

Passion at Work, Rodin and Freud as Collectors

from 15 October 2008 to 22 February 2009

Curator of the Exhibition: Bénédicte Garnier

“The antique is life itself”, *August Rodin*



Albert Harlingue, *Rodin in the Museum of Antiquities in Meudon*, approximately between 1908 and 1912.
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Max Pollak, *Sigmund Freud at his desk*, 19 Bergasse, in Vienna, 1914, engraving.
© Freud Museum, London, IN 517



Auguste Rodin, *Assemblage: female nude standing in a vase*, 1895-1910(?), plaster and terracotta.
© Paris, Rodin Museum, S. 371



Relief of Aglaurides, known as *La Gradiva*, Roman art, first half of the 2nd century A.D., marble.
© Rome, Chiaramonti Museum, Inv. 1284

The Rodin Museum is organising an exhibition of the collections of antiquities that had belonged to Rodin and Freud. The Freud collection, kept at the Freud Museum of London, is presented for the first time in France. The objective is to shed new light on the close links between the work of these two men and their passion for antiquity.

A shared passion: the gods of Antiquity

It was in the middle of the 1890s that Freud in Vienna and Rodin in Paris started their collections. Their passion never slackened from that moment onwards. Numerous archaeological excavations were carried out during that period, and art objects circulated freely, making it easy to acquire works and constantly enrich collections. The obsessive presence of statuettes in the consulting room of the psychoanalyst echoed the multitude of antiquities that gradually invaded the villa of the sculptor in Meudon. When Rodin died in 1917, he left over 6000 antiquities behind him, while Freud possessed no less than 3000 when he passed away in 1939.

A collection rich with meaning

The exhibition will display a selection of antiquities of various origins - Egypt, Greece and Rome - and will highlight the works of major importance. Thanks to an exceptional loan from the Chiaramonti Museum of the Vatican, *La Gradiva*, a source of inspiration for Freud and a whole generation of authors and artists after him, will be included among the works presented. The two collections have many similarities, but the main focus will be the relationship Rodin and Freud maintained with antiquity. These objects were far from being mere pieces of stone for these two personalities. “Saxa loquuntur”, Freud was fond of saying, for in fact these stones speak a language that needs to be deciphered and translated. Vestiges and fragments are traces of a past that is invariably present, and completely open to exploration. “It is real flesh”, Rodin used to say, revealing the first stirrings of an adoration for his “gods”, his “treasures”. A large number of documents from that period, including letters and photographs, will illustrate this profoundly original relationship with antiquity.

Passion at work: the studios

The collection became central to the work in progress of both men. At this point, antiquity merged into creation, giving birth to hybrid and mysterious works. The assemblages of Rodin provide an excellent example of this process. As for Freud, he too worked on assemblages, on “associations”, and he was able to discern a form of psychoanalysis in archaeology: “Similar to archaeology in that it probes the earth, psychoanalysis must unearth, stratum after stratum, the psyche of the patient, in order to dig up treasures buried in the innermost depths”. In the exhibition, *La Gradiva* testifies to the elaboration of the psychoanalytic research undertaken by Freud.

Rilke, Lou Andréas-Salomé, Zweig, Marie Bonaparte, Romain Rolland

All these famous personalities now form a chain of links between Rodin and Freud. Although the two collectors never actually met each other, they frequented the same circles, between Paris and Vienna, among the intelligentsia of the 1900s. Among other links, Rainer Maria Rilke will be mentioned because of his role in disseminating the work of Rodin in Vienna, as well as Marie Bonaparte, who introduced the research conducted by Freud to Paris. The exhibition will examine these leading figures, who contributed to making the work of Rodin and Freud known, from a completely new angle. The circuit will conclude with a presentation of the library of both men.

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Visuals available for the press on the Internet site of the Museum in the section on *Communication*

Entry to the exhibition: 6 €; rate for young visitors: 4€; rate for professionals: 5 €; families: 10 €
Audio-guide designed for family visits. Combined exhibition + permanent collections + garden ticket: 9 €;
rate for young visitors and professionals: 7 €; families: 10 €. Tickets can be purchased from www.musee-rodin.fr

Rodin Museum, 79 rue de Varenne, 75007 Paris. Metro: Varenne. Closed on Mondays. Open from 9.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m.