

# CONSTANTIN BRÂNCUȘI [1876–1957]

Constantin Brâncuși was a Romanian sculptor during the early 1900s. In 1876, he was born to farmers in a small Romanian village named Hobița. From an early age he was very skilled in woodworking and carving, and enrolled in an arts school as a teenager. From there, he left for Paris, the art capital of Europe at the time, with the hope of becoming a successful artist.

He was not in Paris long before his skills were noticed. He became friends with many other artists in Paris at the time, including Gertrude Stein and Pablo Picasso. For two months he worked as a carver for the famous French sculptor Auguste Rodin then quit. He believed working for someone as famous as Rodin would not allow him to develop his own ideas. After leaving Rodin's studio, Brâncuși went on to become one of the most important modern sculptors.

Brâncuși was very influenced by his Romanian background – he only wore typical Romanian peasant clothes, even in Paris – but he also helped pioneer many new ideas. In his sculptures he took basic scenes and simplified them into lines and geometric shapes. One of his most famous pieces, called “The Kiss,” is a sculpture of a man and a woman kissing; the shape of it was simplified into a rectangle and only a few lines and details. Brâncuși felt that finding interesting and powerful shapes was a more effective way of expressing an emotion in sculpture than making a realistic-looking scene.

Many people have described Brâncuși's work as spiritual. Many of his shapes and ideas seem ancient and timeless. One of his sculptures was named “Endless Column.” It is a repeating set of shapes, stacked vertically on each other, and it looks like it can keep growing taller and taller, higher than any of us can see.



*Portrait of Mademoiselle Pogany*



*The Kiss*



*Endless Column*

# BRÂNCUȘI EXERCISE

Look at the photograph of Brâncuși's sculpture "The Kiss." Try drawing it. What do you notice about the lines and shapes he uses? Is this what people really look like? How can we tell they are people?

