

HART MUSEUM

The Birth
of Modern
Sculpture



From
Centre
Pompidou

BRANCUSI

PRESS INFORMATION

PRESS



RELEASE

H'ART Museum and Centre Pompidou present grand exhibition in Amsterdam

Brancusi - The Birth of Modern Sculpture

On Saturday, September 20, H'ART Museum will open a grand exhibition in collaboration with the collections from the Centre Pompidou: *Brancusi, The Birth of Modern Sculpture*. This landmark presentation brings to Amsterdam an exceptional collection of works by Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957), who is widely regarded as the father of modern sculpture. Exploring the different facets of his art, the exhibition displays more than 30 sculptural masterpieces, accompanied by the original pedestals created by the artist, as well as his photographs and films. Centre Pompidou rarely lends these very fragile pieces, making this a unique event.

The exhibition marks the next chapter in the multi-year partnership between H'ART Museum and Centre Pompidou. It is also the very first solo exhibition of Brancusi's work in the Dutch capital and the second to be held in the Netherlands (the only other retrospective was in The Hague in 1970).

These exceptional loans are made possible by the extensive renovation of Centre Pompidou and the long-standing partnership between the museums in Paris and Amsterdam. Giving the Dutch a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore Brancusi's unparalleled oeuvre. The collection originates from the artist's original studio, which he bequeathed in its entirety to the French state in 1957. Making Centre Pompidou the custodian of the world's largest and most comprehensive Brancusi collection.



Constantin Brancusi, *Sleeping Muse* (1910). Purchased in 1947. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Philippe Migeat/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



Constantin Brancusi, *The Endless Column III* (c. 1928). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Georges Meguerditchian/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION A TRIBUTE TO THE FATHER OF MODERN SCULPTURE

The exhibition unveils the major themes and motifs that Brancusi would constantly explore for five decades. It sheds light on his distinctive creative process, including his choice of direct carving and his talent to bring out 'the essence of things'. The sculptures, with their smooth and pure forms, reflect his desire to go beyond appearances, to achieve a new and universal language. Celebrating his inventive power and tireless quest for beauty, the exhibition highlights the major revolutions brought about by Brancusi's art: the reinvention of portraiture, the new status given to pedestals, the play with light and movement, and seriality.

The exhibition also highlights the diversity of his creative output, featuring not only sculptures but also a rare painting, more than 20 photographs and films by the artist. It also includes a film projection about the history of his studio, located on Impasse Ronsin in Paris. This iconic place, designed by Brancusi as a work of art in its own right, fascinated many of his avant-gardist contemporaries. To immerse themselves in the atmosphere of the studio, visitors will also be able to listen to musical excerpts from the artist's record collection.

Visitors will follow a themed route organized around the artist's major serial works he devoted his life to: the Essence of Things (*Sleeping Muse*, *Head of a Sleeping Child*, *Sculpture for the blind*), the Portraits (*Eileen Lane*, *Mlle Pogany*), the Animals (*The Young Bird*, *The Cock*, *Seal*), the relationship with Architecture (*Endless Column*, *Caryatid*), the Ambiguity between Feminine and Masculine (*Princess X*, *Torso of a Young Man*, *Torso of a Young Girl*), the play on Light and Movement (*The Newborn II*) and finally the series of *The Kiss*.

ABOUT BRANCUSI THE ARTIST WHO REVOLUTIONIZED THE HISTORY OF SCULPTURE

Over 120 years ago, a young artist set out on foot from his native Romania and journeyed across Europe to Paris. Here, Constantin Brancusi invented a whole new way of sculpting, a universal language using a direct carving technique to produce simple shapes. His work sparked great fascination among his contemporaries and friends like Marcel Duchamp, Fernand Léger, and Amedeo Modigliani. Departing



Constantin Brancusi, *Profile of a Woman with a Chignon, Face Inclined*, (c. 1924). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Bertrand Prévost/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



Constantin Brancusi, *The Cock* (1935). Purchased in 1947. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

from the tradition of modeling, he pioneered a new, poetic sculptural form that redefined modern sculpture. Photography played an important role in Brancusi's artistic vision. He began photographing his works in the 1910s for documentary purposes. But after meeting Man Ray around 1921, whose advice he sought, photography became more a medium for reflection on his sculpture, a revelation of his vision. Brancusi himself said, 'Why write about my sculptures? Why not just show photographs of them?' For this reason, he was very reluctant to let other photographers take pictures of his works.

Also, music and dance were part of Brancusi's everyday life. He was a great music lover, a close friend of many composers, including Erik Satie, Darius Milhaud and Marcel Mihalovici. And friends who came to Paris to study dance, such as Lizica Codréano, created choreography in the artist's studio. Over time, the studio itself became a pilgrimage destination for fellow artists and art lovers.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

A comprehensive and richly illustrated catalogue (Dutch and English), published by WBooks, featuring special contributions from Ariane Coulondre (Curator, Modern Collections Department, Centre Pompidou), will accompany the exhibition. It will be available from the opening day at the museum, in bookstores, and online.

H'ART MUSEUM AND CENTRE POMPIDOU

The long-term partnership between H'ART Museum and the Centre Pompidou was announced in 2023, alongside the museum's new name — formerly known as Hermitage Amsterdam. This cross-cultural collaboration launched in 2024 with the exhibition *Kandinsky*, which marked the grand reopening of the museum and its renewed mission: to bring world-class art collections to the Dutch capital through lasting partnerships with leading institutions such as Centre Pompidou. Together, H'ART Museum and Centre Pompidou will present more major exhibitions, each showcasing the Parisian museum's excellence and iconic works, such as: *Brancusi, The Birth of Modern Sculpture* (2025–2026), *Matisse* (2026–2027), *Surrealism* (2027) and *Fernand Léger* (2028)

Brancusi, The Birth of Modern Sculpture is on show from Saturday September 20, 2025, until Sunday January 18, 2026. More information and tickets are available via hartmuseum.nl.



Constantin Brancusi, *Torso of a Young Girl III* (1925). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

Notes for the editors, not for publication

Images are available upon request via pressoffice@hartmuseum.nl. The images provided by the museum can only be used in articles about this exhibition; credits are mandatory. In addition, each user is expected to contact Pictoright (the image rights administrator) themselves to obtain permission.

Invitation

The press opening is on Thursday 18 September, 10 am. Please register via pressoffice@hartmuseum.nl.

Contact

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THEMES, HIGHLIGHTS



AND PRESS IMAGES

“The exhibition introduces visitors to Brancusi’s art, his sources of inspiration and the main themes that the artist would endlessly explore.”

Ariane Coulondre (curator Centre Pompidou) and Birgit Boelens (curator H'ART Museum)

THE ESSENCE OF THINGS

Very early, Constantin Brancusi broke with academic tradition and the influence of Auguste Rodin to invent a new sculptural idiom. He abandoned modeling in clay in favor of direct carving and patient polishing. Seeking to get closer to ‘the very essence of things’, he arrived at simple, streamlined forms. In the *Sleeping Muses* and the *Children’s heads*, the body is fragmented and the details almost eliminated.



Constantin Brancusi, *The Newborn II* (c. 1923). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



Constantin Brancusi, *Sleeping Muse* (1910). Purchased in 1947. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Philippe Migeat/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



Edward Steichen, *Beginning of The World* (1920) (c. 1926). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Georges Meguerditchian/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



Constantin Brancusi, *Head of a Sleeping Child* (c. 1908). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

PORTRAITS?

From the beginning, portraiture played a key role in Brancusi's art. While moving away from outward appearances, he never entirely abandoned the human figure. If the titles of his works sometimes retain the names of the female friends who inspired them (Margit Pogany, Eileen Lane, etc.), their individual personalities seem to merge into a single, smooth, oval face. Each is distinguished by a few elementary signs, like almond-shaped eyes or a chignon.



Constantin Brancusi, *Profile of a Woman with a Chignon, Face Inclined*, (c. 1924). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Bertrand Prévost/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



Constantin Brancusi, *Mlle Pogany III* (1933). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



Constantin Brancusi, *Eileen Lane* (1923). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



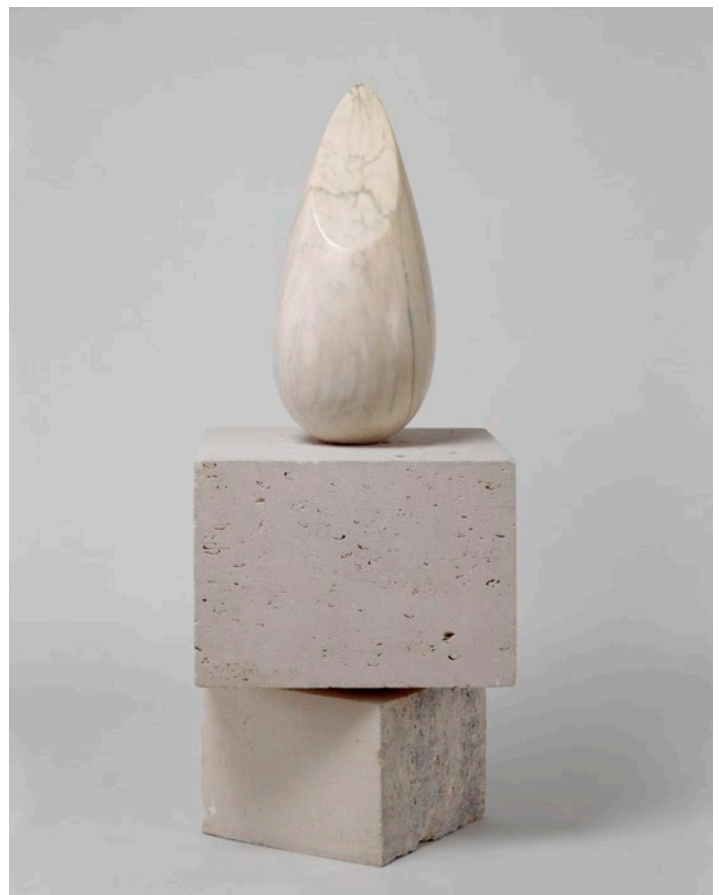
Constantin Brancusi, *Mlle Pogany I* (1912-1913). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Philippe Migeat/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

ANIMALS

Brancusi's rural childhood in a Romanian village left him with a strong rapport to nature. Throughout his life, he worked on various series of animal sculptures. His bestiary included two distinct types of fauna: winged creatures (like roosters, swans, and other birds) and aquatic life forms (fish, seals, etc.). He aimed simultaneously to achieve a symbolic representation of the animal and to transcribe its movement. Its fluid passage through air or water is suggested by sleek surfaces and abstracted volumes.



Constantin Brancusi, *The Cock* (1935). Purchased in 1947. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



Constantin Brancusi, *Young Bird II* (1928). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



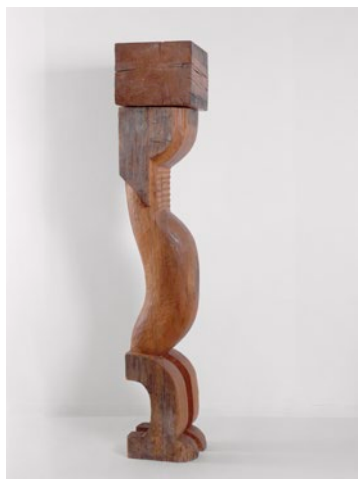
Constantin Brancusi, *Seal II* (1943). Purchased in 1947. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Philippe Migeat/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

TOWARDS ARCHITECTURE

Throughout his life, Brancusi dreamed of creating art on a monumental scale. Starting with a simple wooden base, he developed *Endless Column* by stacking a single repeated form vertically. He made several versions of this piece, the tallest reaching nearly 30 meters high. This version now stands as part of the monumental ensemble in Târgu Jiu (Romania).



Constantin Brancusi, *The Endless Column III* (c. 1928). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Georges Meguerditchian/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



Constantin Brancusi, *Caryatid* (1943–1948). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



Constantin Brancusi, *Timidity* (1917). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

FEMININE AND MASCULINE

The simplification of forms and suppression of details in Brancusi's work are, paradoxically, a source of ambiguity. In 1909, the artist began to experiment with the female torso. Taking his *Woman looking at Herself in a Mirror* as the starting point, he eliminated all but the curve connecting the rounded forms of the head and chest to arrive at the ambivalent *Princess X*. The ambiguity of the sculpture caused a scandal and led to the artist's exclusion from the 1920 Salon des Indépendants.



Constantin Brancusi, *Torso of a Young Girl III* (1925). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

LIGHT AND MOVEMENT

Brancusi's patient polishing gave his bronzes a shiny, mirror-like surface. This creates a play of reflections and enables the sculpture to project itself outwards, escaping its firm outline. The artist's photographs and films confirm his fascination with the sometimes blinding light reflections and their power to metamorphose shapes. The polished metal of the work absorbs, reflects and distorts the image of its surroundings and of anyone approaching it.



Constantin Brancusi, *Mlle Pogany II, in profile, polished bronze (1920)* (c. 1920). Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Georges Meguerditchian/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.



Constantin Brancusi, *The Newborn II (1927)*. Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

THE ENDLESS KISS

The Kiss 'was my road to Damascus', Brancusi confided. A cornerstone of his art. It was the first motif to inspire a series of works, eventually extending over forty years. The man and woman are reduced to signs and stand face to face, mirroring each other. The unity of the compact block symbolizes the complete emotional fusion of the lovers. Brancusi returned tirelessly to this motif, stylizing it and eventually elaborating it on an architectural scale. It appeared in infinite variations, becoming an icon of his esthetic and spiritual quest.

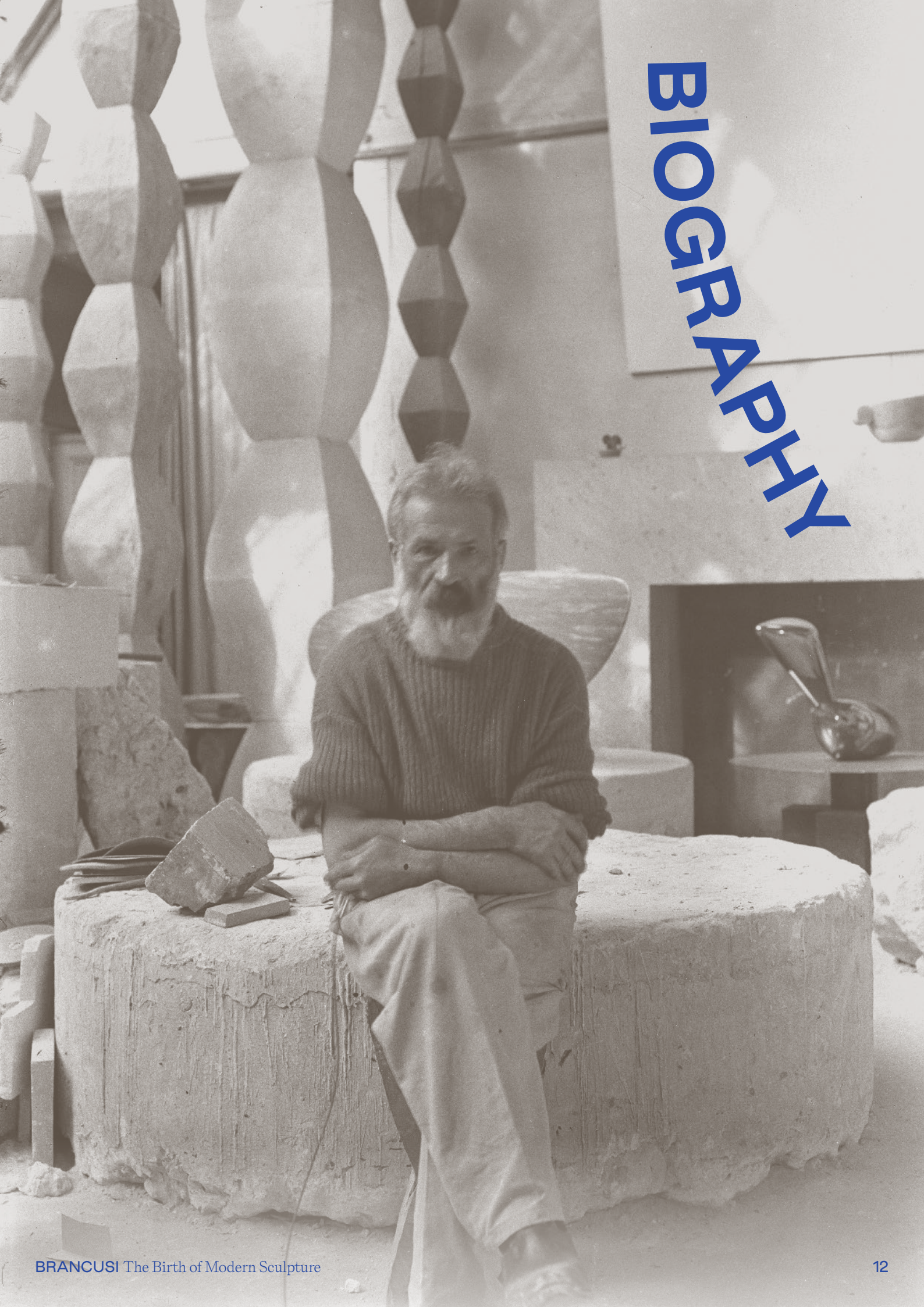


Constantin Brancusi, *The Kiss (1907-1908) (c. 1910)*. Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

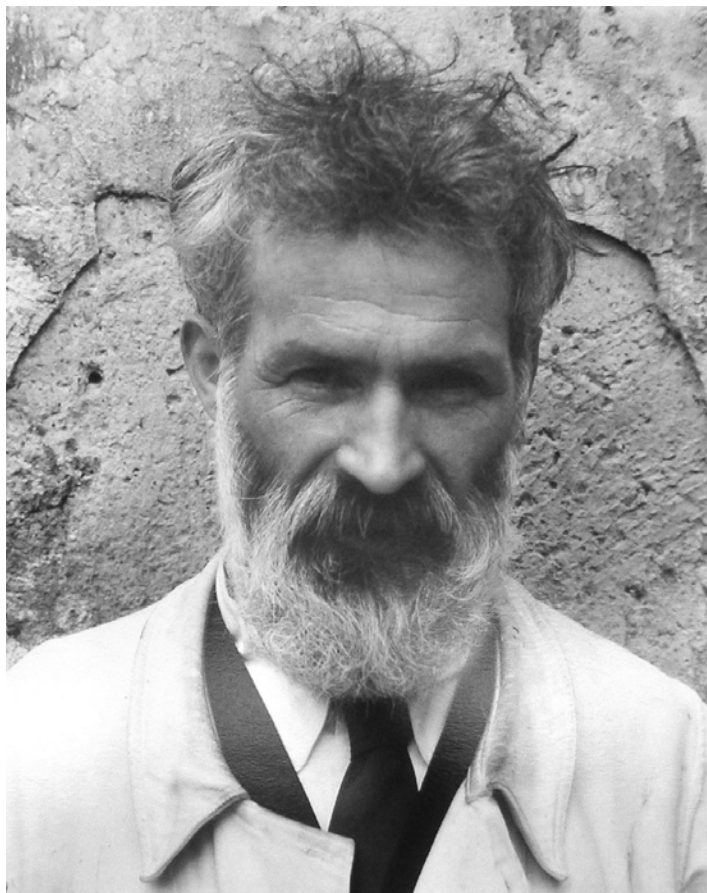


Constantin Brancusi, *Boundary Marker (1945)*. Bequest of Constantin Brancusi in 1957. © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/Adam Rzepka/Dist. GrandPalaisRmn.

BIOGRAPHY



Biography Constantin Brancusi

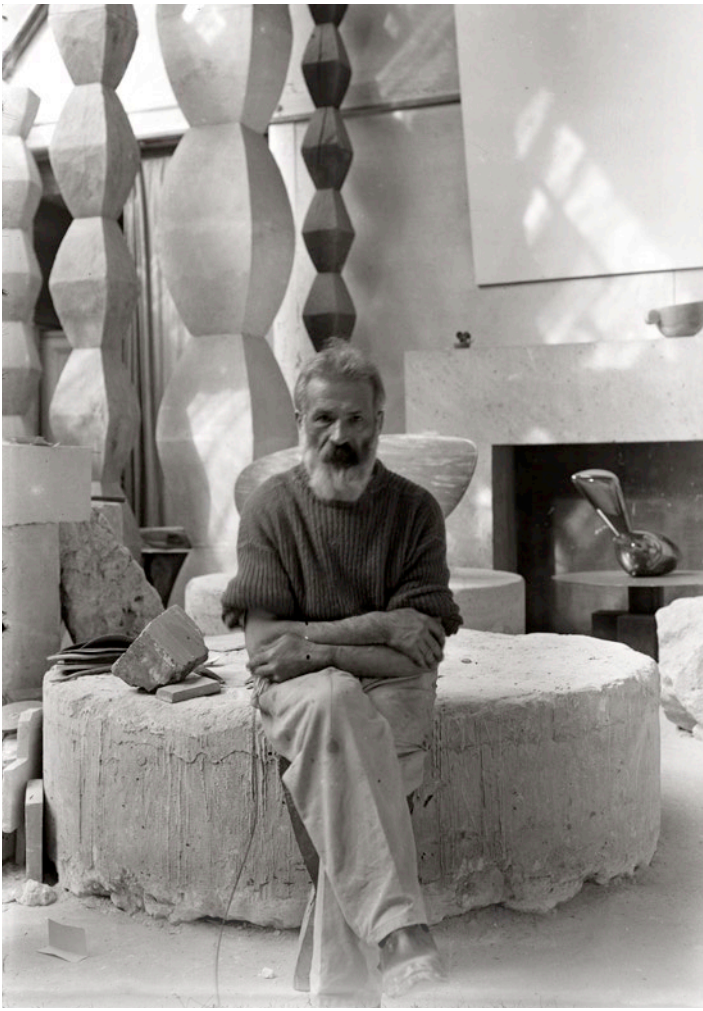


Constantin Brancusi (1922). Photo: Edward Steichen (public domain)

Around 120 years ago, a young artist crossed Europe on foot from his native Romania to settle in Paris. Here, in the bustling city charged with artistic energy, Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957) was to invent a whole new way of sculpting, a universal language using a direct carving technique to produce simple shapes.

His art was soon to spark great fascination among his contemporaries: many artists and admirers came to visit his studio, in the Impasse Ronsin in Montparnasse. This was where he lived and where he created and presented his work. He designed his studio as a work of art in its own right and bequeathed it to the French government in his will.

- 1876** Born on 19 February in Hobita, a village in the south-west of Romania.
- 1894–1902** Attends the Craiova School of Arts and Crafts and later studies at the Bucharest School of Fine Arts. He wins many prizes for his work.
- 1904** After a long journey across Europe, much of it on foot, he arrives in Paris on 14 July.
- 1905** He begins his training in the sculpture studio of Antonin Mercié at the École nationale des Beaux-Arts, where he joins the circle of Romanian students.
- 1906** Participates for the first time in the Salon des Beaux-Arts and the Salon d'Automne, and is discovered by Auguste Rodin.
- 1907** After working for only a short period in Rodin's studio, he begins to carve his art work straight into the stone.
- 1908** Baroness Frachon poses for Brancusi. She would become the inspiration for *Sleeping Muse* (1910). Friendships with Henri Rousseau, Henri Matisse, Fernand Léger and Amedeo Modigliani. Art critic Charles Morice describes Brancusi as 'one of the most talented artists of his generation'.
- 1911** *The Kiss* is placed on the grave of Tatiana Rachewskaia in Montparnasse cemetery. The sculpture was commissioned in 1909 from the then little-known Romanian artist for the modest price of two hundred francs. It was purchased by a Romanian doctor named Solomon Marbais to decorate the grave of his lover Tatiana, a Russian student who had taken her own life.
- 1913** Participates in the Armory Show in New York City.
- 1914** First solo exhibition with eight works at Alfred Stieglitz's Little Galleries of the Photo Secession in New York City.
- 1916** Moves into a new studio at 8 Impasse Ronsin (Montparnasse). Second solo exhibition at the Modern Gallery, New York City.
- 1918** Work first published in the Dutch art magazine *De Stijl*. It would be discussed and featured there several more times in the years that followed.
- 1920** Scandal provoked by the sculpture *Princess X*, which was refused by the Salon des Indépendants.



Self Portrait in the Studio, 1934 ©Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI/
Dist. GrandPalaisRmn

- 1921** Acquires photographic equipment on the advice of Man Ray.
- 1922** Brancusi meets Eileen Lane, a young American with whom he has a brief affair. He created a portrait of her from memory, without recognizable facial features.
- 1924** Exhibits in the Romanian pavilion at the Venice Biennale.
- 1925** Exhibits at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, as part of the *De Branding* exhibition. Brancusi would exhibit in the Netherlands five times during his lifetime.
- 1926** Solo exhibition at the Brummer Gallery in New York City, organized by Marcel Duchamp. First stay in the USA.
- 1927–1928** Suspected by the U.S. customs of trying to pass an industrial product off as an artwork (*Bird in Space*), to avoid paying the import tax. Brancusi wins the case against the United States.
- 1931** Relationship with the New Zealand-born pianist Vera Moore.
- 1933** Second exhibition at the Brummer Gallery, New York City.
- 1937–1938** Creates his only monumental project, in Târgu Jiu (Romania), composed of three symbolic elements: *The Table of Silence*, *The Gate of the Kiss* and the *Endless Column*.
- 1940–1944** Lives in great isolation in his studio during the war years. Receives a visit from Peggy Guggenheim, who buys a *Bird in Space* in polished bronze.
- 1952** French nationality obtained.
- 1955** Retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum, New York City.
- 1957** Brancusi dies in his studio on 16 March and is buried in Montparnasse Cemetery. In his will, his entire studio is bequeathed to the French state. The studio was first partially installed at the Palais de Tokyo then entirely at the Centre Pompidou.

OTHER



INFO

Meet the team

CURATORS



ARIANE COULONDRE

Curator, Modern Collections Department

Centre Pompidou, Musée national
d'art moderne Paris
centrepompidou.com



BIRGIT BOELENS

Curator of exhibitions

H'ART Museum
Amsterdam
hartmuseum.nl

STORYLINE DEVELOPERS

Our exhibitions are created in collaboration with a rotating team of curators and experts. We also involve people from other disciplines, who enrich the storylines with new or surprising perspectives. The storyline developers for this exhibition will soon be announced.

DESIGNERS



TATYANA VAN WALSUM

3D Exhibition Design

Studio Tatyana van Walsum
Amstelveen
tatyavanwalsum.com



MARLINE BAKKER

2D Exhibition Design

Glamcult
Amsterdam
glamcultstudio.com



STUDIO BERRY SLOK

Publicity Campaign

Amsterdam
studioberryslok.nl

Factsheet

EXHIBITION

Brancusi
The Birth of Modern Sculpture

DATA

20 September 2025–18 January 2026

LOCATION

H'ART Museum, Amstel 51 Amsterdam

OPEN

Open daily, 10–17 uur

VISITOR INFORMATION

020 530 87 55

PUBLICATION

Brancusi
Price: €34,95
ISBN 978 94 625 8725 0
Publisher: WBOOKS | H'ART Museum

ADMISSION PRICES

Museum Pass	€5
Adult	€27,50
Youth up to 17 years	free
Student/CJP	€17,50
VriendenLoterij VIP- KAART*	free
Iamsterdam City Card	free
GoCity	free
GetYourGuide/Tiqets	free
Stadspas	free
Members H'ART Museum	free
ICOM	free

* Special VriendenLoterij promotion:
you may bring one guest for free when
presenting your VIP-KAART.

FURTHER INFORMATION

MUSEUM SHOP

10.30–17 uur, no ticket needed

CAFÉ-RESTAURANT

First floor. Open 10–17.30 hrs. Courtyard terrace
open from (weather permitting) 10–17.30 hrs

AUDITORIUM

Suitable for various purposes

MEETING ROOMS

Available for lectures and meetings

TOURING CAR

In and out: Weesperstraat, group entrance: Nieuwe
Keizersgracht 1

BOAT

Jetty in front of main entrance Amstel

CAR

Parking garages: Dutch National Opera & Ballet,
Waterlooplein, Markenhoven

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Tram 14 (Waterlooplein), metro 51, 53, 54
(Waterlooplein, exit Nieuwe Herengracht)

ACCESSIBILITY

The entire building is easily accessible. Wheelchairs
and walkers to borrow, reservation recommended. Two
disabled parking spaces available, reservation required
in advance. +31 (0)20 530 87 55

Colophon

CONTACT

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PRESS IMAGES

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