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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

## Brâncuși: The Origins of Infinity

Rome, 10.03.2026 [ENA]

The exhibition “Brâncuși: The Origins of Infinity” showcases Constantin Brâncuși’s work in the stunning setting of Trajan’s Market. This massive 2nd-century Roman complex, located on Rome’s Quirinal Hill, serves as a captivating backdrop for exploring Brâncuși’s life and art. The exhibition employs a dual-curatorial approach, presenting two distinct aspects of his work. One side delves into his formative years in

Oltenia. The other side examines the ancient Greek and Roman classical sculpture that profoundly influenced Brâncuși’s artistic development during his studies at the Beaux-Arts School in Bucharest.

This dual origin highlights two distinct yet complementary traditions. The Romanian tradition, rooted in archaic and symbolic synthetic and geometric decoration, primarily influenced Brâncuși’s visual experience. This tradition is closely associated with the wood-carving handicraft of peasants from his home in Gorj county. Chronologically, the second tradition, the classical, figurative and didactic tradition, emerged from his education. This tradition draws inspiration from realistically modelled daily life or the laborious stone chiselling.

Together, these two origins, originating from vastly different and seemingly opposing centuries-old traditions, merged and rapidly evolved into Brâncuși’s avant-garde approach to sculpture. This fusion occurred in the vibrant cultural environment of Paris during the first decade of the 20th century.

The exhibition presents Brâncuși’s works alongside ethnographic materials from his homeland in Oltenia. These materials are juxtaposed with classical sculptures from the Museum of the Imperial Forums’ permanent collection. The figurative classical sculptures unearthed from the Imperial Forums are paired with abstract geometric motifs decorating wooden poles preserved from Oltenian 19th-century houses. These poles are similar to those found

in Brâncuși’s childhood home.

This juxtaposition of contrasting traditions offers a deeper understanding of Brâncuși’s modernist synthesis, grounded in his biography. It supports the exhibition’s main argument that Brâncuși was an early-on and fully-educated sculptor. He explored and mastered the manual and art-historical skills of a classical

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sculptor throughout his consistent academic journey.

The exhibited works by Brâncusi come from two main museums in Romania- The National Museum of Art in Bucharest, and the Craiva Art Museum, while the Oftenian house poles are contributed by the Gory County "Alexandru Stefulescu" Museum in Târgu-Jiu. Brâncusi's Mademoiselle Pogany series comprises multiple versions in marble, bronze, plaster and onyx, all derived from three primary variants: I, II and III. This example is a later copy of Mademoiselle Pogany I, a work that achieved international recognition at the 1913 Armory Show in New York. A portrait of the Hungarian painter Margit Pogany (1879-1964), the sculpture provoked some of the most controversial reactions in the contemporary press, with many critics comparing it to a hard-boiled

egg. Pogány and Brâncusi met in 1910, when she was studying painting in Paris. Although she posed for the artist on several occasions, the series of portraits was initiated after her return to Hungary. Marking a decisive break with conventional portraiture, Brâncusi employed highly stylised forms and simplified lines in pursuit of the essential form. The proportions are reimagined: the large almond-shaped eyes dominate the face, while the mouth is reduced to an almost imperceptible element, complemented by a refined linear nose and delicate ears. The hair is suggested by the black patina covering the upper part of the head. The composition is highly hieratic and mysterious, evoking the presence of a Byzantine Madonna.

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