

## Walking man by Auguste Rodin: Melbourne businessman David Bardas AO and family gift important bronze by French sculptor



**15 December 2022:** A powerful and imposing bronze by French artist Auguste Rodin (1840–1917), who is widely regarded as the founder of modern sculpture, has been generously gifted to the NGV Collection by David Bardas AO and his late wife Sandra Bardas OAM.

*Walking man* (*L'Homme qui marche, moyen modèle*), conceived by Rodin in 1899–1900, and cast in 1964 by the Georges Rudier Foundry, Paris, is the first sculpture in the *non finito* style to enter the NGV Collection. Considered one of Rodin's most important contributions to art history, his *non finito* works challenged conventional notions of sculpture at the time by presenting the human form as incomplete.

*Walking man* is Rodin's most recognised and admired work in the *non finito* tradition. The gifted *Walking Man* cast - the only one in Australia - was recently authenticated by the Comité Rodin, Paris, and will be included in their major forthcoming catalogue of Rodin's work.

This work builds on the Gallery's existing holdings of eight sculptures by the artist, including the first bronze version of his iconic masterpiece *The thinker* (*Le Penseur*), 1881-1882, acquired by the Felton Bequest.

*Walking man* has been donated from the private collection of David Bardas AO and his late wife Sandra Bardas OAM, known as the Coppin Grove Collection. The couple started collecting works of art shortly after their marriage in 1962.

Tony Ellwood AM, Director, NGV, said: 'This important gift strengthens the NGV's leading Australian collection of works by Auguste Rodin, one of the foremost French sculptors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We're incredibly grateful to David, Sandra and the entire Bardas family for entrusting us with this important and art historically significant sculpture.'

David Bardas said: 'We have lived with Rodin's *Walking man* in our garden since 1977. It is part of our sense of home. A meaningful piece from our collection, we are delighted to share him now with all of Melbourne and the greater art world.'

Ted Gott, Senior Curator, International Art, NGV said: 'Since Rodin first exhibited in 1900, *Walking man* has proved to be one of his most enduring and impactful images inspiring great modernist sculptors Giacometti and Boccioni who created their own interpretations of this critical sculpture. Its appeal lies in its universality, and it is impossible to think of an exhibition of Rodin's work that does not include *Walking man*.'

*Walking man* is now on display in the Salon gallery on level 2 of NGV International on St Kilda Road, Melbourne. Further information is available via the NGV website: [NGV.MELBOURNE](http://NGV.MELBOURNE)

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**Image credit:** David Bardas AO with *Walking man (L'Homme qui marche, moyen modèle)* by Auguste Rodin. Photo: Aaron Francis courtesy of NGV.

**IMAGES:** <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/vc4amkeqha88v9rnb6x1z/h?dl=0&rlkey=dokypf6sfxxitru3izu2x4bko>