



Aknay János

János Aknay was born on 28th February 1949 in Nyíregyháza. His father, János Aknay (1913-1986) is the supervisor of the Hungarian National Bank (MNB), an economist, and his mother Anna Bíró (1917-2007) is a housewife. He started his artistic studies at the Medgyessy Ferenc Fine Arts Circle

In Debrecen between 1959 and 1963, where he met with Géza Veress, Ferenc Nagy, József Menyhárt, László Félegyházi, Nándor Berky and Lajos Bíró and worked together. From 1962 to 1967 he studied at the Budapest Fine Arts and Applied Grammar School, where he was a student of Ferenc Sebestény.

Between 1953 and 1963 he lived in Debrecen, then in Budapest between 1963 and 1971. In 1971 he moved to Szentendre, where he lives and works also today.

The Nyíregyháza-born young painter, who was of the same mind as the members of the evolving Lajos Vajda Studio in Szentendre, moved to the town in 1971-72, and clearly grasped something of the *genius loci* when the objects and motifs he ordered in his mind and heart began to take shape under his hand, namely: the elements of the characteristically homely, though art-historically not particularly valuable Szentendre houses tightly cuddling together, its meandering streets playing hide and seek, its short alleys and rambling yards; its pointed rooftops built for the play of life and its façades with human faces; its graceful crest ornaments and stone puppets balancing on cornices; its stairways going up and down intimately playing their music; its softly arched, marked gates and pilaster-tripped, braided windows; its calvaries wrapped in the snail horns of the *Word*; its suffering, rust-eaten corpora; its crossed tower caps pointing to the sky and the silent bodies of its time-traveler church naves; its everyday folk and its glorified saints immersed in thought; its still icons tucked in gold-leaf halos sweating tears; the rustling of wings flying off its frescos; and its meek angels flaking off eccos and floating cloud-like... As from a sacrificial cloud, the welcome rain of signs has continued to fall on the good soil of many a canvas and paper ever since. In Aknay, the devotional coulisses of this intimately personalized town suggestive of its heavenly double appear in a new, subjectively condensed lyrical and simultaneously plane-constructive interpretive pictorial structure for natives stuck here, for famous and experienced, living and dead artist predecessors, for perigee "space travelers" who are interested in art not as a pastime, but to consciously find the source of the thirst for images.

Then from 1976-77, transforming this architectural environment of unparalleled richness and warmth into increasingly general concepts and abstract visual signs, he began to work with themes that fit into a strictly controlled constructivist-geometrical formal system, one that required the precision of a constructor; these included among others: geometric *connections* and *relations*, *births* and *eruptions*, *proportions* and *compositions*; in other words, plane constructions rendering spaces, houses and windows simultaneously perceptible, abstract motifs of townscape details composed from a bird's-eye view, color panel paintings

sometimes almost plastic with their many layers and strict undulating sketching, as well as *mural designs* for public spaces and *studies*.

Then again, from the early 80s, his picture-window fields, which rendered even plane-constructive spaces perceptible and often divided their surfaces, began to have characters of an archaic alphabet – an unacknowledged and almost hidden public treasure –: idiosyncratically remodeled, painted Székely-Hungarian *runes* with the stories they encrypt and *tagmata* packed with associated emotions: hidden messages for deciphering, family and community situations or stories condensed into drama. Moreover, these pictures also deployed symbolic gates and mournful coffins, details of falling and soaring wings, taught arcs and sharp wedges, ligature-runes awaiting decoding, crosses and crossings, sharply drawn constructive and lyrical, surreal and emblematic pictograms turning into new symbols. Just as importantly as this accentuation of signs, the doubly, triply, quadruple divided, delicate and variegated casement-like background surfaces, based on a meticulous priming and the hoarding of initials and often including readable runes, increased in significance.

From 1986, the birth of a new, abstract angel motif can be observed, which blends the geometrically or organically used runic “S” and “Á” with an earlier wing motif (to the everlasting memory of his prematurely deceased daughter), and which appears in multifarious ways, variations and situations in his paintings and graphics (including a public-square statue and two put up in landscapes) to this very day. However, its essentially and ethereally abstract form has come to be repeatedly transformed back into an expressive, half-abstract heavenly being, an emblematic angel man always taking new shape due to the compulsion to change or an angel icon sacrificial in the strictest sense of the word from the second half of the 90s. This angel motif traversing on the wings of the imagination, mobile in both space and time, truly flutters to and from in the works of Aknay as ideas do in folktales: it transgresses worlds; walks back and forth between stars; returns to its creator (its father), the artist; peeps in through windows and doors; reappears in the reconstructed coulisses of Szentendre, above rooftops, crosses and ordeals. It often has a dual nature: it is a positive and a negative abstraction cut into a plane construction, partly a sign and partly an articulation; sometimes it is a child, a girl, an androgynous dream face, mist as such, fear looming dark, the solitude of a cave, sometimes a piece of concrete reality, sometimes a saint glittering in gold; sometimes it is an *in memoriam* for a painter or a friend, sometimes an element of the past beaming back and an ephemeral element of the present; sometimes it is the sun and the moon, a shadow, a light, a haloed amoeba duvet flying like a winged cloud, a pyramidal UFO with a diamond peak in a window or a door; sometimes it is a guardian, a protector; at times it is lonely, at others, it brings good tidings; sometimes it hides, at others, it is an endless secret moving into an egg or a cyclorama, and it is also dumbness nesting in the smile of God, an icon offspring multiplying itself.

In Aknay’s trove of self-feeding, self-developing and self-generating devices, however, apart from the immensely rich and variegated treasury of motifs, we find a fully-fledged painterly inventiveness based on essential and audacious principles of composing and constructing and an infinite cornucopia of emotionally charged color and surface treatment and brushwork. His background motifs cut off or severed and running out on to picture frames, his outward or suspended lines, which perhaps bind the pictorial plots to nothingness, and thus signify everlasting continuity and intellectual uninterruptedness, and his clear color fields or frames delineating border strips all point to – apart from possible psychological interpretations – the fact that he ascribes particular importance to

showing signs or a system of signs, and that, in his oeuvre, every single work has had and is going to have its antecedent and its outcome wherever we begin to undo the threads.

Embedded as it is in the history of Szentendre art, his both subjective and communal work has thus a simultaneously horizontal and vertical orientation, a heavenly and an earthly nature. In other words, his art, in a horizontal perspective, draws virtually only on the themes and motifs of the town, looks through the eyes of Szentendre only; but, vertically, it is spiritually and transcendently orientated. His art therefore not only hovers – as though it were a sacrificial mirage – above Szentendre, but also traverses boundless, universal courses in its imaginary ethereal dimensions and cosmic time. It must be acknowledged that his pictorial world (a blending of a fascinatingly instinctual and extraordinarily conscious one), which has been present for almost forty years, is, by not only Hungarian but even international standards, a highly individual, daring and noteworthy achievement (in other words, it is as classical as it is avant-garde)! And, to use an expression not in fashion these days: his art is both universal and Hungarian. (T. N.)

Awards:

1975: Memorandum for the successful participation of János Aknay in the IX. At the National Amateur Fine Arts Exhibition, Szekszárd.

1977: Starring of the Young Artists Studio.

1978: Collective Studio Award for the Leninvárosi V-studio Experimental Workshop.

1988: Commemorative coin of Vilnius (LIT).

1988: Graphic of the Year Award, Szentendrei Graphic Workshop.

1989: Anna Memorial of Neufeld, Vác.

1992: commemorative coin of the Zebegényi Szőnyi István Summer Art School.

1993: Studio of Young Artists Studio XII. Debrecen National Summer Exhibition; Reminder for János Aknay for the XII. Debrecen's National Summer Show.

1993: Award of the Local Government of Esztergom, I. National Pastel Biennial, Esztergom.

1993: Professional 1st Prize, Autumn Exhibit, Érd.

1993: Prize for the National Graphic Exhibition in Szekszárd.

1994: Baktay diploma and Baktay grandmother, Erika Baktay High School and Water Technical Secondary School, Dunaharaszti.

1995: Commemorative coin of Zella-Mehlis (D).

1996: Pro Urbe memorial, Szentendre.

1996: Winner of the Millecentennial National Summer Festival in Debrecen.

1996: Pest County Award for Art.

1996: Karsai Rt. Memorial Hall, Székesfehérvár.

1996: Siklós Salon Award, Siklós.

1997: Memorial plaque of Horváth & Lukács Gallery, Nagycenk.

1998: Csongrád County General Assembly Award, VII. Szeged Biennial of Table Paintings.

1999: Pest County Art Award (Patak Group).

1999: RMDSZ Jubilee memorial plaque.

2000: Fee of the Local Government of Szeged County, VIII. Szeged Biennial of Table Paintings.

2000: Pest County Art Award, Lajos Vajda Studio.

2000: Knight Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary (bachelor's degree).

2001: Main Prize of the Siklós Salon, Siklós.

2001: Memorial Day for Excellent Work in the Millennium Year, Szentendre.

2002: Mihály Munkácsy Prize.

2003: Hajdúböszörmény City Award.

2003: Prize of the Hungarian Foundation for Graphic IV. National Color Printing Graphic Exhibition.

2004: International Artists' Colony, Miklós Káplár Memorial Hall, Hajdúböszörmény.

2004: The collective Pro Urbe of Lajos Vajda Studio, Szentendre.

2005: Main Prize of the Association of Hungarian Fine Arts and Crafts, Szekszárd.

2005: II. National Artistic Student Circle Conference Memorandum, Szeged.

2006: Patrick Art Prize, Fire exhibition, Szigetszentmiklós.

2006: The town of Hajdúböszörmény István Bocskai memorial plaque.

2007: The Association of Hungarian Fine Arts and Crafts Associations Ildikó's Simsay Award.

2007: The Bercsényi Primary School, the memorial plaque of Bercsényi Gallery, Szombathely.

2008: Collective Hungarian Heritage Award of the Old Artists' Colony of Szentendre.

2008: The XX. Debrecen National Summer Exhibition is the main prize for a bid to commemorate Magda Szabó.

2008: The 45th International Commemorative Fair in Hajdúság, Hajdúböszörmény.

2008: The Art Fellowship Fund for Vecsés Art, Vecsés.

2009: Hungarian Art Award, Hungarian Art Foundation.

2010: Kossuth Prize.

Individual exhibitions:

1972: József Attila Cultural Center, Szentendre (with György Holdas, Gábor Matyófalvi and István Zámbofi).

1976: Lajos Vajda Studio (VLS) Winery (Pm), Szentendre (György Holdas).

1977: House of Culture, Örkény; Táborfalva; Hernád (leaflet invitation).

1977: Georgi Dimitrov County Cultural Center, Veszprém.

1978: Youth Cultural Center, Salgótarján.

1979: Világfa Gallery, Pest County Cultural Center and Library (PMKK), Szentendre (leaflet invitation).

1979: Stúdió Gallery, Budapest (catalog catalog).

1980: VLS Pm, Szentendre (with István Haász, György Holdas, Attila Joláthy and Gábor Matyófalvi).

1981: PMKK Housing Estate Club, Szentendre (leaflet invitation).

1981: Bastion Gallery, Fisherman's Bastion, Buda Castle.

1982: Artistic Gallery, Szentendre (screened folder catalog and invitations).

1983: Workshop Gallery, Szentendre [with Bereznai Péter (folder invitation)].

1984: County and Municipal Cultural Center, Nyíregyháza.

1984: Csongrád Gallery, Csongrád.

1987: Gyopár Club Gallery, Békéscsaba.

1987: Art Gallery, Szentendre, [Peter Bereznai and Mihály Gubis (offset catalog catalog)].

1989: Szentendre Gallery, Szentendre (book catalog).

1989: Madách Imre Cultural Center, Madách Gallery, Vác.

1989: Vihar Gallery, Matthias Jantyk Museum, Békés; "Brick" Community House, Békéscsaba.

1990: County Cultural Center, Szolnok.

1991: Püski Bookstore and Gallery, Székesfehérvár (Kiss László's Waiting in the Garden and the exhibition of János Aknay, who designed the cover of the book).

1991: City Library, Szigetszentmiklós; City Cultural Center, Érd; Ács Károly Cultural Center, Ráckeve; Leisure Center, Ócsa [with Mihály Gubis, Mihály Kéri and György Somogyi (catalog)].

1991: P 'Art Gallery, Érd.

1991: János Aknay's graphic cards, Transitional Gallery, Zebegény Library.

1993: Horváth & Lukács Gallery, Nagycenk.

1993: Art-éria Gallery, Szentendre.

1994: Baktay Ervin Grammar School and Water Technical Secondary School, Dunaharaszti (with Mihály Gubis and Ottó Vincze).

1994: Csepel Gallery, Budapest (DVD).

1994: Rösch Gallery, Karlsruhe (D) (screen folder catalog).

1995: Diptychon-Triptychons, Barcsay School Gallery, Szentendre (catalog).

1995: "Mythen II.", Bürgerhaus, Zella-Mehlis (D) (with Ottó Vincze).

1995: Four Szentendre constructivist painters, Hungarian Institute, Paris [Jenő Barcsay, László Balogh, Pál Deim, János Aknay (leaflet catalog)].

1995: Presentation of the first three works of the Szentendre Sculpture Exhibition and the related Santa Claus Ceremony (János Aknay, Pál Deim, István Ef Zámbó), Great Place of Post, Szentendre (leaflet invitation).

1995: Christmas Presentation by János Aknay's Screen Album, László Vincze's Paper Making Workshop, Szentendre.

1996: Künstlerhaus (Studio Exhibitor), Salzburg (A).

1996: Pappenheim Castle, Iszkaszentgyörgy (screened folder catalog).

1996: Kaposfüred Gallery, Kaposvár-Kaposfüred.

1997: Cultural Palace, Târgu Mureş [Palatul Culturii, Târgu Mureş (RO) (screened directory catalog)].

1997: Cultural Center of the Republic of Hungary, Bucharest (RO) (screened folder catalog). 1997: Kovács Máté Town Cultural Center and Library, Hajdúszoboszló.

1997-98: Connections, Vigadó Gallery, Budapest (folder catalog with screen printing).

1998: Selection from "Contacts" from the exhibition material, Provincia Hotel Gallery, Szentendre.

1998: Graphics and Screenprint Exhibition, Keve Gallery, Ráckeve.

1998: Horváth & Lukács Gallery, Nagycenk (with Puha Ferenc and György Somogyi).

1999: February 28th, János Aknay's 50th birthday party, Cave, Danube House Cultural Center, Szentendre.

1999: János Aknay's exhibition organized by the material of the Horváth & Lukács Gallery (Nagyecenk), VLS Pm, Szentendre (folder catalog with screen).

1999: Horváth & Lukács Gallery, Nagyecenk (with Stefanie Nickel and Wolfgang Nickel). 1999: Rondella Gallery, Esztergom.

2000: Selection from 20 years of screen printers, Artothek, Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Library Kőbányai Könyvtára.

2000: book exhibition of John Aknay's chamber exhibition, St. Michael's Chapel, Castle of Buda.

2001: Monostori Fortress, Komárom (with Ef Zábó István).

2001: Horváth Theater, Group-Horde Gallery, Pécs (leaflet catalog).

2002: Contemporary Gallery, Tatabánya.

2002: Árpád Museum, Ráckeve (with Péter Bereznai and Csaba György with Borgó).

2002: This will be an exhibition!, Casino Szentendre (with István Zábó, Tibor Frózsi-Nánássy, Margit Szabolcs).

2002: Plein Air 2002, City Gallery, Csongrád (Popovics Lőrinci).

2002: Sárospataki Gallery, Sárospatak (catalog catalog).

2002: Brotherhoods Gallery, Pomáz.

2003: Karda Gallery, Budapest.

2003: Country House, Budakalász.

2003: Kunst im Gespräch, Emsdetten (D) (Wolfgang Nickel).

2003: City Museum, Csurgó.

2003: János Aknay's exhibition is selected from the material of Horváth & Lukács Gallery of Nagycsaba, Béla County Cultural Center, Győr.

2003: Angels at Szamárhegy, Ipszilon Gallery, Szentendre.

2004: Cork Gallery, Hajdúböszörmény.

2004: In space, in light, Manréza Spiritual and Cultural Center, Dobogókő.

2004: Selection from the material of the Croatian & Lukács Gallery, Széchenyi István Memorial Museum, Nagyecenk (with Peter Bereznai, Ferenc Puha, György Somogyi and László Amár Varga).

2004: "Contact", Volksbank Rt., Budapest (Selection 2004, catalog).

2004: Pécs Gallery, Pécs (folder catalog with screen printing).

2004: Szentendre Art Portraits 2004/8, Chamber Gallery of Szentendre Gallery, Szentendre.

2004: Presentation by Aknay János's ANGYALY BOOK with film screening, MűvészetMalom, Szentendre.

2005: Tisza Cultural Center, Mindszent.

2005: Suli Gallery, Budapest, Dózsa György út 25-27.

2005: Selection from the material of the Horváth & Lukács Gallery, Community House, Hegykő (Péter Bereznai, Ferenc Puha, György Somogyi).

2005: Sillye Gábor Cultural Center, Hajdúböszörmény; Cork Gallery, Debrecen University College of Pedagogy, Hajdúböszörmény.

2005: Country house, Leányfalu.

2005: János Aknay's exhibition from László Szepessy's collection, Bernády House, Targu Mures (RO) (folder catalog with C-print, DVD).

2005-06: Double Window (1982), Barcsay Collection, Szentendre.

2006: Winter exhibition 2006, Abigail Gallery, Budapest (with János Bozsó, Ákos Matzon, István Gy. Molnár and Klára Szilárd, catalog).

2006: Debrecen Cultural Center, Downtown Gallery, Debrecen (folder catalog with C-print).

2006: Angels of Aknay János, Templom of Múzsák, Rákóczi Museum of the Hungarian National Museum, Sáropatak (folder catalog with C-print).

2006: Contemporary Hungarian Gallery, Dunaszerdahely [Dunajská Streda, (SK) (folder catalog with C-print)].

2006: Catholic Parish Church, Szentendre (Imre Szuromi).

2007: Miklós Bercsényi Primary School, Szombathely (Selection from the material of Horváth and Lukács Nagycenki Gallery).

2007: Szepes Gyula Cultural Center, Érd.

2007: KEVE Gallery, Ráckeve.

2007: Újlipótváros Club Gallery, Budapest (catalog catalog with C-print, catalog).

2007-08: Gönczi Gallery, Dezső Keresztury ÁMK, Zalaegerszeg (folder catalog with C-print).

2008: József Gammel Fine Arts and Crafts Circle - József Attila Cultural Center, Vecsési Exhibition Hall, Vecsés.

2008: St. George's Day, Pappenheim Castle, Iszkaszentgyörgy (folder catalog with C-print).

2008: IV. Templar Days, Somogy Reformed Ward, Gothic Church, Somorja.

2008: Painters, Mestermű Gallery, Veszprém (folder catalog with C-print).

2008-09: Shrine of Advent, New Art Restaurant, Szentendre.

2009: February 28th János Aknay's 60th birthday party, Cave, Danube House Cultural Center, Szentendre.

2009: AKNAY 60, ART-ÉRT Gallery, Sárospatak (folder catalog with C-print).

2009: Live Muse - Szentendre színtér, MűvészetiMalom, Szentendre (book catalog).

2009: Our guest is János Aknay, the artist presents Judit Láng interior designer, Kuckó, Bp Hunyadi János u. 8th

2009: Screen Prints, International Modern Museum, Hajdúszoboszló.

2010: Szentendrei múzsa - János Aknay's collection of exhibitions, MODEM Modern and Contemporary Art Center, Debrecen.

2010: Between Two Worlds, a premiere of a portrait film about the painter János Aknay, P 'Art Cinema, Szentendre, February 26, 2010 18 hours.

2010: Watchmen, painters, Cella Septichora Visitor Center, Pécs.

2010: Mayor Ferenc Ditz hands over János Aknay's Angyalos room, the Barcsay Jenő Primary School's Poetry Event, Szentendre.

2010: Ten Source Festival, Borough of Tornácok Guesthouse, Hegykő.

2010: Watchmen and Messengers, Table Conversations Cultural Foundation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Balatonboglár, Lutheran Church, Balatonboglár.

2010: Festivals, guardian angels, Cifrapalota, Kecskemét.

2010: Meeting of the Friends of the Craftsmen's Circle on the occasion of the Hungarian Day of Painting. Conversation with Tihamér Novotny art writer and János Aknay painter, House of Craftsmen, Zalaegerszeg.

2011: Leányfalu-Ház, Leányfalu.

2011: Jankay Collection and Contemporary Gallery, Békéscsaba.

2011: Opening Ceremony of János Aknay's Evangelical Church, Balatonboglár.

2011: The Night of Museums and Art Galleries in Szentendre, Workshop Visit to János Aknay Kossuth Prize winner, Szentendre Old Artists' Colony.

2011: "Angels and Sacred Spaces", Budapest - Fasori Evangelical Ward, Church Hall.

2011: Open Day at Szentendre Festival, László Vincze and her sons (Paper Mill - Printing - Binding) Presentation of a Paper Handling Workshop at JNC AKNAY's Kossuth Prize-winning Painter, Szentendre, Bogdányi u. 51st

2011: János Aknay's exhibition (5th Sacred Arts Week, announcement of the foundation of the Contemporary Art Collection of the Diocese of Székesfehérvár), Szent István Cultural Center, Székesfehérvár.

2011: Painter among the Angels, Gyula Castle Theater, Gyula.

2011: Horváth & Lukács Gallery, Nagycenk (on the closing day of the exhibition, he has a guided tour with: Ernő P. Szabó).

2011: Abstract Angels, Tibor Bakoss Kisgaléria, Debrecen Reformed University of Hittity, Kölcsey Ferenc Teacher Training Institute, Debrecen.

2011: Motion Pictures - Portrait of János Aknay, (Péter Erős ArtWorld Szentendre series), Scheffer Gallery, Budapest.

2012: Semmelweis Salon, Semmelweis University, Budapest.

2012: Retromodern - furniture from art deco to postmodern, Sestina Gallery, Debrecen.

2012: Dorottya Salon (Cafe Dorottya), Budapest.

2012: One Night Adventure with the Art of Szentendre, Workshop Visit János Aknay's Kossuth Prize at Fine Artist, Szentendre, Bogdányi u. 51st

2012: Berta Bulcsu Cultural Center and Library, Balatonyörök.

2012: János Aknay Kossuth Prize winning painter and Ottó Vincze Munkácsy-winning artist on art, Malom Café, Szentendre.

2012: "On the Road", Ars Sacra Festival, Magdolna Tower, Budapest.

2012: Péter Mansfeld Gallery, Budapest.