
Bodies across
space and time

versus
Rodin.

Bodies across space and time

Auguste Rodin—one of the undisputed masters of modern art—revolutionised the way we look at, and think about, the human body. A full century after his death, the French sculptor's radical reappraisal of the figure continues to fascinate audiences and scholars alike.

Rodin broke the sculptural mould. Discarding the staid academic attitudes of the establishment, he developed a mode of expression that privileged creativity and process, and which spoke to the anxieties and uncertainties of a new age. The Parisian's alchemical talent turned matter into movement, and he created works that crackled with energy and pulsed with emotion. His sculptures also questioned received notions of style, taste and decorum. The world had never seen anything like it, and, when he died at the age of seventy-seven, Rodin was a towering figure in European art.

Fast-forward to our own image-saturated era, one which seems to be increasingly preoccupied with the body, and Rodin's game-changing focus on the human figure is perhaps more relevant than ever before. *Versus Rodin: bodies across space and time* explores this legacy, drawing on the Art Gallery of South Australia's collection of bronzes by Rodin, the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. The exhibition places these masterpieces in conversation with a selection of figurative works by key modern and contemporary artists.

In a daring series of duels and duets, *Versus Rodin* teases out the tensions and harmonies implicit in the act of figuring human identity. Significantly, the exhibition breaks new ground by enacting a dialogue between Rodin's sculptures and the work of leading contemporary artists from Australia and overseas.

Leigh Robb—

‘In Rodin’s complex vision, the figure was fragmented, contorted and fetishised. Limbs and torsos were deconstructed, and body parts from different models were ‘frankensteined’ together in remarkable disjunctures. Through such radical juxtapositions, Rodin allowed us to view the human figure with fresh eyes, to consider it anew.’

Auguste Rodin—

‘In reality there is not a muscle of the body which does not express the inner variations of feeling. All speak of joy or of sorrow, of enthusiasm or of despair, of serenity or of madness.’

Curatorial premise

The history of art can be viewed as a history of bodies and gazes. *Versus Rodin* is an exhibition of bodies—whole, partial, composite, transitional, morphing and synthetic. Collectively, they create an arena of figures, busts, masks, muscles, bones and skins, a theatre of anatomy in which to contemplate the representation of the body and the perception of the self.

The Gallery’s collection of works by Rodin is the axis around which revolve more than 200 works from international and Australian artists, including a number of works commissioned for the exhibition. Themes explored include the classical, fragmented, erotic, emotional and social body. In addition *Versus Rodin* presents an opportunity to delve into the collection and bring to light significant modern and contemporary works, some of which are displayed for the first time, others which have not been seen for decades.

Rather than recasting Rodin’s reputation in the context of the contemporary, *Versus Rodin* allows us to review the correspondences and contrasts between his work and those of his most challenging modern and contemporary successors.

The exhibition considers a range of questions. How has the treatment of the body changed over this time? How and why have ideas and art forms shifted, and what is at stake today in the representation of the body 100 years on?

Leigh Robb

Curator, *Versus Rodin: bodies across space and time*

Antony Gormley—

‘For me, (Rodin) is the first modernist. It is almost as if his bodies have an internal flame. They have a kind of energy that is played out on their surface.’

Acquiring Rodin

The Art Gallery of South Australia acquired twenty bronze sculptures and one drawing by Auguste Rodin in early 1996, following an offer by prominent collector and arts patron William Bowmore, AO, OBE, to sell this part of his important private collection to a public institution. The works were purchased by the South Australian Government, with able assistance from the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation, as a gift to the Gallery.

In an added gesture of good will to accompany the acquisition, Bowmore donated to the Gallery sixteen superb paintings by the likes of Garofalo, Ambrosius Benson, Gerrit Dou, Francesco Guardi, Thomas Lawrence and John Constable, works which considerably enhanced the collection's European holdings.

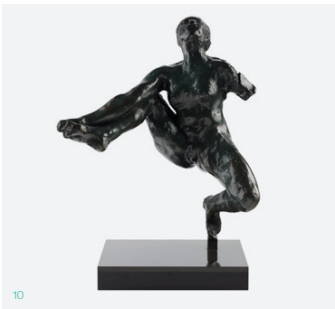
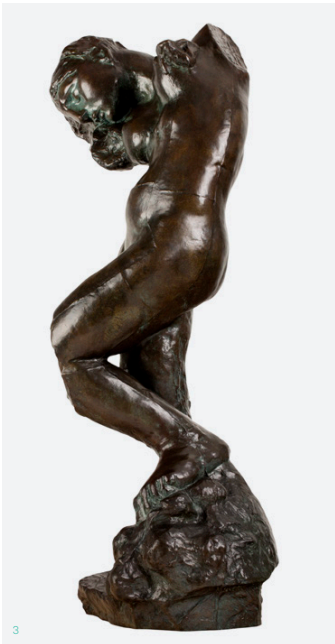
Highlights of the Gallery's Rodin collection include *Pierre de Wissant* and *Andrieu d'Andres* from the sculptural group *Monument to the Burghers of Calais*; *The Three Shades* from Rodin's never completed *The Gates of Hell*; *The Walking Man*; *Iris, Messenger of the Gods* and *Flying Figure*.

Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) seated beside his work in his studio (b/w photo),
Dornac (Paul François Arnold Cardon) (1892–1941) / Archive Larousse, Paris,
France / Bridgeman Images





Auguste Rodin with:
Tony Albert
Benjamin Armstrong
Frank Auerbach
Australian Dance Theatre
Francis Bacon
Phyllida Barlow
Huma Bhabha
Polly Borland
Louise Bourgeois
Pat Brassington
Cecily Brown
Janet Burchill
Eugène Carrière
Thea Costantino
Olive Cotton
Bridget Currie
Tacita Dean
Max Dupain
Anne Ferran
Urs Fischer
Simryn Gill
Felix Gonzalez -Torres
Antony Gormley
Brent Harris
Bill Henson
Barbara Hepworth
Thomas Houseago
Sui Jianguo
William Kentridge
Bharti Kher
Emily Kame Kngwarreye
Rosemary Laing
Lindy Lee
Ben Leslie
Sherrie Levine
Sarah Lucas
Guy Maestri
Mark Manders
Ricky Maynard
Rob McLeish
Henry Moore
Chris Ofili
Dennis Oppenheim
Mike Parr
João Penalva
Paul Pfeiffer
Seth Price
Sara Rahbar
Elvis Richardson
Julia Robinson
Ugo Rondinone
David Rosetzky
Alison Saar
Yhonnie Scarce
Tim Silver
Kiki Smith
Fiona Tan
Wolfgang Tillmans
Francis Upritchard
Bill Viola
Danh Võ
Kara Walker
Gillian Wearing
Kehinde Wiley
Xu Zhen



- 1 Tim Silver, Australia, born 1974, *Untitled (Oneirophrenia) (Blue) #5*, 2016, Sydney, pure white concrete, marble dust and pigment, 38.5 x 24.0 x 26.0 cm, © Tim Silver, courtesy of the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf, Sydney
- 2 Detail: Paul Pfeiffer, United States of America, born 1966, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, No. 18*, 2004, photograph C-print, fuji flex, digital edition of 6 plus, 1AP, 121.9 x 152.4 cm, Collection of Naomi Milgrom AO, © Paul Pfeiffer, courtesy Thomas Dane Gallery, London
- 3 Auguste Rodin, France, 1840–1917, *The Inner Voice*, c.1894, enlarged 1895–96, (Coubertin Foundry, cast 1982), Paris, bronze, 146.0 x 76.0 x 45.0 cm, William Bowmore AO OBE Collection, Gift of the South Australian Government, assisted by the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 1996, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
- 4 Ugo Rondinone, Sweden, born 1963, *nude (xxxxxxx)*, 2010, cast wax edition of 3, 72.0 x 102.0 x 62.0 cm, Collection of Naomi Milgrom AO, © Ugo Rondinone, courtesy Sadie Coles HQ, London
- 5 Sarah Lucas, Britain, born 1962, *Realidad*, 2013, cast bronze, bricks, 44.0 x 43.0 x 57.0 cm, Private collection, © Sarah Lucas, courtesy Sadie Coles HQ, London
- 6 Detail: Auguste Rodin, France, 1840–1917, *Pierre de Wissaint, monumental nude*, c.1896–97 (Coubertin Foundry, cast 1985), Paris, bronze, 215.0 x 100.0 x 60.0 cm, William Bowmore AO OBE Collection, Gift of the South Australian Government, assisted by the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 1996, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
- 7 Detail: Xu Zhen, China, born 1977, *Eternity*, 2013–14, glass-fibre, reinforced concrete, marble grains, sandstone grains, steel, mineral pigments, dimensions variable, White Rabbit Collection © Xu Zhen, courtesy White Rabbit Collection, Sydney
- 8 Cecily Brown, Britain, born 1969, *Boy with a Cat*, 2015, oil, pastel on linen, 109.2 x 165.1 cm, Collection of Danny and Lisa Goldberg, Sydney, © Cecily Brown, courtesy Thomas Dane Gallery, London
- 9 Antony Gormley, Britain, born 1950, *Clutch*, 2007, mild steel blocks, 95.0 x 44.0 x 85.0 cm, Private collection, Melbourne, © Antony Gormley, courtesy Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, photo: Stephen White, London
- 10 Auguste Rodin, France, 1840–1917, *Iris, study with head*, 1891, (G. Rudier Foundry, cast 1970), Paris, bronze, 48.0 x 40.0 x 24.0 cm, William Bowmore AO OBE Collection, Gift of the South Australian Government, assisted by the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 1996, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

Events program

Daily tours

11am & 2pm

Drawing tours

Sunday 23, 30 April, 7 & 14 May, 3pm
\$10 with exhibition entry
Ages 16+

Bookings essential:

08 8207 7035

public.programs@artgallery.sa.gov.au
artgallery.sa.gov.au

Opening day

Saturday 4 March, 11am–4pm
Free with exhibition entry

The exhibition opens to the public with a jam-packed day of events. Come along to learn about artists' enduring obsession with representing the human body in sculpture, painting, printmaking, video art and more. Be stimulated by in-gallery artists' talks and lively panel discussions, and be among the first to see Australian Dance Theatre's new work commissioned for *Versus Rodin*.

First Fridays

Open late until 9pm

Free, entry fees apply for *Versus Rodin*

The Gallery is firing up Friday nights by staying open after hours on the first Friday of every month. Hear great talks, unwind to live music and take in the latest exhibitions and displays.

Friday 7 April

Be the first to see a new work in development by choreographer Chris Scherer of Vitalstatistix/PADA, inspired by dance pioneer and radical icon, Isadora Duncan. Hear about the revolutionary artist Auguste Rodin with a guided tour, listen to the experimental sounds of composer Adam Page as he sculpts with sound in response to the exhibition or sink into a beanbag and enjoy our First Fridays film screening.

Friday 5 May

Enjoy an exclusive performance of *Things meeting now* by sibling artists Bridget and Alison Currie, hear from South Australian artist Ben Leslie about his work in *Versus Rodin* and relax over a drink with DJ TRIP.

Friday 2 June

Experience a contemporary take on classicism with Zephyr Quartet and enjoy their musical arrangements developed in response to Rodin's explorations of the body.

Lunchtime talks

12.30pm

Free with exhibition entry

Tuesday 7 March

Leigh Robb, Curator of Contemporary Art and curator of *Versus Rodin: bodies across space and time*, introduces the exhibition.

Tuesday 14 March

Lisa Slade, Assistant Director, Artistic Programs and contributor to the *Versus Rodin* publication, discusses the matter of sex in the exhibition.

Tuesday 21 March

Maria Zagala, Associate Curator of Prints, Drawings and Photographs, explores the theme of trauma and transgression in Rodin's *The Torture Garden* and in the work of Chris Ofili, Brent Harris and Louise Bourgeois.

Tuesday 28 March

Tracey Lock, Curator of Australian Paintings and Sculpture and contributor to the *Versus Rodin* publication, discusses the theme of sight in the work of Benjamin Armstrong and Auguste Rodin.

Tuesday 11 April

Elle Freak, Assistant Curator of Australian Paintings and Sculpture, speaks about the elemental forces at play in the work of Rodin and selected artists in the exhibition.

Tuesday 2 May

Tony Magnusson, Curator of European and North American Art, shares his insights on the persistence of classicism in modern and contemporary art.

Tuesday 16 May

Artist Ben Leslie speaks about his new work created for *Versus Rodin*.

Tuesday 23 May

Russell Kelty, Associate Curator of Asian Art and contributor to the *Versus Rodin* publication, discusses Rodin's passion for the fragment and the profound impact this had on modern and contemporary sculpture.

For full program details visit
artgallery.sa.gov.au

Venue

Art Gallery of South Australia
North Terrace, Adelaide

Key dates

Media Preview	Thursday 2 March, 11am
VIP Opening Night	Thursday 2 March, 5.30pm
Exclusive Members Day	Friday 3 March
Exhibition Season	Saturday 4 March — Sunday 2 July Daily 10am — 5pm

Tickets

Available online at artgallery.sa.gov.au or at the Gallery.

Adult	\$18
Concession	\$16
Member	\$14
Student	\$10
Child (5 — 12 years)	\$8
Child (0 — 4 years)	Free
Family (2 adults and up to 3 children)	\$40
Member Season Pass	\$40

artgallery.sa.gov.au/rodin

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#versusrodin #artgalleryofsa

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Images and exhibition publication available on request.

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