

## **RESUME (SUMMARY)**

The richest and most original chapter of the Roumanian drawing in the interbellic period is the portrait. The portrait tradition in the Roumanian painting was at that time more than four century old. This period is characterised by an avalanche of portraits, not only due to the quantity, but also through the interest which the human physiognomy as an instrument of knowing the universe was thought to offer. There were many thorough portraits which were a part of the social and individual existence of the time, as well as the people.

The human figure is one of the constants of the artistic endeavour practiced through all the periods of time and all over the world. The artist who attempts to get behind the apparent mask of the models finds himself in a similar situation to that of an explorer who is in search of new territories.

The Roumanian artists demonstrate their creative capacities of conscious involvement in fascinating works.

Portraits were one of the initial preoccupations of the laborious artist who was Cecilia Cuțescu-Storck and they continued to occupy her attention in later years. Some depressed and sad figures in the first years were replaced by other brighter, more vigorous, more combative ones, by no means less interior and significant, but on the contrary.

In her memories, published under the title of “A life’s Fresco”, the artist herself confesses: “What interested me at my models, was not the desire of painting their portraits, but they gave me the pretext for arabesques and lines, of play of surfaces and volumes... Simplifying the nature and reducing it to contours, I was enhancing its character and expression...”

Vigourously built, by valuing and not linearity, therefore with the due picturality, are the portraits of a “Worker”, of the architect Gabriela Storck and of the artist Elisabeta Henția. The coloring is here more powerful, more vibrant, the contouring more flexible, the masses more consistent. Remarkably real is the “Head of Child”. The heads of expression of “Porter”, and “Vasile” are especially profound as psychology and “Revolutionary’s Head” (side view) gives evidence of the inner tension and has a bright air. It is an especially spiritualised figure. Spirituality, intellectualisation and a more lucid psychology, pervaded by the feeling of man’s responsibility for the society characterises many of the faces and figures of the characters painted by Cecilia Cuțescu–Storck, who also in this respect, together with other great painters overcame the elementary, picturesque portrait-painting, in favour of a more significant, more evolved, more thoughtful, and fuller of superior frets, portrait-painting.

In 1905, Cecilia Cuțescu–Storck succeeds in opening her own exhibition at Hassel, in rue Laffite. Here she displays, among others, the canvasses: “The Fisherman” and “The Vagabond”, the result of a holiday in Normandy. “The Fisherman” (now displayed at the Simu Museum), kept in a discreet brown hue, with warm tones, is pictured with the fishing rod at the brink of the water, in an enveloping atmosphere of quiet, in the bosom of the nature. “The Vagabond”, (now displayed at the Theodor Amman in Craiova), is represented as standing, in his ragged clothes, with his cheek rifted by wrinkles, with dreamy blue eyes, and pictured as stooped by the sack carried on his back, against a clouded sky on which horizon one can see the hills of Trouville and factories chimneys.

Elena Popea, in 1921, in a vast exhibition in Cluj, displays the double portrait of character "Old Ladies", in which her sensitive temperament gets gravity, the hues get delicacy, the drawing gets certainty and equilibrium.

Elena Popea, being attentive to construction and expression, using a diluted colour which recollects watercolour in live hues, paints "Heads of Children", "Girls of Bretany", Portrait of a Girl in Vinga", "Portrait of a Peasant Lady", figures of Transylvanian peasants and others, such as the "Self Portrait" of the artist.

Her art gains in depth and is enriched in expressivity. Elena Popea masters a nuanced technique and language of an art filled with intense emotion, likening it to the art of some great artists of the West.

In water colour painting, Rodica Maniu, confirmed fully her artistic qualities, as numerous critics in the interbellic period appreciated her as a great water colour artist, a fame which she kept until the end of her life. Rodica Maniu proves to be a skillful artist of the portrait: the portrait of the mother and of the brother.

The types chosen by Rodica Maniu in the works in her Dobrujan series represent heads of Turks and Tartars, whose features and Oriental clothes attracted her.

A symbol of a mood - a genre which Rodica Maniu loved and cherished over the years are the works which belong to the so-called series for the crinolines, or the "women in epoch dresses".

Bearing for the beginning suggestive titles like: "Portrait since old times", "Fashion 1860", "Granny's Dress", "Brown Grand-Grandmother", the works with time, begin to bear the name of the moods they symbolise, such as: "Meditation", "Melancholy", "Dreamtime", and so on. Evoking more of a spiritual atmosphere than a touchable reality, the works have the

characteristic mark of elegant discretion and finesse, which gives them a rare distinction.

Margareta Sterian works in a completely different interpretative manner, which is shown in the few portraits which she painted during her long career.

One of the best examples is called “The Portrait of the Newspaperwoman Apriliana Medeanu” represents a pyramidal construction in which the stress is on the emphasising of the data of the form of the head.

In 1929 Margareta Sterian paints two works, “Boy from Drăguș”, and “Children from Drăguș”. They represent a deliberately coherent and quiet approach through finality and pragmatism.

Magdalena Rădulescu is a singular figure of the Roumanian and European painting, who erected in the spaces of modern art the signs of Roumanian spirituality to the level of universal values.

The portrait of “Ion Sava” with whom the artist worked at the National Theatre, is the one due to whom she painted numerous portraits of actors: “Marioara Voiculescu”, in a monumental composition, or “Ion Finteșteanu”, with a face of a tragic clown, as well as other portraits: “Lili Carondino”, “N. Carondino”, “Tantzi Cocea”, “Clody Bertola”, “Octavian Neamțu” with his wife, “Elena Neamțu”, the actor “N. Moțoc”, “Dr. Maria Avramescu”, one of the most constant friends, painted in numerous paintings, “Zaharia Stancu”, “Ion Biberi”, “Cella Serghi”, “D. Paleolog”, (drawn on a golden background, a technique which the artist develops beginning with 1933), “Fifi Mihalovici”, “Vera Proca-Ciortea”, “Gabriel Negri”, “Petru Comarnescu” (vigorously drawn in severe lines).

A great echo and success enjoyed at its exhibit the portrait “The Egyptian Woman”. The dreamy eyes, the oval of the face perfectly drawn,

the sombre colours underlined by white lights and a few accents of red and blue make this one of the most complete and expressive portraits in the Roumanian portrait painting, as well as “Eminé”, a young and dreamy girl, envelopped in white. Other portraits, of young girls, of flower selling women and gypsy women, a young Albanian man, or scenes of maternity, dancers, clowns, as well as anonymous portraits, complete the glory of Magdalena Rădulescu’s portrait painting.

Michaela Eleuteriade stays within the same colour hues which require a totally unusual sensitivity, comprising quiet and charm.

A portrait of a peasant, “Boy with Fiddle”, dating from 1926, imposes itself with the authority of the monumental. The elongation of the shapes does not look for elegance, but for an integration of their volumes of a quiet white in the compositional field of the painting.

Sometimes the monumental is obvious in paintings of peasants, as in that “Moş Manea” of 1938 in which the character, having its looks loaded with sadness, seems to be carved in old wood.

Ligia Macovei, a complex and multilateral temperament, remarked herself in painting and in the whole of her work the drawing holds the first place.

Ligia Macovei exhibits several works often named according to the clothing attributes: “White Hat”, “Yellow Hat”, “Green Earrings”, “Flowered Dress”, “Red Dress” and others.

The artist manages to discover features of a delicate humanity, as in the works: “Adolescent Girl”, “Spring of the Poet”, or in “Woman in the Balcony”.

The artist’s compassion towards the poor and the simple, people of an astute honesty, daring in their resolution to fight for the change of their condition,

transpires in paintings as: “Sicilian Woman with Oranges” or “Family of Sicilian Fishermen”

## **1. The Personal Paintings**

In my paintings, both compositions and portraits, the colors are rich in brightness and sensuality, through the fine and strong drawing line. I always conceive my work to be interesting and tender, by making it vibrate in a pure color. At the same time I fortify my drawing in which I see the noble part of the art and the basis of painting. It plays a very important part in my work as well as the color does. I use the light to express my feelings and my thoughts.

The painting is similar to serenity and harmony with a spontaneous and vivid touchline.

The human figure is one of the most important parts in art, used everywhere, anywhere. The artist is a good psychologist, because he expresses what the empiric doesn't. He needs intuition, perseverance and talent. My portraits represent a fascinating artistic experience, being tidy and in smooth colors.

In the self-portrait the smile is almost perceptible, and the look is piercing, suggesting inside peace. Through the sensibility of the touchline, the refinement on the colors (both in carnation and in clothing) individuality is suggested.

In the portrait of my mother, I used a very gentle a various palette of red, from very bright to very dark, in perfect harmony with her blue eyes, and her expression reveals wisdom and a strong personality.

## 2. RESTORED PAINTINGS:

The art collections belonging to the Brukenthal National Museum, as well as those belonging to other museums in our country and throughout the world, culturally illustrate centuries of history, gathering works of art of inestimable value, heritage which is threatened both by the passing of time and by other factors. Careful protection of the cultural heritage and sustained efforts for preserving it and enhancing the value of this historical evolution are needed.

Two types of analysis are to be found in any laboratory which takes into account the working norms: the non-destructive analysis and the in depth one. The paintings brought into the Restoration Laboratory of the Brukenthal National Museum, like any other object brought into laboratory to be examined, are aimed at providing an amount of documentation as complex and as scientific as possible. The paintings have started being examined from an optical point of view with the use of both natural and artificial light. During a first phase we studied the paintings in controlled natural light (lit straightly, sideways and skimmingly). The areas of interest and the details were examined with the help of a magnifying glass and an adjustable loupe attached to some glasses. The entire process was supported by the necessary photographic documentation for those areas that would later on be acted upon, as well as by overall images. Besides natural light, we also used the ultraviolet lamp and the RX radiography for studying the surface of the painting.

As a result of the physical, chemical and biological analyses that have been performed, I can say that I have all the necessary documentation for

diagnosing the conservation state of the paintings in the laboratory and proposing further interventions aimed at saving and protecting the paintings.

### **2.1. The Conservation and Restoration of the Painting Entitled *Landscape*, bearing the inventory number 1935, general data.**

The painting represents a realistic landscape with houses outlined in the foreground, on the left side of the picture, and hills in the background. It seems to be a sketch for a larger painting. The drawing was initially outlined in china ink with energetic touches of colour being drawn afterwards.

Comparing this landscape with other paintings belonging to the same authoress, we notice that it is a less elaborated work of art and thus it can be regarded as a draft. Its chromatics is fairly complex, with multiple shades. The artist tries to harmonize warm colours such as ochre, yellow, green, brown with cold ones such as blue, violet and various shades of grey.

### **2.2. The Detailed Account of the Conservation State of the Painting Entitled *Landscape*.**

The underframe, made of fir wood, is 65.5/47.5 cm in dimension with the thickness and width of the rod being of 4.5/1.5cm wide; it is cut in a 45° angle, glued and fixed with metallic nails; it does not have a wedge for the canvas. As a result of the wood having dried, the frame displays slight distortions, which endanger the resistance of the painted canvas, as well as

scratches and pricks due to improper handling and adherent dirt; it also displays the traces of a label having been stuck on it.

The canvas is fixed on the underframe with metallic nails disposed at a distance of 6.5 cm and 3 cm. The distance of 6.5 cm is much too large and therefore, in order to prevent the canvas from becoming uneven, I propose supplementing the number of nails.

The canvas is uneven and displays a prick caused by improper handling and there is dust on the back of the canvas.

The canvas has a smooth fabric made of 17 woof threads and 19 warp threads.

The roughcast layer on the upper left side of the painting has become thin and in the pricked area it completely lacks.

The colour layer displays scratches due to careless handling of the painting and on the upper left side portions of colour are missing.

The varnish layer is uneven and it has become shabby. Adherence of dirt can be observed on the surface of the painting.

### **2.3. The Actual Restoration Process of the Painting Entitled *Landscape*:**

1. Drawing up the photographic documentation and the conservation data sheet with the state of the painting before being restored.
2. Superficial dust cleaning, process carried out with the help of soft brushes and a vacuum cleaner.
3. Protecting the pricked area by applying Japanese foil on it.

4. The next stage was the detaching of the painting from the old underframe.
5. Making up a proper underframe provided with a backing slant and wedges on which the label bearing the inventory number was transferred from the old underframe.
6. Restoring the plainness of the painting by alternating warm compresses with cold ones.
7. Fixing the wedges on the underframe with the use of Beva 371 adhesive and a heat-repellent palette knife.
8. Consolidating the pricked area by binding the threads together and securing the damaged area with thread bridges and Beva 371.
9. Fixing the canvas on the new underframe.
10. Filling the cleavages in the roughcast layer with putty.
11. Burnishing the areas which have been filled with putty.
12. Making the cleaning tests.
13. The next stage was represented by the actual cleaning process consisting in making the varnish layer thinner and even.
14. Chromatic integration based on water colours in those areas that have previously been filled with putty.
15. The general varnishing of the painting with Vernis Damar 15% solution with turpentine and alcohol essence.
16. The chromatic integration of the painting with the help of varnish-based colours.

17. The final varnishing of the painting.

### **3.The Conservation and Restoration of the painting Entitled *Peasant Woman with Wooden Pails*, Painted by Elena Popea**

This painting is part of the Romanian Art Collection of the Brukenthal National Museum and it bears the inventory number 2180. It is an avant-gardist oil painting with the following dimensions: length – 79.6 cm, width – 61 cm; it is signed in the lower left corner in black pencil: Elena Popea.

In the foreground, marked by deep lyricism, there is a seated peasant woman looking at the eight wooden pails surrounding her. The background illustrates a typical Transylvanian countryside landscape. Natural elements seem to have been detached from their real context and recomposed in life and movement strings through intersected diagonal axes and the criss-crossed cut of the lines under the effect of light and colour, thus giving rise to an authentic emotional experience. The colour gamut mixes harmoniously various tints of grey with brownish ochre and refined green.

#### **3.1. The Conservation State of the Painting Bearing the Inventory Number 2180.**

The underframe is made of fir wood with dovetail ending and it is provided with a backing slant and with key holes for wedges, but the latter are missing, which has led to the canvas being slightly uneven. The dimensions of the underframe are the following: length – 79.6 cm, width – 61 cm and thickness of the rod – 4.5/2.5 cm.

Traces of sponge patches can be observed on the back of the painting; they were glued on the four corners of the underframe in order to protect it from possible shocks, but the sponge has lost its properties and has become friable, oxidized and brownish. Scratches and slight cracks can also be noticed.

The canvas is fixed on the underframe with the help of metallic nails disposed at a distance varying from 4 to 7 cm. It is highly uneven mostly due to the large distance between the nails used to fix it on the underframe.

The canvas has a smooth fabric consisting in 17 woof threads and 19 warp threads.

A portion of 1.5/1 cm of the colour layer is missing in the upper left side of the painting due to a prick from the back of the canvas. There are some scratches, too, due to improper handling of the painting.

The painting has not been varnished.

### **3.2. The Restoration Process of the Painting Entitled *Peasant***

#### ***Woman with Wooden Pails:***

1. Drawing up the conservation data sheet reporting the state of the painting before being restored and the photographic documentation.
2. Provisional protection with the help of Japanese foil and fish glue with a concentration of 3% in the area where portions of colour are missing.
3. Dust cleaning the painting with soft brushes and a vacuum cleaner.
4. Removing the sponge remains on the back of the underframe.

5. The making of the wedges.
6. Restoring the plainness of the painting by alternating damp warm compresses with cold ones.
7. Consolidating the cleavages in the colour layer.
8. Removing the Japanese foil.
9. Making the cleaning tests.
10. The actual cleaning of the painting.
11. Filling the cleavages in the colour layer with putty.
12. Cleaning the putty surplus and restoring the original brushing.
13. The general varnishing of the painting.
14. The chromatic integration of the painting with the help of varnish-based colours.
15. The final varnishing of the painting.
16. The restoration data sheet.

### **Recommendation Regarding the Handling of the Object after the Restoration Process**

The paintings should be handled properly by instructed people, using cotton gloves.

Mechanic concussions, quick movements and touching the painted surface will be avoided.

The paintings will be wrapped so as to be protected from microclimatic variations. Tight, rigid and water-proof materials will be used for wrapping the paintings. The paintings will be wrapped with impervious materials so as to ensure their thermal insulation.

Wrapping the paintings in a carton waded with shock-proof plastic foil is recommended; the position of the objects inside the carton should be indicated.

When transported, placing the carton on high stands will be avoided in order to prevent it from falling and heavy objects will not be placed on the carton.

The temperature in the exposure room should not exceed 18-20°C and the humidity should range between 50-65%. Placing the paintings above or in the immediate proximity of heating sources will be avoided.

The paintings may be illuminated either with natural light or with incandescent light spots, but in the latter case the light should not exceed 150 lx.

The paintings will be stored in vertical position, avoiding superposing them and protecting them from dust. The storage location should offer microclimatic stability.