

5 Jul, 2024 | Written By LONDNR

Bowman Sculpture: Faces and Fables

London’s art calendar is always a star-studded affair, but right now there nestles in St James a rare jewel of the sort that even this city isn’t graced with often.



‘FACES AND FABLES: Rodin’s Portraiture, Great Commissions, Mythology, and Sculptural Innovations’, currently on show at Bowman Sculpture, is unique. Not only is the onlooker treated to an up-close-and-personal experience with some of the most famous sculptures in existence (including a lifetime cast of *The Thinker*), but the show functions as a microcosm of Rodin’s entire oeuvre.

Each section, from early pieces created during his apprenticeship, to his most controversial public commission, *Monument to Balzac* (a cast of the final study is included in the exhibition), to lifetime casts from world-renown masterpieces such as *The Gates of Hell* and *The Burghers of Calais*, to experimental later works, FACES AND FABLES gives the viewer a delicious taste of each important moment in Rodin’s glorious career.



Le Penseur (The Thinker), petit modèle with rounded base, Signed A. Rodin with repeat raised interior signature. Inscribed Alexis Rudier Fondateur Paris, Bronze with brown patina, Conceived circa 1880-1881; the reduction was created in 1903. One of only 8 lifetime casts.

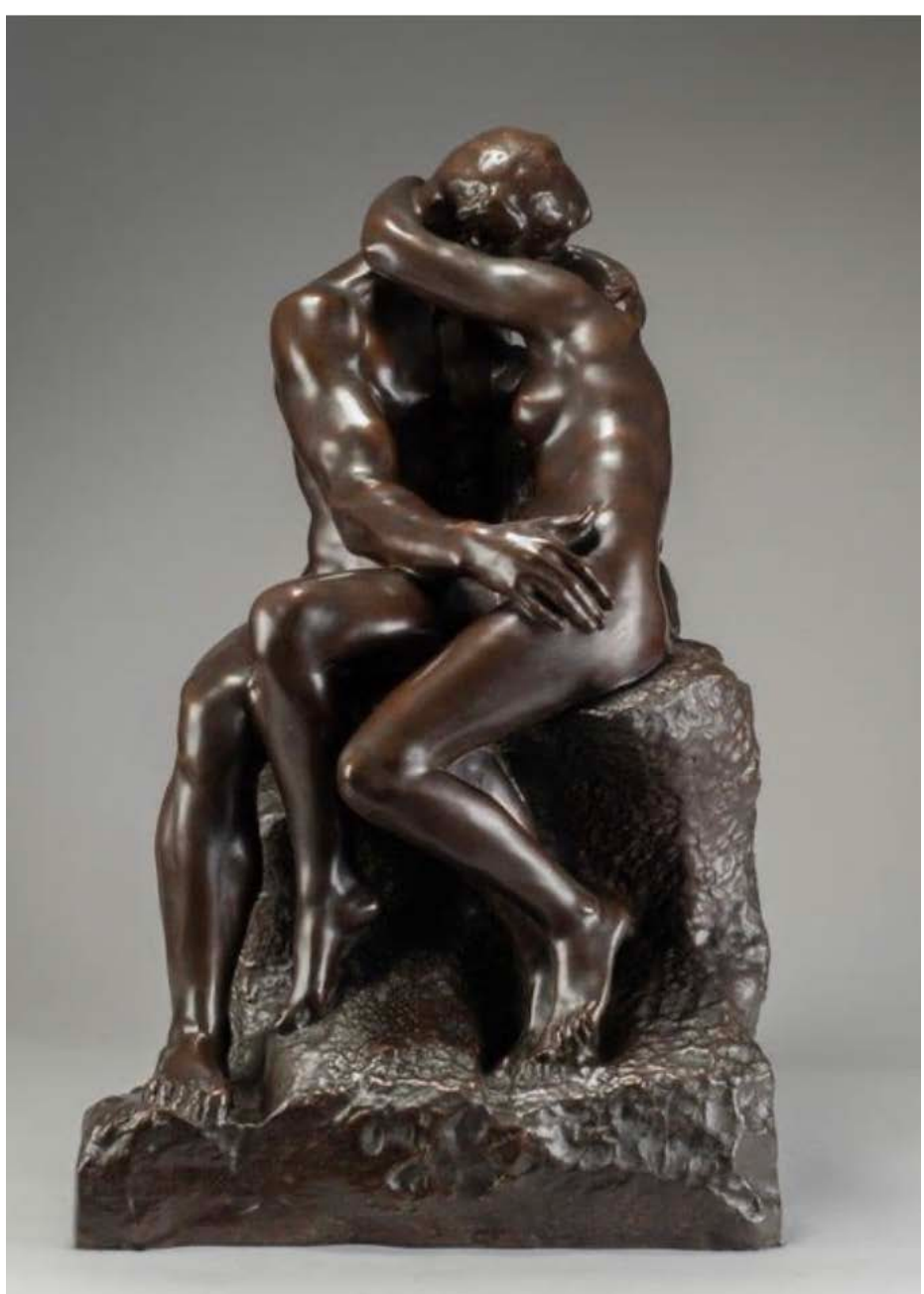
Bowman Sculpture are well placed to deliver the choicest finds; established in 1993, they are the foremost gallery in the world for Auguste Rodin’s sculpture. One sees the fingerprints of this long friendship clearly in the curation and the careful descriptions. The Bowmans are exceptionally knowledgeable and infectiously enthusiastic, and they take us beyond the sculpture, sharing the intimate lives of these works.

One display, for instance, features a framed excerpt with a handwritten note added by a collector in 1897. For a brief moment we seem to glance directly into the magical past and see Rodin, working on Victor Hugo’s bust, as described.



Buste de Victor Hugo (Bust of Victor Hugo), Signed A. Rodin, Bronze with brown patina. Conceived circa 1885, this cast was executed by François Rudier in May-June 1897. Just seven casts of this model were made during the artist’s lifetime.

FACES AND FABLES is the perfect introduction to one of sculpture’s greatest masters. Or, if you’re a lifelong fan of Rodin’s, it’s a chance to reacquaint yourself with major works in a setting rather more hospitable than a crowded museum hall. To witness the depth of emotion that Rodin was capable of rendering is an experience. This exhibition has been years in the making – and it should not be missed.



Le Baiser (The Kiss), 1st Reduction, Signed A. Rodin, Conceived in 1886; this cast made in February 1912 by the Barbedienne Foundry in Rodin’s lifetime.

VISITING INFO:

GALLERY NAME: [BOWMAN SCULPTURE GALLERY](#)
ADDRESS: 6 DUKE STREET ST JAMES’S, SW1Y 6BN, LONDON
DATES: 20th June – 31st July 2024
ENTRY: Free

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