Brancusi, Constantin, 1876–1957

1876--1957, French sculptor born in Romania, noted for the simplicity of his abstract forms.

Summary Article: Brancusi, Constantin
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(bränkyô'zē, Rom. brän'kōsh), 1876–1957, Romanian sculptor. Brancusi is considered one of the foremost of modern artists. In 1904 he went to Paris, where he worked under Mercié. He declined Rodin's invitation to work in his studio. Because of his radical, economic style, his abstract sculptures, The Kiss (1908), Sleeping Muse (1910), and the portrait of Mlle Pogany (1923; Musée d'Art moderne, Paris) were the subjects of much controversy. He altered his technique from modeling to carving c.1910. In 1927 Brancusi won a lawsuit against the U.S. customs authorities who attempted to value his sculpture as raw metal. The suit led to legal changes permitting the importation of abstract art free of duty. Brancusi's work is notable for its extreme simplification of form, its organic and frequently symbolic character, and its consummate craftsmanship. He had a profound understanding of materials, working primarily in metal, stone, and wood. Bird in Space (1919; Mus. of Modern Art, New York City) is a characteristic work. Others are in the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York City, and in the museums of Chicago, Cleveland, and Philadelphia.


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