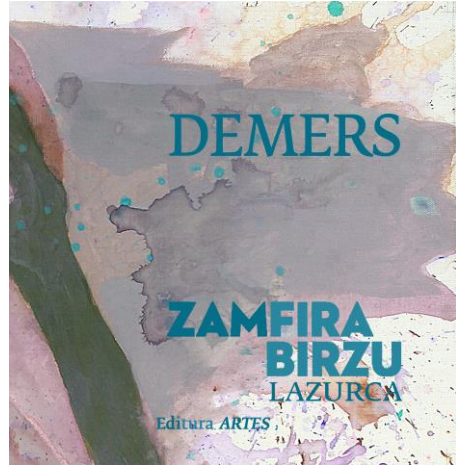


## **Zamfira Bîrzu's artistic approach – a way to transfigure the human**

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About Zamfira Bîrzu it has been written about in the past, and it will be written from now on. About an artist able to weave with such talent the painted expression of the world around us, and the ineffable essence of her spirit, there will always be critics, aestheticians, philosophers, rhapsodists and lovers of beauty in images, able to translate into praising terms her prodigious work and activity.

By far, Zamfira Bîrzu is one of the artists of the contemporary period from Iasi, who enjoys a wide appreciation among connoisseurs and professionals in the artistic field, arousing a natural question every time she addresses the public: What else does she bring this time, how will she thrill our eyes?

However, this time we have before us a remarkable editorial signed by Zamfira Bîrzu, visual artist and Associate Professor PhD at the Faculty of Visual Arts and Design within the "George Enescu" University of Arts in Iasi.

Awarded with the "Prize for editorial debut" at the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the Editorial Harvest Days, organized by "Mihai Ursachi" Culture House from Iasi, the art album "Demers" ("Approach"), published in 2020 at Artes Publishing House in Iasi, with 165 color pages, of a very good quality, both in terms of technical realization and imagistic content, invites the reader to a chronological, visual and conceptual journey in the universe of shapes and colors of Zamfira Bîrzu, impartially probing the different paths, or rather, approaches the artist undertakes with great courage in the field of art. Indeed, the reader – eager to know even more the meanings of the author's artistic creation, happy to find again on this path her work – has the opportunity to

come at close contact with the various thematic and technical explorations with which the artist made us feel familiar with them for a long time.

Although trained as classic painter, Zamfira Bîrzu is not limited to the vocabulary, instruments and means of expression of painting, the artist being able to constantly capture through escapades also welcome in other fields of art, such as the sculptural object or installation, fully showing the fact that nowadays' artist is no longer just a painter or sculptor, draftsman or colorist, but all at once, or successively, easily alternating the means of expression of these visual communication media. However, Zamfira Bîrzu makes it naturally, in her works no effort of creation being charged; on the contrary, the lightness of the brush, the spontaneity of the shape and the color spot making the expressiveness of a visual discourse loaded with the natural dialogue, mediated through the work of art, between the artist and her audience.

In fact, Zamfira Bîrzu's artistic approach also enjoys, similarly to the richness of the chromatic palette she uses, a specific thematic pluralism. The artist easily juggles between human morphologies, in which she seeks, as she herself confesses, the ideal of harmony "where life pulsates" (p. 6), thanks to female nudes and erotic themes, portraits and self-portraits, reaching the space of ancestral mythologies which give shape and meaning to imaginary representations and chimeras, which subtly flow into her creation, but also requiring the direct participation of the viewer, who is symbolically being called for a certain type of cognitive, but also spiritual involvement.

Nature is another important source of inspiration, which Zamfira Bîrzu masterfully captures in her creations. The artist alternates different images and sequences with a significant impact on her artistic perception: whether she captures a flower, a shadow, a landscape, a sunrise or a sunset in the Danube Delta, the hills of her native Bukovina, a garden, a house in Balchik or a Tunisian gate, in all these situations, her painting has a synesthetic effect on the viewer, thus training all his senses, not just his sight. Her flowers do smell, and the although-abstract landscapes absorb you inside.

Therefore, the artistic approach proposed to us is a visual spectacle in which the fascination of shapes and colors, the meticulousness of compositional constructions and the unexpected spontaneity of the linear duct place these creations in the sphere of artistic refinement, giving the defining note of Zamfira Bîrzu's painting. Moreover, there is a permanent feeling of freshness, her painting proving with elegance and subtlety the quality of the new, but also a certain pleasant and assumed feeling of *déjà vu*, exalting through the cultural quote, specific to modern art of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, to which her entire experience of becoming an artist relates.

Zamfira Bîrzu is also an artist of dichotomies, softness and strength, shape and color, rigorous construction and ineffable and unrepeatable hazard, decorativism and painting as well, imperceptibly, naturally combining all

these qualities and principles into works of art that bear the recognizable imprint of the fully mature artist, aware of her value and creative potential.

We can also talk about a certain tectonics of the creations the artist makes, regardless the technique – from painting to the installation-object –, from the barely touched canvas of transparent washers to the one saturated with the strongly pasty color, generating spontaneous and controlled craquelures, reaching the natural patina of wood and the rust of metal, which the artist takes out of the banality of their inert world, giving them life and bringing them all into the realm of artistic refinement and visual subtleties. The invoice of Zamfira Bîrzu's painting, as well as the texture of the installations-objects incites the tactile sense, inviting the viewer to overcome – even at the level of mental representations – the prohibition of touching the work of art. The sensual anatomy of chimeras painted on canvas or cut in metal falls in turn, in the same register of visual dichotomies that we mentioned earlier, but able to express and transmit much more than it shows.

But perhaps the most natural expression, which offers the defining note of an artist's creation, is the one given by the proof of the portrait, in which Zamfira Bîrzu excels, extracting those features of the face that make it not only recognizable, but turns it into a true work of art. The project "Expressions and typologies" dedicated to some of the most important personalities of Iasi since the beginning of the third millennium is the supreme testimony of the unpredictable – and always surprising – balance of the artist, between the extremes of plastic representation, from simplicity flat decorativism, towards the concrete structures of the figurative from which the painter selects only the essential that favors and enhances her artistic vision. Nothing is in excess, nothing is missing. Zamfira Bîrzu's portraits stand out for the quality of the balance and harmonies between form and color, adding their extraordinary ability to capture the unique, the emblematic and the authentic.

All these coordinates of Zamfira Bîrzu's artistic creation can be found in this album, the fast reader discovering the profile of a perfect artist, and the one eager to adapt, understand or learn the lesson of painting and contemporary art, in general, receiving moreover than the expectations, preparation and fine tunes that connect him to the field of creation. Thus enunciated and transposed into images, the artist's declared intentions fully reach their goal, of transfiguring the human, offering the lesson of beauty and good taste, of quality art, under the magnifying glass of sensitivity and balance that dominate her entire creation. As a whole, the art album "Demers" ("Approach") is an honorable business card, but also an invitation to the public, friends and relatives to turn one more page from the prestigious book of the artistic personality of Zamfira Bîrzu, and for those who do not yet have had the chance to meet her, a huge challenge of discovering the perpetual beauty of art.