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SAINT-GAUDENS AND KENYON COX, (continued from page 3)

With the centennial of Saint-Gaudens' death approaching in August 2007, it is fitting to remember all that his friends did to eulogize him. For his part, Cox painted a replica of his portrait of Saint-Gaudens for the memorial exhibition that opened at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in March 1908 (the original had burned in Saint-Gaudens' Cornish studio fire in 1904). Cox also served on the exhibition's organizing committee and published tributes in *Atlantic Monthly* and *Architectural Record*. No doubt, when Saint-Gaudens remarked to artist Will Low in 1899 that he was lucky to have "such bully friends who are such bully men" (StG Papers, Dartmouth), Cox was on the short list.

Thayer Tolles is associate curator in the American Paintings and Sculpture department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Saint-Gaudens Memorial is a private, non-profit corporation chartered to advise the Department of the Interior, support the National Historic Site and sponsor programs and activities that promote public awareness of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, his work and sculpture in general.

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Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site
The site is administered by the
U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service
139 Saint-Gaudens Road
Cornish, NH 03745

603-675-2175 phone
603-675-2701 fax
www.nps.gov/saga

Save the Date!

Friday afternoon, July 13, 2007

The Saint-Gaudens
National Historic Site
and the Hood Museum of Art,
Dartmouth College
invite you to attend:

**Augustus Saint-Gaudens
Symposium**

Loews Auditorium
Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College
Reception Follows

— and —

The Saint-Gaudens
National Historic Site,
the Hood Museum of Art
and the Dartmouth Film Society,
Dartmouth College,
invite you to attend
the world premier of

**Augustus Saint-Gaudens:
Master of American Sculpture**
produced by the Trustees
of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial

Hopkins Center for the Arts,
Dartmouth College 8:00 pm

.....

More Details to Follow
in our Spring Newsletter

Volunteers Needed AT THE PARK

For more information, please contact
Park Volunteer Coordinator,
Greg Schwarz, Saint-Gaudens NHS,
139 Saint-Gaudens Road,
Cornish, NH 03745,
(603) 675-2175 x 107,
or via e-mail at Gregory_C_Schwarz@nps.gov.

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AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS AND KENYON COX

By Thayer Tolles

Augustus Saint-Gaudens was one of those fortunate people with a gift for friendship. Many of the people he met as a young artist became lifelong friends — among them architects Stanford White and Charles McKim, artists John Singer Sargent and Thomas Wilmer Dewing, and writers Richard Watson Gilder and Mariana Van Rensselaer. (continued on page 2)

FROM THE MEMORIAL AND THE SITE

DEAR FRIENDS,

The coming year marks the centennial of two 1907 events: the death of the great American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and production of his \$10 "eagle" and \$20 "double eagle" gold coins by the U.S. Mint.

It is with great excitement that we are preparing for 2007, the highlight of which will be the premier of our new hour-long documentary film, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master of American Sculpture* and the related symposium in July in collaboration with the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College

(see p. 8 for more details.)

Next season will also feature an expanded series of exhibits, including the creative work of installation artists Ann Carlson and Mary Ellen Strom (2006 Saint-Gaudens Fellows) and a special exhibit providing a new perspective on the private life of Saint-Gaudens. Two articles in this issue touch on the more personal side of the sculptor: his friendship with painter Kenyon Cox, and the beginnings of his relationship with his wife, Augusta Homer.



(Fig. 1) Kenyon Cox, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 1887; this replica, 1908, oil on canvas, 33 1/2 x 47 1/8 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Friends of the Sculptor (through August F. Jaccaci), 1908.

We are so pleased to welcome 70 new Friends so far this year (new member names inside). Some Friends new and old — were on hand at the Site in October for *Sculptural Visions* — a day-long celebration of the art of sculpture with exhibits and demonstrations in various media (see p. 6). Be on the lookout

for the Spring Newsletter, which will feature Saint-Gaudens' historic coins. Many thanks to all of you, whose interest and support (and hard work) make all of these programs and events possible!

Byron Bell
PRESIDENT
SG Memorial

BJ Dunn
SUPERINTENDENT
SGNHS



(Fig. 2) John Henry Ellsworth Whitney, engraving after Kenyon Cox's charcoal drawing, 1885, of *The Children of Prescott Hall Butler* by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, published in Kenyon Cox, "Augustus Saint Gaudens," *Century Magazine* 35 (November 1887): 29.

These friendships were both personal and professional, and had positive implications for Saint-Gaudens' career. This circle of friends had the shared mission of improving the status of the arts in America. Saint-Gaudens' relationship with the artist and writer Kenyon Cox (1856-1919) is testament to the lengths these friends went to promote each other's careers in support of their mutual cause.

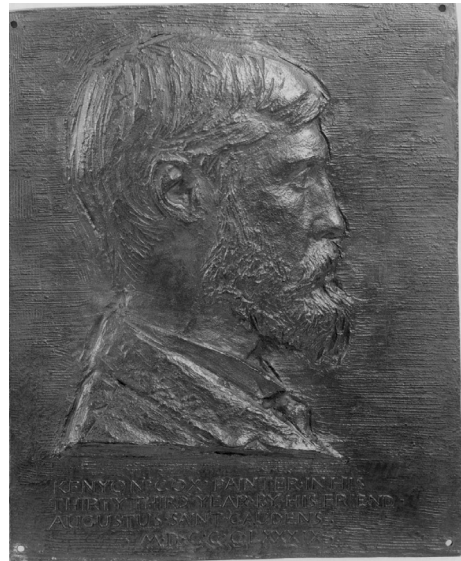
Saint-Gaudens and Cox became acquainted in the late 1870s in Paris. Cox went there in 1877, the same year Saint-Gaudens relocated to work on his *Farragut Monument* (1877-81; Madison Square Park, New York). Cox remained until 1882, in 1879 earning admission to the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts, where Saint-Gaudens had also studied. By autumn 1883 Cox settled in New York to establish his career as an easel and mural painter of academic figure subjects. To earn steady income, he began teaching life drawing classes at the Art Students League in 1884 (Saint-Gaudens joined its faculty in 1888). Cox also began writing and illustrating articles for



(Fig. 3) John Henry Ellsworth Whitney, engraving after Kenyon Cox's drawing, 1883, of *Robert Richard Randall Memorial* by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, published in *Century Magazine* 28 (June 1884): frontispiece.

magazines. Saint-Gaudens helped him establish his name, for instance, he networked with Watson Gilder, the editor of the widely circulated *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, to assure the publication of Cox's 1884 article on Italian Renaissance sculptors. Saint-Gaudens also landed him illustration assignments: one of the first that Cox published was a drawing of the sculptor's *Robert Richard Randall Memorial* (1884; Sailors' Snug Harbor, Staten Island) for the frontispiece of the *Century's* June 1884 issue (fig.3).

By the mid-1880s Cox devoted an increasing amount of time to art writing. Always a traditionalist, he believed that the essence of modern American art rested with its indebtedness to the classical and Italian Renaissance traditions, and with the projection of individual character. Saint-Gaudens' like-minded work



(Fig. 4) Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Kenyon Cox*, 1889, bronze, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., Bequest of Allyn Cox, 1983.

proved easy for him to admire. Cox's most significant article on Saint-Gaudens was published in *Century Magazine* in November 1887, the first extended monographic treatment of the sculptor in a national journal.

The article was deliberately timed to coincide with the unveilings of the *Standing Lincoln* (1884-87) in Chicago and *The Puritan* (1883-86) in Springfield, Massachusetts. Attractively interspersed with illustrations, it included several drawings by Cox after Saint-Gaudens' work. Among them was a charcoal-on-paper drawing of *The Children of Prescott Hall Butler* (1880-81; fig. 2). Cox reserved his greatest appreciation for these low reliefs, a class of sculptures that he felt best embodied Saint-Gaudens' Renaissance sensibilities:

Low-relief is thus an art nearly allied to painting, and which deals with aspects rather than with facts... The lower the relief the greater — the more marvelous — the delicacy of the modeling required to give the proper relations of light and shadow... Success in it is one of the best available measures, both of the power and purity of artistic conception, and of the technical ability, of a given sculptor. St. Gaudens's success in it has been very great.

- Artist Antoinette Jacobsen used a blow-torch to create music with her interactive sculpture — the *Fire Organ*
- Short sculpture films were shown throughout the day in the Visitor Center auditorium — including a 1929 silent film by The Metropolitan Museum of Art on the sculpting process.

Throughout the day nearly 400 guests came to *Sculptural Visions*. This might be the first of an new annual event at the Site.



Paul Sanderson, producer/filmmaker of the documentary *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master of American Sculpture*.

Earlier in the summer the Friends also hosted ***Saint-Gaudens in Bloom***.

This wonderful summer garden party and fund-raiser was an opportunity for Friends and invited guests to meet Paul Sanderson, the film-maker who is producing *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master of American Sculpture* for the Saint-Gaudens Memorial and the Site. Guests enjoyed a spectacular June evening with music, delectable edibles, and the gardens. The Friends especially appreciate the dedicated committee of volunteers who made this event possible.



1. Ed Kimble and Adam Hosmer's interactive mobile art-box-and-project space.
2. The activity tent where children and adults worked on clay relief projects.
3. The site's museum Specialist Martha Knapp demonstrated the art of gilding.



4. Artist Antoinette Jacobsen's musical interactive sculpture, the *Fire Organ*.
5. Artist Gary Mileck interpreting a garden scene on canvas.
6. Wendy Klemperer demonstrated welding techniques on one of her steel sculptures of a deer.



WELCOME TO NEW
friends
2006

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Russell Bastedo
Judith Bookbinder
Timothy Bradley & Eliot Nolen
Marjory S. Berkowitz
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Eleanor Briggs
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Ms. Jane S. Young

New *friends* so far this year

THE FRIENDS IN ACTION

Two events this past season highlighted the great work of the Friends of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial.

On October 7th, the Friends co-sponsored (with a \$2,500 grant to the Site) ***Sculptural Visions – Clay, Wood, Stone, Metal.*** This wonderful event, a festival of sorts, focused on the many elements and forms of sculpture. The highlight of the day-long event was a portable foundry that was brought to the Site for two bronze pour demonstrations. The two artists who had their works cast to bronze were former Sculptor-in-Residence Helene Massey Hemmans and Fritz Maslan. Fritz, a young man from Cornish, New Hampshire, has been an active participant in many of the sculpture workshop offerings of the Site this year and last.

At a variety of locations on the site other *Sculptural Visions* highlights included:

- Stone carver Everett Webber, from the AVA Gallery Uncommon Chisellers, provided demonstrations of carving in marble, alabaster, and other stone
- Dustin Coates, artisan wood carver and bowl maker found beauty in tree burls and other unusual cuts of wood (look for artisan wood bowls made from downed timber from the site in the museum shop next year)
- Welder Wendy Klemperer brought her sculptures created from steel and other metals and demonstrated her welding techniques



Glenn Campbell, Foundry Owner, Rutland, VT, demonstrated bronze casting with a portable foundry that he brought to the Site for the event.

- Contrasting art forms – painting and sculpture – two artists, Gary Mileck on canvas and Helene Massey Hemmans in clay, worked side by side each interpreting a garden scene and vista in their own media
- 2006 Sculptor-in-Residence Bill Williams provided explanations of the lost wax bronze casting methods with examples of clay, wax, molds and casts
- Artists Ed Kimble and Adam Hosmer presented their interactive mobile art-box-and-project space (artists part of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial exhibition series)
- The Site's Museum Specialist Martha Knapp, demonstrated the art of gilding
- At an Activity tent, children and adults worked on relief projects in clay to take home with them

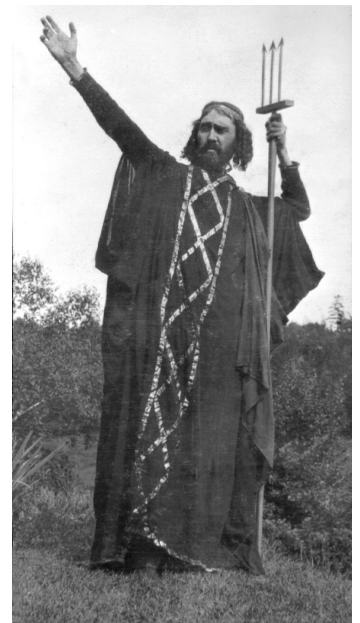


(Fig. 6) De Witt Clinton Ward, "Soiree in St. Gaudens Studio, 36th Street," photograph, n.d., American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York.

In this article, and many subsequent writings, Cox loyally polished and promoted Saint-Gaudens' name, focusing on his alliance with Renaissance sculptors, his originality, and his technical command of his art.

Cox also credited Saint-Gaudens with gaining him entrée into a cosmopolitan group of artists in New York ("the best artistic crowd," as Cox wrote to his mother) in 1883. This group comprised the core of men who frequented Saint-Gaudens' Thirty-sixth Street studio for regular "smoking concerts" on Sunday afternoons during the 1880s. Cox fondly recalled this gathering of New York's young artistic power brokers: "That long white studio became a familiar meeting-place for all who were interested in any form of art." (*Atlantic Monthly*, March 1908, p. 300). A photograph (fig. 6) of one such gathering identifies attendees White, Cox, Gilder, Saint-Gaudens, and the drama critic Brander Matthews.

Like many artists of the day, Saint-Gaudens and Cox exchanged friendship portraits, tangible symbols of a mutually rewarding relationship. Cox's ambitious representation of Saint-Gaudens in his Thirty-sixth Street studio (1887; fig. 1) shows him posed in half-length profile, assuredly modeling his relief portrait of William Merritt Chase (1888; American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York). Among the many objects depicted in the painting's shallow space are the sculptor's bronze portrait of his son Homer (1882; SGNHS); a solar print of his *Amor* from the Cornelius Vanderbilt mantel-piece (1881-83; The Metropolitan Museum of Art); and a copy of the *Femme Inconnue*, a Renaissance portrait bust at the Louvre that Cox venerated. Cox also painted a simple bust-length rendering of Saint-Gaudens in 1888, which served as the sculptor's diploma gift to the National Academy of Design when he became an associate academician. Saint-Gaudens returned Cox's favors in



(Fig. 5) Kenyon Cox as Pluto in "A Masque of 'Ours,' the Gods and the Golden Bowl," photograph, June 22, 1905, SGNHS Archives.

1889 with one of his charming profile portraits in bas-relief (fig. 4; National Portrait Gallery), inscribing it in his characteristic lettering style:

KENYON • COX • PAINTER •
IN • HIS THIRTY THIRD YEAR •
BY HIS FRIEND • AVGVSTVS •
SAINT GAUDENS •
M • D • C • C • CLXXXIX

Cox's friendships with Saint-Gaudens and Dewing led to his purchase of property in Cornish in 1896, and he and his artist-wife Louise Howland King Cox became an integral part of the colony's social fabric. When Saint-Gaudens was celebrated at the "Masque of 'Ours,' the Gods and the Golden Bowl," in June 1905, Cox played the role of Pluto (fig. 5). He published a charming description of the open-air event for the *Nation*, calling it "a neighborhood frolic...but it was much more than this, too. It was a spontaneous and genuine tribute to a great artist and a much-loved man from those best qualified to judge of his artistic and personal worth." Saint-Gaudens gave all the masque participants commemorative plaquettes; Cox in turn gave his example to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1908.

(continued on back cover)



Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Augusta Homer, 1874.

A LOVE IN LETTERS

By Kate Seyfried

“My darling Mother,”
Augusta Homer – a young
American living in Rome –
wrote in February 1874, “you
will not be surprised to hear
that matters have culminated
and the end of the thing is
just this – Mr. St.G. is very
much in love with me.”¹

Miss Homer, who would eventually be married to Mr. St.- G., often struggled with her feelings for the man, sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. While she found herself drawn to the polite and selfless artist, their differing social positions posed one of several obstacles for the couple. In the same February 8 letter, Augusta stated that she was “not dead in love as they say” but that she might be if she thought she should. Her apparently cool affections would become a little more desperate later in their relationship after Augustus fell ill with Roman Fever – “I did not realize or know how much I did care about him until now that he is unwell.”²

Augusta Homer, the second daughter of Thomas Johnston Homer, was from

a respectable and sturdy New England family. Making their home in Roxbury, MA the Homers could trace their familial lines to John Homer, who arrived in Boston in 1650.³ They were of an old stock; happily situated until Thomas Homer’s loss of capital in the 1870s.

Augusta was a pretty, protected child. Her mother especially worried over her child’s delicate hearing. She traveled throughout Europe hoping to find a cure for her failing audible range while at the same time trying to master painting and develop her skill in drawing. Augusta also presented symptoms of a relatively new disorder, one associated with the upper class and urban elite: neurasthenia.⁴ Characterized by fatigue, anxiety, irritability, and depression, the common cause was considered to be the stress of urbanization, the growing hustle and bustle of city-living. Rest cures were often recommended by physicians who recognized the diagnosis.

Augustus Saint-Gaudens, on the other hand, was barely a first generation American. His mother was Irish and his father French. Born in Dublin, where the family resided, he was brought to the United States as an infant. Saint-Gaudens grew up a New Yorker. His father built a prosperous shoe-repair and design business while his sons attended school and later took on apprenticeships. Augustus left school at age 13 in order to work and practice under a cameo cutter. His training would help him later in life when he would pay his bills with money made from his talent. He was able to apply his cameo cutting abilities to craft fine reliefs. His training would also teach him to focus on the

facial features of his subjects, giving his audience a greater sense of personality and individuality. In 1867 Saint-Gaudens left for Europe, first to Paris, and in 1870 to Rome.

In 1872, her parents sent Augusta to Rome with her brother, Joe, seeking treatment for both her ailments. It was there, on those romantic and historic streets of Europe, that Ms. Homer met Mr. Saint-Gaudens. Both were part of an American contingent living about the continent; studying, working and socializing constantly.⁵ They would have met at one of many fêtes thrown by an expatriate or American on vacation. In his *Reminiscences*, Saint-Gaudens briefly mentions that upon his return to Rome after some vacation, he “met Miss Augusta R. Homer, who later became Mrs. Saint-Gaudens.”⁶ While his description is brief and less than sweeping, he does go on to say that his times and activities in Rome “on those warm nights, with the soft air, the lovers, the ease of it all, so far from the stress of existence... form unforgettable memories.”⁷ The underscored charm of their courtship on those idyllic evenings is palpable.

In a letter from January 24, 1874, Augusta described a visit to Augustus’ studio which left her with a lasting impression of the art and method of sculpture – “It’s a perfect marvel to me how they do it and how inside of a great block of marble is some beautiful work of art... Someone remarked that

the clay was life, plaster the death and the marble immortality.”⁸

When he was 19, Saint-Gaudens left for Europe – his studies and passion would take him first to Paris and then to Rome.

Yet, there was still the problem of their differing social situations. First was his lack of more than a grammar school education. Even though he was well learned in the arts, he was still uneducated by upper class standards. With some delicate wording, Augusta convinced her parents that his education in the arts and extensive experience was enough. Then there was only his family to deal with. “I am very sure” Augusta wrote in a private letter to her mother, “that the only possible objection to him is that his father is French and his mother Irish.” She then goes onto defend his own identity passionately: “But mother he is neither – an American to the backbone. Firm in his principles, talented and with an immense amount of pluck and perseverance or he would never have done what he has or made himself what he is.”⁹ She exhibited a very American sense of appreciation for the self-made man.

She also found an appealing quality in Augustus’ devotion to his parents: “his love for his parents is in my mind one of this best traits and I could not love you two more than he does his father and mother.”¹⁰ Saint-Gaudens would often send what money he could back to his parents, ensuring that while they were not rich, they had

enough to survive. This in itself complicated their romance a little further. There was no way Saint-Gaudens could marry Augusta with his financial situation as it was. While he had commissions coming in consistently, he did not have the funds to support the lifestyle expected of a young woman like Augusta.

A letter Saint-Gaudens wrote to Augusta’s father made it clear that he would wait until his circumstances were more conducive to a marriage before claiming Augusta: “I now come to ask your consent in gaining her affections and in claiming her hand when I shall find myself in position to do so with honor to her and a proper regard for our future welfare.”¹¹ He seems sure enough in his future to state that if their engagement is a long one, it “shall be immeasurably unfortunate.”¹² There was a genuine desire to do right by her family, as well as his own. Duty weighed heavily on his mind. He seemed to be taking care of everyone but himself as Augusta would lament to her mother: “he hasn’t a single bad habit that I know of excepting that he does not think quite enough of himself.”¹³

And yet amid the swirling doubt that often comes through in her letters, Augusta was always sure of two things: “We are neither of us children and know and feel the great responsibility of what we are doing.”¹⁴

⁵ Ibid., 65.

⁶ Augustus Saint Gaudens, *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, ed. Homer Saint Gaudens (New York: The Century Company, 1913), 138.

⁷ Ibid., 139.

⁸ Augusta Homer to her mother, 24 January 1874, private letter.

⁹ Augusta Homer to her mother, undated, private letter.

¹⁰ Augusta Homer to her parents, 22 February 1874, private letter



The force of her statement is blunt: even if he was not of perfect social standing, not educated fully, he was still the man she would marry. After some time romancing Ms. Homer, Saint-Gaudens received a letter from a friend detailing how he should proceed: “I hope that you will succeed with your intended, for if I have understood you, I believe she is charming and amiable. Get married. Happiness is there. I believe the happiness of others and their welfare lies in marriage.”¹⁵

Augusta and Augustus were married June 4, 1877, at the Homer family home in Roxbury, Mass. Two days later, they left for France, where they would live for the next two years.

Kate Seyfried was a 2006 summer Student Conservation Association Intern at the SGNHS.

¹¹ Augustus Saint-Gaudens to Thomas Johnston Homer, March 1874, private letter.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Augusta Homer to her parents, 22 February 1874, private letter.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Saint-Gaudens, *Reminiscences*, 149.