

MAIRIE DE PARIS



Museum guide

**B**

muséeBourdelle

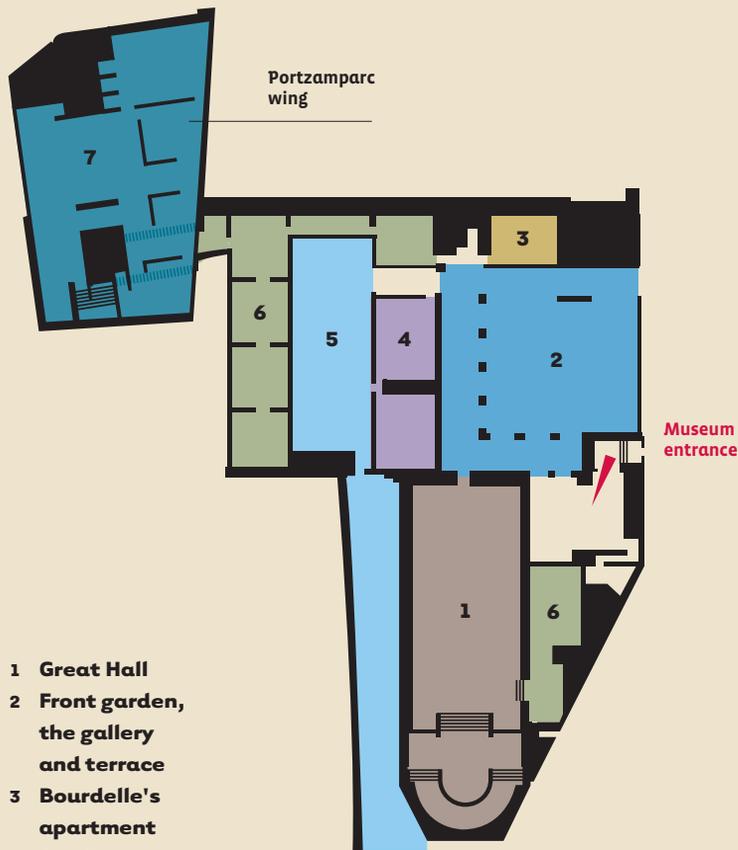
MUSÉES  
DE LA  
VILLE DE  
PARIS



musée de France

[musees.paris.fr](http://musees.paris.fr)

## Tour of the permanent collections



- 1 Great Hall
- 2 Front garden, the gallery and terrace
- 3 Bourdelle's apartment
- 4 Studios
- 5 Courtyard garden
- 6 Temporary exhibition galleries
- 7 Portzamparc wing

## A history of the museum

### The museum

In 1885, Antoine Bourdelle took up residence in Montparnasse, a district teeming with artists' studios. Towards the end of his life, the now famous sculptor planned "like Rodin", his prestigious predecessor, to create a museum to preserve his oeuvre in its entirety. After his death in 1929, his wife Cléopâtre, daughter Rhodia and son-in-law Michel Dufet were determined that his work should at last achieve recognition and be exhibited.

In 1949, Cléopâtre Bourdelle donated the studios and a significant part of her collection to the City of Paris. The Bourdelle Museum opened that same year. Based around the preserved studios, it has retained all of their original charm. In 1961, Henri Gautruche designed the huge plaster sculpture hall to preserve the monumental sculptures and display them to best advantage. Finally, in 1992, Christian de Pontzamparc built an extension including a conservation area, resources center, graphic arts room and storage area, completing the process of turning a private studio into a museum devoted to a single man.

The addition of donations from Rhodia Dufet-Bourdelle in 1992 and 1995 and her bequest to the City of Paris in 2002 resulted in an exceptionally rich collection: 2,000 plaster sculptures and 2,200 bronzes, 198 paintings, 6,000 graphic works, 13,000 photographs and the sculptor's personal collection, as well as a major archive collection.

© Jean-Olivier Roussietu  
"Metropolitan"  
Beethoven,  
study, 1902,  
bronze

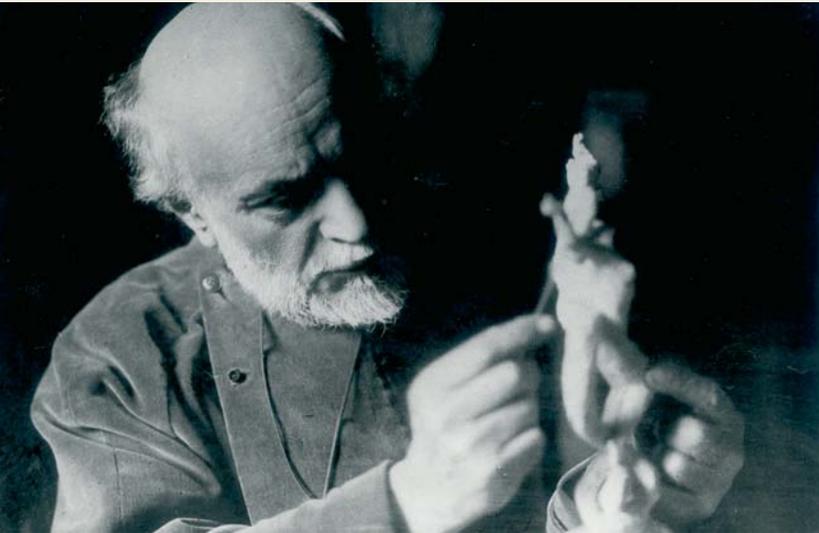


# Antoine Bourdelle (1861-1929)

Born in Montauban, Émile-Antoine Bourdelle enrolled at the Toulouse School of Fine Art at the age of fifteen. In 1885, he took up residence in Paris at the studio of the sculptor Falguière at 16 impasse du Maine, which now houses the museum.

In 1893, Bourdelle became Rodin's sculptor's assistant and their partnership lasted until 1908. In 1900, Rodin realised that Bourdelle's sculpture *Head of Apollo* marked a departure from his own aesthetic. Shortly afterwards he spoke up in defence of

Bourdelle  
sculpting  
*Death of a  
swan*,  
photographed  
in 1929



© Anónimo, 1929



*Head of Apollo*,  
1898-1909,  
bronze

© André Morin

the *Montauban Monument* which was the talk of the town at that time.

During this period, the sculptor met Cléopâtre Sevastos, his student and muse. After several trips abroad and a solo exhibition in Prague in 1909, Bourdelle met with acclaim from his contemporaries with *Heracles the Archer*. From this point until 1929, he taught at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière art school. Among his famous students were Giacometti, Vieira da Silva and Richier. In 1913, the Théâtre des Champs Élysées opened. Bourdelle worked as an ad hoc architect, helping to draw the plans and creating a series of frescoes, as well as the imposing decorative marble sculpture on the front of the building.

*The Fruit*, *Penelope* and *Dying Centaur* are key pieces which had pride of place in some of the world's most prestigious museums. However, France still fought shy of or was even resistant to the artist's work. With the exception of commissions for monuments such as the *Monument to General Alvear*, *Virgin with Offering* or *France*, Bourdelle did not achieve recognition in his own country until the year of his death, with his *Monument to Adam Mickiewicz*.

*The Fruit or  
The Nudity of  
Fruits*, small  
study, 1906,  
bronze



© Jean-Olivier Rousseau

## Museum tour

Great Hall



© André Morin



© Eric Emo

*Dying centaur*, large version, 1911-1914, plaster

### 1 Great Hall

Launched in 1961 to celebrate the centenary of Bourdelle's birth, the Great Hall is devoted to monumental plaster sculptures such as the *Monument to General Alvear*, commissioned in 1913 by the Argentine Republic as a tribute to one of the leading figures of the independence movement. Located on one of the central squares of Buenos Aires, the monument consists of a huge 14 metre-high plinth flanked by four allegorical figures (*Strength, Eloquence, Freedom and Victory*, 1913-1923). Also exhibited are *France* (1923-1925) designed to celebrate the United States' entry into the war and major works such as *Sappho* (1887-1925), *The Fruit* (1902-1911), *Heracles the Archer* (1909), *Penelope* (1905-1912) and *Dying Centaur* (1911-1914), a bronze version of which is displayed in the museum gardens. This latter work is also exhibited in the former studio and draws on the mythological motif beloved of the contemporary Symbolist movement. It is a melancholy allegory of the artist communing with spirit and matter, symbolised by the horse and man.

## Museum tour

### 2 Front garden, the gallery and terrace

The artist's signature piece *Heracles the Archer* (1<sup>st</sup> version 1909) is displayed under the arches here. It is a technical and formal masterpiece, depicting the sixth Labour of Hercules in which he must destroy the threatening birds of lake Stymphalia with his bow. It reflects not just Hercules' struggle, but also the artist's own battle with the forces of creativity.



© Didier Messina

*Heracles the Archer*, final full-size model, first large-scale study, 1909-1924, bronze

*Adam*, 1889, bronze



© Didier Messina



© Didier Messina

Front garden



© Didier Messina

*Meditation of Apollo*, 1910-1913, bronze

## Museum tour

This open area also houses: *Adam* (1888-1889), reminiscent of Michelangelo's slave sculptures, *The Fruit*, a serene figure in a Hellenistic pose with a modern twist, *Penelope*, Ulysses' wife, with her ample curves and exaggerated fullness, *Crouching Female Bather* (1906-1907) in which the erotic inspiration of the piece is in sharp contrast to the massive bulk of the rock, and the bas-reliefs for the Théâtre des Champs Élysées (gallery and terrace, 1910-1913), a vast cycle inspired by the Parthenon and gothic cathedrals.

### 3 Bourdelle's apartment

This room forms part of the house in which Bourdelle lived from 1885 and in which his parents joined him shortly afterwards. Although from 1918 onwards he preferred a more comfortable apartment at 6 avenue du Maine, Bourdelle still came here every day to work and continued to entertain visitors here.

A selection of items from the collection assembled by the artist is displayed here, as well as more personal works.

Antoine Bourdelle and his wife in the apartment circa 1913



© Albert Harlingue / Roger-Viollet

## Museum tour

4

### The studios

#### Antoine Bourdelle's studio

Antoine Bourdelle's studio



© André Morin

Occupied by the artist from 1885 and faithfully preserved, this room recreates the atmosphere of a studio at the dawn of the

twentieth century. A space where he worked, taught and received several of his students, the studio contains a few pieces which sum up the sheer variety of techniques and materials used, including modelling, working directly onto a medium, and the use of wood (*The Nun*, 1888), bronze (*Michel Cognacq*, 1925) and marble (*Bust of Pallas*, 1905 and *Madame Vaysse-Cibiel*, 1904).

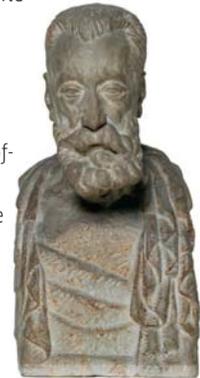
#### Carrière's studio

Eugène Carrière (1849-1906) occupied this studio from 1885 to 1888. As a major turn-of-the-century painter, he is represented by three significant works demonstrating the art of revelation and suggestion. The studio also houses a touching portrait of *Madame Laprade*, a pastel by Bourdelle, a powerfully evocative marble bust of *Anatole France* (1919), and *Day and Night* (1900-1903) where the marble represents the Marquis de Bideran de Béraud with distorted features, testifying to Bourdelle's many influences ranging from Symbolism to Rodin. There is also a marble bust of *Jeanne Prinnet* (1910), acquired in 2006.

*Bust of Jeanne Prinnet*, 1910, marble



© Musée Bourdelle



*Anatole France, draped bust*, 1919, marble

© Jean-Olivier Rousseu

## Museum tour

*Virgin with Offering*, 1919, large-scale model



© André Morin



© Christophe Foin

Courtyard garden

### 5 Courtyard garden

This private garden houses early works: *Hannibal's First Victory* (1885) in the nineteenth-century style and the bas-reliefs entitled *Dawn and Dusk* (1895) which straddle Symbolism and Art nouveau.

These neglected works rub shoulders with works more typical of Bourdelle's formal idiom such as *Sappho* (1887-1925), the Greek poetess of Lesbos, mirroring *Dying Centaur* (1911), and *Virgin with Offering* (1922-1923), inspired by Bourdelle's second wife Cléopâtre Sevastos, as well as the equestrian statue of General Alvear.

### 6 Temporary exhibition galleries

These galleries are reserved for a series of thematic exhibitions created from the collections, including Bourdelle's relationship with the ancient classical world, the art of portraiture with the series of busts dedicated to Beethoven, and his graphic work. They host exhibitions devoted to the sculptor and his era, as well as exhibitions by contemporary and modern artists.

© Musée Bourdelle / Roger-Viollet



*Isadora Duncan*, 1909, pen and violet ink on vellum

## Museum tour

### 7 Portzamparc wing

This extension to the museum (1989-1992), built by Christian de Portzamparc, sheds new light on two of Bourdelle's commemorative monuments. *The Monument to the Combatants and Defenders of Tarn-et-Garonne* (1870-1871), a key work unveiled in Montauban in 1902, is displayed in the form of studies and fragments which Bourdelle viewed as autonomous works, such as *Howling Figures* (1898-1899).

By depicting three moments - the offensive, combat and death - Bourdelle paints a harrowing picture of war.

Belated recognition came in the form of the *Monument to Mickiewicz* (1909-1928), celebrating the Polish poet (1798-1855), author of epic novels exalting his people's sovereignty. Cast by Rudier in 1928, the monument was installed Place de l'Alma, before being transferred to Cours Albert 1<sup>er</sup>.

Presented here in its dismantled form, the work summarises years of thought and formal

innovation and portrays Adam Mickiewicz as a prophet haranguing the crowd, surveying the future intently.

*This wing can accommodate temporary exhibitions with alterations to the layout of the collections.*

© André Morin



*Warrior without legs*, 1894-1900, study for the *Monument to the Combatants and Defenders of Tarn-et-Garonne*, bronze

General view of the Portzamparc wing



© Musée Bourdelle



© Eric Emo

*Adam Mickiewicz*, fragment of the *Monument to Adam Mickiewicz* 1909-1924, bronze

## **Bourdelle Museum**

18, rue Antoine Bourdelle  
75015 Paris  
Tel.: +33 (0)1 49 54 73 73  
www.bourdelle.paris.fr

### **Getting there**

Metro stations:  
Montparnasse-Bienvenüe  
(lines 4, 6, 12, 13, place  
Bienvenüe exit)  
Falguière (line 12)  
Bus: 28, 58, 91, 92, 94, 95, 96  
V Vélib (self-service cycle hire):  
26, av. du Maine

### **Opening hours**

Daily 10am to 6pm, except Mondays  
and bank holidays.

### **Admission charges**

Free admission except during  
temporary exhibitions.  
Admission charges for temporary  
exhibitions vary according to the  
exhibition.  
Concessionary admission charges  
apply and admission is free for  
children under 14.

### **Bookshop**

Publications on Antoine Bourdelle,  
exhibition catalogues,  
DVDs, postcards.

### **Access**

Lift access to the different levels  
of the museum.  
Wheelchair available at reception.  
Disabled access to toilets.  
A list of hands-on exhibits and  
large-print tour guides are available  
at reception.

### **Photography and video**

Non-flash photography, camcorders  
and hand-held cameras are  
permitted in the permanent  
collections for strictly private use.  
For temporary exhibitions, please  
enquire at reception.

### **Bags and luggage**

Large bags, rucksacks and cases  
must be left in the free cloakroom.

### **Cultural activities**

The museum offers a variety of  
cultural activities throughout the  
year to suit all visitors (individuals,  
groups, disabled visitors). A calendar  
of events is available at reception.  
Information and bookings:  
Cultural Activities Office  
on 01 49 54 73 91.