

THE WOMAN IN THE LIFE AND THE WORK OF ART BELONGING TO SCULPTOR CONSTANTIN BRÂNCUȘI

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ABSTRACT: THE IDEAL OF SIMPLICITY, NATURALNESS, BEAUTY WAS REVERSED IN SCULPTURE BY THE GREAT SCULPTOR CONSTANTIN BRÂNCUȘI. THROUGH THIS SIMPLICITY HE KNEW THE PERFECTION AND LAID THE FOUNDATIONS OF WHAT MODERN ART MEANS. THE WORK POWER, INSPIRATION AND THE SCULPTOR'S OWN FLIGHT WAS GIVEN TO HIM BY WOMEN, WHO WERE FOR CONSTANTIN BRÂNCUȘI EVERYTHING, ONLY WIFE AND MOTHER OF HIS CHILDREN, NO.

KEYWORDS: CONSTANTIN BRÂNCUȘI, WOMEN, MUSEUMS, SCULPTURES, WORK OF ART, BEAUTY, IDEALS;

Introduction

Born on February 19, 1876, in the Hobița of the United Romanian Principalities, now the village of Peștișani in Gorj County, Romania, Brâncuși loved the beautiful and immortalized it in sculpture, painting and photography. The very etymology of the first name bearing "Constantine" establishes its constant. The word "Constantin" comes from the Latin "Constantinus" which means constant, stability, firmness.

In an interpretation of the first name "Constantine" according to a kabalistic method (from the Kabalarian Philosophy site) it has a double meaning that sometimes gives rise to extreme happiness, expressiveness, a warm and humorous attitude, and sometimes to a depressive, capricious state, of alienation or self-pity². If a person bearing this name manages to express only their constructive characteristics and suppress their negative characteristics, it can become a very pleasant company. The male person who bear this first name has a profound, philosophical, refined personality, but he also has a great sensitivity which, depending on how it is managed, can climb the heights of success or make him suffer very bad injuries.

Constantin Brâncuși was very attractive to women, and women were the same for the famous sculptor. There were women, they were lovers, they were museums, they were

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² <https://www.diane.ro/2013/05/constantin-nume-semnificatie-origine.html>

pleasures, they were seductions, they were "sponsors", they were freedom, they were comfort, they were delusional, they were working power, they were disciples, they were life, they were flight. Women were everything to Brâncuși, except for two hypostases: spouses and mothers for his children³. None of the women who entered the sculptor's life could offer, all Brâncuși wanted from a woman. The women in Constantin Brâncuși's life have made a huge contribution to the life and work of the great sculptor.

The relationship between Brâncuși and the womans

The relationship between Brâncuși and the woman highlighted several aspects:

- A man's best friend is the woman;
- The strongest muse of a man is the woman;
- The woman who knows how to best bind a wound is the woman;
- The most beautiful flight you get as a man is from a woman.
- The best entrepreneur is the woman.

Although he was surrounded by beautiful women, he appreciated, he sublimated them to the forms depicted in his works, giving them immortality, to them, but especially to him.

From the descriptions made by the women around him, he was a simple, natural, loving man, but he had a timidity and a respect for the feminine beauty he idealized.

He valued work, he loved the truth. He was sharing his knowledge with love. He was teaching his friends how to keep the "chisel and hammer", as Margareta Cosăceanu Lavrillier also said.

His ideal of simplicity, of naturalness, of beauty, his bizarre humanity overturned in his sculpture, in his photography and he obtained excellency.

Essential to him, was to be reconciled with yourself.

The sculptor Barbara Hepworth, in 1952, London Carvings and Drawings, after visiting the sculptor's workshop, said about Brâncuși *"I felt the strength of Brâncuși's personality and his determination to carve stone and wood. Everything I saw in this workshop showed the balance between the evolving form and the finished sculptures, the humanity that breathed them, the full unity between form and matter."*

Marcel Mihalovici said about Brâncuși *"Brâncuși had a weakness for everything that was beautiful, including for women."*⁴

³ Despite the fact that Vera Moor gave birth to a child, John Constantin Brâncuși Moore, the sculptor Constantin Brâncuși never recognized him, and when he learned that pianist Vera Moor was pregnant, their love affair ceased.

⁴ <https://www.eva.ro/actualitate/tema-zilei/iubirile-lui-Brâncuși-femeile-care-i-au-marcate-viata-si-opera-articol-214657.html>

Although there is no exhaustive list of the data of the women of Constantin Brâncuși's life, the most important women, with whom they were created or cared for, under different aspects, the consecrated works of the great artist, or near which he lived moments of the most beautiful, we mention: Baroness Renee Irana Franchon, Margit Pogany, Leonie Ricou - Madame LR, Princess Marie Bonaparte, Milița Petrașcu, Irina Codreanu, Lizica Codreanu, Sanda Kessel, Peggy Gugenheim, Berrenice Abbott, Eileen Lane, Cella de la Vrancea, Nancy Cella de Vrancea , Agnes Meyer, Marthe Lebherz, Florence Meyer, Vera Moor, Margareta Cosaceanu Lavrillier, Barbara Hepworth, Arethia Tătărăscu, Maria Tanase, Sonia Terk-Delaunay, Margit Brauner-Kosch, Maria Chaliapine, Juana Muller and others.

Baroness Renee Irana Frachon - art collector.

From her, Constantin Brâncuși "collected" the admiration and transformed it into his muse. Her spirit inspired the sculptor to create the "*Sleeping Museum*" - 5 versions in bronze, three versions in marble, but also in wood. During the same period, 1909 -1910, the Baroness was also a muse for the sculptures "*Baroness*", "*Study for Baroness R.F*" and "*A muse*".

Margit Pogani - Romanian painter of Hungarian origin

She posed for him until she made him fall in love with her. He loved like a romanian, even though his fate was to be far away from Romania. For a short time, three seasons in 1910, he had a love affair with Miss Pogany, which he remembered for more than 20 years. The talented painter determined the sculptor to reproduce her in 19 works entitled "*Miss Pogany*", which he completed in 20 years.

The greatest pleasure for the sculptor was to see his lover recognizing herself in his work.

In 1913 he exhibited the opera "Miss Pogany" in the United States, where he aroused a great interest.

The correspondence between them lasted 27 years, from 1909 to 1937⁵.

Leonie Ricou - rich aristocrat from Paris

She was Constantin Brâncuși's muse in carrying out the artwork "*Madame L.R.*", after a loving relationship, between 1914-1917.

The work was not exhibited, being held in his workshop. This work ranked second in the list of the most expensive works of art sold in Paris, reaching the art collection of Yvet Saint Laurent.

⁵ <https://www.efemeride.ro/femeile-din-viata-lui-Brancusi/>

Marie Bonaparte - Princess of Greece and Denmark, with a colossal estate legacy in Monte Carlo.⁶

He entered Brâncuși's workshop as a model, between the two he was more than that.

The sculptor portrayed it in the opera "*Princess X*", which can be viewed from two angles: from the point of view of a vain woman or from the perspective of a phallus.

The exhibition of the work in 1919, at the Salon of Independent Artists made the work "very scandalous", and this had two major consequences: the vain princess left him, and the artwork was excluded from the exhibition.

Constantin Brâncuși said then: "*I made the matter say what it cannot say. And what's the matter with the woman? A smile between the lace and the blush on the cheeks. In order to release this entity, to bring this eternal into the realm of sensibility in ephemeral forms, for 5 years I simplified.*"

Milița Petrașcu - the first apprentice of Romanian origin in Brâncuși's workshop

He made a bust of the sculptor, who modeled his cheeks alone, after posing for it. Currently the work is at the Art Museum in Craiova. Milița Petrașcu had a passion for Brâncuși, and this was a benefit for Romania. This determined Arethia Tătărăscu to entrust to Brâncuși the achievement of the Monumental Ensemble Calea Eroilor.

Irina Codreanu, Lizica Codreanu and Sanda Kessel - sculptors and students of Constantin Brâncuși

The sculptor Constantin Brâncuși called them in boys names so they could be punished when they were wrong. Irina was told "Costică". She fell in love with Brâncuși and her sister, Lizica Codreanu also fell in love with Brâncuși, being a muse. The sculptor built a series of three stage costumes for "*Gymnopedies*", Eric Satie's ballet. Lizica Codreanu was a ballerina.

Peggy Gugenheim - the heir to a colossal fortune, after his father disappeared in the wreck of the Titanic; vehement collector of modern works of art;

Between them was born a love story that lasted 20 years, between 1921 - 1940. The American billionaire wanted very much an opera realized by Brâncuși. He seduced him to create a friendship so that she could approach the sculptor, who was looking at people reluctantly. She bought the \$ 4,000 modern art work "*Bird in the Forest*", a bronze work. The price demanded by the sculptor generated a great dispute between the two. Peggy stated in her book that Brâncuși demands monstrous amounts for his works from those who want to purchase them.

⁶ <http://www.uzpbihor.ro/femeile-din-viata-lui-Brancusi/>

In “*The confessions of an art addict*”, Peggy Gugenheim said about Constantin Brâncuși: “*He was half smart peasant, half god. An extraordinary man, short and bearded, with black eyes and a sharp look, made me very happy, but unfortunately he had become possessive and wanted me to dedicate my whole time to him.*”

This highlights many of the sculptor's flaws, and at the same time an unseen part of him, which combats Constantin Brâncuși's own person and his beliefs.

It also describes the sculptor as being obsessed with the idea that someone was spying on him and had a persecution complex. The sculptor caressed her “*Capri*”.⁷

Berenice Abbott - one of the most titled photographers in New York

The friend and girlfriend of his friend, the great sculptor Man Ray, steps into Constantin Brâncuși's workshop and becomes his pupil.

Between Berenice Abbott and Constantin Brâncuși an ambiguous relationship is born, some of her friend suspect a passionate relationship between them.

It is certain that after studying in Paris, in the sculptor's workshop, Berenice Abbott gave up sculpture and began studying photography near Man Ray, becoming in the 1930s a name in photographic art in New York.

Eilleen Lane

Another intense love story was between Constantin Brâncuși and Eileen Lane, an American of Irish origin who the sculptor brought to Hobița, where she even dressed in the traditional Romanian port. When he asked her to accompany him to Romania, he told her he would introduce her as his daughter⁸. She wanted to be his wife, but the sculptor told him that he did not have the quality of husband. The idyll between the two lasted a few months, in 1922, but this was the sculptor's muse, in performing the “*Eilleen Lane*” art work.⁹

Cella Delavrancea - pianist

The year 1922 brings a renowned woman to the workshop of the sculptor in Paris, with whom she has a short love story. She described it later. “*Two small blue eyes pierced my gaze in the shadow of deep orbits. Sloth, suspicion and a glimmer of hostility played into them.*”

Nancy Cunard - poet

Nonconformist poet, hardened activist against communism and fascism became a muse, and from 1923 entered the life of the sculptor. They lived a love story that the poet did not forget until death.

⁷ <http://www.cunoastelumea.ro/femeile-din-viata-lui-constantin-Brâncuși/>

⁸ <http://www.cunoastelumea.ro/femeile-din-viata-lui-constantin-Brâncuși/>

⁹ <http://jurnalul.ro/thumbs/int/2015/06/11/femeile-din-viata-lui-Brâncuși-au-ajuns-statui-18507292.jpg>

She inspired Constantin Brâncuși to sculpt the artworks "*Sophisticated Young Woman*" and "*Blonde Negress*", but she never posed for Brâncuși.

The modern art sculpture "*Sophisticated Young Woman*" was sold in 2018 for 71 million dollars, also registering a new record for Brâncuși's artwork.

Agnez Meyer - the first female reporter employed by the New York Sun

This protected and promoted Brâncuși, bringing to his workshop some of the most important collections of the time. - Miss Beckett, Mrs. Picabia. Their relationship materialized in the sculpture "*La Reine Pas Dédaigneuse*".

Marthe Lebherz - Swiss dancer

The woman who in 1926 enters Constantin Brâncuși's life as a secretary at the workshop, but it becomes one of his most important loves. They had plans to live together, the sculptor bought land for the house, promising her that he would marry her. He was sending drawings from New York with the theme of the Kiss.

Florence Meyer - professional ballerina

She meets Brâncuși in 1929 when she comes to Paris where he creates a love story, which lasts, by extending the letters between the two, until 1947. 15 letters were auctioned, but as they contained notes about personal life and not about the opera, were not introduced in the national cultural heritage. In 1938 Constantin Brâncuși wrote to Florence that he was waiting for her with all his love and that he was thinking of her all the time. She represented for Constantin Brâncuși an "object of worship", which another woman was not for the sculptor.¹⁰

For her, she sculpted the opera "*Miracol*" (Foca).

Vera Moor - pianist

The Jewish New Zealander met the sculptor in 1931 after a concert held by her. They met after the concert, and continued dating for about 4 years. In 1934 Vera gives birth to John Constantin Brâncuși Moore, who became a professional photographer at Crazy Horse in Paris. Constantin Brâncuși never recognized his child and never spoke to the latter. Upon hearing the news that Vera Moore is pregnant, she broke off her love affair with him¹¹.

Vera Moor was the most beloved woman in the sculptor's life, and other women in Brâncuși's life called her "*The Witch*."

¹⁰ <https://www.eva.ro/actualitate/tema-zilei/iubirile-lui-Brâncuși-femeile-care-i-au-marcet-viata-si-opera-articol-214657.html>

¹¹ idem

Arethia Tătărăscu - president of the women's league in Gorj, the wife of the Romanian Prime Minister, Gheorghe Tătărăscu

After the sculptor's visit to his workshop in Paris, in the early 1930s, Constantin Brâncuși comes to Romania, where he is employed by Arethia Tătărăscu to build the monumental ensemble dedicated to heroes. 7 years later, at Tg-Jiu, the Monumental Ensemble of Calea heroes is inaugurated, containing 3 Brâncuși sculptures: Infinity Column, Kiss Gate and Silence Table.

There seems to have been an idyll between the two.

Maria Tanase - renowned singer

The two met in Paris in 1938, when Constantin Brâncuși had already become famous.

She had arrived in Paris to play in a restaurant, being in Dimitrie Gusti's delegation for the Paris International Exhibition. She was 25, he was 62. They lived a short passionate relationship. Destiny brought them back, one in the other's path, meeting New York after years, when the singer had also gained notoriety. Brâncuși was jealous that she was singing for the President of America.¹²

The ironic attitude of Brâncuși caused the singer to leave. She said about the love between the two "*it came at the right time and it lasted exactly as long as we needed to, until we got bored with each other.*"¹³

Juana Muller - sculptor

She came to Paris with a scholarship in 1937, and two years later he worked in Brâncuși's workshop. It helped him to realize the modern art work "*Flying Turtle*", exposed in the Guggenheim Museum, New York.

Sonia Terk-Delaunay

Brâncuși's closest person, in the last years of his life, was a woman, Sonia Terk-Delaunay. She was the one who convinced him to establish since his life, who would have to take care of his works of art and who would take care of the workshop. Thus, Constantin Brâncuși made a will. Sonia told the story about the sculptor that he confessed to her that after his love with Vera Moor "*willingly and unashamedly I became an ascetic*", never loving another woman again.¹⁴

¹² <https://www.efemeride.ro/femeile-din-viata-lui-Brâncuși/>

¹³ <http://www.cunoastelumea.ro/femeile-din-viata-lui-constantin-Brâncuși/>

¹⁴ <https://www.eva.ro/actualitate/tema-zilei/iubirile-lui-Brâncuși-femeile-care-i-au-marcet-viata-si-opera-articol-214657.html>

However, the most important woman in Constantin Brâncuși's life was his mother, and with all the imperfections of the sculptor's greatest struggle, in the last years of his life, was that "he could not pass away in his country." The longing for the homeland, his mother, his Oltenians, the longing for the Jiu's waters, were part of his being, and these were accentuated when he heard Romanian folk songs.

If in modern sculpture Constantin Brâncuși gave the woman the well-deserved place, in his daily life she offered women only bits of what a woman should have meant for a man.

His inner turmoil, his obsessed nature, made him in his personal life everything else instead of what he needed.

With everything that can ever be described, the woman remains the very essence of life, rendered in lyrics, paintings, photographs, sculptures, music and in all of ourselves, famous or not.

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