

RODIN

MAIN GALLERIES

23 September 2006 - 1 January 2007

Sponsored by  **ERNST & YOUNG**

Auguste Rodin (1840 – 1917), the French sculptor who heralded the modern age, will be celebrated in a major retrospective of his work at the Royal Academy of Arts. Ten themes, arranged chronologically, will reveal the sources of Rodin’s inspiration, from his studies of unposed models to his love of the Antique. Central to the exhibition will be an exploration of Rodin’s relationship with Britain, where he established his name as a sculptor of international standing. The *Gates of Hell* and *The Thinker* will feature amongst some 200 pieces of the highest quality, borrowed in large part from the Musée Rodin and the store at Rodin’s home in Meudon. A talented draughtsman, this exhibition will also present Rodin’s lyrical and erotic drawings, alongside contemporary photographs of the artist and his work. This will be the first major Rodin exhibition in Britain for 20 years and will include works that have never before been exhibited outside France.

The story of Rodin and Britain, the sub-theme of this exhibition, begins with his first visit to London in 1881; he exhibited at the Royal Academy the following year. Due to the championing of William Henley and the enthusiasm of early collectors like Constantine Ionides and Lord Leighton PRA, Rodin’s confidence grew, as did his profile in Britain. Interestingly Rodin experienced professional successes in Britain before he became an established artist in Paris. The visits and honours were renewed after 1900 when the founding collectors of the museums in Cardiff, Manchester, Glasgow and elsewhere bought Rodin’s work and he was fêted by the aristocracy and politicians who sat for their portraits. Rodin’s affinity with Britain was further affirmed in 1911, when the *Burghers of Calais* was bought for the nation through the National Art Collections fund, and in 1914, when he donated 18 works to the state, now in the collection of the V&A, 14 of which will be on display.

Rodin brought monumental public sculpture into the 20th Century, breaking with traditional and classical sculpting methods. He also created smaller scale pieces and produced portraits of such luminaries as Victor Hugo and George Bernard Shaw. He would create clay representations of moving models, from which a plaster copy would be taken and, after much experimentation, bronze casts would be made. Following Rodin’s death in 1917, his works continued to be editioned, sometimes leading to issues of quality. This exhibition will present works in marble,

bronze, terracotta and plaster, selected for their relevance and beauty, the great majority being made during Rodin's lifetime.

Rodin's desire to be an artist started at an early age. Despite being rejected three times from the *École des Beaux-Arts*, Rodin persevered and took work as a decorative sculptor and ornamentalist. During the 1880s, Rodin's career flourished. Public bodies in France commissioned a number of high profile monuments, the first of which, the *Gates of Hell*, ran like a leitmotif throughout the rest of his career. In 1917, the year of his death, the Musée Rodin was established in his home at the Hôtel Biron and he married Rose Beuret, his partner of over 50 years. Throughout his life, Rodin had many lovers, most notably his pupil and fellow sculptor Camille Claudel, the artist Gwen John and the Duchess of Choiseul.

The opening galleries will present the first work Rodin exhibited under his own name, working as a sculptor in Brussels and Paris in the 1870s. The evolution of his sculptures will be explored, as works on paper will hang near preliminary models, such as models for the *Gates of Hell*. Other key works, such as *The Kiss* and the *Burghers of Calais* will be examined in the ensuing rooms. Rodin was heavily influenced by Greek and Assyrian sculpture. He drew from the Parthenon Frieze at the British Museum, and built up a collection of antiquities. The theme of the Antique will include a display of works from Rodin's own collection. The final rooms will present Rodin's monuments to Whistler and Victor Hugo.

ORGANISATION

This exhibition has been organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, London, and the Kunsthau Zürich in collaboration with the Musée Rodin, Paris. **Rodin** is curated by Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, Directeur Général at the Institut national d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris; Catherine Lampert, a Rodin scholar, curator of contemporary art and former Director of the Whitechapel Art Gallery; Christoph Becker at the Kunsthau Zurich; and Norman Rosenthal and MaryAnne Stevens at the Royal Academy of Arts.

SPONSORS

Ernst & Young is the generous sponsor of **Rodin**.

Mark Otty, UK chairman of Ernst & Young, said:

"We're delighted to be working with the Royal Academy on **Rodin**. Ernst & Young has been sponsoring and supporting the arts for over twelve years and it has become an integral part of our culture.

As well as sponsoring large exhibitions, we always look for opportunities to bring art to new audiences, contributing in our own small way to culture and the community. We continue to promote our Art Matters initiative with NCH, which aims to release the creative potential of the young people NCH serves. We also help to support upcoming artists through purchasing their work for our corporate art collection.

"**Rodin** will present a mix of his best-loved masterpieces and the show will go a long way towards raising awareness of his genius to a UK audience."

CATALOGUE AND FILM

The fully illustrated catalogue will draw upon new research and new perspectives. Rodin's special relationship to modern art, and particularly to the foundations of post-war British sculpture is the subject of an exciting film produced by Jake Auerbach Films Ltd with contributions from several renowned Royal Academicians.

EXHIBITION TOUR

Royal Academy of Arts	23 September 2006 – 1 January 2007
Kunsthaus Zürich	9 February – 20 May 2007

DATES

Press View	Tuesday 19 September 2006, 10am – 2pm
Open to public:	Saturday 23 September 2006 – Monday 1 January 2007 10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
Late night openings:	Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

ADMISSION

£10.00 full charge; £8.00 Registered Disabled and 60 + years; £6.00 NUS / ISIC cardholders; £3.00 12-18 years and Income Support; £2.00 8-11 years; 7 and under free.

TICKETS

Tickets are available daily at the RA. To book tickets in advance please tel: 0870 848 8484 or visit www.royalacademy.org.uk/rodin. Groups of 10 or more are asked to book in advance; please tel: 020 7300 8027, fax: 020 7300 8084 or email: groupbookings@royalacademy.org.uk

IMAGES

Publicity images for Rodin can be obtained from Picselect, the Press Association's image service for press use. Please register at www.papicselect.com and once registered go to the Royal Academy of Arts folder in the Arts section of Picselect.

To book tickets in advance please tel: 0870 848 8484 or visit www.royalacademy.org.uk/rodin

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