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Adam & Male (Ngya)

Man Uprising from the Ground

Auguste Rodin cast a bronze sculpture of Adam, the first man, in 1910. *Adam* stands at about six feet, giving him a realistic height. Since the sculpture is cast in bronze, it does not have the flesh tones of a real person. Rather, it has a more polished, reflective, and chrome quality. This helps to accentuate the muscles and physique of the statue. The statue is in good condition, with no visible scratchings, accidental or intentional. The sculpture is made in the round with a base support. The depiction is of Adam who is the first biblical man which means there is a religious connotation to the sculpture. He is naked and has one foot on a rock. From the top, he is stretching his neck out and to his shoulders. The jugular veins in his throat are visible which indicates tension and that Adam is exerting an extensive amount of effort to elongated his neck. Adam's eyes are closed and his lips are a bit separated like he was sighing. These two things coupled with the neck give Adam a melancholy face and a saddened tone.

Moving onto his body, Adam has muscles on his forearms and abs. He is in peak physical condition and looks healthy. Both of his hands are in an unrelaxed state. The fingers on his left hand are flexed. His knuckles and sections of fingers are clearly identifiable and looks like he is trying to grip something. Adam's right hand is pointing towards the ground in a forcible way. He is exerting energy into all his motions. This is also visible in his leg muscles. His toes on both feet seem to be digging into the ground or holding onto it. The tension is more noticeable on his right foot that is perched on top of a rock. Adam's pose also gives off a negative vibe.

When looking at the sculpture from the front, Adam's left arm is covering half his body and his right leg is bent upwards covering up the pelvis area. Adam covering himself up and his eyes closed, gives a feeling that he is ashamed and does not want to be exposed to the world. From the back, one can see that Adam's spine is hunched over. His upper body is crouching down and he is lifting his leg upward. This dichotomy of his body offers the view that Adam is looking inwards and the eyes of the viewer focus towards the center. Adam seems to be angry, exemplified by all the muscle tension, His pose and facial expression suggest that he is suffering and coming to terms with life. The bronze gives Adam a darker complexion and the dark blue walls of the museum add to the effect of depression and sadness. Given the religious history of Adam, a man who is strong and God's image of man, here, Rodin portrays Adam as weak and pain-ridden.

Male (Ngya) is a sculpture from South Sudan depicting a man. It is carved out of wood and the exact artist is unknown, however, the Bongo people are the ones who made the sculpture. The sculpture stands at a realistic height, but the actual figure of the man is short because he is standing on top of a substantial base giving him more height. Male (Ngya) is made out of wood which gives the sculpture an earth tone and naturalistic look. There are visible markings and scratchings around the base and up his legs making it readable to the viewer that this was carved. From the museum plaque, one can read how these types of sculptures were used to dedicate the deceased and their successful hunting and combat. Also, both of his arms are missing which meant there was some lack of preservation. The body is simplistic with no overture of muscles. There are also very few details to him like no hair and reduced facial features. The head of the sculpture is tilted upwards to assert its power and dominance. The face has a stoic look with no emotional expression. His head tells the viewer that he was a prominent figure in his community and that he should be revered.

His body and legs are slender giving him a straight, upright posture. There is very little deviation from this other than the fact that he is bending at the knees. With no arms, the body looks even smaller, even if they were still attached they would be by his torso. The sculpture itself does not take up much space but is supposed to be in commemoration of a great man. It is subdued and not of grandeur. The bending of the knees give the man dimension and the idea of movement. His feet are not that pronounced and look as it is almost a part of the base. The toes are little stubs and the bottom of his feet are flat. The straight posture of the sculpture forces the viewer to also stand up straight. The vertical height portrays properness and nobility. It is remarkable that a sculpture that does not take up space with width still conveys the same message with how straight and tall it is.

Adam and *Male* (Ngya), although different aesthetically, are similar in meaning. Both of these sculptures capture the essence of what a man is in the artists' view. Rodin portrays Adam as a man in peril and angst, going against the common outlook of Adam. The South Sudanese people used to erect these sculptures of men who have done great in hunting and battle in their honor. A commonality between the two is that both seem to be uprising from the ground. Adam's feet are clutching and are woven into the rock he is standing on almost as if he is growing from the earth which is how Adam is created in the Bible. However, the sculpture portrays Adam in a state of agony and contemplating the existence of life. Suggesting that all men are subjected to the turmoil of life and what a better example than the first man. *Male* (Ngya) also seems to be growing from the stump he is on top. His feet are almost flushed with the base as his feet disappear into the wood. *Male* (Ngya) was a man of earth and deeply rooted in his community. Even though these two sculptures were made in different areas of the world around the same time, they each represent a version and essence of Man.

Three Objects on view near:

Adam:

1. Monet - *Water Lilies*
2. Degas - *The Dance Class*
3. Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres - *Odalisque in Grisaille*

Commemorative Post: Male (Ngya):

1. Korewori River region - Crocodile Figure (Taki)
2. Kambot People - House Post Figure
3. Sawos People - Ancestor Figure