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Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale

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LOT 26

THE LINDE RODIN: PROPERTY FROM AN IMPORTANT EUROPEAN COLLECTION

AUGUSTE RODIN

1840 - 1917

EVE

Inscribed with the signature A. Rodin

Synnada marble

Height: 31 1/4 in.

79.5 cm

Conceived in 1881 and carved in December 1900 - June 1901.

ESTIMATION 4,000,000-8,000,000 USD

Lot vendu: 4,869,000 USD

This work will be included in the forthcoming Catalogue Critique de l'oeuvre sculpté d'Auguste Rodin being currently

prepared by Galerie Brame & Lorenceau under the direction of Jérôme Le Blay under the archive number 2012-3764B.

PROVENANCE

Dr. Max Linde, Lübeck (acquired from the artist in 1901)

Siegfried Buchenau, Gut Weißenrode, Niendorf nr. Lübeck (acquired from the above circa 1922)

Thence by descent to the previous owner

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- Letter from Auguste Rodin to Max Linde, July 7, 1901
- Letter from Max Linde to Auguste Rodin, late August (?) 1901
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- Ruth Butler, *Rodin, The Shape of Genius*, New Haven et Londres, 1993, p. 159, pp. 161-162, illustration of another version pl. 66
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NOTE DE CATALOGUE

The head sinks deeply into the darkness of her arms, drawn together above her breasts as though she were freezing. Her back is rounded, her neck almost horizontal, she bends forward as if listening to her own body in which a foreign future begins to take life. -- Rainer Maria Rilke

It was with these words that the great German poet Rainer Maria Rilke described Rodin's Eve, one of the most exceptional sculptures in his oeuvre. Here the artist reaches a climax of creativity, refining the expression of gesture and body language in a seminal image of the free-standing female figure. The sculpture displays an abundance of sensual detail and textural juxtaposition. The suppleness of the figure's flesh contrasts with the roughly-hewn rock base on which she stands. Eve's right leg stands firmly on the ground while her left leg seems in search of stability. Her soft belly is fully disclosed while her arms hide her face and breasts. Such contrasts are a hallmark of this sculpture: Eve is both the symbol of impending motherhood as well as the Biblical seductress responsible for humankind's banishment from Paradise. But most of all, the figure epitomizes the eternal beauty of the female body, brought to life in stunning detail.

This exquisite marble carving of Eve was commissioned by the renowned collector, Dr. Max Linde. Linde created an extraordinary collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art, including works by Monet, Manet, Degas, Whistler and Munch, that he displayed in his home in Lübeck. Linde had bought his first sculpture by Rodin in 1898, but his enthusiasm for the artist seems to have been particularly inspired by a visit to Rodin's pavilion at the Paris World Fair on October 12, 1900. Only a few days later, he sent his first letter to the artist, expressing his deep admiration and stating his desire to purchase an entire group of Rodin's works, first and foremost two particularly important sculptures: the figure of Eve in marble (the present sculpture) and a cast of the Age of Bronze. While Linde agreed to purchase an already extant cast of the Age of Bronze (which arrived in Lübeck in early December 1900), he ordered the sculpture of Eve to his own specifications: it was to be carved from marble of Synnada, a stone Linde had particularly admired in Rodin's exhibition for its beautiful grain and color. Work on the Eve began in December 1900 and was finished late in June 1901.

Because of Linde's influence and importance as a collector, Rodin was determined to impress his patron. The present work, therefore, is a superlative example of Rodin's talent and ranks among the most successful works of his entire production. The execution is truly exacting, with every curve and contour of the figure's body expressed convincingly. Upon his receipt of Eve from Rodin, Linde wrote to the artist expressing his deep satisfaction in the carving and marvelling at its profound visual impact: "Thank you for the distinction of the work. You have put in it, sir, the subtlest expression of the woman's soul, the conflict between such various sensations as modesty, fear of the unknown, and coquetry. It is impossible to quickly exhaust this beautiful work; the more I see it, the more "Eve" tells me about the happiness and the sufferings of the artist" (Dr. Max Linde in a letter to Auguste Rodin, August 1901). The commission, execution and installation of Eve at Linde's Lübeck home are documented in a correspondence between artist and patron that give us extraordinary insight into this pivotal moment of Rodin's career.

Rodin was the artist who almost single-handedly realized the impact of modern sculpture. With his deep understanding of emotion and its manifestations in the human body he became the founding father of a new freedom of expression that was eventually to conquer all Europe. But in spite of his innovative approach, Rodin also sought to root his art in the achievements of the old masters, particularly Michelangelo, whom he deeply admired. Thus, Eve's emphatic gesture of defence and protection recalls Michelangelo's Boboli Slaves as well as the Expulsion from

Paradise on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. In Michelangelo's painting, however, Eve is under the protection of Adam. Rodin's Eve, by contrast, is the quintessential outcast, a powerful symbol for human fragility and loneliness in a modern age.

The sculpture was conceived initially between 1881-1883 as a pendant to the life-size figure of Adam with which it would have flanked the Gates of Hell, perhaps Rodin's greatest artistic enterprise. Over the years, however, this initial idea for the placing of these figures was abandoned. Indeed, the Gates of Hell became the sculptor's laboratory for the creation of a vast number of human forms, many of which – like Eve – eventually took on independent life among sculpture's greatest achievements.



Fig. 1

The Eve offered here as displayed in Max Linde's House, Lübeck (circa 1903)

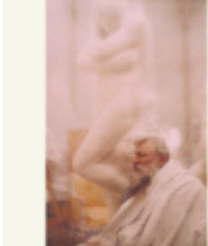


Fig. 2

Edward Steichen Rodin with Eve, 1907



Fig. 3

Michelangelo Buonarroti The Expulsion, circa 1511, fresco, Sistine Chapel



Fig. 4

Edvard Munch Max Linde, 1904, oil on canvas, Stenersenmuseet, Oslo



Fig. 5

Henri Matisse Dos I, 1909-10, Private Collection