

CASTING RODIN'S SCULPTURE

Unlike a painting, of which there is only one original, the medium of bronze sculpture allows for more than one cast of the same piece. During Rodin's lifetime the sculptor allowed numerous foundries to cast his work, thus creating a plethora of some works and much confusion as to their authenticity. Some of the casts lacked foundry marks, while others were missing the artist's signature.

In 1974 the Rodin scholar Albert Elsen organized a committee comprising art historians, artists, museum curators, and art dealers that drafted a "Statement on the Standards for Sculptural Reproduction and Preventative Measures to Combat Unethical Casting in Bronze." This document provided benchmarks for authenticating Rodin's work as well as work by other nineteenth-century sculptors. At the same time, it proposed rules to govern the production and reproduction of sculptors' works.

Rodin had given the Musée Rodin the right to cast his sculpture after his death. French law permits the production of only twelve casts of each work by Rodin. In 1956 the French government established these limitations to ensure that the casts were authentic. A 1968 law stated that the first eight casts would be available for purchase by individuals and the last four would go to cultural institutions.

Presently, there are at least eleven casts of *The Burghers of Calais* including the Metropolitan Museum's 1985 cast. The locations of the ten other known casts are:

- ▶ Basel, Kunstmuseum Basel; acquired in 1948
- ▶ Brussels, Mariemont Park; commissioned in 1905–6 for the Warocqué Collection
- ▶ Calais, square of the Hôtel de Ville; the first bronze cast
- ▶ Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek; commissioned by Carl Jacobsen in 1903
- ▶ London, gardens of the Houses of Parliament; purchased by the British government in 1911
- ▶ Los Angeles, Norton Simon, Inc. Museum of Art
- ▶ Paris, Musée Rodin
- ▶ Philadelphia, Rodin Museum
- ▶ Tokyo, National Museum of Western Art; purchased by the Japanese government in 1959
- ▶ Washington, D.C., Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution