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Works of painter Horia Damian shown in Romania for first time in 60 years

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For the first time since he left Romania in 1946, works of the painter and sculptor Horia Damian, an important figure of contemporary art, are on show in two exhibitions in his home country, in Bucharest.

“Today he is giving joy just to us Romanians,” after “having spread his work all over the world to enjoy it”, President Traian Basescu said on the opening of the exhibition at the National Museum of Contemporary Art (Mnac), which gathers about 60 of the artist’s most recent works.

Born in Bucharest in 1922, Damian had already exhibited in Romania before leaving for Paris in 1946, where he was a student at Andre Lhote and Fernand Leger’s studios.

He then exhibited in some of the most important museums in the world, from the Guggenheim in New York to the Pompidou Centre in Paris. Hosted in several halls in the gigantic palace built by the former Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, where the Mnac is located, the exhibition running until November 8 includes pieces created mainly after 2002, like *Eve Sleeping*, *The Philosopher*, *The Miracle* and *The Blue Plane*.

Damian’s early paintings and sketches are also shown, in the Mogosaia palace, on the outskirts of Bucharest, in an exhibition on until October 13.

These works created between the age of eight and 24 prove his “amazing and early maturity”, said Professor Radu Varia, organiser of most of Damian’s exhibitions in the world, including this one.

According to Basescu, the exhibitions are taking place “at an important moment for us, 20 years after gaining our freedom”. Romania will soon commemorate the fall of Ceausescu in December 1989.