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
— 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 8:00pm
More Details to Follow
in our Spring Newsletter

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

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.

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. 8). 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!

By Thayer Tolles

Augustus Saint-Gaudens Memoria...

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 classmates 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 helped establish his name, for instance, he networked with Watson Gilder, the editor of the widely circulated Century illustrated Monthly Magazine, to assure the publica- tion 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 Rich- ard Randall Memorial (1884; Sailors’ Snug Harbor, Staten Island) for the frontispiece of Century Magazine 28 (June 1884). These friendships were both personal and professional, and had positive implications for Saint-Gaudens’ career.

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

— 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.

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.

By autumn 1883 Cox settled in New York to establish his career as an easel and mural painter of academic figure sub- jects. To earn steady income, he began teaching life drawing classes at the Art Students League in 1884 (Saint-Gaudens joined its faculty in 1886). Cox also began writing and illustrating articles for 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 Century Magazine 28 (June 1884). 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 1886). Cox also began writing and illustrating articles for 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 Century Magazine 28 (June 1884). 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 1886). Cox also began writing and illustrating articles for 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 Century Magazine 28 (June 1884).
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 AAV Gallery Uncommon Chislers, provided demonstrations of carving in marble, alabaster, and other stone.

— Contrasting art forms – painting and sculpture – two artists, Gary Mileek 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 Ed Kimble and Adam Hosmer worked on relief projects in clay to take home with them.

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 created Saint-Gaudens with gaining him entry 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 (1887; fig. 1) and sculptors in bas-relief (fig. 4; National SGNHS Archives). As he wrote to his son Homer (1882; SGNHS), a copy of his portrait of The Goddess and the Golden Bowl by Saint-Gaudens with a rendering of Saint-Gaudens in 1888, which Cox also painted a simple bust-length piece (1881-83; The Metropolitan Museum of Art) 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.
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.” 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 situations proved to be 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.”

Augusta was a pretty, protected child. Her mother especially worried over her child’s delicate health. She traveled throughout Europe hoping to find a cure for her failing auditory 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. 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 the clay he was able to apply to 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 then 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. 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.” 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...”

Augusta was always sure of two things: “We are neither of us children any more” and “I love him.” 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 on to 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.” 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 the best traits and I could not love you two more than he does his father and mother.” 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.

Augusta would lament to her mother: “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.” He seems sure enough in his future to state that if their engagement is a long one, it “shall be immeasurably unfortunate.” There was a genuine desire to do right by her family, as well as his own. Duties 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.”

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.”

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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 coming 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.” He seems sure enough in his future to state that if their engagement is a long one, it “shall be immeasurably unfortunate.” There was a genuine desire to do right by her family, as well as his own. Duties 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.” 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.”

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1. Augusta Homer to her mother, 8 February 1874.
2. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 65.
5. Ibid., 139.
7. Ibid., 130.
8. Augusta Homer to her mother, 22 February 1874, private letter.
9. Augusta Homer to her mother, 22 February 1874, private letter.
10. Augusta Homer to her parents, 23 February 1874, private letter.
11. Augustus Saint-Gaudens to Thomas Johnston Homer, March 1874, private letter.
12. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Saint-Gaudens, Reminiscences, 149.