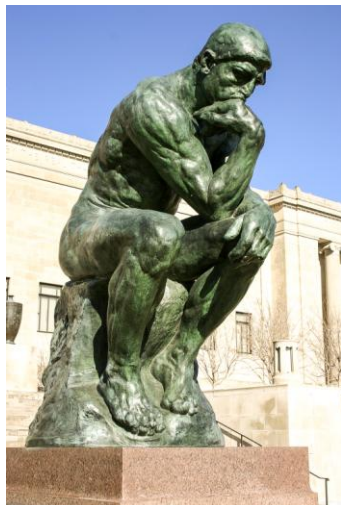


Art Appreciation



The Thinker

Auguste Rodin

1840-1917

***1902, sculpted of bronze
and marble***

Today in Art Appreciation we learned about Auguste Rodin. He was a sculptor whose works include *Walking Man*, *St. John the Baptist*, *The Age of Bronze*, and probably best known for the piece we studied above, *The Thinker*.

He often started out with a clay sculpture, and then would make a plaster mold of the clay form. After that he would pour molten bronze into the mold to form the bronze sculpture. Several casts would be made from the same mold to create his final piece. Many critics accused him of just making a mold from a live human versus actually sculpting the piece. He put those theories to rest with his piece *Walking Man*, in 1880 as that statue was so large in size and without any arms or a head, the size alone proved he had indeed produced these works on his own.

Rodin's unique ability was to be able to create such drama and emotion through facial features, expression, and even the hands. He cut hollows to help create shadows and textures to capture the light and bring a sense of life to his pieces. Rodin was not just a sculptor but also a draftsman, water colorist, author, illustrator, and collector of classical art. He was born in Paris, dropped out of school to become a stone mason, and was rejected in his applications three times to become an art student. He often worked creating decorative ornaments for buildings.

We learned *The Thinker* was originally a piece belonging to a larger piece of a bronze door for the Museum of Decorative Arts. He never finished the entire piece. The piece is called *Gates of Hell* and was a wall of 180 writhing figures watched over by *The Thinker*.

In class we discussed ideas of what *The Thinker* may actually be thinking about. Then later after sharing that it was meant to be part of a larger piece, seeing if that changed our viewpoint on what the subject may be thinking. We finished the lesson by creating sculptures of our own with tinfoil.