

A Parisian in Dupnitsa

Who am I ?

My name is Michel Bertoux. I was born in Paris 61 years ago. I worked very hard in computer programming, statistics, political and marketing surveys, and as a consultant in Training and Human Resources Management. I started the watercolours painting not very long ago. After I had retired on a pension, I met a wonderful artist, Annick Guérin-Follen. She lives and paints in Pontorson, France, very close to Mont Saint Michel.

I had several training sessions on plain-air painting, at the sea side, in the fields of Normandy and Bretagne. The technique she has taught me is a passion, a flash of emotions: it is called “wet on wet”; it is work with water, painting with water. The colors are diluted in water, and the brush drops the colored water over the canvas which is already wet. The canvas is more or less wet, depending on the expected results. And the canvas, water, colors form a combination of parameters which sometimes leads to unexpected results. And each new painting proposes new surprises, new emotions.

Michel Bertoux wants to be absolutely different and frank, a total nonconformist. For him the art valuables had become a form of life.

- Mr. Bertoux, what is your measure for art? Is it possible to help the person through the art? And another question – Are you a vanguard artist? What is your personal style?

- I paint for putting the colors and forms I see on paper. I like the moment when I succeed to do it, and it makes me happy. I do not know if I am a vanguard artist as my art education is not an academical one. I do what I can and what I like to do. I was taught to “wet on wet” painting technique by the famous artist Annick Guérin-Follen that is one of the few artists in the world using this technique. This technique represents painting on paper with pure water and after that you put drops of watercolours prepared in advance. Applying of this technique allows easy mixing of all colors and after that to obtain very soft and delicate images.
- **What gave France for your development as an artist and author? What viewpoint do you bring from France?**
- France formed my personality; I was born in Paris and I obtained my education there. I learnt to paint there and I have spent all my life until I got 60. The thing that impressed me very much when I compared the countryside of Bulgaria and France was that I found a wider landscape here. I have not seen such landscape broadness in France. The skyline is always near there. But here the broadness is like a picture of Sergio Leone's western – vastness and beauty.
- **Is it an accidental and temporary situation for you to be outside France? Do you always find the right door to enter?**
- Many coincidences brought me to Dupnitsa. I do not know whether I have found the right doors always but this time I am sure that I found the right one. I do not want to be temporary here, I would like to live here.

- **How do you feel in Dupnitsa? Is Dupnitsa a cosy place for you?**
- I feel young. Until I see the beauty around I feel young. I am fine in Dupnitsa, this place is cosy for me.
- **Do you know your price? What is your assessment of yourself as an artist?**
- I do not paint my pictures for money. If I sell a painting it will be satisfying that the people like it.
- **Are you a maximalist? What is the most precious thing that you possess?**
- Maybe like more people giving something, I would like to give more than I receive. When I receive something it is very good to be more but not at any cost. If I cannot do something at the moment, I do not start it at all. For example, I would like to paint a picture but it is in my head only. I feel that it is not the moment to paint it yet on the paper. It could be in my head for a long period of time but when the time comes, when it has become ripe completely, I paint it. The most precious that I have is the love and beauty around me.
- **What glasses do you see the world through, except the sunglasses?**
- My „glasses“ are broader than the photographic film. I try not to pay attention to the vanity around me.
- **Does it occur to you to compare the human life with a melody? How sounds the melody of your life?**
- Actually, I have two periods in my life: first period was like rock or metal music. My life melody is a concert for flute by Mozart at the moment.
- **What are your synonyms for light?**
- Colours, watercolours. They could be very soft and very glittering. I like to paint with green and blue colors.
- **What is the biggest punishment to an artist? What is the biggest prize for him?**
- The biggest punishment is if you lose your pictures in a fire. If I lose my pictures it will be a real misfortune for me. My prize are my pictures; they are my wealth.
- **What type of artists do you belong to? To businessmen or to bohemians?**
- I belong to the bohemians as the business and art are two different things. I do not paint my pictures for selling them. Art is a way of life for me. I like the game of the colors, I try to do what I see and what I want to see.
- **Do you think that the hush has a dialog in itself and the silence embraces you?**
- I like when the hush of the countryside embraces me, but I do not like the loneliness. When I am lonely I suffer. I like when there are people around me, but not too many crowded at a place.

Bojoura Katsarova