

1963, “An Exhuming Job:” Medardo Rosso, Margaret Scolari Barr, and the MoMA Exhibition¹

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ABSTRACT

The article revolves around the rediscovery of Medardo Rosso in the United States in the early 1960s, with a special focus on the scholarship of Margaret Scolari Barr and the exhibition organized by Peter Selz at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1963. Scolari Barr was thoroughly committed to the reappraisal of Rosso's art as a pioneering model of modernism, thus positioning the Italian sculptor in the lineage of Western modern and contemporary art. By analyzing her contributions on Rosso—primarily the monograph published in 1963—I aim to demonstrate that Scolari Barr was a scholar and a critic in her own right, who asserted her critical voice through the study on the artist. The book was supported by the organization of a retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, which is reconstructed in the appendix of the article, with as much information as I have been able to find thus far. The relevance of the exhibition lies in the possibility to investigate the early fortune of Rosso in the American art market and evaluate how the appreciation of his art fit within the taste of major collectors and museums overseas. The double initiative of Scolari Barr's book and the MoMA exhibition marks a watershed moment in informing the international reception of Medardo Rosso and defining his legacy.

The exhibition *Medardo Rosso (1858-1928)*, organized by Peter Selz at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (October 2 – November 23, 1963), and the concurrent publication of the monograph *Medardo Rosso* by Margaret Scolari Barr, marked a turning point in the international reception of the Italian sculptor. Not only did the exhibition and the book contribute significantly in reassessing the position of Rosso as a protagonist of the art of his own time, but they also fostered the appreciation of his radical practice as a model and reference for contemporary art. The book authored by Scolari Barr has been extensively mentioned, quoted and discussed, but it has never been acknowledged as the means by which the author articulated and affirmed her own critical voice. On the other hand, the exhibition has never been properly analyzed as a significant initiative which attested to the early circulation of Rosso's sculptures on the art market in the United States. This article is followed by the reconstruction of the exhibition, which is meant to be as informative as possible with regards to the provenance, exhibition and publication histories of the works on view.

1 The article is the result of the research which I developed during my fellowship at CIMA in 2014-2015. I wish to thank Laura Mattioli, the members of the advisory committee Flavio Fergonzi and Vivien Greene, and the CIMA team, for supporting and assisting me throughout all the process. The project could have never been accomplished without the help of Danila Marsure Rosso and Guendalina Giannini Mochi, Archivio Rosso, Milan. I also wish to express my gratitude to Emily Braun, Neil Printz, and Fabio Vittucci. The research has been conducted with the support of the following people and institutions: Anna Vecchi, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio, Tortona; MoMA Archives, New York; Hannah Green, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC.

2 The article is illustrated mostly with photographs taken from the book by Margaret Scolari Barr and installation views of the MoMA exhibition. Whenever possible, the reference to works by Rosso is accompanied by the number of the corresponding entries in the list of works on view in the exhibition, as is hereby reconstructed. With regard to illustrations of works, a decision was made to privilege Rosso's drawings over his sculptures, due to the fact that the former are lesser known than the latter.

The exhibition and the book are intertwined; the first was indeed intended to promote the latter, which was published by the Museum of Modern Art in association with Doubleday Press. Important decisions about loans were discussed between Selz and Scolari Barr. Her expertise on Rosso was developed through years-long research and several trips all over Europe, and Italy especially, by means of which she honed her knowledge of the artist's practice to an extent that she acted as an advisor in the making the exhibition. On the other hand, a few aspects of Selz's choices for the exhibition diverge from the view of Rosso's oeuvre elaborated by Scolari Barr. Commonalities and discrepancies should be carefully examined in order to understand the significance of the respective presentations of the Italian sculptor.

The mission of the project was captured by Peter Selz in a letter to his colleague Palma Bucarelli, the director of Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, in Rome. In light of the difficulties in obtaining a few crucial loans, Selz felt like he needed to emphasize the importance of the initiative in the following terms: "We have purposely scheduled the Medardo Rosso exhibition right after our show of Rodin in order to make clear the difference in thought and achievement of these two artists who have, unfortunately, been coupled by legend in the mind of many critics. It is very important to show the great differences between them even though they are both classified as "impressionist sculptors." Outside Italy the name of Rosso is still little known. We would like to obtain for him the recognition and world acclaim that his work deserves. [...] As you know, Mrs. Margaret Scolari Barr has written a comprehensive and penetrating monograph on Medardo Rosso which will be published by us in conjunction with the exhibition. I am enclosing the introduction to this book which will indicate its importance to you. The Rosso exhibition and monograph constitute a new departure. I think it is fair to say that, with the exception of Canova, Italian sculpture between Bernini and Boccioni is virtually ignored abroad. Rosso is an exception but he is still very little known. We believe this neglect is deplorable. To rectify it we ask your help and the help of your museum. To impress the sophisticated New York public (and justify our own enthusiasm!) we must represent Medardo Rosso at his best. In short, we should have all his six or seven capital works. We need them urgently. I do not, my dear Dottorella, wish to seem importunate. We understand your reluctance. Yet we think that this may be an occasion when some risk is justifiable."³

One could argue that the letter was just meant to convince Bucarelli to lend the pieces which had been requested. Nonetheless, Selz provided a rather accurate report on the state of the art of the reception of Medardo Rosso in the United States by the time of the exhibition which he was organizing. The scant knowledge of Rosso in the United States should first be considered by briefly hinting at the postwar reception of the Italian sculptor overseas.

1. Rosso in the United States, 1945 to 1963

The first occurrence of the name of Medardo Rosso in the United States after World War II is most likely the translation of one of his major writings in an anthology titled *Artists on Art: From the XIV*

³ Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Palma Bucarelli, April 26, 1963, The Museum of Modern Art Exhibition Records, [729.2]. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York (from now on, the citation will be as follows: MoMA Exhs., [exh.#.folder]. MoMA Archives, NY).

to the XX Century, from 1945.⁴ Consisting of a selection of texts, spanning six centuries from Cennino Cennini in the Middle Ages to José Clemente Orozco, in which artists articulated and expressed their vision of art and art making, it would gain increasing recognition as a primary source of information for scholars.⁵ The anthology was compiled and edited by Robert Goldwater and Marco Treves. Both graduate students at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, Goldwater and Treves acknowledged the contribution of their professors in the foreword of the book, with special mention of Erwin Panofsky and Walter Friedlaender.⁶ While Goldwater would become a renowned art historian and museum director, Treves is a rather obscure figure. He was an Italian Jew who fled from his country in 1938 and emigrated to the United States.⁷ His education at the Institute of Fine Arts is attested by the publication of an article in the journal of the Institute's students in 1941.⁸ As the editors claimed in the foreword, many of the artist's statements in the anthology were published in English for the first time, with Treves translating the Spanish and Italian texts. The editors endeavored to provide a comprehensive selection of Western artists by merging history and geography. The resulting structure of the book consisted in a chronological sequence of chapters, in which the artists were grouped by their country of origin. The presence of Italian artists dramatically decreases starting from the sections devoted to the 19th century. Among the few mentioned names, Adriano Cecioni, Medardo Rosso, and Giovanni Segantini represent the contribution of Italy to the art of the late 19th century. In the introductory essay, Goldwater emphasized the revelatory nature of the artists' own words when applied to their practice.⁹ Complying with the intention to focus on such sources, it was that the statement that Rosso published in Edmond Claris's famous survey on Impressionism in sculpture in 1902 would be translated from French.¹⁰ It was the first English translation of this writing. In the short introduction to the text, the Italian sculptor was primarily associated with the category of Impressionism: "Medardo Rosso is the most typical representative of "impressionism" in sculpture. For the interplay of volume and contours he substituted an interplay of light and shadow."¹¹

The inclusion of Rosso's text in *Artists on Art* is early, yet significant, evidence of the modernity of his vision. In this respect, one might wonder whether the decision was also inspired by the artist Louise Bourgeois, to whom Goldwater was married, who was acknowledged in the book "for criticism from the point of view of the contemporary artist."¹² Despite this intriguing assumption, it's not so hard to guess how the editors came to know of Rosso. Among the people to whom they expressed their gratitude in the foreword, Alfred H. Barr was also mentioned. It was probably Barr who brought the Italian sculptor to

4 Robert Goldwater, Marco Treves, eds., *Artists on Art: From the XIV to the XX Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1945).

5 Edward Alden Jewell, "Recent Books on Art," *The New York Times* 95, no. 32,292 (June 23, 1946): 4X. On the book's legacy, see Herschel B. Chipp, "A Method for Studying the Documents of Modern Art," *Art Journal* 26, no. 4 (Summer 1967): 371.

6 "Foreword," in Goldwater, Treves, *Artists on Art*, cit., vii.

7 See the biography available at the following link: <http://marcotreves.blogspot.com/>.

8 Marco Treves, "Maniera, the history of a word," *Marsyas*, vol. 1 (1941): 69-88.

9 Robert Goldwater, "Introduction," in Goldwater, Treves, *Artists on Art*, cit., 11.

10 Edmond Claris, ed., *De l'impressionnisme en sculpture* (Paris: Éditions de la "Nouvelle Revue", 1902): 321-26, translated as Medardo Rosso, "The Aims of Sculpture," in Goldwater, Treves, *Artists on Art*, cit., 329-30.

11 Ibid., 329.

12 Ibid., vii.

the attention of Goldwater and Treves. A few years later, Barr and James Thrall Soby would acknowledge Rosso as “revolutionary precursor of Rodin at his boldest” and “a sculptor of international importance and influence” in the catalogue of the exhibition of Italian modern art, which they organized at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1949.¹³ The relevance assigned to Rosso by Barr and Soby is significant, yet problematic. Despite the insistence in asserting the primacy of his art on an international scale, the sculptor was hailed as a pioneering figure only with regards to the development of modern art in Italy. On a broader level, the historiography of modern Western sculpture in the United States still positioned Rosso as a peripheral figure. Following the assessment of the artist in the anthology by Goldwater and Treves, the prevailing narrative around the sculptor still revolved around his association with French Impressionism. In 1952, a major publication on modern sculpture in Europe and the United States was released, not so far from the museum where Italian art had been celebrated a few years earlier. The book was published by the Museum of Modern Art, and authored by Andrew C. Ritchie, who was the director of the Department of Painting and Sculpture at the museum. Building upon what was considered as the unquestionable preeminence of Auguste Rodin as the pioneer of modern sculpture, Ritchie treated Rosso as the antagonist of the French master, his “Italian counterpart”, whose nature was that of “an impressionist painter in wax” with a weaker sense of mass and space.¹⁴ Ritchie placed Rosso among the artists gravitating in the orbit of such a towering figure as Rodin, yet recognized his role as the initiator of Italian modern sculpture.¹⁵ Two works by Rosso, a plaster version of *Malato all'ospedale* [Sick Man at the Hospital] and a wax of *La conversazione* [Conversation in a Garden], both from the collection of the heirs in Barzio, were illustrated among the plates of the book.¹⁶ The study anticipated a major exhibition of sculpture organized by Ritchie, which travelled among the museums in Philadelphia, Chicago and New York.¹⁷ Taking its cues from the publication, the initiative reasserted the exclusive centrality of Rodin’s work as the origin of modernity in sculpture. No artworks by Rosso were exhibited, while his name was mentioned only once in the accompanying catalogue, in the short biography of the Italian sculptor Giacomo Manzù.¹⁸

It took a little longer before Rosso was (re)discovered as an international protagonist in the history of modern sculpture. In 1955, the substantial analysis of modern sculpture, authored by the German-Swiss art historian Carola Giedion-Welcker, was released in Germany, United Kingdom and the United States.¹⁹ The book was the larger and deeply revised edition of the study that Giedion-Welcker had already

13 James Thrall Soby, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Twentieth-Century Italian Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1949): 7, 33. On the genesis and significance of the exhibition, see the special issue of *Italian Modern Art*, Raffaele Bedarida, Davide Colombo, Silvia Bignami, eds., “Methodologies of Exchange: MoMA’s “Twentieth-Century Italian Art”, *Italian Modern Art*, no. 3 (January 2020).

14 Andrew C. Ritchie, *Sculpture of the Twentieth Century* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1952): 15, 17.

15 Ibid., 17, 34-35.

16 Ibid., 66-67.

17 Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, October 11 – December 7, 1952; Chicago, The Art Institute, January 22 – March 8, 1953; New York, The Museum of Modern Art, April 29 – September 7, 1953.

18 Andrew C. Ritchie, ed., *Sculpture of the Twentieth Century* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art—Simon and Schuster, 1952): 44.

19 The American edition belonged to the series of books “Documents of Modern Art,” directed by Robert Motherwell, see Carola Giedion-Welcker, *Contemporary Sculpture: An Evolution in Volume and Space* (New York: George Wittenborn, Inc., 1955).

published in 1937.²⁰ Based in Europe and engaged in championing modernist sculpture for a long time, the author was up-to-date on many artists who were lesser known in the United States at that time, including Rosso. In Giedion-Welcker's analysis, Rosso countered Rodin inasmuch as the practice of the former was more lyrical, delicate and attentive to the surface of the sculpture, while the latter was more concerned in the dramatic and dynamic effects of huge masses. The art historian contended that the great artistic achievement of Rosso "was the use of light to dematerialize volume,"²¹ and recognized his influential role by illustrating several of his most radical sculptures, often compared to works by younger artists, who might have been inspired by him. In this respect, it's important to notice that Giedion-Welcker analyzed and included the heads of *Yvette Guilbert* and *Madame X* among the plates of the book, illustrated the groups of *La Conversazione* and *Impression de boulevard. Paris la nuit* [Boulevard impression. Paris at night], and ultimately compared Rosso's *Enfant malade* [Sick Child] to Brancusi's *Supplice* and Lehmbruck's *Female bust*, and the grotesque profile, full of edges, of *La portinaia* [Concierge] to Boccioni's *Antigratzioso* [Antigraceful].²²

Giedion-Welcker's scholarship definitely facilitated the circulation and reappraisal of the work of Rosso among American critics and collectors. A few years after the publication of her book, the dealer Louis Pollack, who ran the Peridot Gallery in New York, took increasing interest in Medardo Rosso. Margaret Scolari Barr would recall the circumstance of the dealer's encounter with Rosso's art, and assign a seminal role to that event. A few sheets of notes are currently kept in the MoMA archives, in which Scolari Barr detailed the story.²³ These notes were most likely addressed to William C. Seitz, curator of the Department of Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, to provide him with a draft to use to introduce the lecture that Scolari Barr gave on Rosso at the museum on November 5, 1963.²⁴ Scolari Barr explained that "after the second war Lou Pollack of Peridot was tremendously interested in the very complete series of Rosso sculptures in the Galleria d'arte moderna in Rome. He asked around and by 1959 he had some Rossos for sale."²⁵

The exhibition arranged by Pollack consisted of a small, yet exhaustive, selection of sculptures and drawings by Rosso. Held at Peridot Gallery between 1959 and 1960, it was the first retrospective of the Italian sculptor in the United States, and a watershed event in the acknowledgement of the artist.²⁶

20 Carola Giedion-Welcker, *Moderne Plastik. Elemente der Wirklichkeit; Masse und Auflockerung* (Zurich: Girsberger, 1937).

21 Giedion-Welcker, *Contemporary Sculpture*, cit., 12.

22 Ibid., 13-17, 77

23 Margaret Scolari Barr, handwritten notes to William C. Seitz, October 28, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

24 Press Release no. 108, October 21, 1963, MoMA exhibition records, 729. *Medardo Rosso, 1858-1928* [MoMA Exh. #729, October 2-November 23, 1963], <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3437>. The notes are dated "Monday 28," which should read as October 28, a few days before the lecture, and addressed to a certain Bill, who should be identified as William C. Seitz.

25 Margaret Scolari Barr, handwritten notes to William C. Seitz, October 28, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

26 *The first exhibition in America of sculpture by Medardo Rosso, 1858-1928* (New York: Peridot Gallery, 1959). According to the catalogue, the exhibition was open between 1958 and 1959. Nonetheless, it is a wrong indication, probably due to a typo, considering that the introductory essay by Giorgio Nicodemi is dated October 1959, and the reviews were all published in late

Ten years later, on the occasion of the obituary for Pollack's untimely death, Hilton Kramer would still remember the exhibition as a groundbreaking revelation.²⁷ Consisting of twelve sculptures and two drawings, the exhibition aroused interest in the artistic milieu at that time.²⁸ Based on the reviews, the wish to assert the radical modernity of Rosso's art and his role as a "teacher for the artists of the new generation who recognized his valor and power," as formulated in the introduction of the catalogue by Giorgio Nicodemi—former director of the museums of the city of Milan, editor of the Italian magazine *L'arte*, and a partner of Pollack in the organization of the exhibition—was accomplished. Dore Ashton authored the more insightful report on Rosso's art, which she defined as "prophetic." For the first time, the association with French impressionism felt reductive vis-à-vis the complexity of the forms modeled by the artist. Ashton described the artist's sense for the transparency of light and atmosphere, by means of which he expressed his "new vision of the universe" as a whole, which objects participated in, and sought the pure form laying underneath the transient and ever-changing impressions of reality.²⁹

In the most extensive review of the exhibition, which appeared in *Arts* magazine with several full-page illustrations of sculptures, Hilton Kramer articulated what Ashton hinted with regard to the internal dialectic of Rosso's sculpture. The artist could finally compare to Rodin at the same level, and look even more modern than the French: "Rosso's art looks to the future. Compared with Rosso, it is Rodin who looks like the latter-day master of the Renaissance."³⁰ Dismissing the label of Impressionism, Kramer contended that the raw surfaces through which the artist rendered the human figures resonated with modern Expressionism, and Giacometti's figures, while the purity of his forms, verging on the dematerialization in light and space, anticipated Brancusi's quest for essentiality and the unitary worldview of Futurism. The apparently opposing poles of modernity reconcile in the art of Rosso, whose "realism was thus motivated by a quest of purity, and the purist aspect of his work was abetted by a desire to render the truth."³¹ Other reviewers, such as Bennett Schiff, agreed with Kramer's interpretation.³² Emily Genauer went even further, and argued that Rosso's work would resonate with the vision of young artists more than Rodin's: "Today's sculptors—painters, too—are more interested in light, surface and space. They are absorbed by shapes in metamorphosis, by images that are not fixed but forever in process of becoming. They cannot, however, accept the rhetoric, the heroics, even, of much of Rodin's work. In the few Rosso pieces they've run into [...] they have spotted qualities similar to those they are seeking."³³ The appraisal of the legacy of Rosso by American critics around the time of the exhibition at Peridot Gallery is partially attested by the occurrence of his name in the catalogue of the fundamental exhibition *New Images of Man*, organized at the Museum of

1959, early 1960. Bibliographies published thereafter record the exhibition as taking place between December 15, 1959, and January 16, 1960, see Margaret Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1963): 85.

27 Hilton Kramer, "An Ambiance ... All Too Rare," *The New York Times* 120, no. 41, 224 (December 6, 1970): D29.

28 To know more about this initiative, see the article by Chiara Fabi in this issue.

29 Dore Ashton, "A Sculptor of Mystical Feeling," *The New York Times* 109, no. 37,227 (December 27, 1959): X17.

30 Hilton Kramer, "Medardo Rosso," *Arts* 34, no. 3 (December 1959): 30.

31 *Ibid.*, 37.

32 Bennett Schiff, "In the Art Galleries," *New York Post* (December 20, 1959): M12.

33 Emily Genauer, "Experiments of the Present Form Our View of the Past," *New York Herald Tribune* (December 20, 1959).

Modern Art in Fall 1959.³⁴ Describing the war monument designed by Kenneth Armitage for the Germany city of Krefeld, Peter Selz, the curator of the exhibition, paired Rodin and Rosso as sources of inspiration for the rough treatment of the surface of the sculpture.³⁵

The perception of Rosso in the United States radically changed throughout the 1960s. From the periphery of the art world centered in France and dominated by Rodin, the Italian sculptor was slowly positioned right at the center and acknowledged as a modern master standing at the same level as his French colleague and prefiguring the development of modern and contemporary sculpture. In this respect, the intuition expressed by Barr and Soby in the catalogue of the 1949 exhibition was articulated in 1961, on the occasion of the exhibition on Futurism, organized at the Museum of Modern Art.³⁶ In the accompanying catalogue, Joshua C. Taylor included a full-page plate of Rosso's *Yvette Guilbert*.³⁷ Taking cues from the homage to Rosso paid by Umberto Boccioni in his Manifesto of Futurist sculpture, Taylor contended that Rosso held a central position as a pioneering figure of Italian and international avant-garde.³⁸ Pollack's efforts to arouse interest in Rosso led to the increasing number of his sculptures entering major American public and private collections starting from the exhibition at Peridot Gallery.³⁹ In this respect, the scholarship of Margaret Scolari Barr was fundamental in reassessing the relevance of the artist, which was definitely sanctioned by the exhibition organized at the Museum of Modern Art in 1963.

1. A scholar in her own right: Margaret Scolari Barr on Medardo Rosso

In conjunction with the exhibition at the Peridot Gallery, an insightful scholarly examination of the art of Medardo Rosso was published in *Art News*.⁴⁰ It is a detailed profile of the artist's life and body of work, rather than a commentary or a review of the exhibition. The author was Margaret Scolari Barr. The art historian felt the need to provide the American audience with a proper contextualization of the artist whose work looked so shockingly fresh and modern to anyone visiting the exhibition. The accuracy of the reconstruction revealed the depth of knowledge and the extent of the research by means of which Scolari Barr could retrieve so much information about the Italian sculptor.

The activity of Margaret Scolari Barr is extremely relevant and multifaceted. A comprehensive reconstruction of her figure would extend far beyond the scope of this article. Since the files of her archive were processed and opened to access at the MoMA archives, a few reports on her life and work have been published.⁴¹ Born in Rome in 1901 from an Irish mother and an Italian father, Margaret Scolari was a

34 New York, The Museum of Modern Art, September 30 – November 29, 1959.

35 Peter Selz, "Kenneth Armitage," in Peter Selz, ed., *New Images of Man* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1959): 27.

36 *Futurism*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, May 30 – September 5, 1961.

37 Joshua C. Taylor, ed., *Futurism* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1961): 90.

38 Ibid., 87, 92, 120n42.

39 A few notes about the acquisitions by private collectors and museums are included in the entries of the sculptures exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in 1963 (see the reconstruction below). For a broader analysis of the collecting of Rosso's sculptures, see the article authored by Chiara Fabi.

40 Margaret Scolari Barr, "Reviving Medardo Rosso," *Art News* 58, no. 9 (January 1960): 36-38, 66-67.

41 See the biography in the finding aid of the Margaret Scolari Barr Papers on the museum website (<https://www.moma.org>).

natural polyglot, thanks to her multilingual family background. She studied linguistics in Italy, then moved to the United States to teach Italian at Vassar college, where she started her education in art history. Her fluency in French, Italian, Spanish and German enabled her to build up a network of relationships in Europe and facilitate the acquaintance with the sources and protagonists of modernism of her husband, Alfred H. Barr, whom she married in 1930 (**Fig. 1**).⁴² Scolari often collaborated with Barr on exhibitions and publications, and frequently travelled throughout Europe with him.⁴³ The couple frequently stopped in Italy, where Scolari had important acquaintances in the art world, including the Futurist painter Giacomo Balla, who was a close friend of her father, the Ghiringhelli brothers, who ran Galleria del Milione in Milan, and Bernard Berenson.⁴⁴

According to Scolari Barr's own notes, the encounter with Medardo Rosso was facilitated by her husband, who had been fascinated by his sculpture since the early travels in Europe in the late 1920s.⁴⁵ A more consistent interest in his work more likely dated to the trips to Italy in the postwar years, when Scolari, Barr and Soby were preparing the exhibition on Italian modern art to be held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1949.⁴⁶ Several years later, Scolari briefly recalled the circumstances of the development of her approach to Rosso. In 1977, Francesco (Franz) Larese, who ran the publishing house Erker Presse in St. Gallen, Switzerland, specialized in prints and limited editions, reached out to Scolari through the Italian artist Piero Dorazio, asking whether she were interested in working on a new, updated edition of her 1963 book on Rosso.⁴⁷ After detailing her response, the art historian added a post-scriptum, in which she recounted as follows: "Before getting married, I had done tremendous studies in art history. Then,

[org/research-and-learning/archives/finding-aids/MargaretScolariBarrb.html](https://www.moma.org/research-and-learning/archives/finding-aids/MargaretScolariBarrb.html)). While announcing that the files were processed and accessible, the archivist Elena Cordova emphasized their relevance, see <https://www.moma.org/explore/inside-out/2015/10/13/the-margaret-scolari-barr-papers-now-open-for-research-at-moma-archives/>. The assertion is partially confirmed by a critical profile of Scolari Barr published in 2020, see Lynée Lewis Gaillet, "Museum of Modern Art's 'Margaret Scolari Barr Papers,'" *Peitho. Journal of the Coalition of Feminist Scholars in the History of Rethoric & Composition* 22, no. 3 (Spring 2020), see <https://cfshrc.org/article/museum-of-modern-arts-margaret-scolari-barr-papers/>. Due to the pandemic, it has been unfortunately impossible to visit the MoMA archives and see the papers. A few folders have been digitized by the staff of the archives upon request. I would like to hereby acknowledge their help and support.

42 On the background and early life of Scolari Barr, see Oral history interview with Margaret Scolari Barr relating to Alfred H. Barr, 1974 February 22-May 13. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution: <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-margaret-scolari-barr-relating-to-alfred-h-barr-13250#overview>.

43 Scolari Barr wrote a journal chronicling the work and trips with Alfred between 1930 and 1944, which was published in 1987 in a special issue of *The New Criterion*, devoted to the work of Alfred H. Barr at the Museum of Modern Art, see Margaret Scolari Barr, "'Our Campaigns,'" *The New Criterion* (Summer 1987): 23-74.

44 Ibid., 30, 34, 58. Scolari introduced Balla to her husband on the occasion of a visit in 1932. See also Antje K. Gamble, "Exhibiting Italian Modernism after World War II at MoMA in 'Twentieth Century Italian Art,'" *Italian Modern Art*, no. 3 (January 2020): 9-10.

45 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Giorgio Nicodemi, May 30, 1963, Tortona, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio, Fondo Giorgio Nicodemi (from now on, the citation will be as follows: Tortona, Fondazione CR). See also, Margaret Scolari Barr, handwritten notes to William C. Seitz, October 28, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

46 On the preeminent role played by Scolari Barr in the organization of the exhibition, see Silvia Bignami, Davide Colombo, "Alfred H. Barr, Jr. and James Thrall Soby's Grand Tour of Italy," *Italian Modern Art*, no. 3 (January 2020): 3, 6, 10, 30.

47 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Francesco Larese, April 15, 1977. Margaret Scolari Barr Paper [III.C.26]. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.



FIGURE 1. From Margaret Scolari Barr, ““Our Campaigns,”” *The New Criterion* (Summer 1987): 42. Margaret Scolari and Alfred Barr at the Venice Biennale in 1948.

as the wife of Alfred Barr, I learned more than you could learn at university. When Alfred announced at home that a book on Medardo should be written, I immediately realized that such a work should be done by me.”⁴⁸ The story is confirmed by a letter, held at Archivio Rosso, that Alfred Barr sent to Francesco, the son of the sculptor, in 1949. Taking its cue from a report by James Thrall Soby of a visit to Barzio, the town in the mountains over Lecco where Francesco had his vacation house and created a museum with many of his father’s sculptures, Barr regretted that the acquisition committee of the Museum of Modern Art couldn’t buy a sculpture by Rosso, due to the little knowledge of the artist in New York at that time, but expressed his enthusiasm about him as “the most original artist of his country during that period.”⁴⁹ As part of the intense schedule of international trips taken every year with her husband, Scolari must have visited the major retrospective of Rosso organized at the Venice Biennale in 1950.⁵⁰ The exposure to such a comprehensive selection of sculptures and drawings most likely felt like a confirmation of Barr and Soby’s interpretation of Italian modern sculpture as a lineage stemming from Rosso’s radical practice.⁵¹

48 “Prima di sposare [sic] io avevo fatto tremendi studi di storia dell’arte. Poi come moglie di Alfred Barr imparai più di quel che si potrebbe imparare all’università. Quando Alfred Barr annunciò in casa che era necessario scrivere un libro su Medardo capii subito che questo lavoro dovevo farlo io.” Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten note, April 20, 1977, Margaret Scolari Barr Paper [III.C.26]. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

49 Alfred Barr, typewritten letter to Francesco Rosso on letterhead “The Museum of Modern Art,” October 28, 1949, Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso.

50 The exhibition at the Venice Biennale counted fifty works, see “Medardo Rosso,” in *XXV Biennale di Venezia: Catalogo* (Venice: Bruno Alfieri, 1950): 65-70.

51 See above. Scolari Barr recalled that the schedule of trips to view international exhibitions had gotten extremely intense

Scolari's research on Rosso, the exhibition at Peridot Gallery and the concurrent acquisition of two sculptures, *Portinaia* and *Bookmaker*, by the Museum of Modern Art in 1959, constituted a concerted effort to foster the recognition of the artist in the United States.⁵² According to Scolari Barr's memories, after securing two sculptures to the museum collection, Alfred Barr "wanted someone to write something on Medardo."⁵³ In the notes left to William C. Seitz to help him prepare the introduction to the lecture that she gave at the Museum of Modern Art in November 1963, the art historian understated the importance of her scholarly contribution, maintaining that Barr asked her to study Rosso primarily for her linguistic skills, as the majority of the bibliography on the artist was in Italian.⁵⁴ In this respect, Giorgio Nicodemi, who was also involved in the organization of the exhibition at Peridot Gallery, assisted Scolari Barr in developing her expertise on Rosso, as attested by the correspondence between the two of them in those years. Scolari sent him the catalogue of Peridot Gallery along with her article in *Art News* in early 1960. In the accompanying letter, the author thanked him for providing essays and sources, and complained about the editorial restrictions that forced her to trim her essay. The art historian therefore expressed the desire to publish a more comprehensive survey on the Italian sculptor elsewhere, and asked for Nicodemi's support in reaching out to the family of the artist and whoever was in contact with him.⁵⁵

In the article in *Art News*, Scolari Barr emphasized especially two figures who intersected Rosso's life and art: Rodin and the Dutch collector and art patron Margaretha (Ethä) Fles. The art historian engaged in a thorough investigation of their relationship with Rosso, which she would develop further in the essays published in the following years. The depth and breadth of Scolari Barr's knowledge in this respect reveals her commitment as a scholar. The troubled relationship with Rodin and the issue whether the Italian inspired the composition of his *Balzac* marked the critical interpretation of Parisian years of Rosso.⁵⁶ Getting rid of the misinterpretations and the biases which had accumulated in the scholarship until then, Scolari Barr argued that Rosso's sculptures might have possibly inspired Rodin's solution, acknowledging at the same time the major differences between the works of the two sculptors. Scolari Barr's effort was immediately acknowledged, to the extent that a few years later, Albert Elsen, a leading authority on Rodin, decided to just briefly hint at the connection with Rosso in the monograph on the French sculptor accompanying the retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, which preceded the Rosso exhibition. Instead of providing his own interpretation, Elsen left a broader discussion of the subject for the monograph by Scolari Barr, which would appear shortly afterwards.⁵⁷ With regards to Ethä Fles, the art historian reserved the concluding paragraph of her article in *Art News* entirely to her, recognizing her pivotal role in championing

since 1947, when Alfred Barr resigned from the title of director of the museum and was appointed Director of the Collections at MoMA, see Oral history interview with Margaret Scolari Barr relating to Alfred H. Barr, cit., n.p.

52 To know more about the two sculptures, see entries nos. 6 and 21 in the appendix of this article.

53 Margaret Scolari Barr, handwritten notes to William C. Seitz, October 28, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

54 Ibid.

55 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Giorgio Nicodemi, January 24, 1960, Tortona, Fondazione CR.

56 On the subject, see Sharon Hecker, *A Moment's Monument: Medardo Rosso and the International Origins of Modern Sculpture* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017): 156-57, 164-67.

57 Albert E. Elsen, *Auguste Rodin* (New York—Garden City: The Museum of Modern Art—Doubleday, 1963): 105n25.

inexhaustibly the art of Rosso.⁵⁸

The exploration of these issues developed in conjunction with the extension of the scope of Scolari Barr's research on Medardo Rosso. After the publication of the article, there began an intense period of research and travels. Scolari Barr spent long time in Italy, trying to gather as much information as possible, meet friends and acquaintances of the artist, get the sculptures in public and private collections photographed, and visit as frequently as possible the heirs of Rosso in their property in Barzio, where documents and works were kept at that time. Scolari Barr first visited Barzio on August 4, 1960, as attested by the correspondence with Clotilde Rosso, the widow of Francesco, Medardo's son, and her daughter Danila, as well as by a letter sent from the United States, in which Scolari thanked Clotilde Rosso for the exquisite hospitality and expressed her desire to study the archive.⁵⁹ Upon reception of the letter in which the art historian asked for his help in reaching out to the family, Giorgio Nicodemi facilitated the visit and introduced Scolari to Rosso's heirs in the summer of 1960.⁶⁰ By that time, the project of a book, intended to be published by the Museum of Modern Art, had already been established.⁶¹ Scolari's effort to get the works properly photographed was primarily meant to provide the publication of the book with as many accurate illustrations as possible. When Gino Ghiringhelli of Galleria Il Milione gave her most of the photos which were used by Mino Borghi for the monograph published in 1950, Scolari found some of them outdated, and tried to commission a new photographic campaign.⁶² The Rossos hosted Margaret Scolari in Barzio at least in the summer of 1960 and 1961. They showed her the artist's sculptures and drawings, allowing her to take photographs which would be partly illustrated in the book released in 1963.⁶³ Apparently, despite the hospitality, she couldn't study some of the papers, probably because they had already been used and mentioned in the 1950 book by Borghi.⁶⁴

Scolari became interested in the figure of Etha Fles since the beginning of her research on Rosso, while she was determining the chronology of the artist's body of work. By the summer of 1961, Scolari had already gathered enough material about the Dutch woman, and was working on an article which would be published in the Netherlands.⁶⁵ Titled "Medardo Rosso and His Dutch Patroness Etha Fles," the essay appeared in *Netherlands Yearbook for the History of Art* at the end of 1962.⁶⁶ The story of Scolari Barr's

58 Scolari Barr, "Reviving Medardo Rosso," cit., 67.

59 Clotilde Rosso, draft of a letter to Margaret Scolari Barr, after July 7, 1960, Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso; Margaret Scolari Barr, handwritten letter to Clotilde Rosso on letterhead "Mrs. Alfred H. Barr Jr.," August 17, 1960, Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso.

60 Giorgio Nicodemi, handwritten letter to Clotilde Rosso, June 8, 1960. Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso.

61 Scolari introduced herself by emphasizing the importance of the book project in fostering the international reception of Rosso, see Margaret Scolari Barr, see Margaret Scolari Barr, handwritten letter to Clotilde Rosso, July 7, 1960, Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso.

62 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Giorgio Nicodemi, November 21, 1960, Tortona, Fondazione CR. According to the letter, the photographs published by Borghi were taken by Herbert List. See Mino Borghi, *Medardo Rosso* (Milan: Edizioni del Milione, 1950).

63 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Danila Rosso Parravicini, January 16, 1961, Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso.

64 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Danila Rosso Parravicini, December 2, 1963, Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso.

65 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Giorgio Nicodemi, July 18, 1961, Tortona, Fondazione CR.

66 Margaret Scolari Barr, "Medardo Rosso and His Dutch Patroness Etha Fles," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek / Nether-*

interest in Etha Fles was recounted directly by her in a letter to Nicodemi, in which she provided a short biography and retraced the origins of her studies on Rosso: "At the time when I wrote the article for *Art News*, I had already realized that this Dutch lady was standing in the background. A Dutch woman, who works at Kröller Müller Museum, read the article and sent me the address of the adopted daughter of Fles. I reached out to her and began to understand countless aspects which weren't mentioned in Italian monographs. Time passed and my husband and I went to Berlin in 1960 for a Congress on Cultural Freedom [sic].⁶⁷ I met there Abraham Maria [sic] Hammacher, the director of Kröller Müller Museum, and asked him whether he had memories of this Etha Fles. And he said: "of course I do," and added that she was a beloved intellectual, much admired in the Netherlands. Therefore he commissioned the article on Fles and told me that he would submit it to the *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*. I thought about writing a short piece of approximately 3 pages. Nevertheless, in 1960 as well, shortly after meeting you in person, I met by chance a strange Dutchman in Venice. I forgot to bring with me in Italy the address of the adopted daughter [of Etha Fles], then I gave a letter to him, to be brought back to the Netherlands. This really strange guy, half a journalist, half an historian, went to visit the adopted daughter and, like a detective, started to search, talk, go to libraries, to find out articles and relatives of Fles. He then sent me in scattered letters, extremely hard to read and inconsistent, mostly all the material I used for the article, which reveals another aspect hitherto unknown in the life of Medardo. In fact, the friendship with Fles was actually a miracle for Medardo, not only for the reasons which are clear in the article, but mostly because she deeply admired him and encouraged him at a time when he was neglected in Paris."⁶⁸

In the opening paragraphs of the article, Barr revealed the identities of the figures mentioned in the letter. The adopted daughter of Etha Fles was Agatha Verkroost, while Jacob van der Waals was the name of the journalist who provided Scolari with most of the documents concerning Fles.⁶⁹ In addition, the art historian applied her linguistic skills to learn Dutch to read the articles and books authored by Fles, and integrated the memories shared by Alexandrine Osterkamp, a longtime friend of the woman.⁷⁰ The research

lands Yearbook for History of Art 13 (1962): 217-251.

67 It's a conference organized by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, the anti-communist group founded in 1950.

68 "Già quando scrissi l'articolo sull'ART NEWS avevo capito che nel retroscena c'era questa signora olandese. Una signorina olandese che lavora nel Museo Kröller Müller lesse l'articolo e mi mandò l'indirizzo della figlia adottiva della Fles, io le scrissi e cominciai a capire un sacco di fatti che non c'erano nella monografie italiane. Passò un po' di tempo e nel 1960 mio marito ed io andammo a Berlino per un Congresso sulla Libertà Culturale. Là incontrai Abraham Maria Hammacher direttore del Museo Kröller Müller e gli chiesi se lui si ricordava di questa Etha Fles. E lui disse: "Altroché" e che lei contava come una cara ed intellettuale [sic] signora molto ammirata in Olanda. E così mi commissionò l'articolo sulla Fles e mi disse che l'avrebbe piazzato nell'annuario Olandese di Storia dell'arte. Io pensavo di scrivere un pezzetto di circa 3 pagine quando per coincidenza, sempre nell'anno 1960 e dopo aver avuto il piacere di far la sua conoscenza, conobbi proprio per caso un curiosissimo olandese a Venezia e siccome avevo dimenticato di portarmi dietro in Italia l'indirizzo della figlia adottiva gli diedi una lettera da riportare in Olanda. Questo curiosissimo tipo mezzo giornalista, mezzo storico andò a trovare la figlia adottiva e come un detective cercò parlò andò in biblioteca rintracciò articoli, parenti della Fles e mi mandò in lettere sparse, difficilissime a leggere, incoerenti, quasi tutto il materiale di questo articolo che rivela un altro aspetto a noi finora ignoto della vita di Medardo. Perché in fondo l'amicizia della Fles fu una mano santa per Medardo non solo per le ragioni che traspariscono nell'articolo ma soprattutto perché lei lo ammirava e lo incoraggiava mentre lui era a Parigi negletto." (Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Giorgio Nicodemi, May 30, 1963, Tortona, Fondazione CR. The translation is mine).

69 Scolari Barr, "Medardo Rosso and His Dutch Patroness Etha Fles," cit., 217.

70 In the notes to William C. Seitz, the art historian mentioned the importance of learning Dutch to study the figure of Etha Fles,

resulted in an insightful and intense portrait of Etha Fles. Scolari published several archival documents which substantially integrate the knowledge of the role of the Dutch woman in championing Rosso's art, thus making the essay a major reference for the scholars still today. The figure of Etha Fles impacted on defining aspects in the practice of Rosso, such as his effort to promote his art on an international scale, his problematic settlement within the Parisian art context, and the definition of his revolutionary sculptural style. Reassessing the centrality of Etha Fles in the biography of Rosso, Scolari Barr achieved to assess the centrality of the Italian sculptor himself as a protagonist in the art of the late 19th century and a model for the avant-garde rising in early 20th century. By doing so, she ultimately asserted her own critical voice and expertise in the field. In the contextualization of the role of Fles, the art historian addressed at full extent the crucial issue of the influence of Rosso on Rodin's *Balzac*. Taking cues from Fles's passionate defense of the primacy of Rosso and his *Bookmaker* over Rodin's solution for his monument, Scolari Barr gathered and collapsed the interpretations which accumulated throughout the years. In light of this scrupulous survey, she finally elaborated her own vision, which was way more articulate in determining the commonalities between the sculpture of Rodin and works like *La conversazione*, *Malato all'ospedale* and *Bookmaker* by Rosso, as well as the differences which identified their respective practices.⁷¹ Scolari thus paved the way to the more nuanced interpretation of this subject in the reconstruction of Rosso's years in Paris, which is currently accepted by scholars.⁷²

The article reinforced the relationship with Nicodemi, who kept assisting her as much as possible by providing books and sharing sources, thus proving to be an invaluable reference in the development of Scolari's expertise on Rosso. As such, the Nicodemi's name was mentioned among the first names in the acknowledgments of the monograph on Medardo Rosso published in 1963.⁷³ Scolari Barr wrote the book over a period spanning more than three years. As recalled by the art historian, the monograph was officially commissioned by Monroe Wheeler, head of the Exhibitions and Publications departments at the Museum of Modern Art, on April 4, 1960.⁷⁴ The article on Etha Fles was explicitly introduced as the result of the writing of the concluding chapters of the book which would be released shortly afterwards.⁷⁵ The monograph marked the culmination of the thorough research which Barr undertook to unveil and reconstruct the complex figure of Rosso as precisely as possible, as attested by the long list of people acknowledged in the book.

see Margaret Scolari Barr, handwritten notes to William C. Seitz, October 28, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY. As of today, the writings by Fles haven't yet been translated, with a few exceptions, such as the profile of Rosso originally published in *Elsevier's Geïllustreed Maandschrift*, no. 11 (November 1919), see Etha Fles, “Medardo Rosso”, translated by Marja Bloem, in *Medardo Rosso: Ten Bronzes* (New York—Lugano-London: Peter Freeman—Amedeo Porro Fine Arts, 2016): 71-78.

71 Ibid., 225-30.

72 Hecker, *A Moment's Monument*, cit., 164.

73 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 6.

74 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead “Mrs. Alfred H. Barr, Jr.,” January 4, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

75 Ead., “Medardo Rosso and His Dutch Patroness Etha Fles,” cit., 217.

By the time of the release of the book, the relationship with Italy was getting into a problematic turn. In a letter to Nicodemi, Scolari wished to publish an Italian edition of the article on Fles.⁷⁶ Nicodemi was able to fulfill her request and included the essay in an issue of the magazine *L'Arte*, of which he had been editor, in 1963.⁷⁷ Scolari's desire stemmed from the resurgence of interest in Medardo Rosso at the turn of the 1960s, which was mostly triggered by her research on the sculptor. In 1961, Luciano Caramel, an art historian who would devote many studies to Rosso and assist the artist's heirs for a long time, published a survey on the early activity of the sculptor in the magazine *Arte Lombarda*.⁷⁸ In the introduction to the article, the scholar recognized the reappraisal of Rosso in the United States—although Scolari Barr's name was not mentioned—and asserted the importance of the research on the artist's early years as a contribution and response to such an increasing reconsideration overseas.⁷⁹ Scolari Barr was in touch with Caramel and acknowledged the importance of his article in the letter to Nicodemi, but claimed at the same time that much information published there had first been retraced by her, thus emphasizing the importance of getting her study on Fles published in Italy.⁸⁰

Scolari Barr's book demonstrates her thorough commitment as a scholar at the fullest extent. By gathering and collapsing archival documents, memories, and witnesses by as many friends and acquaintances of Rosso as she could find, Barr realized a substantial contribution in the reappraisal of the Italian sculptor, which would become a reference for the scholarship which developed thereafter. In the book, the author could properly articulate her argument concerning the relationship with Rodin and the possible influence of Rosso's work on the sculpture of the French artist, by virtue of which she assessed the modernity of the body of work produced by Rosso (**Fig. 2**).⁸¹ Building upon the analysis already included in the article on Fles, she also convincingly demonstrated that *Madame X* dates as early as 1896, thus questioning the assertion of the execution in 1913 maintained by Mino Borghi, who had been the leading authority on Rosso until then.⁸² The depth of her knowledge of the existing bibliography on Rosso, which she scrupulously parsed with regard to the definition of the chronology of the sculptures, was countered by the presentation of unpublished sources, such as the early portrait of Baldassare Surdi and the correspondence documenting the acquaintance between Surdi and the artist.⁸³ The discovery of the painting and the papers was made possible by the Italian writer and intellectual Giuseppe Prezzolini, who befriended Scolari Barr during his tenure as professor emeritus at Columbia University and assisted her by sharing his own memories and documents of his friendship with the sculptor and facilitating her contacts

76 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Giorgio Nicodemi, March 5, 1963, Tortona, Fondazione CR.

77 Ead., "Medardo Rosso and his Dutch patroness Etha Fles," *L'Arte* 28 (1963): 119-44.

78 Luciano Caramel, "La prima attività di Medardo Rosso e i suoi rapporti con l'ambiente milanese," *Arte Lombarda* 6, no. 2 (July-December 1961): 265-76.

79 Ibid., 276.

80 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Giorgio Nicodemi, March 5, 1963, Tortona, Fondazione CR.

81 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 8-9, 30, 43, 53-54, 72n104.

82 Ibid., 49, 73-74. The date 1913 was assigned in Borghi, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 69.

83 Ibid., 14-18, 80. Among the documents held by the family of Surdi, which were published in the Book, Scolari Barr included the famous photograph of Rosso's studio in Milan.

with people in Italy, such as Surdi's daughter-in-law.⁸⁴ Prezzolini was one of the several witnesses, ranging from Italian poet Giuseppe Ungaretti to French critic Christian Zervos, whose voices were integrated by Barr within the archival reconstruction of Rosso's life and the art-historical appraisal of his body of work, thus adding human intensity to the vivid portrait of the artist delineated in the book.⁸⁵

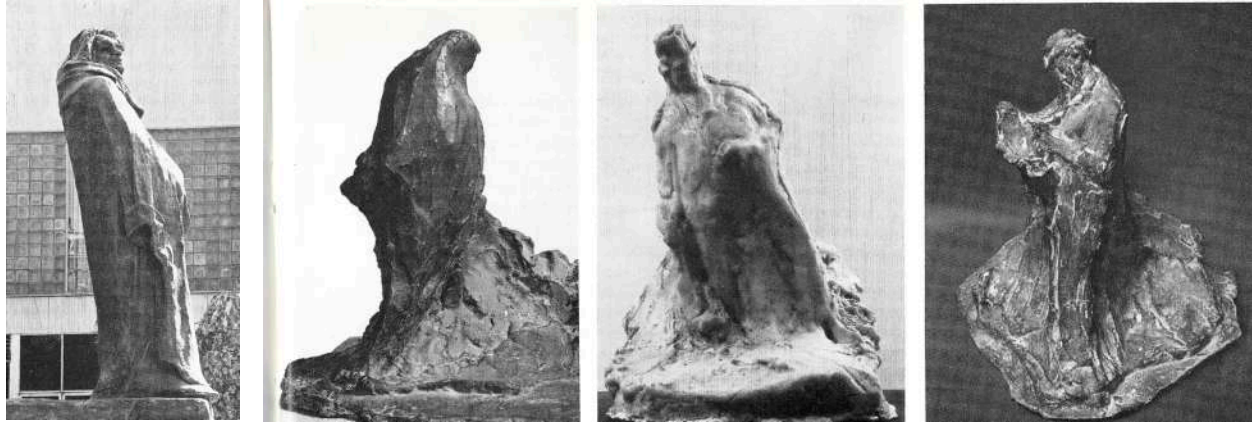


FIGURE 2. From Margaret Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1963): 72-73. The comparison between Rodin's *Balzac* (left) and three figures sculpted by Rosso (from left to right: *Detail of La conversazione*, *Bookmaker*, *L'uomo che legge*)

A few major aspects in Rosso's practice were misunderstood, such as his use of photography. The importance of the artist's practice of taking multiple photographs of his sculptures was briefly acknowledged only once in the book, while discussing his mature production in Paris: "Like Brancusi, Rosso insisted that his sculpture be reproduced only from photographs taken by himself because he felt that his impressions should be seen in one light and at one angle, just as he had beheld them in their transitory reality."⁸⁶ Due to the sporadic access to the artist's files kept by the family at that time, including the majority of his photographs, and the general lack of recognition of this production, Scolari did not quite have the chance to investigate and acknowledge the significance of photography as a practice whose scope extended further than the promotion of the artist in the press, and embraced the inexhaustible process of revisiting and reconfiguring the sculptures by means of the technical manipulation of the mechanical image.⁸⁷ Overlooking the artist's photographs, the art historian couldn't really examine his activity in the late years, after the realization of

⁸⁴ Ibid., 67n21. On the acquaintance with Prezzolini, see Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Giorgio Nicodemi, January 24, 1960. Tortona, Fondazione CR.

⁸⁵ When she sent the manuscript of the book to Peter Selz, Scolari attached a letter in which she listed the witnesses and friends of Rosso with whom she had been more in contact during the preparation of the book. These people included Nicodemi, Prezzolini, Vianello Chiodo, Clotilde Rosso, Agnes Surdi, Cesare Fasola, Ungaretti, Zervos, as well as the critics Lamberto Vitali, and the writers Ardengo Soffici and Knud Verlow, see Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead "Mrs. Alfred H. Barr, Jr.," January 4, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

⁸⁶ Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 43, 46.

⁸⁷ The first major analysis of this part of Rosso's work was undertaken by Paola Mola, see Paola Mola, *Rosso: Trasferimenti* (Milan: Skira, 2006); see also her more recent article "Trasferimenti: fotografia e scultura nell'opera di Rosso," *L'uomo nero*, no. 9 (2012): 40-61.

Ecce Puer, and focused instead on major exhibitions and his critical reception.⁸⁸ On the other hand, Scolari Barr recognized the importance of his works on paper, arguing that the freshness and modernity of Rosso's drawings attest to the extent of his mastery in incorporating the pictorial language of the most advanced tendencies at the time into his practice.⁸⁹

Several aspects of primary importance were emphasized in the visual and artistic analysis of the sculpture of Rosso, including the artist's attention to the relationship between the figure and the ambience and the opening of sculpture to space and light environment (on the edge between the sense of the optical instantaneous impression and the de-materialization), the specific treatment of the surface, the replication—by means of which the same subjects varied in size, composition and surface from one version to the other—and the combination of pictorial and sculptural features. The accurate appraisal of the artist's visual concern led Scolari Barr to reject the exclusive association with French Impressionism, which had been dominant until then, and reassess instead the primary role of Rosso as a model for the avant-garde artists emerging at the turn of the 20th century. In this respect, the comparison with Brancusi, established by the art historian in the abovementioned paragraph on Rosso's use of photography as a means of self-presentation, extended further to include the possible influence of the Italian's work on the Romanian's vision of sculpture.⁹⁰ Futurism held a primary position in acknowledging the role of Rosso, and Scolari Barr discussed the importance of the movement in defining his legacy as a modern master, expanding upon what had already been suggested by Taylor in the catalogue of the exhibition on Futurism in 1961.⁹¹ In this respect, the book and the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art constitute a substantial and insightful analysis of the practice and legacy of Rosso. As attested by the letter quoted in the opening of this article, Peter Selz, the curator of the exhibition, was well aware of the significance and ambition of the scholarly work undertaken by Scolari Barr. To properly analyze the exhibition, the contribution provided by the expertise of Scolari Barr cannot be neglected.

2. "*Medardo Rosso at his best:*" the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art

Selz had thought about an exhibition on Medardo Rosso for a long time: since Margaret Scolari Barr started to elaborate her monograph. In the letter that accompanied the delivery of the finished manuscript to Selz, the art historian reasserted the importance of the initiative by advocating once again for the necessity of a substantial reappraisal of Rosso.⁹² It was early January 1963, and Scolari Barr remarked that the sculptures lately exhibited as part of the Hirshhorn collection at the Guggenheim Museum didn't go unnoticed.⁹³ In light of such appreciations, the art historian wrote: "Maybe I'm prejudiced but I am

⁸⁸ Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 59-65.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 81-83.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 71n95.

⁹¹ Ibid., 60-63. On Taylor's book, see above.

⁹² Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead "Mrs. Alfred H. Barr, Jr.," January 4, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

⁹³ Scolari Barr precisely mentioned the occurrences of the name of Rosso in recent issues of *Art International* and *Arts Yearbook*. The first refers to reviews of the Hirshhorn exhibition, see W.R., "The Hirshhorn Collection at the Guggenheim

convinced that Medardo is very much “in the air.” This summer in Salisbury Tristan Tzara informed Alfred that there was one sculptor that had been seriously overlooked—Medardo Rosso; had he heard of him? [...] None of these writers know much about Rosso but they keep mentioning him because he’s something of a new discovery. I don’t need to remind you that there are five Rossos in the Hirschhorn Collection. I have written more than originally requested but it is impossible to write a good essay on quicksand. [...] Rosso had to be dredged up. No one had done any serious research on him. It was an exhuming job and one that to be done quickly while some of the oldish people who remembered him were still alive.”⁹⁴

Margaret Scolari Barr acted as an advisor to Peter Selz. She brought to his attention important works, starting from *Madame X*, whose inclusion was of primary importance.⁹⁵ The art historian also pointed out a few essential aspects to provide an insightful presentation of the artist’s work. For instance, she encouraged Selz to borrow multiple versions of a same work, to show the sense of variation within the repetition, which was distinctive of Rosso.⁹⁶ She also advised on potential collectors and lenders to contact, such as Cesare Fasola, the owner of the unique version of *Amor materno*.⁹⁷ On the other hand, she expressed doubts about the inclusion of a controversial sculpture as the wax of *Impressione d’omnibus*, which was exhibited anyway.⁹⁸ In return for her assistance in many essential aspects of the exhibition, Selz supported Barr’s project to get her book translated into Italian. The curator reached out to institutions both in New York and in Italy to sponsor and partially fund the publication, and a few Italian publishing houses were contacted.⁹⁹ Unfortunately, the Italian edition was never released.

More importantly, Scolari Barr was influential in finalizing the schedule of the exhibition. In fact, the first plan elaborated by Selz entailed that the retrospectives on Rodin and Rosso would take place at the same time, his intention being to provide a comprehensive view of the work of the leading sculptors of their generation side by side.¹⁰⁰ Scolari Barr vehemently advised against this decision, as attested by correspondence exchanged in the summer of 1962. By that time, the art historian had already accomplished the essay on Etha Fles and was convinced that the traditional interpretation—emphatically maintained by the Italian scholars—by virtue of which Rodin “stole” ideas from Rosso while making the *Balzac* monument, should be radically downscaled and rejected, in favor of a more nuanced reconstruction of the relationship between the two sculptors, based on a deeper acknowledgement of their respective

Museum,” *Art International* 6, no. 9 (November 1962): 35, and Sonya Rudikoff, “New York Letter,” *ibid.*, 62. The latter allusion should be interpreted as the article on Apollinaire authored by Sidney Geist, in which he mentioned the French writer’s consideration of Rosso, see Sidney Geist, “Salut! Apollinaire,” in James R. Mellow, ed., *The Best in Arts: Arts Yearbook* 6 (1962): 97.

94 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead “Mrs. Alfred H. Barr, Jr.,” January 4, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

95 Margaret Scolari Barr, postcard to Peter Selz, stamped May 22, 1962, MoMA Exhs., [729.11], MoMA Archives, NY.

96 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead “Mrs. Alfred H. Barr, Jr.,” March 19, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

97 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten postcard to Peter Selz, January 25, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.3], MoMA Archives, NY.

98 See entry no. 7 in the exhibition reconstruction in the appendix of the present article.

99 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead “Mrs. Alfred H. Barr, Jr.,” March 19, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

100 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Monroe Wheeler, August 28, 1962, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

similarities and divergences. In a letter to Albert Elsen, who was writing the monograph on Rodin which would accompany the retrospective at MoMA, Scolari Barr insisted that “whether he influenced the *Balzac* or not, Rosso’s influence lies in the 20th century and I must say I do disapprove of the Museum’s plan of showing these two artists together, even in separate shows, because it nails once more an incidental, perhaps possible influence which has been swelled by Italian scholars, who don’t have a panoramic view, into exaggerated, constantly perpetuated proportions. [...] I have already said to dear Peter Selz that I think this juxtaposition, even in separate shows is against the intellectual tradition of the Museum. Because it perpetuates an unscholarly fact. And anyway whether Rosso by his work or his conversation influenced the *Balzac* I see no later influence of his upon Rodin.”¹⁰¹ Elsen agreed with Scolari Barr. Ultimately, Selz followed her advice, too. In addition to the possible misinterpretation of Rosso, issues about the budget plans and museum capacity were raised.¹⁰² The two retrospectives were finally scheduled one after another. The Rodin exhibition occupied the large part of the first floor and the sculpture garden of the museum, and ran between May 1 and September 8, 1963. The retrospective of Rosso opened less than one month later, and was accommodated in a room on the third floor of the museum, next to the exhibition devoted to Hans Hoffmann.¹⁰³

The exhibition of the Italian sculptor was necessarily smaller in size than the one devoted to Rodin. Many reasons concurred to create this discrepancy, including the larger availability of Rodin’s works in the United States and the reduced body of work realized by Rosso. The final selection consisted of twenty-eight sculptures and five drawings. The loans largely came from Peridot Gallery and the few American private collectors who had acquired Rosso’s sculptures after the retrospective held in 1959, including Joseph H. Hirshhorn. Harry and Lydia Winston were the only prominent collectors who didn’t participate in the project. A letter in MoMA archives attests to the attempt to ask for the loan of one unidentified sculpture.¹⁰⁴ Most likely, the conditions imposed by the Winstons were too demanding and expensive to finalize the loan. Selz integrated the group of works in the United States with a targeted selection of sculptures borrowed from Italian institutions and collectors. In this respect, the loan process took a lot of time and effort. As detailed in the reconstruction included in the appendix of this article, the curator often had to change his mind according to the inclination of the private and public lenders to accommodate his requests. Despite the several turns and revisions, all the loans were finally accomplished. Nevertheless, only one entry in the curator’s wish list remained unattained. *Femme à la voilette* [Lady with a Veil]—the famous impression of a veiled lady which the artist first fixed in plaster in 1895—was among the most prominent Rosso sculptures which Selz wanted to include and inexhaustibly chased down (**Fig. 3**).¹⁰⁵ It

101 Margaret Scolari Barr, carbon copy of a typewritten letter to Albert Elsen, August 22, 1962, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

102 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Monroe Wheeler, August 28, 1962, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

103 *Hans Hoffmann*, September 11 – December 1, 1963. The 1962 painting by Hoffmann *Memoria in Aeternum* is visible through the entrance in an installation view of the Rosso exhibition.

104 Harry L. Winston, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead “Butzel, Levin, Winston & Quint,” January 31, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY. On the Winston collection, see Robert Broner, “Detroit collector,” *Art in America* 51, no. 1 (February 1963), 142-43.

105 On the sculpture, see Francesco Guzzetti, “*Femme à la voilette*, 1895-1910. Impressions in France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy,” in *Medardo Rosso. Femme à la voilette* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2018): 41-59.



FIGURE 3. From Margaret Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1963): 42. Medardo Rosso, *Femme à la voilette*, 1905 c. [1895] Wax over plaster. Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna.

seems that he followed the advice of Margaret Scolari Barr, who provided a list of versions known to her and encouraged him to include the piece in the show.¹⁰⁶ Selz turned to public institutions, including the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Milan,¹⁰⁷ the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome¹⁰⁸ and the Musée de Beaux-Arts in Lyon,¹⁰⁹ and private lenders who had already collaborated with the museum, such as the prominent Milanese collector Emilio Jesi.¹¹⁰ He also reached out by mistake to the Kröller Müller

106 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead “Mrs. Alfred H. Barr Jr.,” March 10, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

107 Paolo Arrigoni, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead “Comune di Milano Castello Sforzesco,” March 12, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

108 Palma Bucarelli, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead “Soprintendenza alla Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna,” May 16, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

109 Peter Selz, cable to René Jullian, August 26, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

110 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Palma Bucarelli, May 20, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY; Peter Selz, cable to Emilio Jesi, June 13, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

Museum in Otterlo, which doesn't own a version of the sculpture.¹¹¹ Due to concerns about the fragility of a sculpture which is rather large in size and only exists in plaster or wax versions, the inquired people were hesitant and finally denied the loan.¹¹²

The troubled relationship held with the heirs of Medardo Rosso impacted on the circumstances of the search of an available version of *Femme à la voilette* and forced Selz to contact potential lenders at short notice. Danila Rosso Parravicini, the grand-daughter of the artist, had already been contacted in early 1963, to check the availability of six drawings, but there was no response.¹¹³ When she denied the loan of the wax of *Femme à la voilette* held in the collection of Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome, Palma Bucarelli, the museum's director, offered instead to use her influential authority to reach out to the family of the artist, and endorse the prestige of the initiative.¹¹⁴ Rosso Parravicini replied to Bucarelli and confirmed the availability of a wax of *Femme à la voilette* and the works on paper requested a few months earlier.¹¹⁵ When a direct contact was established, Selz asked the Italian Cultural Institute in New York to send a formal letter to support the loan request.¹¹⁶ The art historian Luciano Caramel, who had just started assisting the Rosso family, also facilitated the connection, and helped the exhibition curator secure the loan of the drawings, which were reduced from six to three.¹¹⁷ Throughout the summer of 1963, what looked like an easy process took an unexpected turn. The family expressed concerns about the danger of a long travel for the sculpture, due to the fragility of the wax.¹¹⁸ They offered other works in return, but different versions had already been borrowed elsewhere.¹¹⁹ A few questions were also raised about the insurance policy, which looked insufficient.¹²⁰ When, in mid-August, Rosso Parravicini confirmed the availability of the drawings, it was too late. To reduce the costs and the bureaucracy of the export, all the works from Italy were scheduled to be shipped all at once, and there was no room to modify the procedure or to arrange a

111 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Abraham M. Hammacher, July 30, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY; Rudi W.D. Oxenaar, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead "Rijkmuseum Kröller Müller," August 5, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

112 The catalogue raisonné of the artist's sculpture lists only wax and plaster versions of the piece, see Paola Mola, Fabio Vitucci, eds., *Medardo Rosso: Catalogo ragionato della scultura* (Milan: Skira, 2009), 311-17.

113 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Danila Rosso Parravicini, March 6, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

114 Palma Bucarelli, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead "Soprintendenza alla Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna," May 16, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

115 Palma Bucarelli, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead "Soprintendenza alla Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna," May 30, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

116 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Lucia Pallavicini, June 25, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY; Lucia Pallavicini, typewritten letter to Danila Rosso Parravicini on letterhead "Istituto Italiano di Cultura," June 11, 1963, Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso. Lucia Pallavicini was the assistant director at the Institute.

117 Luciano Caramel, typewritten letter to Peter Selz, July 5, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

118 Danila Rosso Parravicini, handwritten letter to Peter Selz, n.d. [after July 26, 1963], MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

119 Danila Rosso Parravicini, handwritten letter to Peter Selz, July 26, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

120 Danila Rosso Parravicini, copy of typewritten letter to Ditta Bruno Tartaglia, July 24, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

separate shipment.¹²¹

The final display of the exhibition in the room on the third floor of the museum followed the early wishes expressed by Scolari Barr, when she congratulated Selz for the decision to separate it from the Rodin retrospective: "The best thing the Museum could do with Rosso," the scholar wrote, "would be to give him a small jewel-like show with carefully studied bases (from the point of view of height) and very attentive lighting."¹²² (**Fig. 4-5**) The installation of the exhibition stemmed from the conversations between Selz, Scolari Barr, Seitz, and Alicia Legg, who worked at the Museum of Modern Art as assistant curator and installer.¹²³ The art handlers first re-used and adjusted some pedestals which had already been fabricated for the Rodin exhibition.¹²⁴ Several works had been detached from their bases, especially the ones shown in the built-in gallery case, including a few key loans from Italian museums, such as *Madame X*.¹²⁵ New pedestals were designed to accommodate the sculptures which were displayed along the walls of the room.¹²⁶ William C. Seitz oversaw the installation and was extremely careful about the preservation of the waxes. He discussed with Scolari Barr the point of view from which each single sculpture should be seen and the lighting system, in order to accentuate the texture of the surfaces, yet avoid a theatrical effect.¹²⁷ Among all the sculptures, Scolari especially pointed out *L'uomo che legge* [Man Reading] and *Yvette Guilbert* as the most difficult to install, emphasizing the importance to place the former "beneath eye-level with a light coming from above," and the latter "above eye level with light hitting from beneath and also with some light at the back."¹²⁸ The resulting installation, as documented by the photographs, was quite impressive and looked strikingly modern in the great variety of solutions by which the sculpture were displayed in the space and lit. Scolari Barr shared her appreciation with Danila Rosso Parravicini, who didn't view the exhibition, mentioning the perfection of the lighting and the color of the background against which the waxes were installed, which consisted of "a light, very pale green, almost grayish."¹²⁹

121 Alicia Legg, typewritten letter to Danila Rosso Parravicini on letterhead "The Museum of Modern Art," August 20, 1963, Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso.

122 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Peter Selz, September 4, 1962, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

123 Peter Selz, typewritten internal note to Alicia Legg on letterhead "The Museum of Modern Art," July 10, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

124 William C. Seitz, typewritten internal note to Dave Haviland on letterhead "The Museum of Modern Art," September 4, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.6], MoMA Archives, NY.

125 Alicia Legg, typewritten internal note to Denny Clarke on letterhead "The Museum of Modern Art," November 20, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.8], MoMA Archives, NY; Alicia Legg, typewritten internal note to Dorothy Dudley on letterhead "The Museum of Modern Art," September 28, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.8], MoMA Archives, NY.

126 Alicia Legg, typewritten internal note to Denny Clarke on letterhead "The Museum of Modern Art," September 16, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.8], MoMA Archives, NY.

127 William C. Seitz, typewritten letter to Margaret Scolari Barr on letterhead "The Museum of Modern Art," September 9, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

128 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to William C. Seitz, September 3, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.8], MoMA Archives, NY.

129 "Sfondi di velluto di un verde chiaro molto smorto che dava nel grigio." Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Danila Rosso Parravicini, December 2, 1963, Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso.



FIGURE 4. Installation view of the exhibition, “Medardo Rosso: 1858-1928,” October 2, 1963–November 23, 1963. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. Photograph by George Barrows. From left to right: *Enfant malade* (no. 18), *Enfant malade* (no. 19), *Amor materno* (no. 3), *La conversazione* (no. 20), *Ecce Puer* (no. 28), *Parco con fontana* (no. 33), *A Londra in un bar* (no. 32), *Rieuse* (no. 13). Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY.



FIGURE 5. Installation view of the exhibition, "Medardo Rosso: 1858-1928," October 2, 1963–November 23, 1963. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. Photograph by George Barrows. From left to right: *Rieuse* (no. 12), *Bookmaker* (no. 21), *Ecce Puer* (no. 27), *Aetas aurea* (no. 8), *Grande Rieuse* (no. 14), *Head of a Young Woman* (no. 26), *Untitled* (no. 31), *Untitled* (no. 30), *Untitled* (no. 29), *Madame Noblet* (no. 25). Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY.

3. Informing a legacy: "All Rosso's "projection" is into the 20th"

As it was previously mentioned in regard to her effort to scale down the issue of the relationship between Rosso and Rodin, Margaret Scolari Barr was convinced that the legacy of the Italian sculptor lay in the art of the 20th century: "All Rosso's "projection" is into the 20th and whether he influenced the Balzac or not is quite beside the point."¹³⁰ Her interpretation informed the monograph and the presentation of the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, as attested by the book introduction and the wall-text of the exhibition, in which Selz emphasized how "the dematerialization and fluidity of his form which link it to the surrounding atmosphere make Rosso's sculpture most relevant to our sensibility today."¹³¹

The joined effort of the monograph and the exhibition to champion Rosso's legacy in the modernism of early 20th century, as well as the resonance with contemporary sensibility, was largely discussed by reviewers and commentators. Stuart Preston welcomed the show and the book as the opportunities for a final reassessment of the historic and aesthetic significance of Rosso's "intensely private and radical" work.¹³² The sculptor was hailed as "revolutionary" by Hilton Kramer in *Arts Magazine*, and "prophetic" in the brief presentation of the book among the forty recommendations for Christmas in *Art in America*.¹³³ The anonymous reviewer who praised the exhibition in *Time* magazine, defined Rosso as a "rebel" and pointed out how his increasingly reductionist formal solutions, culminating in *Madame X*, presaged Picasso and Brancusi.¹³⁴ Even skeptical reviewers, such as Thomas B. Hess and Sidney Tillim, who didn't fully accept the interpretation of the artist's work as radical and still found unresolved ambiguities and inconsistencies, couldn't help but agree with Scolari Barr and Selz in considering the complexity of his art, which embraced the transient within a sense of "sensitized materiality,"¹³⁵ and asserting his pioneering role in prefiguring Brancusi and the early 20th century avant-garde.¹³⁶ In Italy, too, the double initiative of the book and the exhibition didn't go unnoticed, and was extensively illustrated and praised as a watershed moment in the appreciation of Rosso in the monthly magazine *Emporium*.¹³⁷ The editor of the book section of the monthly magazine *D'Ars Agency* hailed the book of Scolari Barr for the depth of scholarship and the quality of the illustrations.¹³⁸ The exhibition was signaled as a prominent event in specialized magazines such as *Domus*.¹³⁹

130 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Peter Selz, August 22, 1962, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

131 Peter Selz, typewritten notes, MoMA Exhs., [729.5], MoMA Archives, NY.

132 Stuart Preston, "Museum of Modern Art Displaying 28 Sculptures by Rosso," *The New York Times* 113, no. 38,602 (October 2, 1963): 38; Id., "Art and Pathos: Medardo Rosso Shown At the Modern Museum," *The New York Times* 113, no. 38,606 (October 6, 1963): X 17.

133 Hilton Kramer, "Medardo Rosso at The Modern," *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 1 (October 1963): 44. Francine du Plessix, "Books: Forty for Christmas," *Art in America* 51, no. 6 (December 1963): 113.

134 "Art: Rosso Re-evaluated," *Time* 82, no. 15 (October 11, 1963).

135 T.B.H. [Thomas B. Hess], "Reviews and Previews: Medardo Rosso," *Art News* 62, no. 7 (November 1963): 14.

136 Sidney Tillim, "Month in Review," *Arts Magazine* 38, no. 2 (November 1963): 28.

137 R.F.C., "New York: Una grande mostra di Medardo Rosso," *Emporium* 139, no. 830 (February 1964): 68-71.

138 "Ricevuto e visto," *D'Ars Agency* 5, no. 2 (February 1964): 174.

139 Anna Marchi, "Notiziario: antichità," *Domus*, no. 408 (November 1963): n.p.

Among the reviews, two articles especially stand out. The first was authored by Dore Ashton, who had already positively reviewed the exhibition at Peridot Gallery in 1959. The art critic followed and expanded the interpretation elaborated by Margaret Scolari Barr and briefly surveyed the whole development of Rosso's career in order to demonstrate that "it would be foolish to repeat the mistakes of past critics—many of whom with blatant insensitivity misunderstood Rosso's unique personality—by bracketing him with the Impressionist painters and leaving it at that. Rosso's relatively brief creative career, from 1882 to 1907, resulted in a group of sculptures that in many ways herald both the Expressionist and abstract sculptures that appeared later in the twentieth century."¹⁴⁰ The latter commentary was written by Max Kozloff, who took Scolari's and Ashton's assumptions to extremes, to the extent that his interpretation was the most radical at that time. Building upon the artist's undeniable incorporation of pictorial elements into the practice of sculpture, Kozloff contended that Rosso didn't merely embrace subjects or compositions which were typical of painting, but he embarked in the almost impossible task to integrate the metaphorical nature of painting—that, whatever the image depicted is, always alludes to something else—"to *unwill* the corporeality of sculpture," by which he meant "to try to forget that the sculpture is a 'thing'."¹⁴¹ By virtue of the artist's effort to resolve this issue, his art transcends any categories. Kozloff dismissed both Impressionism and Symbolism, with which Rosso was mostly associated. The struggle with the materiality led the sculptor to what Kozloff didn't hesitate to define "an unprecedented conceptual identity," immediately specifying that it would be erroneous "to think of them as muscular expressions of emotion" or "as *jeux d'esprit* with the substance."¹⁴² Kozloff's interpretation revolved especially around the mature works of the artist, such as *Ecce Puer*. Keeping these sculptures and Scolari Barr's interpretation in mind, the art critic rejected the definition of "sketchy" applied to them, and contended instead that "they should rather be seen as gestating equivalents, in an inanimate material, of movement, tone, and atmosphere. In order to perceive the sensations that Rosso is thus eliciting, one has to blind oneself, in an important sense, to their physical presence. [...] Eventually, out of a gummy moil, splintery crag, or melted veil, the sculptor induces a sense of the vicarious (one sees only the reference, not the object) in our experience of his image."¹⁴³ Such a vision would explain the specific interest of Rosso in using photography to revisit his sculptures. In this respect, Kozloff caught the brief mention of the artist's photographs by Scolari Barr and hinted at an insightful interpretation of this branch of Rosso's creativity, which could still resonate with current scholarship on the subject. The art critic's survey resulted in two major conclusions about Rosso's art: "One is that the image, whittled down to even less than its essentials, exists in a state of open possibility. This is attributable not to its vagueness but, on the contrary, to its preciseness, if one understands this word on Rosso's terms as applying to the kind of statement that most opaquely shuts out analysis. We do not see a lady, much less a particular creature, but rather a tremulous state of being. Secondly, the use of wax [...] is itself an analogy of Rosso's expressive aims, as well as the one sculptural medium closest to paint. [...] Finally, wax is a dubious material substance, incredibly light but unporous,

140 Dore Ashton, "Medardo Rosso—A Long – Obscured Talent," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 85, no. 325 (November 24, 1963): 5C.

141 Max Kozloff, "The Equivocation of Medardo Rosso," *Art International* 7, no. 9 (November 1963): 46.

142 Ibid.

143 Ibid.

for which reason it recommended itself unqualifiedly to Rosso.”¹⁴⁴

Kozloff’s interpretation corroborated and expanded Scolari Barr’s and Selz’s appraisal of the modernity of the artist, and paved the way to the long-lasting legacy of the rediscovery of his art in the United States. After 1963, the name of the Italian sculptor gradually made its way into some of the most important texts on modern and contemporary art of the 1960s. A few occurrences are especially relevant to attest to the fortune of the artist. The openness of Rosso’s sculpture, the precise visualization of an evolving state of being, and the status of wax as a dense, yet light, material vis-à-vis the complexity of the artist’s vision, made a vivid impression on Kozloff, who resorted again to his art in 1968, in his monograph on Jasper Johns. The photograph of *Enfant à la Bouchée de pain* makes its appearance among the full-page plates of the book, next to Johns’s *Flashlight III*.¹⁴⁵ Analyzing the artist’s concern in integrating sculpture within his painterly practice, Kozloff established a comparison with Rosso’s effort to reassess sculpture through the metaphorical allusiveness which is typical of painting. The image of a found object “decomposing into (or possibly emerging from) inchoate matter” resonated with the layers of wax by means of which Rosso expressed the environment surrounding the head of a poor child.¹⁴⁶ The “synesthetic” sensibility brought the two artists together in the attempt to express that “the process of willed order deliquescing in a substance is more real—by contrast more appreciable—than any mere concept,”¹⁴⁷ as well as to show “not [...] what the thing consists of, in its density and texture, but what shades and luminosity it can project on the retina.”¹⁴⁸

As attested by the comparison with Johns established by Kozloff, Rosso’s modernity was especially compelling for a generation of artist and critics dealing with the radical reconsideration of sculpture undertaken in the mid-1960s. Despite no documents bear witness to it, many artists and critics presumably visited the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art or took a look at the monograph. In this respect, I was able to reach out to the studio of Jasper Johns while I was fellow at CIMA, and asked him whether he saw the exhibition. His answer was elusive, yet significant: “I feel that I have always admired Medardo Rosso’s work but I don’t remember how or when I first became aware of it. [...] I knew Margaret Scolari Barr and was aware that she had studied his work. It seems possible that I might have seen the 1963 MOMA exhibition, but I have no memory of it.”¹⁴⁹ The discussion around Rosso was ambivalent, but never superficial. On one hand, the name of the artist was finally aligned with Rodin’s as the ultimate expression of the importance of process in making art, which was largely dismissed by the artists gravitating around and stemming from Minimalism. In the seminal article “Anti Form” in 1968, the artist Robert Morris comparatively contrasted the new tenets of sculpture, entailing a specific concern for the truth to materials, and the art of Rodin and Rosso, who “left traces of touch in finished work. Like the Abstract Expressionists after them, they

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 47.

¹⁴⁵ Max Kozloff, *Jasper Johns* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1968): n.p., plates nos. 73-74.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 32.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Jasper Johns, letter sent by e-mail to the author of this article, January 21, 2015. I wish to thank Neil Printz, who first encouraged me to contact the artist and facilitated the connection with his studio.

registered the plasticity of material in autobiographical terms."¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, the art critic Jack Burnham, who championed several emerging tendencies and figures in the new avant-garde, made an arresting reference to Rosso. In the issue of November 1967 of *Artforum*, he published an essay about the vanishing of the pedestal in modern sculpture, which he would expand one year later in his pivotal book *Beyond Modern Sculpture*.¹⁵¹ Reconstructing the genealogy of a new approach to sculpture, Burnham first examined Medardo Rosso and claimed that he paved the way to a trajectory which, through Rodin, Futurism, Brancusi, and Constructivism, led to the recent Minimalist and conceptual art. The life-size early cemetery monument by Medardo Rosso, titled *La Riconoscenza* [Gratitude] (1883), was illustrated in the article.¹⁵² Burnham focused on Rosso's concern for "the plastic fusion between base and figure," and positioned the artist as the precursor of the endeavor to remove any structural barrier between artwork and surrounding space, which would mark a substantial revolution of modernism and contemporary art.¹⁵³ The reconstruction of Medardo Rosso's legacy informed by the exhibition in 1963 and the monograph published in conjunction could extend further and be continued throughout the years. A thorough examination of the reception of Rosso in the second half of the twentieth century is still missing, and is beyond the scope of this article. The variety of the reactions and responses to Rosso's work, ranging from dismissal and skepticism to the enthusiastic appreciation of its revolution, bear witness to the significance of the exhaustive investigation provided by the scholarly publication by Margaret Scolari Barr and the exhibition arranged by Peter Selz at the Museum of Modern Art. The first asserted her own right as a scholar and a critic by arguing that Rosso's legacy resided in the art of the 20th century, and corroborated her assertion with the most scrupulous and extensive research possible at that time. The reviewers and commentators who wrote about the book and the exhibition, as well as the artists and critics who borrowed concepts and keywords from Scolari Barr and articulated them further, all proved that she was right in bringing the artist's "informality and impetuous spontaneity"¹⁵⁴ to the attention of her contemporaries. Each comment, occurrence and discussion marks a step in a lineage which stems from Scolari Barr's intuition and, by virtue of the effort of Peter Selz to visualize it in the MoMA exhibition, has developed throughout the years, reaching the latest contributions on the artist and resonating with today's sensibility. At almost sixty years from the exhibition and the publication, the words by which Scolari Barr referred to her own times could still be employed: "at a time when the "new realism" and the "new humanism" are again catchwords, if not passwords, Rosso's sculpture has some special relevance."¹⁵⁵

150 Robert Morris, "Anti Form," *Artforum* 6, no. 8 (April 1968): 35.

151 Jack Burnham, "Sculpture's Vanishing Base," *Artforum* 6, no. 3 (November 1967): 49-55; Id., *Beyond Modern Sculpture* (New York: George Braziller, 1968): 19-48

152 Id., "Sculpture's Vanishing Base," cit., 49. On Rosso's monument, see Sharon Hecker, "Medardo Rosso's First Commission," *Burlington Magazine* 138, no. 1125 (December 1996): 817-22.

153 Burnham, "Sculpture's Vanishing Base," cit., 49.

154 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 9.

155 Ibid.

APPENDIX

Medardo Rosso (1858-1928), curated by Peter Selz

New York, The Museum of Modern Art, October 2 – November 23, 1963

The exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York consisted of thirty-three pieces (twenty-eight sculptures and five drawings). The reconstruction of the exhibition has been conducted by trying to recover as much information as possible in order to identify precisely each work on view. The information provided in the exhibition checklist and the more recent survey of the artist's body of work, as determined in the catalogue raisonné of sculpture, don't often coincide.¹ In light of these discrepancies, a decision was made to provide the "official" title and date of each work, according to the catalogue raisonné, in the first line of each entry. The title and date assigned in the exhibition follow in the second line. Many of the works on view at MoMA are not included in the catalogue raisonné. The date and information of catalogued sculptures are provided according to their respective entries in the catalogue raisonné. In all other cases, the title is followed by the date of the first version in square brackets. In the case of sculptures from the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the presumable date of cast is also added, according to the object files provided by the museum². With regards to the five drawings, a decision was made to provide the more recent titles and dates under which they have been exhibited and published. Materials and size of each work are updated to the more recent sources of information, unless no evidence of the sculptures was found, in which case the size follows the one indicated in the exhibition checklist. Essential information about provenance and relevant bibliography and exhibition history is provided in case of works documented in the catalogue raisonné. In all other cases, the entries include all information concerning the history and the installation of the works in the exhibition, which was primarily gathered through archival research. The sorting order of the entries, and their division between sculptures and drawings, comply with the checklist of the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, as published in a brochure printed on that occasion.³

Sculpture

1. *Innamorati sotto il lampione*, [1883] (**Fig. 6**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Kiss under the Lamppost*, 1882

Bronze, h. 18 7/8 inches

Current whereabouts unknown

The piece was lent by Jack E. Berizzi. The name of the collector and the provenance of the piece are rather obscure. Jack E. Berizzi was the son of Stefano Berizzi (1881-1960), an Italian immigrant who came to the United States in 1900 and founded the silk importing firm Berizzi Brothers along with his brother Luigi (who changed his name to Louis).⁴ Jack worked in the textile industry and designed fabrics

1 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: Catalogo ragionato della scultura*, cit.

2 I wish to thank Hannah Green for checking the information and providing me with updated records on the provenance of the works in the collection of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

3 *Medardo Rosso*, exhibition brochure, MoMA Exhs., [729.2]. MoMA Archives, NY).

4 See the obituary in *The New York Times* 110, no. 37,536 (October 31, 1960): 31.

for firms such as Moss Rose Mfg. Co.⁵ The Berizzis were originally from Northern Italy, as attested by the fact that Louis Berizzi studied business in Milan before migrating.⁶ They were prominent figures in the Italian community in New York, as Stefano also directed the Banca Commerciale Italiana Trust Company.⁷ It has been impossible so far to determine how the bronze of *Innamorati sotto il lampione* ended up in the collection of Jack E. Berizzi. He might have inherited it from his father. It could be a coincidence, but it is worth noting, in this respect, that Margaret Scolari Barr included the name of Stefano Berizzi among the people she wanted to acknowledge in her book on Rosso, "for investigation, documentation, assistance in procuring photographic material, and reporting references in books and periodicals I had not thought of exploring."⁸ Even if it has not been possible to confirm it so far, it can be argued that Stefano Berizzi was related to Guido Berizzi, an acquaintance of Medardo Rosso and his son, Francesco. Guido Berizzi owned works by Rosso, such as *Aetas Aurea* and *Enfant juif* in wax, which were sold through Galleria Il Milione in Milan to Galleria Odyssia in New York in 1964.⁹ One can assume kinship between Stefano and Guido Berizzi, considering that the latter was an Italian accountant who sat on the board of "Stagionatura Anonima," a silk manufacturing firm in Milan.¹⁰ Another artwork is documented in the collection of Jack E. Berizzi, which is a small scale bronze by the 19th century sculptor Giuseppe Grandi. The sculpture was a cast of *La Pleureuse* (*The Mourning Woman*), published by Scolari Barr in her monograph under the title of *Misery*.¹¹ It was photographed by the technicians at the Museum of Modern Art on the occasion of the exhibition.¹² It was not a sculpture one might easily buy in New York, so it might have been inherited from the family as well.¹³ The version of *Innamorati sotto il lampione* once owned by Berizzi is consistent with the bronze that Francesco Rosso donated to Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome in 1931 and could therefore be considered one of the copies cast at the foundry Strada, according to the reconstruction of the history of the piece and its variants compiled by Paola Mola in the catalogue raisonné.¹⁴ Thanks to the photograph

5 Fabrics designed by Berizzi were included in 13th edition of the *Good Design* exhibition, held at 1954 at the Museum of Modern Art, see "Good Design: 1954," *Arts & Architecture* 71, no. 2 (February 1954): 16.

6 See the obituary in *The New York Times* 100, no. 34,024 (March 21, 1951): 33.

7 See the announcement in *The New York Times* 82, no. 27,501 (May 11, 1933): 25.

8 Margaret Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1963): 6.

9 The two sculptures are mentioned in the registry of Galleria Il Milione (handwritten notes held at Archivio Medardo Rosso, Milan). The provenance is confirmed by the inclusion of the name of Berizzi among the collectors who owned a version of both the works, listed by Mino Borghi in his monograph on Rosso in 1950, see Mino Borghi, *Medardo Rosso* (Milan: Edizioni del Milione, 1950): 65, 66. *Aetas Aurea* was finally acquired by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, NY (<https://www.albrightknox.org/artworks/19666-eta-doro>).

10 *Biografia Finanziaria Italiana: Guida degli amministratori e dei sindaci delle società anonime, delle casse di risparmio, degli enti parastatali ed assimilati, ecc.* (Rome: Tip. Laboremus, 1935): 97. For a complete account on "Stagionatura Anonima," see *Annuario industriale della Provincia di Milano* (Milan: Unione fascista degli industriali della Provincia di Milano, 1937): 479-89.

11 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 66.

12 Typewritten form "Staff Photograph Requisition," March 11, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

13 The sculpture could be identified with the bronze sold at auction at Sotheby's New York in 2013, with provenance indicating that it was gifted by the artist to the grandfather of the owner who gave it on consignment, see *Impressionist and Modern Art*, n. N08968, Sotheby's, New York, March 13, 2013, lot 110.

14 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: Catalogo ragionato della scultura*, cit., 235-36.

reproduced in the book by Scolari Barr and the information concerning the size, the sculpture can be identified with the bronze auctioned at Sotheby's in 1996.¹⁵



FIGURE 6. From Margaret Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1963): 13. Medardo Rosso, *Innamorati sotto il lampione*, [1883] (no.1)

2. *Birichino*, [1882]

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Street Boy (Gavroche)*, 1882

Bronze, h. 13 7/8 inches

Current whereabouts unknown

Although credited to the collection of Paul Josefowitz in the catalogue and exhibition brochure, the sculpture was borrowed from his father, Samuel.¹⁶ The businessman gathered an extensive collection of 19th century and early 20th century art, including a major selection of works by the School of Ponte-Aven,

¹⁵ *Impressionist, Modern and Contemporary Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture*, n. 1529, Sotheby's, New York, February 7, 1996, lot 102. The photograph of Berizzi's sculpture is reproduced in Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 13.

¹⁶ Loan receipt, May 28, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

which was donated to the Indianapolis Museum of Art.¹⁷ Paul followed in his father's footsteps, by expanding the collection and eventually becoming director of the magazine *Apollo*.¹⁸ A few documents concerning the version of *Birichino* in the Josefowitz collection are held at Archivio Medardo Rosso in Milan, according to which the piece was acquired from Galleria Ferrario in Milan in 1950.¹⁹ Based on the documentation provided, the sculpture is a posthumous bronze cast, made by MAF foundry in Milan.²⁰ Such an identification is confirmed by an installation view of the exhibition and the illustration of the piece in the monograph by Scolari Barr, which is mistakenly credited as belonging to the collection of the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome.²¹ In fact, the work does not correspond to the version held in that museum. On the other hand, the round base on the lower part of the illustrated piece is distinctive of the replicas cast at MAF foundry. It could be assumed, then, that the piece illustrated in the book is the version owned by Josefowitz.

3. *Amor materno*, 1883-86 (Fig. 4)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Mother and Child Sleeping*, 1883

Bronze, 13 7/8 x 11 7/8 inches

Current whereabouts unknown²²

The piece came from the collection of Cesare Fasola. It is the only known version of this subject, and was probably the first bronze to be cast from the plaster. Knowing that the piece was unique, Fasola was concerned about the practice of making replicas after Rosso's works. In fact, in his correspondence with "Bruno Tartaglia," the company which shipped all the loans from Italy, he specified that a condition should be included in the agreement, that no copies of any kind were made after the work.²³ It was one of the most relevant works in the exhibition, and it was illustrated in the book by Scolari Barr.²⁴

17 Judith H. Dobrzynski, "Indianapolis Museum Buys 30 Gauguins From Swiss Collector," *The New York Times* 148, no. 51,345 (November 18, 1998): E5.

18 Jennifer Boussamba, "Décès du collectionneur Paul Josefowitz," *Connaissance des arts* (May 14, 2013), see the following link: <https://www.connaissancedesarts.com/arts-expositions/deces-du-collectionneur-paul-josefowitz-11893/>.

19 Copy of receipt to Josefowitz on letterhead of Galleria Ferrario, November 20, 1950. Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso.

20 Handwritten note over the copy of loan receipt of the sculpture for the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, held in Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso.

21 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 15.

22 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: Catalogo ragionato della scultura*, cit., 236-37, no. 6b.

23 Cesare Fasola, typewritten letter to Bruno Tartaglia, January 18, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

24 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 19.

4. *Sagrestano*, [1883]

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *The Sacristan*, 1883

Glazed plaster on a wooden base, h. 15 ¾ inches

Private collection

The work was lent by Peridot Gallery in New York, where it had already been exhibited on the occasion of the retrospective of Medardo Rosso's sculpture, running from December 14, 1959, to January 16, 1960.²⁵ It is first documented in a photograph authenticated by Giorgio Nicodemi, the former director of the museums of the city of Milan, who recorded its provenance from the Mascioni collection.²⁶ The name of Mascioni should be associated to the figure of Enrico Mascioni, a businessman who owned and managed some of the most important hotels in Milan in the early 20th century.²⁷ An avid collector, Mascioni gathered an extensive group of works, mostly by major representative of the modern tendencies in Italian art of the late 19th century, such as Scapigliatura and Divisionismo.²⁸ More recently, the piece has been consigned by the estate of Louis Pollack, owner of Peridot Gallery, to Sotheby's and sold at auction in London.²⁹ Paola Mola compiled a detailed expertise and description in 2018, in which she argued that the work should be considered a replica not made by the artist.³⁰ It is illustrated in Scolari Barr's volume.³¹

5. *Carne altrui*, 1895-1896 [1883-1884]

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *The Flesh of Others*, 1883

Bronze, 16 x 13 x 10 ¾ inches

Washington, DC, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden³²

The work was borrowed from the collection of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, who had acquired it from Peridot Gallery in 1961.³³ By the time of the exhibition, the sculpture had already been presented in the show of the collection of sculptures gathered by Hirshhorn, held at the Guggenheim Museum from October 2, 1962 to January 6, 1963, and featured in the accompanying catalogue.³⁴ It originally belonged to the

25 *The first exhibition in America of sculpture by Medardo Rosso, 1858-1928* (New York: Peridot Gallery, 1959): cat. no. 1.

26 Photograph with handwritten note on the back, Tortona, Archivio della Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Tortona, Fondo Giorgio Nicodemi (from now on the citation will be as follows: Tortona, Fondazione CR)

27 Saverio Almini, "Enrico Mascioni," in Elisabetta Staudacher, ed., *Capitani di un esercito: Milano e i suoi collezionisti* (Milan: Gallerie Maspes, 2017): 84-85.

28 Enrico Somarè, ed., *Raccolta Enrico Mascioni* (Milan: Galleria Pesaro, 1931).

29 *20th Century Italian Art*, London, Sotheby's, October 16, 2009, lot 7.

30 Expertise by Paola Mola, February 6, 2018, Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso.

31 Scolari Barri, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 22.

32 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato della scultura*, cit., 243-44, no. I.10c.

33 According to the provenance detailed by the Hirshhorn Museum, the piece was acquired from Peridot Gallery on March 20, 1961, see https://hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/artwork/?edanUrl=edanmdm%3Ahmsg_66.4405.

34 Thomas Messer, H.H. Arnason, eds., *Sculpture from the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1962): 30, cat. no. 404.

Uruguayan artist Milo Beretta, who was a pupil and assistant of Rosso in Paris until 1898, when he moved back to his native country. In the monograph by Scolari Barr, published on the occasion of the exhibition, a wax version of the sculpture is reproduced.³⁵

6. *Portinaia*, [1883-84]

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Concierge*, 1883

Wax over plaster, 14 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

New York, The Museum of Modern Art³⁶

The work was acquired by the museum from the Peridot Gallery in May 1959.³⁷ It was originally owned by the famous composer Umberto Giordano, whom Rosso addressed in the dedication that he inscribed over the surface of the sculpture. It was included in the selection exhibited at Peridot Gallery between 1959 and 1960, on the occasion of first retrospective of the Italian artist in the United States.³⁸ It is illustrated in Scolari Barr's monograph.³⁹

7. *Impressione d'omnibus*, [1884-1885]

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Impression in an Omnibus*, 1883-1884

Wax over plaster, 17 x 32 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 14 inches

Minneapolis, The Minneapolis Institute of Art

The work was borrowed from the private collection of Samuel Josefowitz.⁴⁰ By the time of the exhibition, Josefowitz had already tried to sell it by consigning it to Frumkin Gallery.⁴¹ It was actually Allan Frumkin who facilitated the contact between Selz and Josefowitz.⁴² It was sold at auction at Sotheby's Parke-Bernet in 1968,⁴³ and finally purchased by the Minneapolis Institute of Art in 1970.⁴⁴ In the checklist

35 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 23. According to the caption, the location of that version was unknown. Nonetheless, the sculpture closely resembles the wax version donated by Francesco Rosso to Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome in 1931. This assumption seems to be confirmed by the credit of the image, which is the Gabinetto fotografico nazionale, the national photographic institute, in Rome, which provided all the photographs of sculptures in the collection of Galleria Nazionale.

36 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato della scultura*, cit., 352, cat. no. III.8d.

37 Purchase order, May 5, 1959, MoMA, Department of Painting and Sculpture, Museum Collection Files 614.1959. Documents consulted at Archivio Medardo Rosso, Milan.

38 *The first American retrospective*, cit., n.p., cat. no. 2.

39 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 24.

40 On the figure of Josefowitz, see the entry concerning *Birichino* above.

41 Samuel Josefowitz, typewritten letter to Peter Selz, September 12, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

42 Allan Frumkin, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead "Allan Frumkin Gallery, Inc.," July 26, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.3], MoMA Archives, NY.

43 *Important 19th-20th Century Sculpture*, New York, Parke-Bernet Galleries, April 4, 1968, lot 127.

44 "Medardo Rosso: El Loch and Impression in an Omnibus", *MIA Bulletin* 59, (1970): 45-47.

published in the brochure circulating on the occasion of the exhibition, the caption of the piece is accompanied by the following note: “The original version of this sculpture, comprising five figures, was smashed on its way to an exhibition in Venice in 1887. This seems to be a later reconstruction by the artist.”⁴⁵ In the monograph, Scolari Barr recounted the story of the original work, its destruction, and focused on the surviving photographs of it, but didn’t mention this sculpture at all. In a confidential report sent to Peter Selz, Scolari Barr explained why she wouldn’t include it in the book. Recalling the circumstances of her first encounter with the sculpture in the collection of the dancer Rosa Sofia Moretti in Rome, where she went in 1960 “hot on the trail of MR [Medardo Rosso]”,⁴⁶ the art historian articulated her doubts about the authenticity. The uncertainty surrounding the piece was such that she could not help but admit that “fake or genuine, [...] I believe the work is very poor in quality. Consequently I do not want to reproduce it or refer to it in the book for anything that I could honestly say would tend to disparage it.”⁴⁷ Barr’s suspicion would be somehow confirmed in the following years: as of today, the work is considered fake by the estate of the artist.

8. *Aetas aurea*, ([1885-1887] probably cast c. 1946-50) (**Fig. 5**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *The Golden Age*, 1886

Wax over plaster, 20 11/16 x 19 5/16 x 11 1/4 inches

Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

The work was lent by Joseph H. Hirshhorn. The collector had acquired it in 1961 from Peridot Gallery, which had it on consignment by Clotilde (Tilde) Longoni Rosso, the widow of Francesco, the sculptor’s son.⁴⁸ The agent Anita de Cristofaro acted as intermediary in the transaction between the family and Louis Pollack, the owner of Peridot Gallery. According to the information provided by the Hirshhorn Museum, it should be considered a cast made by Francesco Rosso, approximately in the second half of the 1940s. It was first exhibited in 1962, on the occasion of the exhibition of Hirshhorn’s collection of sculptures at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.⁴⁹

45 Medardo Rosso, exhibition brochure, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

46 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten report to Peter Selz, undated, MoMA Exhs., [729.4], MoMA Archives, NY.

47 Ibid.

48 According to the object files, the sale was finalized on June 5, 1961, see https://hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/art-work/?edanUrl=edanmdm%3Ahmsg_66.4407. In view of the date, the piece can’t be identified, as it has sometimes been done, with the wax version of *Aetas aurea* exhibited in the first retrospective of Rosso at Peridot Gallery in 1959-60 (*The first exhibition in America*, cit., cat. no. 3). That version was in fact in private hands until 2005, when it was sold at a Sotheby’s auction, see *Impressionist and Modern Art, Day Sale*, London, Sotheby’s, February 2, 2005, lot 439.

49 Messer, Arnason, *Sculpture from the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection* cit., 228, cat. no. 406.

9. *Enfant au sein*, [1889], cast after the version realized in 1910-14

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Child at the Breast*, 1889

Bronze, h. 13 5/8 inches

Current whereabouts unknown

Little information has been found so far with regard to this piece, which was lent by Peridot Gallery. It was not included in the retrospective held at the gallery in 1959-60. Based on the illustration published in the monograph by Scolari Barr, it's a cast of the plaster made by the artist between 1910 and 1914, in which the mother's head was taken out of the composition.⁵⁰ Considering that the plaster was in the collection of the artist's family, and that a bronze is still today at Museo Rosso in Barzio, it might be assumed that the work was a posthumous cast made by Francesco Rosso and given on consignment to Louis Pollack by the family.⁵¹ Further research should be done, though, to confirm such a conclusion.

10. *Malato all'ospedale*, [1889]

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Man in a Hospital*, 1889

Plaster, 9 1/16 x 10 1/4 x 11 1/2 inches

Washington, DC, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

By the time of the exhibition, the work had already been acquired by Joseph H. Hirshhorn and included in the exhibition of his sculpture collection, held at the Guggenheim Museum in New York a few months before.⁵² According to the information provided by the museum, it should be considered a version cast by Rosso himself. It was originally owned by Guido Berizzi, who supposedly acquired a few sculptures directly from the artist.⁵³ Berizzi gave it on consignment to Louis Pollack of the Peridot Gallery in 1961, when it was acquired by Hirshhorn.⁵⁴ A photograph of the work is reproduced in Scolari Barr's book.⁵⁵

11. *Henri Rouart*, 1889

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Portrait of Henri Rouart*, 1890

Bronze, 40 1/2 x 22 7/8 x 13 5/8 inches

Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna⁵⁶

The piece was lent by the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome. It was cast by the artist's

⁵⁰ Scolari Barri, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 29.

⁵¹ Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato della scultura*, cit., 272-73, cat. nos. I.22c.-I.22e.

⁵² Messer, Arnason, *Modern Sculpture from the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection*, cit., 31, cat. no. 407.

⁵³ For information about Guido Berizzi and his connection with Medardo and Francesco Rosso, see the entry of *Innamorati sotto il lampione* above. The object files held in the archive of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden mention an affidavit signed by Berizzi, which confirms the acquisition directly from the artist.

⁵⁴ The acquisition was finalized by May 3, 1961, as explained in the provenance detailed on the museum website: https://hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/artwork/?edanUrl=edanmdm%3Ahmsg_66.4406

⁵⁵ Scolari Barri, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 31.

⁵⁶ Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato*, cit., 362, no. IV.6.

son, Francesco, who gifted it to the museum in 1931. Palma Bucarelli, the director of the museum in Rome, was extremely helpful in securing loans for the exhibition from Italian museums. Bucarelli was hesitant about shipping wax sculptures due to conservation issues, so she refused to lend the wax mask of the *Rieuse*.⁵⁷ Scolari Barr included an image of the piece among the illustrations of her monograph.⁵⁸

12. *Rieuse*, 1894 [1890] (**Fig. 5**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Petite rieuse (head)*, 1890.

Bronze, 14 ½ x 7 ⅞ x 10 ¼ inches

Paris, Musée Rodin⁵⁹

The piece was famously given by Rosso to Auguste Rodin after the 1893 exhibition at the Bodinière in Paris. Rosso took in exchange a half-life size version of the *Torso* by the French sculptor. As explained in the following entry, it was not the original intention of Selz to borrow this piece from Musée Rodin. Although not reproduced, the work is mentioned by Scolari Barr in light of its significance in the relationship between Rosso and Rodin.⁶⁰

13. *Rieuse*, 1890 (**Fig. 4**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Petite rieuse (mask)*, 1890

Bronze, h. 8 ⅝ inches

Private collection

In the original intentions of Peter Selz, the wax mask of the *Rieuse* held at Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome should have been exhibited alongside a version of the head in bronze, owned by Peridot Gallery.⁶¹ When the museum director, Palma Bucarelli, denied the loan, Selz changed ideas entirely on how to present Rosso's *Rieuse*. The head was borrowed from Musée Rodin in Paris, while a bronze version of the mask of the *Rieuse* was borrowed from Peridot Gallery.⁶² The piece was first presented in the first retrospective of Medardo Rosso held at the gallery in 1959-60.⁶³ It should be therefore identified with the

57 Palma Bucarelli, typewritten letter to Peter Selz, March 15, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

58 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 32.

59 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato della scultura*, cit., 277-78, no. I.24b.

60 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 43, 72.

61 That version was published by Nicodemi in 1959, see Giorgio Nicodemi, "Una "épreuve unique" della "Rieuse" e due disegni di Medardo Rosso," *L'Arte* 24, no. 4 (1959): 377. It was subsequently exhibited at Peridot Gallery, see *The first exhibition in America*, cit., cat. no. 4. More recently, it was auctioned in 2003 as part of the collection of the Chicago dealer Bud C. Holland (*Modern and Contemporary Art*, Chicago, Wright, 1 June 2003, lot 105).

62 In a memorandum for the registrar office of the museum concerning the loan of the piece, it's specified that it was "in exchange for bronze head *Rieuse*, which should be delivered to the Peridot Gallery sometime next week" (Typewritten memorandum, September 12, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY).

63 *The first exhibition in America*, cit., cat. no. 5.

bronze version of the sculpture which has recently resurfaced. According to Paola Mola, the sculpture is a posthumous cast made by Francesco Rosso⁶⁴.

14. *Grande Rieuse*, [1891-1892] (Fig. 5)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Grande Rieuse (mask)*, 1891

Wax over plaster, h. 10 ¾ inches

Current whereabouts unknown

The mask of the *Grande Rieuse* hung next to *Aetas aurea* in the vitrine installed at the center of the exhibition room, as depicted in an installation view. It was lent by Count Vittorio Cini, an important Italian politician, based in Venice, who gathered an extensive collection, with special focus on old masters.⁶⁵ The work is no longer part of the collection. Besides the documents held in the exhibition files at the archives of the Museum of Modern Art, thus far no additional documentation has been found concerning the provenance of the piece and its presence in the Cini collection. In her book, Scolari Barr decided to illustrate the head of *Grande Rieuse* instead of the bust, too.⁶⁶ The art historian chose the photograph of the version held at the Civica Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Milan.⁶⁷

15. *Enfant au soleil*, [1891-1892]

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Child in the Sun*, 1892

Bronze, 13 ¼ × 8 ¼ × 7 inches

Milwaukee, Milwaukee Art Museum

The work was initially lent by Louis Pollack of the Peridot Gallery. Nonetheless, Pollack had already sold it to the Milwaukee Art Museum by the time when the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art opened. The museum in Milwaukee agreed to keep the sculpture in the exhibition, with the new credit line.⁶⁸ It had already been presented in the retrospective of Medardo Rosso, taking place at Peridot Gallery between 1959 and 1960.⁶⁹ Apparently, the work was consigned to Pollack by Pietro Biffi, a Milanese friend and collector of Medardo Rosso in the artist's later years.⁷⁰ Biffi was also involved in the loans for the ex-

64 Expertise by Paola Mola, October 2, 2014, Milan, Archivio Medardo Rosso,

65 Typewritten letter to Peter Selz, on letterhead "Amministrazione Vittorio Cini, Venezia", March 2, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

66 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 34.

67 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato della scultura*, cit., 285-86, cat. no. I.25d.

68 Laurence V. Donovan, typewritten letter to Dorothy Dudley, on letterhead "Milwaukee Art Center," September 20, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

69 *The first exhibition in America*, cit., cat. no. 7.

70 This is how Biffi is described by Giorgio Nicodemi, see Nicodemi, "Una "epreuve unique" della "Rieuse" e due disegni di Medardo Rosso," cit., 376.

hibition at the Museum of Modern Art.⁷¹ Further research should be done to confirm the provenance and assess the quality of the piece. It is illustrated in the monograph by Scolari Barr.⁷²

16. *Enfant juif*, [1893]

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Jewish Boy*, 1892

Wax over plaster, 8 7/8 x 6 5/8 x 6 inches

New York, The Museum of Modern Art

The piece was lent by Peridot Gallery. It was subsequently acquired by Harriet H. Jonas, and finally entered the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York as part of Jonas' bequest in 1974.⁷³ So far, it has been impossible to determine the provenance of the sculpture before its consignment to Peridot Gallery. This specific version is also illustrated in Scolari Barr's book.⁷⁴

17. *Enfant à la Bouchée de pain*, [1897], cast c. 1943-44

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Baby Chewing Bread*, 1893

Wax over plaster, 19 7/8 x 19 1/4 x 7 1/8 inches

Washington, D.C., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

At the time of the exhibition, the piece belonged to Joseph H. Hirshhorn and had already been presented, with the rest of his collection of sculptures, at the Guggenheim Museum in 1962-63.⁷⁵ On that occasion, it was assigned the title *Child in Poorhouse*. According to the object files held in the archives of Hirshhorn Museum, the collector bought it from Peridot Gallery on February 1, 1962.⁷⁶ The cast was most likely made by the artist's son, Francesco, in the 1940s. It was consigned to Galleria Santo Spirito in Milan in 1946 and included in the first posthumous retrospective of Medardo Rosso organized at the gallery. It's listed in the catalogue under the title "Bambino all'asilo dei poveri."⁷⁷ On that occasion, it was acquired by the painter Ezio Pastorio, one of the founders of the gallery, as attested by the affidavit held in the museum archive⁷⁸. The dealer Bruno Grossetti, who founded Galleria dell'Annunciata in Milan, bought the sculpture from Pastorio and sold it to Pollack. A photograph of the work is published in the book by Scolari Barr.⁷⁹

71 See the entry of the bronze version of *Ecce Puer* below.

72 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 37.

73 Provenance information held at Archivio Medardo Rosso, Milan.

74 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 38.

75 Messer, Arnason, *Modern Sculpture from the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection*, cit., 228, cat. no. 407

76 See the provenance online: https://hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/artwork/?edanUrl=edanmdm%3Ahmsg_66.4410

77 *I mostra postuma milanese di Medardo Rosso* (Milan: Edizioni Galleria Santo Spirito, 1946): cat. no. 9.

78 Ezio Pastorio, affidavit, March 10, 1960, information provided by Hannah Green.

79 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 39.

18. *Enfant malade*, [1895] (**Fig. 4**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Sick Boy*, 1893

Wax over plaster, 12 x 9 ¼ x 7 inches, including base

Washington, D.C., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

The sculpture was lent by Peridot Gallery. Despite the lack of documentation and the absence of illustrations in Scolari Barr's monograph,⁸⁰ it could be presumably identified with the version of *Enfant malade* which was acquired by Joseph H. Hirshhorn at auction in 1968.⁸¹ Based on the installation views of the exhibition, the sculpture was mounted on a rectangular wooden base, which made it stand higher than the bronze version displayed nearby. The wax in the Hirshhorn collection has an extremely similar base. In addition, stylistic elements and the size included in the caption of the work published in the brochure of the MoMA exhibition coincide. Before being acquired at auction, this sculpture had been consigned in the late 1950s to Peridot Gallery, where it was exhibited in the Rosso retrospective between 1959 and 1960. *Enfant malade* is reproduced without the base in the catalogue produced by the gallery, but the spots in the lower part of the wax layer and the diagonal crack running through the forehead coincide between the photograph and the sculpture currently at the Hirshhorn Museum.⁸² According to the catalogue of the Parke-Bernet sale in 1968, it was originally owned by Giorgio Chierichetti, an important Milanese industrialist and patron of the arts.⁸³ The provenance could explain the presence of a metal plate attached to the wooden base with an inscription in Italian, which includes the artist's name, the title of the work and the reference to the city of Paris. On a side note, Josefowitz bought the wax *Impressione d'omnibus* at the same auction in 1968.⁸⁴

19. *Enfant malade*, [1895] (**Fig. 4**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Sick Boy*, 1893

Bronze, h. 9 ¾ inches

Current whereabouts unknown

At the time of the exhibition, the piece belonged to the collection of Samuel Josefowitz. It was still credited to the same collection a few years later, when a photograph of the piece was illustrated in the survey on sculpture of the 19th and 20th century, which Fred Licht authored in 1967 for the series of books on the history of Western sculpture edited by John Pope-Hennessy.⁸⁵ The sculpture had to be photographed

80 An early photograph of the wax in the collection of the Staatliche Kunstmuseen in Dresden is reproduced in the book, see *ivi*, 40.

81 See the provenance online: https://hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/artwork/?edanUrl=edanmdm%3Ahmsg_86.4049

82 *The first exhibition in America*, cit., cat. no. 10.

83 *Important 19th-20th Century Sculpture*, New York, Parke-Bernet Galleries, sale no. 2679, April 4, 1968, lot 136.

84 See the entry above.

85 Fred Licht, *Sculpture: 19th and 20th Centuries* (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1967): 158, 323, cat. no. 147.

by the photographer of the Museum of Modern Art when it was loaned to the exhibition.⁸⁶ That image was reproduced in the book by Scolari Barr.⁸⁷

20. *La conversazione*, [1899] (**Fig. 4**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Conversation in the Garden*, 1893

Bronze, 15 x 12 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 26 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea⁸⁸

The bronze was the second work by Rosso borrowed from the Galleria Nazionale in Rome, after the *Henri Rouart*. It was given to the museum in Rome by Francesco Rosso in 1931. The reason why it was requested after the *Rouart* stems from a mistake made by Selz.⁸⁹ In fact, the collector Gianni Mattioli was first asked for the loan of his version of *La conversazione*. Selz assumed that Mattioli owned a bronze, but it was actually a wax, and the collector denied the loan due to concerns about the conservation of the piece.⁹⁰ Having already secured the support of Palma Bucarelli, the director of Galleria Nazionale, in expediting the loan procedures, Selz therefore turned to her and asked for the bronze version owned by the museum in Rome. The wax from the Mattioli collection was illustrated in Scolari Barr's monograph anyway, with two photographs taken in different light conditions, to emphasize the texture of its rough surface.⁹¹ The particular of the standing figure to the left was also reproduced, alongside the images of *Bookmaker* and *L'uomo che legge*, to demonstrate Rosso's effort to redefine the depiction of human figure within the atmosphere, in comparison with Rodin's *Balzac*.⁹²

21. *Bookmaker*, [1894] (**Fig. 7**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Bookmaker*, 1894

Wax over plaster, 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 13 x 14 inches

New York, The Museum of Modern Art⁹³

The sculpture already belonged to the collection of the Museum of Modern Art by the time of the

86 T. Varveris, typewritten form on letterhead "The Museum of Modern Art", April 25, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

87 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 40.

88 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato*, cit., 357, cat. no. III.20.

89 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Palma Bucarelli, April 26, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

90 Gianni Mattioli, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead "Gianni Mattioli", April 20, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

91 Scolari Barri, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 41.

92 Ibid., 73.

93 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato*, cit., 367, cat. no. V.5a. Due to lack of knowledge at the time of the realization of the catalogue, the piece is erroneously registered as the bronze cast by Vianello-Chiodo and given personally to Alfred Barr. That sculpture stayed in Barr's private collection, and Margaret Scolari bequeathed it to the Princeton University Art Museum.

exhibition.⁹⁴ It was acquired from Peridot Gallery in October 1959, through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest.⁹⁵ It was part of a group of sculptures that Clotilde Longoni Rosso, the wife of Francesco, gave on consignment to Louis Pollack. As such, the piece was credited to the collection of the Museum of Modern Art when it was published in the catalogue accompanying the retrospective of Rosso organized at Peridot Gallery in 1959-60.⁹⁶ The sculpture was extensively illustrated in the monograph by Scolari Barr. Besides being included among the plates of the book, it was also reproduced vis-à-vis Rodin's *Balzac*, and featured as the cover image of the monograph.⁹⁷

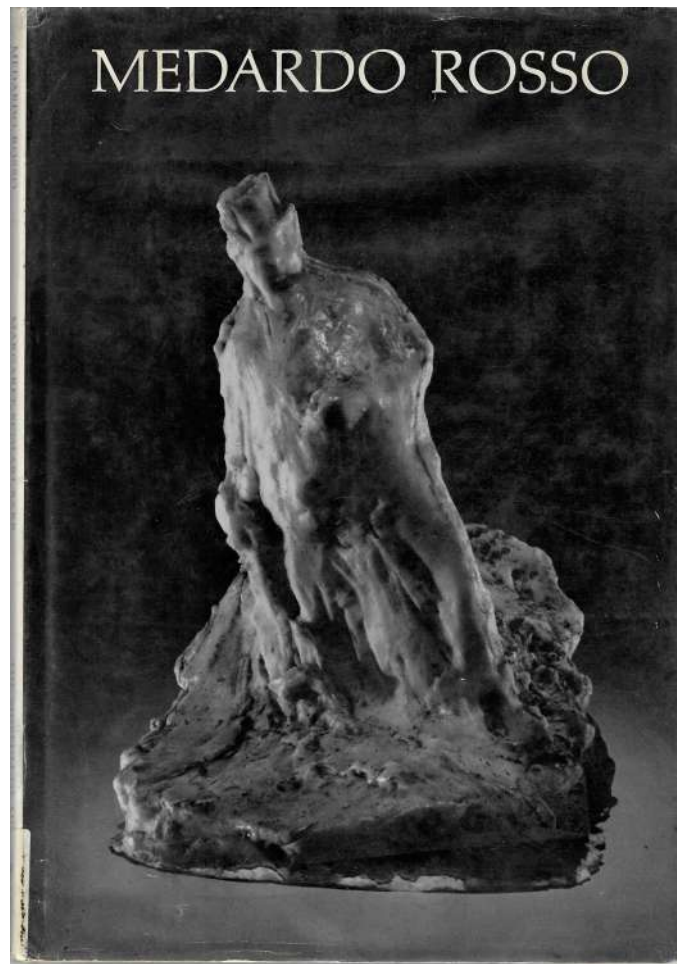


FIGURE 7. Cover of Margaret Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1963). Medardo Rosso, *Bookmaker*, [1894] (no. 21).

94 "Painting and Sculpture Acquisitions January 1 through December 31, 1959," *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 27, nos. 3-4 (1960): 8, 39.

95 Purchase order, October 20, 1959, MoMA, Department of Painting and Sculpture, Museum Collection Files, 673.1959. Copy of object files held at Archivio Medardo Rosso, Milan. See the list of works shipped from Clotilde Rosso to Louis Pollack, June 9, 1959, Archivio Medardo Rosso, Milan.

96 *The first exhibition in America*, cit., cat. no. 9.

97 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., n.p., 44, 73.

22. *L'uomo che legge*, [1894], cast 1960

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Man Reading*, 1894.

Bronze, 10 x 11 ¼ x 11 inches

New York, The Museum of Modern Art⁹⁸

The sculpture entered the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in 1960.⁹⁹ It was acquired from Mario Vianello-Chiodo, who was granted by Rosso himself the right to make copies of a few sculptures that the artist sent to him.¹⁰⁰ Vianello-Chiodo commissioned the execution of bronzes from the Fonderia Artistica Veronese between 1959 and 1960.¹⁰¹ It is correctly credited as a posthumous cast in the caption of the plate published in Scolari Barr's book.¹⁰² The art historian published the image another time, alongside a detail of *La conversazione* and *Bookmaker*, in comparison with the photograph of Rodin's *Balzac*.¹⁰³

23. *Yvette Guilbert*, 1895

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Yvette Guilbert*, 1894

Plaster, 16 ¾ x 12 ⅝ x 9 ½ inches

Venice, Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna di Ca' Pesaro¹⁰⁴

The sculpture was borrowed from the museum of modern art in Venice through the mediation of Palma Bucarelli, the director of the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome.¹⁰⁵ When Selz followed up on the loan request with Guido Perocco, the director of the museum in Venice, he was notified that an official approval request was submitted and pending.¹⁰⁶ Due to the delay in receiving a response, Selz asked Bucarelli for the loan of the wax version of *Yvette Guilbert*, which belongs to the collection of the museum in Rome.¹⁰⁷ Bucarelli was hesitant due to conservation issues, but supported the loan request to Perocco, who finally agreed. On a side note, Perocco asked in return for the support of the Museum of Modern Art in a loan request for Vittore Carpaccio's *Meditation on the Passion* from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹⁰⁸ The panel should have been exhibited in the major Carpaccio retrospective held in Venice in 1963. Selz sent a letter to Theodore Rousseau, curator of European Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum encour-

98 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato*, cit., 367, cat. no. V.4a.

99 Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "Painting and Sculpture Acquisitions, 1960," *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art* 28, nos. 3-4 (1961): 13, 58.

100 Alfred H. Barr, letter to Mario Vianello-Chiodo, December 14, 1959, MoMA, Department of Painting and Sculpture, Museum Collection Files SC89.1960. Copy of object files held at Archivio Medardo Rosso, Milan.

101 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato*, cit., 365-66.

102 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 45.

103 Ibid., 74.

104 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato*, cit., 317-18, cat. no. I.32a.

105 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Palma Bucarelli, May 14, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

106 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Guido Perocco, April 11, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.3], MoMA Archives, NY.

107 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Palma Bucarelli, May 9, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

108 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Guido Perocco, April 11, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.3], MoMA Archives, NY.

aging the loan, which was ultimately denied due to conservation issues.¹⁰⁹ *Yvette Guilbert* was one of the major loans to the exhibition, and thus illustrated in Scolari Barr's monograph.¹¹⁰

24. *Madame X*, 1896 (**Fig. 8**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Madame X*, 1896

Wax over plaster, 11 ¾ x 7 ½ x 9 ½ inches

Venice, Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna di Ca' Pesaro¹¹¹

The piece was borrowed from the Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna, the museum of modern art in Venice. It was originally gifted to the museum by the artist himself in 1914, after the eleventh edition of the Venice Biennale. When it arrived at the Museum of Modern Art, the mounting of the sculpture was found to be insecure. Following consultation with Guido Perocco, the support was replaced.¹¹² Alongside *Yvette Guilbert*, it was the major loan to the exhibition, and was illustrated and extensively discussed in the monograph by Scolari Barr.¹¹³

25. *Madame Noblet*, 1897 (**Fig. 5**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Madame Noblet*, 1897

Bronze, 20 x 19 ¾ x 13 ¾ inches

Milan, Civica Galleria d'Arte Moderna¹¹⁴

Selz asked Paolo Arrigoni, the director of Civica Galleria d'Arte Moderna, the museum of modern art of the city of Milan, for two loans, *Femme à la voilette* and *Madame Noblet*. Arrigoni was concerned about the fragility of the wax and denied the loan of the first piece, but agreed to lend the latter, which is a bronze.¹¹⁵ The sculpture was given to the museum in Milan by Francesco Rosso in 1953. In the book authored by Scolari Barr, the photograph of the dark wax version held at the museum in Ca' Pesaro in Venice is reproduced. The work is mistakenly listed as a bronze and credited to the museum in Milan in the accompanying caption.¹¹⁶

109 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Theodore Rousseau, April 11, 1963; Theodore Rousseau, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead "The Metropolitan Museum of Art," April 17, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.3], MoMA Archives, NY.

110 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 47.

111 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato*, cit., 319-20, cat. no. I.33.

112 Guido Perocco, cable, September 12, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

113 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 50.

114 Mola, Vittucci, *Medardo Rosso: catalogo ragionato*, cit., 324-26, cat. no. I.36b. The sculpture was also exhibited at CIMA, see *Medardo Rosso* (New York: Center for Italian Modern Art, 2015): 26-27.

115 Paolo Arrigoni, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead "Comune di Milano – Castello Sforzesco," March 12, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

116 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 52-53.

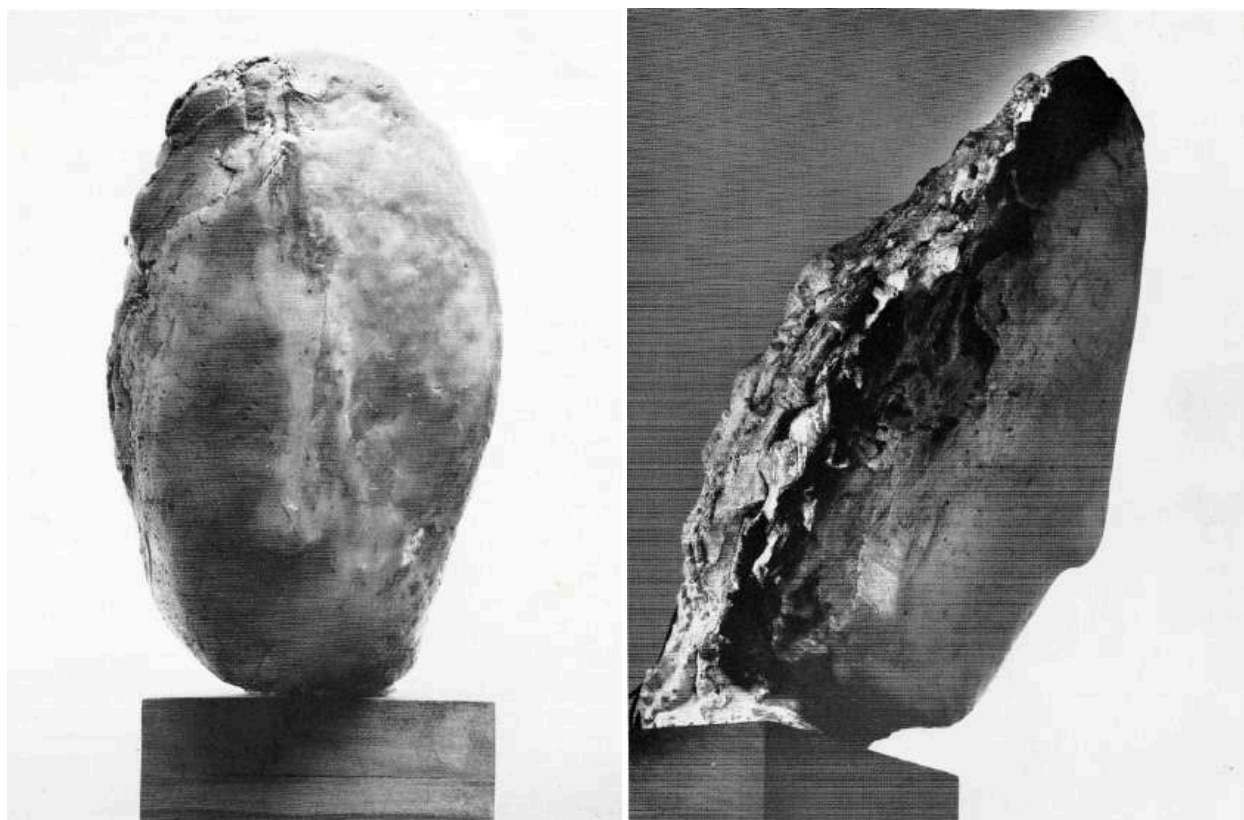


FIGURE 8. From Margaret Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1963): 50-51. Medardo Rosso, *Madame X*, 1896 (no. 24).

26. *Head of a Young Woman*, 1901 (?) (**Fig. 5**)

Wax over plaster, h. 15 $\frac{3}{4}$

Columbus, Columbus Museum of Art

The sculpture, referred to as *Head of a Young Woman* in the exhibition checklist, is listed as a fake in the inventory held at Archivio Rosso in Milan. The authenticity had already been disputed in the catalogue of the retrospective held in Milan in 1979.¹¹⁷ At the time of the exhibition, it was still on consignment to Peridot Gallery, where it was included in the artist's retrospective in 1959-60.¹¹⁸ That exhibition marked the first known presentation of the sculpture. The collectors Howard D. and Babette Sirak, who gathered an extensive collection of impressionist and modern art, acquired the sculpture shortly after the exhibition at MoMA, as attested by its inclusion in the catalogue of the exhibition of the Sirak collection, published in 1968.¹¹⁹ In 1991, the whole collection was given to the Columbus Museum of Art, including *Head of a*

¹¹⁷ Luciano Caramel, Paola Mola Kirchmayr, eds., *Mostra di Medardo Rosso (1858-1928)* (Milan: Società per le Belle Arti ed Esposizione Permanente, 1979): 145, cat. no. 43.

¹¹⁸ *The first exhibition in America*, cit., cat. no. 11. The work was dated 1897 in the catalogue.

¹¹⁹ Addison Franklin Page, ed., *The Sirak Collection* (Louisville: The Speed Art Museum, 1968): 52, cat. no. 10.

Young Woman.¹²⁰ In her monograph on the artist, Scolari Barr published a photo of the sculpture and briefly discussed it in a footnote, in which she noted that it "formerly belonged to Alberto Capozzi, an agent of the Grubicy brothers in Paris."¹²¹ It is probably Scolari Barr who changed the date of the piece from 1897 to 1901. In the correspondence with Giorgio Nicodemi, the art historian discussed the provenance of the piece and asked for his hypotheses about the moment when it might have been realized by the artist.¹²² Scolari's troubles in positioning the sculpture within Rosso's oeuvre help understand her decision to mention it in a footnote, instead of including it in the body text of the book. No evidence about Alberto Capozzi and his connection with Grubicy has been found so far.

27. *Ecce Puer*, [1906], cast c. 1958-59 (**Fig. 9**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Ecce Puer*, 1906-07

Wax over plaster, 17 ¼ x 13 ¾ x 10 ⅜ in.

Washington, D.C., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

By the time of the exhibition, Joseph Hirshhorn had just acquired the sculpture from Peridot Gallery.¹²³ According to the object files in the archive of the Hirshhorn Museum, it was given on consignment to the gallery from Danila Rosso Parravicini, the daughter of Francesco Rosso. Danila had inherited it from her mother Clotilde. A color photograph of the sculpture is published full page on the frontispiece of the monograph by Scolari Barr.¹²⁴ According to information and provenance provided by the Hirshhorn Museum, the piece is presumably a replica made right after the death of Francesco Rosso (1957).

28. *Ecce Puer*, [1906] (**Fig. 9**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Ecce Puer*, 1906-07

Bronze, h. 18 ⅝ inches

Current whereabouts unknown

The sculpture was lent by Pietro Biffi, the same person who gave the bronze of *Enfant au soleil* on consignment to Peridot Gallery.¹²⁵ Biffi was presented as a Milanese friend and collector of Medardo Rosso in the artist's later years by Giorgio Nicodemi.¹²⁶ The relationship with the artist is confirmed by a letter that Biffi himself sent to Selz, in which he agreed to lend *Ecce Puer*, "a bronze," as he described it, "which,

120 See the provenance indicated on the museum website: <http://5095.sydneyplus.com/final/Portal/Default.aspx?lang=en-US>

121 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 77. The sculpture is illustrated *ibid.*, 79.

122 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Giorgio Nicodemi, January 9, 1962, Tortona, Fondazione CR.

123 The acquisition dates to January 25, 1963, see https://hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/artwork/?edanUrl=edan-mdm%3Ahmsg_66.4411

124 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, n.p.

125 See the entry above.

126 Nicodemi, "Una "epreuve unique" della "Rieuse" e due disegni di Medardo Rosso," cit., 376.



FIGURE 9. Frontispiece of Margaret Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1963). Medardo Rosso, *Ecce Puer*, [1906] cast c. 1958-59 (no. 27).

more than anything else, was especially dear to the artist, whom I had the privilege to personally meet and befriend."¹²⁷ Biffi was among the first witnesses of Rosso with whom Scolari Barr reached out at the beginning of her research on Rosso, as attested by a letter to Nicodemi, in which the art historian thanked him for introducing her to Biffi and regretted that hadn't had his remarkable *Ecce Puer* photographed yet.¹²⁸ Biffi was trying to sell this and maybe other works by Rosso at that time. A letter by Dorothy Dudley, the exhibition registrar, to the shipping company "Bruno Tartaglia" bears witness of Biffi's intention to put the sculpture on sale at \$ 15,000, which was the same amount as the insurance value.¹²⁹ In a report sent to the museum, the shipper reminded that the return of all pieces to Italy was a preliminary and mandatory condition in the request of loans from Italy, therefore warning the museum that official permission should be submitted to the Italian Government before selling anything.¹³⁰ *Ecce Puer* was actually returned to Biffi. According to documents held at Archivio Medardo Rosso, the artwork was later sold to the sculptor Cesare Poli, who taught at the Academy of Brera in Milan.¹³¹ Poli passed away in 1964, so, should the information be correct, the sale happened shortly after the return of the sculpture. The photograph of the work was not included in the book by Scolari Barr, who instead illustrated two wax versions, belonging to the Hirshhorn and Malbin collections.¹³²

Works on paper

29. Untitled, n.d. (**Fig. 10**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *At the Café de la Roche*, 1893

Ink, wash on paper, 8 x 5 ¼ inches

Private collection¹³³

At the time of the exhibition, the work belonged to the collection of Gianni Mattioli. The collector had already collaborated with Selz for the exhibition on Futurism, organized at the Museum of Modern Art in 1961.¹³⁴ By virtue of this relationship, Mattioli was among the first collectors to whom Selz reached

127 Pietro Biffi, handwritten letter to Peter Selz, March 10, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

128 Margaret Scolari Barr, typewritten letter to Giorgio Nicodemi, January 24, 1960, Tortona, Fondazione CR.

129 Dorothy H. Dudley, typewritten letter to "Bruno Tartaglia" company, July 8, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.6], MoMA Archives, NY.

130 Ditta Bruno Tartaglia, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead "Bruno Tartaglia," August 24, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

131 The work was sold to Poli through the mediation of engineer Leopoldo Zorzi, according to notes taken after a conversation with the heir of Zorzi, see handwritten notes on letterhead "Museo Medardo Rosso," February 18, 1998, Archivio Medardo Rosso, Milan.

132 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., n.p., 57.

133 The drawing was included in the exhibition at CIMA in 2014-15, see *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 45.

134 According to the exhibition checklist, eleven works were borrowed from the Mattioli collection, see MoMA exhibition records, 695. Futurism [MoMA Exh. #685, May 30-September 5, 1961], 685.1, digitized at the following link: <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2821>.

out for the exhibition on Medardo Rosso.¹³⁵ This is one of three drawings by Rosso which Mattioli agreed to lend.¹³⁶ The drawing was first illustrated in the album published on the occasion of the artist's exhibition at Eugene Cremetti Gallery in London in 1906, which means that it was most likely shown in the exhibition as well.¹³⁷ Such a prominent work on paper was also included in the solo show at Bottega di Poesia gallery in Milan in 1923, and reproduced in the accompanying catalogue under the title *Effet au Café du Roches*.¹³⁸ Before 1963, it was reproduced in the monograph authored by Mino Borghi in 1950.¹³⁹ By virtue of its relevance, Margaret Scolari Barr decided to include it in the restricted selection of artist's sheets illustrated in her book.¹⁴⁰

30. Untitled, n.d. (**Fig. 11**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *The Woods*, 1893

Graphite on paper, 8 x 5 ¼ inches

Private collection¹⁴¹

The drawing was one of the three sheets borrowed from the collection of Gianni Mattioli. It was first published in the seminal monograph authored by Ardengo Soffici two years after the artist's death.¹⁴² On that occasion, it was titled *Giardino* (*Garden*). It was also illustrated in the book by Mino Borghi, released in 1950.¹⁴³

31. Untitled, n.d. (**Fig. 12**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Two Figures*, 1893

Graphite on paper, 5 x 3 ½ inches

Private collection¹⁴⁴

It is the third drawing lent by Gianni Mattioli. By the time of the exhibition, a photograph of the drawing had already been included among the many illustrations of the 1950 book by Mino Borghi.¹⁴⁵

135 Peter Selz, typewritten letter to Gianni Mattioli, February 7, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

136 Gianni Mattioli, typewritten letter to Peter Selz on letterhead "Gianni Mattioli," February 20, 1963, MoMA Exhs., [729.2], MoMA Archives, NY.

137 *Medardo Rosso: Impressions* (London: Eugene Cremetti, 1906): 37.

138 *XIII catalogo d'arte: Mostra personale delle opere di Medardo Rosso* (Milan: Bottega di Poesia, 1923): n.p.

139 Borghi, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 41.

140 Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 82. The drawing is mistakenly credited to Museo Medardo Rosso in Barzio.

141 The drawing was included in the exhibition at CIMA in 2014-15, see *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 42.

142 Ardengo Soffici, *Medardo Rosso* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1929): 169.

143 Borghi, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 39.

144 The drawing was included in the exhibition at CIMA in 2014-15, see *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 56.

145 Borghi, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 31.



FIGURE 10. Medardo Rosso, *Untitled, n.d. (no. 29)*



FIGURE 11. Medardo Rosso, *Untitled, n.d. (no. 30)*



FIGURE 12. Medardo Rosso, *Untitled, n.d. (no. 31)*



FIGURE 13. Medardo Rosso, *A Londra in un bar, n.d. (no. 32)*

32. *A Londra in un bar*, n.d. (**Fig. 13**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Bar in London*, 1906

Graphite on paper, 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches

Private collection

The drawing was borrowed from Peridot Gallery. It was first published in the catalogue of the Rosso exhibition held at Bottega di Poesia in Milan in 1923.¹⁴⁶ On that occasion, it was assigned the French title *Effet dans un bar à Londres*. According to Giorgio Nicodemi, who presented it in 1959, this drawing and a view of Trafalgar Square – which was also shown at the Museum of Modern Art¹⁴⁷ – originally belonged to Rosso's friend Pietro Biffi, who lent the bronze *Ecce Puer* to the exhibition.¹⁴⁸ The two sheets were exhibited together at the retrospective of Rosso held at Peridot Gallery in 1959-60.¹⁴⁹ More recently, they were both sold at auction at Sotheby's.¹⁵⁰

33. *Parco con fontana*, n.d. (**Fig. 14**)

Title and date assigned in the exhibition: *Trafalgar Square*, 1906

Graphite on paper, 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Private collection

Together with the previous drawing, this work was borrowed from Peridot Gallery. Giorgio Nicodemi published the two drawings with a provenance from the collection of Pietro Biffi.¹⁵¹ Soon afterwards, they were exhibited at Peridot Gallery.¹⁵² More recently, the drawings were both sold at auction at Sotheby's.¹⁵³ The sheet was first illustrated in the album published by Cremetti Gallery in London in 1906, on the occasion of the artist's exhibition.¹⁵⁴ Scolari Barr published a photograph of the drawing in her survey on the relationship between Rosso and Etha Fles in 1962.¹⁵⁵ In the personal files of Fles, in fact, Scolari Barr found a photograph that Rosso had taken of the drawing, which served as a postcard sent to Fles. By marking the profile of a statue on the right side of the sheet with a cross, Rosso gave Fles a rendezvous by

146 *XIII catalogo d'arte: Mostra personale delle opere di Medardo Rosso*, cit., n.p.

147 See the following entry.

148 Nicodemi, "Una "épreuve unique" della "Rieuse" e due disegni di Medardo Rosso," cit., 376, 378. Nicodemi mentioned the publication of the two drawings in the 1929 monograph by Ardengo Soffici, but neither of them was illustrated in the book.

149 *The first exhibition in America*, cit., cat. no. 13.

150 *Contemporary Art*, Milan, Sotheby's, 25 November 2009, lot 252.

151 Nicodemi, "Una "épreuve unique" della "Rieuse" e due disegni di Medardo Rosso," cit., 376, 378.

152 *The first exhibition in America*, cit., cat. no. 14.

153 *Contemporary Art*, Milan, Sotheby's, 25 November 2009, lot 251.

154 *Medardo Rosso: Impressions*, cit., 7.

155 Margaret Scolari Barr, "Medardo Rosso and his Dutch patroness Etha Fles," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek (NKJ) / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art*, vol. 13 (1962): 234.

a monument in Trafalgar Square in London.¹⁵⁶ The following year, the art historian would reproduce the drawing once again in her monograph on the artist.¹⁵⁷

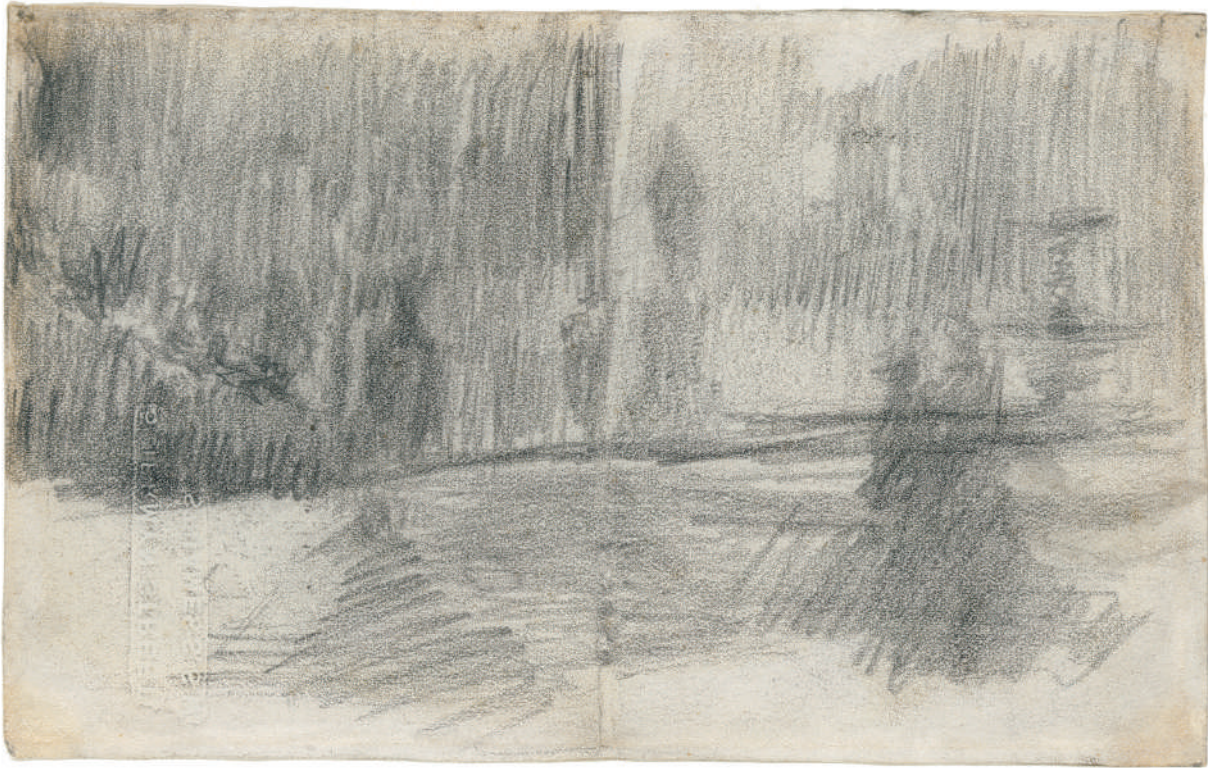


FIGURE 14. Medardo Rosso, *Parco con fontana*, n.d. (no. 32)

¹⁵⁶ The photograph is still kept in Scolari Barr's files held at the Museum of Modern Art, see Margaret Scolari Barr Papers, [III.C.3], The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

¹⁵⁷ Scolari Barr, *Medardo Rosso*, cit., 81.

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