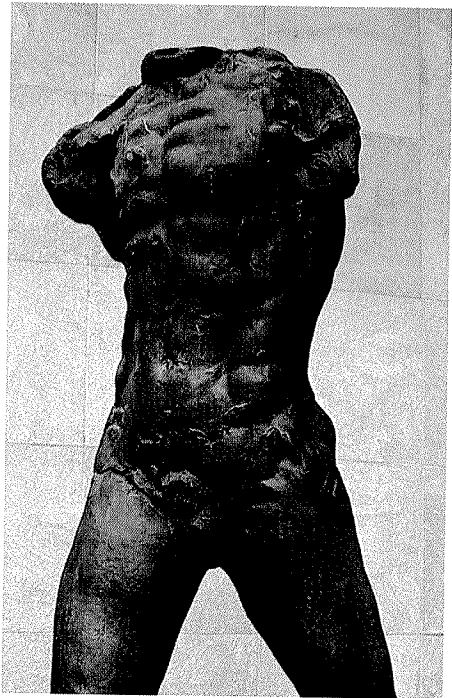


does not refute iconographic or contextual readings. Instead, it makes a case for how this work could support so many. For Rodin, the content of the work was, ultimately, his own role as its maker. This is not to say that the work is autobiographical, though such implications of this and other coded symbolic programs have been made.¹⁹ Rather, this perpetually unfinished project was the pivot around which turned Rodin's decades-long cultivation of his role as the prototypical modern sculptor.

In what follows, I shall discuss three interrelated strategies that Rodin developed in and through his work on the *Gates* as a means to stage a particular view of sculptural practice and to direct the attention back to his own acts of making: (1) his emphatic marking of his works with supposed traces of his process and manipulation, (2) his deployment of the replicatory and recombinatory potential of plaster casting in developing the fig-

ures for the *Gates* (and for their extraction as independent sculptures), and (3) his figuration of materiality in the novel handling of the interstitial spaces across the doors. The first two of these strategies are closely tied to Rodin's career-long work on the *Gates* but they are evident beyond that object alone. Generated by the *Gates*, they came to characterize Rodin's approach to sculpture and its impact on twentieth-century sculptural practice. The third strategy is more particular to the *Gates* but it illustrates how this monumental work provided the



36 Auguste Rodin, *Walking Man* (large version, detail), c.1900/1907. Bronze, 213.5 × 71.7 × 156.5 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photograph © David Getsy

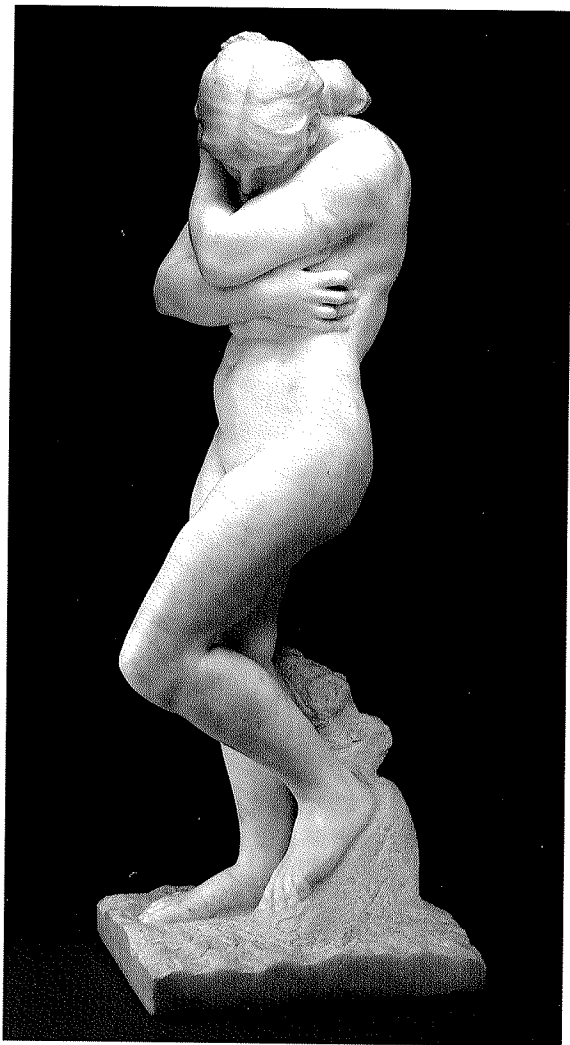
conceptual ground for Rodin's making of modern sculpture. All three strategies came together visibly and dramatically in Rodin's exhibition of the *Gates* in 1900, and all three came to redefine the practice and persona of the modern sculptor. This persona, in turn, became closely linked to the context of sexuality that surrounded Rodin's practice in the public imagination, supported by and giving new meaning to these tactics.

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Rodin's Performative Mark-Making

Mid-nineteenth century discourses of sculpture in which Rodin emerged had a highly vexed attitude toward sculpture's materiality.²⁰ The term "materiality" refers to the constitution of the sculptural object by and as actual matter – stone, metal, wax, plaster, ivory, wood, and so on. A statue's image (for example, the human form) is created in and through the manipulation of the material, and the sculptor must negotiate to some degree the integration of or interference between sculpture as image *and* thing when creating a representational sculpture. Nineteenth-century practices often preferred to obscure sculpture's materiality.²¹ Viewers were not meant to look at a hunk of marble or a piece of bronze but rather were meant to see such images as mythological heroes, great statesmen, or beautiful nudes.

The practice of nineteenth-century sculpture itself insured a division between the sculptural image and its material constitution. Customarily, a sculptor would model the figure in clay. Since clay is a fugitive material, it needed to be kept damp in order to keep it from cracking and crumbling. Once the sculptor had completed the work, it would then be cast in plaster in order to freeze the form in a more permanent, but still inexpensive, material. In this process, the initial clay figure would most often be destroyed. The resulting plaster, however, could then be exhibited in hope of convincing a patron to pay for it to be cast in bronze or carved in marble. From the first plaster cast, numerous additional plaster casts, marble statues, or bronze casts could be produced. The "final" statue, however, was often executed by a highly skilled team of practi-



37 Auguste Rodin, *Eve after the Fall*, 1886. Marble, 76.2 × 27.4 × 21 cm. Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. Martin A. Ryerson Collection, 1933.1304. Photograph: Robert Hashimoto, © The Art Institute of Chicago.

38 (*facing page*) Auguste Rodin, *Eve after the Fall*, 1881, cast before 1932. Bronze, 172.7 × 43.8 × 64.8 cm. Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, Texas. Photograph © David Getsy.



tioners such as bronze casters, mold makers, and stone carvers who used a variety of technologies and devices to insure that the image that had been initially sculpted in clay was faithfully translated a second time to its new material. In this process, the sculptor's artistic labor was located primarily in the conception and initial modeling of the clay figure, not in the creation of the sculptural object.²²

Nineteenth-century procedures of sculpture relied on this division of labor between the conception of sculptural images and the manipulation of sculptural matter.²³ The actual practice of sculpture was not, however, categorically different from techniques used since the Renaissance.²⁴ By and large, however, the framework of academic conventions, so central to French nineteenth-century sculpture, came to exaggerate the institutional and perceived gulf between conception and execution. This separation was enforced as a means to shore up the identity of the sculptor, casting this role as one of the intellectual rather than the craftsman. While this had its roots in earlier sculptural traditions and discourses of the artist, nineteenth-century French sculpture saw the emergence of a more rigid and codified set of academic conventions for sculpture in which the artist was even more hierarchically differentiated from the practitioner.

Rodin, however, came to be seen as more than a creator of form. His reputation became that of the virtuoso maker of objects. Yet he did not develop a comparable expertise in bronze casting, patination, or marble carving.²⁵ As Frederick Lawton made sure to state (perhaps overly so), Rodin was always a modeler and never a practitioner: "[A]lthough occupied for many years in the studios or for the studios of sculptors as an assistant, he was never, as has been erroneously stated, a *praticien*, i.e. a rough or a fine hewer of stone or marble. Indeed this is the one branch of the statuary art which he has never practically learnt."²⁶ While no doubt Rodin did, in fact, have at least some hand in the early marbles, over the course of his mature career he came to invest primarily in the arena in which he performed best – the manipulation of clay. This facility became central to his reputation. One commentator called him a "veritable wizard of clay, marvelous giant, noble creator."²⁷ Emphasizing modeling and





40 and 41 (facing page) Auguste Rodin, *Mademoiselle Camille Claudel*, 1882–99. Bronze, 24 cm h. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, gift of the artist, A.43-1914. Photograph © Victoria and Albert Museum.



clay, Rodin began attempting to find ways to register his own act of making in the object itself, bridging the alienation of conception from execution. Not only did he begin to make his figures larger and smaller than real bodies, but he also wanted his works to bear the evidence of having been hand-made. Even though Rodin attempted to redirect sculptural subject matter to new and ever more provocative content, it is this display

of facture that has often been seen as the most visible sign of and most generative influence on modern sculpture. The display of facture was predicated on the manipulation of clay. From his early, highly nuanced surfaces to the increasingly dramatic gouges, marks, and finger impressions that littered his work, Rodin became for many the most direct and the most present of sculptors because of these traces he initially left in the



42 and 43 (facing page) Auguste Rodin, *La France*, 1904. Bronze, 49.5 × 48.5 × 35.3 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., gift of Mrs. John W. Simpson, 1942.5.9. Image courtesy Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

42, 43 clay. Rosalind Krauss put it well when she remarked, “Rodin’s figures are also branded with marks that tell of their rites of passage during the modelling stage.”²⁸ Under Rodin’s hand, sculpture became more physical, more material, and a closer record of the scene of creation – or at least as his supporters would have one believe.



These marks, however, are by no means direct or unmediated. Recall that most basic of conditions for the interpretation of nineteenth-century sculpture: the initial object created (the clay sculpture) is lost. One never sees the material (the clay) that Rodin touched. This condition is largely opaque to many viewers, and it is frequently forgotten or overlooked (even in many art-historical discussions of nineteenth-century art) that the sculptures are the products of translation from an already sec-

ondary object, the so-called “original plaster,” to subsequent bronze casts outsourced to the foundry or marble sculptures carved by a team of specialized stoneworkers. It is this process that many earlier nineteenth-century sculptors struggled to obscure, characterizing the final marble or bronze as springing fully realized into existence.²⁹ Rodin did not overturn this process – far from it. He relied on teams of specialists to enlarge his compositions (such as the monumental *Thinker*, the large *Walking Man*, or the *Large Head of Iris*), to handle the technical difficulties of casting metal, and to carve the works into marble. In her overview of Rodin’s technique, Patricia Sanders noted that “Although Rodin’s studio practices undoubtedly varied over the years, he seems from the first to have relied on specialists to execute his clay models in bronze or marble. If Rodin’s workshop grew with his reputation, by the turn of the century his studios must have teemed with assistants.”³⁰

That is, despite what appears to be evidence of personal handling by Rodin, the objects called his are – like most nineteenth-century sculptures – rarely the direct product of *his hands*, even though the enduring image of Rodin is as physically present, touching each object in a way that is visible and recoverable on the surface of the sculpture.³¹ Roger Marx, for instance, spoke of Rodin’s caress of the modeling clay even though he and his readers only ever saw bronze, marble, or plaster: “under [Rodin’s] fingers the clay quivers with feverish throbs, and trembles with every spasm of suffering and anguish.”³² This focus on Rodin’s hands and evidence of touching was made central by Rainer Maria Rilke, who began “The Rodin-Book” by discussing them:

[I]nstitutively one looks for the two hands from which this world has come forth. One thinks of the smallness of human hands, of how soon they weary and of how little time is granted to their activity. And one longs to behold these hands which have lived the life of a hundred hands, of a nation of hands, that rose before daybreak to set out on the long pathway of this work. One asks about the owner of these hands. Who is this man?³³



44 Auguste Rodin, *Large Head of Iris*, c.1905. Bronze, 58.4 cm h. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, gift of the artist, A.41-1914. Photograph © Victoria and Albert Museum.



45 Eugène Carrière, *Rodin Sculpting*, 1900. Lithograph, 55.5 × 45.5 cm. The British Museum, London. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Decades later, John Berger remarked in his perceptive essay on the artist that in all Rodin's figures, "one feels that the figure is still the malleable creature, unemancipated, of the sculptor's moulding hand. This hand fascinated Rodin."³⁴



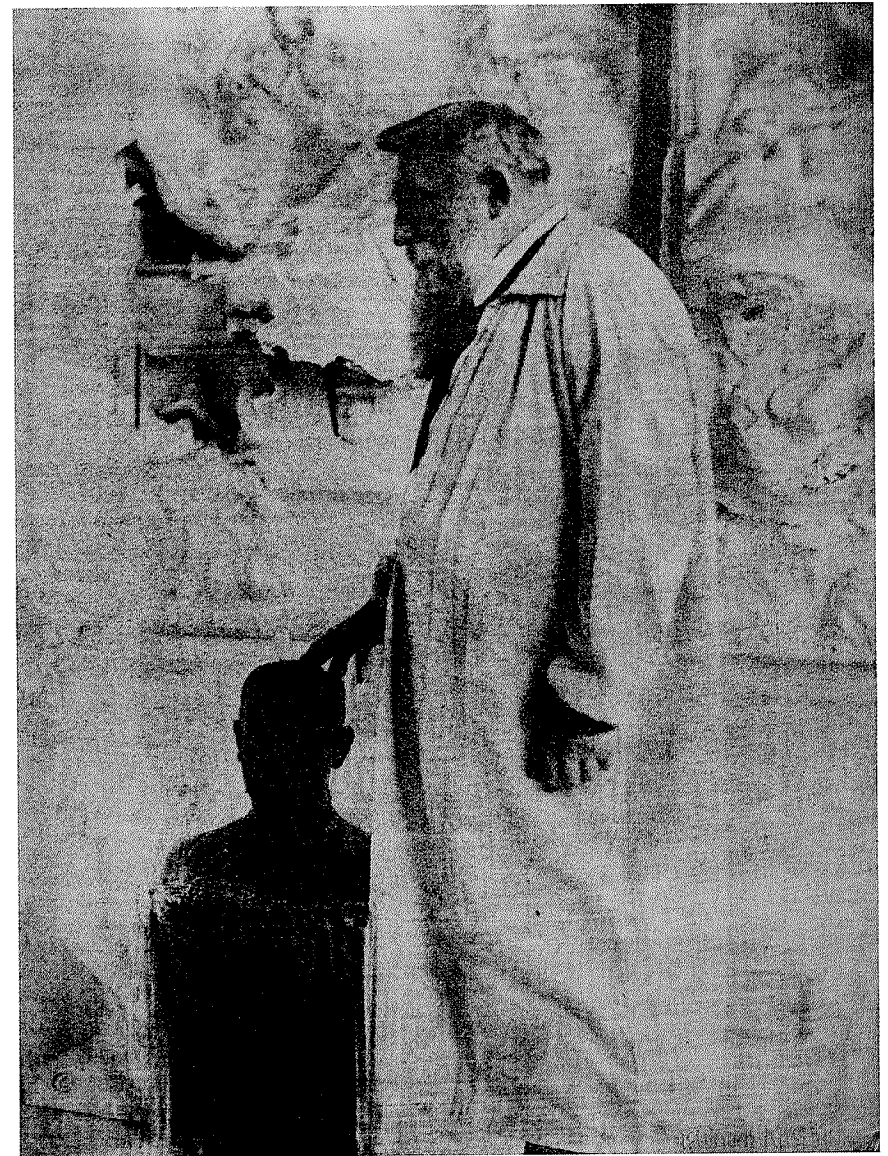
46 William Rothenstein, *Rodin*, 1897. Lithograph on off-white laid paper, 22.7 × 35.3 cm (image); 28.5 × 44.7 cm (sheet). Art Institute of Chicago, B.F. Ferguson Annuity Fund, 1912.1609. Photograph: Jennifer Anderson, © The Art Institute of Chicago.

What interests me here is the lack of equivalence between this perception of Rodin's hands metaphorically hovering near the works – that is, his simulated presence – and the material parameters of the medium of nineteenth-century sculpture. This contradiction has been discussed before, most notably by Leo Steinberg and by Rosalind Krauss. Krauss, in particular, focused on the conflict between "the myth of Rodin as the prodigious form giver" and awareness of reproducibility in Rodin's techniques and, as I shall discuss below, his multiple uses of casts of the same figure. In her important essay of 1981, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde: A Postmodernist Repetition," Krauss stressed the ways in which the material circumstances of Rodin's practice seemed at odds with the originality and authenticity for which Rodin seemed exemplary. She asked,

What are we to make of this little chapter of the *comédie humaine*, in which the artist of the last century most driven to the celebration of his



47 Jean-François Raffaëlli, *Portrait of the Sculptor Auguste Rodin in his Studio*, c.1889. Gouache and black crayon, with charcoal, brush and black ink, touches of watercolor on tan board, 58.2 × 39.5 cm. Art Institute of Chicago, gift of Annie Swan Coburn in memory of Olivia Shaler Swan, 1921.389. Photograph: Jennifer Anderson, © The Art Institute of Chicago.

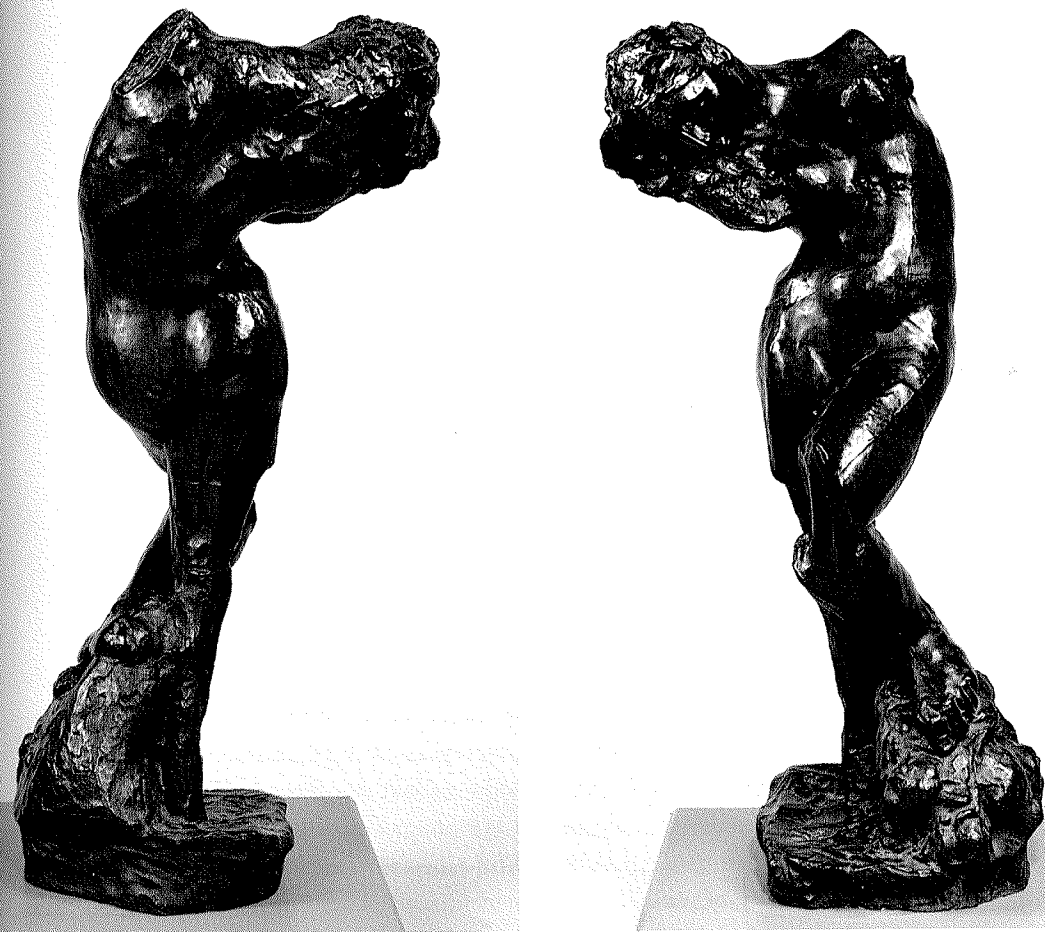


48 Gertrude Käsebier, *Auguste Rodin*, 1905. Gum bichromate print, 28.3 × 24.1 cm. Art Institute of Chicago, gift of Mina Turner, 1973.18. Photograph: Greg Harris, © The Art Institute of Chicago.

own originality and of the autographic character of his own kneading of matter into formal life, *that* artist, should have given his own work over to an afterlife of mechanical reproduction?³⁵

Krauss's essay, as well as her response to a riposte by Albert Elsen, did not pursue this question.³⁶ She abruptly shifted the essay back to a question of posthumous casts with which she started that line of inquiry. For her, the contradiction alone was the answer, refuting the simple and mythologizing claims made about Rodin. By contrast, I want to delve more deeply into how Rodin's remaking of sculptural practice did, in fact, put in place the mythic persona that early twentieth-century commentators saw as enthralling and omnipresent in his work. Building on her questions, I shall examine how Rodin mobilized and thematized reproducibility to establish, maintain, and disseminate his semantic centrality to his works – regardless of who made them. This is crucial because Rodin's positioning of himself at the center of a web of reproductive practices became the foundation for the elision between his artistic practice and the sexual associations that his reputation and subject matter lent to his works.

“Expressiveness and not finish is [Rodin's] ideal,” wrote the painter Louis Weinberg in a remarkably perceptive essay written just after the sculptor's death.³⁷ Indeed, Rodin's handling and sculptural style were intended to produce a set of specific effects. Instead of the often glassy, even surfaces of much previous nineteenth-century sculpture, Rodin left the rough with the smooth, leaving areas seemingly unfinished, with the marks of the chisel or the thumb still in them. He allowed unworked areas of clay to remain on the works, having them stand in for bodily surfaces. Such strategies were not unique in the history of sculpture. Michelangelo, for one, had been a catalyst for Rodin's development of his own version of the *non-finito*. However, for Rodin it was not just an arrested realization of the work but a tactical stylistic choice repeated across the various modes and materials of his sculpture. In addition, he exaggerated the occasional use of approximated details and sketchy surfaces that other nineteenth-century sculptors would sometimes use. For Rodin's immedi-



49 and 50 Auguste Rodin, *Meditation*, 1896 orig. Bronze, 144.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, gift of the artist, A.36-1914. Photograph © Victoria and Albert Museum.

ate predecessors and peers, however, these tactics were largely limited to works that were either self-consciously preparatory sketches or modellos or (as in the case of Honoré Daumier) an equivalent to the hyperbolic



51 and 52 (facing page) Auguste Rodin, *Crouching Woman*, c.1891. Bronze, 33 cm h. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, gift of the artist, A.40-1914. Photograph © Victoria and Albert Museum.

drawing style used in caricature. Rodin drew on such precedents but pushed their tactics further. He incorporated them into finished works intended to be cast or carved and he realized that the approximated and abbreviated details could be read as more active and less fixed than seamless verisimilitude. He built into his process and exhibition practices the appearance of unfinish, of spontaneity, and of his touch as a means of bringing his works the vitality that he saw lacking in the academic style. Increasingly, most of his mature sculptures by the late 1880s began to look as if they were somehow in process and as if they bore the evidence his physical acts of artmaking.

Again, this was not a casual or careless move on Rodin's part; it was strategic. He staged these traces of his touch as more emphatic and more deliberate so that they survived the translation from clay to other materi-



als. It is common for many viewers and critics to think of the marks of process on these works as if they were self-evidently indexical of Rodin's presence. As Geffroy put it, "The sculptor's intention, moreover, is visible in every creation of his hand" with "the mingled pain and passion that informs his modelling, the caressing tenderness that tempers his virile strength[.]"³⁸ Despite the fact that these marks appear to be traces of Rodin's actual, physical manipulation of the material, they simulate the directness and unmediation of Rodin's touch in defiance of the actual material history of the sculptural object as the product of teams of makers and multiple materials. This is an obvious point that is nevertheless often forgotten or overlooked when viewers and critics encounter a sculpture like Rodin's. But by recognizing their anxious relation to the multi-staged practice of sculpture, it becomes clear that Rodin's practice as a whole relies on a different, and more infectious, function for these marks – as *performative*, rather than just constative or descriptive, of Rodin's presence.



53 Auguste Rodin, *Crouching Woman* (detail of figs. 51 and 52), c.1891. Bronze, 33 cm h. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, gift of the artist, A.40-1914. Photograph © David Getsy



54 Auguste Rodin, *Walking Man* (detail of fig. 56). Image courtesy Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

In making this claim, I am contending that Rodin's over-dramatic facture was more than just a *performance* of bravura handling in defiance of naturalism – it was akin to a *performative* utterance that declared Rodin's appearance as the primary meaning of the work. In the definition adapted from Speech Act Theory, performative utterances change the condition of the object to which they are applied. The classic example is the wedding ceremony in which two individuals are pronounced married, thus changing their legal and social status in the community. When using this concept to think about the function of Rodin's facture, I rely on the extended usage of it beyond linguistic manifestations to encompass acts and other visual signs. Following this usage, performativity can be productively identified in visual arts and communication. For instance, a clear example of a visual performative would be the target: any object on which the image of a target is drawn becomes itself a target.

Rodin's marks are, I argue, subtler but no less transformative visual performatives. His activated surface traces relied on the deployment and propagation of replicable and transmissible signs that, once recognized as such, transform the condition of the sculptural figure to foreground both its objectness and Rodin's share in the formation of that object. When the viewer's experience of the statue becomes interrupted by these marks that are recognized as not having to do with the sculptural image – be it a representation of a woman, a man, a couple, a thinker – they shift emphasis to the sculptural thing itself as the product and registration of Rodin.

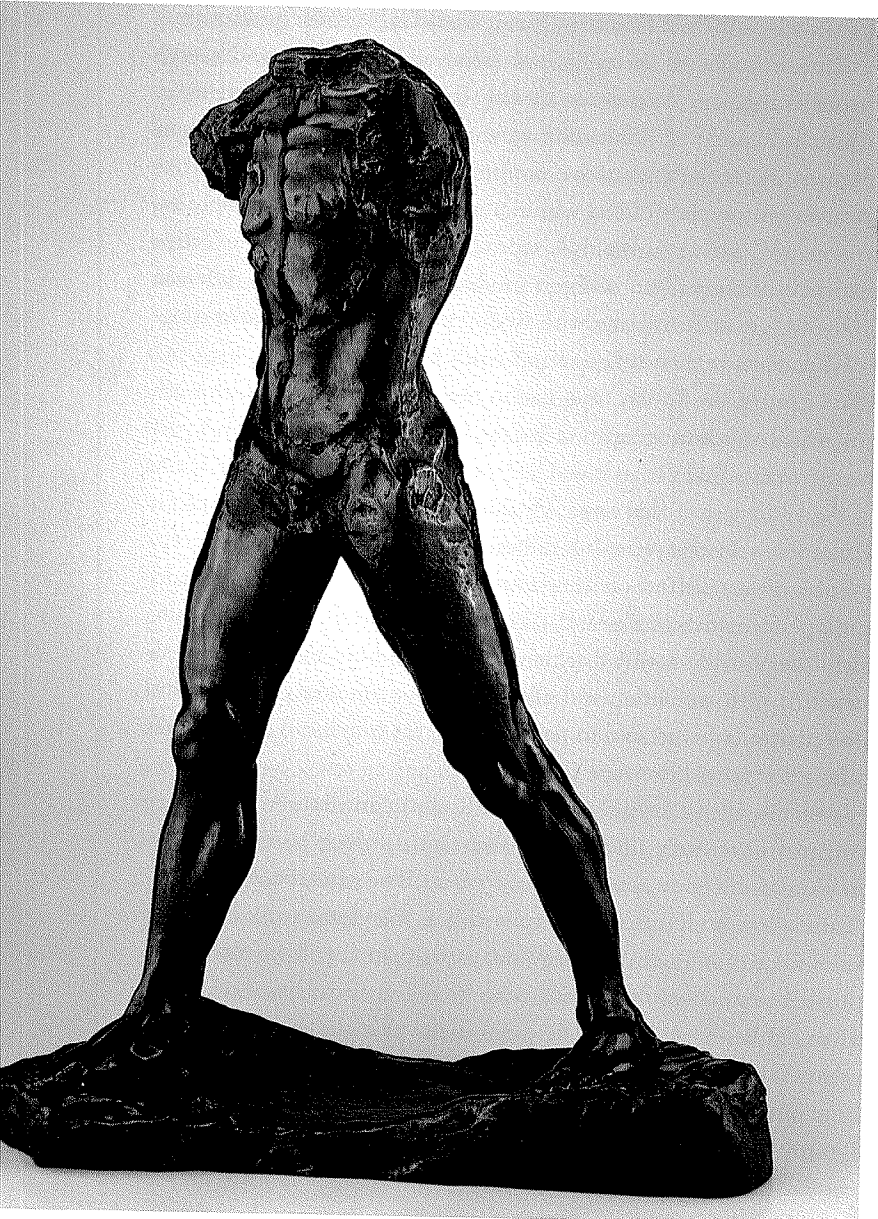
All sculptures operate between image and object, between representation and materiality, but Rodin's intervention into the discourse of nineteenth-century sculptural praxis was to sacrifice verisimilitude, representational consistency, and the coherence of the figure itself in order to let his acts of making overtake the object even after the form had undergone material transcriptions and been the product of other hands. Rodin deployed signs of his presence that would survive the translations of a sculpture across materials but that always pointed back to the fact that the sculpture was made by him, establishing its scene of creation as the primary source of significance for the viewer. Whereas paintings, for instance, might exhibit facture or display materiality, sculpture under

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Rodin's hands mobilized facture so that it would subvert the multi-staged material vicissitudes of the sculptural form, allowing each (and every) sculpture to appear to have arisen directly from his touch. He developed an equivalent mode of production to the heightened facture that had become an increasingly attractive option in painting at the end of the nineteenth century, but did so within a medium that relied strongly on lost "originals" and their multiple reproductions. In short, his effective transmuting of the sculptural object produced by *other* hands is different from the facture one associates with Rodin's painter contemporaries' staging of directness in their unique hand-made art objects.³⁹

The literature on Rodin, from late in the nineteenth century onward, has largely accepted as an open secret the factitious status of Rodin's performative marks.⁴⁰ His friends and later advocates and historians all wrote with the awareness of this issue. My goal in the foregoing paragraphs is not to expose the open secret but rather to argue that the uncritical acceptance of it obscures the more fundamental art-theoretical move made by Rodin's performative marks and their transmuting effects. The significance of these marks is not that they are mediated but that they capitalize on their own mediation and allow Rodin to overtake depiction and subject matter in his art and to point back to his (mythical) acts of making the objects that bear these traces.

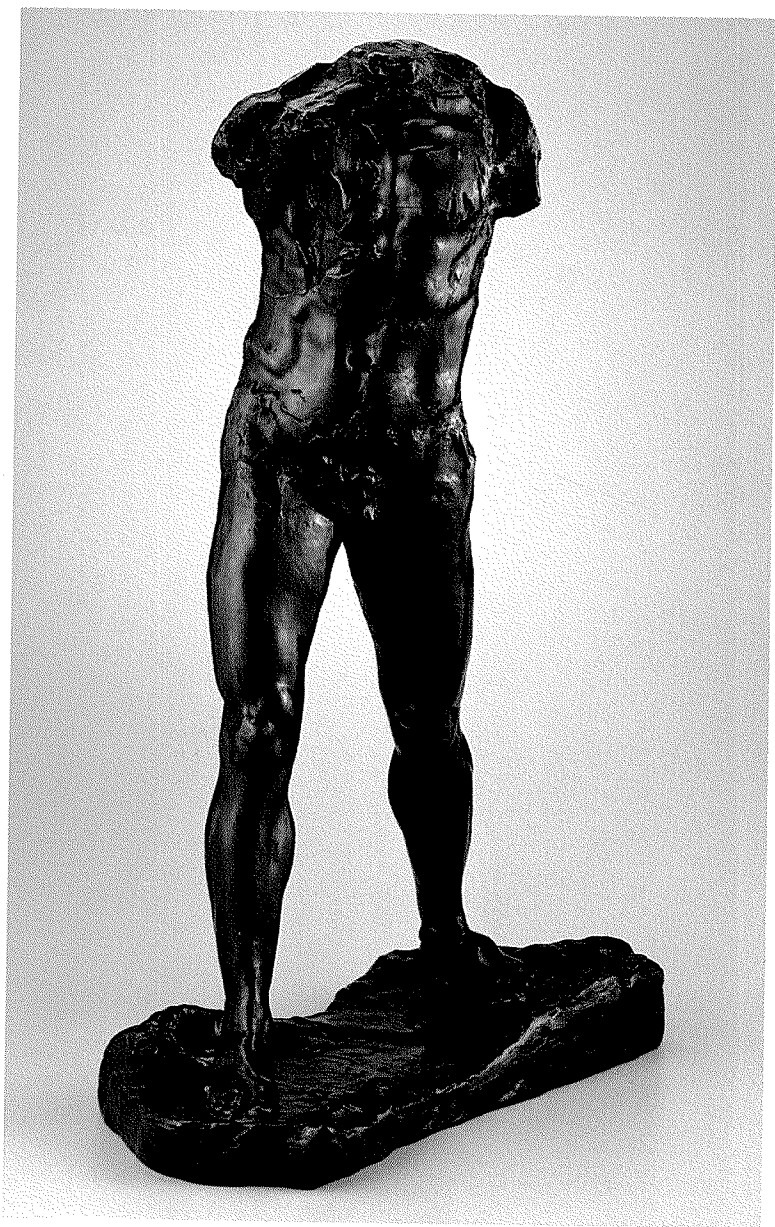
Ultimately, what I am arguing is that Rodin's contribution to modern sculpture was not only the seeds of abstraction, which is how his fragmentation of the body and fractured surfaces have often been interpreted. Subsequent sculptors did interpret this as a stylistic attitude toward verisimilitude, but Rodin's strategy was more complex. It involved redirecting the viewer's attention from image to object as the site at which his hand would be most visible. The point is not that the marks are "fake" but that their emphatic overlay on the sculptural object – across its material transcriptions – effects a shift in what the viewer looks for in the sculptures. This is the basis of Rodin's "liberation" of sculpture and what has been called the demise of the tradition of the statue.⁴¹ Simply put, after Rodin, there were, increasingly, sculptures, not statues – that is, objects, not images. Rodin's performative marks strategically masquerade



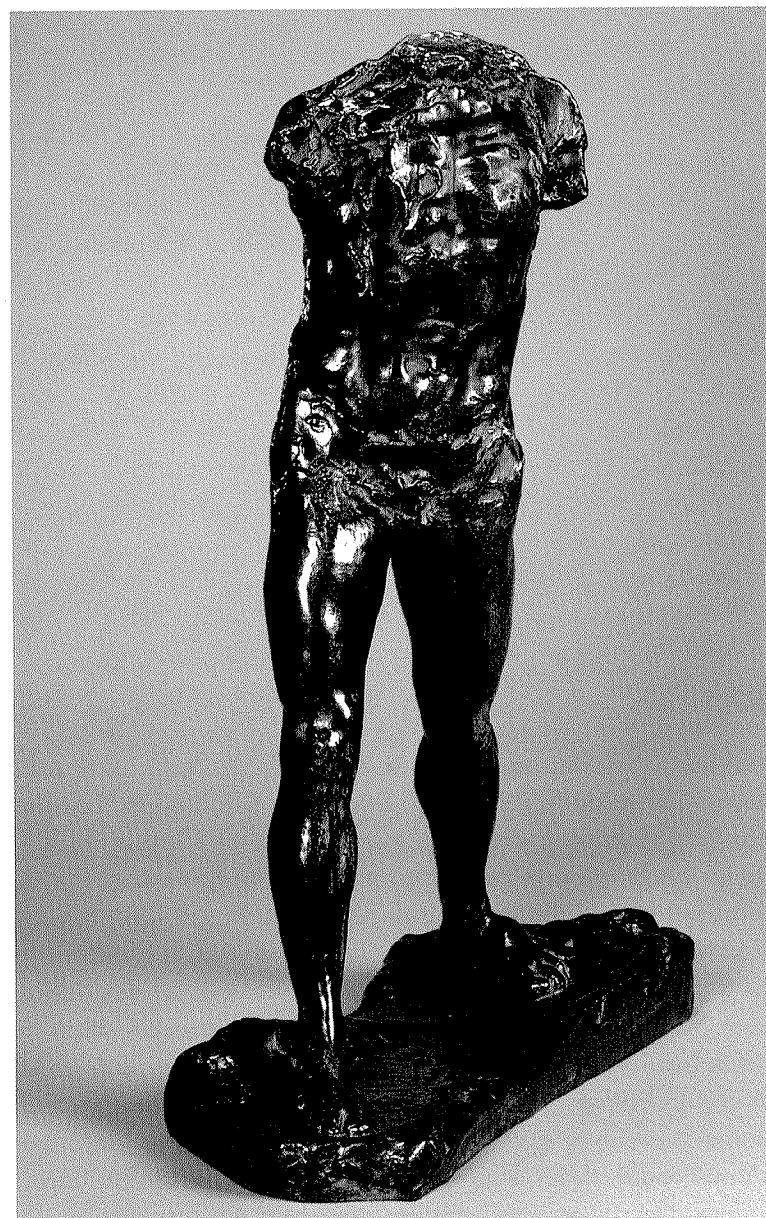
55 Auguste Rodin, *Walking Man*, c.1900. Bronze, 84.1 cm h. Art Institute of Chicago, bequest of A. James Speyer, 1987.217. Photograph © The Art Institute of Chicago.



56 Auguste Rodin, *Walking Man*, c.1900/1903. Bronze, 85.1 × 59.8 × 26.5 cm, gift of Mrs. John W. Simpson. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1942.5.11. Image courtesy Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



57 Auguste Rodin, *Walking Man*, c.1900. Bronze, 84.1 cm h. Art Institute of Chicago, bequest of A. James Speyer, 1987.217. Photograph © The Art Institute of Chicago.



58 Auguste Rodin, *Walking Man*, c.1900/1903. Bronze, 85.1 × 59.8 × 26.5 cm, gift of Mrs. John W. Simpson. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1942.5.11. Image courtesy Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

as direct traces in order to convince the viewer that this untouched object had been touched by him. The false immediacy of these marks does not mitigate the fascination they inspire in viewers. This is because they effect the more insidious result of keeping the artist near. Rodin's presence becomes semantically fused with these objects because of the ways in which these marks shortcircuit the distinction between sculptural representation and materiality – between object and image – on which nineteenth-century sculpture had relied. This shift from sculptural image to sculptural object was, on the one hand, a fundamental contribution to twentieth-century discourses of modernism and, on the other, the precondition for Rodin making his own acts of making the denominator of meaning. The performative mark not only says that “Rodin was here” but also declares that the sculptural object is important primarily because of that claim.

This is why museum-goers continue to find Rodin “powerful,” expressive, and direct: they have successfully (and often unwittingly) received the performative charge generated when his once-direct act of touch was turned into a reproducible sign. Consequently, a central effect of this strategy was that Rodin's public persona became interwoven with the meaning of these works and increasingly no discussion could divorce the two. As Robert Morris confidently remarked in 1966, “In the nineteenth century Rodin and Rosso left traces of touch in finished work. Like the Abstract Expressionists after them, they registered the plasticity of material in autobiographical terms.”⁴² There is a big difference, however, between Rodin and the Abstract Expressionist handling of paint and even Medardo Rosso's manipulation of wax. The “registration” of plasticity was always removed from the initial act of making because of the multi-staged casting process that resulted in plaster or bronze. Despite this, otherwise perceptive viewers like Morris could nevertheless forget the mediation of these marks, taking them as direct. This is the marks' performative effect at work, establishing an interdependence between the objects and, to use Morris's phrase, their “autobiographical terms” – that is, Rodin's staged persona. This persona was, I contend, propagated not just through content and context but, significantly, at the level of practice and making.



59 Auguste Rodin, *Right Hand*, possibly 1880. Plaster, 8 cm l. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., gift of Mrs. John W. Simpson, 1942.5.27. Image courtesy Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Rodin's Recombinatory Practices

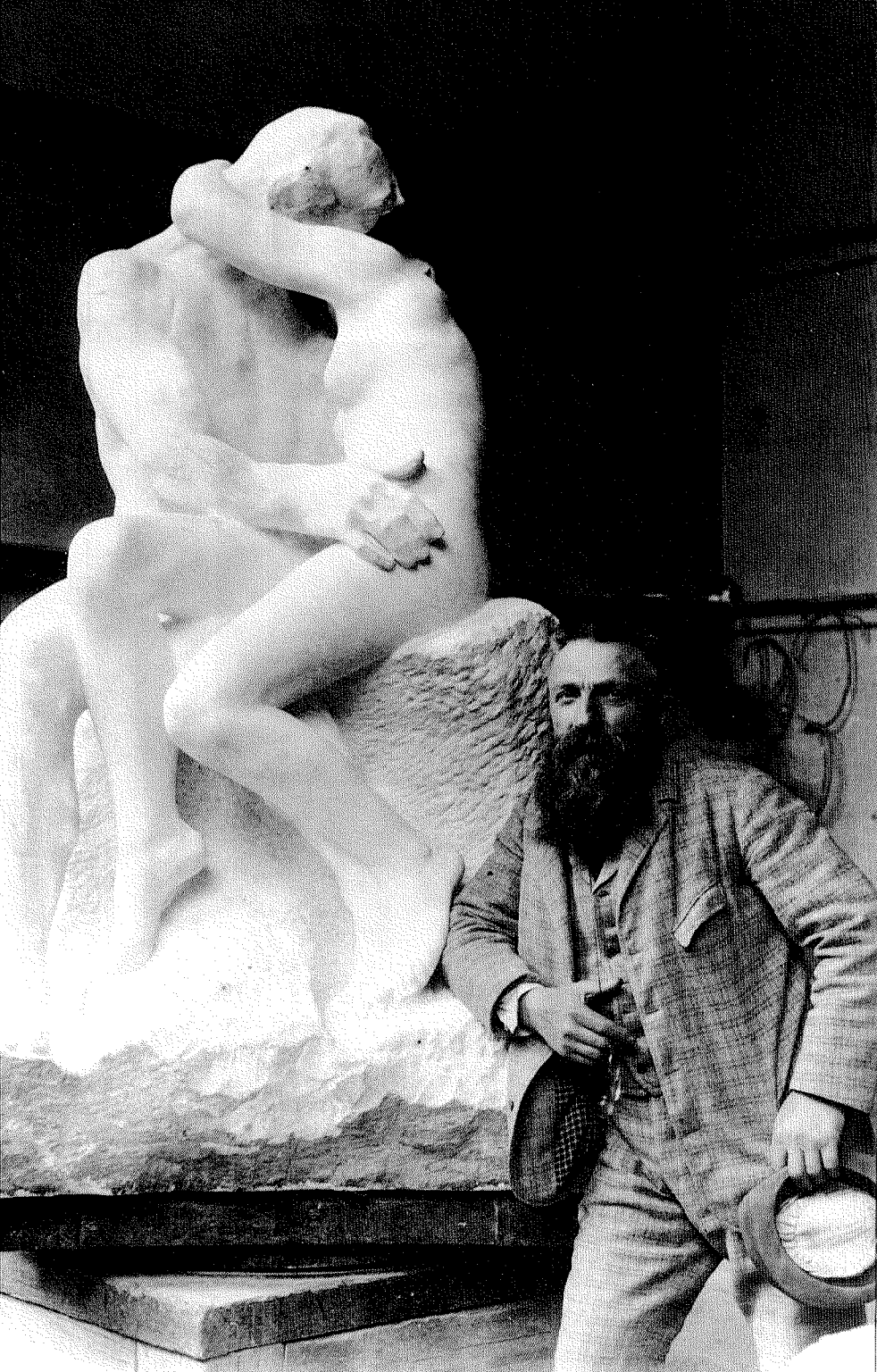
There is a second arena in which Rodin effected his redirection from image to object and from subject matter to his role as the artist. This was his exploitation of the replicatory possibilities of plaster casting and his willingness to break his sculptural bodies into fragments only to recombine them into new forms. This occurred most directly in his work on the *Gates* and in the ways in which he staged his own presence in its surface. By abandoning the idea that his *Gates* would tell a traditional story with

- Sculptor of the Second Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986).
- 16 For a discussion of the final composition of the plaster *Gates of Hell* see Elsen, *Gates of Hell*, 147–8; Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, *Rodin: The Gates of Hell* (Paris: Musée Rodin, 2002), 33–6. There are two plasters that have served as the models for the bronze casts: one at the Musée Rodin in Meudon and the other, better-known cast from 1917, permanently installed at the Musée d'Orsay (on loan from the Musée Rodin and, until 1986, occupying the place of the altar in the chapel at the Hôtel Biron).
- 17 Aida Audeh has argued that Rodin had a sustained engagement with Dante's text and its nineteenth-century illustrations. Aida Audeh, "Rodin's *Gates of Hell* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*: An Iconographic Study" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 2002).
- 18 However, the most fruitful new contexts brought to bear on Rodin's iconography have been Rodin's relations to psychology. See Natasha Ruiz-Gómez, "Morceaux d'amphithéâtre: Science and the Sculpture of Auguste Rodin" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2006) or the earlier Deborah Silverman, *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology, Style* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
- 19 See e.g. Albert Alhadeff, "Rodin: A Self-Portrait in the Gates of Hell," *Art Bulletin* 48, no. 3/4 (1966), 393–5; Silverman, *Art Nouveau*, 303–6.
- 20 See, e.g., Jeanne Wasserman, *Metamorphoses in Nineteenth-Century Sculpture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum and Harvard University Press, 1976); Charles Millard, "Sculpture and Theory in Nineteenth-Century France," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 34, no. 1 (1975), 15–20; Anthony Hughes and Erich Ranfft, eds, *Sculpture and Its Reproductions* (London: Reaktion, 1997).
- 21 Alex Potts has convincingly argued that there is a degree of engagement with materiality and objecthood in the work of Antonio Canova. Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 38–59. Contemporary with Rodin, there are further examples of sculptors who foregrounded materiality, e.g., Hamo Thornycroft and Alfred Gilbert. See Getsy, *Body Doubles*, chs 2 and 3.
- 22 As I shall discuss, Rodin himself relied on many practitioners and studio assistants in the production of his works. As he became more commercially successful in the twentieth century, this practice grew. In particular, his marble sculptures have been highly criticized as being the products of such a system. Nevertheless, he evidenced much interest in displaying the

- marks of process and the objecthood of his sculptures. See Steinberg, "Rodin," 322–403, and for a dissenting view, Daniel Rosenfeld, "Rodin's Carved Sculpture," in *Rodin Rediscovered*, ed. A. Elsen (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 80–102.
- 23 See Albert Elsen, "Rodin's 'Perfect Collaborator,' Henri Lebossé," in *Rodin Rediscovered*, 248–59.
- 24 For useful and concise discussions of earlier practices of casting, see Henry Moore Institute, *Bronze: The Power of Life and Death* (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2005), and Nicholas Penny, *The Materials of Sculpture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993). See also Michael Wayne Cole, *Cellini and the Principles of Sculpture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Peta Motture, ed., *Large Bronzes in the Renaissance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), Debra Pincus, ed., *Small Bronzes in the Renaissance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), and Frits Scholten, et al., *Adriaen de Vries*. (Zwolle: Waanders, 1998).
- 25 E.g., Antoinette Le Normand-Romain wrote with regard to Rodin's reliance on his patineur Jean Limet for the approval and patination of his bronzes after 1900: "Very often, however, Rodin did not see the bronzes: Limet was therefore responsible for assessing the quality of the cast and amending any flaws[.]" Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, *The Bronzes of Rodin: Catalogue of Works in the Musée Rodin*, 2 vols. (Paris: Editions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2007), 1: 31. See also Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, "Rodin und seine Mitarbeiter," in *Auguste Rodin: Eros und Leidenschaft*, ed. Wilfried Seipel (Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 1996), 127–38. This has been widely understood among Rodin scholars. In 1974, Albert Elsen wrote in a letter to Athena Tacha (Spear), "[R]arely did [Rodin] check the bronzes. We know he did not work on them personally." Albert Elsen to Athena Tacha, 28 July 1974. Athena Tacha Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- 26 Lawton, *Life and Work*, 28. A defense of Rodin's relationship to marble can be found in Athena Tacha Spear, *Rodin Sculpture in the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland Museum of Art, 1967), 67–78. See further Rosenfeld, "Rodin's Carved Sculpture," 80–102.
- 27 "véritable enchanteur de la glaise, géant merveilleux, créateur mag-nanime[.]" Marie-Reine Aghion, "En parlant de Rodin dans le studio de Judith Cladel," *Le trésor du siècle*, August 1937.
- 28 Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1977), 29.

- 29 It has been a source of debate about how public this knowledge is. See, e.g., Elsen, "Rodin's 'Perfect Collaborator,'" 248; Albert Elsen, "On the Question of Originality: A Letter," *October* 20 (1982): 107–9; Rosalind Krauss, "Sincerely Yours: A Reply," *October* 20 (1982): 116. Lawton made sure to provide a full explanation of this process in his 1907 book because he was aware of many of his readers' unfamiliarity with it: Lawton, *Life and Work*, 28–30.
- 30 Patricia Sanders, "Notes on Rodin's Technique," in *Rodin's Sculpture: A Critical Study of the Spreckels Collection*, ed. Jacques de Caso and Patricia Sanders (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1977), 29.
- 31 It did, however, become a cliché early in the twentieth century to recognize that the marbles churned out for collectors (usually American) contained passages in which rough, in-process chisel marks were clearly simulated for effect. Rodin's declining reputation in the mid-twentieth century was a result of these works, as Leo Steinberg has discussed. Steinberg, "Rodin," 322–403. See further the Conclusion to this book.
- 32 Roger Marx, preface to Muriel Ciolkowska, *Rodin* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1914), vi.
- 33 Rainer Maria Rilke, "The Rodin-Book: First Part" (1902–3), *Where Silence Reigns: Selected Prose*, trans. G. Craig Houston (New York: New Directions, 1978), 89.
- 34 John Berger, "Rodin and Sexual Domination" (1967), *About Looking* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 179.
- 35 Krauss, "Originality," 52.
- 36 See above, n. 29. On this exchange see also Alexandra Parigoris, "Truth to Material: Bronze, on the Reproducibility of Truth," in *Sculpture and Its Reproductions*, ed. Anthony Hughes and Erich Ranfft (London: Reaktion, 1997), 131–51.
- 37 Louis Weinberg, *The Art of Rodin* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1918), 31.
- 38 "Les intentions du sculpteur sont d'ailleurs visibles dans chaque manifestation de son art. La passion et la douceur qu'il exprime par son modelé, l'attendrissement de caresse qu'il mêle à ses viriles affirmations[.]" Gustave Geffroy, "Auguste Rodin," in *Claude Monet. A. Rodin* (Paris: Galerie Georges Petit, 1889), 73; trans. in Butler, *Rodin in Perspective*, 71.
- 39 See e.g. the discussion of the "technique of originality" with reference to Paul Cézanne and Henri Matisse in Richard Shiff, "Representation, Copying, and the Technique of Originality," *New Literary History* 15, no. 2 (1984), 333–63.

- 40 See Krauss, "Sincerely Yours," 110–30; Jean Chatelain, "An Original in Sculpture," in Elsen, *Rodin Rediscovered*, 275–82.
- 41 See, e.g., Penelope Curtis, "After Rodin: The Problem of the Statue in Twentieth-Century Sculpture," in Mitchell, *Rodin*, 237–44. A registration of the rapid transformations over the first half of the twentieth century can be seen in Dan Rhodes Johnson, "From 'Statuary' to Sculpture: A Long Haul in a Short Time," *Art Digest* 26, no. 1 (1951): 23–5.
- 42 Robert Morris, "Anti-Form" (1968), in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1993), 44.
- 43 Camille Mauclair, *Auguste Rodin: The Man – His Ideas – His Works* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1905), 22–3.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 45 "[The *Gates*] occupies, from several points of view, a place of capital importance in his work as a whole. The something like two hundred figures it included constituted a fund from which he was continually drawing; his most celebrated statues and groups were taken from it and adapted, transformed, 'enlarged.' They were at the disposal of the great plastic dramatist: a troupe of experienced actors." Judith Cladel, *Rodin*, trans. James Whitall (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1937), 76–7. Orig. in Judith Cladel, *Rodin: Sa vie glorieuse et inconnue* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1936), 142. On the transformation of the figures for the *Gates* into larger, discrete works see Elsen, "Rodin's 'Perfect Collaborator,'" 248–59.
- 46 As the author of the catalogue to the 1900 exhibition at the Pavillon de l'Alma wrote, "[L]a *Porte de l'Enfer* n'a pas de date; elle date de toutes les douze ou quatorze années que Rodin a employé à la concevoir, à la modifier, à l'enrichir, à en retrancher, à la refaire, à la laisser voilée, à y travailler sans cesse en paraissant passer définitivement à autre chose." Arsène Alexandre, *L'oeuvre de Rodin: Exposition de 1900* (Paris: Société d'Édition Artistique, 1900), xv.
- 47 Malvina Hoffman, 1910 travel diary, entry June 8, 1910. Malvina Hoffman Papers, Getty Research Institute, Series VII, Box 132, Folder 3.
- 48 Mauclair, *Rodin*, 24.
- 49 For a discussion of Rodin's experimentation with plaster see Albert Elsen, "When the Sculptures Were White: Rodin's Work in Plaster," in Elsen, *Rodin Rediscovered*, 127–50. Elsen, *Gates of Hell*, 82, called Rodin's activities "Serious Play of Sculptural Matchmaking," an apt metaphor for Rodin's paratelic process. Play was a crucial procedure for Rodin and is related to



RODIN

Sex and the Making of
MODERN SCULPTURE

David J. Getsy

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Page i Unknown photographer, *Auguste Rodin*, c.1890–1900.

Photograph, 15.7 × 20.3 cm. René Huyghe Archive, Department of Image Collections, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Image courtesy Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Frontispiece Unknown photographer, *Auguste Rodin posing with "The Kiss" in Marble*, c.1898. Albumen print, 11.5 × 11.6 cm. Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University, gift of Albert E. Elsen, 1994.56.

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