



Oto Hudec: *Invisible Museum*, project, 2017

# Decades of inclusion? Roma artists and contemporary art

26 April 2024

# 2ND ROMA BIENNALE

## Closing Event & Exhibition



Internationally...

...regionally...

...locally

**24.10.21** ■

**14:00 - 23:00**

**ACUD MACHT NEU** •



## 52nd Venice Biennale (2007): "Think with the Senses, Feel with the Mind: Art in the Present Tense"

### Roma pavilion – transnational representation; ethnic collective

Tunali, T. (2011). The politics of "Roma inclusion" at the 52nd Venice art biennale. *Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review*, 11(4), 701-711.

Is art history lagging behind processes of inclusion? – first Romani Group exhibition in 1979 (Budapest)

Inclusion as “the consequence of a sudden and spontaneous humanitarian interest. They are the continuation of a complex set of political, economic, and discursive relations marked by the collapse of State Socialism and EU expansion which helped to institutionalize “Western” human rights discourses to frame “Eastern” ethnic conflicts and tensions in the process of the ongoing “liberalization” and “democratization” of the CEE countries”

Tunali, T. (2011). The politics of "Roma inclusion", 702–703.





Did the Roma Pavilion in the 52nd Venice Biennial aim for negotiating the Roma's "particular political vocabulary" in need to be visible to Romany populations around Europe to build an alternative political solidarity?

Or was this exhibition part of the institutional creativity aimed at the socio-political integration of the former communist Europe into the global economic circuits?

Tunali, T. (2011). The politics of "Roma inclusion", 703.

## Vanda Zsoldos, Stációk (Stations), 1988

'...and in order to become a Roma painter, the existence of the Roma bricklayer should be acknowledged. This is a massive and difficult question ... and I would like to be a Hungarian painter ... The time will come but I will not get the final immigration license from my colleagues for another year or two ... I am going to present a significant piece of art at the World Fair and this work of art ... will not be made by Tamás Péli the Roma painter but Tamás Péli, a painter with a European mind and soul, that of the image designer who is concerned with the future of this country and his community'.



Tamás Péli (b. Budapest 1948, d. Budapest 1994),

<https://www.romarchive.eu/en/collection/staciok-portrefilm-peli-tamas-festomuveszrol/>

Gabi JIMÉNEZ



*Caravans and the Cypresses*, 2001  
oil on canvas, 80 x 60 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Gabi Jiménez



*Saintes Maries de la Mer 3 - The Caravans*, 2002  
oil on canvas, 73 x 116 cm, collection of the artist  
photo: Gabi Jiménez

## Identity and artistic expression

The title of the exhibition, *Paradise Lost*, refers to the fact that the majority society should at last give up not only negative stereotypes about the Roma, but also the exotic “Gypsy romances.” The self-image that is to emerge at this display through the reinterpretation of Roma identity is not expected to be homogenous or stable. It is our belief that the identity of the Roma serves as a model for a modern, European transnational identity that is capable of cultural fusion and adaptation to changing circumstances. This is how the artists invited represent themselves, and this is how they experience their Gypsy identity. But while the goals of the Pavilion include the representation of this flexible identity, the individual artists have not been requested to deal with their own identity. Not every one of the artists in the Pavilion is of Roma origin. Nihad Nino Pušija, for instance, who lives in Berlin, has been documenting the life of a Gypsy family for two decades and had built strong links with this minority before learning (about two years ago) that he himself has Roma ancestors. The Finnish Kiba Lumberg’s video work ends with this sentence:

*“I don’t recall being a Gypsy, but I have Gypsies in my dreams, and Gypsies surround me.”*

This Roma heritage, the traces of it, the memories, experiences and traumas define the pieces, and the artists’ identity will never be irrelevant when interpreting their work. As Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe, the distinguished expert of mixed-race studies said:

*“So many things have happened to me because of what I am, and they shape the way I am today...”<sup>20</sup>*

## András KÁLLAI

All my works are the results of an intuitive creative process, as regards both their subjects and the process of realisation.

It was always after the event that I could recognise my method and identify its sources, whether it be an attraction to primitive art, representations of Venus, compositions built from used dolls and toys, or Barbie dolls.

Which is to say the work always comes first – spontaneously or by chance, – and the idea, the subject follows in its wake, whether immediately or much later.

I want to emphasise this because the Barbie dolls are again something I chanced upon. This figure had appeared in all of my earlier toy-compositions, but I had not accorded more attention to it than to any other degenerate and grotesque toys. But as two of my interests – or more precisely, those works that utilise primitive art and those that employ contemporary toys – were approaching one another, I realised I was using two idols, two completely different images of women! One is Venus, who serves fertility, the other Barbie, who serves infertility! My sculpture *Fat Barbie* is a result, the first refined form, of the encounter of these two idols.

I want to represent the Barbie doll in certain situations, with the use of simple symbols. The works that emerged along this concept may at first sight be perplexing, even funny, but it is my hope that they are attention-arresting.



András Kállai, *Fat Barbie*. 2006, Terracotta, plastic, 28 x 13 x 14 cm,  
<http://universes-in-universe.de/car/venezia/eng/2007/tour/roma/img-19.htm>



Kiba LUMBERG



*Lace Tablecloth*, 1995  
gouache, 50 x 88 cm, National Bureau of Antiquities, The Archives for Prints and Photographs, Finland  
photo: Ritva Bäckman

Roma identity politics in the EU has not been employed to unveil the reasons of increasing social inequality; instead it has been applied to define Roma as a distinct community, which, in turn, has triggered traditional prejudices on them.

Tunali, T. (2011). The politics of "Roma inclusion", 705.



## PARADISE LOST

Edited by Tímea Junghaus and Katalin Székely



THE FIRST ROMA PAVILION  
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2007

“Are we creating an ethnicising, socially motivated ‘special case’, sponsored by philanthropy, in the hybrid environment of the art establishment?”

Gottfried WAGNER, “The Roma Pavilion in Venice: A Bold Beginning”, in Exhibition Catalogue: Paradise Lost, Open Society Foundations, Budapest, 2007, p. 36.

Małgorzata Mirga-Tas (\*1978)



Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Re-enchanting the World, exhibition view, [Polish Pavilion at the 2022 Venice Biennale](#). Image courtesy Zachęta National Gallery of Art. Photo: Daniel Rumiancew.

# Foreigners Everywhere

BIENNALE  
ARTE 2024

VENEZIA

20 APRIL—  
24 NOVEMBER

20 APRILE—  
24 NOVEMBRE

Stranieri

GIARDINI /  
ARSENALE

Ovunque

- First Biennale in 1895
- collective exhibition spaces as well as 30 permanent national pavilions

<https://www.labiennale.org/en/news/biennale-arte-2024-stranieri-ovunque-foreigners-everywhere>

Luna De Rosa, *RrOMA LEPANTO* (detail), 2024.



The Battle of Lepanto by Andrea Vicentino (c. 1571-1600), Museo Correr, Venice

*RrOMA LEPANTO* refers to the naval Battle of Lepanto (1571), highlighting the role of enslaved Gitanos from Spain and Roma from Italy, tasked with rowing the vessels. The site-specific installation initiates a discourse concerning the (in)visibility and recognition of Roma contributions to European history and societies. The choice of the exhibition venue is deliberate: the show takes place at Palazzo Bembo, as Giovanni Bembo served as commander during the battle, which culminated in the triumph of the Holy Alliance.

<https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/592567/rroma-lepanto/>

Luna De Rosa

<https://www.lunaderosa.com>

*Luna De Rosa, is an Italian activist and multidisciplinary artist from the Roma diaspora who works and lives between Berlin and Milan. The body is the starting point of her artistic work: through interventions in the public sphere she expresses the relationship that binds the body to the social context that essentially governs and defines it. In recent years, her artistic work has focused on the vulnerability of ethnic minorities, particularly the Roma, who are strongly affected by exclusion and racism. Through the use of different media, from performance to painting and installation, De Rosa addresses the urgency of challenging misunderstandings, stereotypes and representing the multiple identities of Roma cultural and psychological heritage, focusing especially on the issues of Roma identity and femininity, creating dense images that almost metaphorically follow the friction and conflicting realities of ideas related to being an artist, Roma and woman searching for a way to exist in the middle, to be multiple, to remain irreducible.*



# Manolo Gómez Romero

<https://en.kaidikhas.com/artists/70063/manolo-gomez-romero/works/>

**Works** Biography Exhibitions News



Manolo Gómez Romero  
*Afirmación*, 2013  
Mischtechnik auf Leinwand  
15 x 15 cm



Manolo Gómez Romero  
*África*, 2016  
Mischtechnik auf Leinwand  
65 x 54 cm  
signiert Vorderseite rechts unten,  
rückseitig betitelt



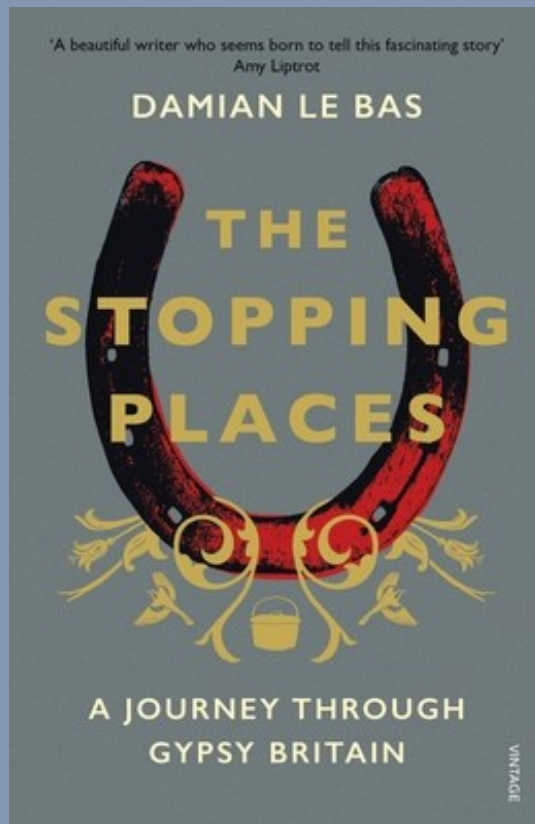
Manolo Gómez Romero  
*Airoso*, 2010  
Mischtechnik auf Papier  
50 x 70 cm  
Vorderseite rechts unten signiert  
und datiert



Manolo Gómez Romero  
*Alboroto*, 2020  
Mischtechnik auf Leinwand  
200 x 195 cm

Damian Le Bas

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/06/racism-gypsy-damian-le-bas-travellers-stopping-places>



“A publisher asked: ‘Aren’t you just some really middle-class guy who happens to have a Traveller background?’ says Le Bas. “He was implying that because I’m educated, I’m inauthentic. That is not a fantastic thing to say – that you can be educated out of your ethnicity. You can’t be educated out of being a Jamaican.”



📷 Traditional bow-top caravans at Appleby Fair. Photograph: Delaine Le Bas



**“WE ARE WHAT WE ARE” ASPECTS OF ROMA LIFE IN CONTEMPORARY ART @ MINORITEN GALLERY, GRAZ (2004)  
(SHOWN IN TRNAVA IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR)**

Matei Bejenaru (RO)  
Michaela Bruckmüller (A)  
Pavlina Fichta Cierna (SK)  
Cosmin Gradinaru (RO)  
Iosif Kiraly / Mariana Celac / Marius Marcu-Lapadat (RO)  
Monika Kovacova (SK)  
Aydan Murtezaoglu (TR)  
Terez Orsos (HU)  
Nihad Nino Pusija (D/BiH)  
Gyöngyi Raczne Kalanyos (HU)  
Mario Rizzi (I), Erzen Shkololli (KOS)  
Mladen Stilinovic (HR)  
Ceija Stojka (A)  
Chad Evans Wyatt (USA/CZ)  
Dusan Zahoransky (CZ/SK)



Nihad Nino Pusija, photo from the series "Ramadan Armani"

LACKA – Ladislava Gažiová



<https://www.artlist.cz/en/lacka-ladislava-gaziova-618-video/>

*O kosmos hino kalo/The Universe is Black*, 2017,  
Moravian Gallery in Brno,



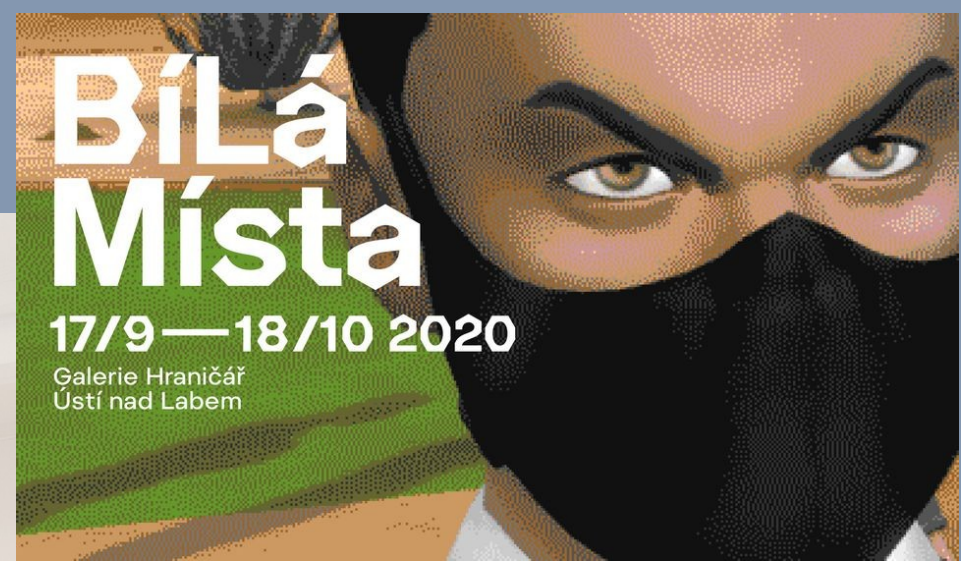
Ladislava Gažiová,  
<https://www.artmap.cz/artist/ladislava-gaziova/>

Phundrado drom / The Open Road, Ethnographic  
Museum, Prague, 3. 6. 2022 – 31. 5. 2024



<https://www.nm.cz/en/program/exhibitions/phundrado-drom-the-open-road#gallery-9>

Bílá Místa, Hranicář Gallery, Ústí nad Labem (2020)



<https://artalk.cz/2020/10/05/roma-lives-matter-v-hranicari/?fbclid=IwAR2zbG0yCtwDxh874ZrCspWpNciDXDcyPXlozFszM1hiHljcTH42TT3Dw>



Rather than the realisation of a specific museum concept, the project connects a range of programmes (exhibitions, film screenings, performance, workshops, etc.), modelling nomadic, flexible institutional operation, which raises questions and formulates statements with the devices of contemporary art. It aspires to achieve all of this in accordance with the museum approaches of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that extend social engagement to reconsidering the relations of museum narratives, cultural heritage and contemporaneity. Although each of the presented artworks contributes to the creative act of the collaborative conception with a unique voice, they share a common desire for narrative, speech and dialogue; their raw material is also shared: contemporary society.



**ROMA  
MOMA**

<https://eriac.org/category/romamoma/>

Internationally...

...regionally...

...locally



Which different strategies do you detect?

Are there any regionally or locally specific practices?