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**ABOUT PAINTINGS OF WOMEN**

All my life, I have painted images of women. Why has the theme of women been the central and lasting motif of my work? Primarily because a woman is the most beautiful being that exists in nature; she has always been the most attractive subject in painting and in art in general.

Nothing in the history of mankind has undergone such immense transformations, and yet, despite its constancy, has not manifested itself in such an incredible number of variations. What a great wealth of expressions is hidden in a single woman!

A woman embodies everything we encounter in our lives; she is the essence of life and its most beautiful ornament. If a man can be seen as a personification of rational civilization, then a woman is the personification of wise and omnipresent nature—a nature that we admire, perceive, and accept without ever fully understanding or influencing it.

I have always been convinced that in women and their portrayals, one can best capture the complexity of life, social relationships, contemporary thought and emotions, as well as both timeless and period-specific ideals of beauty. I am convinced that the immense qualitative transformation of human society, which is the emancipation of women, has fully manifested not only in the lives of modern women but also in their beauty.

Never in history have so many women cared so much about their appearance; never in history have there been so many beautiful and fascinating women as today. Never before has there been such a great fusion of spiritual and physical beauty, a new modern *kalokagathia*.

Today's woman is fully aware that her charm lies as much in the natural gifts of nature as in her spiritual self-awareness. She knows that her beauty fulfills a broader ideal of female beauty—one that today is not an abstract idea but a principle in which a woman freely shapes herself.

She understands that her beauty, the beauty of the sensual world, is directed not only toward the senses but also toward consciousness, which comprehends beauty. The beauty of today's woman is an expression of the spirit and the heart; it is classical in the sense that it balances individual randomness with general laws and order. Women today seek in themselves and in their appearance the inner essence of things—external and internal aspects merge into one. That is why the beauty of a woman is also truthful in itself—for in the rarity of life, it is precisely the inner radiance that makes the beauty of women dominant.

“Life is serious, art is bright,” says the poet Schiller—and women create their image as a work of art that speaks to the world.

Therefore, in portraying today's woman, one must free oneself from any external determinism, from everything unworthy and transient, from all morbidity, from today's cult of successful ugliness. One cannot accept archetypal primitiveness, deliberate deformation, or contemporary absurdity. One cannot accept any limitation of the fullness of nature, because it is precisely in the fusion of natural gifts and spiritual self-awareness—arising from the understanding of nature—that the essence of the beauty of today's women lies.

The beauty of today's woman is full of self-confidence; it is a beauty that combines the harmony of ancient moderation with the drama of the Baroque, the Renaissance's scholarship with the activity and pragmatism of the 1920s and 1930s.

Today's woman unites in a new, higher synthesis all that once seemed characteristic of different historical epochs, various nations, and different societies.

The beauty of today's women is magnificent, complex, and grand—it differs from all previous concepts of female beauty in history while simultaneously being their synthesis.

For forty years, I have painted, again and again, images of women I see in life around me, striving to capture their rich, complex, and wonderful world.

And I am happy that three generations of beautiful, wise, sensitive, and educated women have found in my paintings their new, modern ideal of beauty and have accepted my portrayal of their own absoluteness.

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