

Pécs Workshop 1968-1980
"Mama Said Knock You Out"

PRESS RELEASE

The US rapper LL Cool J's fame was waning at the turn of the 1990s with the advance of gangsta rap. Yet he came back stronger than ever with a number one hit single produced by long time companion Marley Marl in 1991. The idea for the song came after a discussion with his grandmother who simply told him "Oh baby, just knock them out!" and knock'em out he did. Hungarian postwar art is largely unknown and underappreciated in the west primarily because of the Iron Curtain. Amongst the many great art movements in Eastern Europe I felt that *Pécs Workshop* was a cohesive unit that was far ahead of its time. Elements of this body of work can be spotted in the practices of contemporary visual and performance artists. It is high time for the *Pécs Workshop* to be appreciated by a wider audience and gain its rightful place in art history.

The *Pécs Workshop* was composed of Tamás Aknai, Ferenc Ficzek, Károly Halász, Károly Kismányoki, Sándor Pinczehelyi, Lajos Szelényi and Kálmán Szíjártó, all members of the Studio of Applied Arts of Pécs, led by Ferenc Lantos. The group considered the activity of the Bauhaus movement as exemplary. They were influenced by their peers from Pécs who were members of Bauhaus (Farkas Molnár and Alfréd Forbáth), as well as Jenő Gábor, Ferenc Martyn and Lajos Kassák. Beside printmaking, painting and photography, the group also used applied art techniques. In the early 1970's, the artists worked intensively with the enamel factory of Bonyhád, taking part in the Enamel Art Symposium created in 1968, and were also active in the field of graphic design. They developed an interest for new means of expression, especially land art, and the conceptual approach was clearly identifiable in the practices of Sándor Pinczehelyi and Károly Halász. The group was at the forefront of the renewal of constructive and avant-garde traditions of Hungarian art, under the tutelage of Ferenc Lantos. The artists' aim was to create a base for a new visual language and a new visual culture.

*Don't call it a comeback, I been here for years
Rocking my peers and putting suckas in fear
Making tears rain down like a monsson
Listen to the bass go boom
Explosion, overpowering
Over the competition am towering
Wrecking shop, when I drop
These lyrics that'll make you call the cops
Don't you dare stare, you better move
Don't ever compare
Me to the rest that'll all get sliced and diced
Competition's paying the price
I'm gonna knock you out HUUUH!!!
Mama said knock you out HUUUH!*

"Mama Said Knock You Out" by LL Cool J

The exhibition runs from 22 Sep-15 Oct 2015 at Baumgasse 42, 1030 Vienna.