

Rejecting nineteenth-century sculptors' emphases on theatricality, detail, and narrative, Brancusi favored radical simplification and abbreviation. He sought to capture the essence of his subjects with minimal formal means while retaining the integrity of his materials. In *King of Kings* (*Le roi des rois*, ca. 1938), though the monumentality of the sculpture gestures toward the transcendent, uncarved passages highlight the lumber's first use as an architectural beam. Similarly, the abstracted form of *The Sorceress* (*La sorcière*, 1916–24) follows the intersection of trunk and branches in the original wood. Brancusi also frequently paired sculptures so that the upper "figure" and the lower "base" complement each other through their contrasting textures, materials, and masses.

Brancusi's work was significantly inspired by Central and West African sculpture and Romanian folk carving, though the scope and particularities of such influences have been widely debated. Serrated patterns present in many traditional Dogon and Senufo objects appear on *Adam and Eve* (*Adam et Eve*, 1921) and *Watchdog* (*Chien de garde*, ca. 1924). Meanwhile, prototypes for the sequential designs of *King of Kings* have been found in the vernacular architecture of Brancusi's native Romania, and *The Sorceress* has been interpreted as the flying witch described in that country's folk tales. Modern industrial design also served as an important touchstone. In *Flying Turtle* (*Tortue volante*, 1940–45), the smooth surface, nearly geometric forms, and depiction of movement all speak to the influence of machines and industrial production. However, Brancusi's focus on craftsmanship and ahistorical subject matter casts doubt on any direct engagement with such contemporary concerns. Moreover, Brancusi never clarified the sources for his designs, preferring instead to promote an air of mystery surrounding their origins.



Constantin Brancusi

b. 1876, Hobitza, Romania

d. 1957, Paris

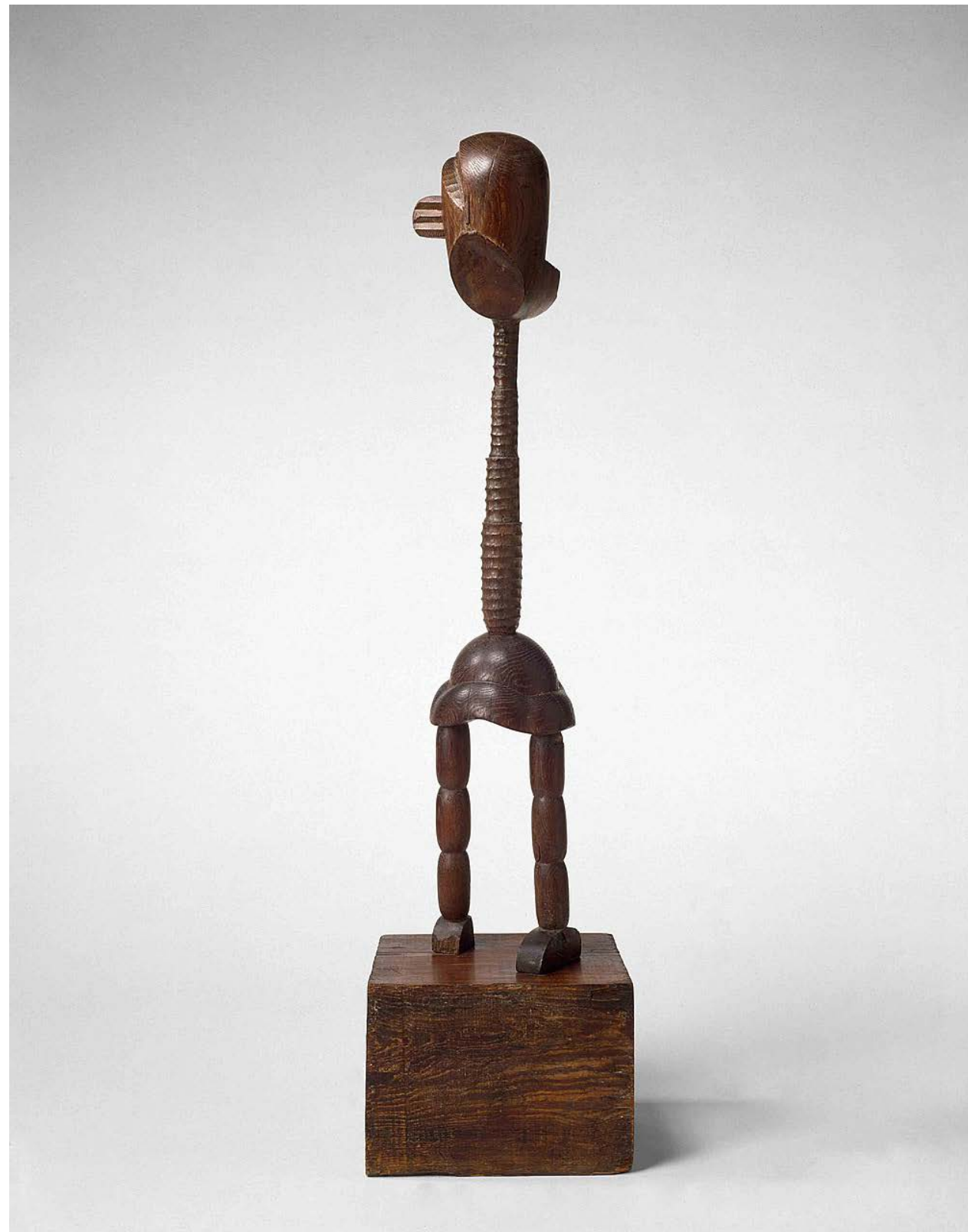
Adam and Eve (Adam et Eve)

1921 (*Adam* and *Eve* executed separately ca. 1916)

Chestnut (*Adam*) and oak (*Eve*) on limestone base

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,

New York 53.1329



Constantin Brancusi

b. 1876, Hobitza, Romania

d. 1957, Paris

**Little French Girl (The First Step [III])
(La jeune fille française)**

ca. 1914–18 (mounted by museum, 1953)

Oak on pine base

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift,
Estate of Katherine S. Dreier 53.1332



Constantin Brancusi

b. 1876, Hobitza, Romania

d. 1957, Paris

The Sorceress

(La sorcière)

1916–24

Walnut on limestone base

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 56.1448

Shown on Watchdog

(Chien de garde)

1916

Oak

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 58.1503



Constantin Brancusi

b. 1876, Hobitza, Romania

d. 1957, Paris

**King of Kings
(Le roi des rois)**

ca. 1938

Oak

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 56.1449



Constantin Brancusi

b. 1876, Hobitza, Romania

d. 1957, Paris

The Miracle (Seal [I])

(Le miracle)

ca. 1930–32

Marble on limestone base

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 56.1450



Constantin Brancusi

b. 1876, Hobitza, Romania

d. 1957, Paris

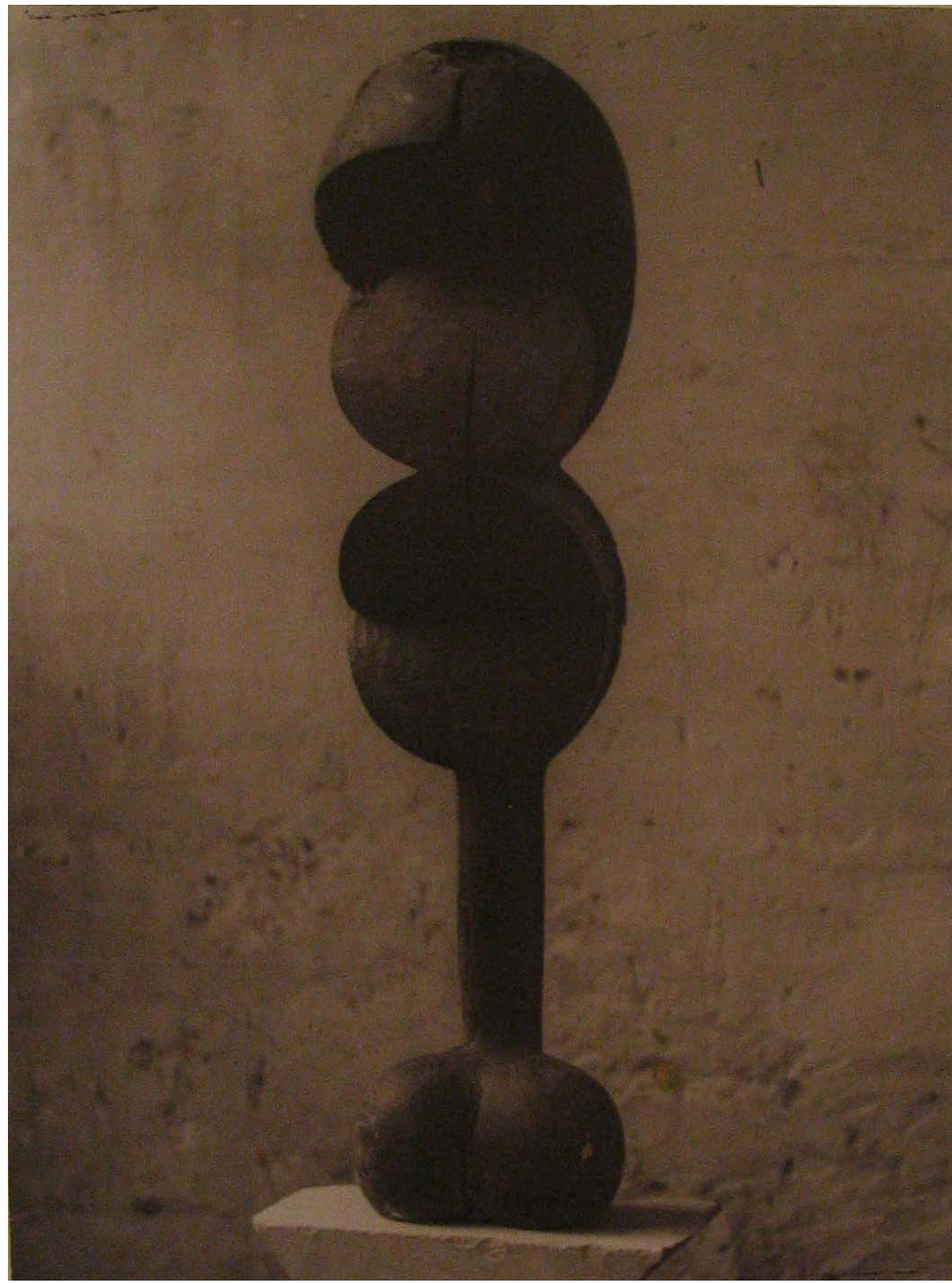
Flying Turtle

(Tortue volante)

1940–45

Marble on limestone base

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 56.1451



Constantin Brancusi

b. 1876, Hobitza, Romania

d. 1957, Paris

Eve

ca. 1919

Gelatin silver print

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

James Johnson Sweeney Records



Constantin Brancusi

b. 1876, Hobitza, Romania

d. 1957, Paris

Adam

ca. 1916–21

Gelatin silver print

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

James Johnson Sweeney Records



Constantin Brancusi

b. 1876, Hobitza, Romania

d. 1957, Paris

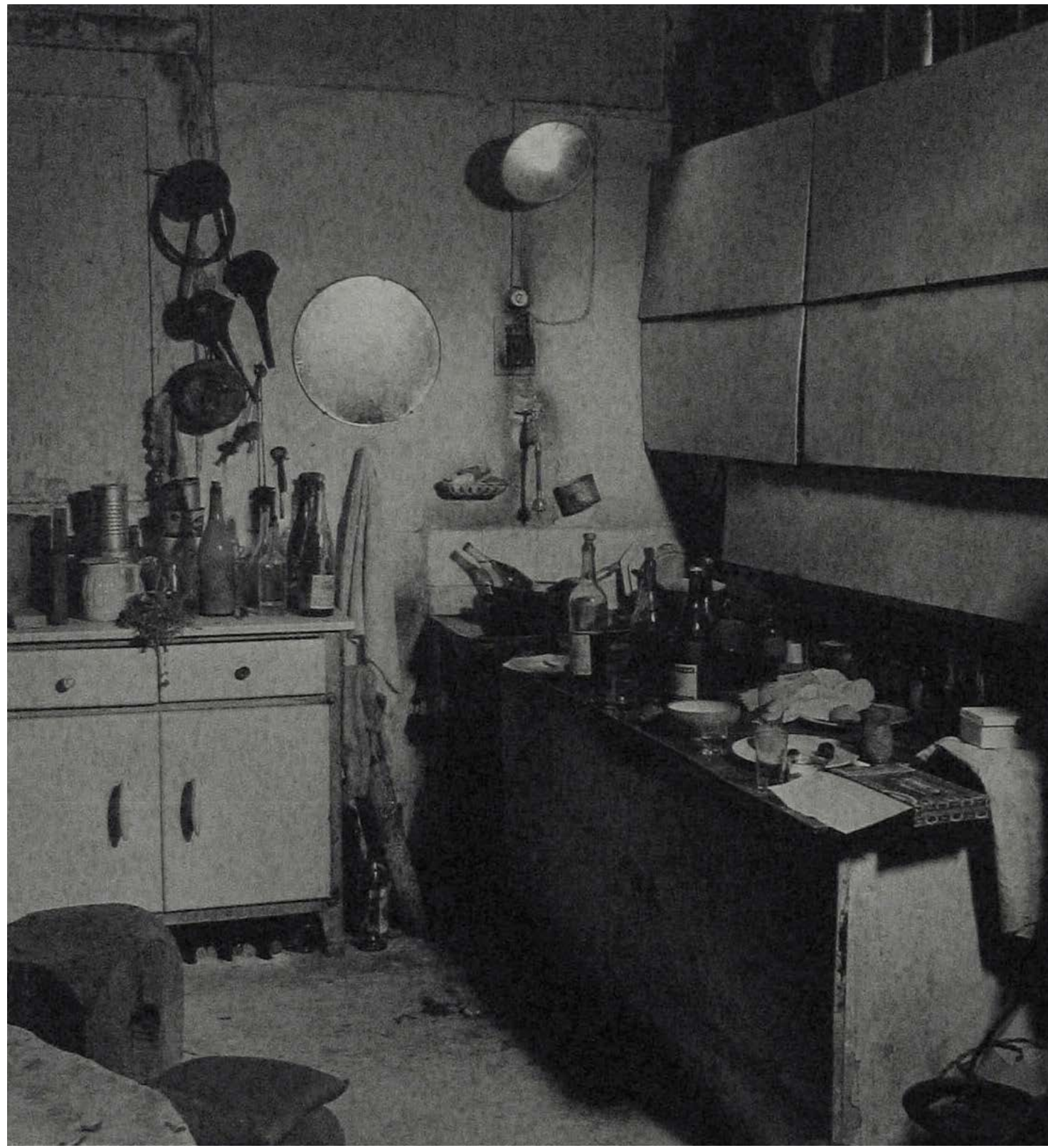
View of the studio: **Mlle. Pogany II, The Kiss, Endless Column (later destroyed), Endless Column I, Bird in Space, and Newborn [II]**

1925

Gelatin silver print

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

James Johnson Sweeney Records



Wayne F. Miller

b. 1918, Chicago

d. 2013, Orinda, California

Constantin Brancusi's studio

1946

Gelatin silver print

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

James Johnson Sweeney Records



Wayne F. Miller

b. 1918, Chicago

d. 2013, Orinda, California

Constantin Brancusi's studio

1946

Gelatin silver print

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

James Johnson Sweeney Records



Wayne F. Miller

b. 1918, Chicago

d. 2013, Orinda, California

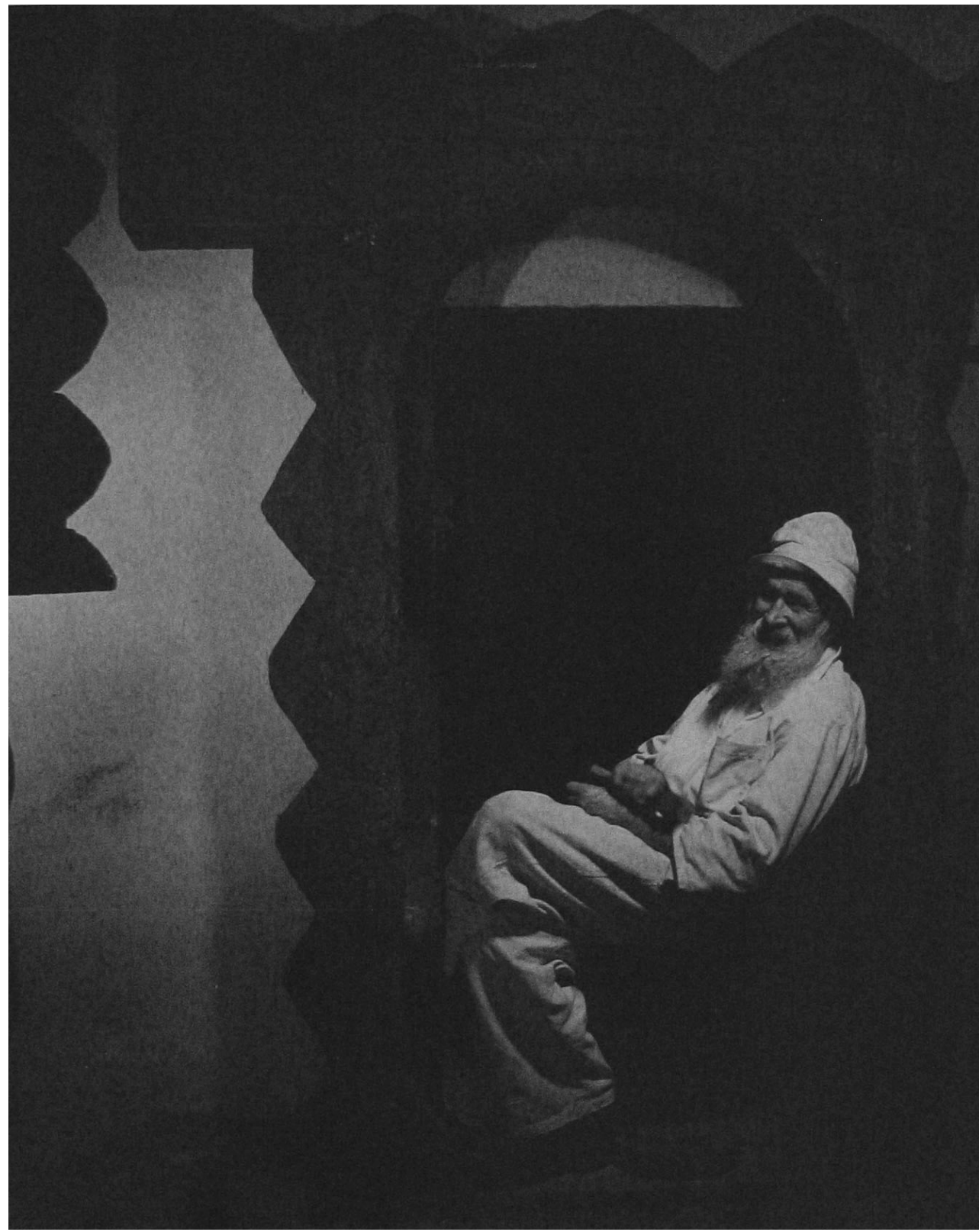
Constantin Brancusi's studio: **Boundary Marker, Flying Turtle, Blond Negress, Eileen Lane, Cock, and Sleeping Muse**

1946

Gelatin silver print

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

James Johnson Sweeney Records



Wayne F. Miller

b. 1918, Chicago

d. 2013, Orinda, California

Constantin Brancusi in front of **Doorway**

1946

Gelatin silver print

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

James Johnson Sweeney Records



Wayne F. Miller

b. 1918, Chicago

d. 2013, Orinda, California

Constantin Brancusi in his studio

1946

Gelatin silver print

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,

James Johnson Sweeney Records