

What I was supposed to do with my life – and the choices I made

Else Fraenkel, with her slender hands, creates from raw material and gives it pulsating form with a distinct artistic expression. Her sculptures have become widely known, way beyond the confines of Hanover.

ELSE FRAENKEL

"Nothing special was expected from me. I was destined to become a housewife. I myself did not have any specific expectations from life. But, from early childhood I was attracted to drawing. I felt the drawing of a portrait as such a rich experience and the expressions on faces and bodies so wonderful. I drew and modelled with such intensity that I forgot all else; the obstacles that presented themselves could take nothing away from my strength, my desire, to comprehend. I attended three art schools every day for quite some time without ever feeling tired. Based on this foundation I turned to sculpture. I was determined to master the technique, to make it possible for me to give each person his very own character and to represent him in his own style.

Each person appeared to me as a sound emanating from a huge instrument whose height and depth had no end. And each person has a different sound. To find this sound is the work of a portrait artist.

A boisterous gypsy boxer requires different material and a different technique from the deep, clear-thinking philosopher Nelson; a vivacious, beautiful Arabian dancer needs a different approach from a well-tempered North German art historian; a tender, not yet awakened young girl another method from a mature musician who plays Bach – and has a past; the head of an Asian from an ancient culture is so different from an European scholar wrestling with Problems. My interest has led me to the speciality of creating portrait busts.

When my work brought me to Paris, where I saw and listened to the great masters, I realised more and more that only introspection and tireless patience leads to art at its highest.

I have been fortunate to be a wife and mother and, though it limited the time I was able to devote to my art, I feel it deepened the intensity of my work."

Special Edition of the Hanover Newspaper for Women's Interests
Excerpt from: "The Woman of Today" Series II
1st December, 1932

Translated from German by Dorian R. Chacko, Else Fraenkel's daughter 5/9/16