



*Tibor Wehner*

## THREE GENERATIONS OF ART IN TATA

The publishing team at Art Limes has embarked on a series of features, mapping out 20th century art in the cities in Komárom-Esztergom County. The first of this series appeared in 2008 with an article on Esztergom on the painter Endre Kaposi. In 2011, Tatabánya was featured, followed by a compilation about Dorog. The latest volume is an overview of art history in Tata.

"Art History of Tata" is not absolutely comprehensive; it does not cover cultural origins in the medieval period, but focuses on the time from the beginning of the 18th to the end of the 20th century. It follows the method of exploration and presentation used in earlier Art Limes publications rather than attempting an all-encompassing analysis of artistic development in Tata. Relying on encyclopedic data, the book provides an encyclopedic amount of information about the range of artists who were prominent in Tata and examines the ways in which their work was important in the town's changing culture.

After its artistic efflorescence of the second half of the 18th century, the 19th century saw a drop in its vitality and influence, but even at the end of that century, Tata's court theater remained an important one, while the works of local artists were reminiscent of practices of the glorious old days.

In the first half of the 20th century, the painters János Schadl and János Vaszary were active here. After WWII, art was dominated by Socialist realism. Even so, museums and cultural institutions slowly began to have more exhibits, and the graphic artist, Károly Kerti initiated many important programs in art education.

Tata was particularly known for its ceramic artists, but also the works of painters, graphic artists, sculptors and craftsmen spurred the activities of local art historians, critics and collectors since their work was inseparable from the artists' activities.

The book reviewed here also presents a rich assortment of biographies of the artists with a more tangential connection to Tata: those who were simply born there, lived there briefly, worked in the city but not as artists, were associated with the city for certain periods of their creative life or belonged to artistic groups centered there. Thus we have an artistic panorama of Tata conveyed in short summaries of artists' lives and works, accompanied by reproductions and their most significant reviews. This method leaves readers free to develop their own generalizations about the art historical phenomena presented and to formulate their own insights about the qualities of the artists in Tata artists. The book presents the work of more than seventy artists, art critics and art historians. However, even in this wide-ranging survey, it is impossible to give a complete and definitive picture. It is very much hoped that this work will stimulate further exploration of many uncertain conjunctions, unexamined aspects, and unsolved problems that need further research to be clarified. But, as with the rest of the series, this book on art in Tata leads us to ponder the latest studies and research findings as it summarizes our existing knowledge and data. Perhaps indeed it will encourage others to create a future with a more complete overview of the artistic heritage of bygone eras.

One of the most significant works of art historian Elemér Révhelyi is his account of Tata's artistic past. We have already quoted his thoughts many times in past articles on Tata and its art history. Let us cite the introduction of his publication, *The Tata Piarist Monastery and Museum*, published in 1938: "The artistic personalities of Tata influenced one another, were linked to one another, inspired one another, and lived in an intertwined community as members of a large family of artists. Homogenous and

healthy, they created and lived in a harmonious artistic spirit. This isolation can explain how they were able to keep other artistic trends at a distance. At the same time, their expansive strength was capable of breaking through the framework of the small town, casting their influence to a vast territory as if they felt the need to honor to their vanished artistic predecessors in order to fulfill their destiny. "Unfortunately, this vibrant, expressive artistic tradi-

tion is alive now only in the memories of a very few. But enthusiasts and fans still feel the heightened artistic atmosphere that the creative spirits of Tata's past have left here."

We do not know what kind of values will be built on this rich tradition, but we hope that Tata will leave a renewed artistic inspiration for future generations in the turbulence of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*(Deborah Marshall fordítása)*



Farkasházy Miklós:  
A Farkasházy Fischer-ház Tataán  
(Wolfshaus), 1926 (rézkar) KDM