

## Background

This Spotlight loan is being developed to coincide with the forthcoming major British Museum exhibition on Rodin in 2018. The loan will draw on one of the main themes of the major exhibition; exploring how Rodin, the great innovator of modern sculpture and art, was influenced by the art of ancient Greece and Rome.

Rodin visited museum collections regularly, and in later life formed his own collection of over 6,000 antiquities. Ancient sculpture frequently comes down to us in a ruined condition. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century it was common practice to have broken statues restored. Rodin, however, did not lament the lack of what was lost but rather rejoiced in what had survived, and saw the fragmentary form as a reduction to the pure essence of sculpture's symbolic and visual power.

This touring exhibition will thus explore how Rodin introduced for the first time, a uniquely positive acceptance of the fragment, converting the limbless, headless torso into a new genre of modern art in its own right.

## Objects

Pending loan approval, the exhibition proposes to tour the bronze figure of *The Thinker* from the Burrell Collection alongside three objects from the British Museum's collection: the Torso from a marble statuette of Venus; a silver Royal Academy medal depicting the Belvedere Torso and the Athenian Acropolis; and a portrait of Auguste Rodin by Eugène Carrière.

Rodin's naked and heavily muscled figure known as *The Thinker* (1880-81) was in part inspired by the Belvedere Torso in the Vatican, which had long been regarded as a masterpiece of Greek art. Its fragmentary state did not inhibit Rodin's intuitive understanding and in this respect he saw it very much as Michelangelo did, as a perfect survival and inimitable creation of ancient Greek art.



The Torso from a marble statuette of Venus (around 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD) was in the British Museum's collection when Rodin visited for the first time in 1881. The statuette is akin to Rodin's process of assembling female torsos with ancient vases from his collection, which he started in the mid 1890s, arranging them like "flowers in a vase".

The medal (around 1901), shows the famous Belvedere Torso, the leading exemplar of ancient sculpture before the arrival of the Parthenon Sculptures in London. Rodin adapted the Torso to create his *Thinker*. Finally, Eugène Carrière's print (1900) shows Rodin at the height of his fame, in the process of sculpting a figure.

Together, these four objects will evoke Rodin's study of antiquity, and his process of assembling the torso. Partner venues are encouraged to include objects from their own collections in order to open the discussion around the fragment and ancient art as an inexhaustible source for modern and contemporary artistic inspiration.

### **Key objectives**

- To encourage UK wide interest in the art of Auguste Rodin and the art of ancient Greece and Rome.
- To provide an opportunity for partner museums to highlight important regional collections and make interesting connections with British Museum collections.
- To encourage new audiences and repeat visits for regional museum partners.

### **Tour Schedule**

The British Museum is looking for three partners to host this Spotlight loan for three months each between August 2018 and April 2019.

### **Interpretation and design**

An interpretation package will be provided to all tour partners, along with guidelines for use. It is unlikely that generic interpretation panels will tour and it is expected that partners may wish to reconfigure text and design in conjunction with the British Museum.

### **Marketing, publicity and programming**

Exhibition and marketing materials must include the British Museum's logo, and logos of any associated sponsors. Press releases and all other materials require sign off input by the British Museum.

Opportunities will be explored for all partners to visit the British Museum for collections knowledge exchange in advance of the exhibition tour.

British Museum staff may also be available to provide talks or lectures during the exhibition on request.

### **Display specifications**

Partner venues must conform to ACE Government Indemnity standards. Venues will be asked to provide standard facility and security information by completing UKRG documentation, as well as diagrams of the display and layout. Environmental readings of gallery spaces will be requested. All materials to be used in case must be tested or previously approved by British Museum conservation.

The usual ambient conditions for lighting, temperature and humidity will apply of 16-25°C; RH 40-60% (with no more than +/-5% fluctuation

about a set point in a 24 hour period). Lux levels will need to be maintained to 80-100 throughout the course of the exhibition.

### **Security**

The ACE Security Adviser will be consulted on security. The objects must be located in a gallery with dedicated invigilation during opening hours.

### **Shipping and installation**

The objects will be shipped by an approved fine art transport agent and accompanied by two couriers from the British Museum. The exhibition will be installed by British Museum technicians with some support required by partner curatorial, conservation and technical staff.

### **Costs**

Partners are expected to meet the cost of all interpretation production, marketing and general programming. Venues will be expected to cover the works under the Minimum Liability arrangements within the GIS.

The British Museum will cover the cost of all staff costs, administration, mounts, transportation, object preparation, packing and conservation and courier reatled travel and subsistence for the entirety of the tour.

Any approaches for additional sponsorship by tour partners must be cleared with the British Museum and the crediting of such sponsorship discussed.

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