

**"George Enescu" National University of Arts  
Faculty of Visual Arts and Design**

## **Engraving techniques between traditional and experimental Summary of the Assignment Thesis**

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The engraving workshop is my research lab, the creation space where ideas seek their way to materialization. The workshop, this miraculous space, shelters the kind and kind of materials, tools and machinery: wooden plates, linoleum, copper, brass, cardboard and plastic, etc., chisels, knives, engraving pins, acids and solvents, engraving inks water and oil bases, water basins, engraving presses and many more or less sophisticated materials. All these are an instrumental summary necessary for the engraver, which, depending on the technique, is used to build the plates / molds that will become engraving. I began to work engraving in 1981, it was not easy, I continued to work by learning constantly, researching and developing the techniques of attack and printing.

I have worked in all forms of high, deep and planetary printing, we have used part of traditional techniques as such or by exploiting technical interferences, executions and prints in many traditional and unconventional variants. The tendencies of contemporary art imply the orientation towards the experiment, the concept, and if we remember the advanced opinion of Leonardo da Vinci, who has not once argued that painting is a mental cosmos, I consider the artist to conceive and work with ideas by finding other ideas to materialize them .

Experimenting in the workshop, going on the line of knowledge, imagination and beauty, but also of personal ideas about the ways and possibilities of manifestation of the engraving, in the extension of the traditional, we have come to some technical solutions of a personal nature. Sometimes unconventional interventions have involved both in the preparation of wood

blocks, cardboards or various plastics, as well as ink and printing. That is how I came to work in what today is called its own manner. It is possible for such methods to be used in one form or another, in their own style or by other graphic artists. My professional trail bears the imprint of personal methods and procedures for engraving. I was particularly passionate about color insertion in engraving using multiple plates and repeated patterning. Continuing in the same manner, I switched to the cutting of plaques in random shapes and the composition of the final works in spatial forms, objects, installations, books and object books.

### **First part of the thesis, ARTISTIC CREATION**

In this chapter I present succinctly my artistic activity developed mostly in the field of engraving, starting from engraving in its traditional form and continuing with the preoccupations in the experimental area in the printing area comprising here hybrids on the mold and the printing forms. Another area of creation is dedicated to the artwork book, the construction of which often is illustrated by gravure and other prints produced by the engraving press. The illustration can be defined as a plastic form of text conversion in the image, through this prism it is possible that many of my engravings fall within such spiritual limits. Compositions often involve symbols, subtle allusions, embedded messages embodying plastic architectures, emotional narratives, etc. proposed to the public in the idea that the created suggestions will offer aesthetic satisfaction to the decipherment.

I organized the chapter in several partitions referring to: Personal and collective expositions, national and international; Project BOOK PROJECT INTERNATIONAL 2013, MARSILIA; Biennial International Contemporary Engraving Project NI, Iasi 2015, 2017; Interference project, group exhibition, Five Plus Art Gallery, Vienna, Austria 2017;

Since graduation, I have been concerned with engraving and its techniques and the book illustration. I have been constantly attending annual, international and international triennial engraving, jury exhibitions. After 2000, when this kind of events took shape, and at national level, I participated in many of them. I'll score a few benchmarks for my career.

Quadriennial KIWA Xilogravure in Kyoto, Japan, is among the most important because in 2007 I received the JAWK II Prize for an Object Book. Built in a classical form but with images printed in an unconventional form, we made the book in 2006. Because wood engraving remained a constant concern of the workshop, I thought it appropriate to create an object book starting from the classic object idea, containing a visual load detached from the classic engraving on wood. We set the format and calculated a mirror of the page, then printed the high-sided, double-sided engraving paper sheets, managing to keep the page mirror constant. For this series of engravings, we used to print 8 traditional wood engraved blocks and a few blocks just textured by pressing or cutting mechanically. I have to mention the fact that the organizers used the 2007 poster illustration, the cover of my book. From that moment we contributed to the event poster illustration in the next two editions, 2011 and 2016.

The triennial Européenne de l'Estampe Contemporaine - Estampadura France brought me the public's award in 2013. Over the years, I had the chance to be accepted at many biennial or triennial international exhibitions, of which I would mention only a few without insisting on the event: 2017, 2015, 3rd Global Print 2017, Portugal; 2017, 2015, THE 19TH INTERNATIONAL PRINT BIENNIAL VARNA 2017, Bulgaria; 2013, Austria, Klagenfurt, Gallery 3, group exhibition, invited artist; 2012, Switzerland, Grenchen, International Triennial of Original Prints Grenchen, Switzerland / Graphic Art of the Balkan countries; 2011, Poland, Katowice, Bienala int. engraving -Ex libris; 2008,2006, Hungary, Budapest, Little Engraving Biennial, "Kisgrafica", etc.

Another important exhibition for me was *Metafora cărților*, (2013), where I exhibit together with the graphic artist Suzana Fântânariu Baia. This exhibition, opened under the auspices of the FILIT Festival (International Literary and Translation Festival), was an event in Iasi because the book is not a familiar work area for many artists. Exposure in the classical museum has contributed to the creation of a period atmosphere enriched in an atypical manner.

The personal exhibition "Imprint" marks a new stage of artistic development, works elaborated under the influence of studies for the realization of Gerard Genette's theoretical thesis, the aesthetics of visual arts, the works get a new attitude.

In some ideological continuity, I focused on the format of the engraving and the possibilities to give it a new dimension. We live in a computer-dominated society by the virtual message, SMS, phones and tablets, we are part of a world that almost disappears the idea of a letter, the envelopes we recognize as carrying bills or information most of the time official or unpleasant.

Probably the invasion of IT personal space, the dependence on these devices that take step by step on our minds, on the tics that create the fires of a good day at some point, have led me to remind, to reconstruct a moment of the text intimacy, which we all used once, perhaps some continue to do it, as others have definitely and definitely chosen the keyboard.

The Mater personal exhibition, opened in 2016 at the Art Museum in Iasi, accumulates in works a large part of the previously exposed plastic and technical experiences. The exhibition grouped over 60 works grouped thematic and technical. The experiment is increasingly telling my word in my engravings. Moving from a traditional relative technique in the Personality Cycle we have evolved to a series of fingerprints executed in its own manner and for printing on canvas. The latter technical alternative it advances a lot towards the picture assuming a number of risks in expression. Appearances are harsh, harsh almost monochrome, I tried to make a reversal, a substitution of material suggestions, the cloth becomes copper or brass and the acrylic soils surface of the base of the elements. The experiment has a lot of force and captures the audience's attention through the novelty of the presentation. This exhibition was traced to the Art Museum in Piatra Neamt and LA National Art Museum in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova.

Project BOOK PROJECT INTERNATIONAL 2013, MARSILLIA

This generous project was initiated and organized by the late graphic artist Iuri Isari. Romania has participated as the invited country BOOK PROJECT INTERNATIONAL 2013, MARSILLIA of Japan, France, and independent artists from different corners of the world. Our team consisted of

representatives of the universities / faculties of visual arts in Bucharest, Iasi and Timisoara. I presented the students' books as well as my own works. Biennial International Contemporary Engraving Project N-E, Iasi. The International Biennial of Contemporary NE engraving was created through a partnership between the Moldavian National Museum Competitiveness in Iasi, the George Enescu Art University in Iasi and the National Art Museum in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. The project is now on the threshold of the 3rd edition, began in 2015 with the announced goal of promoting contemporary engraving. The event resonated worldwide, with artists from over 30 countries from all over the world, from the Orient to Latin America. The works on the simulations of the Iasi Art Museum were extremely technically and stylistically varied and of a very good quality, we were in front of an engraving regal that can be aligned to any similar event in the country or abroad .

Interference Project, Group Exhibition at Five Plus Art Gallery, Vienna, Austria was a project that I managed to implement thanks to the financing of the Romanian Cultural Institute in Vienna and Five Plus - Art Gallery in Vienna, of course, National University of Arts "George Enescu had an important contribution in financial.

A Round Table with the theme "FROM TRADITION TO THE EXPERIMENT - Creative Exploration in the Visual Arts" attended by the curators of the exhibition and the students was part of this project.

The Interference Exhibition, which brings together paintings and graphics, modern and experimental, signed by professors and students of the UNAGE

The Interference exhibition could be considered as a first instance an illustration of ideas that have found their way to materialization in a university-sponsored creation space. the problem must be removed from all the conditions that we may consider limiting, because in the case of art it is easy to see that new forms of art are constantly emerging, new artistic solutions that require, obliges the artist to make decisions transform, experiment. Somewhere in these parameters can be classified the exhibition "Interferences" - graphics and painting between tradition and experiment.

## **Part II of the empowerment is devoted to SCIENTIFIC AND TEACHING ACTIVITY**

I will present: The evolution of the teaching career; Doctoral Thesis 2006, A.I.Cuza University of Iasi, Faculty of Philosophy - "Gérard Genette - Aesthetics of Visual Arts; PhD thesis 2016, George Enescu National University of Fine Arts, Iași, Faculty of Visual Arts and Design - TYPE OF RELIEF, Implications on the evolution of civilization; Publications.

I started my university career in 1990 as Associate Professor after one year in 1991 I obtained the teaching degree of assistant professor, in 1995 I became a lecturer, in 2007 a lecturer and since 2008 I became a Professor at the Graphics Chair Unagi. Concomitantly with the didactic activity I have accomplished various managerial functions within the institution. Thus, during the period 1997-2000 I served as Scientific Secretary of the Faculty of Plastic Arts, Decorative Arts and Design. In 1997 I worked on the first Institutional Contract under the European Socrates-Erasmus program at the UNAGE, program which I coordinated for a short period between 1999 and 2000. In 2008, I was elected Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, four years later, in 2012, I became Rector of the "George Enescu" National University of Arts in Iasi.

Of course, throughout this period of time described above, I have carried out in parallel a whole artistic creation and scientific research activity. I am part of the team that founded the Graphics specialization in Iași, from a workshop with easels I have built a specialization with three optional directions in Engraving, Advertising Graphics and Animation. We have specialized computer processing workshops equipped with Apple computers, professional graphics tablets, scanners, printers, etc. The engraving workshop is equipped with modern equipments for image transposition on metal plates: electric hotplates, acid baths with hoods, dust extraction, etc. The engraving workshop is equipped with three engraving presses, two large and one small.

In 2006, I held at the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, the Faculty of Philosophy, the thesis entitled *Aesthetics of Gérard Genette - visual arts*, coordinated by Mr. Prof. univ. Dr. Dumitru. N. Zaharia.

G rard Genette, a well-known name of contemporary poetics, has expanded his research in the field of aesthetics in the last decade by setting out points of view that present challenges for the theoreticians interested in contemporary arts. The paper addresses a topical topic in the field, namely the reconsideration of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline, a reconsideration imposed by the spectacular changes in the evolution of the arts during the last century. It is based on the cutting-edge information of the specialized bibliography, representative authors of American and European aesthetics, and is involved in the current debates aiming at the fundamental reconstruction of aesthetics in general and aesthetics of visual arts in particular.

PhD thesis in 2016 at "George Enescu" National University of Arts, Faculty of Visual Arts and Design – *The relief print, Implications for the evolution of civilization.*

The PhD thesis is part of a completely different area of expression elaborated under the scientific leadership of the prof. PhD. Dan Cov taru, the research puts into question the traditional engraving, the interpenetration between the traditional language and modern language, bringing to the foreground the relief pattern as a form of modernization and hybridization of engraving. Part of the technical analysis is focused on my own experimentation in the workshop and measures the possibilities of serializing innovation as well as the artist's editions most often performed in its own way.

The evolution of the arts, and especially of the engraving, in the contemporary world is defined, among other things, by an avant-garde attitude, the manifestations are expressed in multiple ways from the point of view of the technical implications. Diversified over time, like any artistic technique, engraving techniques (and materials) are based on the same general principle of printing a drawing on an engraving board.

Engraving is a form of expression of art, creativity, limitless fantasy, and moreover, without necessarily being attached to a secondary or main function as it has ever happened in its history. Concerns specific to contemporary artistic creation, the originality part contained in the plane of plastic expression is in a natural interdependence with engraving techniques. For this reason, I

consider it necessary to briefly present the engraving techniques that are a basis for any engraver.

## **Publications**

The ones previously outlined outline or outline specific concerns about contemporary artistic creation, graphics and some aspects of the engraving and construction of the object book in my vision.

On the other hand, the content of a specialized discipline must clearly distinguish between the conditions that are sufficient and necessary to put into operation a project. This is how we developed two engraving courses.

### *1.Name: Traditional and modern engraving techniques*

*Engraving Techniques*, Artes Publishing House, Iași, 2006, ISBN (10) 973-8271-47-9, ISBN (13) 978-973-8271-47-0 (course)

The paper is in accordance with the title aims to classify the main techniques and methods of printing, tools, materials, recipes and working methods in the engraving workshop.

### *2. High Print*, Artes Publishing House, Iasi, 2008, ISBN978-973-8263-21-5 (course)

It resumes the general classification of engraving techniques, emphasizing the detailed presentation of high-printing techniques. On the basis of indisputable testimonies, the origins of the engraved engraving (as an impression made by hand, then transferred to alternative surfaces) are still coming from the Sumerian civilization of about 4,000 BC, other incontestable testimonies come from the Mexican area dated 1,000-800 BC. Globally, testimonies about this form of printing have been found in various geographic areas, Babylonians, Egyptians, and Asia to Japanese and Chinese, but it is well established that the relief cradle is located in China.

Other works in the field of artistic research and creation

*Syncretic - painting, sculpture, graphics: teachers (coordinator)*, ARTES Publishing House, 2017, 978-606-547-347-8, 183 illustrated pages

*Syncretic - painting, sculpture, graphics: students (coordinator)*, ARTES Publishing House, 2017, 978-606-547-356-1, 126 pages with illustrations

*Mater materia: from tradition to experiment: album*, Ed. Artes, 2016, ISBN 978-606-547-320-1, 147 pages



*The International Biennial of Contemporary Engraving N-E, 1st Edition, Iași, 2015, (volume coordinator), Publishing House of Culture Iași, 2015, ISBN 978-606-8547-11-4, 100 pages*

*Teachers of yesterday and today: "George Enescu" Art University at 155 years (coordinator), Artes, 2015, ISBN 978-606-547-274-7, 250 pages with illustrations*

*155 years of modern artistic education in Iasi, 3rd part 1950-2015, Artes Publishing House, Iasi, 2015, ISBN 978-606-547-245-7 (coordinator)*

*155 years of modern artistic education in Iasi, part II 1950-2015, Artes Publishing House, Iasi, 2015, ISBN 978-606-547-245-7 (coordinator)*

*155 years of modern artistic education in Iasi, Part I 1830-1950, Artes Publishing House, Iasi, 2015, ISBN 978-606-547-244-0 (coordinator)*

*Graphic Routes, Performantica Publishing House, Iasi, 2012, ISBN 978-973-730-982-2*

*Analytical Aesthetics: New conceptual prefigurations in visual arts, Artes Publishing House, Iasi, 2007, ISBN (13) 978-973-8271-34-0 (co-author, page 402)*

*Gerard Genette, from a restricted ontology to a subjectivist relativistic aesthetics, Artes Publishing House, Iași, 2006. ISBN (10) 973-8271-48-7, ISBN (13) 978-973-8271-48-7*

### **The third part of the thesis takes into account the EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF THE PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND ACADEMIC CAREER**

The development of engraving courses on print forms going to the details of traditional and modern techniques, I consider it an ample and ambitious project. There is an acute shortage of specialized books in Romania for narrow areas of specialization. I think a series of such books would be beneficial for both professionals and the public interested in the field of professional engraving.

Another important objective is the continuation of the International Biennial of Contemporary Engraving NE, Iasi.

Regarding the development of my own artistic career I will continue to participate in specialized exhibitions in the country and abroad. And in the Workshop I will continue to develop techniques for hybridization of techniques, engraving and printing methodologies, which, in fact, characterize my Activity at the moment. On the other hand, we all find that as we deepen a field we discover new things that amaze us and bring us satisfaction at the same time.