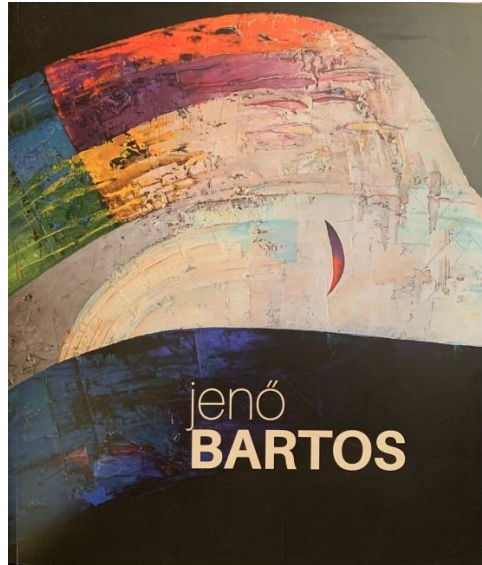


## The painting of Jenő Bartos

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Jenő BARTOS, *Picture album*,  
Pim Publishing, Iasi, 2020,  
240 pages.



The long-awaited album signed by visual artist and professor Jenő Bartos from "George Enescu" National University of Arts in Iasi, was printed this year at Pim Publishing House from Iasi, in a spectacular collection of images and texts which describe relevantly his personality and his artworks.

We must notice that since the beginning he was a remarkable appearance both in terms of the formal aspects of this achievement - the quality of printing and material execution - but especially in terms of the richness and value of its content written in Romanian and translated in English in these 240 color pages.

The retrospective character of this picture album, which was awarded at "Editorial Harvest Days" book fair at its 8<sup>th</sup> edition (2020), organized by "Mihai Ursachi" Culture House of Iasi, is revealed immediately from its first pages where one can notice an impressive photo since his college days which starts the wide series of images that create his artworks portfolio which presents professor Jenő Bartos's prodigious career in visual arts area.

Since the very beginning the author's artistic creed meets the reader's inquisitive eye who is eager to discover, like an archaeologist in search of hidden treasures from the passage of time - the artist's mysteries, secrets and inspiration and also his creative workshop. Inspired by Paul Klee's famous quote according to which "art doesn't reproduce the visible, but makes visible", the whole theoretical and practical approach assumed by professor Jenő Bartos during the more than five decades of artistic activity - of which three decades were dedicated to his university career, is that of figurative-

symbolic representations, a style painting which highlights the suggestive force of the visual language elements based on the "universality of visual codes" (p.7). The meanings of this artistic creed investigates for a period of time different areas of imaginary with reflections including the vast space of metaphysics and reaching the infinite space of the sacred space. The figurative representation which is natively correlated with the world of symbol opposes this way the narrative-realistic rendering of the surrounding realities, showing a synthetic formula in which the expressive force of visual language blends harmoniously with the consistency of the message and the meaning of the artwork which has a visual representation, indicating the boundary between the real space and the fictional one.

The picture album presents further a particular vision of visual art, in which the artist Jenő Bartos summarizes some of the art characteristics which are thoroughly analysed within the millennial artistic manifestations related to: the division into the periods of the great art movements, the evolution of styles, the mobility of the aesthetic categories which are in a continuous struggle of affirmation, and also related to the cyclicity of creative phenomena, and last but not least, to the possibility of defining the very notion of art - the author noticing meanings specific to the field of visual arts.

Art critic Maria Bilașevschi also synthesizes this retrospective picture album which presents a rich activity in the visual arts area described in terms of a revelation, a "restitutio in integrum" of the artist, teacher and theorist, mentor, colleague and the man Jenő Bartos's artworks for public. There are presented the key moments of the artist's becoming and evolution which has stood out throughout his career as a voice that imposes respect everywhere he presents his artworks. Subtle and acute, vigorous and essential at the same time, Professor Jenő Bartos's painting is distinguished by the quality of visual and conceptual expression, art criticism being sensitive to these obvious qualities of one of the most representative local artists's artworks which belongs to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, described by the art critic Petru Bejan in suggestive terms like: "Discreet but convivial, taciturn and meditative, retractile in appearance, but available and convivial". (p.30)

Browsing the pages of this picture album, the reader gradually becomes acquainted with the various stages of perfection as an artist and also discovers, full of enthusiasm, the inner searches that are the essence of the figurative-symbolic style which today became a personal emblem specific to Professor Jenő Bartos's painting style. The complex series of artwork images from this album invites the reader to a chronological, but also stylistic, journey of searches and discoveries specific to the vast territory of visual arts, from figurative to abstract, from realistic to symbolic. The compositional and chromatic refinement cannot be overlooked as it is constantly connected to the painter's visual-artistic discourse whose native vocation reached the

highest peaks of professional recognition within the creative, select and elitist field he takes part from. But beyond all these, one feels the atmosphere of a specific universe of creation configured by endless questions and inner upheavals in search of connections with the world of sacredness, the world beyond which is the existential level with visible and deep ramifications in the universe of philosophy, astrology, quantum physics, symbolism, mythology, *science fiction* or religion.

Even for those who know the artist and professor Jenő Bartos well, this picture album has the quality of discovering those features, perhaps less known of his, by constantly inviting the reader (and the viewer) to see again his artworks and also his personality. Professor Bartos's painting is from this point of view always fresh, always alive and able to awaken new high sensations and feelings.

This picture album has the quality in its entirety of radiographing the so-called in the specialized language "artistic vision" which is masterfully reflected by each point, line, spot or visual expression in an artist's creation concerned with rendering the contour, form and essence of the immaterial world, by using specific techniques specific to the material world.

Enriched with the meaningful words of some remarkable art critics or chroniclers such as: Pavel Țușară, D.N. Zaharia, Negoită Lăptoiu, Valentin Ciucă, Corneliu Antim, Mariana Codruț, Theodor Redlow, Gheorghe Macarie or Traian Mocanu, the album dedicated to the personality and creation of the artist Jenő Bartos contains, like a complex mathematical theorem, all the necessary data to decipher the overwhelming personality that gives the name of this prestigious picture album.

Judiciously structured - like the rigorous composition he practices in his artwork, - in distinct chapters dedicated either to art criticism or to different areas of personal creation in which he distinguished himself from painting to graphics and mural painting, this album impresses through its retrospective character and through the power of synthesis, presenting an important page in the history of Iasi's artistic creation of the last decades, having a well-deserved role of a perfect model within the contemporary artistic practice.

We have, therefore, before our eyes, a valuable picture album, in which the concept, composition and color are not a simple game of words, but a real formula of artistic success, an expression of total dedication on the altar of creation, painting and visual art, in all its figurative-symbolic meanings and creations: Jenő BARTOS.