

friends OF THE SAINT-GAUDENS MEMORIAL

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IN THIS ISSUE

The Afterlife of Augustus Saint-Gaudens | 1

Homer and Carlota: The Next Generation | 5

Sculptural Visions | 7

SGNHS Restoration Efforts | 7

"America's most beautiful coin..." Exhibit | 8

FROM THE MEMORIAL AND THE SITE

DEAR FRIENDS,

The word is out! Excitement is building about Augustus Saint-Gaudens, thanks to centennial exhibitions, symposia and panel discussions, and regional showings of the new film, *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master of American Sculpture*.

This summer *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: A Personal Retrospective*, was organized and exhibited at the Picture Gallery by the Site's Curator Henry Duffy; and still on view at the Federal Reserve Bank Museum in New York is *Theodore Roosevelt, Augustus Saint-Gaudens and America's most beautiful coin*, an exhibition on the history of the ten and twenty dollar gold-coins (See box page 8). Full-to-capacity symposia and regional showings of the new film have taken place at the Hood Museum and Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth College, the Metropolitan Museum in NY, the Smithsonian American Art Museum in DC, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

For those of you who have not yet seen the film – or want to see it again – it will be aired on New Hampshire Public Television (NHPTV) in May 2008. NHPTV

(continued on back cover)



THE AFTERLIFE OF AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

By Thayer Tolles

2007 was marked by a documentary film, symposia, publications, and exhibitions saluting the centenary year of Augustus Saint-Gaudens's death. These recent events are testament to the ongoing power of his art and life to inspire contemporary audiences.

One hundred years ago, there occurred an analogous spate of commemorative gestures, a multi-year process of hero worship played out through four avenues: memorial services, posthumous production of sculptures, publications, and exhibitions. These efforts served various constituencies—from the memory of Saint-Gaudens—to his widow and son—to fellow artists—and American society beyond.

Saint-Gaudens (fig. 1) died in Cornish on August 3, 1907, at age fifty-nine, after a seven-year struggle with intestinal cancer. His passing drew widespread notice in the press. Obituaries consistently labeled him the "greatest" American sculptor, and fre-

quently saluted his artistic "genius." They celebrated a French-Irish immigrant who became the most accomplished American sculptor to date, and singled out monuments that had changed the course of American public sculpture, especially the *Farragut Monument* (1881) in New York and the *Shaw Memorial* (1897) in Boston. His funeral—attended by family, friends, and current and former studio assistants—was held over the sculptor's ashes on August 7 in his Cornish studio.

Saint-Gaudens's circle of admirers in New York initiated efforts to memorialize him. In November, members of the National Sculpture Society, of which Saint-Gaudens

Fig 1. Augustus Saint-Gaudens on the pergola of the Little Studio, ca. 1905, SGNHS Archives



Fig. 2. Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Phillips Brooks Monument*, 1896-1907, bronze, Copley Square, Boston.

had been a founding member in 1893, held a memorial meeting accompanied by an exhibition of photographs of his work. The National Academy of Design, where he became an academician in 1889, soon followed suit issuing a resolution lamenting the quelling of “the noise of the mallet and the chisel.” A memorial service was held at Mendelssohn Hall on February 29, 1908. The hall was filled to capacity with the stage decorated by a full-size plaster version of *Amor Caritas* (1880-98). Among the addresses was an oration by New York City mayor George McClellan. He celebrated Saint-Gaudens not only as a great sculptor in a distinguished artistic continuum, but moreover as a great American “who left the world a little better than he found it.”

Another facet of promoting Saint-Gaudens’s legacy involved the completion of unfinished monumental commissions. This posthumous campaign was a calculated business decision on Augusta Saint-Gaudens’s part as she was dependent on the unpaid portions of these commissions to settle her husband’s business debts. Saint-Gaudens’s assistants Frances



Fig. 3. Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Standing Lincoln*, 1910, bronze, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.

Grimes, Henry Hering, and Elsie Ward remained at work in the Cornish studio. Of the eight incomplete commissions, some were simply awaiting installation and dedication. For instance, a statue of Irish statesman Charles Stewart Parnell (1903-7) had been cast in bronze just six weeks before Saint-Gaudens’s death and shipped overseas to his hometown of Dublin, Ireland. It was unveiled in 1911 with a granite base and obelisk designed by Henry Bacon. Like other late monuments, it had been initiated conceptually by Saint-Gaudens, but was completed by his assistants under his direction when he became too ill to work. Other sculptures were in the final stages of modeling, for instance, the *Phillips Brooks Monument* (fig. 2) for Copley Square in Boston depicts the long-time rector of Trinity Church attended by the figure of Christ. Set within a canopy designed by Stanford White, this monument was unveiled in 1910.

“Saint-Gaudens was not only a great sculptor... but a great American “who left the world a little better than he found it.”

George McClellan
MAYOR, NYC, 1908

Augusta Saint-Gaudens also carried out a carefully-planned program to cast small bronzes. The terms of Saint-Gaudens’s will allowed her to reproduce any of his copyrighted works. As a result, authorized estate production of his sculpture continued almost until her death in 1926. Having managed this aspect of Saint-Gaudens’s business before his death, she shrewdly selected the most saleable models—some twenty-five of them, opting for the familiar reliefs and reductions after public sculptures. She continued to cast bronzes that Saint-Gaudens began distributing commercially in the 1890s: for instance, reductions of *The Puritan* (from 1898 on) and *Amor Caritas* (from 1899 on). But some of his small sculptures that are best-known today were never cast in bronze during his lifetime. With technical input from long-time assistant Gaëtan Ardisson, Augusta Saint-Gaudens produced new models, including in 1910 the *Standing Lincoln* statuette (fig. 3), based on the monument (1887) in Chicago, and by 1912, the Victory statuette (fig. 4) from the gilded equestrian *Sherman Monument*. New casts were purchased by individual clients directly from the Cornish studio or were marketed through East Coast showrooms such as Tiffany & Co. and Gorham. Augusta Saint-Gaudens also had great success in selling posthumous Saint-Gaudens bronzes to museums, including the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Brooklyn Museum.

While Augusta Saint-Gaudens led efforts to cast bronze replicas, her son Homer kept watch over the relentless flow of publications that burnished the sculptor’s reputa-



Fig. 4. Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Victory*, 1912, bronze, Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site.

tion. By the end of 1907, there appeared no fewer than fifteen lengthy articles on Saint-Gaudens, and the pattern continued in 1908 and 1909. Their overall tone was reverential, with several subtitled "America's Greatest Sculptor." Some were penned by Saint-Gaudens loyalists and professional arts writers who had written in praise of the sculptor during his career. There were also tributes by luminaries like the English stage actress Ellen Terry and former President Theodore Roosevelt who offered appreciations through the lens of friendship.

This trail of articles was accompanied by two monographs. In November 1907, Royal Cortissoz, the art critic for the *New York Herald Tribune*, issued an illustrated volume. He saluted Saint-Gaudens's ability to embrace the classical tradition, while breathing a new vitality into American sculpture. Remarkably this publication was assembled in the three months after Saint-Gaudens's death. While Cortissoz drew his inspiration from long familiarity with the artist and his work, the other author, English critic Charles Lewis Hind, never



Fig. 5. Photograph of "Memorial Exhibition of the Works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens," at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, March-May 1908.

even met Saint-Gaudens. His book, gleaned from observations during five months in America in 1908, was a sugar-coated appreciation approved by the Saint-Gaudens family. It included many photographs by Saint-Gaudens's only authorized photographer DeWitt Ward.

Homer Saint-Gaudens's personal homage to his father was the 1913 publication of the two-volume *Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*. In 1906, at his family's urging, Saint-Gaudens had dictated his autobiography, which he privately called the "Reminiscences of an Idiot." After his death, Homer began an ambitious project of incorporating excerpts from these *Reminiscences* with passages from letters solicited from the sculptor's friends. With the help of his friend Witter Bynner, Homer also wove in his own narrative about his father's career, portraying Saint-Gaudens in the best possible light.

Homer took credit as editor and amplifier of the *Reminiscences*; the result, while wholly reverential, is a valuable and insightful resource.

The most ambitious plans to publicly commemorate Saint-Gaudens were led by Daniel Chester French, the other leading American sculptor of the day. French organized a retrospective exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 5), where since 1903 he had served as a trustee. It opened on March 2, 1908, the most ambitious display of any American sculptor's work held to date. In a brief few months, French and others on the Saint-Gaudens Memorial Committee assembled an impressive 154 objects and published an accompanying catalogue on a budget of approximately \$10,000. This committee was a who's who of turn-of-the-century American cultural life: sculptors John Quincy Adams Ward and Herbert Adams;



Fig. 6. Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Seated Lincoln*, 1897-1906, installed in the Hall of Sculpture of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1908. Photograph by De Witt Ward, 1908.

painters John LaFarge and Frank Millet; architects Charles McKim and Cass Gilbert; and ex-officio representatives of the Metropolitan including its president J. P. Morgan.

The memorial committee included as many examples of Saint-Gaudens's sculptures as possible, covering the span of his career, and in all scale and media, from cameos and coins to full-size monuments. Augusta Saint-Gaudens was the main lender to the exhibition, providing more than sixty bronzes, marbles, and plasters, as well as several electrotypes and gold coins. The Saint-Gaudens Memorial Committee received permission from Augusta Saint-Gaudens to exhibit plaster copies after his best-known monuments. Copies taken from the original bronzes included the *Farragut Monument*; the *Standing Lincoln*; and the *Adams Memorial* (1891) in Washington, D.C. The most challenging of the existing plaster casts to secure was that of the *Sherman Monument*. When Saint-Gaudens had returned from Paris in 1900, he left a plaster replica there which was shipped overseas in ten crates and erected in the museum's Great Hall. Only one of Saint-Gaudens's monumental bronzes—the *Seated Lincoln* (fig. 6)—was

displayed, having recently been cast in New York. Its inclusion was a first of sorts as the artist had never allowed his monuments to be publicly exhibited in the United States before they were dedicated. However, the site in Chicago for the *Seated Lincoln* had not yet been agreed upon—indeed the sculpture would not be unveiled until 1926.

Smaller loans were relatively easy to obtain as most owners were eager to lend. A number of Saint-Gaudens's bas-relief portraits had been presented to friends as affectionate gifts in the late 1870s and 1880s. For instance, Mrs. Stanford White lent her marble wedding portrait (fig. 7) in a Renaissance Revival frame designed by her late husband. Also included were the original plaster models of the new ten-and twenty-dollar gold coins, lent by special exception by the United States Mint in Philadelphia.

The Saint-Gaudens exhibition was a runaway success. The first edition of the catalogue ran out within two weeks of the opening and went into a second printing. Visitation soared: an unprecedented 11,000 people came one Sunday. The closing date was twice extended, finally ending on May 31, 1908. A modified version of the exhibition was opened at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., in December 1908, under the auspices of the American Institute of Architects. The show then traveled on to additional venues through March 1910: the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the John Herron Art Institute (which is now the Indianapolis Museum of Art). Augusta Saint-Gaudens also promoted Saint-Gaudens across the sea, in 1909 sending some twenty sculptures to London and, in 1911, another large group to the Roman Art Exposition.



Fig. 7. Augustus Saint-Gaudens, *Mrs. Stanford White (Bessie Springs Smith)*, 1884; this carving, 1888, marble, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of the Erving Wolf Foundation, 1976.

And in 1915 she cooperated with an exhibition of 46 sculptures at the Detroit Institute of Art, the last in this series of early retrospectives.

This posthumous lionization did ample justice to Saint-Gaudens's memory and to the staying power of his artistic achievements, especially his best-known monuments. In the most general sense, it reflected a desire on the part of traditionalist critics to promote an American success story at a time when the Gilded Age was being ushered out by enormous societal and industrial transformation. On another level, it also signaled a moment of huge transition for American artists. Saint-Gaudens had been their sculptor touchstone, their inspiration and mentor. In the end, however, it must be concluded that these celebrations of Saint-Gaudens's artistic talents were largely because his friends and family were compelled to promote the legacy of the man and his art in very public ways.

Thayer Tolles is Associate Curator in the American Paintings and Sculpture department at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Augusta and Homer Saint-Gaudens, 1887

HOMER AND CARLOTA SAINT-GAUDENS: THE NEXT GENERATION

By Henry J. Duffy, Curator

As we consider Saint-Gaudens' legacy and look at the period just after his death 100 years ago, it seems appropriate to look as well at the artistic legacy of his son Homer, and Homer's wife Carlota Dolley Saint-Gaudens.

Although not an artist himself, Homer was a writer and museum administrator. His wife Carlota was a painter. Together, they represented a transition in art from the classically-trained work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens to the very different expression of the post World War period.



Homer Saint-Gaudens (1880-1958)

Homer Saint-Gaudens grew up in a household that was alive with the process and discussion of art. He later recalled conversations between his father and various artists, and the effect it had on his own development into adulthood to

have had the privilege of such close contact with the leading artists of the day. Although he tried some lessons in art as a young man, it was clear that Homer's talent lay not in making art, but in writing about it. As an author and critic he played a role in keeping his father's legacy alive and in creating a transition to the new world of art that followed. While director of the museum of the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, Homer played a role in bridging the gap from the classically trained artists of his father's generation, to the modern artists of the twentieth century.

From childhood Homer had a strong personality. His father called him "the Little Prince", because he was definite in his wants. He was very much his mother's child, spending much time with her, and traveling with her frequently. Homer was educated in Paris, New York and Cornish. It was a privileged upbringing, leading to his education at Harvard in 1899. He was active socially, but not academically, a subject that worried his mother in the waning years of her husband's life.

During World War I Homer became a lieutenant colonel in the 40th Engineers, Camouflage Corps? during World War I, Homer worked with artist Abbott Thayer to develop various colors and patterns to hide soldiers and their weapons. For this groundbreaking work Homer earned extensive honors in Europe and the Bronze Star ? in America.

Homer, an author and critic played a key role in keeping his father's legacy alive and in creating a transition to the new world of art that followed.



Homer in the 40th Engineers, Camouflage corps during WWI.

After the War Homer tried his hand at theatrical production. He served as assistant stage manager for Maude Adams (1872-1953) a prominent stage actress who was best known for her role as Peter Pan. His work in the military brought him to public attention, but as a writer he became well-known.

One of the major accomplishments of Homer's writing career was the publication of his father's memoirs as *The Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Century: New York, 1913). Augustus Saint-Gaudens had been persuaded to dictate his memoirs while he was recuperating from surgery in Boston in 1907. He took a humorous approach to the writing titling his book *Tales of an Idiot*. Homer filled in the gaps to make a complete biography, drawing on

information sent to him by friends and associates of Augustus. He also sanitized his father's writing, making the tone of it more formal and less "tongue-in-cheek". The publication of the biography is still important as a source for scholars today.

Homer's career moved in a different direction in 1922, when he was named assistant director of the Carnegie Institute Gallery of Art in Pittsburgh. The following year he became Director, a post he held until 1950. Homer created an important role for himself and his museum by organizing annual exhibitions of contemporary art. Although he personally remained committed to the classical approach to art practiced by his father, (publishing the book *The American Artist and His Times* in 1943), Homer realized that the institution would make a name for itself by specializing in the art of current times. He made annual visits to Europe to scout and bring back the latest talents – Henri Matisse for instance – whom he would not have agreed with artistically, but whom he recognized as important to the world of art. By doing so he made the Carnegie preeminent in the artistic life of America.

When Augusta Homer Saint-Gaudens founded the Saint-Gaudens Memorial, Homer was at her side. He remained an active partner with her in the creation of the Memorial as a means of keeping his father's presence alive in the world of art.

When his first wife Carlota died in 1927, Homer remarried two years later to Mary McBride. When he left the Carnegie in 1950 they moved to

Florida, where he spent time sailing on his yacht, often to the Bahamas. Homer Saint-Gaudens died on December 8, 1958.

Both mother and son carried the artistic legacy of Augustus Saint-Gaudens into the twentieth century and beyond. Their dedication to preserving the house and studio eventually led to the creation of the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in 1964. They would certainly be pleased that both the Memorial and Historic Site continue to play active parts in the cultural life of the region and the country.



**Carlota Dolley
Saint-Gaudens (1884-1927)**

Carlota Dolley Saint-Gaudens was born into a prominent family in Rochester, New York. The family played an important role in the sciences. Her ancestor Sarah R.A. Dolley was the second accredited woman physician in the United States, and her brother Gilman (1880-1916) was an army doctor.

Carlota broke the mold with a strong early interest in art. She studied painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

and at the Art Student's League in New York. She had an ambition to be a fresco painter, a difficult and labor-intensive technique that had been popular in the Renaissance. She executed a few frescos at the Choate-Rosemary Hall School in Wallingford, CT. ("St. George and the Dragon" and "The Parthenon")

Her family spent summers in New Hampshire. At a house party given by Barry Faulkner she was introduced to Homer Saint-Gaudens. The two were married in 1905, around the time of the "Masque of Ours" (the play given by the Cornish Colony in honor of Augustus Saint-Gaudens). Mrs. Saint-Gaudens presented the young couple with a substantial farmhouse just up the road from "Aspet". The property would later be named "Barberry House" by the poet Witter Bynner, a college roommate of Homer who boarded at the house for several years.

**Among the subjects of Carlota's
miniature portraits were
President Theodore Roosevelt,
Augustus Saint-Gaudens
the poet Witter Bryner and the
author Percy MacKaye.**

Augustus Saint-Gaudens urged Carlota to take up a more marketable technique of art than frescos. It was the Cornish Colony artist Lucia Fuller who introduced Carlota to miniature painting. Carlota discovered that she had a real aptitude for this specialized work?. She became a member of the American Society of Miniature Painters, and exhibited regularly with them from 1908-1923, and of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts



Lewis Johnson by Carlotta Saint-Gaudens, 1887

included “Cornish Artists” at Dartmouth College in 1916, the Brooklyn Society of Miniature Painters (1920, 1921) and a one-person show at Fearargil Galleries in New York City in 1925. Among the subjects of her portraits were President Theodore Roosevelt, the poet Witter Bynner, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the author Percy MacKaye, and her husband and herself.

In personality Carlota seems to have shown a naïve, almost delicate charm in her youth. Her buoyant enthusiasm was tempered by life as she aged, and she suffered the loss of her young son Harold who died in childhood. She and Homer had two other children, Augustus II and Carlota. Carlota (later Mrs. John E. Dodge) studied art and became an illustrator and writer of children’s books.

Carlota Dolley Saint-Gaudens died in Pittsburgh in 1927, soon after her husband Homer became director of the museum of the Carnegie Institute.

Both Homer and Carlota remained loyal to their traditional training in art, while exploring the new world of creativity that was opening around them. As an administrator Homer realized the benefit of sup-

porting contemporary art, and his wife was beginning to explore some of the new directions in art as well.

*Henry Duffy is Curator
of the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site*

THE FRIENDS AND MEMORIAL SUPPORTING THE PARK!

SCULPTURAL VISIONS

On September 29, over 350 visitors to the site enjoyed the second annual *Sculptural Visions*.

Two sculptures were cast to bronze at a portable foundry, using the “lost-wax” casting method. Eight artists provided demonstrations of sculpting techniques using clay, wood, metal, and stone, and visitors also saw painters, gilding demonstrations, and enjoyed a hands-on sculpture activity tent. *Sculptural Visions 2007* was cosponsored and made possible with generous financial support from the Friends.

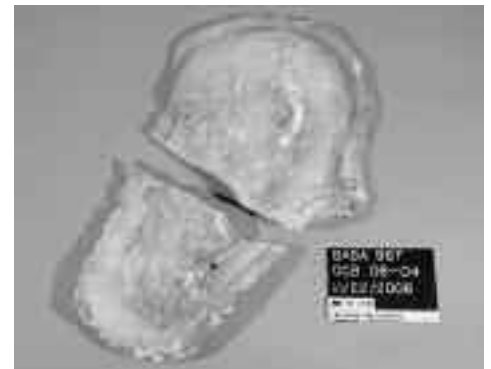


Bronze casting demonstration by Glen Campbell.

SGNHS CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Over twenty-one museum objects benefited from conservation treatment this past year.

These restorations were paid for with a generous \$7,000 grant from the Memorial which leveraged a matching \$14,000 grant from the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts. Seen here are “before and after” treatment images of one of these works, Charles A. Dana (head only) plaster cast, 17 1/2 inches, SGNHS #987.



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('Dear Friends...' continued from front cover)

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.

Saint-Gaudens Memorial 212-750-3690 tel & fax SGMemorial@aol.com www.sgnhs.org

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

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also plans to apply this winter to PBS for national broadcast of the film. Additional regional screenings are being planned for Boston, Chicago, and elsewhere, and the documentary will also be available on DVD as a sale item in the near future.

This issue of the Friends Newsletter draws upon some of this year's special events. Included are a condensation of Thayer Tolles' excellent presentation at the Dartmouth symposium in July and an article by Henry Duffy that draws on "A Personal Retrospective."

This year, the 100th anniversary of the death of Saint-Gaudens, has been a year full of remembrance and celebration. With the support of you - our Friends, we know that appreciation and excitement for Saint-Gaudens and the programs of the Site and the Memorial will continue to grow!

Byron Bell PRESIDENT SG Memorial BJ Dunn SUPERINTENDENT SGNHS