

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Monday, May 16, 2005**

## **Beware Vancouver of the “Rodin Chaser!”**

**Vancouver, BC** – Beware Vancouver, the “Rodin Chaser” may strike in our city in a few weeks. If so, his target will be the Vancouver Art Gallery’s summer exhibition, *Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession: Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation*, which will be on view from June 18 to September 22, 2005. The exhibition features nearly 70 sculptures, drawings and studies by Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), considered one of the greatest sculptors since Michelangelo.

Since 1999, the “Rodin Chaser” has dogged this acclaimed exhibition in different centres across the United States. By now, the pattern is familiar. Shortly before the scheduled opening of the exhibition, local media are bombarded with lengthy and inflammatory e-mails from Florida artist and gallery owner Gary Arseneau that denounce the sculptures in the *Magnificent Obsession* show as fakes. Mr. Arseneau tracks the itinerary of *A Magnificent Obsession* as it travels from place to place and the Vancouver Art Gallery is the next venue. A self-proclaimed crusader on a mission to expose supposed art fraud, he is also a self-published author of several books on art and deception. Mr. Arseneau has also been a vocal critic of other exhibitions over the years.

Gary Arseneau constantly repeats his mantra that ‘dead men don’t sculpt’ and his claim that all posthumous Rodin casts are ‘fakes/reproductions.’ The resulting controversy is quickly dispelled when the terms of Rodin’s will and the unique situation of the Musée Rodin are explained. Rodin willed his entire estate to France and authorized the casting of his work after his death, which led to the foundation of the Musée Rodin, a museum dedicated to his work. “The works which will be presented in Vancouver are in keeping with Rodin’s express wish that the French government continue his legacy through a program of casts issued under the auspices of the Musée National Rodin in Paris,” said Ian Thom, a Senior Curator at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

The Musée Rodin’s collection includes thousands of ‘studio casts’ in Rodin’s studio in Meudon, France. The Musée always makes use of the original plasters and moulds in Rodin’s studio to make the bronze casts. Bronze casts which are made from the artist’s moulds and plasters in limited numbers are considered to be ‘original editions,’ a specialized term widely accepted among scholars and in the art world in general. More than 450 sculptures by Rodin have been donated to prestigious institutions throughout the world as part of the Cantor Foundation’s active arts support program.

- 2 -

Unfortunately Arseneau's misinformed allegations temporarily divert attention from the true value of the exhibition, which presents the astounding work of a remarkable artist whose images, ideas and working methods were daring and original, setting artistic precedents which had a huge impact on the course of modern art. All works in this exhibition are original, either cast in bronze during Rodin's lifetime or cast posthumously according to his explicit wishes and instructions to the French government for the ongoing casting of his sculptures following his death.

*Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession, Sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation* is drawn from the largest private collection of Rodin in the world. It was amassed by the late B. Gerald Cantor who was fascinated by the great French artist's work. This travelling exhibition has already been seen by thousands of people across the United States. It is part of a collaboration that has been traveling across Canada with stops in Calgary, Halifax and its final Canadian presentation at the Vancouver Art Gallery until September 22, 2005.

*Rodin: A Magnificent Obsession* is organized and made possible by the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation.

All media are welcome to attend the opening celebration at 7pm on Friday, June 24, 2005.

- end -

Media contact:

Sue Lavitt, Communications, Vancouver Art Gallery, 604 662 4700 x 309

**Generously supported by:**



**Media**

**Sponsors:**



**Supported  
by:**

Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canada Travelling Exhibitions  
Indemnification Program

---

The Vancouver Art Gallery gratefully acknowledges the support of the City of Vancouver, the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, the Government of Canada through the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage Museums Assistance Program and the Greater Vancouver Regional District.