



AUGUSTE RODIN

(Paris 1840–1917 Meudon)

Le Baiser (The Kiss). 2ème réduction dite aussi "réduction n°4". 1886. Cast on 8 June 1905.

Bronze, brown patina.

Signed in the centre on the right: Rodin. Lower left with the foundry mark: F. Barbedienne. Fondateur. Inside with the engraved numbers "996" and three times "9", the letter "D" on the edge and the numbering in ink "62451 gulg".

H 59.8 cm.

We would like to thank the Galerie Brame & Lorenceau, François Lorenceau and Jérôme Le Blay, for confirming the authenticity of the work, Paris, 28 February 2021. It will be registered under number 2021-6289B and will be included in the catalogue critique de

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l'œuvre sculpté d'Auguste Rodin currently in preparation. Provenance: Swiss private collection, acquired in Paris between 1905 and 1910 and since then owned by the same family. Literature: - Antoinette Le Normand-Romain: The Bronzes of Rodin, Catalogue of Works in the Musée Rodin, Paris 2007, vol. I, no. p. 776 (with ill. another cast p. 161). - Georges Grappe: Catalogue du Musée Rodin, Paris 1927 (with ill. of the marble p. 47). - Georges Grappe: Le Musée Rodin, Paris 1947 (with ill. of the marble p. 71). - Cécile Goldscheider: Rodin, sa vie, son œuvre, son héritage, Paris 1962 (with ill. of the marble). - Albert E. Else: Rodin, London 1963, S. 63 (with ill. another cast). - Bernard Champigneulle: Rodin, London 1967 (with ill. of the marble p. 162/163). - Robert Descharnes and Jean François Chabrun: Auguste Rodin, Lausanne 1967 (with ill. of the marble p. 54/55). - Ionel Jianou and Cécile Goldscheider: Rodin, Paris 1967 (with ill. of the marble p. 54/55). - Ludwig Goldscheider: Rodin Sculptures, London 1970 (with ill. of the marble p. 121). - John L. Tancock: The Sculpture of Auguste Rodin, Philadelphia 1976 (with ill. of the marble p. 77). - Jacques de Caso and Patricia Sanders: Rodin's Sculpture, A Critical Study of the Spreckels Collection, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco 1977, p. 150 (with ill. another cast). - Nicole Barbier: Marbres de Rodin, collection du musée, Paris 1987 (with ill. of the marble p. 186/187). - Antoinette Le Normand-Romain: Le Baiser de Rodin/The Kiss by Rodin, Paris 1995 (with ill. another cast fig. 3). - Antoinette Le Normand-Romain: Rodin, Paris 1997 (with ill. of the terracotta p. 48). - Albert E. Else: Rodin's Art, The Rodin Collection of the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for the Visual Arts at Stanford University, New York 2003 (with ill. another cast p. 214/215). 'Le Baiser' was originally planned as part of Auguste Rodin's project for 'The Gates of Hell'. The sculpture was conceived as one of the first groups, developed between 1880 and 1882, and was to be attached to the left wing of the monumental gate. The depicted couple is inspired by the story of the forbidden love between Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta, as related in the second circle of hell in Dante's Inferno from his Divine Comedy. Although Francesca was already married to Giovanni Malatesta, Paolo's older brother, the two fall in love while reading together. According

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to the tale, the lovers are discovered by Francesca's husband in the midst of their first kiss. Enraged by the betrayal of his brother and his wife, he murders Francesca and Paolo, condemning the lovers to an eternity spent in hell. In his sculpture, Rodin has captured the intimate moment of their first kiss. The sculpture's beauty and expression of tender love was incongruous with the tragic intensity that the artist envisioned for his 'Gates of Hell' and in 1886 Rodin decided to separate 'Le Baiser' from the canon of the 'Gates of Hell' and to make it an independent sculpture. While Rodin's 'Le Baiser' was still scandalous at its first exhibition in 1887 at the Galerie Georges Petite, the sculpture celebrated enormous success at subsequent exhibitions and proved to be greatly popular among the viewing public. This breakthrough led Rodin to sign a ten-year contract with the Leblanc-Barbedienne foundry in 1898 for the reproduction of his models 'L'Eternel Printemps' and 'Le Baiser'. 'Le Baiser' was initially produced in edition sizes of 71 cm and 25 cm, then size 40 cm from 1901 onward and the "deuxième réduction" of 60 cm was finally cast in bronze from 1904 onward. Approximately 65–68 examples of this size were cast between 1904 and 1918. The contract stipulated that Rodin would receive a 20% commission on the sale of each sculpture. The sculptures were each inscribed on the inside with a number code in ink, indicating the date of production. In most cases, this number is no longer visible due to decades of wear and it is therefore not possible to exactly determine the casting year for most of the bronzes. Our model is one of the very rare examples in which the ink code on the inside is still in excellent condition. The sculpture was produced on 8 June 1905, and is one of the earliest casts of this size. The original sales invoice for this copy is in the Musée Rodin in Paris. The present 'Le Baiser' was acquired in Paris between 1905 and 1910 by the great-great-grandfather of the current owners and has remained in the same family for more than 100 years. Today 'Le Baiser' is one of the most famous works by Rodin and one of the most iconic sculptures in the history of art.

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