

kunstmuseum basel

# Medardo Rosso

29.3.—  
10.8.2025

EN

**“There is no painting,  
there is no sculpture,  
there is only a thing  
that is alive!”**

**—Medardo Rosso**

# Inventing Modern Sculpture

Sculptor, photographer, and master of artistic staging, Medardo Rosso (1858 Turin–1928 Milan, Italy) revolutionized sculpture around 1900. Despite his remarkable influence, the Italian-French artist remains still too little-known today. *Medardo Rosso. Inventing Modern Sculpture* aims to change this, offering a rare and comprehensive retrospective of his pioneering work. Featuring around 50 of his sculptures and more than 250 of his photographs and drawings, the exhibition unveils Rosso's groundbreaking materials, methods, and thinking. Selective juxtapositions with works by more than 60 other artists highlight his extraordinary impact, spanning from his contemporaries to the present day.

The exhibition begins in the Kunstmuseum Basel Hauptbau's courtyard with a work by Pamela Rosenkranz. From the Hauptbau, the visitors proceed through the underground connecting wing and past an expansive work by Kaari Upson to the Neubau, where a monographic presentation of Rosso's art is on view on the ground floor. The exhibition continues on the second floor with the juxtapositions with works by other artists.



# HAUPTBAU Courtyard

Pamela Rosenkranz, *Skin Pool (Plasmin)*

## HAUPTBAU → NEUBAU Connecting wing

Kaari Upson, *eleven*

## NEUBAU Ground floor

Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)

Display

Photography

## NEUBAU 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Room 1: Repetition and Variation

Room 2: Anti-Monumentality

Room 3: Process and Performance

Room 4: Touching, Embracing, Shaping

Room 5: Appearance and Disappearance

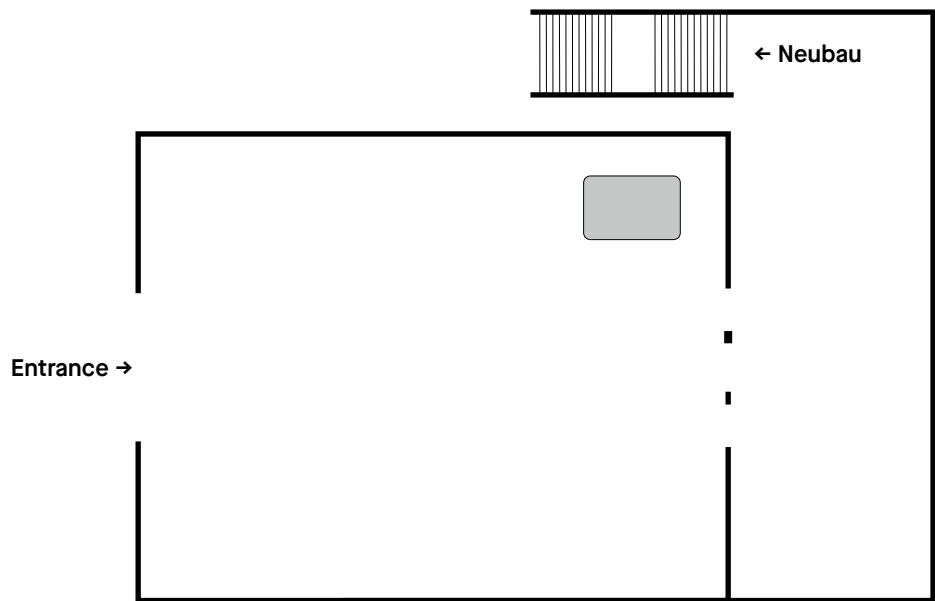
Room 6: Appearance and Disappearance

Room 7: Mise-en-Scène

Room 8: Form Undone

Room 9: Form Undone

# HAUPTBAU Courtyard



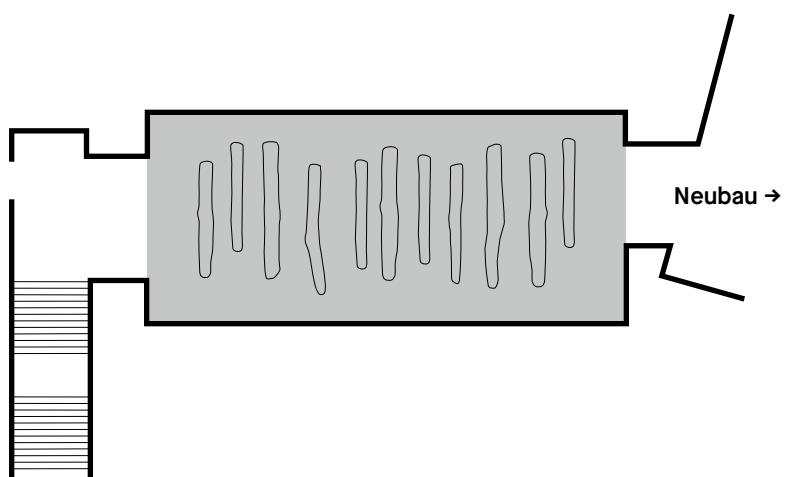
**Pamela Rosenkranz**  
*Skin Pool (Plasmin)*, 2025

Pamela Rosenkranz (\*1979 Altdorf, Switzerland) often draws on research in the natural sciences, neurology, and consumer culture as well as the history of art and literature. In *Skin Pool (Plasmin)* the human body is abstracted—reduced to fluid and surface. The artificial pink coloring mimics and distorts the “default” skin tones long propagated in mainstream advertising—tones shaped by narrow beauty ideals and commercial aesthetics. But the work’s subtitle points beneath the skin: plasmin is a protein-splitting enzyme in human blood that breaks down clots and keeps circulation flowing—an invisible substance vital to bodily function. Installed in a historic fountain in the courtyard of the museum’s Hauptbau, *Skin Pool (Plasmin)* faces Auguste Rodin’s monumental *Les Bourgeois de Calais* (The Burghers of Calais, 1884–1889, cast 1942–1943), a shimmering pool of synthetic color contrasting with Rodin’s weighty bronze bodies. The interplay of light on Rosenkranz’s surface recalls Medardo Rosso’s fascination with how light reveals and transforms the materiality of flesh, especially through his use of wax. If Rodin gives representation solidity and Rosso brings it to the edge of dissolution, Rosenkranz liquefies both figure and flesh. Her use of industrial materials and chemical processes raises questions about the status of the body in a hyper-commercial, biotechnological world.

Pamela Rosenkranz (\*1979)  
*Skin Pool (Plasmin)*, 2025  
Liquid, thickener, colorant, pumps  
Dimension variable  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 2025.4, Ankauf 2025,  
mit Unterstützung der Burger Collection, Hong Kong  
und der TOY-Familie, in Erinnerung an Yves

A second work by the artist,  
*Firm Being (Venice Series)*, 2009,  
is on view at the NEUBAU on the  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor in room 8.

HAUPTBAU → NEUBAU  
Connecting wing





**Kaari Upson**  
*eleven*, 2020

Kaari Upson (1970 San Bernardino, California–2021 New York, USA) often turned to casting, doubling, and distortion to explore how trauma, memory, and bodily experience leave their mark on form. *eleven*, a series of suspended sculptures, was born from hybrid molds of tree branches and the artist's own knee. They were formed in latex and then cast in resin tinted in pinkish, yellowed, and reddened tones—vaguely reminiscent of sickly, bruised, or wounded flesh. Hung like carcasses in a meat locker, these unsettling sculptures (complete with cast termite holes and chain-saw cuts) teeter between the bodily and the inanimate, the familiar and the uncanny. Repetition and variation here become a kind of haunting: a return of the same, yet never quite identical. Like Medardo Rosso, Upson obsessively revisited certain motifs, using volatile materials and unpredictable techniques to probe how form might fracture, dissolve, or hold the imprint of something human. Installed in the connecting wing between the Hauptbau and the Neubau, *eleven* confronts visitors as they move toward Rosso's works—hinting at the exhibition's larger questions of replication, materiality, and corporeality.

**Kaari Upson (1970–2021)**

*eleven*, 2020

Urethan and pigment

228.6 × 22.86 cm

228.6 × 22.86 cm

226.06 × 22.86 cm

232.41 × 21.59 cm

154.94 × 22.86 cm

259.08 × 19.05 cm

219.08 × 26.67 cm

233.68 × 22.86 cm

205.74 × 20.32 cm

222.89 × 22.86 cm

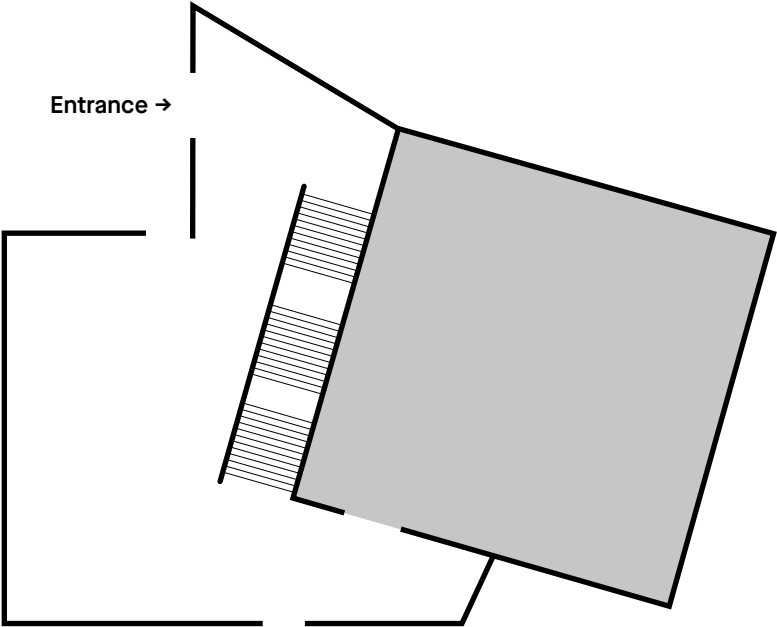
214.63 × 26.67 cm

Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 2025.3.1–11,

Ankauf mit Mitteln der Karl und Margrith Schaub-

Tschudin-Stiftung und des Ankaufskredits 2025

NEUBAU Ground floor



Hailed in 1918 as the “greatest living sculptor” by the French poet and critic Guillaume Apollinaire, Medardo Rosso (1858 Turin–1928 Milan, Italy) remains one of the most uncompromising artists of his time. Also a photographer and a master of artful staging, Rosso spent his defining years in Paris, forging ties with the Impressionists and working alongside his friend (and, later, archrival) Auguste Rodin to push artistic conventions. His approach—an open-ended exploration of a few recurring motifs—favored repetition and variation over finality. Between casting and photography, he collapsed the hierarchies of original and copy, production and reproduction, while creating sculpture that was neither static nor monumental. Instead, it was fugitive, emotional, and, in the words of artist Phyllida Barlow, “alarmingly alive.”

# Medardo Rosso

## (1858–1928)

### 1858

Medardo Rosso is born on June 21 in Turin, Italy, to Luigia Bono and Domenico Rosso, a railroad official. Later, the family will move to Milan, Italy.

### 1882–1885

Rosso studies sculpture at Milan's Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera (Academy of Fine Arts) in 1882. The following year, he is expelled when a provocative petition demanding to draw from live models leads to a conflict with a fellow student. He is associated with one of Italy's first avant-garde movements, the Scapigliatura (Italian for "disheveled"), which advocates for artistic renewal inspired by anarchism and socialism. In 1885, Rosso marries Giuditta Pozzi and they have a son, Francesco.

### 1887

Alongside his drawing practice and sculptural work in terra-cotta, plaster, and bronze, Rosso begins to experiment with photographic processes; at this moment, photography is still a nascent medium.

### 1889

Rosso leaves his family and moves to Paris, where the journalist Felice Cameroni introduces him to leading artistic circles. He develops relationships with writers, including Guillaume Apollinaire, Edmond de Goncourt, Paul Valéry, and Émile Zola, as well as the artists Edgar Degas and Amedeo Modigliani. He also befriends Auguste Rodin and the two exchange artworks, but their relationship will fracture a decade or so later, after Rosso accuses Rodin of appropriating his ideas in the latter's *Monument à Balzac* (Monument to Balzac).

### 1900

Rosso starts staging semi-public casting demonstrations in his studio; a few years earlier, he had set up his own casting workshop and then begun to work in wax. He begins a long friendship with the artist and writer Margaretha "Ethà" Fles, who becomes a dedicated advocate for his work. His international visibility rises through exhibitions across Europe and a growing body of texts published about his practice.

## 1904–1906

In 1904, Rosso is given a central place at the renowned Salon d'Automne (Autumn Salon) in Paris, surrounded by the French Impressionists and paintings by Paul Cezanne. The show draws significant press attention and almost certainly captures the interest of sculptor Constantin Brâncuși. The same year, Rosso becomes a French citizen. In 1906, he creates his final sculptural motif, later titled *Ecce Puer*, then shifts his focus to repeating, reworking, and contextualizing his existing motifs through new casts, photographic experiments, and exhibition stagings, accompanied by theoretical writings.

## 1910–1920

Rosso sees himself as a “European anarchist,” and links his artistic approach to a rejection of the nation-state and a commitment to overcoming borders of all kinds. Artists associated with Italian Futurism declare Rosso a precursor, though he rejects this connection. Rosso returns to Milan in 1920 and soon becomes close to the painter Carlo Carrà, the lawyer Mario Vianello-Chiodo, and the writer Margherita Sarfatti; Sarfatti is close to the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and will play a key role in promoting Rosso's work during the Fascist period in Italy.

## 1928

On March 31, Rosso dies in Milan from complications related to diabetes and blood poisoning, just shy of his seventieth birthday. His son Francesco takes charge of his estate and establishes the Museo Medardo Rosso in Barzio, Italy. During his lifetime, Rosso had authorized his son and Mario Vianello-Chiodo to produce a limited number of posthumous casts of his works.

## 1959–1963

In 1959, New York's Peridot Gallery presents the first-ever Rosso exhibition in the United States, introducing his work to a US audience. Four years later, the Museum of Modern Art in New York will stage a major retrospective that sparks renewed interest in and scholarship about Rosso's radical treatment of form, material, and perception, inspiring artists of the 1960s and beyond.

# Display

For Medardo Rosso, the making of sculpture was only part of the creative act; equally important was its meticulous staging. In the center of this room, a selection of sculptures are presented on the historic pedestals favored by the artist, including the *gabbie* (Italian for “cages”), or glass showcases, that he used to frame them. Rosso saw these enclosures as a way to define the surrounding air and space as part of the sculpture. In his lifetime he insisted on highly controlled, frontal views—emphasizing specific perspectives and deliberately withholding others, rarely allowing the backs to be seen. The arrangement in this room deliberately resists his approach. A more open encounter with his works, which are viewable from all sides, reveals traces of his process, highlights materiality, and offers unfettered access to the radicality of his forms.

Rosso’s presentations involved yet more idiosyncrasies. His photographs are evidence of his penchant for showing sculpture in tight groupings, at varied heights, and in orchestrated dialogues with other artworks (his own and others’). Building on these strategies, his *Portrait d’Henri Rouart* (Portrait of Henri Rouart, 1890) is here shown alongside Auguste Rodin’s *Torse* (Torso, 1878–1879) and Paul Cezanne’s *Cinq baigneuses* (Five Bathers, 1885/1887), reflecting juxtapositions that the artist explored in his day. Upstairs, Rosso’s sculptures are presented alongside works by his contemporaries and artists working now, continuing this emphasis on the conversational and the act of staging, and further underscoring his art’s enduring modernity.

**“We are nothing  
other than the  
consequences  
of the things that  
surround us.”**

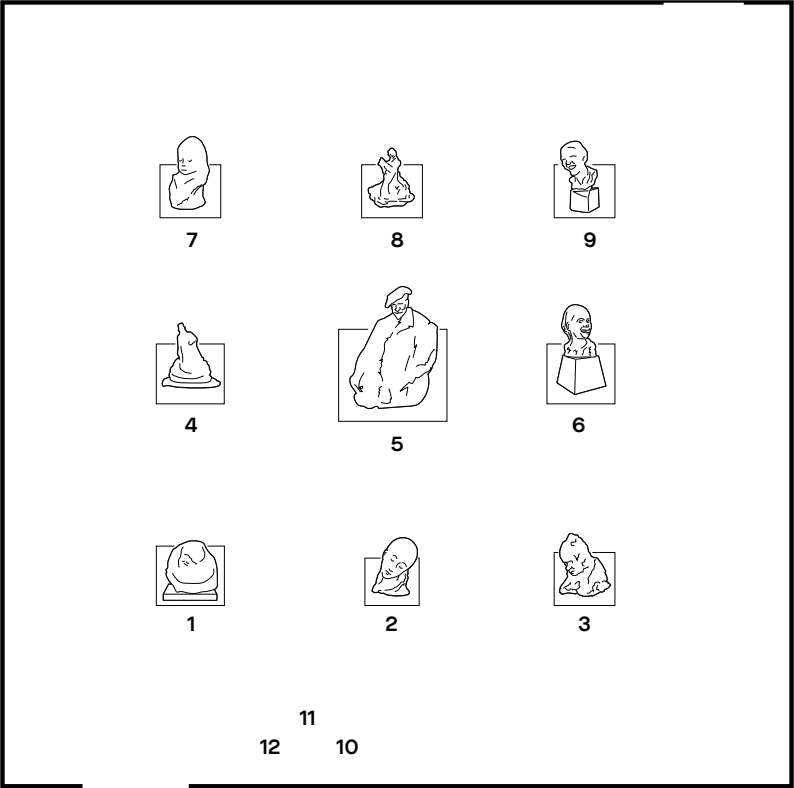
—Medardo Rosso

# Photography

In 1905, art critic Ludwig Hevesi described Medardo Rosso as a creator of “a kind of photo-sculpture,” alluding to the evanescent, blurred qualities of his forms. Given his focus on the fugitive, Rosso’s deep engagement with photography was thus perhaps inevitable.

Unusually for his time, Rosso made photography central to his sculptural process. As opposed to, for instance, Auguste Rodin, who hired renowned photographers to spectacularly document and promote his works, Rosso insisted on taking his own pictures. Cropped and collaged, his curious, often tiny images attest to experimental interventions inside and outside the darkroom. From 1900 onward, Rosso used photography not just to stage his sculptures but also to test how angles, lighting, and framing altered perception. He adjusted the casts accordingly, then photographed the new results. In his hands, photography thus became both a record of and a catalyst for transformation.

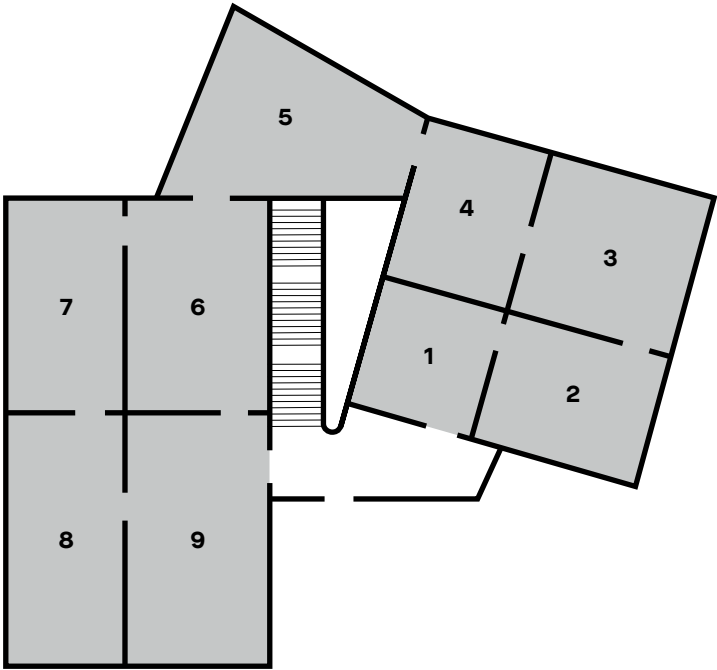
By 1902, Rosso started exhibiting his photographs alongside his sculptures, seeing the former as more than mere documentation. Of the five hundred known photographs that he created and circulated, around half are presented here, as either annotated historic prints, glass negatives, or later prints made from his originals.





- 1 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Carne altrui*, 1883–1884  
Plaster  
50 × 41.5 × 19 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 2 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant malade*, 1893–1895 (1895)  
Plaster  
17.5 × 20 × 19.3 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 3 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Portinaia*, 1883 (1890–1893)  
Plaster  
39.5 × 33.5 × 17.5 cm  
Private collection
- 4 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Bookmaker*, 1894 (1914–1923)  
Wax over plaster  
48 × 43 × 46 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 5 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Henri Rouart*, 1889  
Plaster  
102 × 71 × 31 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 6 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Bambina ridente*, 1889 (1889–1890)  
Wax over plaster  
27.5 × 18.1 × 17.1 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 7 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant au soleil*, 1891/1892 (1891–1892)  
Plaster  
35 × 21 × 19 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 8 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*L'uomo che legge*, 1894 (1926)  
Wax over plaster  
29.5 × 30.5 × 29.5 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 9 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Ruffiana*, 1883 (1885)  
Plaster painted  
49.8 × 24 × 23.5 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 10 **Paul Cezanne (1839–1906)**  
*Cinq baigneuses*, 1885/1887  
Oil on canvas  
65.3 × 65.3 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G. 1960.1,  
erworben mit Beiträgen der Basler Regierung,  
der Max Geldner-Stiftung und privater Kunstfreunde
- 11 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Portrait d'Henri Rouart*, 1889 (1899)  
Bronze  
93 × 71 × 50 cm  
Kunst Museum Winterthur,  
Geschenk des Galeriesvereins, 1964
- 12 **Auguste Rodin (1840–1917)**  
*Torse de l'Étude pour Saint Jean Baptiste,*  
*dit Torse de l'Homme qui marche*, 1878–1879 (1979)  
Bronze  
55.5 × 25.5 × 16.3 cm  
Musée Rodin, Paris

NEUBAU 2<sup>nd</sup> floor



**Medardo Rosso (1858 Turin–1928 Milan, Italy)**  
revolutionized sculpture at the end of the nineteenth century. In an era marked by profound social upheaval, he insisted on a redefinition of sculpture as well in terms of its modes of representation, production, and perception. To prove his point, he often exhibited his works in uncomfortably close proximity, in dialogue with other artists' works, and along with photographs he had taken. It was an approach he maintained throughout his career to underscore both unexpected resonances and decisive ruptures with tradition.

**Rosso's methods were as audacious as they were visionary. In keeping with his focus on staging and dialogue, the exhibition's scenography draws on his own display strategies. At the same time, the show extends his legacy by placing his work alongside that of more than sixty historical and contemporary artists. Whereas the ground floor takes a more monographic perspective, this section unfolds as a transgenerational gathering organized around themes central to Rosso's practice: Repetition and Variation; Anti-Monumentality; Process and Performance; Touching, Embracing, Shaping; Appearance and Disappearance; Mise-en-Scène; Form Undone. The presentation invites new engagement with the enduring relevance of his vision, reexamining modern sculpture's history through a contemporary lens.**

# Repetition and Variation

From the late 1890s onward, Medardo Rosso repeatedly returned to a repertoire of roughly forty sculptural motifs. Until his death, he reimagined them—casting new variants, reworking surfaces, photographing, then starting over yet again. He used diverse reproduction techniques and often attended to the casting himself rather than outsourcing it to a foundry. The many variations resist the notion of a single, definitive version of an artwork.

Rosso's most reproduced sculpture, *Enfant juif* (Jewish Boy, 1893), epitomizes this. Though mechanically cast, each version has subtle differences in material, color, surface, gaze, and tilt, transforming what another artist would have treated as a serial object into an array of unique artworks. The results blur the line between original and copy, with every sculpture radiating its own distinct aura.

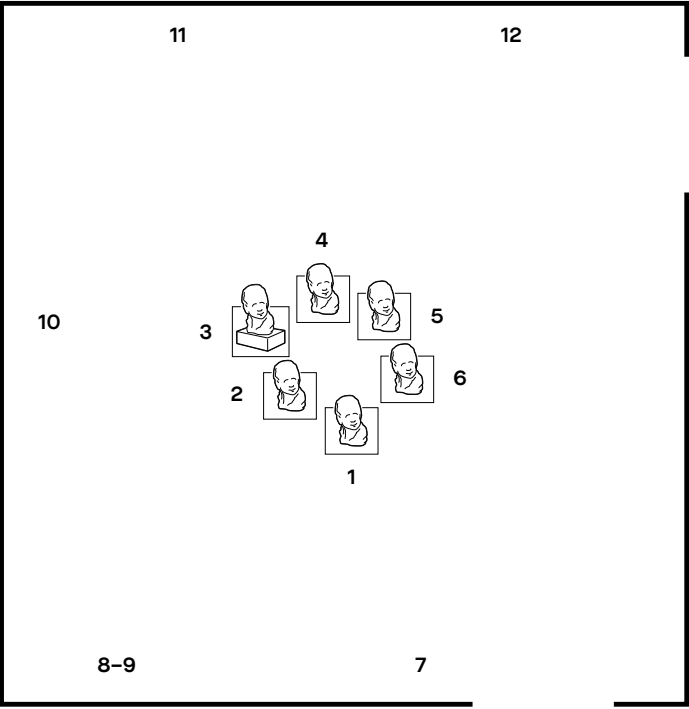
Decades later, movements such as Pop art, Minimalism, and appropriation art revisited these same concerns. Here, Andy Warhol's and Sherrie Levine's mediations on mass reproduction share space with six versions of *Enfant juif* as well as Sidsel Meineche Hansen's mold for a devotional figure made for endless replication. Each differently gestures at the tension between singularity and seriality.

Sidsel Meineche Hansen  
*Baby Mould*, 2023

Sidsel Meineche Hansen (\*1981, Ry, Denmark) addresses how bodies are shaped and constructed by technology, institutions, capitalism, and desire. In recent years, the artist has explored how sexuality, labor, and identity are influenced by digital tools and systems of control. *Baby Mould* might at first seem like a new approach, but it actually continues this exploration by attending to the material and symbolic technologies through which bodies and beliefs are reproduced. The piece is based on a terracotta mold used by an East London convent, the Little Sisters of Jesus, to produce figurines of the infant Christ for sale. Meineche Hansen reshaped this fifteen-part terracotta mold in lead crystal, transforming a tool of religious devotion into a sculptural reflection on reproduction—biological, technological, and spiritual. The artist's interest in this form that makes endless reproduction possible echoes Medardo Rosso's persistent concern with casting and technologies of reproduction. Meineche Hansen's title alludes to the term "mother mold" (used in casting for the original mold that gives rise to all copies) but replaces the mother with the child (the baby). In doing so, the artist shifts the focus from origin to outcome and complicates the idea of where creation begins.

Sherrie Levine  
*L'Absinthe*, 1995

Sherrie Levine (\*1947 Hazleton, Pennsylvania, USA) practices an ongoing questioning of originality, authorship, and reproduction—central concerns of so-called appropriation art, in her case with a feminist bent. To make the work *L'Absinthe* (The Absinthe), Levine photographed a color reproduction of Edgar Degas's *Dans un café / L'absinthe* (In a Café / The Absinthe, 1875–76) from an art book and printed and framed twelve copies in black and white. By multiplying and reframing the image, Levine makes us look again at what we think we know, thereby challenging the authority of the "great male artist." She shows how repetition itself can alter meaning and perception, a concern close to Medardo Rosso, who frequently created multiple versions of the same figure, each exploring subtle shifts in form. If Rosso used reworking and casting to explore artmaking as a changeable process, Levine's critical act of re-presentation extends this to the realm of images, suggesting that every artwork is already a copy, shaped by endless echoes of the art that came before. As with Andy Warhol's serial repetitions, her work questions the very idea of a unique original and highlights how images circulate through culture.



- 1 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant juif*, 1893  
Wax over plaster  
23 × 17.5 × 15.5 cm  
PCC, Pieter Coray Collection
- 2 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant juif*, 1893 (1920–1925)  
Wax over plaster  
23.6 × 14.4 × 17.9 cm  
Private collection
- 3 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant juif (Sarfatti)*, 1893 (before 1915)  
Wax over plaster  
24.2 × 19 × 16 cm  
Courtesy Amedeo Porro Fine Arts, Lugano/London
- 4 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant juif*, 1893  
Plaster, painted  
24.8 × 19.5 × 17.8 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 5 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant juif*, 1893  
Wax over plaster  
24.5 × 15.5 × 17.3 cm  
PCC, Pieter Coray Collection
- 6 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant juif (Piérard)*, 1893 (ca. 1909)  
Wax over plaster  
H: 22.7 cm  
Courtesy Amedeo Porro Fine Arts, Lugano/London
- 7 **Sidsel Meineche Hansen (\*1981)**  
*Baby Mould*, 2023  
Multi-part mold made of crystal glass,  
stainless steel tray  
28 × 40 × 25 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 2024.13,  
Ankauf mit Mitteln der Singeisen-Stiftung 2024
- 8 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Installation view at the Autumn Salon (1904)  
in Paris with Medardo Rosso,  
*Malato all'ospedale*, 1889;  
Michelangelo, *Madonna Medici*, ca. 1521–1534  
(Copy by Medardo Rosso, n. d.)  
Collodion print on matboard, n. d.  
17 × 21.9 cm  
Private collection
- 9 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Installation view at the Autumn Salon (1904)  
in Paris with Medardo Rosso,  
*Enfant à la Bouchée de pain*, 1897;  
Medardo Rosso, *Grande Rieuse*, 1891–1892  
Mirrored photomontage  
17 × 21 cm  
Private collection
- 10 **Sherrie Levine (\*1947)**  
*L'Absinthe*, 1995  
Black-and-white photographs  
Each 25.4 × 20.3 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 2004.271–12, Ankauf 2004
- 11 **Richard Serra (1938–2024)**  
*Candle Piece*, 1968  
Wood, candles  
13.5 × 246 × 8.5 cm  
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
- 12 **Andy Warhol (1928–1987)**  
*Optical Car Crash*, 1962  
Silk-screen print on canvas  
208 × 208.5 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 1970.4, Ankauf 1970

# Anti-Monumentality

Medardo Rosso envisioned sculpture not as fixed and imposing, but as fugitive, shifting. He radically broke with European sculptural tradition by eschewing permanence in favor of impermanence, grandeur in favor of intimacy. His figures are small, provisional, vulnerable—an antidote to the heroic monuments of his time. Their materiality reinforces this: the artist favored wax and plaster, mediums typically reserved for preparatory studies. Soft and fragile, they defy the claims of durability and mightiness of monumental sculpture.

Rosso's subjects, too, reject the exalted. No rulers, no luminaries—instead, the working class, the unemployed, the overlooked. It was a quiet yet radical refusal of sculpture's historic role in glorifying power.

His legacy lingers. Edgar Degas's near-contemporaneous painting of a fallen jockey, Simone Fattal's craggy and misshapen goddess, and Richard Serra's precariously balanced lead pole all echo Rosso's dismantling of dominance. Rosso didn't need a literal fall—his figures already waver on the edge, as if solidity itself has come undone.

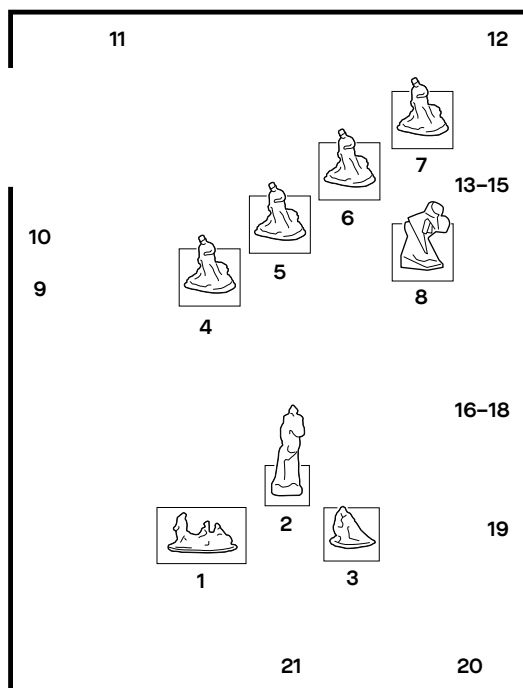


**Simone Fattal**  
*Venus II*, 2006

Simone Fattal (\*1942 Damascus, Syria) is a sculptor whose work is a testament to the experience of war, displacement, and survival. Her *Venus II* stands not as a triumphant goddess of love but as a weathered, almost anonymous figure—closer to an unearthed remnant than an idealized icon. Made from raw, unglazed clay, the sculpture bears the marks of its making: finger imprints, asymmetries, irregularities. It feels shaped by both human hands and geological time. If Fattal draws from a classical tradition, she undoes it from within, offering not perfection but fragility, not permanence but process. Like Medardo Rosso, she rejects monumentality in favor of vulnerability and immediacy. Rosso's figures often teeter or lean, resisting the upright assertiveness of traditional sculpture; Fattal's *Venus* seems to rise from ruin. Together, their works propose a different kind of monument—one rooted not in heroism, but in resilience.

**Edgar Degas**  
*Jockey blessé*, ca. 1896/1898

Edgar Degas (1834–1917, Paris) reworked his painting of a fallen rider, *Jockey blessé* (Injured Jockey) several times. Unlike traditional equestrian representations, particularly those found in monuments, the figure is not triumphant, but vulnerable and unseated. In its collapsed posture and uneven surface, it resonates with Medardo Rosso's sculptures: both celebrate a kind of anti-monumentality, where fragility and fallibility take the place of upright grandeur and heroism. While the work appears to depict the dramatic aftermath of a horse race, Degas's horse and rider—flattened, almost prop-like—are widely read as a meditation on the fall of *grande peinture*, the once-dominant French tradition of history painting. Rosso, too, challenged artistic conventions, dismissing traditional sculpture as nothing more than a “paperweight”: heavy, lifeless, an object meant to hold something down. In his leaning, sagging figures—like *Bookmaker* (1894) or *L'uomo che legge* (Man Reading, 1894)—he pursued a different sculptural language, where the body resists uprightness. Like Degas's jockey, everything tilts, collapses, or leans, casting doubt on whether tradition can still stand at all.



**1 Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*La conversazione*, ca. 1899 (1903)  
 Plaster  
 35 × 66.5 × 41 cm  
 Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio

**2 Simone Fattal (\*1942)**  
*Venus II*, 2006  
 Stoneware  
 55 × 20 × 19 cm  
 Private collection

**3 Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*L'uomo che legge*, 1894 (1923–1926)  
 Wax over plaster  
 36 × 31.5 × 31.5 cm  
 Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan

**4 Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Bookmaker*, 1894 (posthumous casting  
 by Mario Vianello-Chiodo, 1960)  
 Bronze  
 45 × 31 × 35 cm  
 mumok – Museum moderner Kunst  
 Stiftung Ludwig Wien, erworben 1964

- 5 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Bookmaker*, 1894  
Plaster, painted  
45.3 × 33.2 × 36 cm  
Private collection
- 6 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Bookmaker*, 1894 (1914–1923)  
Wax over plaster  
48 × 43 × 46 cm  
Mart – Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, Sammlung der VAF-Stiftung
- 7 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Bookmaker*, 1894 (1902–1903)  
Bronze  
44 × 35 × 36.5 cm  
Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan
- 8 **Raymond Duchamp-Villon (1876–1918)**  
*Le Cheval*, 1914  
Bronze  
44 × 30 × 42 cm  
mumok – Museum moderner Kunst  
Stiftung Ludwig Wien, erworben 1962
- 9 **Edward Steichen (1879–1973)**  
*Balzac – The Silhouette*, 4 a.m., 1908 (1911)  
Photogravure from Camera Work 34/35,  
April–July 1911  
16 × 20.6 cm  
ALBERTINA, Wien, Dauerleihgabe der Höheren Graphischen Bundes-Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt
- 10 **Edward Steichen (1879–1973)**  
*Balzac – Towards the Light, Midnight*, 1908 (1911)  
Photogravure from Camera Work 34/35,  
April–July 1911  
15.9 × 20.3 cm  
ALBERTINA, Wien, Dauerleihgabe der Höheren Graphischen Bundes-Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt
- 11 **Edgar Degas (1834–1917)**  
*Jockey blessé*, ca. 1896/1898  
Oil on canvas  
180.6 × 150.9 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G. 1963.29,  
mit einem Sonderkredit der  
Basler Regierung erworben 1963
- 12 **Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916)**  
*Forme plastiche di un cavallo*, 1913/1914  
Oil on canvas  
40 × 40 cm  
Kunsthaus Zürich, Sammlung Merzbacher
- 13 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Bookmaker*, 1894  
Matt collodion print, n. d.  
14.8 × 9.2 cm  
Private collection
- 14 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Bookmaker*, 1894  
Gelatin silver print, retouched, ca. 1901  
17 × 10.4 cm  
Private collection
- 15 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Bookmaker*, 1894  
Halftone print, n. d.  
17 × 10.5 cm  
Private collection
- 16 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Paris la nuit*, 1896–1897  
Halftone print on matboard,  
scratched in the middle, ca. 1898  
17.7 × 24.3 cm (image)  
Private collection
- 17 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*La conversazione*, ca. 1899?  
Gelatin silver print, n. d.  
10.5 × 9.5 cm  
Private collection
- 18 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*La conversazione*, ca. 1899?  
Modern print from original glass negative, n. d.  
12 × 9 cm  
Private collection
- 19 **Luciano Fabro (1936–2007)**  
*Penelope*, 1972  
Photograph  
30 × 40 cm  
mumok – Museum moderner Kunst  
Stiftung Ludwig Wien, erworben 1995
- 20 **Richard Serra (1938–1968)**  
*Pipe Prop*, 1969  
Lead  
L: 249 cm; D: 12.7 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 2015.30,  
Geschenk der Max Geldner-Stiftung 2020
- 21 **Ellsworth Kelly (1923–2015)**  
*Concorde Relief IV*, 1982–1983  
Teak  
74.3 × 54 × 7.9 cm  
Peter Freeman and Lluïsa Sàrries Zgonc,  
New York

# Process and Performance

Across his career, Medardo Rosso's focus shifted increasingly from the notion of a finished artwork and toward the act of making—material, process, and the event-like nature of artistic creation. He left fingerprints, knife marks, casting seams, and even accidental cracks visible, not as flaws, but as evidence of process. Instead of relying on foundries like most of his contemporaries, he began doing his own casting and even performed spectacular casting sessions for guests in his studio.

His repeated returns to laughing figures, for example, were attempts to capture that most fleeting of gestures. Rosso didn't just sculpt these—he set them in motion, capturing them in photographic sequences that anticipated the flickering dynamism of Anton Giulio Bragaglia's photographs, an example of which is on view here. The tension of suspended movement runs through Giovanni Anselmo's twisted form, where a heavy mass is held taut by a restrained force. A similar sense of tension and release shapes Senga Nengudi's nylon and sand sculptures, which stretch, sag, and settle like bodies in motion, and were integral to the performances Nengudi began staging in the 1970s.

**“Nothing is material  
in space.”**

—Medardo Rosso

## Senga Nengudi

*R.S.V.P., Reverie – Stale Mate, 2014*

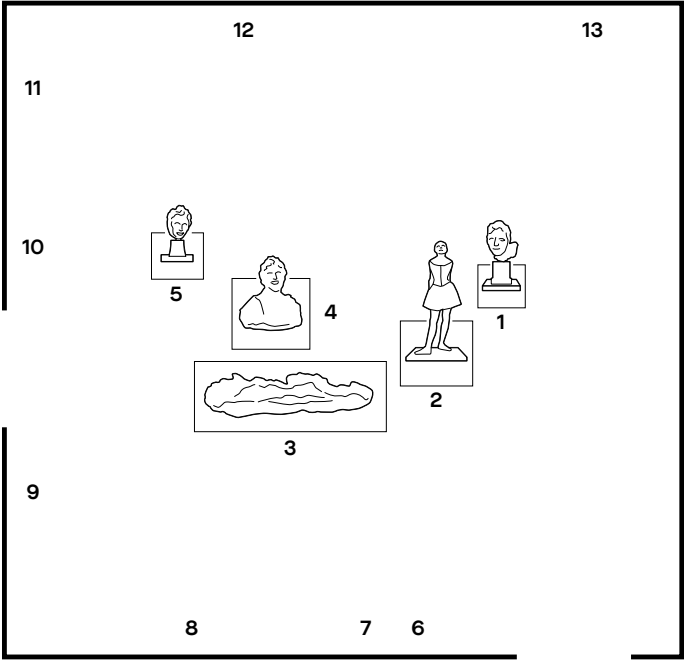
Starting in the mid-1960s, Senga Nengudi (\*1943 Chicago, Illinois, USA), a central figure in the Black Arts Movement in Los Angeles, developed an artistic practice rooted in process and transformation. Half a century after Medardo Rosso, she, too, explored what sculpture could be—celebrating change, fragility, and aliveness. At the heart of her *R.S.V.P.* series, documented here in a photograph of an early studio performance, is the Black female body, shaped by intersecting histories of race, gender, and power. For these works, dyed, sand-filled nylon stockings stretch between walls or hang, their sagging forms evoking the weight of violence and systemic inequality. The sculptures were made to be activated by dancers. The title, drawn from the acronym for “répondez s’il vous plaît” (meaning “please reply”), hints at their being an invitation to engage with the work—subtly alluding to themes of participation, response, and performativity. Tensed almost to the point of rupture, these precarious forms refuse to collapse entirely, transforming vulnerability itself into a form of resistance.

## Anonym, after Loïe Fuller

*Film Lumière n°765, 1 – Danse serpentine, II, ca. 1897–1899*

At the end of the 19th century, Loïe Fuller (1862 Hinsdale, Illinois, USA–1928 Paris) worked at the intersection of dance, the visual arts, cinematography, and entertainment, and was among the first to incorporate modern stage technologies into her performances. In 1892, she premiered the *Serpentine Dance* in Paris, for which she patented a flowing veil costume of her own design. As she or other dancers enacting her choreographies moved on stage, long swathes of fabric swirled around their bodies in fluid, shifting shapes, aglow with colored electric lights and projections. In these dazzling stagings, the body became a kind of living sculpture—continually formed and reformed through light, textile, and motion.

A central figure in Parisian nightlife, Fuller's dances became a cultural sensation and an important reference for poets and artists like Stéphane Mallarmé, Auguste Rodin, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. It is likely that Medardo Rosso, too, was familiar with Fuller's work, in which the boundaries between figure and space, process and performance, seemed to dissolve—an effect that resonates with his own sculptural investigations. Like Fuller, Rosso used light not just to illuminate but as an active element in shaping how presence emerges and fades, making both artists key figures in rethinking sculpture as an ephemeral and transformative act.



- 1 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Rieuse*, 1890 (1894)  
Bronze  
8.5 × 18.5 × 25 cm  
PCC, Pieter Coray Collection
- 2 **Edgar Degas (1834–1917)**  
*La Petite Danseuse de quatorze ans*, ca. 1922  
Bronze, tulle  
98 × 51 × 51 cm  
Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia
- 3 **Lynda Benglis (\*1941)**  
*Baby Contraband*, 1969  
Cast pigmented latex  
200.7 × 50.8 × 3.8 cm  
D.Daskalopoulos Collection
- 4 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Grande Rieuse*, 1892  
Plaster, painted  
53.8 × 50.8 × 15.2 cm  
Private collection
- 5 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Grande Rieuse*, 1891–1892 (1903–1904)  
Wax over plaster  
28 × 20 × 14 cm  
Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan
- 6 **Edgar Degas (1834–1917)**  
*Loges d'actrices*, 1879/1880  
Etching and aquatint, print from the sixfold crossed-out plate, on beige wove paper  
24.9 × 32.2 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv. 1949.19, Ankauf 1949
- 7 **Edgar Degas (1834–1917)**  
*Aux Ambassadeurs*, 1879/1880  
Etching, soft ground etching, drypoint, aquatint, impression from the fourfold crossed-out plate, on beige wove paper  
25.1 × 32.8 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv. 1949.13, Ankauf 1949
- 8 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Rieuse*, 1890  
Gelatin silver bromide prints from original negatives, ca. 1910  
Each 6.2 × 6.2 cm  
Private collection
- 9 **Anton Giulio Bragaglia (1890–1960)**  
*Lo Schiaffo*, 1912  
From the series *Fotodinamismo*  
Vintage gelatin silver print, sepia toned, mounted in original wooden frame  
16 × 22.6 cm (image)  
Fotosammlung OstLicht, Wien
- 10 **Senga Nengudi (\*1943)**  
*R.S.V.P., Reverie – Stale Mate*, 2014  
Nylon tights, sand  
165.1 × 38.1 × 10.2 cm  
Courtesy Sprüth Magers and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York
- 11 **Senga Nengudi (\*1943)**  
*Studio Performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976  
Gelatin silver print  
83 × 103.5 cm  
SAMMLUNG VERBUND, Wien
- 12 **Anonym, after Loïe Fuller (1862–1928)**  
*Film Lumière n°765, 1 – Danse serpentine, II*, ca. 1897–1899  
Hand-colored 35mm film, digitized, 52 sec  
Institut Lumière
- 13 **Giovanni Anselmo (1934–2023)**  
*Torsione*, 1968  
Metal, cotton  
165 × 152 × 100 cm  
S.M.A.K., Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent

# Touching, Embracing, Shaping

In *Aetas aurea* (Golden Age, 1886), Medardo Rosso portrays his wife tenderly embracing their son. Across various cast versions and photographs, the subjects' relationship—and their connection to the surrounding space—shifts. Sometimes they seem to merge, while at others, they blur into their environment—an effect Rosso repeatedly explored. A closer look reveals the mother's hand pressing into the child's cheek, a mirror of the sculptor's act of molding form.

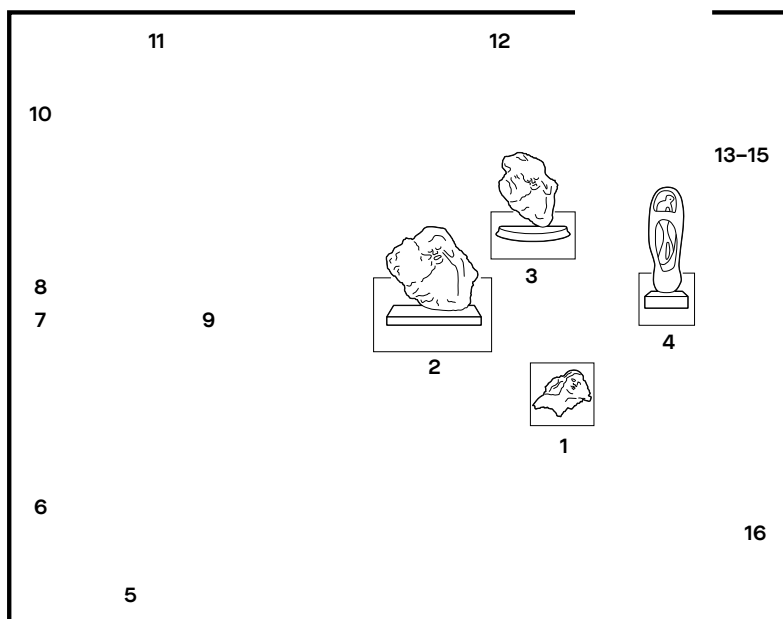
In other artists' works on view here, touch is likewise not just a creative gesture but a force that erodes distinctions between artist and medium, parent and child, subject and form. Phyllida Barlow's ephemeral assemblages, shaped during the night and inspired by the touch of her then-small children, exist now only as photographic documentation. Louise Bourgeois's sewn parent and child, locked in a suffocating embrace, transform maternal intimacy into sculptural entanglement. And Alina Szapocznikow's life cast of her son turns a caress into a haunting imprint. Whether stitched, cast, or modeled, these works make touch and parental "care" unsettlingly tangible.



**Louise Bourgeois**

*Child devoured by kisses*, 1999

Across her prolific career, Louise Bourgeois (1911 Paris–2010 New York, USA) repeatedly returned to themes of motherhood, trauma, and emotional entanglement. In *Child devoured by kisses*, sewn forms cling and meld—conveying not just affection or maternal duty, but also possession and suffocation. The hand-stitched bodies are enclosed in a glassed-off wooden case, more cage than vitrine. Love and fear, care and control, blur into something equal parts affectionate and sinister, as suggested by the “devoured” of the title. Like Medardo Rosso, Bourgeois fused forms to show how touch, whether maternal or sculptural, can shape, but also consume. Both artists reveal how the representation of a relationship between mother and child can be simultaneously tender and terrifying, a state in which bodies lose their boundaries and vulnerability becomes the very fabric of the artwork.



- 1 **Alina Szapocznikow (1926–1973)**  
*Głowa Piotra* (Head of Piotr), 1972  
Polyester resin  
47 × 45 × 21 cm  
Courtesy The Estate of Alina Szapocznikow /  
Piotr Stanislawski, Galerie Loevenbruck  
and Hauser & Wirth
- 2 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Aetas aurea*, 1886  
Wax over plaster  
50 × 48 × 35 cm  
Courtesy Amedeo Porro Fine Arts,  
Lugano/London
- 3 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Das Goldene Zeitalter (Aetas aurea)*, 1886 (ca. 1905)  
Bronze  
52.5 × 38 × 23 cm  
Städel Museum, Frankfurt
- 4 **Henry Moore (1898–1986)**  
*Working Model for Upright Internal/External Form*, 1951  
Bronze  
64 × 22.5 × 22 cm  
Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung, Inv. H 1952.1,  
Depositum in der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel  
1952
- 5 **Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945)**  
*Die Mütter*, 1921/1922  
From the series *Krieg*  
Woodcut on Japanese paper, reworked  
36.5 × 43.1 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett,  
Inv. 2001.35, Vermächtnis Ruth Rapp-Moppert,  
Muttentz 2001
- 6 **Eugène Carrière (1849–1906)**  
*Le Sommeil*, 1890  
Oil on canvas  
66.2 × 82.3 cm  
Städel Museum, Frankfurt
- 7 **Eugène Carrière (1849–1906)**  
*Élise riant*, 1895  
Lithography on wove paper  
33.5 × 23.5 cm  
Collection Galerie Jocelyn Wolff
- 8 **Eugène Carrière (1849–1906)**  
*Le Sommeil (Jean-René Carrière)*, 1897  
Litography  
57.5 × 67 × 3.5 cm  
Collection Galerie Jocelyn Wolff
- 9 **Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010)**  
*Child devoured by kisses*, 1999  
Fabric, thread, stainless steel, wood and glass  
197 × 127 × 91.4 cm  
Private collection, Courtesy Xavier Hufkens Gallery
- 10 **Matthijs Maris (1838–1917)**  
*Bride*, 1898  
Oil on canvas  
57 × 42 cm  
Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Schenkung des  
Vereins zur Gründung einer öffentlichen Sammlung  
zeitgenössischer Kunst in Amsterdam (Verzameling  
van Hedendaagsche Kunst de Amsterdam, VVHK)
- 11 **Phyllida Barlow (1944–2023)**  
*Photographs of Touchpieces*, 1982–1983 (2024)  
Photograph (exhibition copy)  
Each 22.1 × 24.5 bis 22.1 × 33.2 cm  
Courtesy The Estate of Phyllida Barlow  
and Hauser & Wirth
- 12 **Bruce Nauman (\*1941)**  
*Henry Moore Bound to Fail, Back View*, 1967/1970  
Cast iron  
68.5 × 59 × 6 cm  
Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung, Inv. H 1974.7,  
Depositum in der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel  
1974
- 13 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Aetas Aurea*, 1886  
Gelatin silver print, n. d.  
11 × 9.9 cm  
Private collection
- 14 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Aetas Aurea*, 1886  
Halftone print, 1909  
14.9 × 12.6 cm  
Private collection
- 15 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Aetas Aurea*, 1886  
Modern print from original glass negative, n. d.  
13.5 × 9.8 cm  
Private collection
- 16 **Alina Szapocznikow (1926–1973),  
unknown Photographer**  
Alina Szapocznikow with Piotr Stanislawski,  
artist's studio, Malakoff, France, 1972  
Exhibition copy after b/w negative (6 × 6 cm)  
15 × 15 cm  
Alina Szapocznikow Archives, Paris.  
The Estate of Alina Szapocznikow,  
courtesy Loevenbruck, Paris

# Appearance and Disappearance

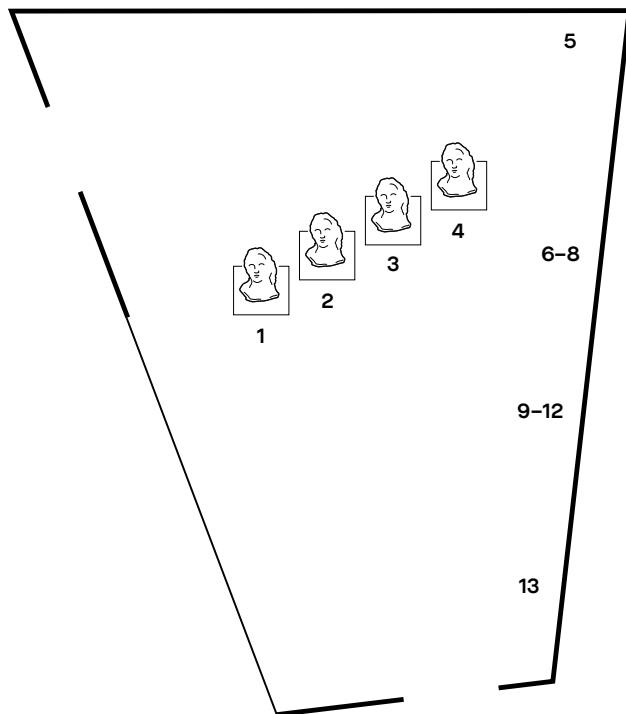
Medardo Rosso's abiding preoccupation was to capture a fleeting moment. To achieve this, he experimented with positioning and lighting, and often coated his plaster sculptures in translucent wax—all to make them seem to shift form as one moves around them. But it was arguably in photography that he most fully explored perception's elusiveness.

*Ecce Puer* (Behold the Child, 1906), the last new motif Rosso created, makes this transience particularly tangible. In any material, its face appears ethereal—more suggestion than definition. In photographs, blurring further unsettles its contours, with light itself acting like a veil. This play of appearance and disappearance found its most radical expression in *Madame X* (1896?), a sculpture represented here through Rosso's photographs of it and Erin Shirreff's 2013 video homage. Created from 132 still images recording shifts in light across a picture of *Madame X*, the video translates Rosso's most abstract sculpture into a flickering game of shadow and illumination, mirroring the dissolution of form so fundamental to his art.

Nairy Baghramian

*S'éloignant (rouge timide)*, 2024

The art of Nairy Baghramian (\*1971 Isfahan, Iran) negotiates abstraction and corporeality, often invoking the bodily without an actual body in sight. Her sculptures also reveal a distinct concern with architectonics—how forms structure, hold, and frame space. In *S'éloignant (rouge timide)* (Withdrawing [Shy Red]), she uses walnut panels to create a protective corner that partially encases a surface of colored wax. Several dense, unshaped lead forms—like solidified splashes of molten metal—sink into this soft plane, as if absorbed by it. The wax seems to bracket the lead, keeping the toxic material in its place. The French title evokes retreat as a kind of self-protection, a soft refusal that reclaims a corner of public space for intimacy or interiority. In her 2022 exhibition at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Texas, USA, Baghramian placed several works from the *S'éloignant* series alongside sculptures by Medardo Rosso, emphasizing shared concerns: a daring use of fragile, unstable materials like wax, a preoccupation with framing and display, and a fascination with what occurs at the margins. Like Rosso, Baghramian treats sculpture as a site of ambivalence—where form flickers in and out of presence, coalescing just briefly before slipping away.



- 1 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Ecce Puer*, 1906 (ca. 1907–1913)  
Bronze  
44.8 × 37.3 × 36.5 cm  
Hilti Art Foundation, Schaan, Liechtenstein
  
- 2 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Ecce Puer*, 1906 (posthumous casting  
by Mario Vianello-Chiodo, 1960)  
Bronze  
45 × 33 × 29 cm  
mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig  
Wien, erworben 1964
  
- 3 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Ecce Puer*, 1906 (after 1920)  
Plaster, painted  
50 × 32.5 × 38.5 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
  
- 4 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Ecce Puer*, 1906 (after 1920)  
Wax over plaster  
47 × 34 × 29 cm  
Fabbri Federico
  
- 5 **Nairy Baghramian (\*1971)**  
*S'éloignant (rouge timide)*, 2024  
Cast led, wax, maple wood  
115 × 112 × 20 cm  
Courtesy Nairy Baghramian
  
- 6 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Ecce Puer*, 1906  
Gelatin silver print, n. d.  
14.3 × 8.8 cm  
Private collection
  
- 7 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Ecce Puer*, 1906  
Gelatin silver print, n. d.  
14.3 × 8.8 cm  
Private collection
  
- 8 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Ecce Puer*, 1906  
Gelatin silver print, n. d.  
8.1 × 5.5 cm  
Private collection
  
- 9 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Madame X*, 1896?  
Gelatin silver print, airbrushed, ca. 1911  
11.2 × 6.8 cm  
Private collection
  
- 10 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Madame X*, 1896?  
Gelatin silver print, n. d.  
13.7 × 8.7 cm  
Private collection
  
- 11 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Madame X*, 1896?  
Gelatin silver print, ca. 1911  
10.2 × 4.7 cm  
Private collection
  
- 12 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Madame X*, 1896?  
Gelatin silver print, 1921  
23.8 × 17.8 cm  
Private collection
  
- 13 **Erin Shirreff (\*1975)**  
*Medardo Rosso, Madame X, 1896*, 2013  
Color video, silent, digital, 24 min., loop  
Courtesy Erin Shirreff and Sikkema Malloy Jenkins,  
New York

# Appearance and Disappearance

In Medardo Rosso's hands, representation is elusive. Light reshapes the craggy edges and unpolished materials of his sculptures, and shadows further unsettle their contours. Faces emerge dimly, only to blur and recede almost as quickly. The sculptor Constantin Brâncuși, who likely first encountered Rosso's work in a 1904 exhibition in Paris, recognized him as a vital precedent. Even though Rosso's raw surfaces may seem at odds with Brâncuși's refined forms, Rosso offered a model for how sculpture could dissolve into space rather than simply occupy it, and how photography could be an extension of sculptural form.

The idea of form on the verge of disintegration, whether actual or merely perceptual, has been reconsidered across generations and contexts. David Hammons conjures a Black head at the threshold between abstraction and recognition by affixing Harlem barbershop clippings to a rock—an economy of form that recalls Rosso and Brâncuși while confronting modernism's appropriation of African art. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, for his part, imbued his work with conditions for loss and renewal: a pile of sweets, evoking his partner's AIDS-afflicted body, perpetually shifts form as visitors take from it and the museum replenishes it.

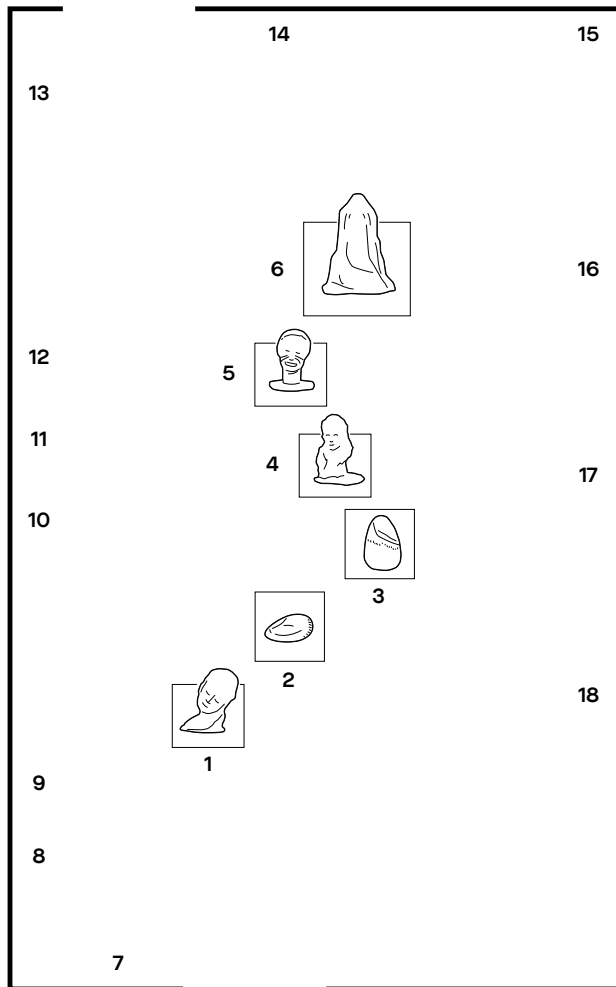
**“We do not exist!  
We are only plays of  
light in space.  
More air, more light,  
more space!”**

—Medardo Rosso



**David Hammons**  
*Rock Head*, 2000

With *Rock Head*, David Hammons (\*1943, Springfield, Illinois, USA) creates a form that toggles between abstraction and recognition. The piece recalls the pared-down simplicity of modernist sculpture—Constantin Brâncuși's *Muse endormie II* (Sleeping Muse II, ca. 1925) and Medardo Rosso's own *Madame X* (1896?) come to mind—but in Hammons's case it is achieved, as with so much of his work, with what is readily available and often culturally connoted with Blackness. Here, a weathered stone roughly the size of a human head is topped with clippings of Black hair swept from the floors of Harlem barbershops. The sculpture builds on performances Hammons staged in the 1970s, when he brought hair-covered rocks to local barbershops for "haircuts." The textured hair and razor-cut geometric lines mark African American identity and point to a history of oppression, resistance, and survival, but also question how such histories are transmitted through form, material, and symbol. At the same time, *Rock Head* confronts modernism's long-standing entanglement with the appropriation of non-European—often African—art. In reclaiming these strategies and codes, Hammons reframes the conversation, inscribing Black experience and presence at the very heart of sculptural practice.



- 1 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant malade*, 1893–1895 (1895)  
Bronze  
25.5 × 23 × 16.5 cm  
Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan
- 2 **Constantin Brâncuși (1876–1957)**  
*Muse endormie II*, ca. 1925  
Polished bronze  
17 × 27 × 17 cm  
Kunsthaus Zürich, Legat Heinz Keller, 1984
- 3 **David Hammons (\*1943)**  
*Rock Head*, 1998  
Rock, human hair  
31.8 × 33 × 24.1 cm  
THE GEORGE ECONOMOU COLLECTION
- 4 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant au soleil (Meek)*, 1892 (1918)  
Wax over plaster  
37.5 × 26 × 24 cm  
Courtesy Amedeo Porro Fine Arts, Lugano/London
- 5 **Juan Muñoz (1953–2001)**  
*Rosso in Africa*, 1994  
Plaster  
28 × 22 × 18 cm  
S.M.A.K., Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gent
- 6 **Andra Ursuța (\*1979)**  
*Grande Odalisque*, 2022  
Lead crystal  
63.5 × 53.3 × 45.7 cm  
Private collection
- 7 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Enfant malade*, 1893–1895  
Gelatin silver bromide print, 1901–1902  
41.4 × 33.5 cm  
Private collection
- 8 **Constantin Brâncuși (1876–1957)**  
*Le nouveau-né II et tête d'enfant dormi*, ca. 1920  
Photograph  
39.7 × 49.6 cm  
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands
- 9 **Constantin Brâncuși (1876–1957)**  
*La muse endormie II*, 1917–1918  
Photograph  
17.6 × 23.6 cm  
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands
- 10 **Odilon Redon (1840–1916)**  
*La sirène*, ca. 1900  
Oil and gold powder on fiberboard  
27 × 22 cm  
Stiftung Im Obersteg, Inv. Im 1441,  
Depositum im Kunstmuseum Basel 2004
- 11 **Georges Seurat (1859–1891)**  
*L'homme couché* (Study for *Une baignade*, Asnières),  
1883–1884  
Conté crayon on Ingres paper "Michallet"  
24.5 × 31.5 cm  
Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Sammlung Beyeler
- 12 **Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920)**  
*Marie (Marie, fille du peuple)*, 1918  
Oil on canvas  
61.2 × 49.8 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 1975.8,  
Vermächtnis Dr. Walther Hanhart, Riehen 1975
- 13 **Eva Hesse (1936–1970)**  
*No title*, 1960  
Oil on canvas  
45.7 × 40.6 cm  
Ursula Hauser Collection, Switzerland
- 14 **Meret Oppenheim (1913–1985)**  
*Weisser Kopf, blaues Gewand*, 1935  
Plaster relief on wood, wood pieces, oil paint  
68 × 50.5 × 12 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 1973.8,  
Depositum der Freunde des Kunstmuseums Basel 1973
- 15 **Felix Gonzalez-Torres (1957–1996)**  
*"Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)*, 1991  
Candies in variously colored wrappers, endless supply  
Dimension variable; ideal weight 175 lbs.  
The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Donna and  
Howard Stone, 2022.343
- 16 **Miriam Cahn (\*1949)**  
Untitled, 1995  
Oil on canvas  
92 × 45.2 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 1995.36,  
Geschenk der Jubiläumsstiftung der  
Schweizerischen Bankgesellschaft Zürich 1995
- 17 **Marisa Merz (1926–2019)**  
Untitled, ca. 1990  
Paraffin and colored pencil on unfired clay  
28.5 × 12 × 19.5 cm  
Kunst Museum Winterthur,  
Geschenk des Galerievereins, 1995
- 18 **Marisa Merz (1926–2019)**  
Untitled, 2003  
Pencil and charcoal on paper  
100 × 70 cm  
Kunst Museum Winterthur,  
Geschenk von Marisa Merz, 2004

# Mise-en-Scène

What if the way we frame art could transform our experience of it? Medardo Rosso was convinced that nothing exists in isolation, and thus not only devised broader dialogues around his work, but also dictated the intimate conditions of its display. He often installed his sculptures in specially made glass cases on wooden plinths (as seen on the ground floor). These were not just protective enclosures, but meticulously staged settings that defined visual boundaries and guided the viewer's gaze. Display, for Rosso, was integral to meaning.

Rosso's approach echoed with later artists who embedded framing into their work. Francesca Woodman repeatedly enclosed herself within architecture and furniture, integrating setting and subject before freezing the image as a photograph. Paul Thek likewise turned framing into a statement, sealing his uncanny sculptural replicas of raw meat in vitrines, much as Rosso sought to encase shifting, amorphous forms. Marcel Duchamp, for his part, built portable showcases to serve as miniature retrospectives, acknowledging, like Rosso, that context shapes content.

**Eva Hesse**  
*Case II*, 1968

Eva Hesse (1936 Hamburg, Germany–1970 New York, USA) was early in her use of unpredictable materials like latex, rubber, epoxy resin, and fiberglass, often drawn from the industrial world and unconventional in the context of art making at the time. *Case II* gathers her small material experiments—made of gauze, latex, wax, and wire mesh—arranged like delicacies in a bakery vitrine. Though these forms began as tentative studies, Hesse exhibited *Case II* in her breakthrough 1968 solo exhibition in New York.

Like Medardo Rosso before her, she embraced the unfinished and the provisional, pushing the boundaries of what makes a work of art “complete.” Yet she also understood, as did Rosso, that things so intimate in scale and visibly vulnerable require a frame that protects them and compels us to see them as works of art.

**Marcel Duchamp**  
*Boîte-en-valise*, 1935–1941 (1949)

Marcel Duchamp’s (1887 Blainville-Crevon–1968 Neuilly-sur-Seine, France) *Boîte-en-valise* (Box in a Suitcase) is a leather valise filled with painstakingly crafted miniature replicas of his own works—a portable exhibition of sorts. With this gesture, Duchamp turned his artistic oeuvre into something that could be replicated, packed, transported, and endlessly restaged. And by producing multiple editions of this personal retrospective of copies, he deliberately challenged distinctions between original and reproduction. Like Medardo Rosso, Duchamp was fascinated by how artworks perform, how framing shapes their perception, and how reception and value are constructed in relation to an artwork’s surroundings. Whereas Rosso manipulated light and surface to create shifting impressions, Duchamp manipulated scale and portability, conceiving his *Boîte-en-valise* into a self-contained mise-en-scène. Both artists understood that the idea of the artwork as a unique object imbued with intrinsic aura is an illusion. Meaning arises not only from the piece itself, but from its context—how it is staged, seen, and situated among other things.



Danh Võ

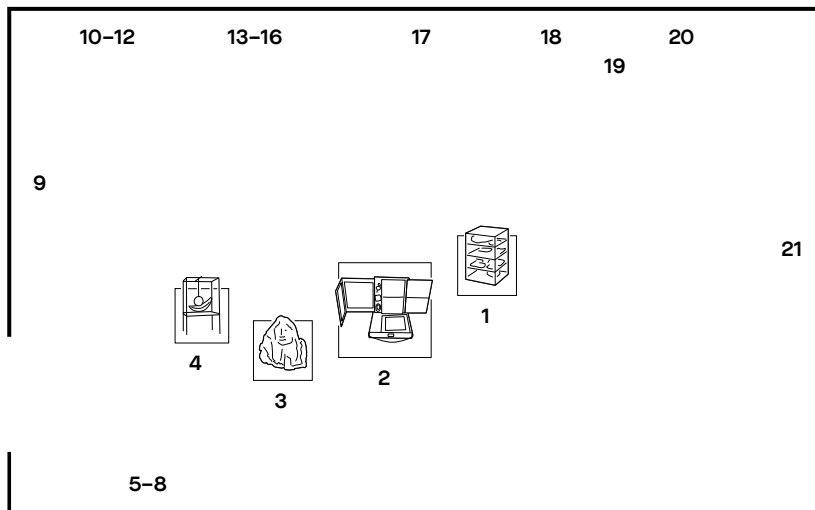
Contract for *untitled*, 2025

Danh Võ's (\*1975 Bà Rịa, Vietnam) contract for *untitled* transforms a private legal agreement into a publicly exhibited artwork, blurring the boundaries between the artwork and its contextual framing, between a performance or instruction piece and a contract. Much of Võ's work addresses personal and political histories, often using found artifacts to evoke larger societal traumas. Here, the document on view is considered both an artwork in its own right and a binding agreement regulating another not-yet-realized artwork. It defines that future artwork's ownership, stipulates its transfer to an institution, and makes visible the usually hidden mechanisms governing an artwork's posterity. If Medardo Rosso meticulously controlled the viewing conditions of his sculptures to shape their reception, Võ, by means of a contract, controls how a future piece will circulate and be collected. It, too, shapes Võ's reception. In both cases, a conceptual staging becomes part of the work itself, and the line between art and its context remains deliberately indistinct.

Robert Gober

*Untitled*, 1998–1999

In *Untitled*, Robert Gober (\*1954 Wallingford, Connecticut, USA) adopts a disturbing form of framing: an uncannily lifelike male torso is forced into a seemingly ordinary plastic storage box. The body appears as if churned out on a factory line—brutally severed from the world of the living and stripped of individuality. The box not only contains but also isolates the torso, while a drain embedded in the figure's stomach leads into emptiness—a motif Gober first conceived during the AIDS crisis, when fears around bodies, contamination, and loss shaped the public imagination. Gober's use of framing recalls Paul Thek's so-called meat pieces, encased in glass boxes, and connects as well to Medardo Rosso's peculiar, partial figures and his insistence on their meticulous framing. For all three, framing amplifies both the vulnerability and the alienation of the fragmented bodies on display. In Gober's case, framing becomes inseparable from violence, turning the body into an object both exposed and contained.



**1 Eva Hesse (1936–1970)**

*Case II*, 1968

15 elements in mixed media,

case in metal and glass

37 × 26 × 26 cm

Private collection

**2 Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968)**

*Boîte-en-valise*, 1935–1941 (1949)

Series A, no. XIX/XX, with 69 objects

and an original template *L'ombre sans cavalier* for a pochoir

41 × 102 × 103 cm (unfolded and installed)

Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 1968.58,

Schenkung Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach 1968

**3 Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**

*Madame Noblet*, 1897 (1897–1898)

Bronze

51 × 50 × 35 cm

Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan

**4 Alberto Giacometti (1901–1966)**

*Boule suspendue*, 1930

Plaster, metal

61 × 35.6 × 37.3 cm

Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. GS 19,

Depositum der Alberto Giacometti-Stiftung



- 5 **Francesca Woodman (1958–1981)**  
Untitled, 1976  
Gelatin silver print (exhibition copy)  
15.9 × 16.6 cm (image)  
Woodman Family Foundation
- 6 **Francesca Woodman (1958–1981)**  
*Space²*, 1976  
Gelatin silver print (exhibition copy)  
13 × 12.1 cm (image)  
Woodman Family Foundation
- 7 **Francesca Woodman (1958–1981)**  
*#1 or House #1 or Abandoned House*, 1976  
Gelatin silver print (exhibition copy)  
14.4 × 14.5 cm (image)  
Woodman Family Foundation
- 8 **Francesca Woodman (1958–1981)**  
Untitled, 1976  
Gelatin silver print (exhibition copy)  
13.3 × 13.2 (image)  
Woodman Family Foundation
- 9 **Giorgio de Chirico (1888–1978)**  
*L'Énigme de la fatalité*, 1914  
Oil with tempera on canvas  
136 × 95 cm  
Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung, Inv. H 1953.4,  
Depositum in der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel  
1953
- 10 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Grande Rieuse*, 1891–1892  
Aristotype, n. d.  
23 × 17 cm  
Private collection
- 11 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Rieuse*, 1890  
Modern print from the original glass negative, 1902  
17.8 × 14.6 cm  
Private collection
- 12 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Rieuse*, 1890  
Gelatin silver print, n. d.  
9.5 × 8.3 cm  
Private collection
- 13 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Installation view at the Autumn Salon (1904) in Paris  
with Medardo Rosso, *Enfant à la Bouchée de pain*, 1897;  
Paul Cezanne, *Cinq Baigneurs*, 1880–1882  
Collodion print on matboard, collaged, n. d.  
13.2 × 10 cm  
Private collection
- 14 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Installation view at the Autumn Salon (1904) in Paris  
with Medardo Rosso, *Enfant à la Bouchée de pain*, 1897;  
Paul Cezanne, *Cinq Baigneurs*, 1880–1882  
Gelatin silver print, retouched and airbrushed, n. d.  
11.7 × 14.5 cm  
Private collection
- 15 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Installation view at the Autumn Salon (1904) in Paris  
with *Portinaia*, 1883–1884;  
*Henri Rouart*, 1890;  
*Madame Noblet*, 1897  
Gelatin silver print, airbrushed, n. d.  
16.2 × 23.2 cm  
Private collection
- 16 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Madame Noblet*, 1897 (n. d.)  
Modern print from the original glass negative, n. d.  
18 × 13 cm  
Private collection
- 17 **Danh Võ (\*1975)**  
*Contract for untitled*, 2025  
Work on paper, housed in a custom framed crafted from  
walnut wood sourced from the McNamara Estate  
29.7 × 21 cm (image)  
Private collection
- 18 **Paul Thek (1933–1988)**  
*Untitled #76*, 1964  
From the series *Technological Reliquaries*  
Mixed media  
24 × 23 × 12 cm  
Private collection
- 19 **Robert Gober (\*1954)**  
*Untitled*, 1998–1999  
Plastic, beeswax, pigments, brass, human hair  
28.1 × 47.6 × 33.3 cm  
Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung, Inv. H 1999.3, Geschenk  
des Künstlers 1999, Depositum in der Öffentlichen  
Kunstsammlung Basel 1999
- 20 **Francis Bacon (1909–1992)**  
*Man in Blue IV*, 1954  
Oil on canvas  
198 × 137 cm  
mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig  
Wien, Leihgabe der Österreichischen Ludwig-Stiftung,  
seit 1984
- 21 **Jasper Johns (\*1930)**  
*The Bath*, 1988  
Encaustic on canvas  
122.5 × 153 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 1988.21, erworben mit einem  
Beitrag der Freunde des Kunstmuseums Basel 1988

# Form Undone

“Gaseous” was how one critic described Medardo Rosso’s sculptures—a fitting word, despite the work’s insistent physical presence. For Rosso, materiality was everything, even as he pursued the undoing of form. His sculptures never fully resolve—if they cohere for a moment, they inevitably then slip toward disintegration. This is evident in *Portinaia* (Concierge, 1883–1884) and *Madame Noblet* (1897), where the modeled, “finished” sides seem as rough and amorphous as the backs of his other sculptures. *Malato all’ospedale* (Sick Man in Hospital, 1889) carries this even further. Rosso’s use of wax—traditionally associated with death masks and embalmed flesh—heightens the work’s sense of mortality and transience.

From the 1960s onward, formlessness ran like a thread through the work of artists including Isa Genzken, Yayoi Kusama, Robert Morris, Carol Rama, and Alina Szapocznikow. Each, in their own way, tested sculpture’s capacity to behave like bodies in flux—pliable, oozing, potentially abject, and ultimately unstable.

**“I am busy with  
materials.”**

—Medardo Rosso

**Pamela Rosenkranz**

*Firm Being (Venice Series)*, 2009

Pamela Rosenkranz (\*1979 Altdorf, Switzerland) often draws on research in the natural sciences, neurology, and consumer culture as well as the history of art and literature.

Her work *Firm Being (Venice Series)* lines several walls and corners of the exhibition with branded water bottles emptied and re-filled with pigmented silicone in pink, tan, and brown—like jellified skin, in varied tones. These disposable shells turn the evocation of the body into a consumable commodity, with only their outer layer containing a fixed form.

A second work by Pamela Rosenkranz, *Skin Pool (Plasmin)*, 2025, is on view in the courtyard of the HAUPTBAU.



Hannah Villiger

Template for *Block I*, WV 290,

Aargauer Kunsthaus Aarau, Schweiz,

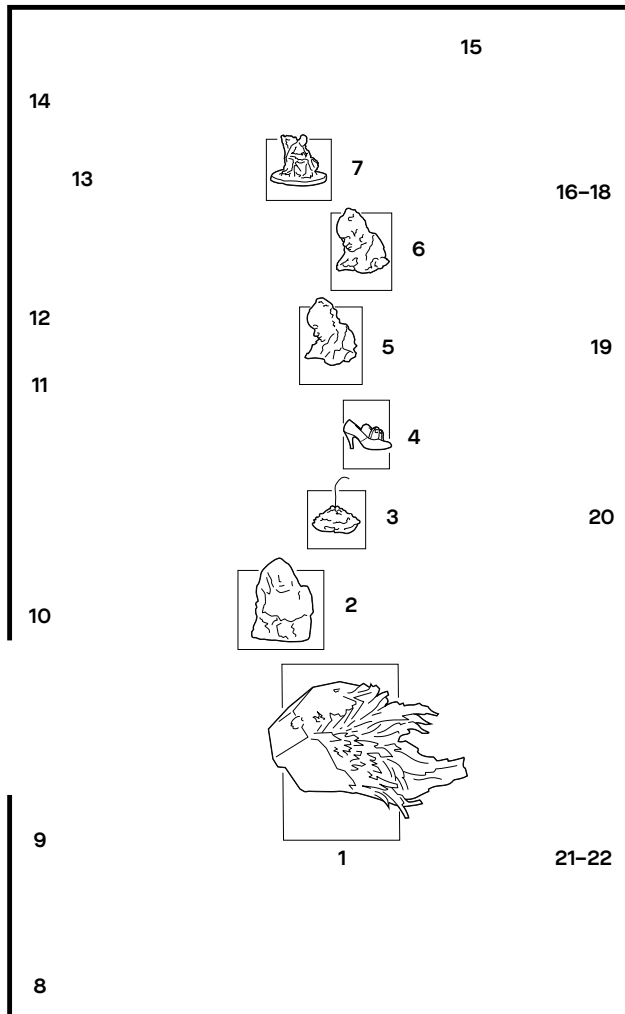
Depositem Gottfried Keller Stiftung

*Block I*, the first in a seminal series by Swiss artist Hannah Villiger (1951 Cham–1997 Auw, Switzerland), consists of a grid of Polaroid photographs showing fragmented views of the artist's own body. These frame-filling, composite self-portraits were taken with a Polaroid SX-70 camera in the solitude of her studio. They treat skin, creases, and limbs as raw material for an exploration that is as sculptural as it is photographic. Embracing a conception of the body that resists idealized "wholeness," Villiger subverts the tradition of the female nude by breaking the body apart. No longer an object of seductive display, it becomes anonymous, malleable—something she claimed could be "sculpted" in dialogue with herself. The result is both intimate and tender, yet also abstracted and depersonalized. Like Medardo Rosso, Villiger pushes figuration toward ambiguity, dissolving bodily coherence. Her fractured self-images resonate with Rosso's undoing of (bodily) form—his insistence that perfection, smoothness, and idealization have no place in sculpture.

Alina Szapocznikow

*Fotorzeźby*, 1971 (2007)

"I sat, deep in thought, chewing absentmindedly my chewing gum. Pulling out of my mouth the strangest forms, I suddenly realized the existence of an extraordinary collection of abstract sculpture, passing between my teeth. It would be enough to photograph and enlarge my chewed-up discoveries, to face the fact of sculptural creation. And its ordinariness." That is how Alina Szapocznikow (1926 Kalisz, Poland–1973 Passy, France) explains the accidental beginnings of her *Fotorzeźby* (Photosculptures). By the 1960s, she was radically rethinking sculpture as an intimate record of memory and the body. Like Medardo Rosso before her, she understood the artistic process as something immediate and experimental, and recognized that photography could itself become a sculptural tool. In *Fotorzeźby*, Szapocznikow envisages sculpture as a direct imprint shaped within the darkness of the oral cavity: intimately formed, then discarded. Captured in photographs, these pieces of chewed gum sit between the raw immediacy of bodily creation and the permanence conferred by the camera's lens. They are improvised traces of the body that produced them—marked by vulnerability and a faint sense of repulsion. The irreverent sculptor created only a few photographic works in her lifetime, and she insisted that they, too, be considered sculptural pieces. One of these few known works, *Fotorzeźby* challenges our notions of what sculpture can be.



- 1 **Peter Fischli (\*1952) / David Weiss (1946–2012)**  
 Untitled, 2005  
 Casting made of polyurethane  
 100 × 100 × 165 cm  
 Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung, H 2005.2,  
 Depositum in der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel  
 2005

- 2 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Madame Nobilet*, after 1914  
 Plaster  
 64.5 × 52.5 × 45.5 cm  
 Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio

- 3 **Isa Genzken (\*1948)**  
*Mein Gehirn*, 1984  
Plaster, metal, paint  
20.4 × 19.3 × 16 cm  
Sammlung Daniel Buchholz und Christopher Müller
- 4 **Yayoi Kusama (\*1929)**  
*Phallic Shoe*, 1966  
Shoe, golden bronze, fabric  
14 × 8 × 24 cm  
mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig  
Wien, Schenkung Hildegard Helga Hahn 2017
- 5 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Portinaia*, 1883–1884  
Wax over plaster  
38.5 × 31 × 17.5 cm  
PCC, Pieter Coray Collection
- 6 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Portinaia*, 1883–1884  
Wax over plaster  
37 × 32.5 × 19 cm  
Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg
- 7 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Malato all'ospedale*, 1889  
Plaster, painted  
23.5 × 30.5 × 28 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 8 **Pamela Rosenkranz (\*1979)**  
*Firm Being (Venice Series)*, 2009  
23 PET bottles, pigments, silicone  
Dimension variable  
Courtesy Pamela Rosenkranz and  
Karma International, Zurich
- 9 **Hannah Villiger (1951–1997)**  
Template for *Block I, WV 290*,  
Aargauer Kunsthau Aarau, Schweiz,  
Depositum Gottfried Keller Stiftung  
Twelve Polaroid color photographs, mounted on  
cardboard, facsimile, working material  
34.8 × 46.4 cm  
Stiftung THE ESTATE OF HANNAH VILLIGER
- 10 **Rosemarie Trockel (\*1952)**  
*O-Sculpture 2*, 2012  
Ceramic, platinum glazed  
60 × 66 × 22 cm  
Private collection
- 11 **Maria Lassnig (1919–2014)**  
*Informel*, 1951  
Oil on canvas  
98 × 79 cm  
mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig  
Wien, Leihgabe der Artothek des Bundes seit 1962
- 12 **Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985)**  
*Portrait fluide*, 1950  
Oil on hardboard  
60.8 × 50 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 1964.8,  
Schenkung Werner Schenk 1964
- 13 **Rebecca Warren (\*1965)**  
*Paris*, 2003  
Clay on MDF on wheels  
191 × 77 × 77 cm  
Wendy Gondeln
- 14 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Malato all'ospedale*, 1889  
Photogravure, retouched, 1920–1929  
14 × 10 cm  
Private collection
- 15 **Robert Morris (1931–2018)**  
Untitled, 1974  
Felt, metal mounts  
230 × 200 × 70 cm  
mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig  
Wien, erworben 2004
- 16 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Portinaia*, 1883–1884  
Collotype, n. d.  
14 × 9 cm  
Private collection
- 17 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Portinaia*, 1883–1884  
Gelatin silver print, n. d.  
10.8 × 5.5 cm  
Private collection
- 18 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Portinaia*, 1883–1884  
Gelatin silver print on matboard, n. d.  
16 × 8.2 cm (image)  
Private collection
- 19 **Robert Gober (\*1954)**  
Untitled, 2008  
Cast polymer plaster  
38 × 26.5 × 15.5 cm  
Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung, Inv. H 2022.2,  
Depositum in der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel
- 20 **Alina Szapocznikow (1926–1973)**  
*Fotorzeźby*, 1971 (2007)  
Gelatin silver print and collage with text on paper  
Each 30 × 24 cm / 24 × 30 cm  
Courtesy Estate of Alina Szapocznikow /  
Piotr Stanislawski,  
Galerie Loevenbruck and Hauser & Wirth
- 21 **Olga Balema (\*1984)**  
*Threat to Civilization 10*, 2015  
Soft PVC, metal, water  
70 × 48 × 29 cm  
Courtesy Olga Balema, Croy Nielsen, Vienna  
and Fons Welters, Amsterdam
- 22 **Olga Balema (\*1984)**  
*Threat to Civilization 8*, 2015  
Soft PVC, metal, water  
50 × 56 × 40 cm  
Courtesy Olga Balema, Croy Nielsen, Vienna  
and Fons Welters, Amsterdam

# Form Undone

For Medardo Rosso, drawing was not a preliminary step, but an extension of the same questions that drove his sculpture and photography. His small-scale renderings were not strict representations, but rather fleeting impressions of places, figures, and forms. He worked in quick, jagged lines, often on invitation cards, envelopes, or menus. He then photographed these seemingly slight pieces and exhibited them, emphasizing their significance to him.

Nebulousness tugs against clear description in Rosso's work, no matter the medium. Consider *Enfant au sein* (Child at Breast, 1890), one of his most radical sculptures. The only two bronze versions he made, both shown here, nod to the timeless mother-and-child motif yet nearly absorb the figures into an indistinct mass. Only on second glance can we discern the child's head, nestled against its mother's breast and cradled in her disembodied arms. Earlier photographs reveal that the mother's head was once modeled, but it was either consciously removed or accidentally broken before casting. In any case, its absence became part of the deliberate result: a fragmentary suggestion of mother and child, fused as if into congealed lava.



**Carol Rama**  
*Bricolage R4*, 1964

The work of Carol Rama (1918–2015 Turin, Italy) is marked by rebellion, experimentation, and material diversity, often circling around the human body. With her unsparing gaze at sexuality, pleasure, illness, and death, Rama questioned societal norms. Starting in the 1960s, she began experimenting with industrial materials such as rubber, metal, and doll eyes in her so-called bricolages, expanding collage into dense material assemblages. In *Bricolage R4*, a viscous mass seems to have coagulated against a red background, caught between liquefaction and solidification—an effect also found in the sculptures of Medardo Rosso. Like Rosso, Rama was also from Turin and would certainly have known his work. Both artists used unconventional materials to create artworks that are at once intimate, subversive, and almost ectoplasmic.



- 1 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant à la Bouchée de pain*, 1897 (ca. 1897–1900)  
Plaster  
45.5 × 45.5 × 30 cm  
Courtesy Amedeo Porro Fine Arts, Lugano/London
- 2 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant à la Bouchée de pain*, 1897 (posthumous casting by Francesco Rosso, after 1928)  
Wax over plaster  
H: 45.8 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 3 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Bambino alle cucine economiche*, 1897  
Plaster, painted  
50 × 55 × 51 cm  
Private collection
- 4 **Hans Josephsohn (1920–2012)**  
Untitled, 1997  
Brass  
144 × 80 × 58 cm  
Kesselhaus Josephsohn, St. Gallen
- 5 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant au sein*, 1889 (ca. 1910–1914)  
Bronze  
50 × 45 × 20 cm  
Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio
- 6 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
*Enfant au sein*, 1889 (1920–1923)  
Bronze  
63.5 × 41.4 × 26 cm  
Kunstmuseum Basel, Inv. G 2024.14,  
Ankauf mit Mitteln der Max Geldner-Stiftung 2024
- 7 **Carol Rama (1918–2015)**  
*Bricolage R4*, 1964  
Acrylic, tempera, glue, and metal spheres on canvas  
69.7 × 50 cm  
Private collection
- 8 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Enfant au sein*, 1890  
Gelatin silver print, ca. 1910  
10 × 8.3 cm  
Private collection
- 9 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Enfant au sein*, 1890  
Aristotypes on silk paper, 1923  
8.3 × 10.2 cm  
Private collection
- 10 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of  
*Enfant au sein*, 1890  
Aristotypes on silk paper, 1923  
11.4 × 13.7 cm  
Private collection
- 11 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Lioness – View of a Lioness, n. d. \*\*  
Collodion print of drawing  
11 × 6.3 cm
- 12 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Lioness – View of a Lioness, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing  
19.4 × 12.2 cm
- 13 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Horse, Trotting up the Street, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing  
10.1 × 5.7 cm
- 14 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Horse, Trotting up the Street, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing  
16 × 9.5 cm
- 15 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Horse, Trotting up the Street, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing  
12.5 × 10 cm
- 16 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of a Man on the Street, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing  
17.7 × 13.4 cm
- 17 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Woman in Carriage – Cab on the Way to London, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing  
22.2 × 14 cm
- 18 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of Venice, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing  
21.8 × 13.9 cm
- 19 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Sketch – Landscape, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing  
20.9 × 14.9 cm
- 20 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Café du Rocher, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing with white highlights  
26.1 × 18.7 cm
- 21 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
In a Bar in London, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing  
25.3 × 19.8 cm
- 22 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
In a Bar in London, n. d. \*\*  
Halftone print of drawing  
22.2 × 13.7 cm

- 23 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of a Metro in Light, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing with white highlights  
21.2 × 16 cm
- 24 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
View of a Metro in Light, n. d. \*\*  
Gelatin silver print of drawing with white highlights  
4.1 × 2.9 cm
- 25 **Giuseppe Penone (\*1947)**  
*Angolo-Vaso*, 1979  
Plaster, canvas, color pigments  
80 × 65.4 × 45 cm  
mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig  
Wien, erworben 1995
- 26 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Figures (Figure Study), ca. 1920  
Graphite and red chalk on paper  
18.1 × 12.7 cm  
Peter Freeman and Lluisa Sàrries Zgonc, New York
- 27 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Three Figures on a Street, n. d. \*\*\*  
Graphite on paper  
21.2 × 12.7 cm
- 28 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Two Figures, One Seated Male and One Standing  
Female, Shown from Behind, n. d. \*\*\*  
Graphite on paper  
26.8 × 17.7 cm
- 29 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Impression of a Bar in London, n. d. \*\*  
Graphite on paper  
12.5 × 8.4 cm
- 30 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Figures on the Street, One in Profile with a Top Hat,  
n. d. \*\*\*  
Graphite on paper  
26.7 × 21.6 cm
- 31 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Two Figures at the Table in a Café, n. d.  
Grease pencil on paper  
17.8 × 13.7 cm  
Private collection, Courtesy Amedeo Porro Fine Arts  
Lugano/London
- 32 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Two Figures on a Street with Lampposts,  
n. d. \*\*\*  
Graphite on paper  
26.7 × 20.3 cm
- 33 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Road with Trees and Figures, n. d. \*\*\*  
Graphite on paper mounted on board by the artist  
20.3 × 22.3 cm
- 34 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Interior with Table and Figures, n. d. \*\*\*  
Graphite on paper mounted on board by the artist  
35.2 × 21 cm
- 35 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Female Figure with Hat Sitting in a Café,  
n. d. \*\*\*  
Ink on paper  
23.8 × 19.7 cm
- 36 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Seated Figures in Conversation, n. d. \*\*\*  
Ink on paper  
23.5 × 12.9 cm
- 37 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Café Interior with Four Figures, n. d. \*\*\*  
Ink on paper mounted on board by the artist  
26.7 × 18.4 cm
- 38 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Walking Figures with Two Women in the Foreground,  
n. d. \*\*\*  
Ink on paper mounted on board by the artist  
24.4 × 18.1 cm
- 39 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Two Figures on the Street, n. d. \*\*\*  
Ink on paper mounted on board by the artist  
21.6 × 21 cm
- 40 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Landscape, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on envelope  
11 × 21 cm
- 41 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Landscape, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on envelope  
9 × 13.5 cm
- 42 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Horse, Trotting up the Street, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite and charcoal on cardboard  
20 × 12 cm
- 43 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Landscape, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite and charcoal on paper  
11 × 18 cm
- 44 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Sketch – Landscape, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on cardboard  
20.5 × 13.5 cm
- 45 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Landscape – Above the Rooftops, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Violett pencil on cardboard  
13.5 × 21.5 cm
- 46 **Paul Thek (1933–1988)**  
*Untitled (Meat Cable)*, ca. 1969  
Wax on steel cable  
L: 395 cm  
Kenny Schachter and Ilona Rich

- 47 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Landscape – Marine Impressionn, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on paper  
13 × 20.5 cm
- 48 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Landscape, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on paper  
11.5 × 19.5 cm
- 49 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Landscape – Marine Impression, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on cardboard  
10.5 × 15 cm
- 50 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Landscape by the Sea, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Ink on paper  
11.3 × 16.4 cm
- 51 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Marine Impression, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on paper  
11 × 15 cm
- 52 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Flowers, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Ink on paper  
12.3 × 10.5 cm
- 53 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Woman with Umbrella, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on cardboard  
15 × 7.5 cm
- 54 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Lioness – View of a Lioness, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on paper  
15 × 8.7 cm
- 55 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Woman in Carriage – Cab on the Way to London,  
n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on cardboard  
9.2 × 6.5 cm
- 56 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Woman Combing Her Hair – Female Figure  
(In the Mirror?), n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on note  
11.5 × 10 cm
- 57 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Crouched Figure (on Balcony?), n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on cardboard  
13 × 7 cm
- 58 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Figures from Behind – On the Omnibus to London,  
n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on cardboard  
12 × 7.5 cm
- 59 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Two Figures on the Street, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on envelope  
10.5 × 7 cm
- 60 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Interior with Figure at Window, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on cardboard  
11 × 9 cm
- 61 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Untitled, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on paper  
11 × 17.5 cm
- 62 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Game of Billiards, 1895 \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on invitation  
15 × 10 cm
- 63 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Man from Behind, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Red chalk on cardboard  
12 × 13 cm
- 64 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Figures on the Street, n. d.  
Graphite on paper  
17.7 × 13.4 cm  
Private collection, Lugano, Amedeo Porro Fine Arts  
Lugano/London
- 65 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Impression of a Man on the Street, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on cardboard  
17.7 × 9 cm
- 66 **Medardo Rosso (1858–1928)**  
Two Figures, n. d. \*\*\*\*  
Graphite on envelope  
12.5 × 7 cm
- \*\* Works private collection
- \*\*\* Works Peter Freeman, Inc. New York /  
Paris and Amedeo Porro Fine Arts Lugano/London
- \*\*\*\* Works Museo Medardo Rosso, Barzio

## Imprint

The exhibition was created in close collaboration with the Medardo Rosso Estate and is a cooperation with the mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien.

**Curators:** Elena Filipovic and Heike Eipeldauer

**Concept:** Heike Eipeldauer

**Curatorial Team:** Len Schaller with Noemi Scherrer,

Renate Wagner, and Jasper Warzecha

**Scenography:** Büro MEYER-GROHBRUEGGE

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SULGER-STIFTUNG





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#### Opening Hours

Tue–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m. / Wed 10 a.m.–8 p.m.

Special opening hours

→ [kunstmuseumbasel.ch/besuch](https://kunstmuseumbasel.ch/besuch)

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