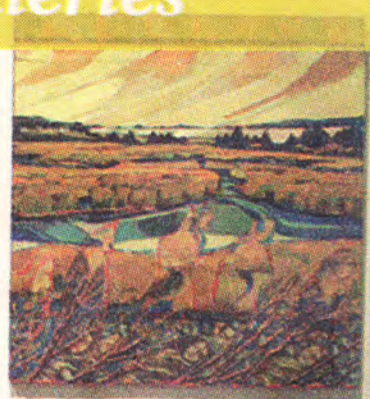
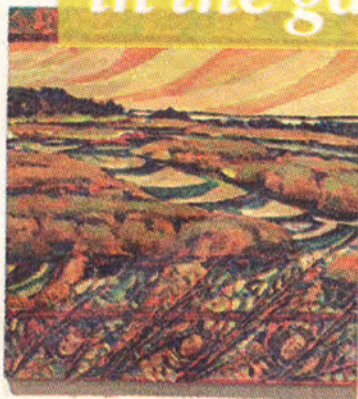
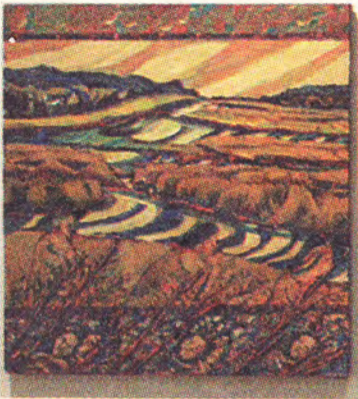


in the galleries



Andrea Blanar's 2009 triptych on paper, 'Procession.' PHOTO: SUBMITTED

Two points, one home

The Canadian-Hungarian artists in 'Re:InSitu' at the Saint John Art Centre share a past and an 'incredible connection to Canada.'
Story by Sean Flinn

Being *in situ*, or in place, means living between two points: interior and exterior, here and there, past and present, young and old or individual and community.

This is the conceptual zone explored, or space occupied, by the visual artists and filmmakers in *Re:InSitu*, on display until Jan. 8 at the Saint John Art Centre.

The program comprises two parts: the Canadian-Hungarian Film Festival, a collection of narrative to experimental films curated by filmmaker Tamás Wormser and featuring screenings by the likes of Philip Borsos, Péter Horváth and István Kántor; and an exhibition covering diverse disciplines organized by the Canadian-Hungarian Artists Collective.

"There's a visual flow" to the work, says Canadian-Hungarian artist Anna Torma, by phone from Baie Verte, near Port Elgin, where she lives and works.

Torma co-curates *Re:InSitu* with Mary Keczan-Ebos, an artist based in Burlington, Ont. Keczan-Ebos combines "domestic materials," such as food and textiles, in her art and describes the entire exhibition as a "vast tapestry."

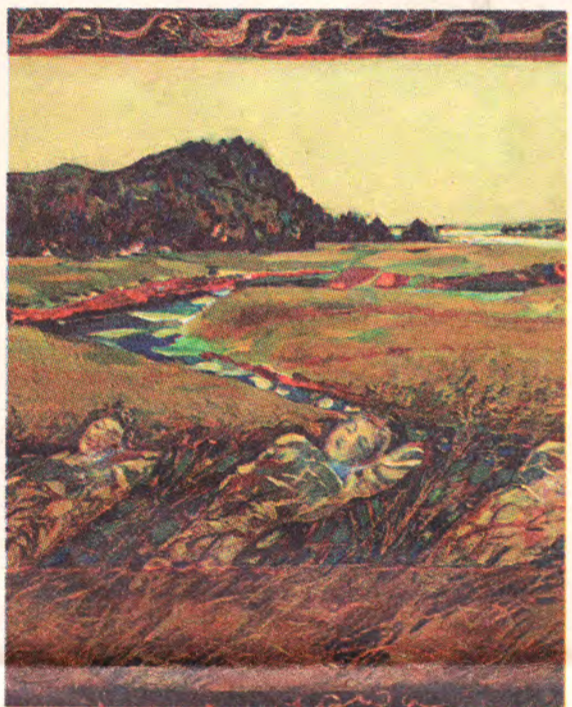
Diverse practices are represented in *Re:InSitu*, including photography, film and video, fibre art, painting, drawing, collage, printmaking, sculpture and multimedia.

Torma points out the ages of the participating artists range broadly, too, from 26 to 80 years old. Memory of Hungary – its historical shifts, such as the 1956 popular uprising against Soviet occupation – are fragmented for some, whole for others.

Yet, Torma says, everyone is working in the present: "There are very contemporary ideas in medium and approach."

Torma, a Strathbutler Award-winning textile artist, studied in Hungary but left the country some 20 years ago. She established her international reputation while in Canada.

She combines her own work with contributions in sculpture, painting, drawing and collage from her family, husband István Zsakó and sons Bálint and Dávid Zsakó. The resulting installation, called *Critical Mass*, involved a return to Hungary: "[C]reating a collaborative work in Hungary would demonstrate the tensions and inspirations of our old and new life," Torma writes in her



Andrea Blanar's 2008 mixed-media on board, 'Marsh Muses.' PHOTO: SUBMITTED

catalogue statement about the work.

The Zsakó men contribute individual works to *Re:InSitu* as well. István, known mainly as a sculptor, shows recent painting and drawing work. Bálint presents drawings, which can be viewed at www.balintzsako.com. His brother Dávid offers a series of photographs called *Limited Memory*.

Heather White Brittain, executive director of the Saint John Arts Centre, has observed an "incredible connection to Canada" underlying the art. And, she adds, a particular attachment to New Brunswick and other parts of Atlantic Canada. "They've been moved by the landscape and warmth of the people," she says.

For example, there's Andrea Blanar, the Hungarian-born president of the Canadian-Hungarian Artists Collective.

Blanar, a Montreal-based artist who founded the Tantramar Arts Symposium, spends summers on the Bay of Fundy. She draws inspiration from the mudflats and saltmarshes of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia (as seen in *Re:InSitu* and elsewhere), says White Brittain.

"Most of the community is Montreal-based," Torma acknowledges.

Re:InSitu has shown in that city, and two locations in Hungary, already.

Torma and husband István Zsakó wouldn't trade their home for a bigger, busier place. "It's clean, spacious and very quiet," she says. "It's a great workplace." ☐

Sean Flinn is a freelance journalist living in Halifax.