Issues of Gender Representation in Modern Greek Art

The Case of Thaleia Flora-Caravia's Photographic Images and Self-Portraits

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ABSTRACT

There is a recent trend, mainly in the field of historiography but also in art history, toward the exploration of female autobiographical discourse, whether it concerns written (autobiographies, correspondence), painted (self-portraits), or photographic data. On the basis of the highly fruitful gender perspective, this article seeks to present and interpret the numerous photographs of the well-known Greek painter Thaleia Flora-Caravia. These photographic recordings, taken almost exclusively from the painter's unpublished personal archive, are inextricably linked to the artist's self-portraits. This kind of cross-examination allows the reader to become familiar with the mosaic of roles and identities that constitutes the subjectivity of female artists in Greece in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

KEYWORDS: autobiography, female artist, modern Greek art, photography, self-portrait

Introduction

No opening words could be more appropriate to introduce a study on twentieth-century artist representation than the verses of Rainer Maria Rilke on the painter Paula Modersohn-Becker:

So free of curiosity your gaze
had become, so unpossessive, of such true
poverty, it no longer desired even
you yourself; it wanted nothing: holy.¹

It is of key importance to note the way in which this emblematic poet of modernity perceives the ideal depiction of oneself: as one being stripped of any vanity that leads to the beautification of physical characteristics. The poet claims that what should be of interest to the modern artist is the portrayal of those particular mental features that make each person unique and radically different from others. This shift from the exact external appearance to the attempt of a thorough inner self-mapping is implemented in the exemplary self-portraits of Rilke's close friend, Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876–1907), whose works are milestones in the portrait genre of the period.

It is obvious, of course, that the successful description of one's *essence* has always been the most peremptory requirement in order to produce a well-made portrait. However, as rightly pointed out by Frances Borzello in her study on female self-portraits, "at the beginning of the 20th century, the increasing access of women into the world of art coincides with the emergence of psychoanalysis, and there is certainly a strong correlation between this thoroughly new concept of knowledge of oneself and the sudden appearance of this great number of self-portraits."²

Focusing on the work and the extraordinary personality of the Greek painter Thaleia Flora-Caravia (1871–1960), this article attempts to understand and thereby interpret the ways in which the identities of professional women artists were being formed at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. It is not based exclusively on the multiple photographic portraits of the painter, but also examines, alongside and complementarily, written autobiographical texts, in this case the painter's unpublished autobiography, whose narrative unfortunately only reaches the year of 1906, as well as her private letters (*epistolaria*), also unpublished to this day.³ It should be noted that these texts prove to be equally or even more eloquent than the photos or the portraits themselves. Maria Tampoukou, in her book *In the Fold between Power and Desire: Women Artists' Narratives*, quite rightly comments that the diverse forms of exploration of the female self, whether we are referring to autobiographies, epistolary literacy, diaries, or self-portraits, compose a patchwork, or better yet, an *assemblage* of narrative and visual elements, a vibrant, dynamic, and constantly enriched arena of interrelations between words and images.⁴

Thaleia Flora-Caravia, one of the first female modern Greek painters, was born in Siatista of Western Macedonia in 1871 and studied at the Zappeion school for girls in Istanbul (1883–1888). Between 1895 and 1898 she lived in Munich, one of the most celebrated art centers of the era, where she attended private painting classes under Nikolaos Gyzis (1842–1901),⁵ Nikolaos Vokos (1854–1902),⁶ Georgios Iakovidis (1853–1932),⁷ and Anton Ažbe (1862–1905),⁸ as women were not accepted as students at the prestigious School of Fine Arts. Her time in the Bavarian capital played a major role not only in shaping the bold and independent character of the painter, but also in her artistic formation. In 1899, she returned permanently to Istanbul, a city that she used as a base for her multiple travels to Greece and Europe. In 1903, she visited Paris and studied at the famous Académie de la Grande Chaumière, and in 1907 she traveled to Egypt, where she married the journalist and scholar Nikolaos Caravias (1876–1959). Caravias was among the most significant figures of the Hellenic diaspora, as well as the founder and director of *Ephimeris* (Newspaper), a journal that circulated in Alexandria for almost forty years (1910–1949). Throughout the fifty years of their marriage,

Caravias never prevented the unfolding of his wife's cosmopolitan life, a life full of wandering and travels that was highlighted by her active presence in the greatest war-time events of the twentieth century; on the contrary, he was a spiritual partner and a fervent supporter of her every activity.

In 1912–1913, Flora-Caravia followed the Greek army in Macedonia and Epirus, during the conflict between the Balkan states and the Ottoman Empire. In 1921, she witnessed the Greek military expedition against the Turkish army at the Asia Minor front as a result of the gradual partition of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. It is worth mentioning here that, on both occasions, Flora-Caravia took numerous sketches on the spot, which she later exhibited in the halls of one of the most important women's organizations in Greece, the Lyceum Club of Greek Women.⁹ In Egypt, where she resided after 1907, she staged numerous exhibitions until 1940, the year she moved to Athens, where she died in 1960.

As evident from the aforementioned biographical notes, the case of Flora-Caravia does not present itself in a temporal or spatial vacuum. On the contrary, her artistic production and multiple activities are strongly interrelated with, or even determined by, the extremely anomalous historical circumstances of the period. As it has been argued by Greek historians, even prior to Flora-Caravia's time, during the Greco-Turkish war of 1897, educated upper- and middle-class women, mainly those gathered around the periodical *Efēmeris tôn kyriôn* (Ladies' journal, 1887–1917) and its editor, Kalliorhoë Parren (1859–1940), formulated new networks of patriotic activism based on the numerous opportunities the war offered them.¹⁰ Indeed, no circumstances would be more suitable for women to participate as active citizens in the public sphere. In this case, they succeeded in being seriously engaged in major national issues not only through the traditional path as mothers and nurturers of the men who went to the front, but also by training the first female nurses (by one woman doctor and three female students of medicine) and by equipping mobile surgeries and hospitals for the needs at the front and at home; in other words, through also their own physical presence on the battlefields. Within this historical context, the case of Flora-Caravia is not, of course, unique, but it is surely representative of women's continuous efforts for emancipation. On the other hand, Flora-Caravia's case is utterly indicative of the so-called diasporic artists, who keep, as Aris Sarafianos eloquently put it, "detouring the metropolitan centre with impressive consistency while operating within the broader grid of Greek diaspora communities."¹¹ Although born in Istanbul and residing permanently in Alexandria, the painter always associated herself, through exhibitions and a stable network of social connections, with metropolitan Greece and its culture.

Throughout Flora-Caravia's adventurous life, photography, a relatively novel medium and not yet widely popularized in Greece, accompanied the most important stages of her career. Photographic reproductions, mainly her portraits in the studio, on which we shall focus, reveal the way the painter defined her individuality as a professional artist and as a woman. It should be stressed, however, that we unfortunately do not know the identity of these photographs' creators. It is highly possible that in most of the cases, they were taken by professionals, regular collaborators of the periodical press (newspapers, magazines), in which the oeuvre of Flora-Caravia was presented. As we shall have the opportunity to attest, they are usually in tune with Flora-

Caravia's own perception of herself, although they surely reveal something of the male gaze toward a female creator. On the other hand, in these photographs, as well as in those of male artists that we shall examine comparatively, one notices certain regularities (special framing, adoption of a specific, predetermined pose, formal or casual outfit) that are borrowed from painted portraits, and vice versa.

The transfer of influences between photography and painting is indicative of a whole field of role construction and interchange, through the acceptance or reformation of established stereotypes. As a result, we are faced either with the same canonical modes characterizing the photographs of male painters, or we are encountering a serious upending of the existent representations of femininity. To be more specific, Flora-Caravia, although engaged in a profession relatively new to women, was not hesitant to depict herself according to established pictorial ways so far applied to male painters. Consequently, she succeeded in inverting the clichéd notion of the housewife or even that of the teacher, professions until then considered the only "suitable" ones for women of the middle social strata. On the other hand, she intelligently proved to a wider audience that the "inner" tendency of the female toward what is beautifully made is not only a matter of external, physical dexterity (sewing, embroidering), but also of mental capability, deep reflection, and inspiration.

Additionally, as far as the studio of the painter, where all of these depictions take place, is concerned, it is quite obvious that the painter and her place of work were strongly interconnected. In Flora-Caravia's letters, as we shall see, she confesses with overwhelming honesty that she "feels more like herself," that her self-consciousness is more profound and complete, when she is in possession of the following: her husband, her home, and her studio. We have already made reference to the special bond that connected the couple, as well as to Nikolaos Caravias's influential figure. For Flora-Caravia, the reminiscence of her husband is associatively connected to her home, her permanent residence in Alexandria, where she kept returning after her daring travels around the world. The unusual role inversion should be thus underlined: the wandering female is asking for the stability of her husband and the family nest. And last but not least, the painter mentions her studio, her place of work, where she identifies herself not as a wife, but as a professional. The case of Flora-Caravia is utterly indicative of the paramount importance of "a room's of one's own," of a private, secluded place where one can meditate and create: in other words, the studio of the artist.

Moreover, the conceptual relation between the artist and her atelier greatly affects the way the artist herself, as much as her works, are interpreted by the audience. This crucial issue is addressed in the words of the American feminist and art historian Eunice Lipton: "People love the opportunity to examine the artist's studio, because they savor the privilege of observing what is ordinarily off-limits and mysterious to them: the hands of the artist at work. They hope that if they look long and hard enough, they will find *him*, and he will be in the act."¹² As a result, when an artist reveals his/her atelier to us, he/she presents himself/herself; he/she is exposed before our eyes, allowing us to take a look at his/her professional *intimité*. Nevertheless, our voyeuristic gaze focuses only on what the artist allows us to see, as his/her working universe is, we could say, staged.

Consequently, the case of Flora-Caravia lends itself to a better understanding of the articulation between photography and painting and also of the intersection be-

tween discursive categories such as gender and class. This kaleidoscopic approach allows us to treat the photographs as well as the painted or drawn portraits and texts as complementary parts of a single corpus, as a pluralistic ensemble, whose study will enhance the understanding of the multifaceted phenomenon of the woman artist. In line with this methodological axis, this article situates its materials in the context of other male self-portraits and photos, aiming to address the issue of gender roles in self-portraiture and photographic depiction since Flora-Caravia constantly challenges them while at the same time reinforcing them. We shall, therefore, try to clarify eventual contradictions, which go far beyond the simplistic notion of acceptance or rejection of established gender roles and comportments.

Photographs and Self-Portraits of Thaleia Flora-Caravia in Her Studio

"To photograph is to confer importance"
—Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (1977)¹³

"Here I am deprived of everything that makes me feel like myself: you—our house—my studio." —Excerpt from a letter sent by the painter from the Asia Minor front to her husband, Nikolaos Caravias (24 July 1921)¹⁴

As mentioned above, for Flora-Caravia, the existence of a personal working space was extremely important, given that being a professional painter, and therefore having a studio, was not an obvious choice for a woman at the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the painter realized at a very early stage, during her studies in Munich, the importance of an atelier for the boosting of her profile as a professional artist. "I am thinking about renting an atelier and I consider this idea a good and effective one in many ways, because what can I say? A painter with her own atelier makes a different impression," she writes to her brother Lazaros.¹⁵ The part of her autobiography that refers to this early period confirms the key role of the studio throughout the years she spent in the Bavarian capital. That is why the painter does not hesitate to dedicate to this subject an entire chapter entitled "The New Studio":

I had the ambition to own an atelier, inside which I should also live in order to save money; that is it would be an atelier and a house at the same time. And I said to myself that the best dressing and the best decoration for an atelier would be these oriental carpets, and then I thought of Istanbul and I wrote to my brother Lazaros, initiating a correspondence that took us through many adventures and many documents to the customs office, until I finally made it to see my atelier covered with many carpets and felt the joy that their colors brought to me. Right there, next to an old red armchair, lay my guitar, whose sweet voice escorted my lonely thoughts and the Greek songs Zairis used to sing [the Greek painter Emmanouil Zairis, (1876–1948)]¹⁶ in his rich tenor voice, every time he came by, along with my white-haired friend, Fraulein Düringer, who had the joyful mood of a young girl. These meetings usually took place after the Abendakt, the tiring nude drawing class at the Academy, when we

turned on the heater and prepared the tea and the sausages to accompany our everlasting discussions on artistic matters.¹⁷

This excerpt, beyond providing a vivid description of an era, also gives rise to a series of observations. First of all, it points out the determination of Flora-Caravia to overcome all kinds of difficulties, financial and practical, in order to own a studio and therefore compete on equal terms with her fellow male artists in Munich's extremely demanding professional arena. In other words, she successfully transgressed the limitations her gender imposed on her and defined her subjectivity the way she wished.

At the same time, her interest in the appearance of her atelier is impressive. It results from her inherent sense of elegance but also of her awareness concerning the effect that a well-arranged studio can have on her guests and potential clientele. At this point, it is very interesting to comment on an early photograph of the painter (Figure 1), which we believe was taken in Munich, where she is caught putting her thoughts on a piece of paper. Maybe she is about to write one more of the letters she regularly sent to her brother Lazaros, to whom the picture was probably sent as well. Behind her, everyday objects complete the narrative of the image: her beloved flowers

Figure 1. The painter in Munich, 1896–1897, courtesy of private collection.

and the writing utensils on the table, the rich oriental carpets on the walls. One can't help but wonder if this is a photographic depiction of the first improvised room-atelier the painter refers to in the letters and in her autobiography.¹⁸

Finally, the representation of the studio not only as a place of work and creation, but also as a meeting point for fellow and like-minded artists, as a space where discussions on art subjects were taking place, as a *lieu par excellence* for intellectual osmosis, deserves our special attention. The evening nude class at the academy (she refers to the private painting school of N. Vokos, where male nude study was allowed for both male and female students),¹⁹ which represents the typical, institutionally authorized part of artistic studies, was followed by the informal version of it: the contact with fellow students, the debate on artistic matters, in other words, the creation of a social network, which was indispensable for a young woman far from her home country and family. The studio is thus invested with the experiences of the artist and of those around her and is transformed into a special *locus* that hosts ambitions, hopes, and thoughts, that promotes isolation but also opens up leisure opportunities and relaxation.

Similar thematic and sentimental elements characterize one of the first and most significant self-portraits of the artist (Figure 2). A comparative analysis between the

Figure 2. Thaleia Flora-Caravia, *Self-Portrait*, 1896–1897, oil on canvas, 54.2 x 42 cm, Athens, courtesy of National Gallery — Alexandros Soutzos Museum. Photo: Stavros Psiroukis.

photograph and the painting will easily reveal multiple commonalities. In both of them the painter presents herself in casual, plain attire in her working space. Unquestionably, it is the power of her gaze, direct, extroverted, and fearless, that constitutes a common topos between the two. Although, as we mentioned before, the photographer remains unknown, it was surely Flora-Caravia who shaped her self-depiction in the photograph, or at least approved of its composition. The great similarity with her painted self-portrait testifies to this conclusion.

As far as the painting is concerned, we shall not insist on the work's formal analysis and the ingenious way in which the young painter assimilated the multiple influences she received as a student, living in a melting pot of styles such as Munich.²⁰ However, it is worth mentioning an illuminating fact about this specific work drawn from the painter's autobiography. In the chapter referring to her studies in Munich she mentions a small self-portrait that, upon recommendation of her professor, Georgios Iakovidis, she sent to the Second Art Exhibition in Athens. The event took place in Zappeion, the main exhibition hall of the Greek capital, in 1898. The painter remarks that the public and the critics of the time appreciated the high quality of her work and assumed that it had been painted by a most promising male artist: "Then came the message from Athens, where, following Iakovidis' advice, I had sent three small works: it was assumed that behind the name signing one of these small self-portraits was hiding a young male painter with a bright future."²¹ Indeed, the way of signing (T. Floras) may easily refer to a male name. I strongly believe that the critics' assumption is a rather clear proof of the gendered perception of the artist. The identification of the artistic creator, especially a "promising" one, with the male artist undoubtedly provides an indicator of the prejudiced reception and the restricted tolerance of the Athenian art world regarding female artistic production of the time. This polarized perception was surely one of the reasons that Flora-Caravia decided to leave Istanbul and study painting in Munich, and later reside permanently in Alexandria, famous for its liberal and cosmopolitan atmosphere.

For methodological reasons we could divide the extended number of Flora-Caravia's photographs into three categories. In the first group the painter is depicted creating inside her atelier, literally at work. In the second, the artist is presented in a formal standing pose with no easel or painting utensils around her, and the third category includes depictions of open-air ateliers (*ateliers en plein air*).

It is indisputably in the first category, where the studio is highlighted as a place of inspiration and creation, that an early photograph of the painter dated around 1901 belongs (Figure 3). It presents her first atelier in Istanbul, soon after her return from Munich.²² The artist's eye does not meet the viewer but instead focuses on the painting placed on the easel in front of her. The work is entitled *Fairytale Princess* and it was exhibited in September 1901, which gives us a safe *terminus ante quem* for dating the photo. Since we know that the piece is made of tempera and pastel, the artist does not hold her large palette of oil colors, but a small case. In her right hand, we can spot the paintbrush with which she is working, while in the left she is holding some thinner brushes. She is dressed in a working outfit, a casual dress matched with a long apron, and her hair is tied up in a messy bun. The lack of any concern for her appearance, a trademark, as we shall see, of her self-portraits too, seems to accentuate the struggle,

Figure 3. The painter in her atelier, 1901, courtesy of private collection.

the psychic turmoil of the painter in order to materialize her artistic vision. This impression is intensified by the deliberate, in my opinion, inclusion, on the right side of the photo, of a chair upon which the viewer is allowed to observe the so-called kitchen of the painter: squeezed paint tubes, paintbrushes, a half-full glass of water, and some used pieces of cloth compose a disordered but charming still life, reminding us that painting is not solely a *cosa mentale*, a mental activity. There are more works surrounding the painter, some hanging on the walls, some placed on the floor. Last but not least, it is worth mentioning the small guitar, which is clearly distinguished in a background corner and harmonically completes the image of a closed, independent space of work and meditation. It is not, I believe, a coincidence that this photograph accompanied every early report on the painter, which means that she herself saw it as being compatible with her self-image and suitable for the further promotion of her work through the press.²³

A similar approach to the studio's space is attempted in the following photo (Figure 4), which is contemporaneous to the previous one. This probably amateur take allows a closer look at Flora's figure while she is working. On the other hand, the atelier is not so thoroughly described, as it is only outlined by two paintings that set the limits of the background. In this case too, the painter's eyes do not meet ours. Unlike her many self-portraits, where she gazes boldly at the viewer, the painter is here depicted as fully committed to the work on the easel. This time we do not get the impression of her having interrupted her work in order to reflect on the next step; her look is not elusive but utterly concentrated on the brushstrokes that she is carefully positioning on the canvas. The sloppy look of her figure, her outfit and hair, verifies once more the distance between the care for external appearance and artistic creation. When the painter is working, the narcissism supposedly inseparable from the female "nature" is superseded by the frenzy of inspiration.

In 1906, following her nine-month stay and study in Paris (1903), as well as the traveling exhibition of her works in Germany (1905), the painter returned to Istanbul and moved to a new studio. Her memories of this period are preserved in an exciting excerpt of her autobiography: "I should like to dwell on this year of my life, I rejoice in it from any aspect. It is during that time that I had the nicest atelier of my career. It was a room in the house of Mme Chopar, the widow of a French officer, furnished in the Empire style, which created an ambiance of pure nobility."²⁴ This new studio is most probably depicted in the photograph bearing the inscription *Atelier of Thaleia Flora* (Figure 5) that illustrates a short presentation of the life and works of the painter.²⁵ We see Flora –Caravia portrayed in profile, seated in front of her easel, upon which we spot a large seascape. The intense moment of the work's conception and execution has passed and the artist is gazing at her painting, calm and satisfied. In the background, the walls, full of paintings, become an indisputable proof of the painter's productivity.

At this point, the juxtaposition of a marvelous painted self-portrait that dates from the period of the artist's studies in Paris is almost unavoidable (see Figure 6). By this time, the painter had enough faith in her technical skills to experiment with a more sophisticated pose inside her atelier. The enlarged field inside which the figure is placed allows us, as opposed to her previous self-portrait (see Figure 2), to take a closer look at her equipment: the large palette and the numerous brushes. The dim light out-

Figure 4. The painter in her atelier, circa 1900, courtesy of private collection.

Figure 5. The painter in her atelier, 1904–1905, courtesy of private collection.

lines the surrounding space, which is probably a student atelier in the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, where Flora-Caravia was studying.²⁶ The large number of works we see placed in the back, as well as a second easel, confirms such an assumption.

The painter's gaze constitutes the main focus of the composition as it becomes intensified in the twilight. Her lips firmly closed, enlivened by a slight ironic smile, her simple, black outfit, all these elements amount to the visualization of the concept of poverty as Rilke regarded it. This self-portrait has such an intense visual force that it transforms the figure depicted from an object to an active subject that observes rather than being observed by the viewer. Facing such a piece, similar attempts of male artists like the one made by Oumvertos Argyros (1882–1963) in 1917 (Figure 7), where the painter is presented in his atelier in a clearly relaxed pose, wearing a loose white shirt and smoking a pipe, give a shallow and frivolous impression. On the other hand, Flora-Caravia's work is closer to self-portraits like the one painted by Nikos Lytras (1883–1927) in 1907–1910 (Figure 8), where the intention to create a deliberately heroic persona, that of a tireless and distinguished worker at the service of art, appears obvious.

Figure 6. Thaleia Flora-Caravia, *Self-Portrait*, [1903], oil on canvas, 104 x 71 cm, courtesy of private collection.

Figure 7. Oumvertos Argyros (1884–1963), *Self-Portrait*, 1917, oil on canvas, 130 x 85 cm, Athens, courtesy of National Gallery — Alexandros Soutzos Museum. Photo: Stavros Psiroukis.

Figure 8. Nikos Lytras (1883–1927) *Self-Portrait*, 1907–1911, oil on canvas, 68 x 48 cm, courtesy of Telloglion Foundation of Art—Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Fifty years later Thaleia Flora-Caravia was photographed in her last atelier, in Athens (Figure 9).²⁷ Despite the passing of all these years, the exact same typology used in the previous pictures can also be observed in this one: the atelier is filled to the brim with paintings, and at its center we see the old and venerable figure of the painter, holding the palette and her brushes. One of Flora-Caravia's last self-portraits entitled *Wintertime* (1949) (Figure 10) presents the painter at approximately the same age.²⁸ The artist contemplates herself and the viewer with a silent, powerful gaze. As always, she is holding in her hands her utensils, the palette and the paintbrushes. The small table next to her provides the perfect excuse for the creation of a charming still life, composed of a white cup, a teapot, and two small flower vases on the right. The structure of the composition allows a panoramic view of her house-atelier, as the painter was, as we

Figure 9. The painter in her atelier, 1950s, courtesy of private collection.

mentioned, at the time established in Athens.²⁹ The paintings, the artistic production of a lifetime, literally invade the place, hung on the walls or left on the floor. Piles of books in the background strictly delimit a place of work, study, and reflection, a *hortus conclusus* innately related to the professional activity of the artist, but also to personal preferences and rituals, such as reading or tea preparation and consumption. Flora-Caravia, as opposed to her usual practice, gives the portrait a fairly sentimental title imbued with delicate symbolism: *Wintertime* does not only refer to the snowy urban landscape that can be seen from the large window on the right, but also to the painter's age, her course of life that is now in its twilight.³⁰ It seems that only the untamed power of time can harness her passion and reduce her creativity. This fully justifies the melancholic, sad ambience of the portrait, which is quite new in the series of self-portraits hereby examined.

Figure 10. Thaleia Flora-Caravia, *Wintertime*, [1949], unknown location.

On the contrary, another small pencil self-portrait of the same period (Figure 11) is much more optimistic and therefore closer to the spirit of the photograph (see Figure 9). The painter depicts herself seated, while drawing with a pencil on a sketch pad that is open in front of her. She turns her gaze to the viewer for only a moment, with astonishing clarity and insight. It is a look characterized simultaneously by incessant curiosity and introspection. This feeling becomes more intense owing to the pose of the figure, as her slightly bent head rests on her right hand. This is a contemporary depiction of a “thinking woman” that comes as a contradiction to the usual images of daydreaming female figures common in the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth century.³¹ The multiple layers of lines, some dense and others not, define the surfaces and contribute to the masterful game of shadow and light that culminates in the description of the face. The last painting Flora-Caravia created, a *Self-Portrait*, in 1957 (Figure 12), is an unfinished attempt probably owing to the eye disease the painter suffered from during the last years of her life. Flora-Caravia is depicted standing in her garden, surrounded by her beloved flowers. The painting in the background, vaguely noticeable, is the only indication that the presented figure is a painter herself. The gloom and the depressed tone of *Wintertime* have been replaced by an almost juvenile freshness, emitted by the bright colors and the rough brushstrokes on the canvas. It seems as if the painter wishes now, at the sunset of her life, to drive death away through the power of art.

Figure 11. Thaleia Flora-Caravia, *Self-Portrait*, 1952, pencil on paper, 16 x 21 cm, courtesy of private collection.

Figure 12. Thaleia Flora-Caravia, *Self-Portrait*, [1957], oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm, courtesy of private collection.

The next three photos belong to the second category of the painter's depiction in her studio. In this case, the artist, far from the easel and without her equipment, is simply posing inside her working space, standing or seated, but always contemplating her works. In the first photograph (Figure 13), which dates from the beginning of

Figure 13. The painter in her atelier, circa 1906, courtesy of private collection.

the twentieth century and takes us to the painter's first atelier in Istanbul, the impact of the pose, a female figure situated in a premeditated position, is very intense. Flora-Caravia is standing with her back turned on the spectator, and she is staring from a distance at a semifinished painting placed on the easel. We have the impression of an airy spectrum, which does not bring at all to mind the solid, dynamic presence of the previous photographs. The loose, white, ankle-length outfit makes her look more like a vision, like a true priestess of art who is easily integrated in the symbolist spirit of the period, albeit belatedly.³² The main concern in this case is obviously to beautify, to elevate the sitter's spiritual outlook. We could not possibly know whether such a radical differentiation in the artist's presentation originates from the painter herself or from the photographer, who, in his turn, is following the stereotypes of the period³³ as far as artists' photos are concerned.³⁴

Similar staging of the artist's persona can be found in photographs of well-known male artists of the period. Professor Nikolaos Gyzis, photographed in his studio in the Munich Academy of Fine Arts (Figure 14), by his student, the German photographer Elias van Bommel, between 1899 and 1900,³⁵ Vikentios Bokatsiampis (1856–1932)³⁶ (Figure 15), and also Spyridonas Vikatos (1878–1960)³⁷ (Figure 16) prove to be quite representative examples. We immediately become aware of the pose of the painter's figure inside the studio, this *mise en scène* aiming, especially in the photographs of Gyzis, to promote the image of a productive, visionary male artist. The photograph of Flora-Caravia seems to follow the same path of idealization, by imbuing the female artist with a kind of "heroic" spirit.

The following photograph (Figure 17) dates to the mid-1920s. It was taken in Flora-Caravia's atelier in Alexandria, the city where she lived for thirty years (1910–1940). This was the biggest and most luxurious studio the painter owned,³⁸ as these were the years she was widely recognized through her exhibitions in Europe and the United States and consequently sold a large number of works.³⁹ In the photo, the painter is depicted seated. She is elegantly dressed, as any high society lady would be, and there is nothing in her outfit or her pose indicating that she is indeed a painter. This constitutes a new characteristic in the series of photographs that are here examined. One possible explanation is that Flora-Caravia has now gained a wider recognition as a painter; therefore she does not have to show her profession with the same perseverance. The comfortable atelier is richly decorated with carpets and plants and, of course, filled with paintings. Among them, one distinguishes, placed in a prominent position, the portrait of *Kassiani*, a work created by Flora-Caravia at the beginning of 1920 and exhibited in her atelier in 1924. The artistic *mise-en-scène* of this shot reveals, once more, the significant intervention of the photographer, who, obviously in cooperation with the painter, set up the image-making process, the pose, the expression, and possibly also the outfit of the sitter, in order to evoke the proper impression (that of a decent social standing and a fairly embellished personal appearance).

In the third and last category of photographs, we find open-air ateliers, that is to say, studios not confined in a closed internal space, but set out in nature. Inspired by the painters of the Barbizon school,⁴⁰ and even more by the Impressionists, the artist

Figure 14. The painter and teacher of Flora-Caravia, Nikolaos Gyzis, in his atelier in Munich, 1899–1900.

Β. Μποκατσιάμπης ἐν τῷ ἐργαστηρίῳ του.

Figure 15. The Corfiot painter Vikentios Bokatsiampis in his atelier, circa 1901.

sought direct contact with the natural landscape while working. The escape from the conventional space of the studio had been a conscious pursuit⁴¹ for the painter, beginning as early as during the years of her studies in Munich. But also later on, as a recognized painter in Istanbul, she never renounced the immediacy, the freshness, as well as the difficulties of outdoor painting (*peindre sur le motif*). In her autobiography we read:

Outside my room-atelier, unforgettable little corner, the boatman is wandering down the paved waterfront and the small boat gently swaying in front of the wet steps, and the paint boxes, the canvas and the umbrella waiting for me. I rush to the boat and the paddles in their rhythmic up and down take me to the silky waters . . . and I am hunting the boats of the fishermen. And then a struggle began to capture with my brushes the airy, smooth colors of the waters and the vibrant ambience.⁴²

This vivid excerpt brings in mind the famous painting by Édouard Manet, depicting his friend, the painter Claude Monet, while working on his floating atelier in

Figure 16. The painter Spyridon Vikatos, circa 1902.

Figure 17. The painter in her atelier, mid-1920s, courtesy of private collection.

Argenteuil.⁴³ One can only imagine the surprise experienced by those who witnessed this scene, surely a rare one in early twentieth-century Istanbul: a woman painter, not only engaged in an activity unsuitable for her gender but, on top of that, performing it without a trace of shame, outside her home and studio, in the public eye. Unfortunately, such an early picture of her working outdoors has not been preserved; however, a photograph taken later, during the interwar period, has been saved and is truly revealing of this method of work (Figure 18).

Flora-Caravia is presented in some coastal area, probably the suburbs of Alexandria, as it appears from the rocky ground and the wooden constructions in the background that were probably used as beach cabins. Her equipment, simple and easy to carry, consists of a small suitcase filled with papers, brushes, and colors, which she uses as an improvised easel. Another characteristic object is the umbrella, which is used for protection against the disturbing impact of the sun. It is evident that the picture was not taken by a professional photographer but by some family member or a student of hers. Indeed, it should be noted that Flora-Caravia ran a school of painting in Alexandria for quite a long time (1910–1940). In certain pictures found in the painter's archive, she is depicted next to her students in parks and gardens of Alexandria, as they work *en plein air* (Figure 19).

However, the image that was meant to be identified with the painter and remains emblematic to this day is the one taken by the photographers F. Zeitz and Aristotelis Romaidis at the front during the 1912–1913 Balkan Wars.⁴⁴ This historic photograph was taken in the Emin-Aga area, close to Ioannina, on the eve of the triumphal

Figure 18. The painter working in the countryside outside Alexandria, 1930s, courtesy of a private collection.

Figure 19. The painter with her students in Alexandria, 1930s, courtesy of a private collection.

occupation of the city, until then under Turkish control, by the Greek army (Figure 20). Flora-Caravia, covered in heavy clothes, is painting calmly, while the surrounding area is far from being characterized as suitable for artistic creation. Under Epirus's rough mountains, in the middle of military tents and animals, the painter has set up her improvised studio: on top of an ammunition case she has placed her colors box, so that its upper side can be used as an easel. An unidentifiable pile of rags or maybe a horse saddle is used as a seat, while we can also spot her sketch pad. Next to the painter, a soldier, dressed in the characteristic Greek *foustanella* (traditional uniform), is bending down, curious to figure out this unknown procedure that is taking place in front of him.

The writer Costas Ouranis describes the painter's image in the most poetic words:

Boredom brought me to the surgery rooms where one could sense the consequences of the war and it was in one of them that I first saw Mrs. Flora-Caravia,

Figure 20. The painter at the front in Epirus (Emin Aga), 1913, courtesy of a private collection.

standing and indifferent to everyone, drawing sketches of the surgery tents in front of the stunned eyes of the lying wounded and of all of us that would expect to see anything in Emin Aga but a woman. Curiosity dragged me to her and admiration made me stick to her side for a long time, until, in the end, we became good friends . . . We got out of the surgery tent together and got knee-deep in the mud that prevented us from advancing, we walked together on the street and stood in front of a mournful landscape full of emptiness and death, to which the imposing, snow-covered [mountain of] Olytsikas granted a background of peace and silence. . . . [The] simpleminded soldiers, lying in front of the fire in a small distance, were looking at her, curious and still, thinking that she was taking pictures of them. In the middle of all this abandonment and the monotony of Epirus's landscapes, in the darkness that was spreading impressive and heavy, Mrs. Flora-Caravia did not give the impression of a woman any more, but that of a priestess of Art that I had the chance to watch during the beautiful moment of a ritual.⁴⁵

Despite the powerful description that completely transmits the pulse of the scene, Ouranis does not manage to go beyond the strongly gendered perception, according to which the woman does not exist *per se* but as an allegory, as a symbol, as an ethereal priestess in the middle of a ritual. This perception also appears in the photographic image of the painter in her studio, as mentioned above (see Figure 13).

As the Emin Aga photograph is the only one of the corpus that we are examining here whose creators are known to us, we could legitimately argue that they are making an indirect yet eloquent comment on the power and efficacy of the photographic depiction of the war, as opposed to the painted one that Flora-Caravia is energetically involved in creating. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a century marked by incessant war operations, is it the painted or the photographic record that really captures the spirit, the ambiance, the tragedy of the war? The question lingers unanswered and it is up to the spectator to give an opinion.

Moreover, it is interesting to point out the ways in which such a photograph dramatizes and at the same time radicalizes the modern female model as opposed to the male one. One woman, a professional painter, finds herself literally in the cross fire, depicting military activities in her sketches. In other words, she is portrayed as an active subject, as an individual who is working under the most adverse circumstances. On the other hand, the figure of the Greek soldier has been transformed into a passive receiver of female intelligence and creativity. The woman is acting whereas the man is observing, in an unexpected inversion of John Berger's famous principle: "Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of a woman is always male: the surveyed is female. Thus, she turns herself into an object of observation: a spectacle."⁴⁶ Hence, we are faced with a complete inversion of gender-specific prejudices, according to which men are always the energetic creators, the male eye is the one that constantly seeks, finds, and reproduces, whereas women perpetually constitute a topos: the Eternal Muse, the object of observation, the one who is constantly looked at for inspiration.

Conclusion

This article has traced the complexity of Thaleia Flora-Caravia's self-definition through photographs of the artist, her writings, and her works, enhancing research into the conditions that gave birth to the social phenomenon of the woman artist in the period here discussed. Flora-Caravia's numerous, tireless attempts at self-promotion prove to be anything but static and rigid. On the contrary, they reveal that what is defined as a woman painter at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century is a multivalent, versatile, constantly changing field of images and perceptions. Considering the limited sphere of activity of female artists, we attest that they inevitably revert to a borrowing of elements from the work of male artists, following the dominant types of representation in terms of self-portraiture. Gradually, however, and as their position in the professional arena strengthens, they shift the iconographic canon to eventually undermine it by creating their own codes of representation.

On the other hand, many other fundamental issues arise, such as the analysis of the image of the female painter as she is portrayed by both male and female fellow artists, issues that should be studied and further examined in the future, so as to lead us to finer, more sophisticated deductions.

◆ About the Author

Despoina Tsourgianni studied history of art at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. She completed her postgraduate studies at the Paris IV–Sorbonne University in Paris, and she holds a PhD from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (2003). Her doctoral dissertation on the painter Thaleia Flora-Caravia was published in 2005 and then later revised and enriched in 2018. Her research interests and publications focus mainly on modern Greek art, with a strong emphasis on female artistic creation and activity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She taught history of European art at the Hellenic Open University (2008–2010). Since 2002 she has been working as Assistant Curator of the Alpha Bank Art Collection, organizing exhibitions and preparing their scientific documentation.

◆ Notes

1. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Requiem gia mia fili kai gia ton Wolf Graf Von Kalckreuth* [Requiem for a friend and for Wolf Graf Von Kalckreuth], trans. by Ioanna Aggelaki, Efthimia Alexaki, Kalliopi Madopoulou, and Chrysa Bania (Athens: Papyros Editions, 2010), 50.

Frances Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-Portraits* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 125.

It is worth noting here that this extremely important corpus of letters makes up, along with the painter's unpublished manuscript of her autobiography (hereafter: "Autobiography"), a major part of the well-organized personal archive of the artist, which now belongs to the descendants of Leonidas Floras, grandson of the painter's brother, Lazaros (hereafter: Floras Family Archive). I would like to wholeheartedly thank them for their kind permission to access and study these precious data.

4. Maria Tamboukou, *In the Fold between Power and Desire: Women Artists' Narratives* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 1–51.

Nikolaos Gyzis, one of the most prominent Greek painters, studied at the School of Fine Arts in Athens (1854–1864). He then went to Munich where in 1868 he was admitted to the class of the famous German painter and teacher Karl von Piloty at the Academy of Fine Arts. In 1888, after many exhibitions and distinctions, he was appointed regular professor at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts. The complex subject matter of his work and his broad stylistic range, which extended from academic realism to symbolism and Jugendstil, made Gyzis a dominant figure in both German and contemporary Greek art in the nineteenth century.

6. Nikolaos Vokos studied at the School of Fine Arts in Athens (1874–1878). In 1885, he won a scholarship to continue his studies in Munich under Nikolaos Gyzis, Ludwig Löfftz, and Andreas Müller. He remained in Munich for sixteen years, running a painting school where Flora-Caravia enrolled. In 1902 he returned to Athens, where he died.

7. Georgios Iakovidis studied painting at the School of Fine Arts in Athens (1870–1877) and continued on a scholarship to the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. He successfully worked as an artist in the Bavarian capital mostly in the genre of children's portraiture. In 1900, he returned to Greece, where he was appointed director of the National Gallery (1900–1918) and was elected professor (1904–1910) and then director of the School of Fine Arts (1910–1930). Throughout his long artistic career, Iakovidis remained a fervent adherent of academic realism.

8. Anton Ažbe was a Slovene realist painter and teacher. At the age of thirty, Ažbe founded his own school of painting in Munich that became a popular attraction for Eastern European students, such as Flora-Caravia.

9. See, indicatively, Dimitra Vassiliadou, "Syllogikes drasseis, drastiries zoes: H thesmothetsisi mias gynaikeias syspeirossis stis arxes tou 20ou aiona" [Collective actions, active lives: The institutionalization of a female group in the beginning of the 20th century], in *To Lykeion ton Ellinidon: 100 xronia* [The Lyceum Club of Greek Women: A centenary] (Athens: Cultural Foundation of Piraeus Bank, 2010), 119–145, here 123; Despoina M. Tsourgianni, "I texni sti grammi tou piros: Ta skitsa tis Thaleias Flora-Caravia apo ti Mikrasiatiki ekstrateia" [Art in the line of fire: Thaleia Flora-Caravia's sketches from the Asia Minor front], *Deltio Kentrou Mikrasiatikon Spoudon* [Bulletin of the Center of Asia Minor Studies] 6 (2009): 379–403; Eleni Bobou-Protou, *To Lykeio ton Ellinidon, 1911–1991* [The Lyceum Club of Greek Women, 1911–1991] (Athens: Lyceum Club of Greek Women, 1993), 66.

10. See, indicatively, Efi Avdela and Angelika Psarra, "Engendering 'Greekness': Women's Emancipation and Irredentist Politics in Nineteenth-Century Greece," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 20, no. 1 (2005): 67–79; and Koula Xiradaki, *Oi gynaikeis ston atychi polemo tou 1897* [Women in the unfortunate war of 1897] (Athens: Filippotis, 1994). As far as *Efimeris ton kyrion* is concerned, see the classic study of Eleni Varikas, *I exegersi ton Kyrion: Genesi mias feministikis syneidisis stin Ellada* [The ladies' revolt: The birth of a feminist consciousness in Greece] (Athens: Katarti Editions, 1997). On Callirhoe Parren, see Angelika Psarra and Eleni Fournaraki, "Parren, Callirhoe," in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. and introduction by Francisca De Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 402–405. For a general history of Greece from the birth of the Greek state until today, see John S. Koliopoulos and Thanos M. Veremis, *Modern Greece: A History since 1821* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

11. Aris Sarafianos, "The Diaspora of Greek Painting in the Nineteenth Century: Christou's Model and the Case of Marie Spartali-Stillman," *Historein, a Review of the Past and Other Stories* 6 (2006): 150–169.

12. Eunice Lipton, "Representing Sexuality in Women Artists' Biographies: The Cases of Suzanne Valadon and Victorine Meurent," *The Journal of Sex Research* 27, no. 1 (1990): 81–94, here 81.

13. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 28.

14. The numerous letters between husband and wife during the important periods the painter spent as a correspondent at the battlefield (Balkan Wars, 1912–1913; Asia Minor front, 1921) reveal the strong relationship between the two. This unpublished material is also preserved in the Floras Family Archive. All translations by the author unless otherwise noted.

15. Letter dated 26 August 1896 (Floras Family Archive).

16. Emmanuil Zairis studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich under Nikolaos Gyzis. After his return to Greece in 1932, he was appointed director of the Athens School of Fine Arts Annex on the island of Mykonos. In his paintings he does not diverge from the formal academic features of the Munich school.

17. "Autobiography," 23 (Floras Family Archive).

18. The sculptor Thomas Thomopoulos (1873–1937), who visited Flora-Caravia in Munich at that time, refers to her atelier: "I see her shyly rise in the artistic world of Munich, so gracefully, so harmoniously and the honesty with which she received me in her atelier was such that the impression of the deep harmony of her art remains unforgettable." Thomas Thomopoulos, "Sixronoi Ellines kallitexnai: Thaleia Flora-Caravia" [Contemporary Greek artists: Thaleia Flora-Caravia], *Kallitexnis* [Artist], no. 12 (1911): 376–380, here 377.

19. It would be instructive at this point to refer, even briefly, to Sofia Laskaridou (1882–1965), the other important Greek woman artist active in this period. Laskaridou came from a prominent, well-off family, the daughter of Laskaris Laskaridis and Aikaterini Christomanou, a true pioneer in the field of women's education in Greece. Sofia Laskaridou was among the first women who managed to enter the strictly male-dominated School of Fine Arts in Athens, in 1903. She graduated in 1907 and immediately left with a scholarship for Munich, where she studied at several painting schools. In 1910, she returned to Athens, but she left almost immediately for Paris, where she remained for four years studying at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière and the Académie Colarossi. After 1915 she settled permanently in Athens, where she developed a rich artistic activity. As expected, there are plenty of similarities between Flora-Caravia and Sofia Laskaridou: they both opted for a radical life path, a *modus vivendi* strikingly different from the vast majority of their female contemporaries. They both studied and traveled extensively abroad and they both became successful professional painters, gaining considerable financial independence from their work. They even held an exhibition together, in 1906, in the historical premises of Parnassos, in the heart of Athens. Finally, they both wrote their memoirs toward the end of their lives. We have already mentioned, on numerous occasions, Flora-Caravia's autobiography. Laskaridou, in her turn, wrote hers, which she published in Athens in 1955, entitled *Apo to hmerologio mou: Thimises kai stoxasmoi* (From my diary: Recollections and reflections). Last but not least, another significant *locus communis* between the two is that they both explored the theme of the male nude, a fact extremely rare, if not unique, for the female Greek painters of the period. For the case of Laskaridou, see Glafki Gotsi, "To andriko gymno stin elliniki texni ton arxon tou 20ou aiona: Zitimata aisthitikis, sexualikotitas kai exousias" [The male nude in Greek art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Questions of aesthetics, sexuality, and power], in *To fylo stin istoria: Apotimiseis kai paradeigmata* [Gender in history: Historiographical accounts and case studies], ed. Glafki Gotsi, Androniki Dialeti, and Eleni Fournaraki (Athens: Asini, 2015), 273–302. For the case of Thaleia Flora-Caravia, see Despoina M. Tsourgianni, *Thaleia Flora-Caravia* (Athens: Peak Publishing, 2018), 204.

20. See Rainer Metzger, *Munich: Its Golden Age of Art and Culture 1890–1920* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2009).

21. "Autobiography," 26 (Floras Family Archive).

22. Elena Chamalidi, "Ellinides eikastikoi stin kambi tou 19ou pros ton 20o aiona kai ston mesopolemo: Ypodoxi tou monternismou kai emfyli anaparastassi" [Female Greek artists at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century and during the interwar period: Reception of modernism and representation of gender], in *H gynaikeia eikastiki kai kallitexniki parousia sta periodika logou kai texnis (1900–1940)* [Female presence in literary and art magazines (1900–1940)], ed. Sophia Denisi, Conference Proceedings, Athens School of Fine Arts (Athens: Gutenberg, 2008), 69–139, here 94–95. It is more than possible that this is the atelier referred to by the painter in her autobiography: "And then [meaning after her return from Munich] he [her brother Lazaros] transformed his northern room at the house of Rausen, a German who was working at the Oriental Railway, into an atelier. The room had a lot of windows and we dressed its walls up to the ceiling with a subtle, Persian motif textile. The first painting I created there was the portrait of my Mother." "Autobiography," 28 (Floras Family Archive).

23. Unknown author, "Thaleia Flora," *Pinakothiki* [Gallery] 1, no. 8 (1901): 186. See also *Kallitexnis*, no. 12 (1911): 376, where the photograph accompanies a detailed curriculum vitae of the painter written by her friend, the sculptor Thomas Thomopoulos.

24. "Autobiography," 45 (Floras Family Archive).

25. Unknown author, "Kallitexnikai physiognomiai ek tou exo ellinismou: I dis Thaleia Flora" [Artistic figures from the Greek diaspora: Miss Thaleia Flora], *Ethnikon imerologion skokou* [Skokos National Almanac] 21 (1906): 272–273.

26. In her autobiography, the painter writes: "This crowd of people, so different and totally unknown to one another, joined forces for the sacred purpose of art. And every single night the Grande Chaumière hall would be crowded with students." "Autobiography," n.p. (Floras Family Archive).

27. Photograph taken from Nikos Kyminios, "Mia polymorfos kallitexnis: Thaleia Flora-Caravia, H zografos ton ethnikon agonon" [A multifaceted artist: Thaleia Flora-Caravia, The painter of national wars], *Stratitika nea* [Military news], 9 August and 16 August 1953.

28. This work was presented in the painter's retrospective exhibition that took place in Zappeion in 1949 and in the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 1950. See Tsourgianni, *Thaleia Flora-Caravia*, 102.

29. The well-known Greek painter Yannis Tsarouchis eloquently describes the painter's house-atelier in Athens: "During the Occupation [the occupation of Athens by the Nazis] I lived at Tritus Septemvriou Street. Across the road, a little—a lot—further up, in the direction of Agamon Square, I could observe, on my left as I was going up, a poetic interior, behind the balcony doors that were only a small distance away from the street. And it was poetic not only because of its walls that were covered with paintings hung one next to the other, but also because the little furniture and the very few objects that equipped the rooms had this inexplicable charm of the old and common things, which create a very special ambience, one that cannot be achieved by the luxurious furnishings." Yannis Tsarouchis, "Anamniseis apo ti Thaleia Flora-Caravia" [Memories from Thaleia Flora-Caravia], in *Apo ton 19o ston 20o aiona (Oi ellines zografoi)* [From the 19th to the 20th century (The Greek painters, 1)] (Athens: Melissa Editions, 1977), 416–418.

30. On the "winter season" and its connection to the age of maturity in female self-portraits, see Rosalba Carriera's self-portrait as the personalization of Winter (1731) but also the one of the Dutch painter Charley Toorop (1955), where the portrayed person's old age is in harmony with the snowy branches of the trees in the background of the painting. See also Borzello, *Seeing Ourselves*, 18, 19.

31. Charikleia-Glafki Gotsi, "O Logos gia ti gynaikeia kai ti gynaikeia kallitexniki dimiourgia stin Ellada (teli 19ou–arxes 20ou aiona)" [Discourse on women and female artistic creation in Greece (end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century)] (PhD diss., Aristotle University

of Thessaloniki, 2002), 75–78, and more specifically on women's artistic education, Charikleia-Glafki Gotsi, "Towards the Formation of a Professional Identity: Women Artists in Greece at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," *Women's History Review* 14, no. 2 (2005): 290–291. For women's education in general, see the excellent study of Katerina Dalakoura and Sidiroula Ziogou-Karastergiou, *I ekpaideusi ton gynaikon. Oi gynaikeis stin ekpaideysi: Koinonikoi, ideologikoi, ekpaideutikoi metasximatismoi kai h gynaikeia paremvoassi (18os–20os aionas)* [Women's education. Women in education: Social, ideological, educational transformations and the female intervention (18th–20th centuries)] (Athens: Syndesmos Ellinikon Akadimaikon Vivliothikon, 2015).

32. It is worth mentioning that at the same time *Pinakothiki* described the painter as a "dedicated art priestess." See *Pinakothiki* 1, no. 4 (1901): 97–98. The sculptor Thomas Thomopoulos writes in a letter to Flora-Caravia dated 15 March 1902 (Floras Family Archive): "An unearthly idea or dream that, owing to the love of good, makes the doubtful sensation of our life shutter, has always attracted me in the people who loved, in the true clairvoyants of art." For the reception of symbolism and neoromanticism in the works of Greek artists at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, see Evgenios D. Matthiopoulos, *I texni pterofyei en odynei: I proslipsi tou neoromantismou stin Ellada* [Art grows wings in pain: The reception of neoromanticism in Greece] (Athens: Potamos Editions, 2005).

33. Gotsi, "O Logos gia ti gynaika kai ti gynaikeia kallitexniki dimiourgia stin Ellada," 40, 41, 130, 131.

34. As Roland Barthes eloquently states: "The photo portrait is a strictly oriented field of multiple different forces. Four imaginary elements are intersected and deformed there. In front of the lens I am at the same time: the one I think I am, the one I would like the spectators to believe I am, the one the photographer thinks I am, and finally the one the photographer creates to enhance his art." Roland Barthes, *O photeinos thalamos : Simeiosseis gia th photographia* [Camera lucida: Reflections on photography], trans. from original French by Giannis Kritikos (Athens: Kedros Editions, 1983), 25, 26.

35. Dr. Ulrich Pohlmann, "Photografia kai zogrophiki se dialogo: O fotografos Elias van Bommel kai o Nikolaos Gysis" [A dialogue between photography and painting: The photographer Elias van Bommel and Nikolaos Gyzis], in *O Gyzis stin Tino: 100 xronia apo ton thanato tou kallitexni* [Gyzis in Tinos: 100 years from the artist's death], exhibition catalog, Cultural Foundation of Tinos Island, Tinos, 1–23 September 2001, ed. by Konstantinos Didaskalou (Tinos: Panhellenic Sacred Foundation of the Evangelistria in Tinos, 2001), 30–37.

36. *Pinakothiki* 1, no. 11 (1902): 255.

37. *Pinakothiki* 2, no. 17 (1902): 96.

38. Alekos Lidorikis writes in his newspaper article entitled "Mia ekthesis" [An exhibition]: "Because Thaleia Caravia is not a simple worker of the brush. Her house in Alexandria was not a typical atelier where the artist, in isolation, would create her paintings in order to later make them available for market consumption. The environment she had been forming for the past thirty years, from 1910 to 1940, was taking the shape of a warm national nest, a shelter for all Greeks who believed in art and had left the center to spend some time in the country of Egypt. Poets, writers, actors, journalists, painters and sculptors who would come all this way down to salute the Nile and admire the Pyramids and the Sphinx, for a moment would stop to pay their respects to Thaleia Caravia." *Acropolis*, 20 June 1943.

39. It is worth mentioning that the painter kept a thoroughly written catalog of all the works she sold during her long career along with their prices and the name of the purchasers. This really invaluable item helped me trace many of the works belonging to private collections, and also permitted me to spot the increasing demand for Flora-Caravia's paintings, especially from the haute bourgeoisie of Alexandrian society during the interwar period. This catalogue is preserved in the Floras Family Archive.

40. The Barbizon school was an art movement active roughly from 1830 through 1870. It takes its name from the village of Barbizon, France, near the forest of Fontainebleau, where many of the artists gathered. Some of the most prominent features of this school are its tonal qualities, color, loose brushwork, and softness of form.

41. During an excursion to the outskirts of the Bavarian capital, Flora-Caravia made her first attempt to draw in the open. She described it in her autobiography: "I took a small piece of canvas out of the paint box and looked around me, the garden of the small hotel was shining under the sun, some omnipresent green joyful harmonies rendered human figures so vivid, so different from what they would look in the cold light of the atelier. It did not take me long to find the courage and decide on a whole composition for a family that kindly volunteered to pose, and the large canvas included the whole Vallinda family." And further down: "I had the chance to try the beloved study of the landscape once more: it was with a blonde peasant, who thought it was a good idea to change clothes and brush her hair, a choice that disappointed both my teacher [the painter Georgios Iakovidis] and myself, to Mrs. Iakovidis's entertainment. This first taste of the countryside seemed to have broadened my horizons in terms of tone and color harmony, and I started dreaming on open-air compositions." "Autobiography," 22, 25 (Floras Family Archive).

42. Ibid., 45 (Floras Family Archive).

43. Christian Lenz, *The Neue Pinakothek Munich* [The New Gallery Munich] (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1989), 103.

44. See *Valkanikoi Polemoi 1912–1913: To photographiko lefkoma ton Romaidi-Zeitz* [Balkan Wars 1912–1913: A photo album by Romaidis-Zeitz], presentation by Asterios I. Topis (Athens: Kedros Editions, 2000), 80, 81. On the Romaidis brothers, see also Alkis Xanthakis, *Istoria tis ellinikis fotografias 1839–1960* [History of Greek photography 1839–1960] (Athens: ELIA [Etaireia Ellinikou Istorikou kai Logotechnikou Arxeiou], 1989), 89–91.

45. *Acropolis*, 26 April 1913.

46. John Berger, *I eikona kai to vlemma* [Ways of seeing], trans. Eirini Stamatopoulou (Athens: Metaixmio, 2009), 54.