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Artist-muse rapport

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Society values art for many uplifting reasons. Art can preserve history, evoke feelings of pleasure or inspiration, voice individual or collective opinions and be sacred in culture or religion. We read of the lives of famous artists posthumously, but wouldn't it be interesting to peep into the life and times of a contemporary artist? Let's look closely here at his rapport with his model.

In the course of my quest of art, I befriended a well-known, well-to-do European painter whose work critics predict will be enduring. He was 75 when we met, I initially figured his 45-year-old wife to be his daughter; they had a 12-year-old son. We would meet from time to time, visit homes of sculptors with other artist friends of theirs and spend very creative evenings together. In fact it was really inspiring for me to be in this French arty milieu. My artistic sense enlarged infinitely.

At their Paris apartment the wife introduced me to a 30-year-old handsome Spaniard who appeared a paying guest student or their butler. On one of my visits to the artist's home the couple was having a sparkling discussion with the young man; it seemed like he was the host of the house. He always accompanied us to

artistic pursuits and the artist's wife was very attentive to him.

Three years later, a classmate from my art college Ecole des Beaux Arts who was very close to this artist's family suddenly called me to accompany him as the artist's wife had a big problem with her man. She threw him out and he's retaliating furiously. I couldn't imagine the old man in this scenario. When we arrived, I realized the problem was with the Spanish guy.

Here's the story of my friends, and it's definitely not fiction. Being tremendously in love with his wife, the old man allowed her to have a relationship with a younger man if she so required. At some party there was an instant spark or "coup de foudre" as the French say, between the wife and this Spaniard looking for accommodation in Paris. It was clear this Casanova's ambition was to find a cozy love nest. The wife brought him home to enjoy intense love with him. But she never sexually abandoned her husband, who was happy that she was happy. They lived happily together for 7 years, the husband, wife, son and lover and everybody knew of their exceptional relationship. Cleverly winning her sentiments, the Spanish man flexed his muscles, exerting power over the little son and tried to grab their property. He got the house address endorsed in his passport, kept all residential documents to prove that this was his home.

It seems the wife found true happiness with the Spaniard in the first 3 years, but was so emotionally drained that she could not dislodge

him in the next 4 years. When he became violent after 7 years, she put him out with great difficulty. Later I heard her polyandry continued with other men. Somehow her extra marital relationships always ended in violence. Why did she need the family protocol of husband and child, when a lover is under the same roof? Her husband never wanted to leave her; her affection for him was intact. For her, is family a status symbol, is living in opulence a need, or is continuous, free and open adventure her game of life? Does this love story say she loved to live in a blur? I did not get any answer, but this is a memoir in my diary.

Very naturally and openly she used to converse with me about her experience of two types of love sensations. She's convinced her husband is a genius, "My postures and portraits are all over his paintings, he's declared that my eyes are matchless for all time to come." When the artist paints she says she feels his caress all over her body. She talks passionately, with sincerity, not using flowery vocabulary; I have always found her to be genuine. She says her husband spends countless hours to focus the right light to illuminate her body, different parts of which she says can reflect different colours. Using the kind of skill that her artist husband paints his brushstrokes with, she explained the pigment of her skin in detail. She narrated with simplicity that the artist needs her desperately for his emotional security. He wants her to be his muse and model, and to get all the love she gives so generously. She needs an experienced man who treats her with the affection of both a father and a lover at the same time. People may think she's with the artist for money alone, but her sentiments expressed with fervour filled her words with depth. I still could not fathom whether she engrossed with affluence or with having the father-lover relationship.

On the other hand, when she had narrates her infatuation with the Spaniard, it gives her a

totally different character. She gets wide-eyed saying his youthfulness penetrates her body and mind like a fresh bath at the Garden of Eden. His kiss conjures up the abundance of rose petals on her body where she goes astray in the misty dream of hallucination. Sometimes the Spaniard is brutal, "I think I need that. It wakes up all my senses, it elevates me from real life. He is the bountiful lover of forbidden, beautiful Eden." It's difficult to understand how this woman balances her emotional level. She's never said anything wrong about either her husband or lover as she has the caliber to use their different love doses as psychological medicine.

Clearly, irrespective of the artist's age, achievement of her immortality through an artist's canvas and sculptures is a dream come true for her as a muse. To criticize this woman's character would be a big mistake. An individual's emotions are so fragile; it is more aspiring to understand this fragility because that's where mental anaesthesia so easily sits on.

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