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DIAGHILEV'S RUSSIAN BALLETS AND THE 20TH CENTURY MANLY-WOMEN: TWO CONTRADICTORY NEW PROTOTYPES FOR THE CARYATIDES OF AMEDEO MODIGLIANI

Abstract:

Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920) is known for his paintings: the particular portraits and the provocative female nudes. However, it has just been recently noticeable the increased interest of the scholars in Modigliani's sculpture, which he practiced between 1909-1915. His sculptural subjects were two: the Heads and the Caryatides, for which he realized a large amount of preparatory studies. Nevertheless, the Caryatides have not been yet the subject of an excessive research, in contrast with the Heads.

As a result, the existing problems regarding the study of the Caryatides are numerous; one of which is the finding of the possible prototypes and the influences that Modigliani absorbed in order to create this stunning type of Caryatid, which encircles all the tendencies flourished at the begging of the 20th century in Paris (e.g. influences from the Egyptian art, ancient Greek art, primitive art, African art, Buddhist art etc.).

However, the Diaghilev's Russian Ballets - famous that time in Paris (1909-1920), have not been linked yet with Modigliani's Caryatides.

From the current research, Russian Ballets can be mentioned without a doubt as one more possible influence on the Caryatides, due to the similar poses of Caryatides and Russian dancers, presented in *Comœdia Illustré* - a magazine which made famous the Russian Ballets in Paris. Moreover, the Italian had known the protagonists of the Russian Ballets (dancers, scenographers, scriptwriters) as Modigliani's portraits reveal. At last, it should be noticed that the period in refer (1910-1912), the Italian boehm maintained a relationship with the well-known Russian poetess Anna Achmatova, who initiated Modigliani into the Russian culture.

Suddenly, during the summer of 1913 Modigliani changed the appearance of his Caryatides integrating details from the Atlas - the male architectural form. Based on the fact that Modigliani wanted to construct a Temple of Beauty, we turned to the contemporary woman in order to find an answer to this change. It is well known that at the beginnings of the 20th century -and during the World War I - the social role of the women had been transformed. The fact that women strengthened their character and became socially active inspired Modigliani. Therefore, his robust Caryatides possibly reflect the New Woman of his era, who is equal to a man as the poster of The 7th International Conference of the Suffragettes (June 1913) implies.

Coincidence or purpose?

Keywords:

Modigliani, Caryatides, Diaghilev, Russian Ballets, 20th Century Women, Prototypes.