

Auguste Rodin

Auguste Rodin

Rodin was born in 1840 into a working-class family in Paris, the son of Marie Cheffer and Jean-Baptiste Rodin, a police department clerk. He was largely self-educated,^[3] and began to draw at ten. From 14 to 17, he attended the *Petite École*, a school specializing in art and mathematics, where he studied drawing with de Boisbaudran and painting with Belloc. Rodin submitted a clay model of a companion to the *Grand École* in 1857 in an attempt to win entrance; he did not succeed, and two further applications were also denied.^[4] Given that entrance requirements at the Grand Ecole were not particularly high,^[5] the rejections were considerable setbacks. Rodin's inability to gain entrance may have been due to the judges' Neoclassical tastes, while Rodin had been schooled in light, 18th century sculpture. Leaving the *Petite École* in 1857, Rodin would earn a living as a craftsman and ornamenteer for most of the next two decades, producing decorative objects and architectural embellishments.

Rodin's sister Maria, two years his senior, died of peritonitis in a convent in 1862. Her brother was anguished, and felt guilty because he had introduced Maria to an unfaithful suitor. Turning away from art, Rodin briefly joined a Christian order. Father Peter Julian Eymard recognized Rodin's talent, however, and encouraged him to continue with his sculpture. He returned to work as a decorator, while taking classes with animal sculptor Antoine-Louis Barye. The teacher's attention to detail—for example, in rendering the musculature of animals in motion—significantly influenced Rodin.^[6]

In 1864, Rodin began to live with a young seamstress named Rose Beuret, with whom he would stay—with ranging commitment—for the rest of his life. The couple bore a son, Auguste-Eugène Beuret, in 1866. The year that Rodin met Beuret, he offered his first sculpture for exhibition, and entered the studio of Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse, a successful mass producer of *objects d'art*. Rodin worked as Carrier-Belleuse' chief assistant until 1870, designing roof decorations and staircase and doorway embellishments. With the arrival of the Franco-Prussian War, Rodin was called to serve in the National Guard, but his service was brief due to his near-sightedness.^[7] Decorators' work had dwindled because of the war, yet Rodin needed to support his family. Carrier-Belleuse soon asked Rodin to join him in Belgium, where they would work on ornamentation for Brussels' stock exchange.

Rodin spent the next six years abroad. Though his relationship with Carrier-Belleuse deteriorated, he found other employment in Brussels, and his companion Rose soon joined him there. Having saved enough money to travel, Rodin visited Italy for two months in 1875, where he was drawn to the work of Donatello and Michelangelo.^[8] Their work had a profound effect on his artistic direction.^[9] Rodin said, "It is [Michelangelo] who has freed me from academic sculpture."^[10] Returning to Belgium, he began work on *The Age of Bronze*, a life-size male figure whose realism brought Rodin attention, but led to accusations of sculptural cheating.

Artistic independence

Rose Beuret and Rodin returned to Paris in 1877, moving into a small flat on the Left Bank. Misfortune surrounded Rodin: his mother, who wanted to see her son marry, was dead, and his father was blind and senile, cared for by Rodin's sister-in-law, Aunt Thérèse. Rodin's eleven-year-old son Auguste, possibly mentally retarded or brain-damaged from a fall, was also in the ever-helpful Thérèse's care. Rodin had essentially abandoned his son for six years,

^[11] and would have a very limited relationship with him throughout their lives. Son and father now joined the couple in their flat, with Rose as caretaker. The charges of fakery surrounding *The Age of Bronze* continued. Rodin increasingly sought more soothing female companionship in Paris, and Rose stayed in the background.

Rodin earned his living collaborating with more established sculptors on public commissions, primarily memorials and neo-baroque architectural pieces in the style of Carpeaux.^[12] In competitions for commissions, he submitted models of Denis Diderot, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Lazare Carnot, all to no avail. He worked on his own time on studies leading to the creation of his next important work, *St. John the Baptist Preaching*.

In 1880, Carrier-Belleuse—now art director of the Sèvres national porcelain factory—offered Rodin a part-time position as a designer. The offer was in part a gesture of reconciliation, and Rodin accepted. That part of Rodin that appreciated 18th-century tastes was aroused, and he immersed himself in designs for vases and table ornaments that gave the factory renown across Europe.^[13] The artistic community appreciated his work in this vein, and Rodin was invited to society gatherings by such friends as writer Léon Cladel. French statesman Leon Gambetta expressed a desire to meet Rodin, and at this salon the sculptor impressed him. In turn, Gambetta spoke of Rodin to several government ministers, likely including Edmund Turquet, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Fine Arts.^[14]

Rodin's relationship with Turquet was rewarding: through him, he won the 1880 commission to create a portal for a planned museum of decorative arts. Rodin dedicated much of the next four decades to his elaborate *Gates of Hell*, an unfinished portal for a museum that was never built. Many of the portal's figures became sculptures in themselves, including *The Thinker* and *The Kiss*. With the commission came a free, sizeable studio, granting Rodin a new level of artistic freedom. Soon, he stopped working at the porcelain factory; his income came from private commissions.

In 1883, Rodin agreed to supervise a sculpture course for Alfred Boucher during his absence, where he met the 18-year-old Camille Claudel. The two formed a passionate but stormy relationship, and influenced each other artistically. Claudel inspired Rodin as a model for many of his figures, and she was a talented sculptor, assisting him on commissions.

Although busy with *The Gates of Hell*, Rodin won other commissions. He pursued an opportunity to create a monument for the French town of Calais, to depict an important moment in the town's history. For a monument to French author Honoré de Balzac, Rodin was chosen in 1891. His execution of both sculptures clashed with traditional tastes, and met with varying degrees of disapproval from the organizations that sponsored the commissions. Still, Rodin was gaining support from diverse sources that continued his path toward fame.

In 1889, the Paris Salon invited Rodin to be a judge on its artistic jury. Though Rodin's career was on the rise, Claudel and Beuret were becoming increasingly impatient with Rodin's "double life". Claudel and Rodin shared an atelier at a small old castle, but Rodin refused to relinquish his ties to Beuret, his loyal companion during the lean years, and mother of his son. During one absence, Rodin wrote to her, "I think of how much you must have loved me to put up with my caprices...I remain, in all tenderness, your Rodin."^[15] He never fulfilled a contract with Claudel to give up all contact with other women and marry her. The couple parted in 1898,^[16] and Claudel's mental health deteriorated.

Summary

He was born in Paris in 1840. He taught himself and he began to draw at ten years. Then he attended the Petite Ecole from his 14 to 17 years. This school is specializing in art and mathematics. There he studied drawing and painting and making models from clay. He participated in a competition, in making from clay, 3 times but he didn't win. Then he earned his own money by making decorative object and embellishments. In 1862 died his sister. After sister death Peter Julian recognized his talent and encouraged him to again continue with his sculptures. In 1864 he met young Rose Beuret. He would stay with her for the rest of his life. Then Rose bore a son. In the same year he offered his first sculpture for exhibition. Rodin was called in National Guard but then he escaped in Belgium for 6 years. Then he went to Italy where he admired works from Michelangelo. When he returned from Belgium he began to creating many sculptures which is now very famous. He married Rose 35 years after he met her. But after they married Rose died in 2 weeks. Auguste died in the same year. He died 77 years old.

Explanation of unknown words

clerk (n)- a person who deals with letters, accounts-**tajnik**
ornament (n)- something decorative, intended to make a room more beautiful-**okras**
render (v)- cause to become-**pripraviti**
embellish (v)- to increase the interest of-**olepšati**
significantly (adv)- to an important degree-**precej**
briefly (adv)-**kratko**
profound (adj)-deep-**globok**
throughout (prep)-in all parts of-**povsod po**
accusation (n)-**obtožba**
setback (n)- a delay in progress-**zastoj, zaostanek**
increasingly (adv)- more and more-**vedno bolj, več**
deteriorate (v)-to grow worse-**poslabšati se**
disapproval (n)-**neodobravanje**
sizeable (adj)- fairly large-**precejšen**
artistically (adv)-**umetniško**
depict (v)-to draw, paint-**slikati, risati**

Word formation

briefly (adv)-kratko; briefing (n)-navodila; brief (v)-dati; brief (n)-kratka razlaga
throughout (prep)-povsod po; through (adj)-direkten; through (adv)-skoz
accusation (n)-obtožba; accuse (v)-obtožiti; the accused (n)-obtoženi
increasingly (adv)-vedno bolj, več; increase (v)-povečati; on the increase-v porastu
disapproval (n)-neodobravanje; disapprove (v)-ne odobravati; disapprovingly (adv)-grajajoče