarian history when all cameras were confiscated, all press and duplicating machines were strictly regulated. Political power regarded all aspects of life that could not be predictably controlled to be suspicious.

[157] A more detailed analysis of why Gedő stopped artistic work in 1949 is given by many of the studies published in this book.

In the fine arts, as well as in all other spheres of life, everything had to comply with the dictates of the communist party leaders. With the exception of works instilled with a naïve, idyllic optimism, all other trends were suppressed. Not only abstract art but even works in a Post-Impressionist style were dubbed a bourgeois aberrations. In accordance with the tenet, inspired by Stalin, that art should be "national in its form and socialist in its content", in architecture Classicism and in fine arts 19th-century Realism became the only styles that could be followed. Even these styles gad to be slavishly followed without inventiveness or individuality. In painting, even a freer stroke of the brush was regarded by the critics, acting on Party instructions, as a grave error. Paintings depicting historical events and genre paintings were brought back into fashion. Moreover, artists were given guidance in their choice of subject by the production of specially compiled "thematic" catalogues. For the first Hungarian National Exhibition in 1950, which was a survey of new socialist art, artists were not only selected well in advance to work on specially committed paintings, but they were also visited by committees of experts to check their progress on such works as *What Did I See in the Soviet Union?* or *Comrade Mátyás Rákosi Talking with the Represntatives of the Peasant Congress.* In spite of this precaution, the works exhibited came under prolonged and harsh attack, not only for their alleged "ideological deviations" but for their indecisiveness in composition and style, including for example, the use of looser, freer, brush strokes.

However, even during these years of dogmatic cultural policies there were clearly marked periods. The years 1949-1953 were characterised by the slavish copying of the Soviet model. This period is regarded the "classical" period of Stalinist art. However, in 1953 a reform Communist, Imre Nagy[158] became Hungary's prime minister. His famous government programme, aimed at loosening the grip of Stalinist terror, marked a relaxation of cultural policies as well. Although the central positions in exhibitions were still occupied by portraits of comrade Stalin and comrade Rákosi, it was no longer a "petite bourgeoisie aberration" to paint a still-life or a scenery picture of a less rigid style. With some hesitation, the cautious rehabilitation of a lyricized Post-Impressionism was allowed. This, however, did not mean that, for example, a monograph on Cézanne could be taken off the list banned books, book that, for reasons of "security" were for a long time

[158] Imre Nagy was one of the most important figures of the suppressed 1956 revolution. He was sentenced to death and executed by the Soviet-backed puppet regime of János Kádár.

separately stored in public libraries. On the eve of the 1956 revolution, Hungary's only art journal *Szabad Művészet* (Free Art) published a few articles on Picasso and Expressionism. The group of *Fomalista Művészek* (Formalist Artists) founded by the former members of *Európai Iskola* (European School) and the first independent organisation since 1949, published an article that seriously challenged the supremacy of Socialist Realism and the omnipotence of the Association of Hungarian Artists.

In the months following the suppression of the Hungarian revolution, a situation of uncertainty arose both in cultural and arts policies. Reprisals were well under way and the various arts associations were being disbanded, when in March 1957 the so-called Spring Salon Exhibition was opened at which, based on a selection of four selection committees representing various art trends, the whole spectrum of Hungarian art was on show. In the volatile environment, after the revolution, it seemed for a while that the reform intelligentsia that already let its voice heard back in 1953 can defend its positions. This would have meant that a liberal and tolerant cultural policy would have become possible that to some extent realises the then existing Chinese policy of "Let a hundred flowers bloom. /Let a hundred schools of thought contend." However, the critical reception of the show indicated that the conservative Stalinist forces were bracing a counter-attack aimed at regaining their positions and returning to the times before 1953. The ideologues of the hard-liners such as József Szigeti, who was one of the leaders of a hostile attack against the well-known Hungarian philosopher, George Lukács, believed that "abstract art makes man indifferent towards his world, and it, in fact, paves the way for the affirmation of imperialist brutality." The conservative ideologues of the Communist Party made an attempt at rehabilitating Zhdanovism and achieving a hegemony of their ideas regarding cultural policies. In order to settle the dispute between the hard-liners and reformists of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (the communist party) published its Cultural Policy Guidelines which were later on to determine the state's cultural policies. This document tries to be a double-edged weapon. On the one hand, it declares the s supremacy of socialist realism as the only really good method of creating art. (Note that "socialist realism" is no longer a style but an artistic method). The document proclaims a struggle against "formalist-decadent" trends including, among others, also non-figurative art and Surrealism. In attempting to counter the totally justified nationalist sentiment of the 1956

revolution, the document rejected even the notion of a homogeneous Hungarian culture, and was suspicious of any evidence of "folk" elements, whether in a novel or in a painting, condemning such traits as "populist". On the other hand, however, the document levels criticism at those "comrades" who, in their fight against hostile art movements, resort to administrative measures. The new approach to cultural policies is broader than that proclaimed at the early 1950's. Now these policies started to acknowledge as progressive the heritage of the avant-garde of the 1910s and 1920s, but for its political rather than artistic naturalism as well as the creative achievements of the socialist movements in art between the two World Wars that radically transcended naturalism. Apart from Socialist Realism, which remained the officially supported trend, the new cultural policy waged an ideological war, albeit reluctantly, against a variety of movements and trends, rather than banning them as before.

Apart from the last few years of the Kádár era (1956-1989), the cultural leadership reiterated with great persistence over and over again the supremacy of socialist realism in spite of the fact that it had become increasingly more difficult to explain the actual meaning of this term. Looking back at this period, the following is clear: although there were times when a tougher line was decided on (1958, 1962-64, 1971-74) during which suppressive measures, such administrative interference and quite often the banning of exhibitions, were resorted to, during these thirty years cultural policy had gradually lost its initiating role. It became for these arts policies to realize its own fundamental principles. Even the ideologists of official cultural policy realized that the hypocritical naturalism of the 1950's was obsolete, but they were incapable of setting new artists new ideas to follow. This is no wonder since, for various reasons, they rejected both Western contemporary art and the art of the so-called *Vásárhelyi Iskola* (Vásárhely School) for its alleged nationalism. What remained was the timid expressionist and cubist variations of Post-Impressionism, which were exhibited with solemn regularity at the main national exhibition halls. The dissident artists or those artists who moved outside these narrow boundaries could only exhibit with difficulty or under very humiliating conditions, and they only very rarely received commissions. As a result, a large number of artists were forced to emigrate, including many of Gedő's friends. Others organized exhibitions of their work, which subsequently acquired a legendary status, in private flats for very close circles, as did Gedő

in 1965.Eventually, these artists were allowed to show their works in insignificant houses of culture, on the outskirts of Budapest or in the provinces.

The gap between the official tenets of cultural policy and reality very soon became apparent. An article[159] written by the famous art historian Lajos Németh in 1961 triggered a debate. In his article Lajos Németh called attention to the anomalies stemming from the state's cultural policies, the inconsistent and muddled views of official cultural policies and also to the irreparable damage caused through the isolation of Hungarian art from the contemporary European developments.

The official ideologues, irritated by the highlighting of the issues, warmed up the tenet according to which, in a world with two competing social systems, the capitalist and the socialist perspectives on art should be sharply differentiated. These ideologues, so it seemed, believed that in art there was no room for Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence of the two systems". They believed that in culture the struggle of the two systems continued; hence the notion of a uniform European culture was just "creeping capitalism and ideological loosening up". While the critics following the official party-line continually reiterated the need for a "modern depiction of reality", every other creative approach that deviated from the mediocre, conventional Post-Impressionism was labelled as "decadent", "formalist", "nihilist" or "existentialist". (At this time the officials used "existentialist" as curse word). It is therefore hardly surprising that official cultural policy could not absorb the genuine values of Hungarian art. The door remained closed not only to Gedő and her contemporaries but also to the best artists of the generations that followed. The dual value system continued to exist. While the majority of the state-supported artists were at best minor masters and their work merely documents of the age, the overwhelming majority of the genuine artists could, at best, be only at the periphery of artistic life. Official state cultural polices were well aware of this split between the two groups of artists, and in the forty-year-period from 1949 to 1989 it had always lamented the mediocrity and disciplined boredom that has flooded the national exhibitions. In words artists were encouraged to show bravery, innovative spirit and a greater sensitivity to problem. However, when an artist the encouragements seriously, there was an immediate reprimand for copying

[159] Lajos Németh: „Megjegyzések képzőművészetünk helyzetéről" (Remarks on the Situation of Hungarian Visual Arts) *Új Írás*, 1961, No. 8, pp.739-744.

Western fashion and for the fact that the works were alien to the socialist reality of the age.

It seemed that the official preferences were better expressed through the famous and infamous division of works of art into three categories (the three "Ts"): supported (in Hungarian *támogatott*), tolerated (*tűrt*) and banned (*tiltott*) works of art. Based on this division, with the exception of favourite artists to be backed by money, commissions and exhibitions, all the other artists had the opportunity, at best, to show their works in rather unknown community centres at "self-expense" exhibitions and even that only after a lengthy and humiliating application procedure. It was in this way, for example, that the legendary leader of the Hungarian avant-garde, Lajos Kassák managed to show his abstract painting in 1967. (Almost up to the time of her death, Gedő belonged to this second hypocritical and stupid category of tolerated art.) The communist regime, which liked to project a liberal image, sometimes resorted to force, banning exhibitions, putting artists on secret black lists, destroyed or curtailed careers even though it did not bulldoze down any exhibitions like in the Soviet Union. However, it must not be forgotten that this rigid threefold categorisation of artists and artworks was creaking more and more under strain because, with the passage of time, even the taste preferences of official arts policies had changed. First it was the artists of the Vásárhelyi Iskola (Vásárhely School), whose peasant topics the state cultural policy accepted. Then, from the beginning of 1960s, came the so-called state-recognised abstract painters who produced empty, decorative abstract paintings with resounding titles like *The Revolution* or *The Working Class*

It is specifically from this time (at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s) that official arts policies became more unsure and less and less effective. Whereas in the 1950s and at the beginning of the 1960's, the conditions determined by official arts policy proved to be the unavoidable reality for most artists, the newly emerging generations of artists created their own, internal "second publicity", thus simply bypassing the rules of the game thus far set by the Party. During this period, the progressive and most talented artists did not participate in the in national exhibitions, not because they were not selected, but because they did not feel it was necessary for them to participate. From this moment, official arts policies were suddenly deprived of the means whereby it could influence artist trends. This

circle of artists and critics and theoreticians who joined them in opting out of the system grew all the time and created its own sub-culture.

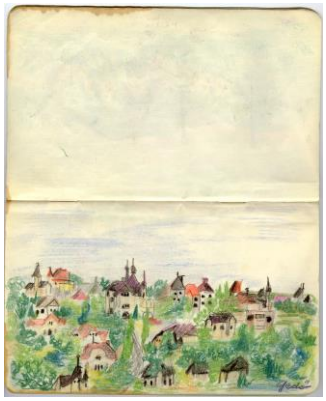
At the beginning of the 1970's, there could be naturally a very fragmented dialogue between the official arts policies and the second publicity. Those experiments which attempted to bring into existence new, progressive socialist fine arts by combining official art with the avant-garde were too late and doomed to failure. Crude interference by the state official remained a threat. In 1973, for example, a holiday resort on Lake Balaton, Balatonboglár, one of the centres of the Hungarian Avant-Garde, was closed down. Later in 1979, a drawing ridiculing officials, titled *The Minister's Mercedes Passes Pub. No. 4111*, so much offended the authorities that the picture was removed from the exhibition of The Studio of Young Artist one day prior to opening. Conservative art critics harshly criticised the "avant-garde's irresponsible dilettantism" and "irresponsible fooling around". By that time, however, Hungary's progressive art had already become independent and autonomous.

By the 1980s, the erosion of Hungarian socialism, for so long thought to be successful, had intensified, and those upholding the official arts policy could only wage petty rear-guard actions. Its conceptual system and the apparatus that maintained it were exhausted and the rules that it had created had lost their validity. However, these cultural left behind a negative legacy by forcing Hungarian visual arts into an arbitrary direction. Add to this the fact that contemporary visual arts were hidden from the general public thus maintaining the concept that most of contemporary art was regarded avant-garde art and thus alien from society and the real spirit of Hungarian art.

One must also bear in mind that while in Western Europe discussions centred on issues relating to art that actually existed, in Hungary many decades were wasted on the pointless discussion as to "what art should be like". A too intensive, politically inspired focus on what art *should* be like had nearly led to the demise of Hungarian art. The fact that this did not happen is to the credit of Ilka Gedő and her fellow artists. (Budapest, 1989)

36. Júlia Szabó: The Drawings of Ilka Gedő, 1989[160]

Ilka Gedő was born in 1921 in Budapest. Her grandfather was a Jewish cantor in Brasov and her father was a teacher of German and Hungarian literature at the Budapest Jewish Grammar School. Ilka Gedő had been drawing since the age of 11, first during the family summer holidays in Kisoroszi, Nagymaros and Szentendre and later in their flat in Budapest. A keen sense of colour and form and a lively fantasy characterise the childhood drawings.



Sketchbook No. 2 (1934)
Drawing No. 4

Detail of drawing No. 4

Ilka Gedő mentioned three artists in her autobiographical recollections who taught her for shorter periods at the end of the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s.

Viktor Erdei (1879-1944) was an Art Nouveau painter and graphic artist who is remembered by few people, although the greatest Hungarian art critic, Lajos Fülep wrote about him with high appreciation at the beginning of the twentieth century. He was a member of the Association of Hungarian Artists and Industrial Artists (KÉVE), and he exhibited in Nagyvárad with Lajos Gulácsy. His drawing style is simultaneously synthesising and detailed, the lines flow softly and loosely, yet they reveal the artist's internal stature. Ilka Gedő may have learnt the harmony of barely perceptible lines from Viktor Erdei.

Ilka Gedő's second master, *Tibor Gallé* (1896-1944) was famous for his etchings and linocuts. He opened a private school in his atelier in 1935. He was a more expressive artist than Viktor Erdei, which means that naturalist and Art Nouveau styles often appear in his works with expressionist distortions. The provincial towns and the grotesque figures of his

[160] Introduction for the catalogue of the exhibition titled *The Drawings of Ilka Gedő* at the Szombathely Art Gallery, from 3 Ferbruary to until 5 March 1989

linocuts, the yellow, purple, blue and brown shades of his pastel townscapes all remind us of drawings by Ilka Gedő, and thus they are an anticipation of Gedő's drawings.

Ilka Gedő's third teacher, István Örkényi-Strasser (1911-1944) was a sculptor. From him, Ilka Gedő learnt the firmness of sculpturesque modelling and the representation of volume.

In the young Ilka Gedő's drawings, there were marks of a bold "handwriting", and that might have been the reason why many other contemporary artists recommended her not to pursue academic studies. In 1945 Gedő nevertheless attended the Academy for one semester, and as her report card shows, she learnt anatomy and the theory of perspective from Jenő Barcsay.

In the first decade of her career, Ilka Gedő created series. There are series of drawings on various topics: the Budapest ghetto of 1944, the home of elderly people, townscape drawings of Szentendre, the Ganz factory and the most comprehensive series is that of the self-portraits. The artist practices the art form of the croquis, the genre of the quickly made drawings based on rapid observation, with a high degree of intellectual concentration. But Ilka Gedő is also a master of studies calling for a more thorough consideration of the topic.

The series on the home of elderly people and the Ganz factory drawings can be regarded as croquis, while the self-portraits can be regarded as studies.

Ilka Gedő considers herself a model easily studied. The sitter Ilka Gedő, in most cases, is sitting with her hands on her lap, sometimes she tilts her head to the side or rests her elbows on the table. There are drawings in which only her head and naked neck appear, and in other drawings, she is represented with a light shawl, and her pose is like that of a sculpture. In another drawing, she is shown with a light shawl tied under her chin as if she were a peasant woman. There are also self-portraits with strange hats, in which she is mysterious and elegant like the middle-class heroines of novels worthy of admiration and secret love.

In European art, this introverted concentration and ascetic attitude of repetition can be compared with Giacometti's self-portraits and portrait series. Gedő's emotional exuberance reflected by colourful and entangled lines can be compared to the works of Antonin Artaud who overly confessed that the human face must be drawn from morning

till night in the state of two hundred thousand dreams because the face is the force of life in the body, and the latter is the cave of death.

The pen and brush of Ilka Gedő rested from 1949 till the beginning of the 1960s. During her creative crisis, the artist was engaged in theoretical studies. She studied the colour theories of Philipp Otto Runge, Goethe and of Arthur Schopenhauer. Around 1965, Gedő resumed artistic activities by creating portraits in pastel and later in oil. Her world is characterised by both the depiction of conflicts and a search for harmony. Her new drawings display the naivety of children's drawings and the consistency of a scholar.

In Hungarian painting, the significance of Ilka Gedő's oeuvre ranks with that of the symbolist Lajos Gulácsy and is close to that of Lajos Vajda. Ernő Kállai was right when, in his letter written to Gedő, he called Gedő's attention to Pierre Bonnard. But we could also mention here Alfred Kubin and from English painting David Hockney. Ilka Gedő's exhibition at the Szombathely Museum is both a Hungarian and European art event.

37. The Ganz Factory Series[161]

The Ganz factory, situated at Margit körút in Budapest, was a large enterprise, producing elements for electrical engineering in one plant, and metal parts for machines and tools in another plant. In the late 1940's after the war, it offered an educational programme, organised by a liberally minded engineer. Ilka Gedő was welcome on the premises to sit and draw, even if the result did not correspond to the official image of a worker. In her diaries Ilka Gedő mentions the fantasy architecture of the Berlin architect Bruno Taut as well as the works by the Italian futurist Gino Severini. These references testify to her keen interest at a time when little or no information travelled across the Eastern borders. The kinship of the present drawings to Alberto Giacometti remains a curious phenomenon, since the artist saw Giacometti's work only in the mid 1960s.

[161] From the catalogue of Gedő's 1995 exhibition at the Shepherd Gallery, New York, 1995 (*Ilka Gedő (1921-1985) Drawings and Pastels* (November 21st-December 29th, 1995), An Exhibition Organized in Cooperation with Janos Gat Gallery. Catalog by Elisabeth Kashey, Shepherd Gallery, 21 East 84th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028)

38. Árpád Göncz: The Pictures of an Exhibition [162]

The occasion is special: we are celebrating the opening of the reconstructed and newly enlarged building of the Jewish Museum. Treasures returned to this house, whose relics were desecrated by thieves. These stolen works of art have now returned to their dignified place. Yet what is even more important than the reopening of the museum is that Ilka Gedő's and György Román's drawings are shown here in a joint exhibition. Ilka Gedő drew the faces of suffering children depicting the horrors of the war, György Román drew the portraits of Hungarian war criminals.

Allow me now not to speak about the horrors. I was living in Budapest in those months when Ilka Gedő drew drawings about the sufferings. I also lived here, when the court trials of the war criminals took place. I did not attend though the court hearings when the war criminals were brought to justice. Not only the contemporaries who suffered and lived through this age, but the members of the later generations can now also see this exhibition.

In Gedő's ghetto drawings I see more than the depiction of reality. These works emanate the gentle empathy Gedő felt for her models. The models reveal their fate. The children's faces reflect anxiety, and on the aged persons' face we can see hopeless suspense. Nevertheless, these faces do not only express dejection. Gedő managed to get behind the surface. The faces are about empathy and understanding. Only great artists are capable of feeling that much pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others. Gedő's drawings have an atmosphere, an emanation of their own. We can see humans refined through suffering. These drawings reveal an abundance of empathy that comes only from being together, which made these days survivable.

In György Román's drawings of war criminals, which seem to have snapshot quality, I don't see empathy. His drawings are dispassionate and detached. What is interesting in

[162] Árpád Göncz (1922-2015) writer, translator and President of the Republic of Hungary (3 August 1990 – 3 August 2000). Exhibition opening address on 26 February 1995 at the extended and renovated building of the Jewish Museum in Budapest *(Áldozatok és gyilkosok/Gedő Ilka gettó-rajzai és Román György háborús bűnösök népbírósági tárgyalásán készült rajzai/ Victims and Perpetrators* /Ilka Gedő's Ghetto Drawings and György Román's Drawings at Court Trials of Hungarian War Criminals./)

this detachedness is that Román did not see in this people the ferocious criminals but rather people whose tragedy was their diabolic ideology.

There were only few artists who were capable of accurately and sensitively showing the events of the age. Two artists reported on two opposing sides of history. I am glad that Ilka Gedő and György Román were our fellow citizens. I am proud of these two artists as they saw and documented the events that they witnessed and were involved in with a measure human dignity.

This exhibition will be shown all over the world.[163] If art did not fulfil its mission, there would be nothing to relieve the grief and bitterness. I trust that this exhibition will bear testimony to the superiority of the spirit over destruction. These works on paper show that life is by all means stronger than death and destruction. I am grateful to these two artists for giving me this feeling and certainty. The spirit of Ilka Gedő and György Román recorded the suffering and sacrifice of the victims and preserved, as an eternal memento, also the faces perpetrators.

These witness reports are, as a matter of fact, about the human being in whose fate there are some fearful possibilities. A person can become a victim, but also a perpetrator. The pictures of Ilka Gedő and György Román celebrate the triumph of the human being over barbarism.

[163] This never happened. The exhibition was only shown at Yad Vashem a year later.

39. János Frank on Ilka Gedő, 1996

In 1940 a woman painter, her name was Tott (Totó), accepted two adolescents as her disciples, Ilka Gedő and me. We went to her studio that was in Fillér utca not far from where Gedő lived. In addition to drawing a lot, the personality and painting of our mentor were very attractive. This suggestive and ironic young painter studied at an arts academy in the Germany of the Weimar Republic, and brought along with herself the free and unimpeded style and urban folklore of the Berlin of the late 1920's. In contrast to my drawings, Ilka Gedő's work reflected an overflow of talent, that additional something that cannot be described in words. Then at the age of 20, I tore up my drawings and I didn't much regret having done so. The only thing I do regret, however, is a drawing made in red chalk depicting Ilka Gedő with her red hair that hung to her shoulder. Maybe that drawing could have been more than just a document.[164]

I knew a woman painter, Márta Jeremiás very well from home. I learnt drawing from her in 1939-1941. She studied at an academy in the Germany of the Weimar Republic. In addition to me, she had only one other disciple, Ilka Gedő."[165]

Any art historian trying to find the predecessors of Ilka Gedő's art would be in trouble, and justifiably so. He would not be able to find any. Gedő is of her own world that consists of several hundred drawings and 152 paintings. She was a self-taught painter although, from time to time, she attended a number of art schools, and was enrolled in the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts. (…) I witnessed the 17-year-old Ilka Gedő drawing pictures in an ad hoc drawing school. Even then, her work already reflected the work of a fully developed artist. (…) Gedő made „two-step" paintings in her last artistic period. She first drew a

[164] I. Nagy – L. Beke (eds.), Hatvanas évek – Új törekvések a magyar képzőművészetben – Kiállítás a Magyar Nemzeti Galériában, 1991. március 14-június 30. [The Sixties: New Trends in Hungarian Visual Arts – An Exhibition at the Hungarian National Gallery, March 14 to June 30, 1991], Budapest, Képzőművészeti Kiadó, Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, Ludwig Múzeum, p.75.

[165] János Frank mentions this in an interview published in the literary weekly *Élet és Irodalom* on August 1, 1998:

sketch of her composition, prepared a mock-up, and wrote the name of the appropriate colours in the various fields, just as a fresco painter or a tapestry weaver would. She prepared a collection sample colours in advance, and she wrote where the colours would go. She never improvised on her paintings; instead she implemented her original plan. In some of her paintings she painted the page torn out of her spiral-bound book as a frame, with the perforated holes on the left. After that, she sometimes copies in handwriting the texts shown on the mock-up to the painting, thus revealing her work method to the public. This is similar to Pirandello's „play within a play." The artist got to abstract surrealism, with protagonists that are the creatures of a personal mythology. Her square and stripe-shaped colour fields are restrained, yet intense; in fact the strength of the cold and warm colours seems to be equal. So the disorder of these paintings is strictly constructed."[166]

[166] Frank János: „Ilka Gedő". In (ed) Anita Semjén: *Victims and Perpetrators*, Budapest, Cultural Exchange Foundation, 1996, p. 13

40. Júlia Szabó On the Artistic Development of Ilka Gedő, 1997[167]

From the age of eleven Ilka Gedő drew, at first the forms and colours that excited her as a child during her regular summer holidays on the banks of the Danube in the towns of Kisoroszi, Nagymaros and Szentendre, and later in their Budapest home. Her vivid imagination and excellent sense of colour and form were already manifested in her childhood drawings. Ilka Gedő mentioned the names of three artists who in the late 30s and early 40s taught her figure drawing, painting and knowledge of materials. All three artists were of Jewish origin, and later died in World War II. The oldest and most distinguished artist among them was Viktor Erdei (1879-1944), and because of his relationship with Ilka's family he taught her for many years. Viktor Erdei was a painter and graphic artist of the naturalist-impressionist and Art Nouveau styles. Today he is almost forgotten. However, at the beginning of the century, the most significant art critic of the time, Lajos Fülep, wrote about his activities with great respect. Ilka Gedő's second teacher was Tibor Gallé (1896-1944), a graphic artist famous for his etchings and linocuts. He opened a school in his Budapest studio. István Örkényi Strasser (1911-1944) was a sculptor. Through his school and exhibitions he was connected with the OMIKE (The Hungarian National Cultural Association of Jews). From István Örkényi Strasser, Ilka Gedő learnt the firmness of sculpturesque modelling and the representation of volume. During her studies, Ilka Gedő quickly developed as an artist. This might have been the reason Róbert Berény and Rudolf Diener-Dénes, representatives of the first generation of Hungarian avant-garde art, did not suggest academic studies for her. The young girl's drawings were marks of a bold 'handwriting' which would not have fit into the classically proportioned natural form of representation practised at the Academy at that time.

[167] Júlia Szabó: „Ilka Gedő's Artistic Activities" In: *The Art o f Ilka Gedő*, Budapest, Új Művészet, 1997, pp. 48-49.

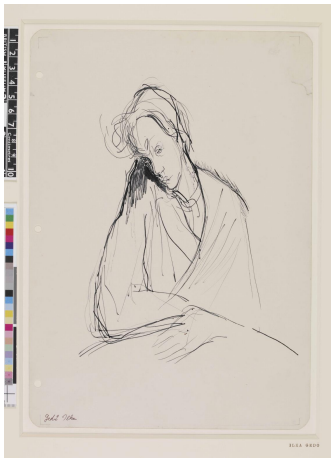
41. Júlia Szabó on the Artist's Ghetto Drawings, 1997[168]

In 1944 Ilka Gedő was living in the ghetto, where she also made drawings, mainly in pencil. She recorded the thin figure and large pensive eyes of her young cousin, drew pictures of a small boy, staring from behind his spectacles, and of weak old people and exasperated women and mothers. These simple line drawings are the first masterpieces in Ilka Gedő's oeuvre, and some of them manifest a sculpturesque way of modelling. Their faithfulness to reality has a historical significance. Despite their small dimensions, these drawings of Word War II possess the same weight as Henry Moore's drawings of air-raids in London.

Júlia Szabó: „Ilka Gedő's Artistic Activities" In: *The Art of Ilka Gedő*, Budapest, Új Művészet, 1997, p. 51.

42. Júlia Szabó on the Self-Portrait Series (1944-49), 1997[169]

The “Sitter Ilka Gedő”, in most cases, is sitting with her hands in her lap, sometimes she tilts her head to the side or rests her elbow on the table. There are drawings showing only her head and bare neck, while in other drawings she is represented with a light shawl tied under the chin as if she were a working or a peasant woman. There are also self-portraits with strange hats, in which she is as mysterious and elegant as the heroines of middle-class novels, secretly adored and beloved. (...) This introverted concentration and ascetic attitude of repetition manifested in her series of self-portraits is unparalleled. In European drawing it may be compared to Giacometti's series of self-portraits. Her art can also be compared with Antonin Artaud's self-portraits drawn with colourful and entangled lines. Antonin Artaud overly confessed that the human face cannot be represented in art via symbolic forms, but it must be drawn from morning till night in the state of two hundred thousand dreams because the human face is the body of the Ego; it is the power of life in the body, which is the cave of death. Ilka Gedő did not know Antonin Artaud's concepts, conceived in 1947, but she drew and painted her smaller and larger self-portraits with similarly stubborn and exclusive attention. These works are masterpieces, but besides her family and a few friends, no one saw them at the time they were made.



Self-Portrait, 1947, black ink, paper, 280 x 216 mm, marked lower left: „*Gedő Ilka*”, British Museum, No. 1

[169] Júlia Szabó: Ilka Gedő's Artistic Activities In: *The Art of Ilka Gedő*, Budapest, Új Művészet, 1997, p. 52. & p. 53

43. Maurice Tempelsman's Three Letters about Ilka Gedő[170]

1.

Dear Mr. Bíró[171],

New York, January 26, 1998

Thank you very much for your note of January 11 which was forwarded to me. I very much appreciate your sending me the book[172] on Ilka Gedő. What a wonderful artist and what a touching story.

Sincerely,

Maurice Tempelsman

2.

New York, September 14, 1998

Dear Mr. Bíro,

Thank you very much for your letter of September 9. I'm grateful to you for sending me Xerox copies of the drawings by Ilka Gedő. I'm delighted that the British Museum's Department of Prints and Drawings recently acquired some of your mother's drawings. She is a great artist and deserves this kind of recognition.

Sincerely,

---

[170] Maurice Tempelsman (1929-) is a Belgian-American businessman and diamond merchant. He was the long-time companion of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, former First Lady of the United States. Mr. Tempelsman bought a drawing by Ilka Gedő from the New York Shepherd Gallery.

Ilka Gedő: *Table # 1*, 1949, black ink, medium-weight wove paper, 648 x 648 mm, signed and dated at lower right: "Gedő Ilka, 1949", Maurice Tempelsman, New York

[171] The addressee is Dávid Bíró, the son of the artist and the author of this volume.

.[172] *Gedő Ilka művészete (1921-1985)* György Péter-Pataki Gábor, Szabó Júlia és Mészáros F. István tanulmányai /*The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921-1985)* Studies by Péter György-Gábor Pataki, Júlia Szabó and F. István Mészáros/ Budapest, Új Művészet Kiadó, 1997

Maurice Tempelsman

3.

New York, July 15, 2003

Dear Mr. Bíro,
Thank you so much for sending me as copy of the *Art of Ilka Gedő*[173]. It was so thoughtful of you to think of me.
Sincerely,
Maurice Tempelsman

[173] István Hajdu–Dávid Bíró: *The Art of Ilka Gedő, Oeuvre Catalogue and Documents*, Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2003 (This volume is in English.)

44. Márta Kovalovszky on Ilka Gedő's Exhibition, 1989[174]

"Is it possible not to exclude objective representation? Could it be *in the guise of reality*? This question has been tormenting me for years. I know, of course, it is possible, but is it possible for us today, for me?" Ilka Gedő formulated these absolutely important and consequential, I could even say, existential questions in 1949 exactly forty years ago in a letter written to the art historian Ernő Kállai. Are these "existential" questions? Yes, they are. llka Gedő asked her timid and passionately brooding questions at a time when Hungarian art, thanks to the art movement of the European School, identified itself freely with non-figurative compositions in the seemingly unrestrained and inexhaustible world of abstract art. The motto was: "Absolutely no figuration!" Ilka Gedő's questions were asked at a time when Hungary was very close to what we call "the fifties"[175]: when in the officially endorsed art the triumph of figuration was celebrated. To be sure, these questions assume a historical significance and a perspective in terms of art history only when we look back forty years later from the *present point in time.* Back in its time these questions were merely the brooding thoughts of a painter, while viewing a drawing by Lajos Vajda and her own drawings and sketches in her *Fillér utca* flat. They were thoughts that were waiting to be endorsed. Thus, for *her* this question was a "life and death" issue, as Gedő was really looking for the answer, for the one and only answer, in other words, this question was really the existential question in the strict meaning of the word.

Gedő chose "figurative art", and based on her oil paintings and drawings, we have to admit that she got to a reality not easy to master. This was not primarily due to the external circumstances of her life (the impact of historical events) that brought her close to a threatening precipice, to the abyss of fate, but it was rather due to something she knew about life: she knew the terrible heaviness of every aspect of reality that weighs down on every moment existence.

Although this special knowledge is traceable also on her oil paintings, now I have the drawings in mind: these drawings detect the "tremors" of events, emotions, and of the internal and the external world with the sensitivity of a seismograph. Ilka Gedő has been

[174] Art exhibition review on Ilka Gedő's exhibition (titled *The Drawings of Ilka Gedő* at the Szombatehly Museum, Hungary from 3 February to 5 March) published in *Vigilia*, October 1989, pp. 795-796
[175] The period of harsh Communist disctatorship.

incessantly drawing from her early childhood with the naturalness of breathing. The graphite and paper were instruments for her that due to their properties were suitable for following and expressing both the heaviness and the fragility of the world. There is most often something of an entanglement and shadowiness in these drawings. In the wake of the movement of the harder and greasily soft graphite, a strange kind of tension fills the picture. The surface pulsates and the figures and details suddenly become independent and they recede. This not completely figurative artistic approach recording the transitory nature of phenomena appears already in the drawings created back in the early 1940's, but at this time the weight of "objective reality", the things seen, the model predominate. Works on paper made in the Jewish home of the elderly between 1941-1944 and at the Ganz factory between 1946 and 1947 show this perfectly. The contours of forms are still continuous, the matchless realities of faces and of hesitantly lowered arms shine through the lines. Such events, fates and such a personally experienced upheaval of human existence surrounded Gedő that the internal vision of the artist, though somewhat visible in the background, does not yet assert itself. In the portraits and self-portraits of the 1940's we can see how the most important element of the later drawings becomes visible from behind the façade of the things seen and the "objective reality". This element is the unspeakable, incomprehensible and terrible vulnerability of human beings, objects and of all beings in the world. The lines, however safely, and accurately they encompass the contours of figuration seem to be entangled and fragmented. These entangled and fragmented lines reflect with painstaking exactitude that silent catastrophe, that discreetly hidden collapse that the human mind so often experiences in the course of a lifetime. Everything is fragile and strangely excited here: the heads with hats that remind us of Giacometti, the reading figures bending forward, the small and slim tables or the daybreak in a window of Pushchino. We meet these slightly moving and yet absolutely correct drawings lines in Júlia Vajda's mature works and in the coal and black ink compositions Lajos Vajda's last period. And naturally Ilka Gedő's drawings can be seen as the late offspring of Art Nouveau in the same was as in the oil paintings there is something that reminds us of the clownish unlikelihood of Lajos Gulácsy. Yet, I believe it is not really appropriate to view these works from the perspective of artistic styles. I am sure: when Gedő was in the process of drawing when she was standing in front of the easel, artistic

creation was not a question of style. For Gedő creating art was a hesitant pondering, intensive concentration and the complicated and silent expression of the following fact. Behind all observable phenomena there is some imprecise knowledge, some vague experience and some border-lines between feelings and thoughts and that everything gets its meaning in them and through them. In other words: “I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord.”

45. Gyula Rózsa: The Price Paid for Creating an Oeuvre, 2004[176]

I was really ashamed when I first walked through Ilka Gedő's present memorial exhibition. Well, how come I am discovering this excellent oeuvre only now? How is it possible that for twenty years I have not taken notice of this superb oeuvre? How come I have not noticed the glass pure greens, the deep, serious greens, these seemingly casually created, but ruthlessly twisted shapes, this extraordinary world? Some explanations followed this sense of guilt. To be sure, in the past twenty years we have been able to see self-portraits by Ilka Gedő, including the *Double Self-Portrait*, but even if we have, we thought these pictures showed some kind of sentimentality in the manner of Lajos Gulácsy. Likewise, the most important virtue of some of Gedő's sophisticated painting compositions seemed to have been the artist's enthusiasm for Klee. The viewers were wrong. Likewise, in order to avoid shrugging off the significance of the self-portrait drawings with comparing them to Giacometti's works, the self-portrait drawings have to be viewed with the awareness of their huge number and the fact that they are a heart-rending series of self-torment.

Not only did Ilka Gedő enter the art scene late, but perhaps, as it follows from the nature of things, also at the wrong time, and not necessarily with really well-organised exhibitions. Her late discoverers were prestigious art historians, but neither they nor the small exhibitions could dispel the suspicions, originating from Gedő's career path, suggesting that she is only a female hobby painter. Gedő's first exhibitions were opened in the 1980's, a decade of much turmoil in art, and the fine originality of Gedő's art was not noticed amidst the turbulent events of the 1980s.

However, what is the most important here, are the reasons for the late recognition of her art. Gedő lived from 1921 to 1985. Although she attended the Academy of Art as well as private art schools only for very short periods of time, she received satisfactory training. Gedő started to exhibit early and her first public appearance took place in 1942. (The presentations of the Hungarian Jewish Educational Association that took place after 1940[177], for well-known reasons, cannot be considered to be real public events.) She is only

[176] Kiállításkritika Gedő Ilka 2004. november 18-ika és 2005. április 3-ika között az MNG-ben megrendezett életműkiállításáról. (*Népszabadság* 2005. január 29.)

[177] 1940: *Az OMIKE második kiállítása* (Second Exhibition of OMIKE, the Hungarian Jewish Educational Association), Jewish Museum, Budapest
1943: *Az OMIKE ötödik kiállítása* (Fifth Exhibition of OMIKE, the Hungarian Jewish Educational Association), Jewish Museum, Budapest

21 years old, when she receives exhibition space and encouraging criticism at the exhibition titled *Freedom and the People* at the Headquarters of the Metalworkers' Trade Union. She prepares drawing studies in the Budapest ghetto until the winter of 1945. (Her emotionally authentic and clear drawings and sketches made in the Ghetto can be viewed as a part of the current exhibition at the Hungarian National Gallery.) In the autumn of the same year, a seemingly logical continuation of her career is her participation in the Exhibition at the Ernst Museum[178]. In 1947 she still participated in an exhibition at the Budapest Arts Hall, but then there is no continuation. At this time of her life, she regularly visits the Ganz Factory to draw workers, machines and work-benches in pencil and pastel. Then she marries becomes a mother, and the art scene does not know anything about her for twenty years.

Gedő's Ganz Factory drawings are fascinating. We can see pastel-red, delicately drawn work-shirts amongst the softly peeling walls of the workshops. We can see geometric images and only the title reveals that they are work-benches. In all the drawings we encounter a brooding mood. The drawing titled *Machines in the Ganz Factory* is suggestive of the poetry of Toulouse-Lautrec. 1946-1947 it is not yet compulsory to draw workers and neither are there any state-mandated style rules. Anyone who does choose such a topic, does so out of commitment. But even at that time works showing factory work are not as tactful as those of Gedő's. However, the reason for Gedő's withdrawal from art is not this difference. Anyone who believes that Ilka Gedő, similarly to the best figures of the European School and of other modern trends, had to stop artistic work due to the well-known and ugly turn of historical events (the deterioration of circumstances, the dictatorial traits of arts policies) will be disappointed by the studies on Ilka Gedő. The artist was paralysed for two decades by doctrinarism of completely opposite nature that, as indicated by the course of events, was at least as intransigent as its institutionalised and state-sponsored counterpart. Obviously, it would not be hard to point out the interrelationship and the cause-effect connection between dictatorial communist arts policies and the sect spirit of that circle of friends that had such a fatal effect on Ilka Gedő. And this latter factor had the real influence on the artist. The "circle", this is how the

[178] 1945*: A Szociáldemokrata Párt Képzőművészeinek Társasága és meghívott művészek kiállítása* (The Exhibition of the Society of Artists of the Social Democratic Party and of Invited Artists), Ernst Museum, Budapest

literature on Ilka Gedő calls this society and this is how this circle, organised from artists, theoreticians and other intellectuals called itself, became an elitist and catacomb community of intellectuals after the mid-1940's, irrespective of its views and intentions. According to Ilka Gedő's own perception and several studies on the artist's career path, the circle caused a long a crisis in Ilka Gedő's life. As shown by documents, the painter by that time had been experiencing a deep conflict between the allegedly mandatory requirements of modernity and her conviction, and, having seen that among the artists regarded by her as really significant only the persecuted and outlawed abstract art is held in esteem, she quit.

There might surely have been other reasons why Ilka Gedő stopped painting for altogether twenty years, and, similarly, in addition to the social circumstances at the end of 1960s, a number unfathomable circumstances must have induced her to start painting. What concerns us here is that exactly twenty years after 1948, when she made her last self-portrait, at the age 47, she resumed artistic work. On closer look, this is not just the resumption of work but a new start. Her mature paintings do not continue the brooding, self-tormenting and interrogating black-chalk, pencil and pastel lines of her self-portrait series. The reason why the self-portrait series cannot be alleged to be connected with Giacometti's drawings is not only that Ilka Gedő could not have known them back in the 1940's, but also because Ilka Gedő's works are more without illusions, more heart-rending, and sure more existentialist than those of Giacometti's, if this term has any meaning in this context.

There is no traceable connection between the artist's second great artistic period and the painful Table series of 1949. There is hardly any connection between the second period and the post-war oil cityscapes of Szentendre, although the liberated and also restrained, and strange colour world of Gedő's second period has some antecedents in her Szentendre cityscapes. It is not even visible if, after the long and hard intermission, Gedő really incorporated what she learnt about colour earlier, although she surely did so.

CLOWN (VERSION WITH A WHITE BACKGROUND)), 1975
Oil on Canvas, 53 x 49 cm

The mature Gedő does not have artistic periods. In the nearly twenty years in which she created her oil painting oeuvre, topics, compositional rhythms, colour gradations and colour contrasts appear, disappear and come back yet again. The National Gallery has had absolute justification in hanging up these pictures in a manner that disregards the chronological order. The unity of these oil-paintings originates from some unnameable free, mischievous and painful surrealist reality that provokes both figuration and non-figuration. The title of one of the paintings contains is *Clown (Version with a White Background*)[179] but the viewer sees a wicker basket with handle placed upon which there is a dented stove shield, although the dents may look like an eye and mouth. The whole thing is jovial, frighteningly jovial.

The Painter Béla Veszelszky,[180] showing a fellow painter doing very abstract pointillist painting, promises to be a deeply esoteric work of art, but the painting shows the figure of a painter with canvas and brush and big waistcoat. In the picture titled *Judit* we can see a mermaid moving upwards in the narrow space of the picture, but the streamlined, colourful and striped body's arms are heavy and end in brown tentacles. The colours are stunningly beautiful. Gedő is capable of mixing the naïve, innocently bright greens with the similarly naïve, ecstatic children's red in such a manner that the delight is only exceeded by the drama of contrast. Gedő has a perfect knowledge of colours and she uses the secret of strong, vivid, pale and moderate colours. After creating an Art Nouveau

[179] 85. CLOWN (VERSION WITH A WHITE BACKGROUND), 1975 Oil on Canvas, 53 x 49 cm

[180] 15. THE PAINTER BÉLA VESZELSZKY, 1968 Oil on paper, 46 x 35 cm

series of flowers, which starts to shine against her background, she immediately makes it uncertain by frames inside the paintings or by restructuring the images.

THE PAINTER BÉLA VESZELSZKY, 1968
Oil on paper, 46 x 35 cm

Viewing this art is both delight and a cathartic experience. Ilka Gedő could have been a political painter or she could have been a painter of the Holocaust. One part of the Hungarian art scene expelled her because she was not an abstract painter, while she did not ask for admission from the other group of painters, as she was not a realist painter. The whole of Hungary's art scence forced her into exile. Her oeuvre is independent of art trends and it represents autonomous art. In this region of Europe precious value can only be obtained for a high price.

46. Ágnes Horváth: The Oeuvre as an Excuse [181]

Ilka Gedő created one of the most significant painting and graphic life oeuvres in Hungarian visual arts. In connection with Gedő's latest retrospective exhibition, the art critic Gyula Rózsa points out in his exhibition review[182] that he has every reason "to feel ashamed" and ask himself: "How is it possible that for twenty years I have not taken notice of this superb painting and graphic oeuvre?" Gyula Rózsa devotes most of his exhibition review to the reasons for "the late recognition of Gedő's art." He is satisfied because he, a faithful servant for many decades of the Communist regime, at last does not have to blame Communist art policies for Gedő's twenty-five-year silence. Instead, Gyula Rózsa is scapegoating a circle of artists, theoreticians and other professionals for a "doctrinarism of completely opposite nature that was at least as intransigent as its institutionalised and state-sponsored counterpart." (Gedő was close to this circle and the field of attraction of the European School.) Rózsa alleges that the "circle" (Lajos Szabó, Béla Tábor, Béla Hamvas, Katalin Kemény, Stefánia Mándy, Júlia Vajda, Endre Bálint, József Jakovits, Attila Kotányi, Endre Bíró and others), so to say, expelled Ilka Gedő because "she was not doing abstract art" and it was the doctrinarism of this circle that „silenced" the young painter who started her career during and after the war with beautiful figurative works and portraits. It is not primarily Gyula Rózsa who is responsible for this vilifying mystification. He merely amplifies the conspiracy theory of the «literature on Gedő» (this is just the art critic, István Hajdu) that relies on a one-sided source. Although István Hajdu mentions this conspiracy theory only cautiously in the Ilka Gedő album, he is prone to emphasize it much more poignantly in his interviews. In his study written for the album on Gedő, István Hajdu still quotes the artist's husband according to which „the terrible conflict springing from outgrowing the child prodigy in fact occurred at a deeper level. It was not rooted in the uncomprehending reception, neither in the atmosphere in our circle." Then István Hajdu adds: „Surely not." However, in his subsequent radio and television interviews, Hajdu already blamed the modernist attitude of the circle (which he calls a „catacomb community") for the long

[181] Published in *Élet és Irodalom* 2005, No. 15. April 15, 2005 (Ágnes Horváth had known Ilka Gedő since she was a child. Her father was László Horváth whose sister, Klári Horváth married Gábor Bíró who was Endre Bíró's elder brother and Ilka Gedő's brother-in-law.)

[182] Gyula Rózsa: "Az életmű ára" (The Price of the Ouevre), *Népszabadság*, January 29, 2005.

interruption of Ilka Gedő's career. This povided an adequate excuse for the official art critic of the former central Communist daily newspaper, Gyula Rózsa to speak about a „cause and effect interaction" between communist dictatorship and the oppressed artists and thinkers, i.e. a cause and effect interaction between the perpetrator and his victims: "Obviously, it would not be hard to point out the interrelationship and the cause-effect connection between dictatorial communist arts policies and the sect spirit of that circle of friends that had such a fatal effect on Ilka Gedő."

In a professionally incorrect, although a politically correct way Hajdu, describes this circle of friends as "'one of the most characteristic and intriguing circles of post-war Budapest intellectual life whose influence can, in an indirect way, be felt up to the present day. This is in spite of the fact that the circle never possessed any formal power of influence, and indeed, for one reason or another but always with the same end-result, it has continually been the subject of some animosity."[183]

(…)

As opposed to Gyula Rózsa, the members of the group of artists (according to the critic a „catacomb community" that „caused a long crisis in Ilka Gedő's life") advocated Ilka Gedő's art for the first time not twenty years after her death. Forty years ago it was Endre Bálint who organised Ilka Gedő's first exhibition, a studio exhibition. The then still living members of the „catacomb community", who lived in Hungary, attended the openings of Ilka Gedő's exhibitions in 1980 in Székesfehérvár and in 1982 in the Dorottya utca Gallery, and they congratulated Ilka Gedő with fascination for her newly created works. Back then Gyula Rózsa did not write about Ilka Gedő. Gyula Rózsa uses Ilka Gedő as a pretext for bringing to the same denominator one of the worst political systems of the 20th century with artists and theoreticians that were the enemies of the state's power, thus creating an equality between the persecutor and the persecuted.

[183] István Hajdu—Dávid Bíró: *The Art of Ilka Gedő*, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, p. 13.

47. Dávid Bíró: *The Price Paid for Creating an Oeuvre* or the *Oeuvre as an Excuse*, 2005[184]

Gyula Rózsa wrote a review[185] about Gedő's oeuvre exhibition held at the Hungarian National Gallery at the turn of 2004-2005. In connection with the fact that Ilka Gedő fell silent in 1949 only to resume artistic work, not a «quarter of century» as another author[186] erroneously alleges, but 16 years later, he wrote: "anyone who believes that Ilka Gedő, similarly to the best figures of the European School and of other modern trends, had to stop artistic work due to the well-known and ugly turn of historical events, the deterioration of circumstances, the dictatorial traits of arts policies, will be disappointed by the studies on Ilka Gedő."

Gyula Rózsa points out that "the artist was paralysed for two decades by doctrinarism of completely opposite nature that, as indicated by the course of events, was at least as intransigent as its institutionalised and state-sponsored counterpart. Obviously it would not be hard to point out the interrelationship and the cause-effect connection between dictatorial communist arts policies and the sect spirit of that circle of friends that had such a fatal effect on Ilka Gedő. And this latter factor had the real influence on the artist. The "circle", this is how the literature on Ilka Gedő calls this society and this is how this circle, organised from artists, theoreticians and other intellectuals called itself, became an elitist and underground community of intellectuals after the mid-1940's, irrespective of its views and intentions. According to Ilka Gedő's own perception and several studies on the artist's career path, the circle caused a long a crisis in Ilka Gedő's life. As shown by documents, the painter by that time had been experiencing a deep conflict between the allegedly mandatory requirements of modernity and her conviction, and, having seen that among the artists regarded by her as really significant only the persecuted and outlawed abstract art is held in esteem, she quit."

In the 15 April 2005 issue of *Élet és Irodalom* Ágnes Horváth[187] takes issue with Gyula Rózsa: "Most of the article written by Gyula Rózsa is devoted to the artist's actually «late recognition». The author is apparently satisfied with the fact that he can, at last, blame

[184] *Élet és Irodalom* refused the publication of this comment.
[185] Cf. Section 45 of this book.
[186] Ágnes Horváth
[187] Ágnes Horváth, "Az életmű mint ürügy" (The Oeuvre as an Excuse) *Élet és Irodalom* (15 April 2005)

something other than the communist cultural policies that he himself served for decades, for the quarter-century long «suppression» of Ilka Gedő, an artist who belonged to the circle of friends and intellectuals around the European School. Indeed, he finds the scapegoat in a society of «completely opposite nature» «consisting of artists, theoreticians and other intellectuals» who were the staunchest and most intransigent opponents of these communist cultural policies. According to Gyula Rózsa, this «circle» – Lajos Szabó, Béla Tábor, Béla Hamvas, Katalin Kemény, Stefánia Mándy[188], Júlia Vajda, Endre Bálint, József Jakovits, Attila Kotányi, Endre Bíró[189] and others – expelled Ilka Gedő «because she was not an abstract artist», which meant that it was the «doctrinarism» of the circle that «silenced» the young painter who started her career during and after the war with beautiful figurative works and portraits. It is not primarily the author of this article who is responsible for this vilifying mystification. He merely amplifies the conspiracy theory of the «literature on Gedő» that relies on a one-sided source. Although István Hajdu mentions this conspiracy theory only cautiously in the Ilka Gedő album, he is prone to emphasize it much more poignantly in his interviews." Ágnes Horváth points out that this happens irrespective of the fact that "in his study written for the album on the artist István Hajdu still quotes the artist's husband according to which «the terrible conflict springing from outgrowing the child prodigy in fact occurred at a deeper level. It was not rooted in the uncomprehending reception, nor in the atmosphere in our circle." According to Ágnes Horváth the collision between Ilka Gedő and the circle is a "vilifying mystification", in other words, not a single word of this story is true.

However, if one takes the effort to read the recollections of the artist's husband, then it becomes immediately clear that this is not a lie. Endre Bíró: "This conflict between the sketching child prodigy's attitude and the existence of modern art would obviously have arisen in some other sphere as well, sooner or later. For the moment it is sufficient to document this with the exchange of letters between Ilka and Ernő Kállai, published in the Catalogue of the István Király Múzeum Exhibition.[190] The circle, including myself, let us call it Lajos Szabó's circle, which Ilka became a part of with our marriage, looked at everything

[188] Stefánia Mándy (1918-2001) was a poet and translator and a writer on visual arts. She wrote a voluminous work on Lajos Vajda (Budapest: Corvina, 1984).

[189] It is astonishing but reveals quite a lot of the author's intentions that Endre Bíró is mentioned as belonging to the "circle".

[190] Cf. Section 13 of the present volume.

that was 'figurative' representation with a misty and uncomprehending suspicion. It was not an absolute refusal, for example Vajda, who was viewed as an authority, left mostly figurative works behind, neither had Endre Bálint ever done 'total' abstraction. Still, the members did not know what to do with Ilka's drawings during and following the war."[191]
The artists taking part in Lajos Szabó's circle were passionate advocates of avant-garde art and they rejected the drawings of Ilka Gedő as expressions of emotional realism, although, as the artist explains in her letter of 21 August 1984 written to Miklós Szentkuthy[192], the drawings made at the Ganz factory did not represent traditional figuration.

Obviously there were also other reasons for stopping artistic work than the lack of understanding and recognition of Ilka Gedő's art. As Endre Bíró points out, «the terrible conflict springing from outgrowing the role of child prodigy in fact occurred at a deeper level. It was not rooted in the uncomprehending reception, nor in the atmosphere in our circle against which she tried to appeal to Ernő Kállai in that particular letter. In actual fact, Ilka was too independent to be hindered by such things."[193]

There were three reasons for stopping artistic activities. The first one was the conditions created by Communist dictatorship, the second one was the lack of understanding of the group intellectuals and artists around Ilka Gedő and the third one was what is mentioned in Endre Bíró's recollections (see the quote above) and what was described by Géza Perneczky in the December 2004 issue of *Holmi,* a prestigious literary magazine: "The recognition that the path that until then had been regarded as negotiable (to put it another way, the further pursuit of classical modernism) could only lead towards cramping up, or merely add to the sterile waste-tip of epigones. Ilka Gedő too was one of those for whom a glimpse of this cul-de-sac signalled an order to halt. To be sure, it would not have been as dramatic, or as radical as this suggests. Equally, there may well have been other reasons—personal or family considerations, for instance—for falling silent. Yet looking back from the perspective of half a century, one cannot help feeling that it was some major ethical impulse that led her to lay down her pencil."[194]

[191] Cf Section 31 of this volume.
[192] Cf. Section 21 of this volume.
[193] Cf Section 31 of this volume.
[194] Géza Perneczky: "In the Rose Garden/ The Art of Ilka Gedő" *Holmi*, Vol. 45, Autumn 2004, pp. 32-33; Cf. Section 48 of this volume.

Ágnes Horváth is right in saying that, in contrast to Gyula Rózsa, the members of the circle "started to advocate Ilka Gedő's art not in 2005, twenty years after her death". However, she is wrong when she points out that Gyula Rózsa uses the recognition of the greatness of Ilka Gedő's art "as a pretext for bringing to the same denominator one of the worst political systems of the 20th century with artists and theoreticians that were the enemies of the state's power, thus creating an equality between the persecutor and the persecuted."

The wording of Ágnes Horváth's article suggests that Ilka Gedő was accorded the same treatment as the other members of the group, because, similarly to the other members, she, too, was under recognised by the communist system. The author of this study, a close witness to some substantial sections of the artist's career path, believes that what was true for the whole of the group during the Stalinist, completely totalitarian stage of the dictatorship was, from the beginning of 1960's, no longer valid for every member of the group (Ágnes Horváth: "the best figures of the European School and of other modern trends")

Several members of the group made a career during the period of "suave" dictatorship, while Ilka Gedő was still an under recognised artist. If Ágnes Horváth were right, then Endre Bálint, who had forty-two[195] exhibitions between his return home from Paris in 1962 and 1984 and whose work was recognised with the Kossuth prize would fall into the same category as Ilka Gedő who was sixty years old at the time of her first official exhibition. As regards being an "advocate" of Ilka Gedő, it must be said that this is a rather vague notion as her art would not just have called for advocacy but it would also have required recognition commensurate with its artistic value, as the artist's works on paper created between 1945 and 1949 are internationally recognised.

"In Hungarian painting, the significance of Ilka Gedő's oeuvre ranks with that of the symbolist Lajos Gulácsy and is close to that of Lajos Vajda. Ernő Kállai was right when, in his letter written to Gedő, he called Gedő's attention to Pierre Bonnard. But we could also mention here Alfred Kubin, Paul Klee and Joan Miro and from English painting David Hockney."[196]

[195] Source: Bálint Endre kiállítása [The Exhibition of Endre Bálint] (Budapest: Műcsarnok, 1984), p. 4. (List of solo exhibitions)

[196] Cf. Section 35 of this volume. The exhibition catalog: *Gedő Ilka festőművész rajzai a Szombathelyi*

There are two revealing statements here showing that Gyula Rózsa has recognised that Ilka Gedő is an under-recognised artist. He points out that it is impossible to do away with Ilka Gedő's self-portraits by referring to their connection with Giacometti: "The reason why the self-portrait series cannot be alleged to be connected with Giacometti's drawings is not only that Ilka Gedő could not have known them back in the 1940's, but also because Ilka Gedő's works are more without illusions, more heart-rending, and sure more existentialist than those of Giacometti's, if this term has any meaning in this context. Likewise, in order to avoid shrugging off the significance of the self-portrait drawings with comparing them to Giacometti's works, the self-portrait drawings have to be viewed with the awareness of their huge number and the fact that they are a heart-rending series of self-torment."

Képtárban 1989. február 3-tól március 5-ig, (The Drawings of llka Gedő, Szombathely Museum, 3 February - 5 March 1989 *)* Ed. by Zoltán Gálig. Júlia Szabó repeats this ranking and evaluation in her writing titled: „Ilka Gedő's Artistic Activities" In: *Gedő Ilka művészete (1921-1985)-The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921-1985),* Budapest, Új Művészet Kiadó, 1997, 44. o.

48. Géza Perneczky: A Colourful Album for Ilka Gedő[197]

After an interval of ten years, I started taking trips home to Hungary in 1980. I was immediately drawn to Szekesfehervar, where Ilka Gedő's first retrospective was on show.

I could hardly have been more surprised. It was as if a gingerbread maker who had until then been working in secret had suddenly opened wide the doors of her shop: the walls were speckled with scraps of petals embedded in honey- cake, gardens flattened with a rolling-pin, woman friends, roses and convolvulus pressed into mementoes, clowns covered with curling leaves. All these were not large, seeking to impress, but the whole exhibition was like the foliage of trees just before they start to shed their leaves. This is the season when Nature reveals more of her anatomy: as if nipped by frost, pigments stand out on surfaces, trees break up into mosaics, the boundaries of colours take on an inimitable complexity. Deep wrinkles, folds seeking a more comfortable position; elsewhere a splash of sandy deserts glimmers—the light of pilfered mirrors perhaps? And, fittingly for the work of a woman entering her riper years, the colour harmony suggests that it had been a dry summer.

The planes of the pictures here resembled sands born of purple glory, there a worn leather binding holding sheets made from the scales of butterflies. Vaguely discernible behind them seemed to be a dazzling phantasm. Here there was an elegy set in a narrow frame, possibly a few evanescent lines of Rilke's. Elsewhere, acrobatics set in a grid of lines, and a frolicking horde of Klee's hobgoblins with their indecipherable tangle of matted hair, or dishevelled Art Nouveau witches. And then a crack in the wall. If one looked at it for long enough, one could see in it an Ariel trying to conjure out what bravado is. He casts a spell, plays with rhymes and taps with his wand; yes, in an ecstasy of joy he lashes the bushes into veritable fairy-chaff.

So who was Ilka Gedő?

Behind her fairy-tale colourfulness and lyricism is a childhood that had been rich in

[197] This study titled *Színes könyv Gedő Ilkának (A Colourful Album for Ilka Gedő)* is the translation of Géza Perneczky's exhibition and book review published in the Hungarian literary monthly *Holmi* (December 2003, pp. 1629-1630). The English translation of this study titled „In the Rose Garden (Ilka Gedő (1921-1985)—A Retrospective at the Hungarian National Gallery 18 November 2003–31 March 2004/ István Hajdu & Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat 2003, 256 pp." was published in *The Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. XLV, No. 175, Autumn 2004, pp. 23-33, with 12 colour illustrations (one on the magazine cover) and 5 black and white illustrations.

intellectual stimuli. She was born in 1921, her father taught at the Jewish grammar school in Budapest, and some of the leading writers and artists of the time were among the family's circle of friends. This childhood ended in the growing shadow of the Second World War. The young woman was herded into the city's Ghetto, and that was where she matured as an artist. Her drawings (until then no more than studies) captured with unexpected vigour the faces and figures in the Ghetto—captured the apathy, fear and helplessness that lurked behind them. These drawings, mainly in pencil, may also be interpreted as portraits and figurative sketches; they have no narrative content, only an intellectual dimension, only a feel that communicates the horror.

In 1946 Ilka Gedő married Endre Biro, a biochemist of literary bent, and they spent longish periods in Paris and the Soviet Union. The horizon of postwar Budapest soon again darkened with the onset of Hungary's Stalinist era. In the visual arts, the key figures were the members of the European School, which had revived after the war only to be soon driven back underground, whilst in broader intellectual life, in close personal contact with the artists of the European School, a friendly circle of philosophers and aesthetes gathered around Lajos Szabó, Béla Tábor and Árpád Mezei, among them Attila Kotányi, who was to move to Paris after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and there became a member of the Situationists' Internationale. The predominant taste in this small circle was delineated by surrealist doctrines, with an admixture of calligraphic exploration, and an espousal of extreme abstraction. Among their Hungarian-born predecessors was Lajos Vajda, the shining star of the 1930s, who died prematurely on forced-labour service. Vajda too had ended up painting non-figurative compositions and he had near-iconic status for these artists.

It was in this artistic environment that Ilka Gedő was showing her drawings, indeed: not abstract enough, too naturalistic. Actually, as the late Júlia Szabó pointed out in the catalogue for the Szekesfehervar exhibition, Gedő’s expressive drawings date from the time Giacometti had embarked on his existentialist period. In his essay in this volume, István Hajdu sees an affinity with Munch, or the no less ecstatic Antonin Artaud, as being important too.

Ilka Gedő faced a crisis. All her instincts and her way of seeing things demanded that she remain true to the manner of depicting feelings and passions which she had embodied

in her figurative drawings, which she personally felt to be a totality and the legacy of Van Gogh. However, the attitudes of the friends around her were far more radical (indeed esoteric). They thought she was old-fashioned. Ilka Gedő resigned herself, and in 1949 she gave up working in the visual arts, only resuming painting and drawing after a silence of sixteen years.

The intervening years were taken up with studying colour theory and translating various theoretical works. She translated, and indeed supplied tiny illustrations for, the papers that Newton, Goethe and Ostwald had written on the theory of colour, and later did likewise for Ebner's *Das Wort und die geistigen Realitäten.* She was not content to leave it at the purely theoretical level: she devised and executed hundreds and thousands of colour tables of differing character or mood—a journey into the realm of the rainbow-hued refractions of light that extended over many years (though one should not dismiss the thought that these "scientific" colour essays are, in many cases, poised on the brink of becoming paintings in their own right). That is how we see those years today: she was again acting instinctively, gaining the knowledge through which she could turn herself into a superb colourist.

By the time the external pressures had diminished, and the cult of the extreme abstractionist authorities was over, it was possible for the cycle of Ilka Gedő's oil paintings to begin.

After the first important show in 1980 in Székesfehérvár Ilka Gedő had one more exhibition, at the Dorottya Street Gallery in Budapest. In the year of her death in 1985, she was commemorated with a one-woman show at the gallery of the Szentendre artists' colony; her paintings also featured that year in the Hungarian Cultural Weeks held in Glasgow. Two years later, in 1987, the Műcsarnok (Palace of Exhibitions) in Budapest gave her a retrospective. Another interlude and the Janos Gat Gallery in New York mounted Ilka Gedő exhibitions in 1994 and 1997, and her work was included in a collective show three years later in 2000.

There is no space here to list all her shows. Many of her works passed into public hands; in addition to the Szekesfehervar Museum and the Budapest National Gallery, various foreign collections acquired them, among them the New York Jewish Museum, the Yad Vashem Art Museum and Israel Museum in Jerusalem, as well as the British Museum

and the Diisseldorf Kunstmuseum. The 1944-45 Ghetto drawings and the slightly later self-portraits have proved most in demand, with some entire series finding new owners. Foremost among the reviews and catalogue publications that accompanied the various exhibitions was a volume of essays by Péter György, Gábor Pataki, Júlia Szabó and Ferenc Mészáros that the *Új Művészet* publishing house put together for publication in 1997. All in all, these shows and purchases, along with the associated recollections and analyses, have meant that Ilka Gedő's name has now started to gain a wider currency.

The new large-format album on Ilka Gedő was published in lieu of a catalogue, as it were, to prepare and accompany the long-awaited exhibition mounted by the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest. Also, it was meant to replace what, to date, have been merely fragmentary impressions with a more clear-cut synopsis; besides reprinting key documents, it includes lists of the sketchbooks and notebooks that the artist left behind. In addition, the book contains what is, for all practical purposes, a complete survey of her oil paintings—the most approachable of the genres from the viewpoint of the general public. This itself is a major step forward, given that before now not one institution or publisher had ventured to survey the entire oeuvre. Indeed, the book is the fruit of a private initiative, only made possible through the work done by the artist's son, Dávid Bíró, in assembling the lists of works and references as well as drumming up the funding for the high-quality reproductions the book is packed with, courtesy of the Eper Grafikai Studio. Hajdu's essay is accompanied by the archive material that is in the family's possession (various writings, diaries, notes and lists of works). All in all, this makes a multi-layered guide that will be indispensable for all future studies, as well as providing a background for the one hundred and fifty colour reproductions that have been made of Ilka Gedő's oil paintings. It is particularly laudable that Hungarian and English-language versions of the book have been printed separately, rather than producing a bilingual edition.

At the first opening of the book, it is clear that its primary (and legitimate) purpose is to present the paintings. Given that the principal message is the colour values of the paintings, my only remark is that in some cases these - Ilka Gedő was a master of restrained surfaces and tones on the darker side of the palette. Having said that, I would like to add the minor comment that it is a matter of personal regret that space could not be found, alongside this imposing gallery of oil paintings, for the reader to be treated to the

no less valuable drawings in similar plenitude and quality (possibly in full colour).

Indeed, the further you turn the pages of the volume, the greater your curiosity to know the diverse "other" genres that are referred to merely in the form of lists. Over the decades, Ilka Gedő's studio became a repository for "secondary materials" of the most fantastic forms and contents, and I am quite sure that all this material, attesting as it does to a rare absorption and, at times, inventiveness or playfulness, still holds many surprises.

Two names appear on the book's title page, those of Istvan Hajdu and Dávid Bíró; a third should rightly share the credits: the artist's husband, Endre Bíró. I am not aware to what extent earlier publications produced for particular occasions utilised the notes and recollections on his wife's work; here, at all events, two such writings ("Ilka Gedő's Studio as It Was at the Time of Her Death", and "Note on Ilka Gedő's Working Life") are highly significant in both their content and length, and in no way inferior to the essay by Hajdu, the highlighted feature of the text.

For their extraordinary modesty and fidelity to their subject, these two documents by Endre Bíró are unique indeed. Writings by the spouses of "dead artists", rarely stop the readers in their tracks, supplying a warning like: "The facts about Lajos Szabó and 'his circle' as recorded here contain things that were experienced and interpreted, and misinterpreted, by the writer of these lines. They may not be applied to any other context without checking and independent confirmation..." What follows is informative, accurate, and yet still enjoyably rounded. One would need to be quick on one's feet indeed to be able to locate any misinterpretation worth mentioning.

With the mention of Lajos Szabó's name we have plunged into the—I almost said metaphysical—tumult, but instead will make do with the clamorous thick of the world in which Ilka Gedő moved. After his wife's death, Endre Bíró took stock of the seemingly endless slips and scraps of paper, newspaper cuttings and postcards, prints and paper toys, miniature bottles, broken-off twigs, remnant tubes of paint or pages ripped from books, and supplied each and every item with a few lines of commentary on its intrinsic or biographical significance. Quite spontaneously, I started reading this text as if it had some literary kinship to one of Georges Perec's writings or, say, Hrabal's *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age.* The further one delves into the inventory, the more significant and perplexing each single addition seems. This is a virtuoso scholarly feat, worthy of a great

natural scientist.

Just as modestly groomed but steeply raked in its perspective is the second essay, dealing with Ilka Gedő's artistic career (with footnotes disproportionately longer than the text). Into this Bíró crams all those thoughts that he felt were either personal or whose contents, by extending beyond the person of Ilka Gedő, strictly speaking stepped outside the framework adumbrated by the title. That is why they are being passed on, as if in an undertone, in columns of small print. Reading this or that interminable footnote one feels it is closer in spirit to the essay than the main text itself. On the way, Bíró has many fascinating things to relate about his wife.

The precise descriptions that he gives of her method of building up layers of paint, for instance, are most instructive, since with this knowledge it is easier to reconstruct how the iridescent, deceptive surfaces of her canvases, which bring to mind translucent lamellae or the concretions of sea shells, were contrived. Even more important, of course, is the testimony borne to the stations and trials through which the artist passed, as observed and recorded by Endre Bíró. One instance concerns the question of why Ilka Gedő gave up art around 1948-49. Was it due to some personal crisis, or because that was when her children were born, or was she paralysed by the failure of the circle of friends around her to understand her? Or might it have been because external pressures—and remember, we are speaking about the period just before 1950—had intensified to the point that they became unbearable? In Endre Bíró's view, Ilka was unnerved on being confronted with the norms set up by the circle around Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor and on perceiving the significance of Lajos Vajda's late abstract period, which debates within the circle had raised to the status of a guiding principle. As a result, she lost her faith in "drawing after nature": she laid down her pencil because she believed that was the only way in which she could be creative. Elsewhere Bíró informs us that Ilka's appetite for art was perhaps taken away by the opinions that Lajos Szabó had formed (partly under the influence of the Vienna psychiatrist Otto Weininger) and which he did not bother hiding, about "women's place in the intellectual world".

By then, Ilka Gedő had already produced the series of drawings that major international collections are now so keen to lay their hands on, and over which there has for some time been an ongoing discussion. Does the concentration that is the essence of the figures really

presage a transformation towards the spiritual comparable to Giacometti's, or did the artist use some other refined stylisation and transmutation to capture these singularly tension-fraught transcendences? And now we have it: she herself believed that the drawings were merely "copied" from nature. Her sole consideration was to be true to life. As to the stilling of her activity, I shall later venture an explanation that perhaps assigns less weight to the incomprehension of the friends around her; for now let it suffice to say in regard to the core question that she may well have felt that the revered figure of Van Gogh was standing behind her whilst she was drawing—and he was the source of her inspiration. Her appetite for work was subsequently taken away by the proliferation of a thicket of directional posts and prohibitory signs.

What is clear from Bíró's lines is that the husband strove to remain discreet, how else was an esteemed scientist at the Szent-Gyorgyi Albert Institute supposed to "relate" to an issue so fraught with subjective problems? He has more to say, on the other hand, about the role of automatism, and Ilka Gedő's ambivalent attitude towards the technique, as Lajos Szabó, for example, accepted its importance but denied it had any role in his own work. Bíró describes the path by which Ilka Gedő, when she resumed work around 1968 by drawing "portraits" of family members or acquaintances (the quotations marks are warranted because these were completely free studies that, even allowing for their being sketches, are not modelled on human body forms), found herself close to total abstraction. According to him, what happened is that whilst doodling she would be thinking intently about the subject in question but simultaneously trying *not* to draw from memory.

In essence, this semi-automatic or, as Bíró aptly denotes it, pantomimic mode of representation subsequently became the near-exclusive method of her entire second artistic period, of the oil paintings that she produced from 1966- 68 until her death.

On the occasion of the 1985 commemorative exhibition at Szentendre, the playwright and novelist György Spíró wrote for the catalogue on "The ever-alert manualism of the non-observer", which is both more and less than automatism. István Hajdu, in his essay, perceptively introduces and analyses the pre-1950 drawings, which he personally (and perhaps Ilka Gedő herself) regards as "...individually fashioned yet universally valid theological messages..." In dealing with the oil paintings that were painted twenty years later he discerns a completely different Ilka Gedő. He concludes that in this second period,

largely given over to oils, she now saw painting as "the most important end, and also the most important means, of what was rather a playful, auto-mythological and also verbally marked internally conducted dialogue." This can no longer be the intuitive alertness of a non-observer, nor the creative scrawls of a pantomime's semi-wakefulness; these are now supplanted by the mechanism of self-reflexiveness, the fairy-tale world of an artist with her own phantasms, drawn from within herself and for her own amusement. A form of *l'art pour l'art* fantasising.

It can be sensed what an essential difference this is. Hajdu divides Ilka Gedő's career in two stylistically, he also sets the two periods on the scales morally as well, and one may be left with a distinct impression that this assessment ends up with Hajdu denying the second, oil-painting period any possible form of relationship with universal functions. How could paintings be truly significant if they are "verbally marked" or "auto-mythological" and serve simultaneously as both end and means in a "dialogue process", or self-serving games, as defined by such terms.

Perhaps what Hajdu is trying to say is that in this second period Ilka Gedő no longer believed there could be any transcendental values, that she (and only she) in that specific time and place would be able to formulate successfully through her particular means. Instead, she constructed a puppet theatre in which she set those repeatedly overpainted, fraying flowers or coloured dolls dancing for her own entertainment. (Hajdu is possibly referring to this when he reminds us that Ilka Gedő often (indeed too often) called her pictorial motifs "artificial flowers". To call something "artificial" is tantamount to saying it is "mock"; so mock art would be something one creates with mock flowers. If that supposition is correct, then it may also be true that Ilka Gedő saw herself in the same way as Hajdu now sees her... The fact that she painted them beautifully is quite another matter. For what does the beauty of the fairy-tale world that revolves around her count for, if it is such that ends and means merge so closely within it? If it is true that this type of painting neither accuses nor glorifies, neither crumbles to dust nor truly soars on high, then it is at best decorative rather than transcendental. And it can only attain "ethereal" heights: in other words, it can be aesthetic, but not redemptive.

But let me go to the heart of what I want to say. On reading the book, I had the impression that Hajdu's essay is based on a story of catharsis; it seeks to register a

complaint about the failure of this catharsis to gain wider currency in Hungarian art. The tragedy that makes the catharsis necessary was the persecution of the Jews that came to a culmination in the final years of the Second World War; its possible epic material comprises the efforts (and any successes) of those thinkers and artists who are sensible to and relive the problem, and eventually attempt to portray it—or if the attempts largely failed, then a description of those failures.

The two artistic climaxes in Ilka Gedő's career more or less coincide with the two periods of accepting that troubled heritage and of being resigned to finding no genuine solution (perceptible at the time right across Europe). The large distance in time between these two periods, which she experienced as a crisis (roughly the years from 1948 to 1968) correspond with what might be characterised as the years of experimentation in which artists were still clinging to the classical avant-garde and seeking a path forward even as they were increasingly obliged to recognise that the path was overtrodden and was not going to help a new Picasso, and thus a new *Guernica,* come into the world. It seems highly indicative that this same weakness, hesitancy or failure, was manifest throughout postwar Europe as it was in Hungary—at best in more familiar settings and on a much larger scale.

(One may add parenthetically that Paris was still a beacon for the continent, though that beacon had long ceased to be the Belle Epoque. Life no longer moved within the domains of the Bois de Boulogne, Montparnasse and Montmartre; the city recovered only gradually from the postwar ordure and troubles. Figuratively, if not literally, its streets stank of urine, and the stucco of its houses had grown black with age: one only has to think of the sensation that was caused when a start was made on cleaning up the faqades of public buildings. Western Europe spent little time lingering in Proust's gardens; in his place the busy, ant-like figure of Sartre bestrode the pavements, whilst Yves Montand and Juliette Greco became the idols of intellectuals. On both sides of the Iron Curtain, the privileged well-off collected the records of Yma Sumac—a startling hand-in-hand consonance! Brisk gusts now swept in, not down the pitted roads, but from the North African coast, courtesy of Camus, or whistled under the door as a frigid Viking legacy, thanks to Beckett. That relatively protracted spell, during which all of Europe waited for Godot, lasted up till the events of 1968 in Prague and Paris, after which the scenery was finally rearranged. True, there had already been harbingers of this change: in the early

1960s Rauschenberg carried off the Grand Prix at the Venice Biennale, the first slap in the face by the New York School; Alberto Giacometti shifted his abode from Alpine valleys to a tiny bedsit in Paris; and Yves Klein discovered how blue the sky was and learned how to launch into flight from the rooftops.)

When Endre Bíró first met Ilka Gedő he had the impression that the young woman was still completely under her mother's influence, a sentimental creature who could only react to her sufferings with romantic or affronted gestures; who whilst loathing the evils she had lived through, indeed forming what was perhaps an unduly mythical image of the atrocities, was nevertheless incapable of any analytical or polemical engagement. Within a few years, however, Ilka too had become a member of the intellectual circle in which Bíró had long been at home, learning to read books on philosophy and aesthetics, translating "banned" texts, and arguing about the problems of abstract art, though there are countless indications in her notes and sketches that she did not feel these were truly her own concerns, indeed sometimes found the denizens of the faded decor of Budapest's mini-Montparnasse to be hysterical or snobbish.

On her attaining the heights of this slowly accumulated erudition and critical acumen, and using it as a rock from which to dive and on which to cling (1 could say: at the fever pitch of the crisis induced by this realisation), came an essay on Vajda that she wrote in 1954 as a lengthy and highly instructive open letter to the art historian and poet Stefánia Mándy. In this she took issue with the norms that had been set up around the European School, such as its doctrine of the alleged or genuine necessity of "catacomb art", or the orthodoxy of dogmatic abstraction. Longing to escape the artistic ghetto she had come to know in Budapest, she sought the outlines of a more total way of painting—one that, for instance, summated Van Gogh, Picasso, Vajda and Klee and also admitted and inhaled more deeply the air of the world of the Old Masters. But was art of this kind still possible at all by then—in 1954, she agonised? And if so, how? Ilka Gedő desperately addressed these questions to the authorities of the European School, and it is noteworthy how much emphasis the text gives to the expression "cramping-up”. The essay, one of the outstanding documents in Hungarian art history of the years between 1948 and 1956, is included in the book.

By then, Ilka Gedő had not been drawing for a good few years, and it was to be a further

decade and more before she took a brush in her hand. It was a long night—of renouncing catharsis. The era bids farewell to the illusion that there might be hope of a solution through the tools of art. The recognition that the path that until then had been regarded as negotiable (to put it another way, the further pursuit of classical modernism) could only lead towards a cramping-up, or merely add to the sterile waste-tip of epigonism. Ilka Gedő too was one of those for whom a glimpse of this cul-de-sac signalled an order to halt. To be sure, it would not have been as dramatic, or as radical, as this suggests; equally, there may well have been other reasons—personal or family considerations, for instance—for falling silent. Yet looking back from a perspective of half a century, one cannot help feeling that it was some major ethical impulse that led her to lay down her pencil. In her own way, quite unconsciously and naively, yet autonomously, she had already once before, during the 1940s come very close to the tone of the longed-for synthesis, perhaps also (it cannot be excluded) to a possible continuation of the trajectory from Van Gogh to Vajda. At one point Hajdu, very perceptively, mentions Francis Bacon as showing certain affinities to Ilka Gedő's early drawings. But Bacon is truly the protagonist of a subsequent chapter, as far beyond his generation as the distance separating the little Hungarian Montparnasse from the dam burst that occurred in Hungary in the late 1960s to produce the Iparterv group from some lower depth. Neither the artists clustered around the European School nor more independent spirits like Ilka Gedő knew what to make of the opportunities that opened up with this new era, for it marked the setting-off on open tracks of a train, still rattling on to this day, on which we ourselves are seated.

Which brings me to my conclusion. I feel that Ilka Gedő's withdrawal was an act that was made within the artistic arena. On reaching a point beyond which the sole paths open to her lay in the direction of sterile planning or the proliferation of copycats, she turned away and fell silent, because that was the only way she could remain true to herself and to the world of her earlier drawings. Obviously she did not do this intentionally, and certainly she had no idea of the broader context. She remained as blind in doing so as she had been in producing her drawings with closed eyes, for only the fearlessness of an *idiot savant* can explain how she was able to balance so masterfully over yawning chasms. By their nature, of course, accomplishments like that can have no direct influence; the message that they impart only arrives at its addressees much later. Ilka Gedő's unpainted pictures, which are

lined up under the alcoves of the years from 1950 to 1968, are phantom pictures, shades that would first become visible only after decades had passed.

I am aware of just one other gesture in Hungarian art of those years that is comparable to her "stepping aside”: that was the pit Bela Veszelszky dug in the garden of his house on Budapest’s Rose Hill and into which he withdrew with a humility comparable to Ilka Gedő’s resignation. Veszelszky's "observatory” was a funnel-shaped hole that pointed towards the heavens like a telescope. What the artist saw from down there brought about a totally new approach in his art.

Where, then, are we to place the mutedly lit fairytale world of the late oil paintings? In answer, I turn to another story as my starting-point.

Some time ago, as luck would have it, I got into a discussion with Zsuzsa Szenes about textile art in Hungary during the 1960s. She recalled that back then I had written a fairly lengthy piece, "Subterranean Streams”, about a group of women—most of them the wives of architects—who had given the genre such an unexpected push into prominence. Hungary's political leadership in those days kept applied artists on a much looser leash, and they took full advantage of the opportunities that this offered. It was potters (Livia Gorka, for example) who were perhaps the first in Hungary to make this new fashion presentable by announcing, with disarming frankness, that they were, to be sure, in a distant sense abstract artists, and before long a whole army of tapestry-weaving women and textile artists, working with carding cotton, woollen yarn and other coloured stuffs, were emulating their example. To this day, whenever I take a 56 tram along Szilágyi Erzsébet Alley in Buda and see, resplendent in its tulip colours, the sentry-box standing by the gates of the Zrinyi Military Academy, I am reminded of the similarly shaped three-dimensional applique works of Zsuzsa Szenes entitled *inis is now nunguuuiis Like It,* or *A Chapter from the Aristophanes Adaptation "Long Live Hary Janos".* And I can almost hear the ringing, healthy peels of laughter with which those conceptual textile artists stole the thunder of pontificating males with their disputatious dispositions.

Zsuzsa Szenes claimed that back then, in the Sixties, I too had paid a visit on their Mecca, the artists' colony at the village of Velem, from which the textile art biennale at nearby Szombathely later emerged. When I said 1 was truly sorry but 1 had no recollection of that, Zsuzsa just shook her head: "And what about the cedar of Lebanon standing there,

and the sweet chestnut?" She could not believe that such key details could have been erased from my memory. It emerged later that since the Velem colony only began to function during the 1970s, there really was no chance that I had visited it in the previous decade, but that is beside the point. What matters is that in their world women have other mental maps—not maps on which names, trends and political programmes (least of all prohibitions) are printed but sweet chestnuts, cedars and arbours of blooming (albeit possibly thorny) rose-bushes. Those are the truths by which they regulate their own lives as well. They maintain surreptitious contacts with one another and with these living, unstoppably growing organic beings. If men happen to come by with their theories, the women just smile forgivingly, for they are well aware what their business is: life must carry on, whatever may have happened, for the fate of generations to come is in their hands.

Ilka Gedő was one such woman. When the 1960s arrived and that gradual but unstoppable flow of subterranean streams commenced, with the result that the overlying rocks began to crack under the pressure and the life-sustaining moisture to seep out onto drought-plagued land, she too started to paint. Flowers— or "artificial flowers" as she called them with quiet self-irony. Part of her extant legacy comprises 128 notebooks containing sketches and notes made whilst she was painting the oils, as well as another 157 notebooks of other texts, including a diary and various notes discussing artistic matters. A plethora of fascinating messages that pass on Ilka Gedő's thoughts still await discovery in this archival material.

Until then, though, we have the pictures. As if a gingerbread maker working in secret had suddenly opened wide the doors to her shop: scraps of petals embedded in honey-cake confections, or gardens flattened with a rolling-pin, roses and convolvulus pressed as mementoes, curling leaves, flowers...

49. Géza Perneczky: The Folder of Drawings, 2007[198]

The curator tried to unravel the secret of these drawings. "Are these drawings the manifestations of realism?", he asked. One could easily challenge this view, because already a superficial glance at these drawings would show these drawings to have been drawn incorrectly. The eye of an expert would immediately recognise the distorted proportions. When, for example, the lines were running upwards, they yielded to a vertical magnetism, and generally the lines were lengthened. When they slid out sideways, they were casting loops, and started to wave, and sooner or later they petered out into dense and mysterious shadings. But because of this, the figures did not, for example, become simply more gothic. Rather, the figures became bodiless in a dreamlike manner. But even this observation seemed to be incorrect, because sometimes these figures revealed that they could collapse under their own weight. Finally, the curator, recognised that, in addition to the vertical forces, there are gravitational forces in these drawings that pointed to the depths, to the third dimension located behind the drawings.

It seemed as if there were an exit behind each drawing. However, these back doors were closed or they have been deleted with rubber. Because of this, the figures appeared at the sides of the drawings, as the greatest part of the space shown remained empty. It seemed as if this emptiness permeated the figures that sought refuge at the sides of the paper in the manner of a draught.

The avant-garde of the 20th century began, as a matter of fact, when the artist abandoned the safe harbours that had been in existence since the Renaissance, and started to face the dangers that rendered their human and artistic existence fragile. The collection and imitation of the wooden sculptures of African peoples and those of Oceania, the paradox inexplicableness of geometric presentation or adventurous journeys into the subconscious, all these attempts were, in fact, experiments that brought these artists into a near-death condition. This is at least sure in the aesthetic and moral sense, as the society surrounding these artistic attempts regarded these attempts to be absurd and even immoral. When, in due course, some really sinful things did happen, then the artists no

[198] Géza Perneczky: "A rajzmappa" (The Folder of Drawings), shortened text, *Holmi*, Volume 19, No. 8 August 2007, pp. 1042-1043.

longer needed these artificial means of creation. Every-day reality had become so much absurd that its support systems simply collapsed, and on the reflection of every-day phenomena nothingness and death had become visible.

Ilka Gedő came to experience such situations already in her youth. The folders show those men and women, together with Ilka Gedő, to have been in this dangerously fragile situation. What is interesting here, is that Ilka Gedő as a graphic artist, did not need the isms to create something which makes you hold your breath when viewing her works on paper. In these works on paper no acrobatics is needed, because tension becomes unbearable even without acrobatic tricks. It is enough to open a folder, and one can see this immediately.

50. Júlia Szabó's Exhibition Speech at the Museum Kiscell, 2001[199]

It is a great honour for me to open this exhibition featuring Ilka Gedő's drawings in the most beautiful exhibition area of the museum. I first saw these drawings in the second half of the 1970s in the artist's flat, one living room of which served also as a studio, after a friend of mine[200], who was an art lover and art collector, had called my attention to the strongly isolated Ilka Gedő. Upon viewing these works, I was immediately sure that this oeuvre of drawings and paintings deserves to be shown in an exhibition. Subsequently I viewed these works with the curator of the King St Stephen Museum of Székesfehérvár, with Márta Kovalovszky. We saw works on paper, sketch-books and also the paintings propped against the walls and chairs all over the place. Those paintings were at other times kept carefully packed on the shelves.

Gedő's first comprehensive exhibition took place in 1980 at the King St. Stephen Museum of Székesfehérvár. Many of the drawings shown back then are now presented at this exhibition. A greater number of the drawings presented at the 1980 exhibition, cannot be shown now due to limited exhibition space (one big exhibition room with two side-rooms.) Art historians, Gábor Pataki, Katalin Néray and István F. Mészáros, analysing Gedő's art all agree that the basic component of Gedő's art is the line. They believe that in her works on paper, from which we see a selection here, the artist has exhausted all the possible expressiveness of the line, and of the coloured line. In her later oil paintings lines in themselves often appear, and her sketch-books, the so-called "ancient drawings" record the flashes of the imagination.

In this exhibition we meet Ilka Gedő who scans the shape of the objects with lines, who expresses the soul of objects with tangled lines and outbursts of lines and line curves. Gedő is a graphic artist who explores reality revealing its every-day and special meanings. The delicate curtains made from light and material, the breathing and stretching table legs, the upwelling or twisting table-cloths as shown in the charcoal and chalk drawings of the Table Series, all these we can find only in Marcel Proust's novels.

The artist has always been concerned with the "personality" of objects. She loved her somewhat shabby furniture preserving forms from the beginning of the 20th century

[199] Municipal Art Gallery/ Museum Kiscell, *Ilka Gedő, Drawings and Pastels*, October 5-28, 2001
[200] Botond Kocsis (1943-2006)

and Art Nouveau style. However, as far as I know, she created a strange series of enigmatic drawings only about two fragile, yet well-constructed Art Nouveau Tonet nesting tables. In the Table Series the object becomes a person through a variation of the drawings comparable to musical motifs, and somewhere in the invisible background the associations with the object also come to light.

These two tables that display the style of a few decades earlier represent the tradition of the past bequeathed to Ilka Gedő, they are a gift of the past. They are the message of the of turn-of-the-century line symbolism which the artist may have to come to know through the works and teachings of two of her masters, Viktor Erdei[201] and Tibor Gallé[202]. Gedő received this message and responded to it: these large-sized drawings showing the life of an object are as significant in the history of Hungarian and European art as works on paper by great turn-of-the century artists.

The Ganz Factory series is also a document from the history of Hungarian industry. In 1947 Ilka Gedő applied for and got a permission to make drawings on the factory premises about the work-benches, the work materials and the workers. Under other circumstances, the artist had already made genre drawings about other topics. It was back in 1962 that I saw for the first the first time a drawing by Ilka Gedő titled *Gendarmes Sitting on a Bench.* This small drawing did not have any social or political critique; it was just an accurate observation of a section of reality. Gedő continues this light, lively and robust presentation in the series of Ganz Factory Drawings. The accuracy of observation, the simplicity of execution characterise these drawings executed in a number of techniques. In some of the Ganz Factory drawings silver stove paint is also applied. These drawings, in addition to being masterworks, are also documents of the history of Hungarian manufacturing industry after World War Two.

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[201] Viktor Erdei (1878 – 1945) sculptor, graphic artist, painter .

[202] Tibor Gallé (1896–1944). Between 1925 and 1928 he studied at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, where his teachers were Gyula Rudnai and Viktor Olgyai. His works can be found in the Hungarian National Gallery and in the British Museum as well.

There are no heroic gestures in Gedő's drawings. Apart from some of the exhibited self-portraits, neither is there any irony. The most important document connected with this exhibition is Gedő's letter written to Ernő Kállai[203] in 1949. It reveals that the artist, analysing Van Gogh's and Picasso's views on art, was concerned with depiction in the "guise of reality". We are glad that we can see these drawings in these exhibition rooms. We are glad that the Museum Kiscell has decided to host this exhibition: the artist of Fillér utca and of the Ganz Factory is an artist of European rank.

[203] Ernő Kállai (1890 – 1954) was a Hungarian art critic who was involved in the promotion of and theorization around Constructivism. Following the suppression of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, Kállai went to Berlin but stayed in touch with other Hungarian refugees from the avant-garde art movement in Vienna.

51. Kriszta Dékei: Can a Female Artist be a Woman, and the Other Way Round?, 2003[204]

Ilka Gedő's exhibition, consisting of closely thirty works and showing the most important aspects of this oeuvre, can still be seen at the Raiffeisen Gallery until January 11. The album, the work István Hajdu and Dávid Bíró, was simultaneously published by Gondolat Kiadó in Budapest and it undertakes, in addition to containing 152 colour tables of the oil paintings, to give a comprehensive and detailed account of this oeuvre. The album attaches the same importance to the internationally recognised works of the first period of Gedő (separated by a 16-year silence) as to the paintings of the second period. Ilka Gedő started drawing at the age of eleven and by the age of 13, as shown by the sketchbooks preserved in the estate, she had filled several sketchbooks with more than seventy pen and water colour drawings. Gedő's mother nursed literary ambitions and her father was a grammar school teacher of Hungarian and German literature, who studied and translated Martin Buber's Hassidic tales and studied the works of the Hungarian poet and playwright, Imre Madách. The parents supported their daughter's artistic obsession with creating drawings. Gedő, the child prodigy, underwent an extraordinarily conscious self-training, and she could draw figure drawing with more and more routine, treating her topic with deep empathy and an adequate impartiality. After the matura exams, she learnt at private schools. Ilka Gedő came from a Jewish family and because of the anti-Jewish laws she could not have visited the Academy of Fine Arts even if she had wanted to. Despite this and at the early age of 21 she already took part in a group exhibition. She was also drawing in the Budapest Ghetto, and in the years 1946-1947 she went to the Ganz Factory to draw workers. It was at this time that she got to know a circle of intellectuals led by Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor. Although the circle's most respected artist was Lajos Vajda, whose works

[204] Kriszta Dékei: „Lehet-e igazán nő, aki művész és fordítva?" (Can an artist truly be a woman and vice versa?) *Magyar Narancs*, December 18, 2003

were not entirely abstract, this circle passionately believed in abstract art as opposed to figuration.

Brain-Wracking Effort

It was in this circle, extended by Béla Hamvas, that she encountered, a theory, embracing the spiritual unity of the whole of European art as opposed to a materialistic a theory. It was also here that Gedő recognised how little she knows about art history and language philosophy. The justification for figuration achieved through a hellish effort, the naïve practice of "how to do figurative drawing" were challenged. This was partly due to the influence of Szabó-Tábor circle but also ~~by~~ due to the official arts policies supporting social realism, and also due to a natural process within the artist herself: Gedő was becoming gradually more conscious of her until then spontaneously used artistic talent, and the question of "how" became less and the question of "why" became more important. It is only natural that Gedő went through an artistic crisis which was made even worse by strict old-fashioned sexist attitudes that barred women from the „world of the spirit". The circle tolerated the presence bluestocking women much more than that of really thinking women. It is not by coincidence that the last two unfinished self-portrait drawings that conclude Gedő's first artistic period got the title *Pensive Woman*[205]*.* Not only are these two drawings a response to the prejudicial views on women's lack of true artistic talent, but through the lines of the skirt and the sliding contours of the face recall the art Lajos Vajda, a master that was very important also for Gedő. These two drawings conclude the in Hungarian art rather unusually extensive self-portrait series[206]. This series of painful self-portraits remind us of Giacometti's drawings although back at this time Gedő did not know them.[207]

[205] Actually the titles of the last two self-protrait drawings from 1949 are *Pensive Self Portrait I* and *Pensive Self Portrait II*.
[206] The number of Gedő's self-prtrait drawings is 338.
[207] How could she have known them when most of the Giacometti drawings were made after 1950, but Gedő finished her self-portrait series on 1949.

Destiny Loosen the Knot

In the faceless self-portraits that were being made with an enormous momentum until her first child was born[208] different aspects of feminine existence appear. There are nude self-portraits, self-portraits in pregnancy, figures sitting at the easel, self-portraits with caps in which she looks like an adolescent boy. Self-portraits that show Gedő as if she were an elegant gentleman from a novel or a semi-kneeling Madonna under the crucifix or a whore in dishevelled clothes. The hastily assumed feminine identity masks seem to push to the background the unavoidable, unknown mother and child-care roles that she was waiting for with some fear. “Is it possible not to exclude objective representation?” Gedő asked. And this question was linked to the most important issues of women painters: „What could be the message of a woman painter? What are its specifics? To be a painter is a profession whose bodily and spiritual traditions have been handed down over the centuries by men since the time Egyptian pyramids were built. Should I take over the way of life, the craftsmanship and the world outlook from these men? Of course I should, but then also their geniality.”

Being a housewife with a wooden spoon in her hand, with a crying baby on her arm, being locked in one-dimensional female identity, gradually getting further away from figuration, she creates the nearly abstract and infinitely tense Table series and not much later she stops creating art. She engages in diligent self-studies: she translates Goethe’s an Wilhelm Ostwald’s colour theory, makes notes on Klees and Kandindsky’s writings and reads, among others, Otto Weininger’s famous book, and works by Werner Heisenberg and Arthur Schopenhauer. Slowly and persistently a new internal “message” develops, and starts suddenly unfolding in 1966 in order to give an emphatic and internationally recognised answer to the question she asked nearly twenty years before. Maybe.

[208] Gedő’s first child was born in September 1947, and the self-ortrait series continued until 1949.

52. Ursula Prinz's Exhibition Opening at the Collegium Hungaricum Berlin, 2006[209]

Ilka Gedő was not known to me before I was asked to give an opening speech. And even after I had seen the pictures in her monograph, everything seemed very strange and extraordinary to me. I also could not make any connection to the Hungarian art I knew until then. Then I began to read and then I saw the pictures again. And then they touched me very much.

I understood: Ilka Gedő is also an outsider in the context of Hungarian art history. Her art is difficult to understand if you don't know anything about her life story, which is of course closely connected with the history of Hungary. She was born in Budapest in 1921, where she spent her life and where she died in 1985, and only lived in Paris for one year (1969-70). Ilka Gedő was not only Hungarian but also an assimilated Jew, the daughter of a grammar school teacher of German and of Hungarian literature, who was also a literary translator. She began drawing early, figurative, often ironic or thoughtfully sad self-portraits. These self-portrait drawings of the 1940s are among the highlights of her tragically lonely art. One could sometimes think of Daumier or Toulouse-Lautrec, but also of Munch or Giacometti. Occasionally she had private lessons. She only stayed at the Budapest Academy of Art for one semester. In the 1940s she had contacts with the artists' colony in Szentendre near Budapest. In 1944 she moved with her family to the Budapest ghetto, where she survived. For the rest, however, this ghetto period was a time she never mentioned herself. Since 1945 she was in constant contact with the group of artists, writers and philosophers who embodied the intellectual Budapest of the time. But soon the conflict between the then modern abstraction and her figurative painting and drawing style became a dilemma for her. She tried to get in touch with the art critic Ernő Kállai about this and wrote him a letter, without any real response. In 1949, after the communist regime had become more stringent, she suddenly decided to stop painting and drawing. She held on to this decision for 15 years. It was a great resignation, the reasons for which were many, not only the confrontation with the art of her modern contemporaries, who also resented her drawings of workers in a nearby factory, but also the general political

[209] The Ilka Gedő exhibition opening speech of Ursula Prinz who in 2006 was the deputy director of the Berlinische Galerie Museum. The opening speech was delivered at Hungary's Cultural Institute in Berlin, the Collegium Hungaricum.

situation and the increasing politicization of art that accompanied it, as well as the fact that she did not feel recognized as a female artist. It was precisely this particular problem of being a female artist that she frequently addressed, not only verbally but above all in the many self-portraits she drew, including those of pregnant women, which are a shocking, but occasionally ironic demonstration of her mental and spiritual state. From now on she devoted herself entirely to her family and took refuge in self-chosen isolation. She did not want to work as a teacher either, but turned to the mysticism of Jakob Boehme, read Kafka, Rilke, Thomas Mann and translated Goethe's Theory of Colours into Hungarian. She came into contact with Western ideas partly through friends who had fled abroad from the primacy of socialist realism.

As suddenly as she had stopped, she began to paint again in 1964 in her mid-forties, often based on older paintings and drawings. Even now the paintings were self-reflective, very graphic, but also determined by colour. Once again, her art has nothing to do with the art that was developing at the same time in Hungary or Budapest, neither with the sensual, painterly or trompe l'oeil painting of László Lakner, for example, who has been living here in Berlin for so long, nor with the Malevich, Kandinsky and Mondrian following the direction of Sándor Molnár, nor with the young generation of the late sixties that took up the western propositions of happening, conceptual art or hard edge. Even when Western art, including American art, became more perceptible in Budapest in the 1970s and 1980s through literature and exhibitions, Gedő continued to pursue her own style outside the official art establishment. In 1980 she had her first official exhibition. She only really became known after her death, in the last decade. Since the late 1990s, internationally renowned museums such as the British Museum, the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, the Hungarian National Gallery and the Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf have also acquired some of her works. In 2003 a catalogue raisonné and monograph by István Hajdu and Dávid Bíró were published.

Gedő herself has contributed little or nothing to the publicity of her works. Literature and puppet theatre have occupied her more than the art world and most of her artist colleagues. Rilke was particularly dear to her heart. But she also admired a painter like Francis Bacon, though without any influence of Bacon’s art in her work. The highly educated artist lived a secluded life and turned to her art and her fears, which continued to

feed her work until the end of her life in 1985. However, she was never self-pitying. Her never-ending self-irony prevented her from self-pity. The self-portrait still plays an important role in her work. Some masks, some flowers–the artist's favourite subjects–seem to be a hidden self-portrait themselves. There are no models for these flowers or masks that exist in reality. They are inventions or rather memories of what she has experienced, seen and dreamed. Especially with the mask pictures I sometimes have thought of James Ensor. Because also a tendency to the grotesque comes to light in Gedős pictures. The gardens and rose gardens that she paints seem like carpets in their non-perspectival representation; they are light as a dream and yet also earthy. This is mainly due to the often brownish, earthy colours. These memorable pictures show people like flowers or vice versa, flowers that look like people and even seem to act like people. Some pictures remind us of Paul Klee. The lightness, sensitivity and poetic quality of many of the works are very close to this master of pictorial poetry. *The March of Triangles* is such a picture, which in its cheerful naivety also makes one think of children's drawings, but of course–as with Paul Klee–is masterfully composed through and through. In Ilka Gedő the organic is combined with constructive elements. Art Nouveau also echoes in the later works. Fractal fragments are mixed with surrealistic elements. Reflections invert the "realistic" or better surrealistic world once again, interchange top and bottom and alienate the subject. The admired Van Gogh has also left his mark on her work. The oil painting often looks like graffiti or pastel. This impression is caused by the graphic elements that also dominate the oil paintings. Disguises, masks, over painting, hidden symbolism determine this work, whose tragic component remains unambiguous, even in the most ornamental and colourful examples. In the seemingly private and intimate, the image and experience of a generation and a period are nevertheless revealed, sharpened in a very feminine, just as self-doubling as a self-confident and self-determined artist. Despite all her inner emigration, she has remained part of her world. It is not out of ignorance that she has not joined the common art movements. She ultimately followed what Ernő Kállai had already written to her in his short letter in 1949: "I would advise you to use your eyes and follow your heart. Don't take any notice of the clever know-it-alls and snobs to whom van Gogh is an outdated concept and according to whose opinion you should follow Picasso's abstract art".

Ilka Gedő has always followed her heart, has later found her own style and now, even later, her deserved fame.

However, she has identified herself with the bread baker described by the famous Hungarian poet Attila József, who committed suicide at the age of 37, and to whom this exhibition owes the motto "...weep bitter tears in the dough".

Appendix

Solo Exhibitions

- 1965: *Sudio Exhibition*
- 1980: *Gedő Ilka festőművész kiállítása* (Exhibition of Ilka Gedő), King St. Stephen Museum Székesfehérvár, Hungary
- 1982: *Ilka Gedő,* chamber exhibition of the Budapest Palace of Arts at the exhibition venue of Dorottya utca
- 1985: *Ilka Gedő (1921-1985),* Gallery of the Szentendre Art Colony
- 1985: *Ilka Gedő (1921-1985) Retrospective Memorial Exhibition of Drawings and Paintings,* Compass Gallery, Glasgow
- 1987: *Ilka Gedő (1921-1985),* Palace of Art, Budapest
- 1989: *Gedő Ilka festőművész rajzai* (The Drawings of Ilka Gedő), the Museum of Szombathely, Hungary
- 1989: *Ilka Gedő: Paintings, Pastels, Drawings, 1932-1985,* Third Eye Centre, Glasgow
- 1994: *Ilka Gedő (1921-1985),* Janos Gat Gallery, New York
- 1995: *Ilka Gedő (1921-1985) Drawings and Pastels,* Shepherd Gallery, New York
- 2001: *Gedő Ilka rajzai 1948-1949-ből (Drawings by Ilka Gedő from the Years, 1948-1949),* Municipal Picture Gallery and the Kiscelli Múzeum
- 2003: *Ilka Gedő,* Gallery of Raiffeisen Bank, Budapest
- 2004-2005: *Gedő Ilka (1921-1985) festőművész kiállítása* (Memorial Exhibition of Ilka Gedő /1921-1985/), Hungarian National Gallery
- 2006: *Könnye kovászba hull--Gedő Ilka (1921-1985) kiállítása ("Weep Bitter Tears into the Dough!" Exhibition of Ilka Gedő /1921-1985/),* Collegium Hungaricum, Berlin
- 2013: *Ilka Gedő,* the Lobby of the Hungarian National Theatre in Budapest
- 2021: *„…Half Picture, Half Veil…" Works on Paper by Ilka Gedő (1921-1985)*, Museum of Fine Arts- Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest, 26 May – 26 September 2021

Group Exhibitions (a selection)

- 1940: *Az OMIKE második kiállítása* (Second Exhibition of OMIKE, the Hungarian Jewish Educational Association), Jewish Museum, Budapest
- 1943 *Az OMIKE ötödik kiállítása* (Fifth Exhibition of OMIKE, the Hungarian Jewish Educational Association), Jewish Museum, Budapest
- 1942*: Szabadság és a nép (Freedom and the People),* the Headquarters of the Metalworkers' Trade Union, Budapest
- 1945*: A Szociáldemokrata Párt Képzőművészeinek Társasága és meghívott művészek kiállítása* (The Exhibition of the Society of Artists of the Social Democratic Party and of Invited Artists), Ernst Museum, Budapest
- 1947*: A Magyar Képzőművészek Szabad Szervezete II. Szabad Nemzeti Kiállítása* (The Second Free National Exhibition of the Free Organization of Hungarian Artists), Municipal Gallery of Budapest
- 1964*: Szabadság és a nép, 1934-1944* (The Group of Socialist Artists, 1934-1944), Hungarian National Gallery, Memorial Exhibition
- 1995*: Culture and Continuity: The Jewish Journey,* Jewish Museum, New York
- 1996*: From Mednyánszky to Gedő—A Survey of Hungarian Art,* Janos Gat Gallery
- 1995*: Áldozatok és gyilkosok/Gedő Ilka gettó-rajzai és Román György háborús bűnösök népbírósági tárgyalásán készült rajzai/ Victims and Perpetrators* (Ilka Gedő's Ghetto Drawings and György Román's Drawings at the War Criminal People's Court Trials), Hungarian Jewish Museum, Budapest
- 1996*: Victims and Perpetrators /Ilka Gedő's Ghetto Drawings and György Román's Drawings at the War Criminal Trials,* Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
- *1997-1998: Diaszpóra és művészet* (Diaspora and Art), Hungarian Jewish Museum, Budapest
- 1998*: A Levendel-gyűjtemény* (The Levendel Collection), Municipal Museum of Szentendre
- 1999*: Voices from Here and There (New Acquisitions in the Departments of Prints and Drawings),* Israel Museum, Jerusalem
- 2000*: Directions, Fall Season,* Janos Gat Galley, New York
- 2002*: 20. századi magyar alternatív műhelyiskolák* (Alternative Hungarian Workshop Schools of the 20th Century), the joint exhibition of the Lajos Kassák und the Viktor Vasarely Museums
- 2003*: A zsidó nő* (The Jewish Woman), Hungarian Jewish Museum, Budapest
- 2003*: Nineteenth Century European Paintings Drawings and Sculpture,* Shepherd Gallery, New York
- 2003*: Das Recht des Bildes: Jüdische Perspektiven in der modernen Kunst* (The Right of the Image: Jewish Perspectives in Modern Art), Museum Bochum
- 2004: *Az elfelejtett holocauszt* (The Forgotten Holocaust), Palace of Art, Budapest
- 2005*: Der Holocaust in der bildenden Kunst in Ungarn* (The Holocaust in Fine Arts in Hungary), Collegium Hungaricum, Berlin
- *2014: A Dada és szürrealizmus. Magritte, Duchamp, Man Ray, Miró, Dalí. Válogatás a jeruzsálemi Izrael múzeum gyűjteményéből* (Dada and Surrealism. Magritte, Duchamp, Man Ray, Miró, Dalí. A Selection from the Collections of the Israel

Museum), joint exhibiton of the Israel Museum and the Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

- 2016*: Kunst aus dem Holocaust,* Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin
- 2019*: In bester Gesellschaft--Ausgewählte Neuerwerbungen des Berliner Kupferstichkabinetts, 2009-2019* (In the Best Company--Selected New Acquisitions of the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett*,* 2009-2019), Kupferstichkabinett (Museum of Prints and Drawings), Berlin

Works in Public Collections

- Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest
- Hungarian Jewish Museum, Budapest
- King St. Stephen's Museum, Székesfehérvár, Hungary
- Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
- Israel Museum, Jerusalem
- British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings
- Museum Kunstpalast, Department of Prints and Drawings, Düsseldorf
- Jewish Museum, New York
- Kupferstichkabinett (Museum of Prints and Drawings), Berlin
- Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, USA
- Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, USA
- Albertina, Vienna
- Metropolitan Museum of Art (Department of Modern and Contemporary Art), New York
- Duke Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany
- Cleveland Museum of Fine Art
- MoMa, Department of Drawings and Prints, New York
- Städel Museum, Frankfurt, Germany

The Complete List of Oil Paintings

1. CROSSES ON GRAVES, 1947
Oil on paper, 32 x 25 cm

2. GARDEN, 1947
Oil on paper, 47 x 39 cm

3. GRAVESTONES, 1947
Oil on paper, 35 x 41.5 cm

4. HOUSE BESIDE THE GRAVEYARD, 1947
Oil on paper, 32 x 48 cm

5. HOUSES IN SZENTENDRE, 1947
Oil on paper, 53.5 x 38 cm

6. OLD GRAVESTONES, 1947
Oil on paper, 50 x 31.5 cm

7. TWO GRAVESTONES, 1947
Oil on paper, 49 x 32 cm

8. SELF-PORTRAIT WITH A HAT, 1948
Oil on paper, 48.5 x 39 cm

9. JUDIT I, 1965
Oil on wooden board, 54 x 19.5 cm

10. JUDIT II, 1965
Oil on wooden board, 52 x 20 cm

11. ANETTE, 1968
Oil on cardboard, 29.5 x 17 cm

12. ANNA, 1968–69
Oil on cardboard, 42 x 25 cm

13. ENDRE BÁLINT I, 1968
Oil on cardboard, 53 x 28.5 cm

14. ENDRE BÁLINT II, 1968
Oil on cardboard, 49 x 29 cm

15. THE PAINTER BÉLA VESZELSZKY, 1968
Oil on paper, 46 x 35 cm

16. DANI, 1968
Oil on cardboard, 35 x 27 cm

17. DÁVID, 1968
Oil on paper, 29 x 16 cm

18. MARRIED COUPLE, 1968
Oil on canvas, 40 x 51.5 cm

19. THE CAT, 1968
Oil on paper, 47 x 47 cm

20.SUMMER FOREST II, 1968–69
Oil on wooden board, 52 x 34 cm

21. FIRST ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1969
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 38 x 21 cm

22. PORTRAIT OF ENDRE BÍRÓ, 1969
Oil on wooden board, 51 x 19.5 cm

23. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER ON AN ORANGE BACKGROUND, 1969
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 36 x 32 cm

24. FRUIT TREES IN BLOOM, 1969
Oil on wooden board, 38 x 55 cm

25. AUNT BORISKA, 1965–1970
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 51 cm

26. DÁVID, 1965–1970
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 57 x 45.5 cm

27. PORTRAIT OF BÉLA TÁBOR, 1969
Oil on wooden board, 37 x 23 cm

28. THE SHADOW OF THE CHURCH (SZENTENDRE), 1969–1970
Oil on paper, 62 x 56.4 cm

29. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH FALLING LEAVES, 1969–1970
Oil on cardboard laid down on wooden board, 48 x 58.5 cm

30. FATHER WITH TWO CHILDREN, 1969–1970
Oil on canvas laid down on wood, 31 x 22 cm

31. TURRETED ROSE GARDEN, 1969–1970
Oil on cardboard, 58 x 42 cm

32. “TURRETED” ROSE GARDEN, 1969–1970
Oil, mixed technique on paper laid down on canvas, 46 x 24 cm

33. JUDIT (SKETCH), 1970
Oil on canvas, 34.5 x 13 cm

34. SKATERS, 1970
Oil on paper, 30 x 39 cm

35. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER IN TWO PARTS, 1970
Oil on cardboard, 33 x 33 cm

36. ROSE GARDEN ON A BLUE BACKGROUND, 1970
Oil on canvas, 25.3 x 52.8 cm

37. ROSE GARDEN IN THE RAIN, 1970
Oil on paper, 46 x 55 cm

38. RIBBED ARTIFICIAL FLOWER I, 1970
Oil on canvas, 36 x 62 cm

39. ÁGNES, 1965–1971
Oil on paper, 43.5 x 30.5 cm

40. VERA, 1965–1971
Oil on cardboard laid down on canvas, 47.5 x 34.5 cm

41. LA DANSEUSE, 1970–71
Oil on canvas, 65 x 47 cm

42. FOREST, 1965–1971
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 36 x 34.5 cm

43. RIBBED ARTIFICAL FLOWER ON A BLUE BACKGROUND, 1970–71
Oil on canvas, 33.5 x 71 cm

44. PARCELLED ROSE GARDEN, 1970–71
Oil on canvas, 60 x 43.5 cm

45. PERSIAN ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1970–71
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 36 x 32 cm

46. BUNCHED ROSE GARDEN (LIGHT), 1970–71
Oil on canvas, 30 x 33 cm

47. ROSE GARDEN WITH A RAINBOW, 1970–71
Oil on canvas, 48 x 53 cm

48. BUNCHED ROSE GARDEN (DARK), 1970–71
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 37 x 40 cm
The work is currently unavailable.

49. EVE TAKES FROM THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE, 1971
Oil on canvas, 32 x 29 cm

50. ESZTER II, 1971
Oil on layered cardboard, 32 x 28 cm

51. SPRING, 1971
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 44.5 x 59 cm

52. RIBBED ARTIFICIAL FLOWER II, 1971
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 21 x 50.5 cm

53. ESZTER I, 1971
Oil on paper laid down on wooden board, 33 x 29 cm

54. RIBBED ROSE GARDEN ON A BLUE BACKGROUND, 1970–71
Oil on paper, 33.5 x 71 cm

55. NÓRA, 1971
Oil on canvas, 36 x 36 cm

56. SMALL CIRCUS SCENE, 1971
Oil on canvas, 32.5 x 22.5 cm

57. KLÁRI, 1971
Oil on layered cardboard, 32.5 x 36 cm

58. SELF-PORTRAIT FLOWER, 1971
Oil on canvas, 48 x 33 cm

59. DOMED ROSE GARDEN, 1970–72
Oil on canvas, 54 x 47 cm

60. NODDING ARTIFICIAL FLOWER (GREY VERSION), 1971–72
Oil on canvas, 34 x 35 cm

61. NODDING ARTIFICIAL FLOWER (RED VERSION), 1971–72
Oil on canvas, 34 x 35 cm

62. PORTRAIT OF KLÁRI HORVÁTH I, 1971–72
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48 cm

63. PORTRAIT OF KLÁRI HORVÁTH II, 1971–72
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 61.5 x 47 cm

64. THE ROSE, 1971–72
Oil on canvas, 57 x 56.5 cm

65. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER FROM TIHANY ON A RED BACKGROUND, 1972
Oil on canvas, 38 x 74 cm

66. LILACS (SMALL SPRAY OF LILAC), 1972
Oil on wooden board, 40 x 19.5 cm

67. ROSE GARDEN WITH CLOSED EYES, 1972
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48 cm

68. BRICK-RED "WINDING" ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1970–73
Oil on wooden board, 50 x 40 cm

69. WINDING ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1970–73
Oil on canvas, 44 x 51 cm

70. DEEP GREEN ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1973
Oil on wooden board, 61 x 61 cm

71. ABANDONED CISTERN, 1973
Oil on canvas, 41.5 x 44.5 cm

72. ROSE GARDEN IN THE WIND, 1972–73
Oil on cardboard, 52.8 x 63 cm

73. RIBBED ROSE GARDEN, BLUISH, 1973–74
Oil on canvas, 40 x 65 cm

74. LILACS II, 1973
Oil on canvas, 58 x 37 cm

75. ROSE GARDEN, 1973–74
Oil on paper laid down on cardboard, 40.5 x 27 cm

76. RIBBED ROSE GARDEN (RED), 1973–74
Oil on paper, 40 x 65 cm

77. LARGE SPRAY OF LILAC, 1973–74
Oil on wooden board, 69 x 54 cm

78. DANCING ARTIFICIAL FLOWER I, 1973–74
Oil on paper, 21 x 48 cm
The work is currently unavailable.

79. ROSE GARDEN IN THE MORNING, 1974
Oil on paper, 46 x 52 cm

80. STEPPED ROSE GARDEN, 1973–74
Oil on paper laid down on wooden board, 43 x 29 cm

81. CIRCUS SCENE WITH WALRUS, 1974
Oil on wooden board, 58 x 23.5 cm

82. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH DAGGERS, 1974
Oil on wooden board, 61 x 61 cm

83. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH "HAT", 1974
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 36 x 36 cm

84. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH A PINK BACKGROUND, 1974
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 28 x 54 cm

85. CLOWN (VERSION WITH A WHITE A BACKGROUND), 1975
Oil on canvas, 53 x 49 cm

86. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH INSCRIPTION, 1974–75
Oil on canvas, 51.5 x 88 cm

87. PORTRAIT OF LILI ORSZÁG, 1975
Oil on canvas, 35 x 49.5 cm

88. THE FOREST OF PARÁD I, 1975
Oil on canvas, 45 x 38.5 cm

89. ROSE GARDEN WITH WINDOW I, 1975
Oil on canvas, 71 x 66 cm

90. THE FOREST OF PARÁD II, 1975
Oil on canvas, 45 x 43.5 cm

91. THE GREAT LUXEMBOURG GARDEN, 1975
Oil on canvas, 69 x 57 cm
The work is currently unavailable.

92. VIOLA ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1975
Oil on canvas, 57.5 x 50 cm

93. CLOWN (WITH A GREENISH BACKGROUND), 1975–76
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 48.5 x 45.5 cm

94. TREE-TRUNK AND BROOKSIDE, 1975–76
Oil on canvas, 50 x 50 cm
The work is currently unavailable and consequently cannot be published

95. ROSE GARDEN WITH A YELLOW BACKGROUND, 1975–76
Oil on canvas, 56.5 x 60 cm

96. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER FROM TIHANY, 1976
Oil on canvas, 30 x 46 cm

97. STILL-LIFE WITH TABLE, 1976
Oil, pastel on paper, 36 x 44 cm

98. THE FOREST OF PARÁD WITH TREE STUMPS, 1975–76
Oil on canvas, 59 x 55.5 cm

99. KITCHEN WINDOW IN PUSCHINO I, 1976
Oil, pastel, stove silver on paper, 56 x 36 cm

100. KITCHEN WINDOW IN PUSCHINO II, 1976
Pencil, watercolours and opaque paint on paper, 72.5 x 42.5 cm

101. MY SISTER-IN-LAW, 1977
Oil on paper, 41 x 36 cm

102. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH A CAT'S CLAW, 1976–78
Oil on aluminium plate, 39.5 x 39 cm

103. CARROTS FROM PUSCHINO, 1976
Oil, pastel on paper, 37 x 35 cm

104. EQUILIBRISTS, CIRCUS, 1977
Oil on canvas, 64 x 42 cm

105. SAD ROSE GARDEN, 1977–78
Oil on aluminium plate, 68 x 48.5 cm

106. BIG TREE TRUNK, 1977–78
Oil on wooden board, 61 x 61 cm

107. ARTFICIAL FLOWER "WITH FLYPAPER" II, 1978
Oil on wooden board, 61 x 61 cm

108. ARTFICIAL FLOWER WITH "FLYPAPER" I, 1978
Oil on canvas, 42.5 x 56 cm

109. ROSE GARDEN WITH WINDOW II, 1978
Oil on canvas, 54 x 51 cm

110. MASKS WITH ORANGES, 1978
Oil on canvas, 31 x 28 cm

111. COMPOSITION IN THREE PARTS, 1978–79
Oil on aluminium plate, 44 x 24.5 cm

112. SCREAMING GIRLS, 1978–79
Oil on canvas, 58 x 67 cm (the painting itself is oval-shaped)

113. A CHILD'S DRAWING, 1979

Oil on canvas, 42.5 x 56 cm

114. ALL SAINTS' DAY, 1979
Oil on cardboard, 34 x 26 cm

115. THE MEADOW, 1979
Oil on paper, 43 x 69 cm

116. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER ON A NAPLES YELLOW BACKGROUND, 1978-1980
Oil on paper laid down on wooden board, 45 x 46 cm

117. CLOWNS OF WARSAW, 1979
Oil on sandpaper, 47 x 30 cm

118. ROSEGRADEN WITH A TRIANGULAR WINDOW, 1979–1980
Oil on canvas, 50 x 55 cm

119. DEJECTED ANGEL, 1979
Oil on cardboard, 46 x 49.5 cm

120. DANCING ARTIFICIAL FLOWER II, 1980
Oil on layered cardboard, 23 x 49 cm

121. PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER MARGIT ANNA, 1980
Oil on canvas, 59 x 31 cm

122. JARDIN DES PLANTES, PARIS, 1980
Oil on canvas, 57.5 x 46 cm

123. LUXEMBOURG GARDEN I, 1979–1980
Oil on cardboard, 52 x 40.5 cm

124. SCARE, 1980
Oil on canvas, 59 x 43 cm

125. MASK STORE, 1980
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 71 x 50 cm

126. PENSIVE SELF-PORTRAIT, 1980
Oil, tempera on paper laid down on wooden board, 17 x 12.5 cm

127. ROSE GARDEN WITH FOUR PARTS, 1980–1981
Oil on fibreboard, 45 x 42 cm

128. MONSTER AND BOY, 1981
Oil on canvas, 55 x 66 cm

129. THE MARCH OF TRIANGLES, 1981
Oil on canvas, 84 x 75 cm

130. PICTURE WITH INSCRIPTION, 1981
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 51 x 66 cm

131. WITHCES IN PREPARATION, 1980–81
Oil on canvas, 59 x 58 cm

132. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH A GREY BACKGROUND, 1980–81
Oil on canvas, 47 x 57 cm

133. ROSE GARDEN WITH A GREEN BACKGROUND, 1981
Oil on canvas, 72 x 50 cm

134. PALE, RIBBED ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1983

Oil on paper, 35.5 x 53.5 cm

135. WOMAN DANCER, 1983
Oil, on emanel paper, 28 x 20 cm

136. MAN AND WOMAN (KIDNAP), 1982
Oil on canvas, 80 x 66 cm

137. SELF-PORTRAIT WITH A HAT, 1983
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48 cm

138. THE CARNEVAL OF DWARVES, 1984
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 49 x 51 cm

139. MAN AND WOMAN, 1983
Oil on paper, 29 x 21 cm

140. MAN READING (THE PORTRAIT OF B. E.), 1983
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 58 x 46.5 cm

141. PINK SELF-PORTRAIT, 1984
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 59 x 49 cm

142. SELF-PORTRAIT PAINTED ON AN OLD DRAWING, 1984
Oil on paper laid down on drawing board, 22 x 14 cm

143. SELF-PORTRAIT WITH A STRAWHAT, 1984
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48.5 cm

144. FENCE OF THE LUXEMBOURG GARDEN, 1979–1985
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 64 x 49 cm

145. RENAISSANCE CLOWNS, 1984
Oil on paper laid down on drawing board, 26 x 37 cm

146. THE BUTTERFLY, 1984–85
Oil on canvas, 40 x 69 cm

147. CONJURER'S TRICK, 1984–85
Oil, pastel on paper, 49 x 27 cm

148. CLOWN IN MAKE UP, 1985
Oil on paper laid down on cardboard, 52 x 32 cm

149. CLOWNS, 1985
Oil, tempera on paper, 22.5 x 25 cm

150. SELF-PORTRAIT WITH A HAT, 1985
Oil, mixed technique on paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48.5 cm

151. BIG CLOWNS (DANCE SCENE), 1985
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 74 x 35 cm

152. DOUBLE SELF-PORTRAIT, 1985
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 58 x 42 cm

Oil Paintings in Public Collections (a detailed list)

1. Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

1. **TURRETED ROSE GARDEN, 1969-1970**
Oil on cardboard, 58 x 42 cm List of oil paintings No. 31

2. **DOMED ROSE GARDEN, 1970-72**
Oil on canvas, 54 x 47 cm List of oil paintings No. 59

3. **ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH DAGGERS, 1974**
Oil on wooden board, 61 x 61 cm List of oil paintings No. 82

4. **ROSEGRADEN WITH A TRIANGULAR WINDOW, 1979-1980**

Oil on canvas, 50 x 55 cm List of oil paintings No. 118

5. **MASK STORE, 1980**
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 71 x 50 cm List of oil paintings No. 125

6. **MONSTER AND BOY, 1981**
Oil on canvas, 55 x 66 cm List of oil paintings No. 128

7. **THE MARCH OF TRIANGLES, 1981**
Oil on canvas, 84 x 75 cm List of oil paintings No. 129

8. **WITHCES IN PREPARATION, 1980-81**
Oil on canvas, 59 x 58 cm List of oil paintings No. 131

2. King St Stephen Museum of Székesfehérvár

1. **ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH FALLING LEAVES, 1969-1970**
Oil on cardboard laid down on wooden board, 48 x 58.5 cm List of oil paintings No. 29

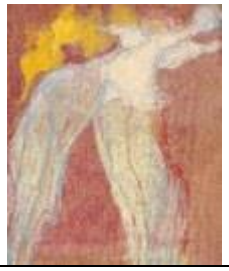
2. **ROSE GARDEN IN THE WIND, 1972-73**
Oil on cardboard, 52.8 x 63 cm List of oil paintings No. 72

Works on Paper in Public Collections (a detailed list)

1. Works on Paper at the Hungarian National Gallery

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15

16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35

36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50
51	52 	53	54	55
56	57	58	59	60

61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80

1. Gendarmes, 1939, pencil, paper, 229 x 150 mm, unsigned (inventory no.: F 63. 201)
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_01.jpg

2. Self-Portrait, 1946, black ink, pen, paper, 169 x 122 mm, unsigned (inventory no.: FK 8445)
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_02.jpg

3. Self-Portrait, 1948, chalk, paper, 318 x 297 mm, unsigned (inventory no.: F 91. 10)
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_03.jpg

4. Self-Portrait I, from Folder 35, 1948, pencil, paper, 143 x 136 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 31
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_04_album_31.jpg

5. Self-Portrait II, from Folder 35, 1948, pencil, paper, 172 x 126 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 32
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_05_album_32.jpg

6. Self-Portrait III, from Folder 35, 1948, pencil, coal, paper, 490 x 270 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 33
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_06_album_33.jpg

7. Self-Portrait IV, from Folder 35, 1948, pencil, coal, paper, 413 x 295 mm, signed lower left: *48 nyár (?)* Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003 Image 34
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_07_album_34.jpg

8. Self-Portrait V, from Folder 35, 1947, pencil, coal, paper, 348 x 277 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 35
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_08_album_35.jpg

9. Self-Portrait VI, from Folder 35, 1947, pencil, coal, paper, 470 x 340 mm, marked lower left: *1947 (ősz-tél?)* Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 36
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_09_album_36.jpg

10. Self-Portrait VII, from Folder 49, 1947, coal, paper, 365 x 280 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 37
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_10_album_37.jpg

11. Sewing Woman VII, from Folder 49, 1947, coal, paper, 345 x 390 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 27
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_11_album_27.jpg

12. Self-Portrait IX, from Folder 49, 1947, coal, paper, 480 x 355 mm, signed lower right: *47 vége (48 nyár?)* Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 39
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_12_album_39.jpg

13. Self-Portrait X, from Folder 49, 1947, coal, paper, 485 x 340 mm, signed lower right: *1947 (ősz-tél)* Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003 Image 40
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_13_album_40.jpg

14. Self-Portrait XI, from Folder 49, 1947, coal, paper, 350 x 240 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 41
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_14_album_41.jpg

15. Pensive Self-Portrait, from Folder 57, 1949, pencil, coal, paper, 570 x 455 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 42
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_15_album_42.jpg

16. Sleeping Woman in the Ghetto, from Folder 10, 1944, pencil, paper, 280 x 216 mm, signed lower right: *Ilka Gedő* Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 22
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_16_album_22.jpg

17. Reclining Figure in the Ghetto, from Folder 10, 1944, pencil, paper, 292 x 210 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 23
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/imagesMNG_Gedo_lista_17_album_23.jpg

18. Sleeping Boy in the Ghetto, from Folder 10, 1944, pencil, paper, 243 x 185 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 24
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_18_album_24.jpg

19. Self-Portrait in Pregnancy I, from Folder 51, 1947, pastel, paper, 405 x 220 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 45
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_19_album_45.jpg

20. Self-Portrait in Pregnancy II, from Folder 51, 1947, pastel, paper, 490 x 340 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 46
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_20_album_46.jpg

21. Self-Portrait in Pregnancy III, from Folder 51, 1947, pastel, paper, 368 x 225 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 47
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_21_album_47.jpg

22. Machines at the Ganz factory, from Folder 57, 1947, pastel, carton, 390 x 485 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 49
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_22_album_49.jpg

23. At the Workbench I, from Folder 57, 1947, pastel, paper, 365 x 505 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 50
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_23_album_50.jpg

24. At the Workbench II, from Folder 57, 1947, pastel, paper, 490 x 350 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 51
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_24_album_51.jpg

25. Table 8, 1949, black and brown pastel, paper, 650 x 610 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 62
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_25_album_62.jpg

26. Table with Tablecloth, 1948-49, pencil, paper, 675 x 650 mm Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, Image 63
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_26_album_63.jpg

27. Drawing No. 31 Folder No. 10, Self-Portrait in Ghetto, 1944, pencil, paper, signed lower right: „Self-Portrait in the Ghetto
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_27_M10_031.jpg

28. Drawing No. 7 from Folder No. 19, Self-Portrait, winter of 1946-1947, black ink, paper, 273 x 225 mm

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_28_M19_007.jpg

29. Drawing No. 14 from Folder No. 54, Self-Portrait, 1946, pencil, paper, 158 x 169 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_29_M54_014.jpg

30. Drawing No. 5 from Folder 19, Self-Portrait, winter of 1946-1947, black ink, paper, 273 x 225 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_30_M19_005.jpg

31. Drawing No. 91 from the Addenda folder, Sad Self-Portrait, 1947, pencil, paper, 156 x 145, mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_31_91AddendaGedo1948.jpg

32. Drawing No. 85 from Folder No 15 (Sadness), 1946-1947, black ink, paper, 145 x 88 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_32_M15_085.jpg

33. Drawing No. 5 from Folder 12, Self-Portrait, 1946-1947, black chalk, paper, 241 x 190 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_33_M12_005.jpg

34. Drawing No. 35. from Folder 45 (Self-Portrait), 1946-1947, pencil, paper, 532 x 348, mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_34_M45_030.jpg

35. Drawing No. 1 from Folder No. 19, Self-Portrait with Hat, the winter of 1946-1947, black ink, paper, 173 x 145 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_35_M19_001.jpg

36. Drawing No. 5 from Folder 38, Self-Portrait, 1947, black ink, paper, 202 x 206 mm marked lower right on the sheet of paper upon which the drawing has been stuck: „1947 tele Fillér utca" (winter 1947, Fillér utca)
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_36_M38_005.jpg

37. Drawing No. 31 of Folder 45, Self-Portrait, black chalk, 1948-1949, paper, , 490 x 326 mm

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_37_M45_031.jpg

38. Drawing No. 90 from Folder 15, Self-Portrait with Hat, 1946-1947, black ink, paper, 173 x 145 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_38_M15_090.jpg

39. Drawing No. 91 from Folder No. 15, Self-Portrait, 1946-1947, pencil, paper, 170 x 140 mm (the verso of item 38)
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_39_M15_091.jpg

40. Drawing No. 84 from Addenda, *Self-Portrait with Drawing Board*, 1948-1949, pencil on oil paper, 366 x 210 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_40_84GedoAddenda1948.jpg

41. Drawing No. 12 from Folder 45, Self-Portrait with Easel, 1948-1949, black chalk, paper, 357 x 272 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_41_M45_012.jpg

42. Drawing No. 6 from Folder 9, Sewing Woman, 1947, pencil, paper, 210 x 185 mm marked lower left: Gedő Ilka
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_42_M09_006.jpg

43. Drawing No. 28 from Folder 9, Sewing Woman 1947, pencil, paper, 171 x 125 mm marked lower left: Gedő Ilka
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_43_Gedo_M09_028.jpg

44. Drawing No. 29. from Folder No. 9, Woman Reclining on Bed Reading a Book, 1947, water colour, paper, 130 x 143 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_44_M09_029.jpg

45. Drawing No. 6 from Folder No. 54., Reader, 1946, pencil, paper, 131 x130 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_45_Gedo_M54_006_(Glasgow_keretezett_134).jpg

46. Drawing No. 18 from Folder No. 10, Budapest Ghetto, Fear, 1944, pencil, paper, 240 x 173 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_46_Gedo_M10_018.jpg

47. Drawing No. 3 from Folder No. 10, Budapest Ghetto, Elderly Couple, 1944, pencil, paper, 235 x 213 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_47_Gedo_M10_003.jpg

48. Drawing 21 from Folder 27, Reading Man (Endre Bíró), 1947, pencil, paper, 138 x 121 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_48_M27_021.jpg

49. Drawing No. 62 from the Addenda Folder, Jewish Home of the Elderly, 1942, pencil, paper, 290 x 241 mm marked lower right: „Zsidó aggok háza, 1942, tavasz" (Jewish Home of the Elderly, spring 1942
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_49_62GedoAddenda1940.jpg

50. Drawing No. 78 from the Addenda Folder, 1948, pastel, paper, 493 x 340, mm National Gallery of Hungary
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_50_78GedoAddenda1949.jpg

51. Sketch for the painting titled *The Portrait of Endre Bálint* (Nos 13 & 14 in the list of oil paintings), 1968, pastel, paper, 595 x 309 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_51_M47_002_(detail).jpg

52. Pastel Sketch for the painting titled *The Portrait of Klári Horváth* (Nos 62 & 64 in the list of oil paintings), 1968, pastel, paper, 433 x 330 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_52_M47_008.jpg

53. Pastel Sketch for the painting titled *Vera* (No. 40 in the list of oil paintings Gedő Ilka), 1968, pastel, paper, 216 x 392 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_53_M47_009.jpg

54. Colour Pattern No. 003, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 255 x 150 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_54_colourpattern_003.jpg

55. Colour Pattern No. 086, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 150 x 110 mm

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_55_colourpattern_086.jpg

56. Colour Pattern No. 089, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 110 x 190 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_56_colourpattern_089.jpg

57. Colour Pattern No. 123, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, canvas, 90 x 240 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_57_colourpattern_123b.jpg

58. Colour Pattern No. 132, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 145 x 285 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_58_colourpattern_132.jpg

59. Colour Pattern No. 140¸1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 140 x 285 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_59_colourpattern_140.jpg

60. Colour Pattern No. 235¸1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 215 x 90 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_60_colourpattern_235.jpg

61. Colour Pattern No. 237¸1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 155 x 140 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_61_colourpattern_237.jpg

62. Colour Pattern No. 241, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 165 x 100 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_63_colourpattern_243.jpg

63. Colour Pattern No. 243¸1970-1985, oil, black ink, pencil, paper, 90 x 115 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_63_colourpattern_243.jpg

64. Colour Pattern No. 249, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 165 x 113 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_64_colourpattern_249.jpg

65. Colour Pattern No. 258, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 160 x 133 mm

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_65_colourpattern_258.jpg

66. Colour Pattern No. 259¸1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 250 x 150 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_66_colourpattern_259.jpg

67. Colour Pattern No. 263¸1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 190 x 155 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_67_colourpattern_263.jpg

68. Colour Pattern No. 273, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 165 x 235 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_68_colourpattern_273.jpg

69. Colour Pattern No. 274, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 150 x 112 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_69_colourpattern_274.jpg

70. Colour Pattern No. 276¸1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 145 x 120 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_70_colourpattern_276.jpg

71. Colour Pattern No. 284¸1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 195 x 150 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_71_colourpattern_284.jpg

72. Colour Pattern No. 286, 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 215 x 110 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_72_colourpattern_286.jpg

73. Colour Pattern No. No. 296¸1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 160 x 110 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_73_colourpattern_296.jpg

74. Colour Pattern No. No. 307¸ 1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 150 x 193 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_74_colourpattern_307.jpg

75. Colour Pattern No. No. 313¸1970-1985, oil, black ink, paper, 160 x 130 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_75_colourpattern_313.jpg

76. Self-Portrait (Drawing 1 of Folder 12), 1948, pencil, paper, 125 x 108 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/index.php-pagenum=2.htm

77. Self-Portrait (Drawing 17 of Folder 20), 1945-1946, pen, paper, 289 x 203 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_77_M20_017.jpg

78. Portrait of Endre Bíró (Drawing 13 of Folder 22), 1947, black chalk, paper, 302 x 210 mm, signed lower right: Gedő Ilka, 1947
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_78_M22_013.jpg

79. Drawing 9 of Folder 56, 1961, pastel, paper, 397 x 304 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_79_M56_009.jpg

80. Drawing 11 of Folder 56, 1961, pastel, paper, 449 x 369 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedo_lista_80_M56_011.jpg

2. King St. Stephen's Museum, Székesfehérvár, Hungary

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8

1. Ilka Gedő: *Drawing 6 from Folder 22*, *Self-portraits from Fillér utca*, 1947, pencil on paper, 281 x 188 mm, unsigned, the artist's stamp is on the passet-partout
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/22/images/Gedo_M22_006.jpg

2. Ilka Gedő: *Drawing 18 from Folder 22, Self-portraits from Fillér utca,* 1947, black chalk, paper, 372 x 261 mm, unsigned, the artist's stamp is on the passet-partout
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/22/images/Gedo_M22_018.jpg

3. Ilka Gedő: *Drawing 22 from Folder 22, Self-portraits from Fillér utca,* 1947, black chalk, paper, 336 x 238 mm, signed lower right: "Gedő Ilka", the artist's stamp is on the passet-partout
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/22/images/Gedo_M22_022.jpg

4. Ilka Gedő: *Drawing 29 from Folder 22 , Self-portraits from Fillér utca,* 1947, black, paper, 273 x 198 mm, unsigned, the artist's stamp is on the passet-partout
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/22/images/Gedo_M22_029.jpg

5. Ilka Gedő: *Drawing 11 from Folder 23, Self-portraits from Fillér utca,* 1947, black chalk, paper, 315 x 206 mm, unsigned, the artist's stamp is on the passet-partout
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/23/images/Gedo_M23_011.jpg

6. Ilka Gedő: *Drawing 9, from folder 42, the Painter's Mother,* 1947, black chalk, paper, 236 x 182 mm, unsigned, the artist's stamp is on the passet-partout, this drawing was shown at the exhibition titled *Drawings of Ilka Gedő* at the Gallery of Szombathely from 3 February to 5 March, 1989, reproduced on page 7 of the catalogue
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/42/images/Gedo_M42_009.jpg

7. Ilka Gedő: *Drawing 11 from folder 42 , Bíró Endre portréja,* 1947, tus, papír, 160 x 135 mm, unsigned, the artist's stamp is on the passet-partout, this drawing was shown at the exhibition titled *Drawings of Ilka Gedő* at the Gallery of Szombathely from 3 February to 5 March, 1989, reproduced on page 10 of the catalogue
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/42/images/Gedo_M42_011.jpg

8. Ilka Gedő: *Drawing 16 from folder 42, Fillér utcai önarcképek,* 1947, tus, papír, 270 x 198 mm, unsigned, the artist's stamp is on the passet-partout, this drawing was shown at the 1980 exhibition of the King St Stephen Museum of the town Székesfehérvár
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/42/images/Gedo_M42_016.jpg

A detail of the drawing can be viewed here:
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/42/images/Gedo_M42_016_(detail).jpg

3. Works on Paper at the Department of Prints and Drawings of the British Museum

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15

1. Self-Portrait, 1947, black ink, paper, 280 x 216 mm, signed lower left: *Gedő Ilka*
2. Self-Portrait, 1947, black ink, paper, 280 x 256 mm, unsigned
3. Self-Portrait, 1947, pencil, paper, 220 x 231 mm, signed lower right: *Gedő Ilka*
4. Self-Portrait, 1947, black ink, paper, 300 x 210 mm, signed lower right: *Gedő Ilka*
5. Self-Portrait V, 1947, pencil, paper, 295 x 211 mm, signed lower right: *Gedő Ilka*
6. Table # 6, 1949, black ink, paper, 324 x 326 mm, unsigned*;* on verso the fully developed drawing of the table in black ink and pencil, signed and dated in graphite at lower right: *„Gedő Ilka/1949*" Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, Image 64
7. Four workers around a table, 1947–48, black chalk, pencil, paper, 303 x 427 mm, signed lower right: *Ganz gyár /1947,* Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, Image 58
8. Woman in factory with windows, grey wall in right foreground, 1947–48, pastel with gold and silver paint, paper, 495 x 344 mm, unsigned Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, Image 57

9. Woman with red top seated at a table, 1948, pastel, paper, 358 x 507 mm, signed and dated in graphite at lower left: *Gedő I/48* Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, Image 54
10. Woman at worktable, 1947-48, pastel, paper, 351 x 419 mm, unsigned Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, Image 59
11. Two figures bending over orange table, vertical lines on rear wall, 1947–48, pastel, paper, 325 x 506 mm, unsigned Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, Image 52
12. Two figures bending over orange table, vertical lines on rear wall, 1947-48, pastel, carton, 317 x 404 mm, unsigned, Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, Image 53
13. Woman in factory with windows, red wall at right foreground, 1947-48, pastel with gold and silver paint, paper, 493 x 347 mm, unsigned István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, Image 56
14. Woman at worktable with objects, 1947-48, pastel, paper, 351 x 530 mm unsigned Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, Image 55
15. Table, 1949, black ink, paper, 340 x 314 mm, unsigned Reproduced: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The Art of Ilka Gedő, Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, Image 65

4. Works on Paper at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem

1	2	3
4	5	6

1. Self-Portrait of Fillér utca, 1949, pastel, paper, 415 x 295 mm, unsigned
2. Nude Self-Portrait, 1947, pencil, paper, 285 x 195 mm, unsigned
3. Self-Portrait, 1948, pastel, pencil, paper, 349 x 246 mm, signed lower right: *1948 nyár? (summer of 1948?)*
4. My Mother, 1945–46, China ink, paper, 160 x 198 mm, unsigned
5. Self-Portrait, 1948, pencil, paper, 285 x 207 mm, unsigned
6. Reading Woman, 1945, pencil, paper, 220 x 182 mm, signed lower left: *Ilka Gedő*

5. Works on Paper at the Hungarian Jewish Museum

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12

In 1992 the artist's sons donated 12 drawings of Ilka Gedő to the Hungarian Jewish Museum that were made in 1944 in the Budapest Ghetto (inventory nos.: 1-12/1992). Ilka Gedő donated one of her Ghetto drawings to the Museum in 1952, but this drawing (inventory no. 52/1950) was unavailable at the time the photos were made.

1. Drawing from the Budapest Ghetto, 1944, charcoal, paper, 155 x 160 mm
2. Drawing from the Budapest Ghetto, 1944, charcoal, paper, 167 x 169 mm
3. Drawing from the Budapest Ghetto, 1944, pencil, charcoal, paper, 301 x 207 mm
4. Drawing from the Budapest Ghetto, 1944, pencil, paper, 186 x 200 mm
5. Sketch from the Budapest Ghetto, 1944, pencil, paper, 76 x 193 mm
6. Drawing from the Budapest Ghetto, 1944, pencil, paper, 230 x 134 mm
7. Drawing from the Budapest Ghetto, 1944, charcoal, paper, 227 x 134 mm
8. Drawing from the Budapest Ghetto, 1944, charcoal, paper, 137 x 100 mm, signed lower right: Ilka Gedő
9. Drawing from the Budapest Ghetto, 1944, charcoal, paper, 164 x 126 mm
10. Self-Portrait in the Ghetto,, 1944, charcoal, paper, 161 x 157 mm, marked lower left: Self-Portrait in the Ghetto
11. Drawing from the Budapest Ghetto, 1944, pencil, charcoal, paper, 177 x 215 mm
12. Sketch from the Budapest Ghetto, 1944, pencil, paper, 205 x 235 mm

6. Ilka Gedő's Works on Paper at Berlin Kupferstichkabinett

1	2	3	4
5	5	7	8
9			

1.Self-Portrait With Drawing Board, Winter 1946-1947, black ink , paper, 273 x 225 mm, taken from No. 19 in Folder 19 verso estate mark, Inventory No. & Catalogue No.: 02-2011 G & KdZ:30542

2. Ganz Factory, 1948, pencil, paper, 305 x 327 mm, taken from No. 17 in Folder 44;, verso estate mark, Inventory No. & Catalogue No.: 03-2011 G & KdZ:30543

3. Ganz Factory, 1948, pastel, paper, 370 x 402 mm, taken from No. 8 in Folder 44, Inventory No. & Catalogue No.: 04-2011 G & KdZ:30544

4. Verso of item 3, Estate mark, on the verso another patel drawing Nr. 8 in Folder 44

5. Ganz Factory, 1948, pen, paper, 228 x 305 mm, taken from No. 1 in Folder 57, verso estate mark, Inventory No. & Catalogue No.: 05-2011 G & KdZ:30545

6. Ganz Factory, 1948, pencil, paper, 309 x 217 mm, taken from No. 6 in Folder 57, verso estate mark, Inventory No. & Catalogue No.: 06-2011 G & KdZ:30546

7. Ganz Factory, 1948, pencil, paper, 369 x 324 mm, taken from No. 4 in Folder 57, verso estate mark, Inventory No. & Catalogue No.: 07-2011 G & KdZ:30547

8. Ilka Gedő: Ganz Factory, 1948, pastel, paper 381 x 340 mm, taken from No. 18 in Folder 44¸ verso estate mark. Inventory No. & Catalogue No.: 08-2011 G & KdZ:30548

9. Ilka Gedő: Ganz Factory, 1948, pencil, paper, 428 x 304 mm, taken from No. 10 in Folder 57¸ verso estate mark
Inventory No. & Catalogue No.: 02-2011 G & KdZ:30549

7. Works on Paper at the Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	

1. Self-Portrait, 1946, pencil, paper, 200 x 190 mm, unsigned
2. Nude Self-Portrait, 1946, pencil, paper, 295 x 210 mm, unsigned
3. Pensive Self-Portrait, 1946, pencil, paper, 215 x 130 mm, signed lower left: *Gedő Ilka*
4. Self-Portrait, 1947 pencil, paper, 220 x 160 mm, signed lower right: *Gedő Ilka*
5. Self-Portrait, black ink, paper, 160 x 100 mm, signed upper left: *Gedő Ilka*
6. Reading Woman, pencil, paper, 210 x 200 mm, signed lower left: *Gedő Ilka*
7. Sorrow, pencil, paper, 275 x 205 mm, unsigned
8. Portrait of Endre, 1947, black ink, paper, 130 x 130, signed upper right: *Gedő Ilka*
9. Reading Man, black ink, paper, 1947, 220 x 205 mm, signed lower right: *Gedő Ilka*
10. Ganz Factory, 1948, pastel, paper, 365 x 250 mm, signed lower right: *Gedő Ilka, 1948*
11. Ganz Factory, 1948, pastel, paper, 365 x 250 mm, verso of item 10

8. The Jewish Museum, New York

1	2	3

1. Untitled (Seated Woman With Star), 1944, graphite on paper 22 x 20 cm
2. Untitled (Reading Figure), 1944, ink and wash on paper, 27 x 25 cm
3. Untitled (Old Woman), 1944, pencil, paper, 30 x 12 cm

9. Works on Paper at the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem

2984.jpg

2985_032.jpg

3111_001.jpg

3243_001.jpg

3243_002.jpg

3243_003.jpg

3243_004.jpg

3243_005.jpg

3243_006.jpg

3243_007.jpg

3243_008.jpg

3243_009.jpg

3243_10.jpg

3243_011.jpg

3243_012.jpg

3243_013.jpg

3243_014.jpg

3243_015.jpg

3243_016.jpg

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3243_100.jpg

3243_101.jpg

3243_102a.jpg

3243_102b.jpg

3243_103a.jpg

3243_103b.jpg

3243_104.jpg

3243_105.jpg

3243_106_a.jpg

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3243_110.jpg

3243_111.jpg

3243_112.jpg

3243_113.jpg

3243_114n.jpg

3243_115n.jpg

3243_116n.jpg

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3243_134n.jpg

3243_135n.jpg

3243_136n.jpg

3243_137n.jpg

3243_138n.jpg

3243_139n.jpg

2984
Ilka Gedő
Self Portrait, 1947
Chalk on paper
50X35.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Ilka Gedő's Estate

2985
Ilka Gedő
Girl Sitting on an Armchair, 1944
Pencil on paper,
30.8x21.7 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Mr. Janos Gat, New York

3111
Ilka Gedő
Fatigue, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
10.4X8.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

1/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Man Leaning on his Elbow, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper,
24.2x33 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem

2/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Boy and Girl's Head, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.1x24.1 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

3/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Talk, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2x24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

4/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Sitting Boy, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33 x24.1 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

5/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sitting Boy Wearing Glasses, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33x24.1 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem

41/3243
Ilka Gedő
Scene from the Yard, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

42/3243
Ilka Gedő
Boy with Jewish Badge, 1944
Pencil on paper, 33.1X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

3243/43a
Ilka Gedő
At the Table, 1944
Pencil on paper
24.2X33cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

3243/43b
Ilka Gedő
Boy Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

3243/44
Ilka Gedő
Boy Sleeping, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper, 24.2X33.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

3243/45
Ilka Gedő
Two Pigtailed Girls, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

46/3243
Ilka Gedő
The Card Players II, 1944
Pencil on paper
25.1X20.4 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Daniel and Ralph Elyashar, New York

47/3243
Ilka Gedő
Cover of the Sketchbook, 1944
Pencil and ink on cardboard
24.2X35.5cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

48/3243
Ilka Gedő

81/3243
Ilka Gedő
Portrait of a Sitting Woman, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.4X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

82/3243
Ilka Gedő
At the Sickbed, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.5X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

83/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sleeping Man, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.4X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

84/3243
Ilka Gedő
People Sitting and Talking, 1944
Pencil on paper
12.1X9.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

85/3243
Ilka Gedő
Scene from the Balcony, 1944
Pencil on paper
34.1X23.6 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

86/3243
Ilka Gedő
Man Reading a Newspaper on the Balcony, 1944
Pencil on paper
24.4X21.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

87/3243
Ilka Gedő
Girl Lying on a Pillow, 1944
Pencil on paper
29.6X20.8 cm
Collection of the Yad

118
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Two Women, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.5X33.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

119/3243
Ilka Gedő
Card Player, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Herman Turdorf, New York

120/3243
Ilka Gedő
Young Boy, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Daniel and Ralph Elyashar, New York

121/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

122/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Woman Sewing, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.5X33.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

123/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Women, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

124/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketches, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper

Art Museum
6/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.4x33.2 cm
7/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: In the Room, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24x33 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
8/3243
Ilka Gedő
Boy Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33x24 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
9/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sitting Girl, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33x24 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

10/3243
Ilka Gedő
Young Boy II, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33x24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Herman Turdorf, New York
11/3243
Ilka Gedő
Boy Reclining on Pillow, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.1x33 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

12/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Sleeping Girl, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33x24.1 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

13/3243
Ilka Gedő
Boy Lying, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2x24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

14/3243
Ilka Gedő
Boy Sitting near the Balustrade, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2x24.2 cm

Cover of the Sketchbook, 1944
Pencil and ink on cardboard, 24.1X35.5cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

49/3243
Ilka Gedő
Cover of the Sketchbook, 1944
Ink on cardboard, 24.3X34.7 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

50/3243
Ilka Gedő
Friday Evening, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

51/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman and Man beyond the Window, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

52/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Woman Sleeping, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

53/3243
Ilka Gedő
Old Woman from Backside, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

54/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Sewing Woman, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

55/3243
Ilka Gedő
Man Reading a Newspaper, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

56/3243
Ilka Gedő
Married Couple with a Cup, 1944
Pencil on paper

Vashem Art Museum

88/3243
Ilka Gedő
Old Woman, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Herman Turdorf, New York

89/3243
Ilka Gedő
Preparing Food, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

90/3243
Ilka Gedő
Boy Wearing a Coat Leaning on his Elbows, 1944
Pencil on paper
13.8X21.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

91/3243
Ilka Gedő
Two Men, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

92/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman having a Rest in an Armchair, 1944
Pencil on paper
17.1X21.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

93/3243
Ilka Gedő
Old Man Sitting on the Chair, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

94/3243
Ilka Gedő
Reading Girl, 1944
Pencil on paper
19.8X20 cm

33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

125/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Around the Table, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.5X33.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

126/3243
Ilka Gedő
Playing Cards on the Balcony, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

127/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketches, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

128/3243
Ilka Gedő
Two Men, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

129/3243
Ilka Gedő
Melancholic Girl, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

130/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Girl, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

131/3243
Ilka Gedő
Women at the Table, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

15/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sitting Boy at the Table, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2x24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

16/3243
Ilka Gedő
Young Boy I, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2x24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Herman Turdorf, New York

17/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sitting Boy, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

18/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Three Children around a Table, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.3X33.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

19/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman Sitting on an Armchair, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

20/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Children, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.2X33.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

21/3243
Ilka Gedő
Pensive Girl, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

22/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Sitting Woman, 1944-1945
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

57/3243
Ilka Gedő
Talk, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

58/3243
Ilka Gedő
Portraits of an Old Woman and of a Young Girl, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

59/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman Sitting at the Window, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

60/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sitting Men and a Woman, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

61/3243
Ilka Gedő
Young Girl, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Daniel and Ralph Elyashar, New York

62/3243
Ilka Gedő
Portrait of a Girl with Bow Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

63/3243
Ilka Gedő
Portrait of a Girl with Bow, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

64/3243
Ilka Gedő
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

95/3243
Ilka Gedő
Girl in a Colored dress having a Rest, 1944
Pencil on paper
30.7X21.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

96/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sitting Girl, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.4X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

3243/97a
Ilka Gedő
Card Players III, 1944
Pencil on paper
12.1X18.9 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

3243/97b
Ilka Gedő
Girl Wearing Glasses, 1944
Pencil on paper
16X21.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

3243/98
Ilka Gedő
Man Leaning on his Elbows, 1944
Pencil on paper
28.6X20.7 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

99/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman Reading, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.1X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

100/3243
Ilka Gedő

132/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman Sewing II, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

133/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman Sewing III, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Daniel and Ralph Elyashar, New York

134/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman at the Table, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

135/3243
Ilka Gedő
Old Lady Sitting on Couch, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Daniel and Ralph Elyashar, New York

136/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Sewing Woman Using a Sewing Machine, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

137/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Woman Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

138/3243
Ilka Gedő

Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

23/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Men, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

24/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Boy Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

25/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Conversation, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.2 X 33.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

26/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Sitting Woman, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

27/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: A Man and a Girl, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

28/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Different Figures, 1944-1945
Ink on paper
24.2X33.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

/324329
Ilka Gedő
Boy Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

30/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Girl, 1944-1945

Sketch: Portrait of a Girl, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.4X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

65/3243
Ilka Gedő
Boy wearing Glasses, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.4X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

66/3243
Ilka Gedő
Girl in Bed Leaning on her Elbows, 1944
Pencil on paper
16X21.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

67/3243
Ilka Gedő
Portrait of a Girl, 1944
Pencil on paper
14.6X21.7 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

68/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sewing Woman, 1944
Pencil on paper
29.6X18 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

69/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sleeping Man, 1944
Pencil on paper
10.3X16.9 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

70/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman Sewing next to a Table, 1944
Pencil on paper
30.4X21 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

71/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman Sewing a White Dress, 1944
Pencil on paper
16.3X10.9 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

72/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sadness, 1944
Pencil on paper

Young Girl I, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.4X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Herman Turdorf, New York

101/3243
Ilka Gedő
Young Girl II, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper, cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Herman Turdorf, New York

3243/102a
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Couple Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

3243/102b
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Boy, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

3243/103a
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Different Figures, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.3X33.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

3243/103b
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Different Figures, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.3X33.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

104/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Woman, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.2X33.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

Sewing Woman IV, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

139/3243
Ilka Gedő
Reading Newspaper, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

140/3243
Ilka Gedő
Two Women, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

Pencil on paper
33.3X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

31/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Girl Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

32/3243
Ilka Gedő
Young Girl Sitting on an Armchair, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.5X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

33/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Boy Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

34/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Woman Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

35/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketch: Girl, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

36/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Resting Woman, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

37/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Woman, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper, 33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

38/3243
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Different Figures, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.2X33.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem

30.6X20.7 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

73/3243
Ilka Gedő
In the Balcony, 1944
Pencil on paper
30X19.1 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

74/3243
Ilka Gedő
Self-portrait in the Ghetto, 1944
Pencil on paper
22.5X21.5 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

75/3243
Ilka Gedő
Men Leaning on their Elbows, 1944
Pencil on paper
31.1X23.7 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

76/3243
Ilka Gedő
Married Couple Reading a Paper, 1944
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

77/3243
Ilka Gedő
Double Portrait of an Old Woman, 1944
Pencil on paper
29.8X19.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

3243/78a
Ilka Gedő
Knitting Woman, 1944
Pencil on paper
22.1X15.6 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

3243/78b
Ilka Gedő
Sketches: Heads, 1944
Pencil on paper
22.1X15.6 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

79/3243
Ilka Gedő
Reading Man, Drinking Woman, 1944

105/3243
Ilka Gedő
Boy Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

106/3243
Ilka Gedő
Portrait of a Boy, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.3 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

107/3243
Ilka Gedő
Boy Standing, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

108/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman Sitting at the Table, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.3X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

109/3243

Ilka Gedő
Girl Sitting, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
33.2X24.2 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

110/3243
Ilka Gedő
Couple Sitting near the Table, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.2X33.1 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum
Gift of Dávid Bíró, Budapest

111/3243
Ilka Gedő
Woman Eating, 1944-1945
Pencil on paper
24.4X33.1 cm
Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum

112/3243
Ilka Gedő

Art Museum 39/3243 Ilka Gedő Girl Sitting, 1944-1945 Pencil on paper 33.2X24.2 cm Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum 40/3243 Ilka Gedő Sketch: A Woman Sleeping, 1944-1945 Pencil on paper 33.1X24.2 cm Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum	Pencil on paper 33.5X24.2 cm Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum 80/3243 Ilka Gedő Sewing Women, 1944 Pencil on paper 33.4X24.3 cm Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum 80/3243 Ilka Gedő Sewing Women, 1944 Pencil on paper 33.4X24.3 cm Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum	Sketches, 1944-1945 Pencil on paper 24.4X33.1 cm Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum 113/3243 Ilka Gedő Sketches: Couple, 1944-1945 Pencil on paper, 33X24.2 cm Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum 114/3243 Ilka Gedő Sketches: Woman Sitting at the Table,1944-1945 Pencil on paper, 33.3X24.5 cm Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum 115/3243 Ilka Gedő The Card Players I, 1944-1945 Pencil on paper 33.3X24.5 cm Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum Gift of Daniel and Ralph Elyashar, New York 116/3243 Ilka Gedő Sketch: the Card Players, 1944-1945 Pencil on paper 33.3X24.5 cm Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum 117/3243 Ilka Gedő Sketch: Girl, 1944 Pencil on paper 33.3X24.5 cm Collection of the Yad Vashem Art Museum	

10. Graphic Arts Collection of the Albertina

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	12

1. Ganz Factory Drawing No. 1 from Folder No. 44, 1947-48¸ pastel, pencil, silver cover paint, paper, 251 x 349 mm, seal on the verso: “The estate of Ilka Gedő”
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46658
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedő_M44_001.jpg

2. Ganz Factory Drawing No. 5 from Folder No. 44¸ 1947-48, pastel, paper, 356 x 518 mm, seal on the verso: “The estate of Ilka Gedő”
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46659

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedő_M44_005.jpg

Exhibited: Memorial retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Hungary (18 November 2004 – 31 March 2005). Catalogue, works on paper, exhibition item No. 88.

3. Ganz Factory Drawing No. 6 from Folder No. 44¸ 1947-48, pastel, thick carton, 351 x 493 mm, verso: Self-Portrait Drawing by Ilka Gedő & seal: "The estate of Ilka Gedő"
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46660
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedő_M44_006.jpg

Exhibited: Memorial retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Hungary (18 November 2004 – 31 March 2005). Catalogue, works on paper, exhibition item No. 89.

Ilka Gedő: Self-Portrait, verso of Ganz Factory Drawing No. 6 from Folder No. 44, pastel, thick carton, 493 x 351 mm,
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedő_M44_007.jpg

4. Ganz Factory Drawing No. 15 from Folder No. 44¸ 1947-48, pastel, thick carton, 330 x 422 mm, seal on the verso: "The estate of Ilka Gedő"
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46661
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedő_M44_015.jpg

5. Self-Portrait No. 4 from Folder No. 51, 1947-48, pastel on paper, 345 x 257 mm, seal on the verso: "The estate of Ilka Gedő"
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46662
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/51/images/Gedő_M51_004.jpg

Exhibited: Memorial retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Hungary (18 November 2004 – 31 March 2005). Catalogue, works on paper, exhibition item No. 52.

6. Self-Portrait No. 5 from Folder No. 5¸ 1947, pastel on paper, 359 x 255 mm, seal on the verso: "The estate of Ilka Gedő"
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46663
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/51/images/Gedő_M51_005.jpg

7. Self-Portrait No. 11 from Folder No. 51, 1947, pastel on paper, 350 x 258 mm, seal on the verso: "The estate of Ilka Gedő"
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46664
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/51/images/Gedő_M51_011.jpg

Exhibited: Memorial retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Hungary (18 November 2004 – 31 March 2005). Catalogue, works on paper, exhibition item No. 57.

8. Self-Portrait No. 12 from Folder No. 51¸ 1947, pastel on paper, 355 x 255 mm, seal on the verso: "The estate of Ilka Gedő"
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46665
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/51/images/Gedő_M51_012.jpg

Exhibited: Memorial retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Hungary (18 November 2004 – 31 March 2005). Catalogue, works on paper, exhibition item No. 58.

9. Drawing No. 37 from Folder No. 55¸ 1947-48, pencil, paper, 370 x 330 mm, seal on the verso: "The estate of Ilka Gedő"
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46666
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/55/images/Gedő_M55_037.jpg

10. Drawing No. 15 from Folder No. 55¸ 1947-48, pastel, coal, carton paper, 499 x 349 mm, seal on the verso: "The estate of Ilka Gedő"
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46667
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/55/images/Gedő_M55_015.jpg

11. Drawing No. 4 from Folder No. 55, 1947-48, pencil, tempera, paper, 310 x 365 mm, seal on the verso: "The estate of Ilka Gedő"
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46668
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/55/images/Gedő_M55_004.jpg

12. Drawing No. 10 from Folder No. 55¸ 1947-48, pencil, paper, 212 x 291 mm, seal on the verso: "The estate of Ilka Gedő"
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46669
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/55/images/Gedő_M55_010.jpg

11. Ilka Gedő's Works on Paper at the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH)

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10

1. Drawing 18 Folder 23 (Self-Portrait), 1947, pencil, paper, 204 x 291 mm, "summer 47"
Inv. no.: TR1207-2015
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/23/images/Gedő_M23_018.jpg

2. Drawing 3 of Folder 54 (Self-Portrait), 1947, coal, paper, 201 x 152 mm
Inv. no.: TR1208-2015
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/54/images/Gedő_M54_003.jpg

3. Drawing 27 Folder 45 (Self-Portrait), 1947, coal, pencil, 356 x 229 mm
Inv. no.: TR1209-2015
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/45/images/Gedő_M45_027.jpg

4. Drawing 13 Folder 45 (Self-Portrait), 1948, coal, paper, 349 x 257, marked lower right: "spring of 1947"
Inv. no.: TR1210-2015
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/45/images/Gedő_M45_013.jpg

5. Drawing 09 Folder 22 (Self-Portrait), 1948, pen, paper, 290 x 280 mm
Inv. no.: TR1211-2015
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/22/images/Gedő_M22_009.jpg

6. Drawing 28 Folder 45 (Self-Portrait with Board), 1949, coal, paper,393 x 286 mm
Inv. no.: TR1212-2015
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/45/images/Gedő_M45_028.jpg

7. Drawing 19 of Folder 42 (Self-Portrait), 1949, pencil, paper, 288 x 305 mm
Inv. no.: TR13-2015
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/42/images/Gedő_M42_019.jpg

8. Drawing 13 Folder 54 (Self-Portrait), 1948-1949, pastel, paper, 223 x 146 mm
Inv. no.: TR1214-2015
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/54/images/Gedő_M54_013.jpg

9- Drawing 14 Folder 53 (Budapest Ghetto Series, 1944), 1944, pencil, paper, 233 x 182 mm
Inv. no.: TR616-2012
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/53/images/Gedő_M53_014.jpg

10. Drawing 82 Folder 53 (Budapest Ghetto Series, 1944), 1944, pencil, paper, 205 x 144 mm
Inv. no.: TR617-2012
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/53/images/Gedő_M53_082.jpg

12. Works on Paper at Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York State

1	2	3.

1. Budapest Ghetto Series, Drawing 48 in Folder 53, 1944, pencil, paper, 151 x 151 mm, unsigned

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/53/images/Gedő_M53_48.jpg

2. Budapest Ghetto Series, Drawing 46 in Folder 53, 1944, pencil, paper, 245 x 170 mm, unsigned

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/53/images/Gedő_M53_046.jpg

3. Budapest Ghetto Series, Drawing 26 in Folder 53, 1944, pencil, paper, 220 x 175, unsigned

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/53/images/Gedő_M53_026.jpg

13. Works on Paper at the Metropolitan Museum

1	2	3

1. Untitled (From the Budapest Ghetto Series), 1944, pencil on paper, 28 x 22 cm
Accession number: 215.481.1
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/53/images/Gedo_M53_023.jpg

2. Untitled (From the Budapest Ghetto Series), 1944, pencil on paper, 28 x 22 cm
Accession number: 215.481.2

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/53/images/Gedő_M53_079.jpg

3. Untitled (From the Budapest Ghetto Series), 1944, pencil on paper, 28 x 22 cm
Accession number: 215.481.3

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/53/images/Gedő_M53_023.jpg

14. Works on Paper in the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany

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21

1. Drawing 1 of Folder 22, (Self-Portrait with Drawing Board), 1947, coal, paper, 299 x 209 mm

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/22/images/Gedő_M22_001.jpg

2. Drawing 10 of Folder22, (Self-Portrait), 1947, pen, paper, 286 x 146 mm

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/22/images/Gedő_M22_010.jpg

3. Drawing 34 of Folder 22, (Self-Portrait), 1947, coal, paper, 358 x 184 mm

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/22/images/Gedő_M22_034.jpg

4. Drawing16 Folder 23, (Self-Portrait), 1947, coal, paper, 290 x 205, marked lower left: “1947 őszének végén?” (at the end of the autumn of 1947?)

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/23/images/Gedő_M23_016.jpg

5. Drawing 21 of Folder23, (Self-Portrait), 1947, pencil, coal, paper, 269 x 175 mm

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/23/images/Gedő_M23_021.jpg

6. Drawing 22 of Folder 23 , (Self-Portrait), 1947, pencil, paper, 288 x 205 mm

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/23/images/Gedő_M23_022.jpg

7. Drawing 25 of Folder23, (Self-Portrait with Baby), 1947, cerua, paper, 291 x 210 mm

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/23/images/Gedő_M23_025.jpg

8. Drawing 27 of Folder 23, (Self-Portrait), 1947, pencil, paper, 344 x 242 mm

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/23/images/Gedő_M23_027.jpg

9. Drawing 28 of Folder 23 (Self-Portrait), 1947, coal, paper, 343 x 241 mm

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/23/images/Gedő_M23_028.jpg

10. Drawing 30 of Folder 23, (Self-Portrait), 1947, coal, paper, 290 x 209 mm

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/23/images/Gedő_M23_030.jpg

11. Drawing 3 of Folder 45, (Self-Portrait), 1947, coal, paper, 431 x 340 mm, marked lower left: "1947 ősze" (the autumn of 1947)

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/45/images/Gedő_M45_003.jpg

12. Drawing 7 of Folder 45, (Self-Portrait), 1949, coal, paper, 411 x 250 mm

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/45/images/Gedő_M45_007.jpg

13. Drawing 21 of Folder 45, (Self-Portrait), 1949, coal, paper, 473 x 349 mm, marked lower right: *"1947 tavasz"* (spring of 1947)

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/45/images/Gedő_M45_021.jpg

14. Drawing 26 of Folder 45, (Self-Portrait), 1947, pencil, paper, 393 x 286 mm, marked lower left: "*Gedő Ilka, 1948*"

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/45/images/Gedő_M45_026.jpg

15. Drawing 30 of Folder 45, (Self-Portrait), 1947, coal, paper, 496 x 342 mm, marked lower left: "*1947 ősze vagy tele* (?)" (the autumn or spring of 1947)

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/45/images/Gedő_M45_030.jpg

16. Drawing 4 of Folder 49, (Self-Portrait), 1948, coal, paper, 490 x 341 mm

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/49/images/Gedő_M49_004.jpg

17. Drawing 4 of Folder 58, (Self-Portrait),1947, coal, paper, 502 x 350 mm, marked lower right: "*1947 ősze vagy tele*"

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/58/images/Gedő_M58_003.jpg

18. Drawing 12 of Folder, 37 (Self-Portrait), 1947, pencil, paper, 150 x 163 mm, marked lower right: "*1939*"

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_012.jpg

19. Drawing 13 of Folder 37, (Self-Portrait), 1939, pencil, paper, 338 x 209 mm, marked lower right: "*1939*"

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_013.jpg

20. Drawing 37. of Folder 41, (Self-Portrait), 1939, pencil, paper, 338 x 285 mm

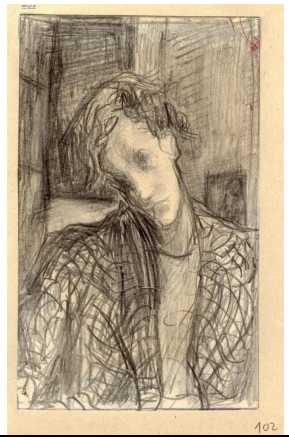
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_041.jpg

21. 65. Drawing Addenda Folder, (Self-Portrait), 1944, pencil, paper, 238 x 205 mm, marked lower right: "1944 őszén" (autumn of 1944)

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/00/images/65GedőAddenda1944.jp

15. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Department of Drawings and Prints

1



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1 Wistful Self-Portrait (Drawing No. 102 in Folder No. 15), 1946-1947 Pencil, paper, 156 x 97 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/15/images/Gedo_M15_102.jpg

2. Self-Portrait, 1946 Pencil (Drawing No. 14 in Folder No. 35), paper, 148 x 121 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/35/images/Gedo_M35_014.jpg

3. Self-Portrait (Drawing No. 13 in Folder No. 52), 1947 Charcoal, paper, 427 x 292 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/52/images/Gedo_M52_013.jpg

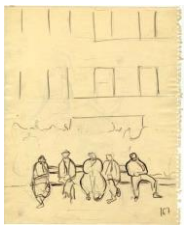
4. Ganz Factory (Drawing No. 10 in Folder No. 44), 1949 Pastel, paper, 307 x 424 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedo_M44_010.jpg

5. Ganz Factory (Drawing No. 12 in Folder No. 44), 1949 Pastel, paper, 462 x 330 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedo_M44_012.jpg

6. Ganz Factory (Drawing No. 13 in Folder No. 44), 1949 Pastel, paper, 305 x 426 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedo_M44_013.jpg

7. Ganz Factory (Drawing No. 14 in Folder No. 44), 1949 Pastel, thick cardboard, 500 x 327 mm
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedo_M44_014.jpg

16. Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main

1	2	3 	4	5
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1. Ika Gedő: Table, drawing no. 8 of the New York Shepherd Gallery exhibition, 1949, 332 x 236 mm, brush and pen in black on vergé paper, watermark: in the centre: three calyx flowers in a trefoil, signed and dated lower left (in pencil): Gedő Ilka, 1949.
Inv. no.: 17984

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/3/images/Shepherd_Cat_No_08_(MNG_kivalasztas_05).jpg

2. Ilka Gedő: Woman from the Jewish Home for the Elderly in Budapest, drawing no. 81 from portfolio no. 24, , spring 1944, pen, brush in black, partly washed, over pencil, on crinkled Japanese paper, 213 x 203 mm
Inv. no.: 17972

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/24/images/Gedo_M24_081.jpg

3. Ilka Gedő: Seated on Klauzál Square, drawing no. 167 from portfolio no. 8, 1938, black coloured pencil over pencil on wove paper, 241 x 191 mm, watermark: on the lower left edge of the sheet: sail [?] with flag and monogram PH [cut].
Inv. no.: 17969

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/08/images/Gedo_M08_167.jpg

4. Gedő Ilka: Sleeping, drawing no. 10 from portfolio no. 54, 1946, pencil on wove paper, 239 x 185 mm, signed and inscribed lower right: Gedő Ilka, 19[...].
Inv. no.: 17970

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/54/images/Gedo_M54_010.jpg

5. Ilka Gedő: Sleeping child, drawing no. 12 from portfolio no. 23, 1947, pencil on wove paper, 298 x 212 mm.
Inv. no.: 17971

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/23/images/Gedo_M23_012.jpg

6. Ilka Gedő: Self-portrait, drawing no. 106 from the exhibition in Glasgow, ca. 1947, pencil, partly wiped, on vergé paper, 248 x 169 mm
Inv. no.: 17973

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_106.jpg

7. Ilka Gedő: Self-portrait with child, drawing no. 2 from portfolio no. 22, 1947, pencil on wove paper, 298 x 211 mm, signed and dated lower left (in pencil): "Gedő Ilka 1947 október".
Inv. no.: 17974

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/22/images/Gedo_M22_002.jpg

8. Ilka Gedő: Self-portrait, drawing no. 101 from the exhibition in Glasgow, ca 1947, black chalk on lined wove paper, 357 x 262 mm.
Inv. no.: 17975

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_101_(MNG_kiallitas_20).jpg

9. Ilka Gedő: Self-portrait, drawing no. 26 from folder no. 22, Self-portraits from Fillér Street, 1947, black chalk on tracing paper, 355 x 240 mm, signed lower right (in pen in black): "Gedő Ilka".
Inv. no.: 17976

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/22/images/Gedo_M22_026.jpg

10. Ilka Gedő: Self-portrait as a pregnant woman, drawing no. 83 from the portfolio of Addenda, Self-portraits from Fillér Street, , pastel and black chalk on green-grey, coarse wove paper, 369 x 204 mm, signed, dated and inscribed lower right: "Gedő Ilka, 1947".
Inv. no.: 17977

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/00/images/83GedoAddenda1948.jpg

11. Ilka Gedő: Self-portrait, drawing no. 14 from portfolio no. 51, Self-portraits from Fillér Street 1947, pastel and black chalk on vellum paper, 356 x 257 mm.
Inv. no.: 17978

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/51/images/Gedo_M51_014.jpg

12. Ilka Gedő: Worker in the Ganz Factory, drawing no. 83 from the exhibition in Glasgow, pencil **on coarse wove paper with shives, 241 x 210 mm.**
Inv. no.: 17979

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_083.jpg

13. Ilka Gedő: Ganz-Fabrik, drawing no. 7 from portfolio no. 57, 1948, pencil and black chalk on light brown, coarse wove paper with shives, 494 x 344 mm.
Inv. no.: 17980

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/57/images/Gedo_M57_007.jpg

14. Ilka Gedő: Workbench in the Ganz factory, drawing no. 84 from the exhibition in Glasgow, 1948, pencil and black chalk on light brown, coarse wove paper with shives, 348 x 505 mm
Inv. no.: 17981

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_084.jpg

15. Ilka Gedő: Ganz-Fabrik, drawing no. 89 from the exhibition in Glasgow, 1946-1948, pastel and black chalk on wove paper, 325 x 488 mm, signed lower left (in pencil): Gedő Ilka.
Inv. no.: 17982

http://www.ilkagedo.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_089.jpg

16. Ilka Gedő: Ganz-Fabrik, drawing no. 90 from the exhibition in Glasgow, 1948, pastel on velour board, 321 x 277 mm.
Inv. no.: 17983

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_090.jpg

17. Ilka Gedő: Staircase near a stone warehouse in Budapest, drawing no. 43 from portfolio no. 10, 1948, pencil on paper, 283 x 206 mm.
Inv. no.: 17984

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/10/images/Gedo_M10_043.jpg

18. Ilka Gedő: Colour sample no. 10, 1975-1985, oil paint and watercolour, pen and brush in black, black pen and pencil on collaged cardboard, 235 x 204 mm.
Inv. no.: 17986

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/colourpatt/images/Gedo_colourpattern_010.jpg

19. Ilka Gedő: Colour sample no. 309, 1975, oil paint and watercolour, pen and brush in black, on cardboard, cut or torn, 97 x 104 mm
Inv. no.: 17987

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/colourpatt/images/Gedo_colourpattern_309.jpg

20. Ilka Gedő: Colour sample no. 268, 1975, oil paint, watercolour and opaque paint, pen in black on cardboard, 173 x 153 mm
Inv. no.: 17988
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/colourpatt/images/Gedo_colourpattern_268.jpg

Biography

1921	Ilka Gedő was born on 26 May 1921 in Budapest. Her father was a teacher at the Budapest Jewish Grammar School. The mother, Elsa Weiszkopf, was a clerk.
1921	Ilka Gedő was born on 26 May 1921 in Budapest. Her father was a teacher at the Budapest Jewish Grammar School. The mother, Elsa Weiszkopf, was a clerk.
1939	In autumn Ilka Gedő visits the free school of Tibor Gallé.
1940	She participates in the second exhibition of OMIKE (Hungarian National Cultural Society of Jews).
1939-42	Due to family connections, she receives training from Viktor Erdei.
1942	She takes part in the exhibition organised by the Group of Socialist Painters that takes place at the Centre of the Metal Workers' Union.
1942-43	She attends the free school of István Örkényi-Strasser.
1943	Gedő participates in the fifth exhibition of OMIKE in the exhibition halls of the Hungarian Jewish Museum.
1944	In the Budapest ghetto a huge series of drawings is born.
1945	In the autumn of 1945 Ilka Gedő enrols as a full-time student in the Academy of Fine Arts. However, she leaves the academy after six months due to family reasons. She draws at the school of Gyula Pap, a former member of Bauhaus.
1946	She marries the biochemist Endre Bíró.
1947	She takes part in the Second Open National Exhibition of the Trade Union of Hungarian Artists. Birth of her first son.
1949	She stops her artistic activities only to resume them in 1965.
1950	From 1950 on she does not take part in art life. Her interests turn to the philosophy of art and art history. She translates extensive passages from Goethe's theory of colour.
1953	Birth of her second son.
1962	The Hungarian National Gallery buys three drawings of the artist.
1965	Gedő shows a selection of her drawings from the years 1945-1949 in a studio exhibition. She resumes her artistic activities.
1969-	Spends a year in Paris. She participates in a group museum exhibition of the

1970	Galerie Lambert.
1974	She gains admission to the Association of Visual Artists.
1980	Retrospective exhibition in the St. Stephen's Museum of Székesfehérvár, Hungary.
1982	Exhibition at the Dorottya Gallery of Budapest. The National Gallery of Hungary buys two of the artist's paintings.
1985	Gedő dies on 19 June in Budapest. A solo exhibition of the artist is opened in the Gallery of the Szentendre Art Colony. A solo exhibition of Gedő is organized in the framework of the Hungarian Season in Glasgow. Gedő's art is praised by the art critics of the *Glasgow Herald*, *The Scotsman*, *Financial Times*, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegrap*h, *The Observer* and *The Guardian*)
1987	Gedő's largest Hungarian exhibition takes place in the Budapest exhibition venue, Műcsarnok.
1989	Exhibition at the Municipal Art Gallery of Szombathely, Hungary.
1989-1990	Gedő's second Glasgow exhibition takes place between 9 December 1989 and 12 January 1990 at the Third Eye Centre.
1994	Solo exhibition at New York's Janos Gat Gallery.
1995	An exhibition titled Victims and Perpetrators from the drawings of György Román made during the trial of Hungarian war criminals and Gedő's drawings made in 1944 in the Budapest ghetto takes place at the Budapest Jewish Museum. From April 1995 four of Ilka Gedő's drawings are shown at the exhibition titled Culture and Continuity: the Jewish Journey of the New York Jewish Museum for a period of six months. The Shepherd Gallery in New York City organizes an exhibition from Gedő's drawings including the table series, the self-portraits and the Ganz factory drawings from 21 November to 19 December 1995.
1996	Supplemented by three oil paintings of both Gedő and Román, Victims and Perpetrators is shown at the Art Museum of Yad Vashem.
1997	Solo exhibition at the Janos Gat Gallery in New York City.
1998	The Department of Prints and Drawings of the The British Museum acquires 15 and The Israel Museum acquires six drawings by Ilka Gedő.
1999	Participation in the collective exhibition titled Voices From Here and There (New Acquisitions in the Department of Prints and Drawings) of the Israel Museum. The Düsseldorf Museum Museums Kunst Palast acquires ten drawings of the Artist.
2001	Chamber exhibition of Gedő's drawings at the Budapest Municipal Picture Gallery and Kiscelli Museum. The National Gallery buys three of Gedő's paintings.

2002	Two of Gedő's painting become a part of the permanent exhibition of the National Gallery.
2003	Gondolat Kiadó, a Budapest publishing house publishes in English and Hungarian an album titled *The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921-1985) / Oeuvre Catalogue and Documents.* The sons of the artist donate twenty-three drawings and three paintings of Gedő to the Hungarian National Gallery.
2004	Oeuvre exhibition in the National Gallery of Hungary from 18 November 2004 to 3 April 2005.
2006	Exhibition of Ilka Gedő takes place at the Berlin Collegium Hungaricum from 9 March to 10 May. A representative selection of the artist's drawings and paintings is shown from the permanent collections of the Hungarian National Gallery and the Düsseldorf Museum Kunst Palast.
2011	The Kupferstichkabinett (Museum of Prints and Drawings, Berlin) acquires eight drawings of Ilka Gedő.
2013	The Albertina acquires twelve drawings of Ilka Gedő. Chamber Exhibition of Ilka Gedő at the National Theatre of Hungary from 22 March to 23 April 2013.

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- *Gedő Ilka (1921-1985) minden munkája: digitalizált oeuvre katalógus /The Complete Works of Ilka Gedő (1921-1985): Digitised Catalogue Raisonne* http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/ Or: www.ilkaGedő.hu
- Hajdu István–Bíró Dávid: *Gedő Ilka művészete, oeuvre katalógus és dokumentumok*, Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2003 The album can be viewed online: [1]
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- *Gedő Ilka festőművész kiállítása*, (Exhibition of Ilka Gedő), Budapest, Hungarian national Gallery, 2004, edited by Marianna Kolozsváry Marianna The catalogue can be vewed online: [3]
- Drawings at the British Museum [4]
- Drawings at the Metropolitan Museum [5]

- Drawings at the Alberina: [6]
- Drawings at the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum:[7]
- Drawings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston [8]
- Drawings at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery [9]
- Paintings at the Hungarian National Gallery [10]
- Drawings at the Yad Vashem Art Museum (a selection): [11]
- Drawings at the Hungarian Jewish Museum [12]
- Katalin S. Nagy: „Tükör által homályosan…- Gedő Ilka műtermében" (Dimly Through the Mirror) *Arnolfini Szalon*, March 2016 [13]
- Katalin S. Nagy: „Gedő Ilka önarcképei" (The Self-Portraits of Ilka Gedő) *Liget*, April 2016 [14]

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9. *Directions (Works by Julian Beck, Herbert Brown, István Farkas, Ilka Gedő, Lajos Gulácsy, Knox Martin, György Roman),* Fall Exhibition 2000, Janos Gat Gallery, 1100 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10028,
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2. István Hajdu: „The Work of Ilka Gedő", pp. 85-106 In: *The Jewess–Exhibition at the Jewish Museum of Hungary*, Budapest, Jewish Museum and Archives of Hungary, 1992
3. Hans Günter Golinski és Sepp-Hiekisch Pickard (szerk): *Das Recht des Bildes*, Bochum, 2003, a drawing on page 21 and biographical info
4. Eliad Moreh-Rosenberg Walter Schmerling (Eds.): *Kunst aus dem Holokaust,* Köln, Wienand Verlag, 2016; there are three drawings in the volume by Ilka Gedő

5. Thomas Döring & Jochen Luckhardt: *Meisterzeichnungen aus dem Braunschweiger Kupferstichkabinett*, Dresden, Sandstein Verlag, 2017; there is a drawing by Ilka Gedő on page 18
6. *In bester Gesellschaft Ausgewählte Erwerbungen des Berliner Kupferstichkabinetts 2009-2019*, Herausgeber: Andreas Schalhorn, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, 2019. (A drawing by Ilka Gedő on page 52.)

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9. Gábor György: „A létező világok legpszeudóbbika–Gedő Ilka kiállítása a Raiffeisen Galériában"(The Most Deceptive of All the Worlds—Ilka Gedő's Exhibition at the Art Gallery of the Raiffeisen Bank), *Balkon*, November 2003
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12. András Bán: “Művirágok” (Artificial Flowers) *Magyar Nemzet,* 15 July 1985

13. Miklós Losonczy: “Gedő Ilka festményei. Szentendre, Művésztelepi Galéria” (Ilka Gedő’s Paintings at the Gallery of the Artist Colony of Szentendre) *Új Tükör,* 4 July 1985

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27. András Bán: “Magyarok Skóciában” (Hungarians in Glasgow) *Élet és Irodalom,* Budapest, 8 November 1985

28. Ágnes Gyetvai: “Az «én múzeumom» Székesfehérvárott” (My Museum at Székesfehérvár) *Magyar Nemzet*, 27 January 1986

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30. “Gedő Ilka öröksége, reprodukciók” (Ilka Gedő’s Legacy, Reproductions) *Élet és Irodalom*, 1 August 1986

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33. József Vadas: “Kívül-belül” (Inside-Outside) *Élet és Irodalom*, 1 May 1987
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48. Kriszta Dékei: “Lehet-e igazán nő, aki művész és fordítva?” (Can a Female Artist be a Woman, and the Other Way Round?”, *Magyar Narancs*, 18 December 2003
49. András Bán: “Gedő Ilka-album és kamaratárlat” (An Album on Ilka Gedő and the Chamber Exhibition of the Artist), *Műértő*, December 2003
50. István Wágner: “A női nemzeti válogatott tárlata a Home galériában” (The Exhibition of the Women’s National Paintresses Team at the Home Gallery), *Magyar Hírlap*, 17 November 2006
51. Mikós Hernádi: “Gedő Ilka önmagához képest” (llka Gedő Without Comparisons), *Élet és Irodalom*, 26 September 2003
52. Judit Szeifert: “A művészet misztériuma” (The Mystery of Art) *Élet és Irodalom*, 18 February 2005
53. Gyula Rózsa: “Az életmű ára” (The Price Paid for Creating an Oeuvre), *Népszabadság*, 29 January 2005
54. Péter György: “Az ismeretlen remekmű” (The Unknown Classic Oeuvre of Ilka Gedő) *Élet és Irodalom,* 5 June, 2020

Ilka Gedő's Manuscripts[210]

I. Diary Notes Related to the Making of Oil Paintings

001_	Brrr notebook	50	Artificial flower with hat/Artificial flower with yellow background
002_	Beautiful	112	There is no title on the cover of the notebook.
003_	Perseverance notebook	114	Artificial flower with flypaper/ Luxembourg/Ágnes
004_	Hurrah notebook	104	Artificial flower with flypaper/ Shouting girls
005_	King St. Stephen	151	Rose Garden Conjurer/ Warsaw clowns/ New picture
006_	Without a title	20	There is no title on the cover of the notebook.
007_	Pastel (green, yellow and red)	112	There is no title on the cover of the notebook.
008_	Exile 36	116	Dwarfs with big masks/ Conjurer's trick/Picture with inscriptions/Big clowns
009_	Exile 19	45	Big clowns / Picture with inscriptions
010_	Later	95	Artficial flower with fly-paper/Ágnes/Spring/Artificial flower/Margit Anna/Luxembourg garden
011_	Without title	40	Artificial flower with flypaper/ Ágnes / Spring/ Artificial flower with inscriptions/ Margit Anna
012_	To hell with	93	Lilika / Margit Anna / Ágnes / Artificial flower with cat claws
013_	Trumm notebook	99	Shouting girls/Artificial flower with flypaper/ Artificial flower with hat/ Artificial flower of Tihany
014_	Exile 6	65	„END x" / Big clowns
015_	Triangles	95	Triangles / Monster and boy
016_	Perseverance	97	Witches in preparation/March of triangles/ Monster and boy
017_	Monster	95	Monster and boy / March of triangles

[210] We have divided the manuscript estate into two groups. In the first group we can find those note-books that record the making of nearly all the oil paintings in a diary-like manner (in some cases, the titles of the paintings are different from the final titles). The diary notes of any given painting can sometimes be found in more than one note-books. The second group of manuscripts includes mainly notes and/or translations into Hungarian of books on arts history and arts theory. In terms of Gedő's paintings the notes on the theory of colours play a significant role.

018_	Jaffa notebook	90	Deep green artificial flower / Shouting girls / Artificial flower of Tihany / Spring/ Ágnes
019_	China notebook	98	Red artifical flower/Warsaw clowns/Conjurers
020_	Great perseverance	97	Witches in preparation
021_	Perseverance with success	94	Witches in preparation / Rose garden II / Butterfly
022_	The third after the exhibition	95	Double self-portrait / Self-portrait with strawhat
023_	Moscow	30	Chaste rose garden/Rose garden/Meadow/Storehouse of masks
024_	Neszny III	101	All saints' day/ Chaste rose garden /Dejected angel /Millimeter rose garden
025_	Without title	103	Ágnes / Start of the Artificial flower with flypaper/Margit Anna
026_	Indescribable perseverance	90	Married couple / Butterfly
027_	Simon ha caddik	99	Yellow-red rose garden with grids/ Frame of the painting titled Lilika / Rose garden in rain/ Rising artificial flower
028_	Without title	75	Viol. artificial flower / Artificial flower with inscriptions/ Cont. of pink rose geraden / To the rose garden with a yellow background / Snowdrop cont.
029_	Ruti notebook	96	Ágnes /Many exciting drawings / margit Anna/ Luxembourg III's drawing on the canvas
030_	The third after the exhibition	88	Self-portrait in strawhat / Double self-portrait
031_	Neszny I	92	Millimetre rose garden / All saints' day/ Dejected angel/Rose garden
032_	Cadik	97	Artificial flower with cat claws / Finishing Margit Anna / Millimetre rose garden
033_	Later, later	92	Ágnes / Lilika / Artificial flower with inscriptions/ Artificial flower with fly-paper
034_	Without title	9	There is no title on the cover of the notebook.
035_	March 15	78	Small aluminium rose garden / Dejected angel / Dark Naple artificial flower / Rose garden / Artificial flower with flypaper / Chaste rose garden
036_	Diligence	85	Luxembourg III /Artificial flower with flypaper/ Ágnes
037_	Go to hell with "later"	95	Margit Anna Manci / Artificial flower with cat's claws / Lilika (cont.)
038_	Lumumba notebook	117	Finishing of Deep green artificial flower/

			Artificial flower with flypaper
039_	New notebook (pp. 99)	100	Rose garden I / Millimetre rose garden/Tihany artificial flower
040_	Patience	98	Artificial flower with flypaper/ Luxembourg garden III / Lilika / Ágnes
041_	Hédi red Rose Garden	88	Red rose garden / Conjurers/Dejected angel/Warsaw clowns
042_	Cat show	88	Meadow/Chaste rose garden / Dark Naple artificial flower / Conjurers /Dejected angel / Warsaw clowns/ Red rose garden
043_	After the time spent at Verőce	94	Artificial flower with flypaper/ Stranding up / Meadow / Chaste rose garden / Dejected angel / Small aluminium red and yellow
044_	After Moscow	91	Storehouse of masks/ Meadow / Rose garden I
045_	Jujj notebook	94	Deep-green artificial flower /Equilibre/Snowdrop
046_	Without title	96	Spring/Equilibre/Artificial flower with hat/Artificial flower with flypaper
047_	Without title	94	Chaste rose garden / Dejected angel / Dark Naple artificial flower / Aluminium, yellow-red garden / All saints' day
048_	Paintings on my shelves	6	Location of pictures after unwrapping them, because Sándor Lukácsy viewed them
049_	After the show	66	Rose garden / "Double self-portrait"
050_	Exile 38	63	Mask / Clown hugging a mask / Child making friends with a monster
051_	Red notebook	75	Red rose garden / Conjurers / A new picture (Triangles) / Monster and boy
052_	Notebook x	89	Rose garden with yellow background
053_	Notebook "uff"	57	Artificial flower with a flypaper / Artificial flower with a hat
054_	Without title Danseause	92	Danseuse (for the last time)/ Luxembourg garden/Artificial flower with inscriptions/Snowdrops
055_	To the pictures	90	Rose garden in the wind (cont.) / Artificial flower with daggers / Viola artificial flower
056_	Without title	96	Equllibre/Masks / Spring (start)/Rose garden all around/Danseause/Rose garden of Zsámbék/Memory of a dead child
057_	To the pictures	76	Rose garden in the wind / Artificial flower of Tihany
058_	King crowned with two hats	97	Self-portrait in hat /Rose garden / Witches in preparation

059_	Exile 2	96	Butterfly/ Self-portrait with grids
060_	The magnification of the other drawings	98	Self-portrait in hat / Rose garden XII
061A_	Notebook “tr”	72	Deep-green artificial flower
061B_	TRRRR notebook	36	Equilibre (conclusion) / Artificial flower with hat /Spring
062_	Exorcised	93	Self-portrait with grids
063_	Mask notebook	69	Storehouse of masks
064_	Notebook Z	95	Artificial flower with a yellow background / Pink artificial flower / Artificial flower with inscriptions/ Second of Klári H./Luxembourg II
065_	Without title	97	Artificial flower with inscriptions / Pink artificial flower / Snow-drops (cont. / Second Klári H. Klári
066_	Shut up notebook	67	Artificial flower with flypaper / Shouting girls/Small Tihany artificial flower
067_	King crowned with hat	71	Self-portrait with hat
068_	May	97	Dejected angel / Rose garden I / All saints’ day / Yellow red aluminium rose garden
069_	Without title	50	Second Klári H./ Rose garden with a dome
070_	Rose-garden notebook XII	82	Rose garden XII / Butterfly/ Self-portrait in hat
071_	Exile 29	66	Picture with inscriptions / Conjurer’s trick/Big clowns
072_	Exile 39	50	Meeting
073_	Very great perseverance	97	Witches in preparation/Kidnap
074_	The end of the two-headed	64	Self-portrait with straw hat (cont.)
075_	During the exhibition	66	Rose garden XII / King with hat
076_	Kukk notebook	53	Spring (cont.) / Equilibre
077_	After the exhibition	17	Double self-portrait
078_	Without title	129	Luxembourg /Edina / Rose garden with windows/ Rose garden with grids
079_	Hajdú	142	Storehouse of masks/Meadow / Dejected angel
080_	Exile 23	42	Emotional self-portrait

081_	Exile 9	66	Child making friend with a monster /Man and woman/ Big clowns
082_	Exile 17	34	Picture with inscriptions / Dwarfs / Big clowns
083_	Exile 25	65	Emotional self-portrait / Picture with inscriptions
084_	Exile 18	50	Big clowns / Picture with inscriptions
085_	Exile 15	33	Picture with inscriptions / Big clowns / Dwarfs with big masks
086_	Exile 5	60	END X / With the inscriptions
087_	Exile 14	30	Dwarfs with big masks / Picture with inscriptions / Man and woman
088_	Exile 3	66	Butterfly/ Self-portrait with squares /Self-portrait with straw hat /Woman dancer/ Big clowns
089_	Exile 10	54	Big clowns / Picture with inscriptions / Dwarfs with big masks
090_	Exile 26	58	Emotional self-portrait /Conjurer's trick
091_	Brr to pictures	17	Equilibre / Spring
092_	Huhh notebook	66	Artificial flower with flypaper / Equilibre / Rose garden with a yellow background/ Finishing two masks/ Artificial flower of Tihany
093_	Winter I	77	Self-portrait with squares / Self-portrait with strawhat / Double self-portrait / Butterfly /Rose garden XII
094_	Indeed	79	Rose garden XII / Self-portrait with strawhat
095_	Notebook with envelope	120	Danseuse (cont.) / Luxembourg garden II/ Edina
096_	Drawing notebook	24	
097_	Exile 35	64	Dwarfs with large masks/ Picture with inscriptions / Conjurer's trick
098_	Exile 34	62	Meeting / Dwarfs with big masks
099_	Exile 30	49	Picture with inscriptions / Conjurer's trick / Big clowns / Meeting
100_	Exile 11	63	Dwarfs with big masks / Picture with inscriptions
101_	Exile 16	33	Dwarfs with large masks/ Big clowns / Picture with inscriptions
102_	Exile 37	65	Clown hugging a mask / Child meeting a monster / Meeting

103_	Exile 32	29	Meeting / Conjurer's trick / Clown hugging a mask
104_	Exile 20	34	Big clowns / Conjurer's trick / Emotional self-portrait
105_	Exile 40	26	Sad clown
106_	Exile 27	58	Conjurer's trick/Emotional self-portrait
107_	Exile 31	29	Conjurer's trick/Dwarfs with big masks/Picture with inscriptions/Meeting
108_	Exile 1	65	Self-portraits with squares / Butterfly
109_	Exile 24	17	Emotional self-portrait
110_	Ordering oil paints	31	
111_	Exile 4	66	Big clowns / Butterfly / Small self-portrait
112_	Exile 28	62	Emotional self-portrait /Picture with inscriptions
113_	During the exhibition	73	Self-portrait with hat / Rose garden
114_	Winter II	60	Rose garden XII /Emotional self-portrait
115_	Exile 22	69	Conjurer's trick / Big clowns/ Emotional self-portrait
116_	Zip notebook	33	Millimetre rose garden
117_	Exile 7	63	End X / Big clowns/ Woman and man
118_	Exile 8	62	Woman and man / Butterfly / Big clowns / Child meeting a monster
119_	Exile 21	66	Emotional self-portrait / Conjurer's trick
120_	Extraordinary	52	Snow-drops / Artificial flower with inscriptions/ Rose garden with a yellow background
121_	Decision to select browns	8	
122_	Jerusalem	99	There is no title on the cover of the notebook.
123_	Trifle	117	Lilike /Anna Manci/ Artificial Flower with Cat Claw
124_	Without title	129	Artificial flower with inscriptions/ Luxembourg garden / Artificial flower of Tihany / Snow drops
125_	"Bumm" notebook	143	Spring/Masks / Poungny artificial flower / Equilibre
126_	Double zip	107	Rosegarden/Millimeter rosegarden

127_	Without title	75	Millimetre rose garden
128_	Meadow	105	Small alumimium, yellow-red rosegarden, Storehouse of Masks, Dejected Angel, Dark Naple artifical flower

II. Note-Books, Translations, Diaries and Colour Theory Notes

129_	Notes from Rainer Maria Rilke, Paul Klee, Lajos Fülep and Béla Tábor (1949)	42
130_	Notes from Klee and Kazimir Malevich (1948)	78
131_	Klee: Pädagogisches Skizzenbuch (notes) (1949)	67
132_	Notes from Gino Severini (1949, September)	30
133_	The continuation of the translation of Goethe's colour theory / From the Beginning up until the physiology of colours (1949)	81
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4. Budapest Artist Paint, 80 Permanent Green Light Company of the Fine Arts Foundation
5. Budapest Artist Paint, 100 Titanium White Company of the Fine Arts Foundation
6. Budapest Artist Paint, 806 Permanent Lemon, Company of the Fine Arts Fund
7. Budapest Artist Paint, 121 Ivory Black, Company of the Fine Arts Foundation
8. Budapest Artist Paint, 72 Paris Blue, Foundation for the Fine Arts Foundation
9. Budapest Artist Paint, 66 Ultramarine Blue Company of the Fine Arts Foundation
10th Budapest Artist Paint, 100 Titanium White Company of the Fine Arts Foundation
11. Budapest Art Paint, 100 Titanium White Company of the Fine Arts Foundation
12. Budapest Art Paint, 808 Permanent Orange, Company of the Fine Arts Foundation
13. Budapest Art Paint, 231 Carmine Dark, Foundation of the Fine Arts Foundation
14. Budapest Artist Paint, 411 Ultramarin Blue, a company of the Fine Arts Fund
15. 216 Permanent Violet Rembrandt Olieverf, Talens
16. 25 Cadmium Yellow Deep, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
17. 91 Caput Martuum Violet, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
18. 201 Cobalt Violet Deep, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
19. Cadmium Orange, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
20. 91 Caput Mortuum Violet, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
21. 175 Burnt Umber, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
22. 221 Ultramarine Deep, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
23. 505 Ultramarine Light, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
24. 344 Mortuum Violet, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
25. 507 Ultramarine Violet, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
26. 200 Cobalt Violet, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
27. 533 Indigo Extra, Violet, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
28. 166 Burnt Green Earth, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
29. 411 Burnt Sienna, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
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31. 200 Cobalt Violet Dicht, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
32. 150 Flesh Ocher, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
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34. 40 Cerulean Blue, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
35. 223 Naples Yellow, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
36. 522 Talens Green, Rembrandt Olieverf, Royal Talens
37. Bleu Hortesia, Lefranc & Bourgeois
38. Jaune Brillant, Lefranc & Bourgeois
39. Bleu Hoggar, Lefranc & Bourgeois
40. Bleu Indigo, Lefranc & Bourgeois

[211] The vast majority of the colours of Ilka Gedő have been lost over the decades. The list published here is only a small fraction, although the artist had bought a huge set of colours during his stay in Paris: After 1970 he used only this set of oil paints, and there was constant concern about the need for supplies / Endre Bíró: "Memories of Ilka's artistic career Gedő". In: In: István Hajdu-Dávid Bíró: The The Art of Ilka Gedő, Oeuvre Catalogue and Documents, Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2003, p. 253

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Important Names with Short Bios

I. List of Visual Artists

Endre Bálint (Budapest, 1916 – Budapest, 1986) painter, graphic artist

He studied poster designing at the National School of Arts and Crafts from 1930 to 1934, then attended the private school of János Vaszary and Vilmos Aba-Novák. From 1936 he spent several summers in Szentendre, in the company of his friend *Lajos Vajda* and the young artists gathering around him. In September 1946 he had a solo exhibition in the exhibition spaces of the European School. In 1947 he stayed in Paris, and contributed a painting to the international Surrealist exhibition *Le Surrealisme en 1947* at the Galerie Maeght and the international exhibition of the the Salon des Réalites Nouvelle. This exhibition brought together 150 artists from every corner of the world.

He lived in France continually from 1957 to 1961. On 18 January 1958 an exhibition opened in the Palais de Beaux-Arts Brussels displaying the works *Lajos Szabó*, *Lajos Vajda*, Endre Bálint, Ljubormir Szabó and Attila Kotányi. In the same year Édition Labergerie published the Jerusalem Bible with more than a thousand of Bálint's illustrations, and this helped him in developing his typical late artistic style. In 1972 he spent six months in West Berlin. In 1985 he got the Kossuth Prize.

Jenő Barcsay (Katona, 1900 – Budapest, 1988) painter, graphic artist, art teacher

Barcsay, a descendant of an aristocratic family in Transylvania, went to Budapest in 1919 and began his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts where he graduated in 1924. His masters were János Vaszary and Gyula Rudnay. He spent a year in Paris on fellowship from the autumn of 1926, where he was particularly influenced by Cézanne, whose paintings put him under a spell until the rest of his life. In spring 1929 he visited Szentendre, where he kept returning, and of which he became a resident. 1929-30 saw him again in Paris again on a fellowship to acquire the rules of cubism. From 1931 to 1945 he was a teacher of the Municipal Apprentice School and from 1945 to his

retirement professor of the Academy of Art, where he taught figure sketching to all Hungarian modern artists influenced by him until the rest of their lives. His textbooks on anatomy for artists had influenced several generations of art students.

Róbert Berény (Budapest, 1887 – Budapest, 1953)

As a young man of 17, in 1904 he studied under the artist Tivadar Zemplényi for several months before moving to study at the Académie Julian in Paris. While there, Berény was particularly influenced by the power of Paul Cézanne's art. He also adopted some of the uses of color of the Fauve movement, and exhibited at the Salon d'Automne with French artists of the Fauvists.

Berény is best known for his form of expressionism and cubism, which he developed in association with the *avant-garde* group known as The Eight, who had their first exhibit together in Budapest in 1909. They included the leader Károly Kernstok, Lajos Tihanyi, Béla Czóbel, Dezső Czigány, Ödön Márffy, Dezső Orbán, and Bertalan Pór. He brought to them French influences from his time in Paris.

In 1919, Berény participated in the art life of the brief Hungarian Democratic Republic, and was the leader of the department for painting in the Art Directorate. After the fall of the republic that year, Berény emigrated to Berlin, together with numerous other Hungarian artists and writers. He lived and worked there for several years, continuing his emphasis on cubism and expressionism. He did not return to Hungary until 1926.
During the last year of World War II, Berény's studio was destroyed, together with many of his works. After the war, he became a teacher at the Academy of Fine Arts.

Viktor Erdei (Budapest, 1906 – Budapest, 1945) sculptor, graphic artist and painter

Viktor Erdei (1879-1944) was an Art Nouveau painter and graphic artist. Lajos Fülep wrote about him with high appreciation at the beginning of the twentieth century. He was a member of the Association of Hungarian Artists and Industrial Artists (KÉVE), and he exhibited in Nagyvárad with Lajos Gulácsy. His wife was *Ada Karinthy*. His drawing style is synthesising and detailed, the lines flow softly and loosely, yet they reveal the artist’s

internal stature. From 1939 on, he started to exhibit at the exhibitions of OMIKE (the Hungarian Jewish Educational Association), the last time in May 1944. During the siege of Budapest, he lived in the ghetto. He died soon after the liberation of the ghetto by the Red Army.

Tibor Gallé (Harta, 1896 – Budapest, 1944) painter and graphic artist

After World War I he travelled to Italy. Between 1925 and 1928 he attended the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts. He had a retrospective exhibition at the Ernst Múzeum in 1931. He travelled to London pursuing artistic studies and donated one his drawings to the Department of Prints and Drawings of the British Museum. Between 1934 and 1944 he managed his private art school at his studio flat in Budapest. He was famous for his etchings and linocuts. He opened a school in his Budapest studio.

Ilka Gedő (Budapest, 1921 – Budapest, 1985) painter and graphic artist

The Hungarian painter and draughtswoman Ilka Gedő (26 May 1921, Budapest – 19 June 1985) drew incessantly even as a child. She began her art studies with *Viktor Erdei*. Prevented from being admitted to the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts because of the anti-Jewish laws enacted in 1938, she enrolled in the private drawing schools of *Tibor Gallé* and *István Örkényi-Strasser*. While her early mentors became victims of the Holocaust, Gedő miraculously escaped a similar fate, and her 1944 sketchbooks of children and old people from the Budapest Ghetto comprise a moving and powerful pictorial diary.

By 1945, when she was eventually admitted to the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Gedő was already a mature artist with a pictorial language of her own. She therefore left the Academy within a year and, and up to 1949 carried on almost exclusively with works on paper. (Based on the digitized oeuvre catalogue of the artist, the number of Ilka Gedő's drawings in the folders exceeds three thousand, and the number of juvenilia drawings is around 1,700. The number of drawings produced between 1944 and 1949 is 740, while in the public collections there are 280 drawings.)

From 1949 on she stopped creating art for fifteen years. This was partly due to the the onset of Communist dictatorship and also due to the lack of friends who could have supported her art in Ilka Gedő's own subculture. But the main reason for stopping artistic activities was the fact that Ilka Gedő did not want to become an imitator of the artists of the classical avant-garde.[212]

In the period during which she stopped creating art, she intensively studied art history and colour theory, making extensive notes and translations of her readings. In 1965, following a studio exhibition of her drawings, Gedő started to work again, initially using pastel, then oil on canvas. The year she spent painting in Paris (1969 –1970) gave a further impetus to her work, and during her second creative period Gedő completed one hundred and fifty-two paintings.

Gedő died at the age of 64, a few months before her discovery abroad. The scene of the breakthrough was Glasgow where the Compass Gallery presented her paintings and drawings in 1985. This was followed by a major retrospective at Glasgow's Third Eye Centre at the turn of 1989-1990.

Ilka Gedő's thematic series (Ghetto Drawings, Ganz Factory Drawings, Self-Portraits, Pregnant Self-Portraits, and Tables) won her worldwide renown and her work can now be found in major museums throughout the world: Hungarian National Gallery Budapest; Albertina, Vienna; Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf; Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin; Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany; Israel Museum; Yad Vashem Art Museum, Jerusalem; British Museum Metropolitan Museum of Art, Jewish Museum,New York; Albright-Knox Art Gallery,Buffalo; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Cleveland Museum of Arts; Hungarian Jewish Museum, the New York MoMA, Department of Drawings and Prtints.

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[212] „The recognition that the path that until then had been regarded as negotiable (to put it another way, the further pursuit of classical modernism) could only lead towards cramping up, or merely add to the sterile waste-tip of epigonism. Ilka Gedő too was one of those for whom a glimpse of this cul-de-sac signalled an order to halt. To be sure, it would not have been as dramatic, or as radical as this suggests. Equally, there may well have been other reasons—personal or family considerations, for instance—for falling silent. Yet looking back from the perspective of half a century, one cannot help feeling that it was some major ethical impulse that led her to lay down her pencil. (…) I feel that Ilka Gedő's withdrawal was an act that was made within the artistic arena. On reaching a point beyond which the sole path open to her lay in the direction of sterile planning or proliferation of copycats, she turned away and fell silent, because that was the only way she could remain true to herself and to the world of her earlier drawings." Géza Perneczky: "In the Rose Garden/ The Art of Ilka Gedő" *Holmi*, Vol. 45, Autumn 2004, pp. 32-33

József Jakovits (Budapest, 1909 – Budapest, 1994), sculptor, painter

He was an autodidact artist. He worked in the Hungarian Royal Iron, Steel and Machinery Factories from 1935 to 1944. In 1945 he met the widow of *Lajos Vajda*, the painter *Júlia Vajda*, whom he married. He joined the European School. In 1948 he took part in an exhibition of the European School with Júlia Vajda.

In 1948, his studio was taken away because of the nationalization, at which time many of his sculptures were destroyed, and he was unable to work until 1950. He worked as a staff member of the State Puppet Theatre (1950-55) and then as a staff member of the Kisfaludy Theatre in Győr (1955-58). In 1951, he was given a small room by the Puppet Theatre, where he made sculptures again. In the meantime, he became a member of the Fine Arts Fund. From 1965 to 1987, he lived in New York, where he began painting. His painting themes were inspired by the mysticism of Kabbalah and the calligraphy of Hebrew writing. He was granted U.S. citizenship in 1985, but repatriated in 1987 and lived in Budapest until his death.

Ada Karinthy (Budapest, 1880 — Budapest, 1955), painter, illustrator

She exhibited her works in the National Salon[213] and the Budapest Palace of Art. She prepared mainly arts and craft objects and watercolours, She was the elder sister of the famous Hungarian writer Frigyes Karinthy and the wife of *Viktor Erdei*.

István Örkényi Strasser (Szentes, 1911 – Kiskunhalas, 1944) sculptor

He studied on a scholarship of his native town at the National School of Arts and Crafts. He participated in public exhibitions from 1935. He was given the award of the Szinyei Society and the Wolfner Prize. He was also awarded a scholarship, but, due to the discriminatory Jewish laws, he was finally barred from it. Together with Aurél Bernát,

[213] Opposing the conservativism of the Budapest Palace of Art, the Association of Hungarian Fine Artists and Arts Advocates was founded in 1894, and it had its own exhibition hall called National Salon. The Association was disbanded in 1949.

Ödön Márffy, he maintained a free art school between 1933 and 1943 that was primarily visited by young artists of Jewish descent who, being discriminated against, could not go to the Academy. He showed his works at the Arts Hall of Budapest and at the exhibitions of The Hungarian National Cultural Association of Jews (OMIKE). Together with Sándor Varga he published a book titled *Fiatalok művészete* (Art by Young Fine Artists) to introduce young Jewish artists to the general public. The book featured, among others, Marianne Gábor, Ilka Gedő and Péter Mihály Földes. He belonged to that labour service company No. 101/322 the members of which were murdered on October 11, 1944 by SS soldiers at the Kiskunhalas railway station.

Gyula Pap (Orosháza, 1899 – Budapest, 1983) painter, lithographer, silversmith, designer

After the suppression of the Soviet republic he emigrated to Austria, where he attended the private art school of Johannes Itten in Vienna. In 1920, he changed to silversmith training in Weimar, where Itten headed the metal workshop at the Bauhaus. He was then brought by Itten to his private art school in Berlin, where he led a painting class and nude drawing until 1933. In 1934, Gyula Pap returned to Hungary, where he tried to run a painting school. "Gyula Pap participated intensively in Hungarian art life, although he made a living as a textile designer. In his studio on Lehel út he also worked as a teacher: From the circle around Lajos Kassák he met Lajos Lengyel here, later on Aranka Kasznár, László Kontraszty, Ilka Gedő and Gergely Vince, among others, learned the basic elements of fine arts here."[214]

Géza Perneczky (Keszthely, 1936–) fine artist, critic, art historian

Géza Perneczky is a protagonist of Hungarian conceptual art. His early conceptual works and also his publications had a catalyst role on the Hungarian neo-avantgarde. Since 1970 Géza Perneczky lives and works in Cologne and was an important mediator between the Hungarian/Eastern European and the international art scene. On the international scene he

[214] This private art school is mentioned in the large-scale monograph published in 1985 (Magyar Művészet 1919-1945 (Hungarian Art 1919-1945), Budapest, Akadémia Kiadó, 1985

became known as one of the founders of the post-fluxus mail art movement, which also defined the character of his conceptual works.

Géza Perneczky's works can be found in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the MoMA, New York, Getty Institute, Centre Pompidou, Walker Art Center, Franklin Furnace Archive, Ludwig Museum Budapest, Hungarian National Gallery, Museum of Fine Arts Budapest, National Gallery Prague, Art Pool Budapest, etc.

Géza Perneczky had several exhibitions internationally in MoMA NY, Centre Pompidou, the Wiener Sezession, Kölner Kunsthalle, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Museum of Concept Art, San Francisco, Olmütz Museum of Art, In-Out Center and Stempelplaast in Amsterdam, and in Hungarian Institutions as well, like the Vasarely Museum in Budapest, Ludwig Museum, King St. Stephen Museum, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest Gallery, Art Pool Budapest.

In 2006 he received the Great State Award (Széchenyi Price), which is a prize given by the Hungarian State in recognition of those who have made an outstanding contribution to academic life in Hungary.

Júlia Vajda (Trencsén, 1913 – Budakeszi, 1982) painter

Between 1935 and 1936 she studied at the textile faculty of the School of Applied Arts (the predecessor of today's Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design) and then, between 1937 and 1938, at Vilmos Aba-Novák's free school. She married Lajos Vajda in 1938. After her husband's death in 1941, she became the administrator of Lajos Vajda's estate. In 1946 she joined the European School together with her second husband, *József Jakovits*. She exhibited her works at the exhibitions of European School. Júlia Vajda and her husband *József Jakovits* and *Endre Bálint* and her wife were forced to live together in a jointly shared flat under dire circumstances. Their flat under 1 Rottenbiller utca became a venue for dissident artists. In 1956-56 Júlia Vajda went to Sweden, and between 1961 and 1963 she lived in Paris.

Lajos Vajda (Zalaegerszeg, 1908 — Budakeszi, 1942) painter

From 1927 to 1930 he was a student of István Csók at the Academy of Fine Arts, and also worked in Lajos Kassák's workshop. From 1930 to 1934 he was in Paris. He studied together with Dezső Korniss at Fernand Léger where he was introduced to cubism and surrealism. He also got acquainted with the outstanding works of the Russian Realist film. These two influences prompted him to create his dramatic photo-montages of the great cataclysms of mankind, war, hunger, armed violence and abject misery. From 1934 onwards, he collected folk art motifs in Szentendre and Szigetmonostor. In his style, folk art and Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic and Jewish symbols were combined with abstract and surrealistic elements. His last abstract surrealistic drawings foreshadow the horrors of World War II. He died of tuberculosis in 1941.

His works represent the most original achievement of Hungarian avant-garde painting uniting the rationalism of compositions with surrealistic visions (constructivist-surrealist method). From an artistic point of view, Vajda's work is the greatest achievement of the Hungarian avant-garde. His art influenced generations of Hungarian artists among them the visual artists of the European School Art (established in 1945) and the Vajda Lajos Studio (established in 1972).

Béla Veszelszky (Budapest, 1905 – Budapest, 1977) painter

He interrupted his studies in pharmacy to enter the Academy of Fine Arts, where he graduated in 1929. He then travelled to Berlin in 1930. Here his attention turned toward the constructivist and expressionist school of art. His view of the world and life, the development of his concept of colour and light in painting were greatly influenced by the philosophy and aesthetics of Jenő Henrik Schmitt.

Following his return to Hungary he worked as an art. His pictures could be seen for the first time publicly in 1962. From that time on he earned his living from his art. He

started to paint portraits, still-lifes and landscapes again after a decade of interruption. His abstract compositions reflect the influence mainly of Piet Mondrian, but his unique pointillist paintings are real abstract compositions of his own.
His solo exhibition was organised by Dezső Korniss in 1964. A selection of his works was displayed in Bloomington (USA) in 1972, in Strasbourg in 1974 and in Warsaw in 1966. His commemorative exhibition was held in 1978 and the venue was the King St. Stephen Museum in Székesfehérvár and the Hatvany Lajos Museum in Hatvan. Many of his paintings are kept in the Janus Pannonius Museum of Pécs, the Balassi Bálint Museum of Esztergom and the Museum of History in Budapest.

II. Art Critics and Art Historians

László Beke (Szombathely, 1944 – Budapest, 2022) art historian

László Beke is an art historian and curator who has been a leading figure in the Hungarian art since since the late 1960s. He was an active contributor to the development of the neo-avant-garde and Conceptual art in Hungary, and wrote important articles about the theory of photography. Beke studied art history at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. From 1969-86 he was a research fellow in art history at the Research Institute for Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. From 2000-12, Beke was the Director of the Research Institute of Art History. He is professor at the Hungarian University of Fine Arts. He curated the exhibition titled *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s*, at the Queens Museum in New York in 1999.

Iván Dévényi (Budapest, 1929 – Esztergom, 1977) teacher, art critic, art historian, and art collector

He graduated from the Eötvös Loránd University in 1951, majoring in Hungarian and History, and had lived and taught in Esztergom since 1951. His attraction to the fine arts led to in-depth research, direct acquaintance with works and the arts. He published his knowledge and insights in studies and reviews in newspapers and magazines. He was

primarily known as an art collector. He created a huge collection of 20th-century Hungarian art. His studies on the history of art and literature had been published since the mid-50s. He wrote important studies on the masters of the European School.

Ernő (Ernst) Kállai, (Szakálháza, 1890 – Budapest, 1954), critic, translator

Ernő Kállai grew up bilingual - German and Hungarian - and finished his secondary school education in Déva in 1910. He began to study Hungarian and German language, literature and history at the National Seminar of Civic Education in Pest in 1910. In 1913, he visited Germany, England, Scandinavia and the United States for study purposes. He worked as a teacher until he was conscripted for military service in the First World War in 1915.

During this time, he met the publicist *Lajos Kassák*. Kállai published essays on constructivism in art in the magazine *MA*. He started to publish articles in German in 1920 and in Hungarian in 1921. In 1920 Kállai left Hungary to study in Germany. His greatest deed of Central European significance was the recognition of the importance of Constructivism. Ernst Kállai was a well-known and popular art critic in Germany writing for arts magazines (*Ararat*, *Weltbühne* and *Cicerone*). In 1925 he wrote his work *Neuere Malerei in Ungarn* in German and Hungarian. In 1928 he worked at the Bauhaus Dessau under the direction of Hannes Meyer as the editor-in-chief of the *bauhaus1* magazine.

Disappointed by the development of the Bauhaus in the second half of the 1920s, he left Dessau in 1929 and moved to Berlin. There he worked, among other things, as an editor for the magazine *Deutsche Kunst* und *Dekoration*.

Kállai returned to Budapest in 1935. Starting in 1946, he taught aesthetics and art history at the Hungarian Applied Arts and Crafts School. In 1948, he became a member the European School, founded the Gallery of the Four Directions and became the director of the Section for Fine Arts in the Art Council of the Hungarian government. During the last years of his life, Kállai increasing retreated from the public offices due to the changed political situation and translated Hungarian fiction books into German.

János Frank (Budapest, 1925 – Budapest, 2004) art historian, art critic

He started to curate exhibitions in Hungary and abroad in 1951. He did the preparatory work for exhibitions, and edited exhibition catalogues. He delivered lectures on how to organise exhibitions to art history students at the ELTE University of Budapest. His research focussed on 20th-century and contemporary Hungarian art as well as the theoretical issues of organising and curating exhibitions. He was a regular contributor of exhibition reviews to major Hungarian weekly newspapers and magazines.

Ágnes Gyetvai (Budapest, 1952– Budapest, 1991) journalist, art critic

She majored in Hungarian literature and culture management. She wrote exhibition catalogue introductions, reviews for daily newspapers and literary and art periodicals. Her main focus was 20th-century art.

Péter György (Budapest, 1954 –) aesthete, media researcher

Professor György, a graduate in Literature, History and Art Theory earned his PhD in the History of Hungarian Avant-garde. His first monograph, co-authored by *Gábor Pataki*, was written about late 1940's Hungarian Avant-garde Art, later he wrote more about contemporary American, European and Hungarian Modernism. After 1989 he was a founding member of the Department of Media Studies at ELTE, lectured at the New School for Social Research, New York and has been extensively contributing at conferences and for scholarly journals in Hungarian and in English ever since. His Distinguished University Professorship came after his book on the philosophical issues involved in museum theory, prior to which he had already widely researched this area in essays and books. He was a visiting professor in New York at the New School for Social Research (1996, 1997 and 2001).

István Hajdu (Budapest, 1949–) art critic

He majored in Hungarian and History in 1972. He was a publishing house editor at Képzőművészeti Kiadó (Publishing House For Visual Arts) between 1975-1990. Since 1990 he has been an art critic publishing exhibition reviews in Hungary's major dailies and magazines and also contributing to television documentaries on art. Since 1993 he has been managing editor of *Balkon*, a very important arts magazine published ten times annually. Major monographs: *Die Ateliers in Budapest = Budapesti műtermek = Les ateliers de Budapest = The studios of Budapest (*Einführung und biographische Essays = bevezető és életrajzi esszék : introduction et essais biographiques : introduction and biographical essays) Tübingen : Wasmuth ; Paris : Navarra, 1990/ *Bak Imre* Budapest, Gondolat, 2003. / *Imre Bak* [transl. by Karl Peter Kirk and Alan Campbell], Budapest, Gondolat, 2004. (English)/ *Imre Bak* [Übers. Madeleine Merán], Budapest, Gondolat, 2004. (German)/ *Gedő Ilka Művészete* (1921–1985): *Oeuvre katalógus és dokumentumok*, Budapest, Gondolat, 2003, (Co-author: Bíró Dávid Bíró) (Angol nyelven is külön kötetben.) /*The Art of Ilka Gedő* (1921–1985): *Oeuvre Catalogue and Documents,* Budapest, Gondolat, 2003 (Co-author: Bíró Dávid)

Attila Kotányi (Sopron, 1924 – Düsseldorf, 2003) Philosopher, architect - urbanist

He lived in Budapest and was in contact with the theorists Lajos Szabó and Béla Hamvas. In 1956, after his participation in the popular uprising in Hungary, he fled with his family from Hungary via Yugoslavia to Brussels. In 1960 he heard about the artists' group Situationist International (SI) and soon after became a member. He advocated the thesis of the impossibility of an uncorrupted art and was interested in traditions of Christian mysticism. In December 1963 he was expelled from the SI. Later he moved to Düsseldorf, where he taught at the Düsseldorf Academy of Art for 12 years. Besides poetry and philosophical discussions, he also painted and created smaller architectural works. In the 1990s he returned to Budapest, where he pursued the last active period

of his life and gathered a fixed circle of young intellectuals in his Saturday afternoon discussions. In the seventies and eighties of the 20th century, he taught art at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf. In the nineties he lived again in Budapest. (Literature: Hannes Böhringer, J. A. Tillmann (eds.): *Tanzen wir Philosophie. Begegnungen mit Attila Kotányi.* Salon Verlag, Düsseldorf 2012

Márta Kovalovszky (Budapest, 1939–) art historian

She received her MA in the history of the art from ELTE University. Since 1963 she has been the curator and later senior department head of the King St Stephen Museum of Székesfehérvár. In addition to her theoretical work focussing on 20th-century visual arts, she was the curator of many crucially important exhibitions featuring major artists (1964: *Lajos Vajda*; 1965: Tibor Vilt & Noémi Ferenczy; 1967: Lajos Gulácsy; Béni Ferenczy; 1968: Dezső Bokros Birman & Lajos Kassák; 1970: Menyhért Tóth; 1974: *Júlia Vajda*; 1977: István Haraszty; 1980: *Ilka Gedő*; 1985: Vilmos Fémes-Beck and György Jovánovics; 1985 & 1985: Tibor Hajas; 1990 Sándor Altorjai).

Mándy Stefánia (Budapest, 1918 – Budapest, 2001)

She was an art historian, poet and translator. She was one of the closest friends of Júlia Vajda, Lajos Vajda and Endre Bálint. Her most important publications on art history: *Vajda Lajos*, Corvina Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1983; *Vajda Lajos (1908-1941),* Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalata, Budapest, 1964

Katalin Néray (Budapest, 1941– Budapest, 2007) art historian

She got an MA degree in art history and Hungarian literature from ELTE University in 1964. Between 1984 and 1992 she was the director of the Palace of Art (Műcsarnok). From 1992 till her death she was the director of Ludwig Museum — Museum of Contemporary Art. She curated several hundred exhibitions both in Hungary and

abroad. She was the curator of the Hungarian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1986, 1988, 1990 and 1997.

Gábor Pataki (Székesfehérvár, 1955 –) art historian

He got an MA degree in art history, history and aesthetics in 1980. Since then he has been working at the Institute of Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and since 1991 he has been its deputy director. He got his PhD degree in art history in 1997. His most important research fields are the 20th-century history of Hungarian art and the history of art criticism. Major publications: *Az Európai Iskola és az Elvont művészek csoportja*, (The European School and the Group of Abstract Artists), Budapest, Corvina, 1990 [co-author Péter György]/ *Lossonczy Tamás*, Budapest, Új Művészet Alapítvány, 1995/ „Egy művészi felfogás paradoxona. Gedő Ilka művészetéről" (The Paradoxon of an Artistic Approach: On Ilka Gedő's Art) [co-author Péter György]/ in: *Gedő Ilka művészete (1921-1985)* György Péter-Pataki Gábor, Szabó Júlia és Mészáros F. István tanulmányai /*The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921-1985)* Studies by Péter György-Gábor Pataki, Júlia Szabó and F. István Mészáros/ Budapest, Új Művészet Kiadó, 1997/ Magyar képzőművészet a 20. században, Budapest, Corvina, 1999) [co-authors Gábor Andrási, György Szücs & András Zwickl]/ *The History of Hungarian Art in the Twentieth Centur*y, Budapest, Corvina, 1999) [co-authors Gábor Andrási, György Szücs & András Zwickl]/ „Vajda Lajos: Felmutató ikonos önarckép" (Self-portrait with Hold-up Icon), *Ars Hungarica*, 2000/1

Máriusz Rabinovszky (Budapest, 1895 – Budapest, 1953) art historian and critic

He studied art history in Budapest, Munich and Berlin. In his studies he dealt with art history art theory. Between the two war he was the art critic of Lloyd. From 1948 he taught art history at the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts.

Gyula Rózsa (Budapest, 1941–) art historian, art critic

He got a degree in art history and Hungarian literature from ELTE university. Starting in 1964, he was for twenty years the art critic of Népszabadság, the daily news paper of the ruling Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. From 1985 to 1992 he was the director of the Museum of Applied Arts.

Júlia Szabó (Királyhelmec, 1939 – Budapest, 2004) art historian

She got her MA degree in art history and English in 1962. Between 1962 and 1969 she worked as a museologist at the Department of Drawings of the Hungarian National Gallery. From 1969 until her death she worked at the Art History Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. She earned her Ph.D with a dissertation titled *A történeti tájfestészet Magyarországon (Historical Scenery Painting in Hungary'"* in 1994. She discovered Ilka Gedő and wrote about her with great appreciation. (György Péter, Pataki Gábor, Szabó Júlia, Mészáros F. István: Gedő Ilka művészete (1921–1985)/ The Art of Ilka Gedő (1921–1985), Új Művészet,Budapest, 1997). Her research field was the history of Hungarian and European art of the 19th and 20th century. From among her more than twenty books, we mention here her book *A XIX. század festészete Magyarországon* published by Corvina Kiadó, Budapest, in 1985. This book was published both in German and English (*Die Malerei des 19. Jahrhunderts in Ungarn*, Corvina Kiadó, Budapest, 1988 /*Painting in Nineteenth-Century Hungar*y, Corvina Kiadó, Budapest, 1988.)

III. Other Persons

Endre Bíró (Budapest, 1919– Velem, 1988) biochemist

Bíró started his scientific career at the Biochemistry Institute of the Pázmány Péter University of Budapest in 1945, an institute that the Nobel Prize winning scientist, Albert Szent-Györgyi founded in the same year. In 1968 Bíró became a university professor and the head of the newly established Department of Biochemistry. In addition to extensive teaching activities, the Department of Biochemistry at Eötvös Loránd University did research into the biochemistry of proteins and the biology of muscle contraction. Between 1947 and 1950 Bíró attended the lectures delivered by *Lajos Szabó*. These lecture seminars were sometimes also attended by the essayist Béla Hamvas and the philosopher *Béla Tábor*. Bíró translated extensive excerpts from James Joyce's Finnegans Wake and wrote a detailed study on this work of fiction.

György Spiró (Budapest, 1946 –) dramatist, novelist and essayist

György Spiró is a dramatist, novelist and essayist who has emerged as one of post-war Hungary's most prominent literary figures. He is a member of the Széchenyi Academy of Literature and Arts. He graduated in Hungarian and Slavic literature from ELTE in 1970. In addition to his writing, he was employed as associate professor at ELTE's Department of World Literature. In 2005 he published an 800-page novel, *Fogság* (Captivity). Set in the Roman Empire in the time of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, it follows the experiences of a Jewish wanderer named Uri. Spiró's earlier works eschewed Jewish themes, but in this work he returns to his ancestral roots. He has always been very interested in visual arts. One of his very successful novels, published in 2010 is *Tavaszi tárlat* (Spring Exhibition), 2010), describing the early days of Hungary after the revolution.

Lajos Szabó (Budapest, 1902 – Düsseldorf, 1967), philosopher, calligrapher

In the first half of the 1920s, Lajos Szabó worked in Vienna and Budapest as a bookshop-assistant. Between 1928 and 1930 he became a member of the "work circle" of Lajos Kassák. Between 1931 and 1932, Lajos Szabó spent some months in Berlin and Frankfurt. He studied at the Institute for Social Research and in 1933 and 1934 he went on study tours to Vienna and to Paris. Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor laid the foundations of the Budapest School of the Dialogue in the post-war years. The year 1954 saw the creation of the first calligraphies which can be regarded to be "meditations expressed through drawings". The Berlin Calligraphy Collection in Berlin's Akademie der Künste has a total of 414 calligraphies by Lajos Szabó which were created before Szabó's emigration to the West.

Béla Tábor (1907–1992) philosopher, translator

Together with Lajos Szabó he was the founder of the Budapest School of the Dialogue which was a “counter-cultural” community of intellectuals, including, among others, *Ilka Gedő* and her husband, *Endre Bíró*, *Júlia Vajda*, *Endre Bálint,* Béla Hamvas, *Ernő Kállai*, Magda Huszár, *Attila Kotányi*, Árpád Mezei, Gábor Bíró and János Surányi. The circle around Lajos Szabó and Béla Tábor came together regularly, discussing the issues of art and philosophy. Béla Tábor and his life-time friend *Lajos Vajda* wrote together the book titled *Vádirat a szellem ellen*[215] (Indictment of the Spirit) In it the authors claim that the representatives of the spirit are responsible for the current crisis. They tolerate a situation in which short-sighted practice takes over the world. There is no universally valid language about the crisis. There are only separate languages that cannot understand each other. Béla Hamvas wrote a book review about this book whose last sentence runs like this: "Life becomes more and more difficult for man,

[215] *Vádirat a szellem ellen* (Indictment of the Spirit*),* Budapest, Az Idő könyvei, 1936

because he knows more and more. And he who knows a lot, and does not live accordingly, points out Jan van Ruysbroek, is lost once and for all."[216]

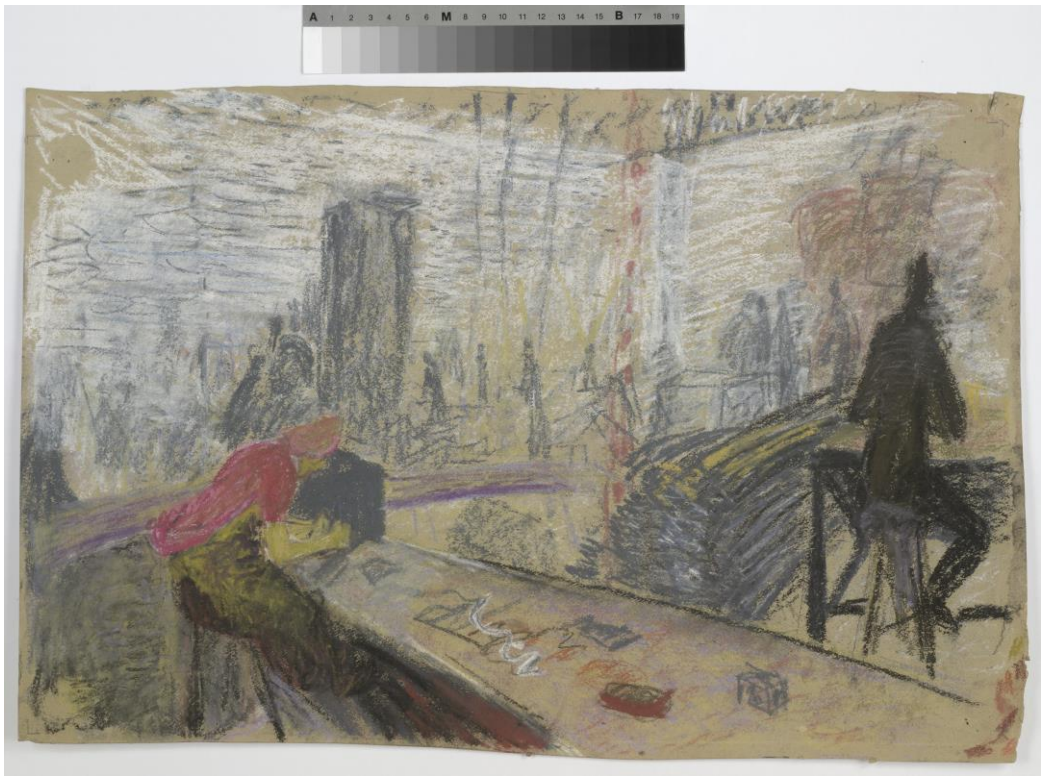
[216] Béla Hamvas: „Anklage gegen den Geist", a book review In: *Eikon: Die spekulativen Bildschriften von Lajos Szabó*, Budapest, Ernst Múzeum, 1997, p. 73

Ganz Factory

Ilka Gedő: *Ganz Factory Drawing No. 1 from Folder No. 44,* 1947-48¸ pastel, pencil, silver cover paint, paper, 251 x 349 mm, seal on the verso: “The estate of Ilka Gedő”, Albertina, Vienna

Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46658

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedő_M44_001.jpg



Ilka Gedő: *Ganz Factory Drawing No. 5 from Folder No. 44¸* 1947-48, pastel, paper, 356 x 518 mm, seal on the verso: “The estate of Ilka Gedő”, Albertina, Vienna

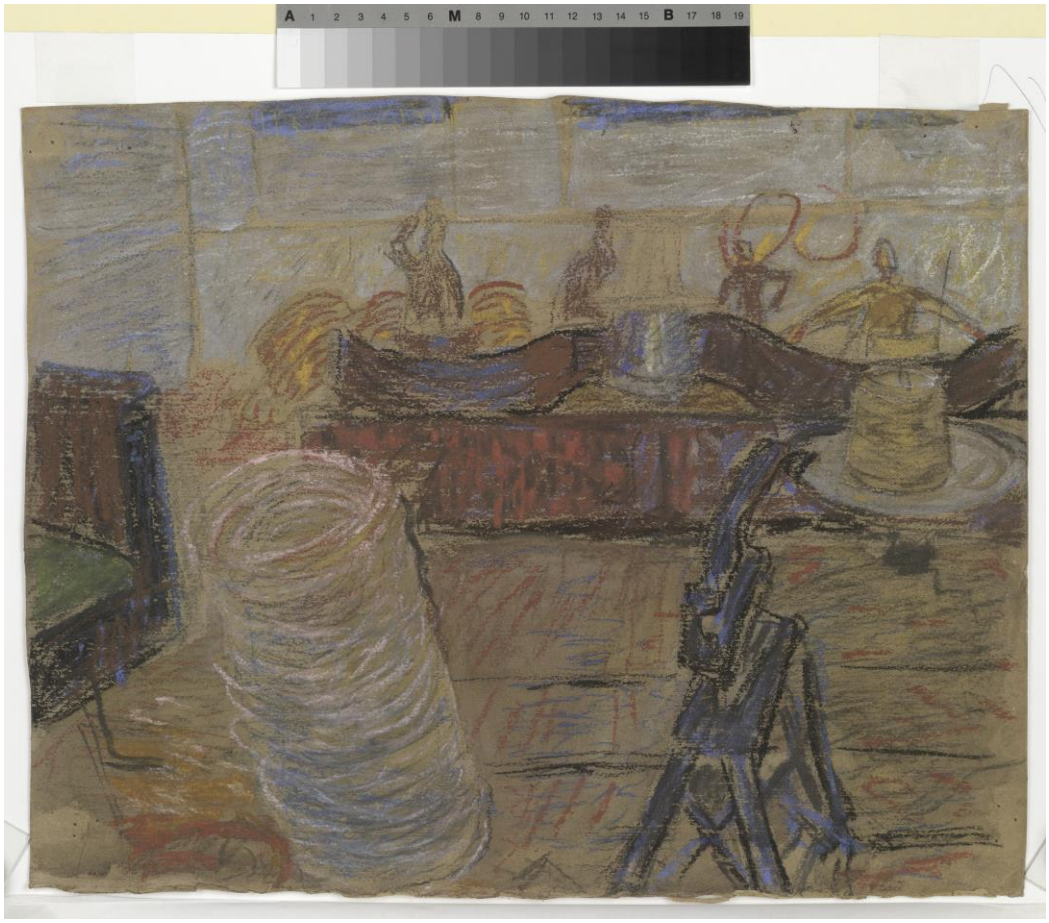
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46659

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedő_M44_005.jpg
Exhibited: Memorial retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Hungary (18 November 2004 – 31 March 2005). Catalogue, works on paper, exhibition item No. 88.

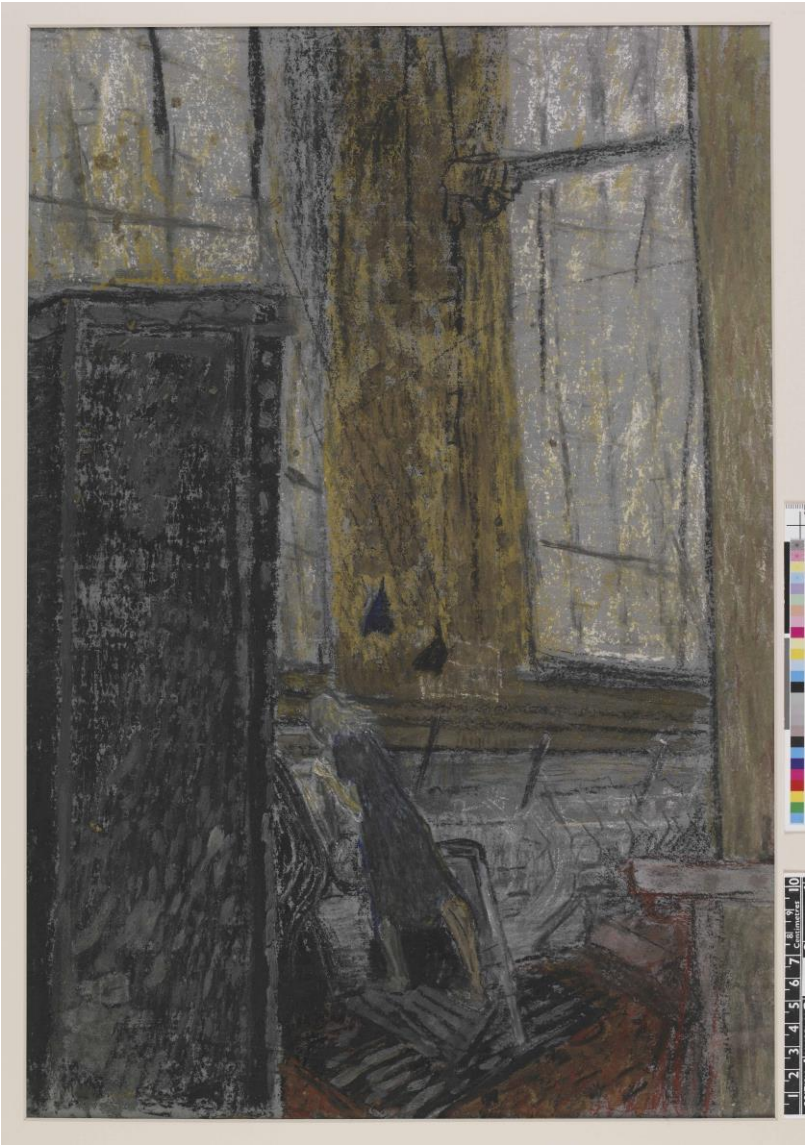
Ilka Gedő: *Ganz Factory Drawing No. 6 from Folder No. 44¸* 1947-48, pastel, thick carton, 351 x 493 mm, verso: Self-Portrait Drawing by Ilka Gedő & seal: "The estate of Ilka Gedő", Albertina, Vienna

Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46660

http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedő_M44_006.jpg
Exhibited: Memorial retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Hungary (18 November 2004 – 31 March 2005). Catalogue, works on paper, exhibition item No. 89.

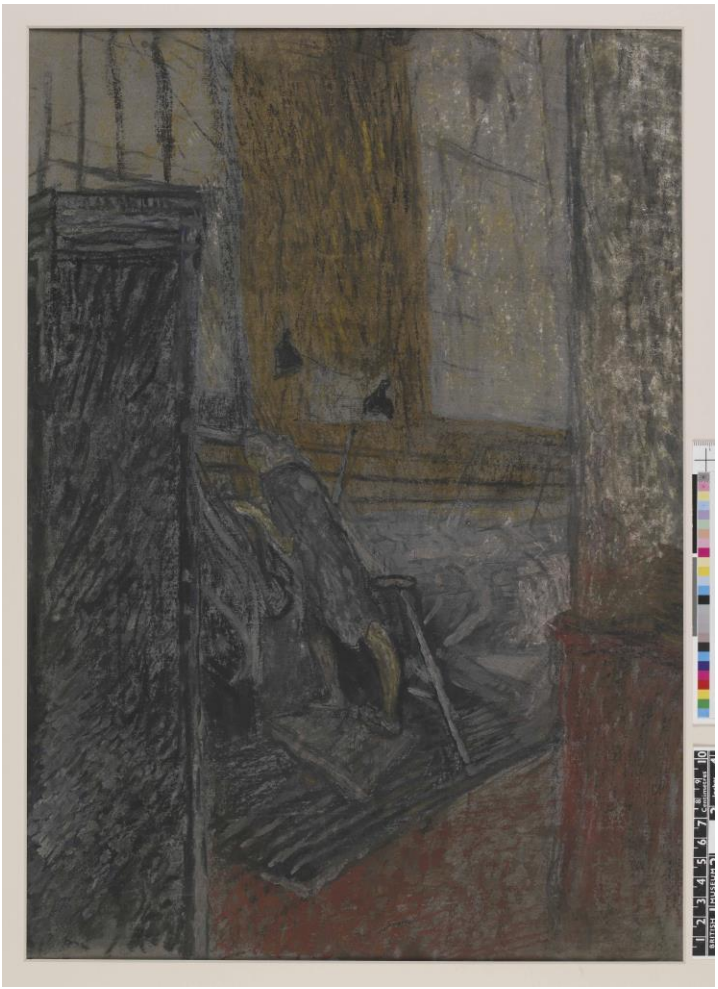


Ilka Gedő: *Ganz Factory Drawing No. 15 from Folder No. 44*¸ 1947-48, pastel, thick carton, 330 x 422 mm, seal on the verso: “The estate of Ilka Gedő”, Albertina, Vienna
Albertina inventory number: Inv.Nr. 46661
http://www.ilkaGedő.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedő_M44_015.jpg



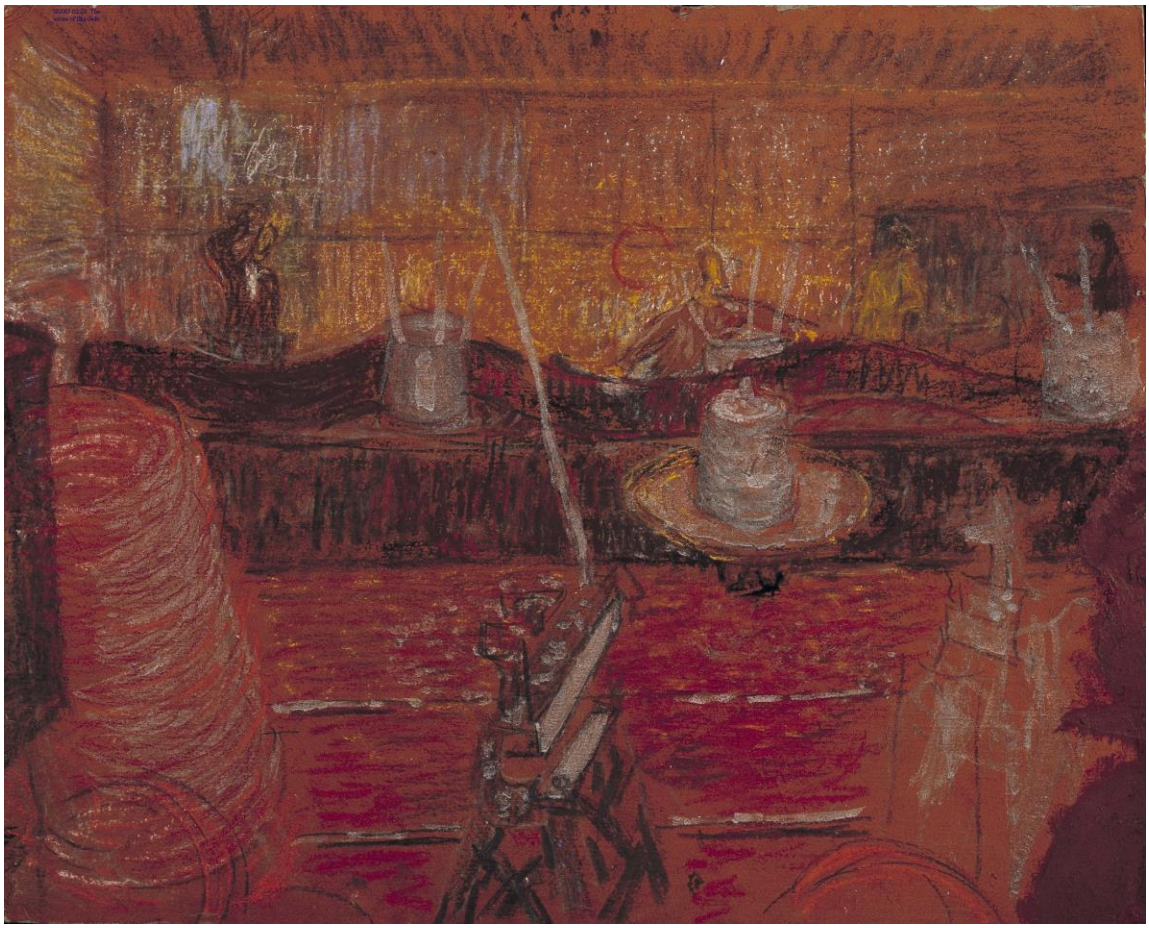
Woman in factory with windows, grey wall in right foreground, 1947–48, pastel with gold and silver paint, paper, 495 x 344 mm, unsigned, the British Museum

Woman with red top seated at a table, 1948, pastel, paper, 358 x 507 mm, signed and dated in graphite at lower left: *Gedő I/48,* The British Museum



Woman in factory with windows, red wall at right foreground, 1947-48, pastel with gold and silver paint, paper, 493 x 347 mm, unsigned, The British Museum

Woman at worktable with objects, 1947-48, pastel, paper, 351 x 530 mm unsigned, the British Museum



Ilka Gedő: Machines at the Ganz factory, from Folder 57, 1947, pastel, carton, 390 x 485 mm, Hungarian National Gallery

Ganz Factory (Drawing No. 10 in Folder No. 44), 1949 Pastel, paper, 307 x 424 mm,, MoMA, New York, Department of Drawings and Prints
http://www.ilkagedo.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedo_M44_010.jpg

Ganz Factory (Drawing No. 13 in Folder No. 44), 1949 Pastel, paper, 305 x 426 mm¸, MoMA, New York, Department of Drawings and Prints
http://www.ilkagedo.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedo_M44_013.jpg

Ganz Factory (Drawing No. 13 in Folder No. 44), 1949 Pastel, paper, 305 x 426 mm, , MoMA, New York, Department of Drawings and Prints
http://www.ilkagedo.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/44/images/Gedo_M44_013.jpg

The Table Series

Ilka Gedő: Table 8, 1949, black and brown pastel, paper, 650 x 610 mm, Hungarian National Gallery

Ilka Gedő: Table with Tablecloth, 1948-49, pencil, paper, 675 x 650 mm, Hungarian National Gallery

Table # 6, 1949, black ink, paper, 324 x 326 mm, unsigned*;* on verso the fully developed drawing of the table in black ink and pencil, signed and dated in graphite at lower right: *„Gedő Ilka/1949*", British Museum

Ilka Gedő: Table # 1, 1949, black ink, medium weight vellum paper, 648 x 648 mm, signed and dated at the bottom right: "Gedő Ilka, 1949", Maurice Tempelsman, New York

Colour Patterns[217]

Colour Pattern No. 123, 1970-1985, 1970-1985, Öl, Tusche, Feder, Leinwand, 90 x 240 mm, Hungarian National Gallery

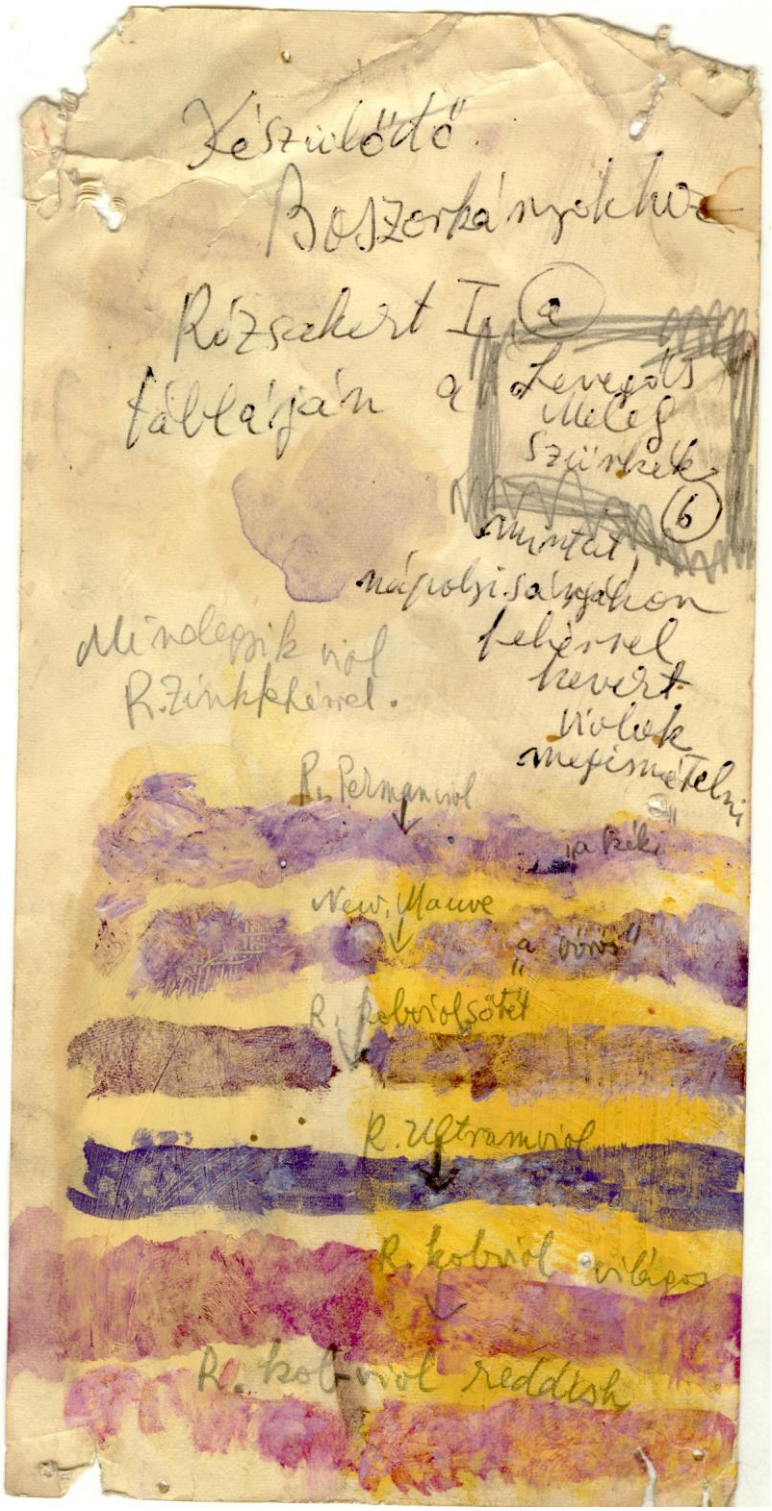
[217] There are approximately about 310 colour patterns. The complete colour patterns can be viewed here: https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/gedo_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/colourpatt/index_en.php.htm

Colour Pattern No. 136, 1970-1985, oil, China ink, pen, paper, 170 x 230 mm

Colour Pattern No. 162, 1970-1985, colour pencil, paper, 80 x 140 mm

Colour Pattern No. 111, 1970-1985, oil, China ink, pen, paper, 120 x 260 mm

Colour Pattern No. 258, 1970-1985, oil, China ink, pen, paper, 160 x 135 mm, Hungarian National Gallery



Colour Pattern No. 250, 1970-1985, oil, China ink, pen, pencil, paper, 200 x 100 mm

The Self-Portraits (A Selection)[218]

1. Juvenilia Self-Portraits

Drawing 12 of Folder 37, 1939, pencil, paper, 150 x 163 mm, marked lower right. „1939", Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany, No. 18

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/13/images/Gedő_Braunschweig_18_M37_012.jpg

[218] Based on a digitized catalogue of her oeuvre, the folders contain more than 3000 drawings by Ilka Gedő, plus the Juvenilia drawings, which number approximately 1700. The number of drawings made between 1944 and 1949 is 740. The total number of self-portraits on paper is about 370. The number of self-portraits in oil is nine.

Drawing 13 from Folder 37, 1939, pencil, paper, 338 x 209 mm, marked lower right: „*1939*", Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany, No. 19

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/13/images/Gedő_Braunschweig_19_M37_013.jpg

Self-Portrait, around 1940, pencil, paper, 452 x 287 mm, private collection, exhibited as item 102 at Glasgow's Third Eye Centre

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_102_(MNG_kiallitas_20).jpg

Drawing 2 from Folder 21, 1938, pencil, paper, 236 x 215 mm

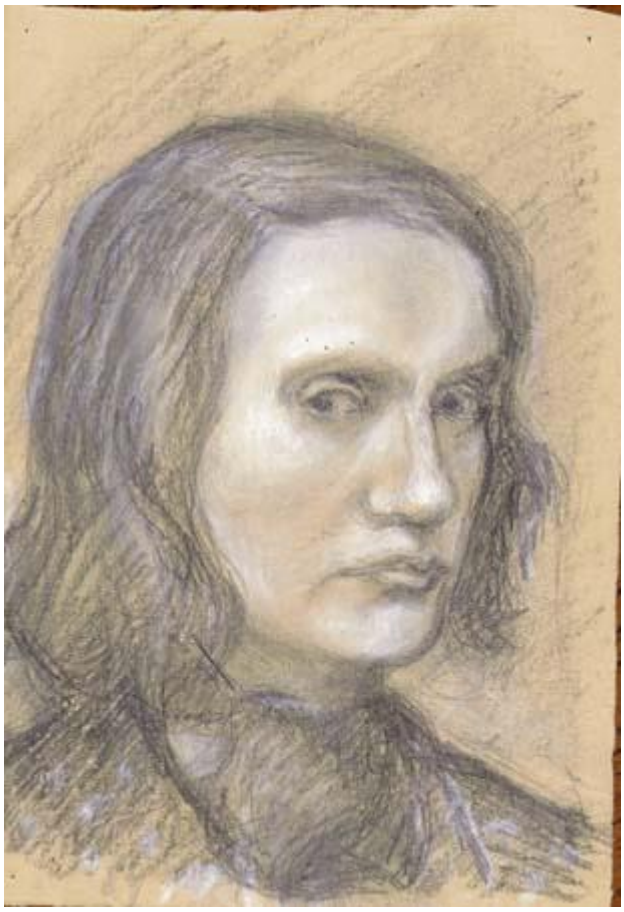
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/21/images/Gedő_M21_002.jpg

Drawing 3 from Folder 21, 1938, pencil, paper, 236 x 215 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/21/images/Gedő_M21_003.jpg

Drawing 4 from Folder 21, 1938, pencil, paper, 236 x 215 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/21/images/Gedő_M21_004.jpg



Drawing 1 from Folder 37, 1938, black, brown and crimson chalks, 252 x 173 mm, private collection

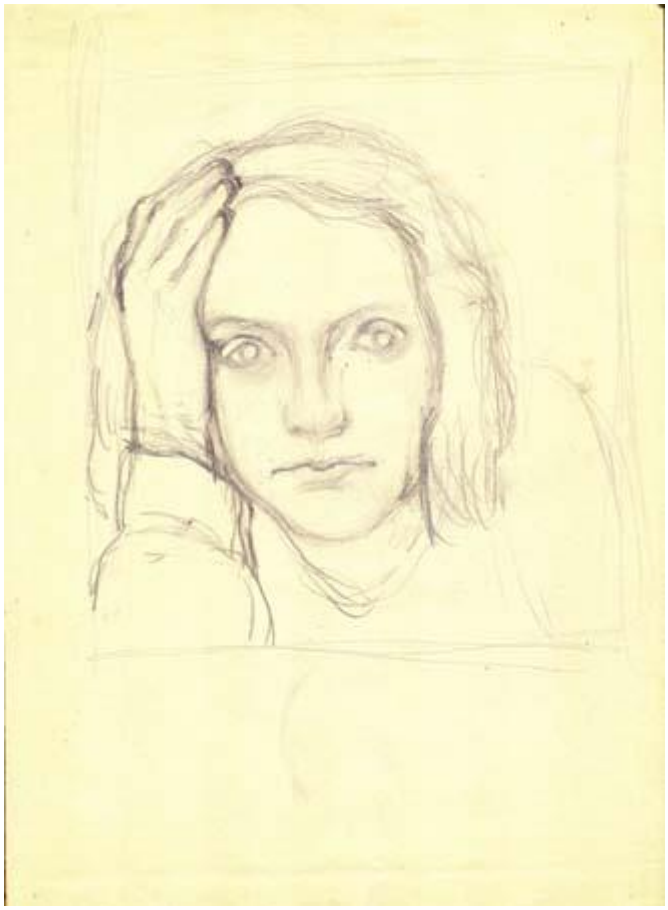
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_001.jpg

Darwing 2 of Folder 37, 1941, black chalk, paper, 214 x 184, mm, marked upper right: „*1941*?”, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_002.jpg

Drawing 3 of Folder 37, 1938, 213 x141 mm, charcoal, paper, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_003.jpg



Drawing 4 of Folder 37, 1938, 303 x 210 mm, pencil, paper, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_004.jpg

Drawing 5 of Folder 37, 1938, 283 x 221 mm, coal, paper, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_005.jpg

Drawing 6 of Folder 37, 1938, pencil, coal, paper, 313 x 221 mm, private collection

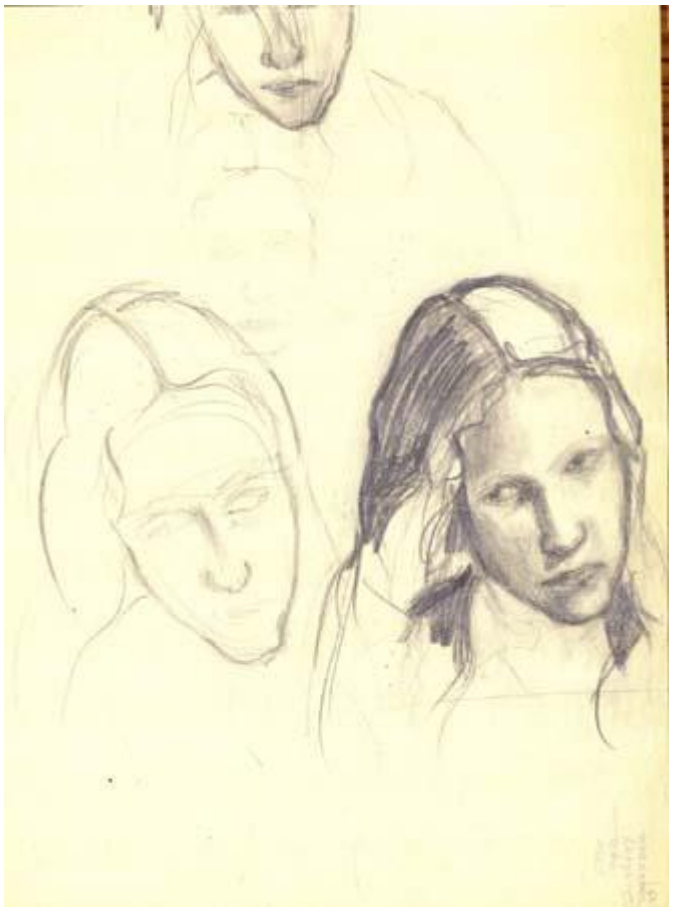
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_006.jpg

Drawing 7 of Folder 37, 1938, pencil, paper, 313 x 241 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_007.jpg

Drawing 8 of Folder 37, 1938, pencil, paper, 170 x 150 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_008.jpg



Drawing 39 of Folder 37, 1938, charcoal, paper, 366 x 263 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_039.jpg

Drawing 41 of Folder 37, 1938, charcoal, pencil, paper, 313 x 240 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_041.jpg

Drawing 45 of Folder 37, 1938, coal, charcoal, paper, 313 x 240 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_045.jpg

Drawing 46 of Folder 37, 1938, black chalk, paper, 403 x 302 mm, private collection

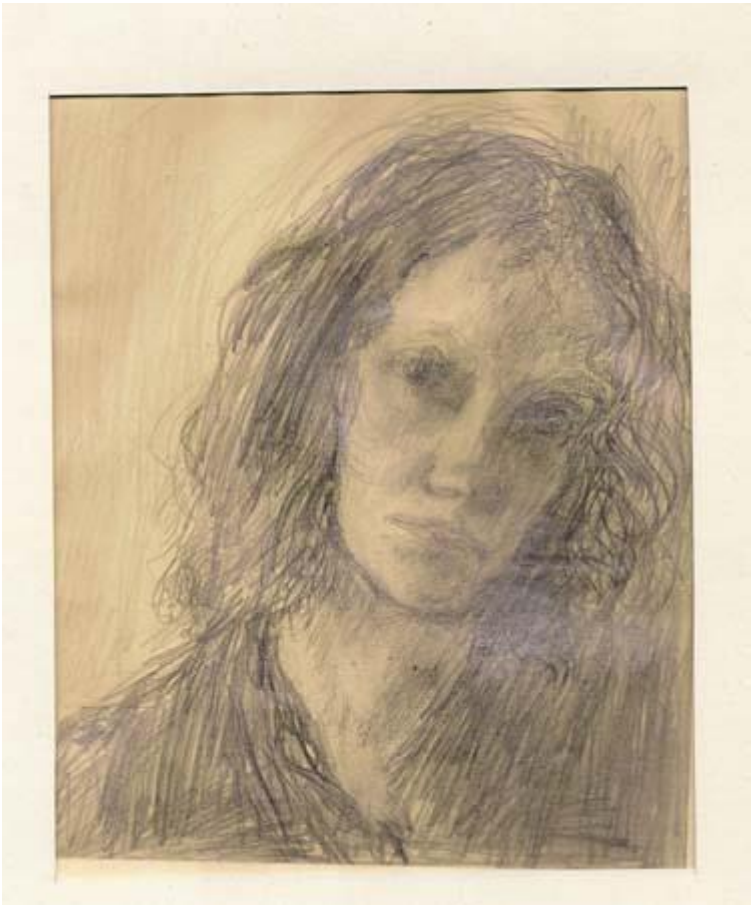
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_046.jpg

Drawing 112 of the Glasgow Exhibition (Third Eye Centre), 1938, pencil, paper, 220 x 172 mm

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_112.jpg

Drawing 113 of the Glasgow Exhibition, 1938, pencil, paper, 339 x 199 mm

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_113.jpg



Drawing 114 of the Glasgow Exhibition, 1938, pencil, paper, 305 x 217 mm

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_114.jpg

2. Self-Portraits in the Budapest Ghetto, 1944[219]

Four self-portraits were made in the ghetto.

1. On the self-portrait drawing that is preserved at Yad Vashem Art Museum the artist is still 23 years old, but an ageless person looks back on us or rather a person who has grown old. The eyes reveal that her spirit has already been broken, but the compressed lips and the line descending from the curve of the lips show that the artist still has the strength to fight for her life.

„This self-portrait is characterized by the blurring of the figure, which cancels her identity. The artist, just twenty-three years old, depicted herself as an old woman. Her shaded face and eyes and her stopped shoulders express fatigue and depression. In

[219] On 5 April 5 1944, the first compulsory decree was issued to Hungarian Jews: every Jew had to wear the yellow star. It was decreed that vehicles owned by Jews had to be registered for later confiscation by the Ministry of Defence. Jews were no longer allowed to work as civil servants; the Bar Association excluded Jewish lawyers from its ranks. On 7 April the freedom of travel of Jews was restricted. Jewish property was confiscated, and as a result Jewish shops were closed. On 21 April the stocks of Jewish shops were confiscated and the government ordered the ghettoisation of the Jews. This was followed by a series of humiliation measures.

In the summer of 1944 Ilka Gedő was forced to move to a yellow-star house at 26 *Erzsébet körút* (a house very close to where the ghetto was located) and this is where she stayed until January 18, 1945 when the Pest side of Budapest was liberated by the Red Army. At first, this building was part of the emergency ghetto hospital located at 44 *Wesselényi utca,* which later became a shelter for abandoned children. These orphaned or deserted children appear in Ilka Gedő's ghetto drawings. From the spring of 1944 onwards, the rapid and complete exclusion of the Jews from Hungarian society accelerated.

On 15 May 1944, the deportation of provincial Jews to concentration camps was started. „The Hungarian Jewish community lost 564,500 lives during the war including 63,000 before the German occupation. Of the 501,500 casualties of the post occupation era 267,800 lives were from Trianon Hungary—85,000 from Budapest and 182,000 from the provinces—and 233,7000 from the territories acquired from Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia."(*Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust*, McMillan Publishing House, 1990, II. p. 702). Although on 7 July the deportation was stopped, the Jews living in villages in the immediate vicinity of the capital were deported on 8 July.

The only Jewish community that had not yet been deported was in Budapest. The idea of creating a centralised ghetto was rejected, and instead the Jews were forced to move to houses designated for them. The relevant decree came into force on 16 June 1944. According to it, a Jewish family was entitled to a single room. The Jews therefore had to leave and vacate their apartments. The group of Jews who were later called ghetto Jews (boys under 14 and girls under 16, pregnant mothers, sick people, women over 50 and men over 60) had to move to the ghetto established on 29 November. Hunger, lack of water and terrible hygienic conditions claimed many victims. Every day 80-120 dead people had to be buried. When the Red Army liberated the ghetto on 17 January 1945, 3000 corpses were lying in the streets of the ghetto.

her post-war self-portraits, Ilka Gedő continued with this expressive approach to her painful introspection."[220]

Self-Portrait in the Ghetto, 1944, pencil, paper, 22,5 x 21, 5 cm, marked lower right: „*Önarckép a gettóban*" (Self-Portrait in the Ghetto), Yad Vashem Art Museum

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/5/324374.html

[220] Eliad Moreh-Rosenberg, Walter Smerling (Hrsg.):*Kunst aus dem Holocaust.*Wienand Verlag, Köln 2016, ISBN 978-3-86832-315-3, pp. 188–189.

2. On the self-portrait that is to be found in the Hungarian Jewish Museum we see the artist from a three-quarter profile that is so common on Ilka Gedő's self-portraits. The artist depicts herself sitting in front of a drawing board, and she emphasises her dignity.

Self-Portrait in the Ghetto, 1944, charcoal, paper, 161 x 157 mm, marked lower left: *„Önarckép a gettóban*" (Self-Portrait in the Ghetto), Hungarian Jewish Museum

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/1/images/92_10_161x157cm.jpg

3. On drawing 31 from Folder 10 she depicts herself leaning on her elbow: from a head resting on the artist's palm an old woman is looking back straight into the eyes of the viewer.

Self-Portrait in the Ghetto, 1944, pencil, paper, 231 x 154 mm, marked lower right: „*Önarckép a gettóban*" (Self-Portrait in the Ghetto), Hungarian National Gallery

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/10/images/Gedő_M10_031.jpg

4. On drawing 64 from the Addenda folder the artist's head is propped up on her elbow and the eyes, so it seems, stare into nothingness. The ego looks for support in her own self.

Drawing 66 of the Addenda Folder, 1944, pencil, paper, 238 x 205 mm, marked lower right: "*1944 őszén*" (in the autumn of 1944), Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/13/images/Gedő_Braunschweig_21_65GedőAddenda1944.jpg

3. Confronting the Traumas of the War[221]

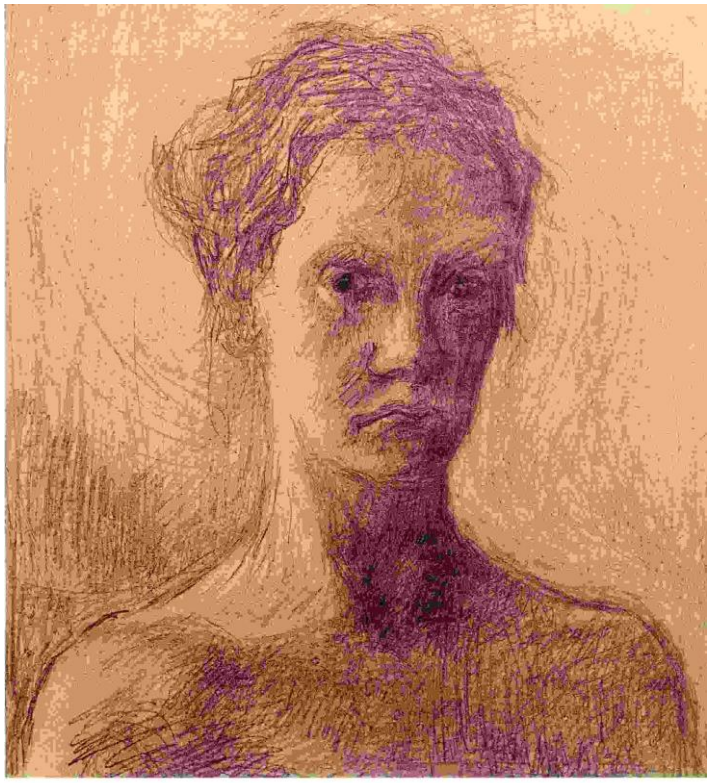
Sadness, 1946-1947, black ink, paper, 145 x 88 mm, Hungarian National Gallery

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/15/images/Gedő_M15_085.jpg

[221] These drawings reveal such intense suffering and pain that one is inclined to say: if the artist had not managed to make these drawings, she would easily have suffered a mental breakdown. In connection with the self-portrait series, one could say that these drawings are "narrative in terms of the reproduction of the artist's impressions that she had received at the time in relation to the various role definitions, which she had largely not expressed in words. István Hajdu: „Hallf Image, Half Veil – The Art of Ilka Gedő“ In: *The Art of Ilka Gedő* Budapest, Gondolat Kiadó, 2003, p. 15

Drawing 3 in Folder 15, pencil, paper, 238 x 195 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/15/images/Gedő_M15_003.jpg



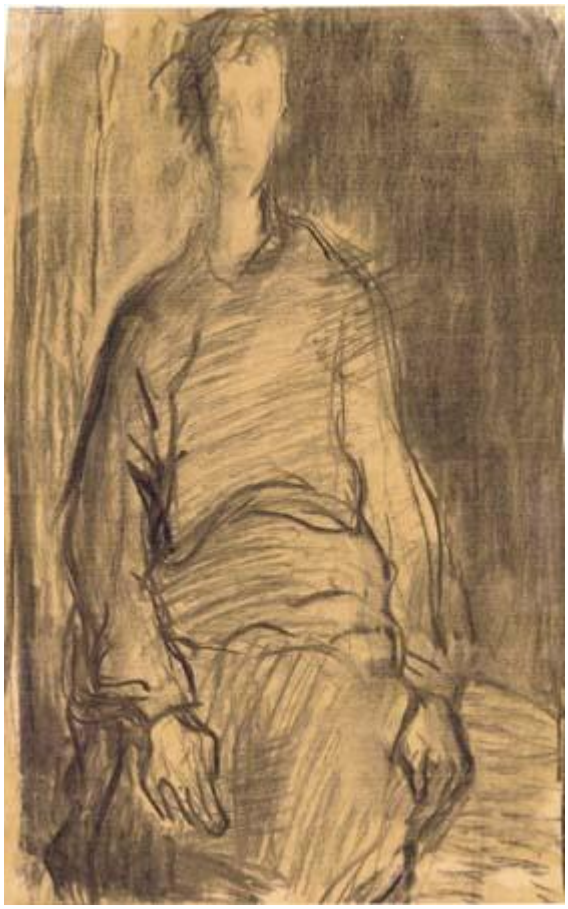
Self-Portrait, 1947-49, pencil, paper, 240 x 210 mm, Robert Kashey's Collection, New York

Drawing 18 from Folder 23, 1947, pencil, paper, 204 x 291 mm, marked lower right: „1947 nyara”, the summer of 1947, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, No. 1

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/10/images/Gedő_Houston_01_M23_018.jpg

Drawing 3 from Folder 54, 1947, black chalk, pencil, paper, 201 x 152 mm, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, No. 2

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/10/images/Gedő_Houston_02_M54_003.jpg



Drawing 27 from Folder 45, 1947, black chalk, pencil, paper, 356 x 229 mm, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, No. 3

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/10/images/Gedő_Houston_03_M45_027.jpg

Drawing 13 from Folder 45, 1947, charcoal, paper, 349 x 257 mm, marked lower right: „*1947 tavasza*" (the spring of 1947), Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, No. 4

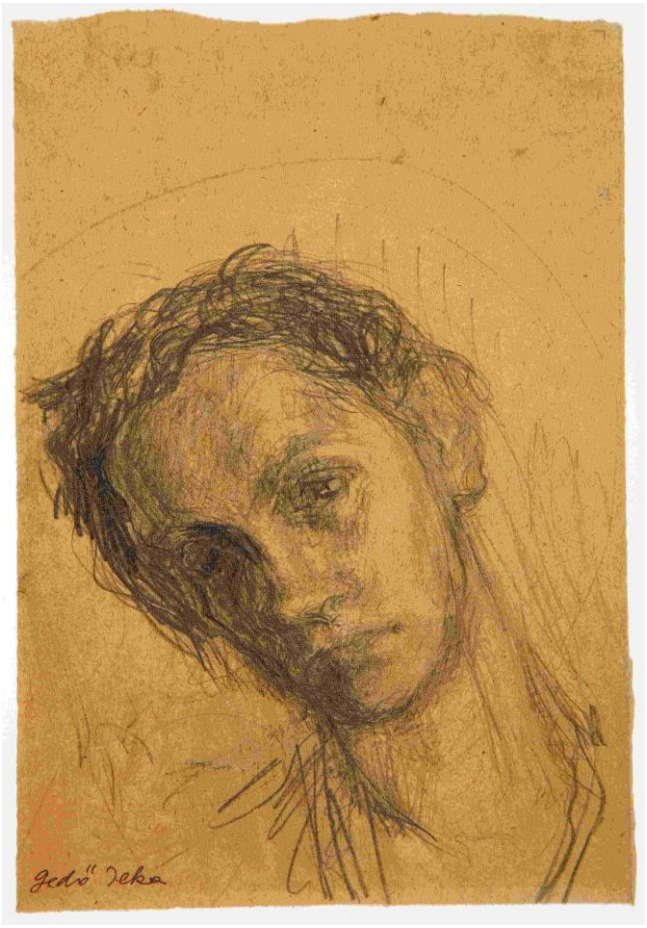
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/10/images/Gedő_Houston_04_M45_013.jpg

Drawing 9 from Folder 22, 1947, pen, paper, 390 x 280 mm, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, No. 5

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/10/images/Gedő_Houston_05_M22_009.jpg

Self-Portrait, 1946, pencil, paper, 200 x 190, mm, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, No. 1

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/3/images/Ilka_Gedő_Dusseldorf_01.jpg



Pensive Self-Portrait, 1946, pencil, paper, 215 x 130, mm, marked lower left: „*Gedő Ilka*", Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, No. 3

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/3/images/Ilka_Gedő_Dusseldorf_03.jpg

Self-Portrait, 1946, pencil, paper, 220 x 160 mm, marked lower right: „*Gedő Ilka*”, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, No. 4

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/3/images/Ilka_Gedő_Dusseldorf_04.jpg

Ilka Gedő: Self-Portrait, 1947, black ink, paper, 160 x 100 mm, marked upper left: „*Gedő Ilka*", Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, No. 5

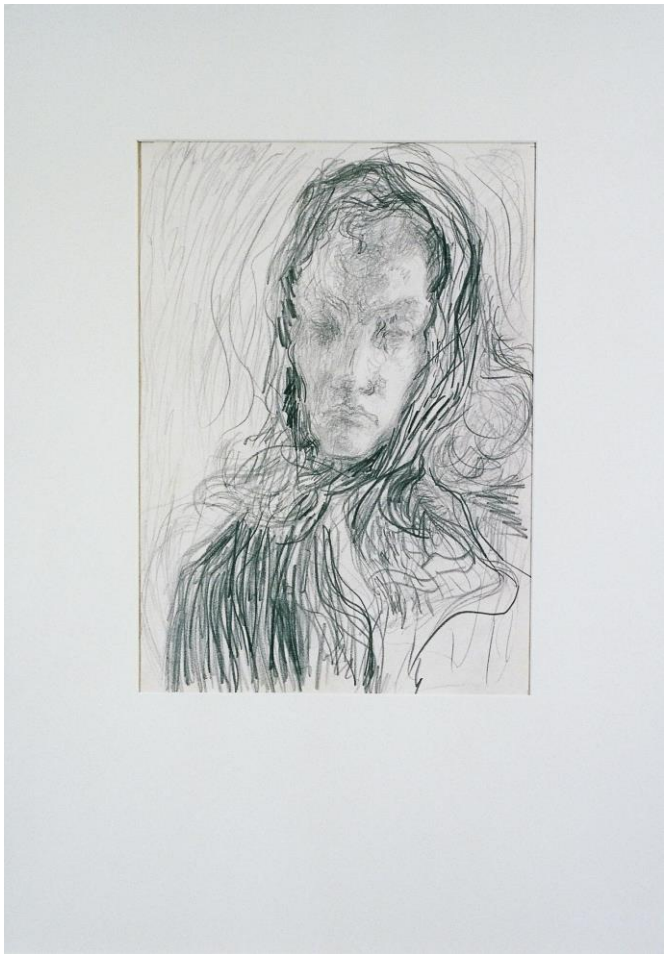
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/3/images/Ilka_Gedő_Dusseldorf_05.jpg

Ilka Gedő: Sorrow, 1947, pencil, paper, 275 x 205, mm, Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, No. 7

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/3/images/Ilka_Gedő_Dusseldorf_07.jpg

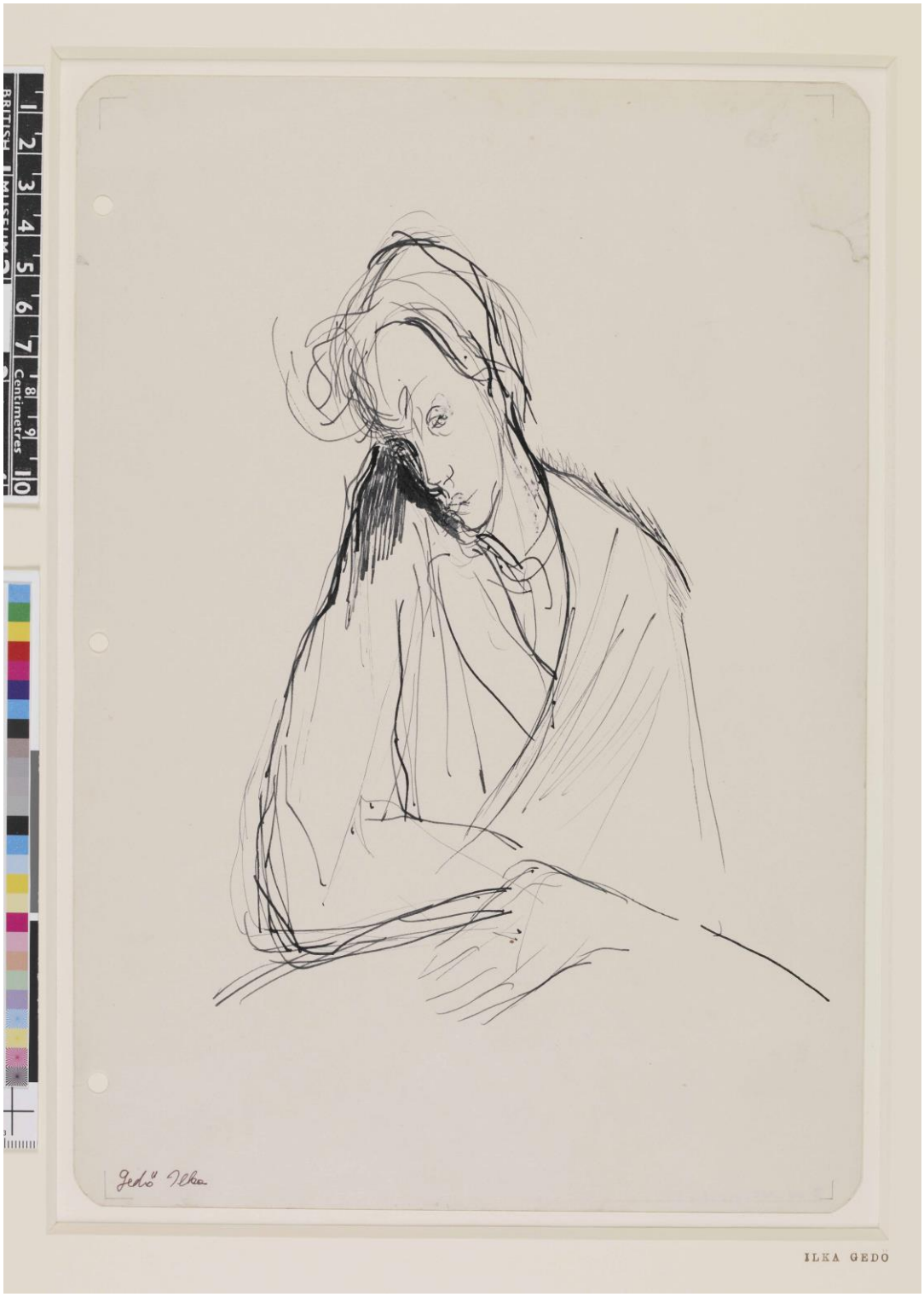
Ilka Gedő: Self-Portrait, 1948, chalk, pencil, paper, 215 x 130, mm, marked lower right: „*1948 nyár?*" (the summer of 1949?), Israel Museum, Jerusalem, No. 3

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/4/images/Ilka_Gedő_Israel_Museum_03.jpg



Self-Portrait, 1948, pencil, paper, 285 x 207, mm, Israel Museum, Jerusalem, No. 5

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/4/images/Ilka_Gedő_Israel_Museum_05.jpg

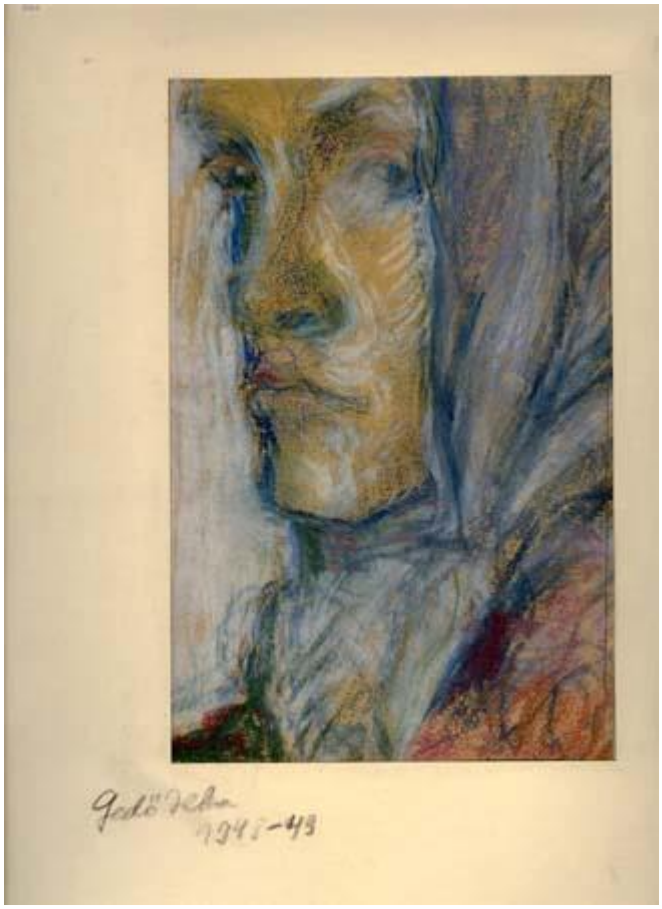


Self-Portrait, 1947, black ink, paper, 280 x 216 mm, marked lower left: „*Gedő Ilka*”, British Museum, No. 1

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/6/images/Gedő_British_01.jpg

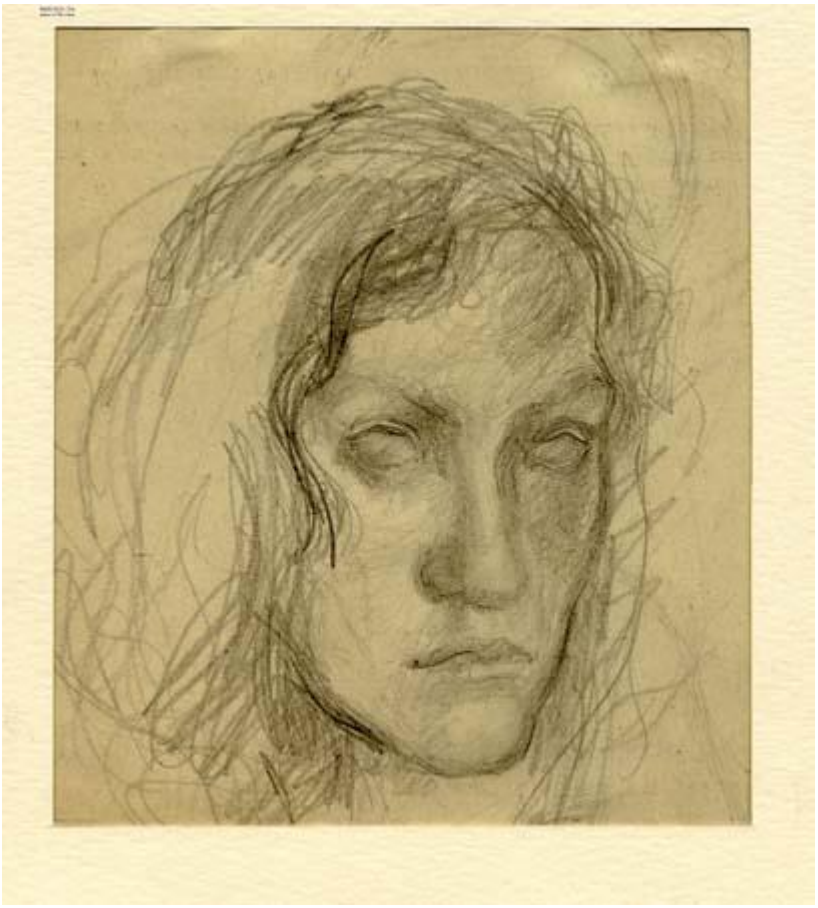
Drawing 19 from Folder 42, 1949, pen, paper, 288 x 305 mm, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, No. 7

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/10/images/Gedő_Houston_07_M42_019.jpg



Drawing 13 from Folder 54, 1948-1949, pastel, paper, 223 x 146 mm, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, No. 8

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/10/images/Gedő_Houston_08_M54_013.jpg



Drawing 1 of Folder 12, 1947, pencil, paper, 125 x 108 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_001.jpg

Drawing 2 of Folder 12, 1947, black ink, paper, 64 x 103 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_002.jpg

Drawing 3 of Folder 12, 1947, black ink, paper, 64 x 103 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_003.jpg

Drawing 4 (Portrait with Hand) of Folder 12, 1947, black ink, paper, 86 x 63 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_004.jpg

Drawing 5 of Folder 12, 1945-1946, black chalk, paper, 241 x 190 mm, private collection

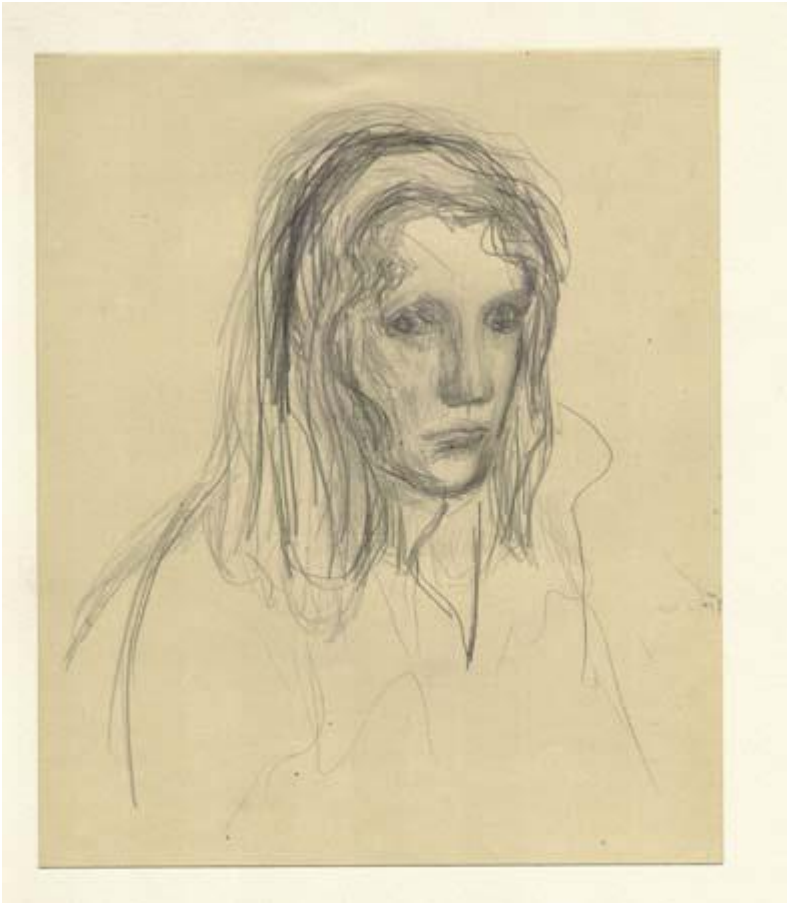
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_005.jpg

Drawing 6 of Folder 20, 1945-1946, pencil, paper, 111 x 87 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/20/images/Gedő_M20_006.jpg

Drawing 8 of Folder 20, 1945-1946, pencil, paper, 263 x 210 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/20/images/Gedő_M20_008.jpg



Drawing 12 of Folder 20, 1945-1946, pencil, paper, 223 x 171 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/20/images/Gedő_M20_012.jpg

Drawing 19 of Folder 20, 1945-1946, pencil, paper, 281 x 220 mm, marked lower left: „Gedő Ilka” private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/20/images/Gedő_M20_019.jpg

Drawing 22 of Folder 20, 1945-1946, pencil, paper, 281 x 220 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/20/images/Gedő_M20_022.jpg

Self-Portrait, 1947, charcoal, paper, 350 x 240 mm, Hungarian National Gallery No. 14

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedő_lista_14_a_41.jpg

Self-Portrait, 1947, crayon, paper, 318 x 297 mm, marked lower left: „*1948 nyár?*”, (the summer of 1948?), Hungarian National Gallery No. 3

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedő_lista_03.jpg

Self-Portrait, 1947, charcoal, paper, 365 x 280 mm, the Hungarian National Gallery No. 10

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedő_lista_10_album_37.jpg

Self-Portrait, ca. 1947, pastel, paper, 356 x 261 mm, drawing 101 of the Glasgow Exhibition (Third Eye Centre), private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_101_(MNG_kiallitas_20).jpg

Self-Portrait 18, ca. 1947, pencil, paper, 235 x 189 mm, marked lower left: „Gedő Ilka”, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_115.jpg

Self-Portrait 19, ca. 1947, pencil, paper, 182 x 177 mm, drawing 116 of the Glasgow Exhibition (Third Eye Centre), private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_116.jpg

Self-Portrait 27, ca. 1947, pencil, paper, 343 x 248 mm, drawing 134 of the Glasgow Exhibition (Third Eye Centre), private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_124.jpg

Drawing 22 in Folder 19, the winter of 1946-1947, black ink, wax paper, 278 x 215 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/19/images/Gedő_M19_022.jpg

Drawing 10 in Folder 12, 1948, pencil, paper, 168 x 223 mm, marked lower left: "*48 nyár?*" (the summer of 1948?), private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_010.jpg

Drawing 21 in Folder 12, 1947, pencil, paper, 310 x 120 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_021.jpg

Drawing 22 in Folder 12, 1946, pencil, paper, 295 x 210 mm, marked lower right: "*Fillér utca, 1946 tavasza*" (Fillér Street, the spring of 1946), private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_022.jpg

Drawing 24 in Folder 12, 1948, pencil, tissue paper, 238 x 195 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_024.jpg

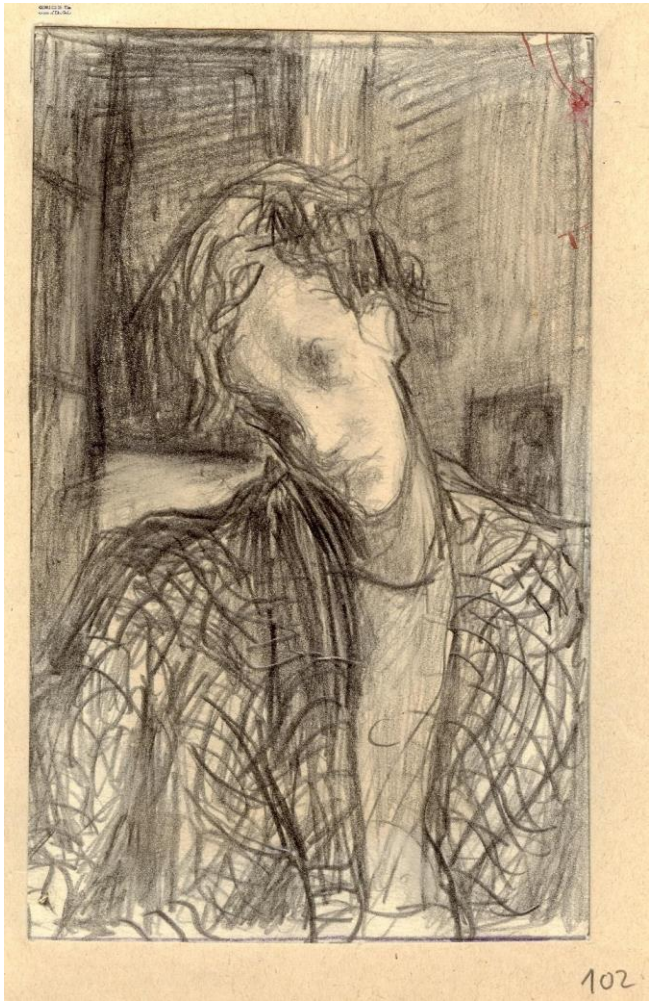
Self-Portrait, 1947, pencil, black crayon, paper, 239 x 161 mm, drawing 106 of the Glasgow Exhibition (Third Eye Centre), private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_106.jpg, 239 x 161 mm

Self-Portrait, 1944, pencil, paper, 108 x 75 mm, private collection

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/09/images/Gedő_M09_002.jpg

Drawing 91 from the Addenda folder, 1947, pencil, paper, 156 x 145 mm, Hungarian National Gallery



Wistful Self-Portrait (Drawing No. 102 in Folder No. 15), 1946-1947 Pencil, paper, 156 x 97 mm, MoMA, New York, Department of Drawings and Prints

http://www.ilkagedo.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/15/images/Gedo_M15_102.jpg

4. The Artist Depicts Her Dignity

The drawings of the Fillér utca self-portrait series have an impact on the viewer due to their cruel honesty and authentic artistic power. For the artist creating self-portraits, there is not a more co-operative model than his or her own portrait looking back on the drawing artist from the mirror. The image of the artist as reflected by a mirror is always at hand. But for the woman artist it is also true that „one must attempt to seduce the mirror, since failing to do so results in seeing one's malevolent double suddenly emerge from it, a grimacing devil, the fantastic projection of the inner demons. The authority of the reflection is imposed primarily on women who, at least at a certain stage of cultural development, construct themselves under the gaze of the other. Civilization can now offer women means of fulfilment outside the beauty-seduction-love paradigm, but the mirror still remains this privileged and vulnerable site of feminity. A tribunal without pity, each morning it summons her to take account of her charms until it is said one day that she is no longer the fairest of them all."[222]

Some art historians compared these drawings with the works of Alberto Giacometti. However, one must see that one of the reasons why these "self-probing, self-tormenting and self-questioning self-portrait series of the 1940's" cannot be "alleged to be connected with Giacometti's drawings" is that Ilka Gedő could not have known them back in the 1940's, while the other is that Ilka Gedő's drawings "are to a larger degree existentialist, if this term has any meaning in this context". Furthermore, "in order to avoid shrugging off the significance of these drawings with comparing them to Giacometti's works, we must simply view these graphic self-portraits with the awareness of their huge number and the fact that they are a heart-rending series of self-torment."[223]

It is much more instructive to compare Ilka Gedő's drawings with those of Egon Schiele, because one of the ways of interpretation in the case of both artists is that the self-portraits can be interpreted also as a role play. (According to Kirk Varnedoe, on his self-portraits Schiele "invented a surrogate self housed in his own body, a self as a poseur in both literal and positive senses, to play out an identity acknowledged to be acted as much as experienced. What seems most tellingly modern about these works is not the directness of communication, but its obliqueness, not the sense of revelation, but the sense of performance."[224])

222 Sabibe Melchiro-Bonnet, The Mirror (A History) (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 271-272.

223 Gyula Rózsa, "Az életmű ára" [The Price Paid for the Oeuvre] Népszabadság (29 January 2005)

224 Kirk Varnedoe, Vienna 1900 (Art, Architecture and Design) (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1987), p. 174.

Drawing 90 from Folder 15 (Self-portrait with Hat), 1946-1947, black ink paper, 173 x 145 mm, Hungarian National Gallery

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/15/images/Gedő_M15_090.jpg

Artists, sitting in front of the mirror, take up a pose even if, while creating the self-portrait, they have to lean forward to the canvas or the paper sheet. Creators of self-portraits are artists and models at the same time. They are the creators and the subjects of creation, the viewers and also critics. Artists do not only depict the visual image. They necessarily reflect something from the personality, because they also know the person that lives behind the eyes and in the body. In the self-portrait the artists confront their own self. To prepare an image of ourselves is often a painful process, but it also involves the expansion of the self. Artists who create their self-portraits also make their internal forces visible. Artists challenge their own self, they construct and deconstruct their own self. “There are hardly any self-portraits from mediaeval art. However, self-conscious artists, who were no longer craftsmen, and who regarded themselves of equal rank with the philosophers, writers and scientists of their times, have, since the time of the renaissance, created a monument for their own self. In addition to confronting their own physiognomy as a ubiquitous and cheap model, self-portraits bear

witness to the artists' internal confrontation with their owns minds, with their changing moods and with their own mortality."[225]

225 http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selbstbildnis

Self Portrait from Folder 6, 1947, charcoal, pencil, paper, 470 x 430mm, marked lower left: „*1947 (ősz/tél?*", (autumn or winter of 1947?), Hungarian National Gallery, No. 9

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedő_lista_09_album_36.jpg

Drawing 4 from Folder 49, 1947, charcoal, paper, 290 x 205 mm, marked lower left: „*1947 őszének végén?*" (The end of the autumn of 1947?), Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, No. 16, Germany

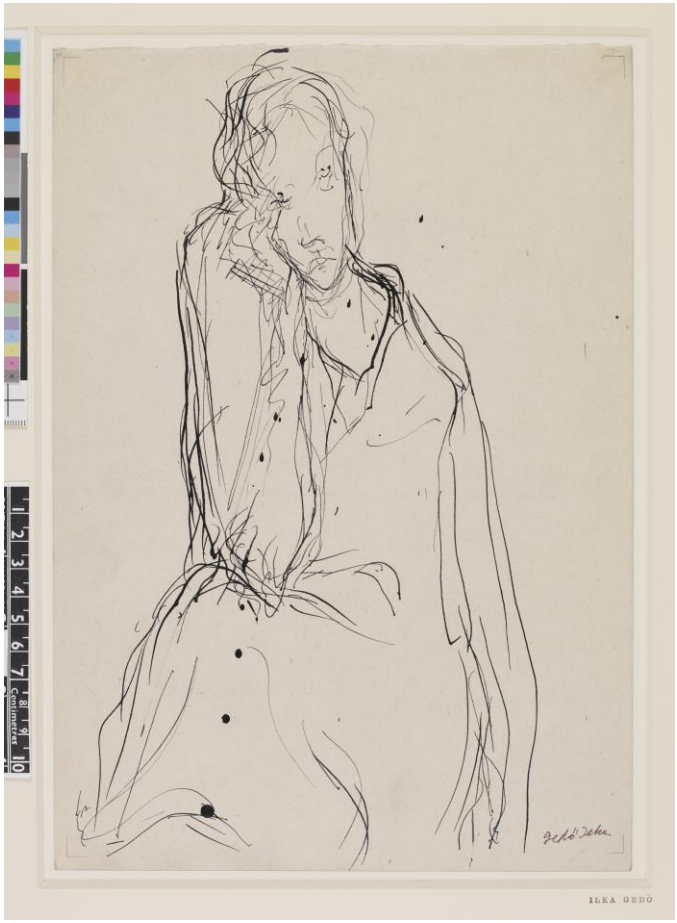
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/13/images/Gedő_Braunschweig_16_M49_004.jpg

Drawing 21 from Folder 45, 1947, charcoal, paper, 437 x 349 mm, marked lower left: „*1947 tavasz?*" (Spring of 1947?), Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany, No. 13

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/13/images/Gedő_Braunschweig_13_M45_021.jpg

Self-Portrait, 1947, black ink, paper, 220 x 231 mm, marked lower right: „Gedő Ilka", British Museum, No. 3

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/6/images/Gedő_British_03.jpg



Self-Portrait, 1947, black ink, paper, 300 x 210 mm, marked lower right: „Gedő Ilka", British Museum, No. 4

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/6/images/Gedő_British_04.jpg

Drawing 7 from Folder 12, pencil, paper, 98 x 204 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_007.jpg

Drawing 19 from Folder 54, pencil paper, 493 x 351 mm, marked lower left: „*1948 nyár*" (the summer of 1948), private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/54/images/Gedő_M54_019.jpg

Drawing 2 From Folder 58, charcoal, paper, 502 x 350 mm, marked lower right: „*1947 ősz tél?*" (the autumn or winter of 1948?), private collection

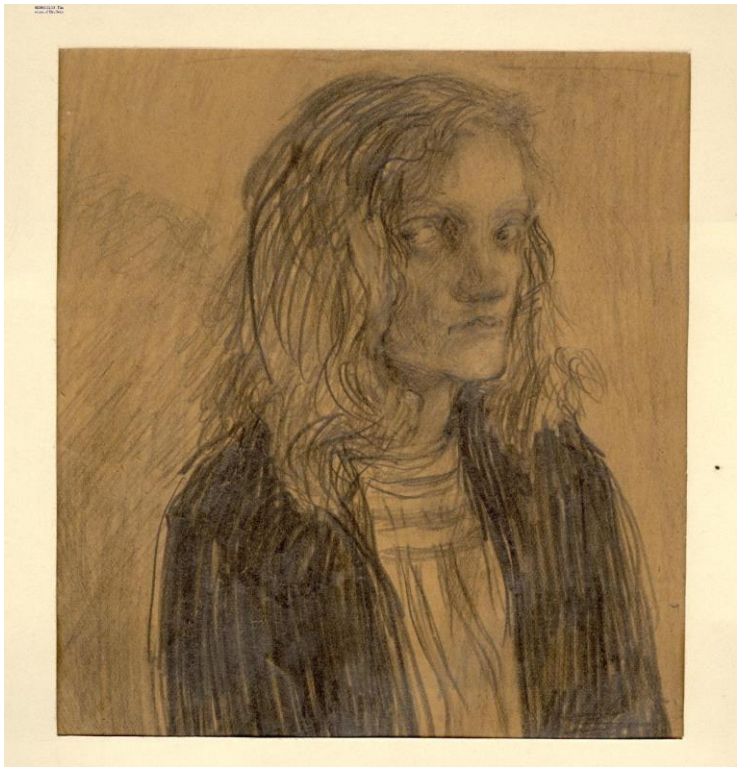
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/58/images/Gedő_M58_002.jpg

Drawing 82 from Folder 15, 1946-1947, pencil, paper, 153 x 113 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/15/images/Gedő_M15_082.jpg

Drawing 2 from Folder 54, 1947, pencil, paper, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/54/images/Gedő_M54_002.jpg



Self-Portrait, 1946 Pencil (Drawing No. 14 in Folder No. 35), paper, 148 x 121 mm, MoMA, New York, Department of Drawings and Prints
http://www.ilkagedo.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/35/images/Gedo_M35_014.jpg

5. The Artist at Work

Self-Portrait (Drawing No. 13 in Folder No. 52), 1947 Charcoal, paper, 427 x 292 mm, MoMA, New York, Department of Drawings and Prints
http://www.ilkagedo.hu/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/52/images/Gedo_M52_013.jpg

Drawing 16 from Folder 20, black ink, paper, 277 x 201 mm, private collection

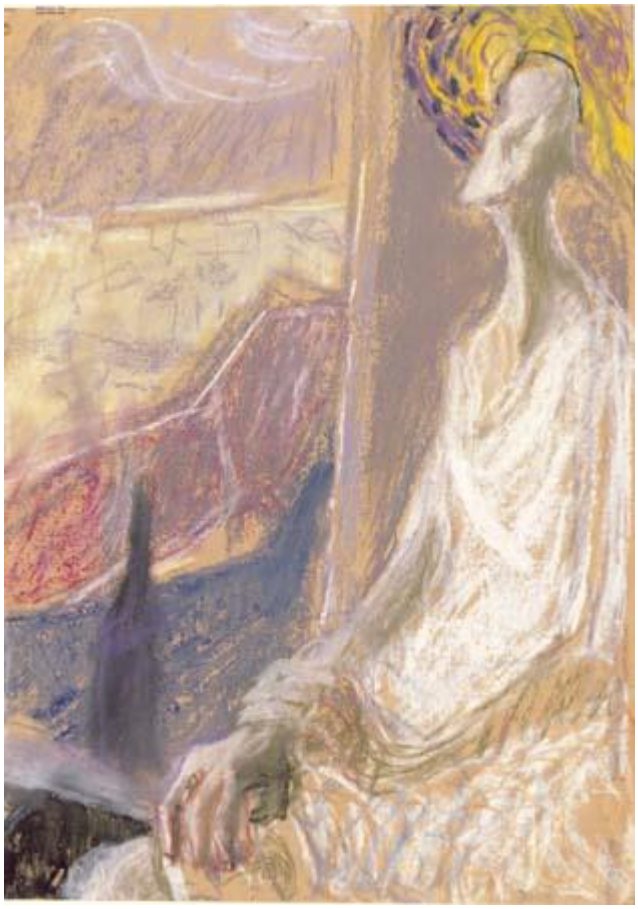
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/20/images/Gedő_M20_016.jpg

Drawing 4 from Folder 51, 1947-1948, pastel, paper, 345 x 247 mm, Albertina Museum, No. 5

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/9/images/Albertina05_Gedő_M51__004.jpg

Drawing 5 from Folder 51, 1947-1948, pastel, paper, 359 x 225 mm, Albertina Museum No. 6

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/9/images/Albertina06_Gedő_M51__005.jpg



Drawing 12 from Folder 51, 1947, pastel, paper, 355 x 255 mm, Albertina, No. 8

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/9/images/Albertina08_Gedő_M51__012.jpg

Self Portrait, 1946, pen, black ink, 169 x 122 mm, marked lower right: „*Ilka Gedő*”, Hungarian National Gallery, No. 2

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedő_lista_02.jpg

Drawing 10 from Folder 22, 1947, pen, paper, 286 x 146 mm, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany, No. 2

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/13/images/Gedő_Braunschweig_02_M22_010.jpg

Drawing 34 from Folder 22, 1947, charcoal, paper, 358 x 184 mm, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany, No. 3

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/13/images/Gedő_Braunschweig_03_M22_034.jpg

Drawing 21 from Folder 23, 1947, pen, charcoal, paper, 269 x 147 mm, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany, No. 5

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/13/images/Gedő_Braunschweig_05_M23_021.jpg

Drawing 3 from Folder 45, 1947, charcoal, paper, marked lower right: „ *1947 ősze*" (the autumn of 1947), Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany, No. 11

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/13/images/Gedő_Braunschweig_11_M45_003.jpg

Drawing 26 from Folder 45, 1948, pencil, paper, 396 x 286, marked lower left: „*Gedő Ilka 1948*" (the autumn of 1947), Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany, No. 14

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/13/images/Gedő_Braunschweig_14_M45_026.jpg

Self-Portrait, 1947, black ink, paper, 280 x 256, marked lower left: „*Gedő Ilka 1948*" (the autumn of 1947), the British Museum, No. 2

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/6/images/Gedő_British_02.jpg

Drawing 23 from Folder 20, 1945-1946, pen, paper, 280 x 218 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/20/images/Gedő_M20_023.jpg

Self Portrait III from Folder 35, 1948, pencil, charcoal, paper, 490 x 270 mm, Hungarian National Gallery, No. 6

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedő_lista_06_album_33.jpg

Self Portrait V from Folder 35, 1948, pencil, charcoal, paper, 348 x 277 mm, Hungarian National Gallery, No. 8

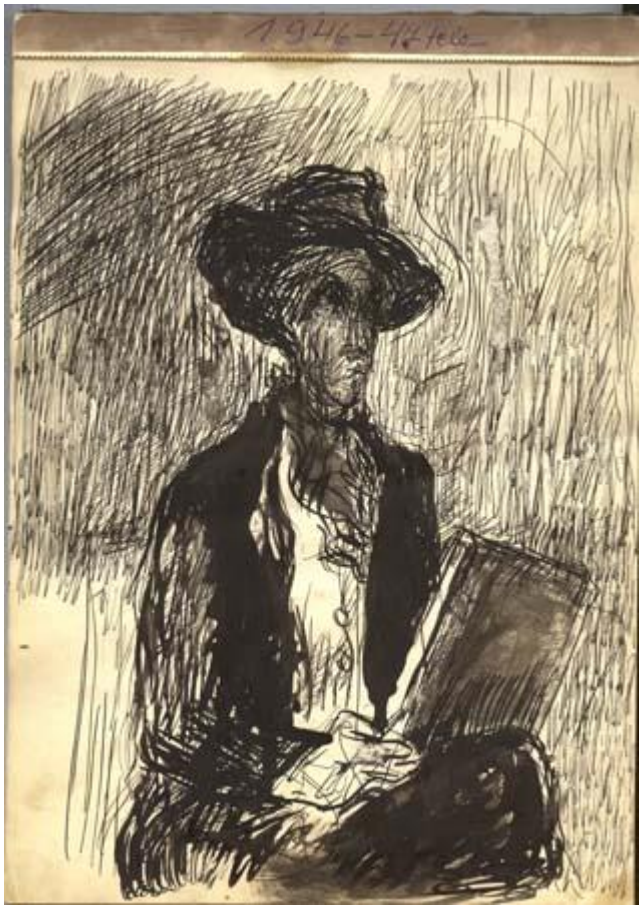
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedő_lista_08_album_35.jpg

Drawing 18 from Folder 19 (Self-Portrait with Drawing Board). the winter of 1946-1947, black ink, paper, 273 x 225 mm

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/19/images/Gedő_M19_018.jpg

Drawing 19 from Folder 19 (Self-Portrait with Drawing Board). the winter of 1946-1947, black ink, paper, 273 x 225 mm, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, No. 1

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/8/images/1_2011.jpg



Drawing 1 (Self-Portrait with Drawing Board) from Folder 19, winter of 1946-1947, black ink, paper, 273 x 225 mm, Hungarian National Gallery

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/19/images/Gedő_M19_001.jpg

Drawing 18 from Folder 12, 1948, black ink, paper, 216 x 129 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_018.jpg

Drawing 19 from Folder 12, 1948, black ink, paper, 120 x 117 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/12/images/Gedő_M12_019.jpg

Drawing 40 from Folder 37, 1938, pencil, paper, 366 x 263 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/37/images/Gedő_M37_040.jpg

Drawing 41 from Folder 37, 1938, charcoal, pencil, paper, 338 x 285 mm, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Braunschweig, Germany, No. 20

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/13/images/Gedő_Braunschweig_20_M37_041.jpg

Drawing 2 from Folder 54, 1947, pencil, paper, 151 x 113 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/54/images/Gedő_M54_002.jpg

Drawing 28 from Folder 45, 1949, charcoal, paper, 393 x 286 mm, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, No. 6

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/10/images/Gedő_Houston_06_M45_028.jpg

Self Portrait X from Folder 49, 1947, charcoal, paper, 485 x 340 mm, marked lower right: „*1947 ősz-tél*" (autumn-winter of 1947), Hungarian National Gallery, No. 13

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedő_lista_13_album_40.jpg

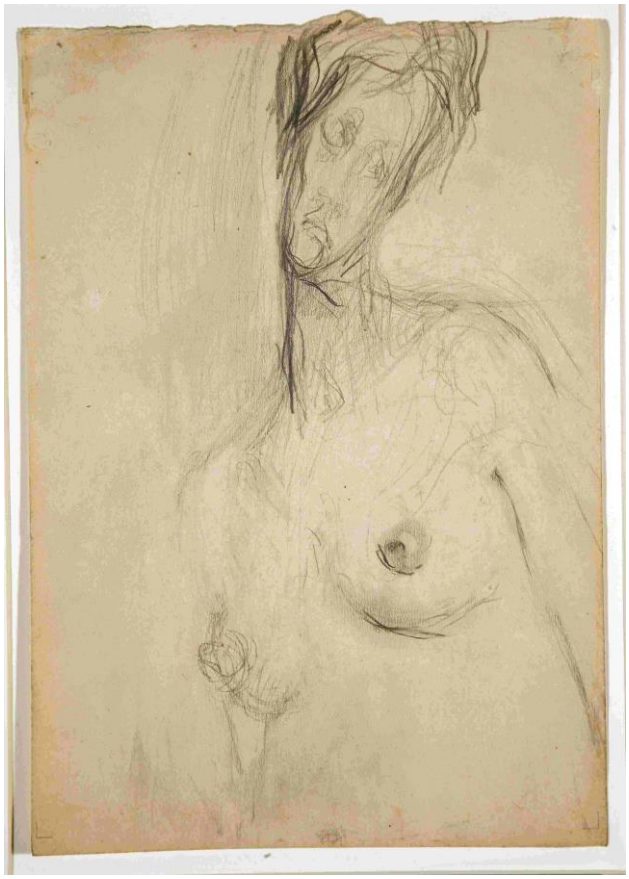
Drawing 18 from Folder 20, 1945-1946, pen, paper, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/20/images/Gedő_M20_018.jpg

Drawing 1 From Folder 58, charcoal, paper, 486 x 340 mm, marked lower right: „*1948 nyár*" (the summer of 1948), private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/58/images/Gedő_M58_001.jpg

6. Nude Self-Portraits



Nude Self-Portrait, 1946, pencil, paper, 200 x 190 mm, Museum Kunstpalast, No. 1

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/3/images/Ilka_Gedő_Dusseldorf_02.jpg

Nude Self-Portrait, 1947, pencil, paper, 285 x 195 mm, Israel Museum, No. 2

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/4/images/Ilka_Gedő_Israel_Museum_02.jpg

7. In Love

Drawing 58 from Folder 15, 1946-1947, pencil, paper, 229 x 173 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/15/images/Gedő_M15_058.jpg

Detail of Drawing 58 from Folder, 15, 1946-1947, pencil, paper, 229 x 173 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/15/images/Gedő_M15_058detail.jpg

8. Self-Portraits in Pregnancy

In another series of self-portraits she draws herself in pregnancy. In the drawing held by the Israel Museum she depicts herself in a sculpturesque way. Where the eyes are we see just hatched lines, the eyes look blindly into the world. This drawing is “not an expression of the conflict between her vocation as a painter and motherhood”, [226] but it rather expresses the anxiety over the future of the child that is to be born.

226 Júlia Szabó, "Ilka Gedő's Paintings" *The New Hungarian Quarterly* No. 4 of 1987

Self-Portrait in Pregnancy, 1947, pastel, paper, 415 x 295 mm, Israel Museum, No. 1

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/4/images/Ilka_Gedő_Israel_Museum_01.jpg

Drawing 1 from Folder 26, 1947, pastel, paper, 358 x 185 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/26/images/Gedő_M26_001.jpg

Drawing 2 from Folder 26, 1947, pastel, paper, 348 x 240 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/26/images/Gedő_M26_002.jpg

Drawing 3 from Folder 26, 1947, pastel, paper, 358 x 230 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/26/images/Gedő_M26_003.jpg

Drawing 4 from Folder 26, 1947, pastel, paper, 348 x 205 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/26/images/Gedő_M26_004.jpg

Drawing 5 from Folder 26, 1947, pastel, paper, 350 x 240 mm, private collection

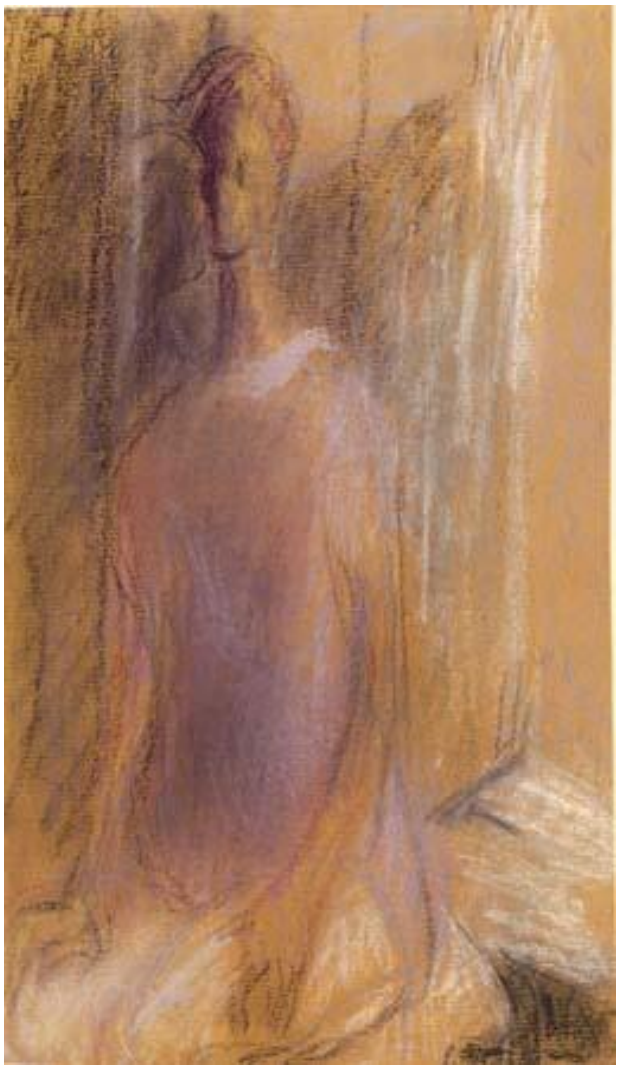
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/26/images/Gedő_M26_005.jpg

Drawing 6 from Folder 26, 1947, pastel, paper, 345 x 195 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/26/images/Gedő_M26_006.jpg

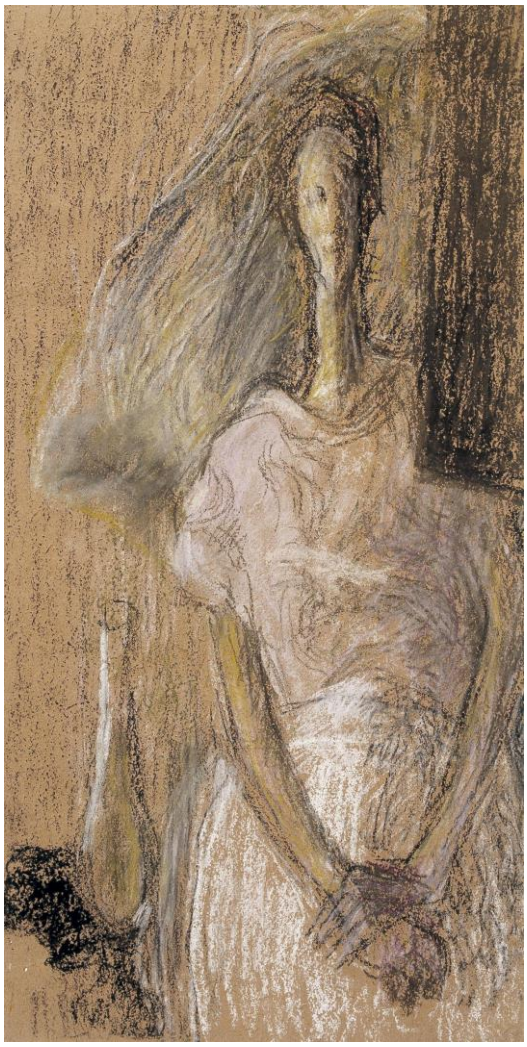
Drawing 7 from Folder 26, 1947, pastel, paper, 319 x 218 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/26/images/Gedő_M26_007.jpg



Drawing 8 from Folder 26, 1947, pastel, paper, 350 x 200 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/26/images/Gedő_M26_008.jpg



Self-Portrait in Pregnancy I from Folder 51, 1947, pastel, paper, 405 x 220 mm, Hungarian National Gallery, No. 19

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedő_lista_19_album_45.jpg

Self-Portrait in Pregnancy II from Folder 51, 1947, pastel, coloured paper, 490 x 340 mm, Hungarian National Gallery

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedő_lista_20_album_46.jpg

Self-Portrait from the Glasgow Exhibition, pastel, coloured paper, 365 x 255 mm, item no. 97 of the Glasgow exhibition, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_097_(MNG_kiallitas_16).jpg

Pregnant Self-Portrait, No. 19, item 99 from the Glasgow Exhibition, pastel, coloured paper, 428 x 305 mm, private collection

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/framedworks/1/images/Glasgow_099_(MNG_kiallitas_19).jpg

9. The Last Two Self-Portraits of the First Artistic Period

Both drawings show sculpturesque features and both seem to aim at monumentality. These drawings show the creator and the created and the mystery. How can this be possible? In his letter sent to Wassily Kandinsky Arnold Schönberg points out, “We must recognise that we are surrounded by mystery, and we must be brave enough to confront these mysteries without cowardly searching for the «solution». It is important that our souls should not try to solve these mysteries but to disentangle them. In the course of this process, not a solution must be born, but a new code and a method for code-breaking. This method is in itself without any value, yet it provides material for the creation of new mysteries. Namely, mystery is nothing else but the mirror image of the inexplicable. However, once we regard the inexplicable possible, then we approach God, because then we no longer demand to understand God. In this case, we no longer interpret God with our intellect, we no longer censure or reject God, because we are no longer capable of merging God with the human error that is our lucidity."[227]

[227] Jelena Kahl-Koch (ed.), Arnold Schönberg – Wassily Kandinsky, *Briefe, Bilder und Dokumente einer außergewöhnlichen Beziehung*, Berlin, DTBV, 1983, p. 69. Quoted by: Milly Heyd: Selbstporträts: zur Frage der jüdischen Identität In: Hans Günter Golinski and Sepp-Hiekisch Pickard (eds.), *Das Recht des Bildes*,Bochum, Edition Braus, 2003, p. 90.

Pensive Self-Portrait I, 1949, pencil, coal, paper, 570 x 455 mm, Hungarian National Gallery

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/publiccoll/2/images/MNG_Gedő_lista_15_album_42.jpg

Pensive Self-Portrait II, 1949, coal, paper, 705 x 448 mm, signed lower right: „Gedő Ilka" Robert Kashey's Collection, New York

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/privatecoll/images/NewYork_Gondolkodo_Robert_Kashey.jpg

10. Self-Portrait Oil Paintings

Self-Portrait with Hat, 1948, oil on paper, 48,5 x 39 cm, private property

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/oilpaintings/images/Gedő_Ilka_008.jpg

"*Self-Portrait with Hat* (oil, paper, 48.5 x 39 cm) was painted in 1948. It is a half-length self-portrait behind which the probably greenish-yellowish wall of the studio is visible. Yet on the wall only an empty painting, the frame can be identified. Somewhat to the left of the vertical axis the artist's hand appears; it is placed upon the chest as if the person shown on the painting were breathing heavily. We can see pronounced, uneven contour lines. The fingers are grey and blue, as if they had been frozen. The hands turning to the body are known from the Maria pictures of early Christianity and from Byzantine icons. The dropped shoulders indicate the painfulness of existence. The hat is unusually big. It is similar to the broad-rimmed Rubens hats without displaying a rich ornamentation. Maybe it is no over interpretation to regard this hat as an accessory of bourgeois existence, and it characteristic of the artist's personality. The creature-like brims whose original colour was cadmium yellow became self-contained forms of black in which some Berlin-blue spots appear. On the right, the hat swells up and becomes heavier than the other deep blue spots. In contrast to the bodiless upper part of the body and the fallen shoulders these, are really tangible. Somehow, they end up looking like also as a halo. This conventional easel painting complies with the rules, yet there are several marks and references that are different from the usual, especially the hat.

The elongated, sunken cheeks constitute, due to the grey colour, also a death-mask, even though the strong details of the face reveal quite a lot from the artist's internal life. The mask covers. On this face, however, the eyes, the nose and the mouth are open and expressive. Light is coming from somewhere, as the right-hand side is under a shadow. We see a naked and ageless face, although, in 1948, Ilka Gedő was only twenty-seven years old. But she looks much older, and it cannot be determined how old she looks."[228]

[228] S. Nagy Katalin: „Gedő Ilka önarcképei" (The Self-Portraits of Ilka Gedő) *Liget*, April 2, 2014 https://ligetmuhely.com/liget/gedo-ilka-onarckepei/

Self-Portrait Flower, 1971, oil on canvas, 48 x 33 cm, private property

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/oilpaintings/images/Gedő_Ilka_058.jpg

"On the painting titled *Self-Portrait Flower* a single withered flower was shifted from the middle axis of the painting to the right. This withered flower is on multi-layered, contoured, coloured rectangles, possibly painting canvases. In 1971, when this painting was created, Ilka Gedő was fifty years old. The flower is the symbol of youth, love and spring: it is the symbol of overcoming death. The withered flower is the opposite of all the above. Its colour is black and brown, colours that are in harmony with the ochre-brown surface." [229]

[229] Ibid.

Self-Portrait with a Hat, 1983, oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48 cm, private property

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/oilpaintings/images/Gedő_Ilka_137.jpg

Drawing No. 5 from Folder No. 38, 1947, black ink, paper, 202 x 206 mm, marked lower right on the sheet of paper that the drawing was stuck onto: „*1947, tél*”, the winter of 1947, private property

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/38/images/Gedő_M38_005.jpg

Self-Portrait Painted on Old Drawing, 1984, oil on paper laid down on drawing board, 22 x 14 cm, private property

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/oilpaintings/images/Gedő_Ilka_142.jpg

Pink Self-Portrait, 1984, oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 59 x 49 cm¸ private property

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/oilpaintings/images/Gedő_Ilka_141.jpg

Drawing No. 6 form Folder 38, 1947, black ink, paper, 270 x 195 mm, private property

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/38/images/Gedő_M38_006.jpg

Pensive Self-Portrait, 1980
Oil, tempera on paper laid down on wooden board, 17 x 12.5 cm

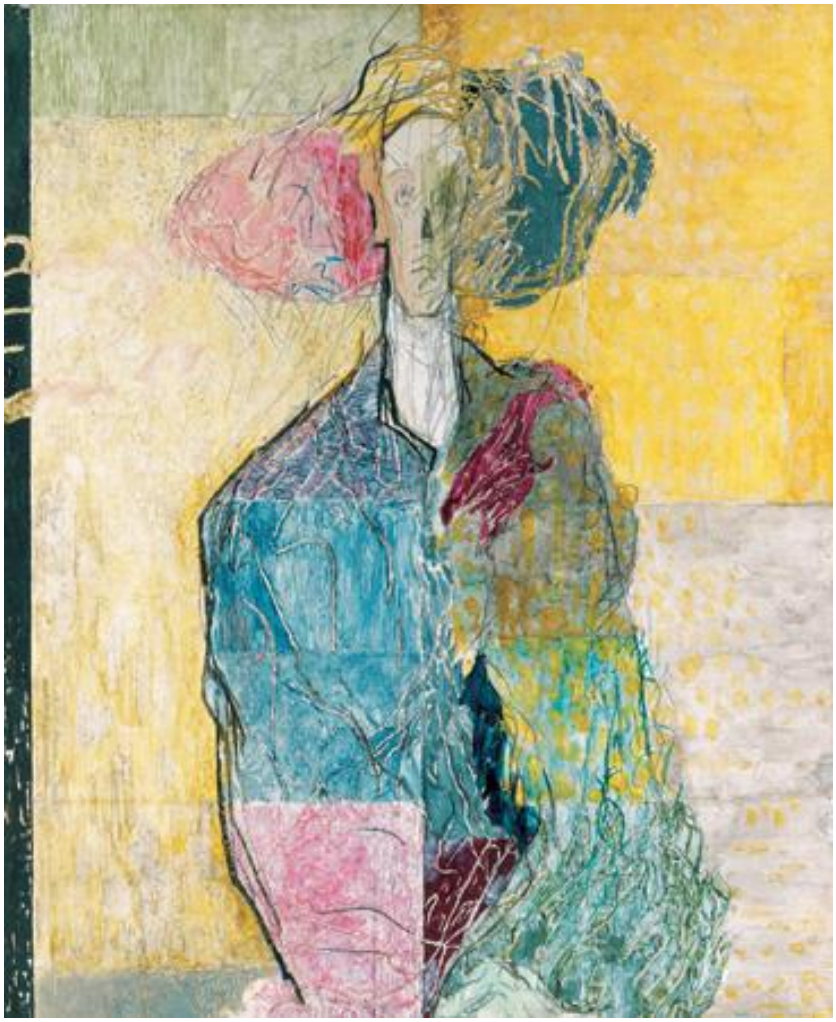
https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/oilpaintings/images/Gedő_Ilka_126.jpg

Self-Portrait with a Hat, 1985, oil mixed technique on paper laid down on canvas, 60x 48.5 cm, private property

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/oilpaintings/images/Gedő_Ilka_150.jpg

Drawing No. 2 from Folder No. 38, 1947, black ink, paper, 182 x 134 mm, marked lower right on the sheet of paper the original drawing was stuck onto: „*1947, tél, Fillér utca*", the winter of 1947, Fillér utca

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/38/images/Gedő_M38_002.jpg



Self-Portrait with Straw-hat, 1985, oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48.5 cm, private property

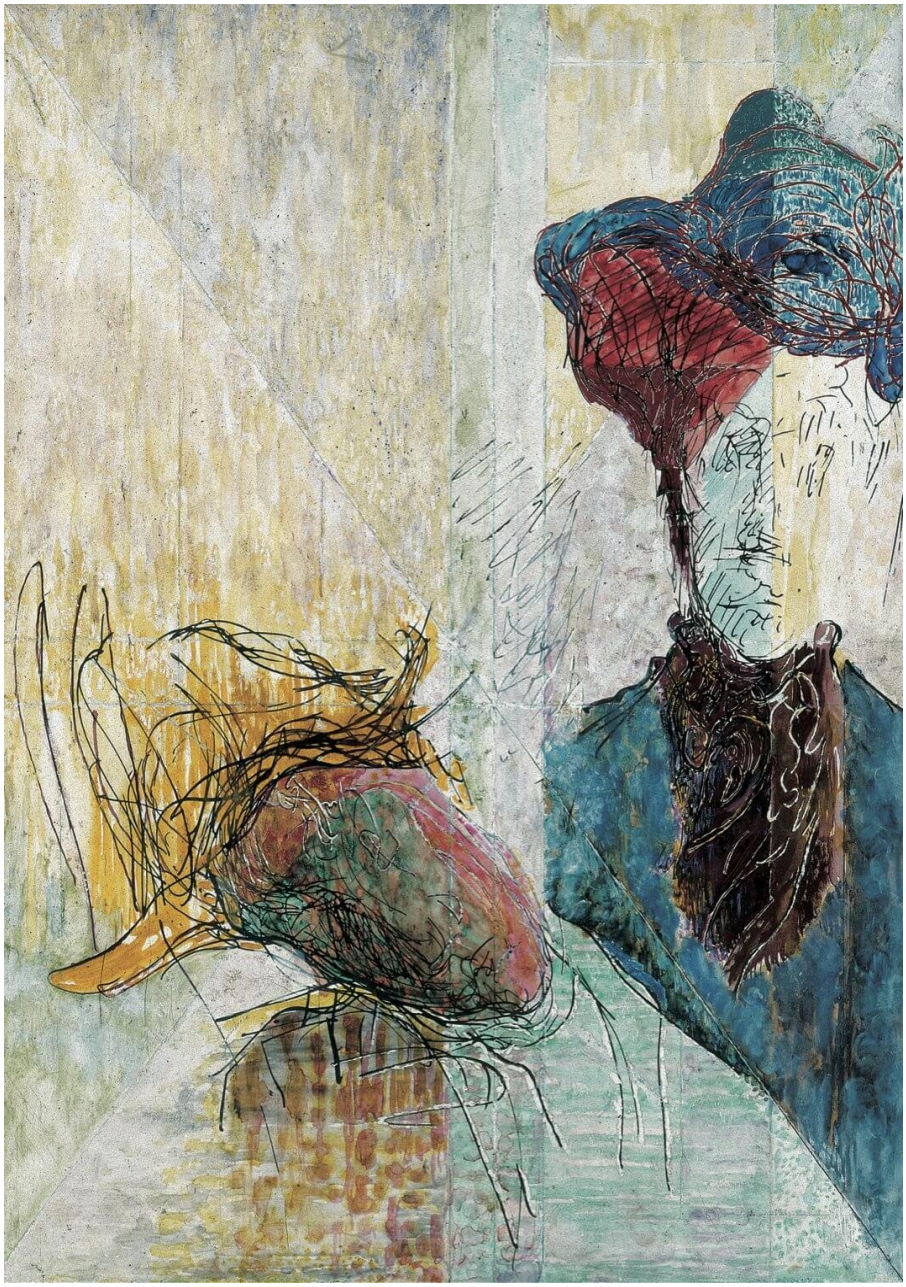
http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/oilpaintings/images/Gedő_Ilka_143.jpg

Self-Portrait with Straw-hat (1985, oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48.5 cm) was painted in 1984, a year before Ilka Gedő's death. The hat is perhaps the same as the one we can see in the painting with the same title painted 36 years before (*Self-Portrait with Hat*, 1948, oil on paper, 48,5 x 39 cm), as on both hats there is a yellow spot in the same location. In our climate, a straw hat is a summer wear. It is easy, defenceless and even a light breeze can blow it away. And yet it is associated with a feeling of light, sunshine and warmth. This is reinforced by the background's light colours: broken yellow, the yellow spots on broken white, blurred grey spots and the green-blue areas in the top and bottom left-hand corners. In the same way, as the straw hat, the background colours might also be a source of joy. However, the cadmium yellow colour spots and graphite marks create tension. The black and blue contours of the body are not even, which makes the main shape of the body edgy. It splits sharply from the background, from the body's background, and starts to live a life of its own. As soft, lyrical and almost emotional the background is, as strong and dynamic is the contour line. The divergence is continued. The body that turns somewhat to the right, and is shifted slightly to the right seems to be composed of several units, perhaps eight units. At the shoulders and the bottom of the painting, there are irregular shapes including rectangles. The component units of the body are very much different also in terms of colour. The colour of the largest part is called summer blue (pure blue, aniline blue), and it reminds us of the summer sky. This is the colour of limitlessness, and infinite, harmonious radiation. It is the favourite colour of mandalas and it is also associated with motherhood. The blue part of the hat is somewhat dull. On the right-hand side, blue lines interweave with the dress covering the body, and, further down, it seems as if we saw water waves.[230]

[230] Ibid.

Drawing No. 3 from Folder 38, 1985, pencil, paper, marked lower left: "*48 tavasza*" (spring of 1948), 346 x 240 mm, private property

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/38/images/Gedő_M38_003.jpg



Double Self-Portrait, 1985, oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 58 x 42 cm, private property

https://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/oilpaintings/images/Gedő_Ilka_152.jpg

Double Self-Portrait (1985, oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 58 x 42 cm) which is the last one of the self-portraits is not about ageing, but about death. It is a picture in a picture. (This has been a favourite genre of painters since Netherlandish painters of the 16th and 17th centuries.) In the foreground, we can see the painter's head tilted to the left. According to the traditions of painting, this is the direction where the past is located. The painter is barely alive. Her thin face is interwoven with black and white lines almost changing the image into a photo. Although on all of her self-portraits the eyes are wide open, here the eyes are closed, and there is no gaze in the painter's eyes. There are blurred, disease-suggesting spots on the face, magenta spots on the forehead, chin and the right side of the face. This shows that Gedő is not dead yet. On top of the head, cadmium-yellow colour beams light up upwards, stretching upwards, becoming one with the off-white plane of the background thus losing their colour. These colour beams are restless, intersecting and troubled, yet they are still full of energy in contrast to the resigned and submissive movement of the head and the unresponsiveness of the face. We can see two colours in the clothing, and likewise, the crosshatching also has two directions. On the right side, on a white surface, light-blue narrow horizontal stripes can be seen, whereas on the left-hand side broad vertical reddish-brown stripes as well as random spots can be seen. These two surfaces on the same clothing create tension, thus increasing the sadness, wretchedness and solitude of the tilted head.

The right side self-portrait is a painting within the painting. In the history of self-portraits, we have known this way of representation since 16th-century Mannerism. We see a timeless face that is possibly more youthful than usual. The left eye is large, round, open and painted on a white area painted over with light blue, whereas the other eye located on a white area illuminated by pale yellow is barely visible. This duality of light and shadow is a characteristic of self-portraits. The hat, especially its rims, are smaller and it is blue. Similar to the face, the left-hand side of it is deep blue, whereas the right-hand side is of lighter blue. The hat and the big red mass of the hair are interwoven by black, white, red lines moving in all directions, showing the dynamics of life. The dress is also blue, and it is covered by an unusually bulky scarf.

In the background between the two self-portraits, there are fine blue, down-going zigzag lines. The multi-colour background is hectic and full of pastel tones in the same way as the background of Ilka Gedő's still-lives and artificial flowers, and her studio also provided a multi-coloured background. (Ilka Gedő was very familiar with colour theory. In the 1950's he translated most of Goethe's *Theory of Colour*, providing her translation with her comments.)

The two narrow vertical rectangles to the right of the painting's central axis play a role in the composition: they can be a door frame or window frame, or the frame of the right-hand self-portrait. It directs the viewer's gaze upwards and beyond the painting. In addition to the vertical lines, the pale diagonal line in the background is also important, leading the viewer out of the picture in the top left-hand corner.

On the right-hand side, there is also a diagonal line above the hat, thus an upside-down triangle is created in the background. The restless lines that cross and intersect the hats and clothing are balanced by these barely perceptible geometric shapes.

In 1985 Ilka Gedő was mortally ill. She knew she would not have much time left for painting. The left-hand eyeless self-portrait suggests the proximity of death, but without the fear of death. Given her loneliness and given the fact that Ilka Gedő lived a life outside society and outside any groupings of artists, she had an intimate relationship with death, and this is well-reflected also in her artificial flower paintings. The majority of her paintings have a closed space, even the paintings of the garden series. Ilka Gedő's studio was a closed space: a refuge and an island. In mythologies closed spaces are at the same time archetypical symbols of death.

The two self-portraits side by side represent therefore two types of existence. Ilka Gedő's *Double Self-Portrait* is the summary of all that the painter has been occupied with for decades: the relationship between existence and what makes things exist, the relationship between being and nothingness, and above all the relationship between an artist and artwork as material existence.

Ilka Gedő's self-portraits are the works of an authentic and genuine creator.[231]

[231] Ibid.

Double Self-Portrait Detail No. 1

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/oilpaintings/images/Gedő_Ilka_152_detail1.jpg

Double Self-Portrait Detail No. 2

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/oilpaintings/images/Gedő_Ilka_152_detail2.jpg

Drawing No. 4 from Folder 38, 1985, black ink, paper, 276 x 240 cm, private property

http://mek.oszk.hu/kiallitas/Gedő_ilka/galleries/worksonpaper/folders/38/images/Gedő_M38_004.jpg

Complete Oil Paintings

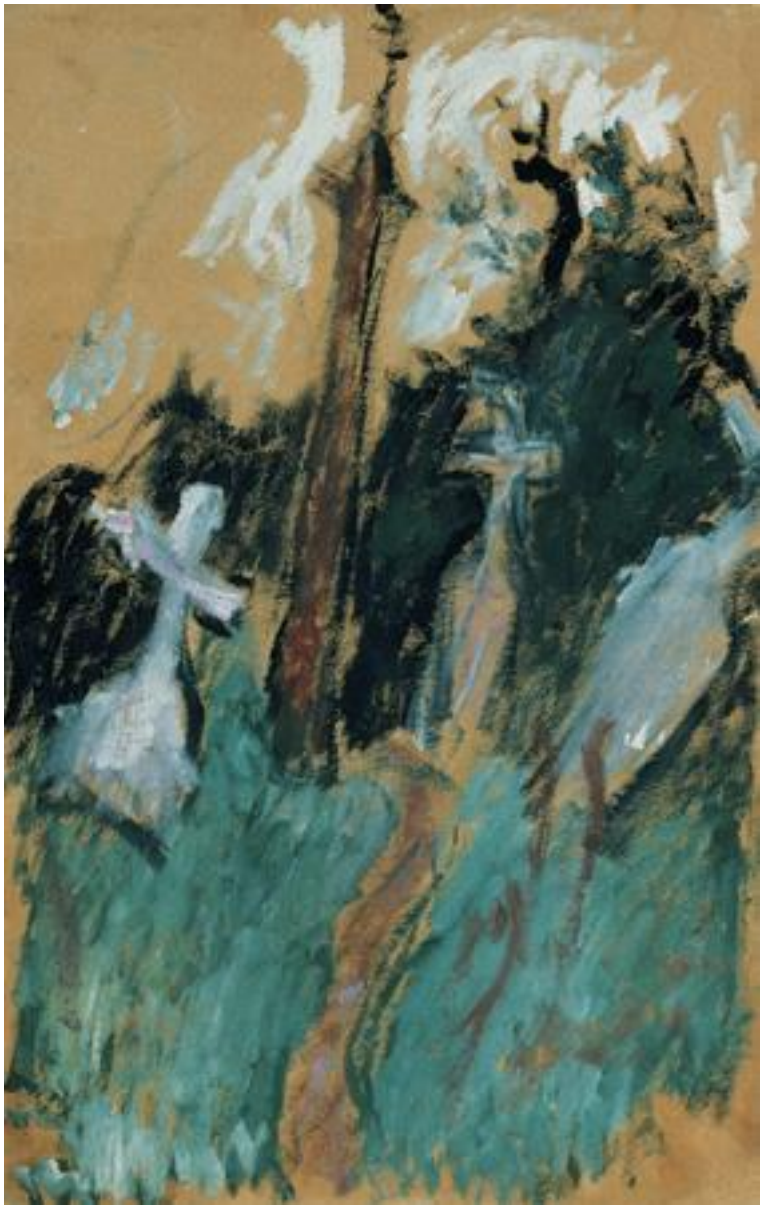
1. CROSSES ON GRAVES, 1947
Oil on paper, 32 x 25 cm

2. GARDEN, 1947
Oil on paper, 47 x 39 cm

3. GRAVESTONES, 1947
Oil on paper, 35 x 41.5 cm

4. HOUSE BESIDE THE GRAVEYARD, 1947
Oil on paper, 32 x 48 cm

5. HOUSES IN SZENTENDRE, 1947
Oil on paper, 53.5 x 38 cm



6. OLD GRAVESTONES, 1947
Oil on paper, 50 x 31.5 cm

7. TWO GRAVESTONES, 1947
Oil on paper, 49 x 32 cm

8. SELF-PORTRAIT WITH A HAT, 1948
Oil on paper, 48.5 x 39 cm

9. JUDIT I, 1965
Oil on wooden board, 54 x 19.5 cm

10. JUDIT II, 1965
Oil on wooden board, 52 x 20 cm

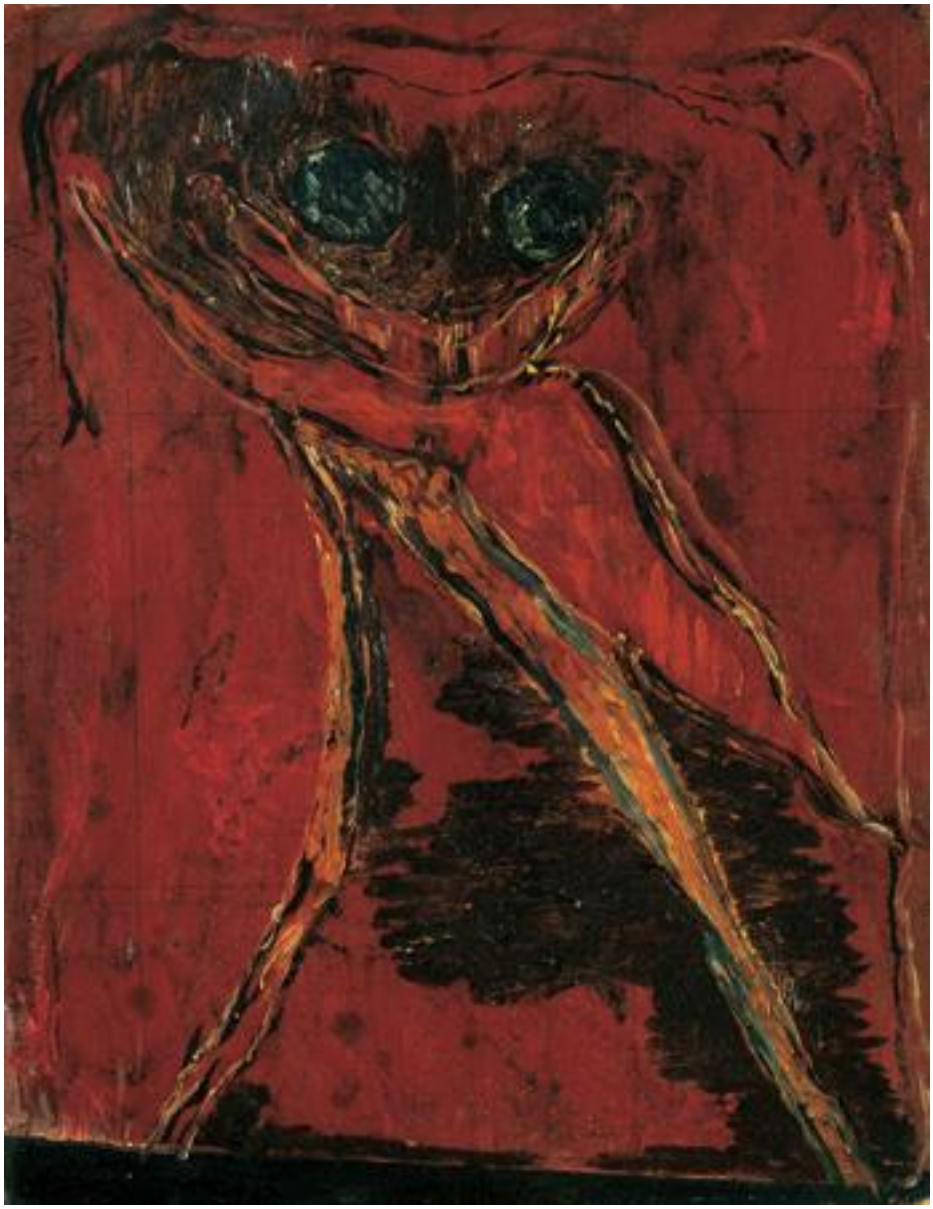
11. ANETTE, 1968
Oil on cardboard, 29.5 x 17 cm

12. ANNA, 1968–69
Oil on cardboard, 42 x 25 cm

13. ENDRE BÁLINT I, 1968
Oil on cardboard, 53 x 28.5 cm

14. ENDRE BÁLINT II, 1968
Oil on cardboard, 49 x 29 cm

15. THE PAINTER BÉLA VESZELSZKY, 1968
Oil on paper, 46 x 35 cm



16. DANI, 1968
Oil on cardboard, 35 x 27 cm

17. DÁVID, 1968
Oil on paper, 29 x 16 cm

18. MARRIED COUPLE, 1968
Oil on canvas, 40 x 51.5 cm

19. THE CAT, 1968
Oil on paper, 47 x 47 cm

20.SUMMER FOREST II, 1968–69
Oil on wooden board, 52 x 34 cm

21. FIRST ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1969
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 38 x 21 cm

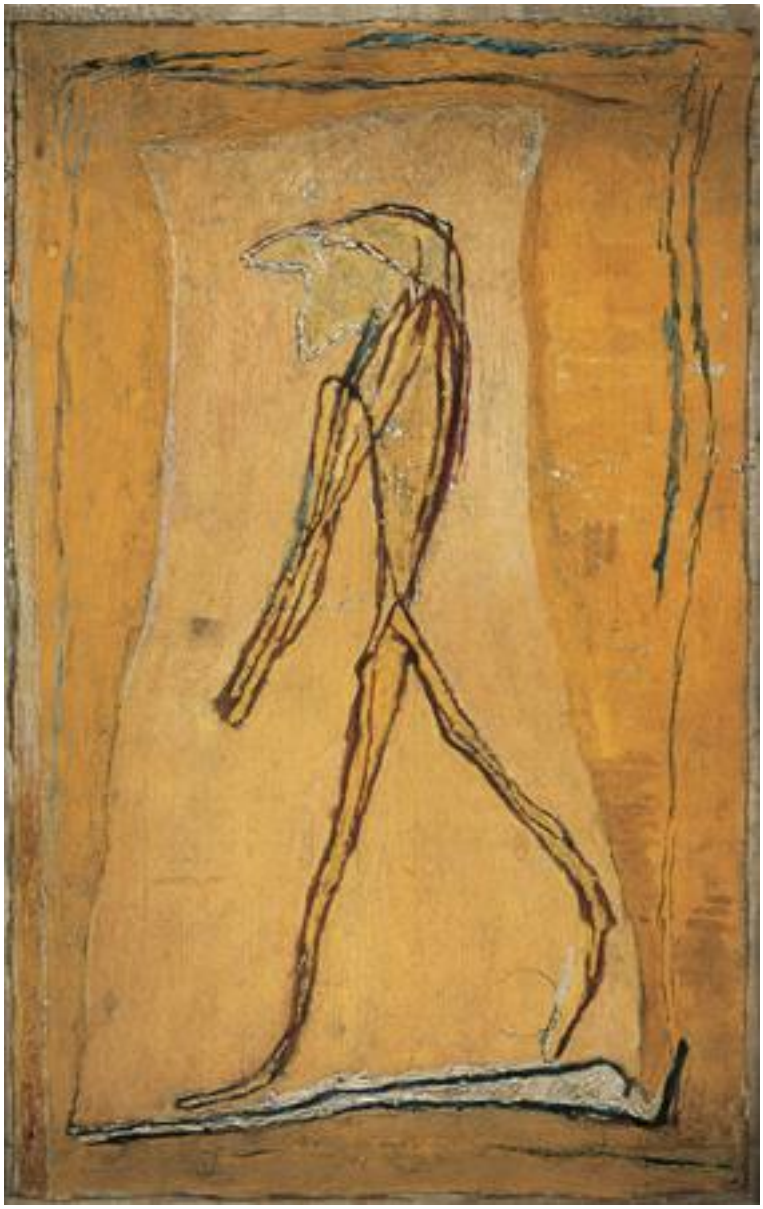
22. PORTRAIT OF ENDRE BÍRÓ, 1969
Oil on wooden board, 51 x 19.5 cm

23. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER ON AN ORANGE BACKGROUND, 1969
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 36 x 32 cm

24. FRUIT TREES IN BLOOM, 1969
Oil on wooden board, 38 x 55 cm

25. AUNT BORISKA, 1965–1970
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 51 cm

26. DÁVID, 1965–1970
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 57 x 45.5 cm



27. PORTRAIT OF BÉLA TÁBOR, 1969
Oil on wooden board, 37 x 23 cm

28. THE SHADOW OF THE CHURCH (SZENTENDRE), 1969–1970
Oil on paper, 62 x 56.4 cm

29. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH FALLING LEAVES, 1969–1970
Oil on cardboard laid down on wooden board, 48 x 58.5 cm, King St. Stephen Museum, Székesfehérvár, Hungary

30. FATHER WITH TWO CHILDREN, 1969–1970
Oil on canvas laid down on wood, 31 x 22 cm

31. TURRETED ROSE GARDEN, 1969–1970
Oil on cardboard, 58 x 42 cm, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

32. “TURRETED” ROSE GARDEN, 1969–1970
Oil, mixed technique on paper laid down on canvas, 46 x 24 cm

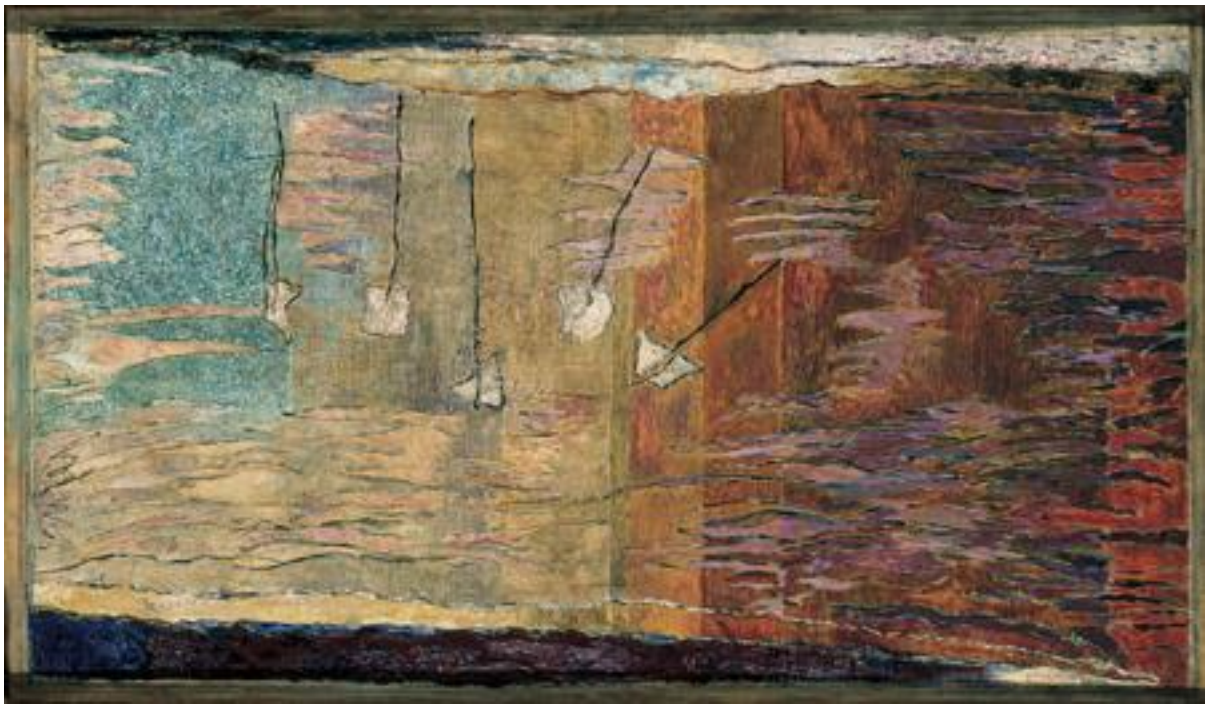
33. JUDIT (SKETCH), 1970
Oil on canvas, 34.5 x 13 cm

34. SKATERS, 1970
Oil on paper, 30 x 39 cm

35. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER IN TWO PARTS, 1970
Oil on cardboard, 33 x 33 cm

36. ROSE GARDEN ON A BLUE BACKGROUND, 1970
Oil on canvas, 25.3 x 52.8 cm

37. ROSE GARDEN IN THE RAIN, 1970
Oil on paper, 46 x 55 cm



38. RIBBED ARTIFICIAL FLOWER I, 1970
Oil on canvas, 36 x 62 cm

39. ÁGNES, 1965–1971
Oil on paper, 43.5 x 30.5 cm

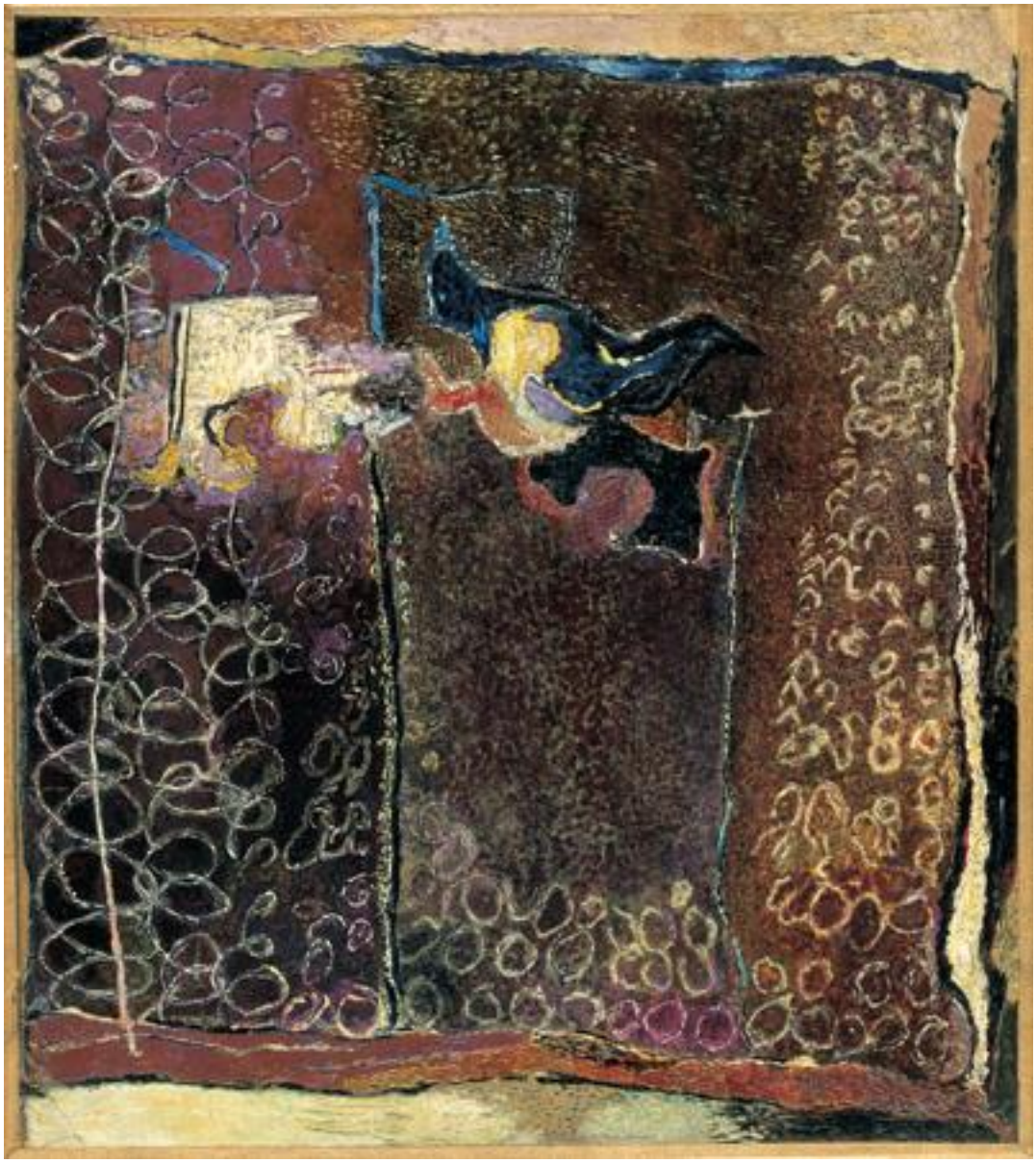
40. VERA, 1965–1971
Oil on cardboard laid down on canvas, 47.5 x 34.5 cm

41. LA DANSEUSE, 1970–71
Oil on canvas, 65 x 47 cm

42. FOREST, 1965–1971
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 36 x 34.5 cm

43. RIBBED ARTIFICAL FLOWER ON A BLUE BACKGROUND, 1970–71
Oil on canvas, 33.5 x 71 cm

44. PARCELLED ROSE GARDEN, 1970–71
Oil on canvas, 60 x 43.5 cm



45. PERSIAN ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1970–71
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 36 x 32 cm

46. BUNCHED ROSE GARDEN (LIGHT), 1970–71
Oil on canvas, 30 x 33 cm

47. ROSE GARDEN WITH A RAINBOW, 1970–71
Oil on canvas, 48 x 53 cm

48. BUNCHED ROSE GARDEN (DARK), 1970–71
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 37 x 40 cm
The work is currently unavailable.

49. EVE TAKES FROM THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE, 1971
Oil on canvas, 32 x 29 cm

50. ESZTER II, 1971
Oil on layered cardboard, 32 x 28 cm

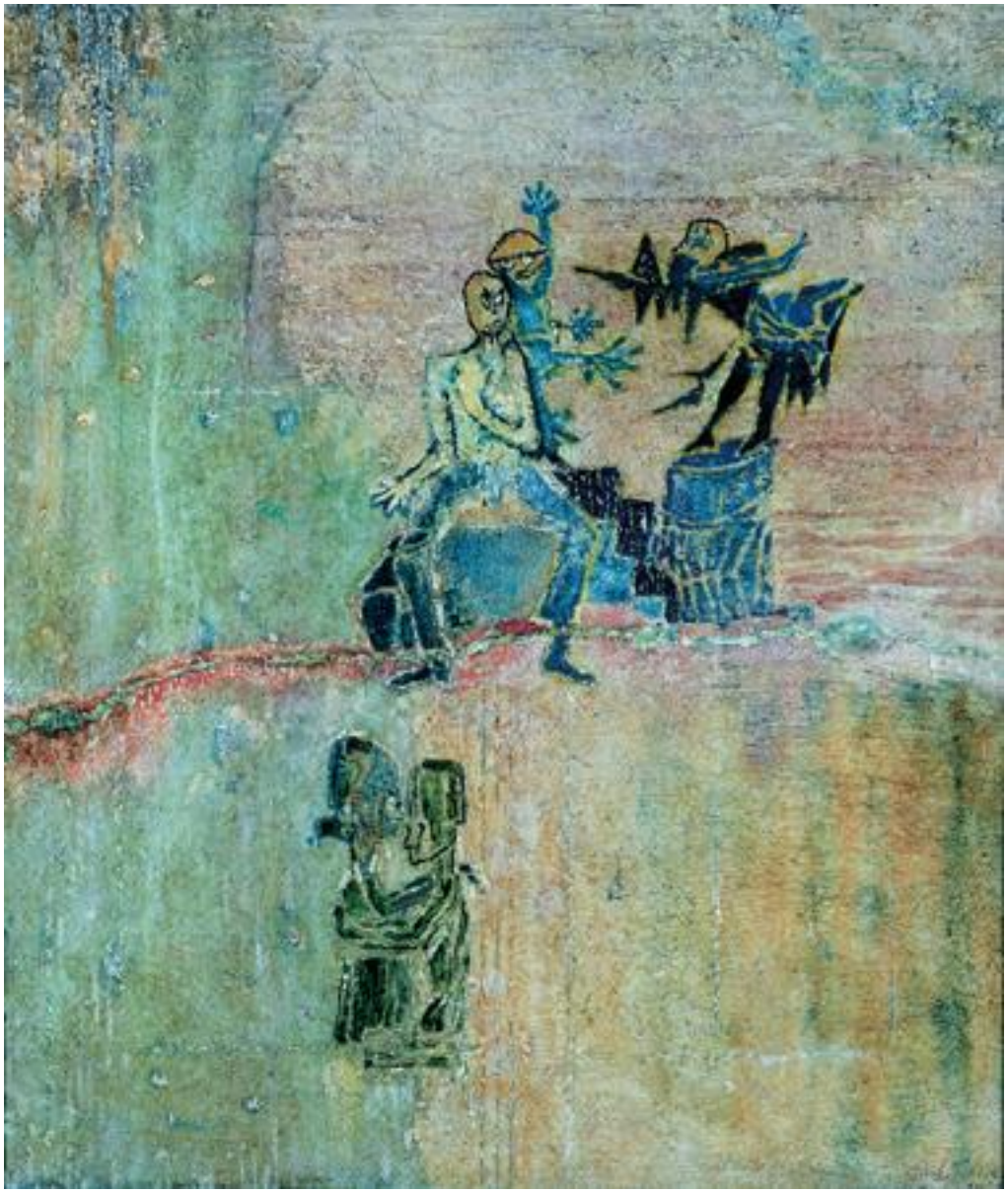
51. SPRING, 1971
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 44.5 x 59 cm

52. RIBBED ARTIFICIAL FLOWER II, 1971
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 21 x 50.5 cm

53. ESZTER I, 1971
Oil on paper laid down on wooden board, 33 x 29 cm

54. RIBBED ROSE GARDEN ON A BLUE BACKGROUND, 1970–71
Oil on paper, 33.5 x 71 cm

55. NÓRA, 1971
Oil on canvas, 36 x 36 cm



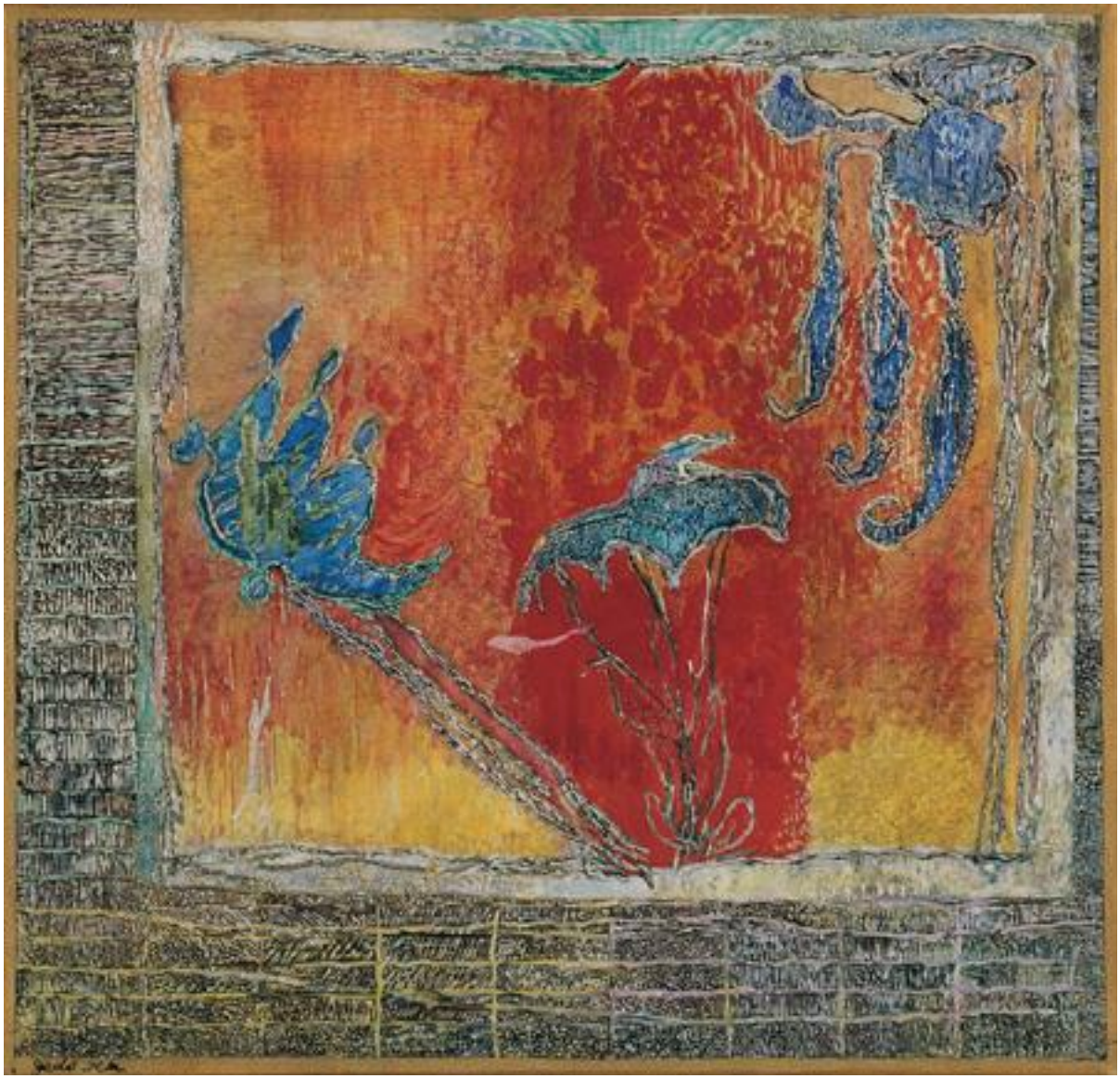
56. SMALL CIRCUS SCENE, 1971
Oil on canvas, 32.5 x 22.5 cm

57. KLÁRI, 1971
Oil on layered cardboard, 32.5 x 36 cm

58. SELF-PORTRAIT FLOWER, 1971
Oil on canvas, 48 x 33 cm

59. DOMED ROSE GARDEN, 1970–72
Oil on canvas, 54 x 47 cm, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

60. NODDING ARTIFICIAL FLOWER (GREY VERSION), 1971–72
Oil on canvas, 34 x 35 cm



61. NODDING ARTIFICIAL FLOWER (RED VERSION), 1971–72
Oil on canvas, 34 x 35 cm

62. PORTRAIT OF KLÁRI HORVÁTH I, 1971–72
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48 cm

63. PORTRAIT OF KLÁRI HORVÁTH II, 1971–72
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 61.5 x 47 cm

64. THE ROSE, 1971–72
Oil on canvas, 57 x 56.5 cm

65. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER FROM TIHANY ON A RED BACKGROUND, 1972
Oil on canvas, 38 x 74 cm

66. LILACS (SMALL SPRAY OF LILAC), 1972
Oil on wooden board, 40 x 19.5 cm

67. ROSE GARDEN WITH CLOSED EYES, 1972
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48 cm

68. BRICK-RED “WINDING” ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1970–73
Oil on wooden board, 50 x 40 cm

69. WINDING ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1970–73
Oil on canvas, 44 x 51 cm

70. DEEP GREEN ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1973
Oil on wooden board, 61 x 61 cm

71. ABANDONED CISTERN, 1973
Oil on canvas, 41.5 x 44.5 cm

72. ROSE GARDEN IN THE WIND, 1972–73
Oil on cardboard, 52.8 x 63 cm, King St. Stephen Museum, Székesfehérvár, Hungary

73. RIBBED ROSE GARDEN, BLUISH, 1973–74
Oil on canvas, 40 x 65 cm

74. LILACS II, 1973
Oil on canvas, 58 x 37 cm

75. ROSE GARDEN, 1973–74
Oil on paper laid down on cardboard, 40.5 x 27 cm

76. RIBBED ROSE GARDEN (RED), 1973–74
Oil on paper, 40 x 65 cm

77. LARGE SPRAY OF LILAC, 1973–74
Oil on wooden board, 69 x 54 cm

78. DANCING ARTIFICIAL FLOWER I, 1973–74
Oil on paper, 21 x 48 cm
The work is currently unavailable.

79. ROSE GARDEN IN THE MORNING, 1974
Oil on paper, 46 x 52 cm

80. STEPPED ROSE GARDEN, 1973–74
Oil on paper laid down on wooden board, 43 x 29 cm

81. CIRCUS SCENE WITH WALRUS, 1974
Oil on wooden board, 58 x 23.5 cm

82. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH DAGGERS, 1974
Oil on wooden board, 61 x 61 cm, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

83. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH “HAT”, 1974
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 36 x 36 cm

84. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH A PINK BACKGROUND, 1974
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 28 x 54 cm

85. CLOWN (VERSION WITH A WHITE A BACKGROUND), 1975
Oil on canvas, 53 x 49 cm

86. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH INSCRIPTION, 1974–75
Oil on canvas, 51.5 x 88 cm

87. PORTRAIT OF LILI ORSZÁG, 1975
Oil on canvas, 35 x 49.5 cm

88. THE FOREST OF PARÁD I, 1975
Oil on canvas, 45 x 38.5 cm

89. ROSE GARDEN WITH WINDOW I, 1975
Oil on canvas, 71 x 66 cm

90. THE FOREST OF PARÁD II, 1975
Oil on canvas, 45 x 43.5 cm

91. THE GREAT LUXEMBOURG GARDEN, 1975
Oil on canvas, 69 x 57 cm
The work is currently unavailable.

92. VIOLA ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1975
Oil on canvas, 57.5 x 50 cm

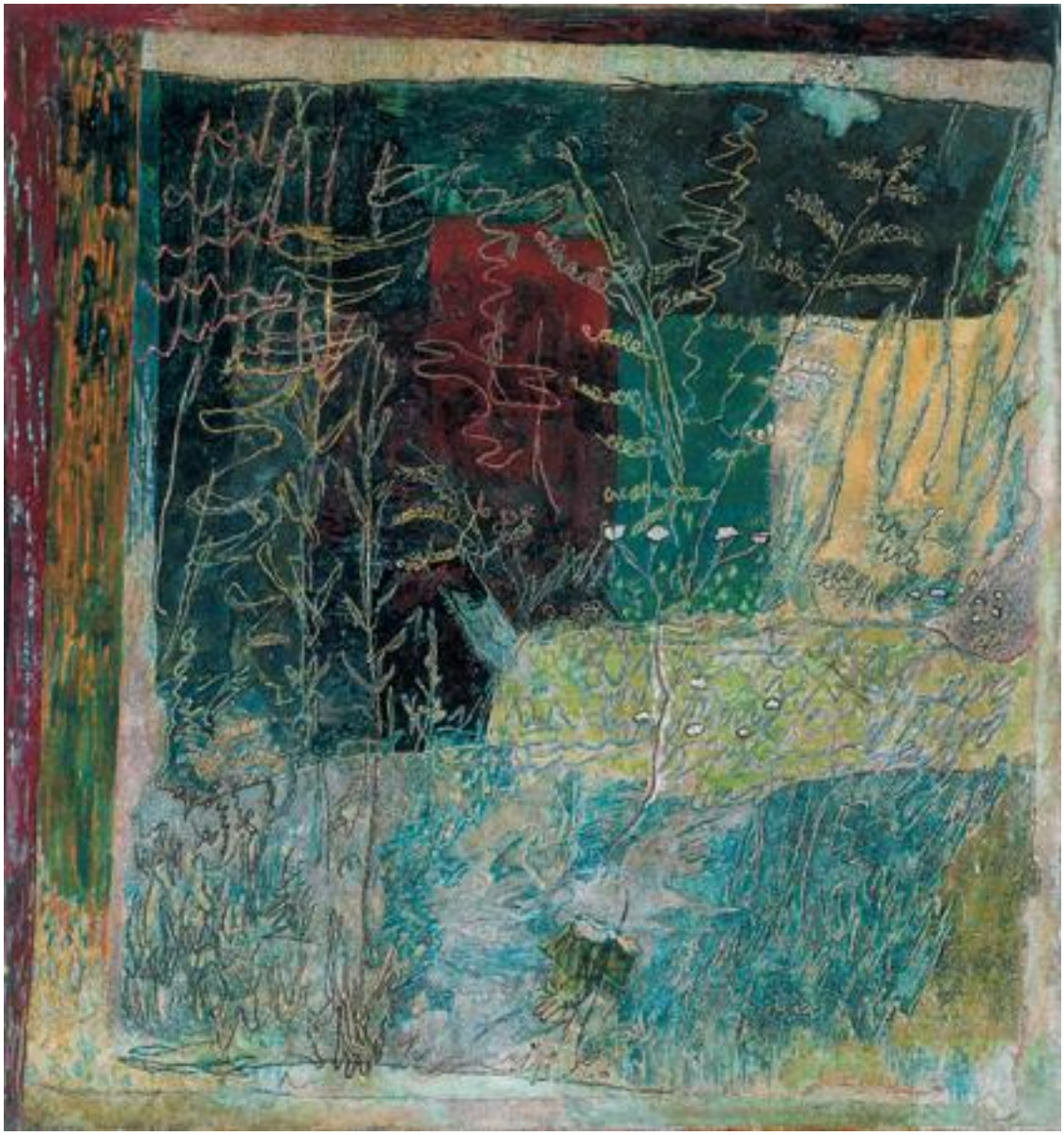
93. CLOWN (WITH A GREENISH BACKGROUND), 1975–76
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 48.5 x 45.5 cm

94. TREE-TRUNK AND BROOKSIDE, 1975–76
Oil on canvas, 50 x 50 cm
The work is currently unavailable and consequently cannot be published

95. ROSE GARDEN WITH A YELLOW BACKGROUND, 1975–76
Oil on canvas, 56.5 x 60 cm

96. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER FROM TIHANY, 1976
Oil on canvas, 30 x 46 cm

97. STILL-LIFE WITH TABLE, 1976
Oil, pastel on paper, 36 x 44 cm



98. THE FOREST OF PARÁD WITH TREE STUMPS, 1975–76
Oil on canvas, 59 x 55.5 cm

99. KITCHEN WINDOW IN PUSCHINO I, 1976
Oil, pastel, stove silver on paper, 56 x 36 cm

/

100. KITCHEN WINDOW IN PUSCHINO II, 1976
Pencil, watercolours and opaque paint on paper, 72.5 x 42.5 cm

101. MY SISTER-IN-LAW, 1977
Oil on paper, 41 x 36 cm

102. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH A CAT'S CLAW, 1976–78
Oil on aluminium plate, 39.5 x 39 cm

103. CARROTS FROM PUSCHINO, 1976
Oil, pastel on paper, 37 x 35 cm

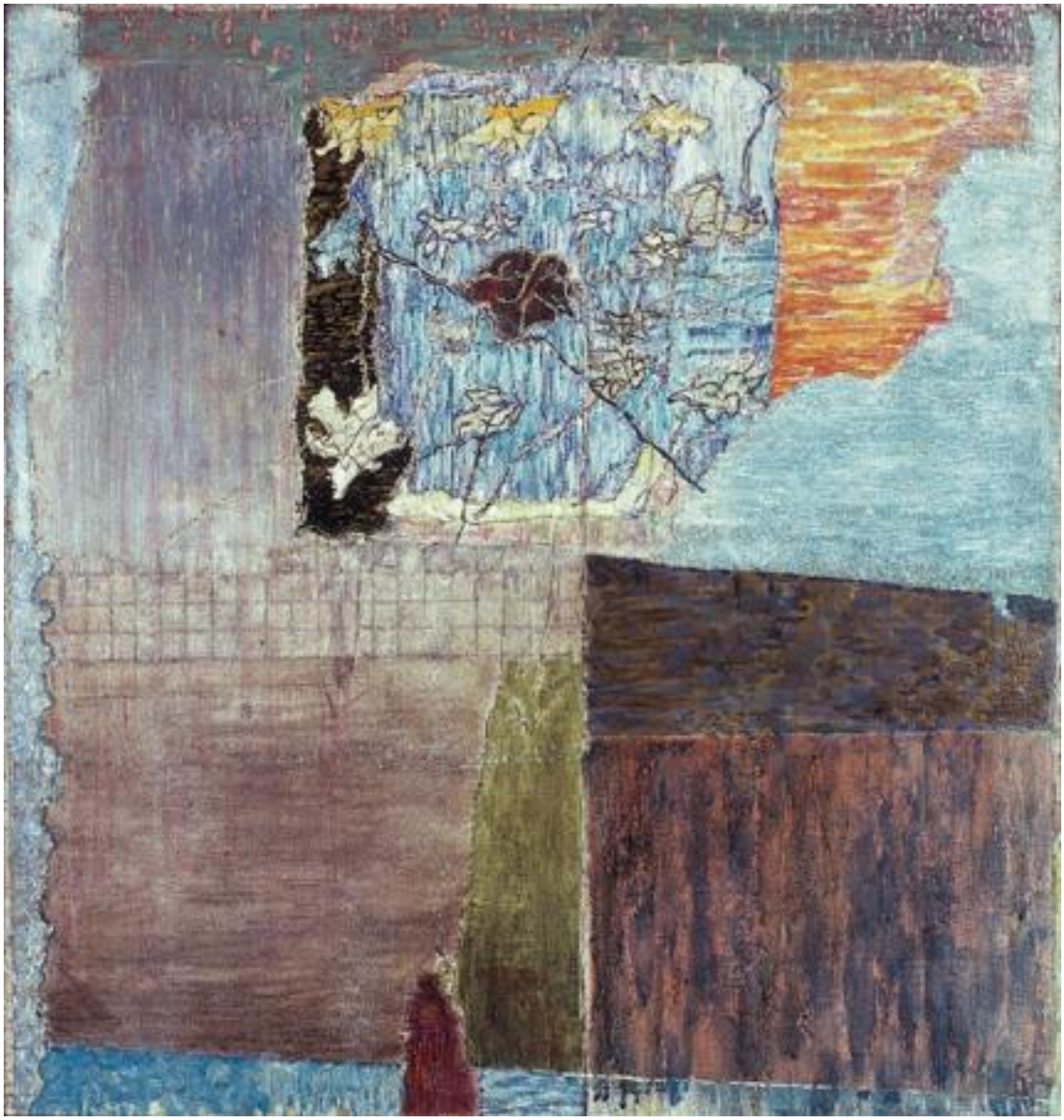
104. EQUILIBRISTS, CIRCUS, 1977
Oil on canvas, 64 x 42 cm

105. SAD ROSE GARDEN, 1977–78
Oil on aluminium plate, 68 x 48.5 cm

106. BIG TREE TRUNK, 1977–78
Oil on wooden board, 61 x 61 cm

107. ARTFICIAL FLOWER “WITH FLYPAPER” II, 1978
Oil on wooden board, 61 x 61 cm

108. ARTFICIAL FLOWER WITH “FLYPAPER” I, 1978
Oil on canvas, 42.5 x 56 cm



109. ROSE GARDEN WITH WINDOW II, 1978
Oil on canvas, 54 x 51 cm

110. MASKS WITH ORANGES, 1978
Oil on canvas, 31 x 28 cm

111. COMPOSITION IN THREE PARTS, 1978–79
Oil on aluminium plate, 44 x 24.5 cm

112. SCREAMING GIRLS, 1978–79
Oil on canvas, 58 x 67 cm (the painting itself is oval-shaped)

113. A CHILD'S DRAWING, 1979
Oil on canvas, 42.5 x 56 cm

114. ALL SAINTS' DAY, 1979
Oil on cardboard, 34 x 26 cm

115. THE MEADOW, 1979
Oil on paper, 43 x 69 cm

116. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER ON A NAPLES YELLOW BACKGROUND, 1978-1980
Oil on paper laid down on wooden board, 45 x 46 cm

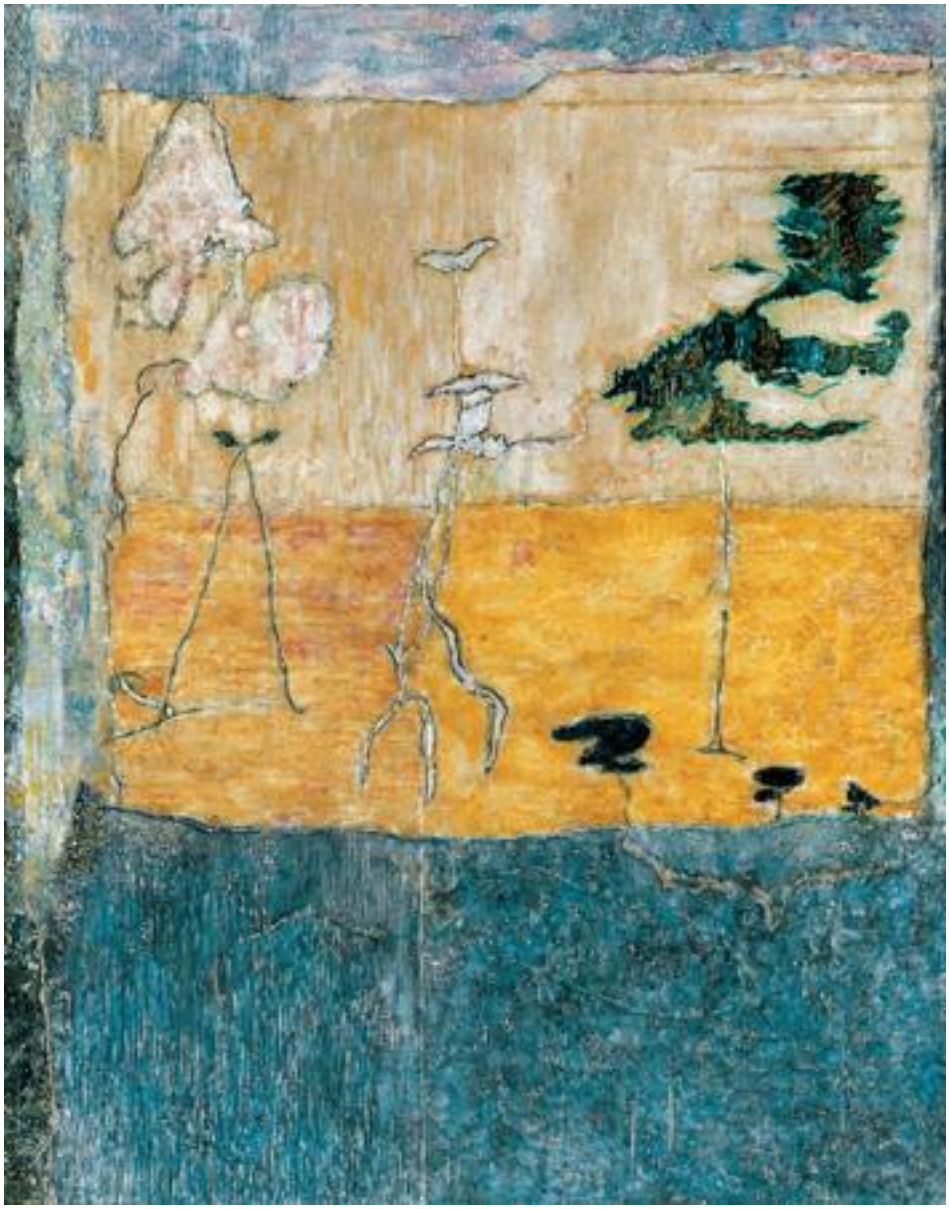
117. CLOWNS OF WARSAW, 1979
Oil on sandpaper, 47 x 30 cm

118. ROSEGRADEN WITH A TRIANGULAR WINDOW, 1979–1980
Oil on canvas, 50 x 55 cm, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

119. DEJECTED ANGEL, 1979
Oil on cardboard, 46 x 49.5 cm

120. DANCING ARTIFICIAL FLOWER II, 1980
Oil on layered cardboard, 23 x 49 cm

121. PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER MARGIT ANNA, 1980
Oil on canvas, 59 x 31 cm



122. JARDIN DES PLANTES, PARIS, 1980
Oil on canvas, 57.5 x 46 cm, Washington D.C. private collection

123. LUXEMBOURG GARDEN I, 1979–1980
Oil on cardboard, 52 x 40.5 cm

124. SCARE, 1980
Oil on canvas, 59 x 43 cm

125. MASK STORE, 1980
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 71 x 50 cm

126. PENSIVE SELF-PORTRAIT, 1980
Oil, tempera on paper laid down on wooden board, 17 x 12.5 cm

127. ROSE GARDEN WITH FOUR PARTS, 1980–1981
Oil on fibreboard, 45 x 42 cm

128. MONSTER AND BOY, 1981
Oil on canvas, 55 x 66 cm

129. THE MARCH OF TRIANGLES, 1981
Oil on canvas, 84 x 75 cm, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

130. PICTURE WITH INSCRIPTION, 1981
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 51 x 66 cm

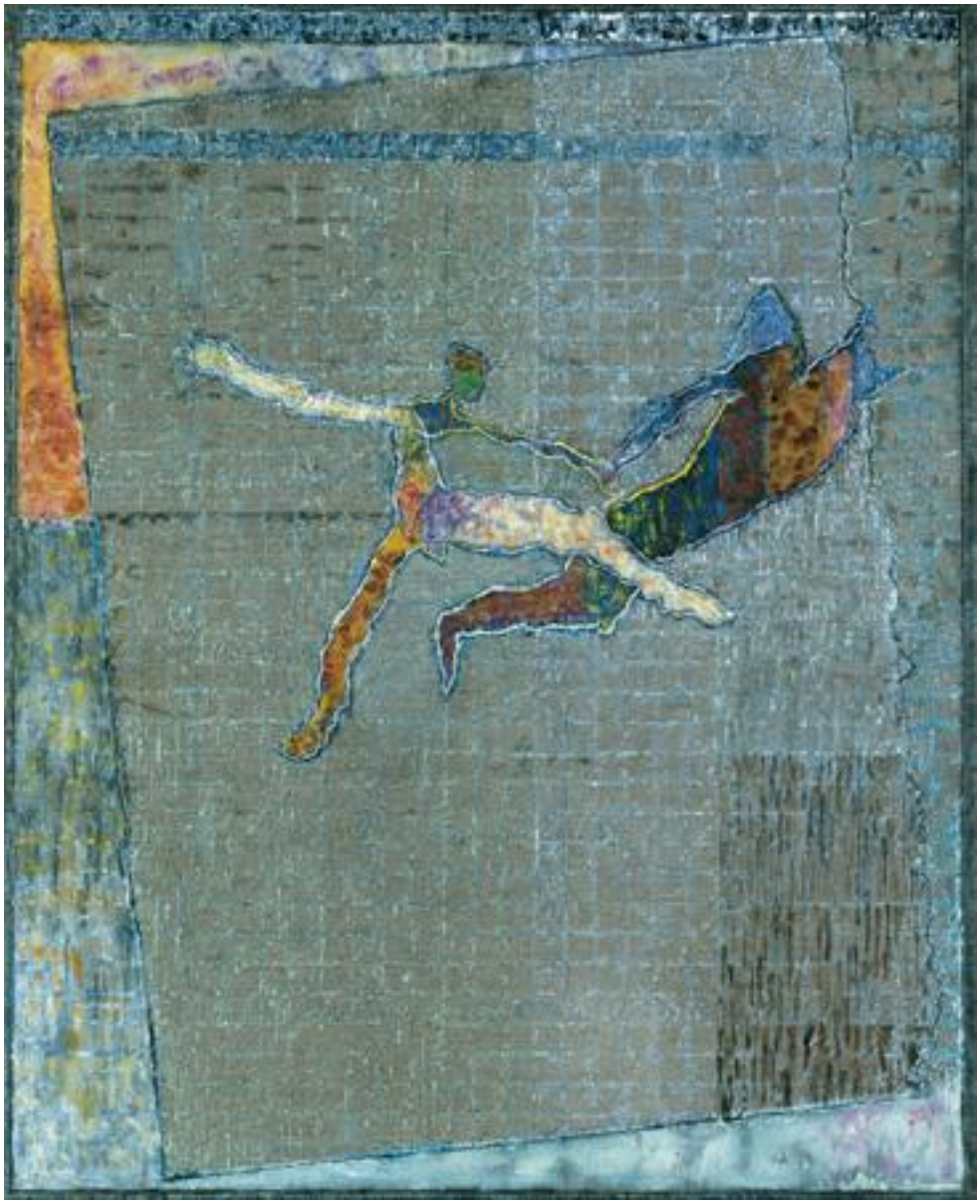
131. WITHCES IN PREPARATION, 1980–81
Oil on canvas, 59 x 58 cm, Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

132. ARTIFICIAL FLOWER WITH A GREY BACKGROUND, 1980–81
Oil on canvas, 47 x 57 cm

133. ROSE GARDEN WITH A GREEN BACKGROUND, 1981
Oil on canvas, 72 x 50 cm

134. PALE, RIBBED ARTIFICIAL FLOWER, 1983
Oil on paper, 35.5 x 53.5 cm

135. WOMAN DANCER, 1983
Oil, on emanel paper, 28 x 20 cm



136. MAN AND WOMAN (KIDNAP), 1982
Oil on canvas, 80 x 66 cm

137. SELF-PORTRAIT WITH A HAT, 1983
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48 cm

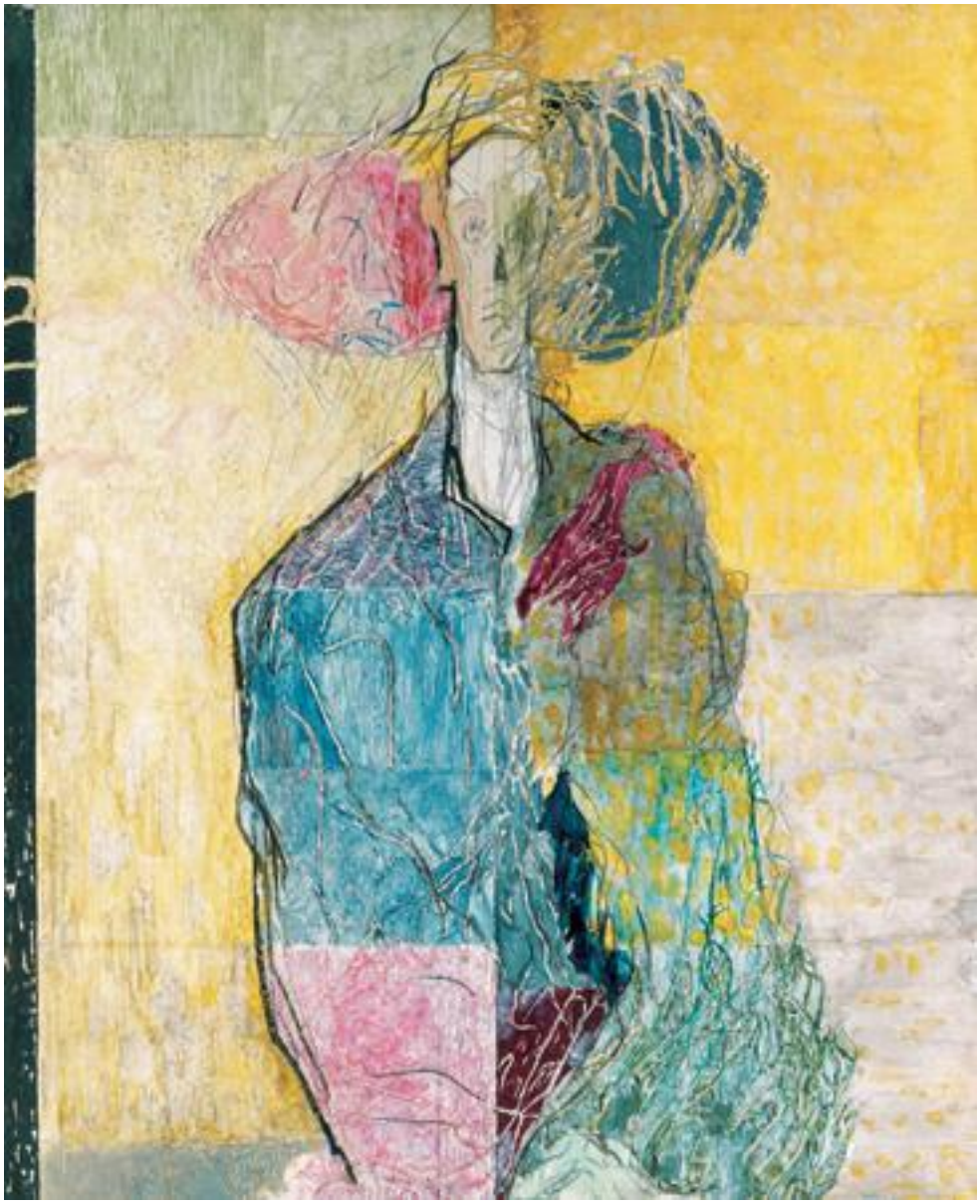
138. THE CARNEVAL OF DWARVES, 1984
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 49 x 51 cm

139. MAN AND WOMAN, 1983
Oil on paper, 29 x 21 cm

140. MAN READING (THE PORTRAIT OF B. E.), 1983
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 58 x 46.5 cm

141. PINK SELF-PORTRAIT, 1984
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 59 x 49 cm

142. SELF-PORTRAIT PAINTED ON AN OLD DRAWING, 1984
Oil on paper laid down on drawing board, 22 x 14 cm

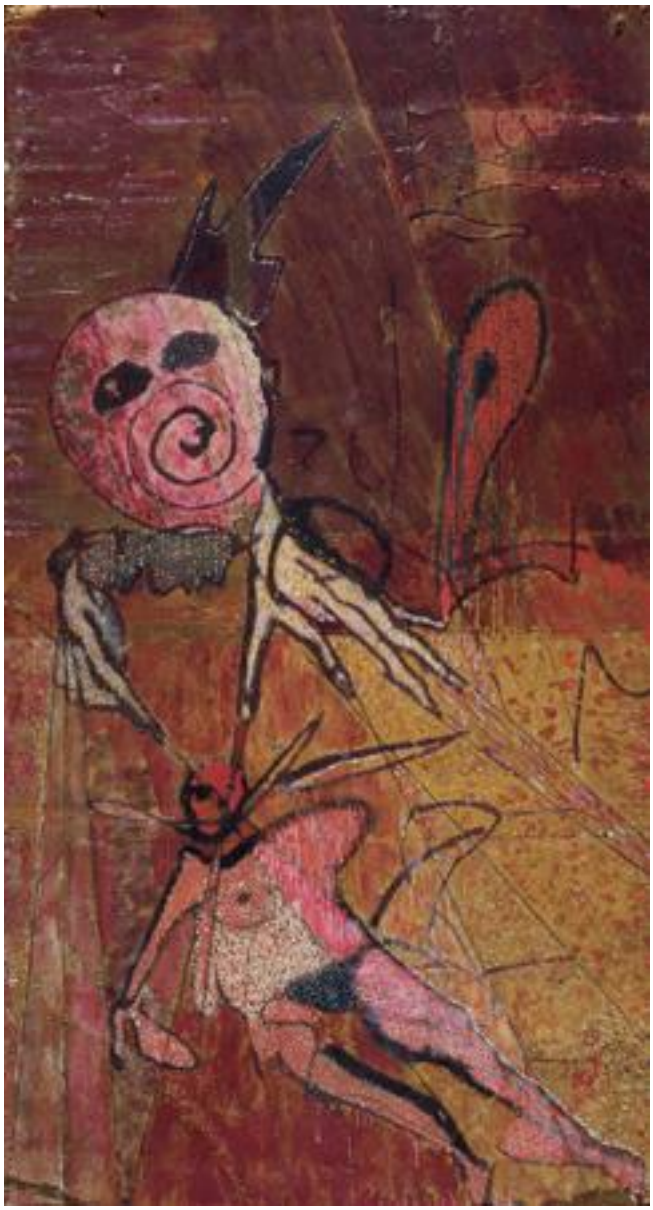


143. SELF-PORTRAIT WITH A STRAWHAT, 1984
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48.5 cm

144. FENCE OF THE LUXEMBOURG GARDEN, 1979–1985
Oil on paper laid down on canvas, 64 x 49 cm

145. RENAISSANCE CLOWNS, 1984
Oil on paper laid down on drawing board, 26 x 37 cm

146. THE BUTTERFLY, 1984–85
Oil on canvas, 40 x 69 cm



147. CONJURER’S TRICK, 1984–85
Oil, pastel on paper, 49 x 27 cm

148. CLOWN IN MAKE UP, 1985
Oil on paper laid down on cardboard, 52 x 32 cm

149. CLOWNS, 1985
Oil, tempera on paper, 22.5 x 25 cm

150. SELF-PORTRAIT WITH A HAT, 1985
Oil, mixed technique on paper laid down on canvas, 60 x 48.5 cm

151. BIG CLOWNS (DANCE SCENE), 1985
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 74 x 35 cm

152. DOUBLE SELF-PORTRAIT, 1985
Oil on photographic paper laid down on canvas, 58 x 42 cm