Brancusi is *Ours* or *Mine*? Publicity and Manipulation in Contemporary Public Space

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**Abstract:** The paper provides a number of issues concerning one of the most creative communication tools - publicity. The purpose of this paper is to highlight how, by appealing to sensitiveness, publicity directs our perception and reporting to immediate reality, which directs and invests with several meanings. The practical part of the paper refers to the publicity campaign conducted to sensitize Romanian citizens to participate in the acquisition of Romanian sculpture "Cumințenia Pământului" ["Wisdom of the Earth"], one of the most important works of art of Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi. The context is one in which the Romanian government announced publicly its intention to acquire the sculpture through a joint effort of the state and its citizens, launching official with the Ministry of Culture, a sustained campaign of national subscription for acquisition this works of art, campaign that was held from May to September 2016. The campaign aimed to attract contributions of Romanians interested in the recovery of national treasures. The analysis conducted in this respect concerns the two publicity spots made during the campaign: the spot conducted by GMP Group, selected by the Ministry of Culture in April 2016 to coordinate the national campaign to purchase the works of Constantin Brancusi and the spot conducted by Papaya Advertising Agency, in August 2016 in a campaign independently of the official with the stated aim of helping the government approach. The paper analyses the discursive and iconic strategies that the two publicity spots have used in order to determine the impact that they had on the Romanian citizen.

**Keywords:** Publicity, national subscription, discursive strategies, iconic strategies, public space.

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1. Introduction

On 16 March 2016, the Romanian Government has publicly announced its intention to acquire the sculpture "Wisdom of the Earth", one of the most important works of Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi. "Wisdom of the Earth" is considered a work of art belonging to the national cultural heritage, as Thesaurus. Along with "The Kiss" and "The Prayer",

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this marks the most appreciated period by the artist, considered the emblem of the first modern sculpture in the world.

Carved in limestone, in 1907, the sculpture was bought four years later by engineer George Romașcu, a good friend of Brancusi. In 1957, the sculpture was confiscated by the communist regime and was exposed for 50 years at the National Museum of Art of Romania. But there are assumptions that the sculpture was once paid by the Romanian state in the 60s, the owner who acquired it from Brancusi, to the price of an apartment (Cristoiu, 2016). After the fall of the communist regime in Romania at the end of a long process with the Romanian state in 2012, the work of art was returned to heirs of engineer Gheorghe Romașcu, Paula Ionescu and Alina Șerbănescu. In this context, they began a series of negotiations between the Romanian state and the rightful heirs of George Romașcu to exercise the right of first refusal - pre-emption, for the work of Brancusi.

Proxies shall of the heiress family of the sculpture "Wisdom of the Earth" in the process of pre-emption belonged to the House of auctions Artmark, established in July 2008 as legal Galleries Artmark SRL, by two associates, collectors and art lovers, theater director Radu Boroianu and the lawyer Alexandru Bâldea. Since its establishment, Artmark held two separate activities, one preeminent trade, of art auction house and the other predominantly cultural, of affirmation art heritage, namely to promote young contemporary art. On March 10, 2016 Artmark communicated officially to the Ministry of Culture that giving up this power of attorney, so the Romanian State through the Ministry of Culture has negotiated directly, on 11 and 14 March 2016, the purchase price with the owners of artwork and with their lawyers, the Culture Minister was the chairman of negotiation. The price for the acquisition of the artwork "Wisdom of the Earth", negotiated by the Ministry of Culture and its current owners of heirs engineer Gheorghe Romașcu, was 11 million euro. The 11 million euro would be paid as follows: five million euros to be allocated by the Romanian Government and six million would be raised by public National subscription.

In this context, the Romanian Government and the Ministry of Culture launched a national campaign to support subscription for purchase artwork of Constantin Brancusi, "Wisdom of the Earth", aimed at attracting contributions of Romanians interested in the recovery of national treasures. Public subscription aim to collect six million Euro amount of money these were added to the five million earmarked by the Government for the purchase of the sculpture. To support subscription, Ministry of Culture wanted to initiate an integrated communication campaign, so it has invited

advertising agencies interested in participating in a selection process. Selected agencies were asked to work pro bono for campaign implementation, including in terms of costs to third parties.

In April 2016, the Ministry of Culture has selected Group GMP, represented by agencies GMP - which was to ensure the creation, GMP PR - which was to handle the public relations, Webstyler - which was to be responsible for digital communication and Media Investment - which was to act as a media agency, to coordinate the national campaign to purchase the artwork of Constantin Brancusi (Obae, 2016).

In May 2016, the Government of Romania and the Ministry of Culture officially launched the campaign to support national subscription for acquisition artwork, campaign that have place until September 30, 2016.

2. Brancusi is not ours, but mine - handling strategy used by GMP Group

Fundraising campaign to purchase the work of art "Wisdom of the Earth" performed by GMP Group, bore the title "Donate for Wisdom of the Earth" and materialized in a site dedicated to it (www.brancusiealmeu.ro), creating a teaser and realization of videos dedicated to the campaign. Shooting is achieved the campaign have been made at the Bucharest Film Studios, former MediaPro Studios in Buftea (Obae, 2016). Publicity campaign has been supported by public and cultural personalities and celebrities from Romania.

Thus, Doina Lemny - curator-researcher at the National Museum of Modern Art, Centre Pompidou in Paris, a specialist in sculpture from the first half of the twentieth century; the writer and essayist Andrei Pleșu; Mircea Cărtărescu - poet, novelist, literary critic and publicist; Bogdan Raileanu - writer and advertiser; Iv the Naive - contemporary writer who does not want to disclose his identity; Vlad Alexandrescu - Professor and former Culture Minister; the architect Vlad Eftenie; Dan Perjovschi - cartoonist, writer and journalist; the visual artist Mircea Cantor; Mihaela Paun - ARCUB Director, a Cultural Center of Bucharest - the only institution in Romania that acts as a liaison between the local authority and civil society; actors Maia Morgenstern, Oana Cristina Cioran, Dora Dumitrescu, Victor Rebenciuc, Oana Geambașu; George Popa - novelist, playwright and director; Tudor Giurgiu - producer and director; the violinist Alexandru Tomescu; the singer Dan Amariei; the popular music singer Mariana Lungu; Dragos Bucurenci - consultant and trainer communication; TV presenters Iuliana Tudor, Melania Medeleanu, Virgil Ianțu and producer
of television Irina Păcurariu; Matei Oprina - filmmaker and radio producer; Andrei Bijutescu - marketing and advertising expert; Radu Restivan - GMP Group consultant; the consultant Luiza Stoica; the HR consultant Monica Costea; Cosmin Alexandru - specialist in business consultancy; the OMNIASIG President Mihai Tecău; the former champions in sports Gheorghe Hagi, Nadia Comăneci, Ilie Năstase Virgil Stănescu; Răzvan Burleanu - the president of Romanian Football Federation; Alexandru Dedu - the president of Romanian Handball Federation; Oana Manea - handball player; Elena Radu - champion in kayak; Cristiana Mongol Stancu - multiple champion in kempo; Constantin Necula - priest, are those who have supported the campaign of publicly, most of them becoming its ambassadors².

The presence of the supporters of the campaign they carried out, or ambassadors of its, public personalities and celebrities from Romania, representing different segments of public who could become leaders for almost every category of public, the GMP Group created a public space and opportunities to participate in it for any Romanian citizen.

The web-site dedicated to publicity campaign - www.brancusiealmeu.ro was very simple achieved and contained six sections, which referred to: the description of the sculpture "Wisdom of the Earth" and the ways in which it can donate³; presentation of media items referring to the views of personalities of public space in Romania on the artwork of the great sculptor Constantin Brancuşi⁴; presentation of major events in which to promote the campaign of donation for the artwork of the great Romanian sculptor (Summer Well Festival, Electric Castle Festival, Airfield Festival, the event in the night of Şâncieni organized by the Cultural Association "Heritage for the Future" and the National Art Museum of Romania, the exhibition "Wisdom of the Earth. This is not a stone", performed at the National Art Museum of Romania⁵; the presentation of the Ambassadors of publicity campaign⁶; a special section with informed regarding opportunities to donate⁷ and submitting an application on the phone, made by Augmented Reality technology that allows application of the sculpture image on any image captured by the phone's camera⁸. Buttons

² http://www.brancusiealmeu.ro/ambasadori
³ http://www.brancusiealmeu.ro/
⁴ http://www.brancusiealmeu.ro/stiri
⁵ http://www.brancusiealmeu.ro/evenimente
⁶ http://www.brancusiealmeu.ro/ambasadori
⁷ http://www.brancusiealmeu.ro/informatii-donatii
⁸ http://www.brancusiealmeu.ro/cumintenia-calatoreste
such as "call to action", recorded with names like "Donate Now", "Donate Online" or "Donate via SMS" determines citizen who access the web to take a desired action by agents of publicity, whose purpose was manipulate the first in this regard.

The teaser dedicated to this publicity campaign was designed to generate the first controversy, necessary from the point of view of PR, and on the other hand has been designed so as to capture the attention of the general public and of the media in order manipulation of public attention. The teaser was to the personalities and public figures who uttered the controversial words "Brancusi is not ours. Brancusi is mine". Through which they uttered speech, sought to raise public awareness to make a donation to purchase the sculpture "Wisdom of the Earth". Most of speeches have put in the mirror the expressions ours - mine, making comparisons linking to the idea that our words apparently do not represent us, whereas mine involves taking. They were accompanied by the exhortation made by every Romanian citizen to donate: "Brancusi is yours, just as this country is yours! Donate, no longer stand aside!" (Morgenstern, 2016; Pleșu, 2016; Rebenciuc, 2016; Stanciu, 2016).

Publicity campaign videos\(^9\) were made by joining speeches of some opinion leaders who supported it, becoming its ambassadors. The content of the message sent was founded a manipulation techniques, with a view to induce them Romanian citizens to donate to the artwork of Brancusi. The publicity message explains why "Brancusi is not ours", generating the idea that the words of our dissipate responsibility at all and so the responsibility is divided to 20 million fellow citizens, which means that there are 20 million less chance that each citizens to donate. The phrase "our means of anyone"\(^{10}\) or arguments like "ours is about responsibility to others, is about all and about nobody; our means of nobody"\(^{11}\) are the most illustrative in this respect. For when ours becomes mine, the responsibility becomes to mine also; and if Brancusi is mine, then the responsibility is mine and I will act without waiting for others to do, because Brancusi be really mine. This reference from the mine to our refers to the individual assumption to assume the artistic

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9. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3vZsP19Mvo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3vZsP19Mvo), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gij_qrWZwwM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gij_qrWZwwM), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMOeQmvLAuE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMOeQmvLAuE), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiwexAwV_88](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiwexAwV_88), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J47WCsT7s6E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J47WCsT7s6E)

10. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiwexAwV_88](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiwexAwV_88)

11. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gij_qrWZwwM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gij_qrWZwwM)
object, to assume a gesture purchase of important artwork to the national culture, to assume the national values itself.

Through opinion leaders who endorsed the publicity campaign, slogans and discursive arguments used by them, it was carried out the persuasion according to the six principles of influence, which have been described by Robert Cialdini (1985) in "Influence: The New Psychology of Modern Persuasion". The "six principles of influence", as they were defined by Cialdini, were six basic methods used by specialists in publicity to achieve the desired results for the purposes of influencing citizens to donate.

Thus it was used the principle of authority, that the individual is predisposed to follow the suggestion of a person or several persons if they seem to be an expert or some experts credible or believable. That supporters and ambassadors of publicity campaign, which sent different messages about the importance of donation in the campaign Brancusi, represented different areas of social and professional life: writers, actors, journalists, sportsmen internationally renowned, experts in various areas, argues of using this principle in the sense that the variety of areas represented by opinion leaders allowed a large part of Romanian citizens to recognize the gesture of one of them, which you might recognize as an expert.

It was also used the principle of sympathy and the principle of consensus, meaning that the diversity of people who supported the publicity campaign or who were declared its ambassadors could create in the minds of the citizens of Romania idea of association with a trusted friend and also the idea that the choice to donate that they make is a popular one. Thus, citizens belonging to different social classes, with various social statuses had the opportunity to meet speech to a public person that could be associated with sympathetic to award talent, kindness, honesty or intelligence, traits that would have produced a countertransference in the sense that every citizen had at least one reason to donate - that the very person who is "nice" donated.

By using phrase ours - mine and associations derived from their meanings, it was used the principle of consistency in that was induced by the idea of being consistent own assumption. Denying that Brancusi as ours using the phrase "Brancusi is not ours! Brancusi is mine" and the transfer of responsibility from everyone to myself, from the collective responsibility to the individual responsibility by using the phrases "Let's not donate! I donate!, it's better!" or "We all donate! Not! Donate! I donate!" generates the need for a logical consistency of transfer, meaning that if the citizen accepts that belongs Brancusi, then will take individually and this affiliation will be manifested consistently, that he will donate.
The principle of reciprocity and the principle of rarity were used in the sense that the messages sent by supporters and ambassadors of publicity campaign was sent to the idea of duty, namely that we owe something Brancusi, our descendants or even ourselves and also the gesture of everyone to donate will bring each one a precious resource. The discourses of Andrei Pleșu or Maia Morgentern are most relevant in this regard: "I can’t imagine a country that has an opportunity to purchase a local product of genius and clearances. No need to hesitate but to think that it would be better for us to honor ourselves by honoring him. Take your own country and its values! Brancusi is yours and mine!" (Pleşu, 2016) and "I will donate to me prove myself first that I am alive, as there is trust ... to have the feeling that I leave something personal, my children's inheritance" (Morgenstern, 2016).

Also, by expressions such as "I donate", "I will donate", "Brancusi is mine", expressed by public personalities who have posed the opinion leaders they used of the principle of reciprocity, meaning that making the gesture to donate and offering a positive attitude to the work of art, they are offered as a model, and the expected result was that the association citizen with of gesture of its leader. Also, all messages that were sent in the idea that it is a milestone and a chance for the Romanian state can acquire an artwork important for national heritage "Now we have the opportunity to become masters of Wisdom of the Earth" (Rebenciuc, 2016), contributed to handling citizens by exploiting the principle of rarity, by creating the illusion of unavailability in order to provoke a positive reaction among citizens, to be endorsed by the act of donating.

3. «That's Romania!» - handling strategy used by Papaya Advertising

In August 2016, the publicity campaign to raise funds to purchase the sculpture "Wisdom of the Earth" seemed to have stalled. Once all the publicity video-clips were broadcast both on television and the Internet, they were gathered from Romanians donations, barely five hundred thousand euros of the six million that who were to be collected by the end of September. In this context, in August 22, 2016 appeared a video publicity, called "Wisdom of the Earth – The Last Train". The new video of publicity was developed by Papaya Advertising, an advertising agency founded in 2002, and was launched under the slogan "Come on, it can be done!". In the early hours after uploading it on YouTube, it has spread rapidly and began to receive both messages of appreciation and critical from some users of social networks. Asked about this publicity clip the director of the agency

12 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOaYngN8-Ec
who created that video, Robert Tider, argued that it is not related to the campaign launched officially by the Government and there is no beneficiary of the shadows of the publicity campaign, the approach being parallel to the official one developed by the Ministry of Culture, on his own initiative, to help government approach and awareness: "it is an independent campaign that aims to help government and approach" (Andronache, 2016).

The video publicity is done in black and lasts 2.13 minutes. It presents the symbolic image of two children who look walking of Romanian history, depicted as a moving train, which carries with it "lost treasures" of Romanian during the Second World War, the loss of a significant part of the treasure of the country and the coming of Soviet regime by the train of propaganda. A first scene that appears in the video-clip is a couple of aristocrats who are in train and are about to give a toast with a glass of champagne, which pours a foamy glass. The scene reflects the representation of interwar elite which contrast the subsequent occurring two children and their parents and which make reference to the vast majority of citizens, who lived in the village and were illiterate and poor. From the way they are dressed the children - their garb refer to traditionally Romanian clothing associated peasant poor, and standing they do not bear anything - we understand that they are poor, and the express image convey their suffering. The two children are huddled on the railway, where Russian train passes the Romanians are exported. At one point it appears a couple formed two young men running and board the train, and how dramatically they affecting children and gesture of the woman makes stretching his left hand toward them and the attitude displayed children - looks after train, let down their heads and cry -, leaves room for interpretation that there is a kinship between the four, a connection of the type parents - children.

In the video-clip appear at a time Red Army soldiers and Stalin, taking with them the Romanian treasury and the two children watch saddened by the trackside as what they took them more valuable. For a split second Roosevelt and Churchill appear in spot alongside Stalin. Also, in the train appears a scene with the pact from Yalta and Stalin; Yalta is where the Big Three United Nations leaders have divided the world.

The entire video publicity has a thread nationalist, it represented both by images that succeed, and through speech of voice-over, both helping to build a story: "Perhaps history is a book we mentions us on lowercase letters, a book tabs broken here and there, bearing treasures lost forever or file snatched and taken away from us. Or maybe it's something that we have been written by others, without soul, we who live only soul. Entire paragraphs dictated in a language that we've never understood it and
made us to feel strangers in our country. A book that some of us have left behind unfinished. That maybe it is history, a long line of chapters who have not depended on us and we've come quietly, waiting with hope that will follow a page to a write yourself, knowing that we can write so nice that those who now say «What do you want, man? That's Romania! », whisper respectfully: «That is Romania!»13. The story that builds in this framework exploits the eternal phrase of the foreigner, who is the main culprit for the tragic history of the Romanians. The publicity clip shows a manner self-victimizer a reference to the past and give transpires idea of a spectacular route that Romania would have had in the twentieth century, had it not been subject to international geostrategic games.

While the voice-over presents a pleading for national hope and respect, the train returns. Children are in the same place, we could say metaphorically "stuck in one place", are garnished faces when the train is approaching. And the train, they not bring their parents, so their faces were not garnished because parents would be returned, but the train bearing the statue of Brancusi, which stops in front of them. Valuable work of art that came back and garnished them their face, lead to think the idea of improving trauma of abandonment. The publicity spot ends with the image of the train where children climb and leads "Wisdom of the Earth", so they were raised in time to catch the "last train" carrying valuable sculpture and go with it. The slogan of publicity spot, bearing the figure is "come on, it can be done. It must be able to!"14.

Publicity spot complies broadly primary historical information. Thus, the train carrying the treasure bears the Russian state, for the treasure was sent before the outbreak of the Bolshevik Tsarist Empire (October 1917) to reach destination in two installments in time interim governments led by Lvov and Kerensky. On the other hand, the spot-makers have degraded military on Stalin, as on his epaulet not found the star of Marshal of the Soviet Union15.

Using the image of children abandoned by their parents in a field, that is clearing up when a train comes back with Brancusi’s statue, seeks to raise citizen on an issue of cultural heritage. In this image includes elements such as: the presence of children and their faces in the foreground, slow

15 http://www.vice.com/ro/read/ce-am-inteles-din-clipul-cumintenia-pamantului
motion, how the light is distributed, all of which used to artificially born emotion and to raise awareness.

The question we ask ourselves finally in connection with this second publicity clip is: for what purpose was it made? Motivation, as it was presented by Robert Tider, the manager of Papaya Advertising Agency, was that this video was made to help the Government approach, but no connection with the campaign officially launched by the Romanian Government and for awareness. Another argument of the reasons this independent campaign appears on the Facebook page created by Papaya Advertising for this publicity campaign. Thus, to the "About" appears under "ARTICLES" along with a quote from Constantin Brancusi ("It is not hard to do things. It is hard to put yourself in condition to make them") appears the following text: "We believe that Romania should not become the land of all possibilities, but country where only good things are possible. We owe Brancusi keep our Wisdom? Maybe. But above all, we owe it to ourselves to enter the state to preserve our dignity and desire to do things of value to us not slip through your fingers. Do you think we can do this? We are sure yes. # come on, it can be done".

This text represents an incentive to make the citizens of Romania to donate to purchase the valuable works or is a subtly warning on a campaign of manipulation of Romanian citizen carried on several levels? "We owe Brancusi keep our Wisdom? Maybe." expresses the idea of a possible duties to the great artwork, not an imperative, a duty that Romanian citizens could realize a properly; and the continuation: "But above all, we owe it to ourselves to enter the state to preserve our dignity and desire to do things of value to us not slip through your fingers" can refers to the need for awareness of things that have to true value, to the ability to discern what is really valuable in the amount of information we are bombarded daily.

4. Conclusions

Manipulation accomplished to purchase the work of Brancusi, "Wisdom of the Earth", was achieved on several levels: that of publicity campaigns, which have induced the idea of an imperative and the redirection of public attention from what truly represent the valuable work to the need on purchase them. Discourses of some public personalities who have assumed the roles of leaders and the nationalist discourse, slightly extreme right of self-victimization, sought to focus public attention and a target for

16 https://www.facebook.com/pg/HaiCaSePoate/about/?ref=page_internal
17 https://www.facebook.com/pg/HaiCaSePoate/about/?ref=page_internal
the meanings of the importance of this artwork and the imperative need to be acquired by the Romanian state. The publicity campaigns have emphasized the need to have, to have the artwork in the property, to the detriment of the need to be, to be axiological reference for Romanian citizens and omitting at least that this masterpiece of art is included in Thesaurus category.

Shapes, colors, intensity of the stimuli, symbols, slogans, messages and emotional charge them, all contributed to the construction of the two publicity campaigns, which were designed to create certain representations in the collective mind, to persuade Romanian citizens to donate money to purchase works of Brancusi.

Publicity campaign accomplished for the purchase of the artwork "Wisdom of the Earth" was performed through a projective publicity, which aimed to score a commercial speech in one social, in a culture, its values and its modes of life.

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