

REALISM / NEOREALISM CONTINUOUS REALISM

My PhD thesis entitled REALISM / NEOREALISM CONTINUOUS REALISM attempts to highlight the characteristics of these artistic trends and to demonstrate the continuity and connection between 19th century realism and contemporary neorealism. Realism was a major artistic movement, which included not only the world of visual arts, but also literature and dramaturgy. There are many social and political considerations for which realism is of particular importance, but what interests us here is especially the aesthetic dimension of this general trend, because this dimension, in all its complexity, appears in the context of the contemporary artistic phenomenon in different forms and formulas, which raise problems and require critical examination.

The first chapter, Realism and neorealism in the visual arts - brief history, aims to offer a perspective on realism in the visual arts, showing the main features of realism and exposing the artistic, political and social context in which it has developed. Reality is one of the essential ideas not only of Western philosophy and culture, but also of human thinking in general. It is no wonder that the history of Western thought has revolved around this concept which is closely linked to the question of truth and knowledge. And also it is not surprising that, especially since the modern European culture has concentrated, especially through German philosophy, on knowledge and truth, this concern has affected and involved the arts as well.

This is how realism appeared, one of the typical trends of the nineteenth century, in which the emphasis is placed on the connection between art and reality, on the authenticity of reality and the accurate presentation of its details. The observation of the reality, especially of the human one, in all its details was the central idea of this artistic tendency. She opposed, through her perspectives and values and stylistic choices related to truth and objectivity, to romanticism, which exaggerated the role of subjectivity.

As an effective artistic trend, realism appeared in France in the years around the Revolution of 1848. Although Romanticism has dominated French literature and art since the early 19th century, realism has rejected the exotic themes and exaggerated emotional drama of this stylistic trend and attitude. Instead, he sought to portray real and typical contemporary people and situations with truth and accuracy, and not to avoid the unpleasant or sordid aspects of life. This movement encountered opposition because it criticized - implicitly or intentionally - the social values of the ruling classes. This trend is largely due to the new values introduced with the industrial revolution in the economic, social and cultural life.

Realism can be considered as the beginning of the art modernization movement due to the attempt to incorporate modern life into art. The movement aimed to focus on topics and events that were previously only admitted idealized in the work of art. Realism depicted people of all social classes in situations that occur in ordinary life and was primarily concerned with how things actually appeared, not how they would be ideally represented. Treating themes in a heroic or sentimental way was rejected and often sordid or unpleasant elements of the topics treated were

not sweetened or omitted, such as academic romanticism did. Realism was concerned with representing the working classes and treating them with the same seriousness as other social classes, considered historical and ruling, but also avoiding artificiality in the treatment of human relationships and emotions.

His interest was focused on the truthful representation of events in daily life and the manifestations of the ordinary man. The consequence was that the artists of this period performed their activity in areas of representation that were, from this perspective, at hand: the social life and the immediate activities of the human being in relation to the environment. Thus, between 1840 and 1880, the realistic trend influenced the works of art created by the artists of those times. Realistic elements have also been transposed into society's perception of life and are also recognized in the literary arts.

What prompted such a change of perspective were the consequences brought by the Industrial Revolutions and the generalization of trade, and what supported it was the introduction of photography, as a way of producing representations that show real objects. Because the attempt to represent the subject truly, without artificiality and avoiding artistic conventions or implausible, exotic and supernatural elements is defining and very pregnant, realism has sometimes been called naturalism. Realism has been predominant in the arts for various periods, largely due to techniques and intentions to avoid stylization.

In the visual arts, realism meant the exact representation of life forms, perspective and details of light and color. That is why realistic - or naturalistic - works of art may, in their subject matter, appear to emphasize the ugly or sordid aspects of the world. This is typical of the realistic movement of the nineteenth century that began in France in the 1850s, immediately after the Revolution of 1848. Realist painters rejected the romanticism, which had dominated French literature and art. The realist movement began in the mid-19th century as a reaction to romantic paintings as style and historical as content.

In the nineteenth century, Paris was the artistic center of the whole world, and the exhibitions that took place here set the tone of the trends in the artistic world. The Paris Salon was the main artistic "scene", where the spectators gathered regularly to admire the most successful paintings. Among them were the paintings of the founder of the realist trend, Gustave Courbet. As subjects for their work, the realist painters used ordinary people in ordinary circumstances, engaged in trivial activities in "real" life. The main exponents of the beginnings of realism were, besides Gustave Courbet, Jean-François Millet, Honoré Daumier and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. Stylistically, they are the aesthetic vision partners of Émile Zola, Honoré de Balzac and Gustave Flaubert.

Understanding the aesthetic essence of the realistic trend raises three issues that I have examined one at a time in the thesis. First of all, the aesthetic problem of representation: **Realism is considered to be the detailed and precise representation in art of the visual aspect of scenes and objects.** In this sense he was also called naturalist. But the development of an increasingly accurate representation of the visual appearances of things has a long history in art. It includes elements such as the accurate representation of the anatomy of humans and animals, the

perspective and effects of distance and also the detailed effects of light and color. The famous story of Pliny the Elder about the birds preening from grapes painted by Zeuxis in the 5th century BC. It may be a legend, but it indicates the aspiration of Greek painting in the direction of the most accurate rendering of reality. In addition to accuracy in shape, light and color, Roman paintings have an intuitive, but effective, knowledge of the representation of distant objects, smaller than the closest ones, and the representation of common geometric shapes, such as the roof and walls of a room, with perspective. This progress of the effects of mimetic restoration, however, did not in any case mean a rejection of idealism; the statues of Greek gods and heroes represent the human body with great accuracy, but the forms are idealized and beautiful (although other works, such as the heads of the famous ugly Socrates, were allowed to fall under these standards of the ideal of beauty). The Roman portrait, when not under too strong a Greek influence, shows a greater commitment to a true presentation of his subjects.

In the West, the classic standards of accurate rendering of reality began to be reached again after the late medieval and early Renaissance, being adopted around the 1470s in Italy, through the development of new oil painting techniques, which allowed the rendering very subtle and precise effects of light using very small brushes and several layers of paint and glaze. The scientific methods of representing the perspective have gradually spread in Europe, and the precision in anatomy has been rediscovered under the influence of classical art. As in classical times, however, idealism remained the norm.

The exact appearance of the landscape in painting was also developed in the early painting of the Netherlands, the early Renaissance of northern Europe and the Italian Renaissance, and was then brought to a very high level in 17th century Dutch painting, with very subtle techniques for painting describe a number of weather conditions and degrees of natural light. As another consequence of the development of early Dutch painting, up to 1600 the European portrait could offer a very good likeness in both painting and sculpture, although the subjects were often idealized by smoothing the features or the artificiality of the picture. Still life paintings and other works have played a considerable role in the development of painting that imitates reality, although in the Dutch tradition of flower painting the "realism" was lacking, by the fact that flowers from all seasons were painted together, although they were not typical of the customs of the seventeenth century, where flowers were displayed on a row.

In this respect, realistic art has been present in different periods and is largely a problem of technique and representation formation, as well as of avoiding stylization. Such an attitude becomes particularly present in European painting, during the early Dutch period of Robert Campin, Jan van Eyck and other artists of the fifteenth century. However, such "realism" is often used to depict, for example, the angels with wings, that is, things that artists have never seen in real life. On the other hand, nineteenth-century realism painters, like Gustave Courbet, are by no means particularly appreciated for the accurate and careful presentation of visual occurrences: at that time this ability was more often a feature of academic painting.

Therefore, the choice and treatment of the subject is what seems to define better realism as an aesthetic movement in painting, much more than the technical attention paid to visual

representations. Thus, a second problem arises that we set out to address: **Realism or naturalism as a representation of common, everyday topics**. But the presentation of ordinary, everyday subjects in art also has a long history, though it has often been skewed in the margins of compositions or presented on a smaller scale. This was due in part to the fact that art was expensive and usually commissioned for specific religious, political or personal reasons, which allowed only a relatively small amount of space or effort to be devoted to such scenes. The small paintings on the edge of the medieval manuscripts sometimes contain scenes from everyday life. Medieval and early Renaissance art usually showed, by convention, non-sacred figures in contemporary clothing, so no adjustment was required for this either in religious or historical scenes that occurred in ancient times.

Early Dutch painting also brought the figure of more ordinary people into portrait painting thanks to the sponsors, prosperous merchants in Flanders. Some of these portraits, notably Arnolfini's Portrait by Jan van Eyck (1434), and more often in religious scenes, such as Altarpiece Merode, by Robert Campin and his workshop (circa 1427), include very detailed illustrations of interior objects of middle class. Similarly, the cycles of the seasons works of the late medieval art, many of which survive, focus on peasants working on different tasks throughout the seasons, often on a rich landscape background and have been significant for both the development of landscape art and in the appearance of people in their daily work. However, these objects are largely there, as they carry layers of complex significance and symbolism that undermine any commitment to realism for its sake.

In the sixteenth century there was a fashion for portraying large scenes of scenes of people working, especially in markets and kitchens and many food products are given as much importance as the workers who produce them. Among the artists were Pieter Aertsen and his nephew, Joachim Beuckelaer, in the Netherlands, working in an essentially Mannerist style, and in Italy from the 1580s, Annibale Carracci and Bartolomeo Passerotti. Pieter Bruegel the Elder painted great panoramic scenes of the peasant life. Such scenes acted as a prelude to the popularity of the 17th century in genre painting, which appeared throughout Europe - the Dutch Golden Age painting with several different sub-genres of such scenes, Bamboccianti in Italy and the introduction of realistic peasants into the historical paintings of Jusepe de Ribera and Velázquez in Spain, the Le Nain brothers from France and many Flemish artists, among whom Adriaen Brouwer and David Teniers the Elder and the Younger painted peasants, but rarerly people in the city. In the eighteenth century, small paintings of working people - especially women - remained popular, relying largely on the Dutch tradition. But it was only in the middle of the 19th century that this changed and the difficulties of life for the poor were emphasized.

That is why it is only the third problem that we believe that, in the end, it really gives us the key to understanding this current: **Realism or naturalism as resistance to idealization**. Realism or naturalism as a style that means the honest, unrealistic representation of the subject, can be used in the depiction of any type of subject, without any commitment to treat the typical or everyday life. Despite the general idealism of classical art, it also had precedents of such treatments in the Renaissance and Baroque. Previously, Demetrius of Alopece, a sculptor

from the fourth century BC, whose works are all lost today, is said to prefer realism to ideal beauty, and during the Ancient Roman Republic, even politicians preferred a look true in portraits, although the first emperors favored Greek idealism. Goya's portraits of the Spanish royal family represent a kind of peak in the honest and honest portrayal of important people.

A recurring trend in Christian art was "realism" which emphasized the humanity of religious figures, above all Christ and his physical sufferings in his passions. Following the tendencies of the devotional literature, this form of visual representation developed in the late Middle Ages, where some painted wood sculptures - especially in Germany and Central Europe - even reached the grotto in the portrayal of Christ covered in wounds and blood, with the intention of to stimulate the viewer to meditate on the suffering of Christ. After the number of such works decreased in the Renaissance, they reappeared in the Baroque, especially in Spanish sculpture.

Renaissance theoreticians opened a debate, which would last several centuries, about the right balance between art resulting from nature observation and art resulting from idealized forms, usually those found in classical models or the work of other artists in general. All recognized the importance of the natural, but many believed that it should be idealized to varying degrees to include only the beautiful. Leonardo da Vinci was the one who supported the pure study of nature and wanted to describe the whole range of individual types of the human figure and other things.

In the seventeenth century, the debate continued in Italy, where it focused on the contrast between Carracci's "classic idealism" and Caravaggio's, or his followers, "naturalist" style, who painted religious scenes as if they had happened in the streets of contemporary Italian cities and described themselves as "naturalists" (Bellori, a few decades after Caravaggio's early death, refers to "naturalists").

Gunderson noted that Positivism, a philosophical trend that emerged in the nineteenth century, had a major impact on the way artists made the transition from romanticism to realism in the realistic representation of reality. He believed that progress could be achieved in human society under the conditions in which the natural world is closely observed. Thus, romanticism began to be rejected by artists and society alike, at a slow but steady pace, and art critics began to give a new name to this reaction against romanticism: realism.

In the century of positivism, realism was one of the most important artistic trends. It attracted the attention of scholars concerned about the relationship between art and ideology. In the case of realism, Gustave Courbet, current representative, promotes not only a new type of art, but also an ideology and a strong desire to participate in the change of the existing political and social regime. Courbet was the main supporter of realism and contestant of the painting with a historical subject, favored by the Art Academy and sponsored by the state. His innovative paintings *A funeral at Ornans* and *Stone Breakers* depicted ordinary people from his hometown. Both paintings were made on huge canvases, as they were usually used for paintings with historical subjects.

The most renowned realist artists chose the Fontainebleau forest in southern Paris, the village of Barbizon and the neighboring villages as a location for painting. Many of them even

choose to live here and visit Paris only on the occasion of the exhibitions at the Salon, which makes realism identifiable with the Barbizon School. Among them are Jean Francois Millet and Theodore Rousseau. Corot is sometimes joined by them, but other artists such as Jules Dupre, Diaz de Pena, Ch. Daubigny, Constant Troyon are also grouped around them. We also find here the Romanians Nicolae Grigorescu and Ion Andreescu, who pass to Barbizon, where they stay for a while.

Courbet's influence was felt most strongly in Germany, where prominent realist names included: Adolph Menzel, Wilhelm Leibl, Wilhelm Trübner and Max Liebermann. In the United Kingdom, artists such as the American James Abbot McNeill Whistler, and English artists Ford Madox Brown, Hubert von Herkomer and Luke Fildes have had great success with realistic paintings that address social issues and depictions of the "real" world. Among the Romanians Nicolae Grigorescu and Ion Andreescu, related to the Barbizon movement as mentioned above, the creation of Stefan Luchian should be invoked. Although it is true that realism in Europe originated from French influences, it is easy to see that each of the representative painters has contributed in a particular way to the development and extension of realistic expression, either by contrasting shades, extreme details or portraits, either by adding a philosophical sense to the paintings, tributes or deep feelings.

The thesis then draws a parallel between socialist realism and social realism, to eliminate the confusion between the two terms and to complete the presentation of realism. As has been shown from the above analyzes, a social dimension was involved in the realistic current. But with the revolution that led to the establishment of socialism in Russia, a realistic art was developed, whose mission was to mirror the socialist reality by illustrating and emphasizing its actions and achievements. Socialist realism in art represented the main style approached by painters throughout the Soviet Union for a period of more than 50 years, starting in 1930, and its style and content had to fulfill the state's need to promote its socialist doctrine. (However, there were also artists such as Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin, Alexander Samokhvalov or Yuri Pimenov, who managed to impose their own expression and authenticity in the paintings exhibited at that time.) Socialist realism was used as a term in this form, starting in 1932, and its name was established at a high level, during party meetings, in which Stalin also participated.

Bown and Taylor suggest that in the post-war period, socialist realism was a trend that allowed less and less expression of any authentic view if it did not reflect the wishes of the party. The artists were reduced to silence and became, no doubt, mere individuals who used their talents to execute the activities dictated by political leaders. Moreover, the painters were obliged to contribute to a complete mythology, a false image, at the center of which was always one of the leaders: Lenin or Stalin.

After World War II, many Eastern European countries entered the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. Thus, the Soviet Union gets to exercise a strong control over the political and social life of the countries in its sphere of influence, creating a system of satellite states that fully adopts the model of the center, i.e. Moscow (economic, political, but also cultural life). Art will be subordinated and transformed into a powerful propaganda apparatus, it will be determined and

limited by the Party's control, which has become the only decision-making factor in the state, so the old artistic models are replaced by an ideological "social realism".

The new cultural trend was in fact a distortion of reality, an adaptation of it to the demands and interests of the Party whose main objective was to hold the monopoly over the truth and to understand the reality. Real was just what was in line with the Party's vision and nothing else. The issue of originality, freedom of expression or creativity was not raised in any case. Everything had to be aligned with a certain standard, a common policy that aimed at creating something that exclusively portrayed the positive and "socialist" things that were happening in the country. An artistic and political utopia transposed in the form of an artistic trend that was based on censorship and persecution in the case of non-aligned artists. The works of art had to be destined for the popular masses, to educate them in the communist spirit. Characteristic for socialist realism is the so-called "positive hero", who, by his behavior, must be the model of the "new human type", the citizen of the communist society. By this, socialist realism, far from being really "realistic", presents life from an ideological perspective, transforming it arbitrarily into a utopia. Humor, irony, satire, stylistic experiments, stigmatized as "bourgeois decadents" and "formalism", officially become impossible, but unofficially multiply.

Since its inception, realism has become a current with international diffusion and evolution. On this background were installed those forms of it that make the main subject of our doctoral approach: neorealism and continuous realism. Neorealism is not only reduced to a single current emerged after realism, but most figurative currents can be included in it, reaching the classical neorealism that seems to be reborn after 2000. Most of the tradition's recovery from the so-called post-modernism, whether it is ironic, dreamlike or of any kind that contains something of contemporary decentralism but which appeals to traditional technical dexterity, it can be included in this current.

The neorealist current, being known in the contemporary era and as hyperrealism, is characterized in principle by the rendering of images at a higher resolution, when we refer to the visual arts. This term is more known in the field of photography than in the field of painting, but it is recognized by the modern artistic community as a stylistic movement that began in 1970, in the United States of America, and later in Europe. In both painting and photography, hyperrealism uses photographic images as a reference source, from which a detailed and definitive, emotion-filled rendering is created and which often includes narrative elements. This style involves the presentation of a lively, tangible subject, thus creating an illusion of reality.

One of the most prolific representatives of neorealism in painting was Robert Bevan, a British painter and one of the founders of Camden Town Group, London Group and Cumberland Market Group. The members of the group, the painters Charles Ginner and Harold Gilman, activated at the beginning of the First World War and had as their main objective the exploration of the spirit of the era in which they lived by using the colors and shapes they encountered in their daily lives. The Camden Town Group was by far the most active group whose goal was to eliminate those who imitated post-Impressionism. To this group and its representatives

- Harold Gilman, Walter Sickel, Charles Ginner, Robert Bevan, Spencer Gore - the thesis gives a subchapter.

Whether it is convenient or not, Soviet socialist realism is one of the forms of neorealism, and its area and the multitude of representatives force us to consider it. Soviet realism, socialist realism or Soviet neorealism, are expressions of the same concept that define a realistic artistic style with origins in the Soviet Union. He has dominated the world of fine art both in Russia and in the rest of the world, influencing the theme and dynamics of the artists' works. The first neo-realist paintings belonging to socialist realism appeared in the early 1920s, and their popularity was sustainable. After more than 40 years, in 1960, the unrealistic style of socialist realism began to lose popularity, but it is still found today in the works of great artists.

Soviet neorealism is characterized broadly by the most authentic rendering of communist values, such as the emancipation of the proletariat, of the lower class of society. Thus, the neorealist paintings embody important characters from the political or cultural world, ordinary people, but also landscapes or elements of village life, as realistic as possible, rendering every detail accurately. Unlike ordinary realism, neorealism promote the cult of personality, socialist politics, Soviet ideals, loyalty to the party, exacerbated optimism, etc. In Cullerne-Bown & Taylor's acceptance, this neorealism is rather a method, than a style.

The second chapter, *The Influences of Continuous Realism and Neorealism in Contemporary Art*, discusses the philosophical concepts that have brought new ideas about contemporary art in society and describes the creative techniques used continuously in this context by the new generations of realist painters. The trends of the plastic arts have had an interesting evolution, over time, always influenced by the political trends and the international climate. Although artists, especially painters, often declare themselves independent of external factors, they are influenced to some extent by the visual and emotional needs of the public and by the dominant theories and ideologies of the moment.

Despite the relatively rapid evolution of art, realism remains an important source of inspiration for the new generations of painters, which is why I considered it very important to highlight the elements that still represent focal points in the contemporary artistic process. Nowadays, you can see a continuity of the realistic current, even if it takes place in the shade, less visible to the general public. Due to the long period in which the Romanian painting was subjected to the rules imposed by the socialist regime, the contemporary art still struggles with the instinct to carry out works based on the old requirements of the regime. However, there have been major changes in the mentality of those who have studied realistic art for a long time, and instinct has become choice. The new generations of painters therefore have the option of combining old and new techniques, in order to obtain expressive, emotive paintings, which nevertheless express an important part of history.

However, Valentina Iancu believes that the "queen of arts" has entered the 21st century unchanged, with the same old poetics, the same dusty narratives and a sad addiction to the past. It had a boom in the so-called second-generation, today consecrated generation, then became repetitive mime. She states that the painting exhibited in recent years on the Bucharest scene,

almost exclusively in commercial spaces, seems an obsessive "neo" -of Western style whose resources have long been exhausted. He also quotes the painter Adrian Ghenie who said: "I have the feeling that today's painting is warming up in a strange mannerism and we cannot speak yet of a radical new painting." At the same time, interest in conceptual art and new media, less stained by the compromises imposed by 20th-century dictatorships, is growing.

In this context, the Western debates about the "death of painting" are becoming more and more relevant to the domestic space. Figurative painting today seems to be approaching self-cancellation through overproduction / inflation. Many of the young painters who follow this visual trend are becoming more and more diluted by reproducing as if mechanical the unlimited photographic resources of the Internet through the projector.

Even if they belong to the past, the realism of the 19th century and then the neorealism of the 20th century, they are still relevant to the art of our day. Realistic and neorealistic ideas are based on strong philosophical concepts, which have deserved to be discussed in this work, as they still influence the style and methods of contemporary artists. Moreover, they serve as inspiration and object of study. The fact that realism is an artistic movement present in the current society, shows the continuity of the trend and its importance in the world of art. As we mentioned in the previous subchapter, realism is perhaps the most popular of the trends, due to the ease with which each artist and ordinary person, at the same time, can come to understand its characteristics.

The third chapter is dedicated to the Plastic Arts in Romania, but it mainly deals with art during the communist regime, i.e. 1945 and 1989, and revolves around the idea of socialist realism. Considering the international importance and force of realism, it is normal that in Romania, the artistic and philosophical concept has played a very important role in the formation of the new generations of painters. And even though it was hijacked and manipulated in the old regime, realism did not disappear with the disappearance of the communist system in Romania, but continued to be appreciated by artists and critics for the authenticity it expresses.

The period 1944-1947 finds the artistic life in Romania in a confused moment, in which we can talk about confrontations between traditionalist trends and modernist searches, between realistic invoice formulas and the newly emerging avant-garde proposals. At one point we could say that the Cultural Revolution appears with the report of C.C. to P.C.R. since 1947, a report that takes over the ideas of articles on culture of Soviet ideologists. From 1948 we can talk about a campaign after which almost all the intellectuals (including plastic artists) become enslaved of the communist power - of the state. This new simplistic idealism, related to the demands of the party, combined with the optimistic-militant theme in attitude and the details of the stylistic manner that resembles kitsch, dominating the exhibition spaces.

In the early 1960s, the visual arts are no longer so much influenced by ideological dogmas and we can speak of a progressive renunciation, which is more pronounced in the workshops, of the method of socialist realism. The main change that took place at the beginning of 1965 is the replacement of the term of socialist realism with that of humanist realism. The painting attempts to overcome the socialist realism imposed by returning to post-impressionist

colorism in parallel with modernist innovations. Consecrated artists (Ressu, Bunescu, Aurel Ciupe, H.H. Catargi, Lucian Grigorescu.) Return to the pre-war style and try new methods of expression, using geometric stylings and a flattened color. Others follow the same path they know and give up on political issues (Baba, Lucia Dem. Bălăcescu, Micaela Eleutheriade). The avant-gardists - those who passed through socialist realism - try semi-realistic, semi-constructivist or semi-surrealist formulas. The young generation, represented by artists like Pavel Codiță, Virgil Almășanu, Paul Gherasim, George Apostu et al. remains true to a realism in which it leaves no room for aggressive naturalism, the color is a more serious, sober one.

The concept of realism - in general and in relation to socialist realism - is questioned and analyzed through the prism of three artists - C. Baba, G. Miklossy and C. Brudașcu - to obtain a transpersonal image of realism. The essential part of the research of this work is also found in this chapter and deals with realism in Corneliu Baba's painting. In this part I set out to analyze how the artist became the most prolific portrait painter in Romania, gaining an international reputation through his mastery. At the same time, the international influences that shaped his style, the way the Romanian painter understands the concepts of tradition and modernity are analyzed, and even the meanings resulting from his impressive collections are considered.

Corneliu Baba's paintings are not part of a single style, as he has exploited his creative potential until near the end of his life. During his long career as a painter he went through all the artistic trends from neoclassicism to realism. If the paintings made in adolescence have a traditionalist style and sum up characteristics of traditionalist painting, those made at maturity are true postmodern masterpieces, appreciated by local and international critics.

The painter Corneliu Baba was one of those artists who proved their mastery in making portraits. From his adolescence, the portrait played a very important role in Baba's evolution as a painter. Although Baba focused his attention on individual portraiture, he also experienced social portraiture on numerous occasions, making portraits of the personalities of the times, of simple people or members of his family. Portrait of Farmer (1950), Otelari (1960) or Măicuțe (1943) are some of the simple compositional portraits he has made. The portraits in Arlechini's suite of the painter are an obvious expression of meditation on the human condition. On the other side of his portraiture is the human side, the drama and the degradation. The portrait of Madman King is the most representative embodiment of the painter's vision of the personified species. The art of portraiture at Corneliu Baba served as an argument in confirming the hypothesis that realism is the basis of a continuous movement, which will continue to present to the public interest, because reality is the purest art form.

The conclusion with which our thesis ends is that realism, as an artistic, philosophical and political current, has appeared to satisfy the need for authenticity, to render reality as it is, unaltered by the product of the imagination of writers, philosophers, politicians, culture personalities or artists. The realistic current initiated a creative movement of mentalities, motivations, but also limitations. As we have emphasized throughout this work, realism is an artistic concept that involves perceiving the environment objectively and portraying reality in a most suggestive way. This artistic trend evolved in unexpected ways, becoming used as a tool for

the political and social manipulation of European societies during the period when Eastern Europe was under socialist influence. The evolution of the painting shows us that realism is a continuous current, and the new realism, developed every time as a reaction to the frustrations of the past, has developed new generations of painters, willing to learn and to deepen new methods, techniques and approaches, to obtain new art forms, more and more interesting, deeper, closer to reality.