FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 18, 2017

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Rodin: The Human Experience/Selections from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collections Opens September 1 at Telfair Museums

Savannah, GA (July 20, 2017) In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the death of sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) on November 17, 2017, Telfair Museums’ Jepson Center presents Rodin: The Human Experience/Selections from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Collections, a selection of 32 bronze figures by the legendary French sculptor whose contemporaries considered him to be the greatest practitioner of his craft since Michelangelo. Telfair Museums joins with art institutions around the world to honor this centennial with exhibitions and educational programs.

One of the foremost artists of his time, Auguste Rodin revolutionized the art of sculpture. While his works always remained faithful to nature, he departed from traditional practice in seeking to reveal the creative process. This exhibition of stunning bronzes will demonstrate Rodin’s particular passion for modeling the human form in clay, the medium in which his hand and mind are most directly evidenced.

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Rodin left behind 19th-century academic traditions to focus on conveying the passion and vitality of the human spirit, and exerted a tremendous influence on artists of subsequent generations, such as Matisse, Brancusi, and Maillol. He broke new artistic ground by insisting that a part of a figure—such as a torso or a hand—could by itself convey meaning and be a complete work of art.

The selected works in the show represent the major achievements of Rodin’s long career. The exhibition includes figures created for Rodin’s monumental Gates of Hell, as well as insightful sculptural studies for his monument The Burghers of Calais. Also featured are sculptures such as Monumental Torso of the Walking Man, which demonstrate Rodin’s admiration for Michelangelo, and Dance Movement D, which speaks to his interest in understanding how the body moved.

“Rodin first studied the human form by drawing from plaster casts of ancient sculpture, just like the casts that still be found today in Telfair Academy’s sculpture gallery. But he broke from his traditional academic background and became a true rebel of the art world,” says Courtney McNeil, Telfair’s chief curator of collections and exhibitions. “The bronzes in this exhibition show the passion and power behind his sculptures of the human figure.”

Rodin’s genius lay in his ability to use bronze to represent living flesh and his talent for combining bodies in ways that expressed emotions and provoked responses. Rodin: The Human Experience reveals why the artist is considered the crucial link between traditional and modern sculpture.

Rodin: The Human Experience will be on view at the Jepson Center September 1, 2017- January 7, 2018.

This exhibition has been organized and made possible by the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation. Sponsored by the City of Savannah Department of Cultural Affairs, Chatham Capital Group, and SunTrust Bank.

Related Programs

Celebrating Two Romantics: Rodin and Beethoven

Telfair Academy Guild will present two events in conjunction with the exhibition Rodin: The Human Experience. Music was a powerful influence on Auguste Rodin’s sculptural output and artistic vision. He felt close to Ludwig van Beethoven and found inspiration in the composer’s works and persona. These two programs will explore connections between the music of Beethoven, whom the French sculptor called “the first Romantic,” and the artistic output of Rodin, the self-proclaimed “last Romantic.”

Rodin: Inspired by Beethoven

Monday, September 25, 10:30am lecture followed by lunch / Jepson Center

Tickets $85

Former Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation fellow and musicologist Olivia Mattis, PhD, will explore the inspiration Rodin derived from the music of Beethoven. Lunch to follow at Jepson Center.

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Quynh Shannon: Passion for an Exhibition

Thursday, October 19, 6:30pm performance followed by dinner

*General tickets $150 / Patron $250 (includes preferred seating)*

Quynh Shannon, accomplished concert pianist, Savannah Philharmonic Guest Artist, and Instructor of Music at Savannah State University, will make her Savannah solo piano debut. Quynh will perform works by Rachmaninoff, Beethoven, and Mussorgsky in the Telfair Academy Rotunda with an elegant dinner to follow in the Jepson Center.

Free Family Day

Saturday, November 11, 1–4pm / Jepson Center

This hands-on family day will encourage the sculptor in everyone to come out, and perhaps inspire the next Auguste Rodin! Local sculptors will be on hand, giving demonstrations and talking about the process of making sculpture in bronze, wood, and other media.

Image Credit: *Study for the Torso of the Walking Man*, modeled 1878-79, Bronze, 20 ½ x 10 ¾ x 8 in. Collection of the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation

About Telfair Museums:

*Opened in 1886, Telfair Museums is the oldest public art museum in the South and features a world-class art collection in the heart of Savannah’s National Historic Landmark District. The museum encompasses three sites: the Jepson Center for the Arts, the Owens-Thomas House, and the Telfair Academy. For more information, call 912-790-8800 or visit [www.telfair.org](http://www.telfair.org).*

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