

## The Steins and the Hungarians

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### Abstract

The traveling exhibition entitled "The Steins Collect" (2011-12) again drew attention – and on this occasion in a manner perhaps more vivid than any exhibition to date – to the importance of the systematically canon-shaping work that took place in two tiny Parisian ateliers (one in the Rue de Fleurus, the other in the Rue de Madame) in terms of the new painterly movements that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century. Leo, Gertrude, and Michael, three siblings from the Stein family, a family of Jewish origin from San Francisco, along with Michael's wife Sarah, not only built within the space of a few years the most important contemporary art collection in Paris, but through their lively salons came to be the most influential shapers and propagators of universal modernism, making their influence felt to this day on assessments of avant-garde art. In the course of preparations for the exhibition and the publication of the accompanying catalogue, both of which provide a comprehensive survey of the Steins' activity, light was cast on the family's Hungarian connections as well. Consequently, one painting by the Hungarian Vilmos Pelroth-Csaba was included at the American venues (San Francisco and New York) of the exhibition, and a presentation on the family's ties to Hungary was held at the scholarly conference organized in connection with the exhibition. Despite the fact that several essays have been published on this subject, the written sources have not been collected – neither those dealing with the large number of Hungarians present at the Steins' Saturday evening gatherings, nor those covering the Hungarian pupils at the Académie Matisse, which was closely aligned with the Steins. This essay is a revised version of the presentation held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, supplemented with additional source-material.

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### Introduction

[1] "The Steins Collect: Matisse, Picasso, and the Parisian Avant-Garde," a traveling exhibition accompanied by an ambitious catalogue that showcased many facets of the Stein family's collection and canon-creating activity, offered many pleasant developments for researchers in Hungary.<sup>1</sup> Although there are only a few Hungarian threads, sparsely

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<sup>1</sup> The exhibition was shown at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), May 21 - September 6, 2011; Réunion des Musées Nationaux – Grand Palais, Paris, October 5, 2011 - January 22, 2012; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, February 21 - June 3, 2012. The English-language catalogue appeared as *The Steins Collect. Matisse, Picasso, and the Parisian*

interwoven in the history of the American family, the topic deserves additional attention, given the exclusively Hungarian sources that can contribute to international scholarship on early 20th-century art. Much of this material is unpublished and available only in Hungarian, so it has remained unknown to foreign scholars and, for that matter, to many Hungarian scholars as well.<sup>2</sup>



1 The Stein children, together with their tutor and governess, Vienna, 1877 (?). Archive photo (Pokorny & Reuter, Vienna). Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Image ID: 1357928

[2] The richness of the source material is made even more compelling thanks to the Hungarian connection at the early stages of the Stein family's collecting. We could even assert (with some strong exaggeration) that the Steins' collecting endeavors were thanks to a Hungarian. (Fig. 1) In Brenda Wineapple's book about Gertrude and Leo Stein, we find, "Since his youth, when his tutor had introduced him to the joys of collecting, [Leo Stein] relished its satisfaction."<sup>3</sup> According to this, the Hungarian governess, who was

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*Avant-Garde*. Janet Bishop, Cécile Debray, and Rebecca Rainbow, eds. New Haven and London, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in association with Yale University Press, 2011 [hereafter, *The Steins Collect*, 2011]. The French catalogue featured somewhat different content with more French authors and was titled *Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso ... l'aventure des Stein*, exposition catalogue. Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba's painting *Female Nude* (Rippl-Rónai Múzeum, Kaposvár, Item No.: 55.403), which was painted in Matisse's studio, was exhibited in both San Francisco and New York. Additionally several essays cited the Hungarian sources that I forwarded to Rebecca Rabinow, curator of the New York exhibit and co-editor of the catalogue. I would like to thank Shelley Wertheim and Robert McD Parker for their contributions, as well as Rebecca Rabinow, for her assistance in gathering Stein documentation for the documentary film *In Search of The Eight*, as well as for inviting me, the only foreign guest, to speak at the Scholars' Day organized in conjunction with her presentation of "The Steins Collect" at The Metropolitan Museum of Art on May 2, 2012. Special thanks are due to Prof. Jack Flam for his friendly support of my presentation.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the sources that I used in my presentation (as well as the re-worked version published here) were translated into English specifically for "The Steins Collect" exhibition catalogue. See also catalogues for the Hungarian Fauves exhibition series and The Eight exhibition, published in English, French, and German.

<sup>3</sup> Wineapple, Brenda. *Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1996. At first, Leo collected moths and other animals, then (together with his siblings) reproductions clipped from periodicals, and later Japanese woodcuts and antique furniture during his university years.

responsible for the boys' upbringing during the family's three-year residence in Vienna (1875-1878), was responsible for a defining experience in the Steins' lives (or at least Leo's). For Leo Stein collecting was the medium through which he formed relationships with others.

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### **Hungarian Invasion at the Steins'**

[3] Because she very publicly took credit for the discovery and patronage of Matisse and Picasso in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, Gertrude has erroneously been considered responsible for the formation of the Stein family collections. Her claims have been supported by her strong temperament (diametrically opposed to Leo's), her astounding self-promotional skills, and most of all to the success of her autobiographical book, which was also translated into Hungarian.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, as "The Steins Collect" so carefully documents, this predominant role is not in accordance with reality at all. The Steins' Hungarian relationships were overwhelmingly due to Leo.

[4] Nonetheless, in terms of Hungarian connections, Gertrude Stein's book still proves to be a precious resource. At the start of the book, she conjures up the spirit of the atelier, established in the now famous 27 Rue de Fleurus, with the passage: "The room was soon very very full and who were they all. Groups of Hungarian painters and writers, it happened that some Hungarian had once been brought and the word had spread from him throughout all Hungary, any village where there was a young man who had ambitions heard of 27 Rue de Fleurus and then he lived but to get there and a great many did get there. They were always there, all sizes and shapes, all degrees of wealth and poverty, some very charming, some simply rough and every now and then a very beautiful young peasant."<sup>5</sup>

[5] Well into the book, while attempting to revive an entire era, the time of beginnings around 1906, she writes, "It was at that time that the Hungarians began their pilgrimages to the Rue de Fleurus."<sup>6</sup> It can be no accident that Gertrude Stein should single out the Hungarians' visits or should consider their presence so striking. Indeed, among the Hungarians, the doorknob passed from hand to hand, and word spread from mouth to mouth that in the Parisian studio that Gertrude and Leo shared, one could view an unrivaled concentration of Matisse and Picasso works. Later, when the flat in Montparnasse became a famous destination for those both from Europe and abroad who were interested in art, the dominant Hungarian presence among the guests was still remarkable. Gertrude Stein described the early 1910s, "The Saturday evenings in those

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<sup>4</sup> Stein, Gertrude. *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* [1933]. New York: Vintage, 1990. (In Hungarian: *Alice B. Toklas önéletrajza*. Tibor Szobotka, trans. Budapest: Gondolat, 1974.) Capitalization has been altered, but punctuation and stylistic idiosyncracies are left unchanged.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

early days were frequented by many Hungarians, quite a number of Germans, quite a few mixed nationalities, a very thin sprinkling of Americans, and practically no English."<sup>7</sup>

[6] Although this extraordinarily rich source makes frequent mention of Hungarians, it can be challenging to identify the individuals to whom the author's remarks apply.

[7] Hungarians are mentioned in the chapter devoted to the opening of Matisse's school, although not at all in a flattering light: "One of the Hungarians wanted to earn his living posing for the class and in the intervals when some one else posed go on with his painting. There were a number of young women who protested, a nude model on a model stand was one thing but to have it turn into a fellow student was another. A Hungarian was found eating the bread for rubbing out crayon drawings that the various students left on their painting boards and this evidence of extreme poverty and lack of hygiene had an awful effect upon the sensibilities of the Americans."<sup>8</sup> We know that, among Matisse's Hungarian pupils, József Brummer, a sculpting apprentice from Szeged, served as a model<sup>9</sup> (all the while filling the school's stoker position).<sup>10</sup> The identity of the impoverished Hungarian student who devoured bread erasers, however, is still unknown. Brummer posed as a model in different schools and in his compatriots' studios,<sup>11</sup> but he soon opened an art dealership in the French capital, where he amassed such a fortune in the trade of African sculpture and Far East works that, moving to New York, he quickly became one of America's most influential art dealers and gallery owners.<sup>12</sup> In New York's Metropolitan Museum, the site of my presentation, thousands of the file cards which enumerate art pieces feature his name.

[8] We are also able to identify the Hungarian described later in the book: "Speaking of Spain also reminds me that once we were in a crowded restaurant. Suddenly in the end of the room a tall form stood up and a man bowed solemnly at Gertrude Stein who as solemnly replied. It was a stray Hungarian from Saturday evening, surely."<sup>13</sup> This episode takes place in 1911. That is, it occurred the same year that Vilmos Perlrótt-Csaba

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 60-61.

<sup>9</sup> Géza Bornemisza recalls that he took Brummer to the school as a model. See Béla Horváth's interview with Géza Bornemisza, undated manuscript. Béla Horváth's art history legacy, Research Centre for the Humanities – Hungarian Academy of Sciences – Institute of Art History, Archive [hereafter, RCH-HAS-IAH, Archive], Item No.: MDK-C-I-217.

<sup>10</sup> Barr mentions that Brummer strove to earn money as the school's stoker. See: Barr, Jr., Alfred. *H. Matisse. His Art and his Public*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1951, p. 117.

<sup>11</sup> According to András Mikola, Brummer posed at the Académie Delécluse. (Mikola, András. *Colors and Lights. Memoirs of a Nagybánya Painter*. Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca, Romania]: Dacia, 1972, p. 44.) Czóbel, however, recalls that Brummer modeled in his studio. See: Czóbel's letter to Iván Dévényi, October 15, 1963. RCH-HAS-IAH, Archive, Item No.: MKCS-C-I-159/469.

<sup>12</sup> For more on Brummer, see: Passuth, Krisztina. "A festő és modellje. Henri Rousseau: Joseph Brummer portréja (1909). Kép és recepció [The Painter and his Model. Henri Rousseau's Portrait of Joseph Brummer (1909). Picture and Reception]," *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, vol. 51, 2002, pp. 225-249.

<sup>13</sup> Stein, 1990, p. 90.

traveled in Spain. We can assume therefore that he was the anonymous stray Hungarian in question, although Gertrude Stein surely would have remembered him as one of Matisse's favorite pupils and one of the Saturday night evenings' permanent Hungarian members.

[9] The only Hungarian that the author mentions by name in her book is Béla Czóbel. Upon visiting the 1907 Salon des Indépendants, Gertrude passionately describes how at the exhibition she encountered Matisse's style-altering masterpiece *Blue Nude*,<sup>14</sup> which would soon enrich her and Leo's collection. She continues, "In the same room as the Matisse, a little covered by a partition, was a Hungarian version of the same picture by one Czóbel whom I remembered to have seen at the Rue de Fleurus, it was the happy independent way to put a violent follower opposite the violent but not quite as violent master."<sup>15</sup>

[10] Unfortunately, this painting, in all certainty one of Czóbel's most significant, has not been located. A few years ago, an archive photo surfaced from the estate of György Bölöni (Fig. 2), featuring a previously unknown reclining female nude by Czóbel.<sup>16</sup> Initially, I supposed that this image could be the version which Gertrude Stein mentioned with such distinction – which, in all probability, is also the painting that Cultural Minister Albert Apponyi had removed from the wall at the 1908 exhibition of MIÉNK (=Circle of Hungarian Impressionists and Naturalists).<sup>17</sup> After a careful re-examination of the information at my disposal, I now suspect that there existed among Czóbel's work a much rawer – if you prefer, a more primitive – nude than this one. The American author Gelett Burgess, who visited the Hungarian painter in his Cité Falguière studio, describes a painting that is more brutal and wilder than the nude seen in the photograph: "In the center of the room is a revolting picture of a woman. Did I say woman? Let us, in decency, call it a female. Czóbel, no doubt, like Braque, would prefer to call it Woman. She is naked and unashamed, if one can judge by her two large eyes. Others of her ilk lie about. As a rule, they are aged 89. They have very purple complexions, enlivened with mustard-colored spots and yolk-yellow throats; they have orange and blue arms.

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<sup>14</sup> Matisse, Henri. *Blue Nude: Memory of Biskra*, 1907. Oil on canvas, 36¼ x 55¼ in. The Baltimore Museum of Art: The Cone Collection, formed by Dr. Claribel Cone and Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore, Maryland.

<sup>15</sup> Stein, 1990, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> Budapest, National Széchényi Library, Manuscript and Letter Archive [hereafter, NSL Archive]. On the photo's discovery and the painting visible in it, see: Gergely, Barki. "Yes, Gertrude! Czóbel lappangó aktja. Emléktöredék a századelő Párizsából [Yes, Gertrude! Czóbel's Missing Nude. Shard of Memory from her Turn-of-the-Century Paris]," *Art Magazin*, vol. 8, 2010, 2, pp. 36-40.

<sup>17</sup> Béla Czóbel spoke of it many times. "When I showed a female nude at the MIÉNK, it had to be removed under Apponyi." See: Béla Horváth's interview with Béla Czóbel, undated manuscript. Horváth Béla's art history legacy, RCH-HAS-IAH, Archive, Item No.: MDK-C-I-217. "I displayed at the MIÉNK – for example, a female nude which had to be taken down, because it scandalized Apponyi." See Béla Horváth's interview with Béla Czóbel, manuscript, September 24, 1961. Horváth Béla's art history legacy, RCH-HAS-IAH, Archive, Item No.: MDK-C-I-217.

Sometimes, not often, they wear bright green skirts. [...] Czóbel observes them through the bars of his cage, roaring out in mauve and cinnabar tones."<sup>18</sup>



2 Photograph of Béla Czóbel's lost painting *Reclining Female Nude* in a Paris studio, 1907. National Széchényi Library, Archives, György Bölöni's legacy

[11] It is worthwhile here to pose a question. How did Burgess hear of the Hungarian painter, and why should he have paid him a visit? With reference to Edward Fry, I, too, for a long time supposed that Matisse must have been the intermediary.<sup>19</sup> Now, however, I suspect that Burgess could have gathered information on those who represented the newest directions during visits to the Steins. We know that Burgess attended the Salon des Indépendants in the spring of 1908, and that additionally, around the same time, he visited Gertrude Stein in the company of the American feminist author Inez Haynes Irwin.<sup>20</sup> In all certainty, Irwin's contact with the Steins was thanks to Burgess,<sup>21</sup> but how did Burgess himself arrive there? The intermediary may well have been the American

<sup>18</sup> Burgess, Gelett. "The Wild Men of Paris," *Architectural Record*, vol. 27, May 1910, pp. 400-414. (I would like to thank Kálmán Maklár for bringing the reproductions in this article to my attention.) The following year when the article and its reproductions appeared as "The 'Cubists' Dominate Paris' Fall Salon," *New York Times*, October 8, 1911, a reproduction of *Female Portrait* was included.

<sup>19</sup> Fry, Edward F. "Cubism 1907-1908: An Early Eyewitness Account," *Art Bulletin*, vol. 48, 1966, p. 70.

<sup>20</sup> Braun, Emily. "Saturday Evenings at the Steins'," *The Steins Collect*, 2011, p. 66 – in reference to Inez Haynes Irwin's writing entitled "Adventures of Yesterday" (Inez Haynes Gilmore Papers, 1872-1945, Schlezinger Library, Radcliff Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, vols. 23-25, fols. 3-16).

<sup>21</sup> Inez Haynes Irwin remembered, "One day Gelett Burgess said to me, 'There's a new school of art here in Paris. I think I am going to write an article on it. Would you like to come with me when I visit the studios of some of these men?'" "There were four Steins living in Paris. [...] We went to Rue Madame first.", "A second time we called on Mr. and Mrs. Stein.", and "From there we went to the studio of Gertrude and Leo Stein." I thank Emily Braun for forwarding me passages from Inez Haynes Irwin's recollections.

painter Max Weber,<sup>22</sup> who was a key point of contact between certain Hungarian painters and the Steins. After all, in 1906, he lived in a house of studios at 9 Rue Campagne Première, along with Róbert Berény, Dezső Czigány, Lajos Gulácsy, and György Bölöni, in addition to maintaining a relationship with Béla Czóbel.<sup>23</sup>

[12] At the Steins', Burgess had the opportunity to view a great number of works by Matisse for the first time and to meet the chief of the Fauves and his followers. I think it is likely that Burgess gained access to the French capital's most progressive painters – in order to interview the "wild men of Paris," as he called them – through his conversations with Max Weber and the Steins.

[13] Stunned by the force of innovation, Burgess did not publish his article, "The Wild Men of Paris," which is based on interviews he conducted in the spring of 1908, until 1910. Why did he wait two years before informing America of the newest developments in artistic life seething in Europe? Soon after his return to America, he released a volume of short stories, presenting readers with his Paris experiences wrapped in a fictional narrative.<sup>24</sup> Of the eight painters that he interviewed, four are mentioned by name in his book, and Czóbel several times.

[14] In other words, the article in *Architectural Record* was not the first publication to bring word of the Fauves and the Cubists stateside. Instead, the honor goes to Burgess's almost unknown book of short stories.

[15] It is worth quoting here, because once again, it underscores that Czóbel's Fauve style was more elementary and primitive than scholars might imagine based on his pictures which are known today. "He, who had never been in France, who had never seen a single disciple of its school, was of 'les fauves' – he was a Wild Beast – wilder, if possible, than Derain, as wild as Czóbel or Picasso. [...] The rudely carved African gods that had delighted and stimulated Derain, the Alaskan totem poles to which Picasso was indebted for his fury, the Aztec graven images that had urged Czóbel to his ferocity, were all unknown to Haulick Smagg. [...] Derain's shrill blues and tumultuous reds, Czóbel's

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<sup>22</sup> Again, thanks to Emily Braun, for drawing my attention to Fitzgerald, Michael. *Picasso and American Art*. New York – New Haven: Whitney Museum of American Art – Yale University Press, 2006, pp. 22-23.

<sup>23</sup> For the relationship formed between the American painter and Berény in 1906, see: Max Weber's letter to István Varró, New York, May 19, 1958. Budapest, Hungarian National Gallery Archive [hereafter, HNG Archive], István Varró – Béla Szíj documents. Some of the letter's details are published in: Szíj, Béla. "Berény Róbert életútja gyermekéveitől a berlini emigrációig [Róbert Berény's Life from his Childhood Years until his Emigration to Berlin]," *Hungarian National Gallery Bulletin*, vol. 4, 1963, pp. 114-115. Max Weber alludes to his friendship with Bölöni in an unpublished letter which he sent to Bölöni, addressed to Paris from his study tour in Spain (NSL Archive, File 127/623). On Czóbel and Max Weber's acquaintance, see: Barki, Gergely. "Béla Czóbel," *The Eight*, exhibition catalogue. Csilla Markója and István Bardoly, eds. Pécs – Budapest: Janus Pannonius Museum – Hungarian Academy of Sciences' Art History Research Institute, 2010, pp. 237-239.

<sup>24</sup> Burgess, Gelett. *Lady Méchante or Life as it Should Be. Being Diverse Precious Episodes In the Life of a Naughty Nonpareille*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1909.

harsh greens, and Picasso's hot yellows Smagg, in his artistic orgy, rework into crazier forms."<sup>25</sup>

[16] Czóbel was a significant figure among the pack of fauves that had formed around Matisse.<sup>26</sup> It is striking to see Czóbel's name in Burgess's writings, especially since he is an artist who has faded from international awareness. Yet, there are many sources from the period that mention him. He was at the forefront of the Parisian avant-garde, more so than his countrymen, and perhaps as a result, was considered aloof. At least, this is how his young Hungarian peers – presumably, not without envy – recalled him: "Czóbel was a terribly selfish man. We were at the Steins'. I was talking with Picasso. Introductions were not the custom then. I knew who he was, he didn't know me. Later, Czóbel showed up. Picasso asked him who I was. Czóbel said, 'a Hungarian' with a wave of the hand. [...] Czóbel had a handwritten sign on his studio door: 'Frappez la porte, après déter votre [nom] S.V.P.' [Knock on the door, then state your name, please.] He would only open the door if it was someone he wanted to allow in. Once Perlrrott-Csaba played a joke on him. He knocked and said it was a money delivery. Czóbel opened the door for that."<sup>27</sup>

[17] Czóbel was already a well-known painter when Amedeo Modigliani became his studio neighbor in 1906. Although their relations were marked by constant grumpiness and quarreling, Modigliani was basically a novice at the time. As their mutual friend Paul Alexandre recalled, "In [Modigliani's] drawings there is invention, simplification and purification of form. This is why African art appealed to him. [He] had reconstructed the lines of a human face in his own way by fitting them into primitive patterns. [...] This search for simplification in drawing also delighted him in certain paintings by Rousseau (Le Douanier) and in Czobel's figures from fairground stalls."<sup>28</sup> Some of Czóbel's marketplace pictures have been rediscovered in recent years, and some of his remarks about the abovementioned friendship have been preserved. "I often met with Modigliani and his friend, Dr. Paul Alexander, who is still living, though at the time he was finishing his medical studies. We would come together in a studio somewhere near Rue Douai. The place had no owner. A painter named Doucet worked there, and he was handled by Charles Vidrac, a poet and art dealer at the time on Rue de Seine. All this was quite removed from Montmartre and the Hungarians. Mr. Paul Alexandre would bring hashish, une sorte de pâté verte que nous avons mâché [a sort of green pâté that we would munch on]. It was probably weak. I didn't feel any effect. Modi was still going to the Caf. Con. At that time, it was called Européen. I can also mention the Atelier Humbert, where

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 349-350.

<sup>26</sup> Regarding Czóbel's former significance and lost works, see also: Barki, 2010, pp. 237-239.

<sup>27</sup> See: Béla Horváth's interview with Géza Bornemisza, undated manuscript. Béla Horváth's art history legacy, RCH-HAS-IAH, Archive, Item No. MDK-C-I-217.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Alexandre, as quoted by his son Noël Alexandre. *Modigliani inconnu*. Paris: Fonds Mercator-Albin Michel, 1993, p. 65.

I would go with Berény for the evening nude. Derain, Marquet, Manguin, etc., went there. They are famous now, but then they were not famous. This could have been around 1906, 1907."<sup>29</sup>

[18] We learn from a number of memoirs that many of the Hungarians in Paris attended the Académie de la Grande-Chaumière. According to both Géza Bornemisza's and Max Weber's accounts, Henri Matisse would "not infrequently appear" for the nude sketches in the evening in 1906-07.<sup>30</sup> In other words, just a few years before opening his own academy, Matisse took advantage of the nude drawing opportunities at the free schools; Matisse and Czóbel may have drawn shoulder-to-shoulder. Curiously, the literature, both in Hungary and internationally, has stated that Czóbel was Matisse's pupil.<sup>31</sup> There is no evidence to support this supposition. Its original source may have been the artist Maurice Denis<sup>32</sup> or the dealer Berthe Weill.<sup>33</sup> Alfred Barr took these statements as fact,<sup>34</sup> and repeated it in his writings. When I gave my presentation in New York, audience members questioned why the already up-and-coming Czóbel would feel the need to become Matisse's student. No, Czóbel was almost surely not a pupil of Matisse, nor did he attend his academy. Czóbel's position within the Fauve group alone

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<sup>29</sup> Czóbel, Béla. Letter to Endre Bajomi-Lázár, Budapest, July 20, 1964. Petőfi Literary Museum, Archive, V.5253/164. Portions of the letter are published in: Bajomi-Lázár, Endre. *A Montmartre*. Budapest: Corvina, 1967, pp. 194-195. The studio was probably rented by Paul Alexandre for his painter friends on the Rue Delta. Paul Alexander remembered Modigliani's interest in meeting Czóbel well. See: Alexandre, 1993, p. 65.

<sup>30</sup> Bornemisza, Géza. "Henri Matisse," *Kékmadár*, vol. 1, 1923, 2, p. 62. For Max Weber's recollection, see: Barr, 1951, p. 535. Also: *Pariser Begegnungen 1904-1914. Café du Dome*. Gerhard Häandler, ed. Duisburg: Académie Matisse – Wilhelm-Lehmbruck Museum, 1965.

<sup>31</sup> For more information about confusion in identifying Hungarian students of Matisse, see: Barki, Gergely. "Párizsi előzmények és a modern francia művészet hatása a Nyolcak aktfestészetében," *A modell – Női akt a 19. századi magyar művészetben* ["Parisian Precedents and French Modern Art's Effect on Nude Painting among The Eight," *Model – The Female Nude in 19th-Century Hungarian Art*], exhibition catalogue. Györgyi Imre, ed. Budapest: Hungarian National Gallery, 2004, p. 468, note 13. It was also erroneously published that Róbert Berény was Matisse's pupil.

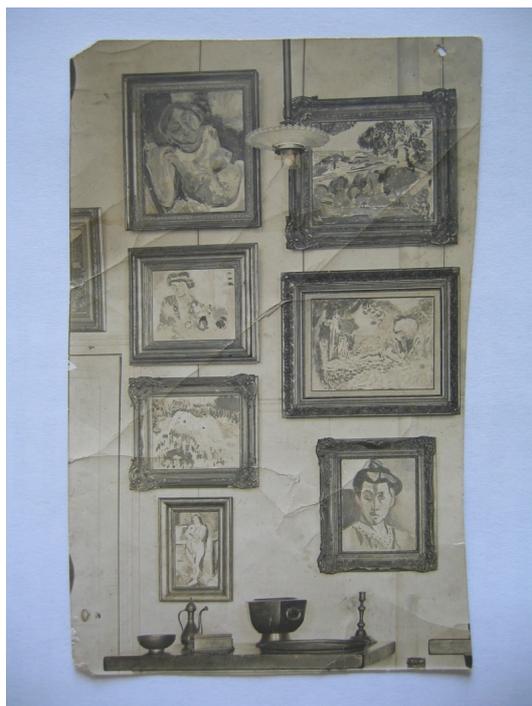
<sup>32</sup> In his famous and often quoted treatise, "Liberté épuisante et stérile" (*La Grande Revue*, April 10, 1908; republished by Philippe Dagen in *Pour ou contre le Fauvisme*. Paris: Somogy, 1994, p. 155), Maurice Denis wrote that Mr. Castelucio and Mr. Matisse each had an academy. ("M. Castelucio a, croyons, une académie, et M. Matisse en a aussi une!") What the author probably intends to express is that a group had formed around each of these men, so both had actually "established schools." Especially in the case of Matisse, we must distinguish between the two meanings of the word "académie" – the school, as an institution, and the artistic circle, which refers to his group of followers. See: Lee, Jane. "Denis and the 'École de Matisse,'" *Maurice Denis, 1870-1943*, exhibition catalogue. Guy Cogeval, Claire Denis, eds. Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1994, pp. 61-71. Denis mentions Czóbel among the group surrounding Matisse and criticizes that "he cares little for nature and dispenses with Greco-Roman art." – It should be clarified that Czóbel was a follower and not student. And in his defense, it is hard to imagine that in only a few months, Denis had familiarized himself with the (mostly foreign and to a large extent insignificant) artists studying at the academy.

<sup>33</sup> Berthe Weill organized a solo exhibition for Czóbel in 1908. Twenty-five years later she reminisced, "Tres inspiré de Matisse, dont il suit les enseignements a son académie, je le crois très doué." See: Weill, Berthe. *Pan! dans l'œil!... avec une préface de Paul Reboux. Orné des aquarelles et dessins de Raoul Dufy, Pascin et Picasso*. Paris: Lipschutz, 1933, p. 148. In this case, too, the académie expression rather refers to Matisse's followers, not his students.

<sup>34</sup> Barr, 1951, p. 117.

makes this difficult to imagine, and Hungarian pupils at the Académie Matisse (who were present since its inception in 1908) do not mention him as one of the students. Czóbel did not consider his French colleague as a Master, but as a predecessor and an inspiration.

[19] It is worth citing a letter that Czóbel wrote to an older colleague, József Rippl-Rónai:<sup>35</sup> "Honored Sir, I enclose the Matisse reproductions. If I can, I will send more. How do you like them? I kiss your dear wife's hand. Your devoted follower, Béla Czóbel."<sup>36</sup>



3 Part of Michael and Sarah Stein's Matisse collection on Rue Madame (Picture sent by Béla Czóbel to József Rippl-Rónai), 1907. Hungarian National Gallery, Archive, Item No.: 5134/1950/29. 4

[20] In this letter from Paris, dated February 23, 1908, Czóbel enclosed a photograph taken in Michael and Sarah Stein's apartment on Rue Madame.<sup>37</sup> (Fig. 3) Like the nearby apartment that Leo and Gertrude shared, the Rue Madame flat served as an open house

<sup>35</sup> György Szücs drew my attention to the letter jointly written by Béla Czóbel and Károly Kernstok. See: Szücs, György: "Dissonancia vagy új harmónia? A 'neós' művészet Nagybányán," *Magyar Vadak Párizstól Nagybányáig 1904-1914* ["Dissonance or New Harmony? The 'Neos' Art in Nagybánya," *Hungarian Fauves from Paris to Nagybánya 1904-1914*], exhibition catalogue. Krisztina Passuth, György Szücs, eds. Budapest: Hungarian National Gallery, 2006, p. 59. Orsolya Danyi found the photo, separate from the letter. See: Danyi, Orsolya. "Egy előbújt fotó a Rippl-Rónai hagyatékából [Photo Resurfaced from Rippl-Rónai's Estate]," *Artmagazin*, vol. 4, 2006, 5, pp. 74-75.

<sup>36</sup> Béla Czóbel and Kernstok Károly's letter. HNG Archive, International Critics about Rippl-Rónai's works until 1912, Item No.: 5118/1950. Rippl-Rónai-kritikák III. The text written by Kernstok: "My dear little Joe, I saw the Vuillard exhibit at the Bernheim; a little boring. I like your things better. What about your exhibition? I heard Drouet was a flop; he's closing up shop and just maintaining the photo business. Good-bye. I kiss you honored wife's hand. A hug, your friend, Károly Kernstok."

<sup>37</sup> HNG Archive. Rippl-Rónai, József, Item No.: 5134/1950/29.

on Saturday nights. Michael and Sarah's gatherings were less casual than Leo and Gertrude's Saturday evenings. They started earlier, and there were those who simply strolled from one venue to the next, although more simply arrived at the latter address for the events that regularly began at 9 p.m. Here, Leo Stein, who had invited them, already held the role of both host and moderator. This was where the otherwise withdrawn Leo found his true self, and the majority of Hungarians preferred to establish a relationship with him, the "missionary of progressive art." Presumably, Czóbel himself gained access to the Saturday soirées thanks to Leo. What is completely sure, however, is that they maintained contact even after Leo left Paris. They almost certainly met in the 1930s, which a drawing of Leo prepared by Czóbel seems to prove.<sup>38</sup> (Fig. 4)



4 Béla Czóbel. *Portrait of Leo Stein*, c. 1930 (?).  
Charcoal on paper, 10½ x 8 in. Hungarian National  
Gallery, Item No.: F.2011.1

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### **Leo Stein, the True Mediator; or, the Montparnasse Apostle**

In Paris, I often ran across a tall man of about fifty who would go about bareheaded in loose black velvet pants and sandals – even in winter. I took him for some eccentric oddball, or Russian nihilist. I would see him without fail at some new exhibition opening, or an open house for some private collection either at Durand-Ruel's flat or on the Rue Lafitte, or at one of the more interesting auctions at the Hôtel Drouot. I grew accustomed to his presence and took his being there for granted, not giving it a second thought. The artistic population of Paris ran to 33,000 at the time, so one more eccentric barely counted for anything among all those artists. The man was Leo Stein. Later, he attended the Académie Delécluse, drawing with the rest of us. One day I completed a rather successful study, a painted female form. He stopped behind me, looked at it for a long time, and then asked in German if I would not mind paying him a visit. He would

<sup>38</sup> Béla Czobel's drawing of Leo Stein was displayed at an exhibit in Duisburg in 1965 (*Pariser Begegnungen 1904-1914. Café du Dôme*, 1965, cat. no. 15). At that time, it was still in the artist's possession, but surprisingly is not among the thousands of graphic works currently in the Czóbel Museum. A recent drawing turned up at auction and is now in the collection of the Hungarian National Gallery's Graphic Art Department.

receive me on Saturday night. I thanked him for the invitation, and at my affirmative response, he gave me a name card with his address. I didn't see much in him. I took him for a poor devil like myself, but what is a hungry man to do? I thought that if he invited me, he would serve me some hot tea. Even that would be something! Saturday night around nine o'clock, I knocked on the door of the ground-floor apartment. He opened the door. After the mutual greeting, I found myself in an immense hall with walls filled up to the ceiling with books. The only furniture in this library was an iron barracks-style bed. The surprise left me practically speechless, but I was even more surprised by another oblong room with overhead lighting where the pictures on display pulled me like a magnet. There was Renoir, Cézanne, Picasso, Matisse, Bonnard, Degas, and so on. Along the walls there were also carved antique Renaissance chests teeming with Chinese and Japanese silk paintings, woodcuts, estampes, and drawings. At that time, Picasso had not yet turned to Cubism, and I especially enjoyed a picture of his painted with a pale, pleasant pink in mild blue tones. It depicted a female circus performer balancing on a ball, while another circus performer, a giant of a man, stood in the foreground with his back to us. Today the picture is the property of the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. I certainly learned a great deal from my highly refined, art connoisseur friend Leo Stein. I received books from him. Even now I possess some ten books about art that were presents from him. In the course of our talks, which we continued at the art school – which he frequented – many times he directed my attention to some worthy goal and refined my opinion of it. I proved fertile ground, and drank in the plentiful knowledge. I became a regular guest on Saturday evenings, and I met several exceptional artists besides Picasso and Matisse. Picasso was a short, stocky man, the chauffeur type. Had I seen him in Nagybánya in a sports cap, I would never have distinguished him from countless others, and his exterior would not have betrayed that he was a world-famous artist. Matisse was a bespectacled professor type. He was a student at the Académie des Beaux Arts until the age of forty. After such a thorough grounding, he embarked on new paths. At that time, his studio was in a building once part of a convent. He would hold open houses, and I saw him at work with an unusually small palette bearing hardly any colors. He would arrange his various tools and brushes with a pedantry more like a dentist's than a great artist's. I met two more members of the Stein family, Leo's older sister and older brother, who were also among the first collectors of Picasso and Matisse. I knew that their parents came from Vienna and became millionaires in the Chicago meatpacking industry. All three Stein children lived in Paris and lived off their inheritance. I believe that in devoting themselves to collecting art, besides their love and appreciation of art, their fortune played a role from the point of view of sound investments and patronage. It is a fact that they were particularly significant in promoting the reputations of the two artists mentioned above. Through their purchases, they directed their money to these painters, which made their further work possible.<sup>39</sup>

[21] This long, detailed quotation from Mikola is worthy of study, and not just from a Hungarian perspective. Despite a few factual errors,<sup>40</sup> it provides certain information which could supplement Leo Stein's biography. It is also interesting that Leo spoke German, and not French, to the Hungarians. This was the common tongue, in which the American raised in Vienna and the Hungarians (who had strayed from the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to Paris) could best understand each other. Moreover, allusions to Leo's affiliation with the Académie Delécluse are exclusively confined to Hungarian

<sup>39</sup> Mikola, 1972, pp. 46-48.

<sup>40</sup> For complete biographical information on the Stein Family see Kate Mendillo's Chronology in *The Steins Collect*, pp. 312-333. The Steins siblings were all born in Pennsylvania. Gertrude was twenty-one months younger than Leo.

sources. It is not only Mikola, the school's custodian, who provides such information, but also Géza Bornemisza. What makes the quotation truly significant is that, unlike other Hungarian sources, Mikola expresses a profound esteem for Leo Stein's aesthetic knowledge, his vocation for taste formation, and his role as a propagator. Whereas a majority of memoirs in the Hungarian language are fairly superficial and tend to characterize the Stein siblings' eccentric appearance or extraordinary behavior, Mikola portrays very credibly the side of Leo Stein that probably had the most impact on the Hungarians in general. Many considered Leo to be an extraordinarily learned connoisseur and collector with refined powers of discrimination. His extensive knowledge and erudition was apparent in his conversations with artists and qualified him to take on such a major role at his "Saturday nights," that of moderator, aesthete, and theorist. He very consciously created a canon and propagated modern art internationally.<sup>41</sup>

[22] Therefore, from the point of view of assessing the artistic views of the Hungarian Fauves between 1905 and 1909 – as well as those of The Eight, since this period was just prior to their formation – Consequently it is especially important to know how Leo Stein interpreted the works of the 1870s generation, Gauguin and Cézanne, and more importantly, Matisse and Picasso, who, more than any other absolutely contemporary artists, occupied the pinnacle of the mainstream. Of the future Eight, Czóbel, Kernstok, Orbán, and Pór, as well as their younger colleague Róbert Berény regularly visited the Steins. Berény may have been among the first to come to know the Steins' collection. In his works from 1905 and 1906, we can already appreciate the influence of Matisse and Cézanne. These pictures are not mere imitations; they testify to a refined understanding, a profound knowledge and feeling for aesthetics. Surely the Leo-dominated Saturday night conversations impacted Berény and other Hungarians – even if it was primarily the direct study of the collection itself, its visual acceptance, that altered and influenced their later art. Leo was extremely well-read and additionally well acquainted with two of the period's most influential art historians, Julius Meier-Graefe and Bernard Berenson. He interpreted them critically and often strongly pointed out his own opinions which were at odds with theirs. One focal point of his personal aesthetic creed was a comment upon the art of Cézanne in relation to the role of space and mass, which was a drastic departure from Meier-Graefe's analysis, for instance. Indeed, Leo believed that, besides color, Cézanne's main challenge was the emphasis of mass. It is no accident that this theory – although it could be derived from other sources – applies to most of the artists in The Eight, particularly the aesthetic that Berény represents.

[23] Bernard Berenson had a significant effect upon Leo Stein's views. They regularly met every summer just outside of Florence, where both men maintained homes. Berenson boldly compared Cézanne to Michelangelo, two giants whose (opposite) poles

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<sup>41</sup> For more on this topic, see: Tinterow, Gary and Kwon, Marci. "Leo Stein before 1914," *The Steins Collect*, 2011, pp. 71-85.

defined the scale of The Eight's dualistic aesthetic; though, in truth, it developed from a point of origin defined by both of them.

[24] Róbert Berény's and Bertalan Pór's trip to Italy in the summer of 1907 was typical of The Eight, not to mention a symbolic manifestation of their simultaneous efforts with regard to modernism's classicizing tendency. In the course of their journey, they consciously sought out classic (and primitive) roots and parallels to the avant-garde which was emerging in Paris. Pór later recalled that their Grand Tour had such an influence upon them that in emulation of the great masters they grew out their beards.<sup>42</sup> Somewhat contradicting this anecdote is a ferrotype which has recently come to light. It was taken in Nizza, at the outset of their journey, and both men can be seen with beards.<sup>43</sup> (Fig. 5) In addition, a portrait which showed Pór sporting a sparse beard was displayed by Berény in the Salon des Indépendants exhibit months before they began their tour.<sup>44</sup> We are also aware that, among Parisian students and painters at the time, a beard was a commonplace accessory. Only at home in Hungary were they able to create a sensation with it.<sup>45</sup>



5 Bertalan Pór and Róbert Berény in Nizza, Spring 1907. Ferrotype, private owner

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### **Assimilated Jews from Budapest and San Francisco in Montparnasse**

[25] Berény's ruddy beard caused a stir in Paris. As Dezső Orbán recalls, "He could have been 22 then [actually, just 20] with a reddish beard like Christ, which was still

<sup>42</sup> "A 70 éves Pór Bertalan [Beretalan Pór Turns 70]," *Magyar Nemzet*, November 12, 1950, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> The ferrotype was certainly taken by a street photographer and placed in a mailing card with an oval cut-out for that purpose. Bertalan Pór sent it to his parents on April 6, 1907. My thanks to Bertalan Pór's relatives, Júlia Bernát and Pál Farkas, for placing the picture at my disposal and to Ildikó Felicides and Zita Sor for restoring, conserving, and digitalizing the ferrotype.

<sup>44</sup> Berény, Róbert. *Portrait of Bertalan Pór*, 1907, oil on cardboard, 22 x 18 in. Private collection.

<sup>45</sup> András Mikola relates a similar story in his autobiography, in the chapter beginning "My beard caused a stir in Nagypeleske." Mikola, 1972, p. 64.

shocking to Parisian tastes. And there was an episode that I'll never forget. We were walking along some boulevard when along comes a rather young shopgirl. She looked at Róbert for a moment and was speechless, but then she quickly composed herself and said to him, 'Dit donc Jésus Christ, quesqu'il fait le bon dieu ?' [sic! – Tell me Jesus Christ, how is doing the Good Lord?] It was an unimaginably funny scene."<sup>46</sup>

[26] Interestingly enough, the mention of a red beard occurs often in Hungarian recollections of Leo Stein – for example, that of Márk Vedres, a sculptor and guest artist at The Eight's group exhibit in 1911. Neither Leo nor Gertrude followed the Parisian bohemian trends in fashion; Leo, for his part, sported a sizable beard, which was the subject of many snide remarks. Vedres recounts meeting the Steins in an Italian studio in Fiesole "Leo Stein was a braggart American. He'd crumple up the newspaper and declare it art. His older sister was a strange woman. She went to Florence in sackcloth and sandals. Fat woman. And Leo Stein was a red-bearded Jew. Kernstok sent them to me in Florence. Leo Stein and his sister bought from a business point of view, rather than for public interest. The children used to rush after her down the street."<sup>47</sup>

[27] The account is surprisingly malicious. Vedres was clearly not aware of Leo's Berensonian grasp of art history, with which perhaps he could have identified. In any case, we must note here that The Eight's understanding of modernism is debated even today. With respect to the sculptor, how much did his notions differ from the most radical views of Berény and Tihanyi, or the most conservative classicizing view represented by Kernstok?<sup>48</sup>

[28] Further, we must mention that Vedres made contact with a number of American collectors in Italy. It is possible that the Steins helped facilitate these relationships. For example Kernstok presumably drew the Steins' attention to his Hungarian sculptor friend with the intention of acquiring patrons. Moreover, many of the Stein's well-to-do American friends visited their villa in Fiesole. These are exactly the people who would have been attracted to the classicizing trend represented by Vedres. Vedres's blunt remark about Leo's Jewishness is particularly odd, especially since Vedres, like many of The Eight, was of Jewish descent himself. Although the Steins' parents had been

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<sup>46</sup> Dezső Orbán's letter to István Varró, April 23, 1961 [?]. HNG Archive, István Varró and Béla Szíj documents.

<sup>47</sup> Béla Horváth's interview with Márk Vedres, undated manuscript. Béla Horváth's art history legacy. RCH-HAS-IAH, Archive, Item No.: MDK-C-I-217.

<sup>48</sup> Károly Lyka's sharply illuminating remark was that Vedres was the Donatello among the Hungarian Fauves (for our purposes, The Eight). "Vedres was smuggled into The Eight. After all, he copied Florentine quattrocento, so stylistically he had nothing to do with them. I don't know why [Kernstok] appreciated Vedres's sculptures so much when they did not suit the movement. He brought Vedres in." Béla Horváth's interview with Károly Lyka, manuscript, January 1957. Béla Horváth's art history legacy, RCH-HAS-IAH, Archive, Item No.: MDK-C-I-217.

observant Jews, the grown children were assimilated; some even celebrated Christmas.<sup>49</sup> Berény did as well; he spent Christmas Eve 1909 in Paris with the composer Béla Bartók.

[29] The literature has addressed Jewish circles in Paris, in particular in Montparnasse. The Steins did not really belong to any of these groups, despite the fact that their lifestyle, disposition, and interests clearly appealed to the new generation of assimilated Jews. Most of the artists promoted by the Steins were not Jewish, a number of their Saturday evening guests were. At the same time, I will venture that it could be no accident that they held their gatherings not on society's accepted day of rest, Sunday, but on Saturday, the Jewish day of rest. Further, they did not refer to these events as salons or soirées, but Saturday nights, which undoubtedly held some significance.

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### **L'Académie Matisse**

[30] The non-Jewish artists who circulated in this cosmopolitan community received their share of vitriol from the contemporary French conservative men of letters, chiefly right-wing with nationalist sentiments. Matisse was the target of especially fierce attacks, since so many foreign students attended his school.<sup>50</sup> The Dreyfus Affair was just then drawing to a close, so Matisse was especially vulnerable to charges. Artists of Jewish background arrived at his academy in great numbers, even from Hungary – for example, the previously mentioned Brummer or Vilmos Perlrótt-Csaba, who could undoubtedly consider himself close to Matisse. Through his master's good graces he became sociéteer of the Salon d'Automne.<sup>51</sup> Because Matisse's school kept no logs, yearbooks, or admission records, art historians' estimates of the number of pupils at the short-lived academy are based upon later recollections and show a great deal of discrepancy.<sup>52</sup> Just as the numbers of students among the largest groups at Matisse's school (Scandinavian, German, and American) are unclear, we have no precise knowledge of the number of Hungarians either. We have inconsistent information and nothing approaching a complete list of names.

[31] The painter Gyula Andorkó is little-known in Hungary, although he is remembered in New York as the first owner of a Van Gogh painting, *Bouquet of Flowers in a Vase*

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<sup>49</sup> Braun, 2011, p. 63.

<sup>50</sup> For more on this theme, see: Silver, Kenneth E. and Golan, Romy. *The Circle of Montparnasse Jewish Artists in Paris 1905-1945*. New York: Universe Books, 1985, pp. 17-18; and Stein, 1974, p. 60.

<sup>51</sup> According to Géza Bornemisza's recollections, "Matisse brought Csaba into the S. Dautomne [sic!]. That's how he became societér." See: Béla Horváth's interview with Géza Bornemisza, undated manuscript. Béla Horváth's art history legacy, RCH-HAS-IAH, Archive, Item No.: MDK-C-I-217.

<sup>52</sup> Citing the written work of a Swedish pupil of Matisse's (Grünwald, Isaac. *Matisse och expressionismen*. Stockholm: Wahlström & Wildstrand, 1944), Barr supposes there were 120 students in all over the school's three-year operation (Barr, 1951, p. 117), while Jack Flam mentions 80 pupils (Flam, Jack. *Matisse. The Man and His Art 1869-1918*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1986, p. 221).

(1890) that now hangs in the Metropolitan Museum.<sup>53</sup> The young Andorkó committed suicide in 1909, and after his death, an exhibition and sale of his collection was organized. The title assigned in 1920 to one of his paintings, "Matisse's Moorish model", implies that he may have been a pupil of Matisse (although the title could have been born out of speculation for the Ernst Museum's auction).<sup>54</sup> Like Matisse and Marquet, who had borrowed Matisse's studio since 1908, Andorkó also painted the landscape from the Seine-spanning bridge Pont Saint-Michel,<sup>55</sup> as did his compatriot Lajos Tihanyi on several occasions.

[32] Contemporary sources prove that there were at least three Hungarian women who studied with Matisse and who were, by no means accidentally, also artists' wives: Valéria Dénes, Erzsébet Fejérváry, and Márta Ferentzy.<sup>56</sup> When they arrived at the academy, the school was already approaching its final days. Besides the aforementioned József Brummer, however, the most consistent Matisse pupils were Géza Bornemisza and Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba, who were present around the time of the school's opening, roughly in January 1908. Although Perlrott mistakenly associated it with the year 1906,<sup>57</sup> he recalls the time when the school was founded, thus asserting that he was among its first pupils. Géza Bornemisza, in a letter to István Réti dated March 1908, also informs us that he spent the previous months at Matisse's academy; that is, he was present at the time of the school's inception.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, he possessed a document, issued by Matisse in 1909, certifying that he was a student at the school.<sup>59</sup> Surprisingly the Scandinavian, German, and American founders of Matisse's school do not mention the names Perlrott and Bornemisza. Jean Heiberg recalls that, when he was accepted to the school in the winter

<sup>53</sup> Molnos, Péter and Geskó, Judit. *Vincent van Gogh művei Magyarországon. Van Gogh Budapesten* [Vincent Van Gogh's Works in Hungary. Van Gogh in Budapest], exhibition catalogue. Judit Geskó, ed. Budapest: Szépművészeti Múzeum, 2006, pp. 105-129. See also: Molnos, Péter. "The First Hungarian to Have Owned a Van Gogh," <http://www.kieselbach.hu/magazine/discovery/first-hungarian-to-have-owned-a-van-gogh>, December 9, 2011 (last accessed April 30, 2014).

<sup>54</sup> Ernst Museum Auctions XI, Budapest, February 1, 1920. Andorkó, Gyula. *Matisse's Moorish Model, 1907*.

<sup>55</sup> Andorkó, Gyula: *A Bridge of the Seine*, 1908. Oil on canvas, Hungarian National Gallery, Item No.: 4139.

<sup>56</sup> Valéria Dénes, wife of painter Sándor Galimberty, probably spent mere months at Matisse's school, instead of the two years that has been previously supposed (Dénes, Zsófia. *Tegnap új művészek*. Budapest: Kozmosz, 1974, p. 88; Dénes, Zsófia. *Galimberty Sándor és Dénes Valéria*. Budapest: Corvina, 1979; Mezei, Ottó: "Les Galimberty, couple des artistes hongrois, des années 1910," *Acta Historiae Artium*, vol. 23, 1977, pp. 329-355). She arrived in 1910, and Matisse stopped teaching in 1911. Erzsébet Fejérváry, wife of sculptor Jenő Körmendi-Frimm, was mentioned as Matisse's pupil in a publication of the Nemzeti Szalon [National Salon] in 1912 (*Almanach. Képzőművészeti lexikon*. Béla Déry, ed. Budapest: Nemzeti Szalon, 1912, p. 165), and the same applies to Márta Ferentzy, the future wife of Elemér Kóródy (ibid.). Also see: Dévényi, Iván. "Henri Matisse magyar kapcsolatai [Henri Matisse's Hungarian Connections]," *Forrás*, vol. 7, 1975, 10, p. 80.

<sup>57</sup> Perlrott-Csaba, Vilmos. "Magamról," *Perlrott Csaba Vilmos művészete* ["About Myself," *The Art of Perlrott-Csaba*], with an introduction by Géza Bornemisza. Budapest: Dante, 1930, pp. 12-13.

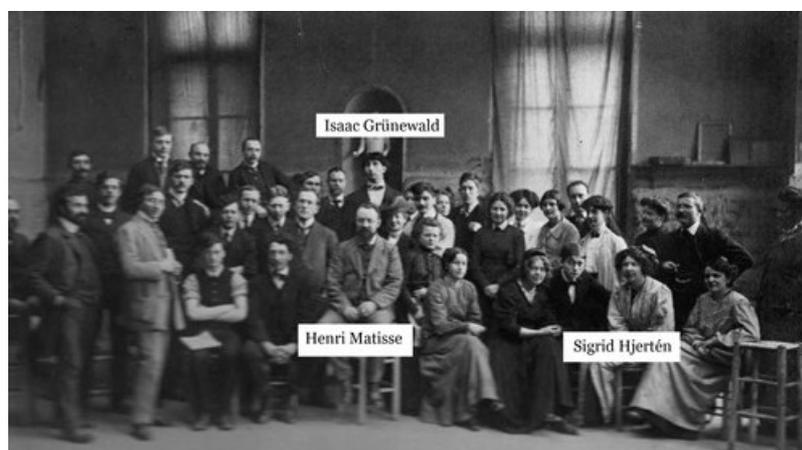
<sup>58</sup> HNG Archive, Item No.: 8242/1955

<sup>59</sup> Published in: Pápai, Emese. "The Painter Géza Bornemisza and his Fauve Period," *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, vol. 51, 2002, pp. 309-321.

of 1908, the total number of students jumped to 12 or 15, and there were Hungarians among them.<sup>60</sup> Perlrott – for the time being, the only identifiable Hungarian – can be recognized in the often reproduced group photo taken in Matisse's school (Fig. 6), which Alfred Barr dated 1910, based on a statement by Carl Palme.<sup>61</sup> According to Palme, Howarth, a German painter, took the photograph in October 1910. This is contradicted, though, by another copy of the picture (existing in a tattered condition, but also reproduced several times), where we can read the year 1909. This caption was presumably provided by a Norwegian student.<sup>62</sup>



6 Group picture of Matisse's students, 1909. Archive photo, Nasjonalgalleriet, Oslo



7 Group picture of Matisse's students, 1909. Archive photo (source: <http://postpop.blogg.se/2010/april/>)

<sup>60</sup> Swane, Leo. *Matisse*. Oslo: Gyldendal, 1950. In English translation: *Académie Matisse – Henri Matisse and his Nordic & American Pupils*. New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting, and Sculpture, 2001, p. 28.

<sup>61</sup> Barr, 1951, p. 117.

<sup>62</sup> The photo is kept in Oslo's Nasjonalgalleriet. Its reproduction is published in Hoff, Svein Olav and Schruppf, Fredrikke. *Matisse-Elevene. De første ar. Tegninger og maleri*. Lillehammer: Lillehammer kunstmuseum, 2001, p. 2.

[33] Meanwhile, a Swedish blog<sup>63</sup> contains a previously unknown photo (Fig. 7) that appears to have been taken at the same time. It is very similar but blurrier and the participants are in slightly different poses. In this version Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba faces forward (whereas, in the well-known photo, he is turned toward Matisse); and it appears to have a wider angle, so the complete figure of the woman on the right-hand side can be seen. When this snapshot emerged, I examined a third archive photo from around the same time in which Géza Bornemisza can be seen with his two painter friends.<sup>64</sup>

[34] Based upon the physiognomic similarities, I propose that the man with the moustache, above Perlrott and a little to the right in the group photo, may be Géza Bornemisza.<sup>65</sup> According to contemporary sources and memoirs, Perlrott and Bornemisza studied under Matisse at the same time. They both demonstrated an uncommon interest in sculpture. In a letter written to István Réti in April 1908,<sup>66</sup> Géza Bornemisza related that he began to sculpt at the urging of Matisse. We are unaware if any of these pieces have survived; still, we may note his interest in the plastic form in several works.<sup>67</sup> In a still-life from 1910,<sup>68</sup> the centerpiece is a (presumably painted) plaster statue quite similar to the sculpture that appears in several still-lives by Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba. Certainly, this statue appearing in Perlrott's paintings holds some significance for him, and not only in the nature of a reoccurring theme or prop. We may also conclude that in his most representative self-portrait, which quotes Renaissance portraiture,<sup>69</sup> the statuette that appears in his hand functions as a sort of attribute. It may be an allusion to Matisse's school. (It is as though he is saying, "Master, I followed your instructions! Here, I prepared a work of sculpture.")

[35] Like other students at Matisse's school, Perlrott painted a number of studio nudes during his time there. We know of only two (Fig. 8); the rest were either lost or cut apart

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<sup>63</sup> The Swedish blog deals with the life of Sigrid Hjertén, a Scandinavian pupil of Matisse. <http://postpop.blogg.se/2010/april/>

<sup>64</sup> *Magyar Vadak*, 2006, p. 92.

<sup>65</sup> *Pariser Begegnungen 1904-1914. Café du Dôme*, 1965. On the opening page of the catalogue's chapter entitled "Académie Matisse," the figures in the familiar photo are numbered. A question mark is placed after six of the numbers, and a further two women are not even counted – that is, eight pupils remain unidentified. The individual I believe to be Géza Bornemisza (No. 6) also has a question mark beside his number.

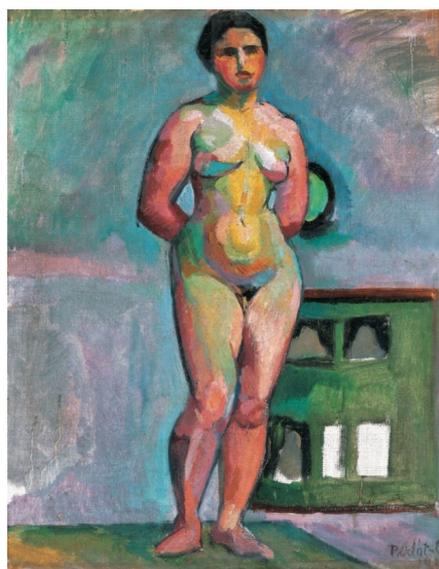
<sup>66</sup> HNG Archive, Item No. 8240/1955.

<sup>67</sup> Even earlier, before Matisse's school, they would begin by copying paintings and making drawings of ecorché sculptures in plaster casts. In a Géza Bornemisza drawing from 1907, a small sculpture erroneously attributed to Michelangelo appears ("Csöndes óra. Rajz," *Művészet*, vol. 6, 1907, p. 347). Like Matisse himself, other students of his made use of the so-called "muscle man" ecorché sculpture – for example Hans Purrmann. We can also find a small plaster statue in a photo taken of his studio (*Pariser Begegnungen 1904-1914. Café du Dôme*, 1965).

<sup>68</sup> Bornemisza, Géza. *Studio Still-life with Statue*, 1910, oil on canvas, 25½ x 27½ in. See: *Magyar Vadak*, 2006, p. 177.

<sup>69</sup> Perlrott-Csaba, Vilmos. *Self-portrait with Statue*, c. 1910, oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. Tamás Kieselbach Collection.

so that the canvas on the other side could be reused.<sup>70</sup> In terms of identifying the place where these paintings had been executed, I would like to draw attention to some new evidence or data which perhaps will be of interest to Matisse scholars as well. In the *The Steins Collect* catalogue, there appeared a certain photograph of the sculpting course at Matisse's school, taken around 1909.<sup>71</sup> (Fig. 9) Just like in the case of the class photo earlier, it shows several deviations from a previously known and widely reproduced version.<sup>72</sup> However, the snapshot is not only intriguing on account of small nuances in posture and hand placement. The angle of the picture is shifted a little to the left, revealing a particular corner of the room which – at least, as far as I am aware – we could not observe in any other photographic record. The board with the clock hung above it, as seen in the background, can also be observed as a minimalist motif in the backgrounds of several nude studies made by Matisse's students, including the aforementioned nude by Perlrott, held in Kaposvár. Up until the discovery, I only presumed that the board visible in the paintings displayed photos of the Chartres Cathedral, which Henrik Sørensen mentioned as the only decoration on the school's walls.<sup>73</sup> In light of this snapshot, this is easily verified.



8 Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba. *Female Nude*, 1910. Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard, 20½ x 16 in. Kaposvár, Rippl-Rónai Múzeum, Item No.: 55.403.  
Photo: György Darabos

<sup>70</sup> For identification of these works, see: Barki, Gergely. "A Juliantól Matisse akadémiájáig. A 'Párizsba gravitáló művészgeneráció' iskolái [From the Julian to Matisse's Academy, Schools of the Artist Generation that Gravitated to Paris]," *Magyar Vadak*, 2006, pp. 85-94.

<sup>71</sup> *The Steins Collect*, 2011, p. 155.

<sup>72</sup> *Magyar Vadak*, 2006, p. 89.

<sup>73</sup> Barki, 2006, p. 94. See also: Swane, 1950. In English translation: *Académie Matisse – Henri Matisse and his Nordic & American Pupils*, 2001, Note 38.



9 Sculpting class at Matisse's school, c. 1909. Archive photo, Paris, Matisse Archives

[36] In those years, every summer, Perlrott returned to Nagybánya (now Baia Mare, Romania). It appears that if he took some of the paintings of nudes that he made in Paris and added Hungarian landscapes to them. It is difficult to determine from the figures' relationship to the space and to each other.

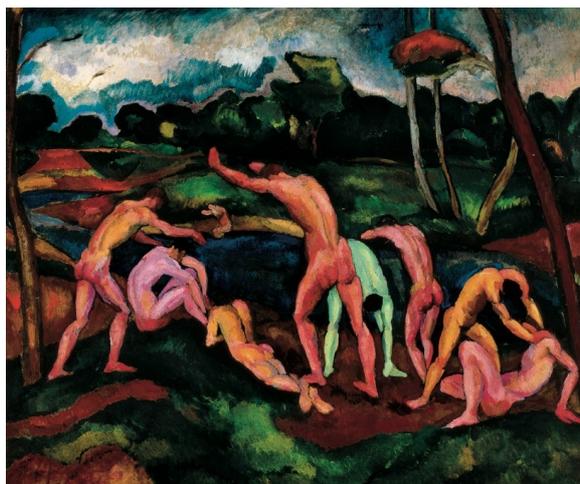
[37] They become compositions of rhythm and color their own sake. From an archive photo taken in Nagybánya,<sup>74</sup> (Fig. 10) it appears that he actually painted the composition of nude males (Fig. 11), now held in the Janus Pannonius Museum (Pécs, Hungary), *en plein air*.<sup>75</sup> It is likely that the photograph was only taken outdoors for the sake of the pose.



10 Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba with his painting *Boys Bathing*, c. 1909-11. Archive photo, property of Alan and Diane Bauer

<sup>74</sup> I must thank Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba's relatives, Diane and Alan Bauer, for placing this previously unpublished photo at my disposal.

<sup>75</sup> Perlrott-Csaba, Vilmos. *Boys Bathing*, c. 1911 (?), oil on canvas, 30½ x 36 in. Pécs, Janus Pannonius Múzeum, Item no.: 76. 259. In my opinion, the official date of this work is questionable. I find the period 1909-10 more probable.



11 Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba. *Boys Bathing*, c. 1909-11. Oil on canvas, 30½ x 36 in. Pécs, Janus Pannonius Museum, Item No.: 76. 259. Photo: György Darabos

[38] We do not know whether Perlrott was still attending Matisse's school when he painted this composition, since one of Bornemisza's unpublished letters reveals that Perlrott did not stay at the academy until it closed.<sup>76</sup> In the same letter, he notes additional information of interest:

[T]his school opened in 1908. In the beginning, there were not 6, but 10 Americans, and Vilmos Perlrott-Csaba and I enrolled in the first weeks. Later, the number of pupils grew, so in 1909, we had to seek more appropriate studio space at No. 33 on the Boulevard des Invalides. The following year, the school became so crowded that Matisse would not undertake it any longer. The school had no particular name besides 'École Matisse'. It started up near Luxembourg, if I remember well, lasting for a little while on Rue Vaugirard. It was then I was commissioned by Gyula Színi to write an article for his *Kék madár* [Bluebird] periodical.<sup>[77]</sup> This journal soon folded, but I noted the place well, and I had a better recollection of the whole area then. It was in a former convent building owned by the state. Later, a Hungarian, József Bató, went there, and still later (as far as I know) János Nyergesi.<sup>78</sup> That was when Vilma Balogh, working for *Világ* [World], visited Matisse and wrote a report about it. She asked, 'What Hungarian painters do you know?' 'I know few,' he replied, 'Rippl-Rónai, Perlrott, and Bornemisza.' You can locate this interview. Who were the foreigners? Bruce, an American, was the messier. The other American names I've forgot. There was a German, Hans Purrmann, professor at a Berlin academy. (He didn't learn much, I can tell from a Purrmann picture I found in a catalogue.) Then I remember Bé de Ward,<sup>79</sup> a beautiful Dutch girl, and Edward Witte (Vienna), whom I brought into the school. I'll tell you how I came to know Matisse. Before this time, I worked at the Delécluse Academy on Rue Notre Dame de Champs. Kind old Delécluse let me work there, because my material state was rather poor. It was also frequented by a half-deaf man – older, hard-of-hearing, and a rich American: Leo Stein. He often came during breaks to look at my works, and I his. But Stein, though he was apparently 'after something', was not a painter, just a dilettante. The school was

<sup>76</sup> Géza Bornemisza's letter to Béla Horváth, September 24, 1962. Béla Horváth's art history legacy, RCH-HAS-IAH, Archive, Item No.: MDK-C-I-217.

<sup>77</sup> The article was written and published much later. Bornemisza, 1932, p. 62.

<sup>78</sup> Considering his age alone, János Nyergesi (1895-1882) could not have been there. He studied in Paris later.

<sup>79</sup> Bé de Waard, a.k.a. Beatrice de Waard, was Leó Popper's fiancée.

rather worthless, but there were models, and it was warm. That was the main attraction for me. Stein kept inviting me to visit him on Saturdays, in his flat at No. 9 on Rue de Fleurus. I finally went one time. I also got to know his brother, Michael Stein. He was a collector, too. Both of them had pictures by Matisse and Picasso (they were his first managers, that is), and Michael Stein's wife also studied at the Matisse School. I met Matisse and Picasso, too, at the Steins', and I also went to Picasso's place a couple of times on Rue Victor Massé with Perlrott-Csaba. Later, I would come to call my relationship with Matisse friendly. When he lived in a small castle in Issy, I took André Lhote to meet him, whom he hadn't known, and they eventually got on well. I had a long, warm friendship with Lhote. [...] I exchanged polite words with Picasso. I confess, he interested me less. [...] Rousseau (Le Douanier) came to my flat at No. 7 Cité Falgère, and we argued. [...] Rousseau liked to play jokes. For instance, he stuck a card under my door recommending himself as a model for tête de Noël [head of Father Christmas], and things like that.

[39] The interview conducted with Matisse that Bornemisza cites,<sup>80</sup> was published and since it is informative, it is included below in full:

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### **In Henri Matisse's Studio**

For everyone interested in painting, Henri Matisse is the cynosure. In France, where painting has influenced the entire Continent's painting since the start of the 19th century, he is the grand master, seeking a new trend that will yield grand results. He is an innovator whom the entire world regards as a prophet.

For we Hungarians, he is twice as intriguing, since a number of young Hungarian painters have made Matisse's various stages and results their starting points, departing from his path in search of their own goals. They declare him their master; or, even if they do not, once they see Matisse's pictures, they cannot deny the spiritual kinship.

Matisse lives in one of the suburbs of Paris, beyond the fortifications, having settled in a charming little castle in Ronte de Caumart [Route de Clamart]. Bernheim, a great art dealer, organizes exhibitions of Matisse collections, and he was kind enough to bring me to the master's attention.

I rang at the garden gate, and the piano music cascading through the castle's open window suddenly ceased. A pretty female head peeked out between the white silk curtains curiously. This was the master's 17-year-old daughter, who, blessed with prodigious musical talents, is preparing for a career as a pianist ... Prancing among the bushes, a few beautiful pedigree dogs rushed forward, then came the gardener in blue overalls to take the visitor's name card inside to Monsieur Matisse. He later hurried back and showed me the way to the studio.

'Kindly step inside. The Master will come immediately ...'

The studio stands in the clearing of the large garden, a few paces from the chateau. It is a spacious, round, and sunny place with a few steps leading to a terrace decorated with Greek urns. Inside the furniture is very sparse. There are two imposing, carved armchairs, an interesting grandfather clock, and two works by different masters: a beautiful copy of the Ares Borghese found in the Louvre

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<sup>80</sup> Balogh, Vilma [B. V.]. "Henri Matisse műtermében," *Világ*, March 31, 1912, pp. 34-35. Here I must thank Árpád Timár for providing me with a typed copy of the article. It is worth noting that Vilma Balogh (1873-1944) was one of the owners and co-editors of the *Kékmadár* [*Bluebird*] periodical that Bornemisza mentions. In addition, she was the wife of theatre director and author László Bánóczi (1884-1945).

and Rodin's bust of Rochefort. Scattered about are all manner of Matisse's pictures, sketches, and sculptures in progress; each of these interesting and valuable pieces bears witness to the master's many aims, pursuits, and absorptions.

Opposite the door is the study for the immense decorative mural commissioned by the Moscow billionaire and collector Shchukin. It shows four [sic!] dancing nude female figures with linked arms on the crest of a hill. The firmament's deep blue appears in the picture as a pure patch of color. Another enormous canvas, upon which the master intends to make changes, leans against the wall. It depicts the dawn as the master once saw it with the moon retreating and the sun smiling forth. In this picture, the sun and stars serve as sheer decoration. In the ether, a suspended female form emerges from her veils. On the easel set in one corner of the room, Matisse's newest work in progress awaits completion. Its Pompeian red background ties together the interior and the details of the master's own studio. Matisse's sculptural works, bronzes, and terra-cottas are all extraordinarily intriguing. All of the master's recent pictures express aspiration. One's attention is especially captured by a block of wood carved relief-style. Gauguin learned this type of wood sculpture in Tahiti. In answer to my question, Matisse (whose word is absolutely trustworthy) replied that although he is very interested in Gauguin, he had not seen the artist's wood carvings. This further proves that the search for style in modern art instinctively turns towards the art of primitive times.

At the open terrace door, from the threshold of which a lovely greyhound followed my steps with vigilant attention and pricked-up ears, Matisse now appears... He is a rather beautiful man, around forty years old with broad shoulders and a brown beard. His manner is engagingly cordial, simple and benevolent. He willingly shows and explains his pictures.

'My master was Moreau,' he relates about himself. 'At the beginning of my career, I was under the sway of Impressionists.'

From one corner, he produces a canvas that had been turned around and calls my attention to it. The picture shows a sunny provincial courtyard, painted in the Impressionist fashion.

'This is how I painted ten years ago,' Matisse continued. 'Naturally, at that time, the tastes of the critics and the general public were closer to mine. Now I travel less trodden paths. However, the main thing is that the path ahead of me be clear! ... And what does not lie clear before me, I will find that, too. That is certain ... Please take a look,' he said, showing the painting with the red background in progress. 'I'm in trouble with this picture. I know that all of the items painted on it – the clock, the pictures, the flowers – only the dark brick-colored background holds them together ... I have been painting this picture for about half a year, and it hasn't become the way I originally envisioned it. I like it, but I don't completely understand it. I don't know why I painted it precisely this way. I am going to let it rest for a while, then the whole thing will either be clear before me, or I'll rub it out, what I've been painting for half a year.'

'Can the Master be very productive working that way?'

'Of course not! I work a lot, but I am not productive. Truly, I had a picture that I worked on for two years.'

'Such artistic perseverance requires a fortune as well.'

'You know that there is no longer a question of money with me. I am rich now. Each of my paintings sells for such a price that I can calmly work on the next one. Although when I was poor, I did the same thing, as an honorable artist should.'

'Who are the Master's best customers?'

'The Russians and the Americans. They have the most money, and they understand art the best. They travel a lot, study up on the world's art treasures, and they do not spare their money ... I owe a lot of thanks to a family that came to Paris from San Francisco. Actually, they are not remarkably wealthy, but they are willing to sacrifice when it comes to paintings. When my pictures were not selling for such high prices like now, they practically bought them all. Now, on Saturdays, they allow friends of Matisse to see the canvases, which hang in their salons and show the developmental stages. My new pictures go to Moscow, almost without exception. Two enthusiastic collectors live there, and they have billions at their disposal. One of them – Shchukin – is my customer ... I've also had a Hungarian customer. Marcell Nemes wanted to sign a contract for a year's worth of my work. Of course, I could not consent to the price. It is quite possible that in one year's time I may not complete a single picture.'

'It is amazing in our country, in Hungary, how many followers you have, Master! Have you had any Hungarian students?'

'I don't have any students now. I need every minute of my time, so I do not teach. However, two years ago I had 50-60 pupils. There were some Hungarian lads among them. I remember Perlrott and Bornemisza very well. I am familiar with Rippl-Rónai's old pictures, although he, too, must have changed a lot. Talented men do not remain in one place.'

'Do you know Klimt, Monsieur Matisse?'

'No!'

'Well, among the modern French artists, who is close to you?'

Matisse smiles.

'You know, it is difficult to answer this question. I do not wish to offend anyone, but if I considered anyone close to myself, I wouldn't bother about new paths with such limitless ardor ... I like Picasso and Bonnat [Bonnard].'

'And what about the other arts, Monsieur Matisse? Are you interested in them?'

'I get so worn out during the day that at night I am rarely in the mood to go to a serious theater or get into serious literature. In the evenings, I lie in bed and fall asleep leafing through some book of little importance. As for theatrical spectacles, productions with clowns, acrobats, or people who work with their bodies interest me the most. Anyway, I don't consider acting a serious art, although music I love. Every Sunday afternoon I attend the Lamoureux concerts with my daughter.'

'If I may ask the Master, if you could say in words what you are trying to express with your paintbrush, what would you say?'

Matisse replies with conviction, 'I am seeking an expressive decorativeness!'

[40] Presumably, the interview was conducted well before the article was published. Matisse finished his *Red Studio* painting in the autumn of 1911;<sup>81</sup> the article describes the painting as half-finished.<sup>82</sup> One year earlier, the future wife of György Bölöni, Ottília Márkus (a.k.a. Itóka), interviewed Matisse as well,<sup>83</sup> but unfortunately the text is lost. At the time of Vilma Balogh's visit, Matisse had recently stopped teaching, and one assumes that his estimate of students is correct. In addition the article provides a sense of Matisse's opinions about his contemporaries and his relationship with the Steins.

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### Visits by Hungarian Cubists and Other "Oddballs" to the Steins

[41] At the time of the interview, around 1911, winds of change were already blowing through Rue de Fleurus. Leo gradually withdrew,<sup>84</sup> and after the arrival of two wealthy Russians, Morozov and Shchukin, Matisse barely took part in the gatherings. The Fauve era was past, and Picasso had long since become the central figure for Gertrude Stein. Nonetheless, during this period, the Hungarian pilgrimages continued; only the new Hungarian arrivals were not under the spell of Matisse, they sought out the Steins because of Picasso.

[42] Zsófia Dénes, Valéria Dénes's cousin, went to Paris for the first time that year. Her escort, the Cubist Alfréd Réth, initiated her into the world on the very first day:

For example, Picasso, you must have heard of him, he's the leading Cubist. He doesn't exhibit with us either [in the Salon des Indépendants], because he lives off the art dealers and collectors. Status, you know. Well, among others, you'll see in my neighborhood of Montparnasse two oddball art collectors, Americans, the Stein siblings. They go about in wrinkled corduroys, smocks, and beat-up sandals. If they strike people as misers or bohemians, it's all the same to them. They have a remarkable nose for pictures, and they invest in outsiders – those who aren't big names yet, but who have great future potential. They were Picasso's first art collectors. [...]

They say that they only have shares in a rural department store in the US. They've lived here since the start of the century and have amassed a very fine collection. Before Picasso, they bought Van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne. Dirt cheap ... They don't live far from here, on the Rue de Fleurus in the Luxembourg quarter. Gertrude Stein is a writer, Cubist poet, and publicist. She has a large body and a masculine face with regular features. Her little brother Leo is thinner, blond, with a thin beard. When he talks, you'd think a woman was speaking, a soprano ... They

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<sup>81</sup> Matisse, Henri. *Red Studio*, Autumn 1911, oil on canvas, 71 x 86¼ in. New York, Museum of Modern Art, Item No.: 8.1949.

<sup>82</sup> I thank Jack Flam for also drawing my attention to the fact that that the year 1911 is also probable, because Matisse's daughter would have been 17 years old.

<sup>83</sup> "On Monday, I went to Henri Matisse's. I've begun a small article about him." Itóka's letter to György Bölöni from Paris, August 3, 1910. Quoted in: *Párizstól pocsolyavárosig. Bölöni György és Itóka levélnaplója 1906-1912 [From Paris to the City of Puddles. György Bölöni and Itóka's Letter Diary]*. Csaba Nagy, ed. Budapest: Petőfi Literary Museum, 2005. p. 95.

<sup>84</sup> After Alice B. Toklas moved in with Gertrude in the fall of 1910, Leo's participation in the gatherings became increasingly rare. For more, see: Braun, 2011, p. 50.

met Picasso at Vollard's, and on the very first occasion, they bought pictures from him for 800 gold francs.<sup>85</sup>

[43] Not everyone who came to Rue de Fleurus was enamored with Picasso. In the same year, Lipót Herman visited the Steins in the fall and recorded in his journal: "I visited the Stein art collection after dinner. There were works by Renoir (weak), Matisse, a few Cézannes, and a couple of others, modern and old. The versatility of Picasso – the Great – was on fine display. He appears to be talented, but I am not yet convinced of his godlike quality. On the other hand, I recognized anew how much we copy them in our country, and how poorly. [...] Another thing about Stein. He is a bearded vegetarian who goes about in sandals. This evening he was having a reception – Englishmen, sweet souls, and modern enthusiasts. Among them, his fat sister, with a cigar in her mouth and her 'reform clothes', seemed a somewhat droll figure."<sup>86</sup>

[44] Many Hungarian visitors regarded the Steins' apartments in Montparnasse as modern art Meccas. Others, though, made pitying observations about their clothing and beat-up sandals – designed, by Isadora Duncan's brother Raymond<sup>87</sup> – and even made disparaging remarks about Picasso. Lipót Herman was rather blunt in the pages of his journal, but presumably restrained himself in the Steins' presence. Another visitor of Hungarian descent, Márton Birnbaum,<sup>88</sup> became persona non grata at the Steins' for mistaking one of Gertrude's favorite Picassos for a Cézanne.<sup>89</sup> It is worth noting that Birnbaum was the main organizer of a traveling exhibition of Austro-Hungarian graphic art that included examples of Hungarian cubism.<sup>90</sup>

[45] A few years ago, on the occasion of Kriszta Passuth's 70th birthday, I drew attention to these unknown Hungarian Cubists. At that time, we could only hope that a few of these artists' works would come to light – and among them, perhaps, graphic

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<sup>85</sup> Dénes, 1974, pp. 7-8, 45.

<sup>86</sup> Portions of Lipót Herman's journal, dated September 16, 1911. HNG Archive, 1911 volume. Quoted in: Molnos, Péter. "The Eighth: Dezső Orbán," *The Eight*, 2010, p. 333.

<sup>87</sup> Braun, 2011, p. 63.

<sup>88</sup> Márton Birnbaum (Martin Birnbaum) was an art critic, historian, collector, and dealer who was born in Miskolc in 1878. He lived in America from 1883 until his death in 1970.

<sup>89</sup> Braun, 2011, p. 60. Birnbaum maintained a relationship with the Steins, particularly Leo. They can be seen in a group photo, in the company of Maurice Sterne, Alfred Polltron, and Ned Bruce, in front of his house in Anticoli Carrado, outside Rome (Archives of American Art Journal, vol. 16, 1976, 2, p. 27). In my opinion, the photo is wrongly dated 1915-16, both in the periodical and on the Smithsonian Archives of American Art website. After all, Leo looks much older in the photograph.

<sup>90</sup> *Contemporary Graphic Art in Hungary, Bohemia, and Austria at the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy*, exhibition catalogue. Introduction by Martin Birnbaum. New York: Albright Art Gallery, 1914. From the catalogues produced, we know of three sites for the traveling exhibition: New York (December 6-27, 1913) and Buffalo (January 4 - February 1, 1914) shared a catalogue, while there was a separate publication in Chicago (The Art Institute of Chicago, March 5 - April 1, 1914). According to data in *American Art Annual* (vol. 11, 1914, 185, p. 137), there were two more sites: St. Louis (February 8 - March 1 (?), 1914) and Boston (April 7-28, 1914).

works that had appeared on the American tour.<sup>91</sup> I never dreamed that the site of my presentation, New York's Metropolitan Museum, owned some of these very drawings.

[46] A few months previously, my colleague Péter Molnos informed me that many Hungarian-related works (and perhaps the graphic works by the unknown Cubists, Elemér Kóródy and Árpád Késmárky, which I was seeking) are listed on the museum's new website. (Figs. 12 and 13) These pieces entered the museum as gifts from Martin Birnbaum.<sup>92</sup> I have thoroughly examined these drawings and am convinced that they are the very ones that were touted as the most progressive Hungarian art in five large American cities in 1914. These drawings include the only extant pieces from Kóródy's and Késmárky's *œuvres*, as well as works by József Csáky, the well-known Cubist sculptor of Hungarian descent. (Fig. 14)

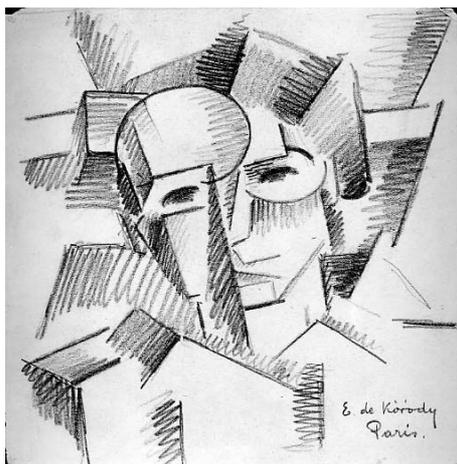


12 Árpád Késmárky. *Golgotha (Crucifixion)*, 1913. Brown ink on paper, 20½ x 15 in. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Arts, Item No.: 59.63.16

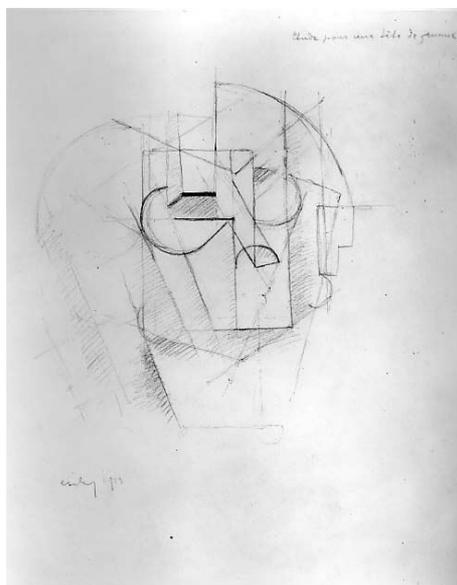
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<sup>91</sup> Barki, Gergely. "A magyar művészet első reprezentatív bemutatkozása(i) Amerikában [Hungarian Art's First Representative Introduction(s) in America]," *Nulla dies sine linea. Tanulmányok Passuth Krisztina hetvenedik születésnapjára*. Ágnes Berecz, Mária L. Molnár, and Erzsébet Tatai, eds. Budapest: Praesens, 2007, pp. 99-113.

<sup>92</sup> Altogether, Martin Birnbaum donated eight Késmárky and six Kóródy graphic works to the museum.



13 Elemér Kóródy. *Cubist Study of a Head*, c. 1913. Pencil on paper, 9 x 9 in. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Arts, Item No.: 59.63.18



14 József Csáky. *Cubist Head*, 1913. Pencil on paper, 10½ x 8 in. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Arts, Item No.: 59.63.4

[47] Hopefully, further research into the Steins and their Hungarian connections will yield more information, both documents and as yet missing works.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Rebecca Rabinow and Prof. Jack Flam for editing the English translation of this article.