

# BRANCUSI

## EXHIBITION

NOVEMBER 17-DECEMBER 15

1 9 2 6

THE BRUMMER GALLERY

27 EAST 57th ST.

NEW YORK

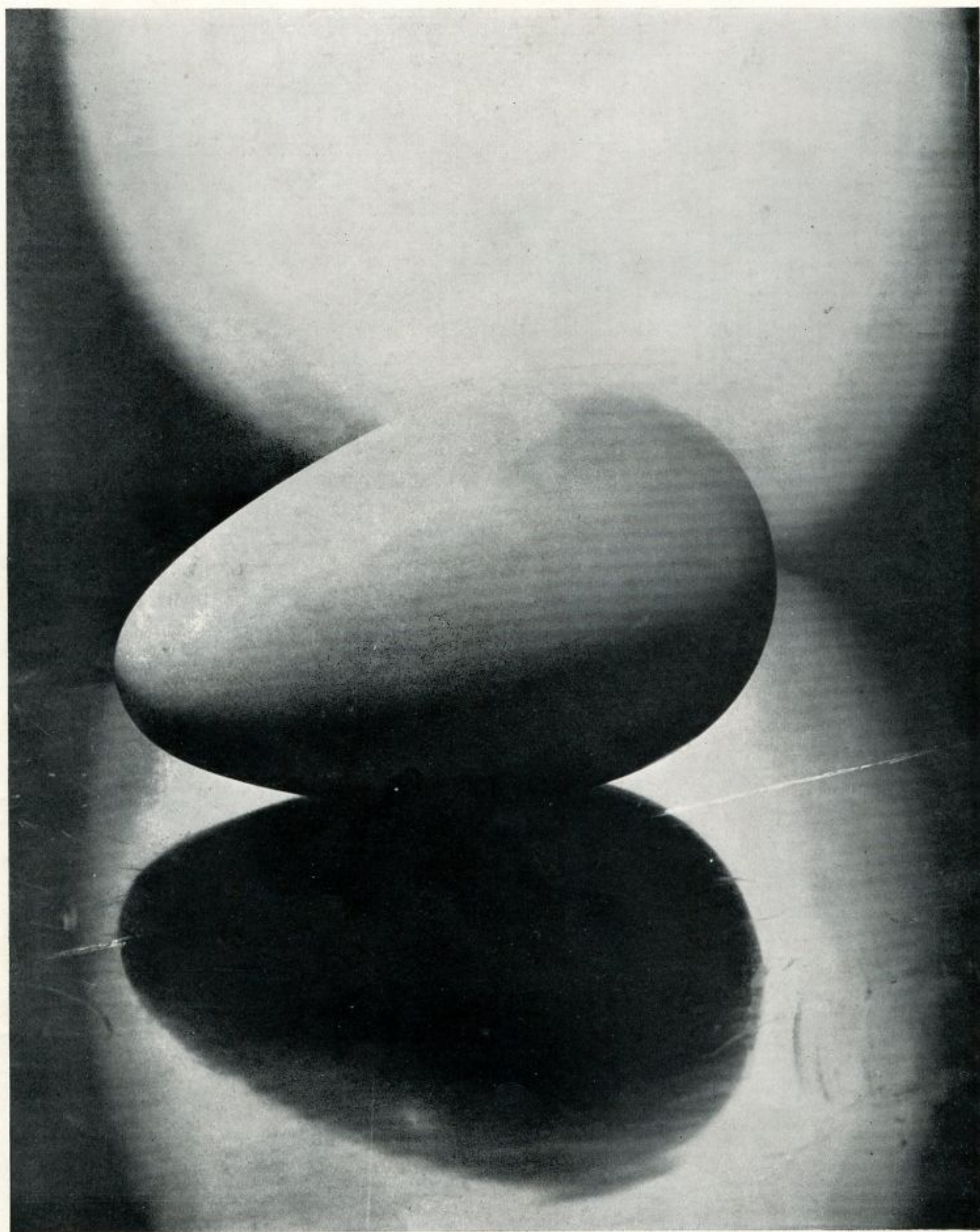


# CATALOGUE

a Stefan Georges en l'honneur  
souvenir de Paris et de sa  
exotique par l'auteur

Paris 7 Janvier 1935







# BRANCUSI

By PAUL MORAND

A SCULPTOR'S studio, as the public imagines it and as it is perpetuated on the screen by those guardians of the stereotyped, the motion picture directors, is a *campo santo* filled with dramatic statues of Carrara marble, blue and livid as death, with here and there, to cheer it up, divans, bibelots, bric-à-brac, and travel souvenirs. Rodin himself, who so liked to be told that he was a force of nature, continued this tradition. I remember having as a child often wandered through his studio in the rue de l'Université. I remember certain of his pieces, like the *Porte de l'Enfer*, which were intended to astonish, and a whole crowd of workmen, fine ladies and pupils hovering about him, exactly as any Renaissance master must have been surrounded. In this respect Rodin was at one with the School, the Institute. . . .

Brancusi, on the contrary, is a modern, a sculptor of tomorrow. Let us visit his studio. Studio? This stone quarry? Where are the big declamatory subjects only waiting to be set up in some forum? Where are the picturesque clays, the "lost waxes"? Nothing here but great blocks of building stone, beams, trunks of trees, boulders and rocks, and here and there the highlight of a polished bronze. One of these primitive forms detaches itself from the rest, and advances toward us, massively. It is Brancusi. A gray beard which recalls Walt Whitman's; the clear eyes of the Latin, and a look of kindness, courage and certitude—so Brancusi appears to us.

Brancusi is a born artisan. He knows nothing of pupils, assistants, stone-pointers, polishers or cutters. He does everything for himself. His materials are always true to him, always faithful. He has approached them from every angle. He has worked at all trades. Brancusi, we know, is a Roumanian, of the old peasant stock of that beautiful country. Legend has it that prodded on by the demon of sculpture he trudged on foot to Paris. The Ecole des Beaux Arts itself could not tame this indomitable nature. Calmly and fearlessly Brancusi keeps on working. He works on without masters or disciples, without advertising, without toadying art critics. The extreme freedom of Paris has allowed Brancusi to remain the least "Parisian" of artists, and what is indeed rarer still, the least "Parisian" of Roumanians. The public which knows and loves Brancusi is that which sought out and appreciated the *douanier* Rousseau, Derain or Matisse long before they became celebrated.



Our Brancusi works without haste. In this alone he is not of our day. At a moment when everyone is rushing into extravagance, he has understood that the one true luxury is not to hurry. He collaborates with Time. His taste for solitude, his conscience, his respect for his material, his joy in living and in creating, his patience, his passionate temperament, his violence are never expressed on the surface, for that surface is as hard and polished as only he can make it.

Never does Brancusi produce repetitions. Never without reason does he translate a theme for one medium into another. Respecting the individuality of his medium, always he transposes. He knows what so many ignore; that what has been thought out in wood or in stone, cannot without modification be executed in bronze.

Brancusi dips into primitive life, moves in it without losing anything of his vital force, of his genetic puissance or his creative faculties. Everything close to Nature inspires him. This hewn mass of wood, suggesting from one angle the crane of an ancient fireplace, is the cock. Now in the cock everything suggests the *crémaillère*—the shadow, the crest, the crow. Here in Brancusi joins the most modern poetry. His fish glides like a meteor. His birds sing and fly through space. His woods speak of the happiness of their new life. His Socrates strikes us as a wireless post which is broadcasting. The grace of his female figures charms us like lovely music. "Look at this work by Brancusi; had it been unearthed among some ancient ruins, it would be acclaimed as a marvel," Jacques Doucet once remarked of the "Sleeping Muse," which Brancusi has known how to place on the ground as a head is placed on a pillow or an ostrich egg in the sand.

Let us take Brancusi's most abstract works—or rather his most realistic, for he claims that "what is real is not the external form, but the essence of things. Starting from this truth it is impossible for any one to express anything essentially real by imitating its exterior surface." These ovoid shapes, these polished cylinders, this plastic geometry embodied in his column without end, we must admire on trust, even if—as often happens to me—we cannot fully comprehend them. Our hands have lingered too long over the patina of bronzes of the Italian Renaissance, over Syracusan medallions, over the Kore of the Acropolis and the cheeks of Buddhas. It is high time to seek cleaner contacts, more complex pleasures. Here we are with Brancusi at the extreme pole of purity. The satisfaction we experience before his art is of a quality already so immaterial that, though we owe it to the senses, it is to the spirit that we offer thanks.

September, 1926.



# PROPOS BY BRANCUSI

Direct cutting is the true road to sculpture, but also the most dangerous for those who don't know how to walk. And in the end, direct or indirect, cutting means nothing, it is the complete thing that counts.

High polish is a necessity which certain approximately absolute forms demand of some materials. It is not always appropriate, it is even very harmful for certain other forms.

Simplicity is not an end in art, but one arrives at simplicity in spite of oneself, in approaching the real sense of things. Simplicity is complexity itself, and one has to be nourished by its essence in order to understand its value.

It is not the things that are difficult to make, but to put ourselves in condition to make them.

When we are no longer children, we are already dead.

To see far, that is one thing, to go there that is another.

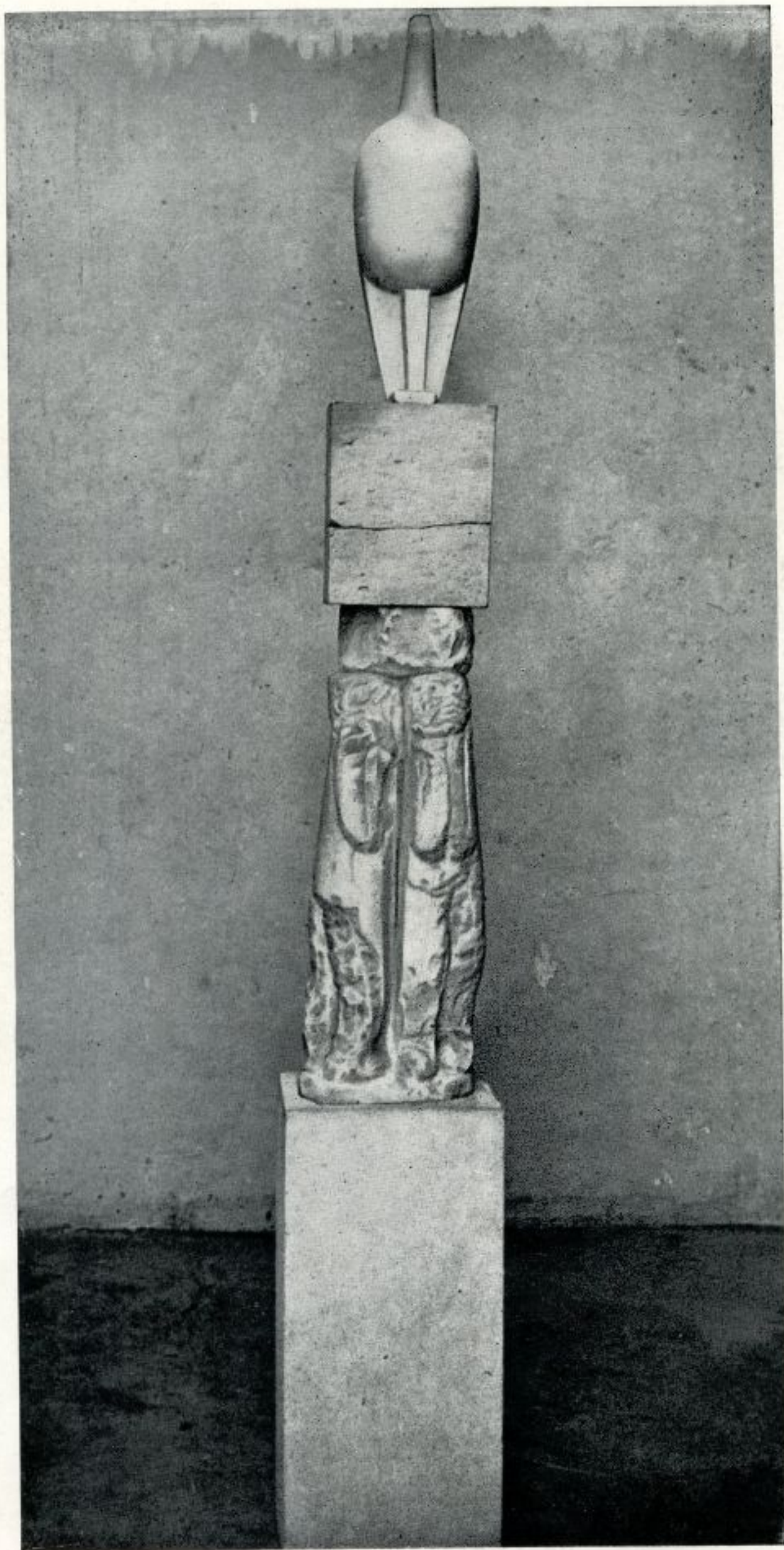
It is something to be clever, but being honest is worth while.





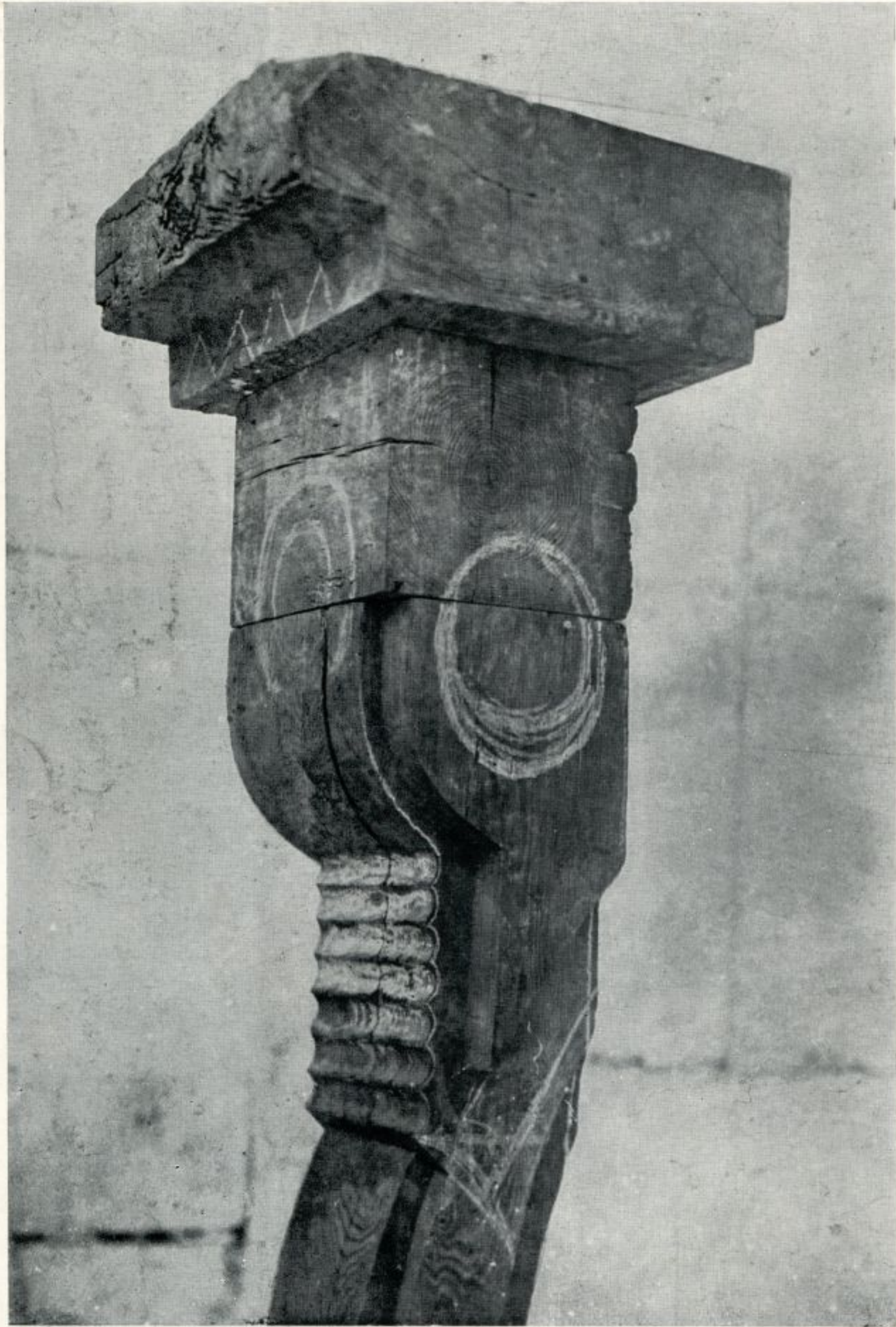
No. 1 CHILD'S HEAD (*Bronze*) 1910





No. 2 MAIASTRA (*Marble and stone*) 1912





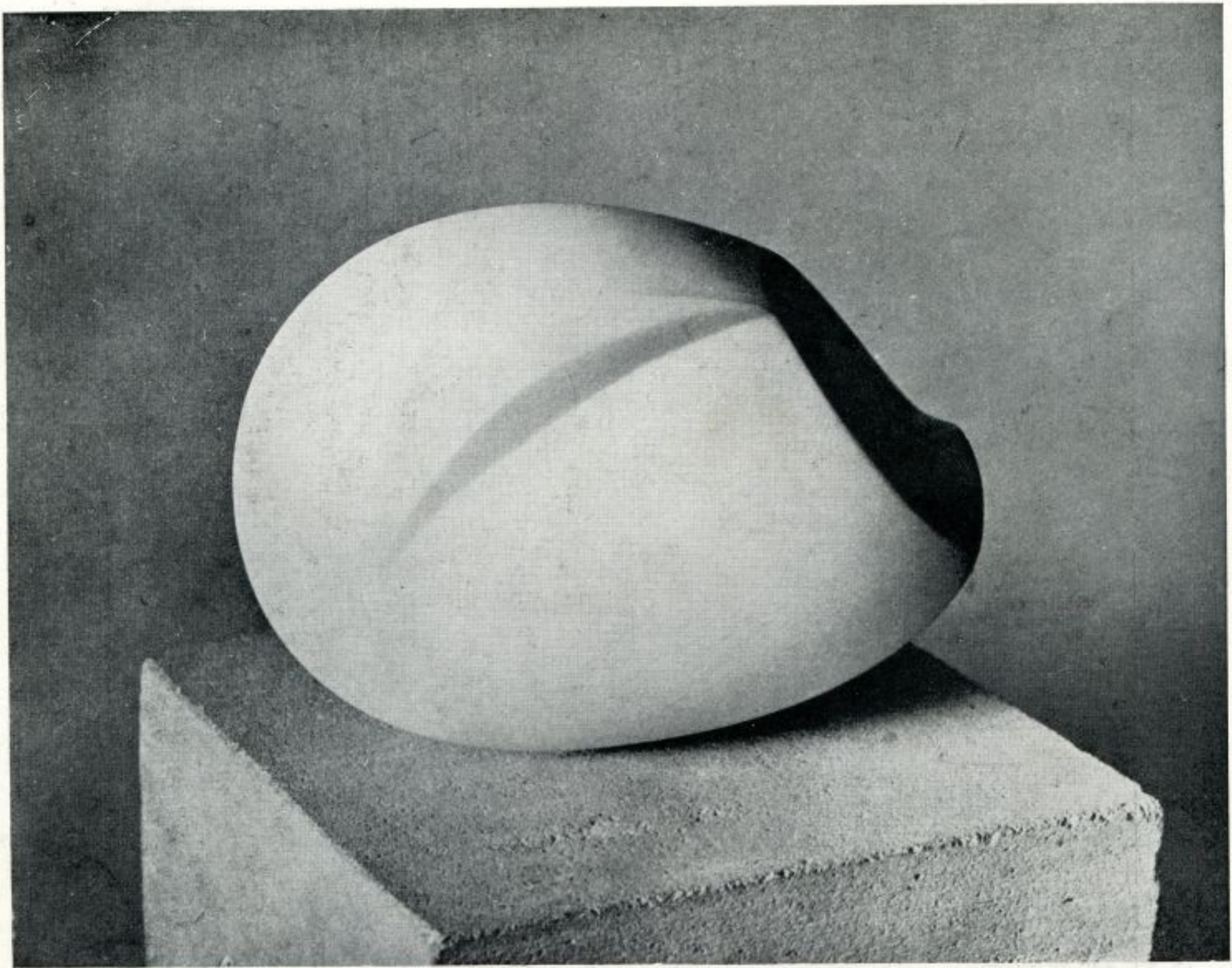
NO. 3. CARYATID (*Old Oak*) 1915





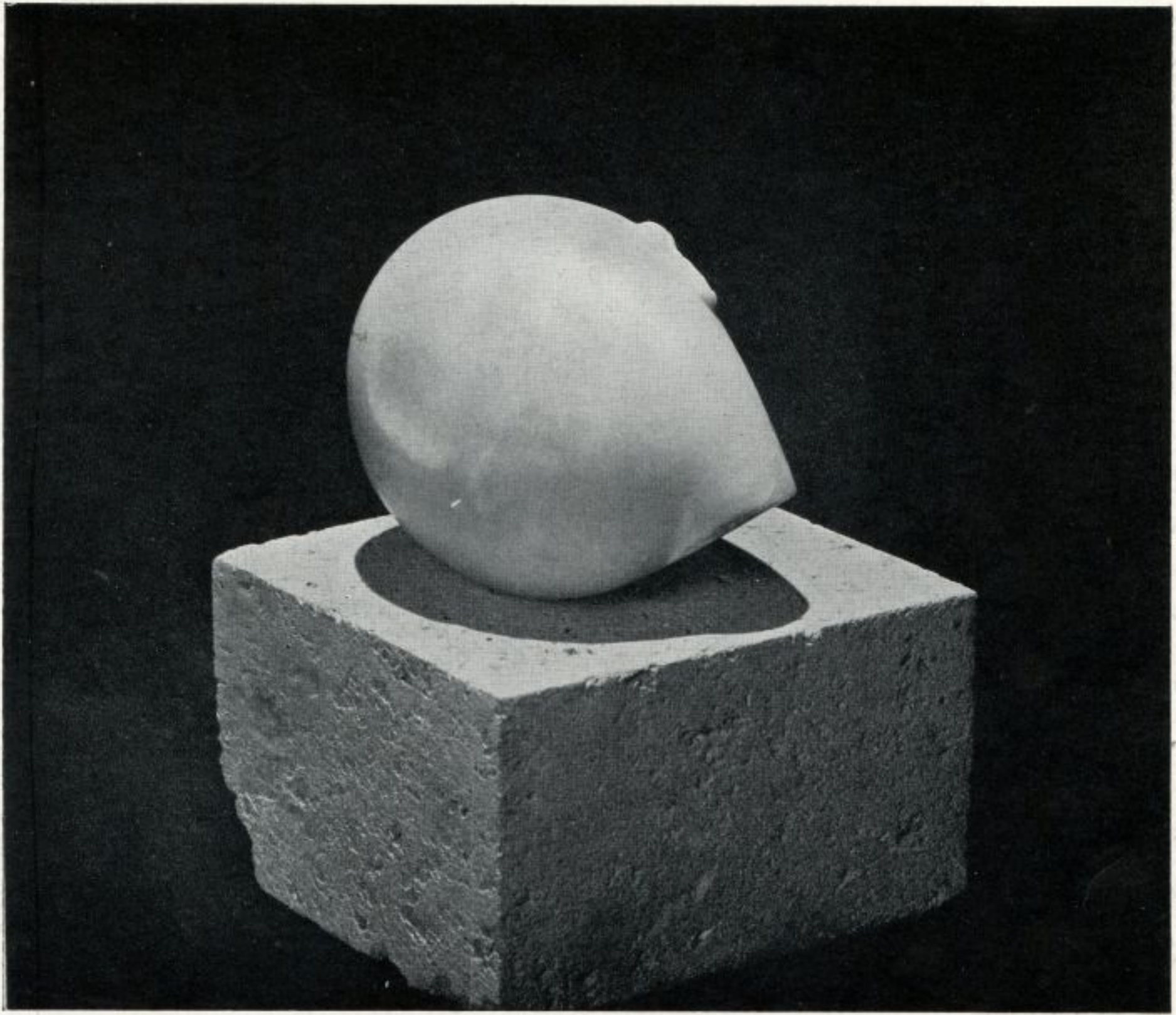
NO. 4. THE KISS (*Stone*) 1908





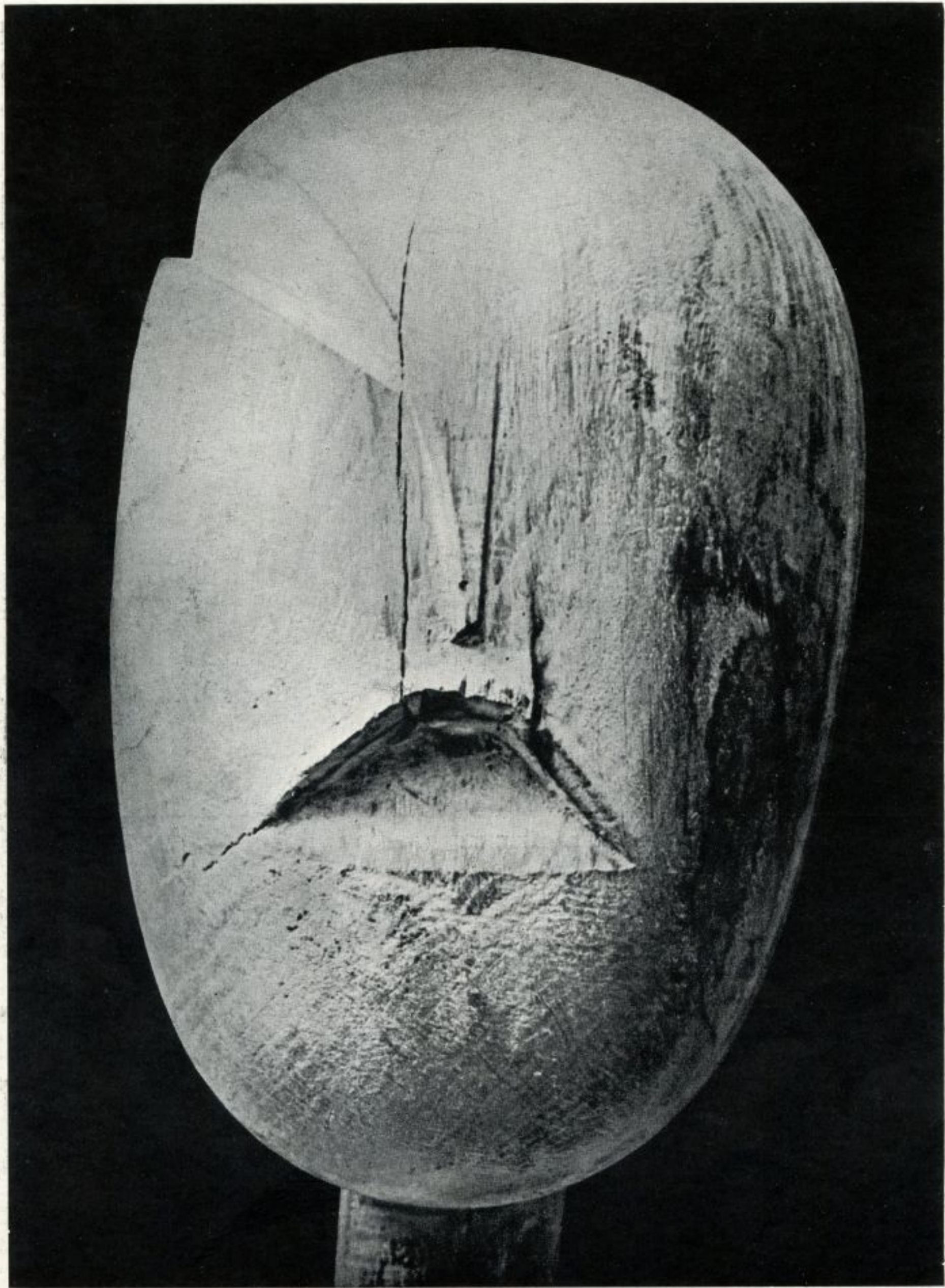
NO. 5. NEW BORN (*Marble*) 1915





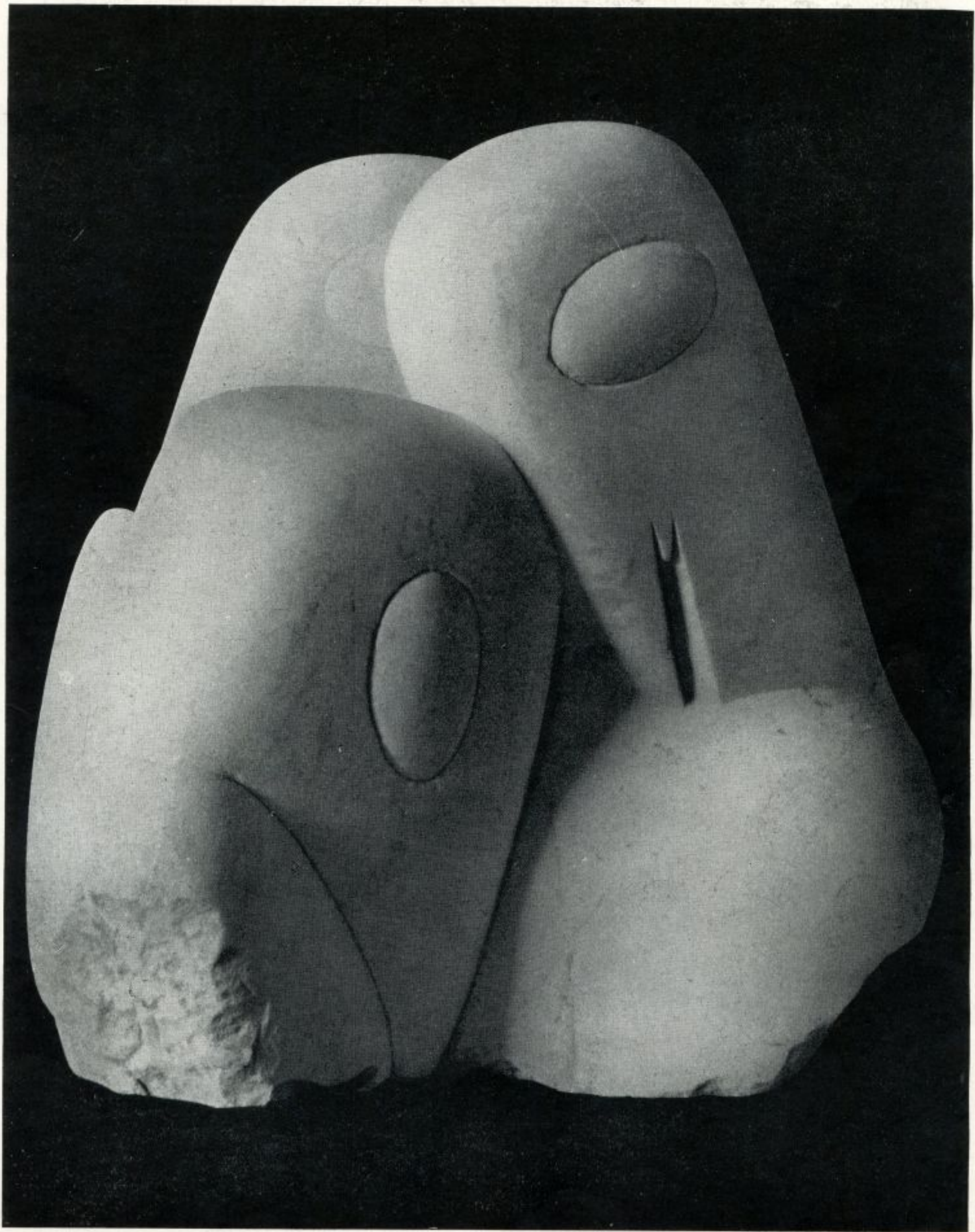
NO. 6. PROMETHEUS (*Marble*) 1911





NO. 7. CHILD'S HEAD (*Wood*) 1913





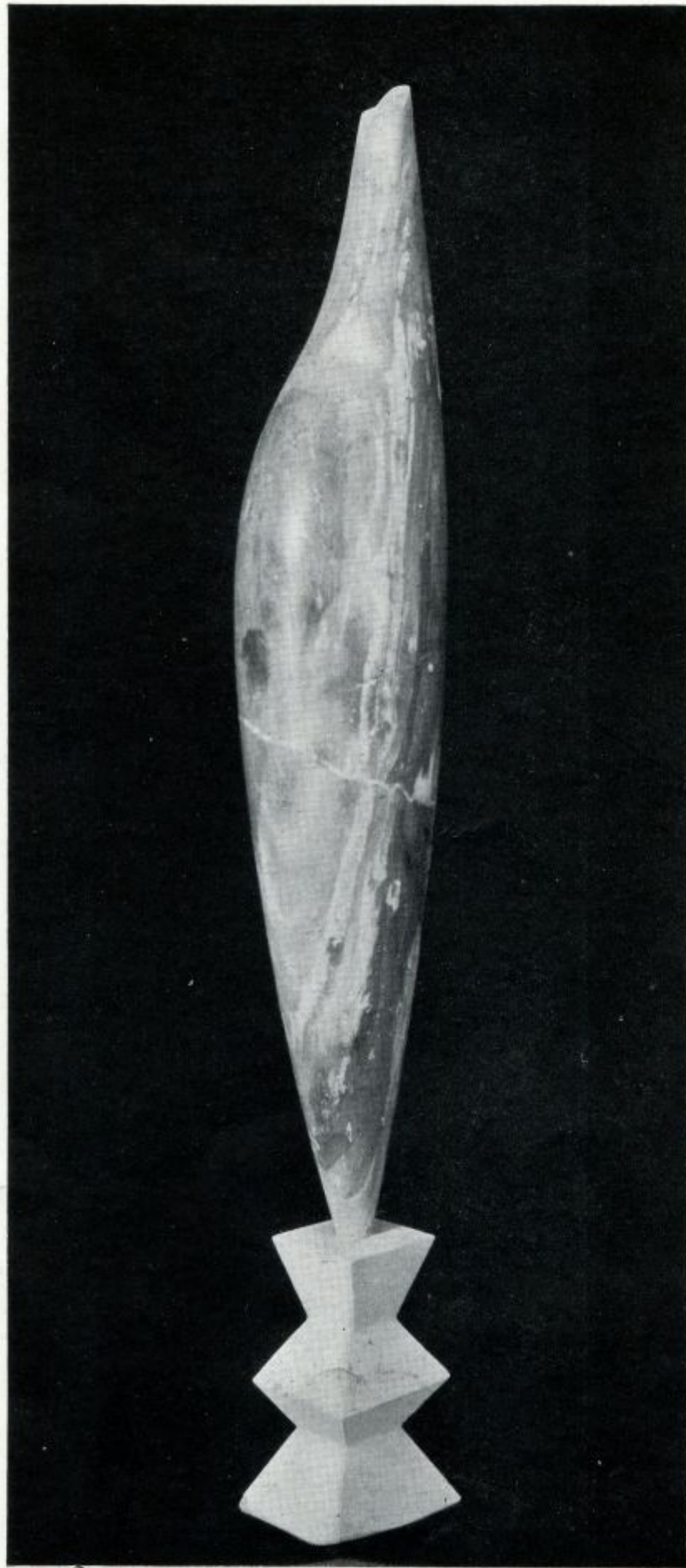
NO. 8. PENGUINS (*Marble*) 1914





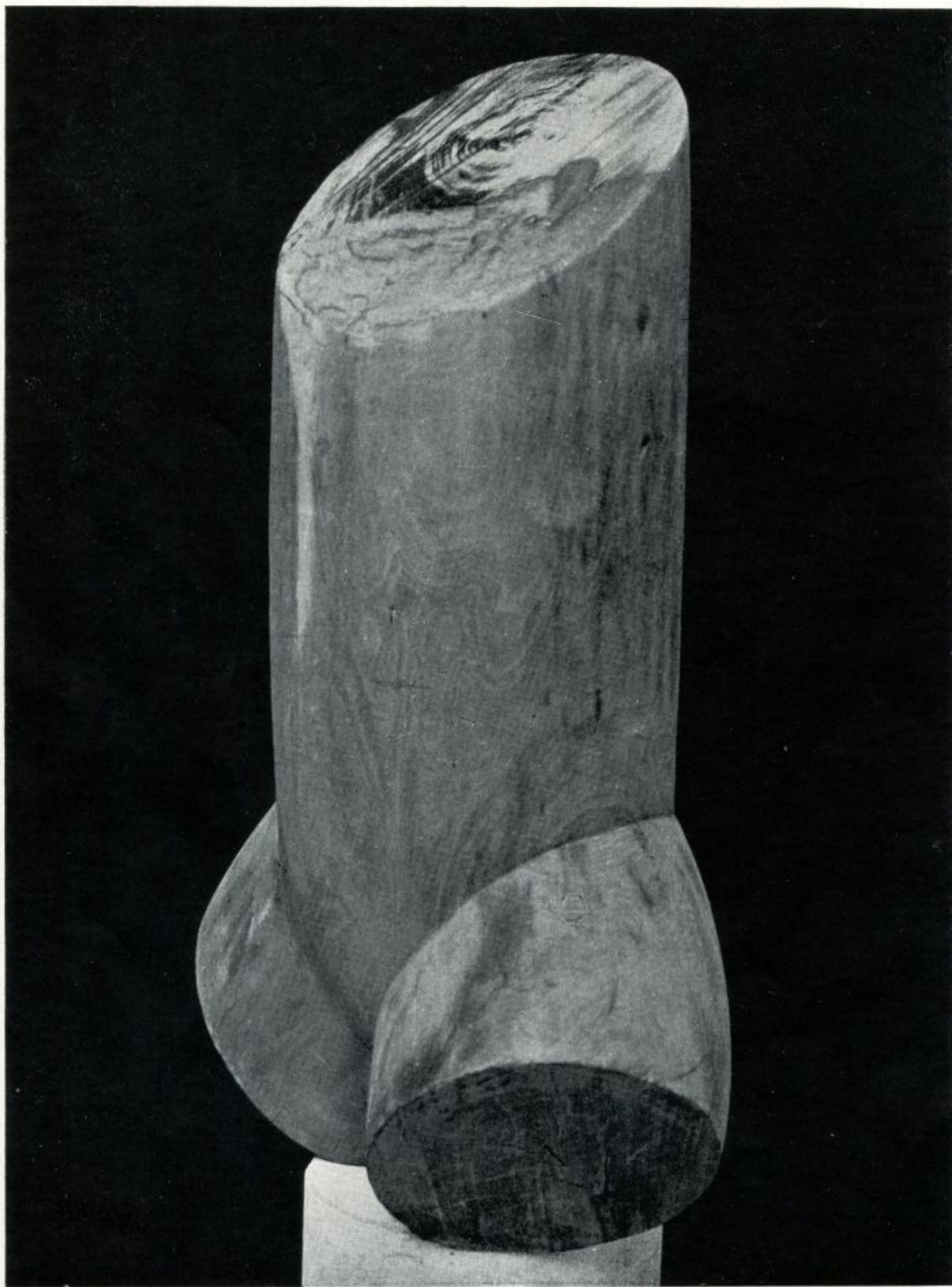
NO. 9. CHIMERA (*Old Oak*) 1918





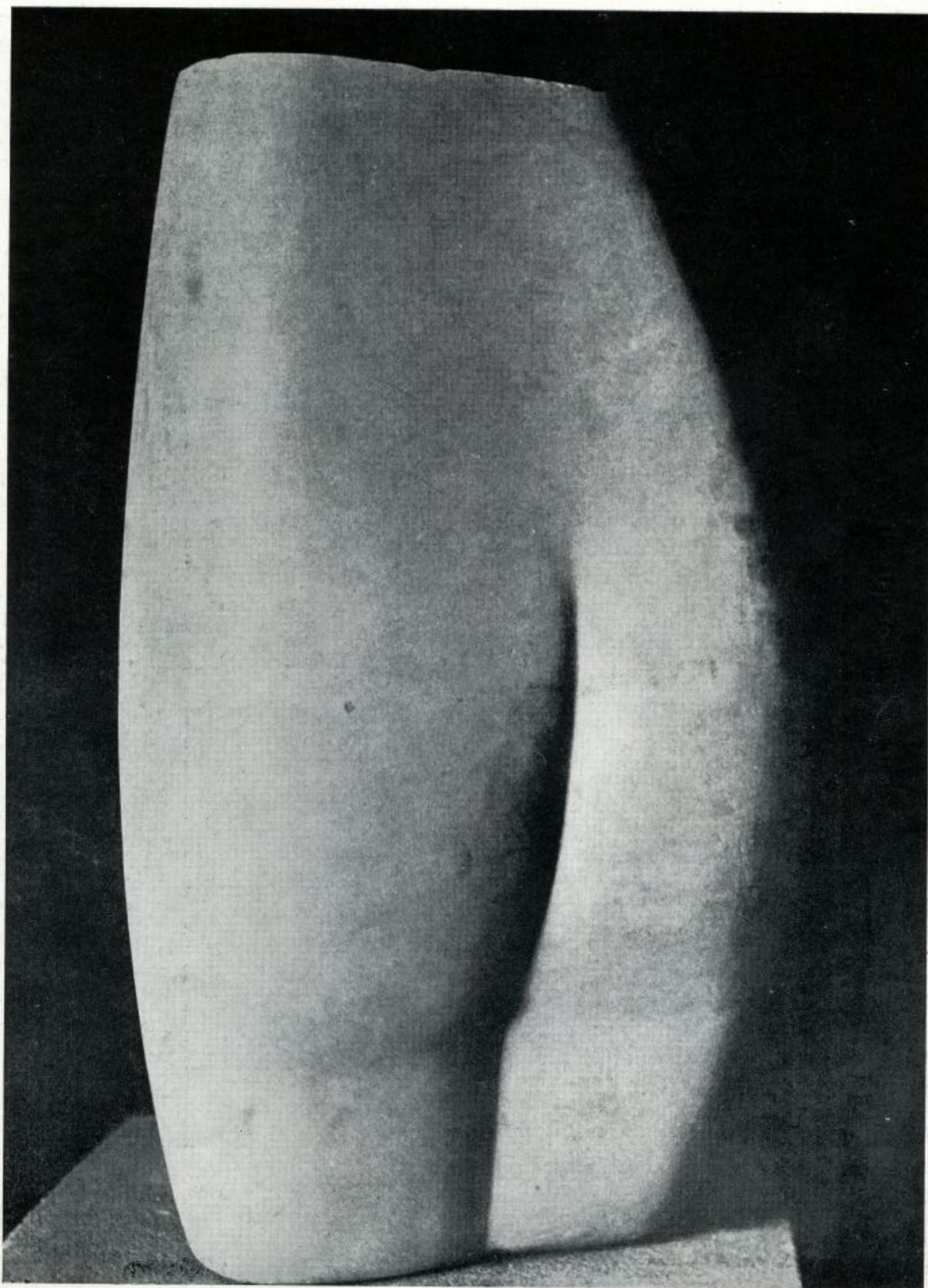
NO. 10. YELLOW BIRD (*Marble*) 1921





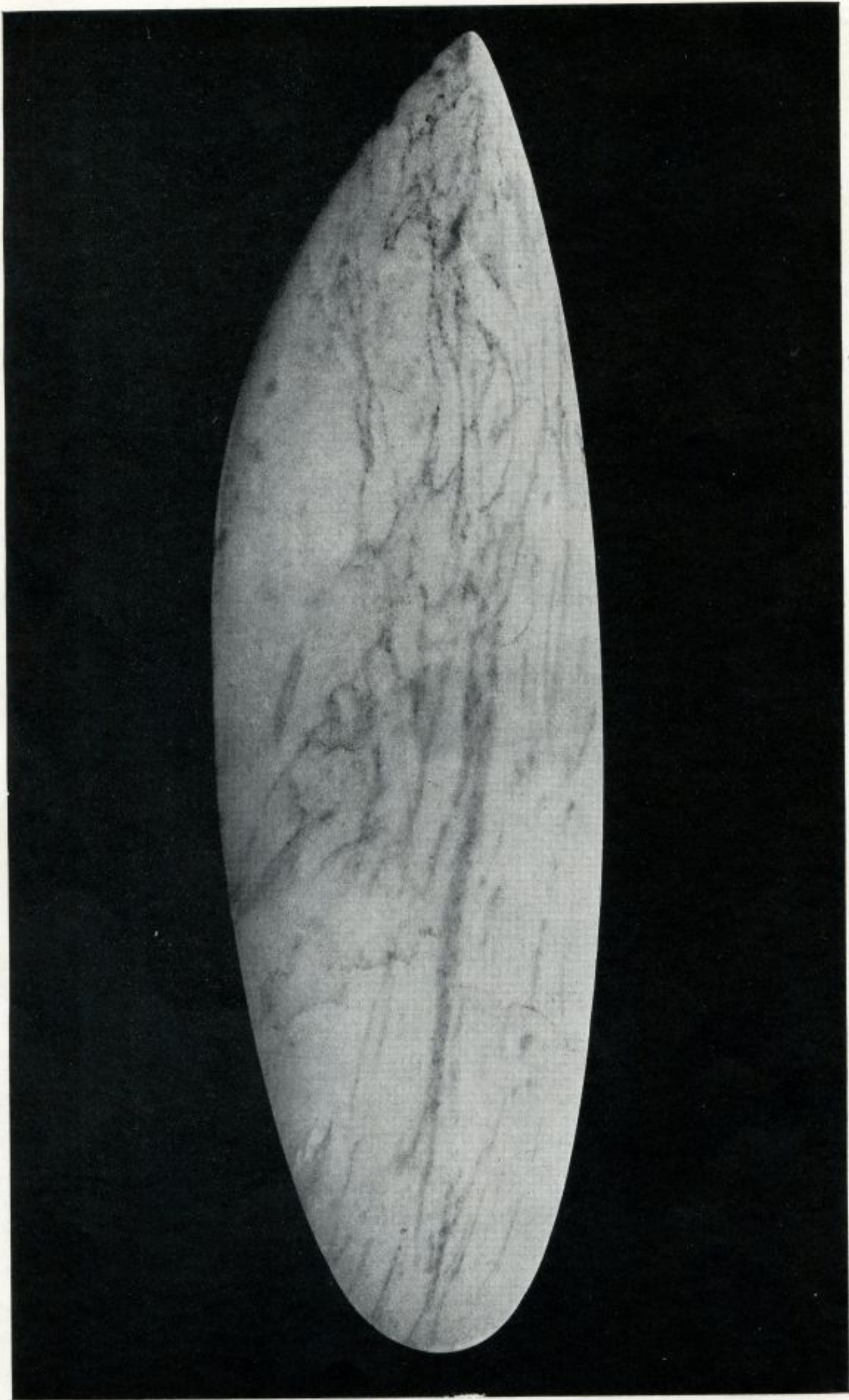
NO. 11. TORSO OF A YOUNG MAN (*Walnut*) 1922





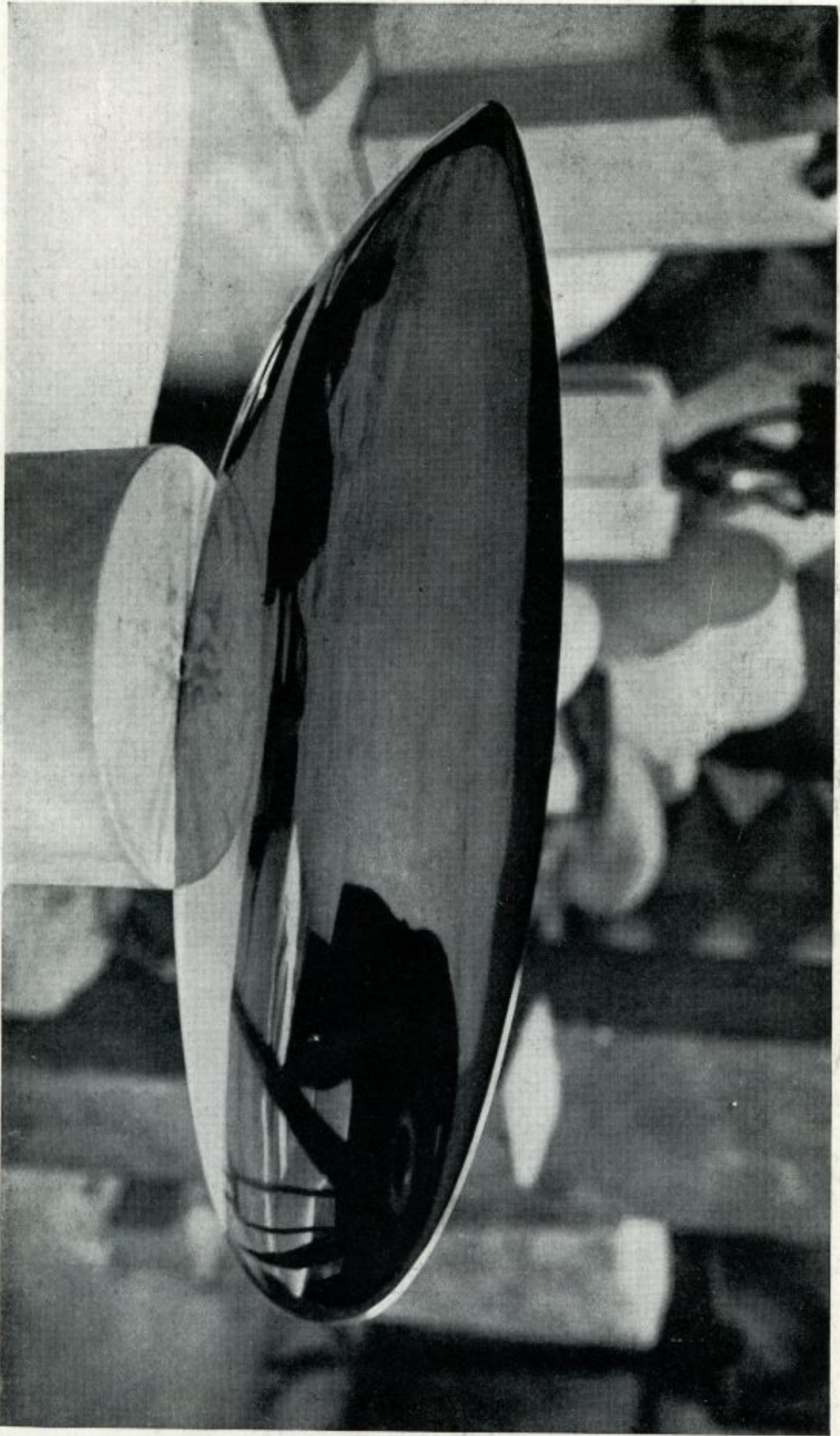
NO. 12. TORSO OF A YOUNG GIRL (*Onyx*) 1918





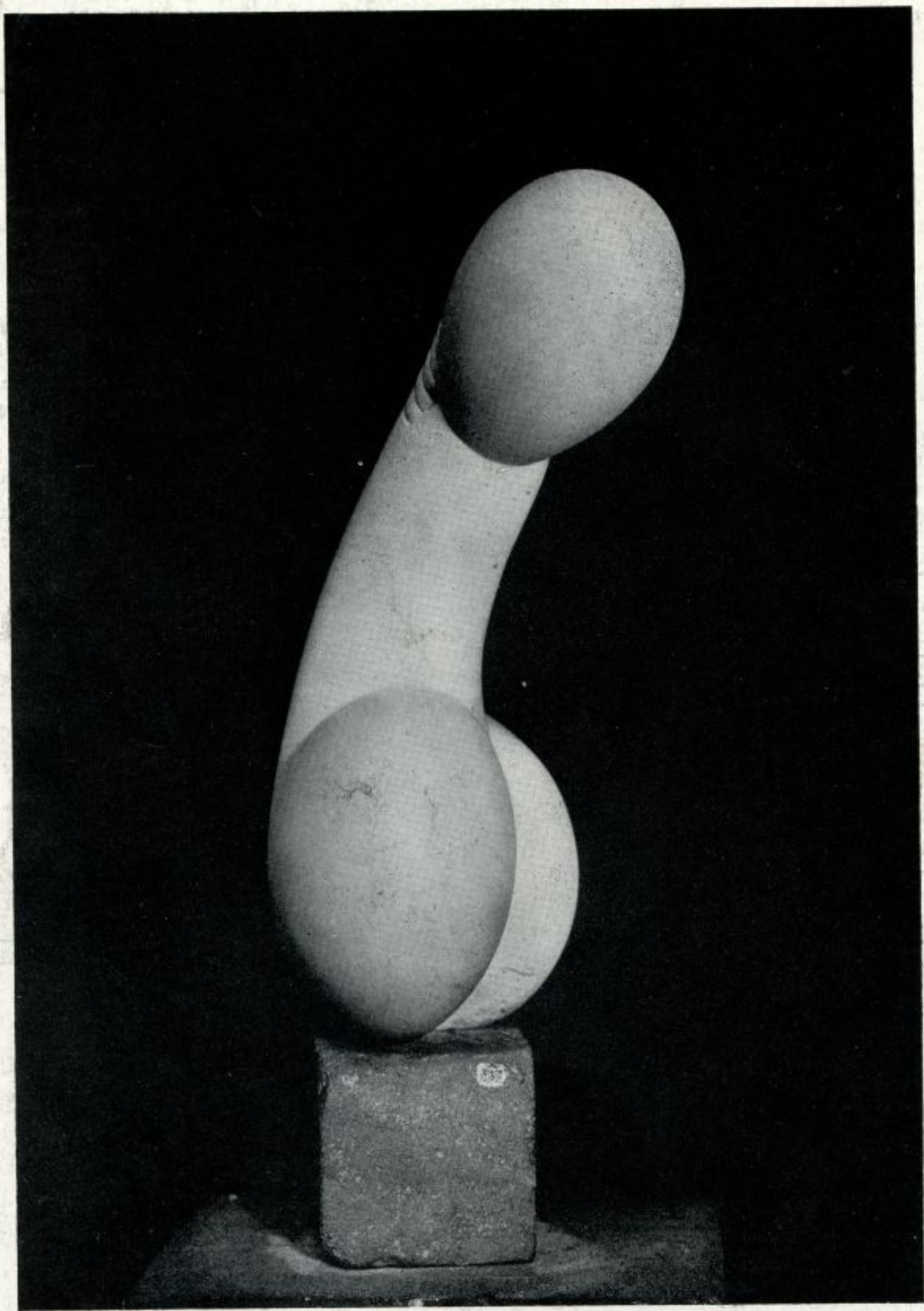
NO. 13. FISH (Colored Marble) 1922





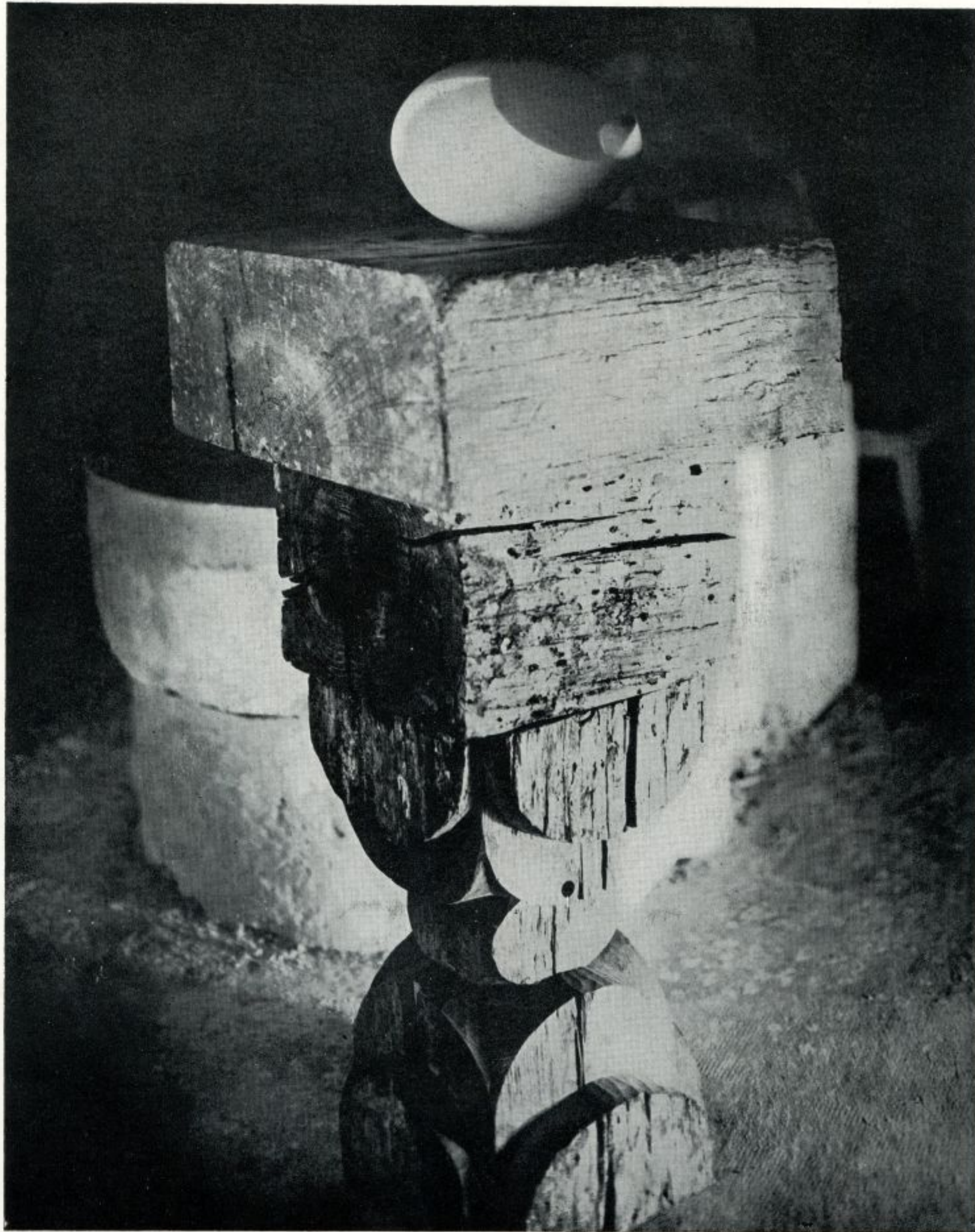
NO. 14. FISH (*Polished Bronze*) 1926





NO. 15. PORTRAIT (*Marble*) 1916

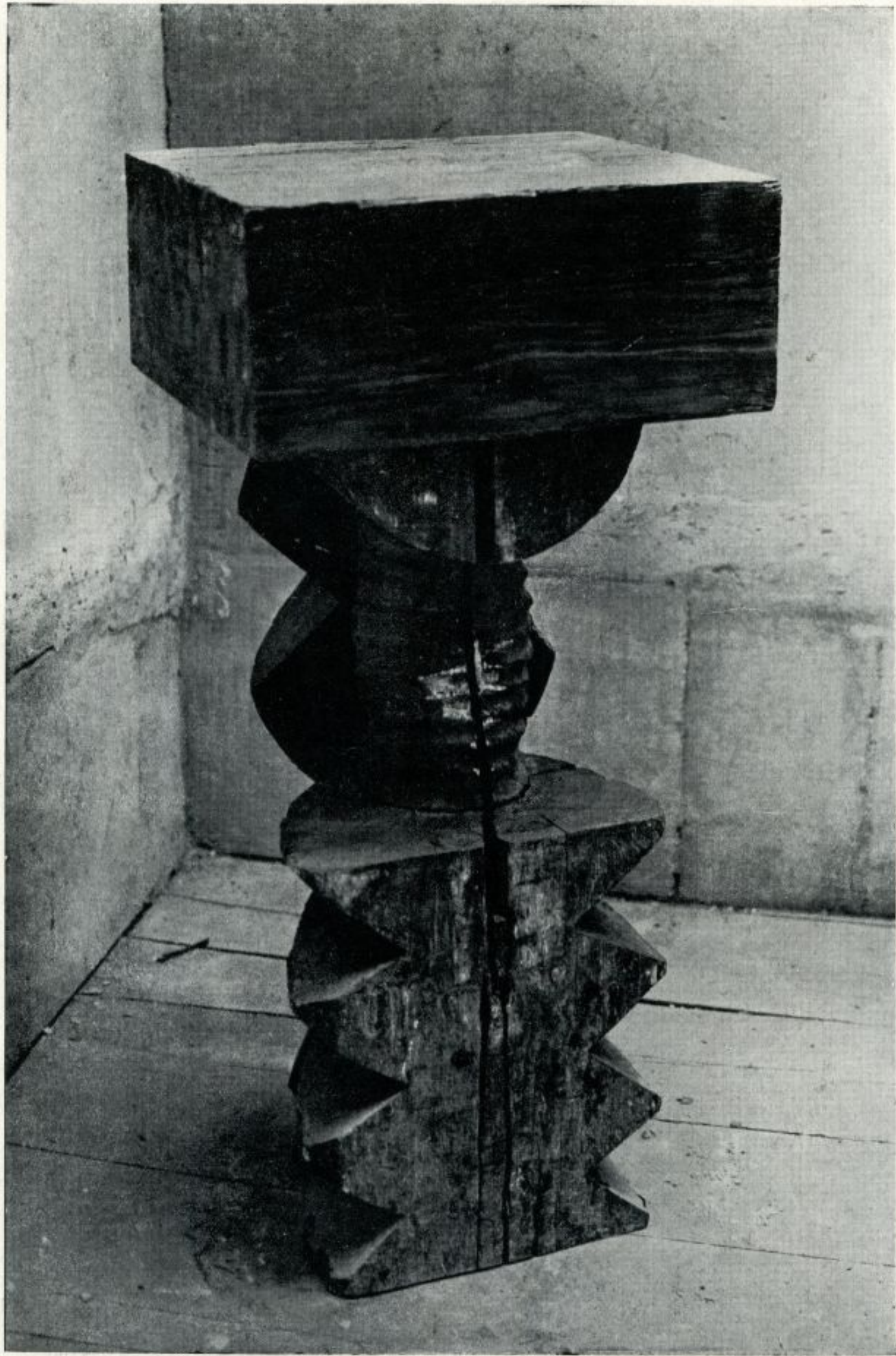




NO. 16. BASE (*Old Oak*) 1920

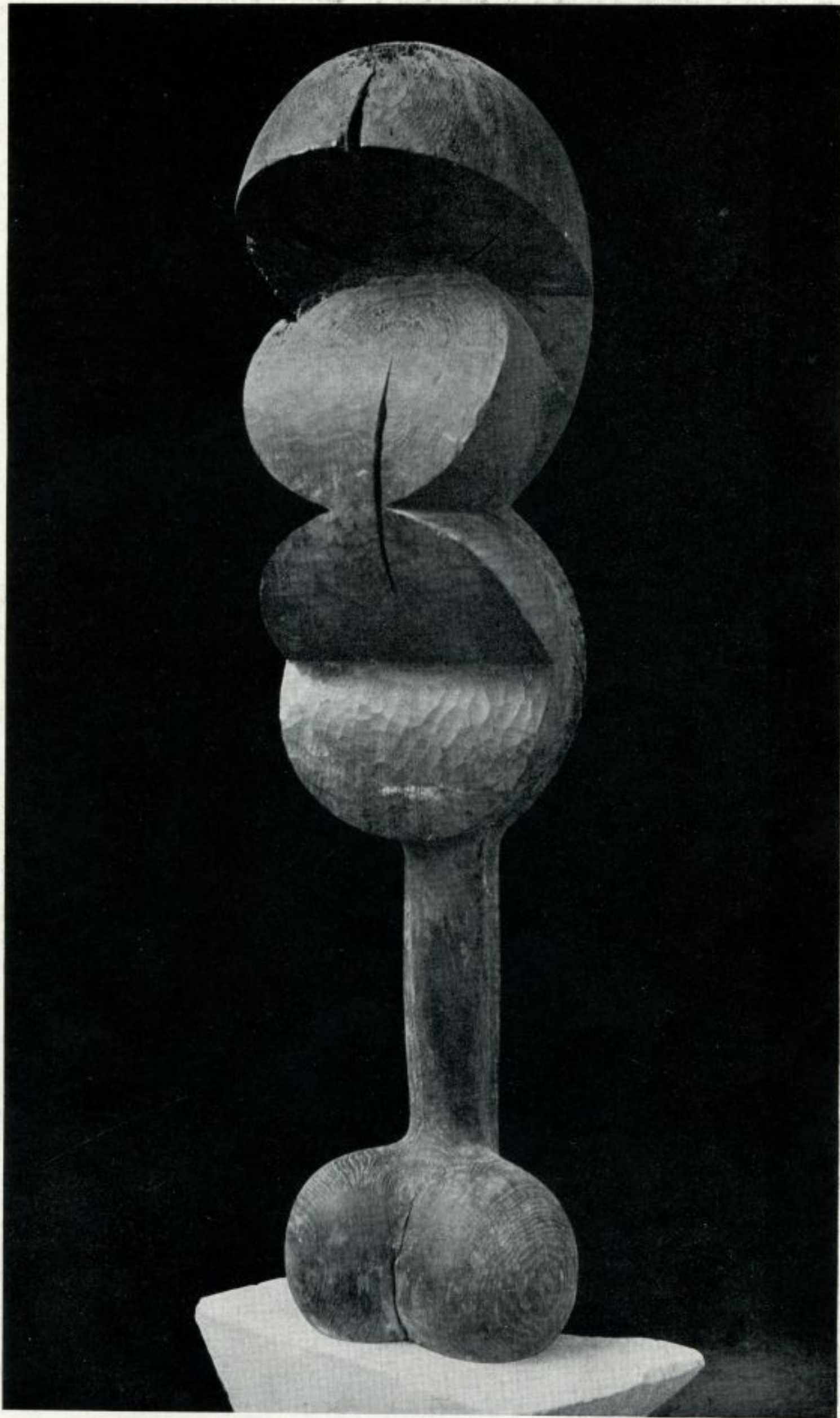


8



NO. 17. ADAM (*Old Oak*) 1921





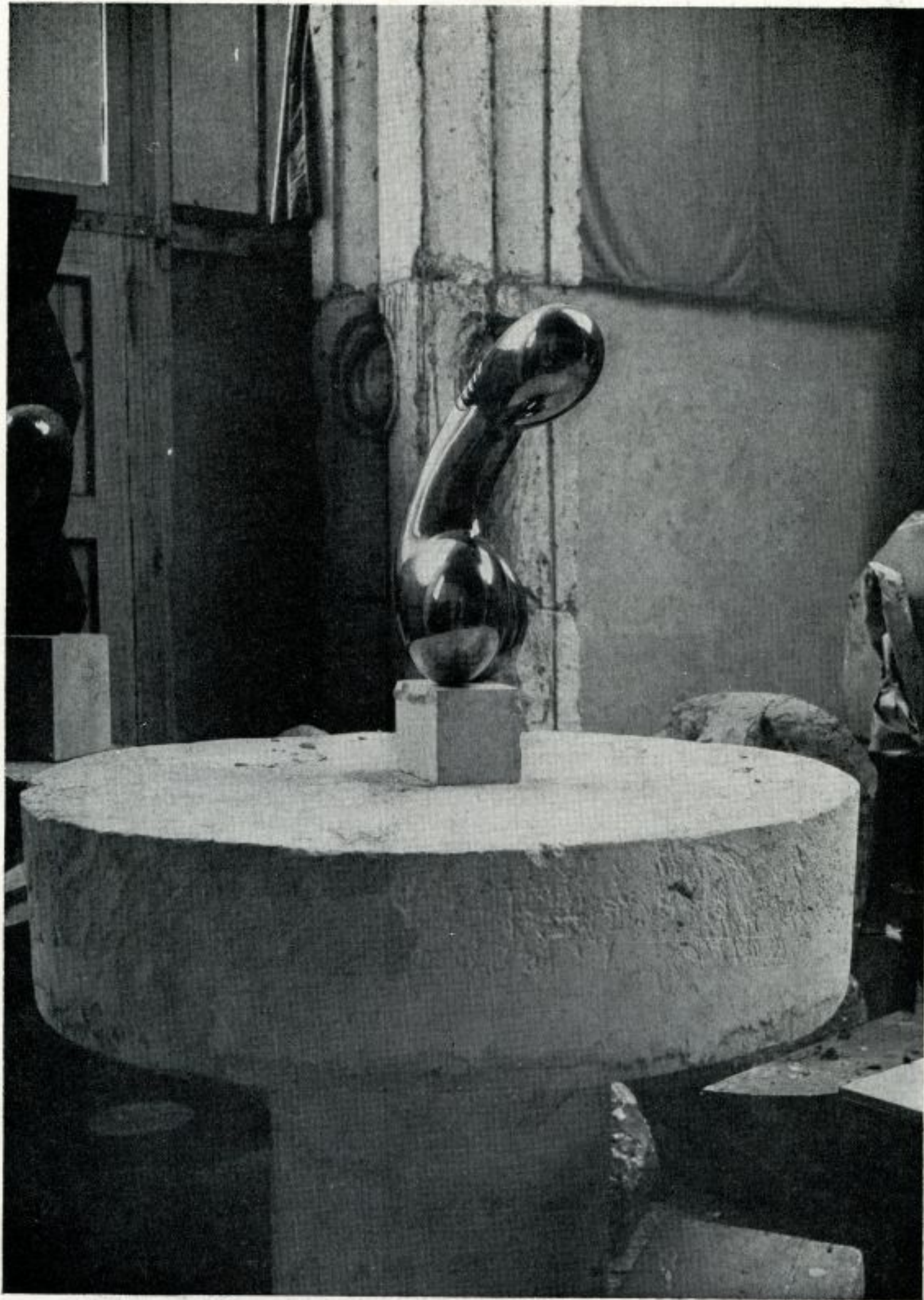
NO. 18. EVE (*Old Oak*) 1921





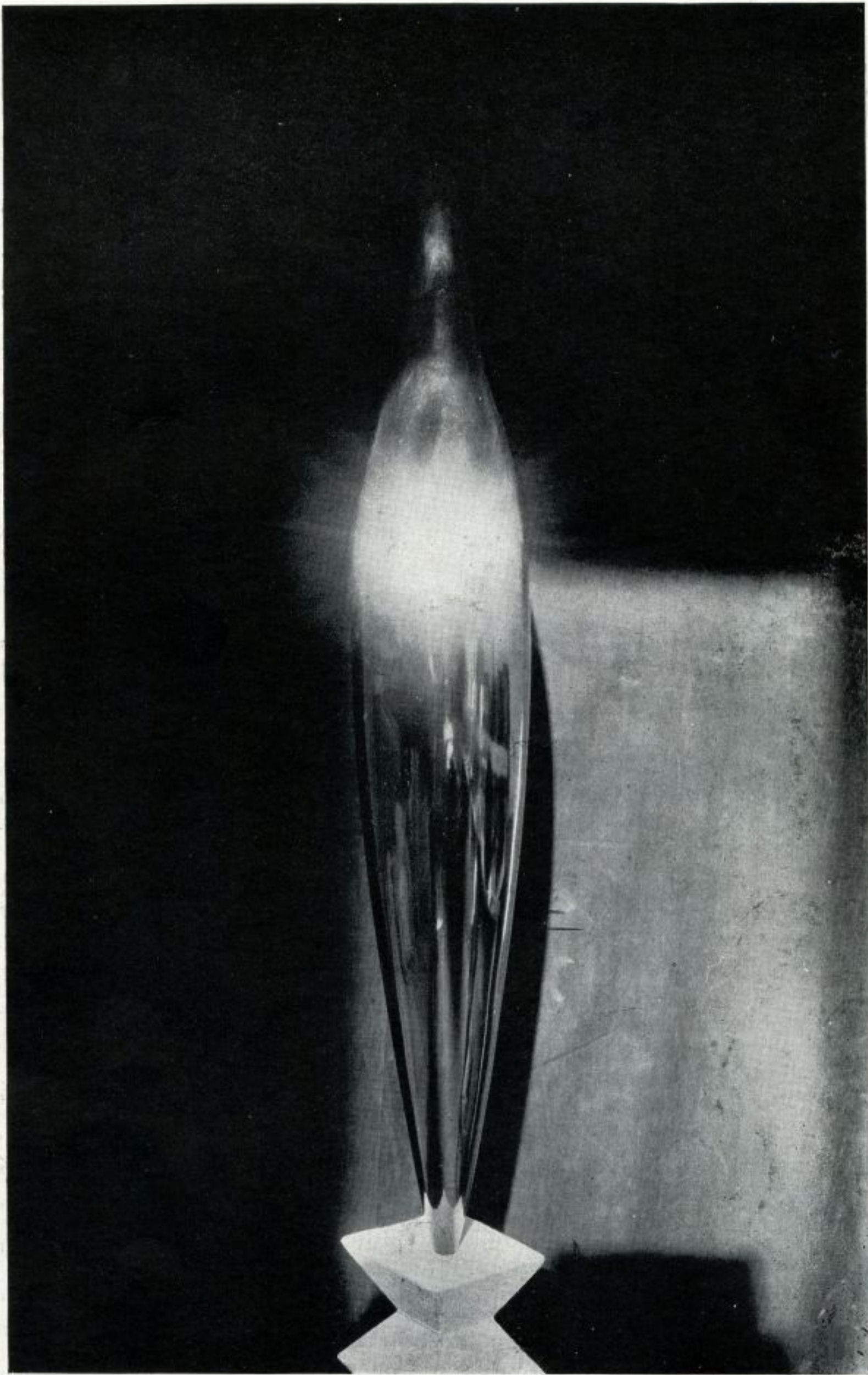
NO. 19. MLE. POGANY (*Polished Bronze*) 1920





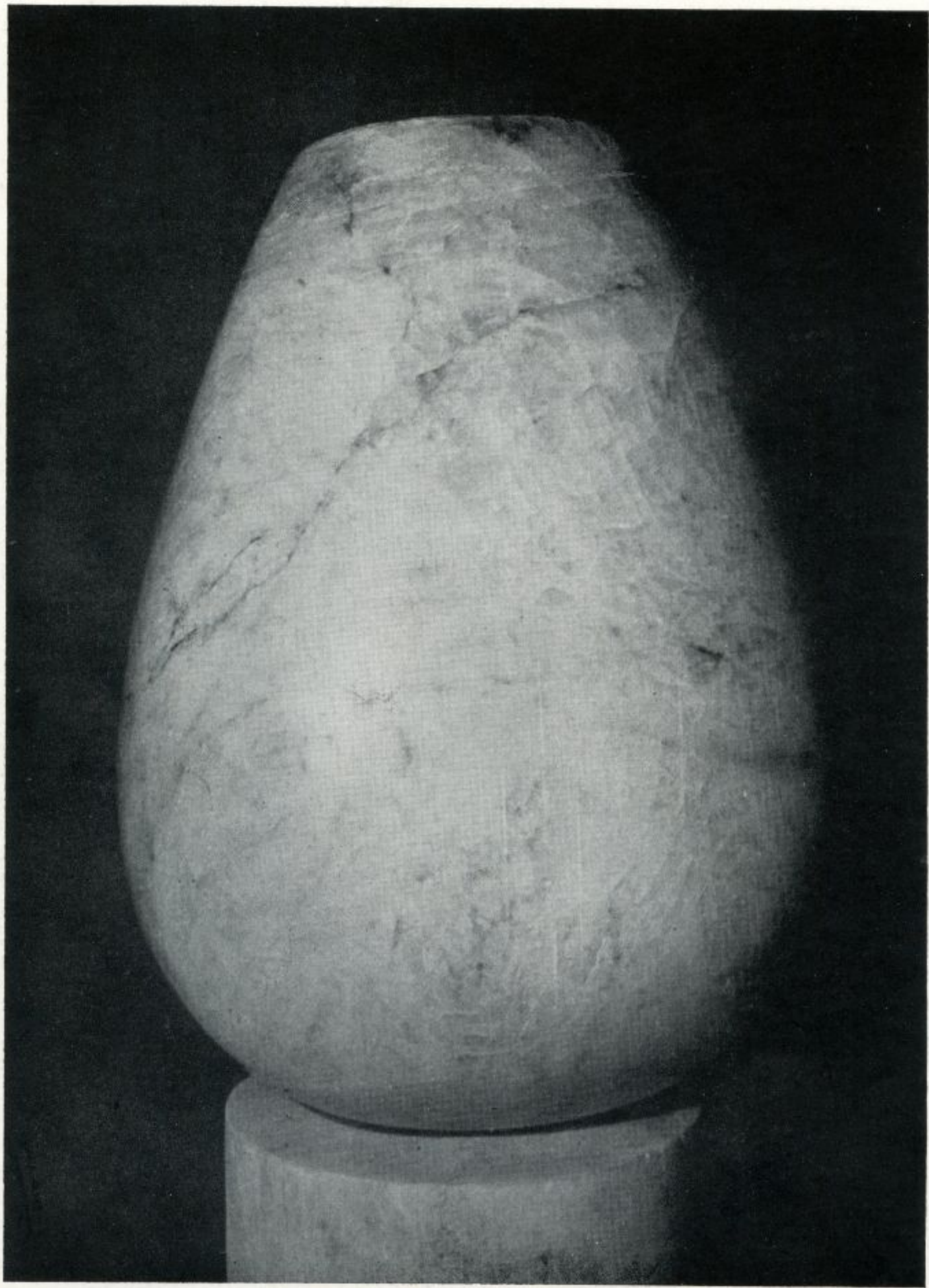
NO. 25. PORTRAIT (*Polished Bronze*) 1916  
*Collection Walter C. Arensberg*





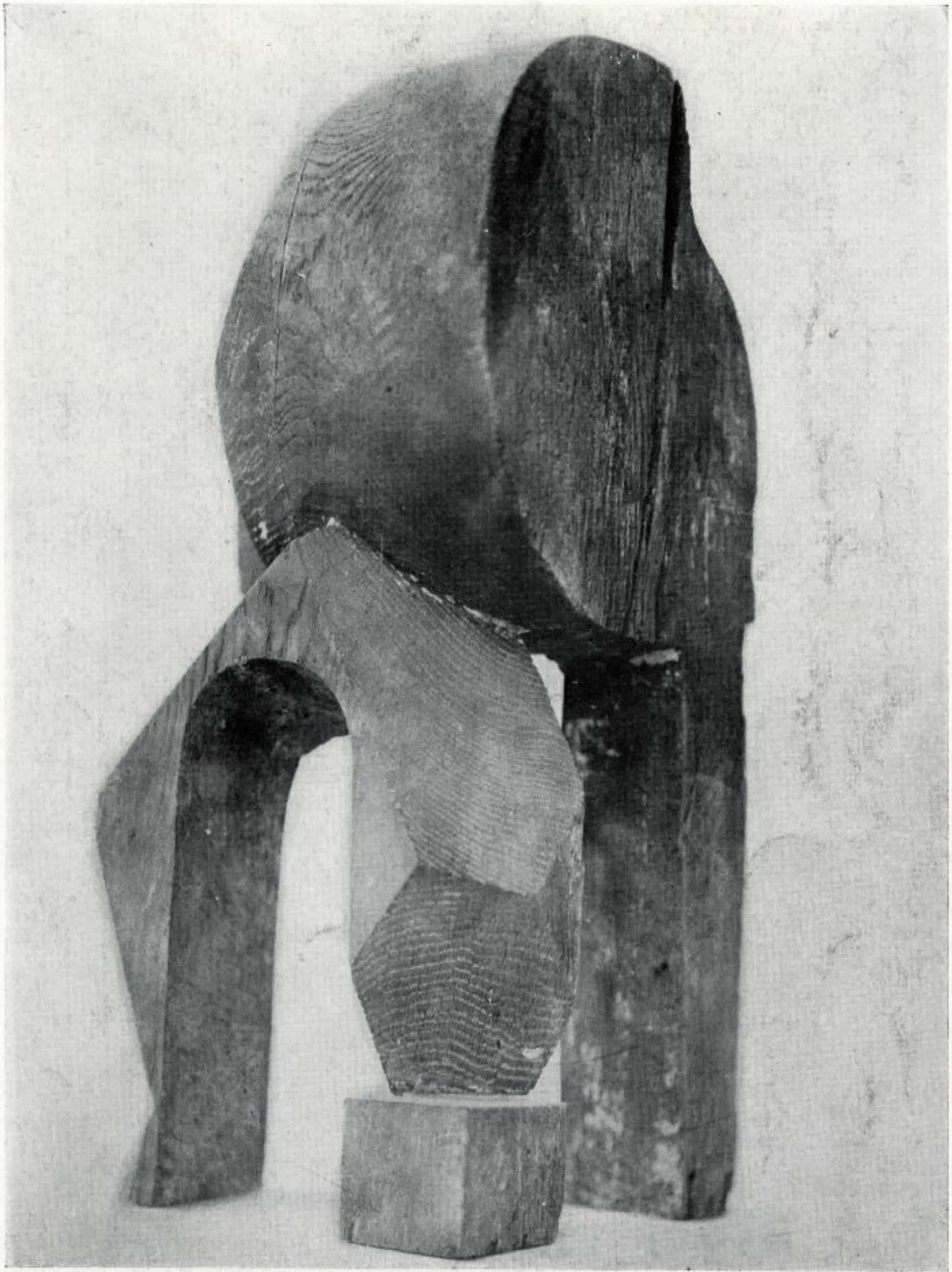
NO. 20. GOLDEN BIRD (*Polished Bronze*) 1919





NO. 21. TORSO OF A YOUNG GIRL (*Onyx*) 1922





NO. 22. PRODIGAL SON (*Wood*) 1925  
*Collection Walter C. Arensberg*





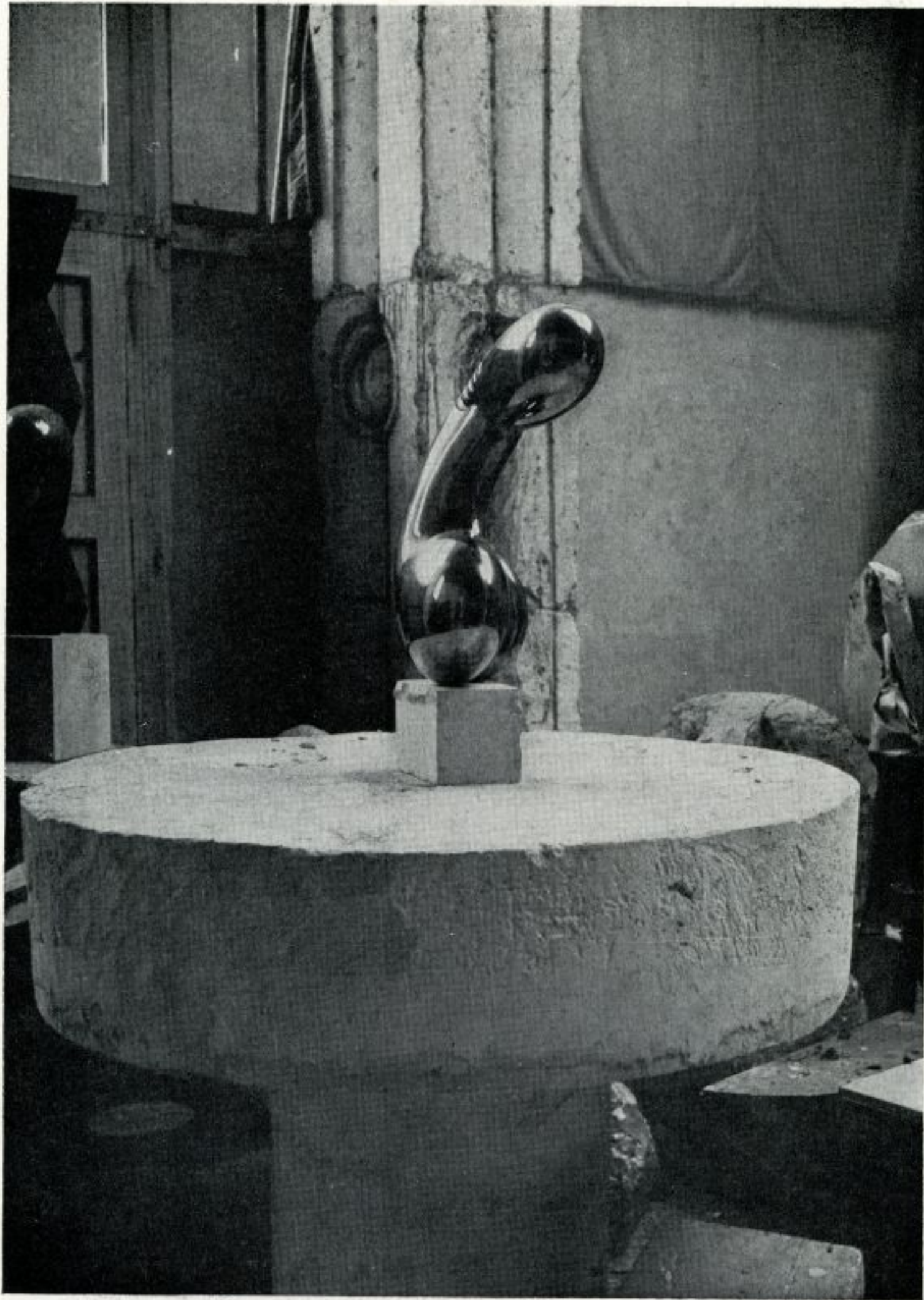
NO. 23. SOCRATES (*Old Oak*) 1923





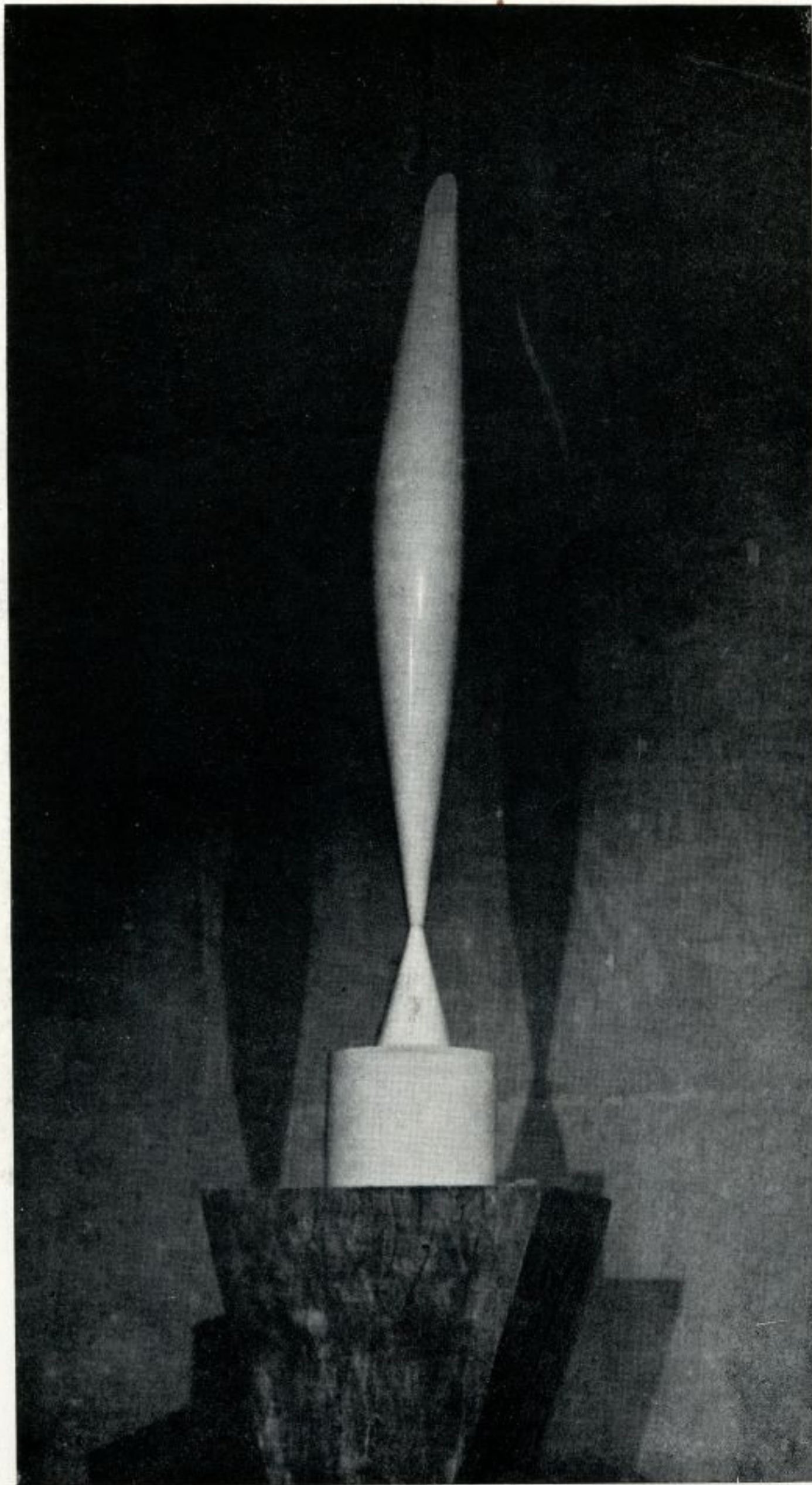
NO. 24. MLE. POGANY (*Marble*) 1919





NO. 25. PORTRAIT (*Polished Bronze*) 1916  
*Collection Walter C. Arensberg*





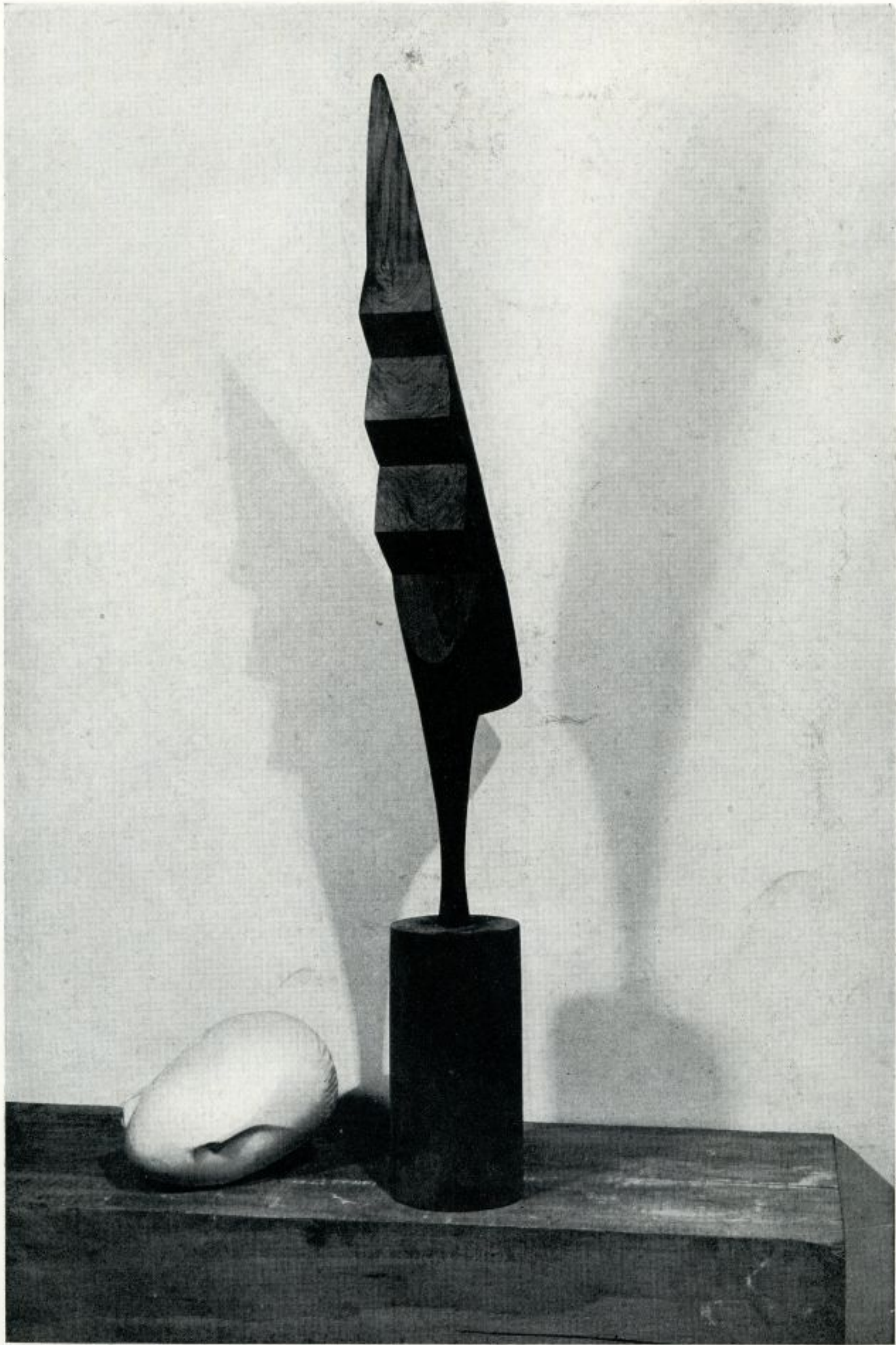
NO. 26. BIRD IN SPACE (*Marble*) 1923. Height 57½ inches





NO. 27. BLOND NEGRESS (*Polished Bronze*) 1926  
*Collection Eugene Meyer, Jr.*





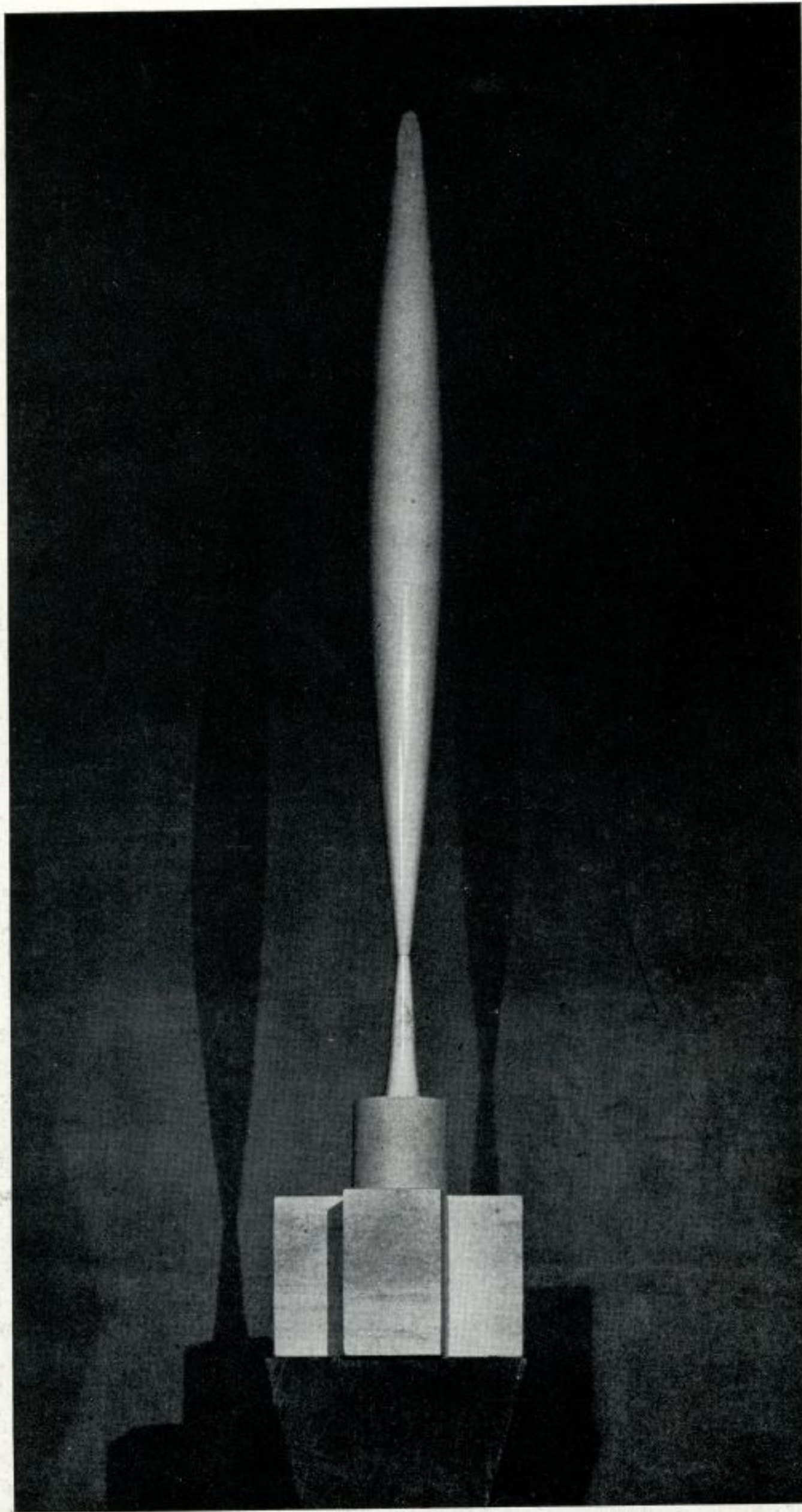
NO. 28. COCK (*Walnut*) 1924





NO. 29. THE CHIEF (*Walnut*) 1925





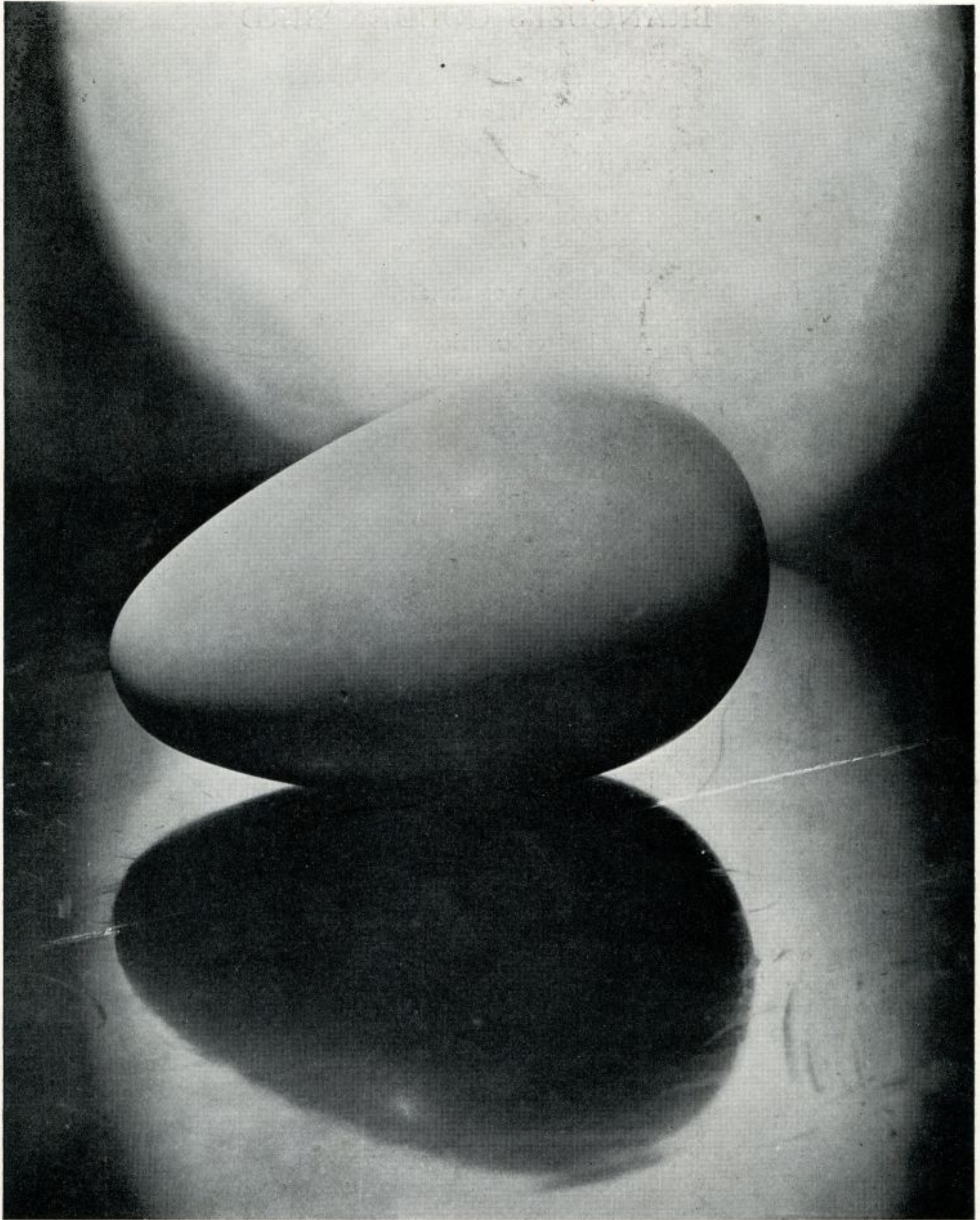
NO. 30. BIRD IN SPACE (*Marble*) 1925. Height 72 inches.  
*Collection Eugene Meyer, Jr.*





NO. 31. COLUMN WITHOUT END (*Old Oak*) 1918





NO. 32. THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD (*Marble*) 1924



## BRANCUSI'S GOLDEN BIRD

The toy  
become the aesthetic archetype

As if  
some patient peasant God  
had rubbed and rubbed  
the Alpha and Omega  
of Form  
into a lump of metal.

A naked orientation  
unwinged, unplumed  
—the ultimate rhythm  
has lopped the extremities  
of crest and claw  
from  
the nucleus of flight.

The absolute act  
of art  
conformed  
to continent sculpture  
—bare as the brow of Osiris—  
This breast of revelation

An incandescent curve  
licked by chromatic flames  
in labyrinths of reflections

This gong  
of polished hyperaesthesia  
shrills with brass  
as the aggressive light  
strikes  
its significance

The immaculate  
conception  
of the inaudible bird  
occurs  
in gorgeous reticence . . .

MINA LOY

*The Dial*



Brancusi is a galoot; he saves tickets to take him nowhere; a galoot with his baggage ready and no time table; oh yes, Brancusi is a galoot; he understands birds and skulls so well, he knows the hang of the hair of the coils and plaits on a woman's head, he knows them so far back he knows where they came from and where they are going; he is fathoming down for the secrets of the first and the oldest makers of shapes.

Let us speak with loose mouths to-day not at all about Brancusi because he has hardly started nor is hardly able to say the name of the place he wants to go when he has time and is ready to start; O Brancusi, keeping hardwood planks around your doorsteps in the sun waiting for the hardwood to be harder for your hard hands to handle, you Brancusi with your chisels and hammers, birds going to cones, skulls going to eggs—how the hope hugs your heart you will find one cone, one egg, so hard when the earth turns mist there among the last to go will be a cone, an egg.

Brancusi, you will not put a want ad in the papers telling God it will be to his advantage to come around and see you; you will not grow gabby and spill God earfuls of prayers; you will not get fresh and familiar as if God is a nextdoor neighbor and you have counted His shirts on a clothes line; you will go stammering, stuttering and mumbling or you will be silent as a mouse in a church garret when the pipe organ is pouring ocean waves on the sunlit rocks of ocean shores; if God is saving a corner for any battling bag of bones, there will be one for you, there will be one for you, Brancusi.

CARL SANDBURG

*Slabs of the Sunburnt West*

. . . Tenez, la tête féminine que voici est précisément de ce jeune Roumain. Comme c'est expressif! Pourtant cet oeuf de cuivre se bossue à peine d'un relief. Et la matière en est-elle assez douce au toucher, au regard! Là, lisse comme un glaçon qui fond, et là, grenue, là, irisée, et là, mate; tels sont les jeux du feu surveillés par un artiste subtil. Que ne sort-il de fouilles, cet objet: on s'émerveillerait.

JACQUES DOUCET

*Bulletin de la Vie Artistique*



For Brancusi, art does not exist by itself. From its beginnings to its modern conception, art has been an appanage of the religion. The artist has been the fanatic who knew how to materialize the visions of his faith. The greatest masterpieces of the past synchronize with the periods of the greatest religious exaltation. The exaltation past, decadence always followed, and that decadence invariably fell into imitative realism.

THE ARTS

In the case of the ovoid, I take it Brancusi is meditating upon pure form free from all terrestrial gravitation; form as free in its own life as the form of the analytic geometers; and the measure of his success in this experiment (unfinished and probably unfinishable) is that from such angles at least the ovoid does come to life and appear ready to levitate.

EZRA POUND

*The Little Review*

. . . To me, Brancusi appears as pure an artist as Bach or Poussin. And if I am asked, as by implication I am, to say what I consider Brancusi's most valuable qualities, I reply: an amazingly sure sense of relations and a most delicate feeling for quality.

CLIVE BELL

*Vogue.*

January 8, 1923.

"All of the things are now set up and are beautiful. Please tell Brancusi how delighted I am with all of them. Each one is more beautiful than the others. . . . They are all beautiful things. . . ."

JOHN QUINN TO H. P. ROCHÉ



. . . It is obvious to one who looks sympathetically upon the work of Brancusi that for him sculpture is a form without holes in it. The mass is unified and continuous; it is one solid piece; there are no arms or legs, attached but not belonging to the main trunk; no fluttering draperies that do not belong fundamentally to the central structure; nothing waving in the air and not a part of the central mass.

FORBES WATSON

*New York World.*

. . .  
Brancusi is honest. I think people who understand the purest essence of painting, the purest essence of sculpture or the purest essence of anything will feel instinctively that such exquisitely finished and subtle carvings as his are can only have been produced by an honest person. Many people felt him to be honest merely by studying his sculpture.

HENRY MCBRIDE

*New York Sun.*

. . .  
Abseits für sich steht Brancusi, einer, der nur seinen Weg gehen kann, einer, dem bildnerische Intensität im Blut zu liegen, der sich an alles wagen zu können scheint und in einem langen Bildhauerleben sich auch an allerlei schon gewagt hat.

PAUL WESTHEIM

*Das Kunstblatt.*

. . .  
Plus acharné qu'un Ucello, l'inimitable Brancusi poursuit, aux confins du désespoir, sa lucide et radieuse recherche de la pureté absolue, dans la forme, en soi.

ANDRÉ SALMON

*Propos d'atelier.*

. . .  
Wie eine Pflanze rührt er sich nicht vom Fleck; seine hauptsächliche Arbeit ist das Werden-lassen.

ALBERT DREYFUS

*Der Querschnitt*



## CONSTANTIN BRANCUSI

### L'OUVRIER

An Olympian cave, marmoreal, still;  
The breathing of giants,  
The white ray undivided.  
Fluted columns, vaulting  
From pavilions of the air.  
Hérons of the Moon flying through velvet mist;  
The Golden Bird, Sun-Bird, Bird of Paradise  
Dazzling in upper space.  
Stupendous masses of rock;  
Old wood mellowed, seasoned by time,  
Hewn from sea-forests.  
Marble—two lovers, the *Embracers*;  
Bronze—a head accented by a single eyebrow;  
Again marble—a smooth head; Brancusi speaking:  
*"With this form I could move the universe."*

### L'HOMME

Pan thewed with sinews of ilex trees;  
A faun's head, black curls,  
(One suspects onyx horns).  
A beard touched with white;  
Darkness between two white fingers;  
The throat—a column;  
Quick hands, gestures  
Faultless of intention,  
Flinging aside knowledge,  
Reaching for perfection  
As a child reaches for a flower;  
Dissolving wisdom  
Tragically for the wise.

### L'ARBRE

In the Forest of St. Germain, he caressed a tree trunk:  
"This is my brother.  
With only a little change in my substance,  
I could take root in the ground,  
Grow motifs instead of cutting them in marble.  
The sap in me would grow a new form of tree trunk.  
I would spread out my branches over lovers  
When they lie down upon the leaves."

### LE PORTRAIT

*Papier ivoire*, blank, a satin glaze,  
"A Madame, Votre ami  
Constantin Brancusi.  
I am sending you my portrait,



*Papier ivoire*, blank, a satin glaze;  
I could not please you  
With lies of the sun or of pencil.  
All that I am to you is here for you;  
You will see me as I would have you see me.  
I shall not ask you how you will precipitate my likeness;  
I trust you."

DINER AVEC BRANCUSI

A glow in the Olympian cave.  
Faggots are blazing  
(Brancusi built the fireplace),  
Fat cocks are roasting.  
Brancusi whips the salad delicately against a wooden bowl.  
We salute the table . . . an Asteroid  
Caught snowy from frozen spaces of the sky.  
(Plaster freshly trowled by Brancusi,  
Damp to the touch.)  
Upon its whiteness,  
Color of flame and twilight—  
*Capuchins*, petals of scarlet  
Sinking in twilight.

Brancusi pours the wine into the glasses.  
He has forgotten his cool marbles.  
The wine bubbles, crimson and amber;  
Fruits shine on fig leaves—  
Pomegranates, peaches like Chinese silk.  
Fragrance sifts through the fumes of wine and fruit.  
Brancusi is grinding coffee  
In a cylinder of Turkish brass.  
One sees cloudily,  
A faun's head, black curls, curved onyx horns,  
Brancusi smiling.

Gravitation loosens its clutching;  
The roof of the cavern has become moonlight;  
We rise slowly, beating the air rhythmically  
With small cloven hoofs;  
Slowly as befits mortals who have put on  
Godship for the moment,  
Following Pan, turning a coffee grinder of Turkish brass,  
Speaking the tongue of dreams,  
Of the lion and the lizard,  
We arrive  
On Olympus.

JEANNE ROBERT FOSTER

*Rock-Flower.*



. . . He has been making these "Birds", they say, for years, again and again—the one I saw was a slender shape of the purest marble about three feet high and tapering so finely as almost to form a thread where it joined its diminished pedestal—yet, as Mr. Ezra Pound remarks, though they appear identical in reproduction, there is perhaps six months' work and twenty years' knowledge between one model and another. It is an attempt, he says, to solve the "maddening difficult problem of getting all the forms into one form," and Brancusi, with characteristic indifference, disarms any critics by asking them to wait until he is in the churchyard before they discuss esthetics with him.

ANGUS WILSON

*New York Times.*

Unless one can come to such art in the unprejudiced mood of discovery, there is little use pretending this or that about Brancusi's art. If, however, the visitor will restore his natural enthusiasm for lovely form no matter how found or fashioned, if he will approach these slender shafts of marble or polished bronze, these ro-tund masses of stone or metal as if they were washed-up treasure on some pebbly beach without particular history or hall-mark, then something of Brancusi's special gift will become apparent.

RALPH FLINT

*Christian Science Monitor.*

A colossal ignorance of art in general places one very little behind even the critics when it comes to an understanding of Constantin Brancusi's work. The strangeness and enigmatic simplicity of it have puzzled nearly everyone. He is evidently headed for somewhere but where, he doesn't seem to know himself, nor care. Whether you consider it art or not, the man is sufficient artist to feel that none of his pieces has come up to what he had hoped and intended it should.

FLORA MERRILL

*New York World.*

For years he will keep under his eyes some beam of weathered oak that he has saved from a demolished house, or some water-worn stone that he has picked up by the river, until, having lived with them, he feels able to touch them without spoiling their natural beauty, which must be embodied in his work.

WALTER PACH

*The Masters of Modern Art.*



## EXHIBITS

1 Child's Head (bronze) .....	1910
2 Maiastra (marble and stone) .....	1912
3 Caryatid (old oak) .....	1915
4 The Kiss (stone) .....	1908
5 New Born (marble) .....	1915
6 Prometheus (marble) .....	1911
7 Child's Head (wood) .....	1913
8 Penguins (marble) .....	1914
9 Chimera (old oak) .....	1918
10 Yellow Bird (marble) .....	1921
11 Torso of a Young Man (walnut) .....	1922
12 Torso of a Young Girl (onyx) .....	1918
13 Fish (colored marble) .....	1922
14 Fish (polished bronze) .....	1926
15 Portrait (marble) .....	1916
16 Base (old oak) .....	1920
17 Adam (old oak) .....	1921
18 Eve (old oak) .....	1921
19 Mlle. Pogany (polished bronze) .....	1920
20 Golden Bird (polished bronze) .....	1919
21 Torso of a Young Girl (onyx) .....	1922



22	Prodigal Son (wood) .....	1915
	<i>Collection Walter C. Arensberg</i>	
23	Socrates (old oak) .....	1923
24	Mlle. Pogany (marble) .....	1919
25	Portrait (polished bronze) .....	1916
	<i>Collection Walter C. Arensberg</i>	
26	Bird in Space (marble) .....	1923
27	Blond Negress (polished bronze) .....	1926
	<i>Collection Eugene Meyer, Jr.</i>	
28	Cock (walnut) .....	1924
29	The Chief (walnut) .....	1925
30	Bird in Space (marble) .....	1925
	<i>Collection Eugene Meyer, Jr.</i>	
31	Column Without End (old oak) .....	1918
32	The Beginning of the World (marble) .....	1924
33	Bird in Space (polished bronze) .....	1925
	<i>Collection Edw. J. Steichen</i>	
34	Cup (wood) .....	1920
35	Child's Head (gilded bronze) .....	1917
36	New Born (polished bronze) ..	1920
37	Bird in Space (yellow marble) .....	1925
38—42	Five Bases	
43	Painting .....	1916
44—70	Studies.....	1910-1916







