

Name: Oana-Maria Toppari

Contact information: email: oanamariaciontu@gmail.com

Supervising professor: Hendrik Ziegler

Title: Women artists from Transylvania: agents and networkers in late nineteenth century Europe

Abstract:

This project aims to uncover the educational trajectories, artistic practices and transnational exchanges of the first generation of academically trained women artists from urban Transylvania, with a special focus on their artistic production as a result of international network building and travel. The study will examine the first documented women visual artists born in the cities of Transylvania from both German and Romanian families, more specifically the generation born around the 1850's. Particular emphasis will be placed on the visual and iconographical analysis of their artworks in order to examine how experiences of mobility, study abroad, and intercultural encounters influenced their artistic language, choice of subjects, and aesthetic approaches. This constitutes a unique case study of a complex and distinctive space, situated at the periphery of Europe but also at the intersection of multiple cultural spheres, influenced by the west through the powerful Habsburg Empire but with centuries of tradition and interaction with the once-prosperous Ottoman Empire. It will be argued that, despite operating within a conservative social environment, this pioneering generation of women artists navigated successfully gender, social, and national barriers, becoming important agents of cultural transfer in South-Eastern Europe.