

## AUGUSTE RODIN

### L'ETERNELLE IDOLE (sketch) (1889)

Rodin Museum (Plaster, 3285), Legion of Honor Museum, San Francisco (Plaster)

Bronze, black shaded green brown patina

H : 17,6 cm, L : 13,2 cm, D : 8,7 cm

Authentic example signed "A.Rodin", "A.Rudier. fondeur.Paris » Mark and "A.Rodin" seal; only examples identified of this sketch cast in 1940 by Eugène Rudier, this one belonging to his personal collection (different from the fifteen about examples identified of the final model known as Anthony Roux) - beautiful example.

Cast in 1940



Conceived separately, both characters are included in the Gate of Hell, bragging right. Around 1890, Rodin chose to bring them together to compose one of his most beautiful works: L'Eternelle Idole. The model fascinates the writer Jules Renard who writes in his diary: " With Rodin, a revelation, an enchantment, this Gate of Hell, this little thing, as big as the hand, which is called L'Eternelle Idole, a man, arms behind the back, defeated, embraces a woman below the breasts, his lips on her skin and the woman looks all sad. It is difficult for me to detach myself from this» (Journal, March 8th, 1891).

However, the collector Anthony Roux will be disappointed by the small size of the model when Rodin will give him the first example in February 1891. He immediately commissioned him an enlarged example of the double. Rodin agrees to have this enlargement carried out, but we feel him disappointed in his reply to the collector: «It is agreed, six hundred francs with enlargement of the double since you find it good! ». Its small dimensions make it an intimate bronze that one likes to hold in hands and caress.

This model, where religion and sensuality are once again mixed together (its first title was L'Ostie), was realized at the culminating moment of its loves with Camille Claudel, at a particularly merging moment of the couple since the group realized by the young woman at the same time, Sakountala, can be seen as a pair with it. Some wanted to see it as a tribute to Camille Claudel, then pregnant, a source of love, veneration and inspiration.

We present today, not an example of the final model, but the sketch. For us who have had in our hands three examples of the definitive model, we are fascinated by the finesse and subtlety of the modelling in this sketch; especially the back of the male character and the right arm that returns to the back...

### The edition

Only one example of the final model was cast during the lifetime of the artist, the one commissioned by Anthony Roux. It is now kept in the Rodin Museum (S39). A second example seems to have been cast for Anthony Roux after Rodin's death. The other examples, 17 announced in the last certificate we received from the Comité Rodin, were cast by Alexis Rudier between 1927 and 1945 on behalf of the museum. A last example was cast in 1958 by Georges Rudier.

The editorial status of the sketch is much more limited since there are only two examples sold by Eugène Rudier in 1940, this one being his, the one from his private collection, his lightness is astonishing...

This example will be included in the archives for the publication of the Catalogue critique de l'oeuvre sculpté currently in preparation by the Comité Rodin under 2002-227B.