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# Constant

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## References

Sculptura pe Internet”,Caiete Silvane magazine, 2008-11-01.

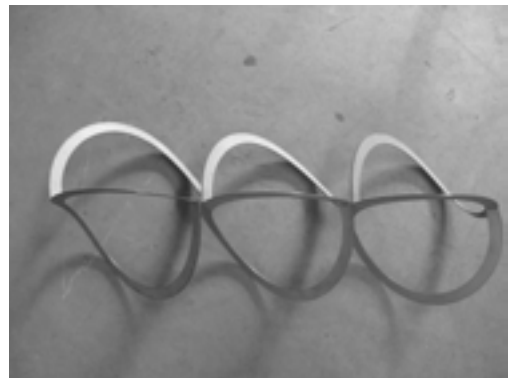
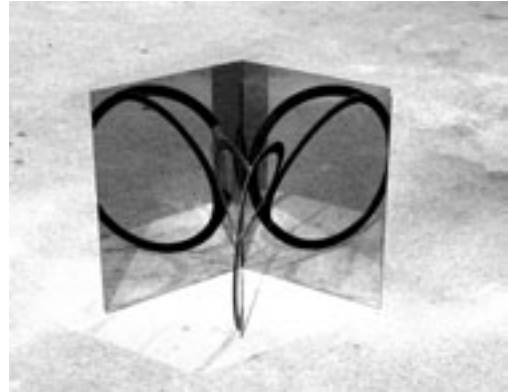
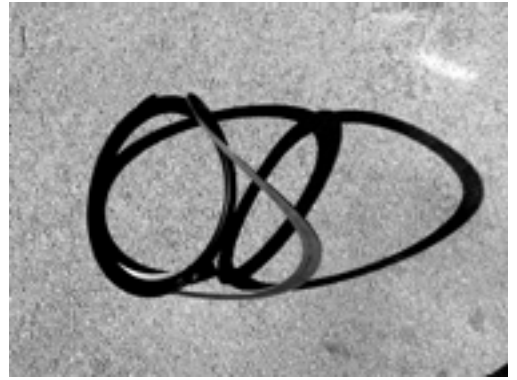
Petre Țuțea, 1985, holiday almanac for the Viața Românească literary review, under the pseudonym Petre Boteanu.

Oral history interview with José de Rivera, 1968 Feb. 24, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Jeanette Winterson, The Guardian, Monday 23 May 2005

## Abstract

Purpose of my work is to understand a shape that I discovered in my working process: why do I find it so attractive and how far can I go with it. I researched the form in size, complexity, repetition, movement and aesthetics while documenting it by taking pictures and video. In the research process I came a lot closer to understanding the shape and what am I currently capable of achieving with it, yet there is vast amounts of work to do. I have found a shape with almost unlimited possibilities that keeps my mind constantly occupied. I see it as a ground study for the future from which I can draw inspiration for all – from simple usable design to large scale artistic works.

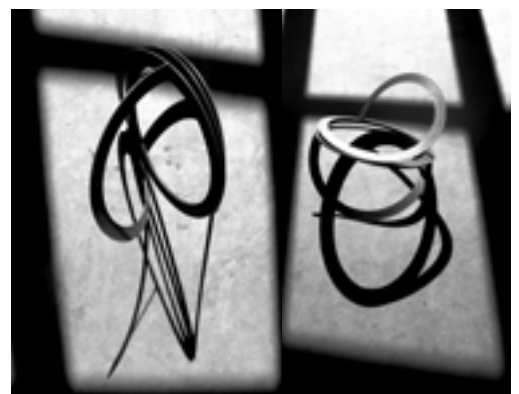


## Background

The subject that I am working with has been addressed and influenced by several artists in the past. To name a few, I chose to point out inspirational names such as Constantin Brâncuși, Jose de Rivera, Rebecca Horn and Keizo Ushio. Constantin Brâncuși's works try to capture the essence of things instead of copying the form, like he said himself: "What is real is not the external form, but the essence of things... it is impossible for anyone to express anything essentially real by imitating its exterior surface". ("Sculptura pe Internet", Caiete Silvane magazine, 2008-11-01.) He managed to simplify the form to a certain point, where he got stuck in his work, repeating the same shapes, not being able to push it further. Again, in his own words: "I ground matter to find the continuous line. And when I realized I could not find it, I stopped, as if an unseen someone had slapped my hands." (Petre Țuțea, 1985, Viața Românească). Despite the fact that the artist stopped developing after 1938 and spent the rest of his years in repetition of his older works, Constantin Brâncuși is, without a doubt, one of the most important figures in the developing modernist sculpture.

Jose de Rivera's works, on the other hand, talk of surface, movement and space. "I assume that if I am going to make pure form in which the space is allowed to participate as well as the material that I have to conceive of them both together; that I can't think up the material to make the space, or the space to make the material. I'm personally convinced that I have to conceive of them both together existently. They exist simultaneously." (Oral history interview with José de Rivera, 1968 Feb. 24, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution). He is often linked to the Mobius Ring movement, in my opinion mistakenly so, as his ideas refer to the surface, form and essence of shape, rather than mathematical perfection. His piece at the Smithsonian Museum got its name, "Infinity", not from him, but from a curator. My work process is many ways similar to his: he made the shapes in small scale models (between 10 – 40 cm high), using the same material as the finishing piece. Then he enlarged a selection of the models to human scale and then continued his research on the form, selecting and leaving unusable shapes out, until the ideal form is revealed.

I am also inspired strongly by Rebecca Horn's kinetic pieces, such as "Floating Souls" and "Heartshadows for Pessoa". "She makes us smile, laugh - and then comes the pause and, often, the discomfort. The seriousness and the playfulness run together." (The Guardian, Monday 23 May 2005) It seems to me that the movement in my work shares a similar quality in its stillness, it seems to demand the attention of the viewer.



I also see a parallel between my work and the Mobius Ring movement. For example, Keizo Ushio and his “Sculpture by the Sea”, although I find the infinite loop too perfect and too cold to satisfy my aesthetic tastes, it seems to be a dead end.

## Aim / Purpose

My first goal, where the project started, was to make a functional and eye-pleasing fire tools set with a firewood basket. I see so many utensils in this world that focus on functional value same time ignoring the aesthetical values, which could improve not only the looks, but utility as well. In the process of composing in material, not on paper, I was able to discover a fascinating combination of curves. I have always been drawn to feminine, circular shapes. They fill me with a feeling of safety, I find looking at them satisfying – a very similar feeling that exists in the shapes I am currently working with. As I did not comprehend what is it in the shape that so much appeals to me, I set out on a quest to understand what I find so pleasing in the forms I work with. I desired to find a perfect expression and scale to communicate the same to my audience that it communicates to me.

## Problem formulation / Description

### Accessibility and Safety versus Motion?

Safety is always one of the main issues of any work that is meant for public space. I could fix it to the ground, but that would impede the whole shape since there would be no longer the ability of movement. I could also limit the access to the shape, but that would be taking away the responsibility and the joy of interaction from the people. By pushing the shape you make it move. You can make a difference. However, every action bears counter-action. If one makes a change, one must also be aware of the results and reasons behind the actions. How do you justify yourself? Should you do it? In a way, the notion of such safety resembles modern western society – very comfortable, with both its positive and negative emotions in that word. I am left with an option of having it in a controlled environment, perhaps a gallery space or a private area.



## Complexity of form?

In order to understand the form and find the perfect balance between the lines and the surfaces, I did a study of circles, coming down from complex form of 4 circles, simplifying it bit by bit to a singular circle. In the process I documented the steps and tried to find the interesting and aesthetically satisfying perspectives and possibilities in each shape that I created. I also studied the shape by repeating and combining the same form. I found my satisfying options in simple, minimalist form, as they have the smallest amount of decorations and focus on the true form.

## Surface

The repeating shape I sandblasted and lacquered, to keep the focus on the form itself, to avoid giving it extra meanings.

## Method

### Craft to Art

The shape I discovered started from craft, from a task of making a firewood basket. My goal was to make a durable, interesting and usable tool, so I selected the shape most usable for the purpose – a circle. In the process of connecting the circle in the most pleasing and reproducible way, I found something far greater than a simple utensil. The flow of the form became the center of attention; I could not walk away from it anymore. In order to understand why I am so intrigued by the form, I started repeating and adjusting it to different variations.

## Size

I studied the shape in 40 cm circles, until I had found one that had the balance between simplicity and tension I was satisfied. It was quite a simple shape, which consisted of only two equal circles, that I could imagine in a larger scale. I up-scaled the shape to a 100 cm circle to see if it still yields the same amount of personal satisfaction and after a process of further adjustment and selections, I decided to go up in size even further. Maximum height of the work I defined by human ability to move it, to interact with it - I could go up to size of 400 cm circles which strongly emphasizes the responsibility of action point of view. The weight of a piece this scale would be approximately 400 kg, the results of your actions you should really consider, simply put: once set into motion, it will be quite hard to stop. After a consideration of options – the machinery and materials available,



as well the price of the work, I ended up with a shape of 2 circles of 200 cm – a human size sculpture. With current size, it still carries the message I want it to, yet it can be stopped by a child with ease. Heroic size work would require some sort of railings, or railroad mechanism for the work to run back and forth on, so the track of the movement is clearly marked and visible, making it safer, but still not removing the responsibility.

## Public & Opinions

During my process, I saw something in the shape that I could not name at that time, so I asked a number of people to express themselves, to tell me what they saw in the shape, to describe it in a single word. I wrote down all the answers I got through social media and personal interviews with people, with the following words coming up repeatedly: flow, movement, enthralling, equality, autism, silence, cycle of life, calm, free form, perfect, infinite, interesting, emotional, repeating, impossible to grasp, geometrical. That provided me with the outside view of my work, yet puzzled me further.

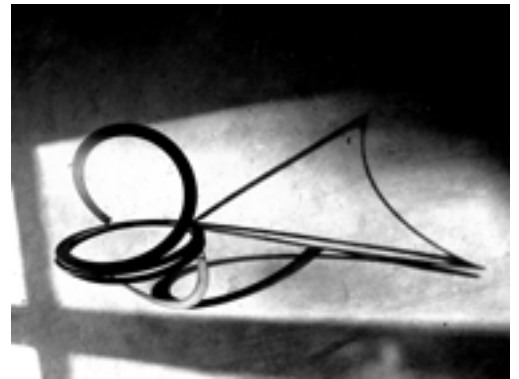
## Complexity & Shadow

From there, as I still did not fully understand what I was seeing, I investigated further into complexity of the shape. I continued this time by starting from shape of 4 circles, maximum material length available from a single length of material. I could have gone even longer, but I needed some borders and the gut feeling at the time told me that adding more circles is less important than understanding the essence of the work. I proceeded with simplifying it by cutting off 1/4th of a circle at a time and arranging the shape repeatedly, while documenting it all. In the process of simplifying and photographing I discovered another aspect – shadows. They add another option to the story; they are a natural part of the shape, melting from and to the work, blurring the line between matter and image.

It became evident that more complex forms move the focus point of the work from the object to the edge of the work, to the border of negative space, creating a reality of nonexistent matter. The ground the piece sits on becomes transparent, reflecting into the matter on what the work sits upon, like sunlight reflecting into water, changing the angle and creating illusions. There is a lot of research there to do; I have just scratched the surface of complexity in the shape.

## Reflection & Repetition

Simple forms, on the other hand, force the focus on the object itself, separating the shadow from the piece, talking about tension and flow of the line – leading to another



direction of study: repetition. First, I did a study of shape with reflecting the shape in two angled mirrors, resulting in a tripled image, with results, again, more interesting than I hoped for. After mirroring all my objects, I selected a shape that I liked the most and proceeded in making it out of metal. The results can be both linked into Mobius Loop movement and patterns, repeating shapes almost tessellating the space.

## Results

I have found a shape with almost unlimited possibilities that keeps my mind constantly occupied; it's like a puzzle that I cannot find an answer to, a challenge to tackle. I know quite a bit about the shape I have studied this spring, yet it keeps surprising and presenting new options to me. I see it as a ground study for the future from which I can draw inspiration for all – from simple usable design to large scale artistic works.

I have photographed the process of simplifying, repetition, up-scaling and movement, resulting in a quantity of over 300 images and video material.

In the process of up-scaling, I created a sculptural piece of work human size.

As a start and a continuous line of side project, I created usable pleasant fire tools set with a firewood basket, as an example of the functional possibilities.

## Discussion

The amount of new information I received from my study of form is overwhelming; I keep finding new input and inspiration from the same shape just by observing it from a different angle or even in a different mood. I never imagined that a simple, basic shape could provide me with such quantities of information. I want to continue in the direction of repetition and negative space, to find the limits I can take it to. It seems that the maximum complexity of the shape is reached at five circles, as further adding circles does not improve the shape; instead relationship between twisted and straight curve becomes unbalanced. Still, I do not have full insight of what is going to happen when I deform the basic circular shapes, create oval shapes and change the height of the circles gradually, in the sense, use the fractal approach. I have some understanding, thanks to the Mobius Ring movement, yet there are vast quantities of ground to cover.

