

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Monday, May 16, 2005**

## ***Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation***

**Vancouver, BC** – The Vancouver Art Gallery is extremely pleased to host the first major exhibition of artist Auguste Rodin’s work in Vancouver in more than 30 years. The North American tour of *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation*, an exhibition of nearly 70 sculptures, drawings and studies by Rodin, opens at the Vancouver Art Gallery on June 18 and will remain on display through September 22, 2005. The exhibition displays the intensely expressive masterpieces of Rodin, who at the peak of his career was considered the greatest sculptor since Michelangelo and is now acknowledged as the ‘father of modern sculpture.’

*Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession* is a significant exhibition which features many of the artist’s most famous and beloved works, including *The Thinker*, *The Kiss* and *The Age of Bronze*, as well as studies for such major monuments as *The Burghers of Calais*, *The Gates of Hell* and *The Monument to Balzac*. Among its extensive works and studies, the exhibition also features six large-scale sculptures and a portrait of Rodin in bronze created by Camille Claudel, his student, model, collaborator and lover. “We welcome this historic sculpture to Vancouver,” said Vancouver Art Gallery Director Kathleen Bartels. “Concentrating on quality and significance, the Cantors have collected an unparalleled representation of Rodin’s finest work.”

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. The exhibition will travel throughout North America and has been organized by the Cantor Foundation in Los Angeles, the world’s largest private collection of Rodin sculptures. More than 450 sculptures by Rodin have been donated to institutions throughout the world as part of the Cantor Foundation’s active arts support program. Iris and B. Gerald Cantor’s dedication to arts patronage is represented in galleries, sculpture gardens, endowed curatorial positions, and scholarship programs at such institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University.

The bronze sculptures in *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession* span the length of Rodin’s career from small studies and reductions to enlargements and monumental works. Additionally, the exhibit 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, which led to the foundation of the Musée Rodin, a museum dedicated to his work and to the ongoing casting of his sculptures following his death.

Rodin revolutionized modern sculpture with his daring and innovative techniques. Capable of producing exquisitely modeled works, Rodin subverted the illusion of perfection by leaving his fingerprints to be cast onto sculpted surfaces, by refusing to file smooth the moulded lines left behind from the casting process and, most importantly, by aggressively modeling his clay subjects to achieve a raw, unfinished appearance. Rodin was also the first artist to conceive of partial figures as sculpturally self-sufficient entities – a radical change in the traditional concept of the human body.

*Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession* is presented in juxtaposition with four contemporary exhibitions in the *Body Slam* suite. These four exhibitions, *Wang Du: Parade*, *Franz West*, *Theodore Wan* and *Body: New Art from the UK*, are an international convergence of recent contemporary work focusing on the human form. Comprising works by artists from Austria, France, the UK and Vancouver, *Body Slam* explores the human condition through the mediums of sculpture, photography and video. These exhibitions provide visitors with a unique opportunity to explore the human body in its many dimensions.

*Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession* is organized and made possible by the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation. *Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canada Travelling Exhibitions Indemnification Program*

All media are invited to attend the opening celebration at 7pm on Friday, June 24, 2005.

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