

István Bán (1922-1984)

István Bán was born in Mohács (Southern Hungary). On his father's side, he had Sokac ancestors (a Croatian nationality). Between 1937-1941, he attended the textile faculty of the Academy of Applied Arts (today, Moholy-Nagy University of Art), where he studied various textile techniques, artistic design, and color chemistry and attended special practical studies. Following his graduation, he mastered French Gobelins weaving techniques.

His art career began in the 1950s. He immediately was awarded two significant acknowledgements: his French Gobelins "Körtánc" (Round dance) in 1957 received the award



of the World Youth Days in Moscow. The real breakthrough in his career was the *Diplôme d'Honneur* award at the Brussels World Fair for his gigantic, 16 m² French Gobelins wall tapestry "Busójárás" (Festival of the sokac busos), that made him a well-known and well-respected artist.

In his early works, which were mostly representational, he applied a border, typical for early Gobelins, that he later neglected. His later works represent craftsmanship of design and composition, artistic coloring and montage-like representation. In the 1960s, besides the large-sized French Gobelins, he created smaller wall tapestries, as well, depicting more of a graphic art character. In order to meet the contemporary expectations in decorative art, he developed his own, more modern weaving technique that he called 'mixed technique'.

His private purchasers mostly chose from his readily available art works. His tapestries were specifically designed for a given interior only if they were commissioned by the state or an institution. Most of these works were ordered for public buildings, hotels, and restaurants (e.g., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hotel Duna Intercontinental, Hotel Tihany). The above-mentioned "Busójárás" was prepared under the commission by the local government of Mohács, and today it decorates the Ceremonial Hall of the mayor's offices at Mohács. The "Abduction of Europe" (1976) was exhibited until the 2010s at the Körszálló Hotel Budapest, while the "Danajds" (1975) is still at its original place at Hotel Gellért in Budapest. Many of his works are held by private persons abroad in various parts of the world.

As an internationally respected wall tapestry artist, as an individual author, he achieved significant national and international acknowledgement. Between 1952 and 1976, his wall tapestries were displayed at 34 important art exhibitions, including the Applied Art Exhibition (Museum Ernst), the National Applied Art Exhibition, and the Fine Arts Exhibition (*Műcsarnok*), the Furnishing and Home Art Exhibition, the Wall Textile Exhibition, and the Textile Biennale. In 1970, the prestigious Csók Gallery in Budapest organized an exhibition dedicated exclusively to his wall tapestries.

He did not live to see the gigantic retrospective exhibition on the 40 years of wall tapestry art organized at Műcsarnok in 1985, "only" his works representing his art of several decades.

István Bán passed away in 1984, at the age of 61.