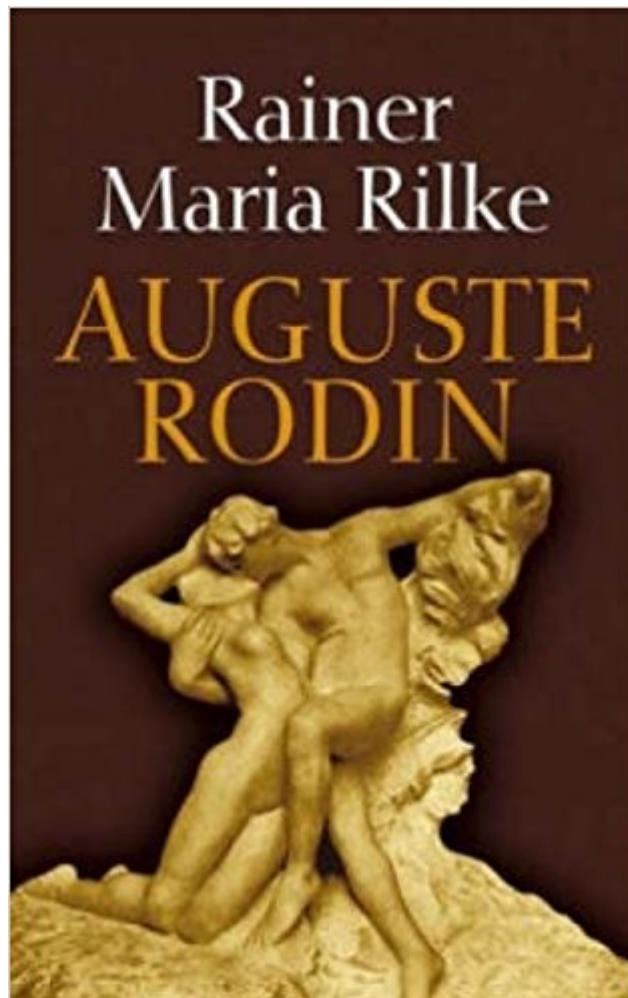




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Auguste Rodin (Dover Fine Art, History Of Art)



Synopsis

"Rilke's observations are wonderfully astute. For readers interested in either [sculpture or poetry], this volume is a treat." — The Christian Science Monitor

During the early 1900s, the great German poet lived and worked in Paris with Auguste Rodin. In a work as revealing of its author as it is of his famous subject, Rainer Maria Rilke examines Rodin's life and work, and explains the often elusive connection between the creative forces that drive timeless literature and great art. Rilke served for several years as Rodin's secretary — living in the sculptor's workshops, watching the shaping of his creations, and discussing his views and ideas. Written in 1903 and 1907, these essays about the master's work and development as an artist mark Rilke's entry into the world of letters. Rodin himself paid the poet the ultimate tribute, declaring these meditations the supreme interpretation of his work. This excellent translation, complemented by 33 illustrations, will fascinate students of literature, philosophy, and art history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"reads almost like a lyrical essay....fantastical, a work of the imagination that sees.....much beyond the everyday and real." --The Complete Review, August 2004 --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

— Over 100 drawings and cutouts — Rodin shows the female nude form in its beauty and simplicity

— Wonderful collection of Rodin's late work --This text refers to an alternate Paperback

edition.

"I have been accused of thinking about women too much ... But what could be more beautiful than thinking about women?" - Auguste Rodin

Rodin is a striking example of an artist who achieved recognition in his own lifetime. That included financial independence, which gave him the freedom to explore directions for which patronage would have been hard to find. In fact, the display of some images in this series is said to have cost the director of the Grand-Ducal Museum his job. It's easy to think of Rodin's masterworks in statuary as complete command of form. Whatever Rodin thought of them, it wasn't enough. His later life produced "one-minute drawings" like these by the thousands. He was looking for something, possibly within himself, that he never found words to articulate wholly. One proposal holds that he wanted to capture the dimension of time, the frozen moment, that eluded stone and bronze. Perhaps he succeeded. Beyond that, he also succeeded in collecting a wonderful catalog of female figure - not just figure, but dynamic and exciting figure. The excitement is more than just intellectual. It goes well towards the carnal but stops short of vulgarity, at least to a modern eye. These models presented not just their forms but their arousal, of themselves and of their same-sex partners. Rodin's genius captured their passion and his own, stripped of any critical sentiment. This book will work well to complement a library that already represents Rodin's better-known works. These watercolor drawings tend toward a sameness of color, contrast, and style that might wear on some viewers' patience. I guess it's not for everyone. If you've already befriended Rodin's work, though, this is an enjoyable way to deepen your relationship.-- wiredweird

Beautifully written. Lacking in factual information.

Elegant and insightful.

Gorgeous AND informative. Not just pictures but the story with them.

[Please note: The review below applies only to the book entitled "Auguste Rodin," published by Archipelago Books and copyrighted 2004, found at this [link](#):^Â Auguste Rodin.] This Archipelago Books volume on Rodin was smartly conceived by its small press publisher. It is nearly square in size to accommodate long-lined text printed on quality paper. Sturdily bound in a partial cloth binding, overall it has the look and feel of a quality gift book, and one features sophisticated content.

If the editor's plan was to see what happens when you assemble in one package the work of three powerful communicators -- a titanic sculptor who ushered in new forms, a poet striving to understand and explicate the invisible, and a living master essayist on literary matters -- that plan succeeds with sparkling insights. The book opens with an Introduction by William Gass, a long-time Rilke maven and an unsparing arbiter of cultural subjects. Gass stylishly fulfills his setting-the-stage duty. Using multiple perspectives (historical, aesthetic, biographical, psychological) he helps the reader understand why the young poet developed an awed appreciation for Rodin (the man and his work). We learn how Rilke absorbed the sculptor's personal and aesthetic credo ("il faut travailler, rien de travailler") with lasting effect on his mature poetic output. All that Rilke learned from Rodin he expressed to the world in two significant pieces which make up the bulk of this book: an essay written at the very start of his personal association with the elder artist in 1903; and a public lecture written at the end of their relationship in 1907. Daniel Slager provides fine new translations from the German of both of these texts. Also found tucked within the pages of this book are four groups of eight glossy color photographs by Michael Eastman: a total of 32 close-up images of major pieces by Rodin that Rilke (and Gass) discuss. The book contains 88 pages of text; this modest nominal count is misleading since in fact the material is the equivalent of about 150 pages in a standard-sized book. As a reading experience the book feels large thanks to the breadth of Professor Gass' encyclopedic observations, paragraph after paragraph, and thanks to the seemingly unstoppable eruption of Rilke's insights, sentence after sentence. Rilke reconnoiters the mountain of Rodin, tossing off witticisms ("Fame is no more than the sum of all the misunderstandings that gather around a new name"), evocative imagery (on The Burgher of Calais: "The figures withdraw within themselves, curling up like burning paper"), and grand judgments ("The artist's task consists of making a world from the smallest part of a thing"). There are extended passages, describing pieces of art and art making, in which Rilke's prose itself achieves a mountainous beauty. True, the pieces that make up this assemblage are available elsewhere: Rilke's essays are available in other volumes, for example, in *Where Silence Reigns: Selected Prose* (New Directions Paperback), while Gass's Introduction is reprinted in his book of essays, *A Temple of Texts*, and there are many other illustrated art books devoted to Rodin's work. But as a package, I consider this particular book to be a fine and rewarding enterprise.

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