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**J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM ACQUIRES FRENCH BRONZE SCULPTURES  
BY CAMILLE CLAUDEL AND AUGUSTE RODIN**

*Torso of a Crouching Woman*  
Cast by 1913 from a model made about 1884-85  
Camille Claudel (French, 1864-1943)

and

*Bust of John the Baptist*  
Cast in 1886 from a model made in 1880  
Auguste Rodin (French, 1840-1917)



*Torso of a Crouching Woman*, model about 1884-85, cast by 1913, Camille Claudel (French, 1864-1943). Bronze, 35 x 27 x 26 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (2018.32)



*Bust of John the Baptist*, model 1880, cast 1886, Auguste Rodin (French, 1840-1917). Bronze, 48 x 38.8 x 27 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES, CA – The J. Paul Getty announced today the acquisition of two important French bronze sculptures, *Torso of a Crouching Woman*, by Camille Claudel (1864-1943) and *Bust of John the Baptist* by Auguste Rodin (1840-1917).

“Each of these bronzes is a work of outstanding quality and importance, but it is the close connection between the two artists that makes their combined acquisition such a

powerful statement about French sculpture at the turn of the twentieth century – a moment when this medium was fundamentally transformed," said Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "It is particularly gratifying to be able to acquire a major work by Claudel – Rodin's student and lover – at a time when her achievement as an artist is receiving the recognition it deserves. I have no doubt the *Torso of a Crouching Woman* will quickly become a favorite with our visitors."

Potts adds, "Claudel was already regarded as an artistic genius by her contemporaries, but her reputation always suffered from being in Rodin's shadow. Fortunately this has changed in recent years, to the point that it is today nearly impossible to collect her already scarce work. We could not therefore pass up the chance to bring this breathtaking sculpture into the Getty, along with a rare lifetime cast Rodin."



*Torso of a Crouching Woman*, model about 1884–85, cast by 1913, Camille Claudel (French, 1864–1943). Bronze, 35 x 27 x 26 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (2018.32)

### ***Torso of a Crouching Woman, Camille Claudel***

At just over a foot tall, *Torso of a Crouching Woman* represents a fragmentary naked female body crouching on the floor, with no head or arms and the left knee cut off. With its movement focusing on the perfectly mastered balance of the body, the sculpture is characteristic of Claudel's harmonious modeling of the human body, with subtle rendition of the bones and muscles under the skin. The *Torso* is extremely rare: its plaster model is lost and only one other bronze cast exists, in a French Museum.

"*Torso of a Crouching Woman* shows Camille Claudel's very personal style," says Anne-Lise Desmas, senior curator of sculpture and decorative arts at the Getty Museum. "While the back and the chest display a natural sensuality, the position of the body folded on itself and the deliberate fragmentary composition expresses introspective meditation, suffering, and the solitude of the individual faced with herself. The Getty Museum already owns masterpieces by women sculptors such Luisa Roldàn, called La Roldana (Spanish, 1652–1706), Barbara Hepworth (1903–1974), and Elisabeth Frink (British, 1930–1993). I am delighted we can add a masterpiece by Claudel, who deserves the increasing devotion she is getting in France. The novelist Octave Mirbeau called her: 'A revolt against nature: a woman genius.' I could not define her better!"

Camille Claudel was born in Northern France in 1864. She spent much of her childhood in Nogent-sur-Seine, southwest of Paris, where she met the sculptor Alfred Boucher (1850-1934). When her family moved to Paris in 1881, Claudel attended the Académie Colarossi and continued to be mentored by Boucher. One of her earliest works is from this time: a bust of her then 13-year-old brother Paul Claudel, who would become a well-known writer and the first owner of the Getty's *Torso of a Crouching Woman*.

When Boucher left Paris in 1883, he asked Auguste Rodin to take on his students. Claudel became Rodin's assistant and began a tumultuous affair with him that would last until 1898. She was his student, model, collaborator, muse and lover in a time marked by Rodin's intense creativity during his commission of the *Gates of Hell*, 1880-90. The Getty's *Torso of a Crouching Woman* corresponds to this period and is a reworking of Claudel's *Crouching Woman*, which was likely inspired by Rodin's terracotta *Crouching Woman (Lust)* which he made as part of the *Gates of Hell* project. However, as Rodin himself stated: "I showed her where to find gold, but the gold she found is entirely her own."

Claudel was known for her very personal conception of sculptural practice and, unlike many sculptors of her time, she carried out most of the technical process of making her sculptures herself. This included the difficult and time-consuming process of carving in marble and onyx. She exhibited regularly from 1885 to 1905 at the Société des Artistes français, and obtained commissions from the French government and a small network of clients. However, the rest of her life was tragic. Claudel's mental health started to decline in 1905: she showed signs of paranoia and lived alone, secluded in her workshop, often destroying her work. Her family sent her to an asylum in 1913, and although doctors declared on various occasions that she could be released, she spent the rest of her life there.

With this acquisition, there are now six sculptures by Camille Claudel in American museums. *Torso of a Crouching Woman* is the first Claudel in the Getty's collection, the only one in a Los Angeles museum, and the largest in the United States.

### ***Bust of John the Baptist, Auguste Rodin***

*Bust of John the Baptist* presents a very realistic portrayal of the saint with long hair, a beard, sunken cheeks and a bony chest – evoking the ascetic desert life of the preacher. The deep holes with which the eyes are pierced give the illusion of an intense gaze, and the open mouth and the slightly raised chin convey the intensity of his preaching. The Getty acquisition is one of only five casts of this sculpture made during the artist's lifetime and is distinguished



*Bust of John the Baptist*, model 1880, cast 1886, Auguste Rodin (French, 1840–1917). Bronze, 48 x 38.8 x 27 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los

from the other four by the absence of a base and a slight shortening of the lower section of the chest. Early lifetime casts of Rodin bronzes are very rare in American museums.

According to Desmas, "The Getty now has two great works by the master Rodin, respectively in marble and in bronze. The addition of *Bust of John the Baptist*, a very refined bronze cast made under Rodin's direct supervision, fills an important gap and ensures a better representation in the collection of this pivotal artist in the history of sculpture. The very fine chiseling and nuanced variation of texture in the hair, beard, flesh, bony forehead and skeletal neck attest to the high quality of this bronze. No doubt our visitors will be compelled by

the strength of the spiritual expression that emanates from this vigorous depiction of John the Baptist."

The bust is typical of Rodin's creative process. As was his practice, he based his figure on an actual person, in this case an Italian peasant from the Abruzzi region named Pignatelli, who agreed to pose for him. Though it was derived from a monumental full-length statue of the saint, Rodin realized it as an independent sculpture. At the 1879 Salon, the plaster model of the bust earned an honorable mention. The plaster model of the monumental statue displayed at the 1881 Salon was greatly admired and a bronze version (now at the Musée d'Orsay) was commissioned by the French government.

Rodin is the most acclaimed European sculptor of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, his work representing a revolutionary turning point that led to modernism in sculpture. He studied at the Petite École and worked for a long time as an assistant to other artists, particularly Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse. His first major work, *The Age of Bronze*, exhibited in Brussels in 1876, was the subject of intense controversy: the sculptor was accused of having cast the figure from life. Four years later, in 1880, that sculpture was acknowledged as an important work of art and purchased by the French government. After 1880, Rodin started receiving important official commissions and his fame continued to rise. From the turn of the century until his death in 1917, he fulfilled a growing demand from international clientele for portraits and figures in marble and bronze.

The Getty Museum acquired its first sculpture by Rodin, the marble *Christ and Mary Magdalene*, in 2015. It is currently on view in the Museum's West Pavilion, alongside French paintings from the same period.

*Bust of John the Baptist* and Claudel's *Torso of a Crouching Woman* will go on view in summer 2018.

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**The J. Paul Getty Museum** collects Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts to 1900, as well as photographs from around the world to the present day. The Museum's mission is to display and interpret its collections, and present important loan exhibitions and publications for the enjoyment and education of visitors locally and internationally. This is supported by an active program of research, conservation, and public programs that seek to deepen our knowledge of and connection to works of art.

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