



Images and Reflections | Vaska Emanouilova – Between Model and Sculptor
120th anniversary of the sculptor's birth

December 16, 2025 - February 22, 2026
Opening: Tuesday, December 18:00 p.m

Vaska Emanouilova went down in the history of Bulgarian art not only as one of the first prominent women sculptors, but also as an inspiration for generations of artists. Her work is characterized by great attention to form, to the human face and body, where the external and the internal, the visible and the invisible, the realistic and the symbolic are constantly intertwining.

The exhibition *Images and Reflections | Vaska Emanouilova – Between Model and Sculptor* presents the sculptor from a couple of perspectives, namely as the subject of portraits who was an inspiration for numerous Bulgarian artists and also as a portraitist.

Each form has a history of its own. A portrait captures not only the features of a person, but also the energy this person radiates. It is the point of intersection of the internal and the external, a gesture of attention, emotional attachment and creative approach. The centerpiece of this exhibition is Vaska Emanouilova's figure, both as an image and an image creator.

Throughout her whole life, she was not only an artist, but also a model. Her fellow artists were attracted not only by her intriguing looks, but also by her talent, audacity, vehemence combined with tenderness and spirituality. And in their works depicting her, they would explore her inner world in harmony with the visible. Having posed for Ivan Nenov, Iliya Petrov, Stoyan Venev, Lyuba Palikarova, Karl Yordanov, Svetlin Rusev, Nenko Balkanski, Ruska Marinova, Donka Konstantinova, Georgi (John) Popov, Alexander Stamatov and many other artists, she was put at the center of a visual story where the model and the artwork mirror one another. These portraits comprise a unique visual diary telling the story of the artist's time, journey and significance. Much like a fictional character, Vaska Emanouilova mirrors said age revealing the image of a woman artist captured between the intimacy of perspective and the symbolism of her time. She represents sustainability of form, vulnerability of emotion, a sculptor's discipline and the gentleness of human presence all rolled into one.

In the course of her work, Vaska Emanouilova would regularly go back to portrait. She turned it into an instrument that facilitates the dialogue between sculptor and model. An attentive observer

and compassionate artist, the sculptor built delicate in-depth images of people in her close circle, namely actor Porfiriyy Velkov, poet Nikolay Hrelkov, pianist Teofana Kalcheva, artists Georgi Mashev, Petrov, Vasil Stoilov and Boris Eliseev. Her works remain deeply human, yet they also have universal value, as they transform the portrait genre into a space for exploring identity and heritage.

The images created by Vaska Emanouilova, as well as those created for her, create the sensation of a delicate, yet also powerful presence of an individual who keeps providing inspiration not only through her art, but also through the way she lived in and changed the world of art.

The exhibition *Images and Reflections / Vaska Emanouilova – Between Model and Sculptor* commemorates the 120th anniversary of the sculptor's birth putting a unique final touch to a year of celebrating Vaska Emanouilova's art presented by the gallery from various perspectives, from archive and documentary studies through to contemporary interpretation of themes by women artists.