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**Brașov artistic centre during the XIXth-XXth centuries
(1815-1989)**

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Keywords: Braşov, modern artistic centre, visual arts and artists, 19th-20th centuries

In the research for the development of the Braşov artistic centre we have targeted a historical interval with chronological landmarks: Congress of Vienna (1815) and the fall of the communist regime (1989). During the period marked by these two crucial historical events, there were important political, economic, social and urban-planning changes in Braşov, as art was also involved in this historical process. I watched the development of the Braşov artistic centre, analyzing the development of Braşov fine art in the context specific to each historical period.

We have set out to reconstitute the historical development of the Braşov art centre in modern times from a critical perspective, which allows verification and reassessment of the historical information previously provided in the scientific papers that has addressed the issue. To this end, we have studied and developed primary documentary sources, some of which have been so far never been established before. Regarding the leading artists in Braşov (Mişu Popp, Hans Eder, Hans Mattis-Teutsch) we have been able to identify and highlight aspects of creation and training not mentioned so far in the works and specialist studies dedicated to them. We also sought to formulate new interpretations on modern Braşov art and to provide an overview of the development of the Braşov artistic centre in modern age.

We have approached the history of the Braşov modern artistic centre in a systematic, complete way, documenting and analyzing for each historical stage of the period studied (1815-1989), the following: urban development, political, social, economic and cultural framework, stylistic directions and trends, exhibition, critique and chronicle art activity, concerns about monuments for public, the popularization of fine art, artistic education, the presence of fine art in museum collections and the organization of artistic life. By documenting the evolution of the critique and art chronicles within the Braşov artistic centre, we aim to highlight the role that the active group of opinion formers (critics, publishers, cultural personalities) played in theorizing the specific character of the Braşov fine art.

The Braşov modern artistic centre was not previously the object of a monographic research. The preoccupation of the post-war art historiography resulted in a series of monographs dedicated to the most important Braşov artists. Besides, the issue of modern Braşov fine art was only addressed in general works about Transylvanian and Romanian art. Many aspects of the history of Braşov-fine art in the 19th-20th centuries remain little known. Starting from this conclusion, I considered that only a monographic research on the evolution of the Braşovean art

centre during this period is likely to offer the premises for integrating Braşov fine art in Romanian art historiography from a broader perspective that would highlight the interrelations with Transylvanian, Romanian and European fine art, but also its specific, individualizing features. Also, seeing that many times Braşov fine art was approached from distinct cultural perspectives (romanian, german, hungarian) we sought to offer a unitary overview of the development of the Braşov artistic centre.

From a structural point of view, the thesis includes appendixs and four chapters dedicated to each period of the development of the Braşov artistic centre: the 19th century, the years around 1900 (1889-1918), the interwar period and the postwar period. Each chapter is divided into subchapters dealing with: aspects of Braşov's urban, economic, social and cultural development, artists active in Braşov from the point of view of the generational structures, characteristics of the formation, origin, social status and relations with the political power, the formation and activity of the associations that have performed in the field of fine art, the directions and stylistic trends manifested in the Braşov artistic centre, the artistic education, the exhibition activity, the artistic life reflection in the press, the concerns regarding public forum monuments and aspects of the contribution of Braşov artists in artistic life from other artistic centers (Transylvania, Central Europe, the integration with the artistic life of Romania). In some subchapters we have addressed a specific issue only for certain historical periods: The First World War in the work of Braşov artists, the presence of Braşov artists in the artists colonies from Balcic and Baia Mare, the Braşov landscape in the Romanian interwar painting and graphics, and the cult of Nicolae and Elena Ceauşescu's personality in Braşov fine art. Data on the Braşov artistic centre are presented in a structured manner in the appendixs of the thesis by means of lists and graphical representations: visual artists active in Braşov (1815-1989), collective and group exhibitions organized in Braşov (1862-1944), chronologic landmarks of the evolution of Braşov modern artistic centre (1815-1989), artists active in Braşov by origin, study periods of Braşov artists and exhibition presences of Braşov artists in other artistic centres.

Braşov's artistic life remained less developed throughout the 19th century due to the persistence of some local particularities: poor artistic and esthetic education of the public, lack of interest in cultural societies and associations for promoting fine arts, lack of artistic circles and absence of public art collection. In this context, the presence of travelling artists in Braşov was important in the still modest emergence of artistic life from the first half of the 19th century and

partly in the second half of the century. Through the work of the artists of Braşov who started their activity in the second half of the 19th century, the local artistic environment has gradually become diverse and mature.

We emphasized the importance of the years around 1900 (1889-1918) for crystallizing the features of modern Braşov art centre by: the onset of a relatively large group of Braşov young artists, the regularly organising of collective and personal exhibitions and the constant appearance in the local press of critique and art chronicles articles. Now, in the work of the Braşov artists there is, under the confluence of the artistic spirit of Central Europe, the influence of the art movements from the sphere of moderate modernism (symbolism, realism, Art Nouveau, impressionism, post-impressionism) and some artists in Braşov join the avant-garde (expressionism).

The evolution of the Braşov artistic centre continued during the interwar period and the Second World War, when artistic life became more active, maintaining to a large extent its specificity in relation to Romanian art, but also suffering the influence of the Romanian artistic environment. The strong upward dynamics in the interwar years are due to the affirmation of a new generation of artists and the activities of the *Das Ziel* (1919), *Das neue Ziel* (1919) and *Klingsor* (1924) associations. Braşov has become one of Romania's important artistic centers, playing a significant role in the dissemination of modernism and artistic avant-garde. The interwar Braşov art was complex in character, highlighted by the multiple stylistic directions that manifested itself in its frame: expressionism, impressionism, post-impressionism, New Objectivity, Heimatmalerei and various metamorphosis of realism and neoclassicism. Expressionism imprinted on the Braşov fine art a special, specific character within the interwar romanian art.

The development of the Braşov art center in the postwar period was marked by the imposition of the communist regime. Artistic creation was centralized and subordinated to the communist party, being „steered” through the Romanian Fine Arts Union branch, and the Braşov artists had to comply with the ideological demands of the communist regime. Braşov fine art reflected the general trends of postwar Romanian art. Specific, distinctive elements have been preserved only in the first years after the war. Gradually, under the impact of the standardization imposed by the communist regime, the Braşov art centre lost its own characteristics, asserted between 1900 and 1945.

Starting from a socio-historical perspective on art as a specific historical phenomenon, during the research we have documented and analyzed the gradual establishment in Braşov in the 19th-20th centuries of a modern artistic centre, which was distinguished in the first half of the 20th century by its particularities within the national art, but which has been permanently connected to varying degrees to the major structures of national and European art. We also showed that the development of the Braşov artistic centre was a sinuous one, a long and slow accumulation period (19th century), followed by the rapid formation of a functional modern art centre (the last decade of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century). The Braşov art centre has reached its height in the coming decades (interwar period), in which it clearly shaped its special, individualized character within the Transylvanian, Romanian and Central European arts. It then experienced a period of decline (postwar period), in which its specific features diminished and tended to disappear, with the Braşov art centre gradually losing its distinctive, singular character within the national art, against the background of the heterogeneous origin of the artists active during this period. In the analysis of the development of the Braşov artistic centre, we have highlighted the successes and failures. Our study identified the main development directions of the Braşov artistic centre, the intertwining with the cultural spaces in which it integrated, but also the features that gave it its own identity.