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Encountering the Male Nude at the Origins of Modern Sculpture. Rodin, Leighton, Hildebrand, and the Negotiation of Physicality and Temporality

The life-size free-standing male nude, beginning perhaps with the Archaic *kouroi* but epitomized in Polykleitos's *Doryphoros*, functioned up to the twentieth century as the central sculptural genre through which individual sculptors mediated tradition and convention. A pivotal episode in this tradition occurred in the late 1870s and early 1880s when – following artists such as Donatello, Michelangelo, and Thorwaldsen – the male nude was deployed by Auguste Rodin, Frederic Leighton, and Adolf von Hildebrand in their redefinitions of sculptural practice and theory. Many sculptors in the late nineteenth century undertook the challenge of breaking with convention through and within the male nude format. Rodin, Leighton, and Hildebrand, however, present three foundational cases that helped to determine the form of modern sculpture in France, Britain, and Germany. All three displaced emphasis away from subject-matter and illustration, attending instead to the phenomenal encounter between viewer and sculpture and to the physical presence of the statue as material body. Strategically, each employed temporality and duration to activate in the viewer a self-consciousness of the physical, bodily engagement with sculpture. In what follows, I will analyze the manner in which each of these sculptors negotiated with physicality and temporality in their reorientation of sculpture. These three cases delineate a general strategy crucial to an understanding of the subsequent development of modern and modernist sculpture.

I.

Auguste Rodin's *Age of Bronze* has conventionally been regarded as one of the seminal works in the history of modern sculpture (Fig. 1). Completed in 1876 when Rodin was thirty-six years old, it was his first full-size figure to be exhibited. This male nude, in turn, heralded Rodin's fame as the dominant sculptor of the late nineteenth century and signaled a departure from the existing parameters of sculpture. Exhibited in Brussels in January 1877 and at the Paris Salon in May of that same year, the statue met with insinuations that it had been com-



Fig. 1: Auguste Rodin. *Age of Bronze*, 1875-76, bronze, height 181 cm.
Leeds Museums & Galleries (City Art Gallery).

posed of plaster casts of a model's body (*surmoulage*) rather than being sculpted by Rodin's own hand. The body of the *Age of Bronze* seemed too unconventional and, by extension, too "real". On its first exhibition in Brussels, one critic offered mixed praise, saying that whereas the statue's 'oddness' initially attracted interest, it sustained that interest because of its display of 'a quality that is as rare as it is precious: life.'¹ The writer went on to voice rumours that this quality may have been achieved through the mechanical process of casting. In Paris later that year, accusations continued to be debated that 'this work, so remarkably real, [bears] within it the traces of a cast from life.'²

The impetus for the statue (originally titled *The Vanquished One* and at one point conceived of holding a spear) may have initially arisen from Rodin's intention to address the trauma of the Franco-Prussian War, as Ruth Butler has speculated.³ He changed the title to *The Age of Bronze* for the Paris exhibition, perhaps obliquely alluding to recent anthropological arguments that the Bronze Age saw the awakening of culture. This reference was equally obscure for contemporary viewers, and many commentators openly criticized Rodin for not providing enough information. His primary concern, as it would later be remembered, was to create 'a simple piece of sculpture without reference to subject.'⁴ The opacity of and vacillation between titles suggest that Rodin's intention was to make illustration and external supporting narrative subordinate to the encounter with the material object itself. Furthering his retreat from the illustrative or allegorical conventions of free-standing sculpture, Rodin also stripped away any identifying attributes. Without a spear nor, for that matter, with any hints as to its subject-matter or iconographic interpretation, the sculpture was first and foremost a statue of an unspecified nude male body. Beyond the lack of reference to anything other than the canonical tradition of the free-standing male nude, the figure also resisted straightforward empathetic projection, displaying only a psychologically ambiguous countenance. The majority of viewers found themselves in unfamiliar territory. Speculations – often contradictory – as to whether the figure was a warrior, a labourer, about to commit suicide, or Adam himself grew in response to Rodin's cultivation of ambiguity.

The iconographic unspecificity of the figure mirrored its unfamiliar compositional structure. The active balance of the traditional freestanding male nude – exemplified in the classic contrapposto pose – gave way in Rodin's statue to an idiosyncratic and unconventional treatment of the body and its stance. Contrapposto was central to the heritage and vicissitudes of the free-standing male nude and provided figures with a hint of movement and life without abandoning repose and stability. More importantly, contrapposto lent a consistency and wholeness to depicted bodies and their movements, allowing – in some interpretations – the perfectly harmonized figure to function as a sign for the ideal subject. Though superficially analogous to contrapposto and its rhythms, the

stance of the *Age of Bronze* was comparatively unbalanced and untypical. Altering the expected positions of arms, legs, and head, Rodin destabilized the pose, leaving a pale echo of contrapposto to make clear his repudiation of the conventional formulae. From some viewing angles the figure seems to be standing with his weight pivoted at the left hip, while from other angles (especially the sides) the figure's upper body appears to lurch precariously forward. No vantage point, however, conveys the architectonic stability, holistic integration, harmonious rhythms, or weighted balance of academic or classical contrapposto.

He effected this destabilization in a body with a highly naturalistic and credible musculature – as said in 1877, the figure had 'une réalité remarquable.' While still athletic, the sculptural body presented in the *Age of Bronze* did not display the perfect symmetries and muscular articulation that had come to be expected of the academic male nude statue. Rodin developed a procedure of building up the sculptural body as a series of counterinflecting adjacent planes, a method derived from his own study of Ancient and Renaissance sculpture.⁵ His strategy replaced overall static compositional balance and solidity with a rhythmic, relational flow between parts and across the body. Effectively, Rodin shifted the terms of sculpture from mass and volume to surface (Fig. 2).

Exploiting the physical qualities of clay as translated into bronze, Rodin made the skin itself the primary object of interest rather than the anatomy it covered. For Rodin, the skin 'bore the precious trace of what it meant to live at any time' and was the threshold where the sculptor's hands, the material object, and the viewer's looking met.⁶ Just as he chose to represent an individual and untypical body, he concerned himself with capturing the particularities and variations across the surface. His statue did not rely on either the summary and homogenizing treatments of the neoclassical tradition or on the conventional tools for displaying 'naturalism' that characterized much Salon sculpture in the period. He did not seek to efface materiality and *facture* but rather cultivated their contributions to the sculptural surface and its complexity. Unlike other statues of the time, Rodin's figure did not display strong contrasts between shadow and highlight to accentuate clearly defined anatomical structures beneath the surface. Rather, the sculptural skin presents us with a gradually metamorphosing topography, distinct rather than uniform at every point. As Rainer Maria Rilke wrote of the statue: 'The most searching eye could not discover in this figure any place less alive, less definite, less expressive than another.'⁷ The subtly faceted sculptural surface catches barely discernible half-lights and half-shadows. Especially in the final material of dark, reflective bronze, these variations are only imperfectly and partially available to the eye. Like the tactilely rich but barely perceptible presence of Braille lettering on white paper, the sculptural skin of the *Age of Bronze* resists being apprehended by vision alone. Its complexity eludes the eye and incites the desire to touch. Even if this desire is never acted upon and remains



Fig. 2: Auguste Rodin, *Age of Bronze* (as in Fig. 1), detail.

imaginary, the statue's physicality becomes an integral element of the viewer's experience (Fig. 2).

Rodin's focus in the *Age of Bronze* was on the outermost boundaries of the figure: the edge, the profile, the surface, the skin. He focused on shifting boundaries and on variations across surfaces, studying their creation of episodic perceptual incidents. Rather than the stability of an overall whole, he concerned himself with the multiple profiles and glimpses established by the statue and spent many hours analyzing the pose from all sides. He abandoned the conventional emphasis on contour and rationalized shape, replacing it with investigations into the viewer's motility and the dynamic processes of apprehending a complex body in space. Rodin attempted to encourage the viewer to attend to the particularities of beholding the sculptural body as direct and unique rather than as typical. He stressed, that is, the interdependence of the statue with the viewer's on-going process of perceiving it. While still presenting a naturalistic pose and body, he engaged the viewer in a process of looking which gradually encouraged her or him to attend to and to focus on the immediate presence of surface incident, detail, and the local relationships between parts in and along the statue.

In its break with academic sculpture, the *Age of Bronze* marked the beginnings of an increasing emphasis on touch, *facture*, and indexicality in Rodin's work. Referring to Rodin's whole *œuvre*, Rosalind Krauss has emphasized that the tactile qualities of Rodin's surfaces were intimately related to temporality, seeing the surfaces of his sculptures as both the visible traces of the coming into being of the material object and the ground of the viewer's experience. Overturning a motivating axiom of figurative sculpture and its humanist justifications, Krauss characterized Rodin's innovations as, at base, a repudiation of the ideal of securely-fixed, pre-given, universal, or transcendent meaning:

Again and again Rodin forces the viewer to acknowledge the work as a result of a process, an act that has shaped the figure over time. And this acknowledgment becomes another factor in forcing on the viewer that condition of which I have spoken: meaning does not precede experience but occurs in the process of experience itself.⁸

As one of Rodin's earliest mature works, the *Age of Bronze* does not exhibit the self-consciously dramatic display of indexical traces of the artistic process that would become the most recognizable aspect of his later style. Krauss's recognition of the interdependence of physicality and temporality in the encounter with Rodin's surfaces, however, is equally perceptive for this 'so remarkably real' sculptural body. In the *Age of Bronze*, Rodin transformed the genre of the male nude. He abandoned the ideal of a statue as illustration or self-evident symbol and instead required the viewer to engage in an extended process of encountering the sculptural body directly. He dramatized the motile and temporal engage-

ments between viewer and statue, making the processes of perception and apprehension central and motivating concerns for sculpture.

II.

In a work exhibited the same year that the *Age of Bronze* was seen in Paris, Frederic Leighton also attempted to bring the viewer into an active physical and temporal relation with the male nude. Unlike Rodin's emphasis on detailed scrutiny, however, Leighton led the viewer into an extended circumambulatory encounter. Leighton has been more widely acknowledged as a painter and as President of the Royal Academy of Arts. He executed only three finished sculptures in his long career. The first of these – the *Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (Figs 3–5) created between 1874 and 1877 – ushered in a widespread reformation in sculptural style and technique in late-Victorian Britain that has since become known as 'The New Sculpture'.⁹ Leighton's entry into sculpture, like Rodin's *Age of Bronze*, suppressed a direct iconographic reference. Many Victorian and twentieth-century commentators have cited the Vatican *Laocoön* (frontispiece) as the source of the subject-matter. Though Leighton capitalized on the canonical authority of the *Laocoön*, his initial idea for the statue came from studies for his large painting of an Apollonian procession – the *Daphnephoria* – and, laterally, an association with the story of Apollo's struggle with the Python of Delphi. Regardless of the source of the subject-matter, Leighton never referred to the work as anything but an athlete. He emphasized it first and foremost as his experiment with the male nude and with the sculptural medium.

Leighton unveiled the *Athlete* at the 1877 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition fully-finished in bronze. He explicitly intended it as his challenge to the Victorian art world and, in conjunction, had two goals in making the statue. First, it attested to his artistic ability in a variety of media, and, second, it was specifically directed at British sculptors as a contrast to the general inadequacies that he and many others saw in their work. To increase the stakes of this undertaking, Leighton adapted the format of the male nude. Breaking with Victorian convention, he created the first fully nude adult male statue for decades. Leighton's gambit was well received. He was elected President of the Royal Academy the following year and saw, over the two decades of his presidency, a renaissance in sculptural production, training, and consumption in the British Empire.

As with Rodin's *Age of Bronze*, critics struggled to identify just *what* was being represented or symbolized by the athlete and his python. Similarly, many of the suggestions as to its moral content were contradictory. Unlike the didactic and illustrative considerations that provided the impetus for much mid-Victorian sculpture, the *Athlete* was a technical and art-theoretical experiment derived



Fig. 3: Frederic Leighton, *Athlete Wrestling with a Python*, 1874–77, bronze, height 175 cm. London, Tate Britain.

foremost from Leighton's struggle with the complexity of three-dimensional figures. That is, the statue was Leighton's answer to the problem of representing bodies that exist literally in space and time rather than in the removed realm of the pictorial. Leighton first began sculpting as a means to improve the veracity of his painted figures. He made small sketch models to work out the feasibility of poses and bodies before painting them on canvas. He rotated these statuettes in his hands as a way of understanding how best to translate the three-dimensional body to a two-dimensional pictorial format. In the course of this process, Leighton came to the basic yet profound realization that three-dimensional figures in the round demanded a different manner of perceptual apprehension than that of painted bodies on a flat surface. In short, sculpture's physical co-presence with the viewer required a negotiation with the *viewer's* movement through space and time. In a move analogous to some later modernist concerns with the essential qualities of artistic media, Leighton created a sculpture that would capitalize on the complexity afforded by the succession of competing views received by the viewer as she or he moved around the statue.¹⁰

The *Athlete* fulfilled Leighton's goal by embodying the process by which he attempted to comprehend bodies in three dimensions and sequentially from all sides. Leighton translated the spiralling rotation of his own handling of statuettes into the central compositional and representational conceit of the statue. The python, as it snakes around the *Athlete's* body, literally establishes a visual path for the viewer to follow around the object (Figs 3–5). The snake functioned as the externalization of Leighton's spiral composition. Just as Leighton rotated his statuettes to visualize them as coherent bodies in space, he encouraged the viewer to circumambulate around the *Athlete* to acknowledge its spatial and, consequently, temporal existence. In turn, the body of the snake partially disrupts views of the *Athlete's* body so that no one comprehensive view of the statue can be established, further spurring the viewing participant's movement. This spiral composition physically draws the viewer around the work into a continuing process of bodily relation. This physical movement around the statue and the interference between python and athlete serve to establish a succession of myopic and incomplete views of the sculpture, none of which provide an adequate establishing view from which the body can be coherently comprehended. Henry James wrote of the statue in 1877: 'Whenever I have been to the Academy I have found a certain relief in looking for a while at this representation of the naked human body, the whole story of which begins and ends with the beautiful play of its muscles and limbs.'¹¹

Unlike statues with a dominant facet or clear frontality, the viewer's experience of the *Athlete* cannot be divorced from the physical and temporal process of circumambulation. We must keep circling as Leighton provided no adequate resting place where the body can be wholly apprehended visually – it must be



Figs 4 & 5: Frederic Leighton. *Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (as in Fig. 3).

experienced primarily in relation to our own movement, bodies, and duration of our encounter. Even more so than in the intimate situation of perceiving the surface drama of Rodin's *Age of Bronze*, the viewer becomes self-conscious of the physical and temporal nature of her or his involvement in the sculptural encounter. Any retrospective recollection of the experience of the *Athlete* will be, as the James quotation captures, episodic rather than comprehensive, taking as its organizing content memories of the viewer's movement through time and space in relation to the statue. Other works in the history of sculpture have encouraged circumambulation to varying degrees. By making circumambulation the central conceit of the statue and its experience, however, Leighton created a self-reflexive statement of sculpture theory with the *Athlete* in which sculpture and the encounter were redefined primarily in terms of temporality and physicality. Akin to the phenomenological agendas of some twentieth-century sculpture (in particular, American Minimalism), the *Athlete* cannot be merely looked at but must be experienced self-consciously in time and space as a relation between bodies.

III.

Leighton's manifesto in bronze reinforced the temporal and physical aspects of the sculptural encounter, distancing them from pictorial representation. Adolf von Hildebrand attempted the opposite in his struggle to establish a new path for sculpture. Hildebrand is best remembered for his public works and his treatise *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst*. First published in 1893 and reprinted in multiple editions and translations, *The Problem of Form* is one of the cornerstones of twentieth-century art theory.¹² Through its influence on figures such as Alois Riegl and, quite profoundly, Heinrich Wölfflin, *The Problem of Form* substantively contributed to later modernist concerns with opticality and form.¹³ The 1893 text, however, was not Hildebrand's first attempt to codify a set of prescriptions for sculpture. Between 1881 and 1884, Hildebrand self-consciously took on the male nude format and the *Doryphoros* in particular, creating his own exemplar of his formalist agenda. The result was *Standing Man* (Figs 6–8), exhibited in 1884 as the centrepiece of his first major one-person exhibition.

It would be beyond the scope of the present argument to provide an extensive analysis of the parallel moves between *The Problem of Form* and its sculptural antecedent. Suffice it to say that a comparison of the two reveals a great deal about the contradictions and the unease with the body and the bodily in each. Briefly, *The Problem of Form* attempted to formulate a coherent system for art viewing and art making in which bodies and physical engagement become restricted in preference for opticality. Hildebrand understood artistic creation as a struggle to find rigorous formal purity and beauty among the raw materials of nature and perception. An individual may encounter moments of fleeting beauty or formal harmony in her or his daily perceptions of the everyday world, but it remained the artist's job to select and transform perceptual data, constructing objects that presented to the viewer perfect formal arrangements. Hildebrand based his treatise on the belief that the retinal perception of the world was always two-dimensional. Imagining the retina as a flat screen onto which perceptions were projected, Hildebrand considered sculpture's greatest challenge the overcoming of the problems arising from the perceptual transformation of the three-dimensional world into two-dimensional retinal pictures. An ideal sculpture, in his system, would present to the viewer an object that, after the process of perception flattened it out on the retina, would still be legible as a perfectly balanced, formal whole.

Hildebrand's emphasis on opticality in *The Problem of Form* led him to argue against the physical and, to a lesser extent, temporal aspects of the sculptural encounter. If one were to follow *The Problem of Form's* prescriptions, the viewer would be confined to a single, static point, unable to move away from the one ideal viewing position from which pure form became recognizable. Despite the



Fig. 6: Adolf von Hildebrand, *Standing Man*, 1881–84, marble, height 175 cm. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Nationalgalerie.

fact that Hildebrand deeply believed in sculpture as the most profound of artistic media, his text effectively censured the manifold physical and temporal elements of the sculptural encounter in preference for pure opticality. That is, both the sculptural body and the viewer's bodily engagement were suppressed in Hildebrand's system. The paradox of his simultaneous commitment to sculpture and to atemporal pure visual form fuelled many of the theoretical machinations of his treatise. The heritage of modernist opticality in sculpture which it established, culminating in Clement Greenberg's discussions of David Smith,¹⁴ would continue to struggle with the polarities between the formal and the physical set up by theorists such as Hildebrand.

Any thorough understanding of Hildebrand's theories of formalism must take into account *Standing Man*, his earlier attempt at a self-reflexive and prescriptive statement of sculpture theory. Instead of opposing physicality and temporality to form and opticality, with *Standing Man* Hildebrand sought to dramatize sculpture's rôle in capturing pure form through a controlled use of the temporal nature of the sculptural encounter. Arguably, it was the first life-size male nude without attributes altogether. *Standing Man* is just that – a male nude standing before us, the viewers. The extremity of this decision to bring external context to a minimum derived again from his devotion to pure form. We can look to artists and theorists such as Hildebrand and his companions Hans von Marées and Konrad Fiedler for one origin of the formalist repudiation of content that would become a strong current within modernist art. Fiedler perhaps said it most succinctly when he stated that 'interest in art begins only at the moment when interest in literary content vanishes.'¹⁵ Though on the surface Hildebrand's *Standing Man* seems to be continuous with the neoclassical tradition, the denial of what Fiedler called 'literary content' or external narrative was a formative attempt to deal with formal and sculptural values in isolation.

From what is conventionally considered the front angle – that is, perpendicular to the central plane of the body and to the rectangular base – *Standing Man* strikes us as far from ideal and hardly formally pure (Fig. 6). Unlike its Doryphoran ancestor, *Standing Man* seems uncomfortable in his body; he is unheroic, uncomposed, and untypical. The delicate balance of repose and motion of classical contrapposto here gives way to a slack and slouched body with feet flatly planted on the ground and hand feebly resting on disproportionate hips.

Looking at the statue from other angles seems to make the problem worse (Fig. 7). The nude increasingly appears not just to have evacuated all external narrative but all ideality as well. As with Rodin and Leighton, the mitigation of external narrative and the abandonment of conventional symbolic scaffolding for the male nude brought the viewer face to face with the body itself. More than the reputed bodily realism of Rodin or the muscularity of Leighton and despite the retention of a neoclassically-derived treatment of the surface, Hilde-

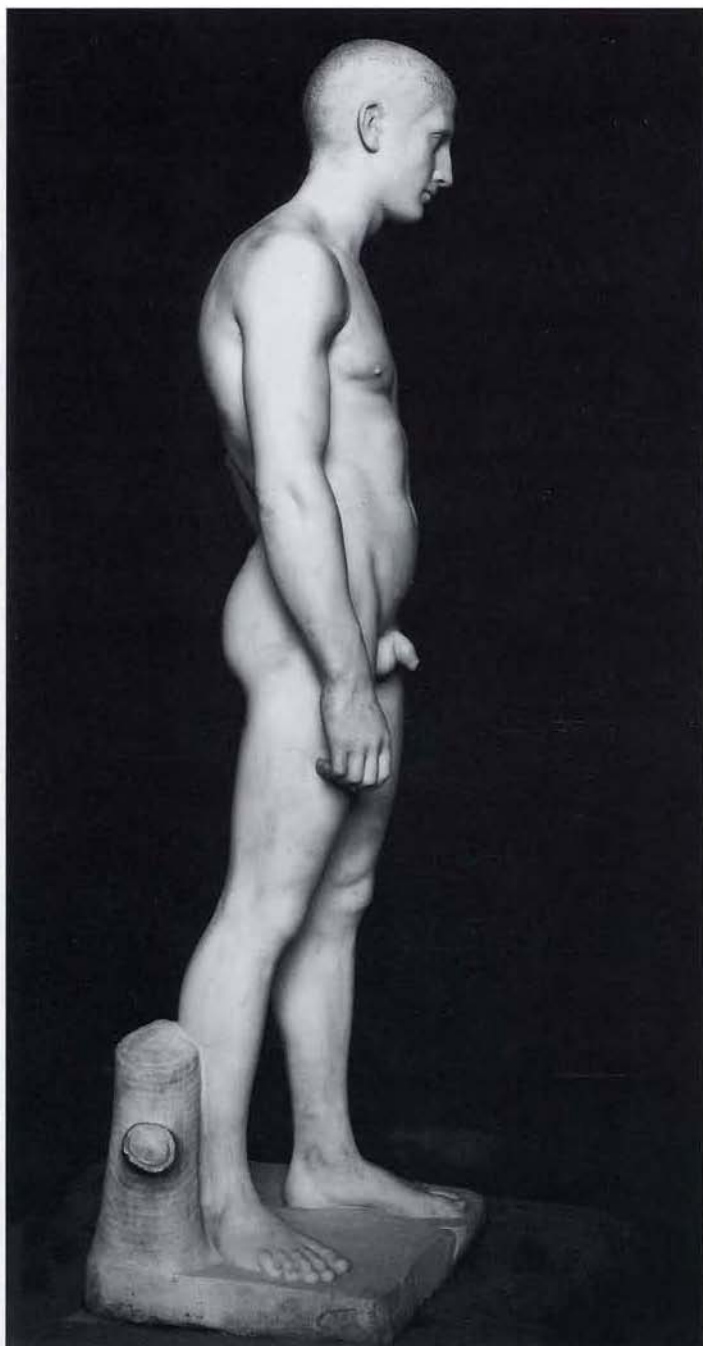


Fig. 7: Adolf von Hildebrand, *Standing Man*
(as in Fig. 6).

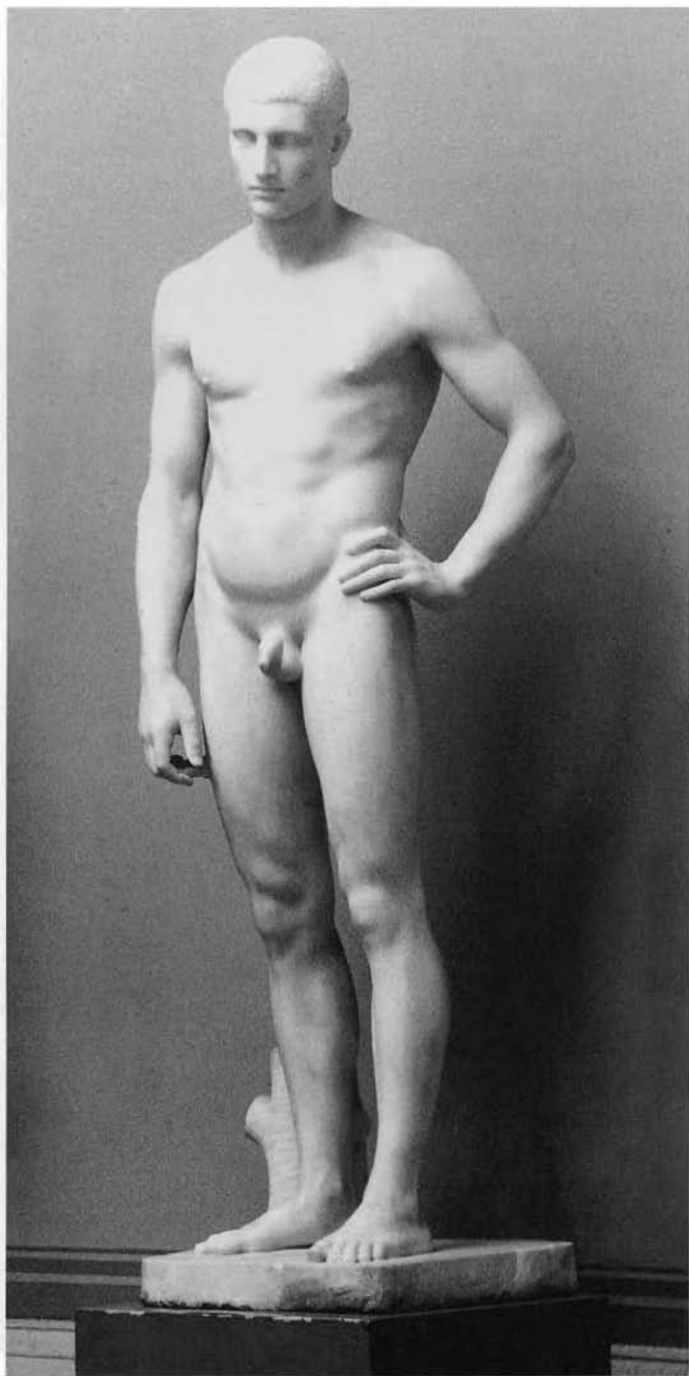


Fig. 8: Adolf von Hildebrand, *Standing Man* (as in Fig. 6).

brand's statue seems like a particular or individual body. Furthermore, unlike the on-going attention to the sculptural skin in the *Age of Bronze* or the potentially endless process of relating and engaging with the *Athlete Wrestling with a Python*, walking around Hildebrand's statue has a definite beginning and end. Our displeasure with this naked body and search for its meaning is meant to last only long enough for us to stop in our tracks when we reach the ideal viewing position (Fig. 8).

From this angle, roughly forty-five degrees to the right, all of the weighty bodiliness of *Standing Man* dissolves into a well-balanced, undulating form. The chest – looking so undeveloped in the other views – now appears broad and strong. The limply resting left hand is now firmly planted on the hip, and each body part falls in its place as part of a perfect picture. This angle is staged for the viewer as a moment of formal transcendence, literally demonstrating to the viewer the goal of the artist – transforming the raw material of nature (that is, a mere body) into the perfectly chosen visual image. Physicality and bodiliness give way to pure opticality as we see the male nude no longer as corporeal but as solely formal. Just as we could think of Leighton's endless duration, physicality, and circumambulation as analogous to the Minimalist art theory of an artist such as Robert Morris, one could compare the drama of transcendence possible in Hildebrand's *Standing Man* to the antithesis of Minimalism – Anthony Caro with his sculptures' similar constrained, unidirectional temporality.

Hildebrand's *Standing Man* capitalized on the tradition of the male nude format but attempted to constitute it as purely a vehicle for the arrangement of forms. By stripping away conventions and external supporting narratives, Hildebrand left the viewer with merely a body. The temporal was invoked as a means of staging formal transformation, suppressing physicality, and creating an optical dynamic. The drama orchestrated by *Standing Man* occurs when we realize that the mere body can be transformed by the artist into formal harmony. Despite this goal of Hildebrand's, however, the body does not simply fade away losing all its gender, class, and racial content. It remains there in front of the viewer with all its physical presence. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the viewer will remain transfixed by the ideal form, and she or he may instead prefer the slack, unheroic version of the body. In the following years, Hildebrand would devote a great deal of energy in his treatise *The Problem of Form* – at times creating paradoxes and contradictions – attempting to deal with the problems of the persistent physicality of the sculptural body and the viewer's relation to it.

Hildebrand differed from his French and British counterparts in shying away from the body and its physicality, but all three are alike in their recognition that temporality and physicality are integral components of the sculptural encounter (whether they be embraced or suppressed). After stripping away external sup-

porting narratives and focusing on the body itself, all three re-defined sculpture theory with the understanding that physical and bodily relations in space and time structure and determine the range of responses to the object, from the aesthetic to the fantasmatic. With Rodin, the emphasis was on sculpture as a material object inciting an on-going variety of intimate, sensuous, and tactile perceptual responses in the viewer. Leighton thematized the viewer's actual movement. In doing so, he created a sculpture that could not be adequately reduced to a single visual picture but had to be experienced and continually re-experienced relationally as a spatial and temporal bodily encounter. Hildebrand's aim of evacuating content altogether while retaining figuration led to his attempts to structure the viewer's movements so that ideality could be reinstalled solely as a function of pure formal organization, hoping the body itself would then fade into the background.

Rodin, Leighton, and Hildebrand framed questions for subsequent developments through the new primacy given to physicality and temporality. From their pivotal deployments of the male nude in the late 1870s and early 1880s onwards, the question of the viewer's physical and temporal relation to the sculptural object would grow in importance to become one of the central issues affecting the course of twentieth-century sculpture and its metamorphoses.¹⁶ These three crucial formulations and their transformation of the canonical tradition of the male nude, however, also make it incumbent on us to examine the statuary tradition on which these artists drew and to acknowledge that physicality, temporality, and the viewer's experience have always been constituent elements of the history and theory of sculpture.

- 1 Anon., 'Chronique de la ville'. *Etoile belge*, 29 January 1877: '[...] qualité aussi précieuse que rare: la vie'.
- 2 C. Tardieu, 'Le Salon de Paris - 1877 - La Sculpture', *L'Art*, III, 1877, pp. 100-8 (108): '[...] dans cette œuvre d'une réalité remarquable des traces de moulage sur nature'.
- 3 R. Butler, 'Rodin and the Paris Salon', in *Rodin Reconsidered*, ed. A. Elsen, Washington, D.C., 1981, pp. 23-4. Also, A. Elsen, *Rodin*, New York 1963, pp. 20-6; and R. Butler, *Rodin. The Shape of Genius*, New Haven 1993, pp. 99-123.
- 4 T. H. Bartlett, 'Auguste Rodin. X. Rodin as an Artist', *American Architect and Building News*, XXV, 15 June 1886, pp. 263-85 (285).
- 5 A. Rodin, 'Phidias and Michelangelo', in *Art. Conversations with Paul Gsell* [1911], tr. J. de Caso and P. Sanders, Berkeley 1984, pp. 87-102.
- 6 Jacques Lipchitz paraphrased in Elsen 1963 (as in n. 3), p. 18. In his *Casting the Die. The Age of Bronze in Leeds*, Leeds 1996, David Ward poetically captured the process of perceiving the weathered surface of the Leeds cast. His photo-essay provides a compelling account of the complexities of this statue and further attests to the interest generated by the sculptural skin. I am grateful he allowed me to use two photographs from that project to illustrate this essay.

- 7 R. M. Rilke, 'The Rodin-Book (1902–3)', in *Rodin and Other Prose Pieces*, tr. G. C. Houston, London 1986, pp. 3–43 (16); cf. R. M. Rilke, *Auguste Rodin*, Berlin 1902, p. 24: 'Das strengste Auge konnte an dieser Figur keinen Platz entdecken, der weniger lebendig, weniger bestimmt und klar gewesen wäre'.
- 8 R. Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, Cambridge, Mass. 1977, p. 30.
- 9 See E. Gosse, 'The New Sculpture: 1879–1894', *Art Journal*, LVI, 1894, pp. 138–42, 199–203, 277–82, 306–11; S. Beattie, *The New Sculpture*, New Haven 1983; J. Barnes et al., *Leighton and his Sculptural Legacy: British Sculpture 1875–1930*, London 1996; and S. Jones et al., *Frederic, Lord Leighton. Eminent Victorian Artist*, London and New York 1996.
- 10 For a related view, see E. Prettejohn, 'The modernism of Frederic Leighton', in *English Art 1860–1914. Modern Artists and Identity*, ed. D. Peters Corbett and L. Perry, Manchester 2000, pp. 31–48, 221–5. While I largely agree with Prettejohn's analysis of the *Athlete* and its affinities to modernism, I contend that it is equally compelling to see Leighton's encouragement of temporality and physicality in the sculptural encounter in relation to Robert Morris and his reconsideration of the Greenbergian concern with the essential qualities of the sculptural medium. I explored this connection with Morris's 'Minimalist' writings and sculptures in my 'Circumambulation and temporality in the sculpture theory of Frederic Leighton and Robert Morris' (public lecture, University of Leeds, 10 November 1999).
- 11 H. James, 'The Picture Season in London, 1877', in *The Painter's Eye. Notes and Essays on the Pictorial Arts by Henry James*, ed. J. Sweeney, Cambridge, Mass. 1956, pp. 130–51 (149).
- 12 A. v. Hildebrand, 'Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst (1893–1907)', in *Adolf von Hildebrand. Gesammelte Schriften zur Kunst*, ed. H. Bock, Cologne 1969, pp. 199–265, 580–1. Bock annotates the third edition of 1901–3, often considered the final text. It should be noted, however, that the 1907 American translation contains substantial additions and alterations executed 'with the author's co-operation'. Though embellished with the translators' clarifying efforts, this collaborative text is useful to consider in relation to the third edition: *The Problem of Form in Painting and Sculpture*, tr. M. Meyer and R. M. Ogden, New York 1907.
- 13 See M. Imdahl, 'Marées, Fiedler, Hildebrand, Riegl, Cézanne. Bilder und Zitate', in *Literatur und Gesellschaft vom neunzehnten bis zwanzigste Jahrhundert*, ed. H. J. Schrimpf, Bonn 1963, pp. 142–95; M. Podro, *The Manifold in Perception. Theories of Art from Kant to Hildebrand*, Oxford 1972, and idem, *The Critical Historians of Art*, New Haven and London 1982; and S. Esche-Braunfels, *Adolf von Hildebrand (1847–1921)*, Berlin 1993.
- 14 See, for instance, *Clement Greenberg. The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. J. O'Brien, 4 vols, Chicago and London 1986, II, pp. 313–9, III, pp. 270–3, 275–9, and IV, pp. 55–61.
- 15 K. Fiedler, *On Judging Works of Visual Art (1876)*, tr. H. Schaefer-Simmern and E. Mood, Berkeley 1978, p. 11; cf. K. Fiedler, 'Über die Beurteilung von Werken der bildenden Kunst', in *Konrad Fiedler. Schriften zur Kunst*, ed. G. Boehm, Munich 1971, I, pp. 1–79 (13): '[...] so beginnt doch das Interesse an der Kunst erst in dem Momente, wo das an dem Gedankengehalte des Kunstwerkes erlischt'.
- 16 On this trajectory, see Krauss (as in n. 8) and A. Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination. Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*, New Haven and London 2000.

A. Roesler-Friedenthal/J. Nathan (Ed./Hrsg.)

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The Enduring Instant

Time and the Spectator
in the Visual Arts



Der bleibende Augenblick

Betrachterzeit in den
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