OMARA Mara Oláh

(1945, Monor, Hungary – 2020, Szarvasgede, Hungary)

Education

1988 Self-taught; no formal artistic training.

Began drawing and painting independently at the age of forty-three.

Solo and two-person exhibitions

2026 "Do it after me." "Csinálják utánam.", Seventeen, London (Forthcoming)

Once They Were Talking About Dream Interpretation on the Radio. I Called In and Asked How It Was Possible That the Things I Dream About Always Come True., Longtermhandstand, Budapest
This Is What I See From the Back Window at Sunset, East Slovak Gallery (Východoslovenská galéria), Košice

2025 *Guess what, I'm still here*, Margot Samel, New York

2024 *DIKH OMARA*, gta exhibitions, ETH Zürich / ONA Fokushalle, Zurich

2023 *Woman to Woman*, with Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Palais de l'Europe, Council of Europe, Strasbourg
You Envied Me. So I Went on the World Wide Web and Even Copyrighted My Name..., Longtermhandstand, Budapest
You Let Me Play, ERIAC Art Space, Berlin
Amit gondolsz, az van lefestve, ENA Korner, Budapest

2022 *An Eclectic Attempt to Complete the Torso in My Head + Omara (Mara Oláh)*, UGM Studio / Maribor Art Gallery, Maribor
The Stormy Rains Are Showing Their Power..., Pina, Vienna

2021 *Omara Occupies the Sound-Space*, Kesztyűgyár Community House, OFF-Biennale Budapest / RomaMoMA, Budapest

2019 *I Don't Care About Your Negative Opinion*, Trapéz, Budapest

2017 *Mara's Provocative Breasts*, FERi – Feminist Project Gallery, Budapest
Think What You Want, aqb Project Space, Budapest

2011 *The Jewelry of One-Eyed Omara Is Only Visible With a Magnifying Glass*, Liget Gallery, Budapest

2010 *Solo exhibition*, Budapest Spring Festival, Budapest

2000 *Solo exhibition*, Hungarian Cultural Institute, Paris
Solo exhibition, Kultiplex Cultural Centre and Cinema, Budapest

1998 *Exhibition for prisoners*, Szolnok Prison, Szolnok
Solo exhibition, Graffity Art Cinema, Budapest

1996–2005 *Temporary exhibitions*, Omnibusz, Oriental Hotel, Budapest

1996 *Solo exhibition*, Secondary School, Tiszavasvár, supported by Tiszadob Children's Village
Solo exhibition, Tököl Prison, Tököl

1994 *Solo exhibition*, Hunnia Art Cinema, Budapest
Solo exhibition, Hotel Venus, Conference Hall, Budapest

1993 *Hungarian naiva*, American Embassy, Budapest; organised by ethnographer Pál Bánszky
Solo exhibition, Cultural Centre of District XI, Budapest

1992 *Solo exhibition*, Naïve Museum, Kecskemét

Group Exhibitions

2026 *Tears That Laugh, Laughs That Cry*, NOCA, Oradea
WIRED, Longtermhandstand, Budapest

2025 *passing the fugitive on*, 13th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, KW Institute for Contemporary Art and other venues, Berlin
Handle With Care. Berlin Edition, Collegium Hungaricum Berlin, Berlin
HŐSÉGRIADÓ: SITDOWNANDRELAX, Longtermhandstand, Budapest
Art-O-Rama Marseille 2025, presented by Longtermhandstand, Marseille
Call Your Mom, Longtermhandstand, Budapest

2024–25 *The Museum Between the Square and the Palace: WARSAW UNDER CONSTRUCTION 16*, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Warsaw

2024 *Echoes Within*, East Slovak Gallery, Košice; touring as House of Mine – Echoes Within, Virág Benedek Ház, Budapest
Eastern European Beauty – Contemporary Fashion Photography & the Eastern European Aesthetic, Robert Capa Contemporary Photography Center, Budapest
Kis magyar kockológia. A modernitás hajlékai a Kádár-korszakban, Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest
I CARE, therefore I am, Liszt Institute, Brussels
The Tale of the Magic Donkey Inn, Longtermhandstand, Budapest
Different Persons – Art From VUNU Gallery and Everybody Needs Art Collections, Kunsthalle Košice / VUNU Gallery, Košice
An Inside Out Attempt to Inhale and Exhale, Longtermhandstand, Budapest
Home from Home, Klosterruine Berlin, Berlin

2023–24 *Darker, Lighter, Puffy, Flat*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna

2023 *Handle with Care*, Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest
Not Either Or, But And, das weisse haus, Vienna
Gypsyism, Balkanism – Through a Glass, Darkly, ERIAC Serbia, Belgrade
Unveiling, Liget Gallery, Budapest
H: PRINCE OF DRAMA, VUNU Gallery / Kasárne-Kulturpark, Košice

2022 *One Day We Shall Celebrate Again: RomaMoMA*, documenta fifteen, Fridericianum, Kassel
Biennale Matter of Art 2022, Prague City Gallery and other venues, Prague
Different Solar Settings, David Kovats, London

2019 *ENA @ Parallel Vienna 2019*, Parallel Vienna, Vienna

2015 *Imagined Communities, Personal Imaginations – Private Nationalism Budapest*, Budapest Gallery and Kiscell Museum – Municipal Gallery, Budapest

2014 *Private Nationalism*, m21 Gallery, Prague
[silence] – A Holocaust Exhibition, Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest

2012 *Beszélő paletták – Hungarian Roma Fine Arts Exhibition*, Department for Social Inclusion Capacities, Ministry of Human Capacities, Budapest

2011 *Romantic Roads*, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris

2010 *Shukar! (Beautiful!) – Contemporary Roma Women's Art*, Hungarian Cultural Institute, New York

2009 *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe*, mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna

2007 *Mi arcunk*, Balázs János Gallery, Budapest
Lost Paradise, First Roma Pavilion, 52nd Venice Biennale, Venice

2006 *Common Space – Issues of Ethnical Minority and Cultural Identity in the Carpathian Basin*, Ernst Museum, Budapest

2004 *Basic Instinct – Contemporary Roma Art in Hungary*, Hungarian Cultural Institute, Berlin
The Hidden Holocaust, Műcsarnok/Kunsthalle Budapest

2003 *Roma Religious Pictures*, Hungarian Roma Parliament, Budapest
Paintings of the Tiszadob Artist Community, Hungarian Roma Parliament, Budapest
Orientalism in Contemporary Roma Art, Hungarian Roma Parliament, Budapest
Contemporary Roma Women's Art I, Hungarian Roma Parliament, Budapest
Group exhibition, Castle Gallery, Budapest
Group exhibition, Lobby of Budapest University of Economic Sciences, Budapest

2000 *III Art Exhibition for Autodidact Roma Artists*, Museum of Ethnography, Budapest

1994 *Group exhibition*, Hotel Gellért, Budapest

1993 *Group exhibition*, Kossuth Klub, Budapest

1992 *Group exhibition*, Cultural Centre, Hollókő
Group exhibition, Rátkai Club, Budapest
Group exhibition, Local Municipality Museum, Veszprém
Group exhibition, Cultural Centre, Kaposvár
Group exhibition, Jurisics Palace, Kőszeg

1991 *Group exhibition*, Vízivárosi Gallery, Budapest

Curatorial, Social Intervention and Design Projects

c. 2010s Tarot and broadcast interventions: designed a set of tarot cards using motifs from her paintings, later circulated as inserts in women's magazines; appeared on television as a fortune teller, incorporating media presence into her broader artistic practice.

2000s–20 Szarvasgede home / "luxury shack": designed and built her own home, covered its exterior with painted scenes and text, and used the living space as an informal exhibition venue and gathering place.

2007 First Roma Pavilion, 52nd Venice Biennale: intervention at the opening in which Omara handed her glass eye to George Soros; later discussed by curator Tímea Junghaus as a pivotal example of the actions and performative gestures integral to her practice.

1996–98 Prison exhibitions and visits at Tököl Prison and Szolnok Prison, extending her work beyond conventional art venues and into sustained engagement with incarcerated audiences.

1993 Mara Gallery, Kispest, Budapest: founded in her apartment, widely cited as the first private Roma art gallery in Hungary.

Monographs, Artist's Books and Exhibitions Publications

2021 Omara and János Háy. Amit gondolsz – az van lefestve. [Komárom]: Poket Publishing, 2021. 125 pp. ISBN 978-615-6384-00-3.

2013 Junghaus, Tímea. "Az 'episztemikus engedetlenség.' Omara Kék sorozatának dekolonializált olvasata" ["Epistemic Disobedience: A Decolonial Reading of Omara's Blue Series"]. Ars Hungarica 39, no. 3 (2013): 302–317.

2007 Junghaus, Tímea, and Katalin Székely, eds. Lost Paradise: First Roma Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale. Exhibition catalogue, 2007.

2006 Omara. The Gypsy Mother Deserves a Crown. Autobiography, privately published, 2006.

1997 Omara. OMara festőművész [Painter Omara]. Self-published. Szolnok: Repro Stúdió, 1997.

Public Collections

Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest
Museum of Fine Arts – Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest
Museum of Ethnography, Budapest
Hungarian Naïve Artists' Collection, Katona József Museum, Kecskemét
Romano Kher Roma Cultural Center, Budapest
And a major UK institution to be announced