

**Media release
For immediate release**

A Season of Sculpture at Glenbow Museum

Calgary, AB (September 8, 2004) — Glenbow Museum is pleased to be the first Canadian venue on a North American tour to present *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation*, an exhibition of nearly 70 sculptures, drawings, and studies by Auguste Rodin (1840-1917). From October 30, 2004 to January 30, 2005, museum visitors will experience first-hand the intensely expressive masterpieces of Rodin, considered by many as one of the greatest sculptors since Michelangelo and the 'father of modern sculpture'. *A Magnificent Obsession* is the first-ever exhibition of Rodin to come to Calgary.

Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession features many of the artist's well-known and beloved works including *The Thinker*, *The Kiss*, and *The Age of Bronze* and will include studies for many of his major monuments such as *The Burgbers of Calais*, *The Gates of Hell*, and *The Monument to Balzac*. Many people are familiar with Rodin's famous sculptures, but the breadth of works in this exhibition will allow visitors to explore the major projects the artist undertook during his prolific career. This exhibition is drawn from the Cantor Foundation in Los Angeles, widely acknowledged to be the world's largest private collection of Rodin sculptures.

Glenbow Museum is pleased to host the Canadian premier and Calgary's first-ever Rodin exhibition as Glenbow President and CEO Mike Robinson explains, "Just as Charlie Russell and Frederic Remington have left the building, we welcome another wonderful artist to Calgary and to Canada. Auguste Rodin via the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation of Los Angeles will open your eyes to a European consideration of human form." Robinson adds, "Glenbow has worked hard to create an internal sculpture garden to display these works, which include a good number of "old friends." You can greet them all at Glenbow as we celebrate autumn as a season of sculpture."

The bronze sculptures in *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession*, which range from small studies, reductions, enlargements, and monumental works, span the length of Rodin's career. Additionally, this exhibition features works on paper, photographs, portraits of the artist, and a model demonstrating the complexities of the lost-wax casting process.

All works in this exhibition are original, either cast in bronze during Rodin's lifetime, or cast posthumously according to the sculptor's explicit wishes and instructions to the French government. Among its extensive works and studies, the exhibition features six large scale sculptures. It also includes a portrait of Rodin in bronze created by Camille Claudel – his student, model, collaborator, and lover.

Throughout his career, Rodin broke new artistic ground by creating raw, vital sculptures of the human form in all its varied emotions. His genius lay in capturing the human spirit, be it beautiful, heroic, tortured or erotic. Today, museum visitors continue to be captivated – and even obsessed – by Rodin's compelling vision. *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession* offers a rare opportunity to explore this artist's work.

Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession will be presented in conjunction with two other sculpture exhibits, *Evan Penny: Absolutely Unreal* and *Malvina Hoffman: From the Heart*.

The works of Toronto-based artist, Evan Penny (b.1953), will be featured in an exhibit entitled *Evan Penny: Absolutely Unreal*. This exhibit, circulated by Museum London, is a survey of Penny's twenty-six year practice, since his graduation from the Alberta College of Art and Design. Penny's works are startlingly realistic – sometimes they have real hair and clothing – one could confuse them for people, except they are not life-size. Penny's sculptures challenge the way we experience and interpret reality, raising issues related to beauty, the aging process, and traditions of representation.

A selection of figurative sculpture by artist Malvina Hoffman (1887-1966) will be drawn from Glenbow Museum's permanent collections. Hoffman, a pupil and friend of Rodin, was an American sculptor who achieved fame of her own.

Glenbow Museum will also present a range of unique programs for all ages and interests to enhance the visitor's experience. Talks, performances, and hands-on activities will further explore the major themes of the exhibits.

Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession is organized and made possible by the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation. This exhibition in Calgary is presented by the American Express Foundation and supported by the Calgary Region Arts Foundation, Total E&P Canada Ltd., the Canada Council for the Arts, Alberta Community Development: Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Hyatt Regency on Stephen Avenue Walk, the Calgary Herald, and CBC Calgary.

Special exhibitions at Glenbow Museum in 2004/05 include *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation* (October 30, 2004 to January 30, 2005), *Our River: Journey of the Bow* (February 19 to June 5, 2005), *South East Asia: Journeys of Body, Mind & Spirit* (July 1, 2005 to September 25, 2005), and *Petra: Lost City of Stone* (October 15, 2005 to February 20, 2006)

Learn more about Glenbow Museum by calling (403) 268-4100 or visit www.glenbow.org for details on hours, admission prices, and further programming details.

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Background on Auguste Rodin (1840–1917)

For close to thirty years until his death in 1917, Auguste Rodin was the most famous sculptor in the world and at the peak of his career was widely regarded as the greatest sculptor since Michelangelo. Boldly redefining and even defying tradition, he expressed the vitality of the human spirit using a vigorous modelling technique to capture movement and depth of emotion. Today his pioneering, figurative sculpture is a crucial link between traditional and modern art.

However, the onset of Rodin's career was not as auspicious. He was trained at the government school for craft and design because he had been rejected by the more prestigious École des Beaux-Arts. He had to make his living as an ornamental mason. From 1871 to 1877, he lived in Brussels carving sculptural decorations for public buildings. Rodin yearned for recognition as an artist and throughout the 1860s unsuccessfully submitted his sculpture to the annual juried Paris Salon exhibitions. His work was finally admitted in 1877 when he was 36 years old.

Rodin earned his reputation as a major artist when he undertook large-scale public art commissions, such as the colossal *The Gates of Hell* (1880- c.1900), *The Burgbers of Calais* (1884–88), *Monument to Honoré de Balzac* (about 1897), and *Monument to Victor Hugo* (about 1897–1900). Although he was daring in many ways, Rodin produced his sculpture following traditional studio practices, virtually unchanged for hundreds of years. In his day and before, the master sculptor initially modelled his works in clay. Craftspeople were assigned to produce replicas: first in clay, then in plaster, and from these stone carvings and/or metal (usually bronze) castings. These were all considered originals. Although the master would supervise, he rarely participated in the creation of these stone or metal versions of his works. In order to accomplish all of this, and to meet the great demand for his sculptures after 1900, Rodin had as many as 50 assistants at work in his studio.

In 1900 Rodin stood at the pinnacle of success: an entire pavilion at the Paris World Exposition was devoted to a retrospective exhibition of his work. A year before he died, Rodin donated his estate, his studio, and its contents to the French government in exchange for France's agreement to establish a museum there. Today his grand home, the Hôtel Biron, is the Musée Rodin.

Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, Evan Penny: Absolutely Unreal, and Malvina Hoffman: Front the Heart are on display at Glenbow Museum from October 30, 2004 to January 30, 2005.

Backgrounder on the works of Auguste Rodin

The Gates of Hell, 1880 – c. 1900

The Gates of Hell was Auguste Rodin's most ambitious work. Commissioned to be a sculptural portal for a (never-built) museum, *The Gates* (about 21 feet or 640 centimetres tall) features hundreds of figures of varying sizes, modelled in low to high relief and even in-the-round. It was inspired by Dante's *Inferno*, a medieval epic poem (part of *The Divine Comedy*, written about 1308). The monumental *Gates of Hell* is revolutionary both in form and content. Instead of a program of separate episodes illustrated on a series of panels, Rodin created two huge, cavernous spaces with an uneven, turbulent background within an architectural framework. Floating and weaving in a surging environment are tormented souls who represent the suffering of humankind in general. From the beginning, Rodin made many of the figures originally modelled for *The Gates of Hell* into free-standing, independent sculptures, sometimes reduced and/or enlarged in size. For example, *The Thinker* originated as a small-scale figure representing the poet Dante. This sculpture has become popular as the personification of thought. Another famous sculpture that is derived from *The Gates* is *The Kiss*. Rodin also combined separate figures to make many new and daring compositions. This practice of re-using pieces and producing them in various sizes was part of Rodin's creative method from 1880 onward.

The Gates of Hell was neither shown in its entirety nor cast in bronze during Rodin's lifetime. *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation* at Glenbow Museum features a maquette of *The Gates of Hell*.

Rodin's Partial Figures and Modern Art

Auguste Rodin's most important legacy to modern art was his partial figures. Although fragments of classical sculptures were admired as works of art, they were actually broken remnants of sculptures that had once been whole. Rodin was the first artist to consider a fragment of the body, such as a torso, as a sculpturally self-sufficient entity – not a part *of* the whole but rather the part *as* the whole. This signified a radical change in the traditional concept of the human body. Rodin believed that a sense of vitality could be projected into any part of the body. For example, he was particularly fascinated by the human hand and he modelled thousands, which ranged from naturalistic studies to powerful symbolic compositions. Many were rapid clay sketches and captured the fluid and expressive nature of the hand. Rodin's partial figures greatly influenced the course of modern sculpture at the beginning of the twentieth century. European artists like Maillol, Brancusi, Archipenko, and Matisse all learned from him.

Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation at Glenbow Museum features such partial figures as *The Cathedral* (1908), *Flying Figure* (c.1890-91), and *Large Left Hand of a Pianist* (1885).

The Monument to Balzac

In 1891 a Parisian literary society commissioned Rodin to create a monument to Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), one of France's most influential and prolific writers. Not only did Rodin have to contend with the titanic reputation of the writer, but he also faced the challenge of having to render a likeness of a man he had never seen. He embarked on an exhaustive research campaign. In addition to consulting photographs, written descriptions and portraits, he read all of Balzac's work. During Rodin's seven-year struggle to find a compelling likeness of the writer, he completed at least fifty studies; the earlier studies are more realistic when he tried to convey Balzac's actual appearance and the later ones are more subjective and abstract. His concept of Balzac evolved over time and he came to see the writer as a superhuman creator, a vision expressed in his remarkable final version. But when Rodin presented the Balzac statue to the public in 1898, it provoked a storm of controversy. Although some admired its daring and innovative modernism, most people were stunned and outraged. Vilification and ridicule in the press were so relentless that it was rejected, resulting in a huge financial loss for Rodin. Deeply hurt by the criticism, Rodin refused to allow the sculpture to be cast during his lifetime.

Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation at Glenbow Museum includes the *Monumental Head of Balzac* (Enlargement, 1897) as well as other studies.

Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, Evan Penny: Absolutely Unreal, and Malvina Hoffman: Front the Heart are on display at Glenbow Museum from October 30, 2004 to January 30, 2005.

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Evan Penny: Absolutely Unreal

Calgary, AB (September 8, 2004) – Beginning October 30, 2004, Glenbow Museum is pleased to present *Evan Penny: Absolutely Unreal*, a survey of the figurative works produced over the past twenty years by this remarkable Canadian artist. Produced by Museum London in London, Ontario, *Evan Penny: Absolutely Unreal* is the first time Glenbow Museum has shown Penny's work as a solo exhibit. As part of Glenbow's season of sculpture, this exhibit is presented in conjunction with *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation* and *Malvina Hoffman: From the Heart* also on display at Glenbow Museum from October 30, 2004 to January 30, 2005.

Evan Penny is one of Canada's premier figurative sculptors, and studied at the Alberta College of Art and Design from 1971-1978. Since completing undergraduate and post-graduate studies, he has gone on to build a nationally robust reputation as one of the most engaging contemporary figurative sculptors in Canada. He has shown widely, both nationally and internationally, for more than twenty years and his works have been collected by many of this country's major institutions.

Evan Penny's work has been described by various critics as "confounding," "unsettling," "uncanny," "eerily realistic," and "hyper-real." Working with both real and fictive models, he explores the ever-changing and unstable boundaries between reality and illusion. By avoiding youthful, idealized subjects, his work questions our perceptions of beauty and the popular stereotypes by which men and women are often represented. Yet, through his working process, attention to detail, and use of real materials like human hair in some works, his works are utterly convincing evocations of his subject. Through the manipulation of space, proportion, and scale, however, Penny continually plays with our expectations.

Glenbow Museum invites the public to learn more about Evan Penny at this special panel on opening day:

Reconsidering Realism: A Panel Discussion Surrounding the Works of Evan Penny

October 30, Start time: 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Burlington Resources Theatre at Glenbow Museum

Included with museum admission

Join this unique opportunity to learn about noted Canadian figurative sculptor, Evan Penny, his work, and its context in contemporary sculpture. Moderated by nationally-acclaimed art critic, Nancy Tousley, this program will include presentations challenging traditions, ideologies and definitions regarding 'realism'. Panel participants include Evan Penny (Toronto), David Clark (Halifax), Chris Cran (Calgary) and Eric Cameron (Calgary).

This exhibit is accompanied by an accompanying catalogue with essays by Nancy Tousley and David Clark, available in the Glenbow Museum Shop.

Evan Penny: Absolutely Unreal is supported at Glenbow Museum by Alberta Community Development: Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, Evan Penny: Absolutely Unreal, and *Malvina Hoffman: Front the Heart* are on display at Glenbow Museum from October 30, 2004 to January 30, 2005.

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Malvina Hoffman: From the Heart

Calgary, AB (September 8, 2004) – Presented in conjunction with *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation* is a small exhibit of one of Auguste Rodin's pupils, Malvina Hoffman (1885–1966), entitled *Malvina Hoffman: From the Heart*. Glenbow Museum has a large collection of Malvina Hoffman pieces after museum founder Eric Harvie collected her work after she achieved recognition in the United States.

In 1910, as a young American artist at the beginning of her career, Malvina Hoffman went to Paris determined to study with Auguste Rodin, the most renowned sculptor in the world. Impressed with the photographs of her work (and her knowledge of French poetry), Rodin agreed to take her on as his pupil. She studied with him for 13 months becoming an assistant in his studio and a close friend. Hoffman continued to work with Rodin every year during the summer months until the outbreak of the First World War. She wrote two books about her life story and her lively anecdotes about Rodin are often cited today in books about him.

As a woman practicing in a physically demanding field, Hoffman felt she had to master all the technical aspects of sculpture. Achieving a high degree of practical experience and proficiency, she wrote an influential textbook on sculpture. She was adept at both modelling in clay and carving in hard stones, building her own armatures and physically engaging in all aspects of the production of her work.

Hoffman was a prolific and respected sculptor who worked in a realistic style. She produced a wide range of figurative sculptures including fountains, architectural sculpture, and heroic monuments. The mainstay of her production was portraiture – primarily of celebrities. Her studio in New York and her home in Paris attracted the most famous figures of the day from the worlds of dance, theatre, art, and literature. Among her best work are sculptures inspired by the legendary Russian dancer, Anna Pavlova. Three of these works, *Bacchanale Rose* (1912), *Pavlova in La Gavotte* (1915), and *Anna Pavlova* (1924) are featured in this exhibit.

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Exhibition Programs and Events during *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession*

For Kids and Families

DISCOVERY ROOM

Open daily, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Included with museum admission

Reveal your artistic side! Drop by our art-based open studio to create, explore and discover with your family any day of the week. The *Discovery Room* changes and evolves with every new special exhibition. For group bookings or more information, call 268-4110.

From November through January, activities focus on *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession*, *Evan Penny, Absolutely Unreal* and *Malvina Hoffman: From the Heart*. Create your own line sculpture using pipe cleaners. Explore how artists increase and decrease scale in sculpture, using light and shadow. Try your hand at using a Pantograph to make a larger version of your very own drawing. Create a sculptural composition with casts of expressive hands, inspired by the works of Auguste Rodin. Explore your rendering skills then transform your work into a monoprint. The *Discovery Room* has activities for all ages and interests.

FACE TO FACE WITH HISTORY: MEET AUGUSTE RODIN

Wednesdays through Fridays, 12:30 p.m.
Saturdays & Sundays, 12:30 & 2:30 p.m.
Second floor lobby

Beginning October 30, rediscover the joy, the passion, the genius and the man who was Rodin. Brought to life by a character interpreter, this 30 minute performance takes you inside the mind of great European sculptor since Michelangelo. Trace Rodin's life of triumph and failure, love and despair, and the magnificent obsession that produced the work on display in this special exhibition. There will be a short gallery tour at the conclusion of each performance.

Face to Face with History is a *Live Interpretation* program supported by Petro-Canada.

Face à face avec l'histoire : faites connaissance avec Camille Claudel

Samedi à 11 heures
Foyer du 2ième étage

"Ma petite chérie, c'est à genoux que j'étreins ce beau corps qui est le tien."
(Lettre de Rodin à Camille Claudel, 1884.)

Camille Claudel fut à la fois l'élève, la collaboratrice et par la suite l'amante de Rodin. Leur séparation finale en 1898, une expérience à briser le cœur, marqua la naissance de sa propre notoriété en tant qu'artiste d'envergure et le début de la paranoïa qui devait lui valoir d'être internée pendant les 37 années qui lui restaient à vivre. Admirez l'œuvre de Rodin à travers les yeux de cette femme et artiste remarquable. En français seulement.

For Adults

OPENING EVENT: RECONSIDERING REALISM

A Panel Discussion Surrounding the Works of Evan Penny

October 30, 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Burlington Resources Theatre at Glenbow Museum

Included with museum admission

Join this unique opportunity to learn about noted Canadian figurative sculptor, Evan Penny, his work, and its context in contemporary sculpture. Moderated by nationally-acclaimed art critic, Nancy Tousley, this program will include presentations challenging traditions, ideologies and definitions regarding 'realism'. Panel participants include Evan Penny (Toronto), David Clark (Halifax), Chris Cran (Calgary) and Eric Cameron (Calgary).

BALLET IN BRONZE: INSPIRED BY RODIN

Friday, December 10, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 11, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 12, 2:00 p.m.

Burlington Resources Theatre at Glenbow Museum

All tickets: \$20. Call 268-4110 to book tickets.

(20% discount for Glenbow Members and Alberta Ballet subscribers)

The dynamic and passionate sculpture of Auguste Rodin is the catalyst for a unique artistic collaboration. Alberta Ballet and Glenbow Museum proudly co-present a program of dance to complement the special exhibition, *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession - Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation*. Celebrate Auguste Rodin's passion for the human form with an intimate and original ballet. A discussion and viewing of the exhibition will follow each performance led by the exhibit curator or the choreographer.

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL WITH RODIN

Offered on both January 13 and January 20

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Cost: \$20

(20% discount for Glenbow Members)

Captivated by *The Kiss*? Intrigued to learn more? Join Glenbow art curator Monique Westra on an exclusive evening tour of the exhibition, *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession*. Monique's engaging speaking style and her in-depth knowledge of Rodin will make for an educational and entertaining two-hour experience in the galleries.

Adult programming during *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession* is supported by Total E&P Canada Ltd.

Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, Evan Penny: Absolutely Unreal, and Malvina Hoffman: Front the Heart are on display at Glenbow Museum from October 30, 2004 to January 30, 2005.

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