



**BRANCUSI, Constantin**

Hobitza, Romania 1876 - Paris 1957

*Le commencement du monde*

*Beginning of the World*

c. 1920

marble, metal and stone

free-standing abstract

30 x 20 x 20 in.

Acc. No.: 1977.51.FA

Credit Line: Dallas Museum of Art, Foundation for the Arts Collection, gift of Mr. and Mrs. James H. Clark

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**Dallas, Texas, Dallas Museum of Art**

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**Provenance**

- 1977, Foundation for the Arts Collection, gift of Mr. and Mrs. James H. Clark

**Bibliography**

- Museum's website, 6 May 2010

1979 Bromberg

Anne Bromberg, A Guide to the Collections. Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, 1979, p. 76, 112-113, n. 142, repr.

1983 Bromberg

Anne R. Bromberg, Dallas Museum of Art. Selected Works, Dallas, The Dallas Museum of Art, 1983, p. 136 n. 139, 137, repr.

1997 Dallas

Dallas Museum of Art. A Guide to the Collection, Seattle, Marquand Books, 1997, p. 130, repr.

## **Comment**

Museum's website, 6 May 2010:

A contemplative examination of elemental forms drawn from an elegant manipulation of basic materials, *Beginning of the World* is exemplary of Brancusi's oeuvre. In his quiet consideration of essential metaphysical issues, Brancusi clung to a relatively narrow range of identifiable forms: eggs, heads, heads resting on necks, birds, columns; and their nonobjective counterparts: ovoids, arching streamlined shapes, mounting stacked objects. Each shape is infused with meaning to reveal its inner significance through the artist's humble attention to the inherent qualities and demands of shape and material. Like so many of his contemporaries at the turn of the century, the symbolists, the early abstractionists including Piet Mondrian, Frantizek Kupka, and Kasimir Malevich as Brancusi strove to give expression to spiritual themes and philosophical issues, he discovered the most eloquent means of expression in nondescriptive or totally abstract forms. Here the marble ovoid rests delicately, even precariously, on a round, polished metal surface. The sculpture is redolent with a diverse range of associations: new life, a precious newborn resting on a birthing dish, or a severed head on a salver, an image comparable to the tiny disembodied elements that float in the works of Odilon Redon. The marble ovoid and mirror metal disk are not anchored but rest on the cruciform limestone base, which reinforces an aura of solemnity. Indeed, Brancusi's sober reexamination of the basics of sculpture, the essence of its materials, and the subtle relationship of object to base/pedestal, constitutes his crucial contribution to modern sculpture in the 20th century.

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