

	<p>Object: The Bronze Age</p> <p>Museum: Kunsthalle Bremen Am Wall 207 28195 Bremen (04 21) 3 29 08-0 info@kunsthalle-bremen.de</p> <p>Collection: Von der Romantik zum Impressionismus, Gemälde und Skulpturen</p> <p>Inventory number: 138-1905/24</p>
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Description

The sculpture *The Bronze Age*—first called “*The Defeated*,” in reference to France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71— was the first freestanding life-sized figure that Auguste Rodin publically displayed. Initially, it was denied recognition as a work of art, as people concluded from its naturalism that the sculpture was nothing more than a cast from nature. In the meantime—like Rodin’s bronzes *Man with Broken Nose* and *Saint John the Baptist*— the work is considered to be one of the Kunsthalle Bremen’s masterpieces. Both *The Bronze Age* and *Saint John the Baptist* break with the Neoclassical sculptural tradition, as they do not emphasize an ideal or tranquility, but rather expression and movement. When Gustav Pauli, the first, academic director of the Kunsthalle, purchased *The Bronze Age* from the artist in 1905, he wondered whether the figure represented an injured person or someone waking. Yet also in a traditional interpretation of the *Bronze Age*, which, as the third stage of human history, stands for injustice and war as well as for attaining consciousness, he did not find an answer. On February 4, 1906, however, Rodin ended the uncertainty in a letter carried to Pauli, reaching him via Rainer Maria Rilke: “Actually, it is rather the awakening, the slow return from a deep and heavy sleep, that is conjured up by the gesture of the young man still so preoccupied with his dreams.”

Basic data

Material/Technique:	Bronze, with brown, green and black patina
Measurements:	180.0 x 66.0 x 60.0 cm

Events

Modelled	When	1875-1876
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Who Auguste Rodin (1840-1917)
Where

Keywords

- Sculpture