



RODIN: TRUTH, FORM, LIFE: Selections from
the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collections -
Ephemera

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Fall 2019

RODIN: TRUTH, FORM, LIFE Selections from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collections Originals Rewall Panel

Fairfield University Art Museum

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Original?

During Rodin's lifetime, he made and sold as many bronzes for which there were buyers. The art marketplace was lively and he wanted to be rich and famous. However, it was (and remains) typical that only works made during an artist's lifetime were considered to be authentic and original.

Before he died in 1917, Auguste Rodin understood that his achievements would be forgotten unless he took matters into his own hands and saw to the creation of a museum to celebrate his sculpture and guard his legacy. The government of France was interested, but only if a way could be found to fund such a museum without using public money (which fund all French government-owned museums). To provide funding for his museum, Rodin took the then-unusual step of authorizing posthumous casting of his bronzes, to be sold to benefit the museum. Such casts are termed "authorized posthumous casts" and are deemed originals by French law and the international art world. Their sale has funded the operations of the Musée Rodin since its establishment. The French government has vested the Musée with the authority to determine what is a true and original cast (i.e., made by Rodin himself or made by it, as authorized by him) and what is not authorized and thus an illegal forgery. The Musée Rodin rigorously exercises this authority. Accordingly, all of the Rodins in the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collection and Cantor Foundation Collection are original. Most of these artworks were commissioned directly from the Musée Rodin and were cast by its selected foundry, Coubertin.

In this exhibition the labels will help you understand the origin of each piece. The label tells you when Rodin originally modeled the piece in clay or plaster. Where appropriate, the label also tells you when the piece was first enlarged or reduced in size. Next you will see the cast number. At the time Rodin lived, artists did not number their casts and rarely limited the number of casts that could be made of a piece; indeed, we know Rodin was happiest when he was selling dozens of casts of a work. Nearly 40 years after Rodin's death, France enacted a law limiting the number of casts that could be made of a piece to twelve. Each of these twelve is an authorized original. Another French law, passed in 1968, makes these multiples subject to a specific numbering system. Thus, when you read a label that says "Modeled 1883, cast 1996, Musée Rodin edition of 3 (or sometimes 3/8 or 3/12)," it is telling you that Rodin created the clay model in 1883; that this bronze was cast, according to Rodin's wishes and authorization, by the Musée Rodin in 1996; and that it is the third in an edition of 12 casts. The label also tells you which foundry cast the work (Coubertin, Alexis Rudier, Godard, etc.).