



Az Orfeo csoport

MEASURE OF MAN

Exhibition from past and later works of members of the late Orfeo Community and from documents of the group's history

The Orfeo community was founded by the sculptor, István Malgot, who was expelled from the College of Fine Arts. First a puppet group was formed by young artists and college students of fine art. The first puppet show of the Orfeo community just under formation was based on Imre Györe's poem, 'Orfeo's Love'. The poem was published in 1969 and was an homage to Ernesto Che Guevara. Even the name chosen for the community was meant to present identification with Che Guevara. The opening was in 1970.

Soon after this, in 1971, the theatrical group, i.e. 'Orfeo Studio' and the music group, 'Orfeo Orchestra' was formed.

The framework for the joint activity of the groups was provided by a youth club network. 'Orfeo' 'invaded' the central club of the Patriotic People's Front (a governmental, not directly political mass organisation), several Budapest district clubs of the same organisation and the Kőbánya youth club of the Pataki Cultural House (10th district of Budapest). Approximately 50-60 young artists and intellectuals were members of the Orfeo community for shorter or longer period.

Parallel with this, within the Orfeo community, there was a workshop-like artistic activity as well, mainly in the fields of graphic arts and photography. In addition there were several sculptors who were members of the Orfeo community. They exhibited their work at regular intervals both in Budapest and in the country at group exhibitions. Their first exhibition opened in 1970 in the newly established Csepel Gallery. Apart from this, they were teaching art interpretation and appreciation in various cultural institutions and high schools.

'Orfeo' was a community of young people putting emphasis on politics, people who regarded themselves as leftist radicals, who felt solidarity with the third world, opposed the practice of the so-called 'existing socialism' that they considered repressive and anti-working class, who sympathised with left-wing student movement, of Vietnam, Guevara, revolutions and the wars of independence. In their artistic work they found it more important to jointly portray social relationships with as much authenticity and as effectively as possible than to formulate their individual voice or style.

The stall of an artistic and political life-experiment of this type can be explained in many different ways. You may wish to examine to what extent the régime tolerated or attacked 'Orfeo', a community of political opposition. You may analyse the role of the opinion differences arising due to the aesthetic and political arguments among the members of the group. In their individual lives, they each experienced differently what they underwent and their recall of events differs, too. Ex-Orfeo members experienced the forthcoming changes along different political and social paths.

Participants: Huba Bálványos, István Borbás, Béla Csomor, László Csomor, Judit Englert, Tamás Eskulits, Péter Fábry, András Forgách, Péter Forgács, Márta Illyés, Anna Kárpáti, Mihály Kiss, Anna Komjáthy, István Kovács, Keve (János) Kovács, Zsuzsa Lóránt, Ilona Németh, István Raffay, Zsuzsa Stuibler, György Szabó, János Szalma, Anna Szilágyi, Szabolcs Szőke, Éva Tóth.