

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Exhibition of a major Slovak painter on the 130th anniversary of his birth and launch of a new publication

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| Author, Exhibition Title: | Július Koreszka |
| Venue: | Záhorie Gallery of Ján Mudroch in Senica, Sadová 619/3 |
| Curator: | Božena Juríčková |
| Exhibition Opening: | May 16, 2025 (Friday) at 5:00 PM |
| Musical guest: | Boris Lenko – accordion |
| Exhibition Duration: | May 16 (Friday) – June 29, 2025 (Sunday) |

In February of this year, we marked the 130th anniversary of the birth of painter Július Koreszka, an artist whose work is a lasting part of Slovak visual art from the first half of the 20th century. Koreszka was a contemporary of the founding generation, but unlike Martin Benka, who strove for a monumental style, he pursued a more personal and lyrical path, one that corresponded more closely with the Czech landscape tradition. His work is largely tied to the flat landscape of the northern Záhorie region, which he transformed—through a harmonious synthesis of emotional ties and a Secessionist-Impressionist painting style, blending plein air experience with studio composition—into a more intimate and poetic vision. This authentic approach, which he consistently followed throughout his more than thirty-year creative career, had no real equivalent on the Slovak scene at the time.

Július Koreszka was born on February 24, 1895, in the village of Dojč near Senica. In 1909, his family moved to Skalica. After finishing secondary school, he began studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest in 1914, but soon left for the front. As a direct participant in World War I, he witnessed events that marked him for life. He completed his formal art education only after the establishment of the First Czechoslovak Republic, studying from 1919 to 1924 at the Academy in Prague, in the figure painting studio of Professor Maximilián Pirner. After leaving Prague, he settled in Bratislava, where he lived until 1936, when—following the death of his first wife—he moved back to his parents' home in Skalica. In this beloved town, he remarried and lived in seclusion and modesty for more than twenty years until his untimely death on December 1, 1958.

Koreszka had already begun to define his individual artistic approach during his studies in Prague and followed it in a steady, uninterrupted way throughout his career. Despite being trained in figure painting, he focused on more traditionally cultivated landscape themes, drawing not only from the contemporary Czech scene but also from the vibrant Uprka tradition, which was active in the nearby Hodonín-based SVUM group (notably Stanislav Lolek), where he was a frequent guest. Modernism and the current trends of contemporary European art, as he himself noted in his autobiography, remained

distant to him. He consistently focused on the contemplative, meditative qualities of the landscape, with the exception of a brief interlude, and largely avoided narrative, social, or political themes. Beginning in the 1930s, he also turned to the genre of still life, first focusing on hunting-themed compositions in line with his passion for hunting, and later expanding to still lifes with objects and flowers. Koreszka's landscapes are neither heroic nor dramatic, psychological nor expressive. They are sophisticated odes, lyrical painterly reflections of the *genius loci* of Skalica, perfectly capturing the personality of their creator—intimate, unconflicted, yet formulated with high precision, verified repeatedly, and carefully articulated in every centimeter of the canvas.

Július Koreszka's work is represented in several public collections (primarily the Slovak National Gallery and the Bratislava City Gallery); many of his paintings also remain in private hands. The largest collection, however, is held by the Záhorie Gallery of Ján Mudroch in Senica, consisting of paintings and drawings from the artist's estate. A substantial portion of this collection was acquired in the early 1970s by the Záhorie Museum in Skalica through a one-time purchase from Koreszka's wife, Františka Koreszková, for the newly planned Záhorie Gallery in Senica. After the gallery was established in 1984, the Koreszka works were officially transferred to its collection. Since then, the gallery has continued expanding the collection, particularly in painting, which now includes 94 of the artist's works. Alongside his numerous drawings (1,570 items), these pieces comprehensively document Koreszka's artistic development and the phases of his continuously evolving yet prematurely concluded career. In addition to further acquisitions, the gallery also devotes attention to the technical care of the artist's works, gradually undertaking professional restoration treatments.

To commemorate Koreszka's recent anniversary, ZGJM has organized an exhibition drawn from its own collection of his paintings. In addition to works from the artist's estate, the show will also feature paintings acquired after 1985 from various private collectors. The exhibition is accompanied by a publication that presents the gallery's collection of Koreszka's works.

Božena Juríčková
Curator, ZGJM



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