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Martha Bibescu Queen of the Belle Époque

A Previously Unknown Portrait of Domenico Rupolo

Elena Lago

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- A tale of a fascinating personality through historical photographs and famous portraits of 19th/early 20th century artists such as Boldini and Vuillard
- Martha Bibescu was also a writer; her novels were published to wide acclaim
- Presentation of an unpublished sculpture and investigation into Domenico Rupolo, a still little-known artist from Venice in the second half of the 19th century, architect of, among other things, the famous Nuova Pescheria di Rialto in Venice

Martha Bibescu (Bucharest, 1886 – Paris, 1973) was one of the greatest and most representative protagonists of the extraordinary world of the Belle Époque, of which Paris, which became her adopted city, was the capital. Linked to the most important political and intellectual personalities of the time, from the kings of Romania to King Alfonso XIII of Spain, from Charles de Gaulle to Winston Churchill and Marcel Proust, Martha intertwined her life with that of the sculptor and architect Domenico Rupolo (Caneva, 1861-1945), the creator of the radical modernisation, lasting almost twenty-five years, of the Bibescu palace in Mogoșoaia. To crown the profound association that bound him to Martha, Rupolo executed the hitherto unpublished marble portrait of her in 1933, on which this volume focuses. This face emerging enigmatically from the marble, a paradigm of the art and culture of an entire era, is a remarkable and unexpected addition to the portraiture of one of the most popular women of the 20th century.

Text in English and Italian.

Elena Lago (1991), graduate in contemporary art history at La Sapienza in Rome, is mainly concerned with artistic expressions at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, ranging from sculpture to painting and the applied arts. Her most recent publications include: the monograph on the artist Herta Ottolenghi Wedekind, edited together with Giulia Gomiero and Sabrina Spinazzè (2021) and the catalogue *Giacomo Manzù. La pietà* (2022).

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