

An abstract painting featuring a dense network of dark, thin, black lines that crisscross the entire canvas. The background is composed of bold, expressive brushstrokes in a variety of colors, including deep purples, blues, greens, yellows, and reds. Two prominent, bright red shapes are visible, one in the upper center and another in the lower right, both appearing to be partially obscured by the web of black lines. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and complex visual texture.

# ROMUL NUȚIU

*elan vital*

418 gallery



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An energizing bath in color! Romul Nuțiu's paintings transport the color in a dynamic and sovereign way. His abstract expressionism provokes and harmonizes at the same time. Figurative allusions are hidden, vanishing behind the power of color.

In his creation, the author conveys the idea of "elan vital", initiated by the French philosopher Henri Bergson. This "philosophem" defines an omnipresent spiritual force which produces the development and can be perceived only intuitively and not rationally, appearing in all the creation processes - be they artistic or scientific - and also in nature's development. Guided by spontaneous intuition and driven by his semantic complexity, the artist moves beyond the canvas, as the only action field, creating objects and installations which are more like paintings transposed in space. Thus the creative act becomes an event.

Romul Nuțiu approaches shape and movement with confidence and determination. Although structured, he never loses the liberty to improvise. The source of inspiration of his graphic and expressive language is nature: especially the plant, the stem - vegetal and earthly structures, and the root - underground vegetal structures; it feeds from the soil and returns fertility to it, and in this permanent struggle for survival it is akin to man. Romul Nuțiu's works produce transcendence, hidden spirituality.

The *Waterfalls, Birds, Ball diary, Cross-sections Through the Fertile Ground, Windows...* even those works simply called *Composition* - all reveal, despite their diversity, the accomplished artist's sure hand and personal style.

Dr. Joana Grevers

# Interview with the artist

**Joana Grevers:** *Mr. Nuțiu, I would like to know if you think you are somehow more connected to the American abstract expressionism or to the European informal one or to none of them?*

**Romul Nuțiu:** To this question I'd answer with some explanations: many years ago, in 1957, when I graduated, my belief was strictly connected to the idea that the perception of things is rather important for the creation act, but being limited, one has to appeal to the subconscious through experiment, challenge and transcendence. My informal was born from hard work and devotion. At that moment, I knew few things about contemporary art, and what I learned in school was just some academic knowledge that was only partially useful. Later on, when I started to travel, I came in contact with the European informal. In the big museums I found out that my way was somehow synchronized, having a polarity to what I was seeing. Abstract expressionism and the European informal made me understand that I have to keep my own authenticity and sensitivity.

**J.G.:** *But this year, an important exhibit at the Bayeler Foundation tried to create a dialogue between the two competitive movements, although the biggest impact obviously comes from the United States.*

**R.N.:** Personally I rather believe in reciprocal appreciation than in absolute reconciliation...

**J.G.:** *Which is your philosophy of life, of creation?*

**R.N.:** One must know that it is not difficult to paint, but it is difficult to put yourself in the state of doing it, and challenging your personal ego can help. Creativity depends on many things. It is important not to philosophize too much and lose sight of the art and the practical aspect of the process of creation... Information, knowledge, culture are integral components for the artist; as it is concentration, genuine individuality...

**J.G.:** *It is therefore appropriate to associate you with "Elan Vital" and Henri Bergson; but hidden spirituality is also a characteristic of your oeuvre. Would you allow me to call you "a sensitive rebel"?*

**R.N.:** The questions are well put, you have the freedom to call me as you please, I don't wish to "direct the press". The association with Bergson is an honour.

**J.G.:** *Have you ever been a member of a movement or artistic group?*

**R.N.:** I could not say I've ever been a member of a group with a doctrine or a specific programme. Between 1965 and 1970, I organized together with my colleagues in the guild - Jecza, Kązinscy, Popa - the exhibition "Painting - Object - Sculpture - Environment" which elaborated a special interaction between the works on display. It was at that point in time that I conceived the painted objects in my gestural mode of expression as an amplification of the act of painting. I always wished to be someone who stays true to his moods and feelings, with a visual articulation of my own.

**J.G.:** *Maybe the real creativity is born from singularity - said Jackson Pollock -, "to paint is a state of the soul... painting is self-awareness. The good artists paint his inner self." What was the key moment in your evolving process, when did you find your own precise style?*

**R.N.:** There were many key moments which manifested themselves on the occasion of some personal exhibitions. I could mention "Dynamic Universe" at Helios Gallery in Timișoara. Here, I proposed a flux between the principles of pure painting, of the established informal, on the one hand and the investigation of reality on the other. The relation with the cultural models of the European informal or of the abstract expressionism is the premise for validating my own solutions. Of special importance is my monumental artwork at the West University, which was realised after researching into the informal. When I came to the conclusion that my studies in this domain were completed, I opened a new exhibition "Sections through Fertile Ground", in which I intended to reaffirm the need to create based on the experience of reality, of the unforeseeable, ephemeral, sensorial... More recently, my exhibition in 2004, "Utopia", is a polemical debate concerning the image of the artist and of art in general. I believe that art must continually change its system of reference and answer to current issues.

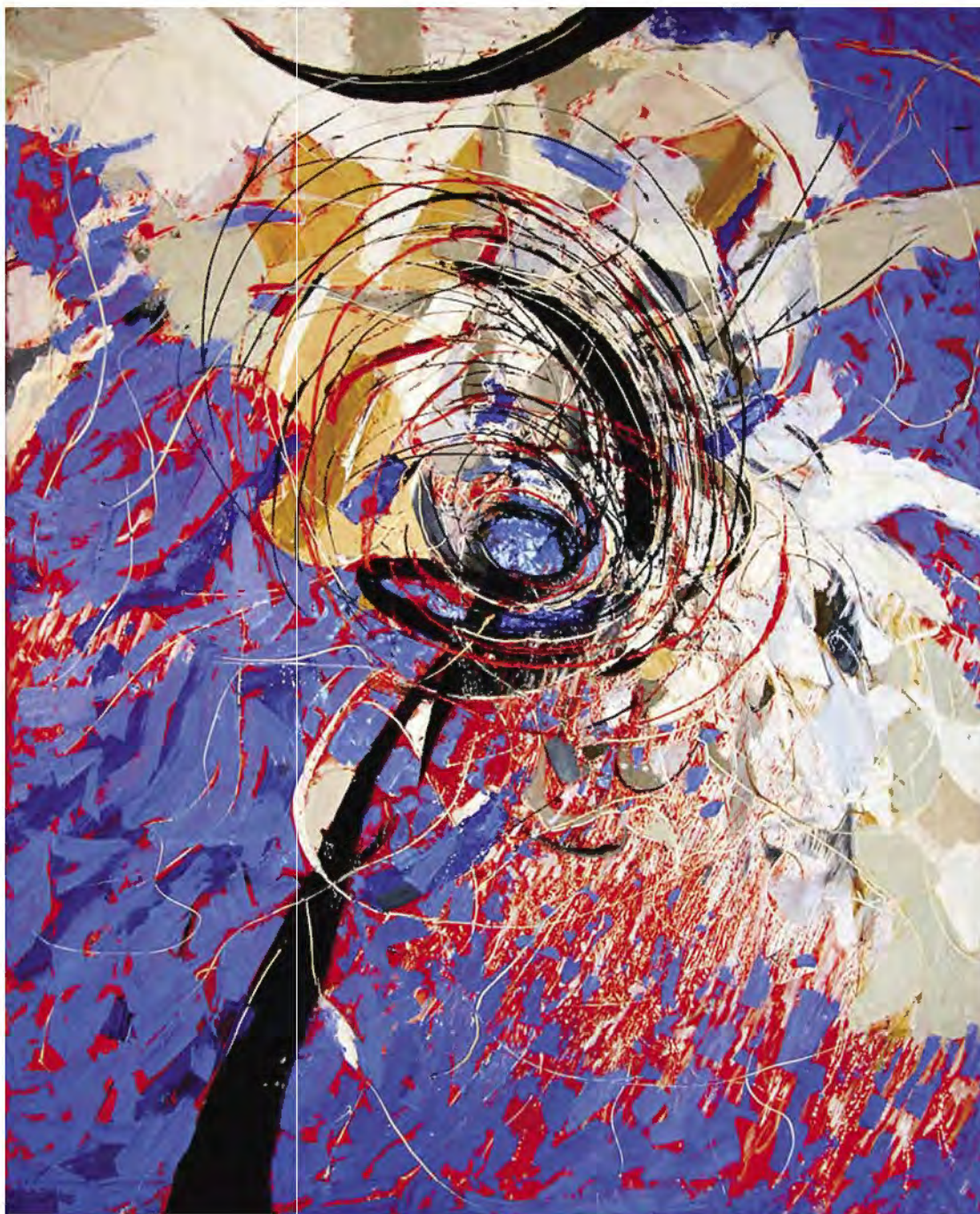
**J.G.:** *When you start a painting, do you think of its impact on the beholder?*

**R.N.:** When I start a painting, my concern is to transmit something through the specific means of visual art: color, shape, space, rhythm, composition. Sometimes I find myself looking at a painting from a viewer's perspective. I think that once a painting is finished, it has to embark on its own history: to be displayed in museums, at different exhibitions, sold, appreciated, given as a gift and - why not - stored in a storehouse, or behind a closet.

**J.G.:** *Mr. Nuțiu, you once said: "If you are aware of your own limits, you may someday be able to go beyond them."*

**R.N.:** Yes, it is very important to know something about yourself. The artist has to be an intellectual: to learn, to inform himself, to meditate and to engage in permanent introspection...

Interview conducted by the curator Dr. Joana Grevers



**Genesis**, 1993, oil on canvas, 250 / 190 cm







▲ **The Great Waterfall**, 2002, oil on canvas, 197/293 cm

◀ **Elan Vital (13 painted shapes)**, 1969-2008, wood, metal, acryl, variable dimensions, h 200 cm





- ▲ **Dynamic Universe I**, 1995, oil on canvas, 150 /120 cm
- ▶ **Dynamic Universe II**, 1995, oil on canvas, 150 /120 cm







- ▲ **Vegetal Labyrinth II**, 1988, oil on canvas, 52 / 52 cm
- ▶ **Perenniality**, 1983, oil on canvas, 130 / 130 cm









- ▲ **Vegetal Archive**, 1988, oil on canvas, 51/94 cm
- ▶ **Permanence**, 2007, mixed technique, 150 /120 cm







- ▲ **Sandglass I**, 3 details, 1965, oil on canvas, 42/54 cm
- ▶ **Sandglass II**, 1965, oil on canvas, 130/130 cm













◀ **Raising**, 1980, oil on canvas, 200 /160 cm

▲ **Underground Vegetal Structures VI**, 1981, oil on canvas, 50 /70 cm





- ▲ **Blue Tree**, 3 details, 2002, oil on canvas
- ▶ **Blue Tree**, 2002, oil on canvas, 158 /115 cm









▲ **Sign II**, 1996, mixed technique, 130 /130 cm  
► **Object VIII**, 1968, wood, iron, industrial colors, 157 /53/39 cm





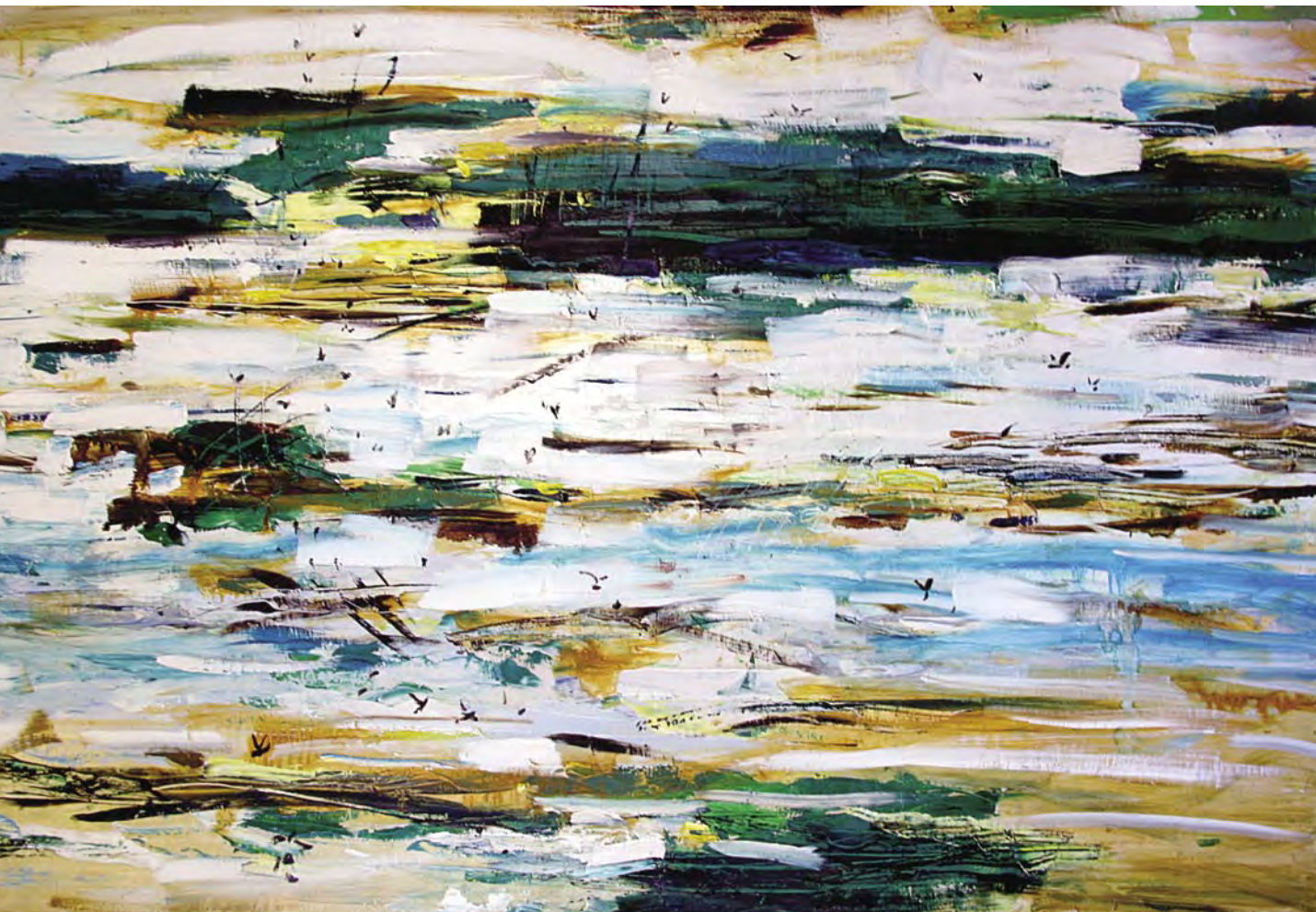




- ◀ **Flowing I**, 2007, oil on canvas, 162 /114 cm
- ▼ **Energetic Space**, 1998, oil on canvas, 130 /130 cm







▲ **Flowing II**, 2007, oil on canvas, 114 /162 cm  
► **Elan Vital**, 3 pieces

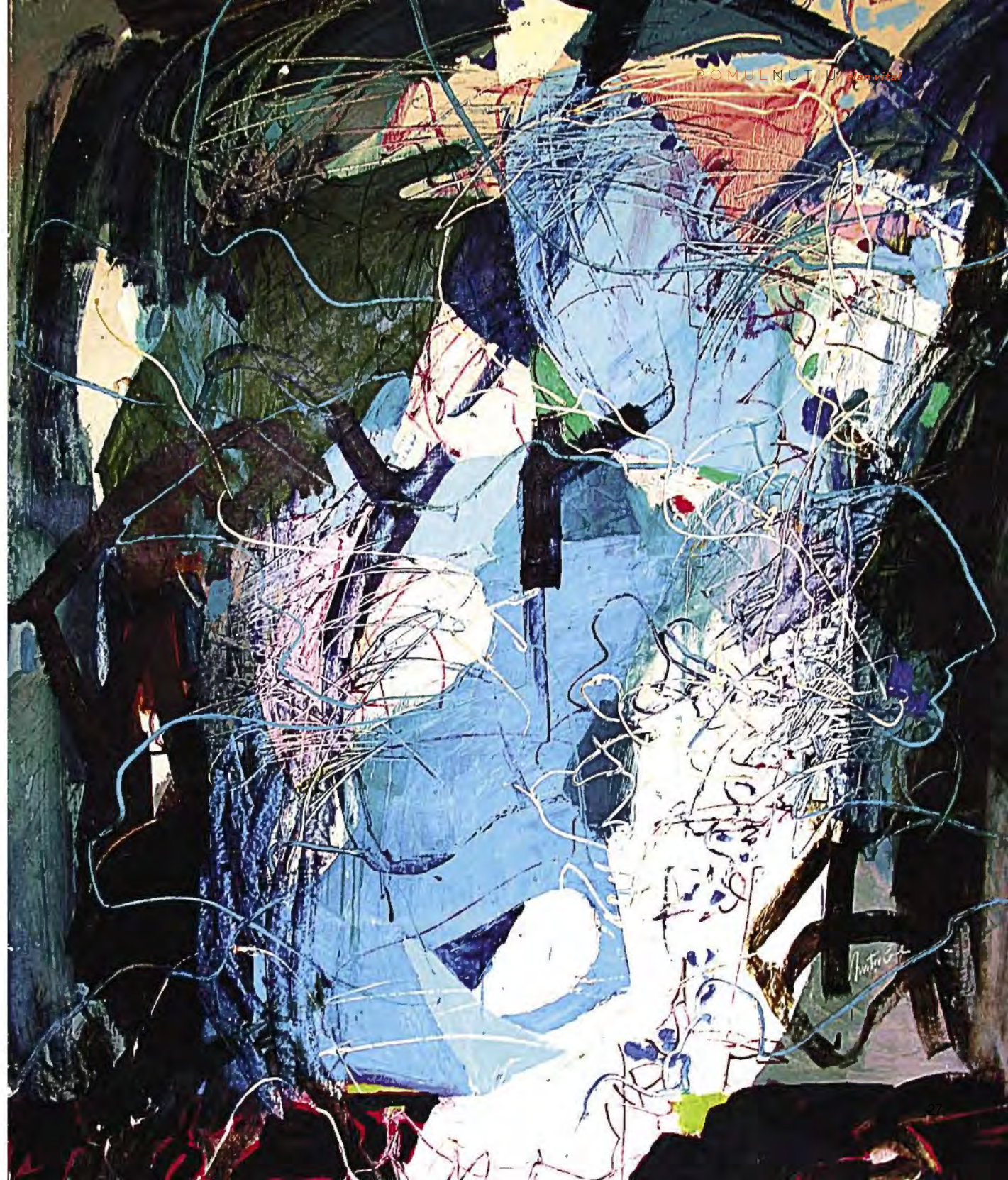






- ▲ **Underground Vegetal Structure XVII**, 1987, oil on canvas, 100 /120 cm
- ▶ **Blue Universe**, 1999, oil on canvas, 196 /160 cm









▲ **Section in Red**, 2008, oil on canvas, 90 /110 cm  
▶ **Vertical Direction**, 1969, oil on canvas, 96 /65 cm











- ◀ **Start for a mural painting**, 1970, cement, wire, glass, diverse objects, 8/95/89 cm
- ▲ **Hidden Universe**, 2003, mixed technique, 70/100/11 cm





- ▲ **Symbol Structure I**, 1988, oil on canvas, 65/80 cm
- ▶ **Symbol Structure II**, 1988, oil on canvas, 80/70 cm









- ◀ **Root III**, 1988, oil on canvas, 70/53 cm
- ▲ **Window I**, 1996, mixed technique, 130 /81 cm
- ▲ **Window II**, 2003, acryl on canvas, 146 /89 cm





- ▲ **Root I**, 1993, oil on canvas, 64 /53 cm
- ▲ **Root II**, 1988, oil on canvas, 70/53 cm
- **Ball Diary II**, 2008, oil on canvas, 200/160 cm











**The Island**, 2002, mixed technique, 145 / 165 cm





▲▶ **Permutable Objects**, 1993, (9 pieces), oil on wood, variable dimensions, 106 – 190 cm











**Uncomfortable Design**, 1993, (5 pieces),  
wood, oil, iron, mirror, variable dimensions





Self-portrait, 1975

ROMUL NUȚIU *biography*

- 1932 ♦ Born on 28<sup>th</sup> of July, Bilbor village, Harghita county; the parents: Ioan and Ludovica, forester and housewife
- 1938 ♦ He pursues the courses of the primary school from Cașva village, Mureș county
- 1940 ♦ Following the Dictate from Wien, he takes refuge in Blaj
- 1941 ♦ He settles in Reghin, where he will graduate the Pedagogical High School "Petru Mayor"
- 1951-1957 ♦ He studies at the Fine Arts Institute "Ion Andreescu" in Cluj, with the professors: Feier Petru and Harșia Teodor, and colleagues: Leon Vreme, Sima Paul, Balău Mircea, Vasile Pop Sgilagy, Alexandru Cristea, Solomon Edwin, Kryżanowska Sofia
- 1957 ♦ He settles in Timișoara, and participates for the 1<sup>st</sup> time at the Annual Fine Art Salon where he will exhibit permanently. With the occasion of the salon opening, he meets Catul Bogdan, Alexandru Ciucurencu, Petru Comarnescu and Romul Ladea
- 1958 ♦ He pursues a documentation and specialisation at the Fine Arts Institute "Nicolae Grigorescu" in București, with the professor Alexandru Ciucurencu
- 1959 ♦ He exhibits at National Biennial of Art, and from that year on he will participate in it permanently
- 1960 ♦ He is a teacher at the Fine Arts High School in Timișoara, working beside the professor Julius Podlipny, and having a good pedagogical collaboration with him
- 1961-1979 ♦ He is lecturer at the University in Timișoara, Drawing Faculty
- 1961 ♦ Becomes a member of Romanian Artists Union, Timișoara branch
- 1962 ♦ He marries Felicia Bircea, teacher
- 1964-1965 ♦ He participates at the Annual Salon of Graphic Arts in Bucharest
- 1966 ♦ His daughter, Simona, was born. Later on she will become an artist
- 1968 ♦ He decorates the Railway Station hall in Băile Herculane, with a ceramic mosaic, on the theme "Tradition"
- 1969-1970 ♦ He participates at the group exhibition "26 Artists from Timișoara", in Novi Sad and Belgrade, as well as at the Romanian art exhibition in Torino, Italy
- 1973 ♦ He designs the monumental art project "Science, Literature and Art" which later he and Gabriel Każyńcy, will transpose in colored cements technique
- 1974 ♦ He exhibits 12 paintings in Hofgeismar, Germany
- 1975 ♦ He opens his personal exhibition of painting "Dynamic Universe", at Helios Art Gallery, Timișoara
- 1976 ♦ Personal exhibition in Cluj-Napoca, at the art galleries of Romanian Artists Union
- 1976-1983 ♦ Becomes the president of Timișoara branch of Romanian Artists Union
- 1977 ♦ He creates an ensemble of 2 monumental works at the Orizont Hotel from Predeal, with the theme "horizon" and "the tree". He participates at the group exhibition "850 years of existence of the town Graț", Austria, with painted wood objects. This type of objects, with no other connotation than the artistic expression, changes the painting statute, turning it volumetrical, not in an illusionist manner, but imposing it on socles as the sculptures.
- 1978 ♦ He participates at the National Exhibition "Study" at Bastion Gallery, with the work "Study, start for an artistic creation"
- ♦ He is invited to participate with 2 works at the Interna-



- tional Biennial of Art, Kosice
- ♦ He participates at the group exhibitions from Göttingen, Northeim, Germany
  - ♦ He exhibits at the International Drawing Contest "Juan Miro", Barcelona, Spain
  - ♦ He presents 10 works in a group exhibition, 49 Gallery, Thalwill, Switzerland
- 1979 ♦ Group exhibition, Sylt List, Germany; Thalwill, Switzerland.
- 1980 ♦ Group exhibitions in Barsinghaus Nieteuscheid, Germany and Epoca Gallery, Lucerna, Switzerland
- ♦ Group exhibition in Delemenhorst, Germany
  - ♦ Romanian exhibition in Gera, Germany
  - ♦ Romanian exhibition in Budapest and Warsaw
- 1985 ♦ He exhibits at the International Fair of Culture, Art, Journalism, XI edition, Beogradski Sajam, Yugoslavia
- ♦ Romanian art exhibition in Stuttgart, Germany and Moscow
  - ♦ The exhibition of the International Camp Pleiner Rudolstadt, Germany
- 1986 ♦ Group exhibition in Lucerna, Switzerland
- ♦ Romanian art exhibition in London
  - ♦ He creates along with Lidia Ciolac, the monumental art work "Mapamond", in "al secco" technique for the International Airport Timișoara
- 1987 ♦ Romanian art exhibition in Glasgow, England. He is named inspector for this exhibition
- 1988 ♦ Personal exhibition "Section through fertile soil" (72 works), Helios Gallery, Timișoara
- ♦ He participates at the Brusque Art Biennial, Brasil
- 1990 ♦ Group exhibition in Szeged, Hungary
- ♦ Group exhibition at Guga/Parc Gallery, Essen, Germany.
- 1991 ♦ Group exhibition at Central Credit Bank, Szaarbruchen, Germany
- ♦ Group exhibition "Creation and European Synchronism" at the Art Museum of Banat, Timișoara
- 1992 ♦ He is named professor at the Art Faculty of West University, Timișoara, painting department, untill 1998, when he retires; he returns as a professor at Tibiscus University, Design Faculty, and from 2002 he is professor - associate at West University
- 1993 ♦ Participates at "International Art Fair" from Vicenza, Italy
- ♦ Group exhibition at Kalvaria Gallery, Szeged, Hungary
  - ♦ Personal exhibition "Beyond Appearances", Helios Gallery, Timișoara
- 1995 ♦ Group exhibition at Europhause Gallery, Germany
- 1996 ♦ Personal exhibition at Sparkasse, Karlsruhe, Germany
- ♦ He participates at the exhibition "The Experiment in Romania" at The National Theatre Galleries, Bucharest.
- 1997 ♦ Personal exhibition "Signs, senses" (non-figurative compositions) at Dure Gallery, Timișoara
- ♦ Group exhibition in Oslo, Norway
- 1998 ♦ Group exhibition at Romanian Cultural Center, Vienna, Austria
- ♦ Group exhibition at Key Springfields Gallery, USA
  - ♦ Group exhibition at Profan Gallery, Elst, Holland
- 1999 ♦ Group exhibition at Romanian Cultural Center, Budapest
- 2000 ♦ Group exhibition, Szeged, Hungary
- 2003 ♦ Group exhibition, Budapest, Hungary
- 2004 ♦ Personal exhibition "Utopia", Helios Gallery, Timișoara
- 2005 ♦ Representative exhibition, Bruxelles, Belgium
- ♦ Personal exhibition at Senso Gallery, Bucharest
- 2006 ♦ Art exhibition, European Openings, Timișoara
- 2007 ♦ Bienala de Pictură, Sculptură, Grafică, din Arad
- 2008 ♦ XII Tablakepfesteszegeti Biennale, Szeged, Ungaria
- ♦ Expoziție de grup la Galeria Calina, Timișoara



Exhibition hall, 2004



The catalogue of the exhibition

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CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

**4<sup>th</sup> of December 2008 - 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2009**

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Graphic designer: **Claudia Tache-Veethividangan**

Photos: **Romul Nuțiu**





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