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Award of Saint-Gaudens Medal to Wanda M. Corn

Presentation on July 17 at Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park



Wanda M. Corn

CORNISH, NH, July 12, 2021 – The Saint-Gaudens Memorial, a partner of and advocate for the Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park (SGNHP) in Cornish, NH, is awarding the Saint-Gaudens Medal to Wanda M. Corn in recognition of her longstanding commitment to the preservation and stewardship of historic artists' properties throughout the United States.

Wanda M. Corn, Robert and Ruth Halperin Professor Emerita at Stanford University, retired from teaching in 2008 and continues to research and organize major exhibitions around topics of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American visual culture. Her recent exhibition *Georgia O'Keeffe: Living Modern*, organized through the Brooklyn Museum of Art where it debuted in 2017, has traveled to museums throughout the country. Her book by the same name won Honorable Mention for the College Art Association's Alfred H. Barr Jr. Award and was awarded the 2018 Dedalus Foundation Exhibition Catalogue Award. Other book-length publications by Professor Corn include *Grant Wood: The Regionalist Vision* (1983); *The Great American Thing: Modern Art and National Identity, 1915-1935* (1999); *Women Building History: Public Art at the 1893 Columbian Exhibition* (2011); and, with Tirza True Latimer, *Seeing Gertrude Stein: Five Stories* (2011). After teaching for forty years in California, Professor Corn returned to her native New England to live on Cape Cod where she takes a special interest in coastline artists including Winslow Homer, Fitz Henry Lane, and three generations of the Wyeth family.

Ever since Wanda M. Corn mounted a (failed) campaign in the early 1990s to save an artist's home and studio in Washington DC, she has advocated for the preservation and interpretation of places where artists have lived and labored. She writes and lectures about what can be learned and experienced in material places artists have crafted. Since 2000, when the National Trust for Historic Preservation created Historic Artists' Homes and Studios (HAHS), a national membership program, she has served as the chair of its advisory committee. Today HAHS (artistshomes.org) is a consortium of forty-eight artist properties that are well-preserved and open to the public. The Saint-Gaudens National Historical Park is a founding member of HAHS. The presentation of the medal on July 17 is timed to correspond with the exhibition *Preserving Creative Spaces: Photographs of Historic Artists' Homes and Studios* on view from July 3 to August 29, 2021, in the Picture Gallery at SGNHP. The exhibition features photographs of the

artists whose homes, studios, and landscapes comprise the HAHS consortium as well as studio materials and photographs related to Saint-Gaudens's creative practice in Cornish.

"I want to share this award with the many hard working and dedicated people I have met who keep the lights on and the learning gears working in preserved artists' homes across the country," said Wanda M. Corn. "I have learned so much from them and their sites about the boundless nature of creativity. Not just my scholarship, but also my life has been deeply enriched by my work with HAHS."

"Wanda Corn is a most deserving recipient of the prestigious Saint-Gaudens Medal, not only for her outstanding work in the field of American art, but also for having recognized over twenty years ago that the artist's work place was becoming 'an endangered species' if not preserved and interpreted for the public," commented Donna Hassler, Executive Director, Chesterwood, A National Trust Historic Site and home of the Historic Artists' Homes and Studios (HAHS) Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and also a trustee of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial.



Robert W. White, *The Augustus St. Gaudens Medal*, 1992, silver.

The Saint-Gaudens Medal, established in 1988, is awarded from time to time to those who, by their talents and vision, have made a distinguished contribution to the arts in America in the high tradition of sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907). The Saint-Gaudens Medal has been presented eleven times. The award was last given in 2019 to Dartmouth College Library in recognition of its exemplary care and preservation of the papers of Saint-Gaudens, as well as those of other Cornish Colony artists and the Saint-Gaudens Memorial. Prior to that, the medal was awarded in 2016 to historian David McCullough for his 2011 book *The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris*, which the author based on extensive research in the Saint-Gaudens papers at SGNHP and Dartmouth.

The medal was designed in 1992 by sculptor Robert W. White, a trustee of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial from 1972 to 2002 and grandson of the architect Stanford White who was a frequent collaborator with Saint-Gaudens.

“Wanda M. Corn joins an esteemed group of Saint-Gaudens Medal recipients who embody our longstanding commitment to fostering the living legacy of historic creative practice,” said Saint-Gaudens Memorial president Thayer Tolles. “Her commitment to celebrating the power of place through her scholarship and her stewardship of the Historic Artists’ Homes and Studios program and its affiliated properties has had indelible and lasting impact.

The Saint-Gaudens Memorial is a nonprofit organization incorporated by the state of New Hampshire in 1919 as a permanent memorial to honor Saint-Gaudens’s legacy and to safeguard his home, studios, gardens, and collections in Cornish. The organization donated the property and contents to the federal government in 1964 to create the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, operated by the National Park Service and renamed in 2019 the Saint-Gaudens

National Historical Park. The Saint-Gaudens Memorial sponsors exhibitions, concerts, artist fellowships, and educational programming at the park which is open to the public seasonally from May to October. To plan visits, please refer to the SGNHP website for the most current information on hours, fees, and conditions: nps.gov/saga.