

Constantin Brancusi

1876–1957, ROMANIAN

One of the greatest of all the modernists, Brancusi revolutionized sculpture with the extreme simplicity of his forms and pioneered the technique of carving directly into the material.

Constantin Brancusi grew up in a peasant family in the village of Hobitza in a rural area of Romania near the Carpathian Mountains. As a young boy, he herded the family's sheep and learned to carve wood—a traditional craft used to decorate household objects—and in his teenage years worked in a variety of jobs in the city of Craiova.

Brancusi taught himself to read and write, and at the age of 18 enrolled at the Craiova School of Arts and Crafts, sponsored by an industrialist who had been impressed by the boy's wood-carving skills. Four years later, he was admitted to the Bucharest School of Fine Arts, where he studied sculpture in the Academic style that was prevalent at the time.

Education in Paris

In 1904, Brancusi traveled to Paris—

the influence both of his Academic training and of Rodin, and his first pieces were exhibited in 1906 at the Salon d'Automne. After parting ways with Rodin, he started to develop the pared-down, simplified forms that were to revolutionize sculpture.

Direct carving

In 1908, Brancusi made *The Kiss*, carved from a single block of stone.

◀ **SLEEPING MU**
Brancusi's marble markings for the features. The archetypal

He worked several versions of *The Kiss*, a pattern that he repeated throughout his life, revisiting and reworking the themes that interested him.

In rejecting the representational and emotional qualities in sculpture that typified Rodin, Brancusi turned toward the "primitive" art of Africa and Asia for inspiration, as well as to the folk art of his homeland. References to an archaic, non-Western art allowed him to express timelessness and universality in his work as part of his seeking the essence of things. The

ional folk art, particularly evident in his own furniture.

Archetypes

Direct, minimalist, pared-down, Brancusi's works addressed the essence of his subjects.

BEER
I AIN'T SOBER
BEER

