

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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### When Sugimoto Met Rodin

By Alexandra A. Seno

#### Rodin Sugimoto



Scenes from the 'Rodin-Sugimoto' show in Paris at the Gagosian Gallery.

Contemporary Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto would seem an unlikely match with the late French sculptor Auguste Rodin. But that's what the Gagosian Gallery chose to do in an exhibit in Paris.

The carefully curated selling exhibition, "Rodin-Sugimoto," takes place Feb. 11 to Mar. 25 and presents a stark contrast in material, volume and approaches to art. Though the gallery declined to reveal the prices, 12 Sugimoto prints are available for purchase. The three Rodin sculptures are for display only.

In featuring the work of the 62-year-old Mr. Sugimoto alongside that by Rodin — who died in 1917 and whose sculptures set the standard for big outdoor art for decades — it sets up the contemporary with the established classic.

Mr. Sugimoto's photography-based art is renowned both for its conceptualism and technical achievement. In 2009, one of his seascapes, "Boden Sea, Utwill," was used as the cover and inspired the title of U2's CD "No Line on the Horizon."

A similar 1.5-meter-by-1.8-meter image, "Black Sea, Ozuluce," one out of an edition of five, sold at a June 2008 auction at Christie's for 646,050 pounds (US\$1.3 million).

Physically dominating the space are three figurative sculptures by Rodin — "Three Shades" (1880) "Monument to Victor Hugo" (1897), and "The Whistler Muse" (1908) — all cast in brass, in the monumental style for which the sculptor became famous. The first two are borrowed from the private holdings of the American couple Gerald and Iris Cantor, the biggest individual collectors of the French artist's sculptures. The third is on loan from Paris's Rodin Museum.

Best known for his bronze figure "The Thinker," created in 1902 and one of the world's most recognized sculptures, Mr. Rodin's large (often larger-than-life), metal realist figures are known for their ability to express ideas and portray the personalities of subjects.

On the walls, each of Mr. Sugimoto's 12 images—each a 1.5-meter-by-1.2-meter silver gelatin print—is a different study of the human form. Five of each image from his "Stylized Sculpture" series, made in 2007, is available in this size. The images are inspired by key 20<sup>th</sup> century fashions from the Kyoto Costume Institute. The photographs depict womens' clothes by designers ranging from Cristobal Balenciaga to Yves Saint Laurent to Issey Miyake and Rei Kawakubo.

Mr. Sugimoto, who lives and works in both New York and Tokyo, shot the dresses—installed on faceless mannequins—in black-and-white, the kind of near-abstract studies of tone and texture much beloved by his fans.