



# Constantin Brancusi: Shifting the Bases of Art (Yale Publications in the History of Art)

*Ms. Anna C. Chave*

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Constantin Brancusi - the most influential sculptor of the 20th century - is usually viewed as a sculptor of pure, perfect, essential forms and as a lone visionary and exotic peasant-sage, aloof from both the social concerns of his age and from avant-garde affiliations. In this fascinating book, Anna C. Chave explodes many of the myths about Brancusi, offering a revised view of the sculptor as an artist creatively responding to avant-garde and social concerns of his day. Using both feminist and social historical lenses to view Brancusi's art, she explores the complex ways in which his works undermine established cultural hierarchies, challenge the fixed nature of sexual identity, and renounce notions of mastery and authority. She discusses, most specifically, how the imperiled status of the subject in an alienated, technological age is addressed by Brancusi's fragmented figures; how the inward-looking, modern subject is invoked by Brancusi's polished, mirroring sculptures that invite narcissistic reflection; and how the changing status of the handmade object in the age of mass production is suggested by Brancusi's use of repetition. Through these achievements, and by his reimagining of the concept of the base - which he generally poised in a dialogic and shifting relation to his sculpture - Brancusi would shift the foundations of art.

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