

Strasser

LONDON,

14th November, 1930.

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter of October 27th, and have pleasure in replying to your three questions contained therein.

1. There was no special moment in my life when I had to decide on my future career or to choose a profession. I grew up in surroundings far remote from any artistic influence, and experienced only great struggles and difficulties. As far back as my earliest childhood days my only wish was to draw and paint, and nothing else in life interested me more than this.
2. I struggled in my earliest days to accomplish my dream and to become a painter, and incessantly, up to the present day, without influence, I continue in the same manner as during my student days; every canvas a new hope to create something better.
3. Until my fourteenth and fifteenth year I found myself at home handicapped from every point of view, and the more difficulties I had to overcome the more I strived to achieve my dream, to reach, as far as it is humanly possible, perfection in Art.

For your further information I would say that there was one great moment in my career which I think was of great assistance and advantageous to the progress I made. When I arrived in Paris in the Autumn (October) of 1890

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I was in possession of a Scholarship of which I made no use, and I utilized my own earned money in a most provident manner. I had a letter of introduction with me from Count Cseky, the Hungarian Minister of Education at that time, to the great Hungarian artist, Munkacsy. The day after my arrival in Paris I presented this letter to the great master. It was on a Friday, a day on which Munkacsy and his wife received their friends, and I saw hundreds of fine carriages standing in front of his palace which was crowded with admirers. Thin and shy I was permitted to present myself to that fine and great artist, whose personality and career I had followed with intense eagerness from my childhood, and you can imagine what my feelings were when he shook hands with me. After looking through several of my drawings which I showed to him he said to me: "Young man, if you are wise and do not fall a victim to the million temptations of this great city, you have a future. You will either achieve what you dream, or will go down entirely." With these words deeply impressed in my mind I left Munkacsy and the crowd in his palace. Next day I was accepted at the Academie Julian, and began my work. I saw the life of my colleagues and compatriots, which disgusted me. Those words of Munkacsy were burning letters in my heart and soul, and I lived only for one thing, and that was my work, and I kept away with rigidity from everything else. That visit to Munkacsy I consider was the turning point in my life.

I should be very pleased to hear further from you.

Yours sincerely,

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