

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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SPECIAL SUMMER EXHIBITION OF BRANCUSI SCULPTURE AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Six sculptures by the famous abstract artist, Constantin Brancusi, including a variant of the controversial BIRD IN SPACE which was the subject of an extraordinary lawsuit in the 20's, will be on view in a special summer exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, in a third floor gallery from July 7 through August 15. The six-foot long marble FISH, perhaps Brancusi's greatest work in stone, is also shown along with three other sculptures from the Museum Collection and one which is on extended loan to the Museum.

A very similar bronze, BIRD IN SPACE, done in 1919, became the center of an important lawsuit against the United States Customs in 1928 when the government held that it was not a work of art and therefore subject to duty when Brancusi attempted to bring it into this country on behalf of the purchaser, Captain Edward Steichen, now Director of the Museum's Department of Photography. The case was argued on Brancusi's behalf by the late Maurice J. Speiser, who later presented his records of the trial to the Museum library.

The gray marble FISH in the exhibition, which was executed in 1930, was recently admitted to the United States free of duty on the precedent of the BIRD, but as the Museum points out in a statement posted in the gallery, "many other kinds of modern sculpture are still held dutiable thanks to the Government's retarded regulations."

Commenting on the FISH and BIRD, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Director of Museum Collections, says:

"In his great gray marble FISH, Brancusi has sought the single essential form, the archetype, of all fishes - subtly curved, delicately poised, the motionless swimmer, swift, powerful, tense and still. Similarly, in his vertical, streamlined, polished BIRD IN SPACE, Brancusi suggests both the shape of the bird and the sense of flight. The bird is wingless, the fish is finless; the bird is static bronze, the fish is inert marble; yet both live and move - move us - as idea, as poetry, as sculpture."