

Helmut Stürmer, poet of the Italian tin box

Helmut Stürmer (b. 1942) scenic and costume designer is a well-known artist of the international theatrical scene. Born in Temesvár (Timisoara), he studied painting in Kolozsvár (Cluj) and scenic design in Bukarest (Bucharest). Although he had a promising start to his career, he emigrated to West Germany in 1977, away from the “cultural revolution” of the Romanian dictatorship. In addition to his numerous international awards, in Hungary he was granted the Theatre Critics Award for the scene and costume design in Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida* at Katona József Színház (Katona József Theatre) in Budapest, 2005 (director: Silviu Purcărete, as in all productions see below), got an award for the same achievement at POSZT, where he also became the best scenic designer in 2012 for Molière’s *The Impostures of Scapin*, Csokonai Theatre, Debrecen). Also, he was the scenographer of Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*, at the Nemzeti Színház (National Theatre, 2014).



‘Heti’ by Purcărete

In 2015 he attended the *Contemporary Scenography* workshop of the MITEM. He is the scenographer of *About Love and Other Demons*, an opera that premiered in January 2017 at the Hungarian State Opera. He is also the scenographer of the *Faust* (d. Silviu Purcărete, 2007) performance scheduled for this year’s MITEM. On April 13, in the Zikkurat adjacent to the National Theatre will be the opening of his personal exhibition, entitled *Spaces of the Imagination*.

“Whenever we embark on a new performance, Heti (Helmut) will always break out a new, spectacular, exquisitely crafted notebook with black hardcover. Next to it will be two or three fine-tipped pens. He will draw elegant lines on quality paper.

I am timidly sitting opposite him. Whenever I would stumble in my explanation, Heti will obligingly offer me one of his artisan pens and the notebook, to make a drawing. Even the idea of soiling that aristocratic notebook seems preposterous, so I invariably ask for a piece of cheap, discarded paper. He will unblinkingly tear out a page from that wonderful notebook saying he has no other paper.

I am deeply ashamed. He also has a fine, pocket-sized Cotman Water Colours box from Winsor & Newton and a set of fine paintbrushes that he uses with the deliberate professionalism of a Japanese painter. A few days later that notebook will be full of masterpieces. The nostalgia of this notebook’s beauty stays with me well beyond the premiere.”

Silviu Purcărete

Translated by Dénes Albert