

# Hungarian Stamps 2010

## FAMOUS HUNGARIANS BICENTENARY OF MIKLÓS BARABÁS'S BIRTH



Magyar Posta is commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Miklós Barabás by issuing a special stamp.

**Miklós Barabás** (Márkusfalva/Márkosfalva [later Kézdimárkosfalva, today Mărcușa, Romania] 10 February 1810 – Budapest, 12 February 1898) was a painter, the most outstanding master of the Hungarian Biedermeier, and a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He was born into a poor family, one of many children. His father was János Barabás and his mother was Therézia Gaál. He studied at the Nagyenyed College and took up portraiture at a young age. He endured great hardships while he was a student, but he forgot all his misery when he could draw. In this way he had some successes and also made a modest living. His love of art grew stronger and stronger, and in 1828 he went to Kolozsvár (now Cluj, Romania), where he learnt the basics of oil painting from an Italian master Gentiluomo. The thirst for knowledge took him to Vienna, where he attended the Academy of Fine Arts. He lived

in extreme poverty but his strong will and unflinching devotion to painting helped him through these hard times. In 1830 he returned to Kolozsvár, where he began portrait painting, and then moved to Bucharest, where he achieved success as a fashionable portrait painter, earning considerable sums with his works. This enabled him to make his old wish to further his studies in Italy come true. In 1834 he was a frequent visitor to the Venetian galleries. All day long he made quick watercolour sketches capturing the principles of composition, colours and forms of the great masters. Later he went to Bologna, Florence and Rome as well as sun-drenched Naples, returning to Hungary in 1835 full of new experiences. He reaped his first success in Pest in 1835 when he showed his copy of Veronese's *The Rape of Europa*, which he painted in Venice. From then on he became one of the most sought after Hungarian portrait painters. Every year he painted the portraits of many eminent figures such as Miklós Wesselényi, Mihály Vörösmarty, Sándor Petőfi, István Széchenyi and János Arany. In 1840 he settled in Pest and in 1841 married Zsuzsanna Bois de Chesne. From this onwards his financial worries were a thing of the past and he could devote his life entirely to painting. He withdrew into his studio and became totally immersed in his creative work for a long time. He painted countless true Biedermeier genre paintings and landscapes with refined moods. His visual memory was astounding. He was the initiator of the Society of Fine Arts and from 1862 until his death he was its president. In 1867 he became a Member of Parliament, representing Pest. This talented, erudite and sought after portrait painter captured the likenesses of many of the country's great personalities of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of his genre paintings reflected the spirit of the age, which further enhanced his popularity. In 1877 the fiftieth anniversary of his artistic career was exuberantly feted, and even after that he painted with youthful zeal for a long time. In 1896 he won a gold medal at the Millennium exhibition. He died on 12 February 1898. (Source: [hu.wikipedia.org](http://hu.wikipedia.org))

The special stamp features Miklós Barabás's *Self-Portrait* (1841) while on the first day cover there is a detail of his painting *Venice at Dusk* (1834). Both works are prized pieces in the collection of the Hungarian National Gallery. The design of the special postmark is a composition of the indispensable tools of an artist, a palette and brushes, surrounded by a laurel wreath.

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