

“ THE HAND OF GOD ”

**Auguste Rodin**

*in conversation with*

**Larry Clark, Tristram Hillier, Maha Malluh,  
Nelson Mandela, Henri Matisse, Akim Monet**

**OPENING:** Friday, May 2, 2014 – 6 to 9 p.m.  
**EXHIBITION RUN:** May 2 to July 12, 2014  
**LOCATION:** Side by Side Gallery Akim Monet, Berlin

**The present exhibition features depictions of hands in multiple media: photography, installation, and works on paper, *in conversation* with four bronze sculptures by Auguste Rodin.**

**Spanning the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, South Africa to the Arabian Peninsula, and Europe to the United States, the artists come from very different cultural backgrounds and periods.**

One doesn't really know where to start when talking about the hand - the word itself evokes a myriad of associations, from anatomy to art, from science to poetry, from one's own body to gestural expression as body language.

The 9th exhibition at Side by Side Gallery Akim Monet, “*The Hand of God*,” focuses on the artistic treatment of the hand, whose complexity has challenged artists from the earliest tracings of human hands at the Caves of Lascaux during the Paleolithic Era.

The successful depiction of the hand is one of the achievements that mark the greatest among artists: Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Hendrik Goltzius in the Renaissance, and Auguste Rodin in modern times.

The importance of mastering the expressive potential of the hand was well understood by **Auguste Rodin**, who characteristically pushed against the physical limits of its anatomy to obtain maximum emotional impact.

Generally considered the father of modern sculpture, Rodin worked from life to create intensely eloquent sculptures. In addition to complete figures, he also modeled fragments and soon discovered that a part could be as meaningful as a whole and began to present the fragments as fully resolved works.

In the current exhibition, we are delighted to present four sculptures of hands by Rodin, each of which is different from the others, one of which is the smallest hand he sculpted, and one the largest.

In conversation with Rodin, we are presenting an expressive drawing by **Henri Matisse**, a 'portrait' of sorts, of Lydia Delectorskaya, the artist's faithful companion, model, and muse for the last 21 years of his life. In this drawing, we see strength, not only of body, specifically her hands, but also of character, as evidenced by her assertive stance.

Evoking the prehistoric cave drawings of hands, two lithographs by **Nelson Mandela**, one an impression of his own palm in which the silhouette of Africa mysteriously appears, and the other a constellation of children's hands surrounding his own, transport us back to the innocence of childhood in their direct manifestation of a child's first 'self-portrait.'

The hand has often been used in art to represent the instrument for the dispensation of grace—think of Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam" in the Sistine Chapel. Addressing the religious connotations of the hand, we present the suite of masterful drawings by **Tristram Hillier**, which portray "The Seven Sacraments: Baptism, Penance, Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination, Extreme Unction."

Moving from the sublime to the mundane, **Larry Clark's** group of three photographs, although depicting prosaic postures, evoke poetry through their chiaroscuro composition, culminating with "Untitled (Bleeding Hand)."

Where Rodin celebrates the tangible hand, the photographs and sculpture installation of Saudi Arabian female artist, **Maha Malluh**, explore the idea of the hidden hand. The photographs from her acclaimed "Tradition & Modernity Series" depict X-rayed gloves, where even as ornamentation is revealed, the hand remains unseen. Similarly her lyrical "Sky Clouds" installation of more than 100 hands belies a yearning for escape and the desire for individuality, as seen through the ornate cuffs which adorn uniform black gloves.

Rodin, who through his sculptor's eye, transformed a human hand into a vessel of expression, thereby recasting anatomy into emotion, was eager to discover how his work could metamorphose through another art form. Thus he often invited photographers into his studio, the most famous of whom was Edward Steichen. Following in this tradition, **Akim Monet** presented a spontaneous series of photographs to the Musée Rodin, which resulted in an invitation to produce a body of work at the museum. The two pigment prints in the present exhibition are part of the initial series. By pure chance, one of his photographs is actually a detail of one of the bronzes exhibited here in "The Hand of God."

***Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.***

Peter 5:6