

Media release

Basel, November 7, 2024

Medardo Rosso Inventing Modern Sculpture

March 29 – August 10, 2025, Kunstmuseum Basel | Neubau
Curators: Heike Eipeldauer (mumok Wien) and Elena Filipovic

Sculptor, photographer, and master of artful staging, rival to Auguste Rodin and role model for countless artists: Medardo Rosso (1858–1928) revolutionized sculpture around 1900. Despite his wide-ranging influence, the Italo-French artist remains little known today. This comprehensive retrospective, organized in cooperation with mumok, Vienna, aims to change this, showcasing nearly fifty of his bronze, plaster, and wax sculptures and hundreds of his photographs and drawings to trace the artist's radical formal, material, and technical explorations.

Rosso's sculptures are anti-monumental and fundamentally human-scaled, walking a tightrope between presence and dissolution. He created animated surfaces that attempted to capture shifting light and perception—hailed in his day as a sculptural version of Impressionism. He was also deeply invested in modern ideas of reproduction, often using photography as a conceptual model and sculptural tool. Inspired by Rosso's own display strategies, the exhibition includes work by more than fifty artists from the last hundred years whose concerns and approaches resonate with Rosso's.

Medardo Rosso with Francis Bacon, Nairy Baghramian, Phyllida Barlow, Louise Bourgeois, Constantin Brancusi, Mary Cassatt, Miriam Cahn, Edgar Degas, Jean Dubuffet, Simone Fattal, Isa Genzken, Robert Gober, Félix González-Torres, David Hammons, Eva Hesse, Käthe Kollwitz, Yayoi Kusama, Mire Lee, Senga Nengudi, Carol Rama, Auguste Rodin, Pamela Rosenkranz, Georges Seurat, Alina Szapocznikow, Michael E. Smith, Paul Thek, Kaari Upson, Andra Ursuta, Hannah Villiger, Danh Võ, Andy Warhol, Rebecca Warren, and more

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