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Ossip Zadkine

Man, Myth & Metamorphosis

Feico Hoekstra

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- Focuses on the mythological and autobiographical themes in Zadkine's sculptural work
- Explores Zadkine's concept of the "Orphic event" and artistic metamorphosis
- Offers insight into the artist's personal mythology and creative philosophy
- Richly illustrated with key works and archival material
- Appeals to readers interested in modern sculpture, myth, and the life of artists
- Connects Zadkine's legacy with broader themes of transformation and nature
- Published to accompany an exhibition in Museum JAN (Amstelveen, NL) until November 9, 2025

The work of Russian-French sculptor Ossip Zadkine (1888-1967) is full of mythological figures, including Diane, Narcissus and Orpheus. Zadkine particularly identified with the latter. Just as Orpheus managed with his music to prompt animals, plants and even rocks to dance, so the artist brought material to life with his hands. Zadkine therefore referred to this creative metamorphosis as "the Orphic event". He also turned his own life story into a myth. The idea of becoming an artist had been revealed to him as a child, he said, when he had fallen with his hand in the clay. From that point on, Zadkine allowed himself to be guided by nature, which he regarded as a source of perpetual change.

Text in English and Dutch.

The author: **Feico Hoekstra** (1967) graduated as an art historian from Radboud University in Nijmegen in 1994. Since then, he has worked as an independent exhibition maker and writer on art for museums and other art institutions in the Netherlands. His specialization is 20th- and 21st-century visual art.





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