Imagined Cosmopolis

Internationalism and Cultural Exchange, 1870s–1920s

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3 Navigating International Networks for Modern Sculpture at the Fin de Siècle: The Case of Medardo Rosso

In 1909, the Belgian critic and activist Louis Piérard characterized the sculptor Medardo Rosso as an artist who had liberated himself from the constraints of national identity:

> Rosso is Italian by birth. This has no importance to him: he is ready to learn without a frown that he is not Piedmontese but rather Chinese or Papuan. His internationalism is simple, clean, radical and impetuous. One must hear him speak about borders and the prejudices that idiots have against a man because he uses a different language with respect to theirs.[1]

These comments reflect the extent to which Rosso fashioned himself as a cosmopolitan figure: he declared himself to be a 'citizen of the world' and a maker of art 'without borders'.[2] Rosso knew how to navigate and utilize the new international networks for modern art that developed at the fin de siècle. As a result, he became one of the few Italian avant-garde artists who acquired a reputation around Europe in the early twentieth century.

Born in Turin in 1858, Rosso first emerged on the art scene in Milan in 1881 as a rebellious sculptor who rejected the formal arts training offered in the European arts academies of the period. Like many young Italians of his

1 Louis Piérard, 'Un sculpteur impressionniste, Medardo Rosso', *La Société Nouvelle*, 15/1, vol. xxxiii (1909), 57.

2 Medardo Rosso, 'Concepimento-Limite-Infinito', *L'Ambrosiano* (12 January 1926); idem, 'Chi largamente vede, largamente pensa. Ha il gesto', *L'Ambrosiano* (15 January 1926).

generation, he was disillusioned with the unfulfilled promises of the benefits of national unity.[3] As with other left-wing radical Milanese thinkers, his cosmopolitan posture developed as a form of cultural and political protest. Thus, Rosso viewed himself as outside the confines of mainstream Italian art of his epoch. Highly ambitious and aspiring to revolutionize modern sculpture, Rosso moved to Paris in 1889. In doing so, he further cultivated his cosmopolitan image, yet he continued to be an outsider, refusing to fully associate himself with the Parisian avant-garde movements of the time. By 1900, it became clear to Rosso that being in Paris would not suffice to create a truly international reputation and disseminate his revolutionary ideas. He began to travel around Europe to promote his art, exhibiting in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Britain, and back in Italy in 1910. His attempt to create a meaningful identity for himself as a sculptor led him to internationalize his career, but it also intensified his uneasy position as a perennial outsider.

This chapter traces the way in which Medardo Rosso worked with and through international networks. These new worldwide opportunities for modern sculpture went hand in hand with artistic challenges and national tensions. As Rosso's case shows, this process was riddled with difficulties and ambivalences. Moreover, while his sculptures were intriguing to some, they were difficult to comprehend for others in every country in which he exhibited. This situation was exacerbated by Rosso's idiosyncratic personality. Throughout his life, he maintained an intransigent attitude: he rejected categorization by nationality or artistic movements and he struggled to adopt the necessary forms of interaction, exchange, compromise and diplomacy. Overall, this chapter highlights the potential and pitfalls encountered by an artist who styled himself as a 'cosmopolitan' at the fin de siècle.

3 See, for example, Roberto Balzani, 'Nati troppo tardi. Illusioni e frustrazioni dei giovani del post-Risorgimento', in Angelo Varni, ed., *Il mondo giovanile in Italia tra Ottocento e Novecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998), 69–85.

Sculpture and Cosmopolitanism

The internationalism of the production and dissemination of sculpture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has yet to be systematically studied.[4] Sculptors relied on the same networks of dealers, patrons and exhibition opportunities as avant-garde painters to advance their careers across national borders. Yet sculpture remained more conservative. In the age of 'monumentomania', sculptors still established their reputations by winning public commissions in their home countries, typically producing traditional monuments that reflected collective national and political ideas. Even the most avant-garde sculptors often desired institutional recognition, as the case of Auguste Rodin illustrates.[5]

A number of developments changed the traditional working patterns for sculptors, with a stronger focus on internationalization. Sculptors were not immune to the loss of influence of institutions such as the French *salon*. The democratization of art and rise of internationally minded dealers catering to demand from bourgeois consumers offered opportunities, leading sculptors to become more entrepreneurial and international. Indeed, Rodin's tremendous reputation at home and abroad was tied to his presence outside of France. Furthermore, the repeated rejection of his radical monuments by the French establishment foreshadowed the demise of institutional control over sculptors, a fact that would become evident in the twentieth century.

The internationalization of sculpture relied on the growing popularity and technical improvements of industrially produced serial sculpture. The gradual democratization of art in Europe, the rise of the new middle-class bourgeois consumer and buyers' demand for affordable art opened avenues for sculptors to sell small-scale modern works in the latter half of

4 For a case study, see Sharon Hecker, *A Moment's Monument: Medardo Rosso and the International Origins of Modern Sculpture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

5 See Ruth Butler, *Rodin: The Shape of Genius* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 349–61.

the century. In his seminal study of serial sculpture in nineteenth-century France, art historian Jacques de Caso notes that, from the 1840s onwards, 'sculpture [...] found an ever-expanding place in society',[6] including a growing taste for fashionable, smaller-scale sculpture, the opening of sculpture museums, sculpture commissioned for new architectural constructions and urban spaces, as well as in private homes. According to de Caso, after 1840, 'the profession of the sculptor [...] opened up to a much greater number of practitioners [...] The commercial exploitation of sculpture thus became a large-scale enterprise. Public capital (i.e., the government) as well as private [...] – was invested in art both for profit and in order to further the development of industry.'[7] In addition, a proliferation of trade journals, advertisements and catalogues promoting these industries became available in and outside France through mechanization of the printing press, a new international awareness of trends, and increased ease of travel abroad.

Technical advances supported the new French market: Achille Collas' perfection of the pointing machine in 1836 made reductions easier to produce, and his partnership with French bronze founder Ferdinand Barbedienne created a serial sculpture empire, along with prosperous French foundry businesses like Christophle and Siot-Decauville.[8] As art historian Neil McWilliam confirms, the market for serial sculpture was 'the most intensely capitalized area of French artistic production [... and the] demand for reproductive sculpture and decorative items had mushroomed, creating a highly competitive market controlled by a small number of specialist foundries'.[9] These foundries used 'increasingly professional marketing

6 Jacques de Caso, 'Serial Sculpture in Nineteenth-Century France', in Jeanne L. Wasserman, ed., *Metamorphoses in Nineteenth-Century Sculpture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 3.

7 Ibid.

8 On Parisian foundries, see Elisabeth Lebon, *Dictionnaire des fondeurs de bronze d'art, France 1890–1950* (Paris: Marjon Editions, 2003); Elisabeth Lebon, *Faire – Fonte au sable – Fonte à cire perdue: Histoire d'une rivalité* (Paris: Ophrys, 2012).

9 Neil McWilliam, 'Craft, Commerce and the Contradictions of Anti-Capitalism: Reproducing the Applied Art of Jean Baffier', in Anthony Hughes and Erich Ranfft, eds, *Sculpture and its Reproductions* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 101–12. The

techniques, involving the development of a network for exhibition and retailing with printed catalogues and advertising'[10] as well as participation in industrial exhibitions and World Fairs at home and abroad. De Caso defines this as 'supply and demand: [...] on the one hand, the conditions surrounding the creative processes which allow us to consider the works as already created in multiple, thanks to molding operations; on the other hand, the deliberate multiplication of work for wide circulation in public and private whether for profit or not'.[11] Since de Caso's landmark study, however, little further research has been conducted on this phenomenon regarding collecting patterns, buying preferences and tastes, domestic and international markets, ideas about construction of value as well as growing international networks of exhibitions, dealers and agents that promoted these works, even laws that governed the making and transfer of these goods across borders.

These innovations in producing smaller-scale objects rendered them more portable and mobile, facilitating the circulation, transport, exhibition and sale of art works in different cities and to more clients. This situation thus gave sculptors greater visibility abroad. Serality also enabled sculptors to disseminate mechanical reductions of their large-scale monuments internationally. Finally, the option of working on a smaller scale and the gradual release of sculpture from institutional control encouraged sculptors to become more experimental. All this led sculptors to internationalize by offering the opportunity for a loosening of ties to their home countries. Rosso, who made a career without a monument to his name, was a pioneer in this sense: by the twentieth century, modern sculptors from Constantin Brancusi to Alberto Giacometti would no longer create international reputations through site-specific monuments or the national institutions of their home countries.

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quote is on p. 103. On Barbedienne, see Florence Rionnet, *La Maison Barbedienne: correspondances d'artistes* (Paris: CTHS, 2008).

10 Ibid.

11 de Caso, 'Serial Sculpture', 2.

Shaping a Cosmopolitan Image in the 1880s and 1890s

How does Rosso's trajectory illuminate the new relationships that developed between modern sculpture and internationalism at the fin de siècle? Elsewhere, I have examined Rosso's cosmopolitan mindset in Milan in the 1880s and Paris in the 1890s, but a summary of his early years is worthwhile.[12] Like many young Italians of his time, he grew up disillusioned. Italian unification and independence from foreign domination brought no tangible improvements, leading to a fragile sense of national unity.[13] Rosso was one of the so-called '*nati troppo tardi*' [born too late], who did not participate in the Risorgimento and could not identify directly with its ideals.[14] Other scholars have situated Rosso's early years within the local artistic Scapigliatura, a loose 'movement' of artists, composers and literary figures working in Milan since the 1860s.[15] Rather than providing him with a local or national setting, Rosso's contact with the Scapigliatura's most forward-thinking cosmopolitan writers and thinkers helped him develop his international approach. Rosso's early radical monuments were rejected, removed or criticized for their radical sculptural language. For example, one of his proposed monuments to Garibaldi looked melancholy and pensive rather than heroic, while another elimated the figure of Garibaldi from the monument altogether, instead focusing on the people who fought for Italian unification. One critic

12 Sharon Hecker, 'Everywhere and Nowhere: Medardo Rosso and the Cultural Cosmopolitan in Fin-de-Siècle Paris', in Karen L. Carter and Susan Waller, eds, *Foreign Artists and Communities in Modern Paris (1870–1914): Strangers in Paradise* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 143–54; Hecker, *A Moment's Monument*.

13 See Gilles Pécout, 'Fare l'Italia: 1770–1871,' in Gilles Pécout and Roberto Balzani, eds, *Il lungo Risorgimento: La nascita dell'Italia contemporanea (1770–1922)* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 1999), 3–194. For a recent interesting addition to the literature in this field, see Sabina Donati, *A Political History of National Citizenship and Identity in Italy, 1861–1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

14 Balzani, 'Nati troppo tardi', 69–85.

15 On the Scapigliatura, see Giovanna Rosa, *La narrativa degli Scapigliati* (Rome: Laterza, 1997); Gaetano Mariani, *Storia della Scapigliatura* (Rome: S. Sciascia, 1967).

described a funerary monument by Rosso to be 'an artistic find inspired by Zola'.[16]

Rosso's smaller sculptures allude to ideas from the previous generation of French Realists that seeped into Italy. For example, several of his works were inspired by lithographs by Honoré Daumier. Like most avant-garde artists working outside of France in the 1880s, Rosso's knowledge of Impressionism, the movement that had emerged in Paris in 1874, was filtered through secondary accounts and foreign newspapers rather than firsthand experience of paintings. Yet it encouraged him to pursue his experimental, anti-academic approach to sculpture and supported his modern, international outlook. By 1887 he was hailed by some critics and condemned by others in Italy for making 'Impressionism in sculpture – of that Impressionism that in painting counts many talented and formidable enthusiasts, so many that it is already a revered and respected school'.[17]

As with countless non-French artists of his time, Rosso sought exhibition opportunities in Paris by submitting small, serially produced works to the annual salons and the world's fairs.[18] By the 1880s, foreign artists used both these kinds of exhibitions as launch pads for success in their home countries, and Italy was no exception. Scholars note, but do not attribute significance to, the fact that Rosso was one of the few Italian sculptors to send works to the 'Salon du Groupe des Artistes Indépendants' of 1886, a short-lived offshoot of the new *Société des Artistes Indépendants* that had established an exhibition free of juries in the previous year.[19] His participation indicates his attunement to new unofficial opportunities in Paris for

16 Mario Mariani, 'Schizzi d'artisti: Medardo Rosso', *La Commedia umana* (1 November 1885), 10.

17 M., 'Medardo Rosso', *L'Esposizione nazionale artistica illustrata* 20 (14 August 1887), 158.

18 Matteo Gardonio, 'Scultori italiani alle Esposizioni Universali di Parigi (1855–89): aspettative, successi e delusioni' (PhD dissertation, Università degli Studi di Trieste, 2008), 98; Gianna Piantoni and Anne Pingeot, eds, *Italie 1880–1910: Arte alla prova della modernità* (Turin: Umberto Allemandi, 2000), 52; published also in French as *Italies 1880–1910: L'art italien à l'épreuve de la modernité* (Paris: Édition de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2001).

19 See, for example, Paola Mola and Fabio Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: Catalogo ragionato della scultura* (Milan: Skira, 2009), 370. The exhibitions are listed in the artist's biography but not contextualized for their importance.

foreigners. The fact that he received favourable reviews may have convinced him of an interest for his art abroad.

Little importance has been attributed to the fact that Rosso was the only avant-garde Italian sculptor of his time to relocate to Paris after exhibiting casts at the Exposition Universelle of 1889. Unlike Italian painters who emigrated to Paris (for instance Giuseppe de Nittis, Giovanni Boldini and Federico Zandomeneghi), Rosso remained aloof from expatriate communities whose members gathered in clubs, informal circles as well as artistic institutions throughout the 1890s: he defended his independence and refused to surrender to French artistic styles or blatant commercial enterprises.[20] He also chose a different path with respect to Italian sculptors who lived in Paris and ended up caving to the market with conventional works or stranded in the ateliers of famous French sculptors, sacrificing personal ambitions in order to survive.[21] Yet, navigating an independent artistic identity left him financially vulnerable. He thus had to devise survival strategies, transforming them into meaningful artistic gestures and appropriating or denying national artistic categories to suit his needs.

Rosso's wish to preserve his autonomy in Paris relates to his understanding of his move from Italy. For politically inspired Italian emigrés like Rosso, emigration led to the formulation of alternative ideologies of opposition to all forms of nationalism and a cosmopolitan attitude. His outlook was intertwined with cultural anarchism: a rejection of nations, nation-states, hierarchies and a development of a broad sense of universal solidarity.[22] Rosso's decision to move signified a severing of ties with his country of origin but also a willful resistance to assimilation, which was characteristic of both cosmopolitan and anarchist ideology. For free-thinking artists like Rosso, cosmopolitanism was also linked to a bohemian lifestyle and a

20 Marion Lagrange, *Les Peintres italiens en quête d'identité, Paris 1855–1909* (Paris: CTHS-INHA, 2010).

21 See Gardonio, 'Scultori italiani', for numerous examples.

22 See, for example, Ruth Kinna, ed., *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism* (London: Continuum, 2012); Kenyon Zimmer, '"The Whole World is Our Country": Immigration and Anarchism in the United States, 1885–1940' (PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2010), Chapter 1.

desire for artistic freedom. Indeed, he settled in Montmartre, which had played an important role in the *Semaine sanglante* of the Paris Comune in 1871. The *quartier* became a haven for foreign artists and central for the development of post-Impressionist art and modernist poetry.[23]

Rosso's first decade in Paris in the 1890s turned out to be more difficult than he had anticipated. On the one hand, there were increasing opportunities for 'independent' exhibitions that included foreign artists. On the other hand, France's professed openness to artists from around the world – as captured in the slogan 'art has no fatherland'[24] – partly served the aim of reinforcing the hegemonic power of Paris as the centre of modern art. Aware of the need to form working relationships, Rosso approached internationally minded French dealers like Georges Petit, Adolphe Goupil, and the prestigious founder Ferdinand Barbedienne. However, they seemed put off by his radical sculptures or his status as an unknown artist in France, as well as his desire to maintain total control.

Rosso only exhibited twice during this decade, at the Salon des Champs Élysées (1895) and at the small yet sophisticated 'La Bodinière' (1893), where he met Rodin. He garnered an elite but restricted Parisian press response and sold to a discerning yet limited clientele. He also had to contend with the fact that the Parisian sculpture scene was dominated by Rodin. As an intriguing foreigner, he put pressure on Rodin's power. Indeed, a rivalry emerged in the press following the unveiling of Rodin's monument to Honoré Balzac in 1898, when left-wing critics accused Rodin of having appropriated Rosso's ideas. By 1900, Rosso may have realized that he needed to devise new ways to bolster his reputation outside France.

23 Richard D. Sonn, 'Marginality and Transgression: Anarchy's Subversive Allure', in Gabriel P. Weisberg, ed., *Montmartre and the Making of Mass Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 123. See also, more generally, Carl Levy, 'Anarchism and Cosmopolitanism', *Journal of Political Ideologies* 16/3 (2011), 265–78.

24 Rachel Esner, '"Art Knows no Fatherland": Internationalism and the Reception of German Art in France in the Early Third Republic', in Martin H. Geyer and Johannes Paulmann, eds, *The Mechanics of Internationalism: Culture, Society, and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 357–74.

From Paris to the Netherlands: Internationalizing Impressionism (1900)

Biographies list, but do not critically analyse, the flurry of European shows in which Rosso participated between 1900 and 1910: Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague, Rotterdam, Dresden, Berlin, Leipzig, Vienna, Paris, London, Brussels, and Florence. The historical turning point was the Exposition Universelle of 1900. Since their inception in 1851 and increasingly throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, these world's fairs functioned as key sites for international exchanges and were crucial for the development and promotion of industry, technology, education, and politics.[25] In the specific case of the fine arts, three events held in conjunction with the 1900 edition of the Exposition shaped foreign attention to French Impressionism as well as to modern sculpture. First, as art historian Robert Jensen notes, the Centenale exhibition of French painting from 1879 to 1889 established 'Impressionism for the first time as lying at the center of the French tradition' in a final divorce from salon art.[26] Through this event, most Europeans, as Jensen argues, became aware of a canonical Impressionism.[27] Second, the display of Gustave Caillebotte's Impressionist collection at the Musée de Luxembourg reinforced Impressionism's supremacy by giving it national institutional credibility. Third, Rodin was crowned as France's greatest living sculptor through the largest retrospective of his sculptures mounted in the Alma Pavilion in Paris, a structure and exhibition that he organized himself to coincide with the Exposition Universelle of 1900.[28]

Despite the fact that Rosso had lived in Paris for over a decade, he was still an Italian citizen and thus was forced to exhibit in the Italian Pavilion at the Exposition. There, cosmopolitan European cultural operators first

25 See Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

26 Robert Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 164.

27 Ibid., 67.

28 *Rodin en 1900: L'exposition de l'Alma* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2001).

saw his art.[29] One was the wealthy Dutch writer, artist, and art critic Etha Fles, who, enraptured by Rosso's art, became his mistress, patroness and supporter. Fles had come to Paris to help the Dutch commissioners select paintings at the Exposition for an Impressionist show in Holland.[30] The enterprise was daring for, according to art historian Benno Tempel, 'before 1900, works by impressionist artists appeared only sporadically on the Dutch exhibition circuit'.[31] Fles chose two or three paintings each by Georges d'Espagnat, Gustave Loiseau, Camille Pissarro, Maxime Maufra, Claude Monet, Henry Moret, Auguste Renoir and Alfred Sisley, and five sculptures by Rosso. She thereby reframed him within Impressionist painting. The exhibition, 'Tentoonstelling van schilderijen uit de moderne Fransche school en beeldhouwwerken van M. Rosso',[32] travelled to Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague. Although Rosso was the only sculptor included, an exhibition of works by Rodin had circulated in Holland in 1899, clearing a path for modern sculpture.

Rosso hoped to be welcomed in Holland, boasting that, 'in the country of Hals and Rembrandt where people hate the academic, I shall be

29 Rosso did not exhibit the works that were authorized. See, for example, letter to Rosso from Camera di Commercio Italiana in Parigi, 15 April 1900 with his annotations, preserved in Archivio Medardo Rosso, Barzio. His name does not appear in the catalogue. For works that were exhibited, see 'À l'Exposition', *L'Eclair* (22 May 1900).

30 Fles had come under the auspices of the Amsterdam society 'Arti et Amicitiae', of which she was a charter member. See Margaret Scolari Barr, 'Medardo Rosso and his Dutch Patroness', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 13 (1962), 223.

31 Benno Tempel, '"Such absurdity can never deserve the name of Art": Impressionism in the Netherlands', *Van Gogh Museum Journal* (1999), 121, available online via <http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_van012199901_01/_van012199901_01_0011.php>.

32 Luciano Caramel gives the dates as January to April: *Mostra di Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)*, exh. cat. (Milan: Società per le belle arti ed esposizione permanente, 1979), 51. Mola and Vittucci claim that the show travelled until May; Mola and Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso*, 372. The exhibition catalogue cover notes the dates as January–February (see *Tentoonstelling van schilderijen uit de moderne Fransche school en beeldhouwwerken van M. Rosso. Januari – Februari 1901*: Arti et Amicitiae, 1901). Barr also cites from the catalogue the works exhibited. Mola and Vittucci make several amendments to this list without citing an alternative source.

understood'.[33] Yet it is difficult to know whether Fles's effort to link Rosso with Impressionism was succesful. Art historian Margaret Scolari Barr hypothesizes that Rosso hardly garnered any press because only one of his bronzes was in Amsterdam for the opening. One lengthy review appeared in the *Nieuwe Groningsche Courant*, but it turns out to have been written by Fles, confirming her promotional role.[34]

Although Fles wrote glowingly that 'in Paris and Vienna the casts of Rosso's work command prices that surpass our imagination, therefore he is not interested in selling here',[35] the exhibition was also intended as a commercial enterprise: Fles' copy of the catalogue includes handwritten prices for Rosso's works.[36] But no records or objects have emerged to assess whether any were sold (although Fles had amassed a significant collection). Given that this would be Rosso's only exhibition in Holland, we might surmise that it did not generate the hoped-for international attention.

From Germany to Austria: Impressionism and Pan-European Modernism (1901–1903)

Existing biographies recount Rosso's career in Dresden, Berlin, and Leipzig between 1901 and 1902 as a resounding personal success.[37] However, German attention to Rosso was contextually determined and the response to his art was ambivalent. The German interest belongs to Central Europe's role in transforming French Impressionism into a pan-European modern phenomenon: Rosso's search for new markets there confirms Jensen's

33 Etha Fles, 'Fransche Kunst in het Museum', *Groninger Courant* (1 March 1901), cited in translation in Barr, 'Medardo Rosso and his Dutch Patroness', 224.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., 223.

37 Mola and Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: Catalogo ragionato*, 335.

assessment that 'Impressionism found most of its patrons outside of France'.[38] These German exhibitions arguably led to Rosso's inclusion in the landmark Vienna Secession of 1903, which reshaped French Impressionism into a transnational 'origin' of modern art. This construction was codified the following year by one of the Secession's masterminds, German art historian and critic Julius Meier-Graefe, whose first edition of the seminal *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Modernen Kunst* [Origins of Modern Art] (1904), included a nine-page chapter entitled 'Medardo Rosso'.[39] Yet a fact that has been left out of Rosso's biographies is Meier-Graefe's elimination of the chapter from subsequent editions – he integrated a condensed version under the heading 'Impressionism in Sculpture'. Although Meier-Graefe made substantial changes in various volumes, this repositioning of Rosso deserves further analysis. It was related both to Meier-Graefe's shifting construction of the international history of modern art and to his uncertainty about Rosso's lasting importance within this narrative. It also demonstrates a pattern: the strong first impression made by Rosso's art, which would later be modified, forcing the artist to continue to devise new strategies.

An example of this pattern is Rosso's exhibition of eight sculptures at the Albertinum in Dresden, probably in June 1901, thanks to Georg Treu, the museum's internationally minded director and Curator of its Sculpture Department.[40] Treu's secretary proposed the exhibition after being captivated by Rosso's work at the Exposition Universelle. Dresden's institutional interest in Rosso is not surprising: it had been the first German city to witness exhibitions of modern French art since the 1890s. The road for modern sculpture had been paved there by Rodin, who

38 Jensen, *Marketing Modernism*, 50.

39 Julius Meier-Graefe, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der modernen Kunst* (Stuttgart: Julius Hoffmann, 1904). Republished in English as *Modern Art: Being a Contribution to a New System of Aesthetics* (London: W. Heinemann, 1908).

40 See the reference in an undated letter from Medardo Rosso to Georg Treu. All letters to Treu are preserved in the Archive Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, Skulpturensammlung, and are referenced hereafter as L:MR/GT. This document contradicts the claim by Mola and Vittucci that Rosso repeated the Dutch tour of five works: Mola and Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso*, 372.

became famous in Central Europe through his exhibition at the Dresden Internationale Kunstausstellung in 1897. Treu, who wrote on Rodin after 1900, had been buying his works for Dresden's sculpture collection since 1894.[41]

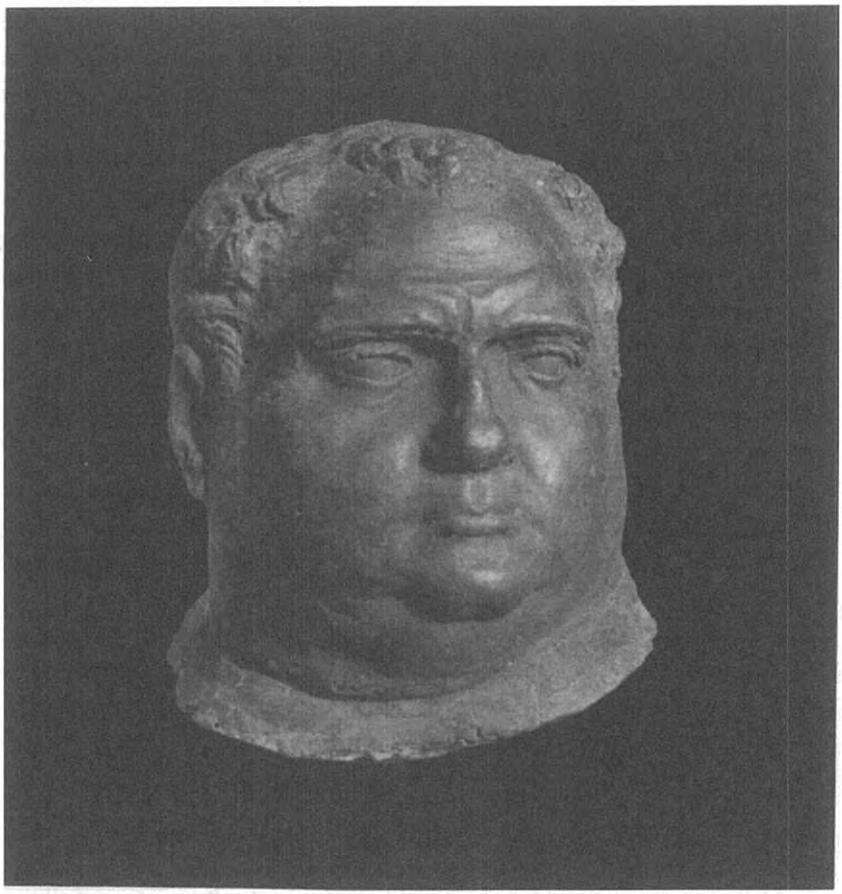

Figure 2. Medardo Rosso, *Head of Vitellius*, c. 1894, bronze, 36 × 26 × 25.7 cm, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden.

41 See J. A. Schmoll gen. Eisenwerth, *Rodin-Studien* (Munich: Prestel, 1983), 329–46.

Treu, however, only bought one small work from Rosso: a wax version of *Enfant malade* [Sick Child] (1893–5), for 1,600 marks in July 1901.[42] This acquisition could hardly guarantee the sculptor an international visibility. Intuiting Treu's background as an archaeologist and interest in ancient art, Rosso subsequently sold Treu a reproduction he had made of an ancient work, *Head of Vitellius*, for 400 marks in March or April 1902, to be placed in the section of the museum that housed copies from the antique (Figure 2).[43] Rosso, however, insisted that his name appear on a label beside the work.[44] Although a thriving international market for pastiches existed, copies of ancient art signed by modern artists seem unusual.[45] Perhaps Rosso relied on Italian stereotypes by capitalizing on his abilities as a modeller and a bronze caster since Italy was known as the source of lost wax casting, a technique largely forgotten in France and therefore highly prized. Since 1895, he had proclaimed that he cast his own works, although this practice led the symbolist critic Camille Mauclair to attack him for being a mere practitioner.[46] Rosso did not succeed in his insistent attempts to sell Treu another copy, the *Roman Senator* in 1903.[47] Rosso's anxiety about not having his own sculptures accepted in Dresden is evident in his donation of a plaster version of his radical figure group, *Une Conversazione* [A Conversation]

42 Letter from Georg Treu to Medardo Rosso, 9 July 1901, Archivio Medardo Rosso, Barzio. See also L:MR/GT 27 October 1901, partially transcribed in Mola and Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso*, 299.

43 The transaction is recorded in four undated letters that feature in L:MR/GT.

44 The receipt reads 'riproduzione da mia mano', replaced by 'riproduzione fatta di mia mano'. He repeats this as: 'Riprodotto e fuso da Medardo Rosso dall'originale del Vaticano a Roma': undated letters in L:MR/GT.

45 Rosso's first documented institutional sale in the 1890s is two copies of ancient works to the Kensington Musuem in London. See letter to Rosso from South Kensington Museum, 26 September 1896, Archivio Museo Rosso, Barzio. Volker Krahn hypothesizes that Rosso sold copies of Renaissance sculptures as originals in Milan, and that Wilhelm von Bode purchased one unknowingly in London in 1894; Volker Krahn, 'Pastiche or Fake? A "Donatello" by Medardo Rosso', *Apollo* (June 2009), 40–7. This is refuted in Mola and Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso*, 340.

46 Camille Mauclair, 'Choses d'art', *Mercure de France* 16 (December 1895): 410–13.

47 Rosso to Treu, 18 June and 10 July 1903, L:MR/GT.

(c. 1892–9) in the same month as he sold the *Head of Vitellius*. But this sculpture can no longer be found the museum's collection.[48]

Rosso's difficulties can be gleaned from a series of his unpublished letters to Treu, written on hotel stationery in Dresden and during his travels to Berlin, Leipzig and Vienna. They reflect long periods of confinement inside hotel rooms, suggesting solitude and discomfort about his foreignness. In these letters, Rosso never mentions sites – the cities, their inhabitants, their artistic treasures, nor does he describe contact with the foreign culture. Furthermore, no place in Germany would provide a stimulus to him for creating new sculptural subjects, which he had stopped making before the turn of the century. The letters paint a poignant portrait of human unease: an artist who wished to be welcomed and understood yet had trouble engaging with what he perceived to be an unreceptive world. Due to his own ambivalence, Rosso frequently overwhelmed his interlocutors with affection and appeals, eliciting in them a need for distance. At the same time, however, Treu did respond to the sculptor's requests for introductions to German cultural personalities.[49]

Rosso also exhibited in commercial art galleries such as Keller und Reiner in Berlin in January 1902.[50] Berlin, the commercial and political capital, superseded all regional art capitals and had the greatest growth of art galleries (from two to eight between 1895 and 1900). Keller und Reiner,

48 Mola and Vittucci give conflicting accounts: that it was sold (*Medardo Rosso*, 200) and that it was a gift (ibid., 372). The Dresden museum Inventory Register notes its entry on 22 March 1902 as 'Geschenk' [gift] (Archive Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden).

49 Rosso to Treu, undated letter sent from Berlin, L:MR/GT.

50 Some scholars date the opening to February: Caramel, *Mostra di Medardo Rosso*, 35; Mola and Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso*, 372. However, a letter from Keller und Reiner to Rosso of 24 January 1902 suggests that the show opened in January (Archivio Medardo Rosso, Barzio), a fact that is confirmed in R. D., 'Aus dem Berliner Kunstleben', *National Zeitung*, Berlin (24 January 1902). Mola and Vittucci hypothesize that he exhibited thirteen sculptures and seven photographs, and that these same works went to Leipzig a few months later, but cite no evidence: Mola and Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso*, 372.

one of Berlin's 'new, chic galleries',[51] had opened in 1898 and was immensely prestigious: the poet Rainer Maria Rilke made his debut as an art critic at its first neo-Impressionist exhibition, and Meier-Graefe advised the gallery on Rodin's sculptures.[52]

Keller und Reiner's decision to exhibit Rosso's works formed part of their internationalist marketing strategy. As Jensen notes, by 1900, ambitious German dealers became convinced that 'regardless of personal taste, modernist art sold, and more importantly, that modernist art was a good long-term investment'.[53] Fierce competition led to the importation of foreign art and a lucrative expansion of the contemporary art market in Berlin. In the spring of 1900 alone, Keller und Reiner held exhibitions of the Berlin artists Ludwig von Hofmann and Walter Leistikow, the Parisian Étienne Moreau-Nélaton, and the Belgian Fernand Khnopff. More than the French, therefore, German gallerists courted international artists. Reviews confirms that German critics and dealers were framing Rosso through the lens of French 'Impressionist sculpture', which was reinforced by the publication of political journalist Edmond Claris's enquiry into 'Impressionism in sculpture'. In this piece of pro-Rosso propaganda, Claris interviewed major artists, critics, and dealers about Impressionism's relationship to sculpture. The book first appeared in French, but was translated into German and republished by Fles in Utrecht, proving her continued support.[54]

Through the Keller und Reiner show, Rosso attempted to entice Germany's cosmopolitan cultural sophisticates. Jensen observes that this gallery was known for its 'elite ambiance [...] with [...] entertainment appeal for polite society, and its remarkable internationalism [... where] commerce [was] suppressed in favor of pedagogy and entertainment'.[55] Yet

51 Jensen, *Marketing Modernism*, 68.

52 Ibid., 210.

53 Ibid., 74.

54 Edmond Claris, *De l'Impressionnisme en sculpture: lettres et opinions de Rodin [et al.]* (Paris: Editions de 'La Nouvelle Revue', 1902). On Claris and the book's genesis, see Edmond Claris, *Souvenirs de soixante ans de journalisme 1895–1955* (Paris: José Millas-Martin, 1958), 30–2 and 137–9.

55 Jensen, *Marketing Modernism*, 68.

despite the non-commercial veneer, the show likely convinced Treu to buy Rosso's *Vitellio* reproduction in March or April 1902, and industrialist Walther Rathenau to buy a *Tête de jeune fille* [Head of a Young Girl] (1889, medium unspecified) for 1,500 marks in September 1903.[56] Harald Gutherz, a German scholar, bought a bronze *Il Birichino* [Street Urchin] (1882), and Karl Ernst Osthaus, who was amassing a collection of French Impressionist art in Hagen, bought a bronze *Bambino ebreo* [Jewish Boy] (1892–4).[57]

Although the German thirst for 'variety [...] novelty [...] change [...] the Sensationsbilder'[58] posited by Jensen might explain why Rosso did not show again in Berlin, one wonders why no city museum purchased works. Hugo von Tschudi, the Director of National Gallery – introduced by Treu to Rosso – seemed uninterested.[59] Likewise, Rosso's repeated attempts to promote his work and expertise in letters to Wilhelm von Bode – at the time Curator of the Kaiser Friedrich Skulpturensammlung and a member of Berlin's cultural establishment – proved unsuccessful. His letters to Bode confirm the sculptor's sense of his foreignness: 'You know [...] that I am new here of all acquaintance of your beautiful city and your language.'[60]

Richard Graul, the director of the Museum der bildenden Künste in Leipzig (also introduced to Rosso by Treu), gave the artist a one-man show, whose title can now be confirmed as 'Kleinplastik in Bronze, Wachs und Papiermasse des Impressionisten Medardo Rosso, Paris', in June 1902.[61] As

56 Letter of Medardo Rosso to Walter Rathenau 25 September 1903, Archivio Medardo Rosso, Barzio. Caramel mistakes this for a sale to the Berlin Museum: Caramel, *Mostra di Medardo Rosso*, 52. Mola believes that the work, now lost, was a copy from the antique: Mola and Vittuci, *Medardo Rosso*, 338. However, I believe it could also have been a bronze version of Rosso's *Bambina che ride.*

57 Mola and Vittucci give the sale date as 'end of July – early September' but cite no source: Mola and Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso*, 292. But see *Hagener Zeitung*, 19 October 1904, in which Osthaus writes about the recent acquisition.

58 Jensen, *Marketing Modernism*, 74.

59 Undated letter from Rosso to Treu, L: MR:GT.

60 Undated letter of Rosso to Willhelm von Bode, Berlin, Bode Museum, published in Mola, *Medardo Rosso*, 344.

61 *Jahresberichte/Verein Kunstgewerbemuseum Leipzig*, and *Städtisches Kunstgewerbemuseum Leipzig*, 125; *Jahre Museum für Kunsthandwerk Leipzig*

with Keller und Reinier, the internationally minded Graul linked Rosso with 'Impressionist sculpture'. Graul had been Paris correspondent of the *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*'s and served on the editorial board of *Pan*, the German arts and literary magazine published from 1895 to 1900 in Berlin by journalist and editor Otto Julius Bierbaum and Meier-Graefe.[62] Although Graul bought a bronze *Laughing Child* from Rosso in August 1903, it does not appear in the museum's registers and never entered the museum's collection.[63]

German interest led to a visit by Meier-Graefe and Wilhelm Bernatzik (an Impressionist painter who had spent most of his life in Paris) to Rosso's studio in Paris in October 1902. The sculptor was subsequently included in their landmark Vienna Secession, 'Entwicklung des Impressionismus in Malerei u. Plastik', from January to February 1903 organized by Meier-Graefe

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Grassimuseum, v. 2/1, all unpublished; Olaf Thormann, ed., *Die Museumschronik von den Anfängen bis zum Jahr 1929* (Leipzig: Passage-Verlag, 2003), 67. The opening date is uncertain. Caramel believes it was in autumn, but Mola and Vittucci claim it was June, citing no source: Caramel, *Mostra di Medardo Rosso*, 53; Mola and Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso*, 372. A review dated 25 September 1902 suggests it opened in that month. For Rosso's description to Treu of his first meeting with Graul see undated letter from Leizpig in L:MR/GT. Graul returned the works on exhibition to Rosso with a packing list, itemizing thirteen bronzes: see letter from Richard Graul to Medardo Rosso, 29 November 1902 (hereafter L: RG/MR), Archivio Medardo Rosso, Barzio. Mola and Vittucci claim that these were actually six bronzes and seven waxes, as well as seven photographs, but do not cite a source for the discrepancies with respect to Graul's list.

62 'Modernes Kunstgewerbe: Impressionistiche Sculptur und Decoration', *Illustrirte Zeitung* (Leipzig), 25 September 1902.

63 See 6 August 1903, L: RG/MR, Archivio Medardo Rosso, Barzio. Rosso recounts this sale to various other people. See letter from Rosso to Gottfried Eissler, n.d. but from August/September 1903, written from Leipzig (Archivio Storico delle Arti Contemporanee, Venice, CA 14, fasc. 'Medardo Rosso', unpublished, transcription by Alessandro de Stefani). Rosso also recounts the sale in an undated letter (likely from September 1903), L: MR/GT. See also letter from Rosso to Jehan Rictus, 11 August 1903, in *Papiers de Jéhan Rictus*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des Manuscrits, Paris, NaFr24571, 189 R, unpublished, transcription by Alessandro de Stefani. A wax *Bambino ebreo* [Jewish Boy] (1892–4) is mistakenly attributed in all sources as a gift Rosso gave to Graul due to a misreading of the dedication.

and Bernatzik through a powerful alliance of dealers, collectors, and the Secessionists, a public exhibition society.[64] Since 1897, the Secessionists had set the standard of modernist culture for Vienna and had become the main funnel for market distribution. As Jensen argues, they saw themselves as the heirs of Impressionism and the representatives of a pan-European Impressionist weltanschauung.[65] This was, in fact, the first major exhibition of Impressionism in Central Europe and it set forth the tenets of modern art, creating a sweeping linear history that culminated in French Impressionism. In this year, Rodin would also be canonized in Central Europe through an essay published in Germany by sociologist Georg Simmel.[66]

Rosso's presence at the Secession demonstrates how internationalism had reshuffled the cards of European art: Meier-Graefe, a German critic, created a Viennese show that inscribed the Italian-born Rosso within a broader history of French Impressionism. Rosso was the only non-French modern sculptor included (Giovanni Boldini, listed as 'Jean Boldini', was the only Italian-born painter). This confirms that nineteenth-century Italian art played no role in the narrative of modernism traced by Meier-Graefe, and that Rosso had gained access to it through internationalization.[67] His local and national affiliation (as with Boldini), was now noted as 'Paris, France'; in a critical shift with respect to his earlier grouping with Italians at the Exposition Universelle, he was billed among French sculptors Antoine Houdon, Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, Rodin, and Albert Bartholomé, as well as the Belgians Constantin Meunier and Georges Minne.[68] This was facilitated by the fact that he had received French citizenship in 1902. Rosso believed

64 Letter from Rosso to Wilhelm Bernatzik, 29 October 1902, published in Hans Ankwiez von Kleehoven, 'Medardo Rosso a Vienna', *La biennale di Venezia*, 23 (January 1955), 23–5.

65 Jensen, *Marketing Modernism*, 201.

66 Georg Simmel, 'Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben', in Theodor Petermann, ed., *Die Großstadt: Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Städteausstellung* (Dresden: Jahn & Jaensch, 1903), 185–206.

67 Another 'Italian' exception was painter Giovanni Segantini, who had spent most of his career in Switzerland.

68 Rosso was already interested in participating in the Vienna Secession in 1900. See letter from Alberto Grubicy to Medardo Rosso, 11 August 1900, transcribed with

he was part of this history, gloating to his friend, the poet Jéhan Rictus, that 'in this dozen of names they chose there was naturally mine'.[69] Yet he also acutely felt his Italian roots as well as his itinerant status:

> [I am here] to take advantage [...] of whoever has been able to be interested in me and come to know [my works ...] I come here with two works that I brought with me – my calling cards. Like the ancient Genoese goldsmiths did on their voyages. Visiting with their merchandise. You can see how I live and that many people never see me complain believe I am happy and completely in a good mood and completely at ease.[70]

Meier-Graefe's seminal work of 1904 codified the history of modern art told by the Secession, constituting the fruition and institutional defence of modernism. As Jensen notes, thanks to Meier-Graefe, Impressionism was now de-nationalized to signify modernism.[71] The fact that Meier-Graefe included a full chapter on Rosso in the first edition reflects his initial interest in the artist and the culmination of Rosso's efforts in Central Europe. Yet Meier-Graefe's subsequent removal of the chapter suggests he had misgivings about whether Rosso's intuitions merited a separate section.

Paris: Home Not So Sweet Home (1903–1906)

In the first decade of 1900 Rosso rarely exhibited in Paris. Now a French citizen, in 1903 he became a founding member of the Salon d'Automne, where he showed works in 1904. While biographies say he was invited, Barr claims that he was refused a separate gallery and thus chose one adjacent to the Italian sculptor Paul Troubetskoy, in order to elicit a comparison

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some errors in Mola and Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso*, 46. The letter is in the Archivio Medardo Rosso, Barzio.

69 Letter of Medardo Rosso to Jehan Rictus, n.d. but from Vienna, *Papiers de Jehan Rictus* NaFr 24571, 387V, published by Giovanni Lista, *La Sculpture impressionniste* (Paris: L'Echoppe, 1994), 85. Transcription by Alessandro de Stefani.

70 Ibid.

71 Jensen, *Marketing Modernism*, 5–6.

that would prove his superiority. This led to a prompt reframing of Rosso as Italian (and Troubetskoy as Russian, due to his father's nationality), despite his French citizenship.[72]

Rosso's idiosyncratic installation intimates his growing impatience with his outsider status in Paris and a plan he devised to emerge. While the catalogue lists his submission generically as '*Impressions* (Bronze et cire)', photographs show he exhibited numerous works.[73] A critic noted a series of 'surreptitious [...] snapshots', which show that Rosso had also added his copies of ancient and Renaissance works alongside his sculptures. Additionally, they reveal that Rosso had furtively placed his sculptures in galleries dedicated to retrospectives of Paul Cézanne and Auguste Renoir (Figure 3).[74] Tongue in cheek, the critic reported that Rosso had even hung photographs of his works – 'accidentally or purposely'[75] – interspersed with photos of sculptures by Rodin. Rosso said that these unusual placements were by 'the hand of Nemesis'.[76] But to German collector Harald Gutherz, Rosso described the show as his homecoming in France, in his idiosyncratic mixture of French and Italian:

> I have just had an exhibition at the salon d'authomme champselisse [*sic*]. They invited me specially and to put my ensemble of works and me up to today to make known my work to everyone, which has been useful to many others bought by celebrities. I accepted. They also asked me to put two of my works in the collection of works by Cezanne [*sic*] and Renoir. That was the most beautiful proof that I am right. That my sculpture goes well with [their painting].[77]

72 Louis Vauxcelles, 'Notes d'art: au Salon d'Automne. Le sculpteur Medardo Rosso', *Gil Blas* (31 October 1904), 1.

73 Société du Salon d'automne, *Catalogue de Peinture, Dessin, Sculpture, Gravure, Architecture et Arts Décoratifs* (Paris: Evreux, 1904), 161.

74 F. K. [Frances Keyzer], 'Impressionism in Sculpture: A Talk with Medardo Rosso', *The Guardian* (2 November 1904).

75 Ibid.

76 Frances Keyzer, 'The Parisians of Paris. A Giant's Struggle', *The King* (3 December 1904), 326.

77 Letter from Medardo Rosso to Harald Gutherz, n.d. but end of 1904, published in Giorgio Nicodemi, '"Le gamin souriant" e cinque lettere di Medardo Rosso', *Emporium*, 83/498 (1936), 300.

Figure 3. Photograph of Medardo Rosso, *Enfant à la bouchée de pain*, installed in the Salle Cézanne, Salon d'Automne, Paris, 1904.

Not only did Rosso infiltrate French art as a form of protest, but he also refused to shake Rodin's hand at the show. Except for one work submitted to the Salon d'Automne of 1906, this was the last time Rosso exhibited in France.

Rosso would again challenge authority, this time in London at the annual exhibition of the International Society for Sculptors, Painters and Gravers in 1906, whose president was Rodin. Claiming once more to have been specially invited, he installed more works than were permitted, leading to the removal of two sculptures by the Hanging Committee. This granted him significant press, but also a harsh response by Honorary Secretary Francis Howard, who defined Rosso's action as 'merely a matter of breaking windows and yelling horribly to attract attention'.[78]

Denied a homecoming in France, Rosso returned to Vienna in 1905 for a one-man exhibition, held at Artaria & Co., an art and antiquities gallery.[79] Little is known of Artaria, which exhibited Czech art nouveau painter Alphonse Mucha in 1897 and Austrian painter Felician von Myrbach in 1898. Rosso's casts of ancient copies were now listed for sale with his works.[80] He received notable Viennese press coverage, including several reviews by the Austro-Hungarian Ludwig Hevesi, the chief apologist for Secession.[81] He also sold to several Viennese collectors.[82] In this show, Rosso transformed the Artaria catalogue, itself offered for sale, into an international marketing tool. Capitalizing on serial reproduction, he published names of collections and institutions around Europe that owned other casts of the same work. He also included the 'surreptitious snapshots' of his recent Salon d'Automne infiltration, now billed as a 'large collective

78 'Rodin and Rosso', *The Observer* (10 February 1907).

79 The agreement was signed on 27 May 1903 for January 1904, but the show was the postponed to 1905. See letter of agreement, Wienbibliothek Artaria Archiv, autographenbox, 22, cited but not transcribed in Mola and Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso*, 309.

80 See Rosso's copy of *Medardo Rosso: Bronzen, Impressionen in Wachs*, Kunstsalon Artaria, February 1905, Archivio Medardo Rosso, Barzio.

81 Ludwig Hevesi, 'Medardo Rosso', *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk*, 8 (1905), 174–82.

82 These include, among others, Hermann and Gottfried Eissler, Erna Brunauer, a certain 'Baronne Eleonora Bach' and a 'Mons. Mendl', to whom Rosso dedicated a wax, *Bambino ebreo*, now in the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna.

exhibition'.[83] Finally, he added glowing reviews by prestigious critics from around Europe and the United States, including a bit from Meier-Graefe's new volume. The catalogue even advertised Claris's *enquête* (which 'proved' that Rosso 'belonged' to French Impressionism and was internationalized in its German translation) for sale. Rosso would later amplify this strategy for another lavish catalogue at his personal exhibition at the Cremetti Gallery in London in December 1906, creating what Barr called 'a gigantic publicity release'.[84]

Epilogue and Conclusion: Envisioning Outsider-ness

In 1905, as the Fauves debuted at the Salon d'Automne and French critics hailed Impressionism as dead, a major Impressionist Show was mounted in London, in which Rosso did not participate. Yet, his subsequent period in London can be contextualized as part of the continued internationalization of Impressionism and Rodin's undying success abroad. In late 1905, Rosso was commissioned by the Jewish industrialist Emile Mond and his wife Angela to make a portrait of their young son, Alfred William (who would commit suicide at age 27). The family immediately rejected the work, claiming it did not resemble their son, but today it is considered Rosso's masterpiece.[85] He later retitled the Mond portrait *Ecce puer* [Behold the Child]. His patroness Etha Fles described it as 'a vision of purity in a banal world'.[86]

As Barr notes, although Rosso had 'won recognition in England, Holland, Germany, and Austria [... he] still considered himself

83 *Medardo Rosso: Bronzen* ..., n.p.

84 Barr believes it was paid for by Fles: 'Medardo Rosso', 234.

85 For a detailed history of the work, see Sharon Hecker, 'Ecce Puer', in Stefano Fugazza, ed., *Da Hayez a Klimt. Maestri dell'Ottocento e Novecento della Galleria Ricci Oddi* (Milan: Skira, 1997), 147–9.

86 Etha Fles, *Medardo Rosso: Der Mensch und der Künstler* (Freiburg [Baden]: Walter Heinrich, 1922), 36.

unappreciated in France'.[87] A long overdue official French endorsement seemed to be the purchase of *Aetas aurea* for the Petit Palais at the end of 1907 and Georges Clemenceau's acceptance of *Ecce puer* [Behold the Child] (1906) and *Impression de boulevard. Femme à la Voilette* [Lady with a Veil] (c. 1892–97) for the Luxembourg Museum. But the French State did not support Rosso's recognition. *Impression de boulevard. Femme à la Voilette* was never inventoried and was shipped to the provincial museum of Lyon in 1931. And despite Rosso's French citizenship, *Ecce puer*, exhibited at the Luxembourg Museum from 1908, was put into storage in 1920, to be installed in a future museum dedicated to the 'School of Foreigners', which would never be constructed.

After a long hiatus, Rosso participated in his first exhibition in Italy in 1910, *La prima mostra dell'impressionismo francese e delle scolture di Medardo Rosso*, organized by Ardengo Soffici in Florence. The show intended to introduce Italians to French Impressionism. What was meant to be Rosso's triumphant homecoming after a twenty-one year absence – now as a cosmopolitan artist and through the lens of Impressionism – instead elicited ferocious nationalistic criticism that Rosso had suppressed his Italian roots. Rosso returned definitely to Italy in 1918, at the end of the First World War.

Rosso's long road to acceptance back at home was riddled with obstacles. It was only Etha Fles who made a last effort to guarantee his legacy on an institutional level. She had moved to Rome by then, sensing that Rosso risked becoming too comfortable due to her financial aid.[88] But displeased with Soffici's campaign, she proposed to sell Rosso's works from her collection to Italian museums. She wrote to directors that, 'it would be psychologically such a good thing for Medardo Rosso if Italy actually bestirred herself for him. If Italy were not his own country he would not mind quite so much this animosity, this hostility towards him.'[89] To entice them, she adopted an internationalist approach by listing his works at the Luxembourg, in Dresden, Leipzig and Hagen. But given their disinterest, she ended up 'forcing' museums to buy one work each while donating

87 Ibid., 231.

88 Ibid., 240.

89 Letter from Etha Fles to Nino Barbantini, 26 October 1914, cited in ibid., 247.

several others.[90] Because of events leading up to the First World War, which caused a fierce nationalistic regression, Rosso was not able to maintain his international vision over the next several decades. Thus, Rosso's return to Italy sounded the death knell for his international reputation.

Rosso certainly registered an awareness of his alienation in his sculpture, as emblematized by his final work, *Ecce puer*. The haunting yet moving image of the child, barely glimpsed, may have triggered Rosso's consciousness of the unease of seeing and being seen that he carried with him throughout his life. This was, as I have argued, a situation at once alleviated and exacerbated by his cosmopolitanism, and it mirrors the ambivalent way he came to be perceived by others. He wanted to feel free from constraints of national identity yet was unable to find a stable form of self-definition. This sentiment momentarily coagulated into a universal vision of human possibility within the condition of alienation, which may well be part of the very meaning of being cosmopolitan.

90 Ibid.