

The Artistic Genius: Practices of Making and Unmaking

6th September 2021

2pm-5pm



Auguste Rodin, *Main droite de Pierre et Jacques de Wissant* (1885-86). Musée Rodin.

Taking place at the Tate Modern, London, this afternoon session will be an opportunity to consider and critique the processes of artistic creation. Often associated with some form of divine inspiration, the touch of the artistic genius has been revered throughout history. Current feminist, queer, and post-colonial debates ask us to challenge the rhetoric around the unique, solitary, master and to instead think about the environment and collaborative approaches that underlie processes of making and unmaking.

Working at the turn of the 20th century, Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) is typically described as the forefather of modern sculpture. Although best known for his powerful works in bronze and marble, Rodin worked as a modeller, who captured movement, light, touch, and volume in pliable materials such as clay and plaster. Within the exhibition at Tate - 'The Making of Rodin' - plaster casts in all sizes demonstrate how the artist worked with a team of people to continually experiment with fragmentation, repetition, and re-joining existing parts in unconventional ways to make new forms and to experiment with multiple compositions.

Beginning with a short art historical introduction by Dr Kate Keohane (University of Oxford) in the Tate Turbine Hall, we will visit 'The Making of Rodin' exhibition and affiliated works within the permanent collection. We will then work together to form an artist studio, sharing experiences and ideas and sculpting our own works of "genius".

Pedagogies for flourishing in complexity and uncertainty

Spring 2021- Spring 2022

Key learning outcomes:

- Gain a knowledge of modernist art histories
- Critique curatorial formations and the narratives surrounding the 'genius' artist
- Develop an understanding of the ethics of studio work and collaborative possibilities for making and unmaking

Participant requirements:

- No prior knowledge of art or art history is required
- All equipment and materials will be provided by the project (although it would be helpful if you could bring a mobile phone with a camera).

Key Questions:

- Is there such a thing as an artistic genius?
- What can be lost or gained through repetition and collaborative work?
- What is the value of 'the original'?
- Does bigger always mean better?

Structure of the session:

2pm: Meet at the Tate Modern Turbine Hall entrance. Welcome and introductions

2.30pm: Introductory talk by Dr Kate Keohane: 'Thinking Through Rodin: The Meanings and Methods of Modernist Sculpture'

3pm: Visit the exhibition 'The Making of Rodin'

3.40-4pm: Coffee break

4-4.45pm: Collaborative making workshop using clay

4.45-5pm: Evaluation