WELCOME TO ATENEUM!

This resource package contains background information, study tips and assignments for school groups that are associated with two special exhibitions on show in Ateneum Art Museum in spring 2016:

- **AUGUSTE RODIN** 5.2.–8.5.2016
- **JAPANOMANIA IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES 1875-1918** 18.2.–15.5.2016

We recommend using these materials as an extra resource alongside a guided tour of the show by an expert from the museum. The assignments and study tips can be adapted to different age groups. We also suggest for the teacher to obtain the small guidebooks for both exhibitions that are available from the museum. Among other information, the guidebooks also contain the wall texts of the exhibitions and a few pictures of the works on display.

Please note: The completely new collection display opens on 18 March 2016, when school materials designed to be used with guided tours of the show will be available online at our website. We recommend schools to use preparatory assignments prior to a museum visit. There are also lots of useful questions and study tips in the idea booklet available at the Deck of Cards page on the Ateneum website.

Owing to copyright restrictions this resource package only contains few images of artworks.

We recommend that school groups book a guide for their tour of the exhibition. Guided tours for school groups are priced at €70, max. 20 students, free admission.

Please read the instructions for school groups on our website.

We look forward to seeing you in the Ateneum!

Public Programmes Team
The exhibition of work by the French sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) offers power, beauty, grace, and even eroticism. Rodin (1840–1917) changed the art of sculpture forever. Over time, many of his works have become very famous and loved. However, when Rodin’s sculptures were exhibited in the late 19th century, they were often considered too daring and realistic. Sometimes they were dismissed as unfinished and lacking narrative context.

Rodin’s lively, spontaneous imagery was entirely novel at the time. With his intense focus on the human body, he could be perceived as one of the last classical sculptors. His naturalistic rendition of muscles and movement express strong feelings, and the traces of the hands that shaped the clay or the rough stone are part of his artistic expression.

What others may have perceived as unfinished was for Rodin the embodiment of perfection. “In every object, the artist reveals the inner truths that underlie appearance,” he said.

The exhibition also showcases work by Rodin’s Finnish students Sigrid af Forselles (1860–1935) and Hilda Flodin (1877–1958).

The Auguste Rodin exhibition was produced jointly by Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, Ateneum Art Museum in Helsinki, Musée Rodin in Paris, and Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, former senior curator at the Musée Rodin. Several private collectors have contributed by lending their works to the exhibition.

The exhibition is mounted in galleries number 3–5 on the ground floor of the museum, and in the gallery on the 3rd floor landing. Each gallery has its own theme:

- **Gallery 3 (1st floor)**, The Gates of Hell
- **Gallery 4 (1st floor)**, Rodin’s later work and experiments
- **Gallery 5 (1st floor)**, Rodin’s Finnish students Hilda Flodin and Sigrid af Forselles
- **Gallery 33 (3rd floor)**, Rodin in his studio

Please note that many of the works in the exhibition feature nudity.

**KEYWORDS:**
sculpture, sculpture materials, art nudes, myths, stories, symbolist literature and philosophy, erotic art, depiction of movement, emotions, art and cultural life in Paris at the turn of the 20th century.
ASSIGNMENT NO. 1, PRIOR TO THE MUSEUM VISIT: THE THINKER
Auguste Rodin’s most famous sculpture is The Thinker. One version of the sculpture is in the collections of Ateneum Art Museum. Start by searching online to find out how many different versions of the sculpture were made by Rodin himself (suggested search terms <Rodin Thinker>). Next, listen to the audio guide presentation of The Thinker on the audio guide page of the Ateneum website. Discuss the thoughts awakened by the sculpture.

ASSIGNMENT NO. 2, IN THE MUSEUM: LET YOUR EYES ROAM
Working in pairs or small groups, have the other person (or the rest of the group) keep their eyes closed or stand with their back to the sculpture. Select a sculpture and one detail in it (such as a foot). Let your eyes roam over the sculpture and tell to the other(s) what you see.

ASSIGNMENT NO. 3, IN THE MUSEUM: DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE SAME SUBJECT
Find a sculpture that is on show in different materials or sizes. What differences can you see (details, mood, overall impression)?

COMMON QUESTIONS AND TIPS FOR VIEWING THE SCULPTURES:

• Do not read the wall labels right away. If you had to give a title to the work, what would it be?
• What can you tell about the figure and its story just by looking at the sculpture?
• What do you think the person in the sculpture might be thinking right now?
• What does it mean, to pose for a work of art?
• Can you take the same pose as the figure in the sculpture? How does it feel to be in that posture?
• If you were to move from the pose, what would be a natural way to do it?

Look at a sculpture of your choice that has a strong sense of motion. What is beautiful in it (and the opposite: what is ugly)? Why?

Point of view: Consider how (and why) the figure in the sculpture is depicted the way it is. How does the size of the sculpture affect its mood and content?
BACKGROUND FOR THE ASSIGNMENT:
Rodin is said to have remarked to a critic who observed him drawing:

“Don’t you see that, for my work of modeling, I have not only to possess a complete knowledge of the human form, but also a deep feeling for every aspect of it? I have, as it were, to incorporate the lines of the human body, and they must become part of myself, deeply seated in my instincts. I must feel them at the end of my fingers. All this must flow naturally from my eye to my hand. Only then can I be certain that I understand. Now look! What is this drawing? Not once in describing the shape of that mass did I shift my eyes from the model. Why? Because I wanted to make sure that nothing evaded my grasp of it. Not a thought about the technical problem of representing it on paper could be allowed to arrest the flow of my feelings about it, from my eye to my hand. The moment I drop my eyes that flow stops.” – Auguste Rodin

ASSIGNMENT NO. 4, IN THE MUSEUM:
OUTLINE DRAWING
You will need a clipboard, paper and pencils. Select one sculpture for the assignment. Draw its outline without taking the pencil off the paper. You can also try drawing the outline like Auguste Rodin did, without looking at the paper while you are doing it. Repeat the assignment a couple of times if you like. Conclude by discussing your observations of the shape of the sculpture. What did you find challenging or difficult? What was easy? This can also be done at school, with a student or the teacher posing.

ASSIGNMENT NO. 5, AT SCHOOL:
GESTURAL DRAWING
The goal of this assignment is not to produce detailed drawings but to guide students to observe the human body in motion. One student (or the teacher) strikes a pose and then others, which are drawn by the entire group. You can start with a pose lasting 5 seconds and then extend the time to 15, 30, 45, even 60 seconds. Use a pencil and do not take it off the paper while you are making the drawing. The movements of the pencil should be relaxed, smooth and fast and focus on capturing motion.

ASSIGNMENT NO. 6, AT SCHOOL:
PUBLIC SCULPTURE
Compare Rodin’s most famous sculptures (image search <Rodin: Balzac monument> or <Rodin: Burghers of Calais>) to sculptures that you are familiar with (such as Wäinö Aaltonen’s Aleksis Kivi monument in the Railway Square or Walter Runeberg’s statue of J. L. Runeberg in the Esplanade Park). Assignment: Design a public sculpture for your own local community. What would the sculpture commemorate or celebrate? What would it look like? Where would you put it?
Japan opened up and began trading with the West about 150 years ago. The country had been closed to foreigners for centuries, and the new access generated great interest in East Asian culture in the late 19th century. Collecting Japanese art and objects became a trend that had a deep impact on art, design and fashion. Oriental ideas of art travelled also to the Nordic countries, where they made an indelible impression on artists in a variety of areas.

The exhibition in Ateneum Art Museum investigates and highlights the influence of Japanese art on Nordic art. The exhibition is mounted on the uppermost, 3rd floor of the museum. The main themes of the exhibition are:

1. ELEGANT EXOTICISM
2. NATURE FROM NEAR AND FAR
3. THE IDEAL OF SIMPLIFICATION

Works reflecting these themes can be found in several galleries.

Study the themes and the works and complete the associated assignments. For assignments that require drawing or writing you will need to bring pencils and paper from school. You can borrow A4 clipboards from the cloakroom in the museum. It is not permitted to write or draw holding the paper against a wall. Colour pencils and felt tip pens are not allowed in the galleries.
1. ELEGANT EXOTICISM

**KEYWORDS:** style, beauty, fashion, exoticism, decorative and utility objects

When Japan opened up, Japanese objects and art began arriving in the West. Artist acquired Japanese things to decorate their homes and studios – fabrics, fans and partitions. They drank tea from beautiful Japanese porcelain cups and hung Japanese woodcuts on the wall. Artists also depicted these things in their own work. Japan was the height of fashion!

**ASSIGNMENT NO. 7, IN THE MUSEUM:**
**INTERIOR DECORATION MANIA**
In the gallery titled Elegant Exoticism (gallery no. 20), find interiors where Japanese objects, garments or fabrics are used in the decoration. What Japanese things are there?

**ASSIGNMENT NO. 8, IN THE MUSEUM:**
**JAPANESE SELFIE**
Find the gallery titled Japanomania Hits the Streets (gallery no 27). There is a small stage in the gallery as well as a coat rack with Japanese costumes. Take a costume, put it on and take a selfie on the stage against the Japanese backdrop. You can also take a selfie with classmates. Pictures like this were taken in the 1800s as well.

**ASSIGNMENT NO. 9, AT SCHOOL:**
**JAPANESE FABRIC STENCIL WORK**
You will need paper and pen as well as a piece of cloth, fabric dyes and a sponge or a piece of plastic foam. Design a simple Japanese-style pattern, draw its outline on thick paper or a sheet of transparency plastic. Cut the pattern out. Take a piece of white or coloured cloth, place it under the stencil you just made and use the sponge to dye the cloth. Do not use too much dye, otherwise the stencil will become wet. Let the cloth dry out and fix it according to the instructions before using it.

**ASSIGNMENT NO. 10, AT SCHOOL:**
**MANGA!**
Manga is Japanese for comics. The earliest and most famous manga artist was Hokusai, who lived 1760–1849 (gallery no. 25). Today, the word manga is used outside Japan specifically to refer to Japanese comics. Manga is very popular in Japan and has gained a wide following also in the West, where many artists have begun to use the style in their own work. Find information online about manga and manga artists. One useful site is [http://www.sangatsumanga.fi/](http://www.sangatsumanga.fi/)

Draw a manga figure. Alternatively, draw a comic strip about things that you remember from your visit to the museum.
2. NATURE FROM NEAR AND FAR

**KEYWORDS:** flowers, trees, birds, insects, frogs, fish, mountains, sea, seasons spring, summer, autumn, winter

The use of natural motifs in Japanese design and woodcuts were widely admired. The new way of observing and depicting nature by concentrating on details found its way also into Nordic art. Not only broad landscape views but also motifs previously considered too prosaic, such as a bird on a tree branch or flowers along a brook, were now accepted as subjects for fine art.

ASSIGNMENT NO. 11, IN THE MUSEUM: WIND IN THE WILLOWS, DRAWING ASSIGNMENT

Look for small creatures in the artworks or other objects on display. Can you find insects, turtles or frogs? A good place to search for them is in the gallery entitled Nature From Near and Far (gallery no 28). Select one or more creatures and draw them on paper on a large scale. Remember not to stand too close to the original picture, keep at least half a metre between yourself and the figures you observe. It is not allowed to touch the artworks.

ASSIGNMENT NO. 12, AT SCHOOL: MY FAVOURITE SEASON

What is your favourite season of the year? Draw or paint with watercolours a close-up view, a detail or an entire landscape depicting your favourite season.

**PLEASE NOTE.** In the window bay in gallery no. 28 you will find instruments – a microscope and magnifying glasses – that you can use to study nature close up. We have even provided dragonflies in the gallery for the purpose!

3. THE IDEAL OF SIMPLIFICATION

**KEYWORDS:** simplicity, stylised, empty space, silence

Japanese art steered Western art away from the mere imitation of nature. Faithful depiction of observed nature was no longer considered necessary, choices were now more important – to focus on what seemed essential features and to depict those. Shading and hatching that were used for centuries in Western painting to create an illusion of three-dimensionality were now replaced by flat areas of colour. The new approach was also reflected in composition; artists would leave large areas of the canvas empty.

ASSIGNMENT NO. 13, AT SCHOOL: CELEBRATING EMPTY SPACE

Select a motif that interests you, it can be something in the class or anything that is near you. Create a composition on paper by sketching the motif lightly in pencil. Simplify the shapes by leaving out some of the details. Draw outlines with a wax crayon and finish the picture with watercolour or gouache. Make areas of smooth, even colour. Use only a few colours to create a harmonious and calm picture.

ASSIGNMENT NO. 14, IN THE MUSEUM: PEACE OF MIND

Study the works in the galleries titled The Ideal of Simplification, In the Sacred Woods and Snowy Landscape (galleries no. 29, 30 and 31). Select one work that interests you. Place yourself in front of the work and observe it at leisure. Breathe deeply and relax, let yourself feel the mood of the picture. Do not speak.
DIFFERENT FORMATS
Japanese influences can also be seen in the format of artworks made by Nordic artists: the tall and narrow shape known as *kakemono* became popular, and artists also used the low, wide *makimono* shape.

ASSIGNMENT NO. 15, IN THE MUSEUM:
LABEL INFORMATION
Find two works in the exhibition, one that is shaped like a kakemono, another shaped like a makimono. On a sheet of paper, write down the following information from the labels of the works:
- the name of artist
- the artist’s year of birth and death
- the artist’s nationality
- the year when the work was completed
- the title of the work
- the medium

ASSIGNMENT NO. 16, AT SCHOOL:
JAPANESE SCENERY
Cut a sheet of paper to create either a kakemono or a makimono shape. Compose and draw or paint a picture on some theme related to nature. Give a title to your work. Discuss with the group how the shape of the picture affects what the landscape feels like.

JAPANESE TERMS:
EDO: The former name of Tokyo
EDO PERIOD: 1603-1868
FUJI: The sacred mountain of Japan, a motif often used by Japanese artists
GEISHA: A trained female entertainer, singer, dancer
JAPONISME: The influence of Japanese art on fine art, applied art and architecture in the West
KABUKI: A popular form of theatre where female roles are played by men
KAKEMONO: A narrow vertical hanging picture scroll, painted on paper or silk
MAKIMONO: A horizontal picture scroll, opening from right to left
MANGA: The Japanese generic name for a collection of drawings on different subjects. The most famous manga artist was Hokusai. The term has later come to denote Japanese comics in particular.
NIPPNON: Japan
SAMURAI: Member of the ruling class of soldiers
TATAMI: A mat of woven soft rush straw
UKIYO-E: Generic title for originally black-and-white, later multicoloured woodcuts from the Edo Period