

Mata Hari, femme fatale

I didn't want to paint Mata Hari all dressed up and dancing, but in an extraordinary way: from her strength and power, from her life's choices and her doubts. She was not only an exotic dancer and a (double)sPY, but also a wife and a mother. I wanted to catch her in a moment of reflection, sitting on the edge of the fountain, contemplating the foredoom of her life. Mata Hari is just characterized by her tiara and the transparency of her dress, to express her femininity and her social position.

Mata Hari was born as Margaretha Geertruida Zelle in 1876 in Leeuwarden, the capital of Friesland. Therefore I added a worth seeing element of her birthplace: the Mercuriusfountain, also known as the 'German fountain' (made in 1923 by Gustav Bredov, a German designer, sculptor), which links her to her suspected spying for the Germans.

I find it interesting to link the arts of painting and sculpting. In this painting I created this connection by sculpting the fountain, which is a sculpture itself, in 3-D relief, and then paint it over.