

Adela Petrescu "Drawings and Paintings 1952-2017"

12.09 – 10.10.2024

Ivan Gallery is pleased to invite you on Thursday, September 12, starting at 6 p.m. to the opening of the exhibition of works by the artist Adela Petrescu.

The exhibition showcases work from different periods, including paintings on cardboard and canvas as well as drawings by Adela Petrescu (b. 1927, d. 2019), a figurative artist. Still lifes, landscapes, portraits and nudes are the themes she dealt with.

Adela (Nicolau) Petrescu began drawing lessons in 1945-46 with her aunt, the sculptor Teodora Pop (wife of the painter Sabin Pop), in the studio of Cecillia Cuțescu Storck. At the same time, she attended the Faculty of Philology and the preparatory year of Fine Arts with Nicolae Dărăscu. Given the times in which the artist lived, her "unhealthy" origins* were the reason for the abrupt end of her studies at the Belle Arts. The fees charged to students from families considered wealthy were too high, so Adela Petrescu had to drop out. Near the end of her academic life, Adela, Nicolau at the time, marries the writer Radu Petrescu. They were teachers at Dipșa and at Prundul Bârgăului from 1951 to 1954. There she began to paint, studying Camilian Demetrescu's Treatise on Painting, Delacroix's and Van Gogh's letters, with little material, as she was not a member of The Artists Union and therefore did not have access to the materials she needed.

Prepared cardboard is often painted double-sided. Lack seems to lie at the root of this generation in which artists had no materials, information was scarce and free expression was restricted. Adela Petrescu's first canvas was a gift received in the mid-1970s from Paul Gherasim, the following ones were bought with the help of Florin Niculiu from the Combinatul Fondului Plastic**. On this new support, old paintings are reproduced in large dimensions, bringing to light intuited geometries and seeking new poetic-metaphysical meanings.

Adela Petrescu is one of the "post-war knights", as Geta Brătescu called at the beginning of her book *Continuous Studio*, the generation she was part of. The "unhealthy" origin sickened the rest of the trajectory, diminishing opportunity and favoring failure. Many artists who were promising have remained somewhere in time only with the promise, unseen, unheard and denied to come to light. Adela Petrescu first exhibited with the support of Florin Niculiu, her first and last presence at a Municipal Salon being the work *Pinii*, at the Art Museum in 1978.

After the death of her husband, the writer Radu Petrescu, who had supported her the most and gave her the confidence to paint, she decided to have a solo exhibition (Schiller House, Bucharest, 1982). A second exhibition in 2005 at the Brâncovenesc Mogoșoaia Palace (in Foișor). She will also take part in a group exhibition at MARE "Marginalized, Isolated and Excluded" in 2020.

Why has Adela Petrescu remained so little known to the public?

At the moment we can only assume, at some point we might know, but it's good that today we know who Adela Petrescu is.

*members of bourgeois upper, middle and lower middle-class families

**an institution which belongs to the Artists Union, being during the communist period the largest and most prolific means of production which was at the disposal of artists members of the Artists Union