

RODIN

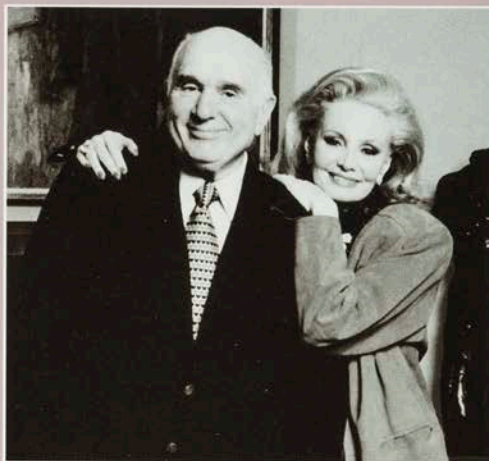
Sculpture from the
IRIS AND B. GERALD CANTOR
COLLECTION

Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation

B. Gerald Cantor (1916–1996) and his wife, Iris Cantor, built the largest and most comprehensive private collection of works by Auguste Rodin. Concentrating on quality and significance, the Cantors collected approximately 750 large- and small-scale sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs, and memorabilia. As an extension of their collecting zeal and their generous patronage the Cantors undertook a program to share their art with the public, a mission now actively promoted by Mrs. Cantor, who serves as Chairman and President of the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation. More than 450 works from the Cantor Collection have been given to over seventy museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. In addition, the Cantors donated 187 Rodin sculptures to the Stanford University Museum of Art and established the Rodin Research Fund at Stanford University to enable Ph.D. candidates to conduct research and travel abroad.

The Cantor Collection traces its origins to 1945, when B. Gerald Cantor wandered into the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. There he was “touched” by a marble version of Rodin’s *The Hand of God*. Eighteen months later Mr. Cantor purchased a bronze version of *The Hand of God*. This early acquisition was the beginning of a lifetime of philanthropy and patronage of the arts. In recognition of Mr. Cantor’s commitment to Rodin, the Musée Rodin in Paris presented him with an original plaster of *The Hand of God* in 1973. The Cantors heightened the public’s awareness of Rodin’s work through their commission for the casting of Rodin’s monumental sculpture *The Gates of Hell*. An award-winning documentary film, *Rodin: The Gates of Hell*, was produced by Iris Cantor and chronicles the painstaking four-year, lost-wax casting process.

The Cantors have received numerous awards and honors in recognition of their generosity. In October 1995 President and Mrs. Clinton presented the Cantors with the National Medal of Arts in recognition of their patronage of the arts. Continuing



Mr. and Mrs. B. Gerald Cantor

her husband’s legacy as a quintessential philanthropist, Iris Cantor serves as a member of the boards of directors of more than a dozen arts and medical institutions nationwide. The Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation in Los Angeles was established in 1978 to promote and encourage recognition and appreciation of excellence in the arts and to enhance cultural life internationally through the support of art exhibitions, scholarship, and the endowment of galleries and sculpture gardens at major museums. The Foundation also organizes and circulates traveling exhibitions on Rodin; to date, exhibitions have been seen in more than 150 venues in the United States, England, Japan, Venezuela, Italy, and Israel.

In addition to cultural activities, the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation is committed to supporting biomedical research. Of particular interest to the Foundation is the support of healthcare initiatives for women, with an emphasis on the early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. The Foundation makes significant grants to support new patient facilities, laboratories, and research fellowships at hospitals and medical centers. Major gifts have been provided in New York to New York Hospital–Cornell Medical Center and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Hospital, and in Los Angeles to the UCLA Medical Center.

B. Gerald Cantor was founder and chairman of the board of Cantor Fitzgerald, an international securities firm. Iris Cantor is CEO and President of Cantor Fitzgerald Incorporated, a financial holding company. Mrs. Cantor is a resident of Bel Air, California.

Auguste Rodin

At the height of his career, Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) was regarded as the greatest sculptor since Michelangelo. His genius lay in his ability to liberate both his subject matter and his style from nineteenth-century academic conventions through a heightened sense of personal artistic expression. Rodin's artistic mission was to communicate the vitality of the human spirit. His vigorous modeling technique was subjective and impressionistic; he captured movement and depth of emotion by altering traditional poses and gestures to create new forms of intense vitality. His pioneering work lives in the public's imagination because of his bold technique and his choice of often nontraditional and provocative subject matter.

Born to modest means, Rodin attended the École Impériale de Dessin (the "Petite École," a government school for craft and design) and the Gobelins tapestry manufactory, where he studied drawing. Although he was awarded two prizes for drawing and modeling at the age of seventeen, Rodin was unable to gain admittance to the prestigious and conservative École des Beaux-Arts, which refused him three times. For part of his career Rodin earned a living by producing ornamental sculpture under the French master of decorative arts, Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse. Around the end of 1875 he journeyed to Italy to study the sculpture of Michelangelo, whose work greatly influenced his style.

By 1900 Rodin had achieved the pinnacle of success: European nobility paid him tribute, and an entire pavilion was devoted to his work at the Paris World Exposition. In 1908 he moved to the Hôtel Biron, where he lived and worked until his death in 1917. A year before he died, Rodin donated his entire estate to the French government. Today the Hôtel Biron serves as the home of the Musée Rodin, which is dedicated to his work.



Rodin in his Sunday best, c. 1864, photographed by Charles Aubrey

In accordance with Auguste Rodin's will, the Musée Rodin was given the right to cast Rodin's sculpture posthumously. In 1956 French law limited production to twelve casts of each model. A system of numbering was established by French legislation in 1968 whereby the first eight of the twelve casts, numbered 1/8–8/8, have been available to the public for purchase; the last four, numbered 1/IV–IV/IV, have been reserved for cultural institutions. This law was reestablished and strictly imposed in 1981.

Sculpture in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

In the later part of the nineteenth century, sculpture became a large-scale enterprise. Growing cities, an expanding and wealthy middle class, and the industrial revolution created an unprecedented demand for multiple copies of popular sculpture. In that age of insatiable markets and government commissions there was no sculptor more modern, more admired, or more controversial than Auguste Rodin. The avant-garde and bourgeoisie alike celebrated

this powerful, prolific man; and they demanded his art. Between 1898 and 1918, for example, the Barbedienne foundry alone produced 231 bronze casts of *The Eternal Spring* and 319 of *The Kiss*, two of the most popular sculptures, each available in four sizes. In the later part of the twentieth century, demand for Rodin's sculpture has undergone an explosive revival.

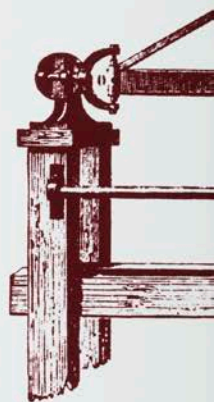


Auguste Rodin, *The Thinker*, 1880, enlarged in 1903-4, bronze, Georges Rudier Foundry, no. 10/12, 79 x 51 1/4 x 55 1/4 inches, Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation and Stanford University Museum of Art

Reductions and Enlargements

Many nineteenth-century sculptors ordered reductions made of their larger monuments so that they could be sold in an edition. Enlargements were less common and more difficult, but Rodin was very interested in transferring his work to a larger scale. He collaborated closely with his associate Henri Lebossé on both reductions and enlargements, and if they were not executed perfectly Rodin rejected them. Rodin's best known sculpture, *The Thinker*, was first conceived as twenty-eight inches high. The sculptor had it reduced to just fourteen-and-three-quarter inches in 1898, and then later enlarged to a monumental size of seventy-nine inches in 1903-4.

Invented in 1836 by French engineer Achille Collas, the Collas machine uses a pantograph system to make proportionately larger or smaller duplications of a sculpture. The concept can be traced to ancient Greek and Roman artists, who desired to reproduce the perfect proportions of the human figure in their sculptures. Their method was called pointing, which meant that measurements of the desired figure were taken, then proportionally increased or decreased on a model. Collas machines often look like lathes. On one turntable sits the plaster model. On a second



The Lost-Wax Casting Process

The most common casting method used through the ages was the *cire-perdue* or lost-wax process. Although expensive and time consuming, the lost-wax method allows the artist to accurately reproduce the delicate nuances of the original model.

Model for the ten-step lost-wax casting process of Rodin's *Sorrow* (1889)

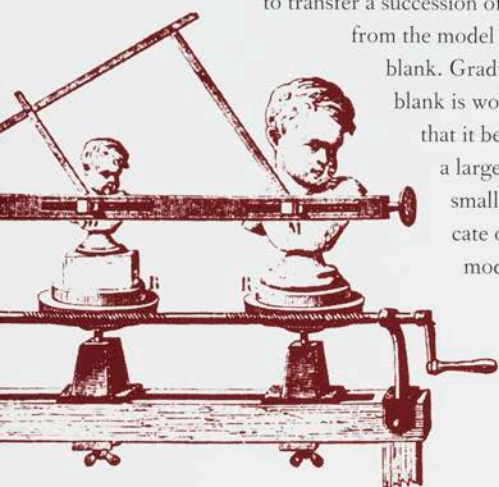


1

The sculptor creates a model, which is generally made of plaster, clay, marble, stone, or wood.

turntable, connected to the first, sits a clay or plaster “blank” that has been roughly shaped to resemble the model but on a larger or smaller scale.

The Collas machine keeps the model and the blank in the same orientation, as the technician uses a tracing needle, linked to a sharp cutting instrument, to transfer a succession of profiles from the model onto the blank. Gradually the blank is worked so that it becomes a larger or smaller duplicate of the model.



ABOVE Collas sculpture-reducing machine as depicted in a nineteenth-century publication (Paul Poiré, *La France Industrielle* [Librairie Hachette, 1880])

RIGHT Georges Bigel uses the Collas machine. **Top:** Checking the points of the cutting needles. **Middle:** The slow process of eradicating the rougher vertical cuts to move to the final plaster surface. **Bottom:** The enlarging process, showing the figure to be enlarged in clay and how the reproducer makes the vertical cuts in the rough model.



2
An impression of the model is made in a bed of very fine elastic material supported by a rigid outer layer. The supportive layer is designed to withstand the pressure of melted wax running through the mold.



3
This sharply defined mold is used to create a fireproof clay model, identical to the artist's original model.

The Gates of Hell

The Gates of Hell (1880–c. 1900) was Rodin's most ambitious commission. Originally conceived as the entrance portal for a never-realized museum of decorative arts in Paris, *The Gates* features hundreds of figures modeled in high relief and in-the-round. The imagery in *The Gates* was inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy* (c. 1307), an imaginary tale of a journey through Hell and Purgatory to Paradise, and by Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857), a volume of poetry that examined complex, often morbid emotional states. The visual model for Rodin's *Gates* was the long-standing tradition of decorative, compartmentalized church portals, specifically the Florence baptistery doors (1425–52) designed by the Italian Renaissance artist Lorenzo Ghiberti. However, Rodin abandoned the formal structure of traditional doors, creating an environment of tormented souls in which figures float and weave in a surging arrangement representing the suffering of mankind. Beginning in the 1880s, Rodin exhibited many of the figures from *The Gates of Hell* independently as freestanding sculptures. Among the most well known are *The Thinker* (1880) and *The Three Shades* (1881–86). Although *The Gates of Hell* was never cast in bronze during Rodin's lifetime, several casts were made after his death, including one commissioned by the Cantors, which they donated to Stanford University Museum of Art in 1984.



4

The surface of the clay model is scraped, reducing it by the desired thickness of the final bronze.



5

After closing the mold around the clay model, wax is poured into the space between the model and the mold. This stage is crucial in producing a perfect reproduction of the initial sculpture. The result is a wax model which is hand finished to fidelity, incorporating the artist's signature, cast number, and foundry seal.

The Burghers of Calais

The Burghers of Calais (1884–88) was commissioned for the city of Calais, France, and represents a dramatic event that occurred there in 1347, during the Hundred Years War. Six leading citizens of Calais volunteered themselves as hostages to the English king Edward III, in exchange for his lifting an eleven-month siege on their city. Rodin's final version of *The Burghers of Calais* defied French academic canons traditionally used to portray heroism and depicted each man at the moment that he realized the limits of his humanity. The figures are barefoot, wearing sackcloth, and their anguish is evident from their despondent poses and gestures. The shift in focus from triumphant glory to human suffering changed the form and meaning of the public monument as it was known at the time. To achieve a more dramatic and emotional effect, Rodin placed the figures on a low platform, a radical move for his day, which allowed viewers to come close enough to clearly read the complex facial expressions. Mr. and Mrs. Cantor donated a cast of *The Burghers of Calais* to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1990.



OPPOSITE Auguste Rodin, *The Gates of Hell*, 1880–c. 1900, bronze, Coubertin Foundry, no. 5/12, 250 3/4 x 158 x 33 1/8 inches, Stanford University Museum of Art, gift of the B. Gerald Cantor Collections (Photo: Frank Wing)

ABOVE Auguste Rodin, *The Burghers of Calais*, 1884–88, bronze, Coubertin Foundry, no. 1/11, 82 1/2 x 94 x 75 inches, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Iris and B. Gerald Cantor, 1988



6 Wax conduits, called sprues and gates, are attached to the model. They act as channels through which the wax, when heated, will escape.



7 A finely granulated ceramic is gradually applied to the surface of the model and its conduits until it becomes thick and coarse. The end result is called an "investment mold." The mold is then dried and heated; the wax melts and flows out of the mold, leaving a space between the fire resistant clay model and the investment mold. This process is called the "lost-wax method."

Monument to Victor Hugo



The original commission for a monument to Victor Hugo was awarded to Rodin in 1889 by the French government as part of a new program of sculpture for the Panthéon in Paris. The commission held great personal significance for Rodin, who, like many in France of the period, idolized Hugo for his literary and political achievements. Although Rodin worked on the project intensely, his monument for the Panthéon was never realized. Often the argument has been made that Rodin was at fault for the failure of the project, but the complexities he was faced with may have been insurmountable.

In brief, the reactionary political climate of the 1890s (this was the period when the Dreyfus affair surfaced) and deep philosophical disagreements about the role of public sculpture made an agreeable conclusion to the commission almost impossible. The monument was finally cast in bronze when it was commissioned by the city of Paris in 1952 to commemorate the centennial of Victor Hugo's poem *Les Châtiments* (1853).

The monument depicts Victor Hugo seated in contemplation, with two allegorical figures representing his inspiration: standing on his left is *Meditation* and hovering over his right shoulder is the *Tragic Muse*. As well as celebrat-

ing the extraordinarily prolific career of Victor Hugo, the monument commemorates his years in exile, when he resided on the rocky island of Guernsey rather than return to the France of Napoleon III.

A second cast of the monument was commissioned by B. Gerald Cantor, through the Cantor Foundation in 1995, making the sculpture accessible to an audience outside of France.



8
The investment mold is then heated to a high temperature and covered with a coating, which must be completely dry before bronze pouring begins.



9
Molten bronze is then poured into the cavity of the mold, filling the space left by the wax model. The mold is broken and the metal appears; the figure and its conduits are an exact reproduction of the wax figure in step 6.

Monument to Balzac

In 1891 Rodin received the commission to create a monument to one of France's most influential writers, Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850). Since Balzac had been dead for forty years, Rodin faced the challenge of having to render his likeness from photographs. Rodin researched Balzac extensively, going so far as to order a suit from Balzac's tailor to visualize the writer's size and girth. Rodin struggled for seven years to achieve an accurate physical portrayal of Balzac that also symbolized the author's creative genius. About fifty known studies have been documented, some of which are based on Balzac's actual appearance. Others, like the final monument, offer highly subjective and abstract portrayals. No other sculpture brought Rodin as much heartache as his *Monument to Balzac*. In 1898, when it was presented to the public, the monument was received with outrage, disbelief, and ridicule. Pained by criticism, Rodin did not cast the final sculpture in bronze before his death. The Cantors commissioned a cast of the *Monument to Balzac* and donated it to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1968.

OPPOSITE Auguste Rodin, *Monument to Victor Hugo*, 1897, bronze, Coubertin Foundry, no. 1/8, 72 3/4 x 112 1/8 x 63 3/4 inches, Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation (Photo: Meidad Suchowolski)

RIGHT Auguste Rodin, *Monument to Balzac*, c. 1897, bronze, Susse Foundry, no. 9/12, 117 x 47 1/4 x 47 1/4 inches, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of B. Gerald Cantor Art Foundation



10

The conduits are then cut and worked so that no trace of them can be seen. This procedure of hand-finishing the bronze to perfection is called "chasing." Remains of the fireproof clay model left inside the bronze are now removed



11

Upon completion of the chasing, hot or cold oxides are applied to the surface of the bronze, creating a thin layer of corrosion. This layer, usually brown, green, or blue in color, is called the "patina."

Chronology

RODIN

1840–1850

- Auguste Rodin born November 12, 1840, in Paris to Jean-Baptiste Rodin and Marie Cheffier
- Has first drawing lesson at age ten

1851–1860

- Rodin begins studies at the Petite École but fails entrance exam for the École des Beaux-Arts three times
- Works commercially in the decorative arts, plaster and stone carving

1861–1870

- Rodin's beloved sister Maria dies; while mourning he briefly joins a Catholic order
- Meets Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux; works with Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse
- Meets Rose Beuret, his lifelong companion, who bears his son, Auguste-Eugène
- Creates *Man with the Broken Nose* and suffers the first of many rejections by the Paris Salon

1871–1880

- Rodin is discharged from the National Guard for nearsightedness
- Works in Belgium with Carrier-Belleuse; returns to Paris in 1877
- Sees Michelangelo's work in Florence
- Creates *The Age of Bronze* in 1876 and *The Walking Man* in 1877
- Commission for *The Gates of Hell*, 1880

1881–1890

- Rodin meets Camille Claudel in 1883
- Commission for *The Burghers of Calais*, 1884; definitive model shown in a joint exhibition with Monet at Galerie Georges Petit in Paris, 1889
- Original plaster example of *The Kiss*, 1886; a marble version in 1888
- Commission for the monument to Victor Hugo, 1889

1891–1900

- Rodin receives commission for the monument to Balzac, 1891
- Elected president of the sculpture section of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts
- Rodin's marble sculpture is in great demand; he creates *The Hand of God* in marble, 1898
- Retrospective, Paris World Exposition, 1900

1901–1910

- Rodin is visited by Edward Steichen and King Edward VII
- *The Thinker* is installed at the Panthéon in Paris
- Rodin experiments with enlargements of partial figures, as in *The Cathedral*, 1908

1911–1917

- Rodin travels despite wartime difficulties; his sculpture is shown throughout Europe
- Bequeaths his estate to France in 1916
- Marries Rose Beuret on January 29, 1917; she dies three weeks later
- Rodin dies November 17, 1917, and is laid to rest at Meudon

THE WORLD AND THE ARTS

- Claude Monet born in 1840; death of Honoré de Balzac, 1850
- Revolution sweeps through Europe; *The Communist Manifesto*, by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, is published in 1848

- Louis Napoleon declares himself emperor in 1852; the Second Empire is established; Victor Hugo begins eighteen years of self-imposed exile in opposition.
- Charles Darwin writes *On the Origin of Species*

- United States Civil War; Franco-Prussian War
- Victor Hugo writes *Les Misérables*; Dostoyevsky writes *Crime and Punishment*
- Deaths of Henry Thoreau, Charles Dickens, and Alexandre Dumas
- Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* published in 1867; Suez canal opens in 1869
- Napoleon III holds "Salon de Refusés" to exhibit works rejected by the Academy.

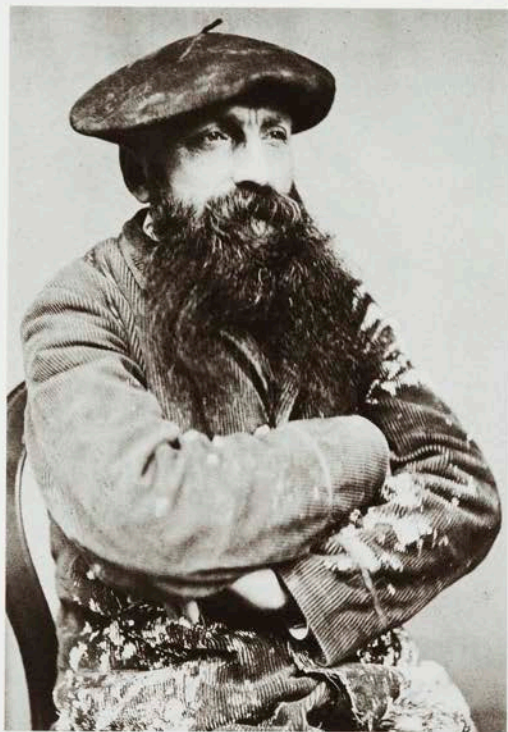
- German Empire proclaimed by Otto von Bismarck, 1871
- The word "impressionism" is coined; Whistler paints portrait of his mother
- Jules Verne publishes *Around the World in Eighty Days*
- Sioux defeat Custer at Little Bighorn, 1876

- Freedom of the press established in France; trade unions legalized
- Pablo Picasso, Coco Chanel, and Adolf Hitler are born
- Deaths of Victor Hugo, Vincent van Gogh, and Karl Marx
- Statue of Liberty erected; Eiffel Tower built
- Rapid expansion of railways in the western United States

- Sigmund Freud publishes *The Interpretation of Dreams*
- Paul Gauguin settles in Tahiti; Aubrey Beardsley spreads art nouveau style; the symbolist movement is active
- Tate Gallery opens in London
- Nobel Prize instituted; the Paris subway opens
- Alfred Dreyfus arrested for treason, 1894; pardoned, 1899

- Picasso has first exhibition in Paris; paints *Les Femmes d'Alger*
- Deaths of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Paul Gauguin, Whistler, and Paul Cézanne
- Separation of church and state in France

- World War I begins, 1914; Bolshevik Revolution, 1917
- Marcel Duchamp paints *Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2*, 1912; Wassily Kandinsky creates nonobjective paintings
- Albert Einstein formulates general theory of relativity
- Cubist works are exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants



TOP Rodin's funeral, November 24, 1917. At the sculptor's request, *The Thinker* stands at his tomb in Meudon. Photograph by Pierre Choumoff. (Photo: Musée Rodin)

LEFT Rodin about 1880, in a plaster-spattered coat. (Photo: Musée Rodin)

ABOVE Rodin in 1917 posing with friends and associates in front of the full-scale plaster version of *The Gates of Hell* at Meudon. Standing at the artist's right is Léonce Bénédite, first curator of the Musée Rodin; to his left is Henri Lebossé, who was responsible for reductions and enlargements of Rodin's sculpture; in the foreground is Eugène Rudier of the Alexis Rudier Foundry, where the *Gates* was originally cast. (Photo: Collection Robert Descharnes)



Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation

P.O. BOX 811, Beverly Hills, California 90213

<http://www.cantorfoundation.com>

ABOVE Rodin at work on the bust of Father Eymard, 1863 (Photo: Musée Rodin)

FRONT COVER August Rodin, *Heroic Bust of Victor Hugo*, 1890-97 or 1901-2, bronze, Georges Rudier Foundry, no. 5/12, 1967
27 3/4 x 18 3/4 x 18 3/4 inches, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of B. Gerald Cantor Art Foundation